



John Heydinger and his wife Mary Gullong, parents of nine boys, lie in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

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HEYDINGER

Newsletter

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The last four of the original nine Heydinger boys: oldest Peter, and the three youngest: Ben, Gus and Charlie Pops.

Alsace Trip Update

Interest in the trip abroad in the spring of 2016 has plateaued lately. Eighteen persons have indicated a desire to accompany the group, but we have heard from many others that they are thinking about the possibility. If you are in either of the two groups and have not yet fully committed by going on line to sign up, there is an important date that you may want to consider. May 15th of this year is the last time the signers can claim an "early signing" bonus. The bonus was \$250 until the middle of April but has now been reduced for the last time to \$150. Folks can still sign up after this May 15 for next May's trip, but without benefit of a reduction for early signing.

We welcome any new enrollees at any time. The offer still goes that if you have a non-relative friend who may want to accompany you, they are most welcome as well. Any friend of yours can become an "adopted" Heydinger for the duration of the trip.

We caution any thinking of enrolling to make sure that they have the proper paper work finished well in advance. The biggest change now is that passports will require a valid expiration date at least six months after your expected return date to the States. In our branch of the family, a recently married niece learned this the hard way. She neglected to check the expiration date until the week before her wedding. The Italian honeymoon almost didn't happen. She was stuck paying an exorbitant overnight fee and expedited renewal fee - hundreds of dollars. But anything for love, right!

So, once again, if you are thinking about making the trip and have questions, please email them to us, and we will try to get you the information promptly.

Face Book Page and Twitter Update

Deb Maliszkeski, our Cleveland area cousin, has graciously set up a Heydinger Family account on Facebook and opened a Twitter account in the family name as well. We thank Deb for getting the ball rolling and also the dozens of those family members who have visited the Facebook site and left their tracks. Some have sent messages of encouragement, others pictures. We welcome all to visit the site and especially urge folks to post up pictures. Those posted so far take us back to yesteryear for the most part, and that's great! Those who have been attending the Big One for decades relish meeting old friends once again.

But to better prepare for the 2016 version of the reunion, it would be nice to see more recent family faces. Folks would appreciate meeting well in advance those whom they may have never seen before, becoming familiar with their names and faces and then feeling more at home once they arrive at the reunion. So DO start using the sight more frequently and make your visual contribution.

Get to the sites this way:

Facebook (Like Us) - <https://www.facebook.com/Heydinger-Family>

Twitter (Follow Us) - <https://twitter.com/HeydingerFamily>

Thanks again, Deb, for all you have done for the family!

A Heydinger Family Quilting Idea

Not long ago, a family member shared with us an idea for the Heydinger Auction to be held in conjunction with the 2016 Reunion. She wants to make and auction off a Heydinger Family Quilt.

Say “quilt“ any more and visions of quilting bees immediately come to mind. Modern Heydingers just drop in at JC Penney’s or Walmart to pick up a quilt for the bedroom rather than creating their own. Not enough time these days for the younger ones. Many of the old time family members still cherish memories of participating in these social events. Many women seated themselves around a quilting table at someone’s home or in a church basement, sharing family stories as they constructed yet another usable piece of bedding for some family, something that someday in the future could become a valuable family heirloom. That spirit still lives, but this cousin is not envisioning folks coming from afar to stitch together this quilt. She herself is quite willing to do the work required over the next year, maybe assisted by a daughter or two. But she does need your help. How so?

For one, she envisions a quilt that will somehow tell the saga of the Heydinger family. Each square would play a part in the narration in the final masterpiece. So her question is this: how would the family like the narrative to run? For one, it could be short and sweet - maybe as few as a dozen or as many as sixteen squares focusing on the major points of our family heritage - our French roots, our emigration and immigration, the trek across half the nation to Ohio, the early settlement, scenes of the early farm and the New Washington-North Auburn communities, our very earliest ancestors, and so on. This type of quilt would focus solely upon our earliest beginnings - but thus miss 90% of our history.

