

Letters from Anna Elsbernd Elpert from Festina to her Parents and Sister back in Germany (translated from German)

Source: *St. Lucas German American Museum and Family History Museum*

Calmar August 9, 1870

Beloved Parents and Sister,

Your last letter I rightly received and learned from it, that you are all well and doing fine which I was glad to know. Thanks God I'm alright, too. For a long time I've been waiting for your letter in vain, for because we read about the war in the papers every day I was very much afraid that Hermann would become a soldier, too, but that did not come to yet, and let us hope, it will stay that way. Over here it is said, that things are very bad and that war will last very long, but we must leave it up to God, because everything happens as He wants it to, let us all pray to God that he may free you from war soon. Last Sunday it was in the newspaper that everyman between 20 and 30 years stands under a command again, thus my cousin from Asbeck surely has become a soldier again. But let us hope that he will soon be back home amidst his loved ones. Here from America some people are moving to join in the fighting, many of the Prussians and also a lot of the French, over here they often are quarreling with each other, each on sticking to his side.

Last Sunday I received a letter from Cincinnati saying that Elisabeth Mollman, too, is now in America, happily arrived over there with her man. We now have finished harvesting, next week we'll thresh and that will be it then for this year. The harvest was pretty good, the straw is a bit thin, but thus the corn is much better. Many people now are moving west to buy land there, where nobody has settled yet. Many millions of acres are lying there with nobody to live on them, and when so many Catholic families have settled there together that they can build a church. Then the building starts and they live there so well like they couldn't do any better. In some places the acre costs some 5-6 (Dollar ?) and in some places almost nothing, but there it is far away from towns and market place, it's not so good either. Recently I've set a letter with a picture to Hillers in Asbeck, whether they have received it I don't know. Please tell me in your next writing. For you as well here is my picture, but it has not become as good, because it was not taken on paper but on sheet metal, but I think you can recognize me. Thus, dear parents and sisters you can see me as often as you like. If we shall not meet again here, we must take it for God's will and then it is only for a short time. Up above the stars there will be no more parting. So live all together very well, let us pray each for one another and we shall all do fine. I have to finish my writing, the paper gets too small. I greet you all together, father and mother, brothers and sisters your love daughter and sister Anna Elsbernd. Regards from uncle and aunt Heitkempers, from Bockmanns, Honemmans, Elpers, Lohaus and Bullermans, and especially from Heinrich and his wife and children. Regards from me to Tenberege and Hillers and all neighbors and relatives and acquaintances. Regards to the teacher from her niece and me as well. As we heard as to the war Prussia is on the winning side, everywhere you hear Long Live Prussia. Already two million have been sent to Prussia which have been brought together here. We get to know the development of the war earlier than many of you. I shall soon send a letter with a picture of Heinrich and his wife and 3 children. I beg you to write back soon, otherwise I'm always worrying about Hermann.

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Source: *St. Lucas German American Museum and Family History Museum*

Festina May 10, 1872

Beloved Parents and Sister,

Your last letter we received rightly and in best of health and learned from it that you are all well, too, and that father's old illness isn't quite as bad anymore, very much to our enjoyment. Thanks God Franziska is back here with us, she was 17 weeks with Eink, since his wife is dead. That was pretty tough for her, the last 7 weeks they had the little child at home, that meant such a lot of work for her, she hardly bear it, every night she had to get up 4 to 5 times, because of troubles with the baby, and then all the labor in the daytime, as she was there all alone and with a farmer with so much cattle, and the Eink himself was a bit sick all the time. She stood that for seven weeks, but then it became impossible, she was ill herself, then she returned to us. The doctor came to see her twice. Now she is almost well again. How the Eink is going to handle things we don't know, sometimes they say, he is going to fetch another woman from Germany. Until now he has been alone with his 3 children for the 14 days since Franziska left, the youngest child being with other people. Here many people are ill now. The doctor, who visited Franziska said that he often did not get sleep in 3 and 4 nights. I think this is a lot because of the bad weather we had this spring until now. It's still cold and often rainy. When summer is to really start this year I don't know. Farmers have almost finished the wheat sowing and also oat and barley if mostly in the (the earth, that is). Now the grain has to be done. If only the weather would change soon.

As you can read in the papers over here, in Prussia school is now separated from church. Please let us know, if there have been any changes with you too, and then, many people over here think that there will be again soon. That would be easy to understand, as Bismark is always and everywhere against the Catholics. God looks at that for a while, but then it comes to an end, but we hope, that you get out of it alright. If my brothers must be soldiers, it would be better for them to come over here to us, otherwise it is their own decision. I wonder if I shall stay the only one of all 8 sisters to have seen America. H. Heitkemper has now sold his farm again for 5550 Thaler. In one week's time he will sell all his other things, too, and then leave Iowa for Cincinnati. They all cannot stay in one place for long. We have now waited a bit longer before writing, as we wanted to have a photograph taken to enclose a picture with the letter and then that was delayed a bit. Yesterday we received the pictures, but they are pretty darkish, still I think you will recognize us.

Send our greetings to all relatives and acquaintances, especially Mollers, Hillers and Tenberge, as well as Dropelmanns, Mollmanns, and especially Sophie and Bernings. Many regards from us to all of you, father, mother, brother and sisters.

Yours in love,
Johan, Anna & Franziska Elpert

Please write back soon and if you can send us your picture especially Hermann and Bernard they surely could do it soon and father and mother. I should like to see again if only on paper.