

Altenwalde, November 22nd, 1868

Dearly Beloved Children!

We received your dear letter of June 6th with great joy and see that all of you are still in good health and good spirits . So far, we too are in good health and good spirits, but it was a cause of great sorrow to us that we did not receive any letter, because we had thought that you dear children had embarked on your travels last spring and had perished, for we heard that there were many railroad accidents in America and that many ships had perished too, but your dear letter gave us great joy once again and it gladdened us to hear that your dear wife would like to care for us in our old age, but realization is not possible, for our dear Mother is very sickly and so often wished that we only had one of August's daughters with us.

Dear August! We had a dry summer, for in many places there was a lack of water and an early and blessed harvest and healthy corn, too, such as we have not seen in several years , but everything is very dear, too, and we were glad to hear that you had a good harvest also.

Dear August! Since November 1st. Ritzebüttel and Cuxhaven and the Hamburg border are within the Prussian customs union, so we can import and export goods without tariff, but everything has become more expensive than it used to be, whether it remains like this, no one knows.

Dear August! Write us again soon and don't keep us waiting so long, for we do not receive any letters from Johann and Fritz and believe firmly that they are both dead, and Johann's wife would not notify us even if he is dead. So it is a joy for us to hear from you dear children and we are glad that you live happily and in contentment in America, and that you have a good wife, and let us know whether your dear wife's parents are living or not. And further, we wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a joyful New Year and wish you, dear August, much luck in all your labors and that your affairs continue to make good progress. Give our regards to all your dear children and your dear wife, write us again soon.

Once more, many regards from all of us in the hope that all of you are still in good health and good spirits, we remain

Your Parents Who Love You,

s/ F. Wittkopf

Dear Uncle and Aunt!

I attained my 21st year this fall and I am glad that I can do my work again, for my broken leg is healed again very well and took 15 weeks. I drew chances this summer and won my freedom, and I went to two examinations last spring and this fall and was declared permanently unfit. I received my certificate of exclusion right away on September 21st and can now go where I want, if the dear God keeps me well and in good spirits, I will make good money and will not have to play soldier for 3 years. I am now in Ritzebüttel working for a farmer by the name of Gustav Schleier as 2nd farmhand and I earn 50 Thaler per year. Many, many regards to Adelheid, Christiane, John, Otto and little Willy and you, my dear Aunt and to you, my dear Uncle, and come over here soon, won't you, I remain

your loving grandson (*)

Fritz Nikolaus Wittkopf

*Translator's Note: I wonder if he made a mistake there. If he addresses the letter to Uncle and Aunt, he must surely be the nephew. Maybe he made an error by force of habit, being more used to writing to his grandparents.