Another concern is that people don’t read quilts. When viewing them, people should see images rather than text and be able to immediately recognize the various messages. But keep this in mind. The quilt designer is but one person, born long after half of the original nine boys had died, was but a small child when her own grandfather passed, and four generations removed from the actual immigrants. She has cousins, born decades before her own mother, in branches of the family that she never knew. So you can appreciate her dilemma - what exactly should go into the making of this historical quilt?

Here’s where you can help, cousin. Your branch of the Heydinger family, going all the way back to the original nine boys, has its own unique history. There are interesting people in your branch, momentous events that occurred that are always talked about whenever YOUR branch gathers, no matter how far down the family tree. Who were those people? What were the events that should be chronicled for ages to come? And here’s the REAL question - how can those people and those events best be represented on a quilt square?

We are asking you to talk this up among your immediate family and with your closet cousins. See what you can come up with. Sketch out what you would like your particular square to look like on the quilt. Maybe even volunteer to create that one small square to be sewn later into the final product. Email us your ideas in the next month or so, so that we can make a preliminary guesstimate as to how large the final quilt will be, and therefore how large each square has to be. Once we can determine the final size, it may even be possible to have individual sewers all over the country create a single square for their branch and mail it to us for the final product.

Right now, these are just crazy musings to get this project off the ground. It is a tremendous commitment our cousin is willing to make and will be a true labor of love. But unless and until YOU can help her determine what direction this should go, the idea will remain just that, a fantasy that could have been. So step up all of you and flood us with ideas. We will report back in the near future and let you know what the next step would be.

Contact US

You may email your ideas and sketches and any questions about the reunion or the trip to either Gretchen Shellenger at gshelleng@yahoo.com or to Mike Heydinger at MHeydinger@HuronHS.com

Provide your feedback also on what you would like to see covered in future articles, suggestions for reunion activities, questions no matter how crazy, or to volunteer your services and talent! It’s YOUR reunion, so help make it the best by becoming involved now. We are fewer than 370 days from departure on the trip next May and only about 450 days from the actual reunion weekend!

The Heydinger Emigration Saga Continues

Leaving the Alsace

In our last episode, we investigated what some of the forces were that caused John Adam and his wife Catherine to pack up the family and move out. We investigated the social, political, and primarily the economic causes of the vast migrations that took place in the early and mid-nineteenth century. The area in and around Merlebach had been devastated by warfare during the time of Napoleon. Then, just as they were making a recovery from those problems, famine and poor harvests occurred. Then, while all this was occurring, the most insidious of the problems besetting the area, the Industrial Revolution, turned centuries old lifestyles on their heads. It was like a slowly growing cancer, undetected at first, then presenting minor symptoms and requiring investigation, and then all at once, it seems, the patient is at death's doorstep. Over a fifty year time period, the nearly 95 percent rural, agrarian society was transformed from working for themselves on small landholdings to working for others in the earliest "factories." To survive, they had to relinquish the freedom that came with living upon, and earning from, the land to moving to smaller holdings within towns and cities, learning new occupations, living in sometimes crowded and squalid conditions, and now subjected to a different kind of slavery, that of the clock.

Sound like some of what has occurred in America in the past half century? Laborers' real income stagnating, then plateauing, then dropping. Globalization raping whole cities of their good paying, middle class jobs and shipping them abroad. Once proud cities like Detroit and Cleveland reduced to unrecognizable wrecks of their former selves. Job skills that once supported families now no longer needed, and even with re-training, very few new jobs available. No open land left to retreat to and begin anew. So absent places to which to flee, overwhelming despair sets in, crime rises, and the overall quality of life declines.

Luckily for John Adam, there WAS an escape valve that does not exist today. Millions of open, empty square miles of low cost, fertile land beckoned from across the sea. But one does not simply read about such far away Edens, pack his bags tonight, and catch a red eye to any such place. Months, perhaps years, of planning are required to make a successful transition. Not to mention funding necessary to make the trip and restart. Those required hard cash. So what were the problems that John Adam faced and conquered, and how did he accomplish these tasks and bring his family safely to America? We ask this last part about safely with some reservation because shortly after the family's arrival in America, son Joseph did die from illness and then shortly thereafter, his sister Elizabeth followed him into eternity. But that aside, the preparations were monumental, the selection of the safest methods was daunting, and the actual crossing harrowing.

