

The travelogue and a letter to the editor of Pankrätius Boll

Experiences of the emigrant family from Riedern am Wald in building a new life in the USA

from **Pankrätius Boll**, Greenville, Illinois, USA

Transcription and addition of two pictures: G. Boll, Gurtweil.

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For further information see website G-Boll.de

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Travelogue from 1871,
published: 1877 in the „Alb-Bote“

Feuilleton.

My experiences in America.

From P. Boll.

It was October 29, 1854, when I arrived with my family: wife and two children at the port of New York. We all considered ourselves lucky to have arrived safely, for the journey we had just made had been a bad and unhappy one. About 28 of our fellow travelers did not enter it, the longed-for, long-awaited country of their choice, they have already rested in the deep ocean.

The sense of finite salvation from a two-month captivity was reflected on all the faces of the severely tested passengers and immigrants; in all of them new life and movement seemed to have awakened. Like a swarm of bees on a warm spring day, the ship was bustling with activity; boxes and suitcases were dragged back and forth on the ceiling of the ship, ant-like activity prevailed everywhere, until finally everything was dominical polished, when the long awaited disembarkation took place by a small tugboat.

The crowd started to move and poured itself out like a slow flowing stream into the empty spaces of the coastal vehicle. The old three-master „Forest City“, in German Waldstadt, emptied itself of its load, and in a few minutes we left it behind, which from a distance seemed like a black, sinister monster. — No friendly memory, no friendly thought linked us to this ship and its crew. The treatment was raw and brutal, the ship bad and overcrowded, the rooms dirty and not ventilated at all. It was worse than a prison in a barracks, and we had to endure in this Noah box for 50 days

How happy we felt to be able now to eat again at a quietly table that

stood at Terra Firma. It is a pleasure that every voyager appreciates.

Our stay in the metropolis of America lasted only 2 days and therefore I cannot report much from my own view and observation about the waves and hustle and bustle there, besides, it would require, if I could, a big book to describe all the secrets and events of this world city.

At 10 o'clock in the evening of October 31st we started our journey to the Far West again; our final destination was via St. Louis, Mo. to the small town of Highland, Illinois.

The experiences of this journey were such that I cannot ignore them.

Our next stop was Buffalo in the state of New-York; as we had a distant relative there whom we wanted to visit.

The journey went very well up to there, we were at least still transported in second class wagons (the second class is here the one like in Germany the third).

Arrived in Buffalo, we soon found our relatives, who welcomed us very friendly and hosted us in the most hospitable way.

But now our misfortune should begin again. We had been waiting several days for our boxes, which should have arrived on the first day. I ran probably ten times to the German company, where they always put me off until tomorrow. It was in vain, they did not arrive. There, on the advice of the emigration society, I made the trip back to Albany N.Y.; since what I was looking for was not to be found there either, I took my way back via Canada, Niagara, where I did not find our boxes either, but still had the wonderful pleasure of seeing the largest and most magnificent of all waterfalls in the world. Since this wonderful wonder of nature has already been described by hundreds of travellers, I will skip that and just note that today, as I write this, the memory of this great wonder of nature still makes me more

happy than the loss of the boxes hurt me at that time.

We stayed in Buffalo for a fortnight, it is a very nice and lively point by the way. The traffic is especially heavy at the Leve (landing place), where hundreds of vehicles are anchored.

The further way to the far west had again nothing romantic about it, but could confidently be put alongside our sea voyage as a worthy image. To the eternal disgrace of the governments of that time it must be said that the emigrants were, until recently, treated in a way¹ that can only be described as „barbaric“.

Wrapped up in ordinary freight cars, with no lights, no refreshments, not even seats, in the company of raw, mostly brutally drunk Irish people, the poor cheated immigrants, women and children, were forced to make their journey to the Far West.

I'm sure they'll reply, „Why didn't you use the ordinary passenger trains?“ That would have been the best thing, of course; but first of all we did not know the American circumstances, and in the old Fatherland we were carried on extra emigration trains, even if they were not exactly first class, but they were passenger cars and were under government control. Of course we concluded from all this that it would be the same in America.

