Discussion questions for ‘The Office of Emigration’

A lot of you have raised the question — in your writing and emails — of why and how immigrants have come to Wisconsin. The reading for Monday is a set of three excerpts from a book about the recruitment of migrants, the introduction, a section on advice to migrants and the conclusion. This work focused on Germans, but highly relevant to 19th c. immigration generally. The book is readily available in campus libraries. The book is short and it's a quick and easy read if you’re interested in the topic I urge you to read the whole thing.

1. What was the Office of Emigration? What did it do? When did it exist?
2. Why was there an official office for immigration to Wisconsin?
3. What is ‘chain migration’? Do you know of examples of it in Wisconsin?
4. What practical challenges did migrants face?
5. How did travel patterns change over time?
6. What other sources of encouragement were there for potential migrants?
7. What kind of advice did immigrants get?
8. How effective was the office?
9. What contrasts do you see between the historical and political context of this effort and the current situation with regard to migration in Wisconsin and the US generally?