

# **THE ALTLEININGEN KREBILLS**

## **AN EARLY HISTORY**



**Figure 1: Ancient  
Kreijebuhl Family Crest**

Excerpts from "The Altleiningen Krebills, 1730-1966, A Genealogical And Historical Report", Olga A. Krebill, 1966

## **MILLER SAMUEL GREHBIEL - THE FIRST GENERATION**

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a Samuel Grehbiel family occupied what was known as the Altleiningen mill in the RheinPfalz area in southwestern Germany. Their mill stood on the banks of a stream called Echbach, a short distance down stream from Aitleiningen towards Grünstadt. These flour mills were typical in this part of Europe where ever streams of sufficient flow existed to turn the water-wheels which operated the mill machinery. Much of the water which spilled from these wheels would find its way back into the stream and continue down to turn the wheel for other mills. In those times flowing streams were the principal source of power for many industries.



**The Altleiningen Mill, photo by E.C. Lowenburg, 1967**

About two centuries before there existed a protestant movement called. Anabaptism. This was somewhat more radical than that which was initiated by Martin Luther.

This movement was met with vehement actions by State and church. Many were destroyed, many more tortured and driven into the valleys of the Alps or into the swamps of the low-lands. A converted catholic Priest, Menno Simons, made an effort to gather some of these refugees into groups and under his leadership formed the branch known as Mennonites. In the 1600s and 1700s many of these Mennonites fled to America and. settled in the state of Pennsylvania and Virginia.

By the time of the Grehbiels at the Altleiningen mill, the Mennonites were starting to conform to the practice of other Protestant Evangelical churches. In certain areas officials permitted Mennonite members to erect their own churches. However, all young men were required to serve two years of military training and be subject to conscription in case of war. This was contrary to the belief of the Mennonite religion and so these people were still at odds with the Church-State government and therefore not accorded full citizenship.

In addition the farmers were subjected to exorbitant rents and taxes. Because of the scarcity of land young men were unable to provide a home and in consequence were not permitted to marry. Teen-aged boys were required to serve a four year apprenticeship in some craft or trade and after being discharged they were permitted to travel as journeymen and work for others or perhaps ultimately establish a business for themselves.

Abraham, a son of Samuel and. his first wife Katharina, was Mayor of Altleiningen for a period of time. While he was thus in office he signed all official papers spelling his name, Abraham Krebill instead of the way his father spelled it. There is evidence that the rest of this family followed his practice from then on.

Friedrich Krebill, the Common Ancestor of the many direct blood-line descendants of this narrative, was one of the younger sons of the Samuel Grehbiel family who lived in a mill near Altleiningen in the Pallatinate or Pfalz area in southwestern Germany.

Early in the year of 1834 Friedrich and Anna Risser Krebill with their six sons and one daughter arrived at the Hayesville cross-roads area in Richland County of Ohio.

In 1842, Samuel, their second son died at an age of not quite 23 years. In 1849, not more than fifteen years after their arrival from Germany, the Father Friedrich passed away at the age of 61 years. During these years he was able to see his Sons Johannes, Abraham and Jacob as well as the daughter Agnes marry and see three of his grandsons. Eight years later mother Anna joined her Husband.

Johannes and his brother Abraham had changed the spelling of their family names from Krebill to Grabill. By the middle of the summer of 1857 all of Johannes' brothers and his sister had left their Ohio community and moved westward. All that was left of the once so large a family was Johannes and Nancy Harper Grabill and their eleven year old son Samuel.

In 1857 Abraham and Margaret Grabill lived on a farm near Bedford in Bureau County in Illinois. After Margaret died in 1888, Abraham moved to Kensington, Kansas to live with his daughter and her family.

Jacob and Eliza Strickland Krebill and their family went to Iowa in the fall of 1856 and settled on a farm in the vicinity that was then known as the Franklin Prairie in Lee County.

Heinrich Krebill was traveling from town to town working at his trade as a shoemaker and leather merchant.

Christian and Agnes Krebill Eymann also went to Iowa in the fall of 1856. Early in 1857 Mr. Eymann died. In 1858 Agnes married Johannes Conrad Eberle. They lived here for about thirty years before moving to Kansas.

Peter and Magdalena Fuchs Krebill went to Lee County in Iowa in the spring of 1857. Peter Krebill's farm as well as Agnes Eymann's farm were both adjacent to their brother Jacob's place. All their homes stood within walking distance of the Zion Mennonite church and school. This meeting house stood at the cross-roads about three and a half miles due west from the town of Franklin Center.

Jacob and Eliza passed away in 1907. Peter and Magdalena died in 1910 and 1908 respectively. Henry died in 1910.

## THE CROSSING AND THE FIRST YEARS

Late in the year of 1816 Friedrich Krebill, at the age of 28 years, and Anna Risser, at the age of 22 years, were married at Friedeishheim. Friedrich was from Altleiningen, Rhine-Pfalz (Rhineland-Palatinate), Germany, some distance northwesterly from Bad Dürkheim, and Anna was from Friedelsheim which was situated not far southeasterly from Bad Dürkheim.

Following their marriage they moved onto a homestead called Messerschwanderhof near Otterberg which was located not far due north of the city of Kaiserslautern. Friedrich and Anna with their family lived on this farm for nearly 14 years. Seven sons were born to them on this farm. Johannes, Samuel, Abraham, Jakob, Heinrich, Christian, who did not live quite 2 years, and Peter. The births of all seven boys were registered in the Otterberg government records with the family name spelled "Grehbiel." In spite of this fact the family used the "Kreibill" spelling for the boys in school as well as otherwise.

Soon after their son Peter was born Friedrich sold their Messerschwander farm and moved onto a rented farm which consisted of one half of the large Qürnheim estate. Here their last child, a daughter whom they named Agnes, was born. Their older boys attended school here during the three years that they lived on this farm. In the year 1832 Anna's brother Johannes Risser from Friedelsheim, with wife and children, emigrated to America. He was an ordained Mennonite minister and they settled near a place called Hayesville Crossroads in Ohio. Pastor Risser was an educated person and we are indebted to him for much of the early history which is available about the Hayesville area near Ashland, Ohio.

By the time Friedrich and Anna's oldest son was nearly 15 years of age they became more and more aware-of the fact that with six boys growing up they were confronted with disturbing problems. There was the scarcity of land for young men to build homes for themselves, and there was the compulsory military training each boy would be subjected to as he became of age.

High rents and church-state government taxes were a burden to those who had to rent farms. So by 1833 Friedrich and Anna, as well as Anna's brother Jacob Risser, had decided to follow Pastor Johannes Risser to America.



Figure 3: Germany

It was the first week in October when they started out on their tremendous undertaking. It is possible that their attempt to harvest their own crops for the year, may account for their late start. However, their late start of this trip and other unforeseeable unfavorable circumstances contributed hardships almost all along the way to their destination in Ohio.



## Ohio Map Showing Richland and Ashland Counties, 1890

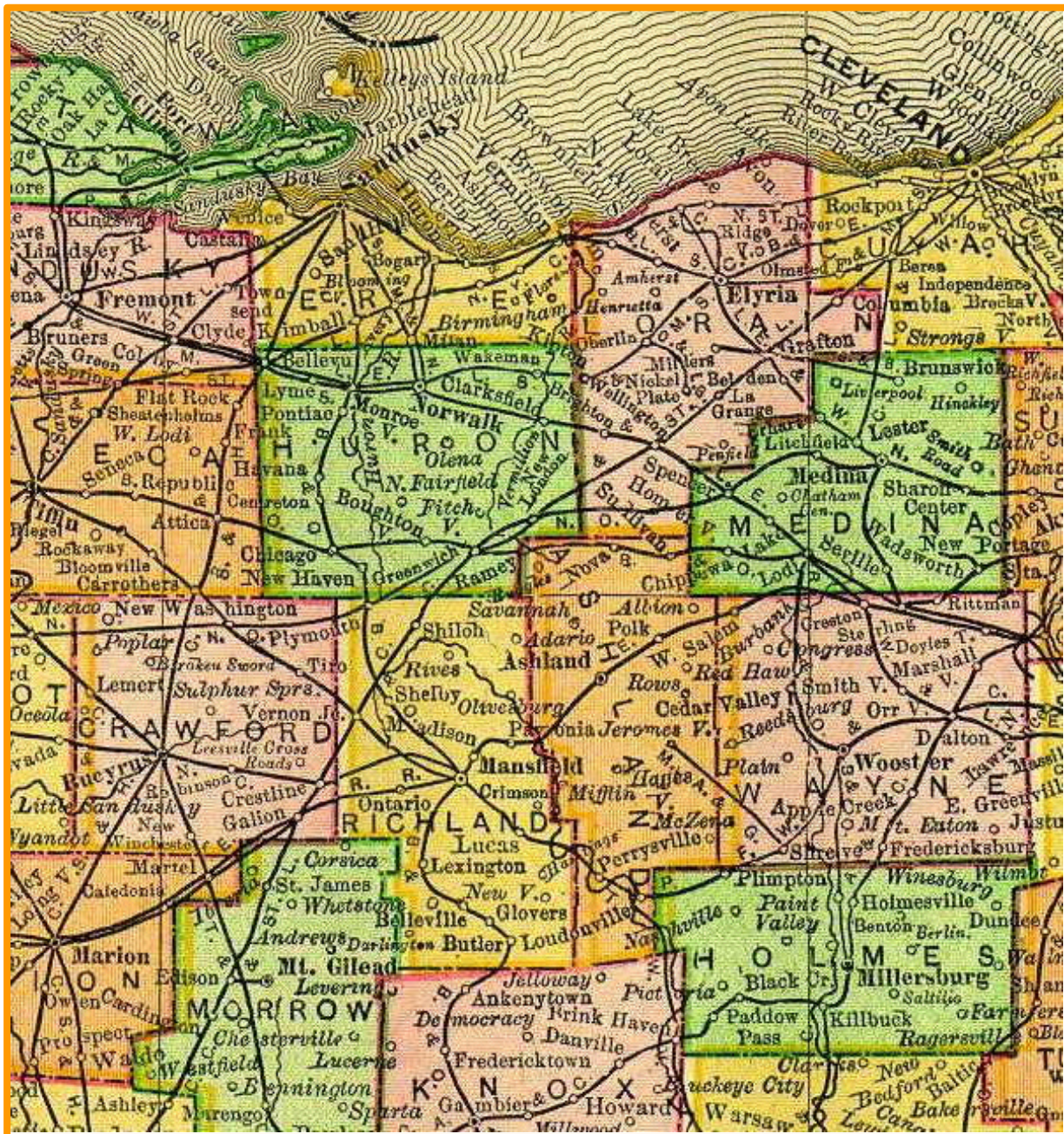


Figure 2: Ohio Map Showing Richland and Ashland Counties, 1890

**Following is a translation of a passport issued to Friedrich Krebill which authorizes him to leave Germany, pass through France and board ship at La Havre de Grace.**

"DIMENSIONS STAMP"

By Kreutzer.

- - - -DECLARATION- - - -

The Administration, which has signed below, herewith certifies that Friedrich Krebill of the nobility, born at Altleiningen and a resident there, has decided to emigrate to North America with his wife Anna, nee Risser, and his seven children; Johannes, Samuel, Abraham, Jakob, Heinrich and Peter all born near Otterberg and Agnes who was born at Qürnheim. He has the necessary money for the journey and the amount of his property is 4000 Gulden.

Qürnheim, August 15, 1833.

Off ice of the Bürgermeister at Qürnheim,

By Miller.

The above signature is that of the Mayor of Qürnheim and is hereby confirmed.

Frankenthal, August 20, 1833.

