

## **An immigrant letter: Manitowoc-Rapids, in the state of Wisconsin, July 26, 1848.**

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Kremers, Gerhard

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# An Immigrant Letter

## Manitowoc-Rapids, in the State of Wisconsin, July 26, 1848

JUL 10 1986

by: Gerhard Kremers, son of Peter Kremers —  
a former resident of Vluyn, Germany.  
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EDITOR'S NOTE: 'To Occupational Monograph No. 59 entitled, "An Immigrant's Letter" by Gerhard Kremers, originally published in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Volume 21, pages 68-84.

We are indebted to Paul Haas, Editor of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, for permission to print this article in this issue of our Manitowoc County Historical Society's Occupational Monograph series.

It seems that the P. Kremers resided in "Vluyn near Moers" in Germany. This was a hamlet in the Dusseldorf part of Germany. Dusseldorf was an industrial city which might have had at the time a population of about 26,000. The community known as "Vluyn" was in a coal mining area. The factories in the town produced products made of iron and also of leather.

The Kremer family were immigrants to America in 1848, and became residents of the Town of Newton, because some of their former neighbors had settled in that town. We find in the article the familiar name of "Diederich", a name that is familiar to us,

for some years ago we published "The Diary of the J.F. Diederich Family" in Occupational Monograph No. 51" The Kremer article supplements very well the one written by the Diederich's, in that they mention episodes which in our time are regarded as minor reversals, but which then were almost calamities.

The Kremer article indicates that they purchased land in section four of the Town of Newton. The land description being the southwest one-fourth of section 4. This would suggest that they purchased 80 acres of land — which 80 acre plot in that quarter section of land is not clear. The land transaction is recorded on page 234, of Vol. 58, certificate No. 6988, in the *Wisconsin Domesday Book*, kept in the Green Bay District office. Date of purchase was June 18, 1848. A search of the records in the Register of Deeds office in our county has not revealed a land purchase by the Kremer's. It was in 1848 that Wisconsin became a state, and so territorial regulations must have prevailed when this family arrived in America.

We have searched the cemetery records of the Manitowoc County Genealogical Society, but have not found the name "Kremers" among any of the burials. Whether this is indication that the Kremers did not remain in Manitowoc County very long, or whether the burials were never recorded, we would not know.

Most immigrants who came to America in the mid-19th century years realized that they would lead lives in which hardships and deprivation of many of the comforts of daily living would be their lot. They were willing to accept these things, however, for the sake of their children. Had they remained in Germany they would have been denied certain freedoms that were given people in America, e.g. the freedom of worship, the freedom to become what their talents would permit. Also America did not seem to have any ambitions in world conquest. Thus, they came to settle in America's interior . . . and to become a part of what we now call "The History of Manitowoc County."



Assuming that you have received in due season my letter dated May 29th from New York which advised you of our successful voyage, also that you have learned of our arrival in Wisconsin from Philipsen's family of Baerl,<sup>1</sup> I shall herewith give you a more detailed account of our trip, also of our experiences made in this new country. However, I must beg of you not to expect too much in the way of experiences since our stay here has been but brief.

Following the painful day of separations, we took the train the next morning at Duisburg which brought us to Bremen the same evening. After a lapse of three days we went to Bremerhaven, where the anchors were weighed on the 19th of April. With good cheer and favorable wind we sailed down the ever widening Weser into the North sea. A truly great spectacle: the unbounded expanse of the sea makes an unforgettable impression on the admirer. However, the very next morning the sight had lost its

sublimity for many. With a strong wind, which enabled us to make four [knots] per hour, the disagreeable seasickness made its appearance. Though by no means dangerous, it is accompanied by a sense of annoyance. Since this sickness has been described so often, it would be superfluous to describe it in detail though I could write from experience. Children are not affected, also some grown ups, among them my father. Favored by a strong wind, we entered the channel on the 3rd day and could see the cliffs of the English coast, however, for a short time only. A few days later we had to entrust ourselves to the waves of the Atlantic ocean, which were readily recognized by their size. The wind became less strong and for 8-10 days we made little progress. But now there came a change. Suddenly toward evening a wind arose. It became stronger and stronger and bulged the sails. Waves 25 feet high crowded each other while their spray was carried away by the wind and struck with

hissing sounds. Our small ship, which had only 130 passengers on board, tilted to the side so that occasionally the railing was on a level with the surface of the water. However, it made great progress (in an hour 6.) Trunks, tin containers, and other objects fell over. The dreadfulness was increased by the darkness of the night and the phosphorescence of the sea. The whole was of such a nature, that, as the sailors told us, we might get a fair idea of a storm, but that it could not be called such. Toward morning it became more quiet. Even in worse storms the voyage on the open sea is not dangerous though it is so near the coast. Anyone who desires to emigrate will not be induced to give up his plans because of such contingencies. Moreover, accidents are very rare. Should there be sufficient cause, we should not hesitate to entrust ourselves to the waves again.—Our captain decided to avoid the gulf stream. We arrived on the grand bank of New Foundland. From here our course was



in a southwesterly direction, however, very slowly, along the American coast as far as Long Island. This we first saw to our right with the mainland in the distance. What a pleasant sight!—