Unfortunately, the Germans also bore a large part of the blame for the poor immigrants' bad treatment and fraud. In particular, it were German expeditionary companies who engaged in this usurious trade with their fellow countrymen.

Landlords, merchants and agents, they were all Germans who attracted and duped their poor victims with the sweet sound of their mother tongue.

The American could not talk to them and did not care at all about

these foreign invaders, as they were called at that time.

But to the comfort of my readers I can now assure you that this matter has changed completely in recent years; humanity has also taken a fine step forward in this respect, and it has done so (to the honour of the German people) especially at the instigation of influential German men and societies.

Now back to our journey.

The destination of our western journey: St. Louis, Missouri was finally reached after much toil.

We also made a part of the trip on a magnificent river steamer, namely from Alton to St. Louis, Missouri.

The proud boat floated majestically on the broad back of the Father of the Rivers, we breathed more joyfully, the mighty current captured our attention, our excitement had risen to the highest level when it appeared, the big beautiful city with its numerous towers and chimneys and soon though there was no forest of masts, but a whole colony of steamships with towering chimneys in front of us. Oh how it puffed and hissed there! From the city you could already hear the roaring and hissing (a peculiarity of all large traffic cities), the ship's bell rang out, still the engine works mightily, intermittently the hot breath escapes from the nostrils of the steam pipe, now it turns, the land swims before our eyes, still some massive strokes of the wheel and then it is stuck.

The planks are thrown and the crowd flows out „to the land!“ in the far west beyond the Mississippi!

At the time of our immigration, St. Louis was not yet the big and splendid city that it is today in 1871, but nevertheless, at that time, it already counted a little more than two hundred thousand. However, the European noticed one unpleasant circumstance: In vain, the eye looked for beautiful gardens and parks, as one is used to find in the surroundings of European cities.

¹ The printed copy of the transcript does not permit reliable text recognition here, so that some words of the German version were completed speculatively.

Those who reflect a little on the matter, however, will soon be able to find the reason why it was so.

The American cities, especially in the western and middle states, developed like mushrooms overnight, to which the immigration from the motherland and the eastern American states contributed most. Trade and industry, as well as agriculture, developed with a rapidity that amazed the Americans themselves.

Eads Bridge	
	
Plattformen:	4 Highway-Spuren 2 Städteverbindungs-Gleise
Crossing:	River Mississippi
Location between:	St. Louis, Missouri and East St. Louis, Illinois
Planner:	James B. Eads
Design:	arch bridge (3 yokes)
Total length:	6,442 feet or 1,964 m
Width:	46 feet or 14 m
Largest span:	520 feet or 158 m
Freeboard:	88 feet or 27 m
Construction period:	1867 - 1874
geogr. Lage:	38°37'41"N; 90°10'17"W

Moreover, this rapid development is based on the inexhaustible richness of the country. From all this it is easy to conclude that the industrialist was above all concerned to produce those buildings which his business required and which proved indispensable in the first place. Over the years and the

increasing wealth this has now long ago improved and luxury has also found its way into American cities. When I speak of luxury, I do not mean the luxury of clothes and apartments, because this was almost more at home in America, at least more generally than in Europe, but I understand it to mean public ornamentation, gardens, parks, monuments, etc. These were still a rare phenomenon 18 years ago, especially in the far West.

(to be continued.)

Travelogue from late summer 1871,
published: 1877 in the „Alb-Bote“
(Nr. 60?)

Feuilleton.

My experiences in America.

By P. Boll. (Continuation.)

At the time of our immigration, St. Louis counted hardly three railroad lines that ended there, today it is surrounded on all sides of the compass rose by a network of railroads and has a population of over 360,000 souls. (Today, 1877 450,000). Above all, a circumstance should be mentioned here, which will be of incalculable benefit for the development of the city. It is the bridge now under construction from Illinois town across the Mississippi to St. Louis, which is expected to be completed within a year. - 1872. (Now 1877 completely finished.) The same will be listed as a dimension by an equally mighty construction and will rest on four tower-high grenade pillars. The remaining building material is



EADS BRIDGE, ST. LOUIS

cast steel throughout, forming three giant arches of about 500 feet and 5020' each, at a height of 70' above water level, so that even the highest steamships can pass.

