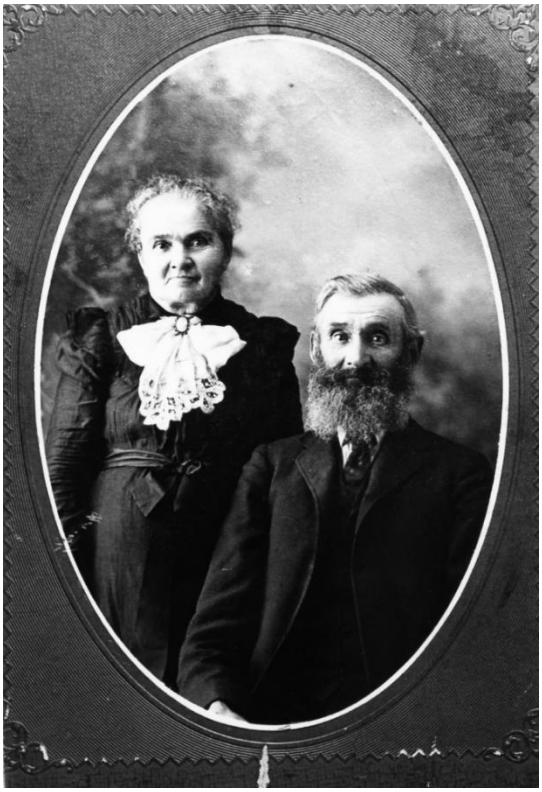
11. Our Ancestors

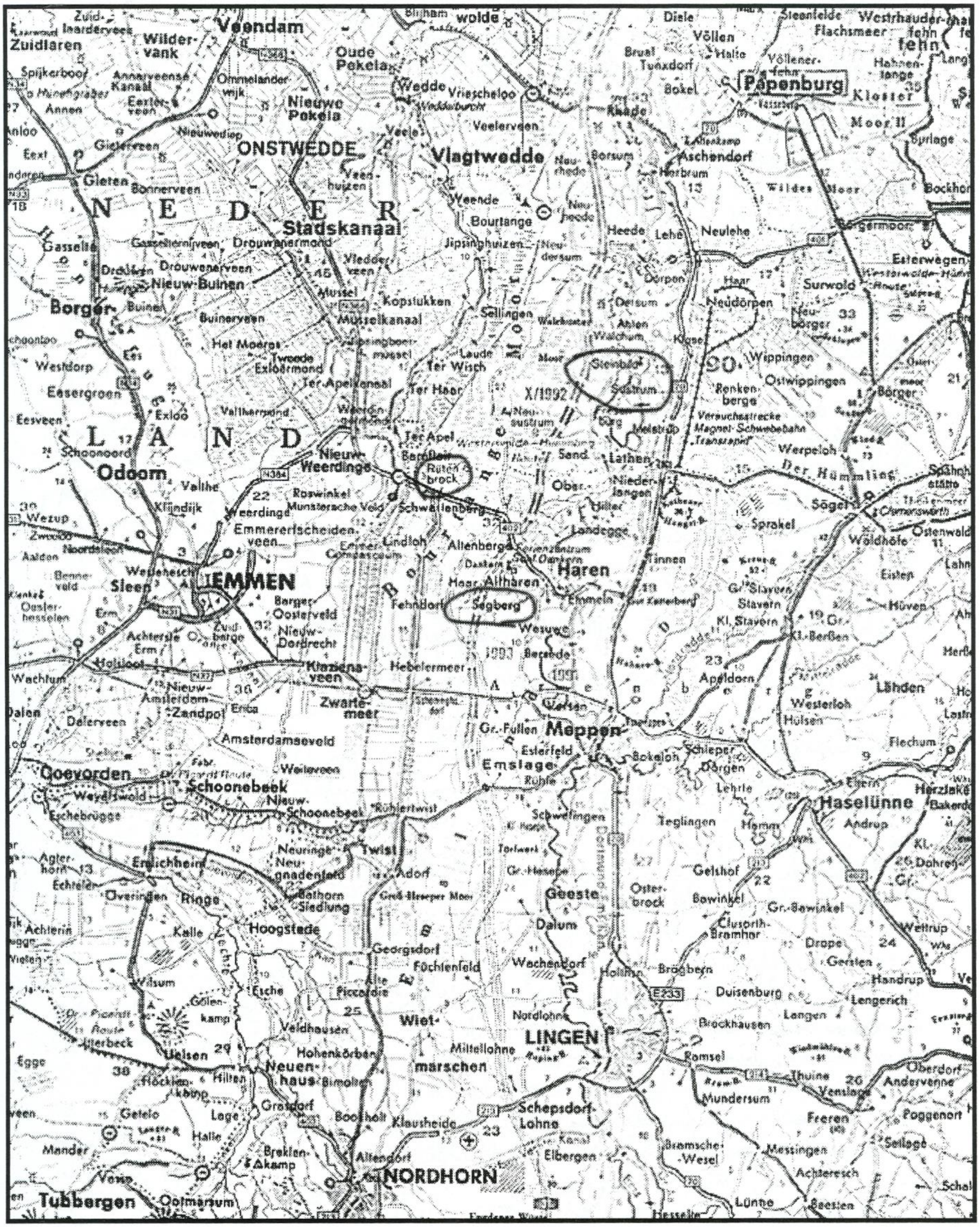
Well, you might be wondering now about our family who came before you or me, our ancestors who lived many years ago. Who were they? Well, hundreds of years ago they lived in Europe. Fifteen of our immediate ancestors came to America from Germany between 1845 and 1877. We cannot follow all these ancestors in one Story because there are too many of them and it would be just too confusing. If you think about the fact that you have a mother and a father, who both had mothers and fathers, and all of them also had mothers and fathers, and so on as you go backward into our history, you can quickly see that there will be a lot of ancestors. So we will talk in this Story mostly about my paternal grandparents Heinrich Segbers and Maria Helena Lammers, and some about Johnnie's line, the Crubels. This is a photo of my paternal grandparents Heinrich and Maria, taken perhaps in the 1870s.



