

John Adam Heydinger Prepares to Emigrate

So how does one set about preparing to uproot a family, generate the cash and materials necessary for a new way of life, and then actually make the voyage? We have almost no written records from the Heydinger family itself, so instead have to rely upon those left by other families in similar circumstances and upon some few oral traditions within the Heydinger family.

Raising the Cash

What were other French and German families doing to prepare to leave the Old World for the New? The first necessity was to raise cash, not just for the crossing fares but for expenses anticipated prior to their leaving, immediately after landing, and eventually for purchasing land in America.

We don't know exactly how much John Adam was able to raise for his crossing and that of his family. Many poor families at that time could raise only enough to send over at first just one person from the family, usually the eldest son, who would make the crossing, usually stay with a relative or townsperson who had made the trip earlier in time, and then scout out the best prospects for land or other entrepreneurial undertakings. A single person had a better chance, striking out on his own and surviving by wits and will until a suitable place could be arranged. Only then could the remainder of the family be sent for. This process many times did not take place over the period of a single season or two. All too frequently, the pioneer "scout" ended by serving almost as an indentured servant for a year or even more to help raise cash and smooth the transition for those to follow. He would usually purchase a small amount of land and perhaps erect a structure in which to live. For John Adam, not all of this process seems to have occurred, for the entire family emigrated together. However, there was someone here awaiting them.

We do know from family oral tradition that when the family first came over, they established communication with relatives who had preceded them to the area of Cranberry and Auburn Townships. The family's name was Dallas, and we do have record of a Dallas family in the North Auburn area as early as 1847. Who were the Dallahs and what was their relationship to the John Adam Heydinger family? Simple. John Adam's mother, the second wife of his father Pierre Heydinger, was Barbe Dellesse. It was a relative of hers, possibly a nephew, who came over first, in the 1830's with the first wave of Alsatian immigrants to the northern Ohio area. It was due to some immigration official's faulty hearing, unfamiliarity with the German pronunciation of a French surname, or bloody stupidity that transformed the family name Dellesse into spelling of Dallas. Whatever the cause, a relative would be there to meet John Adam upon his arrival.

So exactly how much cash would John Adam have had to raise in order to make a successful emigration with a family his size? And exactly what would he have had to liquidate in Merlebach that would be of enough value to pay for their fare across the Atlantic, the moving costs before and after sailing, and then the final expenses to homestead in Ohio? We can only speculate at this point; however, several possibilities arise.

First, the family could have inherited money, possibly from either one of John Adam's parents' side of the family. Not hardly, though. Pierre Heydinger, John's Adam's father, was actually the third son of his father, Christian Heydinger. According to the laws of primogeniture inheritance, the eldest son inherited at the expense of younger male siblings. Poor Pierre, literally, was born too far down the family tree, even though his oldest brother, Jean Nicolas, had already passed away two years before their father died in 1774. So there would have been hardly any passable inheritable property on John Adam's father's side. As for the Dellesse side, Barbe too had an older brother, Gaspar, who would have inherited all parental property. So we can safely rule out inheritance as any source of family income.

Second, the family could have been saving passage money for some time prior to their leaving. This theory does have possibilities and thus bears looking into.

We don't know whether John Adam owned farm land in 1850 or whether he was actually living inside the village of Merlebach. Land ownership records from that time are scarce enough, as are land transfer records. All we know for sure is that the records indicate John Adam was a "tisserand," a weaver. But weavers in that area of France were one of two kinds: the cottage or small industry type and the urban factory type. The cottage industry weaver owned his own land and loom, could work his land, and wove at his leisure inside his own home in an area devoted to the loom, usually in times when farming was impossible, such as winter and the rainy seasons. His cloth was then bought by traveling broker-merchants, and the income derived from such sales supplemented what the family earned from farming. John Adam could have been this type of weaver.

We also know that in the Alsace, an area of Europe which had undergone unprecedented population growth within one generation, the farm size had dropped steadily, forcing the folk to engage in the small industries. Indeed, the data shows that pauperization of the Alsatian populace was so intense around 1850 that fully 25% of the population was engaged in a secondary occupation. Intensive farming on small holdings was not up to keeping malnutrition at bay; only a secondary job could. When the small manufacturing activity did not deal directly with farm produce, it often coexisted with agriculture in a multi-activity context. The home textile and metal-working businesses were not seasonal in themselves but their manpower was mostly engaged in farm work during the summer, and census-takers often found it difficult to determine whether the main activity was farming or trades and crafts. This could explain why John Adam was listed on the census rolls as a weaver, his secondary craft job, even though he may have held farmable land. These "little" occupations, providing seasonal occupation as they did to a quarter of the families then, produced what can only be called the "able-bodied poor."

These working poor, however, contributed much to the overall net worth of the economy at the time. These people were extremely resourceful and adapted quickly to the changing needs. They modernized their tools, updated their products, and were able to dispatch them throughout the world cheaply. (Sounds almost like some of the laborers in third world countries today.) And the beauty of it was that the investment in their labor was extremely small. A sawmill or tannery, for example, cost only the equivalent of about four hectares of land, a mill seven hectares, and a restaurant just over four. Some industries were even less – a clogmaking or cutlery shop was worth only a quarter of a hectare of land. Straw-hat makers only needed a wooden bench and a needle, and those who made hairnets needed only a nail, a stick and a little fork. But in the hands of an industrious people these tools could enhance a family's income tremendously. In fact, in the non-harvest and planting seasons, even women and children could contribute their labor.

An interesting aside here concerns just this family labor. Even more than in farming, small industries such as weaving, hat and shoe making, provided work for the women and children. In the family context women and children were the auxiliaries and provided the manpower for home industries. They were rarely paid wages and they do not appear in the statistics, but they certainly provided most of the labor for small industries in Alsace. Most of the work did not call for great physical strength. Skill and precision were the qualities needed in work that was generally simple and easy to learn. Small industries, therefore, used labor which had up to then been the least active in the productive process, that of the unemployed women and children. An 1841 law limiting child labor was not applied in home workshops, which could not be controlled, and so in 1856 we find six-year-old children decorating shoes in several cantons at the foot of the Vosges. The development of this kind of work enabled some women to add to the family income while remaining in the home, but at the heavy price of a considerably increased workload; the need to provide subsistence was the only limit to their working hours, and thus they labored far into the

night. Imagine then, if you will, Catherine Heydinger and maybe some of her young brood laboring at all hours indoors, while John Adam tended the land and wove whenever he could.

In the Heydinger family annals, however, we find no mention, no complaint, no hint from Catherine nor from John Heydinger nor any of the girls about what transpired in the Alsace before their emigration. Either such exploitation of family labor never happened, or the family erased it from their collective memory, considering that the challenges of starting over in America were even greater. Or maybe they were infected with that Catholic stoicism found all over Europe from the Middle Ages onward that man's lot was to toil unceasingly here to reap an eternal reward in the "sweet bye-and-bye."

Could a working family have saved up enough money over time to have emigrated on their savings? Don't rule out the possibility just yet. A few more facts need to be looked into.