Before proceeding, I shall say something about our provisions on board ship. Our food was very poor: poor coffee, poor pork, and malodorous beef; in addition we received bread, butter, peas, beans, barley, and rice.<sup>2</sup> Even these would not have been edible because of poor preparation had not hunger spiced the meals. Several modest requests for a better preparation of the food were rejected in a harsh voice. This incivility we could bear so long as our own provisions lasted. These exhausted, our patience had an end. Several of our traveling companions informed the captain in all seriousness that he had to provide better food. This decisive demand produced results. Whether angry or frightened, I know not, but the captain changed color several times. From now on we, the passengers, prepared our own food. So far as the material, delivered in sufficient quantity, was concerned it was good, the dishes prepared therefrom were palatable. However, such supplies as were poor to begin with could not be improved. Owner, captain, and cook all three were to blame. Others who sailed via Bremen had like experiences. We know full well, for we have been so informed by those who have had the experience, that boarding at one's own expense has its disadvantages, we are nevertheless of the opinion that others who desire to follow will do better to sail from Antwerp, Rotterdam, Havre, or London since by so doing they can board themselves. For families with children under twelve years of age it will also be cheaper, hence advisable.

But now let us return to the American coast which we approached very closely after we had taken on board a pilot. Every one was jubilant over our early arrival in the country which our eyes had sought so eagerly and so often. While Long Island spread out to our right, we could see the endless main land to our south. However, as we came closer, all was hidden by a dense fog. Night overtook us and the ship dropped its anchor. As the fog disappeared the next morning, we saw land close by. Words fail to describe how happy we were. It was as though winter had suddenly been replaced by spring. On both sides beautiful panorama delighted the eye. On both sides beautiful knolls covered with a variety of trees and studded with country homes. At the foot of the hills white houses, one more beautiful than the other. Of interest also are the fortresses with their cannons. Before us and to our rear hundreds of masts of ships from all parts of the world. In addition, steamships, very different

from the German ones, cross the bay. Here at quarantine, an hour this side of New York, every one, was happy over the fortunate termination of our trip. Every one, feeling that to God alone belonged praise, gladly joined in singing 'Nun danket alle Gott' as proposed. Such a choral, sung on such an occasion, is uplifting. After a rapid and none too strict inspection of our baggage, and after the physician had done his duty, toward noon of the 37th day we were conveyed by a steamer to New York. An endless forest of masts of sailing vessels and of smoke stacks of the largest steamers stretches along the shore line of the city. Presumably but few cities afford a like sight. The impression made upon us was great.

These pleasant hours came to an abrupt end as we landed. Our baggage had to be removed quickly. However, the dock was so crowded with hotelmen, swindlers with letters from Germany, draymen with their carts, and characters of all kinds, that there was scarcely room for our baggage. Enraged, we had to push these people back. In New York we lodged in the 'Hamburger Hof.' However, I would advise others to lodge with Peter Stocky, No. 141 Cedar Str., which place is said to be better. Here in New York we met 'Pastors' Steins of Neukirchen; Stein the bookbinder of Meurs; 'Pastor' Weiskotten, formerly a merchant in Elberfeld; Dahmen, the carpenter from Budberg; also Volkertz of Rheinhausen. The last mentioned was returning to Germany. We refused to listen to the swindlers who tried every trick, but sought the agent of the 'Deutsche Gesellschaft,' J.E. Allstaedt, No. 95 Greenwich Str. We followed his advice and purchased tickets as far as Buffalo, but no farther, from Wolf and Richmueller, now No. 159, Washington Str. Through tickets as far as Milwaukee or Sheboygan cost a dollar more. In order to avoid being cheated, let every one go to the agents mentioned and secure passage as far as Buffalo. The tickets were 6 dollars per person or 8½ 'Thaler Pr. Cour.'<sup>3</sup> In addition, we would advise every one not to allow himself to be persuaded to travel from Albany to Buffalo by canal. True, the ticket is cheaper, but the trip lasts from 10 to 12 days. Since every one has to board himself and since food is expensive, this mode of travel is more expensive than that by rail. In addition, the time is lost.

Before we leave New York, we want to tell you at least something about this large city. As we walked from the dock to our hotel, the dirty streets made a very unfavorable impression. Later, however, our impressions were much more favorable: Broadway which is two German miles long [i.e. 9.2 miles], impressive public buildings, and beautiful, Gothic churches. However, as a whole, the city, at least so far as we

