

These letters were written by my great grandfather, in German script, to his family in Germany. They were later brought back to Indiana and donated to the Columbus, Indiana Historical Society by a relative, George Varwald. A retired Lutheran minister translated them into English, and they were sent to my sister Agnes Zuroeveste by our second cousin, Norman Stienhaus, who lives in Columbus.

Norman contacted the Historical Society after he had seen an article, in the Columbus newspaper asking that any descendants of Johann Hienrich Zuroeveste contact them. Out of this call came a meeting with Mr. Renee Henry, Curator of the Bartholomew County Historical Society. She told of plans that were made for a benefit dinner, and that a professional actor had been contacted to play the part of J. H. Zuroeveste as depicted in the letters he had written. The many descendants of German immigrants living in the Columbus area made the resultant affair a great success.

Later, a German man, who is a representative for a German company that manufactures farm implements, returned to Reiste, Germany and found there are still Zuroevestes living there. He found two branches of the family, one still Catholic. The ancestors of J. H. Zuroeveste branch are Lutherans. The house that these letters were sent to is still standing, but it is no longer occupied. The family now lives in a more modern house that stands behind the original house, but the letters do not mention this. The man says that years ago the family was caretaker of land that was held by a Catholic monastery, which still stands adjacent to the land. Some mention is made in the letters of when the family was able to buy the land.

My father told me that the spelling of the name Zuroeveste originated in this country. Originally it was derived from the position this family had. They were caretakers of a sizable amount of land held by a German ruler - which one is unknown - in Saxony. The land spread from Kessen (a village east of Dresden) all the way to the Oeveste river, which is now part of Poland, hence the name Von Kessen Zur Oeveste, which translates, From Kessen to Oeveste.

My brother Alfred remembered that as a young child a member of the Zuroeveste family would come from Germany with a dole for the American branch of the family. The eldest son in the family inherited the land, but he had to share the income with other members. Alfred said my grandmother, Maria Caroline Zuroeveste's (who married John Henry Seulter) portion of that money was used to purchase the four Suelter farms in Lincoln county, Kansas. The original cost of our land, seven miles south-east of Lincoln, Kansas was \$1200.00. After my father died, the land was sold to a cousin, Lewis Suelter, for \$22000.00, in 1949.

If you care to learn more about the attention given to our immigrant ancestor, Johann Hienrich Zuroeveste, you may write to:

Mr. Norman Stienhaus
3402 N. Talley Rd.
Columbus, Indiana 47203

Regards,

16 October 1986
216 Vivian Dr.
Fayetteville, N.C. 28301

Melinda Suelter Hunt

THE REPUBLIC, COLUMBUS, IND.
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1984

Society to Host German Dinner, Program

To celebrate the opening of the Bartholomew County Historical Society's next exhibit, "Our German Heritage," a special quarterly dinner-meeting will be held at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 819 Fifth, at 7 p.m. next Monday.

Ticket holders will have an opportunity to preview the German exhibit before moving to the church for a German dinner, prepared from recipes from Margaret Cyliax of Columbus.

The after-dinner program will explore the immigration of Germans to Bartholomew County through the years. Local actor Don Smith will portray Johann Heinrich Zuroveste, the author of 21 letters about his life in America from 1834 to 1872.

Rolf Cyliax, who immigrated here eight years ago with his family, will share his views and experiences on immigration, making comparisons to the Zuroveste letters.

Reservations for tickets should be made in advance by calling the museum at 372-3541, and a check for \$6.50 per person should be mailed by Wednesday to the Bartholomew County Historical Museum, 524 Third, Columbus, Ind. 47201. Tickets are to be picked up at the exhibit at the museum between 6 and 7 p.m. next Monday before the dinner-meeting.

The dinner-meeting is open to the public. Attendance is limited to 100.



GERMAN HERITAGE — Local actor Don Smith, 301 Sunset, portrays German immigrant Johann Heinrich Zuroveste, who lived in Bartholomew County in the 1800s. Smith told the story of Zuroveste's life to 100 people at Bartholomew County Historical Society's dinner meeting held in conjunction with the opening of the exhibit, "Our German Heritage," Monday night. The exhibit will be on display at the museum through July 1 and was made possible through a matching grant from the Indiana Commission for the Humanities in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Museum Continues Oral History Projects

By RENEE HENRY

For the Bartholomew County Historical Museum

The Bartholomew County Historical Society has collected the memories and stories of 13 older Bartholomew County residents since renewing its emphasis on the oral history project last August.

Six new volunteers have been trained to record the oral histories on cassette tapes and file them at the Bartholomew County Historical Museum.

This type of research can be considered to be both one of the oldest and one of the newest methods of interviewing. Recording memories can be traced to ancient Greek historians over 2,500 years ago. They depended on eyewitness accounts of events to formulate their texts. The Bible is one of the best known collections of oral history.

This interviewing method was made more feasible with the invention of the portable tape recorder. The first tapes were made in the late 1930s, but historians have accepted it as a research source only in the past 20 years.

At this time, the Historical Society is specifically interested in recording descendants of German immigrants in Bartholomew County.

A gift and matching grant from the Indiana Committee for the Humanities in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities has been awarded to the Historical Society in support of the exhibit, "Our German Heritage," and its associated programming. The exhibit will open at the museum Feb. 13.

Because of the grant, the society has been able to hire as oral history coordinator Mohammed Ansari, a graduate student in the folklore department at Indiana University and instructor for the local IUPUI folklore class.

Ansari will lead the society's volunteers in collecting 50 interviews on "Our German Heritage" during the next nine weeks. The information they gather will be used in the exhibit and preserved for the future.

Anyone wishing to volunteer as an interviewer or with suggestions of people to interview may call the museum at 372-3541.

FOR ZUROEVESTE
FAMILY MEMBER.

Baltimore, May 19, 1834

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:

On May 18 I finally arrived in Baltimore hale and hearty. Now I have an opportunity to tell you of my present circumstances. Our Sea voyage did not turn out as well as one had originally imagined. On March 12 we left Bremen and on the 13th we came to the big ship and traveled the following night for several hours from the harbor of Bremen and returned because of wind and waves and remained at anchor for two days and traveled again on the 14th in the morning and only on the 21st we came to the channel between England and France. On the 23rd we had a strong west-wind so that most of the passengers became sea-sick. We saw many mountains and moor land in England but only a few mountains in France. On the 27th we left England and came to the Spanish Sea. During the Easter days and during the week after Easter we had good east-wind and we made good headway. The ship usually ran 8 German miles in 4 hours. On April 5 the daughter of Frederick Kroeger died at the age of 17 weeks and was committed to the sea with a stone the following night. On April 14 we had a storm from the Southwest for 24 hours. On the 16th the storm became even worse and it came from the northwest. The waves met the ship like mountains and hit the ship with great force. The water came through the ? so forcefully so that most of the beds were soaked with water. On the 25th and 26th we had a great storm from the west; on the 27th a storm from the South with rain; on the 28th a storm from the west. The month of April finally stormed away. And even though, according to the assurances of the captain and all the sailors there was no life-threatening danger in the open sea because of the strength of this well-built ship, yet for one who has never experienced it, a storm at sea is a very frightening and very uncomfortable experience, when one can hardly either stand or walk, nor sit nor lie down. The boxes (trunks?) which had not been fastened very carefully fell one over another. A person could hardly eat or drink. The month of May began well enough, but on the 7th we had a storm from the Southwest. During the night of the 8th to the 9th the wife of H. Zman of Lohausen gave birth to a healthy son. The wind continued mostly from the west. On May 12 we received a ? for the first time. For so long a time we had seen nothing but water, various kinds of fish and sea birds, and now and then we also saw ships. Several of these passed near us and some were seen from a distance. On the morning of May 13 we first saw the woods of America and we were 45 German miles from Baltimore. But on account of contrary winds we had to lie at anchor on

