

[1]

[postcard addressed to:] Mr. J.J. Dyck Laird Box 132 Sask. Canada.

Wasco¹ Calif[ornia] October 20. [19]33.

Dear Dycks. I address you just as I feel with the above words! Thank you very much for your heart-warming words of sympathy. I appreciate it very much, it does me so much good. I can say now so far from experience, it is not true that people are always only bad consolers. All the words of consolation that have come to me in this difficult time have achieved their purpose. The heavenly Father comforts not only directly, but also indirectly. He uses loving fellow human beings as His medium. Yes, I will be still, His word is holy. I wrote a somewhat detailed letter to you, but addressed to Howarden. I assume that you will have your mail forwarded and that you have received the aforementioned letter. I want to thank the Lord forever for all the good things He has done for me and my dear Anna² in our pilgrimage together. Even in the time of her illness, how many hours of blessing were granted to us, until she was finally able to go home in peace. She is with the Savior, and I rejoice in that,

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despite my longing and pain. It is difficult for me to grasp that, she is no longer here! Someone who was dying in peace said at the time of departure "give my regards to the dying, I am going to the living." And in this sense, Anna also went home. May God's grace be upon you. With warm greetings, Peter Penner

[p.s.] I see you read not only the *Freund* but also the *Herald*. Quite interesting for me. God's blessings at Laird!

[3]

Wasco, California. October 5, 1933.

Dearest friends and family! - Greeting with Psalm 37.4. Have your delight in the Lord who will give you the desires of your heart. We received your precious letter. Thank you very much! My dear Anna also read it, but was already sick in bed. On the 30th we drove to Paso Robles, where Anna wanted to stay for a few days. From there we wanted to go to the beach. On Sunday evening Helene and I drove home again. Tuesday, on the 4th Otto Toews phoned³: Anna was asking for me. When we arrived there, she was lying in bed, both legs paralyzed. At 6 p.m. she touched her legs and exclaimed: "What's happened, I have no feeling in my legs. And so it was, she could not move. A little later severe pain set in. The doctor was close by and after an hour she got some relief. That evening we still took her 11 miles south to the Atascadero Hospital. Here she lay 2 weeks, then we took her to Wila Beach. Here she lay 3 weeks, then again 3 weeks in Atascadero, a 35 mile trip. Then we took her 150 miles south to Glendale hospital. Here she lay again 3 weeks then she passed away, on the 19th of September 6:20 a.m. He [the LORD] came quietly, took her by the hand and led her home to his father's house. When I came to her on July 4, she

¹ [Wasco](#)

² Anna=Anna Epp GRANDMA #244701, 14.04.1877-19.09.1933

³ He used the English form, "phonte"!

looked at me so with a smile and said: "Is this dying? She felt so free, detached from everything and ready! I had never imagined dying like this! Then she continued: "But the challenges may still come. The grace of God has gloriously been manifested in her life and work. She was able to bear much pain and hardship in patience and surrender. Initially I was able to be with her day and night, then daughter Linda⁴ came from Kansas for a week. [4] When she returned home, I took Helen⁵, who stayed with her till she died. I drove home in between from Atascadero (100 miles from here) 6 or 7 times and in Glendale, Helene and I were with her constantly. A week before her departure, Linda also came back to bedside. She also brought Aunt Ida⁶, Anna's sister. During the last 3 weeks in Atascadero she often had difficulty breathing, water had collected in her lungs. ¾ cup of water was drained, after which it became easier. Then her kidneys also failed. She could only lie on her left side for a short time. She was very tired when lying down and had to be turned more often. During the last 4 weeks she was so weakened that at times she talked nonsensically. The first time I noticed it, it was when she held up a small cloth in front of her. I asked her if it was too bright for her eyes. Then she lowered her hands and said with a friendly face, "Oh, I'm dreaming again. Another time she said to me "now I'm going to the mission, I haven't done enough for her yet! When I told her "you have done so much in the field at home and you have our Ella on the mission field! Then she said, that is also so! What seemed so wonderful to me was that she was so clear in her prayers, from beginning to end. In the evening we had our devotions together. When we read God's Word, we prayed in turn, first Helene, then Linda, Auntie and me. Then my dear Anna was also prepared. Her voice was no longer strong, but still understandable at the beginning. But soon I had to bend over her to get everything. Her voice became softer and softer, then only her lips moved, a few moments of silence, then she prayed very briefly. She spoke to the Father in a childlike trust, those were holy times for me. At the end we sang a song, then we wished each other goodnight and kissed each other and the three of us went to our rented apartment, only a 5 minute walk away. Helene [5] stayed with Mama. Linda once asked her if she could take over from Helene, but she wouldn't hear of it. She held on to Helene. Every day there were 3 or 4 free times for Helene. She couldn't be with her all the time, day and night, so I was there. I had to arrange it so that not too many were around her. Once, when I was with her, she asked, where is H. [Helene] again? I said that she had gone out for a while, and was probably resting. Then she always said, "That's true, that's true! But once she said: "What does it mean that Helene is not here? Once, when I was with her, she asked, where is H. [Helene] again? I said that she had gone out for a while, and was probably resting. Then she always said, "That's true, that's true! But once she said: "What does it mean that H. is not here? But it did not take much to calm her down.

Oh dear, it is so hard for me. I know that it is God's providence; I know that my dear Anna is among the host of the redeemed. After a short time, I said to her, then we will meet again. Yes, I know all this and yet how hard to let go. When I think - and especially in the evening - now Mama is coming to me from the other room., when I sit out on the lawn in the evening, in my chair, or at the dinner table, the chair on my right side is empty. "Mama aren't you coming?" No, no! She is not here, the home of the souls is

⁴ Linda Penner GRANDMA #777279, 08.03.1898-17.04.1995.

⁵ Helene Elvera Penner GRANDMA #777278, 27.08.1900-14.11.1990.

⁶ Ida Epp GRANDMA #69922, 15.09.1872-27.08.1949.

in heaven. At such moments I feel as if I am standing in front of an empty wall. My Lord and my God, nevertheless I remain with you, your right hand holds me. The grace of God shall suffice me.

But now to your letter: He also leads you along difficult paths, paths that are not understood. I do not think it is necessary for us to understand His ways. We children do not need to know everything, why He does this or that. We know that He leads everything gloriously and that is enough for us, isn't it? I was glad that you, dear Johannes, were able to make a trip to Ontario. I guess the climate is not so harsh there. Yes, Emil has rented⁷ our farm, but that doesn't leave me free [6] yet. The economic situation in general has not yet improved much, at least not significantly. Prices for products are slightly higher. Potato prices were very good. I can't say anything about going to see you there yet. Perhaps the Lord will make it possible for you to make the trip. We have heard about the great drought in your country, then the heat and the eaters [grasshoppers?] The harvest or the summer is gone and you have no help, - that is hard and for the third time, difficult. I understand it, if then the incentive drops. They say: the world belongs to the brave. And there is much truth in it, but I like even better the saying: - And even if I feel nothing of your power, you lead me to destination, even though the times are dark. We did not know that you, dear Johannes, also suffer from liver and bile issues. I can imagine how hard it is to be inactive during the long winter and I regret this from the bottom of my heart. We are glad to hear that your daughter Lieschen⁸ is getting better. Hopefully she will heal completely. May the good Lord grant it. Yes, the terrible things in Russia are still continuing. May deliverance come soon!

