

Altenwalde, April 14, 1868

Dear August !

We hope that our letter will find you in good health; as far as we are concerned, thank God we are in good health and good spirits. Every day, we look for a letter from you, and it may be that one is already on the way, but so far we haven't received one yet, and we also expected you constantly around the 18th of March, but you were in error, dear August, our wedding day was not on March 18th but on the 26th, and we celebrated our Golden Wedding in good health and with enjoyment. Now, we must tell you a little about our Golden Wedding. The festivities began at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Sixteen little girls were dressed all in white and had a green wreath on their heads and around their dress and a little basket of flowers in their hands. Twelve Musicians and the 16 wreath maidens came for us to our house and escorted us to the wedding house; at 5 o'clock, we started off again with music and went to the church and the little wreath maidens walked behind the musicians and strewed flowers; in the church, we first sang two verses of the hymn, 'Bis hierher hat mich Gott gebracht' (God brought me safely to this place) etc. , then the wedding sermon was preached. After that, the Pastor presented us with a pretty Bible from the old Queen Elisabeth of Prussia, gilt-edged and with a golden cross on one side and a golden chalice on the other, and inside three pictures, Elisabeth and her husband, who has been dead, however, since 1860, and Dr. Martin Luther. After that the last verse of the hymn mentioned was sung, and thereafter we returned from church to the wedding house with music and the little wreath maidens who strewed flowers again. They honored us very solemnly in Altenwalde, and the little girls in their white garb looked very pretty; the church door and the altar were adorned with green garlands and golden bows in between, and the door of the wedding house and the sofa on which we sat were also wreathed with greens and the table had golden ornamental strips, and Mother had a golden wreath upon her head, and the two of us had a small golden bouquet on the left side of the bodice. Four persons arranged the event, and 325 people participated; the oldest guests said that never as long as they could remember had there been such a wedding in Altenwalde and surely would never be seen again which made us very happy. Among the presents we received were 10 Thalers from the present King, Wilhelm I of Prussia, and from the wedding, after expenses were met, 53 Thaler, and he who stood for the father in church, Ytjen by name, gave us 4 Thaler, altogether, including several smaller presents we received 70 Thaler, which will serve to take care of us in our old age; our joy would have been even greater if all of you

flowers again. They honored us very solemnly in Altenwalde, and the little girls in their white garb looked very pretty; the church door and the altar were adorned with green garlands and golden bows in between, and the door of the wedding house and the sofa on which we sat were also wreathed with greens and the table had golden ornamental strips, and Mother had a golden wreath upon her head, and the two of us had a small golden bouquet on the left side of the bodice. Four persons arranged the event, and 325 people participated; the oldest guests said that never as long as they could remember had there been such a wedding in Altenwalde and surely would never be seen again which made us very happy. Among the presents we received were 10 Thalers from the present King, Wilhelm I of Prussia, and from the wedding, after expenses were met, 53 Thaler, and he who stood for the father in church, Ytjen by name, gave us 4 Thaler, altogether, including several smaller presents we received 70 Thaler, which will serve to take care of us in our old age; our joy would have been even greater if all of you had been with us, but our hope was in vain, for there was no relative other than my brother Christoffer with his daughter, he manages the Stender Farm near Otterndorf.

Dear August! We have had a pretty mild winter here; frost in December and January, but not in February or March. Occasional afterfrost, of course, but no lasting frost. As we heard from others here, you in America seem to

have had a more severe winter. Everything is very expensive here, too. One hundredweight of wheatflour costs 5 Thaler 4 Groschen; 1 hwt. rye flour 4 Thaler, 8 Gr. ; 1 hwt. potatoes 2 Th. One lb. of meat is 8 Gr., 1 lb. butter 7 Gr. etc. Coffee, sugar and clothing are the most reasonable items so far, but otherwise, everything is very dear here. The Prussian wants to have a battery built here in Cuxhaven this summer; it is said that construction will begin this month.

Dear August! We sent off a letter last fall but so far have not received a reply. Please write to us soon and don't let us wait so long again. Many greetings from all of us to you and your loving wife and your dear children in the hope that all of you are still in good spirits and health. Once more, with loving regards, we remain

Your Loving Parents
s/ F. Wittkopf

Dear Uncle!

I have been very unhappy this winter, for I suffered a leg fracture on January 30th, of the lower leg near the foot, and because of that I was confined to bed for 7 weeks, and for 6 weeks I lay in a machine with my leg (Traction?) , now I can walk again already with the aid of a cane. When my grandparents celebrated their wedding jubilee, I was not yet able to walk and had to remain at home which was very disagreeable, but "Man expects and God directs". And to make it worse, I signed up for military service on January 27th, but this year, I will surely be free, for the Prussian can not use me . But Dear Uncle! Who knows what it is good for; after all, there is no escaping what God has decreed for us. Perhaps I am even free for good, for 11 weeks have gone by now that I have not earned a penny, and who knows when I will be able to work properly again, but when one is forced to be a soldier for the Prussian, one must serve for three years, and one does not make any money either and is treated badly on top of it and does not get half enough to eat, so that he can hardly walk upon his return. So I am thinking that this misfortune contains some good luck and one must be content. Write again soon, please. Many loving regards, dear Uncle and Aunt, from me, and many regards to Adelheit, Christiane, John and the little Otto in the hope that all of you are well and in good spirits, I remain your

loving grandson
s/ F. N. Wittkopf

Altenwalde, April 15th, 1868