A Jewish Peddler’s Diary
1842-1843

ABRAM VOSSEN GOODMAN

INTRODUCTION

Abraham Kohn represented the successful adaptation of a pre-1848 Jew to the stress and strain of American life in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1842 Kohn was twenty-three years of age when he left the Bavarian village of Mönchstroth and sailed to seek his fortune in the new world. Less than two years later he was already located in Chicago as the proprietor of a store.

Kohn had a strong sense of Jewish loyalty which caused him to be one of the fourteen men who in 1847 were founders of Chicago’s first congregation, the Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv, now popularly known as K.A.M. Kohn became president in 1853, and, in the words of Hyman L. Meites, the historian of Chicago Jewry, he “placed the congregation on a firm foundation.”

Kohn took his American citizenship as seriously as his Jewish ties. Because he refused to accept a second-class status for the Jews, he was prominently identified in the campaign to obtain for Jewish American citizens the right to reside in Switzerland. He was elected city clerk of Chicago in 1860, and showed himself an enthusiastic Republican and ardent advocate of that party’s presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln of Springfield.

Kohn’s admiration for the new president resulted in a gift that brought him some national attention. He sent Lincoln an American flag on whose red stripes he inscribed six of the verses from Joshua 1, including the stirring words: “I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of good courage.” This was indeed a fit message for the leader embarking on a desperate war to preserve the Union.

Abraham Kohn died in 1871. Through his courage and leadership he had won for himself a good name within and without the Jewish community.

This brief summary of Abraham Kohn’s career fails to touch on

1History of the Jews of Chicago, ed. by Hyman L. Meites, Chicago, 1924, p. 55.

Rabbi Abram Vossen Goodman, Ph.D., of Davenport, Iowa, is the author of American Overture, a study of Jewish rights in colonial times.
the struggles and hardships accompanying his Americanization. It would be unjust to the man and the age to suggest that the process was easy. There was an undeniable contrast between the Bavarian village with its medieval ways and the brash modernity of Chicago. The physical distance separating them was in itself disconcerting when one considers the long journey overland within Germany and the United States and the difficult voyage across the ocean in a small vessel. When an emigrant said farewell to his family and friends before setting out for America there was a certain grim finality. Added to this was the threat of poverty in a foreign land with strange speech and unfamiliar customs. No, the process of Americanization was difficult for Kohn, as for every newcomer.

Fortunately, the diary mirroring the heartaches and hardships that fell to his lot has been preserved. It is a valuable but hitherto unpublished document that furnishes insight into the life and emotions of a young man who set out to make his fortune overseas. It reveals clearly the sensibilities of the author. His fine Jewish background comes to the surface in a variety of Hebrew allusions used with the original German. There is a graphic picture of what it meant to cross Germany on foot from Bavaria to Bremen in the old days and what grim privations were endured on the Atlantic voyage.

The account of Kohn's experiences as a peddler in rural New England gives real historical value to the diary. Mr. Lee M. Friedman has commented in a letter to the writer: "He came to New England just about the time the New England boy peddlers were going West, so that there was a scarcity of peddlers in New England."

The diary, as it appears here in slightly abridged form, was translated from German. After breaking off the diary abruptly, Kohn wrote a series of letters to his mother summarizing his establishment in Chicago, but these lack the spontaneity of his journal.

Readers impressed by the attachment of the author for his mother will be interested to learn that she joined her son in Chicago, where she died in the cholera epidemic of 1849. She remained firm in her devotion to the dietary laws, and the story is told that her refusal to eat meat not properly slaughtered by a shohet was responsible for the founding of the K.A.M. congregation.

The original diary is owned by Abraham Kohn's granddaughter, Mrs. Julius E. Weil of Chicago, whose other grandfather, the renowned rabbi of K.A.M., Liebman Adler, officiated at Kohn's funeral.

The diary was to have been published under the editorship of Dr. David Philipson, but death had the final word.

* * * * *

82 AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES, JUNE, 1951
ABRAHAM KOHN
"ONE OF THE BLACKEST REPUBLICANS AND ABOLITIONISTS"
Journey From Home to Bremen

With God's Help!

15. Yesterday morning, Wednesday, June 15, 1842, I began my journey to North America, together with my brother Moses. It was difficult for me to leave my dear brothers and sisters and, especially, my beloved mother—so difficult that I was exhausted when I arrived at 5 o'clock at Wittelshofen, accompanied by my devoted mother, who had held my hand in hers all the way....

Tears are a gift from God. I wept bitterly as I kissed my dear mother, for perhaps the last time, in Wittelshofen, pressing her hand and commending her to the protection of the Eternal, the Father of all widows and orphans.

My friend, E. Jordan, who is making the journey with us, could control his feelings better than we, but even he could not forget that this was the hour of parting. At Klein Ried, a village near Ansbach, we stopped for lunch, but as we relived in our minds the scene of farewell we could not eat for weeping.

With prayers to the heavenly Father for a happy journey and a safe arrival, we have left our beloved home. May all our hopes be fulfilled! Heavenly Father, I ask Thy blessing. Send to us, as to Jacob our father, Thy heavenly angel. In joy and health let us again see our beloved relatives and friends. Amen. Amen.

16. On Thursday, June 16, at 3 o'clock in the morning, we arose and proceeded on foot to Lehrberg, where, in another scene of sentiment, we once more bade farewell to other relatives. ... It is truly very hard to part before so long a journey; one believes that one is seeing one's loved ones for the last time. Yet hope, the constant companion of every man, brings comfort to the wounded heart, and faith in the dear Father of all, gives courage. Happy is the man whose trust is in God, and whose trust the Lord is. ...²

At noon we stopped in Markt Bürgeb and arrived by evening at Uffenheim, where we spent the night. ...

17. I felt well and refreshed on Friday morning. At night, to my joy, I received a letter from my dear friend Weinberg from Fürth; may God preserve him in good health! In the same enclosure I found some lines from Theilbrenner and, last but not least, a note from my dear mother, which I shall always cherish. ... Friday evening my brother and I wrote home. ... All day we laughed and sang and

²This appeared in Hebrew in the original text.
slept, rejoicing in the knowledge that all goes well with God’s help.
This is being written in Volkach on Friday evening at 5 o’clock.
I have just sent a letter for my mother by a Mr. Frank from Werhausen, near Volkach.

18. Friday night we were in Volkach, and on Saturday morning at 3 o’clock set out for Schweinfurt, where we arrived to refresh ourselves with some remarkable wine. At noon we stopped at Poppenhausen and arrived, in the evening, at Münnerstadt. For the first time in my life I desecrated the Sabbath in such a manner, but circumstances left me no choice. May God forgive me! Saturday night we had delicious wine.

19. We left Münnerstadt on Sunday morning at 4 o’clock. We passed the last villages of Bavaria—Neustadt on the Saale, Mellrichstadt, and Essenhausen—and, three-quarters of an hour away from the last of them, at the top of a mountain, we inscribed our three names on the Saxon boundary post.

20. In the evening we came to Meiningen, a beautiful Saxon town in a romantic and lovely region. Here we spent the night and proceeded in the morning at 4 o’clock to Eisenach. At noon we stopped for some very bad beer at a village called Waldfisch. Our night’s lodging at Eisenach was good, but too expensive.

21. On the morning of the 21st we wrote home the good news that brother Moses would get his visa in Bremen, tidings which made him very happy indeed. Travelling soon becomes monotonous. Although the country along the Werra is truly beautiful, lodging in this region tends to be very expensive. We spent the night in Albing, a mere post office, nine hours from Göttingen...