The other industrial model for weaving, the factory system, was also growing up beside the cottage industries. Weaving factories, either water wheel powered or steam engine powered, provided work space for weavers who moved off their land into towns where they lived and then worked for "the company." The period from the late 1830's onward was the beginning of the era of industrialization in France, and weaving was the first traditional handiwork process to be industrialized. The Alsace-Lorraine area was among the earliest in the European mainland to be thus industrialized.

So where did John Adam fit into the picture? We believe that he was a more traditional cottage industry weaver. Why? Because he came to America with too much money. Now that may sound ridiculous, but when we consider what he would have needed to emigrate with his family, it is almost impossible for him to have raised that much money from savings from having labored under the industrial factory weaving model. How so? Mainly because of the reasons listed below that indicate urban dwellers could never break even once they moved off the land. In addition, records of the time indicate that there was much labor unrest in the Alsace. Rural folk who had abandoned their former lifestyle and moved to the small villages for work discovered that they were actually worse off economically than if they had remained on the land. Why? Because their expenses actually **increased** as a result of moving to town and their means of support fell. They found themselves working harder but earning less. (A short, circular path from the mid-nineteenth to the twenty-first century again!) Hence the labor unrest and demands for increases in day wages and payment for their cloth. Had these transplanted farmers remained on the land, at least they would not have been so malnourished.

For example, while living on the farm land, they could be totally self sufficient in producing their own food. No expenses there for John Adam to feed seven mouths. A few chickens, hogs, and cattle would have provided the eggs, dairy, and meat stuffs, while the land would have produced the truck garden vegetables and orchard products needed for the family. Granted, the farms were small at the time, five to twenty hectares at most, but the extra land would have then provided the needed pasturage and area for cereal grains to support the livestock. Secondly, clothing on the farm was cheap. The raw material for the cloth was either wool raised by the farmer himself or hemp which was plentiful, cheap, and easily spun and woven. (Don't tell the authorities in this country that hemp has already been tried and proven and didn't create a pot-headed population.) The weaver-farmer was thus able to retain for his own family's use whatever cloth he needed. The women of the family would convert that raw cloth into wearable clothing at very little expense. The weaver was under no obligation to sell a specified amount of cloth, only what he wove over and above what was needed for family use. Lastly, there was no housing expense either, as the farmer's homestead was usually paid for through inheritable property and required only the normal annual upkeep and repairs.

Move to town, however, and the whole dynamics changed. Housing tended there to consist of homes with less square footage but increased cost. Only if a farmer sold out to move to town, then he had a

chance of breaking even on the cost of housing. However, if the laborer had moved from farm to town as a single person, then costs were incurred that could not make weaving profitable. The one moving had to either rent living space or purchase land and build a home in town, both costly undertakings. We don't know what the labor-economic dynamic was in the area. One could argue, for example, that the building of a new home could have been done as it is today among the Amish and Mennonite communities – the entire community pitches in and in one day erects the living space, a la an old fashioned barn raising. That would have cut the labor costs, but materials and furnishings would be another matter. To paraphrase the American poet, it would have taken a heap of weaving to build a house. And from what we know of the labor situation at the time, the wages from weaving would have left any individual or family building a new home in poverty for many years until the debt could be paid down.

Feeding the family in town was also now a fixed cost that had not been incurred while living on the land. We tend to imagine villages at the time as Currier and Ives places with neat homes surrounded by picket fences and the laundry line in the side lawn. Nothing was further from the truth. Villages were dirty, smelly places with dirt streets and very little sanitation. But remember, if the homes had fences, they were to retain a few animals being kept for food. Many families kept a small coop for chickens or a pen in which to raise a hog or two. (Consider that as late as the 1960's, some families inside the village limits of New Washington still kept chickens. We don't know when the last hog moved out.) But these animals required feed, feed which had to be bought as the transplanted farmer-weaver now owned no land on which to raise cereals. As long as grain was only pennies per bushel, weaving fingers could stay ahead of this cost. But as farm crops failed because of drought, grain prices rose, and the urban dwellers were doubly squeezed, both for their own flour and the grain for their pen animals. Finally, many urban homes did have space for a small vegetable garden to help mitigate food expenses; however, the space was usually too small on which to raise the large amount of food required to see a family through the winter by storing in a root cellar as they had on the farm. So food costs for the urban dweller consumed a large part of what the weaver earned, a cost that was never experienced while living outside of town. Urban weaving was literally a hand to mouth proposition and contributed to the malnourished population.

Finally, another part of the family's "lawn" was not actually grass but bare dirt, the wood lawn. Here the family chopped its wood and stored the ricks and cords of wood needed to heat the house and cook year round. Except in town there was a problem – no locally owned forests from which to obtain the free firewood. A farmer simply went to his woodlot to obtain the wood he needed, and by judicious forest management had a readily replenished natural source of heat, almost forever. The urban dweller, however, had a problem. Cut down the one lawn shade tree and he was done – no summer air conditioning, and no heating wood after about the first year. What to do? Pay to have logs drayed in from the countryside, stored in the side yard, and then sawn and split, as time allowed, for cooking and heating purposes. So here was another cost incurred in the towns that rural folks never had to think about. Merlebach, lying as it was so close to the Saar valley and its vast coal deposits, could have used that coal to heat homes. However, prior to about 1860, we can find no record of coal's being a commodity in the area.

Where is all this leading? The fact that we suspect that John Adam never moved to town, that he remained engaged in farming as a primary occupation with a secondary income at weaving. One of our sources, Ed Heydinger, Peter Heydinger's third son, mentioned in one of his records that it was passed down in his branch of the family that John Adam had brought \$800 dollars with him to expend on crossing and on an initial land purchase here in America. That alone was a huge sum for an immigrant to be carrying at the time! What was the source of this money? We doubt that any weaving alone could have produced such a large amount. That leaves us to conjecture that John Adam had sold land in the Alsace before coming to America. Furthermore, family size also gives us a clue as to where John Adam had lived. He and Catherine brought five children to America. A sixth had died in infancy as late as 1847. We know from French government census data that when families moved to the villages, family

size actually decreased. Farm families, however, remained stable in size throughout France at that time, averaging above seven children per couple. We suspect that had John Adam moved into town early on, there would not have been six children born live to him and Catherine.

Add to this the fact that upon settling in Ohio, John Adam purchased farm land and immediately engaged in farming. Granted, there was not a whole lot of weaving going on in Auburn Township in those days, what with a general store in the town of New Washington selling bolt cloth by the yard. But the fact that John Adam and the family so readily fell into an agricultural mode of life speaks volumes about their ability to make a living from the land, using skills which they had brought with them from their native land and their recent engagement in farming. Had he preferred to weave, John Adam had other places he could have settled in America, New England especially. Then we Heydingers would all be burring our final R's now and dining with the DAR. Instead, John Adam chose to come to Middle America, to an agriculture-only area and do what he obviously knew best – farm. That he was eventually successful at it and gradually increased his land holdings says he never really gave it up in the Alsace. Which brings us back to the money, that total sum of eight hundred dollars in his pocket in addition to cash needed for other incidentals. We hereby speculate that he came by that amount by liquidating land in Merlebach, lots of land. A single lot, even with a home on it in town, would not have yielded that sum.