The Land Commissariat

By Kaiser.

Confirming the signature of the Land Commissar of Frankenthal .

Speyer, August 28, 1833.

The Kingsburger government of the RheinKreis.

By Bertheau.

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A Large group of Mennonites including the Friedrich Krebill and Jakob Risser families prepared to travel overland out of Germany and through France to the Ship-Port at Le Havre de Grace.

It is probable that the Krebill and Risser wagons left Altleiningen together, other wagons may have joined them there and still others perhaps joined them along the way.

They traveled in a westerly direction through Kaiserslautern; Homburg, St. Ingbert and Zarrbriücken to Forbach which was the porttown of France. Here the travelers were required to show their passes and pay a Toll charge on horses and painted wagons.

It seems that all were permitted to pass, even those who did not possess a pass were not stopped.

From Forbach they traveled through Metz, Paris and Roun and finally reached Le Havre, Interesting details are given in the following translated letters which were written enroute and after arrival at their destination, by members of the Krebill family



To: Heinrich Krebill  
Altleiningen near Grünstadt  
RheidPfalz / Germany.

From: Havre de Grace  
October 14, 1833

Dear Grandmother;

On Wednesday, October the 9th we fortunately arrived here all well, for which God be praised!

Father is so very sorry that he has not had time to write you himself. He is so busy with the Ship's master making out requisitions for provisions for the ocean voyage. The Ship's commander demands that all families be represented to make arrangements for the trip with him. You can imagine how difficult it is to get all of them together at the same time when they are lodged in so many separate localities.

I got along alright at Mainz. However, as I was riding along between Fröhnerhof and Eselsfiuth our carriage suddenly, slowed down and as I looked around I saw that we had met a wagon, and I unexpectantly discovered that it was filled with relatives and friends! I was so surprised that for a moment I wondered if I was on this earth. In fact, I was so confused that even now I am unable to recall who all was on the wagon.

In Homburg I met my folks again, all well. While it had been only a short time since we parted, we were all glad to be together again. I had gotten the money which they feared I might not be able to obtain. On this Sunday we drove only to St. Ingbert. On the following day we arrived at Forbach about noon. Here we remained until noon on the following day. Every one was permitted to pass, even those who had no passes. We were asked to open the lids of our trunks but did not have to remove the contents. We had to pay toll charges for the horses but not for unpainted wagons, Those who had the distinction to be riding in painted wagons had to pay 21 Francs for each wagon.

We kept our sorrel until we got through the hilly country and were fortunate to have him and he was well worth the toll which he cost us. At Metz, in Clermont, a post master bought him for 450 Francs. Now we were in a country where they hitched five horses to a plow. There were almost no wagons used, mostly two-wheel carts, We saw carts on level roads with as many as ten horses hitched to them in single file. We saw harrows in the fields with 20 horses pulling them, two horses to two sections.

Other harrows with five horses pulling five sections and driven with one driver . We also saw a plow which turned two furrows simultaneously. One plow seemed to be following the other. I really cannot describe how it was done.

No one became sick on the entire trip except John Jost Redinger from Kindenheim who was indisposed for a day. One day we caught up with the big freight wagon which was traveling slower than the lighter wagons. Risser, whose wagon was ahead of ours, pulled out and past the big rig. Then we pulled out to pass and when we were about even with the driver, Schenk from Asselheim fell between the wagons!

We were greatly alarmed for fear that a wheel of the heavy wagon had passed over him. Fortunately John Risser quickly pulled him out so that one of the wheels only bruised one of Schenk's heels. He is able to walk on it now.

When on the evening of October the fifth the drivers made an early stop, Mr. Dick from Börrstadt and we continued on for another two hours. Jakob Risser would have gone with us but carried no feed for his horses, so was obliged to remain with the main group. The following morning, Sunday October the sixth, Mr. Dick and we got up early and drove for several hours before breakfast. We watered and rested the horses while we prepared coffee. We were charged 4 Sous for the water to make coffee. We then drove on and at Roun we engaged a guide to show us the city as we drove through, This took us about 30 minutes after which we continued into the outskirts of the city where we obtained a lodging place.

On the morning of the 7th we had breakfast at the inn where we stayed over night. Before we left the suburbs of Roun, Father and mother went to a market to purchase some meat. While we were waiting for them to return, a Frenchman spoke to us in French. We thought he was inquiring if we intended to sell our team of horses, He left and pretty soon returned with a team of horses which he proceeded to hitch ahead of our team, When we tried to remonstrate about what he was doing, he unhitched his team and ours as well and paired each one of our horses with one of his and hitched them to our wagon again, When Father and mother returned from the market we explained to them what had happened.

This procedure seems to have been a typical one at this place because there was a steep grade just beyond the city and often travelers required help to make this grade, Anyway, Father laughed about the confusion and said ask the man what he charges for his services and let him go ahead. So we had four horses to get us over the hill. This is just an example of comical incidences which one experiences when traveling in a strange country. By noon the main group of our people had caught up with us again.

Here in Le Havre we have two small rooms which cost us 1 Frank per day. We have reservation on a merchant ship which is to sail a day after tomorrow, on Thursday. The fare is 923 Franks per person. The Ship's Captain is obliged to pay 100 Franks for each day that the ship is delayed beyond its scheduled departure. So any passenger who is the cause of such a delay will be required to pay the Captain that amount.

We purchased 5 malters of potatoes which cost us 40 Franks.

Our brown horse which is nice and fat, has a good color and good eyes, we were unable to sell before now. An Elzas driver who had brought some travelers from there, bought him for 130 Franks. We would have left on that Merchant ship on Thursday but this was too soon for us. Another ship is ready now, but it is too small a vessel. The one which is to leave on the 26th of this month is anchored directly across from our two rooms.

It is a new magnificent vessel but is scheduled to leave so much later than we would like to leave. Yesterday afternoon we older boys moved onto the ship. Father and mother and the younger boys still live in the rooms. We are celebrating our first Sunday at Havre and perhaps the last one in Europe.

Dear Grandmother, aunt and uncle at the mill and dear uncle at Lowen, to all of you a hearty greeting and farewell!

And dear Grandmother, a thousand more greetings from your grandson

Joh. Krebill.

P.S.



*Dear brethren, please do not think of me too harshly for not writing. It is just impossible for me. Our contract reads that whoever delays the time of the ship's departure must pay 100 Franks, Naturally I must avoid such an obligation.*

*I have so much to do that sometimes I just do not know which way to turn first. I am indeed sorry because I have so much to tell you.*

*Brother Abraham you expressed the wish to accompany us to Havre, if you had done so you would never regret it, for who has not seen Paris, Rouen and Havre has not seen much. In general, France is nice and beautiful. There is much of last year's crop in addition to this year's harvest still in the fields. The price of produce is not cheap here.*

*Our trip to Havre cost us 200 Franks, but thanks to God we are all real well. We greet you heartily and farewell to you.*

*Friedrich Krebill.*

Havre de Grace  
October 24. 1833.

Dear Grandmother;

Since unfavorable winds have delayed us for so long, we feel we should write you once more from Havre. On the 15th of October the wind was still unfavorable and the Captain of the ship did not seem to really be ready to sail. We too did not seem to be altogether ready. So the ship has not sailed and still the unfavorable winds persist.

Today, while window shopping down town I met Jacob Leisy and several others who are waiting for the ship to sail. Together we went up a mountain sight-seeing near the ocean to see the light houses or towers. We looked at two towers, one of which was about a hundred feet high. We asked for permission to go up to the loft. A woman led us up about 100 steps, perhaps 80 feet. We entered the Lamp room through a trap door opening.

A narrow walkway encircled the glassed-in lamp chambers with a guard rail along the outside. There were two levels or batteries of ten lamps each. These lamps have immense reflectors which concentrate the rays of light over the ocean.

On October 20 we spent some time at a street fair in the market place of the city. This fair is to continue for three weeks.

Articles sold for 2½, 5, and 25 Sous.

On October 21 the wind was more favorable. By noon it was reported that eight ships were going to sail. Mr. Schare from Worms, and Mr. Finger from across the Rhein are on one which is to leave, actually the steps leading to the deck have already been removed. Three three-mast Norwegian ships and six small ones sailed today. However, Share and Finger's ship are still here.

I watched as a tugboat was hitched to the first vessel to leave. The wind and the waves of the ocean were so strong that no vessel could leave the harbor without the help of the tugboats. One cannot hitch horses to such a ship. When a tugboat was fastened to a ship we ran along the city streets to the ocean. From here we could see how hard the tugboats had to pull against the wind and water.

When a ship finally reached the open water and the tugboat was detached, it was a wonderful sight to see how the ship slowly swung into its course and majestically sailed away.

Small single masted ships could be hauled out by manpower.

A path built with boulders and smaller stones leads out into the ocean a short distance. As I stand here waves roll in and break against this stone walkway with such force as to spray the salt water high into the air. As one wave recedes it is met with another coming in and the spectacle is repeated over and over. The noise is like thunder and like the roar of the wind in the forest. I am not able to describe it, it is fearfully nice and remarkably beautiful and you feel you see the power and greatness and wisdom of God.

On October the 22nd and 23rd the wind is still unfavorable.

We have been here 11, days and we are still sleeping aboard ship excepting Father and mother and the younger children for whom it is too noisy.

Some aboard ship arose real early and went up on deck. Suddenly they returned, shouting "Good wind!" "Good wind!" Everyone hurried up on deck to see for themselves. There were no sad faces to be seen this morning. When I got on deck I saw Schare's ship leaving, Three large three-masters one after the other slid out of the harbor unassisted. How majestically they sailed out towards the open sea.

As the last ship ahead of ours left the pier, our ship was moved forward, those on the wharf said that it appeared as if the wharf was receding and the ship standing still. Now we could move on the ship so that we will be able to get an early start the following morning. Already some people complained about dizziness! As other ships were leaving mother with little Agnes were watching too. When Agnes saw a sailor way up on one of the masts she asked mother "do we have to go way up there too?" She was so unafraid!

Dear friends, will you let the Friedelsheimers and the Biedesheimers have this letter first? Send it by express messenger rather than with a chance acquaintance? Dear Grandmother, uncle Heinrich and all the children, dear uncle Abraham and dear uncle Heinrich Würtz, Greetings to all of you!

Joh. Krebill.

P.S.

.I, my wife and the children greet you affectionately, We are, thanks to God, all well and wish you farewell. Dear Mother and brother you will say that I have had time to write, but no, a writer like I needs time to gather his thoughts and this is not possible here. Be satisfied when you hear that we have arrived in America! I and my wife and the small children are now boarding the ship and will sleep there tonight for tomorrow at six o'clock we will, be leaving.

Friedrich Krebill.

P.S.

My mother tells me that, we children received gifts from uncle Würtz and Neumüller Abraham. We thank you very much.

Dear aunts Elizabeth and Maria and uncle Peter and all the others also Johannes Leisy's boys and Latschar John, I greet you all many times!

Joh. Krebill.

Hayesville Crossroads  
June 21, 1834

Dear Mother and Sisters;

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus be with us all, always! Amen.

I must report to you our long but safe ocean voyage. That our trip to Havre went according to our plans you saw in our previous writings. We all remained well and the weather was nice. On the 24th of October we all boarded the ship; on the 25th we left the harbor. Everyone was on deck. We wished our fatherland farewell. How I felt I am unable to write, only those who have had this experience can comprehend the feeling I had.

By afternoon there already were people "feeding the fish".