22. Witzenhausen, the last Hessian village, is attractive and lively, and Grossenschneen, where we stopped at noon, is entirely Hanoverian. In the evening we arrived at a country tavern near Göttingen and, before we continued, I took a walk to Göttingen with Mr. Mark from Würzburg, one of our companions. It is really a very nice city, and we particularly liked the clear German pronunciation of the Göttingen citizens.

23. In the morning we continued on our way. After stopping at noon at Hohenheim, we arrived in the evening at Amenhausen, and

*Orthodox Jews are forbidden to initiate a long journey on the Sabbath.*
there we enjoyed one of the best lodgings of our entire trip. It put us in fine spirits, and I shall remember it for a long time. We accepted an invitation to join the dancing at a peasant wedding. . . . Although we danced in a barn, the admirable dancing partners and the good music provided us with some unforgettable hours. Although people here are peasants, they are well educated and distinguished in their speech and their behavior. My brother’s tobacco pipe disappeared in the barn, but I cannot say where it went.

24. At 4 o’clock in the morning we resumed our journey and stopped at noon at Elze, a small village, six hours from Hannover. It was a monotonous day, and we passed most of the time in sleep, occasionally amusing ourselves with conversation and singing. Just an hour away from Hannover we stopped for the night and had the poorest lodging of our entire trip—bad food, hard and expensive beds, and such unfriendly people that we were glad to leave them in the early morning. There are different kinds of men in the world, but one doesn’t find the friendly welcome and inexpensive service of our dear Fatherland here in the North German states. O Lord, Thou art a righteous judge with full knowledge both of good men and of evildoers.

25. Saturday morning we continued on our way to Bremen, coming in the evening to Krug-Meinigheim, an inn situated in the midst of a forest; good lodgings, although expensive.

26. On Sunday morning it was raining, and we were still fifteen hours from Bremen. We therefore proceeded in a coach—Jordan, Mark, my brother Moses, and I—to Bremen, where we arrived at 8 o’clock on Sunday evening.

God be praised, our journey by land is finished, and with His continued help we will safely continue our voyage by sea.

In the evening I crossed the two bridges and ventured into the old section of the city. The buildings are beautiful, but the streets were quiet with a true Sunday stillness. It had grown very late, so I returned home and to bed, where, for the first time, I slept quite well.

27. On Monday we explored Bremen, truly a wonderful city. From the great Weser Bridge we had a lovely view and saw several steamers and many small craft. In the streets the traffic was heavy with wagons carrying every kind of commodity. There are more beautiful girls here than in any city I have ever seen except Munich. . . .

4On this Saturday he makes no apology for traveling!
28. On Tuesday we visited various places, buying necessary things for our ocean voyage.

29. At 5 o'clock on Wednesday morning Mr. Oettinger, Mr. Lehrberg, and I embarked in a steamboat for Bremerhaven, where we arrived at 10 o'clock. . . . The Weser is very wide here. The extraordinary number of big merchant ships at dock, the colorful bustle of dock-hands and sailors loading and unloading the vessels, all the busy movement of the harbor presented a magnificent spectacle.

We wanted to see the ship on which we had engaged our passage and we found it, well-built and friendly-looking, promising a successful voyage. Only a few days ago it returned here from New York in twenty-eight days.

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon we took the steamboat back to Bremen, where we arrived at 9 o'clock.

30. In the morning we called upon people who had been recommended to us, among them Mr. H. Rueppel and Mr. Albrecht. The latter had been very well spoken of to Jordan by his brother-in-law. He welcomed us warmly and we talked of many things, chiefly of the tragic condition of our coreligionists in Bavaria. He displayed so much interest in this topic that it occurred to me that he, too, may have been a Jew in earlier times.

In this connection I remembered the story of a Jew who was converted, but in his sphere of activity was respected and honored by all. He was believed to be very wealthy and continued to acquire riches, but lived withal in a very modest way. He died at a great age and was survived by many friends who anticipated considerable gain through his bequests. When his will was read it was found to bequeath substantial property to his servant, to the poor of the city, and to his good friends. In addition, he left a great iron chest in the basement. When this was opened there was found inside a painting of a cat and a mouse, beneath which was the inscription:

"As this cat is too large for a mouse to eat,
So Christian from Jew's an impossible feat."

We visited Mr. Oettinger and his wife, as we have several times. Following this we purchased a few luxury articles, and I bought a few watches with which I hope to do something in the future.

July 1. On Friday we went for a walk and inspected the environs of Bremen, which we found very pleasant. In the afternoon there arrived a letter from home which I opened with some misgivings but which,
happily, informed me that all was well. My mother dwelt at great length on her sorrow at our absence, a sentiment I can understand, for my thoughts have been constantly of my dear mother.

2. On this Saturday we paid visits to the American consul, Hirshman Ansbach, and Mr. Oettinger.

3. Our stay in Bremen becomes expensive, for it is difficult to be forced to stay in a big city—or anywhere else for that matter—without a chance to earn one's living. We spend money whenever we go out; on the other hand, one cannot always stay at home. On Sunday evening, as a matter of fact, we were very convivial and drank so much good wine that I finally became quite tipsy.

4. We made further preparations for embarkation. Heinecke is a rogue.

5. Heinecke's transgressions grow; he is unfit for companionship.

6. On Wednesday morning at 11 o'clock we departed from Bremen for Bremerhaven where, in the afternoon, we boarded our ship, the Atlanta. We inspected the interior of the ship, the night quarters.

7. We spent this Thursday morning aboard ship and after lunch walked along the harbor.

8. On Friday, at five o'clock, there was a solar eclipse, invisible to us.

9. Saturday was spent in visits, billiards, and dinner.

10. Sunday dullness on board the ship.

11. More of the same on Monday.

**The Voyage**

12. On Tuesday we departed from Bremerhaven. Temperature, 67 degrees, winds very good, but for too short a time. Farewell! The last glimpse of land, the German soil, brought mixed feelings.

July 13, 14, 15, and 16. A strong north wind on the Weser, but impatience, boredom, and bad sleeping aboard. Thirty-four more passengers joined us . . .
17. Sunday and a holiday, so much sleeping. A north wind in the afternoon, but anchor at evening.

18. On Monday the ship came by tacking to the mouth of the Weser.

19. We are at the entrance of the North Sea with an excellent wind. With such a wind the Captain thinks we will be in New York within two weeks. Can I believe it?

20. On Wednesday terrible west winds. We tacked the entire day. Seasickness has seized most of the passengers; out of 101 only 11 are well. Fortunately, my brother and I are among them, but Jordan is sick.

21. At 4 o'clock today the wind became so strong that the ship rose and fell violently and many things fell over. From time to time I could hear the cries of the ladies aboard. . . . I went on deck to smoke a cigar but found a terrible storm and a hideous raging of the waves. Sometimes the sea seemed to embrace the ship as an unusually big wave visited the deck. But the storm kept growing in its severity, and four or five of us sought company seated together.

Suddenly there was a great crashing and cracking sound, so that we sprang to our feet to look overboard. What a terrifying sight! The powerful wind had struck the upper sails with such force that it had torn off the entire topgallant mast with all yards, sails, and rigging. This was the fate of both foremasts and, as they fell, they took with them parts of the back mast. Fear seized us. The sailors ran about the deck, at a loss as to what to do first. At that moment the captain appeared, on his face astonishment, but courage as well. He gave commands to pull in certain sails, all in a German dialect I could not understand. And then he turned a cheerful face to us, giving us new confidence.

