

Letter from Germany

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Rauschwalde near Görlitz

16 October 1922

Dear Family Hannes

I would like to introduce myself to you. I am the daughter of Gustav Heinze, Niederlössnitz. The reason for my writing is to thank you for the good you have done for my parents. Our gracious God will bless you and your relatives for your gifts and love which you offer your friends in the distant homeland.

In September I had travelled with my husband and 2 boys to visit my parents. My mother met us at the train station. The very first thing she told us was the help you had sent to her and my dad. With your help they can look more hopefully into their future. My father suffers a lot during this time in his life especially because he has physical ailments which prevent him from working. As long as my father was well we could say "Work makes life sweet." My parents worked as long as they could.

During the summer we were still quite happy because our father could go into the garden and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine a little. But as autumn arrived he had to stay indoors. Father was happy to receive your American newspapers, because reading has become his only entertainment from morning to evening. Both of them cannot write any more because their hands tremble. (Quite a few lines not legible)

Fabrics and notions are very expensive. 1 meter cloth to sew a man's shirt used to cost 58 to 70 Pfennig. Now it costs 350 Marks and more. We can say now: "Oh beautiful time, how distant you are." But we don't want to lose the hope that soon all will be better again when every German will be able to buy a shirt, where mind and body will flourish again. At the present people are unsatisfied, restless, rush and chase. At the present difficult time you cannot feel peaceful comfort if it is not nurtured in the home. Father gave me the newspapers and when I have read them I will take them to aunt Dominik and will share the greetings from family Hannes. The Dominik family will be happy to hear all the news. They only live one hour from us. Would Mr. Hannes not be interested to return to his homeland one last time? To see once more the place where he grew up and spent his youth has to give him much joy. I hope and wish he can do it. It takes me 4 hours by train to get to my parent's house. When I have not been home for ½ year or more I long to go home, I cross the border to Saxony, Löbau, Bautzen. My boys are 2 and 9 and their names are Lothar and Gottfried.

I want to write about one more item. We are blessed by the German American support. Our older boy has participated in 4 weeks of eating Quaker oats at school, which the medical doctor ordered. Soon Christmas will be here. Do you celebrate Christmas like we do in Germany? Do you decorate your trees with candles which will be lit on Christmas Eve? Do you have Stollen (fruitcake), cookies, apples and nuts and gingerbreads? I am sure you sing all the familiar Christmas songs. I have read in letters that you continue to sing German folksongs and hymns. But now I want to close. My husband, a schoolmaster, also sends his words of thanks for the love you have shown our parents. With many regards, yours Alma (last name illegible)

Translated by Margot Hendricks