Sylveria Sabers Ruden completed a family history in 1998 for the family of Heinrich and Maria Helena Lammers Segbers/Sebers/Sabers and found that in the 8 generations from 1819-1998 Heinrich and Maria generated 4126 descendants. That is a *lot* of people from one couple! People had big families, then. I, for example, am one of 14 children of Henry, Heinrich's third child. I had 34 first cousins on my father's side alone, I have never counted my first cousins on my mother's side, Mary Roling Sabers. Her father remarried when her mother died, and he had another family with the new wife. My mother was 6 and her sister was 4 when their mother died. Because my family was big, and your great-grandpa's family was big, your Daddy had 81 first cousins on my side and 51 first cousins on Johnnie's side, a total of 132 first cousins from my brothers and sisters and from Johnnie's brothers and sisters. Now if you start to add in all the second cousins, or third cousins, or aunts and uncles, that number becomes much larger. Heinrich died in 1884 and Maria in 1899, so I did not get to know my grandfather, but I did have my grandmother for 8 years. This is the genealogical information for them: Heinrich Segbers was born in 1819 in Oldenburg in the Sustrum, Germany area. He died October 4, 1884, in New Vienna, Iowa and was buried there. He married Maria Helena Lammers. She was born February 4, 1815, in Sustrum, Germany and was christened February 5, 1815, in Steinbild, Germany. She was the daughter of Rudolph Lammers and Helena

Rohe. Maria died August 16, 1899, in New Vienna, Iowa, and was buried there. New Vienna is where I was born and lived until I married and moved to Bloomington, Wisconsin.

Germany



Sustrum to Segberg = about 11 miles

Sustrum is in the northwest of Germany, about 20 miles from the border of the Netherlands, which you may have studied as the land of windmills, tulips, and wooden shoes. There is one theory that Maria Lammers' family were originally from the Netherlands. One of my cousins told me the Segbers were originally Sabers who emigrated from England to Germany, where they adopted the Segbers name, perhaps from the nearby town of Segberg. I always thought that one day I would go to Germany and discover the places where they were born and lived. When they came to America, they called themselves Segbers. Our ancestors in Germany were mostly farmers in America.

Why did people leave their own country to come to America? Here is a good summary from *The Immigration Resources:* (Later we will look at reasons more specific to our ancestors.)

Push Factors:

- The German economy. After the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815, foreign imports flooded the German markets and German industry cold not complete. In addition, the inheritance tradition of dividing farms among families was making farms so small that they were unsuccessful.
- The population had grown very large and was dependent on the potato to sustain it. In 1840 rural Germany was struck by the potato blight, which led to famine.
- German princes sponsored societies in the 1830s and 1840s that provided one-way tickets to the poor with the idea that in the long run it was cheaper than long-term subsidies.
- A best-selling book in 1829 about Missouri by Gottfried Duden inspired a tidal wave of emigration.
- Social and economic discrimination in Germany led to the emigration of thousands of German Jews during all the immigration waves and of Catholics after the May Laws of the 1870s.
- During several of the immigrant waves, young men emigrated to escape being conscripted in the German military service.

Pull Factors:

- Aid societies promoted immigration by supporting bettering the conditions of immigrants.
- The north-central states of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan promoted their states for settlement among Germans with funding and support from their state legislatures.
- The transcontinental railroads sent agents to ports of departure and arrival to recruit immigrants to take up their land grants or ship their goods through their freight lines.
- Chain migration occurred during the later phases of German immigration as newcomers joined family and friends who had made the journey before them.