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15th and 16th, and came to Baltimore only on the 17th. On that same day a doctor and several men came to examine the ship. But because of the Pentecost Festival we still could not leave the ship. However the captain gave permission to whoever wished to do so to go ashore. So, together with several good friends I went to Baltimore on the first Pentecost day and looked at the city with great surprise. What struck me especially were the many black negroes. We then went to the German Lutheran Church. In the church things went on just as in Germany. We understood the preacher very well. That evening two sailors took us aboard the ship again. On the second Pentecost day the ship finally docked and a great number of onlookers came. Among them were also many Germans. The first acquaintances I met was Ludwig and Twiegels Menke, both from Foerden. Later I met Friedrich Hussman, Gertrude Grewe(?) from Stoeddeig(?). There are many Germans here. The city is said to have 100,000 residents. Among them there are 40,000 negroes. We met plenty people who wished to give us lodging. We are now in a German house. Several who arrived here with us will remain here to work, for work is available here. But Ernest Tiefekamp, H. Hoepker and I have already decided to go to Cincinnati and then to Dayton to look for Hoepker's brother. We have already arranged with a carriage driver which will cost about \$2.00. The good Lord has been with us till now in this strange land and during all the time I have been away from you I have not lost a finger, and I and my comrades have not been seasick. Some were bedfast all the time. The ? fever was raging the entire time on the ship. And now I hope that you will receive my letter in good health. My thoughts of home are gradually disappearing and I hope that you will not be too concerned because of my absence. I have a desire to see more of this world. And I hope that at another time when I have arrived at my destination to gladden you more through my letters. Now greet all my friends, relatives, and acquaintances. From your obedient son

Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

Dear father and Mother, brothers and sisters:

I am making known to you that I have come here hale and hearty. I have been quite well satisfied here. I have not been seasick. Most lay in bed. I greet you many thousand times. Greet all friends, relatives and acquaintances. Greet your mother from your brother and sister. They have suffered seasickness for 14 days during the great storm. Later they all became well again. I greet all friends and relatives and acquaintances and all who ask about me. With this I will close.
I remain your obedient son,

Herman Heinrich Hoepker

Ohio Sept. 30, 1834

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:-

Almost seven months have passed since I took leave of you. I am sure you are very concerned to know something of my present circumstances. I hope that you have received my letter from Baltimore. Now I consider it my duty to tell you of my present whereabouts. As far as I am concerned, I am still in good health and I hope that you will receive my letter in good health.

We traveled on Tuesday after Pentecost from Baltimore with a company of 15 men and gave our baggage into the hands of a driver to Wilmington. We did not like this journey very much. There are many mountains and dips which, at some places are very dangerous. We came to one of the highest mountains and saw that the clouds could not go over them. We came higher into the mountains and a thick fog enveloped us so that one could not think otherwise than that we were traveling through the clouds. We spent 15 days on this trip. As soon as we came to Wilmington we saw to it that our baggage was put on board a steam-boat, and then traveled for 48 hours on the Ohio River to Cincinnati. Here we met many Germans of our own countrymen. We met Barnhardt Biegt(?). He was quite well satisfied and had a good job. But I heard that he had not yet written home. He said that he would write at the first opportunity and I believe surely that you have received a letter from him long ago. We stayed for 3 days in Cincinnati and traveled up the canal 45 English miles. We left our baggage, except for some clothing and several shirts at Wilbrand Struwe's in Cincinnati. We visited Rudolph Hoepker and met him in good health at the place from which he had written the previous winter. He would gladly have kept us, but because at this time not much is done with regard to the ?(Brewery?) we could not stay there. But the boss agreed to let his brother work there. We heard that we could get work at Dayton on the canal. I and Ernst Tiefekamp went to Dayton and agreed to work on the canal 4 English miles above Dayton for \$12 per month. The dollar here is 100 cents. And according to our money surely worth 99 "groshen". We did not like it at the canal because of the food and sleeping. After 3 days we again went to Dayton and hired out with a farmer for \$9.00 per month plus food and washing. Here we liked it much better. 14 days later we came to Rudolph Hoepker in Dayton. He had the task of hiring a servant. He offered it to me and because I realized that we would probably not be able to stay with the farmer during the coming winter, I separated myself from the farmer. The next morning the farmer gave me what I had earned. So I left and went to the distillery to work. At first I did not work in the distillery, but rather did all kinds of work

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outdoors. But now I work in the distillery. My job is to scoop beer, and it begins at 12 o'clock noon till 12 midnight. Then another man comes and releives me. I like this work quite well. I earn \$10 per month and good food. But I have to do my own washing. There are now 12' men working here. Among these are 7 Germans and 5 Americans. This distillery is very ingeniousl arranged and lies below a hill. The beverage which is produced here every day is surely worth more than \$80.00. It is called whiskey and is made mostly of coen, which you call turkish wheat. The whiskey is "driven off" with fire and the water is made to boil. I will write more about this country as much as I can. But it is not possible for me to write you about everything. This is a free country and in some ways I like this freedom, but what I do not like is that this state is just now being developed and the oldest citizen in this State had their beginning only 30 or 40 years ago. The people who live here are mostly Americans who have moved from Pennsylvania and other States. The Pennsylvanian\$, for the most part, speak good German. Earlier this State was populated by wild Indians. Things look much different from the way it was in Germany. And the timber here is in great abundance. One can the best logs lying one over another so that they rot. One can see here many kinds of timber in the woods. The soil here is heavy and strong. Corn is raised here abundantly and grows here especially well. The other crops I have not seen to any extent. As with you in Germany the raising of cattle is here very profitable. Here they have especially good horses and all kinds of other animals, as with you in Germany. The main language here is English. I cannot write much about religions here, because it is very different. Many of the people here live entirely without religion. They are not baptized and do not attend Holy Communion. Others accept a religion when they come of age, the one this the other that (kind of religion). Churches and schools are established here and there, but few parents send their children to them for no one here is forced to do so. Everyone can have his own religion. We do not go often, but every 14 days we go to Mehemesburg where German Lutheran Services are held. There good German preachers have, but they have poor insight. Each one gives what he wishes because this is a free country. One counts as much as another. And no one prostelitizes(?) against another. Here in this area the land has been bought for the most part and people live on it. Those areas where the land is now being sold are called "Bremøn Wabkountti" (?) and "Stalloten" which gets its name from the bookbinder of Damme. An acre is sold for \$1.25. There are only trees. Till now I have no desire to chop a home for me in the woods. I still cannot forget Germany and will not advise anyone follow me. Everyone must

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decide for himself. There is much more money to be earned here, but the expenses are also much higher, because everything is expensive here. But if one is healthy he can save more. - I cannot write more at this this of special interest. But I plead for a quick answer. I expect today to stay here during the coming winter. Write and tell me whether my brother Frederick is at home again and how things stand in my dear family. Greet all my friends, neighbors and relatives.

From your obedient Son,
Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

Addressed to :

*Col Kessen Zur Oeveste in
Rieste _____ Braunschweig _____
Vörden _____ Hannover*

Cincinnati April 2, 1836

Dear parents, brothers and sisters: -

To my great joy I have received your letter of August 10 in the best of health from the bearer. I note from it that you are well and content, which is a great joy for me. I would have written to you long ago if I had not been on a journey during the last winter. But shortly before my leaving I wrote a short letter and sent it along with Arndt Muller's letter in which I indicated my health and whereabouts. You must not think that I am no longer concerned about you, my dear parents. That is not the case. I will not forget Germany and my dear relatives. You are always in my heart and it my greatest joy when I hear from you. I must tell you that I was on a trip for three months. On March 30 I arrived here in good health. We traveled on the Ohio River to the Mississippi, 1200 English miles southward from here and worked at Vicksburg on the railroad where in the future steam-wagons will travel. We earned \$20.00 plus food. But the food and sleeping arrangements were not as one would wish. Here in this region cotton grows very well. It is planted every year and grows on bushes which look almost like potatoes. Each farmer here has his negroes as slaves. Every day many negroes came here to the city which were publicly sold on the market. There are here more black than white people. But the negroes are all slaves and are sold from one hand to the other. In this area there still many wild Indians. They live by hunting and some go about almost naked and had only a cover hanging around them; and a big knife on their side. Their faces are brown, but not as ugly as the negroes. This area is too warm for white people in the summer. Most of them again leave during the summer. The winter here was not severe. Several mornings one could see a little ice. Half of March was already warm, - like you have it in the middle of summer. The woods were already in full bloom. The land was uneven. Cotton is the main crop of the people. Only in a few places did one see potatoes and corn. Most of the houses stand on pillars 4 feet above the ground because of dampness and unhealthfulness. Most of this region is covered with woods and timber is here in great abundance. I cannot write more of that region. But I must say that the evil-doer was severely punished here. Whoever transgresses the laws of the State, as in gambling for money, and one who hits another so that the blood ran, was immediately hanged without a trial. They had erected the Scaffold near the cemetery. Anyhow, I like the northern area in the State of Ohio better than the Southern area. As I now hear, the winter was rather severe. I think I will stay here this summer. There is plenty of work here, if only one is healthy and wants to work. There are many Germans here in the city. Here is the opportunity to go to church on Sunday, which is not the

