

Letter #3

Altenwalde
November 2, 1866

Dear August:

We received your letter of September 6 with great pleasure and hope this answer finds you in good health. We are saddened to read that your wife was seriously ill during the summer. Our mother (F.N. Wittkopf's wife) was also very sick since spring and is not fully recovered since she is too weak. We had to have the doctor coming in for a long time.

Dear August, things have changed greatly in Germany. The whole German league has been destroyed and we have had a serious war the last summer. We are now controlled by the King of Prussia. His government has taken over the whole Kingdom of Hanover after the Battle of Languisalza in which armies of Hanover were beaten by the Prussians, but it will not be long before we become an Hanoveraiansagain since our crown prince will get a Russian princess as wife and is in England now and the King of Hanovers in Vienna. All the big powers including France and Russia are getting ready and no doubt in the spring the war will start again. Dear August, it is a bad time here too and like in America, however, we did not have a hard winter, as in America. There was a hard freeze only on three days last winter and we had little snow and we had a beautiful spring. We had a great many mice and rats that destroyed the crops so that we only had half the normal harvest. Many laborers had no work at all. Many young people are leaving for America in many villages, up to 30 people and the reason is that they don't want to play soldier in the Prussian Army. In the month of August alone, 7,438 people traveled to New York and dear uncle, if we hadn't received your letter, I would have come over this fall. Here, everything is expensive too. A pound of meat cost 8 pfinning, a pound of butter and a pound of coffee cost 8 to 14 pfinning and fat animals cost between 80 and 120 pfinning because of the pork disease which has passed through all the villages and wheat costs 4V, but dear God provides each person with his daily bread. In some areas it is even worse, such as in Finland, where the people had no harvest, where they are dying of hunger because they don't

know where to get their bread. They are cutting straw very finely and cooking it and eating that and also in Bohemia where the enemy rode over the fine fields and fertilized it with blood. Now we must end our letter. We wait every day for the young Otto with his mully calf, which he wants to send to Germany. The people here will wonder when young Otto comes with it because they have never seen such a calf. (1)

Many greetings to you dear August and your dear wife and Adelaide, Christina, Johann and Little Otto from the old people in the hope that this finds you in good health and spirits and hoping that another of your letters is on the way or that you write us soon.

Your parents and nephew, F. Wittkopf

(1) - Mully - a German word, perhaps slang, unable to translate. (A muley or mulley calf is a breed, such as Angus, which never grows horns. [Conrad Terrill, 2012])