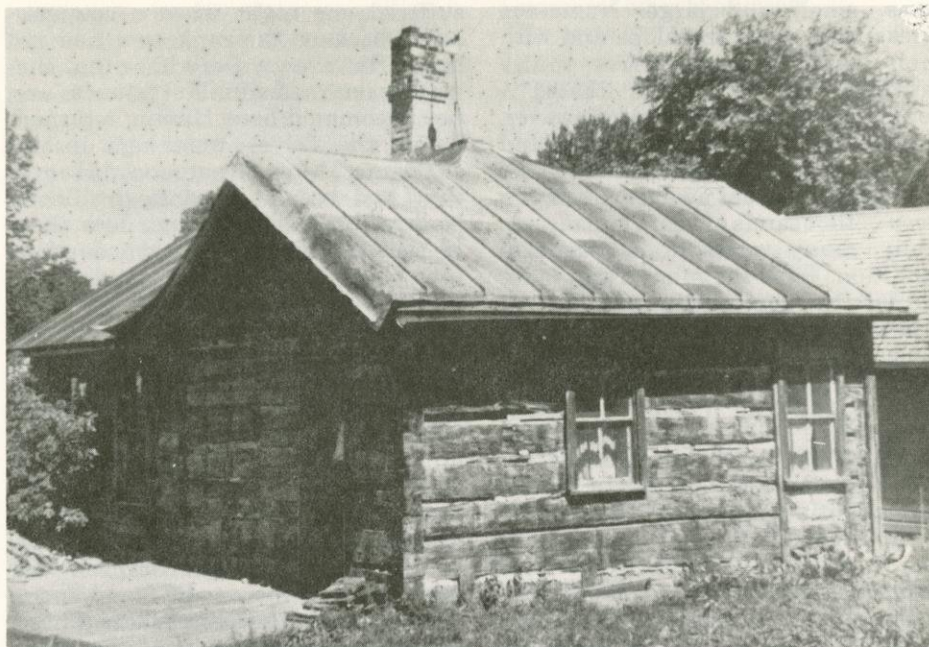
learned to know it, afforded little that was pleasant. The buildings, constructed almost without exception of red bricks, impart a sombre aspect to the streets. As to the concourse in the streets, not one of us had imagined anything as great. Wagons and carts roll incessantly over the pavement in such a crowded condition that at any moment you expect them to run into each other. One may well judge the extent of the commerce implied.

On the evening of May 29th we boarded the steamer which carried us to Albany. To describe adequately the steamers that ply between these two places would require several sheets. They are colossal structures and at the same time beautiful. Although our steamer was not one of the largest, it had a length of 350 feet and a width of 70 feet and was three stories high. It is a floating hotel with rooms for any and all purposes. The equipment is luxurious and elegant. About 50 to 60 negro servants run about. The ship carried about 2,000 passengers.—We arrived at Albany toward 5 o'clock the next morning. So far as we saw the city, there was nothing particularly attractive. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon we left by train for Buffalo, a trip which lasted 29 hours. We stopped at a number of attractive cities. But little care has been exercised in building this road. At some points, however, worth while improvements were being made. A German can scarcely conceive of the primitive bridges constructed over the canal, over small lakes, rivers and valleys. Equally difficult is it for him to imagine the shaking and jarring. Without barriers, the railway begins in the very heart of the city, passes in like manner through others and ends likewise. In Buffalo we took lodging in the 'Wilhelm Tell' run by Eisenberger and Nic. Strauch, whom we can recommend to those who may come after us. Buffalo, an important and lively commercial city, has about 40,000 inhabitants. In all American cities which we have seen, in the largest as well as in the smallest, pigs run about the street. Here we took in provisions for a 4 to 6 days' trip on lakes Erie, St. Clair, Huron, and Michigan as far as Sheboygan. These lakes, reputed for their clear water, have several shallow places on which ships occasionally are stranded. This happened to us, but we soon managed to work ahead. Because of too many passengers, our stay on this ship was well nigh unbearable. Had we taken our quilts out of our boxes, they might have served us a useful purpose. We were happy indeed, when, toward the close of the fourth day, we sent our foot on land once more. Now (June 5th) we were in Wisconsin, the goal of our itinerary—Here (in Sheboygan) Barnstein of Hoerstgen, Gatermann of Meyderich, Pannebecker, and we



parted company from the others, all of whom continued as far as Milwaukee. The price of each ticket from Buffalo to Sheboygan was 6 dollars. The increase was due to the large number of immigrants. For the excess weight of our baggage (2,000 lbs.) we had to pay 64 Thlr. Pr. Ct. from New York to here, whereas formerly any excess was scarcely taken into account. Moreover, here in Sheboygan there exists the greatest overcharging for pier toll. Thus, upon our arrival here we had to pay 7 Thlr. Pr. Ct. and later as we left for Manitowoc when provisions had been added out our baggage, 10 Thlr., hence all told 17 Thlr. Pr. Ct. for pier tolls. In Manitowoc, on the other hand, they charged only  $3\frac{1}{4}$  Thlr. Hence it would be advantageous for those who come later, whether they wish to buy congress land or 2-3 year old farms to land in Manitowoc. At present ships do not stop there. However, they have frequently been asked to do so, and it is to be hoped that the request will be heeded soon. In Sheboygan we can recommend Testevuide and Christmann as fair innkeepers. The regular price for meals and lodging is  $21\frac{1}{4}$  gr [about 55 cents] per day. No charge is made for the storage of goods. Children less than 12 years old are charged one-half. On the lakes the charge for these is also one-half. Sheboygan, at the mouth of a river with like name, is a small but pretty city. The river is about as wide as the Ruhr. Founded only three years ago, the city already has almost 3,000 inhabitants and has fine stores. The white frame houses are attractive but not durable.

