

[Fictional immigrant letter, spring 2001]

*Dear Gunther,*

*It's been a year since I moved from Germany to America. While my stay has had unpleasant times, I would still urge you to come to America and get away from Nazi Germany. Although Hitler has been able to help the economy of Germany by rebuilding factories and providing jobs, the other actions he has taken are horrendous. Jews and minorities are being taken away to concentration camps and Hitler has seized absolute control of the government. His troops apprehend anyone who protests or rebels. The Gestapo can arrest anyone, at anytime, without any reason. Even though we were discreet about our opposition to Hitler, it was very hard to keep it quiet. Neighbors and friends could not be trusted, as they feared that they could be caught for hiding secrets.*

*The boat ride over to America was not a pleasant trip. To conserve money, I traveled in steerage, which was noisy and dismal. Upon arrival, I was excited to be off the horrible boat and filled with trepidation about what was to come. The physical exams at Ellis Island were the worst part of arrival. We were checked for diseases and other health problems and those who did not pass were not allowed to stay so some were forced to separate from their family. I immediately began looking for a job, which was certainly not easy. My education and job skills that I acquired in Germany helped me to find a job. Many others in America were not so lucky. The job pays very little, however, and I do not have much money. I was lucky enough to find a tenement, which I share with many other Germans. The conditions are awful and it is unsanitary, but it is better than living on the street.*

*America is not an easy place to live, especially for German immigrants at this time, but it is safer than Germany. In the United States, we are allowed the freedom of speech and (usually) are not punished for having different opinions. There are not hundreds of armed soldiers patrolling the streets and there are no concentration camps. Many Americans are angry about German concentration camps and Hitler's breaking his promises with the Allies. Whenever I am confronted by one of these people, I am looked-down upon by them for simply being German. They don't seem to realize that I left because I didn't agree with what Germany was doing. Even though things are not easy here, you cannot stay in Germany. You could stay with me. Having already gone through everything first, I could tell you what to expect. We will be able to get through things more easily together. Please write soon.*

*Sincerely,*

*Fredrick Heissenbergerlichlebenswagenschirmermann*