In the evening a sailor came and instructed us to tie everything down tight. When we had finished this we retired. Suddenly someone was ill in every bed and what we thought would stand without fastening down, fell over! All of us were seasick except Johannes. Our Agnes slept with us and when she awoke she sat up and looked about so sorrowfully but uttered not a word. She went back to sleep and slept for two nights and a day without anything to eat or drink. However, then she became lively again and asked for some bread which her Johannes brought to her.

We said "if there was only someone who could make sane coffee for us" and then Henry Brand came by and he seemed to be feeling better and offered to try to make some for us. After this our two boys made coffee for us and in the evening we had some tea. Now the worst of our seasickness was over and we began to have an appetite again. Our helper "Fritz" did most of the cooking for us and we were well on the way of recovering from this ordeal. The children were not complaining any more except Abraham who was bothered with dizziness for quite a long time. My husband seemed to be in a better mood aboard ship than I. When it stormed at night and the waves tossed the ship he could sleep through it all undisturbed.

I have never seen Friedrich so relaxed and carefree in all my life, as he was here aboard ship. One time when some trunks got loose and fell over on some people I was so alarmed and my husband saw my fear and heard my sighs and he said to me: How can you be so concerned and worry so much?

When we boarded the ship I thought, Lord, Thy will be done and so on, and I will abide by that. Surely what God wills to happen will not be changed by my complaining. But it was a long time to be on the ocean, much too long for me, for I had to sit so much and lie down too often because I could not walk about unless the ocean was perfectly calm. But thanks to God I was well otherwise.

Dear ones, on the ocean one learns to pray, I found much comfort in that booklet my sister gave me for a remembrance.

That was a precious gift! All of you who may have been apprehensive about our ocean voyage will be glad to hear that we boarded the ship in good health and left it in good health.



Oh Mother, who must have prayed so fervently for us while we were on the sea, rejoice for the Lord has answered your supplications.

When we arrived at New York we went into a place to eat. As we ordered some coffee our Agnes clapped her hands and shouted, "Mother! Coffee with bread and milk!" Here we learned that we had to travel overland to Ohio. At Philadelphia we bought two horses and started out in God's name. The original group had divided so that we and the Helmenreichs were traveling together. My brother Jacob Risser had hired a conveyance and had left two days ago. Others went by mail or Post coaches and some remained for the winter.

At Lancaster we met a John Risser who informed us that my brother Jacob was at a friend's place and that we should be able to make it to there in two days' driving. When we got there we discovered that the people lived on a, country road some distance in from the main road. The lane leading to their place was so bad that our horses could not make it.

So my husband and I with sons Johannes and Jacob walked in to their home. Here we met my brother Jacob as well as Jakob Leisy. We were welcomed so warmly by the friends that we almost forgot that we were still traveling. They invited us to remain with them until the cold weather subsided and it would cost us nothing. However, we felt that we should reach our new home as early as possible. So the next morning, which was the first Sunday after New Year's day they drove us out to our wagon.

After this we met no one whom we knew until we reached Pittsburgh. There we met a young man named Breitenstein from Sülzen who visited with us every evening. We tarried here several days to rest the horses and to do some shopping. Now we were going again with cold weather and bad roads. We and our horses were tired. When we were still 85 miles from my brother's place we sent Johannes and Abraham ahead to tell them of our approach. The condition of the roads became worse and we needed to rest. So we remained in a small town called Kenton, in Ohio. We remained here seven days and here is where my brother's John found us when he came to meet us with two fresh horses.

Now we had renewed courage and new life! The following morning we started out anew. By afternoon we arrived at the home of Abraham Wolfs from Frieaelsheim. You should have seen how glad we were to see each other. The following morning he took not a cent for keeping us overnight. They have a good butcher shop business but none of their church denomination living close by. After two days' driving, on Sunday February 9th, before Shrove Tuesday we arrived at my Brother Johannes' place all in good health. After a brief period of rest we were like having been reborn, but soon were reminded that we were still creatures of this world.

As we were in the act of buying some land my husband became ill and was confined to bed for three weeks. I cannot describe how worried I was. How often I thought of you dear sister and brother Abraham and prayed for my husband's recovery. Thanks to God, he is well again. The owner of the land which we planned to buy became anxious waiting so long. He inquired several times if we still intended to buy. Finally he asked to see my husband who was somewhat better now. A few days later I and Friedrich with my brother Johannes and Mr. Beutler and a man named Forror went to look at the place.

After we had seen the fields, the forest and the sawmill and everything I said, let us buy the place. My brother Johannes knew the place since he had his lumber sawed there. All the others agreed with us. I believe that had you seen it you would have advised to buy it. Especially you, mother, because you advised, if possible to have water available so that we

could develop same sort of business. When we were with uncle Risser he advised the same thing.

So we bought 80 acres of land of which 40 acres are clear and 10 acres in wheat. There is a sawmill, two small houses, one nearly new the other old. They stand so close together that we enclosed the space between them which forms an entrance to both.

Between the house and the sawmill there is an orchard with 22 apple trees, some large, some small, more peach trees which bloomed and some cherries. The barn is poor so we are planning to saw lumber to build a new one. There is a windmill on the place and we got a plow, all for one thousand and fifty Dollars. We also bought from the owner a cow with calf, a young steer, seven sheep, seven large pigs and eight small ones, all for twenty dollars. Our cattle feed in the pasture and the cows give plenty of milk.

We are real well satisfied with our deal. We have  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the Roths', 1 mile to the Schwanns', 3 miles to the Philipp Simons'.

The Simons lived with us until they bought a place for themselves. We have church services every two weeks, at my brother's place. At the last meeting Daniel Krehbiel and Jacob Leisy from the Weierhof had just arrived and were present. Oh! What a sight is this strange land. If we were so fortunate as to have you with us here we would soon forget Germany. A few days later Krehbiel and Leisy also visited with us. They also expressed the wish that their folks in Germany could be here. When we were discussing our land purchase Mr. Krehbiel said if he would inherit not a cent here in America he would still be better off than in Germany with an inheritance. It is so vastly different here, low taxes, and inexpensive land. There are no beggars. All who are able and willing to work, no matter how rich or how poor all seem to fare alike, even at the table, so long as they are honest.

If any of you wish to follow us be sure to start earlier in the year. For aboard ship bring butter, eggs, flour, potatoes, dried fruit, rice, dried noodles, sausage, hams, spices, onions, wine, whisky, vinegar, sugar, coffee, tea, black biscuits, white biscuits. Prepare bread by slicing it about a half inch thick in small squares. Aboard ship-wet them then toast them over hot coals and you will find them very tasteful.

Remember salt and cinnamon. Peas and beans are very good. We had a little beef but we found it too much. Those of you who may follow us do not be discouraged with all the disagreeable things you may have to put up with for it is worth it just to get away from the German slavery. Dear ones while we do not write more often you are always in our thoughts.

In Philadelphia my husband started a letter for you and I continued it but it was never completed. We always had so much on our minds that needed our attention. Then later we knew that you must have heard from brother Johannes Risser that we had arrived. Then we said we will set aside a day or leisure just to write you. Well what shall I write now? That things went bad! How all 26 persons in our group had to sleep on the floor in one room when it was bitter cold and were forbidden to place straw on the floor to make our beds on?

Innkeepers do not let anyone put straw in their rooms, and often we cannot converse with them so we have to be satisfied with whatever they give us.

One time we were lodged in a hotel where the keeper and guests were drinking. Gradually the noise quieted down when suddenly the mother and children shrieked with horror! My husband rushed to where the sounds were coming from to see what he could do.

*He returned immediately and said they had taken the keeper to a room for dead. Right away some people came and accused us for murdering the man. One of his arms was broken in two places and his head was severely injured but was still alive. However he was unconscious and so could not talk. We were placed under arrest and held. It was bitter cold and they gave us no wood for a fire. They kept watch over us all night and kept the barn closed the following morning. They asked us to confess who killed the man. The injured man was still unable to talk or he could have exonerated us.*

*After much argumentation we had to pay \$4.50 for twelve people for supper and one night's lodging. In the morning we got nothing and wanted nothing but get away from there. I would have liked to sleep in a bed, but in a cold room we preferred to sleep on the floor where we could use our own bedding.*

*After we bought everyone said we were fortunate. We too thought so but we still wanted to see some proof. We believe we have it now, for everything we planted is in full bloom and our vegetable garden is so nice. I have never seen it better.*

*I must end now and think I will write you again. We are physically well and the children are growing fast except Johannes and the Brand boy. I greet you all dear mother, Sisters, and sister-in-laws. When you write us do not forget to let us know how Agnes Eichelberger's little girl is getting along. Adieu and farewell! Dear sister Maria we received your letter and you may tell Peter Weber that Mr. Schwann is worried because he does not hear from him. Mr. Schwann had written in January and perhaps it did not reach him. Dear sister Elizabeth if your sister-in-law is still with you, tell her I wasn't able to fulfill her request because we live 80 miles apart so I gave it to Jacob Leisy to deliver. I greet you again your ever loving sister.*

*Anna Krebill*

To: Heinrich Krebill,  
Altleiningen near Grünstadt  
Pfalz / Germany

From: Hayesville Crossroads  
Richland County  
Ohio, U.S.A.  
June 25, 1834

Dear Mother and Brother;

You will say, At last a letter! The reason why I haven't written sooner is because I first wanted to wait until we knew just how well we liked it here.

Now we know we like it real well here, and no one in our family would wish to be back in Germany! We are all together here just like we were when we left there. We wish you might be free of those worries which we do not have here. More than that you would not find necessary. While we are still new here I will describe the country later. Now about our journey. It was long and tiresome, but thanks to God we remained well.

The voyage across the ocean, about which so much is said in Germany, was really the easiest part. Only our son Abraham was ill with sea-sickness for fourteen days. There were two children who died on the way across but were none of our group.

Our ship was not a fast one and required 50 days to reach New York. It was a good French merchant ship and we had a good Captain. However one should make sure to take a Mail ship for it would be faster. Just when we arrived at Havre, such a ship left the harbor. But we were too late for it. The next ship out was a small one and did not suit us. Then the next one was another eight days later but was the best we could do was the one we took. Fare was 91 Francs per person.

When we arrived at New York, the first question that we were asked was "Where to?" To this I answered "To Ohio State by way of Canal to Buffalo". They answered that the canal had been drained yesterday because of the freezing temperatures. So we had to go by land. We got a reservation on a steamboat which we thought was to take us to Philadelphia. However we went first by steamboat, then by stage coach, then on a car which ran on rails and finally a steamboat brought us to Philadelphia. The first day we covered 90 miles and it proved to be the most tiresome trip so far. Some complained about this and others about that.

Peter Helmenreich from Pfifflogheim, decided we would buy horses and drive as far as the weather permitted. I bought a blind horse for \$9.50 and a good one for \$45.00. Helmenreich bought a wagon and one horse for \$100.00. I brought my team all the way through and put in my spring crop with it. Then one day when my son John was hauling rocks, the blind horse sprang against a tree which cost him his life. The other horse I traded off and got my money back.

Two days before New Year's day we left Philadelphia. Our group had separated, some before and some afterwards and some remained for the winter. A few days after we were on the road it turned cold and a heavy snow fell. After the roads had been cleared we continued until we reached the Allegheny Mountains.

Now the roads were up hill for four to eight miles at a stretch and some times level for a short distance. The roads were slick as glass. No one remained in the wagon except the small children and even they had to get out once. My wife and Mrs. Helmenreich often walked a mile ahead or a mile behind, sometimes they were clear out of sight. It went this



way for nine or ten days. You can believe that my wife learned to walk because she walked almost 460 miles and did not seem to mind it. I can tell you she did not get fat and took a lot of money to feed her. Here the restaurants charge according to how much you eat. We were twelve people and two horses so for supper and breakfast they charged anywhere from \$2.50 to \$6.00.