So beginning with the preparations, we harken back to our last episode where we discussed how pamphleteers from America, hired primarily by land speculators, American land capitalists, were sent to Europe to entice folks to leave their homelands for better opportunities in the New Land. They were especially aggressive in the area of Lorraine, John Adam's part of eastern France.

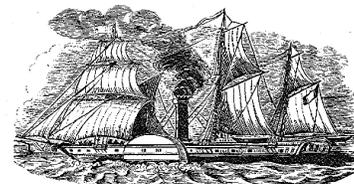
So how does one set about preparing to uproot a family, generate the cash and materials necessary for a new way of life, and then actually make the voyage? We have almost no written records from the Heydinger family itself, so instead have to rely upon those left by other families in similar circumstances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

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Typical handbook spread throughout the Lorraine area explaining how to emigrate: how much money was needed, what to pack for the trip, book a ship etc.

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 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.

How Much Cash?

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 clog-making 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.

The closest we find to this tradition in America today can be found all over the areas populated by the Amish and Mennonites. Primarily an agricultural population, nearly all have a secondary occupation. A drive down any Amish road reveals signs posted at nearly every driveway advertising the specific craft or service offered. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

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."

Yet the question remains, 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 a cow or two 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, on the other hand, 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.

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.

Costs for the Passage

What could the average passenger expect to pay for the crossing in 1850? 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 have seen, 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 Strasbourg guilder. (John Adam's favorite song here in America, according to grandson Peter Heydinger, was *O Strasbourg!* 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 in 1850 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.

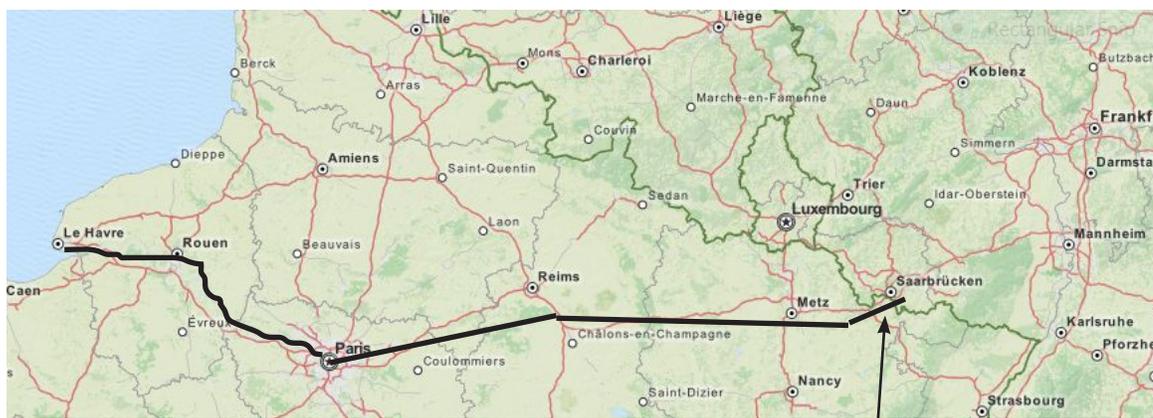
Merlebach to LeHavre

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 country, 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.



Map showing the usual emigration route from Western Germany to Le Havre at the mouth of the Seine River, flowing west from Paris, up through Rouen.