October 7. Now a few more words. It is quite a good place; one is always served. We had not thought that it would come like this! It is so nice and pleasant for parents when children can all be at home and find something to do there, but is it always the best? In many cases it is better if children put their feet under other people's tables. Our children, without exception, have all served. My Anna served 4 years before I took her home. I also served until I was 26 years old and even in 6 different positions. All respect for young people who are ready to take up any, even the seemingly most menial service. A girl who serves in the household and then serves in the sense of "serving the Lord" is not easily overestimated. How nice that your Anna⁹ has a good job, that is also worthy of thanks. [7] What we read in Proverbs 2:31 also applies to a young girl. I esteem her much higher than one who sits up to her ears in wealth and kills time. You must have bought a farm at Larid. It must have been friend Isaac who wrote this to us. You are now in the midst of Germans and hope that you will do very well there. The good Lord also wants this step to be a blessing for you. Your brothers and sisters would also like to go there, if it were possible: He asked me for help, but I cannot do it now. This year I paid out all our children their earnings which they left with me for so long, having waited a long time. The oldest daughter waited 13 years. The boys had already got theirs. And now the hospitals, doctors, ambulances, X rays and apartment bills on top of that. That has cleaned out nicely. I also don't know of anyone else who would be able to help out your brothers and sisters. Otto Toews' are also quite poor. Those who can bring something are helping the starving in [8] in Russia. You dear Johannes, wrote me once that

⁷ He germanised the English word and wrote "gerentet".

⁸ Eliese Dyck GRANDMA #386634, 14.11.1909-22.07.2002.

⁹ Anna Dyck GRANDMA #440877, 19.02.1911-19.01.1966.

you had bought some more land. Then you probably had $\frac{3}{4}$ section¹⁰? Why you bought this, you wanted to tell me another time (probably verbally!) Were you able to exchange this farm for the one at Laird? Today I received a letter from my sister Anna¹¹ and I see from the same that she did not receive the news of my dear Anna's departure; I wrote the same day and informed you of it. Now I have a request for you "would you be so kind as to send this letter to her? Now, may God's grace, which He has so gloriously revealed to us and to all of you in Jesus Christ our Savior, lead us through all tribulations and sufferings to blessed perfection, where we will most certainly thank Him from the bottom of our hearts even for the difficult paths. Greetings with love sent you, your friend, P. Penner.

PS. I will enclose a few more lines [for] my little sister.

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Wasco. January 20, 1934.

My dear friends in the distant north! Your invitation to your beautiful celebration reached us for the second time yesterday. Thank you very much for the love and kindness I perceive from your letters. I have not yet answered your letter of December 18, so I will do so now. Of course we would like to be in your midst for your celebration, it would be so nice. Will your friends from Horwarden be able to come? Hardly likely. I am very happy that you can now live among Germans. How much nicer for you and especially for your children. We celebrated Christmas this time with daughter Anna Ifland¹², our 3rd daughter. She lives in town, so to speak, and only $1\frac{3}{4}$ mile away from us. The youngest daughter Louise¹³ [10] married soon after her mother's departure to a young man, Peter Kröker¹⁴, and lives 7 miles south of us at Shafter. I have in my Helene¹⁵, as a good, faithful and prudent support. Emil¹⁶, the youngest son, is also still at home. He is very busy¹⁷ and is only at meals - and not even that always. In the evenings he is usually away from home. Now he has his tractor running day and night in front of the plow. He has gotten quite a bit plowed. We have had a lot of fog this winter. It was clear until December 20 and a bit of night frost once in a while. Since then it has been cloudy or foggy, but without frost. I thought this would probably not have done you any good, but nevertheless you could still come to visit. We do not have far to go to the sunshine, only a good hour's drive, to the mountains. Well, I wish you a very blessed get-together on your¹⁸ silver wedding anniversary. Our thoughts will be with you on that day and we will join in the praise and thanksgiving for the many graces our Heavenly Father has bestowed. A heartfelt greeting to all of you and may His grace be with us till we meet again. Peter Penner.

¹⁰ Section of land = 1 square mile. Usually a settler would start with a quarter section.

¹¹ Anna (Dyck) Tgahrt GRANDMA #861319, 22.12.1871-1945.

¹² Anna Esther Penner GRANDMA #777276, 2.09.1904-14.06.1992.

¹³ Louise Penner GRANDMA #308089, 8.09.1913-12.02.2004.

¹⁴ Peter Kroeker GRANDMA #120183, 12.07.1905-28.06.1983.

¹⁵ Helene Elvera Penner GRANDMA #777278, 27.08.1900-14.11.1990.

¹⁶ Emil Penner GRANDMA #808521, 2.01.1911-10.07.1988.

¹⁷ Plattdeutsch word "drock" is used for being very busy.

¹⁸ 25th wedding anniversary of Johannes Dyck GRANDMA #168774 and Renate Mathies GRANDMA #168775.

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May 24, 1937

Wasco, Calif. Palm. Av. Box 118.E.

My very dear friends including your children! With deep sorrow and heartfelt sympathy I take note of your message dear Johannes, which arrived here today. The words above and the following on the next sheet, I send in greeting! In firm faith and childlike trust! "Nevertheless," this is a challenge, a victorious position in the face of all doubt, despondency

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and whatever else threatens to cut us down in the struggle. How great and glorious this state of grace, we, my dear Anna and I, experienced. I had to be thankful again and again for His gracious guidance. Weeks before her departure, we were able to calmly make arrangements regarding the children and her funeral, and among other things, she also gave instructions as to which dress she wanted to wear in her coffin. Then she also asked me to request her women's association, which was very dear to her, to use the money intended for the flowers for the funeral, for missions instead. This last will of hers, to her ladies group, was fulfilled by sending the money to our daughter on the mission field in Africa. We agreed completely and willingly in the words: "If only I have Him, I will gladly give up everything else". We did not insist in our

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prayers of petition "help us out of trouble," but instead we insisted, "Help us in our time of need," knowing that only on the latter we had His absolute promise, and that could hold Him to His promise. How gloriously he proved himself to be our Savior "in our trouble. Thus, and not otherwise, you will experience His promise. Yes, only His will be done! We thank and will thank Him even more later for the tribulations here, which are only temporal and light? Yes! We all know what triggers them. He will make it "well"! My intention this morning was to write to you today. Now that your letter is here, I do it twice as gladly. I am indebted to you with my letter! Please forgive!

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I have read your letter of January 8 again. Yes, you have judged correctly! I am graciously provided for in every respect. I have always been healthy so far. My dear daughter Helene, an excellent housekeeper, takes care of everything, even properly combs my hair, in the faint and disappearing moonlight. I could think of no better assistance, except for the one I had enjoyed so long and who stood by me so faithfully. Also, I am carefree in material respects.

There was a high price for potatoes and good price for cotton last year -- \$2.50-4.00 per 100 lb and \$12 per lb. Now we are receiving, initially \$1.25 and now \$1.00, and a yield of 300 bags per acre¹⁹. Wool, has a slightly higher price this year. If the expectations of those who lease the land for oil and gas is at \$35 to 50 per acre over 3 years (our 80 acres are also leased) then our area will soon be turned into an oil and gas field. The nearest oil well to us, 1 ½ miles away, is 9900 feet deep.