While mother and the smaller children were quartered in Sheboygan, father, my grown up brothers and I, in company with Barnstein, Gatermann, and Pannebecker went into the primeval forests of Wisconsin. The immediate surrounding country made no very favorable impression upon us. The soil seemed sandy. This is also true of Sheboygan which is on a bluff. Nevertheless, we saw good garden fruits. Having tramped westward for two hours, we arrived at Falls, a small community on the Sheboygan river which was founded three years ago and now has about 50 houses. From here we went in a northerly direction toward Rapids (Manitowoc Rapids) in the vicinity of which Diedrichs of Elberfeld,<sup>4</sup> Philipsen of Baerl, and Weihe, who formerly lived with Paschen in Neukirchen, are said to reside. Along the road we were interested in the homes of the farmers, their work, their cattle, their grain, etc. At that time the grain did not stand well. Since the farms had been settled only 1-4 years, we saw less of wealth than in the neighborhood of Milwaukee, where the settlements are older.—Overtaken by the night, we, for the first time, had to take shelter in a



*This was the Charles Tisch home; built in 1867 . . . Family lived at Tisch Mills. Picture was taken in 1910.*

log cabin. The next day we met Philipsen [sic] in Rapids. He and a guide familiar with the woods accompanied us into the forest around Rapids where congress land is still to be had. However, we were not tempted to buy since the land sloped too much. Incidentally we learned that a tramp through the primeval forest without paths is no small matter. Although our guide had a compass, he got lost. Now we tramped up hill and down dale, through swamps and underbrush. At times we were confronted by fallen trees, partly destroyed by fire that seemed to make further passage impossible. As far as we have seen the forest, we found many species of beautiful oaks, 100 ft. in height and splendid pines more than 100 ft. high and 2 to 3 ft. in diameter. Most of the trees, however as might be expected, were not so large and even stunted, hence made no special impression upon us. As also was to be expected, many trees in a primeval forest have fallen. Some of them are still good, others look healthy but are rotted, occasionally they are charred. All of this affords a strange sight. After our stray wandering which, fortunately, did not last long, we went to the homes of Diedrich and Weihe with the expectation of purchasing in their neighborhood. This Gatermann of Meyderich did. However, after thinking the matter over, we concluded that a distance of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hrs. from the nearest place was too great. After wandering to and fro for eight days, we found a place on the Green Bay road which suited us better.<sup>5</sup> The man who claimed the land had cleared and fenced in two acres planted with maize, potatoes, oats, and beans. For this and the favorable location he demanded 40

dollars. Father and Barnstein came to an agreement with the man. The price of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  dollars per acre for congress land was paid at the land office. Of the 160 acres Barnstein took one-half, we the other. The land is favorably situated on the Green Bay road, one of the principal highways in Wisconsin, leading from Milwaukee through Washington, Hamburg, Sheboygan, Falls, Rapids, and Manitowoc to Green Bay. Daily people travel over this road on foot, on horseback, or by wagon; also, twice weekly a mail carrier on horseback passes by. Although the road is a highway, traffic is not as great as between Vluyn and Moers, neither is the road as good. However, at present in summer, the road from our home to Rapids may be called a fairly good country road. Besides we live only  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hr. from Rapids and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours from Manitowoc.—Rapids lies in the valley of the Manitowoc river (a river fully as wide as the Ruhr) and consists of about 30 houses. Manitowoc has about 50 houses and is located on both sides of the Manitowoc river on Lake Michigan. Already Manitowoc has fairly good stores, several good inns, and an English school; in addition a church is to be built in which service is to be conducted in the German as well as in the English language. At present the Germans living in this neighborhood come together every Sunday at Diedrichs where a sermon is read. In addition 2 physicians and 1 apothecary shop are available to those in need thereof. Both communities are located in a romantic valley. Moreover, the region between Milwaukee and Manitowoc may be called beautiful. The country between Milwaukee and Manitowoc is traversed by ridges between which are located beautiful



lakes, small and large. Numerous creeks rush down the slope and with their rapid current drive many sawmills. One of these is located  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour from here. Our friends, however, should not forget that the land described is not cultivated. Rather, it is land which has but awakened out of a sleep of thousands of years and reveals many, many traces of its primeval condition. Thus the many rural lakes are for the most part surrounded by dense forests. Decayed trees, partly consumed by fire lie crisscross in beautiful creeks.—However, no one should regard Wisconsin as a wilderness. The creative, regulating hand of man has accomplished the well nigh incredible within a decade and is continuously active. Roads lead in all directions through the forest to rapidly developing small cities. Postal connection is had with all places, even in the heart of the forest postal service may be had.—From the former owner of the farm we purchased 2 oxen with bell: the bell  $2\frac{1}{2}$  doll., the yoke 2 doll., 2 heavy chains 6 doll., a total of 60 dollars.

The logs for the house had been dragged together. While some of us erected the log house, others brought mother and the younger children, also the baggage, by steamer from Sheboygan to Manitowoc. The steamer makes weekly trips between Chicago, Milwaukee, Sheboygan, and Manitowoc. As already stated, we live but  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours from Manitowoc, hence could call for the baggage with our own oxen. Our next problem was to plant potatoes for our own use. This is no easy task. The earth between the stumps is freed from roots as far as practicable, the earth hilled, and the potatoes are inserted. Potatoes, also grain and vegetables are reported to do exceedingly well. Of vegetable seeds we have a fair number. Today we have had our first lettuce sown 4 weeks ago. As previously stated, we were not inclined at first to praise the fertility of the soil, and could not understand why Wisconsin should be praised for its fertility. Now, however, we are surprised at the rapid growth of all varieties. By late frosts the growth of the plants is retarded, indeed sometimes the plants are killed. Hence early planting is useless. Even if planted late, grain matures rapidly.