When we were still several days traveling away from Pittsburgh we almost had trouble at one of the hotels. The next morning it was raining and the mud was so deep that one sank in to above the ankles. We could not drive as one horse had a raw shoulder and the other one was not much better off. We remained here for seven days and waited for our freight to catch up with us. Our hotel bill was \$16.00. Now we were on the road again. It was cold, ice flows nearly as large as an acre of ground were going down the Ohio river. One day we followed a precipitous road which seemed to cling to the sides of some cliffs. Near the end of the second day we came to a small town called Economy.

Most of the people living here were from Württemberg. One man was at the head of the colony from the oldest to the youngest.

He was their Minister and general manager. They had a nice church building and as it was a Sunday we attended their afternoon services, Travelers find this a nice place to stop over as they have two buildings just for this purpose. These quarters are free and from their store you can buy very inexpensively.

I had one of the horses reshod for which they did not charge at all. This was nice for a day but I would not like to live there. For example, when they milk their cows the milk is taken to the milk house where it is divided so everyone gets an equal share. If there is a surplus it remains at the milk house for other use. They live as one large family and the old man as their governor.

It kept getting colder, the roads were bad and we kept going up and down hill I forget for how many days. We forded streams which were not entirely frozen over, once it took us two hours to cross. In the spring our horses lost the hair on their legs up as high as the icy water they splashed through these streams which they passed through.

About 80 or 90 miles from my brother-in-law, Johannes Risser, our sons John and Abraham went ahead of us afoot. We kept driving until we came to a place called Kenten in Ohio. We were all so tired that we did not feel like going on any farther, so we remained here for a few days. Here our nephew, John Risser, found us and had brought two fresh horses. The Helmenreichs remained here for the time being while we started out for the remainder of our journey.

We arrived at my brother-in-law's place on Sunday February 9, 1834. How we were glad the journey was completed. I did not buy a place immediately but lived with the Risser's for about six weeks. On March the 18th we bought 80 acres of land with a nearly new sawmill, a windmill and a plow, all for \$1050.00. There are 20 acres of nice meadow, two small houses which can be improved. 40 or 45 acres are cleared, and the rest is virgin timber of large trees such as oak, hard maple, beech, walnut, linden and more. Our live stock consists of three horses, two four years old, one two year old which cost us \$134.00, three cows, three heifers, seven sheep, sixteen pigs and twelve chickens.

We also have many apple trees some of which are old enough to bear fruit and many more peach trees. Unfortunately late frosts killed most of the blossoms.

On June the 2nd we had an unusual storm, a tornado which flattened big forest trees like ripe grain in a field. In the path where it went it also killed some cattle. During the day of the evening when the storm struck here

I with John and our hand Fritz had gone to Rissers', to help raise a barn.

The boys had taken the wagon along and loaded a saw log to take to our mill. Then we took the team and went up to the house. The team ran away from us and it took three days to find them. Now we went over to get the wagon and log to the mill. When we got there we discovered that the storm had passed through the forest right where the wagon with the loaded log stood. It took Rissers and me until 5 o'clock to clear the fallen trees away so we could get the wagon out. What a miracle it was to find the wagon undamaged! We did not hear that any people were killed.

The storm struck late in the evening between nine and ten o'clock when everyone was at home. I had been in the sawmill and had just started the saw. It struck so suddenly that I failed to shut the mill off. We waited for a minute or so. Samuel and Heinrich and our hand "Brand" were with me. The Brand boy was so frightened that he almost fainted. We took the boys by the hand and made a run for the house. It rained so hard that we all were thoroughly drenched.

Most of the land around our farm has been pretty well cleared.

It is half a mile to the post office of Hayesville. There are many Germans living around here. It is three miles to Simons from Kindenheim; In the other direction it is one mile to Schwanns, Fuchs and Scharfs from Nieferheim; Two miles to Johnnes and Jakob Rissers; Two miles to Roths; three miles to Beutlers and his brother Johannes and many others. Hellwig, from Asselheim. Baade from Kertzenheim, Franz Latschar from Munchhof and Daniel Krehbiel from Weierhof visited with us.

They seemed to like it here. Latschar went to Buffalo to get his folks who wintered there but hasn't returned yet.

One can still buy land here because there are English people living here who wish to move out if they can sell their farms. Good land, half cleared can be had for ten to fifteen Dollars per acre. Any one from home in Germany who plans to come to America should leave earlier in the year than we did. Do not bring implements along because you can get better ones here. Most important is good cloth for wearing apparel for what you can get here is of poor quality. It seems that people from your part of Germany are not so anxious to come as they used to be.

I thank God for giving me the thought to come to America, for whoever has made the journey can truthfully say; I have fought a good battle. We do not have the worries here which you have at home. With a willingness to work, life is good here, and we have plenty. I have tried raising Barley and have a good start.

I will close my poor writing for this time hoping it will please you and that you will write us soon and tell us how all of you are, what interesting new has happened and especially how the awkward hunter's suit came out. You may tell the Hafners that their Friedrich sends his greetings and says that he has never felt better than since he left Germany and wishes they all were here with him. In fact he regrets that he did not come sooner. You can

also tell Mr. Risser from Kertzenheim that Maria sends greetings and that she is real well. Elizabeth and Christine wish he could be near them here.

I wish that this letter may reach you as well and happy as it leaves us here. So Adieu dear Mother and brother, friends and acquaintances, we greet you affectionately and farewell.

I remain always your obedient son

Friedrich Krebill.

P.S.

Dear Mother; Just another greeting from our little Agnes. She says that you should come but not by ship. You should bring all the folks with you and they should build a bridge across the Ocean.

The village which is a half mile from our home has its name from a pioneer named Hayes. The town was laid out three years ago and yesterday the man was buried with honors.

Following is our address which should be written with English letters.

Friedrich Krebill,  
Hayesville road Post Office,  
Richland County,  
Ohio.

Much beloved Mother. I cannot thank God enough that he gave me the thought to come to America and you too Mother for giving us your consent without which we would not have undertaken this important move. As I reflect upon my past life in thankfulness I must exclaim with Jakob of old; O God! I do not deserve all that Thou hast bestowed upon Thy servant.

Notwithstanding how difficult it was to part from dear ones and friends and leave the Fatherland, it was done with a firm and steadfast belief that we all would meet again in the joyous hereafter!

Without this step I could not have done so much for our children. Insofar as God will bless us with good health and the children are willing to work and help along we can buy more land which would have been impossible back in Germany.

I keep recalling the song "Ihn! Ihn! las Walten Er ist ein weiser Fürst  
etc.

I end my writing by wishing you always a farewell and remain your obedient son.

Friedrich.

P.S.

Yes Mother you have your children's sincere conviction. We can truthfully say "The Lord has done great things for us, for which we are glad. At no time since our marriage have we been so happy and so hopeful as here in America .

We have no debts, have a good Farm, a comfortable house, three horses, 18 head of cattle, fifteen sheep, and in the house we have plenty of everything we need.

*Now adieu dear Mother, may the Lord guide and lead us that we may meet again in the great beyond where we may sing Him a Halleluya, then our hearts can rejoice with a happiness which no one can take away from us!*

*Anna Krebill.*



## OHIO PIONEERS

In 1795 Indian Tribes ceded the land which now comprises the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan to the United States. In the ensuing years land must have been surveyed by the Federal Government to define the lines and boundaries of sections and townships in preparation for the influx of pioneer settlers. At an early date Wayne County in Ohio was reported to have been the largest county in the United States.

At a later date when Ashland County was formed it encroached upon the adjacent counties of Wayne, Richland, Huron and Lorain.

The first settlers found this Ohio country covered with a veritable forest of virgin hardwood trees.

The first task confronting a settler was to clear a place on which to build a shelter. The trees which he cut down supplied the logs with which he built his cabin and other shelters. "Huts" these primitive cabins were called by late comers. They were simple structure with log ends alternately extending at each corner.

One of the sidewalls was built up a foot or so higher than the one on the opposite side to give the roof same incline. The roof consisted of logs placed close together across the top of these walls, covered with brush, slough grass and soil packed down firmly. Better huts might have a fireplace built up with sticks crisscross fashion and wet clay used to cover the frame inside and out.

The opening for the doorway might have a piece of canvas or horse blanket draped over it to keep the weather out. Floors were the soil upon which the cabin was built. Earth was banked up against the outside of the bottom logs to keep the inside dry. The clearing off of trees for a building site was the introduction to the Herculean task for a man with an axe and a grubbing hoe to clear the acres so he could cultivate his fertile land. This task included to grub out by the roots all dogwood and ironwood and other brush as well as timber trees less than 12 inches in diameter at stump height. Larger trees which were cut down were reduced in length so the logs as well as the brush could be piled over stumps and set afire. Still larger trees were "barked" all around at stump height so that they would die and left to be removed later at a more convenient time.

An 80 acre farm with about 40 acres cleared for cultivation was considered a desirable home by incoming settlers looking for a homestead. Home seekers from adjacent states as well as emigrants from abroad began to filter into this Ashland County country as early as 1812. Life for these early pioneers was a rugged one. For years roads were simple trails which were almost impassable except when frozen hard or during the dry time of the year.

During these early years such produce as the farmers raised on their farms brought very low prices because there was no transportation to get it out. Still later Peter Bechtel hauled 24 bushels of wheat to Sandusky. It took him seven days to make the trip and all he got was 3 shillings per bushel. A storekeeper refused to accept a bushel of wheat for a quarter of a pound of gun powder!

In about 1824 a young man, by the name "Imhof" who had been working for a farmer in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, walked to the Hayesville vicinity carrying his money and all his possessions. When he got there he discovered that he did not have enough money to make a down payment on a farm. So he walked back to Lancaster and worked for the same farmer for \$8.00 per month which was two dollars more than he got for his first stint.

After about three years he again walked back to the same area in Ohio where he had been before and bought eighty acres of wooded land for \$400.00. He paid \$200.00 down and contracted with a farmer to

clear 40 acres of timberland for him for the balance of \$200.00 which he owed on his purchase. In addition to clearing the forty acres he also had to split enough rails to fence in the forty acres into five eight acre fields.

This took him about three years before he was able to start in on his own timberland. He felled enough trees to build a barn and started a cabin for himself. Before the house was completed he married an Elizabeth Pletscher. So late as in 1926, the house he had built in 1835 was still standing in good repair.

In 1832 Johannes Risser, an ordained Mennonite minister, with wife and children came to Hayesville, Ohio from Friedelsheim. By now there were other German speaking people living in this vicinity. A family with the name Brubacker welcomed Pastor Risser and his family to share his home while he searched for a place to buy.

These two families lived together for eight days when Mr. Risser moved his family into their own home. This was more than a year before Pastor Risser's sister Anna, her husband Friedrich Krebill and their children arrived in America. Pastor Risser noted that when the Friedrich Krebill arrived in New York, they went by steamboat to New Brunswick which took about 14 hours. From there they went by coach which ran on wooden rails to Trenton which took ten hours. From there they again went by steamboat to Philadelphia which took 16 hours.

Gradually from the time of the earliest settlers the types and quality of log cabins improved. Logs were notched where they were fitted together at corners, rafters were hewed square from light poles and pitched roofs with gable ends produced attic storage and bedrooms. First floor rooms were divided. Fireplaces were built with stones. Windows with glass set into wooden frames took the place of holes with greased paper over them.

As more and more people came in to the area many farmers were capable craftsmen and this was reflected by the use of materials. Lime kilns were improvised which made lime and sand mortar available. Riven shakes or large shingles became available, even ornamentation such as carving name or initial on the face of a lintel over a door was seen on some homes.

