

**A1025**

**Meissner Family Papers, 1862-1953, no date**

1 box

Processed by Dennis Northcott, June 2016

Translations by Sven Eliasson

**REPOSITORY**

Missouri History Museum Archives

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**DONOR INFORMATION**

The papers were donated to the Missouri Historical Society by Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Merkle in November 1967.

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Gustave Edward Meissner was born March 16, 1843, in Muehlhausen, Germany, and came to the United States with his parents (Carl August Meissner and Amelia Roebing Meissner) in 1851, settling on Staten Island, New York. He married Alvina Niemeyer of Staten Island in 1867, and soon thereafter they moved to Waterloo, Iowa. In 1870 he took a position with Isidor Bush & Son, wine growers, in St. Louis. Two years later he became a partner in the firm, now known as Bush & Son & Meissner. In the 1870s, the firm sent vine cuttings to France to help that country reestablish their vineyards, which had been ravaged by attacks of phylloxera. Gustave Meissner became a well-known horticulturist and viticulturist. He died January 2, 1898, at his home in Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri. His wife, Mrs. Alvina Meissner died March 22, 1934, in Jefferson County.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection consists primarily of family correspondence to Gustave Meissner and his wife, Alvina Meissner. Principal correspondents include Gustave's brother Wilhelm Meissner and Wilhelm's wife, Elfriede Meissner; Gustave's brother Fritz Meissner; and Gustave's business partner Isidor Bush and Isidor's wife, Teresa Bush. Most of the correspondence is in German. English translations of these letters appear at the bottom of this finding aid.

**Folder 1**

1862 May 27

Letter signed G.E. Meissner, Pittsburgh, Pa., to B.L. Ryder, West Franklin Nurseries. Requests a job at Ryder's nursery, which was recommended to him by Mr. F.A. Staunton.

**Folder 2**

1862 July 18

Letter signed your faithful mother, Staten Il. [Staten Island], to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 3**

1867 Aug 10

Letter signed Wilhelm to bride-to-be [Alwine]. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 4**

1868 Feb 10

Letter signed Efride to little bride [Alwine]. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 5**

1868 Aug 13

Letter signed your faithful husband to wife. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 6**

1868 Aug 19

Letter signed Gustav, steamboat Minnesota, Mississippi River, to my dear wife. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 7**

1868 Aug 22

Letter signed your faithful husband (on stationery of Barnum's Hotel, St. Louis) to wife. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 8**

1868 Dec 29

Letter signed Emilie, St. Georg [near Hamburg], to Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 9**

1868 Dec 29

Letter signed Ottilia, Washington, to Gustav and Alwina. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 10**

1869 Jan 6

Letter signed Wilh., Black Hawk, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 11**

1869 Feb 8

Letter signed E.M. [Elfriede Meissner], Black Hawk, to Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 12**

1869 Mar 6

Letter signed Isidor Bush, Sr. (on stationery of Bluffton Wine Company of Central Missouri, St. Louis), to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Richmond P.O., Staten Island, N.Y. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 13**

1869 Mar 12

Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to brother Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 14**

1869 Apr 6

Letter signed Isidor Bush, St. Louis, to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Richmond, S.I. [Staten Island], N.Y. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 15**

1869 Apr 6

Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 16**

1869 May 3

Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 17**

1869 May 9

Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 18**

1869 May 14

Letter signed Elfriede to Alwine, Blackhawk. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 19**

1869 July 10

Letter signed Fritz, New York, to brother Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 20**

1869 July 31

Letter signed Isidor Bush (on stationery of Isidor Bush & Son, proprietors, Bushberg Vineyards and Orchards, Bushberg, Mo.) to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 21**

1870 May 23

Letter signed Julius and Lizzie, Pittsburg, to Alwine. Congratulates Alwine and her husband, Gustav, on the birth of their daughter. Lizzie describes her own young child, Julia.

**Folder 22**

1870 Sept 21

Letter signed Fritz, N.Y., to brother Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 23**

1870 Nov 16

Letter signed Carl, Hamburg (on stationery of Chas. F.L. Meissner, Hamburg), to brother Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 24**

1870 Dec 31

Letter signed Isidor Bush & Son, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Mo., to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 25**

[1871?]

Letter signed Louise Meissner to Aunt Wiene. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 26**

1871 Jan 16

Unsigned letter (on stationery of Isidor Bush & Co., St. Louis) to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 27**

1871 Feb 10

Letter signed Isidor Bush & Son (on stationery of Isidor Bush & Son, proprietors, Bushberg Vineyards and Orchards, St. Louis, Mo.), to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 28**

1871 Mar 9

Letter signed Fritz, Richmondhill, to brother Gustav Meissner, care of Isidor Bush & Son, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Mo. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 29**

1871 Mar 22

Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustave and Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 30**

1871 Apr 16

Letter signed Fritz, Richmondhill, to brother Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 31**

1871 May 3

Letter signed Wilhelm, Black Hawk, to Gustav and Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 32**

1871 May 21

Letter signed Julius Meissner, Pittsburgh, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 33**

[circa 1871 June 18]

Letter signed Elfriede to Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 34**

1871 June 22

Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to Gustav and Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 35**

1871 June 26

Letter signed Fritz, Richmondhill, to brother Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 36**

1871 Aug 6

Letter signed Julius, Joliet, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 37**

1871 Aug 22

Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to brother Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 38**

1871 Sept 15

Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to brother Gustav and Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 39**

1871 Sept 30

Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 40**

1871 Sept 30

Letter signed Wm. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa, to Isidor Bush & Co., St. Louis, Mo.

**Folder 41**

1871 Oct 9

Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 42**

1871 Oct 21

Letter signed Elfriede, Black Hawk, to Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 43**

[1871 or 1872] Dec 7 Letter signed Teresa [Bush], St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 44**

1871 Dec 10 Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to Gustav and Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 45**

1871 Dec 21 Letter signed Fritz, Newark, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 46**

1871 Dec 28 Letter signed Julius, Pittsburgh, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 47**

1872 Jan 4 Letter signed "W," Blackhawk, to Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 48**

circa 1872 Jan 23 Letter signed Elfriede to Alwine. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 49**

[1872] Jan 29 Letter signed Teresa Bush, St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner. Includes note signed Isidor [Bush]. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 50**

1872 Feb 2 Letter signed Wilhelm to Gustav and Alwine. Letter is written on letterhead of Central House, J.J. Sanford, proprietor, Waterloo, Iowa. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 51**

1872 Feb 25 Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 52**

1872 Feb 27 Letter signed J.H. Meissner, Barnums Hotel, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 53**

[1872?] Feb 29 Letter signed Teresa Bush, St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 54**  
1872 Mar 16

Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 55**  
1876 Sept 6

Letter signed Isidor Bush to Meissner. Letter is written on letterhead of Bushberg Grape Nurseries, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Mo. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 56**  
1880 Dec 26

Reproduction of letter of Friedrich Hecker, Summerfield, Illinois, to Adolf Blankenhorn, Karlsruhe. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 57**  
1885 Oct 21

Letter signed Mama, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri, to Emma. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 58**  
1886 Apr 12

Letter signed Papa to Emma. Letter is written on letterhead of Bushberg Grape Nurseries, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 59**  
1892 Mar 19

Letter signed Papa to Emmchen. Letter is written on letterhead of Bushberg Grape Nurseries, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri. (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 60**  
1893 Feb 16

Handwritten lyrics to song celebrating the silver wedding anniversary of Gustav and Alwine Meissner. Document is written on letterhead of Bushberg Grape Nurseries, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri. (Document in German with translation.)

**Folder 61**  
1894 Aug 15

Letter signed W.S. Merkle, 7026 Michigan Ave., St. Louis, to Emma. Discusses plans for outing near Bushberg.

**Folder 62**  
1897 Dec 3

Letter signed Isidor Bush, 1311 South 13<sup>th</sup> St., to "My dear good friend Meissner." Wishes Meissner improved health, and mentions that he may visit him soon in Bushberg.

**Folder 63**

1901 Aug 29

Printed lyrics, "Leid und Freud des Herrn Gustav Wilckens"  
[Regret and Comfort for Mr. Gustave Wilckens] (in German with  
English translation).

1901 Aug 29

Printed lyrics, "Tafel-Lied zur Hochzeits-Feier des Fraulein  
Daisy Meissner mit Herrn Gustav Wilckens" [Invitation-Song for  
the Wedding Celebration of Miss Daisy Meissner to Mr. Gustav  
Wilckens] (in German with English translation).

**Folder 64**

1902 Oct 2

Printed letter of G.E. Meissner Nursery Co., growers of fruit  
trees and grape vines, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Mo., to Eagle  
Generator Co. Letter includes a photograph of the residence of  
G.E. Meissner, Bushberg. "Enclosed find a photo of our house  
lighted by Acetylene Gas generated by your 'Eagle' Generator. .  
. . the 'Eagle' Generator placed in our home is giving entire  
satisfaction in every way. . . ."

**Folder 65**

1952 Nov 28

Conservation citation of the St. Louis Audubon Society to Miss  
Amelia Meissner in recognition of her pioneering leadership in  
the development of the Educational Museum of the St. Louis  
Public Schools.

**Folder 66**

[no year] Feb 13

Letter signed G.E. Meissner, Ravenswood, L.I. [Long Island?],  
to Freeman & Bro. Regarding the terms of his employment at the  
nursery. Mentions Mr. F.A. Freeman.

**Folder 67**

[no year] Mar 14

Letter signed Teresa Bush, St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner. (Letter in  
German with translation.)

**Folder 68**

[no year] Dec 22

Letter signed Terese Bush, St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner. (Letter in  
German with translation.)

**Folder 69**

[no date] Long Friday

Letter fragment in Elfriede's handwriting to Alwine. (Letter in  
German with translation.)

**Folder 70**

no date

Letter signed Alwine and family to Raphael and Minnie Bush.  
(Letter in German with translation.)



**Folder 71**

no date

Letter signed Gustave, Erie R.R. and Buffalo, to "Mr dear, faithful treasure." (Letter in German with translation.)

**Folder 72**

no date

Fragment of letter signed B.L. Ryder to unknown recipient. Mentions that he can meet him at Mt. Union, and mentions the train fare from Pittsburgh to Mt. Union.

**Folder 73**

no date

Reminiscences signed "A.M." regarding attending Friedrich Froebel's kindergarten. (5 pages)

**Folder 74**

no date

Three pages of notes containing treatments for dysentery, hives, rheumatism, and other ailments. Two of the pages are written on baggage report forms of the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad, dated 186-. (in English and German)

**Folder 75**

1892 Apr 12

Reproduction of letter of J. Leenhardt-Pomier, Montpellier, to "Cher Monsieur" regarding the death of G.E. Meissner. Published in *La Vigne Americaine et la Viticulture en Europe*. (in French)

[1952?]

Reproduction of newspaper article titled "Retired Jefferson County Teacher Honored for Work in Education," regarding Miss Amelia Meissner receiving the St. Louis Audubon Society's annual award for distinguished work in conservation.