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Would you be interested if I shared with you something of the farming operations of our two youngest sons? In the fall of 1935 they together bought, 3 miles north of us, their own operation of 120 acres for \$18,000. Their down payment was less than what they had to spend on equipment: irrigation pipes, wells and a pump. In 1936 after harvest they paid off the entire debt. Then in 1936 they leased a property 15 miles west, the "Kärmel-Range" 6 sections for 5 years with an option to extend it for longer. Only half, 3 sections, needs to be irrigated. The snow-water from the mountains is free and abundant. We have not had this much mountain water since our being here. The 3 expensive wells and pumps they installed there (totaling \$20,000), will not be used this year. They will have to pay for them, but it will be deducted from the least payment, 1/5 of the crop. Although our potatoes are harvested clean from the adherence of any dirt, buyers from across the U.S where they are shipped, still demand that they be washed. For this purpose

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they have set up in Wasco a packing house with 2 washers for \$7000 each. In 50 minutes, they wash, bag, weigh and 1 wagon load of 300 bags. Now when they harvest their potatoes, 50 people are busy in the field and as many in the packing house and office. They also wash potatoes for many other neighbors. This is a very different operation now than in 1921. Then we had 80 acres and 8 donkeys. Now one uses exclusively machines on a large farm -- potato and cotton planters, 2-4 rows [at a time], potato plows for 2 rows at a time. The wagons are trucks. How much cost the 2 new trucks, 8 caterpillars²⁰ and other tractors, cost, I do not know. Then besides the plows and other equipment, there are 3 new vehicles, 2 big ones and 1 coupe and 2 pickup trucks. Of course, they now have a big pile of debt to clear up with this year's crop revenue. The annual operating expense is probably over \$50,000 annually. Our farm and the 10 acres next to our 80 acres which we already have leased for several years, and our wells provide enough water,

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for 90 acres. Otto²¹ and Emil²² have also leased these. They do all the maintenance, pay expenses, the seed, the labor, the water and delivery costs. This land yields ¼ cotton and 1/6 potatoes. You will probably wonder why there is such a big difference in the yield between potatoes and cotton? The answer: cotton grows from April to November. The land is irrigated before planting, and it holds this

¹⁹ AK (Acker) = acre = ca 0.4 hectre

²⁰ Kattepilller = Caterpillar

²¹ Otto Penner GRANDMA #777277, 24.09.1901-27.01.1950.

²² Emil Penner GRANDMA #808521, 2.01.1911-10.07.1988.

moisture until the end of June, then further irrigating is done for the next 4 months. Seed cost are about \$1.25 per acre, and the picking, \$15 per acre. (seed for cutting cotton) \$10, labor cost for watering and cleaning is the same as for potatoes. Potato seed per acre, 13 bags at a price of \$ 3.00 equals \$40.00. Cutting per sack plus 10 for cleaning, also as much. Brand new sacks cost \$ 10. If currently the potato per acre where $\frac{3}{4}$ of the potatoes actual come up, yields no more than 300 sacks per acre, it would be \$ 30 per sack, and expenses \$10. The dry plant also approximately \$1 S. Total cost of potato cultivation depends on the price of the seed, \$150-160 per acre, and the washing \$8.

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On our farm, \$ 150 will be sufficient; since we are already pumping natural gas for the 3rd year, since the pipeline runs through it. It would not be appropriate and also quite boring for you, to go into more detail, but you have already got a rough idea of the operations. In total they have 180 acres of potatoes, 1070 acres of cotton, the rest in sugar beets. Sugar beets were planted for the first time this year.

But I still have something to add. 40 miles closer to the mountains, planting potatoes begins in November. With us, it only begins at the end of December. By far the most are planted in February. Growing season is 90 to 110 days. Within 110 days they are ripe. They are watered after they have emerged, in the furrow between the rows, for 1 or 2 weeks, 2 times a week, and then on every other day until they are ready to be dug up. The irrigation remains constant, day after day, the 1st day every other row; the next day the ones in between. The largest pump on Carmel delivers 3 thousand gallons of water per minute.

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The blast of water from the 12 inch pipe remains level for several feet before beginning to fall. The water is enough for 1 section. In the management of their farming enterprise, they have divided their responsibilities. Otto takes care of only their farm and ours, Emil keeps the Carmel farm running in full speed. Adolf²³ also found his way back last fall and is in charge of the workers at Karmel. He lives there with his family - 4 children ages 1 to 11. Linda²⁴, who often spends her free time with us, has also been with us for 1 month. Ella²⁵ and Herold Coen²⁶ with their 2 lovely girls, $\frac{3}{4}$ and 5 years-old, arrived from Africa the 24th of December at his parents in Ohio. From there they came to us March 19. With several invitations, they have now spent several weeks (going on a month) in Los Angeles. They held lectures in several churches. The girls have been entrusted us for a while already. Anna²⁷ and Henry Ifland²⁸, with whom the stork in March delivered their 6th, a long sweet boy, are very close to Wasco. Louise²⁹, our

²³ Adolf Penner GRANDMA #348821, 24.03.1899-13.12.1985.

²⁴ Linda Penner GRANDMA #777279, 8.03.1898-17.04.1995.

²⁵ Ella Penner GRANDMA #777275, 9.07.1907-15.03.1997.

²⁶ Harold Coen GRANDMA #6.08.1902-5.09.1993.

²⁷ Anna Penner GRANDMA #777276, 2.09.1904-14.06.1992.

²⁸ Henry Ifland GRANDMA #1382173, 27.09.1903-22.07.1984.

²⁹ Louise Penner GRANDMA #308089, 8.09.1913-12.02.2004.

baby and Peter Kröker³⁰, live 25 miles south of Bakersfield and 8 miles west, on 90 acres of leased potato land. They are expecting their 2nd bundle of joy,

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Their first born 3 years ago, will not have his only child status much longer. Otto's very lively, cheerful Ruth is completely in her element when she can host and entertain guests. They have also made sure that their firstborn 2 year-old will get a playmate soon. I am very curious to see what will become of this boy if he continues as he is now. I always have to admire his skill, speed and daring. Fear is alien to him. If something happens to him and he gets a good crack, then he squeezes his eyes shut for a short time and off he goes. He has hardly learned to walk. Yet as soon as his legs carried him, he never tried to hold on to an object to stand up, as one usually notices with children. No, he stood up freely and walked. If he fell, it did not stop him, he immediately got up again and went forward. Now, when he runs, that's the way it is. In between he does a high jump, when he reaches his destination. He ducks a little bit, uses all his strength, does his master jump and lands with his feet and butt at the same time. Yes, the little ones give a lot of pleasure.