Pastor Johannes Risser left his first floor room undivided so it could be used for a meeting place until a church building was erected some years later. Pegs were dowed into logs to support seat boards for the worshipers, or for shelves higher up. These methods were still used by those who could not afford the cost of sawmill lumber when it became available.

Heinrich Krebill  
Altleiningen near Grünstadt  
Rhein Baiern, Europe,  
New York, Havre via Kaiserslautern.

Hayesville Crossroad  
Ohio, U.S.A.  
April 17, 1837

Dear Mother, Brothers, Sisters and Friends:

I feel I owe you a letter to let you know how we all are. In my wife's last letter you heard that we had been very sick.

We really had a time of it the past winter for all of us were down real sick in bed excepting our John, and the three younger ones did not take it so hard. For a time Samuel and I were so low that the doctor had but little hope for us.

We wished for a doctor from Germany, but God must have helped us to recover. I took sick first and my wife got little rest keeping a snow pack on my head and waiting on me. The children were still alright then. Then my wife became ill. They set up a bed for her next to mine. I would ask her "Are you better?" Then she would ask me how I felt, then get up and wait on me, but go right back to bed.

So it went for three weeks. Next Sam, Abraham and Jacob took down at the same time but Abraham and Jacob soon recovered.

Samuel Hierstein came here from Ashland where he had been working and he was going to sit up with Sam when he took down with the same decease. With him it did not last so long. The doctors called it gall fever in its worst form. With Sam the snow packs melted so quickly that they had to use ice packs instead. Even these melted on his forehead as if put on a stove.

Mary Keister left us last Christmas and went to John Kueste and at Easter was married to Christ Keister. They are living in Ashland where he bought a home. Our Henry is still with his boss although his apprenticeship has been completed. We are busy making maple sugar. We have 140 pounds of it and several crocks of molasses or syrup as they call it here. We spread it on bread, it looks like nice honey but has a better flavor and it is real sweet. We often wish we could send you same dear Mother.

Land is worth twice what it was when we arrived here. Prices of grain are good per bushel: wheat \$1.25; rye 75¢; barley 50¢; oats 37¢; corn 75¢; flour per bbl (196#) \$7.00; a common cow \$30.00; pair of oxen \$70.00; common horse about \$60.00. Since Christmas my wife has had no hired girl. They will not hire out by the year, only by the month or the week or even for just a few days.

P.S. Dear Mother, Brothers, Sister and Friends who remember us. I do hope these lines will find you as well as they leave us. Please write often for our love for you is growing stronger although we may not write so often. Although we cannot talk together let us be thankful that we can write. Since we cannot hire a maid for long at a time, we have one for a day or so and then none. I wish our daughter was a few years older. Greetings to all of you.

Friedrich and Anna Krebill,

P.S. Dear Cousin Abraham:

You wrote you had hopes to come to America too. Hopes alone will not get you here, you get here you must work and It requires courage and determination, and save.

*Your friend Samuel Krebill.*

Heinrich Krebill  
Altleiningen near Grünstadt  
Rheinkreis Germany,  
Via New York, Kaiserslautern.

Hayesville Ohio, U.S.A.  
January 28, 1849.

Dear Friends: Your letter of the 17th of October arrived on the 17th day of December. We were glad to hear that you were all well.

First let me extend the warmest greeting to you all. My father has been ill since last May and suffers so much. He has many wounds on his legs and face. He has had surgeons cauterize and cut the wounds clear to the bones of his legs. When I visited him yesterday he seemed to have some hope that the condition might improve as the sores seemed somewhat better. May it be God's will that he may get well. Jesus said "Without God's will not a hair will fall from our head."

By your letters and other reports, war clouds are hovering over you again. I hope this will clear up. God can help us under the most dire circumstances. We have nothing to complain about here.

Grain prices are average. Horses sell anywhere from \$70.00 to \$125.00. I have 80 acres of land about a half mile from Father's.

My wife is English but can speak a few words in German. She is in church now and our Samuel, about two years and three months old, is here on the floor playing. He wants to know if I am writing the ABC's. We are anxious to hear from you, especially because of Father who is always glad to hear from you. You have so many good writers there and I am such a poor one. Affectionately

John S. Krebill.

P.S. Greetings from all of us to you dear brother.

The Peace of God which passeth all understanding be with you and us all, now and forever, Amen. I had been ill for some time then I had trouble passing urine and finally - affected other parts of my body especially my legs. The pain was so great that I could not sleep the night through. Dear brother please write often, it is so difficult to write. Greetings from your friend and brother.

Fr. Krebill

I will try to explain the awful affliction my husband is suffering with. By October he was mostly confined to bed. Wounds, the size of a silver dollar, developed on his legs which looked like warts. They would break open as running sores and then dry up then break open again. They do not seem so painful of late but we cannot say that his condition is any better.

May God give him strength and patience until he sees fit to call, him home, which is his daily wish and prayer now. You, dear brother-in-law can understand how hard this is for me.

Our three boys have English wives and we are well satisfied with them. They are good workers and good in every way. John has a son, named Samuel. Abraham has a son also named Samuel. Jacob had a son but the Lord took him.

*Henry Brand is married to an English woman and they have a girl and a boy and are getting along fine. He often visits father and urges you to write. He sends greetings to all of you and would like to hear from his mother. Goodbye from your loving Sister.*

*Anna Krebill.*

**Abraham Grabill**

*Samuel Krebill  
Altleiningen, Germany.*

*Hayesville, Ohio.  
Aug. 26, 1838.*

*Dear cousin Samuel:*

*I greet you and in spirit kiss you and may the grace of the Lord be with you.*

*When I arrived home today my dear mother informed me that J. Latschar was leaving for the Fatherland this coming Tuesday and we brothers should write something for him to carry with him for you.*

*My brother says that we haven't heard from you for so long that perhaps you do not expect to hear from us and we might send a few words verbally with Latschar and save the writing. However things are always changing here so perhaps you might like for me to write anyway.*

*I had been thinking of learning some trade or craft and finally I decided to learn the Tanning trade. My parents seemed to be in favor of this selection of mine so Father went to speak to a Tanner at Hayesville. They drew up a contract whereby I was to work two years for the sum of \$65/00 and shoes to wear. I was also to have three months of school each year.*

*This man seemed to be an honest one and so far I am well satisfied to work for him. Please write soon, Samuel and ask questions and we brothers will be glad to answer!*

*Greetings to you dear Grandmother, and to your parents and to all the cousins. Finally I greet all of those who remember me kindly. I hope that this writing may reach you all in as good health as it leaves us here. With a farewell to you I remain your true Friend.*

*Abraham Grabill.*

*P.S.*

*Dear ones; In reply as to how our children are getting along. Johannes and Samuel put out the planting and do the cultivating and the others help when it comes to cutting, bundling and gathering corn. So we do not need to hire extra help during harvest time. Our Peter goes to school and Agnes can read english real well. She helps with cleaning and dusting about the house and can knit, if I keep after her. But she would rather runaround outdoors!*

*Anna, (Abraham's mother)*



## **JACOB KREBILL**

Jacob, the fourth son of Friedrich and Anna, was a lad of eleven years when they arrived in Ohio. Jacob had attended public schools in Germany and probably did so for a period of time in their new home vicinity in America.

On a farm in those days a boy of eleven did not only do his share of the daily chores, he also took the place of a grown man with the field work.

Johannes Risser, an educated ordained minister, served the newly founded congregation of Mennonite pioneer families in the Hayesville community. The Rev. Risser was an uncle of Jacob's and conducted catechismal classes. Jacob attended these classes and ultimately, like his older brothers, was baptized in the Mennonite Christian faith and accepted as a member of the church.

At the age of 24 years Jacob married Eliza Ann Strickland and in the following ten years that they lived in the Hayesville community their first six children were born. Their first child lived but a few weeks and their third child lived about two and a half years.

In the fall of 1856 Jacob and Eliza with their children Frederick, Amanda, Nancy and Mary left their Ohio home and traveled by covered wagon and horse teams across the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to Lee County, Iowa.

A Mennonite colony had been established here some years before and a church building had been built several miles due west from the town of Franklin.

On November 13 in 1856 two deeds were filed at the local court house by Jacob and Peter Krebill for 120 acres of land which they had purchased on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. One deed was for 80 acres described as the East 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of section-20 in Franklin Township of Lee County.

The other deed was for 40 acres described as the North 1/2 of the West 1/2 of the same Southwest 1/4 of section 20, Jacob and his family moved on to his farm right away but Peter remained at Hayesville until the following spring.

About 25 years later, on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1881, Jacob filed a deed for 80 acres of land for which he had obtained the title on January 20<sup>th</sup>. It was described as the East 1/2 of the Northwest 1/4 of section 27 in Franklin Township.

On June 17, 1884, he filed another deed for the adjacent 80 acres for which he had obtained the title on March 12<sup>th</sup>, and described as the West 1/2 of the Northwest 1/4 of the same section 27.

There seems to be some indication that Jacob may have farmed this land prior to the time when he filed these deeds.

Perhaps he may have rented the land or possibly bought it on contract, before he obtained title to it. In the year 1871 Jacob's son Frederick married Elizabeth Rings. Frederick and Elizabeth were the first to live on the west half of this 160 acre farm.

The house stood at the end of a short lane leading in from the road about midway between the town of Franklin to the east and the Green Tree crossroads to the west. In 1882, after five children had been born to the Frederick Krebills, Elizabeth the mother died following a serious tuberculosis illness. About a year later Frederick married a cousin of his former wife.

Up until this time Jacob had been living on his farm near the church. He had replaced the old house with a red brick one, enclosed it with an attractive front yard, built a large bank barn and other improvements. He had a bearing apple orchard and grape vineyard. After Frederick's children had reached school age,

which was about the time when he married the second time, he and his father Jacob exchanged farms. It has been reported that this was done so that the young children were closer to church and schools.

In 1884 Jacob built a small frame house on the east half of his 160 acre farm. This house stood close to the main road as well as to the lane which lead to the larger old home. When his son Joseph and Selma Weber were married they moved into this new house, which they occupied for about four years. When Jacob and Elite's son William married Clara E. Weber, the parents moved into the smaller home near the road and Joseph and his brother William shared the old house.

Joseph occupied the south part and William, the north part of this old, house.

By 1894 the brothers Joseph and William rented the adjacent farm to the west and since their families had been expanding, William with his family moved into the house nearby which stood on the rented farm. However, the two brothers continued to farm the several farms together.

Jacob was a deacon at the Zion Mennonite Church for many years. After moving to their farm near Franklin Mr. and Mrs. Krebill would come to the church services driving a brown horse hitched to a top-buggy. They were honored with a reserved space for their rig along the hitching rack in front of the church. After Jacob was no longer able to drive himself his son Joseph's family would bring them to the service.

These grandparents continued to live by themselves up until after their 61st wedding anniversary. A bell was mounted conveniently so they could call for help as the Joseph Krebill family still lived nearby in the old house. When the old folks retired early, their son Joseph would make it a routine of his to go up and sit on the porch by their bedroom window to talk.

In August 1907 Eliza became very ill and in a few days was called home by her Lord. In order that the aged Jacob might remain in his home environment, his son William's widow and children moved in to care for him. Only seven weeks after Elite's demise, Jacob too was called to his eternal home.

In the fall of 1857 Jacob added a postscript to a letter written by his brother Peter to their brother Johannes Grabill at Hayesville, Ohio.