1952 Oct 17

Reproduction of *Daily News-Democrat* (Festus, Mo.) article titled "Reporter Visits Descendant of One of America's Great Bridge Builders," regarding a visit to the home of Mrs. Amanda Obermiller. Discusses Mrs. Obermiller's great uncle John A. Roebling, the famous bridge builder; mentions Mrs. Obermiller's parents, Gustav E. Meissner and Alvina Niemeyer Meissner; and discusses Mrs. Obermiller's antique business. Article includes a photograph of Mrs. Obermiller's home.

1952 Nov 24

Reproduction of *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* newspaper article regarding the St. Louis Audubon Society bestowing the conservation honor of the year award on Miss Amelia Meissner.

1953 May 14

Reproduction of [*Press-Times?*] newspaper article titled "Meissner Family of Pevely and Kimmswick Man Among 517 Lamplighters Who Help Keep River Safe." Page also includes(1)

reproduction of undated newspaper article regarding the funeral services for Mrs. Alvina Meissner and (2) reproduction of newspaper clipping, circa 1893, regarding the business of Bush, Son & Meissner.

Three envelopes address to Gustave E. Meissner.

## Letter Translations

**1862 July 18 Letter signed your faithful mother, Staten Il. [Staten Island], to Gustav.**

Staten Island July 18, 1862

My good and dear Gustav,

Against my will, there was a longer than usual pause this time. I have a need to correspond with you often so that the exchange of thoughts between us is not interrupted and so that nothing comes between our hearts, my dear child, something which would make me most unhappy!

If you feel the need to correspond privately, send your letters to Richmond where Ottilia is accustomed to forwarding letters from Ernst to me.

These lines will probably reach you in London as your last letter indicates; I hope that you will finally find satisfaction there. I am afraid that it is your problem when you complain all the time and do not feel well. Pay attention to the fact that you are in your learning period which under any set of circumstances is a trial – nevertheless everyone must go through it.

Be attentive to all and everything especially the details because in your business much depends thereon. I am concerned that you through the changes have lost sight of the learning. What did you do in Kenos? You never commented on that. What I was afraid of a couple of months ago has come to pass. Our wine is poor again and dissipated and the harvest is only one half to one third. The leaves are partially eaten and probably from insects and small moths. Half of the grapes have brown spots and soon fall off. In addition do we see rot and mildew. I was quite depressed when walking through this morning after a break of 9 days.

We have had a lot of fog and moist, warm weather and that may well be the cause but we are quite convinced that this is not a location for vineyards.

It is quite probable as Conrad supposes that the many stones at the overhang harbour insects, which cannot be eradicated. Rot and mildew are the result of the foggy weather and the eaten flowers and brown spots come solely from the insects. Down in the garden where I live the leaves are pretty and the grapes free of spots and quite large already. I was just down there to report accurately to you and there were only traces of mildew. On the mountain up here where it is not attacked, the wine is now succulent and nice but down there all is gone. Karl has a pretty garden around his house with wine and that is all just fine. The same at the Hudson. These observations discourage us greatly and Fritz has already proposed that we eventually plant small trees so that we get something out of the land. Nothing of these will happen before you get here; I am not getting into anything like this, as Fritz well understands. Once more, I entreat you, dear Gustav: keep your eye on one profession so that you can stand on your own two feet when you get here in 1864. I want for nothing but peace and enjoy as you the idea that this separation will be over. Please speak when you have a chance with the experts about our wine bushes. You know

the location well enough. You talked in an earlier letter about cultivation. I must tell you in all honesty that I think it would not be wise at this time both because it will distract you from your studying and 2) were several lots to be planted where it later turned out to be unsuitable then it is better you be here and take a good look yourself.

Fritz is preoccupied with his business; not that it goes very well, that period is over with since a couple of months, but the political climate and the high prices of gold etc. keeps his mood in such a state of agitation that Fritz ignores the minor tasks and labors of the year and does not even attend to his garden; he likes the old gardener, Allen, very well. I got hay fever three weeks ago and I realized painfully that I am really alone with my work and do not have anyone to share advice with. Then I thought about the year before when you were at my side and how good that felt. I followed the example of others, when they started I cut the meadows below right and then the meadow at the edge and it came out all right. I am not satisfied with the outcome because after the wet year the yield was not good so I left the ground for potatoes and now it is standing as beautiful as ever before; Heinrich will pre-mow the large lattice meadow and cut it all down on Monday, something he will easily finish. Julius has poured the missing part in his shop and I get out of the machine repairs without cost. Ash and guano have been very good for these fields and I hope to get a good harvest. So then, I now only have the rear meadow under the overhang to mow. The small trees have been cut back for the second time three weeks ago by gardener Allen and stand very pretty. I think that perhaps one quarter will fail. Vegetables and red currant are abundant. I never have had as much salad, as pretty and as good as now with heads large enough to bowl with; we "pig" out on them daily, and the same goes for asparagus which is excellent; today I had 6 big cucumbers, my plate is full. I think each time of you who so much liked good vegetables. If Ottilia had not been keeping me company I would have had a hard time enjoying it so much. It would please me very much if you could come and see me now. Konrad keeps the garden in good order; the stables and all outer buildings have gotten a new yellow coat and look clean and friendly (welcoming); the street windows have been painted white and to do the same to the passages over my farmyard is another goal. I have had made a small passage way near the fence and under the hickory trees with one door toward the street and another facing the doors by the road and that can be used by passers-by. Small but necessary improvement, which make the whole look better. I take up your time with these details, but I know that you just as well would have left them alone, my dear Gustav! Now you are going to be treated to the family. We went to Trenton Tuesday to celebrate Bauers wedding on Wednesday the 16. Fritz with his whole family and Hermann Niemann who has been here for 6 weeks accompanied me and on the train were the two Methfessels. Julius came on Wednesday, Karl and Helena whom we were expecting for the ceremony did not come unfortunately because Karl had taken ill with a severe cough following the terrible heat wave worse than I can ever remember one. Ottilia also preferred to stay home with little August.

One cannot deny that there is considerable ill will in the family in Richmond, which has not been improved by the arrival of Methfessels. It was a chilly party—nowhere as pleasant and happy as in our place. Who was not there did not miss anything.

Methfessel is here on the island near Karl and plans to open a school in Soptli[?] Both are happy in their Boffiby[?]

Hermann moves to Hamburg next week; his departure makes us sad, he is a nice person.

I must finish now as much as enjoy gabbing with you and much to tell, here is some more.

Elfriedes Dad died three months ago and she is very depressed, write to her. It is likely that her mother and sister are coming over. Just now Fritz tells me softly that his new varieties and the Clintons have rot and pest; my peaches are all falling off just the same and there are only a few peaches on the ones in the garden. I am afraid that Richmond is not the place for fruit; the new trees may or not bear fruit. This is beyond calculation. I bring you a letter from Helena that I have had for 6 weeks. I will write her as agreed to her birthday. Warmest greetings from Ottilia who has a time with her dizzying kids. With love, greetings and kisses, your faithful Mother.

**1867 Aug 10 Letter signed Wilhelm to bride-to-be [Alwine].**

Sunday, August 10, 1867

My dearest, warmhearted little bride-to-be

What indescribable joy did we have from the information that you, dear Alwine, have become engaged to good, old Gustav. I had often thought about it and wished for it. Please take our best wishes for happiness, you lovely couple. May God keep your young happiness fresh and untroubled. What heavenly hours you now live, hours that keep with man all life long and in later years warm the heart in their sunshine. Oh, how I wish I could see you again and enjoy your happiness. You might think that we did not take part in the general joy that your engagement caused in the family since we have not yet written but, no, you would not think that of us because you know how much we love you. Circumstances have kept us from it. We have probably very little time left open. Out we go around 4 to 430 am and in the evening it is always late before everything gets taken care of. Thank God we are through with the harvest soon so then we will have some peace. I have not had any maid these last two weeks – now I have a German maid who does not understand very much and is very slow. Today, Sunday, the foreigners are gone but instead we have visitors, A. Methfessel with two gentlemen. So goes it the entire time – to cook and clean for 10 adults and 5 children keeps us busy.

Thursday August 15. This morning I finally have a moment of time to finish this letter because my sole is heavy that I have not written. I have just come back from a good horseback ride in which I wanted to bring back a newly purchased cow and I had to ride miles to catch her. I have now overcome the fear of being thrown from the horse and take great pleasure in galloping over the beautiful prairie where many beautiful flowers are under me and little birds and [unclear] sing to me. Yes, little Alwina, I am sure it is nice by you in St. I. but it is also great here on the free, green open prairie. It remains true that wherever one is happy, is ones home. I wish I could have you here with us, you dear, true soul, wouldn't we have a great time together? These are wishes with no hope of satisfaction.

Have you already set the time for your wedding? I would like to know it. Please write back soon, do not be mad at us, the will was there but the execution lagged behind. The children send aunt Wine many many greeting and also to dear Uncle Gustav; they remember you well.

And how goes it with the good Bertha? Is she still with you and regards the rest of us as her people, the children would like to go on the mountain which is what they call it when Ernst rode with little Carl and drove the sheep which was anything but boring. The children are in school now, that is, the oldest ones and they are quite diligent.

I have really described the whole outline and barely so but now I must really end although I could keep entertaining you forever but by now I wonder how you have taken to my delayed writing. Live well, dear heart, steal a hearty kiss from your treasure and get one back from him and be grateful for your chance to true happiness. Your Evg(y?)

[From Wilhelm:] My dear Elfriede has warned me decidedly not to spend time on excuses – but rather give you my heartiest congratulations. St. Louis bless you two dear good people and may heaven maintain your young love forever – also that you will be able to live with suffering that will and must come. I hope that you will not let us suffer too much for our silence – and soon let us hear something good. With deepest love your (soon our) Wilhelm

**1868 Feb 10 Letter signed Efride to little bride [Alwine].**

Black Hawk 2/10 1868

Dear, sweet little bride!

It has been a while since you heard from me, my dear little Alwina but I have consoled me with the thought that the blessed time you now are living in, this the most tender and beautiful of times in life that is given to us, the wedding time, has kept you from missing me, my heart. But not on next Sunday, the day which is your most beautiful day of honor when our good wishes will be with you not in body but the poor letters can barely transmit that I am with you with all my soul. You, dear bride that in the short time we have spent together you have become as dear to me as a sister and I share your happiness with all my heart. I would so very much like to be with you at your wedding but "the entrance is narrow and the world so wide."

So take my best and warmest wishes for happiness, you dear couple. May you have lot of happiness and success and may the warm sunshine of love banish all shadows and even late in life warm your hearts. Poor Alwina you are also far away from your mother who would have loved to congratulate you personally. However, Gustav is worth more than all of that! Love is all-powerful and the heart that receives it is torn from all it previously has known and does not miss it and only wants to be in the sunshine of love. You have after all so many loving hearts around you down in New York who want nothing more than making your celebrations as good as possible. However much your dear mother feels happiness now let God grant that she will be well enough to enjoy the happy day with you. We would have been so happy if you could have come to live near us. That would have satisfied our old dream to have somebody we love near by. However, you have all your loved ones close in N.Y. and would rather stay there. But, dear Alwina, if fate should force you to move be not afraid of life on the prairie; it is so free and wonderful that even with all the work and effort one feels as healthy and independent as a king. I love our beautiful prairie and it would be very hard for me to leave it. Should you decide to come you will find open arms and hearts and as much open air, grass and animals as you could want. Ernst and Louise remember you well and send regards; so also Berthe and Tohny. You should see little Willy, he is such a little bundle of joy; he repeats everything, is always happy and funny and at the same time sweet and interesting. He sings, dances, and plays with the other children all of whom love him. Thank God, they are five lovable children that give us much joy.

