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Copperas Cove, Texas
[no date, about 1884]

Honorable Pastor

Since I have been asked several times I want to also give you some information, as good as I am able. Some have asked me how it came about that the whole congregation emigrated to America. It was not the entire congregation where Pastor Kilian was the pastor. A new congregation was organized from many villages and churches. Wherever Pastor Kilian preached people came together and had a number of meetings, usually at Karl Lehmann and at my father, Carl Teinert. It was the year 1854 when the congregation was organized.

The same year we traveled to Hamburg via the railroad. When we arrived there the ship company had two ships for us. Most people did not want to go on two ships. They wanted to go on one ship and stay together. Then the ship company obtained a large ship for us, namely the large ship *Ben Nevis*, in Liverpool, England. Then we had to sail to England on a steam ship. When we arrived at the harbor of Hull we again boarded a train, went through a long tunnel and then on an elevated track over Manchester, a factory town. Then we came to Liverpool. There we had to wait until the ship was loaded.

In the meantime cholera broke out and many became ill. We then boarded the ship and sailed from there. How long we sailed, I do not know. Since many were sick we sailed into the harbor at Queenstown, Ireland. There all of us had to leave our ship, go onto another ship and our ship was scrubbed and fumigated. It took a long time before everything was ready. We again boarded our ship and set sail.

We sailed for quite some time when one afternoon a big storm came which threatened to break our ship apart. The captain ordered two sailors to go up the mast and loosen the sails, but they refused to go up being afraid. Then he threw off his coat and climbed up himself. As he climbed up one of the sailors followed him. The two loosened the sails and the others pulled them down on the foredeck with the block and tackle. They also took down the cross-trees. When this was completed the captain and the sailor came down. The captain was white as a sheet and could not go to his cabin by himself. Some men had to take him. Four men, alternately, pumped the water out of the ship as long as the storm lasted. There is no telling how far the ship was driven off course by the storm. When the storm was over the cross-trees and sails were pulled up again and secured. Then we set sail again.

Some were still sick. Several also died. One night my mother also died. The next morning I went to the foredeck at the railing to look into the water. I saw how several men lowered a corpse into the water and saw how the corpse slowly sank into the deep sea. That was my mother. I have never forgotten this.

We continued sailing until we could see Santo Domingo. We stood still several days because there was no wind and it was also fairly warm. One night the wind came again and so we continued until we saw the Island of Cuba. He it was said that it was now not very far to America. We kept going; then one morning land was

sighted. Everyone was happy that we would soon be on land again. It did not take very long when a ship came toward us. It showed us how to sail into the harbor, also the place where we would dock. The ship left right away again for Galveston.

It did not take long until a second ship came. This one brought the doctors. They inspected or examined us to see if we were all healthy. Since no one was sick anymore we could go ashore. Now all had to gather their belongings, whatever they had. In the meantime a large ship came which was going to bring us ashore. Everyone was glad that we would soon land. As we came to Galveston our boxes, trunks, chests and baggage were opened and inspected to determine if we brought along any valuable goods to sell. Since they did not find anything we did not have to pay any duty for the people in those days did not have any silk dresses and hosiery. Then our belongings had to be re-packed and we had to wait until our belongings were loaded on the ship which was to take us to Houston. When this was completed we proceeded to Houston.

After we arrived at Houston we no longer traveled by ship but by oxcart. We again had to wait until some one came for our belongings. All that could walk went on foot because ox-carts did not go very fast. In those days there was no railroad that went where we wanted to go. Some had to wait for quite some time because there were not enough wagons. Some families did not go farther than New Ulm, Frelsburg, and Industry because their means or money were gone. They stayed there for quite some time.

Two men went ahead to look for land to settle. Carl Lehmann and John Dube found the Delaplain league where Serbin is not located. Before the land could be bought and divided many months of the year 1855 had passed. When all this was done the people built their first log cabins because there were no houses.

Pastor Kilian was not idle. At New Ulm, where several families stayed, some were ready for confirmation instruction. He went here and there to instruct the children for confirmation among whom I also was confirmed. We were 4 boys and 4 girls. As far as I can remember all others have died.

In the meantime the people continued to build log cabins. The congregation also built a house for the pastor. There were two rooms separated by a hall. In this house the pastor started the school. It was the year 1856. In one room he lived with his family and in the other was the school and on Sundays church services were conducted there until the wooden church was built. Later, after the Civil War, the stone church was built. The pastor lived in the house with his family until his son replaced him and he died there. Everything else is known by many others.

In those days the people cooked their meals outdoors and also baked their bread there because at that time the people did not have any stoves and ovens. When there were heavy rains many built a fire in the middle of the room. They did not have to be concerned that the floor would burn up because the people had no wooden floors, only dirt floors. The smoke could escape through the roof of home made shingles.

Greetings to all of you, I remain, your friend,
S/John Teinert
Born May 14, 1841]