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Emil lives with Otto, and they also have a young man with them, whose name is Karl Lichty, possibly Emil's future brother-in-law. That you made the trip to Jacob Wiebe's silver wedding anniversary, we heard already in Berlin. We were happy about it and the joy of the children doubled your joy, so it's right and good. We got to know "Strength through Joy" well in Germany. It was a lot of fun there. Anyway, you have already read or heard about it. And Peter is getting ready for the teaching profession. It is probably not a rarity that parents want to determine the profession of their children, which in my opinion rarely turns out to be a blessing if the parents insist on it. I told my sons, especially versatile Emil, that if anything appealed to him more than farming, he should take up whatever he felt like and loved. All 3 wanted to know of nothing but farming. Emil was a particularly good and easy learner, despite the fact that he almost hated books. He tried to skip school before the time allowed, but did not succeed and had to endure. To higher learning? [22] Nah! Nah! My college is here on the farm! When I ask him: have you read this and that in the newspaper? The response: Oh, the air is full of that news, I just read the headlines³¹. How nice for you to have all the children close by. Except for the two (in Africa for the fifth year), we have the all the children here with us as well. Yes! Dear Johannes, you now have a very difficult struggle, many things to overcome. Only be confident and very joyful. The harder the struggle, the greater and more glorious the victory and the reward! May you and I and all those who love you, be satisfied with Rom. 8,28. My sincere thanks for both letters. I am glad that you also reported about the other friends. Sheldon is still in my memory. I think several of the Germans stayed there. It's a pity for me that I can't quite follow your children (you've named them all here). The little flower girl is almost sitting with me. I have not given up my intention to visit you all again, and I will [In the margin of page 22: *I put a cheque with this letter. You will probably not have trouble to cash it. Cousin D. Toews is well known over there.*]

³⁰ Peter Kroeker GRANDMA #120183, 12.07.1905-2.07.1983.

³¹ English word "head-lines" is used in the German text.

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carry out my intention. If only my Helena would not be so car shy. But she cannot help it. Now back from the trip to Europe, her preference is to stay at home. I would like to go by car to visit you because on the way I have several friends and also cousin G. Froese in Walla Walla Wash; also Dietrich Dycks in Oregon. We will be done with potato harvest within 1 week, then I will be ready for the trip. I may find company before the fall there. Thank you for the kind invitation. I visited the dear Fr. Janzen family on an occasion (about 1 month ago) when I brought Dr. Cornelius Krahn, Holland, who is studying Mennonitism here in the U.S. and probably also in Canada, to Paso Robles and from there to Reedley. I will send you the report. Dr. C. Krahn lectured on conditions in Russia, Germany and Holland in congregations where he was invited. He also talked about the origin and development of the Mennonitism. He is a nice, interesting, reserved younger man. I also heard him here in our church at Paso Robles. He was born in Russia. His last home was on the mountain side, west of Saratov. He got out in 1925. He studied in Germany 2 years and is

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at home in Holland. I just remembered, you also read the B. B. and I do not need to write anything more about it. Today I received a letter from J. J. Wiebes Nebraska. They have also heard from you. There it has rained beautifully and everything seems to coming along well. But that you, as simple farmers, who are best served with the simplest, demand that we send a forerunner - for what purpose actually? We will knock on the door when we get there.

We were already very used to renting a room in Europe and making our visits from there. Only with Driedgers, Jacob Wiebes and when we arrived with sister Anna³² and Bruno³³, we overnighted. You are all³⁴ considered our best friends. We would like to remember you, also in our intercession. Yes, as your dear Renate asks: we would like to use all days for the honor of our Father. I, as a mediator, have been entrusted with the task of assisting you and I am happy to be able to do this and to be allowed to do it. With heartfelt participation and greetings to all of you, I remain, your Peter Penner, bound in love.

[P.S. top of page 11 – first page of this letter:] *I wrote that our land is leased to the Oil Company. I learned today in Bakersfield that not all is well yet. The decision will be made on June 5.*

[25]

Wasco. December 30, 1935

Dear friends in the “already cold” north! Huh! - I have to pity you. I thank you, dear Johannes that in spite of my procrastination (not answering your last letter) you have still reported to me about your progress. I also warmly thank you for your congratulations and best wishes which I too want to wish you. Yes, nothing seems as precious as the deep peace of God and His grace, with which we can endure

³² Sister Anna=Anna Dyck GRANDMA #861319, 22.12.1871-1945.

³³ Probably Bruno Tjahrt GRANDMA #172577, 2.10.1908-08.1980.

³⁴ Seit alle Ihm unserem besten Freud befohlen.

everything. Everything else, without this peace is only a heavy yoke, under which the heart gnaws and toils and gets no true pleasure. If I obtain this one thing, it replaces everything. I am satisfied in everything with Jesus. May God grant³⁵ that to you there and to us, here.

How am I doing in health and otherwise? I am quite well and in good health. As different as we humans are from each other, so also is the pain we feel in separation. Those prone to sadness, will have it the hardest. But apart from that, a Jesus-child, it's been proven, has a suitable remedy, even in the greatest pain. A child of God can hold on to the promise of the Father in Rom 8.28. God blesses us in giving and in receiving; the greater blessing lies in receiving. The worse our temporal situation becomes

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the greater we cling to the rock that remains eternal. I will only cite a proven means and that we find recorded in 1 Thess 5.18. Psalm. 50, 14, 15, 23. Eph 5, 20. Ps. 119, 71, 75. In summary: humble yourself before God, saying "yes, yes" [to God], submitting to His leading and giving thanks in all times, and for all things. He equips us with His spirit, the spirit of love, and it empowers us to follow Him in obedience. I appreciate and thank you very much that you have thought of me in love, and I have no doubt that you have also interceded for me. Even though I have given up the farming operation, and I still find something to do, my hearing loss is hindrance, especially in social setting where the English language is used. This leads to further loneliness. It is quite different when two lonely people share their loneliness. But however God may lead, that's right and good! Our children have all mastered the German colloquial language. In writing, all the others are more or less inferior to Helene. Only the two oldest have had vacation school in Kansas for 1 ½ months. Anna, their mother, taught them to write German and I insisted that they learn songs the book with notes, mostly chorales, Mama and Papa also needed to brush up on. We rarely were allowed to reach for a book during our morning and evening devotions. All 4 voices were represented in our singing, while they were still home. We kept up the singing until my Anna found it too difficult to sing along.

Your big difference in the price of wheat was probably caused by the frost. I congratulate you on your plan and hope you can fulfil it. How nice it would be, if it would include going a little further, up to us!

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I'm glad that things in general are becoming so much easier for you. Your brother-in-law J. is then probably cured of his illness? I have just read your previous letter of December 3, 1934 a few times, and noting a few passages that I want to respond to. So I wrote my last letter to you on Nov. 4, 1934. Your brother-in-law then responded in gratefulness.

Now hold on, I have to read your letter thoroughly. You have dared to write: "Peter, but you are a good fellow"! And you dare to throw something like that in my face? All politeness stops here! I judged you to be a good judge of character by the way you looked at me, but there I am! One can be so deceived. The opposite of what you said is the truth. You cannot be the only one who claims to be the sinner among

³⁵ Das walte Gott bei Euch...

sinners; I am also one of them, and the more we come under the true light, the clearer the realization of ourselves that nothing good is to be found in us, and that God alone works the will and deeds of good. Therefore, to God be the glory!

Yes, the visit to Kansas and the exhibition, was good for us. Otto helped his former boss at Enconitas, 250 miles south of here, bring Christmas flowers to market. Our place is a ½ mile southwest of Wasco and they are 1 ½ miles northwest.