Remember us on your big Day; we will celebrate it here and I will pray to God for you much beloved ones.

With warmest love, your [sister?] Efride

**[In the left-hand margin]**

Dear Alwina, please give Gustav a pretty congratulation kiss from me and make him give you one back – Send Berthe my love [six words at the end cannot be read]



**1868 Aug 13 Letter signed your faithful husband to wife.**

Waterloo, Iowa  
August 13<sup>th</sup> 68  
5 AM

Dear little wife, love of my heart

I am almost at the end of my travels. Another 16 miles and we will be at the end and when I next step on a train, it will be to rejoin you.

I arrived here safe and sound an hour ago after a boring over night trip from Dubuque. I had thought I could get a wagon quickly, unfortunately, I had to wait another hour and so I used that in the most pleasant way by chatting with you, my true treasure. I wrote you yesterday morning from Chicago and included \$10 and hope that you got that letter safely. I do think that my wife cannot complain that her husband does not let her hear enough from him. However, how it will be in the upcoming days, I do not know. If I have a chance, I will write, and if not, you will just have to be patient a couple of days, my pet. I have already looked around here in Waterloo and I must say that I had not expected such a large place but I will tell you more about it later. I left Chicago yesterday morning at 9 o'clock and had a very pleasant trip to Dunseith, which is opposite Dubuque on the shores of the Mississippi River. We arrived at 7.15, left again at eight from Dubuque, and got here at 4 in the morning. It was so cold at night that I could not sleep well and I was not sorry when we finally arrived here. Unfortunately, the sky looks completely overcast this morning and I am afraid that it will be like in Milwaukee, which would be too bad. It is as if the bad weather was tracking me. Well, perhaps my suspicions are without merit, I do not after all understand these things. As I understand it, Wilhelm did not get my letter announcing my arrival. He came here on Saturday and my letter arrived on Monday. Now won't that be a pleasant surprise and joy when I suddenly enter? It makes me feel good. Wilhelm himself is probably stuck at work because as far as I can see, the farmers have not finished harvesting. In that case, I can help him and at the same time find out what the farmers here have for practical advice.

Oh, I hope that I will get a little letter from you today. I hope but I can hardly believe it if you first wrote Monday morning. If I do not hear from you today then I must wait because it is not likely that Wilhelm goes to town for mail more than once a week. Nevertheless, I would so much have liked to hear from you and I long to hear how you and your dear mother are. Today I have been gone for 8 days, which means one third of the planned absence is gone. Only twice as long and then I think I will have my treasure in my arms and I am already thinking of the pleasure of being reunited after such deprivation.

I fervently hope that your mother is well and expect to hear from you about that very soon. Greet her now kindly and tell her that there is nothing wrong in your doing for her what your strength allows.

Therefore, live well, my pet; the clock strikes and I have still to advise August of my arrival. With the most heartfelt kisses and greetings

Your faithful husband

**1868 Aug 19 Letter signed Gustav, steamboat Minnesota, Mississippi River, to my dear wife.**

Steamboat Minnesota  
Mississippi River Aug. 19, 1868  
9 am

My dear wife whom I love in my heart!

My dear treasure, as you can see, I am traveling again and I now sit on one of the great Mississippi boats on the way to St. Louis. I left yesterday afternoon from Waterloo and would have preferred to get out of Dubuque with the early morning train but we were an hour late so I could not make the connection. Because I would have had to lie over until tonight, I took the opportunity to go by boat to Rock Island and then take the train there to Bloomington and St. Louis. I must say that the gorgeous scenery is such that it well makes up for the loss of time.

Everything was good and happy at Wilhelm's. It was great pleasure when I so unexpectedly appeared. Wilhelm was not expecting me because he had not gotten my letter from New York, not having been to town. I found him and Elfriede in the field reaping, Frieda leading the horses and Wilhelm at the machine. I relieved them from their hard work like a couple of kids.

I received your dear letter of July 9 on Saturday and really enjoyed the good news and I thank you very much for the picture and the curl, which made me even happier. I wrote you from Chicago on the 12th and from Waterloo on the 13<sup>th</sup> and put \$10 in the first one and \$5 in the second and I hope that you received both.

I must admit that the boat shakes a great deal and I hope you can decipher these lines.

I will write more tomorrow when there is another opportunity. Until then, farewell my dear heart. Warmest regards to your dear mother and thousands of greetings and kisses to you. Much as I like to chat with you and I have much to say but it must be put off. I hope these lines will find you well and happy and I remain yours deeply loving

Gustav

One more thing. I am afraid that I can no longer join you and remove your grass widow status on Monday or Tuesday as planned but rather a bit later. Our boat is just now in Savannah, IL and I can add a few more lines. I will be in Bloomington next and from there go to Warsaw (here by the river) provided I get good connections; if not I will make it directly to St. Louis. So I cannot be sure when I will get there. I will probably have to stay over night and Sunday somewhere near and I do hope it will not be too boring.

I hope I will have letters from you in St. Louis. Presumably, there are still some in Waterloo because Elfriede went too late to town and they were no longer available. I do long so for fresh news, and I hope good ones from you.

Well, we are under way again and I shall have to be rattled again. Unless you have something different to tell me there is no need for you to answer this letter, as I assume that you will not get it until Saturday or Monday. If you write me after Monday, please address the letters in care of Julius.

So, my little treasure take care and stay happy as you have so far.  
A hearty kiss from your  
Gustav

**1868 Aug 22 Letter signed your faithful husband (on stationery of Barnum's Hotel, St. Louis) to wife.**

St. Louis, Aug 22 1868

My dearly beloved little wife

A greeting in all haste, my treasure. I got here yesterday evening at 10 successfully and found a whole correspondence waiting. There were five letters from you from the ninth through the 16th and I really enjoyed the pleasant contents. Hearty thanks for this, my treasure. It appears that you got neither my first letter from Chicago on the eighth nor my Milwaukee letter from the 10<sup>th</sup>. I am sorry about that, my love (heart). I wrote after all from Waterloo on the 13<sup>th</sup> and then 2 letters on board the Minnesota. So, my treasure, forgotten you have I not. I was in Bloomington yesterday and Dr. Schroder made some very acceptable proposals. He will rent me his vineyards for shares. More about that later. So much is certain: as I leave here I find myself received all over the West with open arms and I no longer have any worries about the future.

Tomorrow I go to Hermann, 87 miles away. Where I am supposed to spend Sunday morning, I do not know yet. I must quickly rejoin the group. More tomorrow. Farewell for today and have with your mother from me thousand times greetings and kisses from your faithful husband.

**1868 Dec 29 Letter signed Emilie, St. Georg [near Hamburg], to Alwine.**

St. Georg, December 29 1868

Dear Alwine!

How different are the thoughts we so often send you from the ones in which we dream we are with you! You know that we share your sufferings and happiness and so you may judge our pleasure when we learned that you without any external problems now hold your child in your arms. Bertha was at your side and it does help when one has a first experience with an old hand. We hope that the little, beloved spirit does as well as the one we see on the floor of the picture of Elizabeth's little one. Are they going to be christened together? We assume so, or is the distance too great? Unfortunately the small, exciting outfit that the mothers and Emma together with much happy diligence made for her is lost and there is not much ray of hope that it will be saved. How are you getting along now by yourself? Because if plans for that are not made now the 2<sup>nd</sup> one should not be started. The dear lines that you send us now and then sometimes end up in Reinbeck and sometimes here during Christmas preparations; they always take us directly into your room, whether you are celebrating your husband's recovery or quietly contemplating the future of your child. It does now sound in your last letter as if your husband plans to change his address and turn to Virginia. Would you like me to give you the address of a friend? He is the son of old man Bartels: Hermann Bartels

Southern View by Warrenton

Fanquare County Virg.

Hermann is a charming, well educated young man, and a learned economist who bought a property there three years ago. Not only has he complained of loneliness but also expressed a wish to cultivate wine there but did not have enough means. Could one not imagine that with joined forces you would get farther than each on his own? Anyway, your husband can think about it and perhaps look into it. I would enjoy it for your sake if it came about, because even if he is not married he is a man of pleasant demeanor and you do have common viewpoints from home. I know also that if you follow your man wherever he goes without moaning and groaning so will homesickness hit you in the heart whether you live alone or surrounded by friendly people and so I heard with some concern that you almost went to IOWA. Here I paint myself a picture that you can stay away from real work because of Hans' dairy but that would not be the case in Iowa. You must be very valuable to him with your background. A joint effort by intelligent, young people like your husband and Hermann together with advantageous soil conditions should be crowned with success even if they are not dependent on each other. Well, what comes comes.

May you be happy in your new endeavor, that is my New Year wish and also that you may enjoy with undivided heart your newfound domesticity. Ed and I plan to sleep through the change of year. Grandma has accepted an invitation to? Wilkins and Ed. is still bothered by his rheumatism. New Years Day we go to Bärenbrücke with the children; at the moment Georg is playing down in the Christmas room where the tree is still standing and our gifts decorate the table. Your mother was really happy to see the house partially filled again for the holy evening. Minna and Linchen were here to visit both healthy and happy. Minna's decision to give up her house was correct; she deserves

the time to think about her music-talent as long as she is young. I do not know how long she can stand it in the boarding house where she has a monotonous, closed existence but perhaps she will live a healthier life as far as blood and nerves are concerned. She looks good. Linchen has gotten quite fat and her life runs too smoothly but that will soon change. If I could only point her into the direction of activities such as Adli has undertaken. Adli is very good and likeable and undemanding and quietly active. She laughs at both work and play, whichever comes along and is, thank God, very healthy. Unfortunately, she has to leave the parish near Lübeck at Easter and has not found a new position. Helene Meihnsner is also climbing out of her baby shoes, right? I do not know if she will develop more quickly now that she has richer surroundings but surely, Bertha will like it better with her present apartment. You may not like to see her go, but your own little one is consolation enough. Did the little one get her name from your beloved mother? I think as well that it is a shame that she lives so far from here; we have no babies around and are always ready to cuddle them. Jan. 23, 69

Oh dear, here lies the letter still and you might be wondering why Ed and I send no congratulations to you for your little child! Today I will get that greeting on the way and perhaps rather add another one. But we have had several celebrations this month: we had Christmas with Dad on Jan 10<sup>th</sup>, birthday at our place on the 4<sup>th</sup>, concert on the 14<sup>th</sup> with all rehearsal, including the final one between 2 and 6 on the 14<sup>th</sup> and then my usual two days of headache after parties so. I am glad to have it all far behind me. Oh, I forgot on the 21<sup>st</sup> we had Hélène's birthday here. I suggested that instead of always playing whist, we read. Tell with the roles divided between us; this pleased everyone and it came out well even if there were not enough men for the roles which was too bad but all read with pleasure and love. A good steak strengthened the exhausted spirits afterwards and fostered a decision to have another evening soon. Think how proudly your men would have read along. It is a pity that the Meihnsners do not do the same so Helene and Agnes could be the lovely German xxxx. However, they do live too far from the families to have frequent gatherings. We have no more music either in our house as Emma's voice is still weak and Ed has put away his cello until he can practice more and the harmonium was left in Reinbeck for the summer. But he has big plans for singing and caroling about which I will tell you more when they have been performed. Otto and Lita are playing around my feet and you can see from the letter how much they disturb me. So I close for today, my dear, so you will get some sign of life from me. May God keep you and your loved ones healthy, is my wish.