To understand the importance of this bridge, on a busy day in October, you have to take a look at the so-called „Ferry Boats“, the latter are steamships which until then had been used to transport traffic between the east and west side. According to statistics, more than 10 million bushel of coal and more than one million pieces of cattle, horses, donkeys, pigs and sheep are transported annually; moreover, more than 40,000 loaded and unloaded farm wagons and more than 750,000 tons of load are transported across this wide river by these boats.

Added to this are the city's transport vehicles such as omnibuses, chaises, express carriages, etc., which are all picked up in the gullet of these steam ferries and transported to their destination.

This shows that the previous means of transport were still inadequate and, compared with the bridge, is a very slow and difficult transit. Since the construction company has taken all this into consideration, namely that the traffic is increasing from year to year, the dimensions of the bridge were calculated in such a way that a blockage should not occur so easily. The bridge is 2000' long, 50' wide and 70' high above the water. The bridge consists of 2 floors, the lower one with the rail track, the upper one for the carriages and pedestrians. For the latter there were separate sidewalks (pavements).

But since it is my intention to describe my experiences and I have lost the thread of the story anyway, I will now try to take it up again, especially since I am convinced that St. Louis Mo. will rise to become a world city even without my support.

My debut in America.

It was about mid-November when we left St. Louis and made our trip to Highland Illinois in a farm wagon owned by a fellow countryman of ours. The way there was quite a backwoods romantic. Everywhere we went through the woods we saw big fires burning, usually surrounded by three or four emigrant wagons, forming a farm where cooking, smoking, gambling, and farming was done like in a gypsy camp or soldier's bivouac; these were emigrants from East American states moving to Missouri, Kansas, Texas. Apparitions that can still be seen frequently every autumn. Even we on our wagon, protected from the night dew under a large roof, felt like a gypsy family on the road.

At that time there was no railway to Highland and Greenville on which the snorting iron horse could pull the travellers in comfortable wagons with lightning speed. Step by step we went forward, through thick and thin with our modest vehicle, sometimes through deep holes, sometimes through a shallow stream, sometimes up a hill, to finally merge into an endless prairie. Nowhere a tree and a hill, an endless landscape similar to the surface of the sea, covered with man-high grass and other plants, lay before us.

The road wound its way snakelike through this bushlike grass until we finally saw a glimmer of light shining towards us from a far distance. Finally the light came closer, we were in the city of St. Jacob, Illinois, the wagoner stopped and I also got out of my looking-box, because I wanted to have a look at the city anyway. „But where is the town?“ I asked my compatriot in amazement, „There's only a house, a barn and a few pigsties?“ „Ha! ha!“ laughed my fellow countryman, „that's just the kind of town that there are many in the countryside here in the west, a farmer who has a few hundred acres of land lying around here has had building plots and wide streets, a

public park etc. laid out and then designed a map of it and the town is finished, the houses will come later. So this is the city, I thought to myself, that's how people humbug and lie here! That's a nice story in this wild country, no roads, no bridges, no houses, no villages, just wilderness! that's what the greenhorn thinks when he arrives here; nothing suits him, here in Germany it's done quite differently.

But patience my friend! The coachman was right after all; although he did not believe it himself. That area, which we passed through as a wilderness in those days, is now a magnificent garden, blooming fields and orchards, vineyards and meadows, and hundreds, even thousands of picturesque country houses now lie before our astonished eyes. St. Jakob has really become a beautiful village with several hundred inhabitants, industrialists and farmers. The train to St. Louis passes by 28 times a day. Certainly a big change.

But now back to our journey. Two hours later we were already in the beautiful Swiss town of „Highland“ and sat in the cosy little room of my brother-in-law, a former organ builder from Donaueschingen. The welcome we received was warm and hundreds of questions and answers were exchanged. We hadn't seen each other for 5 years and we never hoped to see each other again.