*Dear brother;*

*I must write you briefly how we are getting along. I am sorry to report that our little Mary has been ill nearly all summer, She is presently so poorly that we are in doubt that she will be with us very long.*

*She is suffering with tuberculosis and the doctor says nothing can be done to help her. The rest of us are quite well. Christian Hirstein says he is sorry that he does not hear from anyone in Ohio. He did not know that I had left there until he had almost arrived at our place here. He did not mention about receiving a letter from you. Write again,*

*Your brother Jacob.*

## HEINRICH KREBILL

HEINRICH KREBILL: Shoe-maker, Merchant and Rancher.  
Born June 14, 1824 at Messerschwanderhof near Otterberg.  
Deceased February 15, 1910 near Donnellson, Iowa. U.S.A.

Henry Krebill was about 10 years of age when his family, the Friedrich Krebills, arrived at Hayesville, Ohio. In a letter to their folks in Germany dated early in 1837r Henry's mother stated that he had completed his apprenticeship but was still working for his employer.

From some early correspondence we gather that perhaps Henry had apprenticed for a shoe-maker and leather merchant which trade he may have followed before he got into the Colorado mining and ranching business.

Following are letters and excerpts of letters written by Henry and by others about Henry. These letters indicate to some measure the itinerant mode of living he followed during most of his adult life.

Henry Krebill spent the last years of his life at the home of his nephew Frederick R. Krebill, near Donnellson, Iowa, where he lived in retirement until the time of his demise.

*Jacob Krebill,  
June 15, 1855.*

*Hayesville, Ohio.*

*Dear Brother;*

*I and Abraham Risser, God be praised, are quite well. We are in Nebraska and are planning to go to Kansas and Missouri, I like it better here than in Iowa.*

*Please let Abraham Risser's father know where we are at, and the same to brother Johannes.*

*If I do not get home before July, will you go to the store-keeper and tell him that if he cannot pay by July the 14th, you want the article back.*

*I received a letter from Mr. Hott who writes that he will be unable to pay what he owes me. You know what to say to him, and I suppose there is not much risked but that he will pay later.*

*Please excuse my short letter, I am somewhat in a hurry.*

*Yours, H. Krebill.*

Victoria, Knox County, Illinois

Dear Brother Johannes Grabill:

I write this with the hope it will find you all well as, Thanks to God, it leaves me. When I left you I had no idea that you would have to wait so long for an answer to your questions. While I could give you plenty of excuses for my dilatory writing, but they would not be much good. First let me tell how I got along on my trip. At Mansfield I had to wait until four O'clock P.M. I arrived at Bureau Junction at 2:30 P.M. the following day. There Jacob and Mr. Eymann took a train west while I continued to Sheffield where I arrived soon after. However I discovered that from Sheffield I had to walk fourteen miles to brother Abraham's place. It was seven O'clock when I arrived there and I tell you that it was the fastest I had ever walked that distance.

Abrahams were all well. I had anticipated to find them living in their new house but such was not the case. I went to Princeton the next day looking for work as I wanted to wait until brother Peter would come along and we could continue the journey.

However, when I returned Mr. Huston told me that it seemed brother Abraham would not get his house finished this summer. He needed it very much because the two families were living in Mr. Huston's house together. He had hired a young man and promised to pay him Eleven dollars per month. He put in 16 acres of wheat which looks nice and five acres of oats which also looks nice. He also has seven acres of corn which does not look too good.

I thought, perhaps if I would help him get his house finished and get a well dug it might help him. I suggested that he break up the rest of the sod. Early in September I will visit him again.

Writing is difficult for me but hope I have explained so you understand what you especially wanted to know.

I went back to "Bureau" where I met one of the shop men who said that Boss Fred was in town. So I went and looked him up and he was glad to see for his regular foreman was in Pennsylvania for several weeks on vacation. He offered me the job until the regular man would come back. I like it here at my old job.

Do not send my chest until I write for it. I will write again in a month.

Goodby dear brother, "Lebe wohl" and write soon. Greetings to all the friends.

Heinrich Krebill

We seem to have only the latter portion of this letter but will add it to the foregoing one as it deals with the same subject. The foregoing letter did not seem to have the dates which we estimate to have been in the mid 1850s.

*Peoria, Illinois. We traveled together from Peoria to Galesburg where he continued west and I east. I had promised you I would visit Brother Abraham and I found him and his family as well as the Mittingtons in good health.*

*He had his hired man all summer. He intends to keep until next spring. He has some 300 bushels of wheat which he intends to keep until next spring. Of corn he does not have enough.*

*I left then for Iowa where I found Brothers and sister all well, and better fixed than I had anticipated them to be. Our sister purchased a farm across the road and directly east from the southeast tip of Jacob and Peter's farm. She really has a nice farm and could not have done better in locating so close to the others.*

*I remained here for a week and every one was well when I left there.*

*I became sick and turned so yellow that I did not know myself when I looked in a mirror. I sent for a doctor and he said I had "Yellow fever." I kept getting worse so I sent for another doctor.*

*His medicine helped and I got better right away. I will sign off with these words;*

*Yours, thine never-forgetting brother,  
Heinrich Krebill.*

-----

*Johannes Grabill, Hayesville, Ohio. Dec. 28, 1858, Victoria, Illinois.  
(Knox County)*

*Dear Brother:*

*This had always been an important day for our parents and I am writing you more out of nostalgic joy on the Holy day rather than about any news I might have to tell. I wish you and your family a Happy New Year!*

*It was nice to hear that all of you are well. Please remember me to cousin Rissler. I heard from Abraham Rissler that they were well but that business was not too good.*

*Now about brother Abraham; I thought that perhaps he had written you about his affairs, but evidently not. He has so much bad luck that I feel sorry for him. He got almost no wheat, not much corn and the mare he bought from brother Jacob died before he got her paid for, The man from whom he rented some land is pressing him for the rent money!*

*Some irregularities have come up about Peter's 40 acres in Bureau county and I finally paid \$500/00 to safeguard the deal and I hope I can write better news by the end of the year.*

*Your brother Henry Krebill.*

The following is an excerpt from a letter which Henry dated February 20, 1859 but does not indicate where he may have written it:

*To John Grabill, Kayesville, Ohio.*

*Four men, one of which is I, have formed an alliance.*

*With three yoke of Oxen and one yoke of Cows and provisions to last us six months we propose to start out towards the last of the month for Pikes Peak. This, no doubt, will seem foolish to you. From one angle it seems foolish to me too, but from another angle I look at it differently.*

*Some people will pay extra prices for good seed, broadcast it over the ground and hope to get a good crop, and perhaps will. So I too expect to have the pleasure of climbing Pikes Peak and perhaps find a little gold.*

*I should like to hear from you before I start and let me know something about Mr. Sheet's leaving. I have always thought him the best minister that they have had in that charge. Also, who have they now?*

*I saw in the Cleveland paper that a man in Mansfield made a confession on his death-bed of French Miller's killing the driver and that this man should have cut the throat of the horse. Then I saw it contradicted in the last paper.*

*I would like the particulars of all news that you can think of. I was highly pleased to see your letter so filled up but it was a pity that you ran out of paper.*

*Your humble brother,*

*Henry.*

Excerpts from a letter by a J. J. Risser dated Nov. 19, 1879 at Canon City, Cole. to John Grabill, Hayesville, Ohio.

*Delighted to hear that you had a nice trip to Illinois.*

*Your brother "Henry" left here the day after you did. I will write to "Henry" as soon as I can manage to get started to see if he wants to go with me on my trip to look around.*

*I believe that he would like to sell out if he possibly can. He seemed very much affected when you and "Jacob" left and I believe that he felt more lonesome than ever.*

*Perhaps if you folks keep writing to him, whether he will answer or not, you may get him to return to the States and settle there.*

*Yours very truly,  
J. J. Risser.*

John S. Grabill  
Hayesville, Ohio

Mountain Dale  
Park County, Cole.  
Nov. 23, 1881

Dear Brother;

Your letter as well as your son Samuel's letter came today. I was delighted to hear from both of you. Just last week, Mr. Mosser handed me a letter from you which was dated October 3. It appeared as if it had been carried around in someone's pocket for some time. This is not so much the Post-master's fault as it is of those who pick up or deliver such letters. Since the last of June the mail carrier from the Mountain Dale office comes by my place but returns by another route. Because of these changes I receive my mail more regularly.

Work at the mine is not turning out as I would like to see it. The man who owns the ground is not able to develop it and is afraid to let a company with capital work at it. Last summer a company wanted to tunnel a hundred feet and if it was successful they would pay him \$15,000/00. If it proved unsuccessful they would pay him \$2,000/00 for half interest in the mine.

I am living in my new house. It is eighteen feet by twenty-four feet with a cellar underneath. It is warm and comfortable and I am planning to spend most of the winter months sitting by the hot stove. Last Friday morning the temperature was sixteen below zero, and I had the good luck to be obliged to go ten miles after grain for my friend Coles. Coles have a nice boy of whom they are exceedingly proud.

They are working on a railroad from Denver to Stairplay which will be within six miles from my place. Perhaps they will have it running by next fall, and then I should be able to sell out. However, I will try to rent the place out next summer for I want to come and see you all so very much and fulfill my promises. But there are so many of you that it will require a lot of time. I might spare five or six weeks this winter but that would be worse than your visit out here had been.

I would have to send word to some of you to come and see me before starting back. I will wait a little longer before I come.

Dear brother I wish you a pleasant visit to Iowa and a Merry Christmas. I would like to be with you personally but must content myself to be with you in thought. I will close and please remember all inquiring friends for me.

Your brother,  
Henry Krebill.



John S. Grabill  
Hayesville, Ohio.

Mountain Dale,  
Clark County, Cole.  
September 8, 1886.

Dear Brother;

Your letter of August the 18th and the certified copy of father's naturalization papers, dated August the 20th, were delivered today. I sent the papers to Leadville right away and think they will straighten out the matter alright.

I regret that I have caused you so much inconvenience to search for those papers. My health is better now than it was at the time when I wrote you last, at any rate I am feeling better since the weather is turning cooler.

I am putting up hay now which is a light crop this year. The oats I shall leave in the field until October. We have had a light snow last Thursday. I will close for this time and write you again as soon as I hear from Leadville.

My love to you from your brother,  
Henry Krebill.

John S. Grabill  
Hayesville, Ohio.

Mountain Dale, Cole.  
November 10, 1886

Dear Brother John;

I returned from a week at the Florissant Springs and found a letter here from nephew Fred H. Krebill at Donnellson, Iowa. I was very sorry to hear that your lung trouble has not improved. I would very much like to come and see you if I were just footloose so that I would not need to come back again!

I had unexpected expenses the past year with boarding out and not being able to work. I feel much better since September when the fever subsided and the weather has been nice with very little snow. Last night was the coldest so far this fall with 1 below zero.

I finally got my homestead papers from Leadville this week. The reason for them being delayed for so long is due to the fact the man who is in that office is new.

We will soon be hearing the trains whistle for the crossing on the netland. They have started to lay ties and expect to reach Florissant by February. I do not seem to have more to write that would be of interest to you, so will close hoping you may be feeling better. Write again, Your brother,

Henry Krebill.

Samuel Grabill Esq.  
Hayesville, Ohio.

Donnellson, Lee Co.,  
Iowa.  
January 25, 1887.

Dear Cousin;

*I received your welcome letter promptly and was delighted to hear from you. Chris Eberle just now handed me a letter dated January 20 from uncle Henry. He writes; "When I returned from the Springs nephew Samuel and a letter from you waiting for me. I would like to go and see Brother John once more on this earth.*

*However, I think it will not be long until we will meet in Heaven to part no more.*

*I have often thought, if I were only ready to go with him, but God knows what is best for us. If we trust God all will be right in the end! My health is better than it was last summer, but I take good care of myself.*

(The above is an excerpt from a letter written by Frederick B. Krebill. Following is an excerpt of another letter which he wrote about two weeks later.)

