

[W.F. See below in letter: Hohendorf, 18 July 1927]

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¹ Beloved children Johannes and Renate Dyck and you dear grandchildren. All of you, all of you in faraway America!

First of all, I wish that you will happily reach your destination and will find a new home, and in addition, I wish you God's peace in your new home and (His) assistance in your undertakings. Yes, the dear heavenly Father, who so faithfully stood by you and blessed you, I pray will not withdraw his faithful hand there in the new homeland, but will bless you again out of the abundance of his graces. Yes, beloved children, as I write these lines, you will hopefully already be far away in America and many, many thousand "versts" have separated us from each other by rail and steamboat. Yes, children, hard times for an old man. When the train left Saratov and I and our daughter Renate still were holding each other's hands through the window for the last time in this life and then got pulled apart, I cannot describe how I felt, but our dear heavenly Father helps hourly and daily and has again ruled over me with His hand of grace. To Him be praise and thanks. The last sign from our dear Dyck children were the white handkerchiefs waving from the train as it departed from Saratov. Only a few moments before the train turned a corner and gone, gone were all signs of life forever, we remained standing. They are gone, we were told, oh difficult hours. We stood still for a while, then all of us who had stayed behind walked slowly through the Wacksaal² to the tramwai³. There was not much talk, I think everyone had to deal with his emotions, one more, the other less. I for my part was quite dejected (broken), always with the thought, that this was the last time we would ever see all you loved ones, and that really hurts, anyway, as I have such a woman's heart. We drove

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to the center of town, bought some little things, because the stores are closed so early, when you could still buy many things in that time. Were not finished shopping, (but) had to abandon everything and go by streetcar to the Volga, to Cossack city. The next (other) day Peter, Tine and Helene went again to Saratov to buy the most necessary things. Peter something for the Selbstbinder⁴ and the two daughters some small things. I and Marie stayed in Cossack City, sold the eggs and also bought several odds and ends. At 5 o'clock in the evening, we left for home, drove via Fresenheim, dropped off Tine and at 1:30 a.m. at night, we were home. Dear Renate, then I thought of your little Renate, how on the train she said, "Mama, I want to go home" and you said, "me too". That gave me a stab in my heart that I couldn't get rid of for a long time. Even now I am tormented by the thought of that innocent little girl, who spoke such truth in her innocence. The next day we went to get the things we had bought from you. Peter brought your locker to Helene and the chest of drawers and sewing machine to us, placing them in our large living room. The dresser is where Helene's used to stand. With the mirror on top it is very pretty, but as I have already said, it would have been easier for me, had it not been bought. When I go into the big room, I am reminded every time of you, dear Renate, and it hurts. It still belongs to Dycks and not to us. When we came home, there was some trouble. The boys were supposed to diligently mow schitnak⁵, but they had broken something on the machine and had accomplished very little. We had to borrow from Hiebert, who lends out his machine, and pay 1 ruble per desjatine in order to finish. We got the Schitnak and hay stalks home dry, also the rye, because we had started mowing on the 5th of July with the Selbstbinder (hay baler)

¹ Willi Frese. This is the first letter after the family Dyck emigrated, written by Peter Mathies (1851-1934) (GRANDMA #109037) on 18 Juli 1927 to the family of his daughter Renate Mathies (1885-1963) (GRANDMA #168775) and her husband Johannes Dyck (1885-1948) (GRANDMA #168774)

² Willi Frese. Wacksal= Russian for train station

³ Willi Frese. Tramwai=Russian for streetcar

⁴ Ruth Scott. Selbstbinder = possibly a piece for the hay baler

⁵ Ruth Scott. Schitnak = presumably a s

and we had had hot days and nice weather. On July 9, we had finished mowing rye, 16 desjatines have made 18 large 10-pound bales of Spagat⁶. It is a lot of piles, but there will be no grain after that. The following 3 days (storms), when you were still here, have caused great damage. Knocked (filled?) to the roof, we have already over 500 bundles, à bundle costs 3 kopecks for labor, but

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everything lies still, only a few individuals have their rye out (of the fields?). Julius Wiens⁷, Köppenthal has threshed 98 pud, à desjatine. Penners, Fresenheim have it out, I think Heinrich spoke of 50 pud, he said he had [threshed] too early, lots [grain] remained in the straw. I asked Johannes Neufeld, stubble rye 44 pud, fallow maybe 60, not all threshed yet. And your friend Johannes Bergmann⁸ has the machine standing at the threshing floor⁹, but nothing is threshed, is like a miracle, workmen already there and nothing (but) rain after rain. From me slow is not a miracle when the rye is still growing in the country on the land, [the rye] had in my opinion, still stood too short a time, this doesn't produce a good crop. In general, this year is fine in the grain, but such surprises make you wonder, (they) are still quite full of life (still green?). I, on the other hand, am already tired of life and everything depends on me.