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the case at many places in this country. The city of Cincinnati has all kinds of factories where many people work. The wages here are not as good as in the Southern area, but the expenses are also not as heavy. I cannot tell you much about the two Hoepkers, except that, when I left here last fall, they were still at the same place. The enclosed letter from their father, in my letter sent at that time, they sent to me then that it should come into fulfillment this spring. I would certainly have answered the letter of August 30 immediately, if we had not sent letters to Germany just before that. I cannot tell you much today about Ernest Tiefekamp(?), except that he traveled to New Orleans last fall. Bernhardt Biegt went to Louisville late last year. However, a few days ago I heard that he is working on a Steamboat. There are many Germans here and they are good companions. But here it is not as with you that people remain permanently in one place, the Americans as well as the Germans move away. Many property owners who have already lived here for some years has sold out and moves far away to a totally different area. The one reaches out in this direction and the other in another direction, - to try a piece of land. But there is timber and it costs much labor to begin anew. Most of the Germans who buy land and have little money left, must work on the canal or wherever they can find work, and can work on their own land only now and then. But if one has come to the point where he can make a living from his land, will live here better than in Germany, for the land here is richer and manure is not needed. Expenses are small here for a farmer. Be that as it may, whoever has a place in your land where he can make a living and thinks of selling it to come to America in order to improve his living, he is mistaken as far as I can see. He makes for himself much trouble in his life. For everyone can imagine that whoever moves into a wilderness, sometimes near strange people, can have no pleasure, like one who stays on his property where he was born and raised. So far I have no desire to buy land, because I am still alone. Often the thought comes to me to come back to you in Germany because you and my dear family are in my heart. But if it should be the case that the prospects in Germany will not improve, but instead even become worse, and my brother or someone else in the relationship had the desire to follow me, then I will not advise against it. For if one brings money along with him to this country, he can make more with it here than with you. So it would be a great joy for me if I would have my brother or some other near relative with me. But I will let everyone have his own free will about this. Here you hear one say that he would want to live in Germany again. Another will say, I am going back to Germany as soon as I have earned some money. Most people here must work

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harder than you. But the women and girls have it better here and do only housework. I have been, praise God, well till now and I have earned considerable money. But expenses are heavy here also. There is not as much left over as some of you may be thinking. If one sick or something else happens, then the money is soon used up. I don't have anything special to write to you at this time. I will write more about other matters at another time. With my whole heart I hope that that my letter reaches you in the best of health and I beg for a quick reply. Now greet all my friends, relatives, and acquaintances. From your obedient Son,

J. Heinrich Zur Oeveste

When you write again use this address:

H. W. Struve (?)

in Cincinnati ? over the Canal.

Address stamped over too many times to be legible.

Cincinnati May 7, 1837

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:-

Since I now have the best opportunity, I will write you a letter and tell you about my present circumstances. I have always been in good health this spring and also last winter, and my wish is that you may receive my letter in the best of health. Your last letter I received exactly on New Year's Day from the bearer, J. H. Gortemuller. That was really a very happy New Year's gift; since I learned from it that you are all well and in good circumstances. I would have answered this letter immediately, if I had not just shortly before sent a letter to you. Further, I must let you know that 8 days ago I met two of my young friends, namely Dietrich Pardieck and F. Eckelman. We have enjoyed much pleasure and we are together every day in a hotel at H.W. Struwe. I still have the work which I have had for some time in the foundry where the iron is pounded. I earn \$1.00 daily and must pay \$1.75 each week for food. Not much is left over from these earnings as may think, because one must spend much money for clothing and shoes and washing and all kinds of things. But if one is well and always works he will make more in one year than in five years in Germany, working as a servant. Moreover, we heard today that for a beginning worker it will not be better but rather worse. Several factories here have already stopped. One also hears that in the coastal cities like New Orleans and New York important merchants have been bankrupted. Special news I cannot tell you now in this letter, except that on May 1 there was a large balloon in which one man went up and away with it. He had made a seat for himself below with ropes so that everyone could see him. He remained up in the air for awhile and came down again 10 English miles from here. There are here men of all kinds of crafts and sciences of which I cannot write to you. Many Germans from all parts of Germany now live in this city. Most of these came in the last 5 years and a third of the citizens here are now certain Germans. Those who control the big businesses are Americans and Englishmen from whom the Germans must earn their living. English is the main language here, which is rather difficult for the Germans at first, but one learns it in the course of time. At first you understand little or nothing and I also thought that I would never learn it, but now I can get along fairly well. When one has learned to know the language to some extent, he can help himself ever better in all matters. I like it here now much better than at first. There are many acquaintances and countrymen here and every day more are coming. Ernest Tiefekamp is now in New Orleans as I heard from Pardieck and Eckelman. So he will probably fulfill his

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proposed journey to Germany this year. The two Hoepkers are now, as I have heard some time ago, still where they have always been. Herman was married late last year. Other than this I cannot write about this. Of Barnhardt Biegt I have heard nothing since the time he moved away from here. One comes here today and tomorrow he goes away again. There are Germans in all parts of America and more are always coming.

Dear parents, in the last letter I sent to you I remarked that soon I would ask my money from you. I hope that you will not take it amiss, for I intend to remain here. I see that I can make a living better here than with you. I have a desire to start something for myself as soon as possible, rather than always to work for someone else. I have already bought some land but it costs much to begin there. When, however, one has come to the point where he can make a living on it, he can live here better than in Germany. Here one does not have any special expenses. If you could continue with this, do it as carefully as you can. Dietrich Pardieck is also asking for his own. Consider this thoroughly with one another. The safest is probably by a check, or if a trusted friend or my brother should once get the desire to follow me here. I made an agreement with Dietrich Pahlman for \$50.00 according to your money. He has urgently asked me to support his mother I hope that you will be so good to pay \$50.00 to the widow Pahlmann according to your money. But I ask that you mention this in your next letter, or to enclose a receipt showing that you have paid her. I beg for a reply as soon as possible and to explain everything in detail.

Parents, brothers and sisters, friends, relatives and acquaintances, greetings to all of you. From your obedient son,

Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste
in Cincinnati

Addressed:

An
Gen. H. Kessens Zur
Oeveste in Cincinnati

Cincinnati Oct.31, 1839

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:-

You will forgive me that I have not answered your letter of February 24. I received it on June 15 in good health. I note from it to my great joy that you are in good health also. I would have answered your letter long ago. This past summer I did not remain here but stayed in the State of Indiana and therefore had no opportunity to write to you. I bought 120 acres of good land there and am thinking of going again sometime for 2 or 3 weeks and to work there next winter, D. Pardieck and several Germans have also bought property there. Franz Schumaker bought the piece next to mine. I have heard that the Hoepker family has moved into the country and Henry is said to have married Herman's widowed wife. I also heard that E. Kiesakamp has been here and according to him has journeyed to Germany. As I have heard, this summer, no German from our vicinity and whom we know, have come here. The past summer has been very hot and dry. The summer crops have generally been poor because of the heat. There was very little rain here during the last summer. The Ohio River is too low for shipping and that causes bad times here. Also the banks have closed. State workers are not being paid promptly. Most of the work on the canal is now idle. The States have too many debts and this causes bad times for the workers. I expect to work on my own land in the near future, and if the good Lord grants me health, I hope to make my living there. But it costs very much to start anew. But I think this is best for me and I believe I am far enough along to work for myself instead of working for daily wages. I have already tried many things here and have experienced much. I have met good and bad people since the time I took leave from you. Thank God, I have come so far that it makes me no difference whether I associate with an American or with a German. I can get along with the English language quite well, of which one understands hardly anything at first. It is a difficult thing at first for Germans who come into this country that they do not know the language because they must work for Americans. The English language is used in the United States as the main language even though the country is populated by various nations. There are many German parents whose children cannot speak German at all. Children who come from Germany learn the language quickly from the American children on the street, three times faster and better than adult persons who come from Germany. Laws and legal matters are all handled in the English language. So there are only a few Germans here who know the laws of the land. Several times the Germans have tried to have the laws in the German language which would be to their own interest, but until now they have

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not achieved their purpose. The Germans are so strong in this city. Surely there is no other city in all of America like this. The German Lutherans built a beautiful church this summer which they call the North German Lutheran Church. These are all low-Germans who have separated themselves from the high Germans who come mostly from the Southern parts of Germany. There are three German Lutheran churches here, German Catholic, and a Jewish Synagogue. I cannot tell you exactly about the English churches, - how many and how many different sects there are. There are many Americans who have no religion. Some are baptized when they are grown up. Many let their children learn but without religion and let them have their choices when they are grown. This is a free country and everyone can believe and think as he wishes. And this is also the reason why there are so many sects, of which one in Germany knows nothing. But I say, Remain with what you have learned and what has been committed to you.