(It's also interesting to note that a great nineteenth century philosopher who was present at the birth of this capitalistic, exploitive labor system was born and raised not too far from Merlebach, in a little town called Trier on the German side of the border and about thirty miles north of Merlebach. He escaped his lot, moved to England where he wrote a book, an expose, if you will, on the transformation of life in Europe. The book? *Das Kapital*. The man? Karl Marx. While much of his youthful life was spent in college towns, it was in France while visiting the Alsace that he came into first hand contact with the impoverishing social conditions that industrialization was creating. John Adam and his family, however, through their industriousness, seem to have escaped this situation.)

Calculating the Expenses of the Move

It is helpful to remember that in calculating his expenses and his chances of survival in America, John Adam had to insure that he had enough money put by to enable him and the family to survive at least eighteen months without an income. The family had left Europe in October, sailing from Le Havre in 1850, and had arrived in America long overdue in early January of 1851. The journey to the New Washington area could not begin immediately as the Erie Canal system and Lake Erie were frozen. (Lake shipping that year, in fact, did not begin until April 13th from Buffalo NY to the Sandusky area.) Upon making their way to Chatfield and then New Washington in the spring of 1851, the family first traveled to the Delphos area to scout land there. However, because of the extremely wet conditions there on the edge of the Black Swamp, they returned to Auburn Township right on the edge of another swamp, the present day muck land between Willard and North Auburn. They purchased land there that already had a cabin standing on it and moved in, too late to plant and harvest a crop and earn income for that season. A vegetable garden would have been all they could have put out to get them through the approaching winter. It would not be until the spring of 1852 that they could purchase seed and begin the actual farming. In the meantime, they had to acquire the necessary farm animals and implements needed to survive on the homestead. In short, it would be eighteen hard months of constant capital outlay with no income. But a judicious John Adam and a Provident God got them through that hardship time.

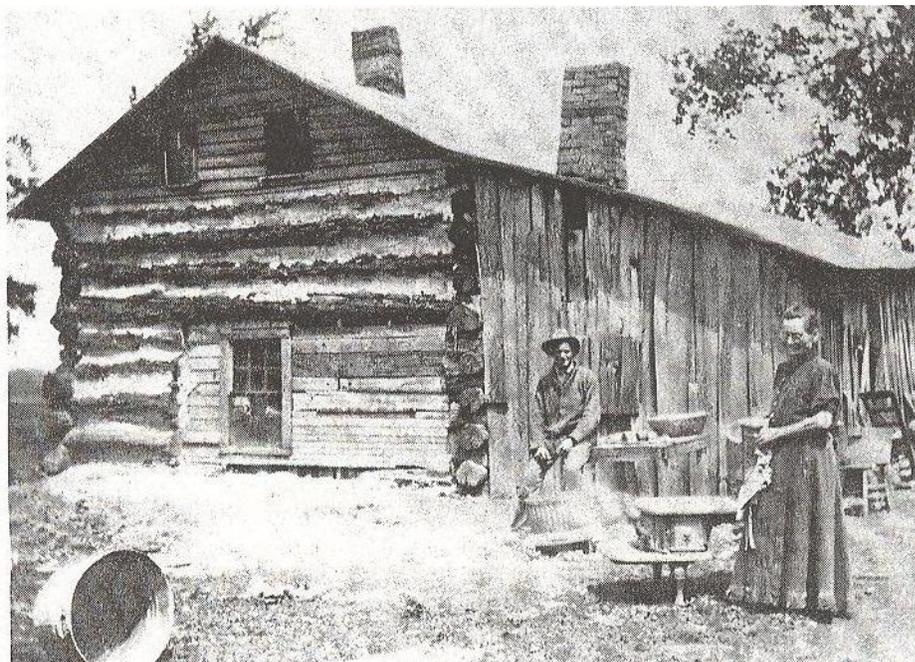
Land and Housing Costs

Calculating land cost around 1850 is relatively easy. Good farm land in America, Ohio especially, was selling for a dollar and a quarter per acre in 1850. (The records of early farm land purchases in what is now known as Crawford County can be found in the Wooster, Ohio county court house.) A family needed

at least 100 acres to survive, but a quarter-section, 160 acres, really was better as it afforded space for future growth of the family and potential splitting of lands for the next generation. So roughly two hundred dollars would be needed for farm land and had to be laid aside for that and nothing else.

The cost of erecting a home was minimal. The family would have first lived temporarily with relatives who had emigrated earlier or with other German speaking families until either a house was purchased, in town, or a new one erected, if living out on the farm. Generally, the new home was of simple log construction, a single room about 16 X 20 feet in size, with a sleeping loft in the attic area, and could be erected within a single summer season. Trees had to be felled, logs dressed and hauled to the site location, usually only a few hundred yards away, then arranged and hoisted into place. Neighbors always pitched in to help with the heavy lifting. The men of the house, in this case John Adam and John Heydinger, would then be left to use their carpentry skills to roof the dwelling, split the shingles from white oak, and construct the fireplace. The women and children would have helped with the mortaring and chinking of the logs to make the home less drafty in the winter.

As luck would have it, however, the first piece of property purchased by John Adam had a cabin standing on it already. It had been erected in 1833 by Ludwig Haeberle on land owned by the German poet Nikolaus Lenau. This had to have been an unexpected savings for the Heydingers, but making the place habitable for a family instead of a bachelor man would take some doing.



This is the earliest known picture of the original Heydinger cabin erected on Young Road just west of Mother of Sorrows Church at North Auburn. The couple in the picture are NOT the parents of the present owner, Mark Heydinger.

Furnishing the home would have entailed a little bit of money. If the family desired glass for the window or two, it could be purchased in town, as could any metal needed for fireplace irons and andirons. We know that John Adam brought over a large trunk but we cannot be sure of its contents. Did it contain the necessary cooking utensils, eating utensils and dishware needed for the family? We don't know. We do know that John Adam made his own bed and that it lasted at least until the property of John Heydinger was put up for sale. (A younger member of the Heydinger family purchased it at auction and it may still be in the family somewhere.) Clothing would certainly have been transported in the trunk, enough to get

the family through until a spinning wheel and loom could be constructed and new duds either made or bought in town. A curtain or two might be in order but certainly not a necessity. All other furnishings would have been made of wood by John Adam and young John, Joseph having died shortly after the arrival in America.

Sailing Expenses

Then there was the cost of articles to transport. There was no charge for shipping personal belongings, just a per person fare. Therefore, the shipping companies attempted to increase revenue by other means. We learn from several sources exactly what émigrés were expected to purchase from ship services and also to provide for themselves while on the journey.

As there were three classes of passengers on these great sailing ships – first and second class and steerage - rates were different, about the way airlines configure their rate structure today, a ratio of about three to one being the differential between first or business classes and the coach section. In sailing days, however, the differential could be as high as ten times between first class and steerage. So Europe's poor were consigned to the hold. *Titanic*, anyone? First class passengers on the ships, therefore, needed to bring very little by way of provisions and even less for food preparation. They had individual staterooms, narrow and cramped to be sure, but with privacy. Their food was prepared and served to them either in their quarters or in a common eating area.