The accident would not have happened had not the captain, just at that moment, been busy making observations with some instrument, and consequently unable to pay attention to the ship. Now, however, we rejoiced that the worst was over, although the wind blew with full strength and the boat creaked and rocked to and fro like a ball shuttling between two players in a game. I remembered the story of Robinson Crusoe, although our calamity was certainly not as great as his.

I remained on deck as the ship rocked in a terrifying way, lifted high at one moment only to drop an equal distance the next. Those on deck were forced to hold fast with both hands to avoid being washed overboard when they stood upright. The sailors were very
busy now, attempting to bring down the broken tops of the masts and climbing aloft with remarkable courage as the boat lay nearly on her side. . . . Meanwhile in the steerage our companions were tossed about most unpleasantly.

Every once in a while we “are visited by Mr. Ulrich” (an expression the captain uses to describe seasickness). I seek the deck, where I feel best. . . .

After tea I remained on deck for some time. We were not more than ten or twelve miles from the English Channel; the sea had grown calmer but the north wind continued to blow fiercely. The captain, although lamenting our accident, feels sure that the course of our voyage will not be disturbed. We have lumber in stock, and he hopes to restore the three masts in three days. . . .

22. By Friday morning all was fine and the English coast was in view, with its magnificent cliffs thrusting their stony faces out to sea. With the captain’s telescope I glimpsed a lovely city along the coast, several towns upon the heights, and beautiful foliage, all of which brought great joy to me and made an indescribable impression. The sight of firm land is so heartening to the seafarer that he longs in sheer joy to fly over sea to the dry land. What a pity that we have no wings, and that even our limbs are really not fit for swimming such a distance! The weather is splendid, with a fair wind. Even now the men resume their carpentry upon the tops of the masts.

In the afternoon all passengers came on deck. Most of them are perfectly well again and rejoice at the sea’s being far calmer than it was yesterday. We chat about a thousand different topics in order to drive away boredom.

23. On Saturday calm is restored and all is well. At 9 o’clock the Bremen freighter Elard passed us, a feat which would not have been possible had our masts been undamaged. Our captain, however, hopes to overtake it again. Later we saw the Isle of Wight appearing in the Channel off the English coast, and at noon we could catch sight of Portsmouth through the telescope.

Work on the foremasts is finished, and by evening the middle and strongest mast was also repaired. The calm, which continues to hold, brings joy to the captain, for in such weather all can be put to right. In the evening my pipe tasted very fine, and my brother and I enjoyed the best of health. Jordan is also recovered.

24. No wind on Sunday morning. Although the work on the masts continued, we got on very slowly. In the evening, however, a good wind arose, becoming increasingly stronger.
25. A wonderful east wind on Monday morning. The masts will be ready by noon, and we should proceed very quickly.

26, 27, 28, and 29. During all this time we have had wonderful weather and have made from eight to ten miles every four hours. We are now in the Atlantic Ocean but so far have seen nothing remarkable except occasional ocean fish swimming about our vessel. . . . Generally the days are very dull.

30. There was no wind at all on Saturday, and we grew impatient. Life on board ship is extremely tedious, particularly when we recall our varied amusements in the past. Alas, here things remain the same continually; nothing happens, and, in addition, even the wind has died down. The indifferent food and uncomfortable beds are depressing, and only hope and the constant companionship of our fellow men keep up our spirits.

We welcome the coming of night—not because of sleep, which we never enjoy as we do on land—but because it marks, to our joy, the passing of another day. And we long for morning, too, with its fresh air and light. Accept our prayers, O Lord, lead us through Thy angels safely into the new world where, with songs of thanksgiving, we can praise Thy mercy. Amen.

31. After a Sunday morning with no wind, there arose in the afternoon a favorable breeze that lasted through Monday, August 1st. It persisted through Tuesday, the 2nd, and the weather was fine, but on Wednesday, August 3rd, at 3 o’clock, the weather became worse and we had a very strong north wind.

August 4. There is a bad gale this Thursday, with a raging sea that lifts the boat violently up and down and makes many people sick. The heavy rain keeps every one off the deck.

5. A somewhat calmer sea on Friday, but the fierce wind continues. Each day we hope that the weather will change on the morrow, but it never seems to.

6. Throughout Saturday the bad wind persists, turning towards evening into a rainy half-storm. Throughout the night it is impossible to sleep. Everything seems to depend on a good wind.

7. A calmer sea on Sunday, although the wind is never quite to our taste. Last night my brother became sick, but is well again today. After supper, an unpleasant evening.
8. Things grow worse rather than better, for as we have a complete calm the boredom is hardly to be tolerated. Yet we must have patience until we are once again liberated.

9, 10, 11, and 12. Throughout Friday a bad wind and continuous washing by the waves.

13. Finally on Saturday things became better with a wind from the northeast and the ship moving splendidly. Pleasant weather also arrived so that several of the passengers went on deck, rejoicing and thanking God. No one, I am sure, thanked Him more heartily than I.

14. On Sunday a splendid east wind blew with full force and all sails were unfurled. This day we made the greatest progress of any day on our entire trip. It grew a little calmer at night.

15. Monday morning found us off the banks of Newfoundland. We enjoyed the sight of some huge fish which are called "North Capers" and are very interesting creatures. They are from twenty to forty feet in length and have the appearance, in back, of a large horse. They can be observed from quite a great distance, since they spout water to a height of ten feet from their nostrils. I have often wondered about the sea monsters of Scripture; now I have seen them.

We were to see yet another remarkable phenomenon of nature. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the steersman observed an iceberg in the distance, and the call of "iceberg" brought all the passengers hurrying to the deck. Even the sick folk managed to get up the stairs for the spectacle. To avoid colliding with the tremendous body of ice, we sailed somewhat to the right, allowing it to pass at our left a mere hundred yards away. These ice blocks are an astonishing sight. They rise above the level of the ocean as high as a house and, so we were told by the sailors, extend beneath the surface for more than twice that distance. Within the iceberg area the weather grew much colder and the thermometer reached the freezing point. Icebergs are rarely seen in summer in this latitude. Indeed, our captain, a veteran skipper, had never met one until now in any of his trips to America.

At night a favorable northeast wind arose, but shortly the entire atmosphere was filled with a very dense fog which became still thicker during the night. We could, in fact, hardly distinguish sea from sky.

Well, this was a remarkable day! My brother derived great fun from the iceberg, asking all the passengers again and again, "Did you see the iceberg?" Owing to the favorable winds we found ourselves at night on the banks of Newfoundland, where our captain took soundings...
16. Very calm on Tuesday morning. Today our captain wanted to catch some fish and cast two large baited lines; unfortunately, not a fish bit. The wind was not very favorable today. Heavy fog again in the afternoon.

17. Although Wednesday morning brought wonderful weather, it was, unfortunately, too calm. There were many fish on the surface, and at noon we enjoyed seeing more than ten of the "North Capers," some of them of tremendous length. In the afternoon came a dense fog and a better southeast wind. There was fishing again, but with no luck. Supper was distinguished by a fine rice pudding, produced by our beloved Fanny.

18. There was a poor wind on Thursday and we had to furl the sails. At 2:00 A.M. a baby boy was born aboard ship. The father was Heinrich Koch of Mölle, near Osnabrück.

19. The winds were still light on Friday, improving somewhat at night. We continue to think wistfully of home, and while those we have left behind are enjoying a good meal as contrasted with our supper of tea, they, too, must be thinking of us with tears.