They have now undertaken an operation, besides our 80 acres and their 120 acres, located 17 miles of us west (together with two other young men) a rod of 6 sections³⁶ -- 3840 acres. Not all of it is cultivated. They have leased it for 5 years for wheat, corn³⁷ and cotton.

It is understandable that you and your children will feel more comfortable at Tiefengrund, but how do you think H. Froese's feel, who were left behind. His wife who runs the operation seemed to me, to be a quite strong-willed, capable and an undaunted woman. The other Germans, who lived closer to the

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church (probably west of you) probably also did not all stay there.

Friend John P. Epp sold his farm, I think a ½ section (320 acres) about 16 years ago to a Krause, oras he's called in Plattditsch, "Krus". There probably won't be too many Krauses there, that you can't find him. If I am not mistaken, Krause is a neighbor to my brother-in-law Jacob Claassen³⁸ - my cousin, Kate Toews³⁹ was his wife. Recently Krause - who still owes a lot - tried to give half of the land back to Epp and get the debt on the other ¼ section paid off. However, Epp could not accept this deal, but took an amount off of the purchase price. How much Kraus paid for this land at that time I do not know. He possibly has one ¼ section for sale. Your children are all very busy.

A Grade 8 teacher's salary of \$40 is very low compared to the salary here, but in our state, wages are higher than in any other states. Is Lenchen the one who hurt her back? And my flower girl, the baby of the family, is probably with her mother. But I have forgotten her name. Wintering the cattle must have been well worth it, the price went up a lot.

Well, the boys, both yours and mine, as a rule, make their fathers more headaches than the daughters, but therefore they are "boys"! In the long run, everything will be resolved. Unemployment and relief are tricky matters. Before the cotton was picked, the government, gave work to the unemployed, and as if on demand, the pickers left the fields. This did not last long and the government assigned the work, and the farmer got their fields harvested. Many who take Relief refuse to work when offered such. As one trains a boy, so he will not depart when he grows old. The children's upbringing and habits at home are, as a rule, decisive for their later life. As much as I got to know dear old Uncle D. Froese,

³⁶ 6 square miles

³⁷ Corn = Mais

³⁸ Jacob Klassen (15.04.1867-3.10.1948), GRANDMA #4892.

³⁹ Katharina Toews (6.12.1871-26.04.1908), GRANDMA #4972.

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he was a very thrifty man in the smallest of matters, but with big things, it was probably often the other way around, and he did a lot of good for others. Of course, one does not broadcast such weaknesses of others. One has enough to do with one's own mistakes and never gets them cleared up. But you already know that I am not without faults, or rather, very faulty, and I am ready to point out to my friends their faults. Don't you think that those who tell us the truth are our best most loyal friends? I think that in this matter we should reject our great "I", "spare oneself" the suffering shyness, and admonish each other to the good for the sake of love and duty towards our neighbor. You will probably not have to look for the opportunity to do them such a friendly service there.

Last year I received a letter from our very dear friend - can I also say stepsister - Mrs. Wall, formerly Helene Dyck⁴⁰, i.e. your aunt. She told me the sad new of her husband's passing⁴¹ and her difficult circumstances. I sent her help at that time and in the circular letter, which is making the rounds between our siblings, I mentioned her situation. Sister J. Wiebe informed the old Mr. John Harder, who also visited the Am Trakt Settlement about 60 years ago, and who had his home with your grandparents⁴² of a while. This old man also sent something, to my joy. A few days later, she wrote for the second time in great anxiousness, that her son may have to go the same path as her husband. Although the situation has improved somewhat, there is still great need. If I had her letter here, I could send it to you. I have sent it to P. H. Unruh Kansas to find out if it is possible to help in any way. According to the last reports there are no options. I am waiting now for an answer from Unruh. Bruno⁴³ and later also Sister Anna⁴⁴ brought us good news. Sister is on the road to recovery. She did not have cancer and the wound healed well. At Christmas she came from the hospital near Marienburg to Bruno. In the spring he will marry his bride Gertruda Ratzlaff⁴⁵, the best girl in the world!

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If we carry out the plan as made (whether Helena also goes is still undetermined), then there will be a reunion in Berlin next May, where Bruno is a pilot in Hitler's service. Possibly the wedding will be in the air. Well, we'll find out. Then Bruno wants to take his mother to be with him. Yes! Our children are all close-by, except for Linda⁴⁶, who is at the Bethel Hospital in Newton, Kansas and Ella Coen⁴⁷ and her husband with their 4-year-old daughter Ruth-Marie with the Sudan Interior Mission, Katanga, Nigeria, West Africa. The oldest of the son Adolf with his Anna⁴⁸ and 3 children from 4-11 years are not quite close. He is now trucking 175 miles north of us. Anna Ifland has 5 children from 1-9 year. Otto the

⁴⁰ Helene Dyck (4.01.1867-16.11.1943), GRANDMA #109012.

⁴¹ Franz Wall (22.03.1866-1.01.1933), GRANDMA #109011.

⁴² Johannes Dyck (5.12.1826-10.11.1898), GRANDMA #132332, Helene Janzen (19.08.1825-18.01.1888), GRANDMA #132333.

⁴³ Bruno Tjahrt (2.10.1908-08.1980), GRANDMA #172577.

⁴⁴ Anna Dyck (22.12.1871-1945), GRANDMA #861319.

⁴⁵ Gertruda Ratzlaff GRANDMA #1455360.

⁴⁶ Linda Penner GRANDMA #777279, 08.03.1898-17.04.1995.

⁴⁷ Ella Penner GRANDMA #777275, 9.07.1907-15.03.1997.

⁴⁸ Anna Sara Janzen GRANDMA #39419, 9.11.1903-1.03.1997

second son and Ruth, have a son 10-month old. Louise Kroeker⁴⁹ (our baby) (he serves on the farm) has 1 son soon to be 2 years old. Two grandchildren died soon after birth -- one in Africa and the other Adolph, lies buried here beside the grandmother and uncle P. Tjarth⁵⁰ in Shafler. Otto's Ruth cannot speak German and H. Ifland speaks a very broken German. All the grandchildren are no longer German, and that is a great pity. Later they will possibly visit the German school to be able to speak German. The harvests here are very much the same from year to year, because we have irrigation. But the prices for the same are very different. Potatoes this year were only \$60 for 100 lb., and the yield 350 bags per acre. I have transferred all the work of planting, etc. to the sons for 1/6 annually, and also at \$ 30 per acre. With regard to the cotton operation, which costs much less to develop, they give me ¼. They are not quite done yet. The harvest produces about 2 bales (1 bale 500 lb.) per acre. The price is \$12 a. lb. We have gotten some rain, about a ¼ inch, not enough for potato land to plow and are irrigating the land now. We want to plant in January. On Carmel Range they will seed 800 acres of wheat, leaving the rest for cotton and corn. Cotton will be planted in April, and corn in May or June. Some of the range is pasture. How the boys will manage all this is not quite clear to me. Sometimes it seems to me that they have too much work. We both want to go to Los Angeles for several weeks next year. We had frost early, probably at the same time as it became winter where you are, but it didn't last long (there was frost only at night). Best regards to all of you, children, relatives and friends, goodbye and perhaps we will see you 1937. With love Peter Penner