Now I know nothing more to write to you about my circumstances. Write to me and tell me how things with you. Write me about all who things are with regard to the war and whether changes have taken place. A greeting from D. Pardieck and let Cof. Pardieck know that his wife gave birth to a healthy son three months ago. And please be so good and greet the Schumackers at Hemke(?) from Franz Schumaker that he is quite well.

Finally I greet you all, my relatives and friends,

Father Mother, brothers and sisters

J. H. Zur Oeveste

And when you write again, address it as before. Then I will surely receive it.

Addressed:

Ljmund Kessens Zur
Oeveste in Rieste
Ampt Vörden Kingdom
Hannover
Hannover

12.

Cincinnati February 21, 1840

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:

I am moved to write you a letter, because I consider it my duty to do so. As far as I am concerned, I am, thank God, still quite hale and healthy and I hope that you may receive my letter in good health. I will further make mention in my letters that I have entered the holy estate of marriage on Nov. 19 with my present wife Regina Louise Geist, who hails from Hassbuger near Osnabrück. She is 25 years old and belongs to an honorable family with whom I am still living here in the city. Happy and Satisfied. I like it here very much; better than before when I roamed about in the world from one place to another and from one hotel to another. It is now nearly six years since I bid farewell from you, my dear parents and relatives. You may perhaps think that I may have forgotten you or do not think of you very often. But this is not the case. The thought of you is always new and will never be extinguished in my heart. Since the time I parted from you I have seen and experienced much. I have done hard work with good and with bad people and along with this I have had evil associates. But I have overcome all this and have learned to know the world. But now I live with my wife alone and this kind of life I like much better. I further want you to know that the winter here this year is quite severe and lasting such as I have not experienced here before. It has already been wintery for more than two months. The situation here is rather bad. Many have never experienced a winter like this. Factories and businesses are almost at a stand-still. The wages are now low. Working for the State, through which thousands of people had their employment, is now quiet. And last summer state workers were not paid. There are now hundreds of people in the city who have no work and earn nothing. Whoever has no earnings will probably go hungry. How and for what reason these bad times come I cannot exactly tell you. One hopes for better times. If God gives me health, I am considering that perhaps next fall or at least within a year to move away from here to my land. This winter I have already been on my land for 6 weeks to work. I think that in the future I can make a better living there than here in the city. There are too many people here and the wages are too low. My intention was to move to my land already this winter, but the area is still sparsely populated. So we have postponed this for the time being. Many Germans have bought property in that area, and gradually they move there and in the future there will be a beautiful German colony. If my brother or one of my cousins had the desire to travel to America, he could come to Cincinnati and move with us to the country. But I cannot advise anyone. Here everyone must have

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his own free will. One gets along quite well, the other does not. For one who comes from Germany it is best for him to settle on the land immediately if he has enough money. But it costs very much at first to begin. If if one has once come to the point where he can make a living, he can live a good life. For the first 5 years there no taxes here, and later you will have to pay a small tax. Little is known here about manuring, although in some places it would propbably be good to do so.

Recently I read in D. Pardieck's letter that my sister Catharine Maria married last fall. May God grant His blessing. I have not met any coming from your area in Germany, but this year many Germans from other areas have arrived. Times are bad here now for the newcomers. E. Kieskamp, as I have heard, has again ? (moved?) to New Orleans. He brought a number of letters which came here.(?) I have been looking for news from you for a long time, but have received none. The last letter I received from you in the past summer had already been written in the month of February. So a whole year has passed since I heard from you. But I hope that I will soon receive a letter from you. This letter you will receive without cost, because I am paying for it here. The bearer is Arnhold Schulte of Furstnau. He will remain there for a while, and then return to America, and particularly to Cincinnati. I cannot write to you of items of special interest to you at this time. Please write to me again as soon as possible, concerning all circumstances, how you all getting along. Many greetings from us to all of you, - parnets, brother and sister, relatives and freinds

From your obedient Son,

Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

Addressed:

*Col Kessens Zur Oeveste
in Rieste Amt Vörden
Kierpsiel Brannecke
King. Hannover*

14

Cincinnati - Sept. 1, 1840

Dear parents, brothers and sister:

Your last letter of March 14 we have received on June 25, being in the best of health, and which gave us great joy, because it tells us of your health and well-being. About 6 months ago I sent a letter to you which hopefully you have received long ago. We have heard that the bearer will soon be back here. Surely I will receive news about you from him. But since I now have the best opportunity I consider it my duty to tell you about my circumstances so much as is possible for me to do so. Until now I still live here in the city. I have rented a room for which I have to pay \$3.00 per month. The wages here this summer are not as one is accustomed to. I work in a white lead factory. I earn a dollar a day here. But this work is not good for one's health and has already made me somewhat sick, but I recovered in about 14 days. People here generally complain about bad times and lack of money. Food is cheap here, but if one has no money you can't get it. Furthermore I must inform you in this letter that we expect to move to the country next fall because more of our acquaintances will move with us at that time. Dear brother, you have asked me to write to you what kind of land it is, and the surrounding area. This land is covered with timber, all kinds of trees. The earth (dirt) is rather heavy. In this vicinity there is much grass which is especially good for raising cattle. In this area there are still many wild animals, deer and all kinds. Furthermore, it lies approximately midway between two small but already rather important towns. The one is Rockford and the other Columbus. Both of these lie along an important river which is called the White River. The rest which you probably would like to know, you can hear personally from the mouth of the bearer of this letter. He can tell you everything in detail. He knows my present circumstances very well. His name is H. Trimpe and lives with Gerde. He is a good friend of mine. The rest that I have already stated in the last letter I will not repeat here, for I know that you are doing as well as you can and I hope that soon I will receive news about you. Special news I do not have at this time. Many greetings from me and from my wife to you all. Also a greeting to my sister Catharine Maria and to my brother-in-law Rudolph Karnlage and to the whole family. Greet all relatives and friends. I remain your obedient son

J. H. Zur Oeveste

Please forgive my poor writing because I was completely in "nil" and Trimpe left here sooner than I had expected.

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Cincinnati - October 10, 1841

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:

I have received your letter from the bearer, Trimpe. From it I see that you are well which gives us great joy. We also, thank God, are well and I have to inform you that already last spring on April 14 my dear wife gave birth to a healthy boy. He was baptized on the festival ~~of~~ Pentecost and added to Christ's church. I ^{named} ~~named~~ him Johann Rudolph after my sponsor, even though he could not be present and was far away. The child is growing well to our great joy. He is now 24 weeks old. I also have to tell you in this letter that already a year ago we moved to the country from Cincinnati and we now live on our own land, 150 miles English miles from Cincinnati in the State of Indiana. Here one begins and farms. The land which I have now seeded will, according to your measurements, probably yield 18 "Scheffel"(?) seed, which I have planted with corn and some potatoes and other fruits. The crop looks good for the first year. You can easily imagine that it takes a great deal of work to begin in green woods. To prepare the soil we begin in this way: You chop the trees down one or two feet above the ground and the wood is burned. The biggest trees are left for the time being. The bark is chopped through so that they die. And so one begins to farm, even though in the first years not much can be done with a plow. Yet the crops grow fairly well. Corn is here probably the main crop. Of this the people in the country make most of their bread. It grows six, eight, up to 10 feet high and has large ears. Also wheat grows here quite well, also other fruit, as also with you. The land here is quite good and is especially good for raising cattle. Cattle are fed well here only in winter. In the summertime there is pasture aplenty. But one must feed them a little; especially some Salt is given them. Otherwise they would not come home. Here it is hard to find them. Everyone here has a bell hanging on a cow or a horse. One knows the bell by its sound. The animals which I have purchased for the first are a horse, two cows, two calves, six hogs. More I could not afford.

You have written to me that you have to remind me of. Your letter says that I could obtain about 20 pistols. Well, I had the opportunity. A girl named Anna Maria Gliekampf wanted to send exactly hundred dollars in German money to Germany. Rudolph Hoelsker who lives in Hespe(?) is to have this money. Now I wish you would be so kind to pay these hundred dollars in your money to him. For I have received hundred dollars in your money from Anna Maria Gleikamp. I hope and wish that this exchange will not be inconvenient for you. Finally I must also say that I had to travel to

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Cincinnati in connection with this business. Now I hope and wish that you will so kind to answer about this as soon as possible concerning the correctness of this matter. Please write again as soon as possible about your circumstances. How gladly we hear from all of you! What a great joy it is for me when I receive news of you occasionally, and that the dear Lord has kept you in good health till now. I hope therefore most heartily that I will receive such news of you for many years. - Finally, I must also tell you that I intend to move away from here tomorrow. And when you write again, address the letter to Caspar Geist in Cincinnati. He may open the letter here and show the girl that you have paid the money to Hoelsker in Hesse. And write to me and tell me whether or not you have ---? I am satisfied with whatever you do. I have nothing special to write to you this time, except many greetings from me and my wife to you and all relatives and acquaintances.