20. A calm Saturday morning, with a good wind in the afternoon, dying down in the evening and increasing again around midnight.

21. Sunday the same.

22. A good wind in the morning, followed by a calm at noon. . . .

23. Early on Tuesday morning there arose an excellent northeast wind which, thank God, lasted the whole of the day. At half-past eleven this morning we saw from afar a strange black patch on the sea. No one knew its meaning, but as we approached it we beheld, to our surprise, the whole lower part of a wrecked ship floating on the ocean. God alone knows how long it has been there. It seemed to have been a schooner of from eighty to ninety tons. Mast and rigging were still there.

How many, O Lord, have found their lonely grave in the waves! And yet, seen from land or considered in some inland port, the idea of a wrecked ship seems to arouse even more horror than does the actual sight at sea. . . .

At night we beheld a magnificent sunset which seemed to lend a magic purple light to the entire surface of the sea. An inspiring sight for all of us!
24. Wonderful weather on Wednesday morning, but deplorably calm. How long, we wonder, must we remain at sea, waiting in vain to enter the calm harbor of New York? We grow ill and weary in addition with the terrible hot weather; even the temperature of the water is 78 degrees. And we long, too, for relief from a monotony which grows unbearable.

25. Still calm and very hot on Thursday, but the evening is pleasanter and all the passengers come on deck to pass the time with songs and jokes and laughter.

26. Calm again on Friday.

27. Saturday brings the same weather. We are now at the 60th degree and will remain here until we have favorable winds. This terrible heat will soon become real torture, and the boredom has grown unbearable. How vivid now are the memories of home! I have never spent this kind of Saturday in all my life, and our sad mood is increased by the possibility of our spending the New Year holidays on shipboard. Depressed by these sad feelings, I sought my bed in tears. . . . At noon I felt better, for, thank God, we had some wind, though from the southwest only. We made a little progress by tacking, however, and felt that we might see land in a few days.

28. A very strong southeast wind on Sunday morning allowed us to proceed seven to seven and a half miles, which we had not done for a long time, although our progress is not precisely in the right direction. The vigorous rocking of the ship made several of our companions sick. O God, bring us favorable winds so that within the week we may set our feet on the soil of America. The sea is now somewhat calmer, but the wind is still good. We sighted five ships today, three bound in our direction and two sailing the opposite way. We soon left them behind. A good wind from the southeast on Sunday night. . . .

29. On Monday morning we heard a commotion on deck, and went up to see the sailors drawing in most of the sails because of the persistent northwest wind. The sky was heavy with storm clouds, and there was much lightning and thunder. The women aboard were terrified, but the wind soon blew the clouds away, and we enjoyed the strong breeze from the north. Beautiful weather yielded at night to dense fog and cold, and at 8 o'clock a very heavy northwest wind. The upper sails were taken in. God be thanked for the night's heavy wind.
30. We have had the same wind today, praised be our Lord. In four hours we proceeded seven to eight miles and are now on the St. George bank. The day was very cold and rough.

31. A marvelous wind on Wednesday morning, with a speed of eight miles. We wait hopefully for news, thus far in vain. Moving in a southerly direction, we saw but one passing ship. The good east wind became weaker at night, but still satisfactory. With two more days of favorable wind we shall be through.

September 1, 1842. On Thursday morning at 5 o'clock I went on deck, but no land was in sight. I saw only the sun, rising from the ocean and presenting a marvelous sight. The southeast wind could have been stronger.

In the afternoon we sighted land, still very far away, but with mountains and rocks rising from the sea to the delight of every one on board. All of us were making preparations for landing. At night we saw some lighthouses and went to sleep full of joy with the hope that next morning we should at last greet the shores for which we have longed these many days.

2. On Friday morning there was a splendid wind, but the continent still lay far off. The arrival at noon of a pilot from New York caused much joy. At 6:00 P. M. we saw a great number of small boats, very close to our ship, a most cheerful sight. My brother and I counted 31 of them. We had to tack from 3 to 6 this afternoon, but in three or four days, with God's help, we hope to land in New York. We are now about due east of Boston.

3. At 8 o'clock on Saturday morning we saw the American coast. The rich green colors, the trees we have missed for so long, the beautiful buildings along the shore, the many busy freighters and boats and coastal steamers which passed us—all of these impressed us in a way which I cannot describe.

**Arrival in New York**

At nine we saw from afar the city of New York, and at eleven we anchored some two hours' distance from the city, where we were kept in quarantine. I was allowed to go by boat to the islands which extend in front of New York, but only after I had been examined by a doctor and found well. From there we took a steamboat to the city itself. I enjoyed my first sight of the city immensely, but, as I proceeded through the crowded streets on my way to see my brother, I felt somewhat uncomfortable. The frantic hurry of the people,
the hundreds of cabs, wagons, and carts—the noise is indescribable. Even one who has seen Germany's largest cities can hardly believe his eyes and ears. Feeling quite dizzy, I passed through Grand Street where, to my great joy, I met my old friend Friedmann, who has changed greatly since he left Fürth. He was taking a walk with his sister and guided me immediately to my brother's residence. The latter was out looking for me, having heard of the arrival of our ship. He soon returned home to embrace me, and at that moment I wished only that my mother could have been present. It is impossible to describe our feelings. It is enough to say that, with the Lord's help, we were together and happy.

Brother Moses was still on board ship, planning to enter the city on Monday night.

4. Sunday, New Year's Day. On the eve of the New Year I found myself with a new career before me. What kind of career? "I don't know"—the American's customary reply to every difficult question.

At night, in the Attorney St. Synagogue, I prayed to the Almighty, thanking Him for the voyage happily finished and asking good and abiding health for my dear mother and brothers and sisters. I prayed then for my own good health and asked for all of us good fortune.

May the Almighty hear my prayer! May He bless and bestow upon us His infinite mercy and charity! Amen.

5 and 6. These were the two New Year's holidays. I spent the morning in the synagogue, and in the afternoon I walked around a bit. However, both Moses—who had now joined me—and I felt so tired after this little exercise that we went to bed immediately. The long voyage and lack of exercise had left us weak.

7-29. During this period I was in New York, trying in vain to find a job as clerk in a store. But business was too slow, and I had to do as all the others; with a bundle on my back I had to go out into the country, peddling various articles. This, then, is the vaunted luck of the immigrants from Bavaria! O misguided fools, led astray by avarice and cupidity! You have left your friends and acquaintances, your relatives and your parents, your home and your fatherland, your language and your customs, your faith and your religion—only to sell your wares in the wild places of America, in isolated farmhouses and tiny hamlets.

5Original in English.

6This was probably the Shaarey Hashamayim Synagogue at 122 Attorney St. It is now the Central Synagogue.
A JEWISH PEDDLER'S DIARY

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1861
WHEN KOHN SENT HIM A PAINTING OF THE AMERICAN FLAG
WITH A HEBREW INSCRIPTION
Only rarely do you succeed, and then only in the smallest way. Is this fate worth the losses you have suffered, the dangers you have met on land and sea? Is this an equal exchange for the parents and kinsmen you have given up? Is this the celebrated freedom of America's soil? Is it liberty of thought and action when, in order to do business in a single state, one has to buy a license for a hundred dollars? When one must profane the holy Sabbath, observing Sunday instead? In such matters are life and thought more or less confined than in the fatherland? True, one does hear the name "Jew," but only because one does not utter it. Can a man, in fact, be said to be "living" as he plods through the vast, remote country, uncertain even as to which farmer will provide him shelter for the coming night?