Our next most important want was the purchase of cows. For this purpose Gattermann, Barnstein, and my father went to Milwaukee where a cattle market is conducted almost daily. Barnstein bought 2, my father 4 cows, each at an average price of 18 doll. The cattle had to be driven a distance of thirty hours [90 miles] and the young of those cows which calved on the way had to be carted on a wheelbarrow. By the way the wheelbarrow cost 6 Thlr. Pr. Cour. An unpleasant loss we

suffered one night when a cow ran away because the innkeeper had no fence. However, we still hope that she may be returned. Similar instances are not uncommon here. Having returned home, the calves were kept in an enclosure. The cows were guarded until they had become used to the farm. Now, with a bell tied to their neck, they go each morning into the woods after they have been milked and have suckled the calves. Evenings they return well fed. However, they do not yield much milk. A cow that has recently come in yields 10 to 14 'Mass,'<sup>6</sup> a measure which we brought with us from Germany. However, they yield more butter. Buttermaking is accomplished in 4 to 5 minutes. We have just mentioned the fodder of the woods. This consists more of large leaves than of grass. However, the latter is everywhere to be found, more particularly in the lower places. These can be converted into good meadows after the trees have been removed so that the sun may warm the soil. Prairies and pastures, of which Bromme writes so much, we have not seen thus far—these lie farther southwest. Nevertheless, as stated, live stock is in the very best condition owing to the feed, an abundance of which it finds the woods. It eats everything green. To the calves we also carry leaves of trees.—Although so far we have had no trouble with run away cows (with the exception of the one that ran away on the trip) some people complain bitterly. So long as people do not enclose their land with a fence, cows run away frequently, some times 10, 20, and even 40 (Engl.) miles to the place where they have been bought, and at times are a complete loss. In Milwaukee we also bought a wagon at 45 doll. and several implements for the house: among other items, nice, solid tin milk cans (*Seidoepes*), everything at high prices. Tin dishes are used extensively here and are very strong and well made.—From one of our neighbors we bought  $\frac{1}{2}$  doz. hens also a rooster, each at 10 Sgr. We still want pigs, a dog and a cat, all of which may render good services.

The hauling together of tree trunks for a log house is done very well with oxen. It is surprising how these animals manage among and over logs. My brother James has undertaken to manage them. With the erection of the house the neighbors helped diligently. In this the Yankee is particularly skillful. The windows move in sliding frames (in America these are the only ones). They are  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. high and nearly 2 ft. wide. In America windows are articles of commerce and can be purchased ready made and glazed. Ours cost each, with glass, 1 Thlr. 10 Sgr. Pr. Cour.

To the first house or hut he have added a second: in all 48 feet long, 12

feet deep, and 12 feet high. It stands on a knoll. I have added a sketch thereof.

Here I shall record the prices in Prussian currency paid for implements for farm and house, also of other goods purchased in stores: 1 axe, 1 Thlr. 25 Sgr., 1 hoe 1 Thlr., teeth for the drag 3 Thlr. 20 Sgr., 1 cowbell 1 Thlr. 20 Sgr., 1 augur 20 Sgr., a light hoe 15 Sgr., a large saw to reduce trees (known as *Draumeisen* to you) 4 Thlr. 15 Sgr., 1 pail 11 Sgr., a tin pail 22 Sgr., 1 stove with pots etc but without stove pipe, 20 to 30 Thlr. (the stoves here are different from yours, ours has 4 openings and 1 oven for baking), 1 tin milk pan 5 Sgr., 1 tin pan for mixing bread 25 Sgr., (here one bakes bread daily), 1 pound smoked ham 2 Sgr. 8 Pf., 1 pound rice 2 Sgr. 6 Pf., 1 pound fairly good coffee 5 Sgr., 1 pound candles 5 Sgr., 1 pound dried apples 2 Sgr. 9 Pf.; the dried apples are imported from Buffalo where apples are cheap. Nursery stock, it is said, may be had in Milwaukee. 1 pound loaf sugar 5 Sgr., 1 pound maple sugar  $3\frac{1}{2}$  Sgr., 196 pounds of the best, bolted wheat flour 8 Thlr. Wheat bread only is eaten here. However, rye also grows here. It goes without saying that the price of potatoes, pork, and flour, also of other articles of food rises and falls. Inasmuch as so far we have bought all items from merchants, we cannot state at present what the farmer receives therefore. Since our house is ready, that is habitable, we are now clearing land for wheat. First of all the trees are cut down three feet above the ground, with exception of the largest which are girdled which causes them to die. The logs suitable for fencing are dragged away with oxen. Whatever is not suitable for fence rails is piled and burned.—Although the advantage in the use of the axe used here is great in comparison with the German tool, wielding it is no easy matter for the inexperienced.—The burning ended, toward the end of August the land is dragged without being first plowed. About this time the wheat is sown and the field dragged again.—According to the statements of experienced farmers, the acre is said to produce 24 to 32 'Scheffel' (not bushel).<sup>7</sup> I cannot guarantee the correctness of this statement, but on the trip to Milwaukee we saw the most luxuriant wheat fields.—The soil consists of heavy clay, the layer being 7 to 10 feet deep. Deeper we have not dug thus far. The soil is covered with a fertilizer, the product of vegetable decay. In addition the soil is fertilized with the ashes of the burned trees.—Inasmuch as our residence here has been brief, we are in a position to say but little about the climate. Thus far we have found it similar to that of Germany. That it is more changeable we have already experienced. That it most likely is healthy, is proven by the immigration from southern states.