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June 27, 1937

Dear friends! This time you have surprised us quite pleasantly by your overall appearance with us. Many thanks for that! One draws such conclusions when one studies the faces. The two to the left of Johannes must be the educated ones. Standing next to Klara is undoubtedly the one who gets the most oats⁵¹ - it's clear to see that she's the sly one. The young mother will know what she wants. If it doesn't work one way, it will work another, but work it will. The grandson on the mother's arm thinks certainly: "Well, what is supposed to show. The father will probably represent the attitude of the mother and will not let anybody shift the set goal. A true Israelite in whose spirit is no deceit. One of the two girls on the right [32] must be my flower girl, but which one? Surely it will be the second one. Right? The occasion for our Kansas trip was the wedding of our daughter Linda to Herman Oswald, who came over from Baden, Germany 15 years ago. Since 1933 on the farm (1/2 sec.) he had his sister with him. This farm, where the children will also farm in the future, is 20 miles west of Wichita and the owner, a millionaire oil well proprietor, also came to the wedding. The relationship between owner and children, is commendable, he comes to visit them often. Too bad about the wheat in Kansas, spoiled by all the rain. It will probably hardly give ¼ of the crop expected earlier. Oats were still very good. Very little grain was planted compared to earlier times. Grasshoppers massive, wonder if they will leave any of the grain standing? Potato harvesting is still going on at our place. The larger half sold at \$1.15 per 100 lbs. Now the price is

⁴⁹ Luise Kroeker GRANDMA #308089.

⁵⁰ Peter Tjarth GRANDMA #861318, 11.01.1865-1928.

⁵¹ „der der Hafer am meisten spickt“ probably means the one who is most restless.

\$60-70. The yield is a little below normal. Spending is being delayed until there's more breathing space at the market. The temperature was up to 100 all summer. The warmth reminds me of the ocean. "Globe trotter" is the name that I've been give. Maybe Helen will still travel with me, at least until she finds a substitute. With best regards to all of you! P. Penner

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Wasco May 5.1938.

My dear Johannes! Your letter of April 25, was received on Monday, May 2. The journey home went well, as I expected. At home everything was also well. Liebchen, what more do you wish? Yes! It would be good if mother could recover completely. Winter which arrived so soon after your arrival at home, was only quite short, and now you will probably be very busy in the countryside. Here we recently had a small cloudburst with 1 ½ inches of rain in 20 minutes, consequently forcing us to replant the cotton. Potatoes cover the ground. Since my sons had a good chance to give up the Karmel Range, they want to lease some land that is closer.

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Summer has really not come here yet either. Some people are still heating their homes in the morning. For the grapes you left behind, I assume we will find buyers at Frey's. They are managing, but poorly, since he is not healthy and the doctor must be paid, and they are expecting an addition to the family. Thus you can know that your trouble with the grapes is not in vain. In the near future we too will be on the road. I really would like to go by car, but then I will not get daughter Helene along with me. Thank you for all the greetings from relatives and friends.. I return the same. Helene will also enclose something. Thus, may God and His grace, on which we all depend, be upon us all. With great love to you and your children. P. Penner.

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Wasco, May 5.1938.

Dear friends. We are glad that you arrived home safely. It is only a pity our Aunt became so ill again. Clara's card was received.. Thank you for writing to me on the way home. We received a letter from Jakob J. Wiebes, Nebraska, a few days ago, as well a one from Aunt Tjarth in Germany, which was also addressed to you. Now we do not know if Wiebe's sent it to you or not, because she writes that we can keep it, . If you have not read it, please let us know and we will send it to you. Aunt Anna always seems to be happy and jolly. I had already all kinds of thoughts in my mind, because no letter had come for such a long time. I am happy for her that she is so content and takes everything from God's hand. The fact that Bruno and his wife will probably not stay with her in Berlin is a bit of a surprize to her,

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and also difficult, but it is not certain, yet she seems to be counting on it.

The last rain and hail, which we had 7 days ago, was quite extraordinary - we had about 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ inches in 20 minutes. The paths and fields were full of water - many people need to replant the cotton, since seed cannot break through soil that gets too hard, especially where the water has stood so long. It is still 10 days, until it's off to Kansas by train. It takes 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ days to get there. I'm looking forward to it. A change is always good for both of us. Up to Canada we will probably not come; being on the go like that, is not for me. I have found that the case during our Germany trip.

I still want to crack some nuts and take them along for sister Linda and Hermann⁵², whose wedding is to take place on May 25.

Greeting, Helene Penner

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[June/Juli 1938]

Dear Friends. It is just a week now that we are back from our Kansas and Idaho trip. Your beautiful photograph came the next day. If you could have seen how the sandstorm damaged our house, you would understand why you did not hear from us sooner. Since I must do everything mainly along, I don't get much done.⁵³ Papa also help sweep a bit. The spiders have also been busy. Whenever I went through a door, or wanted to open a window, I found a web across it. I have already worked around quite a bit with the broom. Back to the photograph. It was taken at the time when I had everyone here for a visit. You all look very natural - Klara my Kus name. And, how are you, my dear aunt? Many asked about you when we were on our trip. We were glad that the weather stayed so nice and cool on our trip and it was so good to come home. I said to Papa, that this should be my last trip. We were gone a month. In the garden, everything grew a lot, even the weeds that we have already cleared away for the most part, chopped and sprayed. Now we begin canning cherries. I have already canned 14 quarts. Apriots come next. Grapes are haning heavy again as well;

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they will be ripe in about a month or more. We will harvest much more fruit from our garden than what we can use. We will give the brothers and sisters much of it. If you didn't live so far away, you could also get in on some, there is enough for all of us. In Kansas there is so to speak no fruit this year - too much frost. When we left Kansas and came to the Colorado mountains, we drove over a suspension bridge (1250 feet long), the highest in the world (1053 feet above the river). In the middle of the bridge we got off and looked down into the abyss, it was mostly dizzying.⁵⁴ On the mountainside there was a cable which went steeply down. We also took it for a ride. When we got to the bottom we board a train for Idaho. From there we went via San Francisco till be were back home. We took the Juer Ferry Juer

⁵² Hermann Oswald GRANDMA #1382171.

⁵³ „beschickt“ = from a Plattdeutsch expression meaning to achieve a lot.

⁵⁴ „es war meist zum schwindlig“

across the Bay and under a long bridge, the longest in the world, just over seven miles long. We stayed one night in Soutg Tramka. The next morning we went by bus on the long bridge to the Sante Te Depot, we saw the man-made island where the 1939 exhibition will be. They pumped the earth out of the bay. Ruth with her two young ones are in southern California at the moment, and will probably stay there for the summer because of her hay fever. Otto or Emil go there often, so we get the opportunity to go with them for a few days. Thank you very much for the beautiful photograph. Greetings, your friend Helene.

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Reedley California

Dear Everyone!

Sunday afternoon! Outside it's windy today for a change, but otherwise beautiful sunshine. We were glad to hear from you again and that Uncle Toews is better - We are also well. Everything is growing in the garden. I have already picked quite a lot of flowers, especially Wick. Sister Ella with her husband and youngest child went back to Africa to the mission field just before Christmas. Her two big girls, ages 6 and 10 years old, stayed in Saint Carolina in the mission home for missionary children. Each child has its own duties -- the little ones help with drying the dishes, the bigger ones, with cleaning, preparing vegetables for meals and so on.