Your Emilie

Even your Otto greets you and the little child heartily.

**1868 Dec 29 Letter signed Otilia, Washington, to Gustav and Alwina.**

Washington December 29, 1868

Dear Gustav and Alwina,

Your dear greeting came in my hands on the birthday of our dear, unforgettable mother, which made me happy and moved and I thank you therefore.

It was a sad day filled with memories for me and for all of us. The loss is recent enough for us to feel it the most in these holidays, which also were our special family celebration days.

Joined together in Heaven our dear parents knew well of such days in the middle of death when the grandchildren who were yet to learn life's seriousness enjoyed their pleasures.

And so also our children were happy and gay at their Christmas celebration and whooped it up around the glittering tree which as before was the center of the feast and I did not have the heart to disturb them but rather helped them prepare.

One more year and your darling will also be running around in joyous mood. May God bless your luck!

It makes me happy in my concerns for the estate that you will stay around for a while so that Mother's xxxx and xxxx will not fall into the hands of strangers. I would have liked to have xxxx around but we must all act according to our best understanding and I wish you good luck from the bottom of my heart. So also, do I send you, my dearest, our best wishes for the New Year and may it bring you much good!

In the matter of your slippers, dear Gustav: I will tell you that two weeks ago I gave them to Mr. Schmitt who was to visit relatives in New York. I assume that at this time he has already delivered them to you; if not ask the Wehes for heavens sake; she is somewhat forgetful and I think off hand that she might have forgotten to give them to you.

I thought you might be missing them or I would have kept them for Ernst to bring but that would have delayed them a couple of weeks.

What we can tell you, is that our life is very quiet; beginning next Monday both little Ine and August start school which will be an event for them and truly for me, too; at least in the beginning I will not be sorry to have 6 hours free and it will do them good.

Ernst sends his best regards and so do the children.

With love

Your Otilia

**1869 Jan 6 Letter signed Wilh., Black Hawk, to Gustav.**

Black Hawk, January 6, 1869

My dear Gustav,

You have not heard from me, not a single line, since we said farewell here. No excuses. You know our circumstances well enough to understand the many obstacles, needs and disturbances, which contribute to the natural resistance to writing even if it will give me credit with you.

There is not much to tell you from our simple life which was the main goal and driving force. As you know, sudden changes never happen for the best and God has protected us from any so far.

A long and sad time comes before us and no one is more the victim than you are who for so many years had the dear departed in your household always there, greatly loved and now lost.

It must be a consolation for you to have been there and able to help in her last moments something which we were denied.

It was and remains our sincere wish that the memory of her being with us will forge a link and bond between us and a sense of trust. May a gracious God let this come to pass and may also the assumption and longing for an independent – not by sorrow undermined – existence for this country be fulfilled as we hope and expect. Such are my wishes for Alwine and I end with an attached wish for a happy and joyous household and the best of health and happiness for Alwine and her loved ones.

You, in particular, my dear Gustav do I wish again that the success you so long have pursued, giving away so much in the meantime, may finally come to you. Therein lays much compensation for you and a happy household. In this context, I wish to congratulate you on the important appointment as city mayor, which appeared as a *deus ex machina* to all our surprise 5 weeks ago. Even if it is not a world-shaking event, does it really take you 5 weeks to announce to friends and relatives what had happened?

Next time you will hopefully have acquired more know-how to make it a quieter process. Many well-known concerns and daily activities will now haunt the matron of the house! Well, now I have stepped into a hole and I am afraid I will get stuck in it; there is no way out except with my own ball and chain who bears me no ill will.

Thank God, we are all happy and I feel quite well. Elfriede does not seem able to shake off the sudden attack of diphtheria, it still affects her and goes on for what seems like seasons. The Doctor is happy to come here, gives her different leeches, and attaches them to different sites.

Christmas holidays with its happy "showers" (to quote out of the mouth of children) are hopefully done with in your place as well as ours. We unfortunately had to dispense with a couple of days until Lent because of my trip to the City- Elfriede, who is alone, did not get all her work done either. We had to spend some of the holidays on the road.

The winter has been fairly pleasant so far, neither too mild, nor too cold.



Now, excuse my cutting this short, my dear Gustav. I have suffered so much and so long with shame but now you must admit I have made up for it. I hope that my letter will find you all happy and glad and with the New Year coming in there will be new activities for you and here. With hearty greeting from Elfriede to big and little ones and a kiss for your wife and child with all love

Your Wilh.

**1869 Feb 8 Letter signed E.M., Black Hawk, to Alwine.**

Black Hawk February 8th, 1869

Oh God, is life ever good, dear little Alwine. If not more, you must think the same often when you and your loving man enjoy your little darling and when your heart feels rich and full of mutual love. It happens to me quite often and then I cannot find the words to thank our heavenly father and pray that he will let it last. Now what you and your loved ones might think of me that I have not let you hear from me until now, God alone knows. My thoughts are with you and are joyous with you and sad with you and in our hearts, the old love is still the same. I hope that your sweet little child is well and happy and I wish

**[In right margin:] I have just stirred the fermented brew and feel quite countrified.**

**[Top margin, upside down:] Love and care to all of you; only let us soon have cordial greetings from you E.M.**

your love is all it ought to be. I was glad at heart that heaven let you get through it all so quickly and happily. More later, because even 4 weeks after birth have we not seen any announcement, not even of the formal arrival of the little prince. We do not really have much to tell because asides from a big mess, there is little to complain about. Our Sundays are mostly taken up with visits and besides sometimes one is just lazy.

So, what have you named your child, is the little one healthy, does he look like you or your husband, are you nursing him yourself? Many questions, my dear Alwine, and I have more that I would like to ask. Please write pretty soon and tell us lots about yourself. Our little happy band off to school except William who is driving me nuts and now wants the "writer" (my pen). Ernst, Louise, Bertha and Johnny are in school and they like it there. Thank God, they have all been so happy and healthy this winter we really cannot be grateful enough. Wilhelm has not had so much pain from his rheumatism this year and the weather in general has been nice, as we have not had the strong, long lasting cold episodes. How does it look down in your place, is the winter still governing? Are you staying in New York or has Gustav decided otherwise? I wish you were here with us! The pretty Christmas celebration with its excitement is long gone and the New Year has had a happy start with new hopes for the future. Late as usual, our best wishes, you lucky three. Surely, this was a somewhat lonely celebration because your little mother who usually engaged herself in all aspects of Christmas activities was missing. It is in days like these that one feels the loss most acutely!

Also our best good wishes for your birthday, again we are late. We hope you enjoyed it and had a happy feast. Little Louise baked me a cake all by herself which was judged very good; your little ones hopefully gave you a big smile; that is about all the little marvel can do.

I am sorry that you have had to deal with so many things right now when it all is so difficult.

**[in left margin:] Wilhelm and I send you our best wishes and hope that you will soonest send us a sign of your love and tell us how it is going. Your true love E.M.**

**1869 Mar 6 Letter signed Isidor Bush, Sr. (on stationery of Bluffton Wine Company of Central Missouri, St. Louis), to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Richmond P.O., Staten Island, N.Y.**

St. Louis March 6, 1869

In response to yours of February 26 the position of propagator which we advertised is neither newly filled nor is it vacant. The advertisement was not for us (Bush & Son) but rather for the Bluffton Wine Co. Mr. Husmann, the company president, was not quite happy with the present propagator. There were masses of offers but the one that Mr. Husmann preferred did not materialize because of problems relative to intentions and so Mr. Husmann decided to keep the current propagator for this season. You can see from this that it was appropriate to put the announcement in the name of the company. We have a younger man as propagator with whom we are very happy and who was the only one to know that our company name was used in the interest of the Bluffton Wine Co. If you still, knowing this, would like to move then I suggest strongly that you consider this position because it might be possible to hire you as an assistant and then, when we know you, and Mr. Husmann is convinced that you are the better man you could be employed as Chief Propagator. I am sending you company reports. You can in return send me recommendations and references vis-à-vis accomplishments and character. (I have personal friends and relatives in New York City.)

If you are not interested, given the circumstances, and rather have in mind to establish yourself independently in the West so can we perhaps also help you with that and do so willingly. You mention in your letter that you have a big stock on hand, particularly of Concord; we (Bush & Son) have already many more orders than stock. If you have prima, well rooted, one year Concord seedlings and are willing to sell them at cash for \$25.00 per thousand, please send us immediately 6000 and we will send you \$150.00 via New York Exchange as soon as we receive them.\* The price might seem low to you but our selling price here is \$40.00 for class 1 goods and with that 10% off for regular buyers and freight paid to New York. So you can see that we cannot pay more. We have to pay \$25.00 here for select. Perhaps you have other things we could use; send us your list with netto prices.

Respectfully and in friendship  
Yours  
Isidore Bush Sr.

You can correspond with us just as you may prefer in English or German. As to our standing financially, we refer you to Messrs. Taussig & Co, 24 Broad St. N.Y.city—our bankers there.

\* By fast freight Line (at about \$2.50 per 100s) to I. Bush & Son

St. Louis, Mo  
22 S. Main Str

(Mark on every box the number it contains.)

**1869 Mar 12 Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to brother Gustav.**

Blackhawn March 12. 69 [Translator's note: This is really written as Blacktown.  
Blackhawk is the most likely name as per map.]

My dear Gustav!

This evening I got your letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> of last month. Truly, I am disturbed over the sorry state of your affairs, which have lagged even farther behind the hopes and expectations I had for you.

Poor Gustav, you certainly have not had any success in your undertakings, indeed, they have cost you dearly. I regret that it has come to a point where I cannot judge your mood and intentions. Against all expectations after so many failures, you have not even been granted the hope of learning from your mistakes and achieve some success.

Do not lose your courage, I was at your age when I had to let all early hopes and expectations go that I had held on to and start on new ways to get on and that under worrying circumstances. Perhaps for me I had to search for other ways and like you I had to scrape through and after several unsuccessful attempts, which cost a lot, did I end up in clover.

What with the heat and all I have had many tough times but it has gotten better with the years. With God's will it will continue and the majority of my neighbors regard me as in an enviable position. That is correct for the most, but relatively speaking our new arrivals have only begun to play while I have years to show for what was part hope and part hard work as is true for most of the people who followed me to this parish and so it might have been for you, had you come out here and started your nursery. Had you held out you might have been well-to-do now. Such is the West and this illuminates how things are.