I remain your most obedient Son
Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

Addressed:

*Col Heissens Zur Oeveste
in Rieste
Malgarten
Hannover
Europa*

Bartholomew County on the White Creek

Indiana - December 6, 1842

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:

Your letter of March 13 we have received with great joy already in the month of July. We read in it that my father is suffering with a severe affliction of the leg, which caused him much pain and we therefore hope that he has recovered from this long ago, and that all of you may receive my letter in good health. I and my wife and child are till now enjoying good health. But I must also say that in the past winter I was somewhat sickly for several months, namely in this way that I could not pass my water properly. But, praise God, it gradually got better. I must further tell you that the crops were quite good this year, and this year there are plenty acorns so that all the hogs are getting fat in the woods. Here everything is quite cheap. One hundred pounds of pork costs no more than \$2.00. There is food in abundance, but you can't make any money. We are glad that we can live on our own property and one lives here much more quietly than in German because taxes are lower. The tax that I must pay this year is about \$1.50. This must be paid in the ? and when five years have passed from the time when we bought the land, we will have to pay little more. This fall six more German families came here. About 26 German families now live in our neighborhood. We are also in the process of building a church. It was erected two weeks ago and we expect to hold services in it two weeks from today. The church is 26 feet in length and 20 feet wide, built of logs, just like nearly all the houses in the country are built. We do the work ourselves and therefore little expenses. Up till now we have held services in the homes. We also have a German preacher who lives 18 miles from here. He usually comes here every 14 days or 3 weeks. - I cannot tell you of any special news in this letter. Dear brother, in your last letter you have indicated that you are not completely free of the manorial rights, or rather have bought yourselves free. I was very surprised about this. Who would ever have thought, when I was still with you, that this could ever happen to be free of such a burden. I was very happy that you have been able to bring this about, and although I live in a land where no one knows anything about such things, I am very happy over the good fortune and well-being of my dear family. - Finally I must mention in my letter that this year we have food enough for our nourishment and feed for our cattle on our own land. We have nearly 200 bushels of corn; we have wheat for our needs; potatoes and beans we have in plentiful supply. Our animals consist of one horse, 6 cows, young and old - 23 head of hogs. Last summer it did get as warm as we have experienced earlier. The summer here was moderately wet. It has wintered here for 3 weeks already and it has been

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rather cold. I have no special news to write. I would have written sooner, but because nothing special has happened, and I, as you can well imagine, always have work and business, it has been postponed. I plead for a quick answer. Parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends, greetings from your faithful Son,

Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

When you write again, please use this address: J. H. Kessens Zur Oeveste, Rockford on White Creek Bartholomew County, Indiana
But if you happen to write to Cincinnati, you can do as with your previous letter to Casper Geist. It will be taken care of.

Addressed:

? Col Kessens Zur Oeveste
Riiste Amt Vörsen ?
Bramsche Hammer

Europa

Bartholomew County State of Indiana
September 25, 1844

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:

Nearly two years have already passed since I have sent a letter to you. You may think that I do not think of you anymore or am little concerned about you. This is not the case. I would have answered your last letter which I received a little more than a year ago, right away. But since nothing special has happened I considered it unnecessary and to spare you the expense, I have postponed it for a year. As far as we are concerned, I and my wife and small son are, thank God, in good health and we hope that you will receive this letter in good health. Some time ago I heard from a letter, received by D. Pardieck from Germany, that you were all well. This was a joy for me and how glad I am to hear from you! The past summer was a warm and dry summer. This summer the crops were fairly good. The land which I now have under cultivation is about 15 acres, or according to your measurement almost 45 bushels. I now have 3 horses, 2 young ones and one old one; 10 cows, young and old; about 20-30 hogs, also sheep, geese, and chickens. The prices are cheap. One can buy a fairly good horse for 30 or 40 dollars, a good milk-cow for 8 to 10 dollars. The price of corn is a little higher than in the previous year. A bushel of wheat costs 60¢, welsh corn 20¢, oats 20¢, rye and barley is not raised here very much. Fruits are average here this year, but generally much more than with you in Germany. Many sicknesses prevail here this summer. Many people are dying. In some houses the whole family is lying sick. They need others to wait on them. Here among the Germans it is not as bad, but 9 or 10 miles from us it is more unhealthy especially along the rivers which is here called the river bottom. But this is the most fruitful land. I must tell you further in my letter that we are planning to build a new house this fall. The last year we built a new barn. This gives us much work, for here one does the work himself. It is lighter work than with you. First we did not build on the right place because we had no water near the house. Now we will build where we have good wells, several hundred steps further. The houses here in the country are nearly all built of blocks, about 20 feet long, sometimes a little larger or smaller as one wishes to have it. This makes only one or two rooms. On the first Monday in November we have the election here of the new president, namely the chief officer of the U. States. He is elected for four years. He has his residence in Washington. All officials or other appointed men in the government are elected only for four years. Every citizen here has the right to vote and this causes all officials to be very friendly to the people. An immigrant can vote only after he has been in the country for five years.

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Then he can get his papers and he is counted as an American. There are two great parties. One party is called the Whig Party and the other the Democratic Party. The Germans belong mostly to the Democratic Party. Both parties have special principles. Both parties propose candidates. The Whig Party candidate is Henry Clay and the Democratic candidate is James K. Polk. One of these two will be elected as president. So it depends on who has the most votes. These two parties write against each other and each party, according to their statements, believes it has the best resolutions. Some even say that war could result from this. Special news I will not write this time. The best is that we are quite happy here and I live with my wife so lucky and peaceful, perhaps better than if I had married one from your area of the important families. Our little boy is growing up to our great joy. He already knows several letters (of the alphabet) and occasionally speaks about Germany. I beg for an early and thorough answer. Write me again how old my dear parents are now since I do not know this exactly. I hope they are living and well. Write me whether Rudolph and Margaretha are still home. Tell me about my sister Maria. Greet the Gamlagons and the Holsteins. Write me whether my sister Elizabeth's two girls are still living. Greet the Wittegeldts. Greet all uncles and aunts, neighbors and relatives and old acquaintances. Greet Pardieck and Philip Pardieck from me and his brother Dietrich. His wife and children are all well. With the hope of an early reply
I remain your obedient Son,
Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

Addressed:

*den Col. Kessens zur
Oeveste im Reiste
Amt Malgasten K. Braunsche
König. Hannover Europa*

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Bartholomew County - White Creek

February 25, 1846

Your last letter of April 18 of last year I received already in the month of June. The sad news of our sainted father was somewhat shocking to me, but one must be satisfied with the disposition of God. I hope my dear mother is well and that she will hear my letter gladly, for she is still very much in my heart. I hope that all of you may receive my letter in good health. As far as we are concerned, I and my wife and children are till now quite well. Already in the previous year, on February 20, our dear Lord gave us a healthy girl. She is named Sophia Louise. She is now our second living child. They are growing to our great joy. Our little son who will be 5 years old next spring, is already beginning to learn. He is glad when we tell him something about Germany, even though he cannot have any real understanding of this. Last year we had a pretty good harvest. Wheat now costs 65 to 70¢ per bushel and corn 15 to 20¢ per bushel. The hogs became fat last fall and pork costs 3 to 4 dollars per 100 lbs, and is therefore higher in price than it has been for five years. It is impossible to write to you about the many hogs that are sold here in the cities, and if I told you, you would probably receive it as a fable. Times here in America are now quite good, better than they have been for several years. The farmer can sell his products readily, the wage-earner can earn good wages, and whoever still has no property, can still find employment, if he has the desire to work. There are needy people enough, but I have never seen a beggar. I wish therefore that all poor people who would gladly work, would come here to America. I have heard that many Germans, and especially from your area have arrived in Cincinnati last fall. Also three families, who have just arrived here in our neighborhood, - namely Albrand from Hanna with their families; Bolte from Osnabrück and ? from ?. They all visited their friends here. Also, D. Pardieck, has been looking forward to the coming of his brother Philip for a long time. I do not want to discourage but rather encourage my brother Rudolph to come to America, if he would have the desire to follow me along with good companions. He could probably also enjoy some of this beautiful free country. There is always opportunity to buy land here. Circumstances here are much different from Germany. Many Americans sell their place, move to another area in the wilderness and finds more enjoyment in hunting than in farming. Many sell their property and move to a strange country. There it does not suit him either. So he comes back to his old homestead and starts all over again. I believe it would be a much better risk for my brother than when I risked it. He could turn to me right away. And what a joy it would be for me if I could see my brother or one of my relatives again; and I could be of help

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to him in various ways. Everyone can make a living here better than in Germany. This I also did not believe in those first years when I roamed about in this land as a single man. Now I can truthfully write to you that God is with me here in America. I live happily and content with my wife and my two children. They meet me with a friendly smile when I go in and out. No one gives me any orders. I don't know what more to write at this time, except that the winter this year has been long and severe and winter weather continues without stopping. Many hearty greetings from me and my wife to my dear mother, brothers and sisters, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. Greet the Mittelfelts, Erdbrugers, Schneidthorsts, Kleibochers, and Holsteins, and all friends who I may have forgotten in this letter. I am and remain your faithful Son

Johann Heinrich Zu Oeveste

I hope dear brother, you will be so kind to write me at least by next summer a detailed letter about all the things that take place in my old fatherland and please forgive my poor writing.