Now something about the animals living here. As we arrived we observed flocks of pigeons of from 20 to 200. Inasmuch as they are migrating pigeons and leave the local woods soon, one sees less of them at present and can scarcely count any longer on a pigeon soup. Partridges, larger than those with you, may now be seen with their young in the woods. In fall and winter they will be the prey of the hunter. Some of us have seen deer in groups of from 6 to 8. These are best in winter and require a rifle. Of squirrels three varieties are to be seen. To go hunting in season may be pleasant but is not as profitable as activity in the field. Wisconsin forests still shelter wolves and bears, but they are scarce and not dangerous. Last winter the wife of our neighbor drove away a wolf with a stick. A few days ago a bear was seen at Diedrich's, very rare occurrence. He had an eye on a pig but with the appearance of humans disappeared among the trees. Inasmuch as the people had no rifle they could not shoot him. Of snakes we have seen but few so far, with a length of 2 to 3 feet. They are not poisonous. In the woods we have all kinds of pretty and colored birds, but their song is not especially attractive. Cattle here are both heavy and light, mostly of a

handsome breed. The oxen have frightfully large horns but are clumsy. Although horses are not very serviceable to the settler during the first few years, a fair number are already to be found here. They are both of a handsome and ugly shape. As must be apparent to you, we live in a fairly well settled region not far from two towns, Manitowoc and Rapids. As neighbors we have two Germans one at a distance of 4 the other at a distance of 15 minutes, also a Yankee at a distance of 5 minutes. Although Germans live to the right and left of us in the woods, the absence of a social life is our principal grievance, which one feels most keenly in the beginning.—

From these communications it will become apparent to any one who contemplates settling as farmer in Wisconsin whether emigration will be expedient in his case.—However, we warn heads of families with 3-4 small children not to come to Wisconsin with less than 400 Thaler Pr. Cour [equals \$300]. Even with this sum he can buy neither wagon nor oxen. That the estimate is not too high my friends may see from the following tabulation:

40 acres land a 1½ doll. ....	60 doll.
2 cows; (one when kept alone	
is apt to run away .....	40 doll.

1 stove and other implements	
for house and field. ....	30 doll.
For the rental of oxen to deliver	
baggage, articles of food, cultivation	
of the soil, etc. ....	35 doll.
2 pigs .....	10 doll.
Planks, window frames, and	
nails .....	20 doll.
	195 doll.

Within a radius of 2-3 hours of a city land at congress prices of 1¼ doll. is rarely to be had. The increase stated is too small rather than too high.

1 Doll. at 1 5/12 Thlr. Pr. Cour. are therefore 276 ¼ Thlr. Pr. Cour.

That not too much is left for provisions for an entire year for such a family every one can compute from the prices quoted. The voyage for our family of ten cost us 850 Thlr. Pr. Cour. before we were settled.

Whosoever can bring with him the 400 Thlr. mentioned above into this country, does not mind adversity, toil, and privation, also takes pleasure in farming, may risk the venture with God's aid. Free from care, indeed wholly free and independent, he will soon receive the reward of his labors though performed in the sweat of his brow. After 2-3 years his material existence may be regarded a happy one. Proof, a hundred and a



This is a picture that would be very typical of farm buildings and clearings about 25 years after the family had begun farming in Manitowoc County. Three of the buildings are log buildings, including the barn and the house. A small building in the right foreground may be a "smoke house", that is, a building where the family smokes meat such as ham, sausages, etc. The buildings on the left in the foreground might have been a granary, that is a building for the storage of grain, corn, small tools, etc.

Prominent in the picture is a stone fence. The stones were removed from the field where they would have been in the way of farm machinery, and were then used as fence to keep cattle and horses in pasture land. Most of the trees in the picture might have been shade trees. A few on the left might have been an orchard, perhaps apple and cherry trees. Note the livestock, two horses, six head of cattle, and five sheep.



thousandfold, is supplied by those who have emigrated before us. In our neighborhood there are still to be had several farms with 5-20 acres of cleared land. What single individuals may expect, who seek work as day laborers or artisans in America, we know little about. We have learned that Peter Tendick and others who have come over with us earn 10 doll. and board monthly.<sup>8</sup> A blacksmith from Schwafheim who came over with us earns 15 doll. per month without board.—If such single individuals are inclined to come to Wisconsin, they should land in Milwaukee, for there the farmers are not so recent, hence have more money and consequently a livelihood is more secure. As we passed through New York requests for workmen were numerous, also for servant girls who receive high wages in America.—Those who desire to find employment as clerks in stores should above all learn the English language. Efforts in this direction will be rewarded 100 p Ct. A former German school teacher told me that as clerk he earned 120 doll., of which sum 100 doll. was deducted for board, during the first year when he was ignorant of the English language. However, during the second and third years he earned 300 doll. Such a person however, must not expect to find employment at all times.

Now a word about the mode of living of the Yankees as the born Americans of English descent are known. After a breakfast consisting of potatoes, pork, wheat bread, fried eggs, cake and other pastry, coffee or tea with sugar, the Yankee begins his day's work at 6 o'clock. At 12 o'clock he has his dinner which is similar to his breakfast. Afternoons, from 1 to 6 o'clock he again works, after which he has his supper which is similar to the two other meals. Of vegetables the Yankee eats but little. In the early days their houses, also those of the settlements, are extremely simple but clean. The windows are decorated with white or colored curtains as are those of the two story board houses, painted white, of the older farmers. The walls of the latter houses are papered, floors and stairways are covered with carpet. As a matter of fact the interior is elegant. Whereas some of the Yankees are clad miserably but not without bosom shirt, most of them appear well dressed when on horseback or on the wagon. The women appear stylishly dressed, sometimes on horseback, more commonly seated next to their husbands on the wagon seat. Silk dresses, hats with silk veils, silk parasols and umbrellas are nothing scarce. This sex receives great attention here and little work is expected therefrom.— In this connection it may be well to suggest that a young man who contemplates

emigration in order to settle down here, pay his addresses to a girl, for here the choice is meagre. Moreover, German girls are more willing to work and do not smoke, whereas some American women do.