In such an existence the single man gets along far better than the father of a family. Such fools as are married not only suffer themselves, but bring suffering to their women. How must an educated woman feel when, after a brief stay at home, her supporter and shelterer leaves with his pack on his back, not knowing where he will find lodging on the next night or the night after? On how many winter evenings must such a woman sit forlornly with her children at the fireplace, like a widow, wondering where this night finds the head of her family, which homestead in the forests of Ohio will offer him a poor night's shelter? O, that I had never seen this land, but had remained in Germany, apprenticed to a humble country craftsman! Though oppressed by taxes and discriminated against as a Jew, I should still be happier than in the great capital of America, free from royal taxes and every man's religious equal though I am! . . .

There is woe—threelfold woe—in this fortune which appears so glamorous to those in Europe. Dreaming of such a fortune leads a man to depart from his home. But when he awakens from his dreams, he finds himself in the cold and icy night, treading his lonely way in America.

"Hear, 0 Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be upon thy heart. Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt speak of them when thou sittest down in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up. Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. Thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house and upon thy gates."8

7This type of regulation was widely invoked to limit the number of peddlers and reduce competition for the storekeepers.

8This is a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:4-9.
No, son of Israel, despair not; thy God liveth. He is the one Eternal Being. He it was who led thine ancestors from the land of Egypt into Canaan. . . . Let us, therefore, look upon this wonderful land of America as a new Canaan. And lacking a leader such as Moses or Joshua, may we still look to Him, the Eternal, as our Guide, as the Guardian of our Destiny!

But to follow God sincerely we must observe His holy Scriptures, the sacred law given from Mount Sinai.

But leading such a life, none of us is able to observe the smallest commandment. Thousands of peddlers wander about America; young, strong men, they waste their strength by carrying heavy loads in the summer's heat; they lose their health in the icy cold of winter. And thus they forget completely their Creator. They no longer put on the phylacteries; they pray neither on working day nor on the Sabbath. In truth, they have given up their religion for the pack which is on their backs. Is such a life not slavery rather than liberty? Is this condition not misery rather than happiness?

"Hear me, brethren," our rabbis used to say: "Never forget what you are and to what you owe allegiance. Read your morning prayer and your evening prayer, but whenever you worship, conduct yourselves with fervor and with devotion to the Creator of the universe. No one of you is wise enough to live without prayer; for wisdom begins with the fear of God."9

So long as one lives as we do here his thoughts cannot be with his Creator, his religion cannot be observed, his life cannot be virtuous or even happy. Yet it is not indolence or weakness which pushes one to this way of life. Each of us works and pursues his calling, but only ten out of a thousand find any true happiness.

It is the inherent instinct for trade which leads one to this way of living. Could not this instinct be suppressed and our strength employed in other and better ways? Could not each of us, instead of carrying a burden on his back, cultivate the soil of Mother Nature? Would not such labor be more profitable? Why would it not be possible to form a society, based on the good will of its members, which would purchase a large tract of land for tillage and for the foundation of a Jewish colony? Here is a worthy project for honest German men of the Jewish faith. Here thousands and thousands of people could enjoy in happiness the profits of the soil they tilled themselves. Among us there are many craftsmen who could employ their skills in such a venture instead of carrying burdens on their backs. Such a truly great project could be carried out in a few years if the young

9This paragraph is not a direct quotation from rabbinical literature but a series of paraphrases from various sources.
among us could found such a society, supported by an annual contribution of a few dollars from everyone. With a few thousand dollars a large area of ground could be purchased in some well situated state. And, in a short time, there would be laid out a fine town, a new Jerusalem. To such a place thousands of our countrymen would come from Germany with bright prospects, to be welcomed by us.

These were my thoughts on the first Sunday I spent in Dorchester, a village near Boston. These were the doubts I felt, O dear, good mother, feelings you cannot share with your son, who wanders through America with his bundle on his back.

PEDDLING IN NEW ENGLAND

Last week in the vicinity of Plymouth I met two peddlers, Lehman and Marx. Marx knew me from Fürth, and that night we stayed together at a farmer's house. After supper we started singing, and I sat at the fireplace, thinking of all my past and of my family.

Today, Sunday, October 16th, we are here in North Bridgewater, and I am not so downcast as I was two weeks ago. The devil has settled 20,000 shoemakers here, who do not have a cent of money. Suppose, after all, I were a soldier in Bavaria; that would have been a bad lot. I will accept three years in America instead. But I could not stand it any longer.

As far as the language is concerned, I am getting along pretty well. But I don't like to be alone. The Americans are funny people. Although they sit together by the dozen in taverns, they turn their backs to each other, and no one talks to anybody else. Is this supposed to be the custom of a republic? I don't like it. Is this supposed to be the fashion of the nineteenth century? I don't like it either. "Wait a little! There will be more things you won't like." Thus I can hear my brother talking.

The week from the 16th to the 22nd of October found me feeling pretty cheerful, for I expected to meet my brother. Ah, it is wonderful to have a brother in this land of hypocrisy, guile, and fraud! How glad I was to meet my two brothers in Boston on Saturday, the 22nd! Now I was not alone in this strange country.

How much more could I write about this queer land! It likes comfort extremely. The German, by comparison, hardly knows the meaning of the word. The wife of an American farmer can consider herself more important than the wife of a Bavarian judge. For hours she can sit in her rocking chair shaking back and forth as she thinks of nothing but beautiful clothes and fine hairdo. The farmer, himself, unlike the German farmer who works every minute, is able to sit down for a few hours every day, reading his paper and smoking his cigar.
This week I went, together with my brother Juda, from Boston to Worcester. We were both delighted, for the trip was a welcome change from our daily heavy work. Together we sat in the grass for hours, recalling the wonderful years of our youth. And in bed, too, we spent many hours in talking.

Today, the 30th of October, we are here in Northborough, and I feel happier than I have for a fortnight. Moses is in New York, and we will meet him, God willing, at Worcester on Tuesday. The sky is clear and cloudless, and nature is so lovely and romantic, the air so fresh and wholesome, that I praise God, who has created this beautiful country.

Yet, at the same time, I regret that the people here are so cold and that their watchword seems to be "Help yourself; that's the best help." I cannot believe that a man who adapts himself to the language, customs, and character of America can ever quite forget his home in the European countries. Having been here so short a time, I should be very arrogant if I were to set down at this time my judgments on America. The whole country, however, with its extensive domestic and foreign trade, its railroads, canals and factories, looks to me like an adolescent youth. He is a part of society, talking like a man and pretending to be a man. Yet he is truly only a boy. That is America! Although she appears to know everything, her knowledge of religion, history, and human nature is, in truth, very elementary. . . . American history is composed of Independence and Washington; that is all! On Sunday the American dresses up and goes to church, but he thinks of God no more than does the horse that carries him there.

It seems impossible that this nation can remain a republic for many years. Millions and millions of dollars go each year to Europe, but only for the purchase of luxuries. Athens and Rome fell at the very moment of their flowering, for though commerce, art, and science had reached their highest level, luxury—vases of gold and silver, garments of purple and silk—caused their downfall. The merchant who seeks to expand too rapidly in his first years, whose expenses are not balanced by his income, is bound to become a bankrupt. America consumes too much, produces too little. Her inhabitants are lazy and too much accustomed to providing for their own comforts to create a land which will provide for their real and their spiritual needs. Hamburg, half destroyed by fire, got millions from Europe by paying 3½ percent interest; America, though she pays double the interest, gets not one cent.

