

Altenwalde
June 18, 1865

Dear August:

I take my pen in hand with joy to let you know that we are still healthy and in good spirits and still full of life, which we also found out about you. We were of the opinion that you, dear August and your dear wife had already died, maybe shot in the war, since we hadn't heard any news from you for eleven years.

Dear August, we don't live in Otterndorf anymore. We live in Altenwalde, which is about one hour away from Ritzebüttel. You should know that we have a nice apartment. Our house is near the frontier and is a new one, which was built ten years ago. Father is working here again at the Chaussee (like a road department). He has it easier here than in Otterndorf and also earns more money. Father is still in excellent health, but I am often sickly. My only conciliation here is our little Fritz, who is already 17 years old.

(This Fritz, I think, is a nephew of August and the grandson of Fritz Nicholas Wittkopf.)

Dear August, you write about Johann and Fritz, that you wrote them and that you received no reply. We didn't know either why no answers and also we don't know where they are. Four years ago, a man named Kanns visited here in Altenwalde from New York and we asked him if he had heard about any of our children. Then he said he knew Johann. So we gave him a letter along for Johann, advising him to write us and let us know how they are all doing in America. Johann wrote us that August and Fritz could write more often and better than himself. He wrote that in seven years he had not heard nothing from you in eleven years and we have heard nothing from you and nothing from Fritz in five years. He writes us that two years ago he traveled to Neu Aliens (New Orleans?). Now six years have passed. Now he is so fat and strong and was of the opinion that he was a candidate for death (in the war) or that he would have to play soldier since everyone from 18 to 45 had to go along and Johann would have had to go along, but they could not use him because of his right arm and two fingers are too frozen he can't use at all. What he wrote beyond that we cannot repeat because it angered us so. My half brother, William Gronau, left Germany for America after Johann, had lied so much that we didn't even bother answering him. He sent us the address and it was as follows:

H.W. Schultz
571 Canal Street
Corner of Washington Street
New York

(This is the address of
where Gronau was living.)

(1)

Von Schultz has returned to Germany and we do not know when we should send the letter. Maybe you know better than us, that is why we included the address. If you can find him, so write us soon what he is doing, if he is living or if he is dead. Fritz is probably dead for a long time.

Dear August, you wrote us that you have a good farm. We don't understand what that means, possibly a land investment or something like that. We were very pleased to know that the war over there is over. Here too the war with the Danes is over. The Austrians and the Prussians beat the Danes. Here in Cuxhaven there were several large naval vessels and on the ninth of May, 1864 there was a major naval battle near Helgoland in which the Austrians were victorious. Things are very expensive here too. Cattle and horses and clothes, just like you write dear August. However, things have gotten quite a bit cheaper. We don't know anything further to write, except the fact that father is fine and is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo.

(The following paragraph was added by the nephew Fritz.)

Dear Uncle, I was all so happy you wrote us. I don't have any parents anymore. My mother died May 1, 1860 and my father has abandoned me. I am now with my grandparents who are very nice to me. I work with farmers in the country and earn a nice wage. Four weeks ago, I cut the thumb on my left hand severely with a knife and it has not healed yet.

Dear August, now we must close this letter. Write again soon as possible and don't stamp the letter. We can pay for it here.

Many greetings from your parents and Fritz and to you and your wife and children.

Signed,

F. Wittkopf

(1) - Fat in those days meant healthy.