On the advice of my brother-in-law I leased a house and started my former business as a shoemaker again. What else could I do? We were financially quite run down and we had lost our boxes and belongings on the journey and the few 100 Dollars were soon gone in this country. So there was nothing left for us to do but to go to work. But luck did not seem to beckon us, for I may boldly claim that if we had not had funds from Germany, I and my family would have been gnawing at the famine.

We stayed in Highland for six months and then moved to „Pocahontas“² a point 10 miles east. This little town was much smaller than Highland, but it left me the advantage that not a single shoemaker lived there. The inhabitants were all Americans. In the beginning things went rather better than at our old place, I soon got enough work, but our conditions were by no means satisfactory, to call it much less brilliant. We were completely unfamiliar with the language of the country, even my business was run differently here. I was, as they say in this country, still „green“, i.e. ignorant, inexperienced, full of prejudices against everything foreign, and besides, unhelpful in customs and traditions; it was not to be wondered if we soon became homesick for Germany. Very often we visited Highland, because there we felt like in our old fatherland again, among the Germans and Swiss. What deceptions we did not all have to experience, the Americans here were not as we had imagined them to be in Germany; the people in this area were raw and wild, many were often drunk and then real devils, ignorant, proud, cheeky and shameless.

Brawls and public fistfights were considered a free spectacle in those days and the best fighter who could break nose bones and knock out the most eyes was considered the best man around. In short, it was a piece of medieval law (fist law) in the fullest sense of the word. It was precisely during this period that a political party was formed whose principle was xenophobia. Its program was: complete exclusion of all foreign-born from any state office. Besides, it was their intention that no alien should ever become a citizen before the age of 21; only then would the alien immigrant have the right to vote for a thoroughbred American, but not to be elected

² Pocahontas, Illinois

himself. Cheers — meal! Weren't those nice views?

(to be continued.)

Feuilleton.

My experiences in America.

By P. Boll. (Continuation.)

Living among this class of people, we were not in an enviable position, especially since the misfortune of illness was added to this.

The remittent fever, a climatic disease, which 17 years ago was much more frequent than today, because the country is becoming healthier as its culture progresses, gripped us all at the same time. Helplessly we lay there on our sick bed, shaken to our innermost marrow by the cold fever frost, only to be thrown back into the most terrible fever heat immediately afterwards. The thirst often almost devoured us and nobody was there in the first three or four days to give us just a sip of water. But when our miserable condition was finally discovered by chance, several kind-hearted Americans came, for there were, incidentally, enough of them, and fed us as well as possible; yes, a family who lived near the little town came to our house every day by coach and brought us soup and other foods as befits sick people. They were noble and good people. One day my condition became so alarming that my end was expected every moment. This circumstance so frightened my wife and daughter that they left the fever immediately and forever.

Finally, after six months, I was well enough recovered to get out of bed. But then another heavy blow struck me; a letter from Germany reported the death of my beloved father, whose loss hurt me so much that I forgot my and our own misery completely.

I now want to complete this period and start with two years later. Pocahontas was an unhappy place for us, we had almost lost our entire fortune

due to illness and fraud, yes, a fellow countryman from Baden, for whom I had given a guarantee, had cheated us. We decided to leave this unhappy place.

It was on February 26, 1858, on a beautiful warm spring day, as is often the case among these latitudes at this time of year, that a lonely hiker was walking along the road from Pocahontas to Greenville. Those who had the opportunity to observe and listen to him could hear how he often looked up with his hands gesticulating, with tears in his eyes, into the peaceful blue etheric sea, with its fleeing clouds in all fantastic shapes and forms. Like many a poor human heart he lamented, the sailor of the air, his grief and sorrow, offering greetings to his beloved ones in the far away homeland.

Our wanderer's heart seemed to become lighter in God's free nature, a quiet ray of hope flashed through the heart that had for so long become hopeless through sorrow and worry. It was the reawakening dawn of a better future, which shone towards him like a faint presentiment once again, after many years.

This time it did not deceive, this quiet hope, the wanderer, whom the reader will have recognized, found a job for him and his family in the county town of County Bond (Greenville) and after only a few days they moved there. We had become emigrants for the third time.