Would like to have had the fallow around for the second time. Diligently worked with 4 teams a day, but (could) not quite finish, because of the rain, [the soil](seemed) with no firm bottom. The brothers Fieguth¹⁰ Fresenheim, had left their hay bailer standing on the winter wheat, drove there after the rain, got stuck with the wagon on the field. Had to take the wagon apart, move it out of the way to leave again. Now (they) mow with the hay bailer? Our winter wheat is also still standing, we sowed albedum¹¹ quite early, it's supposed to already be left out. It looks quite sad for now, but our old God is still alive and he [has] helped until here, will also help further.

To see the mown wheat from the road is quite timely. Your farm already looks different, long sheds gone, Ambar (barn) gone, looks so bare. On July 14 I went with the children Heinrich¹² and Tine¹³ Isaak to Johannes Isaac¹⁴ Orloff, to the auction. That day rained and rained. At Isaac's, the Krillitz¹⁵ and the house were so full of mud that I saw very little of it. I said at home, Mrs. Isaac has a good piece of work trying to clean by Sunday, for the farewell party. In places, I believe you would have first use a spade, unheard of.

When driving home in the evening, there was a lot of mud, but from Jakob Wiebs' Warenwirtschaft (store) to behind Franz Dyck, pretty much to the Lafki¹⁶, I can't remember ever having seen anything like it. Across the road no earth visible, in places the footbridge barely visible, water everywhere. In some places the Krogolwagen¹⁷ wanted to go into the water to the hub. With a small barge, like we had in Prussia. Schißlomne would have driven it well. I calculate in the shallowest places 1 foot of water.

⁶ Willi Risto.

[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A8%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%B0%D1%82_\(%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%8C\)](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A8%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%B0%D1%82_(%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%8C))

⁷ Alex Wiens. Julius Wiens (1889-1939) (GRANDMA #1254898)

⁸ Alex Wiens. Johannes Bergmann (1887-1938) (GRANDMA #1254544)

⁹ Willi Risto. Tenne=Dreschplatz =. A Threshing Place

¹⁰ Willi Frese. Gustav Fieguth (1885-?) (GRANDMA #19143), Gerhard Fieguth (1886-?) (GRANDMA #19144)

¹¹ Willi Risto. Albedum= most likely a kind of wheat

¹² Willi Frese. Heinrich Isaak (1877-1934) (GRANDMA #1196412)

¹³ Willi Frese. Katharina Mathies (1883-1953) (GRANDMA #1196403)

¹⁴ Alex Wiens. Johannes Isaac (1889-1971) (GRANDMA #173328)

¹⁵ Willi Frese. Krillitz= крыльцо, Aufgang mit Vorbau = staircase with porch

¹⁶ Willi Risto. Lafki=Laden, Geschäft = store, business

¹⁷ Alex Wiens. This probably references a „Karriolwagen“. I have heard that this type was used Am Trakt:

<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karriol>

I have never yet experienced this before in Russia, not even in the spring. Now you can imagine what it looks like, and every day some more, the field becomes almost bottomless.

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At Johannes Isaac, the auction still went quite well, the prospects are not of the best. Horses, of course, cheaper than yours, but the eye also wants something. July 16 I was at Cornelius Fröse¹⁸ Lysanderhöh, at the auction, also went pretty well, except Dering hay baler still in good condition (could) be seen, 150 rubles, is cheap. Heinrich Isaac¹⁹ bought 2 pretty cattle, for 150 rubles together, pretty. I lacked the money otherwise (would have) for that price, but as the saying goes "through poverty there is damage" and so it is with me.