J. H. Zur Oeveste

Addressed:

*Ant(?) den Heirs Col Kessene Zur
Oeveste in Rüste Amt Vörden
Kiespiel Bramsche Kös. Hannover
Europa*

Indiana Bartholomew County

White Creek May 28, 1847

Dear Mother, brothers and sisters:

Your letter of October 11, 1846 I have received. I see from it that you are all well, except for my mother. I hope that now she has fully recovered. As far as we are concerned, - we are well and hope that you receive this letter in good health. A severe sickness prevailed here last summer, a kind of high fever sickness and many people died of it. This illness covered nearly all of America. We heard that the cause of this illness was probably a very warm summer. My wife and my son also became dangerously sick, but now, thank God, with the help of a doctor they have recovered. Times here are very good, especially for a farmer. Everything here is high in price, almost as high as at any time since I live here. The reason for this is uncertain. Perhaps, as we hear here, it is because in Germany and in other countries in Europe there is almost a famine. God grant that this may soon be overcome! No one in this country says anything about this. A short time ago a certain preacher gathered an offering for the poor in Germany. Many people contributed to this, especially the Germans. The last winter was a rather wet winter. And the water in the river which is here called "White Creek" overflowed its banks as never before. It came 6 ft. into the homes of my people who live near the river or in the low places along the river and many lost nearly all their household goods and their cattle. To us, however, it did no harm. The war between the United States and Mexico is still continuing. I also am telling you in this letter that here it is ?. Perhaps you have already heard that there are many religious parties here. One sect is called the Methodists, similar to those with you..... They preach nearly always about repentance and conversion. They say that by conversion a man becomes righteous and will shine at the Stars in the heavens. There are some of our Germans here who say they have actually been converted by God. They will do anything for their neighbor, to convert him and they prove it with Scripture..... One must be born again. Recently Dietrich Pardieck told me that he has received several letters from his brother Philip. I have heard them myself. According to his saying, he has finally decided to travel to America with his family to look up his brother and all of us, and to buy land here for himself and to live in this neighborhood. I have always thought of my brother Rudolph. Perhaps this would be the proper time, if he had the desire to follow me and to visit us here. That would bring all of us great joy. But I do not know in what kind of situation he is now, and I do not want to urge him too strongly, for each one must have his free will in this.

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I have heard nothing more about Herman Eckelman who delivered your last letter to me. The letter was sent to me from Cincinnati, and my brother-in-law has written me that he had come from St. Louis. The seedtime is now about over. The corn has been planted. The woods are green, the grass on the pasture is now overflowing plentiful. I now have 4 horses and three mules, 10 cows, 40 hogs, and many geese and chickens.

I know nothing more to write at this time. Many greetings to me, my wife and children. Greet all friends and relatives.

I remain your faithful

Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

Addressed:

*Col Kessner Zur
Oeveste in Rieste Kirspiel
Bramsche Amt Malgorten
Kingdom Hannover
Europe*

Bartholomew County - White Creek

Dec. ? 17th, 1857

Dear brother and sister-in-law:

Your last letter of May 3 of last year I received in the month of June and learn from it that you are well which was a great joy for us. But in the many cases of mourning which have occurred in our relationship, I have also have participated. As far as we are concerned, we are well. Two months ago my wife a breast-sickness which lasted 3 weeks during which she suffered much pain, until finally the right breast broke through. Last fall we had a terrific cloudburst. This followed a very dry summer. For three weeks we had no rest day or night, so that one feared that we may lose the entire clearing and the cultivated land. The wood which lies here in abundance and the ? which was dry has been reduced. Also fire has caused considerable damage in various places. Houses and barns and all that was in them burned. But we were spared. The last summer here was very dry. We harvested very little last summer. Also the fall was so dry so that the wheat could not come up. Although it was sown early in November, yet it just came up before winter. Wheat turned out pretty well this year and now costs \$1.00 per bushel. There was little corn, little oats, few potatoes, and hardly any other garden produce and no fruit because of the drought. The winter is now here and the ground is covered with snow.

D. Pardieck's wife died last spring in the month of May at the age of about 40. She was born in "Kirchapiel" (?). Pardieck has 4 living children and has married again. The election for the new president of the United States caused great excitement this time. The candidates for the presidency were first Buchanan as Democrat, secondly Fremont as Republican, and third Fillmore as "Knownothing". Concerning these three there is an insulting contest before the election. In all newspapers there is scolding and chiding until finally the election day comes. Election day was the first Monday in November and Buchanan was elected by majority vote as president of the United States for four years. The U.S. now consists of 31 states and several territories, that is, new lands which have just been settled and later when they number so many citizens, they are accepted into the U.S. In 15 States they have the right to own slaves. These are called Slave States. And 16 States where there is no slavery are called Free States. Many are in favor of doing away with slavery altogether, but are worried that two nations, one black and the other white, cannot exist with one another or be friends to one another. Recently I read in the newspaper that in the Congress there was much talk about what the U.S. should do with the black

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people which number several millions, and it would probably be best to send them back to Africa and make them a free people there. The Negroes who live in the free States are not slaves. They pay taxes but do not have the right to vote and they receive no appointments. In short, they are Negroes. - I have heard some time ago that several Americans have developed a plan to lay a telegraph (cable) through the ocean from New York to London. It is to be laid next summer. According to the estimates it will be possible to know what was said in Parliament in London at 8 in the morning, at 2 P.M. in New York. This may rightfully be called a world-wonder if it is accomplished. If you the political papers here, you read of many evil things, all kinds of horror and murders, because the entire country is full of murders. We live in the country very quietly. People here are quite healthy I and my wife and four children are now alone. Next summer I will again hire a servant whom I will pay \$9.00 per month. The land which I bought from Schumacher I have rented for one-third. We now have five horses and 23 cows. Pork now costs 60¢ per 100 lbs. - Of Sonja Blusmans I have not heard recently. Last fall the oldest was still in Cincinnati. He kept milk-cows and sold milk in the city. The youngest was in the State of Missouri.

Greet all our friends and relatives from me and my family. With the happy hope of an early reply, I remain

Your most devoted brother

J.H. Zur Oeveste

Addressed:

Christian Friedrich ~~von~~ Kessens
Zur Oeveste in Rieste
Kierup's Bromsche Amt
Malgarten Hannover
Europa

Bartholomew County White Creek

February 20, 1860

Dear brother:-

Your letter of June 3, 1859 arrived here only on Feb. 6, namely only a few days ago. I read your letter with tears in my eyes. My heart is heavy that death has separated you so early. But we must be satisfied with God's leading, for what God does is always well done. As far as we are concerned we are all well. Our five children, of whom the oldest is now 15, and the youngest is in his second year, are growing up to our great joy. Our son Heinrich is beginning to learn. Since last summer he is in his 8th year and this spring he will be sent to school.

