

Transcript of a letter from Valentin Burkart

Milwaukee, May 22, 1899

Dear friend and cousin!

We have received your letter of 28 Feb. and I was very pleased to hear something from Germany, because I had not yet known directly whether I still had any relatives overseas. Now I know that there are still very many.

My wife was sick all winter, but is healthy again, but still very weak. I had the old rheumatism again this winter, it is all over again. Times have not improved much here, there is a little more work than last year, but the pay is very low. You can't work for nothing, you want to live a little decently, because Milwaukee is already a big city and it costs something to live there if you don't have your own house and have to live in rent. Two of my boys are working very regularly this summer, so that helps a lot. But they also want to have something, because one of them is 21 and the other 19 years old, so you can't demand everything from them. My oldest, who is now 30 years old, can't be used for anything, because he's a dolt and there's nothing to be done with him. He will have a bad time once he no longer has a father and mother. My second boy is married and has to take care of himself, and I still have three smaller girls and a boy. I will probably still see brother-in-law Landwehr this summer, if he doesn't come to me, because he has more money than I do, because I don't have any, then I must go to him once, because we are 130 miles apart, but since father and mother and sister are buried there, I must pray once again on their graves. How can you believe that another one of us would ever visit Germany, because it is too far. I would like to, but there is no money, the others have neither desire nor money.

Mr. Landwehr would like to, but he is too old, but what is not can still become. One cannot know what can still happen. We had a very severe winter, because pretty much everything is frozen, even pretty much all the fruit trees are frozen and this month it is much colder than in April, nothing grows much too cold, which has never happened before. I have a lot to do with my pigeons because they are always traveling. Last Sunday they went 200 miles; next Sunday they go 300 miles they shall make it 600 miles this summer for that is the only pleasure I have. If nothing gets in the way and I can get myself painted, I will send you another family picture this summer. Please excuse my bad German, because it goes very badly from my hand, because I have to be careful, otherwise English comes in between.

With greetings signed the
Valentin BURKARD Family
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