All of your work seems to have been in vain. And that is hard on you, young man! Nevertheless, as I said, you are still young and God willing restored from your severe illness of last year. Therefore, in the end you are ready to take up the fight with fate again.

I wish you the best in your undertakings over there in accordance with your wishes and inclinations, respectively. Should you decide to sell, then you, your wife and child are welcome here and will be received with open arms.

I must agree that the anxiety you seem to have over the moment to move -- against inclination -- is justified.

You must return to the nursery business when you come out here in order to make progress under your circumstances! You against them. Already since you were here have new houses been put up almost daily as people are coming out of their winter rest. There is no question that in less than a year Grundy County has grown into an established district and that is true for all the surrounding counties!

Not so long ago, about 9 years the number eligible to vote in or township was 6-9 and now with the foreign born Freeholders the count has risen to a couple of hundred and this is true of most of our young and earlier so sparsely populated district.

Where do people plan to put their fruit trees for example? Certainly not together with others when they can put them close and pick themselves. And when Iowa, at least

the middle part that I know, and in which Grundy County is in the top tier as far as soil conditions and go ahead of its citizens and even if our district has not become a spring garden very soon, so will it before 20 years are gone. There is certainly here more of an Eldorado for the winemaker than at any other northern state in the Union.

This is no fantasy but a matter of logical deduction from the facts without criticism of any. And you can make your own judgment after you have seen our, the oldest part of Black Hawk Creek Valley.

And to top it off, the prairie which is beautiful in its original state is also capable of the most improvement soil can in this climate.

The people want to do it and they want it with frenzy. Bushes, hedges, fruit gardens etc. all that is popular in your branch.

Many well-situated persons have arrived since you were here last, bringing with them a couple of thousand dollars and planning to stay here and use the money to establish themselves. Some on a smaller scale and others feeling free to quickly grow large and beautify as described above.

You will not need a railroad or bigger town as long as you are not planning on a large-scale undertaking. Thinking ahead a minor R.R. Depot might do and require little material. A McGregor type connection over Waterloo to Des Moines, and running through our Creek Valley can rarely be long in coming.

Pluck up your courage and realize that you must succeed here, of that you can be sure.

Put on your wine sack, bring everybody and settle here! There is still enough being produced on the farm to keep you supplied in the winter. If you need anything more, Hefner will take it to heart and supply it. Here you can make at least 100% more in retail than you do there in wholesale.

Around here is it mostly time payments and that holds true for all business. If you earn 100%, so can you afford to have a little castle and you will meet most useful people. We not have many expenses except for straight production costs compared with your area.

I will now address this concept of "breakthrough."

You will come to us with your family and stay until you can arrange for something independent and that can take one or two years before we can assess progress.

I give you all the ground that you need and maintenance; labor when needed for work and cultivation. I will lend you people to help as often as I can and you need them. You help me when I need it and so it comes out even. Thus, your living will not cost you anything except for clothing and notions. You must of course start on a small scale because of the experimental nature and the need to find out finer details. You must go where you really want to go at your own leisure and estimate, what additional outlays are required for more stock. You can plan for the rebuilding of your own future as quickly as you will and can, expand and it were surprising had you not in a couple of years a result which so far has unfortunately escaped you.

That is one road to success. Another, should you want it, while you wait to decide, and if you are tired of wine kegs—not entirely unexpected—would be to join us. There is opportunity and you have seen we are successful and my partners and I could well use you. That would be another plan, my dear Gustav, and you could also use what you make out of the nursery in corn business and balance the two ventures. Furthermore,

even if you have rather shied away from it, think about the yearly gross income from the newly started young corn, which occupies most of our acreage devoted to corn and eliminates unemployment.

A third possibility would be if you after some time get used to our circumstances there may still be open another possibility, but I cannot guarantee the availability of funds. That would be a business arrangement with Fritz, if he still wants to keep his communal grounds near Grundy Center—320 acres—for that long. As it stands right now you should give him some indication because the time has come when it needs to produce some income. Right now, there is none except for the value of the land, and surely could something be designed for the benefit of both partners.

I have now addressed at least one of the questions about your future in different ways. You may still see these as weak and timid or, as something in the course of time you should ask yourself, in your quest for a new land where so many start with nothing and end up wealthy. Income and expenses are worthy of discussion and consideration before you yourself get here.

You can be sure of a moderate existence here with us for as long as it pleases you without having to feel obligated toward us and the longer, the better, because then we can hope for good success together.

I am now in better circumstances than ever. During the course of the winter, I was in great straits and there are still many of the expenses from that time, which have assumed frightening proportions. I have had as always the independent home business. In spite of the lower prices that income plus the harvest of the year has freed me and perhaps will leave a little extra. Until then must we economize seriously, doing the best we can, and after having done my inventory I find I need to put in another 7000-8000 dollars worth before it can be checked off and most of that must be paid.

I would like to put together some working capital so I could feel at ease and to escape the blood sucking interest grabbers, which now charge 18% for an advance of 1200 dollars with part of my farm as security. There is also the underwriting of the final extension and foundation on my farm, which has been needed for years. Profit is not a possibility here because with the fall of the fruit prices money is scarce as ever. Between us brothers my farm is worth 15000 dollars but I cannot get even 3000 dollars, which is what I would have liked to get.

If you are looking for or have an opportunity to do something in that direction, you could not do me a greater favor. I would propose putting my part in cattle because I have more luck in cattle farming and I am better prepared to get something out of it. It is possible that even at these sorry prices you could make more than the abovementioned people but you could not expect more than a five-fold return with safety.

Ah well, I expect no such thing, dear Gustav. However, judging from experiences in earlier years, you might!

The building of the lower level and the basement will be done in the spring from which will follow better eye appeal and much enlargement with kitchen and some other rooms being moved downstairs. Space enough will we have to have all of you here and a cozy togetherness it will be. If we can complete the outer brickwork depends on the above-mentioned costs.

I have had #5 Truher stone [Translator's note: Cannot identify this stone which must be building material. Could also be read as 50 of Truher stone.] and bricks hauled in

from Waterloo all over the house getting in the way of other work but that job is, thank God, now behind me.

March 17

We have had difficult times since I wrote the above. Elfriede developed a right persistent diphtheria attack three weeks ago. I had to get the doctor who first was not available but later became a steady houseguest. He had nothing to prescribe but worried a lot about E. staying in bed. Early next morning was I forced to call the doctor back and I was really worried. Day before yesterday I myself got sick but am feeling better since yesterday; Louisa also had a slight attack of diphtheria, but, thank God, it was soon over for her and the other children remained well with the grace of God Elfriede is also getting better. However, she is still very tired from it and the slightest cold can bring it on again.

During this time, we had no other women to help in the house than the little girls and as long as I was OK, we kept house but when I got sick the following morning we had to get help from another woman who has been with us before.

How much one misses relatives and close friends in times like this, standing by with help in need, and how much we missed you is not necessary for me to tell you—a rock standing for us; but fortunately all went well and we found that our children with fervor, love and consideration could take care of us. It was a real pleasure to see the bustling little group as they took care of everything.

Now, if we can just stay healthy and stay that way, everything will go so much better.

I have now with Elfriede's consent farmed out most of my fruit orchards to give her more peace and avoid her having to worry so much about strange people. This works out much better for me than doing it myself because when half of the grounds are cultivated and only a small part not, just about a third of the harvest becomes free of costs. We get enough work and more comfort—furthermore this will make us think less of the idea of moving, as there is no shortage of renters and with time other things not the least of which is developed cattle farming from which a very respectable amount can be obtained through renting. A cattle farming is suitable for the lower lands and Uncle has given me the right of first refusal in any sale. Some of this land can be converted to grazing and for that, I might just have the funds on hand.

Therefore, we do not lack work ever and it is profitable and will be more so. If you expect more drought in your Nursery business and see a windfall in farming as I run it the fields are big enough for both of us. It might not go forward with giant steps and we still need to get financial support but it will be a steady and reliable step forward. In my situation that is hardly backward and the branch of cattle farming can take on a higher dimension on our plot of land from uncle with equal work and commitment from your side. It will serve you as a secure base, surplus or not.

But let us not anticipate the effect of time on our ideas and preferences. You must of course first finish your try out period here—then, if you like, you can look at any of my ideas from this letter. Would you rather go it independently but in the same general direction, I will heartily welcome that decision. The time will come when we can talk about all of this. Take the plunge, my dear Gustav; I think I have shown you what you can accomplish in the way of an independent career in the same time if you do it here—that you will be welcome here does not bear repeating. There will be many things you



have to do without; your existence here depends on that. Better now than later, and it is not really all that bad any more, but you cannot come to the West with great expectations.

There is plenty of social and educated company here, I mean German at least as much as one has time to socialize during the time of [several words unclear here] when other, growing concerns occupy us. A number of well-educated Germans are next door. It is like a dovecote here with us, people come and go all day and we hardly need to leave the house to see the neighbors. Most is it talks about business of country agents, from which we could not protect ourselves if we want to socialize with all who visit us. But overall has it been restful.

Now for a request--enclosed you will find 5 Dollars; please buy a crate of good potatoes (Fritz calls them American dinner potatoes) and send them with the steamship to Hamburg with the address Inspector Fritz Reckmann in Rackow by Neudenken, Meckl. Schwerin, c/o Ohne Brocke, Sichern, Hamburg

My brother-in-law Fritz, who is the overseer of my property, has asked me for this.

If you come, come as soon as possible. Your wine sack has dried up, in my opinion. The sooner, the better but if you are relocating, come at any time.

Live well, you have a long epistle to assess and so let it give you thoughts and ideas before you decide. I hope this has made your decision easier. Regards to your dear wife and child and all others dear to us.

With greetings and kisses and hope of good news soon of whatever kind

Your faithful brother

Wilhelm

I do not know if Brenneman is the right company but Fritz will know. Please speed up the potatoes as much as possible They are intended for Laab.

**1869 Apr 6 Letter signed Isidor Bush, St. Louis, to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Richmond, S.I. [Staten Island], N.Y.**

St. Louis, April 6, 1869

Mr. G E Meissner

Richmond, S.I. N.Y.

I can hardly tell you how much I regret that my letter did not reach you in time. Not only because it is now too late here to import wine seedlings which I would have been happy to help you with, but also for other reasons. I waited day after day for a response and had started to fear that I somehow had insulted you—which was absolutely not my intention even if the hopes and expectations I outlined perhaps painted a better outcome than I could realize.

I talked to friend Husmann who knows your plants and would like to win you over to Aliene Courzaris. I also talked to a relative of Dornitzer, who knew you from Staten Island under such better circumstances that he could not believe you were the same Meissner.

If you have made the decision to move to the west, would it not be fun if at the end of the month when you go back to get your family, you were to make a side trip to St. Louis?

As I already said it is too late now to order wine saplings; for Iowa it may be too early. Our dealings are mostly with the South Western trade, in addition, we are adequately supplied and if your idea of low prices is higher than here, you can get Iver seedlings for \$50/1000 Net on delivery, Iona sells very poorly and Diana hardly at all. Husmann has bought 10000 two year old Concords for \$40 from Caywood (Harris & Co). Cone in Vineland, N.J. sends thousands to us for \$20 to \$25 pr. 1000. You might find a market for Clintons, earliest in Iowa, but it is not a good idea as they are not suitable for winter. I am sending my son a message in case he thinks he could use some more Concords and if so, I will send you a telegram tomorrow and a draft on Tansig Fischer & Co N.Y. [Taussig, Fischer & Co.?].