Avoiding conscription was definitely a reason why some young men came to America. Richard Hermsen of New Vienna tells a story about his great grand-father Henry Pasker: As my great-grandfather approached his 19th birthday in 1847, he was supposed to go into the army. "His dad did not like the military because he had an older brother in the army already. Henry's father had been with Napoleon up in Russia, and most of Napoleon's army perished in Russia that winter. The reason he survived is because he had a white stallion that he came back to Germany on. Coming

back to Germany, he was confronted by Napoleon's military police. They got into a fight and Henry's father killed the MP. He covered him with twigs and said they would probably find him next June. So the day before Henry turned 19, he went to Holland. It was about a three-hour walk. At that time Holland would not return anybody to Germany, so Henry was safe from the German military. A few days later he met a fellow by the name of Buskelmann who was in the German army but had beat a German officer so he could not go back to Germany either. The two stayed together for life. They worked their way to the seaport, probably Amsterdam. At that time, ships left the gangplank on and didn't set sail until they had enough men to work on the ship. Henry and his friend worked on the ship to pay their way to America and landed at Baltimore in 1847. After they landed in the United States, they worked in the Boston area for two to three years. Then they were going to go to Cincinnati, where there were more German people."

Sylveria Sabers Ruden in 1964 wrote that my grandfather, your great, great, grandfather, "was to serve in the army, as they all had to at that time, without pay, so they decided to come to America." This would have been in 1845.

Prussia was especially militaristic, and that may have been why Johnnie's grandfather emigrated in 1852-53. Otto von Bismarck was just coming to power and promoting a dominant and powerful Prussia as the head of a German unified state. Johnnie's grandfather may have understood that the growing militarism must inevitably lead to conscription in the army, and he chose to leave before that happened. Bismark did indeed eventually decree that all young men would serve in the army without pay. An estimated 50% of young men of the time in Prussia left. Those who had enough money or could work on the ships decided to come to America. Johnnie's grandfather, born in 1816 in Magdeburg in Prussia arrived in America on a ship that docked in New Orleans in 1852. He was 36 years old, a single man, and classified "Cargo" which may have meant he worked on the ship.

Some of our later ancestor emigrants also left for religious freedom because Bismarck was Lutheran and wanted to rid Germany of the Catholic Church. Almost all our ancestors except Johnnie's grandfather were strongly Catholic. Some of them left Germany before Bismarck came to power in 1862, but they may have feared the coming discrimination. One of the very first things our ancestors did in New Vienna was build a log cabin church. We will talk about that a little later.

It is likely that our ancestors left Germany for a number of different reasons, and we can probably sum up those reasons in the statement that they left in order to seek a better life for their families. Since our Sabers/Crubel ancestors were from the Oldenburg area of Germany, let's look at some detailed information that might pertain particularly to them, from the genealogical website http://www.honkomp.de/damme-auswanderung/chapter0, to understand more specifically the situations that led to our ancestors' emigration and how that emigration probably took place.

Emigration has not only been happening in recent times; as such it has been going on since the dawn of mankind. If we put aside pre-historical movements of an entire people, we already find an exodus to the British Isles of people from our area in the 5th century. Similarly, we find the German colonization of the Eastern territories, during the early Middle Ages, to also have occurred by people from our general neighborhood who were willing to take the risk of leaving. During the 16th and 17th centuries the direction turned westward again. In order to escape the ever-escalating economic difficulties, more and more single people or entire families went to look for better opportunities in the well-to-do Netherlands or in Frisia. This exodus ended after the 30 Years War because of the general decimation of the population via war, pestilence and the accompanying bad harvests and wasted farms. It was not until the beginning of the 19th century that Northwest Germany again experienced emigration, but this time in numbers which had not been experienced earlier.

Primogeniture was law in the Oldenburger Münsterland. This custom eventually resulted in the development of the Heuer system where farm children, who were not entitled to an inheritance, were at least provided with a roof over their heads along with a meager life which permitted them to stay in their general neighborhood. Yet, as the population kept growing, while simultaneously prices for food and other homemade goods were falling, the threat of possible military duty only added to the decisions of many farmers to simply follow the example of their South German brethren and leave to go to North America. Numerous letters and reports made their rounds to further the belief that America was the land of unlimited opportunity where everyone could make good and find milk and honey for their efforts. Because of the mostly very sad situation of each Heuer family, a contemporary written account tells us that "One cannot blame these poor people when they trust the wonderful news which they hear about North America, when they belittle or even totally ignore the difficulties of the ocean crossing and their initial settlement difficulties, when they leave their beloved homeland, their relatives, their accustomed lifestyle and generally everything which they hold so dear, in order to settle down yonder and only hope that they will find a better homeland there." The number of emigrants became significant. For example, if one is to take the three parishes of Damme, Neuenkirchen and Holdorf, which together made up about 10,000 people, about 8000 left. Statistically 95% of the emigrants went to the United States. Once there, they often settled together in closed communities, which structurally resembled those which they knew from home. The central region where most of these German settlements took place was in the American Midwest. Present maps still show the many old and trusted place names like Bremen, Hanover, Oldenburg, New Minden, Westphalia etc., which remind of their origin by settlers from them in Europe.