General steerage passengers, the lower classes such as the Heydingers would have been, had much more difficult conditions. In some respects they were only one step up from the great slave ships of earlier centuries. They lived in common areas below decks, in an area of stifling heat and almost no ventilation, especially on days of rough seas when portholes and hatches could not be opened. The area along the hull to the outside of both port and starboard sides was lined with double berths, which in essence became the "home" for the duration of the voyage for each passenger, or in the case of children, two or more to a bunk. The married and those with children had a separate section reserved for them but still little privacy. The great emigrating unmarried masses slept together, sometimes two or more to a bunk, though male and female quarters were separated by a low wall. Toileting facilities were especially bad, usually a one or two-holer in the aft section of the ship. There was again almost no privacy, though male and female facilities were separated. Imagine the lines in the morning! Below deck, for use on stormy days, was merely a low screened-in area surrounding the pisseur which may or may not have come equipped with a seat. During severe storms these pots were thrown about, their contents sloped, and the dank, dismal, noxious air became even worse. Not to mention the vomit during such tempests!

Most of the ships carrying emigrants in 1850 were really not even designed as passenger liners. That would come only later after the invention of the huge steam powered liners. Even though the ships had French or German sounding names, they were usually built in American ship yards, mostly in New England or Baltimore. The ships usually average about 124 feet in length, and were twenty feet wide and forty-some feet deep from top deck to bottom of the hull. All the holds were designed primarily to carry cargo from America to European ports, the greatest export being cotton. Rather than face the prospects of returning home empty or partially filled, the captains would load the cargo going back to America first, level it, then over the top build a temporary floor of rough planks – no sense planing them because they were only temporary. However, these planks became the floor of the steerage section. In most cases the headroom to the bottom of the top deck was only a little over five feet, so cramped and huddled would be the two adjectives best describing the occupants of these spaces. But remember, on the great slave ships carrying human cargos, such decks were multi-tiered and only three feet apart, so the Heydingers and their fellows were actually living in the lap of luxury, even if it was a stooped crossing. Also remember that the Heydinger boys had been rejected for Napoleon's military service for being too short, so we'd say accommodations were about right for them.

For all of these luxuries, what could the average passenger expect to pay for the crossing? It varied, of course, from company to company and even from decade to decade. The earliest immigrants, riding the earliest waves in the 1820's, for example, could expect to pay anywhere from three to four hundred francs. But due to the increase in trade and thus the number of ships sailing between France and America after the final Napoleonic conflicts, fares by the early 1830's had dropped to about 120 to 150 francs and remained there for decades. Why not charge more with the increased passenger demand? Because the ships would have been sailing to America half empty anyway. Passengers, as we shall see, were an afterthought and a way of filling the empty ships' holds to earn the shipping lines and their captains a little extra money on what would have been a deadhead trip anyway. With immigration increasing, there was increasing competition between the captains for human cargo, thus the price drop. Good timing, John Adam!

All told, then, the fare for this Atlantic crossing was to set John Adam back between 840 to 1350 francs. Two adults, please, and five children! Sorry, no family rates! We suspect that John Adam was stuck for less than the maximum, but at least for 1000 francs.

So what does that mean in modern terms? Figuring the exchange rate is always tricky at best when looking back into history. In fact, banging one's head against a wall is more fun. The problem is that we don't know what form of currency John Adam was using. He could have used German marks, or French francs, or Swiss francs, or even the Strassborg guilder. (John Adam's favorite song here in America, according to grandson Peter Heydinger, was O Strassborg! Maybe he carried guildens in his pocket, too!) All this different coinage was in circulation at the same time and in the same places. People sort of carried and computed exchange tables in their heads, much like today's waitress in a Windsor casino can tell to the cent how much she has been stiffed on a tip by the American who leaves U.S. dollars instead of Canadian.

So to compute John Adam's passage costs, we'll convert to approximate value in US dollars at the time. The conversion rate then was about 5 francs to the dollar, meaning John Adam would have been in for at least \$200 American in 1850 terms. However, that figure means almost nothing. A more realistic comparison would be how much in goods and services would the average \$28 per ticket in 1850 have purchased. It works out to about 20 days of wages for the labor of a craftsman, assuming it was all saved and nothing spent, or the price of six sheep, or the bread made from about 16 bushels of wheat. Now multiply all this by seven passengers, and one begins to see what John Adam had to raise from the sale of his property. About 140 days of labor computes to almost half a year's labor, no matter what time period. And 42 sheep make no mean flock either. Loaves of bread – over 1000 of them – would feed the family for over a year also. Any way one computes it, the cost of freedom from all that ailed Europe in 1850 was expensive. Earlier we saw that John Adam needed at least \$200 to purchase his farm, so the voyage for all seven of the family cost about the same as an American farm would.

So, for those of you keeping score, John Adam needed at least a year's worth of wages just to buy his land in America, another year's worth to punch the boat tickets, and we haven't even talked about transportation costs from Alsace to Le Havre, their point of disembarkation, or from New York, their arrival point, to their final destination in the New Washington area.

Merlebach to LeHavre

How did the Heydingers make their way from their recently sold homestead in Merlebach to the port of Le Havre, and what did it cost? We don't know for sure. There were many routes they could have traveled, but we do have a clue from an oral family tradition that says they went via Paris where supposedly John Adam purchased a crucifix and a shotgun. That information alone rules out several of their routes and means of travel. But it does raise another interesting aside before we move on. The whole concept of a personal insurance policy had not yet been invented in Europe. The cynical among us

could say that John Adam was covering his bets – the crucifix was intended to curry divine favor and protection on the upcoming dangerous ocean voyage, and the shotgun was back up. Cost? We have no way of knowing, but one, if not both, methods worked. The family survived the trip intact.

So what would have lured the Heydingers to Paris instead of taking other routes available at the time? Upon the Merlebach area in 1850, a host of so-called “runners” had descended, most in the employ of shipping companies, others of inns and lodging establishments in all the port cities – Hamburg, Bremen, and Le Havre. There was money to be made from directing émigrés through one’s own port. In addition to the cost of the tickets, there were lodging, food, and provisioning costs. The runners’ jobs were to direct folks from the interior of the country to the coast, and once there to specific lodging and provisioning areas. They lured folks with promises of Eden-like conditions in America. If they did their jobs correctly, the ships could fill easily, and everyone profited – innkeepers, provisioners, and the captains.

Most captains, however, would not sail on a set schedule. They preferred full holds. However, they had no way of knowing when their human cargo holds would be filled since so many variables determined that speed. First, many miles separated the villages from the ports. So a family sailing with many possessions would have to transport them to the port in one of three ways – by boat, by trains, or by ox cart over unpaved roads. Imagine the delays, if you will, at certain times of the year when rains would have made most roads mud-filled cart traps. Swollen rivers could also hamper families’ plans to make their way to the coast. One can see why no set sailing schedule could be maintained. Railroads, too, were in their infancy and hardly reliable. It wasn’t even until the 1880’s that the most advanced railroading county, Great Britain, invented the concept of railroad time schedules and printed schedule books.

So what costs were involved in getting to Le Havre? We can rule out the waterway possibility because there was no navigable river transport system between Merlebach and Paris. The topography of the land and direction of water flow mitigated against that. Even allowing for the few canals in existence in the region at the time, there was simply no direct east-west water route.