Now a word about the Indians. These have been described so often that I might omit writing about them. I may state, however, that the first time an immigrant meets them in the woods they make an unfavorable impression. For the most part they are armed with rifle and bow, live exclusively from hunting and fishing, and roam from one place to another. They are said to be particularly skilled in shooting. Wherever they go they erect their tents and lead a lazy life. It is only by seeing them repeatedly that one gets used to them. We are by this time, since groups of from 10-30 frequently pass by, mostly all on horseback. Occasionally, they ask for a drink of water or a pipe of tobacco. One need not fear them. No longer have they any claim to the land. The slightest excess on their part would cause them to be driven away. Their number is not great. Since, as already stated, the Indians make their living off fishing and hunting, they smell of blood. Inasmuch as the oxen are shy of the Indians, this is, without doubt, the cause. Knowing this, the Indians give the oxen the right of way.

The 4th of July is the festive day commemorating the declaration of Independence.

Finally, a few remarks for those who have decided to migrate. Those who expect to board themselves on ship should provide themselves with dried fruits, dried beef, ham, 'Rollfleisch' (beef prepared like sausage, cooked and pickled in vinegar). In addition they should provide themselves with 'Zwieback' (so-called dried wheat bread), with fresh cabbage and 'Sauerkraut', vinegar, herring, also a few apples. Other provisions are prescribed by the agents.—Let no one forget a cathartic lest he rue it.—For use on the ship the emigrant should provide himself with wooden shoes. On occasions the deck is very wet. As a result we have suffered from cold feet. However, the wooden shoes should be provided with leather soles, otherwise the wearer would slip constantly.

If possible, the emigrant should start about the middle of March or early April. In case he wants to buy congress land, an arrival later than ours would prove detrimental. As is well known, he should endeavor to convert his cash into 10 'Gulden' or 20 franc coins, for these enable him to avoid heavier loss. The feather beds which we took along are rendering good service and are obtainable here only with difficulty. He should also bring flatirons, coffee mill, cord and ropes, smaller carpenter tools, etc. Neither should he forget a spade or shovel, also a three-pronged

fork. We have found the corresponding American tools impractical. Woolen goods are very expensive here. Cheap cotton goods are poor as well. Those that are good are expensive. At least such has been our experience in several stores in Sheboygan and Manitowoc. We know nothing about the prices of corresponding goods in Milwaukee. One sees but little linen here. Its place is taken by cotton. Porcelain and glassware are expensive. At least the breakable goods the emigrant should pack in casks. If properly packed they will not suffer. Boxes should not weigh more than 200 pounds. Those who intend to purchase congress land should not go to Milwaukee, for such is only to be had 30 hours to the north of that city. At present several have purchased to the north of Rapids (we live to the south thereof) where among others Dahlen of Hoerstgen lives. Our region is favorably situated because of its proximity to Lake Michigan. Whereas the farmer who lives 20 to 25 hours in the interior from Milwaukee loses half of the value of his products in their transportation, settlers here can readily take their products to Manitowoc. A Prussian quart of milk costs 2 Sgr., 1 egg 5 Pf., 1 pound of butter 7 Sgr. Near Milwaukee, where there are more cows and chickens, these articles no longer command so high a price. There a pound of butter costs only 5 Sgr.—As you observe, the price of products when compared with the price of land is much higher here than in Germany, even if you add thereto the cost of clearing which amounts to 15-16 Thlr. Pr. Crt.

We have not over-praised the conditions in Wisconsin. We have told the naked truth and have depicted the shadows as well as the sunshine.

<sup>1</sup>See No. 2 of the Ausw. am Niederrh [Der Auswanderer am Niederrhein].

<sup>2</sup>The same complaint is made by Mr. Kloten who traveled on the same ship, the 'Argonaute'. Likewise, he was very much dissatisfied with the unfriendly attitude of the captain.

<sup>3</sup>Since prices occur throughout the letter, the following explanatory note will aid the reader: \$1.00 equals 1 5/12 Thaler Pr. [i.e. Preussisch] Courant; a Groschen (Gr. or Sgr. for Silber-groschen) equals 1/30 Thaler or 1/10 Mark; \$1.00 equals 1 Thaler 10 Silber groschen; a Pfennig equals 1/10 Silber-groschen; 10 Silber-groschen equal 1 mark; a Gulden (Florin) is usually equal to 2/3 of a Thaler (1852).— EDITOR.

<sup>4</sup>See Diederich's diary, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, vii, 218-237, 350-368.— EDITOR.

<sup>5</sup>For a detailed study of Newton township, in which the Kremers bought their farm, see Joseph Schafer, *Wisconsin Domesday Book, Town Studies* i, 84-89.

<sup>6</sup>Mass' equals 1-2 liter.

<sup>7</sup>Prussian 'Scheffel' before 1872 equalled 54.96 liter.