Let's take a closer look at primogeniture and the Heuer system in Germany at the time our ancestors lived there. The rule of primogeniture in the strictest sense means that the right of succession belongs to the first-born child. As practiced, however, primogeniture often became the feudal rule by which the whole real estate of an intestate passed to the oldest son. This was the more common usage, often together with the individual rule that a particular farm must remain titled to the same name. This would have been the reason for a man changing his last name in order to inherit the real estate of his wife or pass it on to his children The Huer system was a feudal land management system that grew out of the hardships caused by primogeniture during the

upheaval of the Reformation and the Thirty Year's War. It is often referred to as the tenant farmer system. Let's look at the genealogical website http://www.honkomp.de/damme-auswanderung/chapter0 again.

The Heuerling System had its historical beginnings in the 16th and 17th Century. The specific factor which prompted it can be found in the existing rights of inheritance, such as it prevailed in our region through the ages, making the oldest son the sole heir. The younger sons were due a "Child's portion". Of course, a younger son conceivably could acquire his own Courtyard through a suitable "In-Marriage". Additionally, common lands (within an Estate) which until now had lain fallow were now put under cultivation and new, basic, primitive, living quarters erected. Mostly, though the reality seemed different. Many of the younger sons faced a dismal future as subservient co-workers on the older brother's estate. Not all accepted this fate gladly. Sometimes one in this position would take permanent leave of their family and villagers and head for work in the city; some enlisted in the military to make that a career.
The period of religious upheaval, following the Reformation, and the Thirty-Year War served to make substantial changes in the village social structure. Perhaps as a result of these unsettled times the younger farmers' sons often would not accept their fate without some protest. They made an effort to lead an independent lifestyle.

At the same time the farmers themselves were among the hardest hit populace following the war. Their lands had been devastated, their cattle stolen, their homes plundered. The demands for tax revenues on part of the Sovereign to be extracted from the farmers rose constantly, and with that, the indebtedness of the farmers. Faced with adversity, the possibility of a fixed income from farm lease arrangements, and the discontinuance of the burdensome inheritance taxes, held a certain appeal. The introduction of the Heuerleute system could alleviate the problems of both sides, the farmers as well as the departing farm sons. The farmer would make a portion of his land available, for which he could expect a suitable fee, with a number of hands available to assist in his operations. The term "Heuer Mann" well describes the relationship as the Platt Deutsch "Heuer" or "Hür" implies lease or rent.

The Heuerleute would receive from the farmer a piece of land, grazing rights on the "common land" and living quarters. These living quarters, furnished and maintained by the farmer, were in the beginning -and were for a long time - exceedingly primitive. One would select an outhouse, such as barns, stables or baking hut, and make minimal changes to convert it for human habitation. Even the later Heuer Houses, usually constructed to house two families, were invariably narrow and offered few amenities. An idea of this type facility can be obtained from a report of the Holdorf

Estate as issued by the responsible Damme Office in the year 1845:

"Housing for the Heuerleute is generally of flimsy construction and deficient in numerous respects. The mud walls, doors and roof, in general, are not tightly sealed, offering no protection from drafts and cold air, windows which can be opened usually are missing altogether, which causes lack of circulation., which is more necessary here, as the alcoves in the living quarters (set-backs recessed into the walls) provide the sleeping quarters for the entire family. Chimneys on this type of a building are unthinkable; most are lacking in a water well, forcing the inhabitants to fetch water from a cistern in poor condition, or with enormous difficulties from a well at a great distance".

As modest as the shelters were for the Heuerleute, their living conditions were similarly wanting. On the tiny strip of arable land, allotted to him, grain was planted. The soil in Holdorf in the best years was barely adequate to feed a 4-member family. A yield beyond that, to offer for sale, was at best a wish. Planting potatoes came into play in the 18th century but gained rapid acceptance thereafter. A family's menu could be enriched by vegetables grown in one's own garden. A meat diet among the Heuerleute was a rare event, and it certainly was not a given among the farmers in general.