On Monday night, October 31st, we came to Worcester in order

10Original quotation in English.
to meet Moses. However, he was prevented from leaving New York. On Wednesday night we received a letter from him, asking that I come to New York to get my case out of the customs house. I therefore took a steamboat for New York, arriving there on Thursday, November 3rd, and returning to Worcester on Saturday. On Wednesday, November 9th, Moses and I went to Holden, where we stayed until Sunday with Mr. How. On Monday we went on, arriving on Tuesday at Rutland. In the morning our packs seemed very heavy, and we had to rest every half-mile. In the afternoon a buggy was offered to us and, thank Heaven, it was within our means. We took off our bundles and anticipated thriving business. Wednesday we proceeded to Barre by horse and carriage, and on Thursday went to Worcester to meet Juda. Here we stayed together until Friday, November 25th, when we left for West Boylston, staying for the night at Mr. Stuart's, two miles from Sterling. We stayed on Saturday night and over Sunday at the home of Mr. Blaube where I met the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. Her name is Helena Brown and she is from Boston. But despite this girl, I do not yet like America as well as I might wish. But if Heaven causes us to prosper we may yet be entirely satisfied.

Last Thursday was Thanksgiving Day, a general holiday, fixed by the governor for the inhabitants of Massachusetts. Yet it seems to be merely a formal observance, coldly carried through with nothing genuine about it. To the American one day is like another, and even Sunday, their only holiday, is a mere form. They often go to church here, but only to show the neighbor's wife a new veil or dress.

Winter has come. . . . We were at Sterling and Leominster on Monday, November 28th, and went from there to Lunenburg.

Not far from here we were forced to stop on Wednesday because of the heavy snow. We sought to spend the night with a cooper, a Mr. Spaulding, but his wife did not wish to take us in. She was afraid of strangers, she might not sleep well; we should go our way. And outside there raged the worst blizzard I have ever seen. O God, I thought, is this the land of liberty and hospitality and tolerance? Why have I been led here? After we had talked to this woman for half an hour, after repeatedly pointing out that to turn us forth into the blizzard would be sinful, we were allowed to stay. She became friendlier, indeed, after a few hours, and at night she even joined us in singing. But how often I remembered during that evening how my poor mother treated strangers at all times. Every poor man, every traveler who entered the house, was welcomed hospitably and given the best at our table. Her motto, even for strangers, was, "Who throws stones at me shall be, in turn, pelted by me with bread." Now her own children beg for shelter in a foreign land. . . .
Thursday was a day of inactivity owing to twelve inches of snow. On Friday and Saturday business was very poor, and we did not take in two dollars during the two days.

On Sunday we stayed with Mr. Brown, a blacksmith, two miles from Lunenburg. Both of us were in a bitter mood, for during the whole week of driving about in the bitter cold we had earned no money. I long for the beautiful days in my beloved homeland. Will they ever return? Yes, a secret voice tells me that all of us will again find happiness and, although there are many obstacles to be overcome, the old maxim will guide me!

“When you go the way of duty
God is ever at your side.
Even though new dangers threaten
Courage in your heart shall bide.”

On Monday morning, December 5th, we set out for Groton in a sleigh and at night stayed with an old farmer, about two miles from that place. It was a very satisfactory business day, and we took in about fifteen dollars. On Tuesday we continued through much snow, via Pepperell, to Hollis, in New Hampshire. Towards evening the good Moses managed to overthrow the sleigh, and me along with it, into the snow. I am sure that, should I ever come this way in future years, I shall always be able to recognize the spot where I lay in a snowdrift.

After spending Wednesday in Milford, we traveled beyond on Thursday and Friday, spending Saturday at Amherst and Sunday at the home of Mr. Kendall in Mount Vernon. Business, thanks be to God, is satisfactory, and this week we took in more than forty-five dollars. We rode horseback for pleasure on Sunday.

“Things will yet go well.
The world is round and must keep turning.
Things will yet go well.”

So goes an old German song which I once heard an actor sing in Fürth in a play, which one, I don’t remember.

On Monday the 12th to Lyndeborough; Tuesday to Wilton; Wednesday to Mason Village; Thursday, New Ipswich; Friday, Ashburnham. On Saturday we came to Westminster, where we stayed over Sunday, the 18th of December. It was extremely cold this week, and there was more snow than we had ever seen in our lives. At some places the snow was three to four feet deep, and we could hardly get through with the sleigh. How often we thanked God that we did not have to carry our wares on our backs in this cold. To tramp
with a heavy pack from house to house in this weather would be terrible.

O youth of Bavaria, if you long for freedom, if you dream of life here, beware, for you shall rue the hour you embarked for a country and a life far different from what you dream of. This land—and particularly this calling—offers harsh, cold air, great masses of snow, and people who are credulous, filled with silly pride, cold toward foreigners and toward all who do not speak the language perfectly. And, though "money is beauty, scarce everywhere," yet there is still plenty of it in the country. The Whig government, the new bankruptcy law, the high tariff bill—all combine to create a scarcity of ready cash the like of which I have never seen nor the oldest inhabitants of the land ever experienced.

There is, in addition, the abominable Dr. Miller, who preaches to the people the imminent end of the world. The majority believe him. What is supposed to occur? On April 20, 1843, the world is supposed to be consumed by fire, according to a prophecy of the prophet Daniel. I should like to see this Dr. Miller in Germany, preaching such nonsense. He would not last long; the boys in the streets would drive him away by stoning. I have never seen a spectacle like him in all my life.

So goes it with the masses of a people which governs itself. These things can happen only in a country where each man is allowed to talk and write about anything whatsoever. It reminds one of the French Republic and of Rousseau, who wanted to restore the world to a state of nature, remote from art, science, and civilization. An abundance of pamphlets, most of them available without charge, all preach the coming end of the world, as Jonah once did in Nineveh. Well, we shall see whether Dr. Miller has the true prophetic spirit.

On Monday, December 19th, to Barre from Westminster; Tuesday to Rutland; Wednesday to Holden, where we were forced to stay until Saturday because of the heavy rain. On Saturday the 24th we left for Worcester, arriving—all three together—on Sunday.

On Monday we separated, Moses going west and Juda and I going north, agreeing to meet here again in four weeks. We went that day to New Braintree; Tuesday to Hardwick; Wednesday, Petersham; Thursday, the 29th, to Templeton. Here a heavy blizzard kept us until Saturday, the 31st, when we proceeded to Gardner and there spent Sunday, January 1, 1843.

The night before I recalled the gay New Year's Eve which I spent in Fürth on December 31, 1841. O God, I little thought at the

---

11 William Miller, the founder of the Adventist faith, preached that the final coming of Christ was imminent.
time that a year later I should be spending the night at a lonesome Massachusetts farmhouse. And God alone knows where I shall be a year from today.

Monday, January 2nd, we went to Holden Factory; Tuesday, Hubbardston; Wednesday, Templeton; Thursday, Winchester; Friday, Rindge; Saturday, Jaffrey; Sunday, Peterborough; Monday, Hancock; Tuesday, Antrim; and, on Wednesday, the 11th, Nelson.

The weather is very bad, and the sleigh sinks two feet into the snow. Money is scarce, but, God be thanked, sleeping quarters have been good. There is much work for little profit, yet God in heaven may send better times that all our drudgery will not have been in vain. And my brother Juda, God be praised, seems to be growing stronger.