Samuel E. Grabill,  
Hayesville, Ohio.

Donnellson, Lee Co.,  
Iowa.  
February 10, 1887.

Dear Cousin Samuel;

*We received your telegram with the sad tidings of Uncle John's death. Although it was expected the reality struck us quite suddenly. I sent a copy of your message to uncle Peter and one to Father. They both indicate that they can not go. I can not leave because we have children with the measles and while they are not considered dangerous, they can be troublesome.*

*Father, uncle Peter, aunt Nancy and cousins wish to say that you have our heartfelt sympathy in your bereavement.*

*We should not mourn over our loss, for it is his gain. He has parted for a better world where there is no trouble, pain nor sickness. Our time may come at any time.*

*May God help us to be prepared at all hours. I refer you to God and his word as the best and only comfort at such times. Let us try to shape our course so as to meet him, never to be parted.*

*I am sending my love to you*

Your cousin  
Frederick H. Krebill.

## **PETER KREBILL**

Peter was just a boy about six years of age when the Friedrich Krebills arrived at Hayesville, Ohio early in 1834. The fact that Peter was so much younger than his brothers was to his advantage for he had the opportunity to attend English schools for a longer period of time.

In addition to growing up on a farm with its many chores for the young, he also learned about operating a farmer's saw-mill.

Early in 1856, about seven years after the father, Friedrich, had died, and about a year before the mother Anna's demise, Peter Krebill and Magdalena Fox (Fuchs) were married. During this summer, Peter and his brother Jacob and their brother-in-law Christian Eymann, decided to move to the Franklin Prairie vicinity near Franklin in Lee County, Iowa.

In the fall of 1856 the brothers Jacob and Peter bought 120 acres of land about three miles due west from the Village of Franklin Center.

However, Peter did not move to Iowa until the following spring after their first child, a daughter Anna, had been born. They left Hayesville in April of 1857 and like his brother Jacob and Christian Eymann did on the previous fall, Peter traveled by covered wagon and team. They arrived on the 13th of June and moved into a log cabin which stood on a forty acre tract, a part of the 120 acres which the brothers had acquired the fall before. About a half mile north from the new Zion Mennonite church, a lane extended eastward to the Peter Krebill's cabin.

The wives of Jacob and Peter were non-Mennonites. There seemed to have been some conversation among the church dignitaries to the effect that the wives should be required to be baptized before being accepted as members. However, in view of the fact that both of them had been baptized in Protestant faiths, Peter warned the Mennonites that they would prefer to join another church if they insisted that this was mandatory. Fortunately the Mennonites accepted the wives as members without any reservations.

Peter Krebills lived in their log cabin until they moved into another one when in 1865 Peter purchased about 50 acres of land in the southwest quarter of the adjacent section 19. His home on this newly acquired place stood just one mile west from his brother Jacob's place. In 1867 and 1869 Peter added two more tracts of land next to his first 50 acres. In 1883 he purchased still another piece of farmland which gave him title to the entire southwest quarter of section 19.

He also owned two wooded tracts across the road from his farm in Harrison Township which brought his holding up to about 200 acres. Peter followed a diversified type of farming, specialized in horse and cattle breeding and operated a grain threshing rig for many years. At first he used a horsepower and later a steam engine to run the grain separator.

The following pages contain excerpts from letters which Peter Krebill wrote from Lee County, Iowa to his brother John Grabill at Hayesville, Ohio. These letters were written over a period of years from the time when Peter first arrived in Iowa in 1857 to the time of his brother John's demise in Ohio in 1887.

The full text of these letters may be found at the Musselman historical library at the Bluffton College in Bluffton, Ohio.

*John S. Grabill, Hayesville, O. July 5, 1857, Franklin Center, Iowa.*

*The Jacob Krebill and Agnes Eymann families are all well.*

*We arrived here on June 13th. We moved Agnes into one of Mrs. Strohm's houses west from the church. I left brother Henry at brother Abraham's place. He said he would be traveling towards Peoria, and would write me when he found a job. I have not heard yet.*

*I went with Fred Fuchs to Montrose on the sixth. Goodbye*  
*Peter Krebill.*

*John S. Grabill, Hayesville. September 23, 1857, Franklin Center.*

*David Risser offered to sell his eighty acre farm to sister Agnes Eymann and take her house at Franklin in trade. He asked \$27/00 an acre and offered \$672/00 for her house. Agnes bought the land. It is described as the west half of the northeast quarter of section 29 in Franklin township.*

*I sold my iron gray horse for \$170/00 to John Rupp, a brother-in-law of Heinrich Kirschler. Brother Jacob bought the roan mare for \$150/00 without an argument. Today was the first day of the three day fair at West Point.*

*Tell Fred Fox (Fuchs) I will write him before long.*

*Your brother Peter Krebill.*

*John S. Grabill, Hayesville. January 18, 1868, Franklin Center.*

*The last one of two letters from you came from Philadelphia.*

*I got first premium on the large horse and second on the colt. Pork is worth \$3/50 to \$3/75, corn 15¢, or 20¢ at Keokuk. I often think of the time when you took your first trip to the west, when we were all gathered around the table. Mother would say in German, "I wish John would come and eat' some now."*

*How you are there and the rest of us are scattered from here to Pike's Peak! We had hoped to see Henry last fall but have not seen anything of him yet.*

*Your brother Peter Krebill.*

*John S. Grabill, Hayesville.  
Iowa.*

*June 1, 1868, Franklin,*

*John Hertzler and wife have been here. After they got back to Burlington he found the garden plow and he took it to their shop. He will send it to us as soon as possible. I still keep their plows here for sale.*

*I sold my stallion to John Haffner, a son of Fred Haffner, for \$300/00. I have 50 acres of small grain and 50 acres of corn.*

*Our Anna had a letter from brother Abraham's little girl.*

*Peter Krebill.*

*John S. Grabill, Hayesville.  
Primrose, Iowa.*

*October 2, 1881,*

*We did not hear from Henry all summer, if we do hear from him we will let you know right away.*

*Our Peter was baptized with six others last Sunday, September the 25th. John, Edward and Laura are still in school. Little Freddie is only three years old.*

*Peter Krebill.*

*John S. Grabill, Hayesville.  
Primrose, Iowa.*

*November 17, 1886,*

*I would like to hear that you are feeling better. Perhaps next summer you may feel like visiting us again.*

*I am feeding 23 steers. Our son Henry will start out for himself next summer. He rented a farm about a mile north from the Lover crossroads. So by next year there will be four out of our eleven children out on their own.*

*We haven't heard from brother Henry yet.*

*Peter Krebill.*

*John S. Grabill, Hayesville.  
Primrose, Iowa.*

*January 1, 1887,*

*Happy New Year! As I wrote the date I thought of the time fifty years ago on a new years day how you taught me to write the new date. It was on that big old chest by the old cook-stove.*

*Henry will marry a daughter of John Lowenberg who lives close to the church, and are preparing for their home by spring time.*

*"Nephew Samuel"; Looking at the picture of your four children, that little girl standing by the tree reminds me so much of the little boy I used to see riding the dog around the house!*

*Tell them to be kind to their grand-pa when he is sick.*

*Peter Krebill.*

John S. Grabill, Hayesville.  
Primrose, Iowa.

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1887,

*I miss your letters so much since you are not able to write.*

*For the past thirty years we have exchanged letters every year. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of this month brother Jacob's daughter Charlotte and Elias Weber are to be married. Then on the 30<sup>th</sup> our Lena and Emil Leisy are to be married.*

*"Dear nephew Samuel"; Our Freddie wants to tell your boys Howard and John the little speech he gave in school:*

*"If older boys can make a speech  
we little boys can too  
And though we may not say so much  
Yet here's a word for you.*

*This world's large and full of room  
There is a place for all  
The rich, the poor, the wise, the good  
The large as well as small*

*So give the little ones a chance  
To show off what they know  
And shun us not because we're small  
For little boys will grow*

*Your unvnr Peter Krebill.*

Samuel B. Grabill, Hayesville, O.  
Primrose, Iowa.

March 13, 1887,

*Dear Nephew;*

*I did not get around to answering your last letter before we received the sad news of your father's death. At the time Laura and Freddie were down with the measles and I could not leave at such a time to attend the funeral. At such a time one wonders "Why didn't I go and see him while he was still alive?" "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so saith the spirit, for they rest from their labor."*

*Emil and Lena Leisy live in Kansas now. Henry and Elise moved on to their farm last Tuesday. Katharine Latschar and Henry Sander are to be married next Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup>.*

*Well, Howard; Freddie was delighted to receive your nice letter. Freddie's English school will be out this week and then he will go to German school again. If you were here you could learn to talk and write German letters. Last Wednesday was Freddie's birthday and his mother baked a big cake for him.*

*Does your mother bake one for you on your birthday? When I saw her she was a little girl, I think about two years old.*



*I wish I could see you all for I like children when they are good and mind their mothers.*

*Peter Krebill.*

## **AGNES EYMANN EBERLE**

Agnes was the youngest child of Friedrich and Anna Krebill and was not much more than three years of age when with her family she arrived in America. Perhaps she was the only one of the children who obtained all of her school education in America. In addition to attending the English public schools during these pioneer years, Agnes, like most children of Mennonite families, also attended German parochial school for a few months every summer as well as receiving catechismal instructions. After completing the catechism course at about the age of fourteen years members of the class were baptized and accepted in the church as members.

During much of her life here in America, Agnes was known by the name "Nancy." Even in her father's last will and testament he referred to her as "Nancy" and some of her relatives in later years knew her by no other name. However, most of the letters which Agnes wrote, that we had the opportunity to read, were signed "Agnes."

Agnes married Christian Eyman near Hayesville, Ohio and their four children were all born there. In the fall of 1856 Christian and Agnes Eymann with their children followed the Jacob Krebill family who journeyed by team and covered wagon to Franklin in Lee County in Iowa. The Eymann family moved in with a Schwann family who lived in the town of Franklin until they bought four room house for themselves.

Indications are that Mr. Eymann had been in poor health for some time before they left their Ohio home. Early in the month of February of 1857 Mr. Eymann died and his remains are interred in the Donnellson, Iowa Zion Mennonite Cemetery.

In the month of June when Peter Krebill arrived from Ohio, he and his brother Jacob moved the widow Eymann into a vacant house that stood about a half mile west and a short distance north from the church, on Mrs. Strohm's farm. Here Agnes lived near both her brothers' families.

In the fall of 1857 Agnes took advantage 1857 Agnes took advantage of an opportunity to buy a farm which was situated almost across the road from her brother Jacob's place. The 80 acre farm consisted of the W- $\frac{1}{2}$  of the N.E.- $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 29 in Franklin Township and also included a 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  acre wood lot not far from the church.

In March of 1858 Agnes married Johannes C. Eberle and during the ensuing years five Eberle children were added to the four Eyman youngsters which made a family of nine children. The Eberle family lived on this farm for about 30 years. The older children were working away from their home state and ultimately the Eberle parents and their family left their Iowa home.

Johannes and Agnes finally settled in Halstead, Kansas. After Mr. Eberle died his remains were interred in the Zion Mennonite Cemetery near Halstead. Agnes remained in their Halstead home for a while, then made her home with her daughter Louisa and Jacob Dester at Deer Creek, Oklahoma until the end of her days. Her remains were also interred in the Halstead cemetery.

Johannes Grabill  
Hayesville, Ohio.

Franklin, Iowa  
Feb. 25, 1857

Dear Brother; It is with a heavy heart that I write you about my dear husband's demise. I hope you had heard about it by brother Jacob's letter to brother Peter. Christian was like he had been all last summer in Ohio, but eight days after our arrival here he suffered an attack of diarrhea with which he was afflicted to same degree as long as he lived.