As far as the position in the Company goes, we are prepared to give you advantage even later but I must tell you that the company in itself is an experiment—a rather magnificent one but not a guaranteed success (this in confidence). As much as we are inclined to attract you to us and our state, I can only advise you that if you can find an attractive position with your brother in Iowa with good prospects and future, take it, it is better than Bluffton Wine Company.

With friendly greetings

Respectfully yours,

Isidor Bush

**1869 Apr 6 Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav.**

Waterloo, April 6. 69

My dear Gustav!

I got your dear letter of the 26th yesterday and have sent a telegram formulated thus:

"On time ASP graph

Shall attend everything myself if needed"

Just in case you want to send the whole sum with the down-payment.

Except for the double travel costs would it be in many ways better if you came yourself.

The number of apple trees and wine plants that you say you want to bring is so great that it were better for me to order them from here lest they arrive too late

**[Marginal note:]** Of course we will keep your business between us and nobody has any inkling of your arrival or plans.

(at least the greater portion) and I will see to it that they do as well here as in your meager soil.

I forgot to mention in my long message that it is dry enough here to start planting at any time. Our soil dries up very soon after the frost even with heavy rains and during preparation of the soil you rarely find areas of drought, so you can really start plowing here as early as there.

Well, you know that already. Workers are easily gotten when you need them; if not here so in town. You can also plow quickly here.

I am going to reserve large enough acreage to which more can be added when you need it if it has not already been done.

I did not expect such a quick response so your letter was not picked up until yesterday—I hope you were not too much delayed thereby.

Elfriede still has problems but thank God, the help that departs is replaced almost as quickly.

Bring all of your stock; that make the cost of transportation worthwhile.

When you become well known around here you can recover the costs next year that you did not get this one and through foresight and acclimatization will the objections against the import of easterly methods go away.

I attach information about hay to this draft. Please bring me all valuable decorative plants that you have and will grow here, cuttings and grafted apples and just get what you do not have from Fritz.

I hope and can assure you that you will without trouble get on the way to the next level in time and will do it nicely here. Of course is it understandable that you might come here by yourself and let the family hesitate. Otherwise you might not get ready. Come on by yourself which would be cheaper but rather with your lovely wife and children. With many regards and see you soon!

Your Wilhelm

**1869 May 3 Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to Gustav.**

Blacktown May 3, 1869

My dear Gustav!

Your dear letter of the 24<sup>th</sup> did not arrive here until last night. I was in town in vain the day before yesterday and the kids have not been there because of vacation so it must have been picked up by a neighbor who brought it here to me unbeknownst.

I am totally prepared to give your plants the finest site and care they need and do it as many times as needed—I have plowed pieces of land south of here and the sheep grazing area a couple of times for this purpose; I put in the plants you sent and will see to the plants from Waterloo today.

Why are you now so certain that others who plant will do better than you; given the shrubbery and small fruit and at least a few apple trees—they I planted to soon, they failed and I have ordered new ones from the nursery here.

I really have to get started here on some fruit and a few other things both for comfort and our own enjoyment.

Now I must ask you again to do what you have not, namely ask Fritz for samples. Send them as soon as proper and practical, even if they are young plants or cuttings. It is now too late for wine pest for which I am glad and thank God. We are all set and organized to start and get you your wish to grow wine, which you among many others want to do. My faithful helpers can now step forward and hopefully contribute something new.

Mr. Selmer is heartily welcome if he wants to come out here before you can get away and there is enough opportunity here for him so he does not need to seek any farther. If that does not suit him, he is welcome any way to make himself useful around here.

You still speak with sorrow over having abandoned a goal worthy of your knowledge, and left behind trouble and sorrow; maybe you truly regret this but together we can acquire new knowledge—it is after all a pretty miserable brother you have had to rely on so far. So come now as soon as you possibly can, write often with news of departure from there and arrival here, so we can arrange a reception. Selmer can find day jobs almost any time and then give a scrip of Leave and Luck when you are to be in town. Please send me a klutch-death trap so as to keep the Gopher population away. Many greetings and kisses to wife and child. Your Wilhelm

**1869 May 9 Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to Gustav.**

Blacalfarm May 9, 1869

My dear Gustav!

My last two brief notes to you were written in such haste that I am really ashamed thereof—you could not really avoid answering which in this case meant to milk the details, bury some and attribute some unanswerable ones to the silly writer. Your dear wife has escaped another bout of illness and that, too, I seem to have forgotten in my letters. I am sure, my dear little Alwine, that you also read my letters, so have your husband tell you that this has happened before but it always comes from a good heart. Today I have told myself to apologize for my own stupidity, will you forgive me?

We are so sorry that you poor ones have been so sorely tried before your departure but we also rejoice in that everything ended well; all this goes without saying. May God grant that you do not have to stay even longer and farther away and depart as well as possible.

Elfriede has wanted to write to you, dear Alwine for a long time but cannot with the best will in the world grip a pen tightly. How she with her serious cough problem is going to be able to help me with the caretaking of an estate this size is beyond me, but she helped me yesterday and the day before for hours with the harvesting of the wine.

The vines are hopefully mostly OK and ready for fermenting, thank God. The upcoming ones are only good for establishing new vines. The heat and dryness has been considerable the last ten days. I have only been able to use the early morning and late evening hours for planting the last two days but about 8000 plants are down and for me goes the planting with unparalleled speed in this good soil because of the care spent on preparing the ground without regard to time or workload.

I put down every rootstock wrapped and deep so it requires a deep furrow and then several passes with the hoe to backfill the row, and better can it not be done even at your place.

All the bed linen has been unpacked, sprayed and disinfected with some kind of stuff and with the hot closets we have I do not think there is any risk of mold.

My God, do you have ideas, having tried to figure out by calculation how much easier the nursery man here, given the ground and soil preparation, can plant and cultivate. I am surprised you have not gotten into the business end which is more common here.

I have given your wine a wonderful place—now let us hope for the best.

It is unfortunately not possible for me to entertain you any longer—the day after tomorrow the corn harvest begins and we have about 80 acres which because of the dryness have to be undercut. Otherwise the cost of harvesting is bigger than the prize offered and the weeds are only waiting for more rain to take over.

Quite a job as you can well imagine but come as soon as possible. Warmest greetings from all of us and give your little wife a peck on the cheek to make her forgive her inattentive brother-in-law—whether she accepts it or not.

With all my love

Your Wilhelm

**1869 May 14 Letter signed Elfriede to Alwine, Blackhawk.**

Black Hawk May 14 1869

Dear little Alwine!

What will you think of me: not a word of welcome or pleasure have you received from me? Perhaps you think that I was not so happy. No, dear heart, I am endlessly happy. W. and I, we are so glad to have you come here and soon at that, I wish you were already here and all the trouble behind you. You, dear Alwine, have to get used to a great many things which may seem difficult in the beginning, but love overcomes all and as soon as you get here safely all will even out. I will truly stand by your side and as W. will greet his brother with open arms so will I in my heart treat you as a sister. We do not have many of the things that you do or can have but there are also much beautiful here that you do not know. Our prairie will shine like a jewel for you and your darling baby and the good Gustav; he will enjoy the fresh air. Be of good mood now when the separation from the loved ones down there becomes difficult, look the future straight in the eye and remember where one is happy one is at home! – You poor wife, you have been rather sick and I hope you have recovered and gotten your lost strength back. I would have loved to write you long ago but just now I have so much to do. W. with 8 workers is out planting corn which has been delayed unfortunately. We have not heard much from you lately. The wine bushes arrived 8 days after Gustav's letter and are long since planted. I helped with that because W. wanted them in the ground as soon as possible. W. now has a lot of work and he must always take the lead in it and it really is too much for him: I really wish that Gustav were here and could help W. Today we have lots to do. Now we have the small trees which require a lot of attention and even if the man who keeps an eye on the sheep is very good—he still needs to be supervised. We have 10 small calves to feed and I have to make up 4 large vessels with cornmeal everyday for them. I have 59 small hens and they must be looked after. You might think one gets bored out here but that is not so. The weather is usually very nice; we have had much rain the last couple of weeks which is good for the wine bushes.

Have you already decided when you are moving here? Let us know ASAP so that W. can receive you in Waterloo. Let me hear from you real soon—perhaps is there already a letter in Waterloo. Could you please ask Bertha for a pattern for Carl's coats? Ernst wants so much to have a real coat and I cannot find a pattern here and when I eventually get a genuine Paillard pattern also for Agnes's dress then I can make that into a dress for Louise. Give Berta my best regards and ask her to forgive my presumptuousness. Bertha is so good at pattern making. Live well, dear Alwine and best regards to all from your welcoming Elfriede.

**[Margin notes:]** Would you not like to get started bringing your things? If it is something you rather have immediately, send ahead and we will take care of it. We have all necessities here and you are welcome to any of it. I will try to make it as pleasant as I can but there will still be plenty to wash. Thank God, we are all well, hope you are, too. Excuse my haste, it is time to cook supper!

**1869 July 10 Letter signed Fritz, New York, to brother Gustav.**

New York July 10, 1869

My dear Gustav:

We have in our possession a few lines from Alwine and it makes us happy to see that you have successfully arrived in Iowa at Wilhelm's. I wish from my heart that your new life which in truth you have started will be accompanied by the best of luck and that you may build up an existence filled with work but otherwise free of sorrow.

You know that this could never happen here, all conditions were against it. Your neighbors all speak well of you, one character says "he was too good, too kind," and thinks that your daily workers ruined you and says that the same cannot happen out there because you learn from experience.

You will be happy to hear that I have rented the Richmond Farm to a very nice guy, Gustav Richter who is a former neighbor to Ertenmayers in Illinois where he farmed for 10 years. He is related to the Unkarts, is very honorable and respectable, but, I am afraid, like you is not firm enough and will not start a network of dairies. He asked me particularly to enquire about him with the Ertenmaiers but I did not do anything about it. I rented the farm to him rather cheaply at \$400 per year for 5 years; all the lower fields by LaTourette's together with my corn field will I let him have in the new year, so also your timothy field, but there is nothing but weeds on that and I told him to compensate you for that—how much do you want? It cannot be worth much, it looks awful.

I started cleaning up around the Richmond house immediately after your departure: the two balsam poplars, three small poplars and the twiggy bushes next to the house and the willows in front of the house were removed so now it looks a lot more orderly; you should have done that a long time ago. Removed all the willows up to the arborvitae and all around so that now air and sun can come into the garden. I left the side alone; the fences are in need of much repair. Good old George has been good for 12 hours work per day but he really is a drunk and a difficult customer.

I had some fuss with Wendling because the piece of land you rented him yielded nothing; he paid rent again to Richter and I had to give Richter a cut and the jokers in Richmond had a good time over it. House and farm can be had for next to nothing.

We have had moist but nice weather and your wine stock and evergreens look good.