Last year, 1859, we had an average harvest. Wheat, oats and oats turned out fairly well. This year we thrashed 210 bu. of wheat, which now yields \$1.15 per bushel. But we had sowed a little over 40 bushels. The land, which has been cleared already for years, is becoming lean and must be manured. People here are beginning to build sheds, especially for the cattle in order to obtain more manure. Land now costs \$15.00 per acre. Wooded land is somewhat cheaper. The last summer was very dry; it hardly rained at all so that nearly everything dried up by the of the month of July. Then all at once it rained so much so that everything revived again, and later there was no lack of rain. Times have been quite good here recently so that there is a condition of well-being here. But the people are not becoming better, but rather worse. One hears of frequent commotion because of the black population. There are about 4 million slaves among the negroes. Of the 33 States nearly half are slave states. There are many among the whites who want to make an end of slavery. These are called Abolitionists. Recently five of these were hanged because of rioting. There is fear that this is by no means the end. This year there is again the election of a new president and many think that this will mean a great change or even a separation of the United States. - We now have a mild winter. In December we had very cold days, like the coldest days of winter with you in Germany. In the wintertime I and my wife and children are usually alone. Throughout the Spring and summer till late fall we always have a hired worker whom we will have again. He has already worked for us for three years. I pay him \$85.00 for 8 months. One of my neighbors, Barnhardt Meier is moving away from here again to Cincinnati. He sold his land, 120 acres, for \$1850.00. There are very many children here and it is impossible to obtain land for all of them. Heinrich Blusman wrote some time ago and mentioned that his brother Dietrich had traveled to Germany to visit all of you again and I hope that he has arrived safely in

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old fatherland long ago. He will surely tell of all the circumstances here personally, - what is not possible for me to write. - I hope, dear brother, you will receive this letter before cousin, D. Beusman leaves from there and that he use this opportunity to tell me about your circumstances. What you mentioned in your last letter, namely to visit you once more, - concerning this I must say the following: It would be the greatest joy in the world to see my old fatherland and all of you once more, but my present circumstances do not permit me this choice, first, because my wife has rejected this completely, secondly, because my children are still small, and third, finally because I myself am somewhat infirm and already quite old. So we will have to let this lie, if not in this world, then God willing in the other world. Finally, I must also tell you, namely concerning your letter to me, namely ? which you have again received I can only write that I doubt whether ? have been in Columbus and one often hears complaints concerning the postal service. Your letter of July 23, 1859 I received only on Feb. 16, 1860 through Klusman. The latter also brought some more letters and some other things, but not before today. Klusman arrived in Cincinnati already last fall in the month of October, but he has not come here yet. Thus the people do here in America.

I close this letter with the heartiest greetings to you and your wife and children, Brother Rudolph and sister-in-law, uncle and aunt, relatives and friends.

J. H. Zur Oeveste

Addressed! (badly Poded)

*Friedrich Zur Oeveste
Rieste*

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Bartholomew County - White Creek

April 18, 1861

Dear brother:

Your letter of Dec. 18 of last year I received with great joy in the month of February. As far as we are concerned, we are all in good health and we hope the same for you. I would have answered sooner, but since both our cousins, the Beusmans, left Cincinnati this spring with their families to move to Minnesota, a new land North-west from here where it is rather cold, I was urgently requested by them to visit them in Cincinnati, which also came to pass, namely by me and my wife. I also must add that Cincinnati is now a significantly large city, I believe two-thirds larger than 20 years ago. The journey from here (that is 5 miles from us) to Cincinnati can be made in 5 hours. Our two cousins Beusman will probably be on their journey today. They travel there all the way by water, - that is, first down the Ohio River and then up the Missouri River. Now I would like to tell you something about the present situation in this country. There is much news here today, but very little good news. Since the last presidential election it seems that the union can no longer exist. Six slave States have already separated themselves from the Union and it seems that the others will soon follow them. The new president, Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, is against slavery in the territories. To this the South, or the Slave States do not agree. The South says the government wants to restrict its rights and property, and will endanger their lives. The north claims the South has no right to separate itself from the Union. The South has already elected its own president, and does not want anything to do with the government of the country. The government has fortified the ports and the Congress is continually concerned with maintaining the peace. But so far everything has failed. In short, what the South wants the North does not want and what the North wants the South does not want. Both sides are preparing for war and every day one is fearful of a Civil War. Business has been curtailed through this already. Most of the big factories have stopped working and thousands of people are without employment, especially in the cities. Our country which blossomed out so quickly because of the great immigration and the peaceful relationship with practically all nations in the whole world, will perhaps experience a severe jolt. And all this not from the outside, no, for we have no enemies from the outside. We have a friendly relationship with practically all nations. To mention a few examples: Last summer a Japanese legation (commission?) was here, - and all were men of the first rank-. They investigated all the big cities and looked at everything. They visited the president. And all this to strengthen commerce between the two countries.

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Also the Prince of Wales was here. Much honor was shown him, and all this again in friendly relations. But it seems that here the statement of the Lord Jesus will find its application: Every kingdom which is divided against itself will be laid waste, and one house will fall over the other. Finally I want to add: The total separation from God in this country, the wealth, the grossest evil deeds, - all this being the punishment of God. But the Lord who guides the hearts of men like the water-brooks, will rule also here.

In Cincinnati we stayed for four days with our nearest relatives. We were warmly welcomed by them and were received in the most friendly manner. From my side there are the two Beusman cousins with their families; from my wife's side; her mother who is now 77 years old, her two brothers and a sister with their families. Upon the advice of the Beusman cousins we went to a painter and let him paint us, - me and my wife and our youngest daughter who is in her third year since October 24. Our other children were at home. Since October 19 I am in my 60th year, as you probably well know. My wife is in her 47th year since January 6th. You will surely receive the little portrait this spring. I thought that since we will probably not see each other again in this world, this would serve as a remembrance. Cousin Beusman has taken it upon himself to send the portrait. - The harvest in the past year was average. The winter was mild and little snow. Wheat now costs 90¢ per bushel here, corn 25-30¢. Horses and cattle are cheaper than before. Dried pork 7-8¢ per lb. There is a good stand of wheat on the ground. - Greet my brother Rudolph and both sisters and their children. Greet all our relatives and friends and neighbors.

I remain as always

Your loving brother Zur Oeveste

Please do not delay your answer. And address it to the same address as before. Then I will be sure to receive it.

Addressed:

Col. Christian Friedrich
Zur Oeveste in Rente
Kierspil Bramsche
Amt Malgarten
Kön. Hannover Europa

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Bartholomew County - White Creek

April 30, 1863

Dear brother:

It was on the first Friday after Lent that I heard with the greatest joy that a letter from you came for me in the Walesboro post (office). I went there in the morning and received what I asked for. I am answering your letter immediately. At the same time I also received a letter from our cousin H. Beusman, from whom I had no reports since the Indian uprising. I had noted the whole Indian story quite in detail in the newspapers. And since it was exactly New Ulm where our Beusman relatives had moved to and which the Indians had attacked and burned down, therefore we were very much afraid that none of them had survived. Several days ago I received a letter from D. Beusman. He writes that he has lost everything. His house was burned down. He now works in Milwaukee. He is well and it is said that the government will restore everything to him. As far as we are concerned, I and my wife and five children are well. Our second daughter Maria was confirmed at Easter. Our son Heinrich goes to school and the two youngest girls cannot go to school yet because of the long way. The youngest is only 5 years old. Last summer we built a new church because our old log church was too small. The new church was built with bricks, 40 feet wide and 60 feet long, properly furnished according to churchly style.

Now I would like to tell you things are here with us. You surely know that my pen cannot write you everything. If we could speak to each other in person, ~~it~~ would be much easier. First I must let you know that the war is continuing until now and only God knows when peace will return. Peace proposals are made from time to time, but without result till now. For several months no big battles have been fought because the roads are so bad here in the winter time. But there have been little (battles), at sea as well as on land. One would think that it cannot go on much longer, for where the big armies stand opposed to one another, there is no longer any farming done. Some of the young people are killed, and the others who do not finish in the battles, die mostly of sicknesses or are sent home sick. In general it is bad to be a soldier here in America, especially in time of war because the roads here are very bad, and because the American soldier must always lie under the open skies or must first set up his tent wherever he goes. Most of the young men from our neighborhood who went to war last summer or a year ago or two years ago are already dead. Until now most of them were volunteers, but now they do not get any more volunteers and conscription was decided upon in the last Congress. Every citizen from the age of 18 to

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45 is subject to military service. Today it is said that the draft will take place in the month of May and that 200,000 will have to leave in to fill the regiments again and at the same time there is the fear that bloody scenes may occur here with us, because in our State as well as in Ohio and Illinois and other States organizations have been established to oppose the government. But He who rules over us from above, will certainly make everything right in the end. So far in this bloody Civil War 3 to 400,000 people have already lost their lives; this is on the Northern side alone, and perhaps no less on the Southern side. Last fall several big battles were fought where 10 to 20 thousand dead were left on the field. All hospitals are full of sick and wounded soldiers. In some places the people are so ? that farm-work could not be done properly. But here in our neighborhood it has gone forward till now, because our German sons have been holding back and have not so blindly run into the fire. This had driven the wages higher. In spite of the war and unrest the prices have again risen. Whatever the farmer has left over has a good price. Wheat costs \$1.15 to \$1.25 per bushel. Corn 50¢. There is very little oats here, because it turned out poorly last summer. The price of live-stock is also fairly good again, especially horses which are used in the war. But everything we must buy is expensive. Some people here are beginning to sow flax and make linen for shirts and bed-clothes. Some also plant a kind of sugar-cane, of which they make molasses and syrup. We made 35 gallons of it last fall. My wife and children have 50 lb. of good sugar, made from the sugar maple trees. For coffee some use wheat, another uses rye, on this and the other that. There is now an abundance of money here, namely paper money, most of it made by the government. One cannot get to all gold or silver anymore. - So far we have luckily spared by the war so far. God alone knows what the future may bring. Today has been designated by the government as a general day of penance and everyone is called upon to implore God to make an end to this horrible war, and to restore peace again. This we all hope for with all our hearts. I hope this letter reaches you in the best of health, also hoping for an early reply. Heartiest greetings from me and my wife and children to you and yours, as well as to brothers and sisters and all relatives, I remain your loving Brother,

J. H. Zur Oeveste

When you write again address it to J. H. Zur Oeveste, Walesboro, Bartholomew County, Indiana. The word White Creek must now be omitted.