I failed to notice how much strength he had lost until Wednesday morning when he did not get up out of bed as usual and that he had no appetite.

From then on he gradually failed until Sunday morning when I noticed a perceptible change. Peter Latschar had gone home after his night watch and Friedrich Schwann and his wife Elizabeth were both with me when Christian quietly fell asleep in the Lord.

He died at nine o'clock Sunday morning of February ninth, 1857.

On Tuesday February 10th his remains were interred at the Zion Mennonite Cemetery about four miles due west from Franklin. Uncle Krehbiel conducted the funeral services. For his text he chose Second Corinthians Chapter Four, verses Seventeen and Eighteen;

"For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

However, our sorrows are deep and it is difficult to be alone with four children, it is an experience which is impossible to describe. However, I know that it is wrong to wish him back only for one moment.

It was no less with a heavy heart that we received the death notice of our mother. When I think of you folks back there in Ohio, it seems like a dream that mother is no longer with you.

Eberle suggested that if there is something we would like to have of mother's we should write for it. Of course I would like to have something for a remembrance but mother would not approve to sell any of her clothes.

I must close. Brother Jacob will write you about my various affairs. I greet you as your loving sister

Agnes Eymann.

Johannes Grabill, Hayesville, O.  
Iowa.

Dec. 11, 1865, Franklin,

Dear Brother-in-law;

As I have an opportunity to send you a note along with Mr. Schwann I will write you. I intend to build the house as you had planned it with the following exceptions: The living room will be 14'6" by 16'0", the room next to the kitchen 11'0" by 11'6", the kitchen 12'0" by 15' and a sleeping room 9'0" by 16'0". This will make the overall plan about 28'0" by 34'0". Mr. Schwann thinks that the gable end should face the road.

Brother Jacob's Friedrich received a letter from brother Heinrich and he writes that he is well. Brother Abraham is at home. Brother Peter has moved to his new home. He sold a large bull for \$200/00. He expects to get about 2000 bu. of corn. He got about ten acres of corn with his new place.

Joseph Latschar is suffering so much with sores on his legs that he is having public auction. Price of hogs is \$7/00 to \$8/00 per Cwt. We are all well, God be praised.

John C. Eberle.

Johannes Grabill, Hayesville, O.  
Franklin, Iowa.

Jan. 9, 1876-

Dear Brother;

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus be with you and us all, Amen! I was so sorry to hear through your letter to Brother Peter, about the illness of your dear wife. How you must suffer I know only too well by my own experience. May God be praised that we have a comforter and Oh! how one feels the nearness of God during such hours of trial when we may sit beneath the cross and realize that he who places the burden on our shoulders, also helps us to carry it. In thought I have spent much time with you.

Did you know that she had decided to remain with Maria until spring time? Since she left our two youngest children, Louisa and Christian, have been very sick with diphtheria. I was alone with the children, and the hired man, because my husband was visiting his brother in Cincinnati and Barbara was in Illinois. By the time he returned home the children were somewhat improved.

Since Maria has been doing most of the writing I shall close. I and my husband greet you, and if you will write he will too.

Your Sister, Agnes Eberle.

*Johannes Grabill, Hayesville, O.*

*July 17, 1884, Donnellson Ia.*

*Dear Brother-in-law;*

*Today we have a forced holiday because of rain. It has been on the dry side but corn looks good and we have had a good hay crop. We have put up all our hay except that which we intend to "Head" for seed. The wheat and oats are ready to harvest.*

*Brother Peter's David who has been in Colorado his uncle Heinrich is now in Kansas on his way back to Iowa. He wrote to his cousin Friedrich here that he was coming home to Iowa to stay!*

*Our Jacob Latschar is busy heading his wheat crop. When he gets through harvesting he will build a small house on our land so Maria can come and live there with her family. Then the question will be, what will Katharina Latschar do? Her daughter Maria is not very well. To sell the farm one needs a buyer which is not too easy to get now.*

*We were disappointed not to see you at nephew Joseph Krebill and Selma Weber's wedding. They have moved into their new home near the road which leads to Franklin. David wrote that the inside of Heinrich's house needs the touch of a woman's hands. One can not expect too much from hired help.*

*As you already know brother Peter has bought a "steamer" to operate his threshing machine.*

*However, David does not seem to be too much at ease around the new machine. Nephew Friedrichs have a new daughter since on the 13th of this month. They named her Charlotte.*

*We do not have so much fruit this year. However we did have lots of cherries and have more currants than we know what to do with. currants than we know what to do with. We have been eating new potatoes for some time.*

*I must close, I should not have done so much scribbling! Regards to you, wife and Samuel.*

*John C. Eberle.*

*Johannes Grabill, Hayesville. O.*

*Nov, 5, 1884, Donnellson, Ia.*

*Dear Brother-in-law;*

*In your letter to Brother Peter we learned about your birthday party for Bro. Fuchs, and that you were looking for a letter from us. We heard that Brother Heinrich was thrown from a two year old colt, and sprained his shoulder severely. It could have been worse.*

*He had in mind to come to Kansas for the winter, but finally went to Colorado Springs for several weeks instead.*

*He wrote that David got home-sick and that they were sorry that he did not remain with them for the winter.*

*Dear Brother-in-law, on January 16, 1885 I shall be 61 years of age. Gustav and Christian with the help of a hired hand finished gathering our corn.*

*Johannes Grabill, Hayesville, O.*

*Oct. 28, 1881, Donnellson, Iowa.*

*Dear Brother-in-law;*

*I just thought that I should write you once again. We're all well except for myself who have some trouble with my right leg which causes me to limp.*

*Yesterday afternoon I sowed eight bushels of rye by hand and by evening I was almost unable to walk. This morning brother Jacob and I helped with a barn raising at Haffners. The barn is 35 feet wide and 50 feet long.*

*This summer it has been exceptionally dry. The field crops have not been very good and many wells have gone dry. I am gathering stones to wall up a new well which I am digging. We got more apples than most folks around here and the women have sliced and sun-dried many for "Apfel schnitzen."*

*Brother Peter has almost finished his rounds of threshing for this fall. His wife, Magdalena, is planning to go to Kansas pretty soon.*

*Our Jacob (Latschar) wants his wife's sister to come and keep house for them because Maria is unable to do any hard work. We have had pleasant weather for our Donnellson Fair and it was well attended. Maria won prizes amounting to \$4/50. I won first prize for a three year old Foal, first for grapes, second for oats and second for some apples. Altogether we got \$12/00.*

*Old Peter Schowalter hasn't been able to come to church services for the past eight weeks. Just recently John C. Krehbiel's saw-mill burned down at West Point.*

*At present Katharina Latschar is quite well but very thin, but it is regrettable that her brothers and sisters do not write her more often for they have quite a hard time to make-ends meet.*

*Please remember me to friends and acquaintances who may inquire about us here. The John Rissers, Millers, Conrad Fuchs, Herschlers, Christian Bollenders as well as your son Samuel and wife.*

*Hello to all of you and also from your brother-in-law.*

*John C. Eberle.*



John S. Grabill, Hayesville, O.

Dec. 22, 1886, Donnellson, Iowa.

Dear Brother-in-law;

A few days ago I called on Mrs. Katharina Latschar. Same neighbors were having a firewood frolick for her. The boys were helping by raking up dry twigs for kindling which they brought to the house. Their Maria returned from Kansas just recently and brought a picture of little Joseph Latschar along with instructions that we foreward it to you.

We received a letter from Jacob Eymann in California and he wants to know if perhaps you will be coming out during the winter months. He mentioned that there were still some grapes to be seen on the vines.

Our children are all at home right now except Gustav who has been in Kansas for about two months, but we are looking for him back this week some time. Our Jacob Latschar is doing pretty well. He writes that he made \$1,000/00 on a land sale and one day sold 14 tons of coal. He also has interest in a store with August Schwann which seems to be doing alright.

Because of the dry season this summer our corn crop will not be so big but the ears are of good quality. The Oats did pretty good and we got all of 100 bushels of potatoes which is enough for our use. Fruit was plentiful!

Brother Jacob's Amanda is here from Kansas with her little boy Emil. Elias Weber and Emil Leisy are expected to arrive from Kansas this week in anticipation of taking their respective brides, Brother Jacobs daughter Charlotte and Brother Peter's daughter Magdalena back to Kansas with them after their weddings next month.

Brother Peter's Henry is working on his rented farm north of the Dover corner. He and Elisa Lowenberg are to be married in March next year. Brother Peter sold his horse-power rig for \$350/00. He had earned about \$1,100/00 with it.

Aunt Latschar is still quite active but has very little feed for their five head of livestock through the winter.

We hope with patience your health may continue to improve. A merry Christmas and Happy New year,

your brother-in-law John C. Eberle.

*John S. Grabill, Hayesville, O.*

*Jan. 16, 1887, Donnellson Ia.*

*Dear Uncle John;*

*As we have not heard from you for so long a time I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that we are all in good health.*

*Dear uncle, the last time we heard from you, you were no better. It would have given us much pleasure to see you here in Iowa once again.*

*But we still hope that you will improve so that perhaps you can come to see us next summer. Father wrote you a letter a few weeks ago and I hope you ....*

*After that Gustav helped his cousin Friedrich finish picking his. Thirteen neighbors had a corn picking frolick for Mrs. Zsttschar and almost finished it. Friedrich Krebill had invited the folks for the corn-husking-bee.*

*Because of the good pastures our cows gave lots of milk and cream. We first gave our cream to Christian Krehbiel, a son of Miller Krehbiel, who had a cream route for a West Point creamery. When Christian changed routes and gathered for the Franklin creamery, we stopped and instead sent our butter to Burlington. However, mother decided that it was more profitable to sell the cream so we stopped making butter.*

*Our Jacob Latschar is still dealing in real estate in Kansas. Maria is quite satisfied in her new home. It cost \$800/00 and so now I am in debt again.*

*Brother Peter lost a beautiful horse when it died for him. It is still raining, so you will get another rainy-day letter, Hancha (Jennifer) will be home again in a few weeks. Greeting to all of you,*

*John C. Eberle.*

*Johannes Grabill, Bayesville, O.*

*Nov. 26, 1886, Donnellson, Ia.*

*Dear Brother John;*

*Since you have been ill for same time, I thought I should write to you. I would rather talk to you but that is not possible now. We had hoped to have you with us last summer, however, man plans but God controls. But we will not give up hope! Perhaps it may be possible soon.*

*Praise God we are all well. Our family is small now, only four of us, we and Louisa and Christian. Gustav has been in Kansas for six weeks but intends to return soon. Hannchen, (Jenmifer) has been working for an english family for the past eight months. They are very agreeable people. Lydia, whom you saw in Kansas, is now on the way home. She spent several weeks with the Moyers in Missouri and now she is with the Pletschers in Summerfield Illinois. We expect her home next week.*

*We have had very pleasant fall weather, nearly every week some mild rains. Pastures are good and live stock need not be fed. Fall crops look nice. We did have some light frosts the past week.*

*At Jacobs, Peters, and Friedrichs all is well. I wrote to Abrahams last week. We still have heard nothing from Henry. If he would only get away from there! I am afraid that he will remain there until it will be too late. At his age he should have some one to care for him.*

*How are our friends and acquaintances there? We send greetings especially to you and Samuel's family and the Rissers and Millers. I wish you a good measure of good health and patience. John C. has written to you twice since you were here, but received no answer from you!*

*I will close my scribbling, hoping to hear from you soon.*

*Your loving sister Nancy Eberle*