Young August Regier was also at the auction, drives home, unloads the purchased things, wants to push the car over [to the side]. The old man wants to help, falls down and is dead as a doornail. Such is human life: a vapor (puff of air), as the psalmist says. On June 30, I, Mama²⁰, Peter²¹ and Marie²² were at Gerhard Fieguth's²³, first for the wedding ceremony in the church in Orloff and then in his home for the wedding. When I received the letter [with the invitation to the wedding], Peter sent (an answer) and invited the bride and groom, who visited our place on June 27. They came late, but we managed to have a good evening together. At the wedding nothing was missing, everything was in abundance. We arrived home after 12 o'clock. Because the young were along, the old must already do as well²⁴. Martin Ekkert²⁵ with his wife²⁶, also visited us last week, (he) is also already 70 years old. His wife is quite American, said to him: just stay where you are, a worn out guy, if you work, (you) would sweat a lot.

David Wall²⁷ Fresenheim died and buried, was, I think, 62 years old, quite worn out.

Yesterday, Sunday, July 17 was the farewell party of the dear brothers and sisters who are following you, Cornelius Fröse, Johannes Isaac, Gustav Fröse²⁸, at 12 o'clock in the afternoon in the church at Orloff.

I, Mama, Marie and Helene had also gone there. First Jacob Penner²⁹ Ostenfeld gave the sermon on the text about Tobias 5 v 23 So go! God be with you on the way and his angel guide you. A beautiful celebration, afterwards Johannes Penner³⁰ Medemthal, second speaker, at the end the song 738, which was sung with you. What do you do that you also cry (when) singing together. It seems to me as if I should just meet you there, but no. One more, the 29 June at 1:30 in the afternoon it whistled in my ears as if I were on the steamboat, said to mine, now Dycks go to sea. Renate is thinking so strongly of me, (I) wrote it down right away. It was remarkable, never (experienced) this before, asking (you) for information? Will have to close for this time, because I, our Helene write together in this letter, because there would still be enough material, with the rainy weather and mud. Your letter from Regier, dated 29 June, received 5 July to the delight of us all. Dear Renate, warmest greetings from Mama, Peter, Marie to you loved ones all, which I join. Remain your father, grandfather Peter Mathies. Hohendorf, July 18, 1927

¹⁸ Alex Wiens. Kornelius Fröse (1868-1929) (GRANDMA #454720)

¹⁹ Willi Frese. Heinrich Isaak (1877-1934) (GRANDMA #1196412)

²⁰ Willi Frese. Anna Wall (1864-1929) (GRANDMA #109036)

²¹ Willi Frese. Peter Mathies (1902-1943) (GRANDMA #1196411)

²² Willi Frese. Maria Mathies (1909-1993) (GRANDMA #1196425)

²³ Alex Wiens. Gerhard Fieguth (1867-1930) (GRANDMA #19142). Wedding with Anna Franzen #19611

²⁴ Willi Risto. müssen die Alte schon guttun=auch so lange bleiben = the old folk have to stay that long

²⁵ Willi Frese. Martin Ekkert (1856-1936) (GRANDMA #187114)

²⁶ Willi Frese. Presumably his second wife. The first had died according to GRANDMA 1902

²⁷ Alex Wiens. David Wall (1865-1927) Nr. 74 under: <https://amtrakt.de/bewohner-von-fresenheim-1921-22/>

²⁸ Alex Wiens. Gustav Fröse (1896-1970) (GRANDMA #461873)

²⁹ Alex Wiens. Jakob Penner (1890_????) Nr. 137 under: <https://amtrakt.de/bewohner-von-ostenfeld-1921/>

³⁰ Alex Wiens. Johannes Penner (1892-1976) (GRANDMA #1254919)

³¹Accept this imperfect letter with love, it is from my heart and well meant. Farewell. Farewell.

³² In Neu Warenburg the hail has almost totally destroyed the grain. Peter has seen it, says there is almost nothing left.

³³In Brunnenthal it has hailed so much, a child was killed, also rain, the costly dam broke through.

³⁴For all the rain we can thank God that he spared us from such hail.

³¹ Willi Frese. Briefergänzung seitlich, Seite 1

³² Willi Frese. Briefergänzung seitlich, Seite 2 links

³³ Willi Frese. Briefergänzung seitlich, Seite 3

³⁴ Willi Frese. Briefergänzung seitlich, Seite 4