The lady in the market bought thyme for \$40, Mrs. Unkart paid \$430 and I added \$2 so that I now have deposited \$500 for you of which \$38 is finder's fee. I have paid freight to New Do?? at 7½ and shoes for \$2½. I am keeping track of the \$38 separately and if we get more out of your old things I will credit you.

Carl's family has successfully arrived over there and we are all healthy here but we miss you a lot.

Nerich wants to sell me 320 acres at \$10, and I will take that when Beckmann has sold my 320 acres in Grundy Centre. In this case I ask of Wilhelm to select the best piece of Nerich's land but without assistance from Leavitt and I have also written Bechman that I will only pay even money, for my purchase, I do not want to invest anything more. Wilhelm can give me the exact section number. At ten dollars an acre or better, I may take another 160-320 acres of Nerich's if the opportunity comes along.

Onkel [Uncle] has recently had an accident and lost 4 toes from the right foot; he miscalculated and got squeezed by the Fulton ferry. He is doing alright but will always be lame.

Everything looks very good in my garden but I have little time to enjoy it. How much do you want for your sewing machine, perhaps Richter will buy it?

We hopefully will soon hear from you when you are installed and well settled; Wilhelm has surely done all for the necessary comfort. Kindest regards to Alwine, the little one and Wilhelm and his family from all of us, Bertha and the brothers. Write soon.

Your faithful Brother

Fritz



**1869 July 31 Letter signed Isidor Bush (on stationery of Isidor Bush & Son, proprietors, Bushberg Vineyards and Orchards, Bushberg, Mo.) to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa.**

Mr. G. E. Meissner

Waterloo-Iowa

In response to yours of the 15th do we send you today our and the Bluffton Wine Co. price lists. Our Trade List (Net Wholesale Prices) has not yet been printed. We will have a large stock of homegrown wine-stocks—we do not know if we will be buyers because that depends on the orders we get. We have more than enough for the fall sales; it would only be Martha and Norton's Virginia wines we might want and you probably do not have much of them. The outlook for the vine harvest is poor because of the cold and wet weather. We have rot here and in northern Ohio and Illinois there is mildew! This will have a negative effect on the wine production because such a crop failure does not encourage people to replant. But we have not had such a bad year for grapes in the last 11 years. Nevertheless many varieties are doing very well and the Norton's do not rot and have terrific yield.

I am too old not to realize what a beastly business it is to advise for or against anything particularly when dealing with a family man and the question of whether to join us or not. If you like it in Iowa after more experience, then I wish you the best of luck and success and will not try to dissuade you; but if that is not the case (and the long winter would repulse me at least so much that any attraction would have to be considerable to make me want to seek my new home there) and as you are leaving the best of the beautiful New York I do invite you once more to come and look us over. Bluffton seems to me to be a rare chance for a hardworking, aggressive and competent Propagator. The company has built at the costly expenditure of \$20000 very large propagating houses, nine of them in accordance with the Henderson model (three short, three long, three short).

[Sketch]

covering about 10000 square feet; the result was very unsatisfactory because we selected the wrong manager and had little production and much waste of valuable wine stock, ridiculously high expenditures and workers who did not work. The Board decided to sell on very satisfying conditions and we (Isidore Bush & Son) would like to enter into partnership with a good man. How do we know that you are the one?—well, we are not saying that you are, but we hope, at least we think it is possible to find you to be the one. What we know of your reputation and that of your plants is good. And you do not know if the climate and the assignment would suit you but it seems worth the effort to find out.—That is of course if you are inclined to look around and to stay in the Nursery business.

Looking forward to hear further from you

With friendly greetings

Yours,

Isidor Bush

**Answ. Aug. 17**

**1870 Sept 21 Letter signed Fritz, N.Y., to brother Gustav.**

N.Y. Sept. 21 1870

My dear Gustav!

Attached a letter to Alwine and the information that 8 days from today I leave for Europe; first to Hamburg and from there to southern Europe where there is business to be done. I would have liked to write you and Wilhelm once more in detail but now I lack time. Your note to Geib comes due in December, take care of that at the right time and write him accordingly.

I will have a serious talk with Edward in Hamburg on your behalf. Warmest regards to Alwine, the children and the Wilhelm family!

Your faithful brother

Fritz

[Along the side:] Thorman has not paid mine, promises only.

**1870 Nov 16 Letter signed Carl, Hamburg (on stationery of Chas. F.L. Meissner, Hamburg), to brother Gustav.**

Hamburg, November 16th, 1870

My dear Gustav

I have wanted to write to you for a long time but have not gotten farther than wishes. Today I am quickly using a peaceful hour, lest you think that in the end we have forgotten all about you. That is not the case; my thoughts are with you and your undertakings. I received your letter on time and read it with great interest. I was particularly pleased to hear about Fritz and that he slowly but securely gets on. You, too, can create a lasting home for yourself and your family with diligence and persistence. Above all you must learn to rely on your own strength and ability to manage without the support of others. Only when a man is dependent on his own drive can he develop his strength with success and certainty. I do not know if your brother-in-law Edward has done anything for you here this summer. I kind of doubt it judging from his own statements and I must point out that in your position I would not have leaned so much on him. It is also so that in your letter you develop some high-flying ideas, forgetting the old proverb that Rome was not built in a day. The smaller scale you start on and the more slowly and honestly you proceed the more certainly will you go forward. You might not agree now but later when you have the benefit of time to review your accomplishments, then you will find that I am right. You complain about your partner because he does not seem to concern himself with the business but all you really know is that he has given some money but no real work. When you start looking from the point of view then you will always judge others and when they are not always polite and gentleman like, remember it happens to all of us. I have had to deal with such details and bow deeply; that happens in all business as long as monetary considerations are important and so one must get used to the unavoidable and reign in one's feelings. Believe me, my dear Gustav, that when in the next few years when you are on your own, if you do not find it so easy to get unlimited money, you might be better off. You know what scenes we had between me and our dear departed mother and between you and me over this point. Your feelings against me were not the friendliest and they will not be after reading this letter; still, believe me, after due consideration you will realize that only warm and brotherly feelings have prompted me to write these lines which came out of my pen unasked for.

Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>. This letter was unfortunately set aside and when I read it again I was tempted not to send it but I assume that you will take my well intentioned advice in the right way.

In the mean time our joyous Christmas has come closer and now the children talk only of Santa Claus. Regrettable the feast this year will be a sad one for Helena because these days are also a lively reminder of the dear deceased and we will miss our dear Susan twice, first here and then we go to Staten Island to celebrate with the other family members. The pain of loss is offset by the new little baby. You have surely heard that Helena gave me my third boy on September 13 and he was Christened two weeks ago with the name Edward Oscar. He is now on the bottle but still happy and healthy. Helena is also feeling better the last days and I hope that when winter is over and all returns to

peace she will soon feel even better. Praise God the children are well and happy and that the climate suits them well this year after having done nothing but complain last winter. That they all are so well serves as an invitation to spend a week in Harvestude, Rabenstrand; Alwine remembers the area well, having lived there. It is next to the Great Basin by Alster with a good view and lovely in the summer. It is pretty cold now in winter and the draft protectors are by the door-sills as the children going to school run in and out in the bad weather. In the summer we take them away.

Fritz's visit in October was a great joy. He stayed only a few days but will return in the middle of January and stay longer. For the moment he is in Alexandria and may visit Jerusalem and then go over Beirut to Istanbul and via Trieste back here. He will then stay with Bertha who will be delighted as he will not be here over Christmas.

Christmas time is approaching with big steps, only a few more weeks and it is all over. We will celebrate as in the past all together hopefully in comfort. Your eldest will understand more this year and I delight in seeing our Hermann in front of the tree. I assume you will be with Wilhelm and his family. I rarely hear from them. Give Wilhelm, Elfriede and children mine and Helena's best wishes. I wish he would write me once in a while so that we brothers do not stay apart. Helena wants to write to Alwine but with the 6 children there is little time and she sends her heartfelt greetings to all. I hope you will soon write and let me know how things are going.

Do not forget your faithful brother  
Carl

**1870 Dec 31 Letter signed Isidor Bush & Son, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Mo., to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa.**

Mr.  
G.E. Meissner

Waterloo, Iowa

Esteemed Sir

Our outstanding propagator and foreman, Mr. Kelley plans to leave us as soon as we can find a satisfactory replacement. The reason is family considerations (he got married about 1½ years ago). We hope that you are well situated and so happy that you would not yourself (as when we were looking for a propagator for Bluffton two years ago) consider the position but if that is not so, or you could recommend someone, please regard this as proof that we have not forgotten you and remain forever your friendly and affectionate

Isidor Bush & Son

Answ. Jany. 9

**[1871?] Letter signed Louise Meissner to Aunt Wiene.**

Dear Aunt Wiene

Mama has written you a letter and now I will try to tell you something about us. Ella can already run and she can say a few words like Mama, Papa, Bertha, Peter, piggy. She can already wrinkle her nose when you give her a handkerchief. When mother scolds us and we cry, Ella will kiss us—she is always so happy.

Aunt Wiene, can you imagine that Ella fell against the hot and burned her little hand!! She walks by herself now. Ella can already by herself wash her hands and little face. I wish you could see the little rascal just once; she now can climb four steps in the stairs. Bertha, Johann and I go to the English school in the mornings. Ernst must tend to the cattle.

Greetings to you, Uncle Gustav and Emmi from all of us sisters and brothers but most of all from your  
dear little  
Louise Meissner

**1871 Jan 16 Unsigned etter (on stationery of Isidor Bush & Co., St. Louis) to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa.**

St. Louis Jan 16 1871

Mr. G. E. Meissner Waterloo Iowa

Your esteemed of the 9<sup>th</sup> of this month has been received. The way in which you present your circumstances makes us understand that, even if our offer pleases you, it is not so easy to accept promptly. On the other hand it is imperative that we fill the position as soon as possible because the work in the Propagating House is about to begin and our man Kelley can start somewhat but is about to leave us in early March. It would also be of great advantage if you could work with him for a couple of weeks so that you could more easily find your way around. We do not expect you to take the position, sad as that makes us, or that we can hold it open for you but as long as you expressed a wish that we give you more details about it here they are. Perhaps when you have reconsidered will it be possible for you to become available soon, perhaps upon your agreement may we be able to temporarily fill the position until you can get here.