Dear, good mother, how often I recall your letters, your advice against going to America: “Stay at home; you can win success as well in Germany.” But I would not listen; I had to come to America. I was drawn by fate and here I am, living a life that is wandering and uncertain.

How will we find our beloved Moses, who must stamp through the snow with his pack on his back, without a brother, without a companion with whom to exchange a word? What he feels must be new to him. I know what it is like to wander alone and am anxious to hear what he has to say on the subject.

We long to send a letter home which will bring joy and happiness, but, dear God, shall we lie like the Bavarians? This I should not like, yet they at home would be upset by the truth. It seems wisest to let them continue with golden hopes, and, for the time being, not to write at all. You alone, dear mother, may judge, should you read this journal at some future time, whether we have done right or wrong.

Today, January 11th, I was made very angry when Juda left his pocketbook at a house and we had to drive back nine miles to retrieve it. The road was so poor that driving was difficult under any circumstances. But patience, hope, confidence in the Father of all give us strength and help us to accept whatever happens with gratitude.

Dear friends of Fürth, what are you doing now? Do you think of me as often as I do of you? Although I cannot know, I find myself hoping that my comrade Weinberg and my friend Marie sometimes speak of me. If only I could spend an hour in talk with them! God bring us such a time!

Everywhere there is chaos over the end of the world. To hell with this Miller! Gullible people, these Americans! News from Europe is very scarce here, England and her colonies being the most im-
important to Americans. The newspapers are more attractive, fuller, and more freely written than those of Germany. We like them very much.

In Hillsborough, New Hampshire, they have dismissed the schoolmaster. Since the world is to end in three months, the children need no education.

Thursday, January 12th, was one of the hardest days of my entire life. I shall never forget it. In the morning we drove to a solitary house, three miles from Hancock in the direction of Nelson. The sleigh went on fairly well. After we had driven five or six miles there was, suddenly, no more snow to be seen. It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon and we were among the high hills. No snow appeared before us, not a single white patch behind us, great hills surrounded us; there was no prospect of trade or of a night's shelter. Where could we go? In such a situation the intellect is powerless; faith in God alone can help. And the situation was not improved by my brother Juda, who had been in depressed spirits all day. Well, "Forward," said Napoleon, and forward it went. I proceeded ahead two miles, Juda slowly following with the sleigh as best he could. At the home of some very poor people — such a home as I had not yet seen in America — I found lodging for the night. My worries, however, kept me from sleeping that night.

On Friday morning we drove slowly back to Hancock, making difficult progress. We spent the night in the same house we had visited on Sunday and set out for Brookline on Monday, the 16th. On Tuesday, in low spirits, we went to Hollis, on Wednesday to Groton, and on Thursday to Lunenburg, where we exchanged the sleigh for the wagon. After spending Friday, the 20th, at West Boylston, we came on Saturday to Worcester once more, arriving only an hour before Moses. We thanked God at finding him in good health, although he did not appear quite as hearty as he had four weeks before. He had been sleeping poorly, poor devil, and I knew how he felt, for I have had these experiences too.

We spent Saturday, Sunday, and Monday in Worcester. The joy of being together for a few days always costs money, but we are so pleased to see each other again that it is very hard to leave. Dear mother, how I wish you too could join our reunions! God will aid us and lead us back again to you.

On Tuesday morning at ten I left Worcester, it being my turn to travel alone for seven weeks. A thousand thanks to God, I felt far stronger than when I first left my brothers in Boston. Now I have become more accustomed to the language, the business, and the American way of life.

I came on Tuesday afternoon to Hubbardston by stagecoach and
I spent the night there. On Wednesday night I stayed three miles from Templeton and proceeded on Thursday to Phillipston. On Friday I found myself still a mile away from Phillipston.

I am satisfied with business, thank God. I hope it continues this way. I enjoy my meals and my slumber and pray twice each day. Thus, trusting in God's help, I quietly go my way.

On Sunday I attended the meeting house in Phillipston—a poor preacher but a beautiful choir. The sermon dealt mostly with love of the Redeemer and displayed false and cloudy ideas throughout. It was not worth comparison with the godly and moral sermons of Dr. Loewe in Fürth. The behavior in church, the solemn silence and reverence for the service are admirable. More than fifty sleighs and buggies belonging to farmers of the region were outside the meeting house. Here even those with no more than half a mile to travel go by buggy. In the evening I read three different newspapers; such things could not be found in a German farmhouse. In a young people's paper, The Youth's Companion, I found this little stanza:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Behold how good a thing it is} \\
\text{And how becoming well,} \\
\text{Together such as brethren are} \\
\text{In unity to dwell (Ps. 133:1).}
\end{align*}
\]

On Monday, January 30th, I went from Phillipston to Athol, satisfied at night with my day's work. Tuesday was so very stormy that I could not travel, and on Wednesday, February 1st, there was likewise much rain and snow. I had to stop often. I did little on Thursday, and came to South Orange in a storm on Friday. At night I stayed with Mr. Wheelock, four miles from town. There I had to stay over Sunday and Monday. For two days there was so much snow that I had to trudge through one and a half feet of it on my way to Warwick.

It is hard, very hard indeed, to make a living this way. Sweat runs down my body in great drops and my back seems to be breaking, but I cannot stop; I must go on and on, however far my way lies.

On Wednesday, the 7th, I returned from Warwick to South Orange to get letters from my brother. But this trip was in vain; there were none. On again towards New Salem with bitter cold and much snow in the afternoon. Friday, the 9th, was a bit better, but on Saturday a heavy rainfall forced me to stop four miles from Prescott. And on Tuesday and Wednesday a very heavy blizzard made me stop again for the two days. My quarters are good, but poor business makes me

\[12\text{Dr. Isaac Loewe (more commonly Löwi) was the first modern rabbi in Fürth.}\]
feel bad. Depressed in spirit and with sad memories of home, I sit gloomily at the fireplace. The farmer's wife, a former schoolmistress, realized my state of mind and admonished me. She warned me not to let poor trade put me into a bad humor. No, I must have courage and faith in God. I have my health and what I want to eat and drink; good shelter protects me from wind and weather. Why must I worry? No, gold shall not drive me to misery. May the devil have the banknotes and let me have a book to read that I may be of good cheer! And you, brothers, will also have found shelter somewhere. I shall be cheerful in the knowledge that God will help me.

On Thursday I went on to Enfield and then continued so as to arrive at Amherst on Saturday, the 18th. Here I spent Sunday. I expected mail from my brothers, but there was none. Monday, the 20th, to Hadley; Tuesday, Hatfield; Wednesday, Northampton; Thursday, Williamsburg; Friday, Goshen. On Saturday, the 25th, I came to Cummington, where I stayed on Sunday. I am sometimes depressed by poor trade and bad weather, yet God leads me always to good lodging and at night, sitting by the fireplace, I thank Him that I have finished another day of servitude.

Here in the land of the free, where every child, every human being, preaches and enjoys liberty, it is I who am compelled to follow such a trade, to devote myself to so heavy and difficult a life. Each day I must ask and importune some farmer's wife to buy my wares, a few pennies' worth. Accursed desire for money, it is you that have driven the Bavarian immigrants to this wretched kind of trade! No, I must stop this business, the sooner the better. The great Lord will help me that I come in a fortnight to Worcester. I hope to meet there my two brothers healthy and after that goodbye peddling.\(^13\)

I could write this journal entirely in English, but, since I enjoy the German tongue and the German script, I prefer writing in German. My mother has often told me how, during her stay in Italy, she missed the German language. How much she would have given to listen to the speech of her countrymen! And, though I never realized how such a small thing could give great pleasure, I realize it now.

