

*Giddings Deutsches Volksblatt*, 20 July 1922. Image 011500537.

A letter from the former home of the Volksblatt man

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23 June 1922

Niesky (The Deaconess House)

Dear Mr. Proske,

Pastor Kuhnke, an acquaintance of mine, gave me your letter several days ago because he could not answer your questions or concerns. The letter was addressed to the pastor in Petershain near Cottbus, Lower Lusatia, when in fact you meant the deaconess house in Niesky near Görlitz, Upper Lusatia. Niesky is the train station after Petershain along the Kohlfurt/Falkenberg train track. For the last 15 years Petershain has served as a train station with connections to express trains.

I am a piano teacher for the girls home but live in the deaconess house. I assume you know that Niesky is a colony of the "Herrenhuter". This brotherhood consists of several sections, a place to raise girls and boys, a mission school, a deaconess house, a home for widows and a sister house for single women.

Maybe you have heard of the news in America that on June 17, 1922 the Herrenhut Brotherhood celebrated 200 years of existence.

Niesky, our town, has some large factories where they manufacture machines and wagons. This town is growing consistently. (cannot make out several lines). Some of the laborers live in villages close by. Petershain has remained a small village with 500 inhabitants. I like Petershain very much and visit there when I ride my bicycle. The day I received the letter from Pastor Kuhnke and yours I had a day off and was delighted to ride my bicycle over to Petershain to research if you still have relatives on your mother's side living there. I have known a family by the name of Barthel there. There are about 5 or 6 families with the letter "B" who carry a surname. After two hours of search I met the cousin of your mother, her name is Barthel, born Lena Barthel. She remembered you well and showed much interest. She is an old little woman, her husband an invalid of the war in 1870. She has two married daughters. Her son fell in WWI in 1915. Her oldest sister Marie is married in Luckenwalde. Her last name is Nitsche. Johanne and Auguste have died, one was only 15 years old, the other died soon after marriage. Their brother August became a carpenter and works for the railroad. He is married with 3 children. These are children of your side of the family as well as uncle Johann and aunt Rosine. Mrs. Lena Barthel took me to the cemetery. He died in 1901 and she in 1896.

(More later.)

Translated by Margot Hendricks