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Letter From Ira D. Landis to Alfred L. Shoemaker, October 29, 1949

Ira D. Landis

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Lititz R-3, Pa.,
Oct. 29, 1949

Dear Dr. Shoemaker:

At last herewith is my proffer on a phase of agriculture briefly told. If it is found worthy of a corner in your good paper, well. If not, "nickets for niggites"

I have read the last issue I'm ready for the next.

Sincerely
Ira D. Landis

The Dutch-Calcium Carbonate Compound

To

Our Swiss fathers' immigrants of the third century yonder, Pennsylvania Dutch and limestone made a substantial practical combination. As says ^{Oscar} Kuhns, "If you are ^{on} limestone soil, you can open your mouth in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect and you will be always understood". It was the cream of Europe that left, guided by the Almighty. They had in spite of their persecution reduced their thoughts to language, which at least they could understand. It was the language of their highlands close enough to the German border to be basically German, which was ~~stre~~ streamlined in the Palatinate, and all it needed to be Bill Frey's mother tongue was to be properly seasoned here with ^{some} ~~the~~ English.

They passed by in ¹⁷¹⁰ ~~late~~ Germantown and its weavers, because they were seeking ethnologically the soil of the Palatinate limestone that they knew how to till. They came to the country north of Gap, where they had 10,000 acres for the claiming, but this limestone was not rich enough. The trees were not thick and tall and vegetation in superabundance as ~~that~~ good limestone, such as ^{upon which they} ~~they~~ were accustomed to produce. Just

as the skilled farmer can tell something of the soil of a community as he is passing through, by the extent and condition of the buildings, the kind and condition of the weeds and the language the farmers speak agriculturally, ^{so they} Or whether an Indian guide told them of better land ~~tw~~ twenty miles farther down the Pequea, it was God, above all instinct and intelligence.

This too was in the Temperate Zone, but more. This country ~~and~~ ^{did} not vie in elevation with the Alpine Switzerland, their earlier home, nor indeed with ~~with~~ the lowlands of the Baltic and North Seas, which they passed ~~tho~~ through enroute. It compared favorably with the country between, which could be farmed and yet possessed plenty of water as the trees and vegetation evidenced on ~~ev~~ every hand. Some of them had lived in the Palatinate ^{ate} and had made the Battle Ground of Europe to blossom like the rose. Here was the same kind of soil, that was well watered by streams and clouds It was their favorite limestone.

Now give their contemporaries the forum: " The Earth by God's blessing has more than answered our expectations; the poorest places in our judgment producing large crops of garden ~~spuff~~ and grain... We have had them

mark of the good ground amongst us, from thirty to sixty fold of English corn.

" Upon Tryal we find that corn and roots that grow in England thrive very well there, as Wheat, Barley, Rye, Oats, Buckwheat, Pease, Beans, Cabbages, Turnips, Carrots, Parsnups, Calleflowers, Asparagus, Onions, Charlot, Garlick and Irish Potatoes???. . . .

" Our lowlands are excellent for Rape and Hemp and Flax. A Tryal has been made and of the two last, there is considerable quantity Dressed year^{ly}

" The weeds of our woods feed our Cattle to the market, as well as da(i)ry. I have seen fat Bullocks brought thence to Market before Mid Summer. Our Swamps and Marshes yield us coarse Hay for Winter."

(Quoted by The German Immigration into Pennsylvania
1700-1775 V. II P 24)

"They always prefer good land or that land on which there is a large quantity of meadow ground. From an attention to the cultivation of grass they often double the value of an old farm in a few years and grow rich on farms on which their predecessors, of whom they purchased them, nearly starved"- Benjamin Rush

" They took care to settle on fertile lands and they soon became

distinguished as the best farmers in America"-Hildreth's History of

the United States Vol II P 264

"The farms of the Germans became the wheat granary of the world"

- The German Element in the United States Vol II P ³⁶ #6

" The best soil in Pennsylvania for farming purposes is limestone and it is a significant fact that almost every acre of this soil is in the possession of German farmers... It is due to the fact that Lancaster County is very rich in limestone soil and is largely inhabited by Mennonites, that it has become the richest farming county in United States of America" Oscar Kuhns, quoted in Pennsylvania German Magazine Vol 24 P150

So marvellously did they succeed here that when they began overflowing they chose similar soils in Cumberland and York Counties, Morrison's Cove, Half Moon Valley and wherever land had a limestone base, And they took the Pennsylvania Dutch with them, holding to it, until a generation arose that was not educated. in Pennsylvania Dutch.

manoeuver:

N.B. Latest ~~example~~: A limestone farm at Blue Ball was recently sold by a Pennsylvania Dutchman to a Pennsylvania Dutchman in the Pennsylvania Dutch at only \$1320 per acre (for 53 acres 15 miles from the closest city, Coatesville). Moral: It takes the Dutch to do it. We need more of it.