So did the family walk or ride the rails? If they walked, there was still a problem of transporting their trunk and any other “carry on” loose objects. Merlebach lay, by land routes at the time, over 110 miles, as the crow flies, from Paris, a long way to carry a trunk by hand. It is more probable to believe that they hired a cart and horse or ox to transport their goods. After all, many others were doing it. An account from Le Havre at the time described the lamentable sight of Bavarian villagers traveling toward the French port of Le Havre:

The long files of carts that you meet every mile, carrying the whole property of the poor wretches, who are about to cross the Atlantic...piled with the scanty boxes containing their few effects, and on the top of all, the women and children, the sick and den, and all who are too exhausted with the journey to walk.

Not a pretty sight to be sure. But where did they obtain a cart?

Of course, one could argue that perhaps they brought their own cart and draught animal to save money. Not so fast, though. One’s own horse or ox would need daily feed, either purchased daily on the way or carried along from home. Then, considering the distance, even under optimum travel conditions, the family would have been a week or more on the road. Horses pulling a wagon could make about twenty miles in a day, oxen less. That would have required daily food and lodging costs plus livery expenses for the animal(s). Not to mention the disposal issue at the end of the trip. What to do with a horse/ox and cart in a city teeming with hundreds of families in similar situations? No one was leading teams and empty carts back to Alsace to reload for a return trip. So the cost of the horse and cart would have been simply lost.

No, a better clue to how John Adam obtained a cart can be found in the records of the trading companies at the time. Le Havre, in 1850, owed its very existence to America. Remember “King Cotton” in the American South? The biggest purchasers of Southern cotton were the weaving companies of France, gradually being set up since the late 1830’s in the Alsatian region. As farming income had plateaued and farm space was maxed out for the available population, other occupations needed to be found or the people would have literally starved to death. Weaving factories thus sprung up all over the Alsace after the invention of the steam engines made it possible to power a whole building full of looms off one engine. So it was the American cotton that built up the port of Le Havre in the 1840’s and led to a huge traffic of ox carts from the port to the towns and villages east all across the Alsace. Picture wagon trains of cotton bales being transported east and then weeks later the empty carts returning to Le Havre for more cotton.

It was these carts that could have enabled the Heydinger family to make part of its journey to Le Havre. Except we have evidence that John Adam did not follow the straighter route, Le Havre to the Saar region of Alsace. He detoured through Paris, a more southern route, and that complicates the trip. We have discovered no records of the time of the cost of hiring such a cart, but suspect that it was rather inconsiderable, a handful of francs at most.

A best case scenario, then, for making the trip could have involved the railroads also, but not completely. The Heydingers left Merlebach for Le Havre, probably in early September of 1850. They would have been on foot, like the rest of the emigrants, for about thirty miles, a good long day, maybe two. A major road led from Forbach, through Merlebach, and thence westward to Metz. So the probable path would have been to travel by one of these rented cotton carts from Merlebach, through Forbach up to Metz.

Once at Metz, the trip grew easier, but only for a day. A railroad had just been completed from Metz down to Nancy, a distance of about fifty miles, following the meandering valley of the Moselle River. By rail this part of the journey would have consumed a day. At Nancy they would have to disembark and from there continue west toward Paris, back on foot or cart again. The next train spur began about 70 miles away at a small town called Viltry-le-francois. This again would have necessitated either walking or carting their goods between the two sites. It makes sense, then, that they probably hired the transportation to take them to wherever the train loaded at Viltry. There the track began again, proceeding northwest through Chalons, then due west to Epernay and finally back southwest to Paris. Again no records or timetables survive from then to determine the total elapsed travel time needed for the trip. The walking-carting part between the train rides would have taken at least two days, though.

So, leaving Merlebach on, say Monday morning, the family would have walked all that day and part of Tuesday to arrive at Metz. If the train were “on time,” whatever that means, they could have been in Nancy by Wednesday evening. Early on Thursday morning, if a cart were available, they could have left for Viltry, and under best case scenario, arrived maybe late Saturday. Overnight in Viltry, early to Mass on Sunday morning, and then take the rest of the day off - trains did not run on Sunday in 1850. Up early on Monday, then, to the AAA office for train tickets to Paris for seven adults and their trunk and carry-ons. In all, the last trek by train would have entailed slightly over two hundred miles, in a zigzagging route following river valleys to the northwest, then catching the tributaries more westward to the Seine. It’s doubtful that this part of the trip would have taken less than part of two days and an overnight. Whether they slept aboard in their seats – non-tiltback – or in an inn in some remote village we don’t know. About Wednesday of week two would have been a good estimate for arrival in Paris. So a good ten days from home, still dressed in the same sweaty, soiled clothing, they arrived at the beginning of the next part of their journey. Cost? Not totally known but maybe fifty francs at most for rentals, tickets, and daily food for ten travel days. Most families of the time traveled with about two weeks’ worth of food from home.

Paris

How long would they have remained in Paris? We don't know. We do know that because of the huge number of emigrating German and Alsations through Paris, there was a rather large commune of German speaking wayfarers already established there. Here the families could find temporary respite from their journey. Remember that the Heydingers were only a minimum of ten days out from home, probably a few more. Others coming up from Switzerland or Bavaria or points further east would have been many more days on the road and feeling even more destitute. Interesting, isn't it, that when we think of how America was settled and the great wagon trains moving westward and taking several months, we forget that there were similar "cart trains" all across Europe, too, feeding the great river ports their human cargo.

How long the Heydingers would have tarried in Paris would have depended upon whether they traveled alone or in company of others leaving their home area at the same time. A peek at the ship *Zampa*'s list of passengers does not give us any clues as to whether those other passengers labeled as from Germany were their neighbors or not. The Heydingers probably remained till the following week. Why do we say that? Because they would have needed to replenish their food and water supplies, maybe find an inn to refresh themselves and launder their clothing, and then make the arrangements for the trip north to Le Havre on the English Channel. It's now approaching October, though, so they had better not while away there too long or they'll be stuck in Le Havre all winter. A worse place to winter over God had not yet created!

To LeHavre

The Heydingers were in luck. There were two ways they could have made this leg of the journey to the great port city of Le Havre. They could, of course, have taken a river steam boat down the Seine, but as luck would have it, a railroad had opened up in late 1847 connecting Paris with Le Havre, via Rouen. Which did John Adam choose for his family? We don't know. It was not an easy choice. The rail was quicker but more expensive, the boat more leisurely, more time consuming, but cheaper by far. Knowing the Heydinger penchant for squeezing every nickel until the Indian rode the buffalo, we'd say John Adam opted for the boat. But that's just a guess. So what was in store for him if he had?