Even among those of the Heuerleute who understood how to augment their income through one or another form of activity, their basic income remained whatever their strip of land would bring forth. This included one or two cows, who served also as beasts of burden. Until the common grounds were subdivided the cows would graze on the communal meadow. Since the Heuerleute were ignored when it came to subdividing land, they would have to settle for strips of grass along ditches and roads, where the Heuerleute children would attend to the animals.
To the one or two cows would be added a feeder pig, a few geese and chicken, who could be sold. The cattle were the most significant possession of the Heuermann. The cows in particular were the most prized and treated with special care. The Heuerleute often developed special skills in treating sick animals, utilizing time-proven home remedies, so that the farmers would use their expertise.

The Heuermann would treat his allotted soil with great respect and care. The greatly limited acreage allowed no wasted space. At all times watchful, keeping weeds under control, harvesting the limited produce, in all these aspects the Heuermann would be more meticulous than the farmer. It should be mentioned as an aside that the Heuerleute were abused to an extraordinary degree by the farmers in their farming duties. To begin with, the strip of land assigned to the Heuermann was the least productive. Worst of all, after the Heuermann had invested great effort and much sweat to increase the soil to improve its yield, the farmer would often withdraw this strip and reassign another, infertile, strip instead.
Many of the chores incurred in the Heuer operations would rest on the shoulders of the housewife and children as the husband's duties would call him away. The obligatory aspects of the Heuer relationship toward the farmer were the principal burden on the Heuermann. Whenever the farmer summoned the Heuermann the latter would be obligated to drop the task at hand and report for duty. Naturally, these summons would occur most frequently during times of high labor intensity,

such as hay and grain harvesting, flax "drawing" and manure spreading. This impacted on the Heuer operations which had to be deferred to the late evening and early morning hours. As a result, the Heuermann's produce was likely to be moist or immature. The extent of the Heuermann's specific duties were not committed to paper and were subject to the whims of the farmer.

We do not have information about whether the Segbers/Sabers or Lammers families were part of the Heuer system, nor whether Heinrich and the four Lammers siblings who emigrated were younger children in their families and thus not eligible for the ownership of the family farms in Germany. We do however, have some documentation that the system may have applied to the Lampe family. Johnnie's grandfather married Catherine Lampe in New Vienna in 1857. Catherine's father, Johann Heinrich Lampe (1801-1875) came from Plaggenschale in the Hannover area, about 60 miles south of Oldenburg city. Catherine was born there on May 22, 1832, and came with her parents to America sometime after that. There was a Lampe family in Oldenburg in 1649 who may have been ancestors of Catherine. If so, one of those ancestors was the farmer, and we do not know if other children in the Lampe family might have been Heuerling. In 1649 on the Lampe-Gosslingk Estate the main house was occupied by the family members of the farmer, namely a Lampe daughter and a sister, and the Heuermann and his wife were quartered in the barn.

The hardships of Heuer life made it almost imperative that to survive, the Heuerleute had to have a secondary income to support the family. For Heuerleute in northern Germany, that need led to an important migrant worker partnership with the neighboring Netherlands.

Over a period of about 300 years, 1600 to 1900, each year in the early summer months a stream of migrant workers in the Northwestern section of Germany made the trek to Holland, where they found employment for several weeks and months. This trek had its beginnings in the early part of the 17th Century, thus coinciding with the inception of the Heuerling System. As the Heuerling System grew, the trek to Holland grew with it, to the point that it was a mass people movement. Recent studies indicate that during the highest migration years probably every second male adult, and with certainty the bulk of the Heuerleute, annually came to the coastal area of the North Sea as migrant workers. Confirmation of this trend comes from the statements by *Johann Theodor Moormann*, according to which nearly all adults plus other able-bodied males of the Heuerleute migrated to Holland during the summer.

A report in the year 1806 - a time past the apex of the migrant worker movement - indicates that for the Damme Parish, between 350 and 380 persons made the trek to Holland. This corresponds to 5% of the total population of the Parish and 30% of the adult males, with a total parish population of 7 000 persons.

The nature of the activity in Holland covered two principal areas: work with grass and processing turf (peat moss). Much less important were the number of seafarers and those involved in the construction trades. For this reason we shall not delve further into the latter categories in this report.

The bulk of the Holland trekkers found work in the grass and hay fields, which can be attributed to the confluence of several favorable trends. The farm economy back home in the months of May and June experienced a slack period; such chores as needed to be attended could be handled by the wives and children. So the Heuermann's services were available elsewhere.

On the other hand, the Dutch economy in this period was at its most labor-intensive time. Here far-reaching progress had been made in the dairy industry, with large dairy herds dominating the vista. The cows depended on hay for feed in the winter months, which was brought in large quantity for storage in the early summer months. Speed was essential, and every helping hand most welcome.