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Undated possibly written between 1863 and 1867

Dear brother:

As you have stated in your last letter that our deceased uncle Schneithorst has remembered us in his testament and you plan to send my portion to me and in which way it would be best to do this, I can say to you that at this time it suited me best that it was sent by check to Cincinnati. That was really an advantage for me. But I must also say that money is very dear now, - I really don't know how dear, The whole country is flooded with paper money. One does not see any gold or silver here. At that time I was paid in paper money in Cincinnati and this would surely happen again if you would send it. There is no hurry at all. You can wait at least this winter. But if you want to send it, then send it again by check as before to Caspar Geist on Mansfield Str. No. 17 in Cincinnati. But if it should be the case that your Son cannot be cured of the American sickness and if he should decide to immigrate to America, then he could attend to this in good time. As I hear now, money now stands at 40 per cent. It may perhaps rise higher. So our money is now worth 60¢. This is all the result of the war.

Your loving brother,

J.H. Zur Oeveste

Bartholomew County White Creek, Ind.

September 30, 1867

Dear brother, sister-in-law, and children:-

After long hesitation I came finally to the determination to tell you as much as I am able of our present situation. Your last letter I received with the greatest joy from your son Heinrich, sent here from Cincinnati. We are in our house; we are all well and, on the whole, our health has been very good. Our oldest daughter Sophia still lives in Indianapolis. She visited us here last week with her little daughter which is already 7 old. Last spring they bought a house there for \$1550.00 from Heinrich. He is a poor writer. Since the time he sent me your letter he has never written again. But I heard from my neighbor's Son, that he is now going to a school to learn book-keeping. I don't really know what that means. Some learn only a little and can handle big business, and others must learn all the time and still accomplish nothing. My son Heinrich is only 15 years old. He has learned little in school. He did not have much desire and also no particular gifts to learn. He is a strong young man and I hope that in the future he will work better. That means not only on the farm but also in all kinds of carpenter work according to his ability. Those are wordless wells to which you must first carry the water. - We now have a long-continuing drought here. It is high time to sow wheat, but the clover-ground is so hard that one cannot press the plow into it. The meadow looks as if it had been burnt. The corn is completely ripe. In the summer it looked good, but because of the drought it may yield only half. The wheat also turned out poorly this year. The oats were quite good. There are few potatoes and other garden produce is almost nothing. There are quite many apples, but there are no peaches to be seen in this neighborhood. Livestock has a fairly nice price, but there is little demand for horses. Milk cows are high in price and cost 30 to 50 dollars per head. Lean hogs that weigh 100 lb. cost \$5.00 per 100 lb. Wheat costs \$2.00 per bushel and will probably not become cheaper this year. Corn is 60¢ per bushel.

In the hope of a quick reply, I close with the heartiest greetings to you and your dear wife and children, I remain your loving brother,

Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

White Creek - Bartholomew County

December 26, 1869

Dear brother:-

Your letter of November 4 I received on December 20. The sad news of the death of our brother has brought all of us much sorrow, but we will gladly commit ourselves to the providence of God. He has gone before us and has over come everything which still stands before us all, and perhaps soon. About a month ago I sent a letter to you in which, as far as I know, I told you of our circumstances. I hope that you have already received it.

So far we have had a fine fall. But today winter is beginning to be rather severe. Thank God, we are all well and I hope that you will receive these few lines in the best of health.

Dear brother, you have written me about the estate of our widowed(?) brother. As you have said, I believe it would be best to sent the money here by a check to my brother-in-law, Caspar Geist, in Cincinnati. He will take care of it for me. Caspar Geist lives on Mansfield Str., House Number 17, I believe, just as several years ago, and I liked him very much. Incidentally, you will probably know better than I how to manage this, I would like to reimburse you for your trouble in some way, if it were at all possible. I had thought little about this inheritance and had not hoped for it at all. But since you have decided it in this way, I will accept it with sincere gratitude. I will inform you as soon as the money arrives here. I will also send a letter to Caspar Geist. Our paper money stands very low over against gold, but I do not know how much.

I close with sincerest greeting to you and your wife and children.
Greet all our relatives, and especially my two sisters from your loving
brother

J.H. Zur Oeveste

Bartholomew County - White Creek

July 17, 1871

Dear brother:

Your last letter of Feb. 12 I received soon after in good health. We learn from it that all of you are well which makes us all very happy. As far as we here are concerned, we are all still well and hope you will receive my letter in the best of health. The harvest here is now almost finished, and about as early as we have ever experienced it here. And this happened for the following reasons, namely because we had a dry summer. The wheat was fully ripe already in the middle of June. It looked so beautiful last spring, so that one thought it would bring a double crop, but later it suffered very much because of the continuing drought, so that we have to consider it as an average crop. The oats remained so short that we could hardly mow it. The corn is delayed because of the dryness. But since we had a heavy rain yesterday, we still have hope. The potatoes were fiercely attacked by the voracious bugs. They are practically a total loss. Also the hay harvest turned out very poorly. There is also very little fruit. This spring in the middle of March when the fruit trees were already in full bloom, several nights of frost destroyed everything. So this year we have a poor harvest and it will be difficult to bring the livestock through the winter. We are very glad that the war with France has come to an end. We hope for an enduring peace for Germany and that it may bring a blessing to mankind. Sometime ago I heard that your son Heinrich visited you this summer. But whether he plans to stay with you in Germany or to return to America, - rather think the latter. I would gladly have heard from him, but I do not know to whom I should turn, for I have heard that for the last two years he stayed in Kentucky. Now, dear brother that I will be 70 years old next fall. As far as I know our sainted father did not get any older. I am now in fairly good health, but one feels the weakness of old age frequently. We will therefore continue to work while it is day, because the night is coming when no man can work. Heartiest greetings from me, my wife and children to all of you.

I remain your loving brother

J. H. Zur Oeveste

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White Creek

March 12, 1872

Dear brother:-

I received your last letter in good time. To our great joy we note that you are all well. I want to tell you that, thank God, the same is true also of us. We hope that these few lines will find you in the best of health. Generally the last year has been a healthy year in this neighborhood. Our pastor told me last Sunday that almost an entire year has passed since the last funeral took place on our cemetery and that it is something quite unusual in a congregation which now numbers more than a hundred members. We had a long and changing winter and the frost has not yet come out of the ground. I must tell you that to my great joy I recently received a letter from your son Heinrich. He wrote that he had married last fall and now has his own business and that he is doing well. We are happy over this that he has succeeded in this so far. People here are always of the opinion that the fourth year, namely the year when a new president is elected, is a bad year, because everything becomes very cheap. And this is the case this year. Everything is very cheap here, except the wheat which yields \$1.50 per bushel. A good farm-horse which earlier brought \$100.00 or more, one cannot sell for \$75.00. A good milk-cow formerly \$35 to \$40, today \$20.00 to \$25.00. Fat hogs \$5.00 per 100 lb. Good pork \$7.00 per 100 lb.

Concerning the elction to be held I cannot write this time because the candidates have not yet been chosen. Our government is surely the best in the world because we are a people who govern themselves. But among the officials there are always too many theives and rascals. I believe that much of this is due to the fact that in this nation the Anglo-Saxon party is still the ruling party.

Many hearty greetings from me, my wife and children to all of you, especially to my two sisters from your faithful brother

J. H. Zur Oeveste

Because both of us, according to God's will, are already old, I therefore ask most kindly not to delay answering my letter.