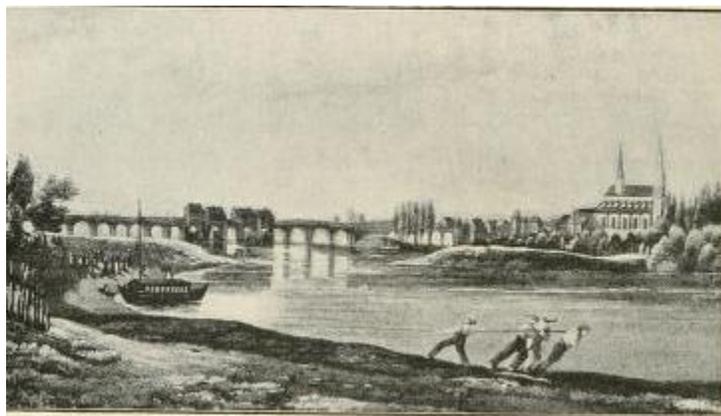
There was a tidal bore in the Seine River, the *mascaret* it was called. When shallow rivers with just the right bottom topography enter a large body of water subject to tides, the incoming tidal force can form a raised *upstream* flow of water, the bore, which in some cases can have a visible frontal wave up to twenty feet high. It's like a mini-tsunami or tidal wave. In the case of the Seine, the bore often made it from Le Havre all the way to Rouen, 80 km away at a height of 7.3 m in places. That's a long way to surf upstream! The bore was actually responsible for 217 river ship sinkings between 1798 and 1850, better than four per year! Remember that the boats on the Seine were not the deep draught, ocean going ships but flat bottomed, of a shallow draught, and a rather square-prowed craft susceptible to sinking if encountering unusually high waves or bores on a river. Think of a bar of Ivory soap floating placidly on your bathwater until you suddenly plopped your leg or butt into the water. For experienced river rats, a sudden shaking would amount to nothing, but for farm folk turned weavers, land lubbers all their lives and never nearer water than a bridge crossing, such a jolt would have been fearful indeed. But it would have been mere preparation for the ocean crossing awaiting them.

Had they chosen to take the train up to Le Havre, what would they have encountered? A cool, sooty ride in open air cars, through some of the most beautiful landscape that France has to offer. It beat walking though, avoided the uncertainties of the river, and could have been more relaxing. Elapsed time would have been comparable to the boat trip, for trains had to stop every twenty miles or so to take on more water and sometimes fuel, not to mention more passengers toting luggage, runny nose children, small animals, disease. Every small town had a depot, and thus the idea of the modern bullet trains zipping along was totally foreign. Towns needed service, the railroads provided it, and considerable time was eaten up in going even a hundred miles.



Third Class Carriage by French artist Honore Daumier, 1867, showing the miserable masses of huddling low class people using the public transportation system in France.

A trip down the Seine today can be a leisurely week long cruise or a two day jaunt by barge and cargo ships. We believe that in 1850, however, several days would have been needed for the trip, even by steamboat. The river was not a straight shot to the sea as many maps show. Rather, it was a meandering maze of riffles and rapids, huge sinuous ox bows as tight as a shoestring bow, narrow channels cutting between high cliffs in places, then widening out to broad expanses, detouring through locks and canals necessitated where even flat bottomed keels scraped the gravel shoals and bars, then finally in the last ten miles making a sudden headlong rush to the sea. If a body had a fishing pole and all the time in the world, it would be a pretty enough journey, what with the picturesque villages with their towering churches, Romanesque bridges spanning the waters in sweeping solid stone rising above the spring floods, the sleepy towns embracing the banks and giving a life of their own to the river, even the animals wandering to the shallows to drink and gaze sleepily at any craft passing by.



The Seine at Poissy, showing towmen pulling a craft through the shallows.

We don't know what face the Seine showed the Heydingers in that fall of 1850, but one thing is for sure: they had never been on water before, and if they thought that the river was a preparation for the ocean leg of their voyage – WRONG! But we're getting ahead of ourselves. First they had to deal with the mayhem that was called Le Havre.

Le Havre

Le Havre, The Harbor, as in THE Harbor town, the Harbor of Harbors. This French city is located at the mouth of the Seine on the eastern side of the Cherbourg Peninsula, site of the Normandy D-Day invasion a century later. It wasn't an old city, having been founded only in 1517 by Francois I, king of France, as a point of disembarkation for colonizing the New World. But it didn't take long for it to become a major European port and a stinking hell-hole of a festering swamp. It had been built upon a marsh area, drained and raised slightly at the base of a great mastiff of a rock cliff. It was bordered on the west by the English Channel, the south by the mouth of the Seine and the north by the coast of the sea.



The city in 1850, the time period in which we are interested, consisted mostly of docks and shorefront inns, tawdry flophouses, rigging lofts, and warehouses. It served as the main port of entry for cargo ships from America; in fact, without America, the city would have died. Because of high taxes on the Rhine River shipping, it was cheaper for companies to offload cargos from America at Le Havre and then from there ox cart the cargos eastward to Alsace and even Germany. So docks were pile high with bales of cotton and teamsters jostling their oxen through a maze of buildings, screaming commands at truly dumb animals and their draymen as well. The odors of rotting fish and saltwater, as well as tons of manure and rotting grain on streets and docks as well, surely offended the French nostrils and those of newcomers from the east like the Heydingers, who had to have arrived at an overwhelming scene of acres of seacraft with masts and rigging towering higher than any trees they had ever seen in Merlebach. Gruss Gott, Katerina, was ist hier geschehen! Oh, my God, Catherine, what have we gotten ourselves into here!

The Heydingers were not alone in their initial distress and sense of generally being overwhelmed. Here were simple dirt farmers from all over Germany, the Alsace, and even Switzerland encountering for the first time the taste of raw urban life. Paris had been beautiful compared with this cesspool of urbanity. None of them had any idea of how long they would be trapped in this hell hole. We know that in 1850, upwards of 25,000 Germans alone passed through the port, most between the first of March until the middle of September – a seven months invasion of land lubbers in a city ill prepared with facilities to handle the human traffic. Inns were crowded, with several people sleeping to a bed; latrines were