A long-range relationship between the Dutch farmer and his mowers would soon develop. As a rule, it was the same grass workers who would annually report to any given farmer. And if one or the other would drop out, he would arrange for a replacement, whether for a given season, or permanently. Particularly, in the 18th Century a certain communication system developed. When the grass harvest season was approaching, the farmer (who was called "Bass") would inform, by mail, his recent worker, who in turn would notify the others in his group, or perhaps arrange for suitable substitutes. The departure of these workers occurred in groups. A major assembly point for them was the bridge over the Ems River near Lingen. Per season as many as 25,000 Holland trekkers would come by here. From this assembly point the trekkers would branch out to their various destinations. The trip to and from seasonal employment would take a week in each direction and would invariably be done on foot. The trip in and of itself had its problems, if one remembers that in addition to the required tools, changes of clothes and such, the trekker would have to bring along basic foodstuffs from home. He made every effort to keep his upkeep on the Holland trek to a minimum.

The grass-mowing operation was performed in a rhythm. The pace was set by one particularly enduring "foreman." Weaker mowers naturally were more of a hindrance and if they persevered in their activity could have a damaging effect on the overall effort. Sunday was a work-free day, but all other days the workday would begin at 4:00 am and end at 8:00 pm. Short breaks were few and far between. The night was spent in the farmer's barn.

Numerous factors combined to make this a hazardous occupation. The 16-hour workday, the stressfulness of this activity, the skimpy meals, the inadequate shelter, frequently prompted damage to a worker's health. Serious illnesses, often chronic, even death could be brought on by this existence; most notably, it was premature ageing which could be expected by the grass-worker.

Yet the peat moss workers were exposed to far greater dangers. He who did not have a strong constitution could quickly become a victim of the harsh working conditions. The dismantling of the peat bogs took place in the Niedermooren, which is just below sea level. The workers would stand in water to their knees, which would be ice cold in the spring months. In the summer heat their bodies would be exposed to the broiling sun, without protection to the torso. If this exposure would not be enough, their accommodations were such as to guarantee permanent damage to their health. Their shacks were in the Moor, far from any human habitation. They consisted of piled turf, with a roof made of loose tiles, which offered practically no protection from rain or wind. "Mattresses" would consist of a thin layer of brushwood atop the barren peat ground. For cover they would have one "blanket," which consisted of coffee sacks, sewn together. It is hard to think of a better breeding ground for fevers, lung infections, gout, rheumatism, and other illnesses.

What made this activity an even harder burden was the length of the "season" which lasted from early spring into the fall. Whoever of the Holland trekkers opted for the peat moss operation instead of the grass operation did this because of the higher earnings expected due to the longer season in the peat fields.

Despite the hardships of life at the time, especially for the Heuerleute, the decision to emigrate was not easy. Emigrants knew they were leaving behind everything they had ever known, and they would certainly never again see any of their family and friends they left behind. Let's look at a letter from a Steinfeld emigrant:

Up to 30% of Steinfeld`s population emigrated between 1830 and 1880. 30% left their home country, their families, relatives, friends, and neighbors. How big must have been the misery and despair in those days, to make this step with a heavy heart. And how many people would have liked to do the same but could not.
All the villages in Südoldenburg were overpopulated, scanty soil and no fertilizer, little farms, on which every farmer had four to six hireling-families. 40 or 50 people lived on one farm – and the farm had to feed them all. People needed to have a 2nd job for having a little income. They were spinning and weaving wool and binding brooms and baskets. But who on earth should buy this?

After the 30-years-war from 1618-1648 people took the walk to Holland, or went to the sea for fishing. A hard job. They worked from sunrise ´til sundown and had to be back home to the harvest time. Time passed .... the income was not pretty good, many people died on a nervefever which was 'imported' from the Hollandgang. And many young people from 14 up to 30 went to sea. The misery was great and so many of them risked their own life on sea. And the last exit, the last chance, for the poor people was the emigration.

What happened in families in farm-und hireling houses in the 19th century? All was uncertain. Nobody knew exactly what would happen, what could they expect in America. There is a saying from that time, which is still alive and free-translated as "*If you have enough bread, stay here, you don´t have to go only for the butter to America.*"
Discussions through days & nights, weeks and months. Who should go first? What happens with the parents? Everybody knew the one who emigrated wouldn´t come back. But last but not least the temptation was too big and they hoped for a better future. It sounds a little bit macabre, but often it was the truth. Many were waiting with their emigration until their parents died.

