

Letters from Russia:

Huck 14 Jan.--To Alexander Müller in Argona, Ja.(*Ed. Note: could also be Argona, Ia, as the Fraktur characters for capital letters i and j are the same, in any case, unable to locate Argona. There is an Algona Iowa*).--My dearest daughter's husband and daughter Margarethe, nee Brotzmann! -- I received your lovely letter and I see that you were all still well and healthy when you sent the letter. We find ourselves in the very same state of health. I was very pleased to once again receive a letter from you, long have I waited for your response. But much greater was my joy when from what I saw in your letter that you had the idea to help me. We have already thirsted for a long time for help. But when the need is great the help seems to be next door (*Ed. Note: the phrase literally translates as Next or soon, but the author's meaning is clear. Help is always somewhere other than at her location.*). Our need grows larger from day to day. If you could see with your own eyes how poor and bare are those who we must help, I know you would be unable to stop your tears from flowing. You must quickly intervene with your help and do not delay a minute longer, hasten to our distress. Since the beginning of the year we have been unable to extricate ourselves from our misery. When one thinks, "now it's going a bit better," along comes another emergency from another side and casts all hopes over the houses (*Ed. Note: idiomatic expression perhaps better translated as "dashes all hope"*). In such difficult proportions life spoils and embitters you would think that one would no longer find joy in life and would prefer death. But what can we do? One must bow beneath the mighty hand of God and quietly wait until the Lord pulls back his outstretched hand and we are once again shown his favor. As he leads us, we will follow, even when it displeases our old men.

Your father has been dead going on 5 years now. He had from the lamentable time no more use of need. He is beyond all need that we must still embrace. From his funeral text, I can remember nothing, only the song that was sung at his burial is still fresh in my memory:

Frivolous world, I am tired of you, my soul eagerly seeks heaven's peace and freedom. Oh, my God, when will you call me! Call me! With great joy I will divorce myself from this misery, because I know, that it is through the Blood of Christ that my life's ending will be good.

The song is under number 723.

Once I asked him if he was glad to be dying. He gave me the answer: I am also glad to be here.

It has been nearly 15 years since I have had any information about my son Philipp. He went missing while serving as a soldier. He disappeared without a trace and no one knows where he went. Who knows which sands cover his body? When the many miseries over us go away, you can then, dear daughter, remember, that in the quiet of the evening hours many hot tears have rolled down my cheeks. But one must be patient and remember: What God does is well done. Your grandfather and your grandmother are already gone to eternity; remaining is only your Wes Elisabeth (*believed to be Aunt Elisabeth*). With her inexplicable condition one has also much to bear. The cross has not left us yet, but I believe indeed in the greater cross, nearer to heaven, and so forth and so on.

My son Johannes is married to Elisabeth Kreick. They were the first to be married in the community house. She was a widow when Johannes married her. She has a son from her first husband and with Johannes she also had a child but it died. Think of us with love and do not forget us in our misery.

With many heartfelt greetings and good wishes for you both and to everyone large and small, I remain yours, your loving remembered mother,

Anna Marg. Brotzmann.

Dear Sister Anna Margarethe!

You complain in your letter that we don't write enough. We have already written many times, perhaps our letters to you were missent to another address. The last that we sent, you have received. Write more frequently to us and we will answer your letters without fail.

With greetings from your brother,

Johannes Brotzmann