

Letter #4

Altenwalde
October 20, 1867

Dear August:

We received your letter of May 5 with pleasure and see that you are all healthy and in good spirits. As far as we are concerned, thank God that we are in good spirits and healthy, but Mother is still sickly. Since the time she was sick, but at the moment, somewhat less so, because in summer the climate here in Altenwalde is healthier than in winter. At that time, there is always a strong wind from which we must protect ourselves. Everything here is very expensive. Grains are the most expensive things. We will have a late harvest. The fields are ready and are all very nice, so that we have a nice year to look forward to. If God will let it happen, things will get cheaper soon, since things cannot continue this way. Then all the young people have to play soldiers, then the Prussians can use them all, but there are still very many who are leaving for America because they are afraid of war with France. If it should start again, it will be a bloody war, since there isn't a single king who is friendly with him because he didn't conquer Hanover with the sword, but rather like a thief who breaks in the house during the night and takes everything. It would be desirable if peace continues.

Dear August, we congratulate all of you very much on the birth of your son and wish you that God will give him a long life and health and that he gives you pleasure. We are glad to hear that all are growing. We thank you also for your wishes for our golden wedding and we are looking forward when you will be here with us and we would be glad to hear your friendly voice. (1)

Dear August, Adelaide would like to have the auerbach book and my flower apparatus. The book has deteriorated so that the writing cannot be ready anymore, and in respect to the apparatuses, I have very few of them anymore. In my opinion, dear August, it would have been better if she had learned the cleaning work. For the last 30 years here there have been very few flowers made because the flowers all come from factories. They are so nice and cute that they cannot be equalled when made by hand. They are so cheap that we can't equal their price. For three or four B one can buy the uncut flowers.

Many greetings from the Controller Griffing and Cadenberge, who are now Customs Agents in Altenbrüch, to you and your wife and children and they are happy that things are going well for you in America. When you come over to Germany, you should do them the honor of visiting them. Many greetings from all of us to you and your beloved wife and children. Hoping that you will write again soon or that we will be able to embrace you once again in our old days if God permits. Then we have heard no news yet from Johann and Fritz. Again, many greetings from us all in the hope that you receive this letter with joy. We remain, your dear parents.

F. Wittkopf

(1) It is unknown if this was the fifth child.

Dear Uncle and Aunt:

I have now reached my 20th year and the time is approaching that I will have to be a soldier. If it comes to that, I would prefer to go to America, than go with the Prussians because the young soldiers are treated like dogs and my grandparents would prefer it. One cannot know what is best. Man thinks, but God controls. Now I am in Altenbrüch working with a farmer by the name of Jacob Gerdts, where I have been for a year and I return next year. I must now end my letter. Please write soon again, but we wish that instead of the letter, we could see you in person. When we write again I will include my portrait. Again, many greetings from all of us dear uncle and aunt and all the children. I remain your oldest nephew.

F.N. Wittkopf