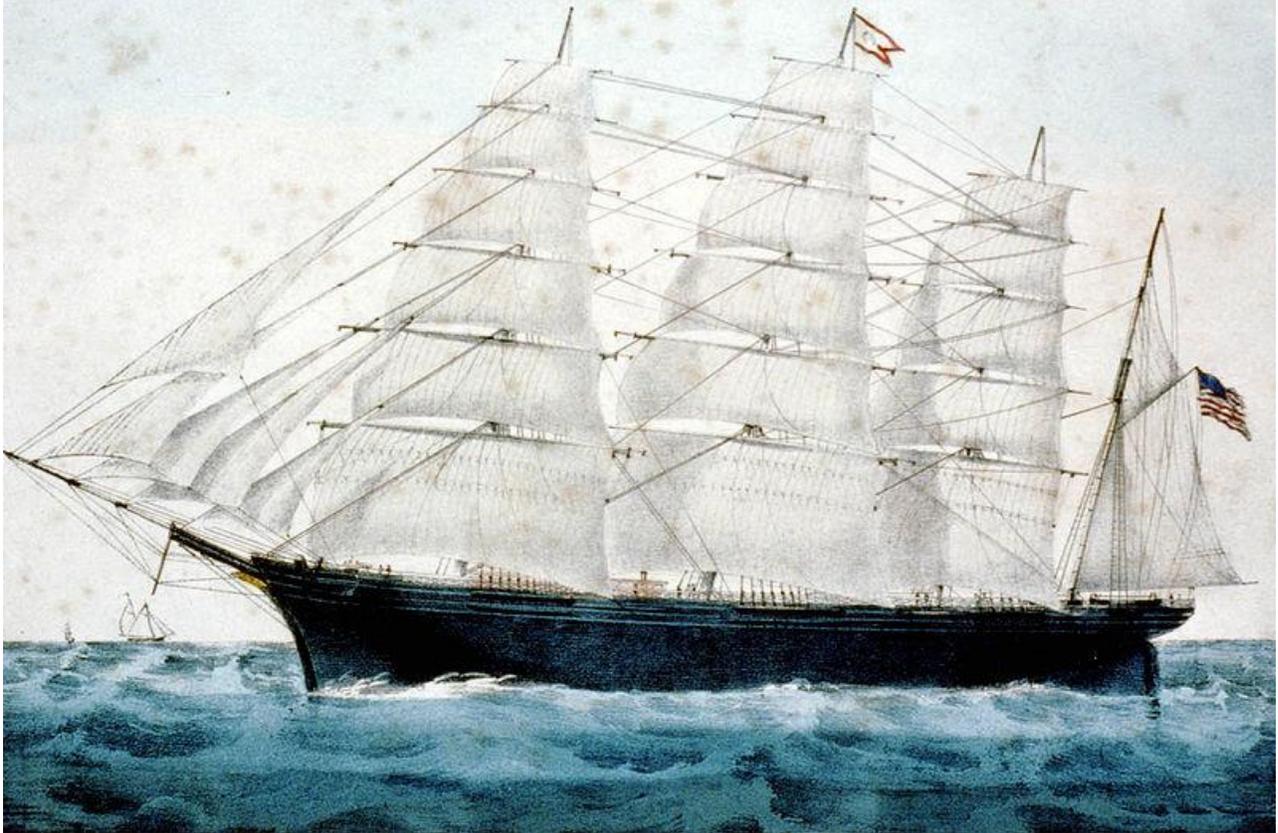
dumping directly into the bay, polluting the waters; provisions were usually plentiful but expensive, for a ten-day supply of food from home was usually exhausted by Le Havre. Hunger and thirst, always the enemies of travel in any day, haunted the newly arrived and made them easy prey for hustlers. The lucky ones had, before leaving their hometowns in the east, read one or more of the traveler's handbooks circulating in the country, warning the citizens of the pitfalls that awaited them, and often filled with pronunciation guides of the several languages the German speakers would encounter. We can't know whether John Adam had ever seen one of these books – or could have read one had it dropped into his lap. But nothing, not even the nineteenth century version of Rick Steves' *Backdoor through Europe* could have fully prepared them. Was this a harbinger of things to come – the New York to which most were headed? If so, many a vow had to have been made right there on the final shores of Europe any would ever see to get in and out fast.



The port side scene of mass confusion confronting all emigrants as they sought passage to the New World.

Shocked but ever resilient, John Adam set about feeding his family, finding affordable lodging, and then finding a ship's captain who still had room for a family of seven. Most ship's captains would not set sail on a return trip to America until a full complement of passengers was reached. But reaching a bargain on the cost of the passage and the necessary provisions was not so simple. Each ship had its own rules with the ship's master the sole arbiter. The master set the price, assigned the space in the steerage, and determined the amount of provisions needed and from whom to purchase the necessaries. In that respect the émigrés were more or less at the mercy of the master.

After searching for a bit, John Adam seems to have located and contracted with the master of the barque *Zampa*, Jean Alexander Vanier. The *Zampa* had already made one crossing earlier in 1850, departing Le Havre in March of 1850 and with the ship's manifest being filed in New York on May 27th. There is no record of when it departed New York back to Le Havre nor with what cargo. Since New York was a major commodity exchange center for cotton in 1850, we can safely surmise that she returned to Le Havre with her hold filled with cotton. We do know that she was fully unloaded, re-provisioned for another crossing, loaded with whatever cargo was going to New York, and then retro-fitted for passenger transport. By mid-October, she was again ready to sail, waiting only for a full passenger listing.



A French barque of the type build between 1835 and 1855, depicted fully rigged and at sea. These craft were built for speed and measured on average about 175 feet in length, 19 feet in width, with a single deck topside and a depth of about 48 feet from gunwale to keel. The Zampa was laden with 125 passengers and on the lower side of between twelve and twenty-five crew. All these people called this ship "home" for the 67 days it took to reach New York in late 1850.

The *Zampa* was a seaworthy craft, a three-masted, square rigged barque of 366 tons and a depth of about 16 meters. She had been built in 1837 at Nantes, on the west coast of France and records of her were found from an 1847 registry from Le Havre. Most craft from Le Havre, even those with French sounding names, were actually built in American shipyards and then became part of the mercantile fleet plying the waves between a pre-Civil War America of growing prosperity and the former mother countries of Western Europe. But the *Zampa* and nine other ships sailing from Le Havre in the 1850's had been French built. These craft were the backbone of trans-Atlantic trade in the era before steamships, a compromise ship, so to speak, that maximized profits for her owners. Larger, faster craft existed, some four masted fully rigged but requiring three times as many crewmen to manage. The *Zampa*, by contrast, could sail fully rigged with only a ten man crew; usually, though, about a dozen apprentices also sailed, literally learning the ropes. They were only slightly slower in crossing, averaging about 43 days between Le Havre and New York in good weather. It was to this ship that John Adam would trust his family's fortunes.



Special-Agentur
der regelmäßigen amerik. Postschiffe
zwischen

Havre & New-York.

Regelmäßige Abfahrten von Havre am 4., 11., 19. u. 27. eines jeden Monats.

Im Monat März fahren ab:

Am 4. März das Post-Schiff **New-York**, Capitain Thompson, 1000 Tonnen.
Am 11. März das Post-Schiff **S. M. Fox**, Capitain Waskins, 1500 Tonnen.
Am 19. März das Post-Schiff **St. Nicolas**, Capitain Bragdon, 1000 Tonnen.
Am 27. März das Post-Schiff **Bavaria**, Capitain Bayler, 1000 Tonnen.

Unsere Auswanderer werden durch zuverlässige Conducteurs bis Havre begleitet.

Die Special-Agentur:

Chrystie, Schloessmann u. Comp.
in Ludwigshafen a. Rhn., Stehl u. Havre.

(479)

Nähere Auskunft ertheilt unser Agent, Herr

Louis Kraus in Freiburg i. S.

An advertisement for ship's passage from Le Havre to New York from the early 1850's. This ad shows four different sailings, each about a week apart in March, listing the captains of each ship and the gross tonnage. Notice that the sailings began in early March and that the ship company was boasting of regular, dependable departures (Regelmässige Abfahrten) between Europe and New York. For that time and for sailing ships, that was quite a boast.

As far as food and drink were concerned, there was no ship-provided service. Steerage passengers – that would include the Heydingers - had two choices only for menu – bring their own stock of provisions or purchase them from the ship's larders. The most the ship master was required to provide was three quarts of water daily per passenger over the age of fourteen. After that, passengers were given guidelines as to how much they were to bring aboard. They were advised as follows: per week, each passenger should be provisioned with 2 ½ lbs of bread or biscuit, 1 lb of wheat flour, 5 lbs of oatmeal, 2 lbs of rice, 2 oz. of tea, ½ lb of sugar and ½ lb of molasses. In addition, passengers were also advised to take aboard as much as 6 lbs of bacon, 2 ½ lbs butter, 4 lb of loaf, hard baked, extra tea; 2 lbs brown sugar, salt, soap, and bread soda.