"The main reasons for the emigration were:

1) pressure from the farmer, the hireling had to help any time the farmer wanted help, the hire-rent was too high, the hireling had no chance to have a fertile soil

2) bad harvests because of strong, cold winters
3) six years of military service for the hireling-sons
4) the wish of independence und the hope for a better future"

Another letter of a Steinfeld emigrant: "*Yes, so the world goes. Families living together having their bread, talk together and then comes the day, on which they moved away from each other. It´s like a cannonball, which all people fall apart and nobody knows where the other is gone. We should believe that we´ll see them next time in the eternity."*

Warnings came from the Government in Oldenburg against the so called "addiction to emigration," because so many young people left the duchy of Oldenburg and the old people stayed. The duke threatened the people *"if you go, you´ll lose your nationality forever."* But what should they lose?

Further words out of the letter from the Steinfeld emigrant, "*I´ve read the letter from Blöcker that your son died on sea. That´s very sad. Even that´s the reason why we go to America, that our children should not have to work on the dangerous sea. America is a free land, everybody can do what he wants to***.** For this he sacrifices his home and his roots." The despair in those days must have been very great. But many people tried this adventure. But in the last century it was no longer such an adventure as 50 or 60 years before, because the relatives & friends were already in America.

In some areas of Germany it is said that the nobles were funding voyages to America for poor people because sending away the poor from their duchies was thought to be cheaper than continuing to support those in need. That does not seem to be the case in the Oldenburg area, which was quite concerned about its loss of citizens. In the1830's the Grand Ducal Government in Oldenburg requested an inquiry by the Office in Damme about the growing emigration. Specifically, the inquiry was to seek causes for the large numbers of this District emigrating.

A comprehensive report dated July 31, 1834, clarifies the problem. Three basic causes are cited.
- First, is the dire need of the Heuerleute, whose numbers increase disproportionally, and whose situation depends on an insecure, time-bound lease arrangement, for which competition is on the increase. Added to this are the frequently strained relations of the Heuerleute to the Colons. This brought on additional stress when time-bound circumstances turned even more unfavorable.
- In second place is named the reduction of the number of persons who made seasonal trips to Holland for employment purposes.
- The third reason, the report cites, is the fact that nearly all of the local inhabitants already have family members and friends in America, who make constant efforts to encourage left-behind family members to follow them to the New World. Undoubtedly, many of the reports of those who left earlier are exaggerated. Those who encourage people to remain are often accused of dishonest motivation or even lies. Thus opposing thrusts collide: One, the hopeless situation of the Heuerleute in particular, whose lot, due to increase in population and the disappearance of side income, is becoming increasingly dismal and on the other hand, the magnetism and call from the New World on the part of family members and friends. Entire families took courage to embark on the voyage across the Atlantic, often including aged parents and infant children. It was primarily young people, such as departing farmers' sons, unattached servants and maids, who were attracted by better opportunities for increased income and gaining a measure of independence in the New World. A number of young men saw an opportunity to avoid a six-year hitch of military service by emigrating.

This third reason listed here, the encouragement from family members and friends already in America, grew to be so important a reason that it earned its own name, "chain migration." Studies of specific areas in Germany that were especially hard hit by emigration usually show some form of chain migration in play, and I think it was an important part of our ancestors' histories.

A reasonable explanation can be found in the previously mentioned remarks by Johann Theodor Moormann. As he writes: It was here that a letter from the bookbinder Stallo praised America in a quite extraordinary manner. This brought on a great deal of commotion, causing nearly everyone to ponder how to best and quickest prepare for departure for America." This occurred in the spring of 1832. As Moormann writes elsewhere, there had been rumors circulating describing America as a "Laulеckerland," loosely translated as the Land of Milk & Honey, or the land paved with golden bricks, where anyone could live free of any worry. However, it was Stallo, among the first of the local emigres, who was personally known to the folks at home. Moormann describes his profession and his precise family situation. Stallo's high recognition factor in Holdorf may rest on his having held the teaching position in Grandorf prior to his practicing his bookbinding activities in Damme for a time. This served to establish confidence and gave his message substantial credibility and made his letters highly effective. "Thus we can view Stallo as the individual who prompted the concentrated emigration activity in our area."

"The instigator of the emigration from Southern Oldenburg was the former teacher and bookbinder, Franz Joseph Stallo, from the city of Damme, who emigrated with his family in 1831 and initially settled in Cincinnati. He wrote many letters in which he recruited those who had stayed at home. In 1832 the first group arrived because of his efforts in Cincinnati. Stallo had organized to purchase land about 150 miles to the north in Ohio, which he subdivided for sale to the new settlers. This place became known as Stallotown but was later renamed Minster after the main city of Westphalia, Münster. Over time many additional emigrants came here from the Damme region to settle and prosper or move on to other areas."

So who was this man Stallo?

