

Transcript of a letter from Anton Burkart

Green Bay March 1, 1864

Dearest brother-in-law!

If my letter finds you in good health, we would be pleased. First of all, my warm greetings to all of you. As for me and my family, thank God, we are all healthy. My family now includes 2 girls and 2 boys; the smallest is months 5 old. The reason why I haven't written to you for so long is that I couldn't write to you very well, just at that time I was too deep in business. As the thing with the war came, there was no more possibility to get out. I lost 927 dollars 000 a month and all my property. The only thing I kept was my homestead. If the war hadn't come, I would have been a rich man, but it wasn't meant to be. Therefore, I live now better than before, because it may come as it will, I am equally well. Until now I have a furniture store, there I had done good business last year, and as it was at its best, fire broke out nearby. To the greatest need I could still save the furniture. But my buildings burned down. I am currently in the process of constructing a new building. As you may have learned from newspapers how the war is going, we are probably quite far from the theater of war, but I can write to you that it is a heaven-sent sin - seeing how family fathers have left their families to fence for the Union. But, unfortunately, it looks bad. Already 3 years we are in the unfortunate civil war, and for what - to free the "nodder". Merely for the sake of appearances. If it were not for the money, the war would be over long ago. The contractors and army officers are getting rich, but the poor people have to pay it. The war is costing us 2 to 3 million dollars a day, and still we don't know an end when our Lord God won't help. We have now put 2 million men in the field. Where are they? Half sick and crippled. Now you can think what Johann exists in the family. The war has its good side and its bad side, of course. Next fall we have another presidential election, then it will probably be decided. No gold and silver money is hardly seen anymore, it is 54% above paper money. I want to attach to you quite a few things, which we have cash. Rather the war does not stop, until the people themselves realize it. But then it will be too late in the end, everything has enormous prices now. Money is abundant, but what will be the value of money when the war is over - nothing! I myself agree that slavery should stop, but not by this way - little by little. Because the "noders" are a lazy people, if they are not driven, so they do nothing and prefer to starve. In my opinion, the slaves are better off if they have a master. For it is folly to say the Negroes will ....

(here is the end of the letter, probably because not completely copied! )