Do the math, and one will find a VERY large trunk would have been required to hold the provisions. Actually, most ships provided barrels to store and transport the materials. The average crossing time of 43 days would be six weeks of materials. Laws however, required that extra be carried, enough to provision for the longest possible crossing, about 70 days – a full ten weeks of provisions per passenger. So for all the figures given above, multiply by ten per person and then by seven for the whole family. Flour, then, would total ten pounds per passenger or a sack of 70 pounds for the family. Sugar would be half that amount, and the oatmeal – my God, five pounds per person, times 10 weeks times seven persons, and we're talking some serious stowage problems. That was the bad news. The good news was that there was no charge for shipping any goods or provisions, just passengers. So the 350 pounds of oatmeal for the Heydingers alone would have required quite a bit of space. The worst news, of course, is that every ship was subject to being flooded below decks at least once per crossing. Thus the problem of keeping provisions dry. All passengers were advised to fasten wooden slats or legs to the bottom of their trunks to keep them and their contents above the wet flooring. Put yourself in the place of a dirt-farmer-turned-weaver, with absolutely no previous experience in such matters, and in an age without waterproof plastic wraps, sheeting, or Rubbermaid containers and you can begin to appreciate what faced John Adam and Catherine as they tried to insure survival of themselves and their children for a month and a half at sea. One false calculation and the family would be at peril.

As for food preparation on board ship, each family was responsible for feeding itself daily. Each ship had common cooking areas where families or individuals could prepare their food. Imagine, if you will, the lines that formed early and continued much of the day for an opportunity to use the community cook stove – usually an area of a solid bricked-in enclosure, grated, and heated by charcoal or wood. Ventilation below deck was extremely poor, and most suffered the entire voyage from pulmonary conditions. Woe to the passage that encountered many days of rough seas – no cook fires could be made, thus making all meals cold. (For that matter, no lanterns could be used for lighting as swinging lanterns in a storm invited fire. So cold, wet, and dark, locked in below deck for days at a time. Cruise ship, anyone?) The oatmeal could be used then for a thin, cold gruel or porridge. Such gales could sometimes continue for four or five days at a stretch. Only nursing infants then had benefit of warm meals!

The Heydinger clan, therefore, had the choice of provisioning themselves or purchasing on board. We have no evidence as to which John Adam preferred but suspect it may have entailed a bit of both methods. His family was four adults and three teens, and food for forty five or more days would have created a massive logistical problem – especially in days before canned or boxed goods. Just to keep watch over the provisions alone would have been problematical. In fact, we have one record surviving in the family oral tradition that the family trunk had been tampered with, necessitating thereafter constant vigilance. So we suspect the family began by using its own provisions and ended depending upon the ship's larders. However, the fact that the ship exceeded its normal 43 day sailing time by almost a month meant that not only the Heydingers but all aboard had the grumbellies by the time they sighted land.

Many accounts of the time also reported another scam run by the ship's captains and pursers. They tried to con individuals and families into purchasing "mess kits," most of which they didn't need or already had. These consisted of a tin cup, tin washbasin, a tin can for holding water, a tin mug, plate, knife, fork and spoon and a nondescript utensil which was, for want of a better description, the nineteenth century seafaring equivalent of a "barf bag." There is no record of whether John Adam's family was conned in this manner, but enough passengers were that laws were enacted to protect the unwitting rural rubes from the predations of the wiser charlatans found in all the great port cities. Unfortunately the laws were enacted the year *after* the Heydingers emigrated! In addition to eating and drinking utensils, the sales people tried to sell passengers soap and towels as well as tick mattresses, stuffed with either straw or seaweed, that could be rolled up by day. Seaweed was softer, but sand had a way of working its way up out of it and through the batting so by the end of a voyage one could have his shorts full of grit.

Blankets, too, would be needed for the voyage, for the Atlantic was cold in any season. A coarse black covering could be had for 12s 6p and usually luridly bore the name of the ship painted in bright yellow and red. When the poet Emma Lazarus penned her immortal words for the Statue of Liberty decades later, her reference to the "huddled masses" was alluding to the passengers of all classes huddled for most of the passage on deck or below, buried beneath these skeins of black wool. All the black and white photos from the era show only eyes and heads peering from the edges of these blankets. Again, we have no information as to whether John Adam purchased these necessities. What we do know for sure is that Joseph, John Adam's second son who actually survived the journey, died shortly thereafter due to the effects of exposure on the way over. (Would it be too romantic to imagine that he gallantly gave his life in sharing his blanket with his sisters? We'll never know, but he or she who would ever turn these accounts to a novel would have grist for a tear jerker chapter here.)

A word must be added here about the general sanitation situation on board. We have already mentioned the general state of the latrines, but even worse would have been the cabin and sleeping area. Every crossing account includes lengthy passages about how sea sick passengers always became on the way over. But remember, these were usually rural folks traveling on water for the very first – and for many the only time – so even moderate rolls caused roiling stomachs. Most became sick during the night and soon re-filled their tin containers with that evening's supper. Now add to that the fact that in rolling seas

passengers could not make their way to the latrines on board. So pots were provided for that purpose. But also keep in mind that in rough seas these pots were thrown about and contents liberally splashed around. Finally, consider that all parts of the ship were wooden and that wood absorbs liquids and odors readily but surrenders them only slowly. What do you have? A recipe for “eau de jaques,” or the essence of outhouse bouquet. A day or two of this one might tolerate but a month or more of breathing such air and even the pig sty starts to smell good. There was absolutely no way of buying one’s way out of such experiences.

And so began the second great leg of their journey, this one across the sea at a time of year not conducive to good passage.

It has been difficult, therefore, to judge exactly how much John Adam would have had to set aside for provisioning his family for the journey. The bottom line is that the \$800 dollar figure that has been passed down in the family would have seen them safely from Merlebach, to Paris, to Le Havre, across the Atlantic to New York, and then from there to Ohio where their first land purchase could be made. Using caution in guarding their belongings and exercising frugality in their spending habits, the Heydinger family could have survived all legs of their grand excursion until they arrived on land to call their own and could begin doing what they knew best, establish a farming way of life in a land that gave them the opportunity to prosper but guaranteed them nothing. But armed with their faith, a solid work ethic, and a desire to be free from the encumbrances that had weighed them and countless other families down in eastern France, and one can see that they had prosperity written all over their future.



Emigrants in steerage as ship prepares to disembark from Le Havre in this 1850 engraving. Notice the area above the bunks built in for food storage.



The German Emigrant from the 1840 collection of Maggie Land Blanc. These scenes depicted the tearful farewells between parents and the Abentuer, the adventurer son, who, through no fault of his own – birth order usually and shortage of land – found himself landless and forced to emigrate. Most of those leaving alone never returned nor saw their families again. They were prolific, though as fully 20% of America's population yet today can claim German ancestry,