Times are bad; everywhere there is no money. This increases the hardship of life so that I am sometimes tempted to return to New York and to start all over again. However, I must have patience. God will help. On Sunday every farmer urges me to attend church, and this week in Williamsburg, at each house where I tried to sell my wares, I was told to go to church.

God in Heaven, Father of our ancestors, Thou who hast protected

\(^{13}\)This was written in English.
the little band of Jews unto this day, Thou knowest my thoughts. Thou alone knowest of my grief when, on the Sabbath's eve, I must retire to my lodging and on Saturday morning carry my pack on my back, profaning the holy day, God's gift to His people, Israel. I can't live as a Jew. How should I go to church and pray to the "hanged" Jesus? Better that I be baptized at once, forswear the God of Israel, and go to Hell. . . . By the God of Israel I swear that if I can't make my living in any other way in this blessed land of freedom and equality, I will return to my mother, brothers, and sisters, and God will help me and give me His aid and blessing in all my ways.

The open field is my temple where I pray. Our Father in heaven will hear me there. "In every place where thou shalt mention My name I shall come to thee and bless thee." This comforts me and lends me strength and courage and endurance for my sufferings. And in only two more weeks I shall find something different.

Millerism seems to be somewhat on the decline, and I don't hear as much of it as formerly. Mormonism is another superstition which, in this progressive and enlightened nation, seems to make strides. A certain Joe Smith, now living and preaching to the people in the western states, claims to be the true, prophet of God, a priest of Melchizedek. He purports to have found the true Bible and rejects Jesus, Moses, and Mohammed alike. He proclaims a new religion to the credulous people and, absurd as it seems to me, it is reported to have more than thirty thousand disciples. Terrible!

For more than three months I have not been in the mood to continue my diary or to write anything at all. In the middle of March I had hoped to get rid of my peddler's existence. But I was forced to take up my pack again, and from February 26th to March 11th, I journeyed towards Worcester, where I was to meet my dear brothers. On March 1st, I came to Worthington, where I met a peddler named Marx, from Albany, married, and an immigrant from Frankenthal in Württemberg. Wretched, business! This unfortunate man has been driving himself in this miserable trade for three years to furnish a bare living for himself and his family. O God, our Father, consider Thy little band of the house of Israel. Behold how they are compelled to profane Thy holy Torah in pursuit of their daily bread. In three years this poor fellow could observe the Sabbath less than ten times. And he is a member of the Jewish congregation in Albany. This is religious liberty in America.

On March 11th, in Worcester, I happily met my dear brothers again, and we spent Sunday together in Paxton. From there I went to Boston and New York, Moses and Juda remaining for four more
weeks in the country. From March 19th to April 27th, I remained in New York, where my business was quite good, and where, for four or five weeks, I lived again like a human being. I had thoughts of staying in New York permanently, but my fate was decided otherwise. My brother Juda came to New York without Moses, but in good health. After two days Juda became sick and for reasons which the dear Lord can understand. Poor business, unwelcome news from our dear mother and family; this all affected his health unfavorably. But with God's help he was much better after a week.

For reasons known only to my brothers and myself, I was forced, on April 27th, to have my beloved bundle put on board the steamboat again. On Friday, the 28th, I came to Worcester, where I stayed with Moses until Monday. We then separated, to meet again at Worcester on June 21st. My journey took me to Hubbardston, Templeton, Phillipston, Athol, Royalston, Orange, Erving, Northfield, Gill and Greenfield. In Gill I met Bendel from Fürth, carrying ninety pounds on his back and mere skin and bones. In Greenfield I received letters from Juda and Moses and thanked God for their health. From there I went to Shelburne and Colrain, and on Saturday afternoon, May 20th, I saw a peddler passing by. "Hello, sir," I hailed him. "How are you?" It turned out to be Samuel Zirndorfer from Fürth. Alas, how the poor devil looked! Thus one man from Fürth with 80 pounds on his back meets another with 50 pounds on his back some 4,000 miles away from their native town. If I had known of this sort of thing a year ago, how different things might be now! We stayed together for a week. He is still the same old Samuel, a good fellow but, banished from his home, an unhappy one.

On Monday, May 29th, we separated, I to go to Stockbridge, he to New York. Tuesday I went to Great Barrington, Wednesday, 31 miles further, and, on Thursday, June 1st, I came to Tyringham.

A year ago today I left Fürth. Thou, God, guidest our destinies. I cannot say whether America has misled me or whether I misled myself. How quickly this year has passed! But how many sad and bitter hours has it brought me! In Fürth ten years did not bring the worries and troubles that a single year has brought me in this land. Yet Thou, Father of all, who hast brought me across the ocean and directed my steps up till today, wilt grant me Thy further aid. With confidence in Thy Fatherly goodness I continue my way of life. Thou alone knowest my goal. May I find contentment and a life of peace, united in well-being with my dear mother and with my brothers and sisters!

I came on Friday, June 2nd, to Otis, and on Saturday went three miles farther. Here I stayed over Saturday and over our holy day, Shavuos [Pentecost]. In the morning, in a mood of depression, I re-
lieved my heart by prayer to our heavenly Father. I found some beautiful prayers in the English Bible, yet I pledged that I would not spend another sacred holiday in this manner.

Monday, June 5th, was the second day of Shavuos, and on Tuesday I set out in the direction of Blandford with hills and woodland in every direction. Wednesday I went beyond Blandford and approached Westfield on Thursday. Friday I went to Springfield and Saturday to Wilbrook Depot, where I stayed over Sunday. Monday I travelled to Ludlow and on Tuesday returned to Springfield in order to meet dear Juda. He spent Shavuos in New York, and Moses was in Boston. I had hoped to meet both of them, but Moses is still journeying elsewhere. At any rate, thank God, the two of us met again in good health and proceeded from Springfield to Ludlow, South Hadley, Belchertown and Enfield, where we spent Sunday, June 18th. We spent our time in talk about our home, our youth, politics, religion, morality, and a thousand other topics.

On Monday, June 19th, we went to Greenwich, and on Tuesday to Ware and East Brookfield. On Wednesday we met brother Moses at the railroad, and the three of us rode together to Worcester, where we stayed all day. Good health makes us cheerful, but again our lot is to be separated. On Thursday Juda and I stayed together, while Moses went on alone. We took the train to Natick and walked from there to Weston, Wayland, Lincoln, Concord, Carlisle, Billerica, Wilmington, Reading, Middleton, and Topsfield, where we had a hard time finding a night’s lodging. We next went on to Hamilton, Essex, Rockport, and Gloucester. Here we had a magnificent view of the Atlantic coast and of the sea, filled with fishermen, schooners, and small boats. In the morning we went sailing in a boat and out into the open sea for fishing. But we did not enjoy it very much and soon sought the land again.

What else is there in life besides constant fishing? One man fishes this way, the other that way; this one fishes the small streams, that one the ocean. And when they tire of fishing, Death, the great Fisherman, comes to all of them alike and they, like the fish themselves, are caught. O tragic fishery!

How many experiences do you give, O America, to the young man who carries on his life of fishing! How many stones are caught in the nets which are set for fish! How often is an empty net pulled from the dark, unfathomable depths when a full net is expected!

Yet the fisherman says, “Patience.” Patience, dear God — send me an abundance of it! Although there is still no sign of it, the net should, at some time, be full.

(Here the diary breaks off.—Ed.)