A second stage in our life.

A few weeks later we felt much tidier, another life seemed to have come into us, we felt like people among people again after long unhappy years. I got a full-time job and soon earned so much that I was able to meet all my obligations in Pocahontas. Since it was soon known in the city that I knew how to perform on the piano, I was invited to the best houses and societies that would otherwise have remained closed to me.

Here I got to know the Americans from another side, because I also came under better societies. In general, I found that in general the treatment of women is very rigid and associated with gallantry. The Americans, even if they are Republicans, are very etiquette-minded, so that if you are not introduced in a society, you will not be able to talk to anyone, especially the formalities with women are strictly observed.

(to be continued.)

Feuilleton.

My experiences in America.

By P. Boll. (Continuation.)

(Continuation and conclusion from No. 60.)

Since I was generally in good health throughout my stay in Greenville, and since I ran my business diligently and earned a handsome sum each year from piano tuning, my financial situation had improved quite a bit. I had already bought a house and garden earlier, later I also acquired quite valuable property in the center of town, on which now the post office and a bakery are located.

In 1868 I was elected delegate to the State Convention in Peoria, Illinois, because I was a keen observer of all political affairs and always stood in the ranks of the political fighters. It was on May 6th when we started our journey there via St. Louis Mo., from where we continued by steamboat up the Mississippi River to above Alton, where we turned into the Illinois River. The weather was beautiful and warm, nature was in its most beautiful springtime jewelry; the Illinois River was just swollen, smooth and picturesque, framed by a splendid green frame of mighty oaks and other beautiful trees and bushes, in front of our eyes melting in this beauty. It was the first time in 15 years that I had made the same trip on the Mississippi River, only with the difference that this time I was going up it while at the first time I

was traveling from the town of Alton on the Father of the Rivers to St. Louis. What a difference between that trip and the second one!

I have to admit, there were a lot of feelings and memories which reappeared here again in my mind. Pictures of the past in all possible shades and reflexes were passing my soul.

All in all we had a wonderful trip, which lasted a little over 2 days. The society was made up of educated people from the better classes, of which the majority were also delegates to the Republican Party Convention in Peoria.

The convention went very well and satisfactorily for the entire state of Illinois, because even our opponents had to acknowledge that the men proposed for the respective state offices could not be surpassed. In particular, it was John C. Palmer, one of the best men ever nominated for governor. Thanks to the common sense of the people of Illinois, all the candidates were elected in the next state and presidential election.

On this occasion I made the acquaintance of a number of people who were known as leaders of the Party and also recognized statesmen. In particular it was a young, very talented German, an editor of the „Deutsche Zeitung“ in Peoria (a native of Mannheim), with whom I am still on friendly terms up to this day. He was elected Secretary of State and became an excellent civil servant.

Two years later.

It was about mid-August 1870, when one day I was unexpectedly asked to take over the local postmaster's office due to the dismissal of the post officer for certain reasons. Since I never reflected on the position, and had no thought at all of ever getting it, since without it there would have been 10 candidates for one post, it was a great surprise to me. At first I was afraid (since the German is always anxious and conscientious) that I

would not be able to cope with this office; it was something completely new for me, but I was appeased and of course I agreed, after all, it was a step forward.

Today is the anniversary of the first time I took office. Everything went quite well, better than I had ever imagined. Thanks to good fortune, at least we no longer have to struggle with the poverty, our circumstances are such that we can now look confidently into the mysterious future.

Postscript.

August 10, 1877.

Six years have now passed since the above was written, and four years back I had the good fortune to see again the land where my cradle stood. That this journey was a great pleasure for me, I certainly do of course not need to reassure my esteemed readers. With joyful memories I still think of all the places I travelled through and visited at that time; almost 20 years had passed since I had left the dear German soil. Even today I still see before me in my mind's eye the magnificent German Rhine, as it winds its way from Mainz to the venerable old city of Cologne, through its rocky mountains and idyllic valleys, decorated with vineyards and orchards, like a broad silver band on which the pretty Rhine steamers and other pretty vehicles swim merrily. One involuntarily thinks of Heinrich Heine's beautiful verses (Lorelei): „I don't know what should it mean“ etc.