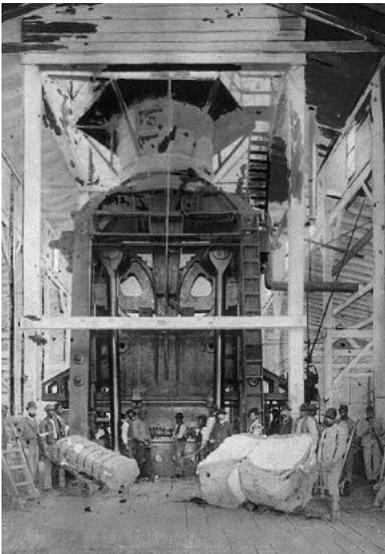
What we do know is this, that in 1848 the part of western Germany closest to Lorraine, the German Palatinate, closed the Rhine River to transport of emigrants north to the seaports of the Netherlands. That meant that any German emigrants wishing to escape conditions in the Palatinate had to travel westward, overland through France, and leave through the closest French port which was Le Havre at the mouth of the Seine River. Tens of thousands of such emigrants made the trip. Contemporary journals tell us that the main overland route out of the Palatinate and travelers on the emigration route passed only a few fields to the north of the tiny village of Freyding-Merlebach! Imagine that – John Adam living just a stone's throw from the equivalent of the French Underground Railroad! German travelers would form their groups in Kaiserslautern, northeast of Merlebach on

the German side of the Rhine, then cross the bridge at Merlebach, then travel southwest to Forbach to pay the required tolls. As they passed through Freyding-Merlebach, they joined French travelers and continued on through Metz, Paris, and Rouen to Le Havre.

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 then all who are too exhausted with the journey to walk.

Not a pretty sight to be sure. But where would the Heydingers have obtained such an ox cart as described above? Remember the ships from America landing at Le Havre laden with bales of cotton from ports such as Savannah GA or Mobile AL or New Orleans LA? Those bales had to be transported eastward to towns like Merlebach where the sprouting weaving industry and the early factories could then process the cotton into wearable cloth for clothing. The easiest way was to load the bales on steam boats and carry them upriver on the Seine to Paris, off-load them onto ox carts, and lug them over to parts of Lorraine where the weavers lived. That required scores of carts and oxen to make the near two week trip, each cart carrying at most only two or three bales. Because bales were shipped by sea and the cost was determined by volume of the bales and not weight, the plantation owners had at first devised a standardized bale size of approximately 56 inches long and 24 inches in square cross section. Total weight was between 450 to 500 pounds per bale. For oceanic transport, however, the bales were then re-compressed into bales half as long, yielding a bale approximately cubic in shape, a little over two feet on a side – still at 500 pounds. That’s a lot of hernias just lifting and loading each bale! Pity the oxen if you must, but a couple bales at most could be pulled by a team. The reason was that wooden axles and wheels, even steel rimmed, could not hold up under much more weight, especially on the pot holed “roads” back then.



This picture shows the huge compressors that rendered the cotton bales into suitably compressed sizes for transport. On the lower right one can see the field sized bales, fresh from the cotton gins where the seeds were removed. The bales originated at about 540 pounds before ginning, then were rebaled at 500 pounds after the ginning operation. The press that you see in the back compressed the large bale from four sides into the nearly five foot bale seen at the lower left. These smaller bales were then loaded onto boats destined for a sea port. Once there, the bales were re-compressed into the smallest two cubic feet size for loading onto ships for the transoceanic trip.

In 1850, approximately 2 million bales of such cotton were exported from the United States and worth some 71 million dollars. By today’s standards, that would be pocket change for a Donald Trump or a Warren Buffett, but in 1850, that amount was over half of the total exports from the States! Indeed, Cotton was King! But on the European side, that cotton had to be transported, and ox pulled carts filled the gap. That meant hundreds of carts were available in Lorraine to haul human cargo back to the port city of Le Havre. John Adam would have been able to hire for a mere song such a cart to transport his family and goods back to the ships on the coast.

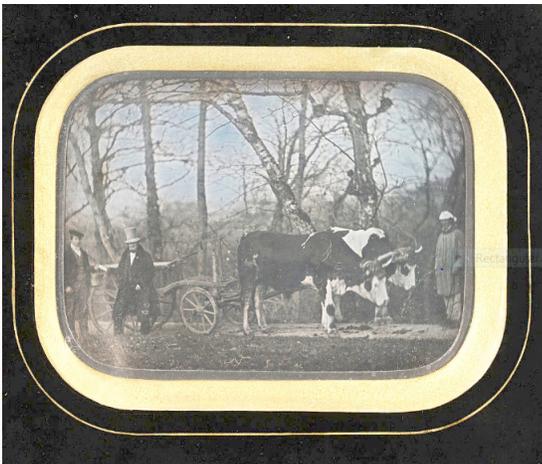
What were the mental stresses encountered upon having to make such a decision? We quote at length here from a diary kept by cottagers in 1835. Though they were leaving from English shores, the mental struggle they endured had to have been experienced all across Europe.