Franz Joseph Stallo was born May 2, 1793, in Sierhausen, Parish of Damme, Kreis Vechta, Oldenburg. In keeping with family tradition, he studied at the Carolinium Gymnasium in Osnabrück, became a school teacher, and taught until about 1815 at Grandorf, Parish of Damme, Oldenburg.
Stallo also learned the trade of printing and bookbinding; and was noted for his horticultural expertise. The practice of burning-off the moors for the production of buckwheat, a related evergreen reforestation project, and his success in bee culture brought him a measure of acclaim. Stallo performed electrical experiments on information gleaned from treatises brought to him for binding and it is thought that he was on the verge of inventing the telegraph. He also experimented with a balloon flight over Damme which was not successful. He was versed in the English language and could sustain a conversation in this tongue.

Stallo became interested in America through a poem he received from a friend. He printed the poem "Lied Aus Amerika" or "The Song from America" by Hölstrup and distributed it throughout the neighborhood in both Hannover and Oldenburg. Government officials, who were eager to suppress any large-scale emigration, took action against Stallo; and his business in Damme suffered to such an extent, that following his own advice, he decided to emigrate to America. Stallo family history recalls that on Sunday, April 24, 1831, Stallo with his ailing wife and five children left Germany for Amsterdam to embark for the New World. Upon arrival at Amsterdam his wife was fatally stricken and she died there at the age of thirty-eight. Stallo secured a nurse, with the surname Bramlage, for the children, and undaunted, the group set sail for America on the sailing ship Jano on May 2, 1831, arriving in New York June 19, 1831. They continued on to Cincinnati and arrived at this final destination on July 27, 1831.

In Cincinnati Stallo gained employment in the print shop of a Mr. Phillips, following his bookbinding trade. Here, Stallo became a good friend of William H. McGuffey, who later published the famous series of readers. The ready access to the printing press was an invitation to Stallo and he flooded his former neighborhood in Germany with propaganda concerning the excellent opportunities and conditions in the Ohio region. Soon a considerable number of farmers, carpenters, and artisans began to arrive in Cincinnati in 1832 from the land of the wooden shoe and windmill, particularly from Damme and Twistringen. The conditions there where not favorable to the immigrants as the frontiersmen were ill-disposed to the ever-increasing number of "Dutchmen" arriving daily. Catholic immigrants were particularly frowned upon because of the suspicion that they were part of a plot by the Pope to take over the Mississippi River Valley and create a Papal domain in America.
The new arrivals were restless and disappointed in Cincinnati and soon questioned Stallo about where they should go. Stallo proposed the founding of a town or colony, a dream which he may have harbored long before his departure from Damme. Accordingly, a group of the young Germans met in Cincinnati, and designated Stallo and a Mr. Beckmann to find a suitable locality for the establishment of such a colony. On September 1, 1832, a stock company was formed to purchase land in Mercer County, and Stallo was designated as the man to carry out the conditions of furnishing money, purchasing the land, and laying out the town.

Stallo, accompanied by six men; of which we know only the names of Johann Bernard Feldmann, Johann Herman Surmann, Heinrich Joseph Cordesmann, and Johann Friedrich Rohenkohl, proceeded to the U.S. Government Land Office at Picua, Ohio. Here Stallo purchased 1200 acres of Congress land in Mercer County and Shelby County for $1.25 per acre. The dates of the purchases were September 28, October 3, and October 15, 1832. The opportunistic Stallo perhaps anticipated the future extension of the Miami Canal from Dayton northward and the probable fact that the canal would pass through or near the site chosen for Stallostown. Unfortunately, two years after he arrived in Cincinnati he died at age 38 of a cholera epidemic that was raging there.

The brevity of Stallo's life is far overshadowed by the impact of that life. Through his activity a substantial number of south Oldenburg emigrants settled in the Cincinnati vicinity. The people ultimately affected by Stallo's enthusiasm probably included our ancestors.

Stallo in a real sense was a pioneer for these folks. Cincinnati served as a primary destination, quite infrequently as a permanent address. One was conscious of the fact that in Cincinnati there lived former Landsleute (former neighbors) who could be helpful. Thus, one would stay there a while, look around to learn the lay of the land and resume contacts with relatives and acquaintances. Of primary concern was the acquisition of a tract of land, as the majority of the immigrants planned to become farmers. Land was cheap and for just a few hundred Marks one could acquire a strip the size of a farm back home. To a departing farmer's son back home the lot of "Onkel an't Für" (sarcastic term for Crown Prince of a Pig Sty) was his best expectation; in America his lot could be a stately farm, and with a bit of imagination he could picture a family of his own situated there. Even the Heuermann, who through great effort saved a bit from his work on a loom at home or from his wanderings in Holland could assure himself of a decent property. And those without any means whatever, could, due to high wages in America and suitable frugality, at, least in

their mind, picture the day when they could afford to buy the land necessary for a farming operation.