Brother Emil and his wife have separated. They have agreed that they do not fit together. They have tried their best to avoid this step. Since they have a soon-to-be 3 year-old daughter, she will have it the hardest.

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She is currently with her mother. Emil wrote not ago that he has a young couple with a 6 year-old boy living with him. She is supposed to be a good cook and housekeeper, and he is the Judge for the little town 2 miles from their farm. It is a sad story. Neither he, nor they blame each other. Emil told her that if they separated it would be best. It seems to me that the matter depends on her, because Emil still gets along with anybody and together has taken this in prayer to God. She is supposed to have said to someone 2 weeks after the wedding that she married Emil not for love, but for his money and property. That says enough, doesn't it? I feel so sorry for the little one.

Mrs. Ruth is also very busy in her purchased house to make things right for tenants. She sends her greetings to you. With greetings, Helene Penner.

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Reedley, 19 March 1944.

To my dear friends, the Dyck family! Thank you very much for your beautiful and detailed report. Yes, we do not want to abandon our exchanges, even if it takes longer as we get older because our paces has

slowed down. We don't really consider ourselves as the old ones. In our family is all hands are on deck. No one can complain about lack of work; the shortage of workers is great and increasing. If what is planned is carried out, then the bread shortage will happen. The farmer must now already leave more of the land fallow. Very probably a bread shortage is in prospect for us. Then we will tighten our belts⁵⁵ for a change, so that we do not fall apart. Much more sensitive than the restriction of food by means of the various war ration books is the dwindling of unavoidably necessary items we need to be able to work the land. As a partial replacement for the ration books we now receive "Rd-Ponts". I enclose one of them. It seems that it is not yet possible to make it comprehensive enough to support trade and commerce. Not long ago when the call went out to the farmers to raise more pork, the warehouses were so full that some spoiled that could not be preserved in the freezers.

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So even though we didn't know where to put the surplus pork, at the same time we had days when there was no pork in the stores. There were completely meatless days where all the boxes and crates in the butcher's store were empty. Well, the whole arrangement is appropriate for people who cannot do without sufficient variety. If he wants pork, he can get only sheep meat and vice versa is also true. It happens that when you ask for something in the store, you are asked, "What is it?" For example, if one asks for plastic covers, he is quite surprised that one does not yet know that the article has disappeared from the market. Much of what one expects to be available is no longer there. Personally they say, "we ordered it" but when, or if they'll get it, they don't know! This description is only a small sample of the prevailing conditions. That's what it's like in this country. Complain? Oh no! I can't even imagine! Our children are all at their usual occupations. Adolf bought 40 A southwest of Reedley in January 1943 to add to his 20 A ton. His income totals what he paid for the farm, namely \$12000. They have 5 healthy children; the two oldest help very much in the work. Louise and Peter⁵⁶ bought 20 A also 8 miles from Reedley, have 4 growing children who are not much help yet, except at the table.

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They also have their livelihood on the farm, which is not planted with vines. Like Adolf, Anna and Heinrich⁵⁷ make do very much with their 8 children. The house is already somewhat tight for them. Heinrich is employed in the military airfield as an electrician and has given up his business in Wasco. Otto continues to farm his 80 acres and also Emil farms his 40 acre at Arvin, which is about 50 miles south of Wasco. Because of her hay fever, Ruth spends several months with the 2 boys in Emanites on the Ocean and Otto continues to stay at home. He should also take a week to be refreshed. Otto also manages my 80 acres. Emil has risen in economic terms extremely fast in the few years that he has been farming. In 1942 his income was so strong that he bought 80 acres there and set them up for irrigation. He also built his house at 7000, p-u—pe[?] and trees at 10 thousand. In 1943 he bought an additional 160 acres. He has leased these plus the 80 acres for potatoes and cotton. His income tax in 1942 was 16,000 and in 1943 it was quite significantly more, but don't know how high it was. Ella and Harold left

⁵⁵ Poljas...mal enger schnallen = literally, tighten our girdles, "Poljas" in Russian.

⁵⁶ Peter Kroeker, GRANDMA #120183.

⁵⁷ Heinrich Ifland, GRANDMA #1382173

for Africa in January and have, we hope, arrived there happily. We will probably receive news soon. They have tried very hard to get permission to take their youngest 3 year old daughter with them and their wish and many prayers have come true,

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so that they have been allowed to take her along. Now you are probably wonder "How is the old boy doing?" To this I must answer: "quite well!" Especially since mid-September 1943, when I bought a 2-story building including 3 lots (quite an implusive purchase). It has 8 rooms and 2 bathrooms, and is next to the high school. When I saw it and it was offered to me, I did not think twice, and took it. It was just the thing I needed, both inside and outside, but it was too expensive. That I am not yet an old man, you will probably notice when I tell you about some of the work I have done and am about 60% done⁵⁸. I nailed down all the shingles, and then tapped and rapped the whole roof to get all the dirt and dust out from under and between the shingles. Then I cleaned up the rest with a hand broom. Now I want to paint it with hot oil and the arbor is ready. The planned facility can remain on the roof. While working, I had chosen quite correctly: 2 - 1x6 boards 10 feet long nailed together in the form of a gutter. There were 4 nails at the bottom edge to prevent slipping. On each end of this bench I fastened rope, which was attached to a weight on the other side of the roof. At the top, the weight hangs on the other side. At the bottom I nailed the 10 foot width.

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Then I could get to the top with this seat, pulling the weight and seat up. As one side was finished, then I changed to the other side. After all, the rainy season is coming soon. I also still want to pain the whole house white.

We have had a very little amount of frost this year. It's only been white with frost, but no ice; 8 inches of rain.

Helene has also written and so I will write about two other irritants which give me great pleasure and satisfaction⁵⁹ when they pick and play with me without having to gasp for fresh air⁶⁰. What I don't all get to hear: if you fall, catch a cold, cover my face, have no taste.... and my shoes, which I guard all night. Whether I clean them and brush them off thoroughly, no matter where I place them, or where Elise moves them, sand trickles down, unseen. Then when I run my hand along the seam, I can feel the grain of sand again. Well, every creature has his little experiences and things to complain about.

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I will leave the \$75 for the school according to your wishes, which is good and pleasing to God. It is His work and whatever we may contribute, from what He has allotted us, is His. I should have written as

⁵⁸ „dass doch 60 % Fall habe alle Schindeln herunter genagelt“

⁵⁹ „beiden Krack Kehlern , deren es, wie es mir scheint, ein Hochgenuß und zur großen Befriedigung gereicht“

⁶⁰ „wenn sie immer wehrentweg, ohne frische Luft zu gaspen an mich herumpflücken und doktern können“

soon as I received your letter, but this will probably still come at the right time. Greetings and goodbye.
Peter Penner.

[47]

Feb. 18, 1945. Reedley, California.