<sup>8</sup>According to letters received from Peter Tendick this is correct. [Remark by the publisher.]



# Housebarn Destined for National Registry of Places

by Michael J. Sibilsky

*Our special thanks is extended to Mr. Sibilsky and the Country Chronicle, May 2, 1984, for granting permission to reprint this article.*

A rare, nearly 130-year-old housebarn, flanked by lilacs and incorporating traditional German "fachwerk" on Edith Lutze property in the Manitowoc County town of Centerville, is destined for the National Register of Historic Places if University of Wisconsin-Madison landscape architect William Tishler has his way.

And Tishler, who concentrates on "vernacular" buildings, said he would like to see the large, two-story plus attic rectangular structure, which is "significant as one of the best surviving examples of an ancient form of shelter for both people and beasts," qualify for an Historic Preservation Tax Incentive through restoration.

The Lutze Housebarn, still in "remarkably good condition" for its years, needs to be preserved — along with other picturesque, historical buildings — for a number of reasons, Tishler said.

"People have emotional and psychological ties with their cultural past, and preservation is important for tourism.

"People not only come to Wisconsin for our recreation areas, but also for the graceful fields, sliced with fences and interspersed with barns, sheds and silos they can see along country roads.

"The Lutze Housebarn serves as an unusual time capsule of how immigrants from Wisconsin's largest ethnic group lived and coped with the demands of early pioneer life.

"Rarely built in America, the structure, off 13634 S. Union Road, is of a type that has nearly disappeared from the landscape. It's a national treasure, and it would be a tragedy not to preserve it. There are only a dozen or so of its kind still standing in the nation," Tishler said. "And only three are known to be of fachwerk construction."

Tishler said that in fachwerk (half-timber) construction, such as that employed in the Lutze Housebarn, settlers from Saxony fastened hewn timbers into a framework and packed

the spaces with mud and bricks to make a solid wall. Timbers were mortised, tenoned and pegged together with oak pins.

The housebarn idea (house on one end and barn on the other) dates to Neolithic times and actually is "a very efficient housing technique," Tishler said. Humans protected the animals from theft and exposure, and animals gave the humans warmth.

The housebarn is like those which were commonly constructed in northeast Germany, because wood was in short supply. And the lilacs, found around many old rural buildings in Wisconsin, were common early plants because they were hardy, Tishler said.

The Lutze farmstead also includes a yellow brick farmhouse (built in 1896), a gable roof wood frame barn and a garage among several trees.

The nearly 28-by-92 foot housebarn, built in two sections, has large diagonal braces to provide lateral stability, and has wood clapboards and sawn wood shingles — the latter subsequently covered with sheet metal roofing.



**TEST OF TIME** — With some exceptions, the Lutze Housebarn, in southern Manitowoc County, has weathered its more than 130 years of existence "remarkably well," according to University-Madison landscape architect William Tishler.



The first floor contains a large stable area for cattle (on the west end), while the east half was built for human occupation. There is an entry space with stairways leading to both the second floor and food storage cellar, a living room, dining area and yellow brickfloored kitchen.

On the second floor are four bedrooms, a living room, grain storage area and shelter for poultry and small stock. Unfinished attic space was also used for storage, and affords a view of a large, sundried clay brick chimney.

Hewn wood members are marked with Roman numerals or another numbering system incorporating small, triangular carpenter marks chiseled into the wood for correct final assembly at the building site.

In the cellar, several hand-forged metal hooks protrude from the walls, on which meat and other food items were hung.

Tishler noted that a nearly all of the original woodwork and hardware remains and the early grained finish painted on the door and window frames is clearly evident, as is the unusual blue pattern sponged on the plaster walls of several bedrooms.

The structure, Tishler wrote in his nomination to the National Historic

Register of Historic Places Inventory, contains scores of furniture items, tools, implements and other artifacts — many of which were handcrafted.

While common in many parts of Europe, the housebarn never developed as an accepted form of shelter among many European immigrants.

But the structure was especially suitable in areas with a harsh winter climate.

Early examples allowed man and livestock to intermingle freely in a long, continuous sheltered space with common entrance.

As housebarns evolved, a stove was located in the living space for heating and cooking.

Versions of the housebarn still prevail in Europe. But in America, because of the ready availability of land, changing agricultural practices and modernized attitudes toward hygiene, housebarns were generally not built.

"The Lutze Housebarn" represents a rare and unusual American combination of agricultural and architectural traditions that have direct origins, and important relationships, to ancient farming practices in Europe," Tishler said.

While there are half-timber barns,

houses, granaries and other outbuildings constructed by German settlers in Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Dodge and Ozaukee Counties, the Lutze Housebarn "retains its basic structural and functional integrity — though obsolete for many years," Tishler said.

Tishler noted that on July 14, 1849, John Gottlieb Lutze and his wife, Frederica, purchased 80 acres in Section 19 of Centerville Township. According to family lore, they initially built a crude log shelter. The housebarn was believed erected about 1850.

The 1850 federal census indicates Gottlieb was 40 years old, his wife was 32 and they had four children. Their real estate was valued at \$320.

"In 1874, Gottlieb sold the farm to his son, August, who retained ownership for 34 years. It was August, who built the yellow brick house nearby in 1896.

"With the family no longer occupying the housebarn, the living quarters have been used during ensuing years for storage and various maintenance activities," Tishler said.

The Lutze farm is now in its sixth generation of family ownership.

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