Who else could remain emotionless in this wonderful area full of legends and deeds? Like the living imagination stand and hang on high rock and mountain peaks as if scattered by fairy hands, castles, ruins, monasteries, churches and chapels, magnificent villas and cute country houses, old Roman buildings as viaducts and gigantic dark looking towers, which today, after almost two thousand years of history, still bear witness to a once mighty nation whose shields and

swords have for many years scrolled through these then dark and rocky oak forests. Today, in addition to the steamship, the iron steam horse still roars between the rocks and the Rhine, and even the siren song of the „Lorelei“ can no longer affect the travellers and skippers who roar along by steam.

Soon I came to Mainz, then to Mannheim-Heidelberg and Karlsruhe, but I had made small detours to all these places, from where I visited other places like Durlach, Pforzheim, Bretten and especially the beautiful old monastery „Maulbronn“. My letters about the journey at that time were all published in a local newspaper „Highland Union“. From Baden-Baden I travelled directly via Basel to Waldshut, where I visited my home town for about 14 days. Then I went to Lake Constance, to Konstanz with its strange sights (among them of course the old council building, the cathedral and the place where Huß was burned 400 years ago). Meersburg and Heiligenberg, with its incomparable view, were also visited for a longer time, since in the latter place a nephew of mine was the secondary-school teacher.³

From there I went to the beautiful Switzerland, up to the Appenzellerland, upstream the Rhine valley to Ragaz after the Tamina – „Bad Pfeffers“, which I described in my letters with all its gruesome beauties.

Of course it would lead me too far, if I wanted to describe all the details of my journey at that time, only so much should be noted, I visited all the beautiful points, which are interesting for every nature lover. From Ragaz via St. Gallen to Winterthur, Zurich - Lucerne, where I stayed for 14 days, because at that time the federal singers' festival was being performed. It is understood that I also climbed the „Rigi“, or rather went up with the Rigi

³ Handwritten note in German: ‚which is called Hummel!‘

cable car. I also visited all points at the beautiful Vierwaldstädter Lake, namely: the Tell's chapel „das Grütli“⁴, the Schiller rock, Flüelen and Altdorf, Brunnen and the Axenstraße etc. From there I went to the Berner-land, where I visited the federal capital of Switzerland, of course, along with many other places, and then I took the train to Thun (an old interesting city and area), and then I went by steamer up the Lake of Thun, which is surrounded by the most enormous mountains. I also saw the „Beatus Mountain“ with the „Beatus Cave“, known

through Christoph Schmits works, „The Beatus Cave“. My final destination was Interlaken or actually the Lauterbrunnen Valley, which is still a few hours inside in the mountains, with its wonderful Staubbach and its sky-high rocks. I walked for over an hour along the valley to the foot of the Jungfrau, where I heard the thunder of the avalanches only too clearly. The sight of this magnificent mountain world remains unforgettable to me. Even today I still see everything I have experienced before me again. But the room is coming to an end. So farewell, my dear reader.

⁴ presumably „das Rütli“.

Letter to the editor by P. Boll due to the reporting about the USA in the entertainment paper of the Constance News-paper;
publication in the „Alb-Bote“ of 1885

Feuilleton.

* From across the ocean.

Just as the „Alb-Bote“ is a widely popular and liked paper here in Germany, which best proves its great distribution and ever-growing number of copies, it is approaching the number 4000, so it also has its friends in other countries, even in faraway America, where a certain number of copies emigrate every week to bring news from the old homeland to its compatriots and friends beyond the ocean, to bring news from the dear German fatherland, from the life and activity in it. For the German cannot forget his old homeland even in America, which has become dear to him in other respects, and he hangs with body and soul on the clod of earth, where his cradle once stood and where he romped „through the woods, through the meadows“ as a boy and young man. So also such an old friend of the „Alb-Bote“ is sitting over the big water in the state of Illinois, where he has created a new and pleasant home in Greenville, but nevertheless in his thoughts often and much tarried in the native mountains and valleys of the Black Forest, which he will never forget. This friend dreams particularly vividly of the so familiar and idyllic little spot of earth that surrounds the so homely place of the spa of Bruckhaus near Gurtweil with its dear and friendly inhabitants, where he spent some time so happily and peacefully three years ago when he visited his Black Forest mountains. Since then, the friendship bond with the „Alb-Bote“ has become more and more deeply ingrained, and as an expression of this friendship we must consider the shorter or longer reports „from America“ that we receive from time to time,

as we are able to print one today. This latest overseas correspondence is as follows:

„Greenville, Illinois, Jan. 7, 1885. Your honored sheet, the faithful „Alb-Bote“, has been a dear friend and fellow-housekeeper to us for many years, and we look forward to his appearance every week, as he always brings us something new from our old home. Moreover, he is a decent fellow, leads a decent language, which unfortunately cannot be said of all children of the German press. Last year, for example, the „Konstanzer Zeitung“ published an article which is really not suitable to awaken and maintain the friendly feelings for the old homeland and our compatriots. But I want to tell the story first and then let the honoured readers judge for themselves. For some months now my son-in-law, a former Meersburg citizen, has been sent the „Konstanzer Zeitung“ together with the entertainment paper, and so it happened that I accidentally got two numbers from the latter in my hands; they were numbers 49 and 50 of the entertainment paper of the „Konstanzer Zeitung“ of 1884. These 2 numbers contained an article about America, allegedly by a German who knew the country and its people well enough. This article consists of a continuing series of distorted facts which show that its manufacturer is either a prototype of malice or has no faint idea of the conditions here. Unfortunately, space does not allow me to bring the whole content, so I will only reproduce some of the power points. „The foods that constitute the staple diet of the United States are poor, adulterated, foul, and dangerous. Americans don't have healthy bread, this fragrant pastry of our country is completely missing there. Its place is taken by a gypsum-white, spongy product, without salt and sourdough, „supposedly“ made from wheat flour, quickly becomes stale and chokes in the throat when eaten, satisfies hunger only slightly and bears the sure characteris-

tic of the non-foodless, namely an arousal of disgust when eating. What these people do with the grain is not known." Then he speaks of the product and the process of grinding, of the bitter taste of it, then of the preparation of the pastries, of their powerlessness, so that the simplest German woman (as if there were no German women here) as well as the most cautious connoisseur must assume that this substance - flour - is mixed with ground foodless substances. Then he comes to the meat, he says: „Even the better fresh varieties are characterized by a boiled up, watery tissue and lack of nutritive substance in an unpremeditated way. Much more frequently than in Germany, however, old meat is sold in America, since enormous masses of meat from the Central slaughterhouses of Chicago, Cincinnati and the like are more and more distributed to all parts of the Union by traders and meat hawkers (?)" - But now comes the most horrible story: „The real American 'meat atrocity', however, lies in the salt meat, whoever sees these tons of Pickled Beef & Pork in a watery salt broth (is the salt broth in Germany thick and dry?), where the meat lies exhausted and frayed, exhaling fumes that resemble the vaults of an anatomy (!) - then looks at the preserved chitterlings and suspicious livers(?) and such delicacies to stimulate his appetite, he can easily commit himself to vegetarianism for life. „So", the well-informed (?) rapporteur continues — is the „meat" in America. Of sausages and other prepared goods you can only find a few miserable things. The people here run a very miserable kitchen, the number of ignorant women who cannot prepare a meal goes into the million (why not all of them?), meat, pastries, vegetables are brought to the table half raw and swallowed hastily. „The preserves are mixed with salts and acids (why not with petroleum), all food is „fixed", i.e. adulterated, mangled and spoiled. - You would