“The lamplight burned late in their simple cottage as George pored over the numerous books and pamphlets written to provide trav-

eling hints for American emigrants. Knowing Jane's resistance would relent, as she was an obedient wife, he negotiated with his younger brother, John, to sell his life interest in the yearly land allotment which had descended to him and would revert to the Lord of the Manor when he died. With this money he made arrangements with a . . . ship captain for steerage berths, bought the necessary provision for the trip and reserved the remaining funds for the family's expenses in the New World.

"Jane sadly prepared for the trip, comforted only by her equally unhappy sister-in-law, Jane "Ann" Holt. They sold their furniture, packed supplies and crated family treasures, making ready to set sail in May, 1835. The older children, George W., David, and Ann's three boys were filled with anticipation and excitement, dreaming of the adventures they would have. It was when they reached the harbor . . . that Jane fully felt the importance of the step they were taking. The dismal reality of leaving . . . for an unknown wilderness was magnified upon viewing for the first time the massive sea-going ships, like forest trees crowding the port as far as the eye could see."

We for this month, we shall leave the Heydingers there for now, poised on the edge of the road at Merlebach, ready to throw their belongings on to an ox cart. John Adam and Catherine stood there, together with their 23 year old son John from whom we are descended, and then the teenagers Joseph, Elizabeth, Margaret, and Mary. What were their thoughts, their fears, their hopes? Were they seen off by any of the family members of John's two sisters, Marie and Susanna, who did not emigrate? Quite possibly. Susanna had died in 1837 but her husband, Jean Fortener, a stone mason in Merlebach, was still living. Jean's first wife was Susanna Delesse, a sister of Pierre Heydinger's wife, Barbe Delesse. He had thus first had married his second wife's aunt. That made him doubly related to the Heydinger brood, spread over two generations. The important point here is that both Delesses and Forteners had already emigrated to America around 1832. Because of the translation errors and faulty transcription upon arriving in America, the Delesses had become the Dallas family in the Chatfield-New Washington area while the Forteners had become the Fortens family out in the Delphos area. It is quite possible that both these Americanized Heydinger shirt tail relatives had written to John Adam and partly induced him to follow with his family. Indeed, upon first arriving in Crawford county, John Adam stayed with the Dallas family near Chatfield, then later with the Fortens family, as he scouted out the Delphos area before deciding the area was too wet to farm. It is not improbable to believe that Jean Fortener would definitely have been there to see the family off, perhaps sending tidings to his own American relatives. We'll never know for sure either how long the family stood there looking back upon a whole lifetime of memories, indeed, several centuries of family history in the area. They were about to become true pioneers in every respect.



An early Daguerreotype made in 1850 shows the ox carts used for transportation in France. Note the small size and the rather rickety construction. Figure at least two weeks to Paris with all the breakdowns!

In the spring of 2016, as the Heydinger family travels to the Lorraine area to explore the family roots, we shall visit the area around Strasbourg Fr in Lorraine and then venture south into the true Alsace region. After exploring for those few days, we shall then retrace the footsteps of John Adam as he made his way west to Le Havre, detouring through Rheims, but including a stop in Rouen. We will not be tracing in exactly the same order as John Adam did, instead retracing kind of backwards as we want to end our trip in Paris, which is where John Adam would have jumped off the ox cart and boarded a boat for the trip down the Seine to Le Havre. It will be interesting to see how much the land has remained the same even as it has changed over the last century and a half or so. The major cities through which we will pass will obviously have responded to industrialization and two world wars. The hinterlands, though, from which our stock derives, has pretty much remained the same, even as the work has become mechanized with tractors and electricity to help. Look for plenty of pictures and tales at the 2016 reunion.