Dear Friends! Yes, it is high time we wrote you and told you about our experiences. It was very interesting to hear from all of you. It is a pity that Walter is not well and that the little one is also suffering. We are all healthy in our family circle. Papa and I were in Wasco a few weeks ago for 5 days. Everybody is in good health there too. Brother Emil and his wife have been apart for a year. Their little girl is with her. She comes home every month from the south where she goes to college and takes the little one to nursery. Emil often goes to see her parents and meets them once a month. We hope she will realize that she is not doing the right thing by not staying with him. She also sees a doctor who tries to restore her health (I am sure she is not normal upstairs). We can

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only pray for her, that as a mother and wife she may see what her duty is to the child and husband. I don't think you would recognize our father if we visited you. He looks like Santa Claus with his white curly full beard. A little boy of 4 ½ years, just before Christmas got him to stop on the street and cried out: Santa Claus! Santa Claus!!! When father asked him his name, he just kept saying: S.C! S.C!! To get rid of him, father wanted to give him some candy, but his pockets happened to be empty. So he took him to the store and bought him some cookies, which he accepted, but Santa was much more important to him and he kept saying, S.C., S.C. The other pedestrians saw the pleasure in the little boy. Father came home quite amused when he told us what happened. His grandchildren also call him S.C. If I get a good picture of him, I'll send you one. We went to a Golden Wedding Sunday and tomorrow we are going to a Diamond Wedding. Both celebrated at our Mennonite church.

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March 5, continued! My accordion is still doing a good work, especially for the old men and women in the old people's home, which is diagonally across the street. Even the women in the building next door hear it, so I don't miss anyone. The accordion music cannot be contained within the 4 walls. Sometimes I sit on the porch in the evening when it is already dark and play, and the next day the neighbors at the other end of the block, tell me how they enjoyed it. They would like it

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if I would play at least once a week in the old folk's home, which I unfortunately did not promise them.

Your letter was very welcome, even Mrs. Ruth read it with interest. With my youngest sister Louise, a little daughter arrived on the 2nd of January, the 5th child. Now, she has 2 girls and 3 boys. All are chipper. Mrs. Ruth and I helped her out, she at the bedside, and I in the kitchen. The little one is very well-behaved, which is worth a lot. My sister Ella, and her husband and 3 year old daughter went back to

the mission field in Africa again. The two older girls, 8 -11 years old, stayed in U.S. at a mission home. Also in February they were to have another little one, if everything went according to the plan. We have to wait a long time to get news from them. With love, your friend Helene.

[51]

Reedley, March 5, 1945.

Dear Friends. Mark it!! It is time for me to write, or else. But, is it true that I did not answer the last letter? Don't think so. Except for Emil's wife, we are all beautifully healthy. Bernice is not only a mystery to us, but also for Emil. We know that she suffers from severe nerves. She apparently has to and wants to live all by herself. Helene has already written, probably all the good and bad about the family. Thus all that remains is the tail end for me. Having only a bit of health, is not good enough, therefore you should make your way to the fountain of youth (California). Did it not have such a good effect last time? Why should it not be just as effective the second time. The door is no longer closed. Also we are now 100 miles closer. In business terms, it's business as usual. Potatoes were planted in January and have sprouted. The later ones are also coming up. Some fruit trees are in full bloom. I still have employment at both apartment blocks and in the gardens next to the

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same. It would suit be very well now if you want to send me the money. I bought 160 acres from Emil at Cervin. They still have five 80 acres without these 160. Then, I have leased another another 160 acres ($\frac{1}{2}$ section). Otto has Emil's 40 acres next to his 80 acres, and is content with that. Poor David Froese, pity the family. Please send him \$25, and the rest to me. I hope I can help him more after the harvest. I will not forget the school either. However, I don't want to make any promises now. It may very well happen that there is great need in Germany again, where we will have to help. What I have now, I have never before had in my life -- major debts. It seems to me that there is no more peace. How good it is that we may confidently entrust the future to the Most High, who directs and determines the destinies of the nations. He will make everything right and good. The rulers are powerless against Him and their peace talk means nothing. Greetings and goodbye, Peter Penner

[54]

No! There must be no talk about interest, if there were, then you could just as well have borrowed else where. I would like to ask David to send me a receipt for the US\$25. I guess he will get a little over \$25, since the Canadian dollar is lower in value. Keeping receipts helps lower my income tax⁶¹. I hope you get another bountiful harvest. Prices have been good here the last few years for all farm products, and some, like wine and fruit even outrageously high. My son Adolph who

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⁶¹ "Einkommmentax" = income tax

bought 40 acres in 1943, had a grape crop that brought in \$10,000. This was the purchase price. It is very good that we have fixed prices on many things, or we else we would have endless inflation. Fixed prices: Potato lb 2.50 - 2.75, Alhalfa, in the 24 - 28 zone, Cotton, \$23 per lb. Also the rent on buildings cannot be increased to infinity. I wonder if you might not be able to send everything at once, since it was borrowed? If not, then it must be good in other ways.

[55]

Dear Dyck siblings! Much and often we think of you, and remember our wonderful stay with you. Yes, the beautiful hours that we were allowed to spend with you. It would be nice if you could visit us sometime. Much has happened in your family. We wish you God's blessing for the new relationships. In the world it looks so sad and thus the Christian home must provide the foundation. Too bad that Hans is not well. Did he ever write to Dr. George Stan White, 327 South Alvarado Street, Los Angeles, California? I have never seen heart sufferers improve so much and be cured as with Wethade. Also, Anna's husband, that's very difficult. He too should write to him, or dear Anna should. Now I am sending you a copy of the translated songs. Peter would probably have better use for them. Will he and his dear wife visit us after their return? Helene wanted these songs in the local language. For programs No. 1 we sang these 2 years ago. The others she considers as her favorite songs and plays them on her accordion. People have had different songs that have gone with them through their life. It is probably already quite quiet at your place. You have a longing for the children since they are so scattered. It is nice that Anna, Hans and Irma live so close. Best regards to all and I wish you the best. With sincere love, Elise Ruth.

[56]

Reedley. Aug. 5, 1946.

Dear brothers and sisters in the distant north! That I am very, very lazy in writing, and also don't create many words. You have experienced that enough. This time, however, there is a special reason that simply forces me to write. When there is no news, everything is just fine. Since we visited you, 11 years have passed and what a change in world events, from then to the now. Great events have happened, and we are facing even greater ones before the world (if at all) comes to rest. We are grateful to know: He has prepared his throne in heaven and his kingdom reigns over all. In our family we are all beautifully healthy. Harvest and prices are satisfactory.

[57]

I remember that you, dear Johannes, took my promise that we would let you know when we planned to visit you. We now have that announcement. Our plans are that around August 20, we want to make a trip via Oregon and Washington to British Columbia. On the return trip we want to pass through Nebraska to Kansas and Oklahoma and so on, till we're home again. If he is still living, we intend to visit D. Dyck⁶² in Weathland, Oregon and Gustav Froese⁶³ in Walla Walla. Our arrival at your place, as you know, cannot be determined yet. If no one else comes forward to join us, then Mrs. Elisabeth Ruth, with

⁶² Dietrich Dyck (1867-1943) (GRANDMA #400315).

⁶³ Gustav D. Froese (1880-1967) (GRANDMA #1254690)

whom we are staying, will come with us in addition to the two of us. We recently visited O. Toews' where everyone was also was chipper, and also at J. Neufelds. So goodbye for now!