think now that it would be soon enough, but it will go on like this for a long time yet, but I just want to mention a few things from this lovely article here. So further: „But even the natural products enjoyed fresh are inferior, the potatoes lack that spicy flour, they are watery, bitter (?) and spoil easily. So are all garden plants and field crops." The kind man has completely forgotten about the eggs, so I want to point out to him that they only have one yolk here. Now as the last, but not least come the dangerous „means of death", the commissions, they are: Pork, artificial cheese, artificial butter, etc., which the workers lose their fingernails when preparing them. Finally, he mentions the „pork cholera" and warns people to be careful and not to pay the Yankees the garbage, because they salt all these cholera pigs and send them to Germany. — The „New York State Newspaper" dispatches the educated gentleman very briefly from above, calls their „German" „Yankeegerman"! The whole writing reminds me of a political speech I heard 28 years ago from an old man who was making the country insecure as a candidate for the Senate. The gentleman belonged to the then xenophobic party, which was mockingly called the „Knownothings", i.e. „Nichtswisser". This gentleman said, among other nonsense, that Americans, and only „natives," must govern America, for what are these foreigners „intruders" and where do they come from? from starved Europe! from Germany, which is so overcrowded that they must eat horses that have already died there, and half the population has to be fed through soup kitchens, he called it „slap" (Saustränke⁵). In the process he tore his jokes about the half-dead „Germans" with their wooden shoes, who would be born with a tobacco pipe and a tin beer can. Their bread, he shouted, was a round black block made of a weed

⁵ pigs potions

seed mixed with some peas and oats, which people eat either dry or mixed with water and salt, as so-called „slap“. This gentleman „ignoramus“ used to be in a town in northern Germany under President Pierce Consul, where he did his country and folk studies. What he said was partly true, only like everything else, strongly coloured and he spoke as a party man to his party friends, just as the German anarchist Most speaks to his friends. Nothing else can be expected from this kind of people. But the above-mentioned speaker and his party were rejected by the people because the Americans did not recognize such a doctrine.

It would take too much space if I wanted to try to refute all that malicious nonsense. It's just ridiculous to make such claims. We have no healthy bread, he says? Firstly, the bakers are mostly Germans and have been bakers in Germany, or in France, Switzerland, Belgium etc. Furthermore are millions of German women and other European countries here, who bake just as good bread, here as outside. If the Americans love their bread baked differently, that is a matter of taste. What he talks about ground product and wheat is simply stupid and ridiculous. One really has enough wheat here that one doesn't need to mix it with chalk earth, as a flour merchant in Germany did, of which the Albbote brought a message, if I'm not mistaken. About the „means of death“, as artificial butter, artificial cheese, etc., I must assure my readers that there should be such, but in many states these articles are completely forbidden, while in other states they may be sold as such, i.e. as what they are, as with you, for example, artificial wines as such. In the countryside you will not find such articles. I can assure my readers that the butter here is so nice and good, as well as the cheeses of different kinds, as you can only find somewhere in Germany or Switzerland. But enough about that. We

readily admit that there is enough to criticize here too; where would this not be the case? This country is inhabited by almost 10 million Germans, all of whom still sympathize with the motherland, since there is hardly a family with you who do not have friends and relatives, very often even brothers and sisters here, and the Germans here are and have always been willing to help with a friend's hand in times of great need, and what thanks do we get for that? It is the truth when I say that no decent Anglo-American newspaper would take up such abusive articles and expostulations of lies about Germany, and when a newspaper leaves out something like that, the point of view of German and Anglo-American newspapers is made clear to it. As far as the author of the article is concerned, I think I can say that he himself knows little about America. If he was given such bad food, he must have been in very bad places, because only in such places can suspicious livers, sausages and such delicacies have been placed. As you know, Mr. Editor, I have travelled a great deal in Europe, as well as in America, and I believe that I am able to make a more accurate judgement about such defamation⁶ than someone who came here with prejudice and when it was not exactly possible, as he dreamed it would be in his imagination. To such a person I would like to cry out like Bismarck: „The right word for such people is on the tip of my tongue, but you may owe it to my good upbringing if I do not pronounce it. Hopefully it's enough for this time.

Drawing with respect

your loyal friend

P. Boll.

(Our best thanks and friendly greetings and a happy „ see you again „ next summer at the Bruckhaus. A

⁶ The printed copy of the transcript shows here in the German version only the „D“ of a short word; the word was completed speculatively.

bottle of the best is to strengthen
international relations.)