

Transcript of a letter from Anton Burkart

Green Bay, 11. XI. 1853

Dearest brother-in-law!

If my letter finds you in good, good health, it would please us. As far as we are concerned, we are all healthy, and I must apologize for not writing to you. I have always had no great desire to write, because of my business, I have always had a lot of work. The weekdays I had no time. And the Sundays I had also little time. I have been a churchwarden for over two years now, so I sometimes have too much to do on Sundays. I started the letter two months ago and could not finish it. I have also built a Catholic church this summer 60 feet long 36 feet wide 23 feet high with a tower 85 feet high, I have made \$500 on it. It is to be consecrated next spring. Anton is working for me now too. He is making good progress, next spring he wants to build a house for his father - he is hardworking and quiet. As for me, I am doing well so far. I have now finished my house and have two cows. If God keeps us healthy, things will get better every year. I started with nothing and yet I have saved so much that I now have my livelihood. Furthermore, I have a request to you. My wife (Rosalie) is perpetually ill and she is in good hope. If you would do me the favor of offering a wax child in the sanctuary. My wife is in unspeakable pain during childbirth. With the first child I had 3 doctors and it took 5 days until she could give birth. The doctors could not find any fault with her. I talked to my brother about it and he said it would be better if I wrote to you. I would have better hope. I will send you the money right away. I don't want you to think that I wasted the money I brought from home. No, I gave it to my brothers, to Michael I gave 200 dollars and to Johann 50 dollars and for the other I bought 80 acres of land. When I arrived in town I still had 42 cents money, and what I earned the first summer I gave to Johann so that he could live, because I can't tell you the situation as it happened to my brothers. In the second year, 27 pigs and a calf died for Michael, a few oxen and a cow for Joseph, and Johann's wife died, and so one misfortune followed another. You imagine things quite differently than they are, now they are all better off. Their children are working hard and they are doing well now. Michael has just gone into the forest and is looking for the school land. He gets 2 dollars and 50 cents every day. That makes after your money 6 guilders 15 kreutzers a day. It may take 80 to a hundred days, but he is set up by the state treasurer to appraise school land for what it is worth. Every 6 miles is a school section of 8 by 80 acres each and so he has to go through 3 counties. They are up to 300 miles away from us. As far as his family is concerned it is quite healthy, his children work quite well and as soon as he gets back home so does he keep school. For that he gets 10 dollars every month for 3 hours every day. Johann is also quite healthy and content, his Lehna gives him a helping hand. He now has a nice piece of land. Of course he can grow his own bread and sell it, and Joseph is doing quite well. They live all 3 in a line together. I live 10 miles from my brothers. But we get together once a week, which is just as if we lived together. Johann Strasser will probably work for me this winter on my land. I want to have several acres of land cleared for me and I also want to set up a land well. If I no longer like it in the city, I will go to my land. Valentine should not worry about going to America; it is too hard for him. He is already too old to come here. Furthermore, I would like you to write to my father-in-law. I wrote to him in the month of June and have not yet received an answer. You can also write to him that my sister-in-law

Barbara is with me and she is quite healthy. What is my godfather, little Anton, doing? I wish he were with me. Write me again right away how you are and how Melchor and Valentin are doing. I want to write to you at least once every year now. I will write to Melchior next.

My brothers have had an abundant harvest this year. We have also had the 8th of November a great election to elect state officials and also for a law for the drunkards. There are 2 parties here in America. A vick party and a democratic party. The vick party wants to have that no more spirituous beverage may be served, but the democratic party; they want to have a law made that the one who serves the drunkard too much should be punished. Because the drunkenness is too strong in the big cities, because the democratic party is for the welfare of the people. If the Lord God lets us be healthy, I would come to Germany with my wife in a year or two. My wife would like to see her parents again. I think we will see each other again one day. I can speak English pretty well now. That I can get on well with anyone. I will now close my letter - until another time. I and my wife and my sister-in-law send you and my sister and children and my brothers and sister-in-law and friends and acquaintances our warmest greetings

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