

Transcript of a letter from Anton Burkart

Green Bay, 18 Jan 1857

Dear brother-in-law!

I received your letter last year and saw that you are all still healthy. I would have written to you long ago, but I had so much work. I did not even have Sundays off. I have been a churchwarden for 6 years now, and every Sunday I have to collect money, because everything has to be maintained by the well-meaning Catholics. Because we Catholics do not have any claims from the state. We also have to maintain our own school. There are schools here that are paid for by the state, but no religion may be taught there, only English reading and writing and arithmetic. Many go from Germany to America to make their fortune ... children. Those were not quite firm in religion. When they come to this country, they go to church little or not at all, especially the "forty-eighters" (German emigrants who took part in the revolution in 1848 and had to fear reprisals after its suppression by the princes), these are the very best "birds" (the very worst people). They are ranting about the clergy (priests) that it is really a shame when Protestants hear it. They don't give a damn about any religion, especially those who are half-students. Because we Catholics have a greater duty here than you in Germany, because here one can believe what he wants, no one has anything to say. I also bought a piece of land from the state last year with 15 men and converted it into "Stadtloden" or "Bau...." (Could be about city payment methods meant or?) laid out. I also built a Catholic church on it. The 18th of October last year it was consecrated by Bishop Henin of Milwaukee. Probably in 2 years we will get a bishop's seat to Green Bay, by which we have built a Catholic church on this place ... (whole last letter line illegible because not copied completely!) ... we have many opponents who think we are doing money out of it. For my part, I have building 11 lots. These cost 1 800 dollars, of which I have sold quite a few around 150 and to dollars 100. There are places that will be worth 6000 dollars alone. These run along the river where big steamboats can land. We are making money on it. It may take another 5 to years 10, but it must be risked. I am now taking \$700 a year in rent. I have 4 apartments under construction for me again. When I finish this construction so I can draw 1 500 dollars rent annually. I can say that in 3 years I have profited 4 800 dollars by speculation. But I want to give it up soon. The saying goes, nothing ventured, nothing gained. If I stay healthy that I will ..... in time of 2 years. I still have 9 - 4 thousand dollars outstanding, from building houses. People think I am rich enough, I don't need it so much. But I want to get rid of the carpentry business because I have another business with my brother-in-law Hauser: a furniture magazine. Two businesses, that is too much work - in the years I am also not so firm, I always suffer from "cold fever". In these two years I have been sick three times. I also got married again on February 14, 1857, and also got a very good wife again. So far I am living quite happily. God also gave us a daughter on December 16, a lively child. I have further none of my brother's children as the small Joseph and Johanna. Melchior and Anton are also still with me. He is building a house this winter. Friedrich is also still with me and Anna. Katharina and Nina are married, but without my will. Anton's sister is also married, she has arrived best of all. Three of the children are with other people. News I can write you that the times are quite hard with the money. Food is very cheap; there is no money to be had. Eva, the sister-in-law is also doing well. Melchior, her eldest son, does all the brewing.

I want to close my letter. I greet my brothers and sister-in-law and all of you from my heart. I still have hope of coming to Germany. If it had not been for the children, I would have come years ago. I remain your faithfully loving brother-in-law

Anton Burkart