The position requires a man who with diligence and eagerness can guide the propagation business (also the cultivation of plants, almost exclusively grapes in the greenhouse and outside). The green house is not big but of best construction (it is made from core wood of grape vine, and correctly handled will produce 25000 root plants). You have a young man of your own to help. All kinds of needed help is available for planting outside and in cold frames. You are only responsible for planting those brands that can easily be raised from cuttings when the work in the green house permits (my son is always happy to assist). Because Kelley was leading foreman and therefore responsible for work in the vineyards it was only at certain seasons that he could devote time to green housing. In short, we want a man who works as if and feels that the place is his own property. Isidor Bush, the father gives the means but he is not a worker and has many other businesses besides and you cannot count on him except when it comes to book keeping and correspondence. Raphael Bush, the son, is the only one who you can rely on for collaboration and advice and action and he tends to act more as an older friend than as a boss or commander. The workers in the vineyards understand this very well but he has never worked in the glass house due to a tendency to catching chills. The salary is now for Mr. Kelley \$65 per month and we give him in addition 1/3 of the net profit of the propagating business so the monthly salary can be regarded only as a minimum guarantee and it all adds up to \$1200 per year and with free housing in a small separate house with 2 rooms, well built (frame, lined with brick), free firewood etc is he well off. We sell now yearly over 7000 grape vines and have no doubt that with current market, our persistence and the reputation we have earned the business is ready for even more enlargement. We are now doing this in one branch, we are the leaders and trust we can beat any competition in this area but if the outlook is good we can add additional branches (there is no shortage of money or land). When you feel strong enough and have the ambition and confidence so is here already a career not only waiting but practically readymade. We do not know if you have children or how many, but just in case we must tell you that the opportunities for schooling in Bushberg are very poor. It is not possible to go into all the details in brief but this should suffice.

**1871 Feb 10 Letter signed Isidor Bush & Son (on stationery of Isidor Bush & Son, proprietors, Bushberg Vineyards and Orchards, St. Louis, Mo.), to Mr. G.E. Meissner, Waterloo, Iowa.**

St. Louis

~~Bushberg, Jeff. Co,~~ Mo Febry 10, 1871

Mr. G.E. Meissner

Waterloo, Iowa

Your esteemed letter of the 4th came to Bushberg yesterday and arrived here in St. Louis today – and as of today no cable has arrived – so we consider it as settled and expect you to arrive here “at the end of this month, beginning of May at the latest.”

We hardly need to assure you that there was no lack of applicants, many of whom from all walks of life were well regarded and recommended but were not accepted waiting for your decision; this is the best proof that we with confidence in your competence look forward to your arrival. It will hopefully not distress you if we ask you to speed up your arrival as much as possible. This would give Mr. Kelley a couple of weeks to be on hand for you and be by your side. Our Kelley has knowledge rare within this area and I am sure you would find it agreeable and useful and profit from it. (Neither Husman nor Campbell nor any of the other known celebrities are anywhere near the art of this young, modest man in the art of growing Norton’s, Cynthiana or many other similar roots and plants!) – His has grown up with this place and knows every lack and advantage thereof and would like to do his best so that you soon feel at home.

He has already started with the indoor propagation and brought in fresh sand and will attempt such a beginning that it should be a pleasure for you to carry on.

Your question in regards to housing: As long as Mr. Kelley and his family remain we will empty out my son Raphael’s room and we can find room for belongings easily enough. Later, the house which Mr. Kelley presently occupies has two rooms: one 16x14 and the other only 10x16 with a shed or summer kitchen. It will not however, be necessary to deprive yourself of such family heirlooms as you mention because of lack of space – “where there is a will, there is a way” – We certainly do not lack in good will to make our mutual circumstances as advantageous and pleasant as possible.

Please be assured of our best regards

sincerely yours

Isidor Bush and Son

P.S. Should against expectations any disturbance or delay occur, please cable us immediately at “Isidor Busch & Co” St. Louis – for which case we are holding a Mr. E.W. Wintzer (brother-in-law to Trumpy at Parson & Co) in reserve. If writing address it to St. Louis & Isidor Bush & Son in order to save time.

IBS

My best to your wife.

[Envelope stamped March 10 in New York at 1.30 pm Mr. Gustav Meissner care Isidor Bush & Son Bushberg Jefferson Co Mo]



**1871 Mar 9 Letter signed Fritz, Richmondhill, to brother Gustav Meissner, care of Isidor Bush & Son, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Mo.**

Richmondhill, March 9 1871

My dear Gustav:

Tomorrow it will be two weeks since I came home from my long and interesting journey. I am now acclimatized and no longer the pasha which my Bertha has accused me of being the last 8 days. I have really again become a hard working household member [German: House-donkey] getting up at 6 am and regularly travel with the first train to town. Over there in Europe, Asia and Africa it was better in this respect that I could stay in bed and relax longer, particularly in the winter. I do not know how many of my travel letters you have received but please send the ones you have and Wilhelm has read soonest to Julius and in that way I will get them back.

I was last in Constantinople for a week but was glad to get away because the bad weather made the already dirty city intolerable. I took a Lloyd steamship via Syrah-Corfu to Trieste and crossed at the Semering in frightfully chilly weather to Vienna and then quickly on to Hamburg. I could only stay for 4 days with Carl and then left him and his family happy and well. Helena is very well preserved and they are both happy in their new apartment and Helena has found in Anna Bolt a very satisfactory helper for both the children and the housekeeping; she is a very trustworthy girl. Alwine probably knows of her.

Dear Alwine, I left your dear mother in good shape. We had breakfast over there every day which turned into a family reunion and a very solemn breakfast.

Little Amalie was at home but now older; little Louise is a lovable but somewhat precocious girl, not quite grown but no longer a child, Selma now more of a lady. Emma is a happy wife and soon a mother. Neurath is a charming, solid person, Eduard is the boss but Emilia is suffering and without strength. Minna was also there and acted as the leader, always funny, pleasing and strong. The few days just flew by. Eduard was startled by your intentions, dear Gustav and worried, however pretty a face you put on it all; I got your letter of February 18 2 weeks ago and it did not make a good impression on him that you changed so quickly. The news also surprised me and it makes me sad that you have not been successful in Waterloo and that you must separate from Crittenden; at your age and in your business that does not advance you. God grant that you have been more fortunate in your choice this time and that you do not get disappointed in your hopes; I cannot judge and am quite anxious to get up to date information from your new home as soon as you are well enough situated.

I have not heard anything directly from our other siblings. I am so sorry that Wilhelm and Elfriede have suffered so during the winter. Bertha and the children have done well, Agnes has grown a lot and is almost as tall as her mother; she looks like a rose in bloom, thank God, and strong thereto. Helen came to see us on the first Sunday. Her visit to Bethlehem has been very good for her, she has learned to appreciate the comforts of home and is so loving and kind which we both enjoy and with impatience look forward to the day when she will come back to us. Neil is boarding with Methfessel on the landing and often with Sterzing since two weeks because he otherwise loses too much time, so we have only Agnes at home but that is OK.

I sent you recently a clay[?] pipe with some genuine tobacco to the Waterloo address with a box for Wilhelm, that will be a tasty treat for a Sunday morning.

I am very happy with the business aspects of my trip: we now have lots of business with the Mediterranean and I arranged commerce with the Levant which was missing, particularly for our patented Petroleum packaging.

I have recently paid off your note with Geib; I expect to be paid back with 7% interest as soon as Crittenden has paid you, or, send me one of Crittenden's notes. Your wine stocks must soon out of here and the old man is making containers for them and we make out the offers. With best regards from Bertha to Alwine, you and the children.

Your faithful brother

Fritz

**1871 Mar 22 Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustave and Alwine.**

Waterloo, March 22, 71

My dear Gustav and Alwine!

We got your lines late last night and dear me, what a bad time you had and thank God that it is all over and that you are happy in your new home. Thus our best wishes for you, our dearest, and also to you, my dear Gustav upon your birthday now gone, upon which we sent you our warmest thoughts. When you now start work we also wish for you a new and successful segment of your life.

We have had terrible rains and only been able to leave town 5 times at night and with the darkness stayed home. But everybody is happy and well. We still have freezing weather night and day with the occasional interruption by real bad weather; thus the planting has not yet started.

Now that all at home are healthy, I do not feel up to par and hopefully springtime will do me a good deed.

I went over to Crittenden; he seemed to think that I brought him nothing but lies and evasions; I have a carpenter's saw, which I used recently, reinforced at the end, is that his? If you do not know, write me anyway. He asks of you if you ordered a replacement at Simonson's—he has been waiting in vain, please let him know soonest.

Live well, excuse the rush and brevity. Let us hear soon again from you with good news. Be kind.

Yours

With greetings from all the young ones from house to house!      Wilhelm

P.S. Watch out for your gloominess. The good God hopefully has you all and you in particular under observation as relapses are well known among the depressed if ever so loved. Your W.

**1871 Apr 16 Letter signed Fritz, Richmondhill, to brother Gustav.**

Richmondhill April 16, 1871

My dear Gustav!

I have gotten your last letter and I see with pleasure that you have landed successfully in Bushberg and now I hope from the bottom of my heart that you finally are in the right place and can make some progress. Your wine stocks have been sent. American Express took 4050 of them; I have not yet made out a bill to Bush for them in case you want to bring out some more; otherwise it will be \$12/1000. You can then make out the bill and make sure that he sends me the money. I enclose a copy of your bills according to which you owe me \$77.90. I cannot recall for the moment if Mrs. Danner has paid anything; she came to the office as I was leaving. I will soon see her and then let you know. I am terribly sorry to see how little money you get out of the things you left behind. But they must go this year and I have hauled it all out. Some vines I gave to Dr. Goddard and to Silkman to settle your bills which were still unpaid. Your other plants are in terrible shape; I wanted to plant them any way but the old man said they were "fit only for burning" and so we left it. The evergreens must also go, I planted them with mine even if none are very pretty I can sell some and you get something out of it.

Emil is on the war path. I was astonished to find him so incensed, whatever brought this on? When Carl hears about it will we have a real set to. How much are you getting out of your Waterloo buddies? Take out of my part something for the notes and mortgage and write me about it in detail. You must do something yourself, I cannot be responsible to Carl.

Everybody here is well and sends you greetings; I have today time for myself here at work.

Your faithful brother  
Fritz

**1871 May 3 Letter signed Wilhelm, Black Hawk, to Gustav and Alwine.**

Black Hawk, May 3, 71

My dear Gustav  
and brave little Alwine!

Now what do you think of the fact that we have not let you hear from us for a long time and not yet answered your dear and fascinating letters?

We are very sorry to hear that you and yours, dear Gustav, had such an unpleasant trip—but it did please us to hear that you found everything in order as one could wish and expect and must now hope that this first impression remains unaltered and that you settle into your new environment and live well and satisfied with your choice.

How strange and empty it seems to us now without you, even if we did not see each other all that often we could always count on you and I hope that you are not angry enough over our dairymen not to miss us.

We hope that the 4-6 weeks which have passed have yielded fewer trials than what we unfortunately have been stuck with. Right in the middle of ordering time and without advance warning must all of our toil and moil be put on hold due to our sickness. Both Willi and the baby were more or less unconscious for 8 days, and Elfriede had barely gotten a good night's rest when little Carl took ill with a frightening fever on Easter and through the night it looked like he was hovering between life and death.

Thank God it is now over but it consumed night and day while it lasted and I must thank my Creator doubly. I succeeded with my own treatment to break such a severe illness and you know the method well. Hot and cold baths alternating together with other treatment and if Onkel probably had other ideas, he kept admirably silent and I hope he will show as much trust in the future. Ernst came down with Erysipelas at the same time. We were having visitors from Herfritz in that Beckman with family came and stayed for 8 days. Then Emil's wife suddenly became so ill at midnight that we had to send for both Emil who had gone back to Green County and for the doctor. It was a fright and worry with the house full of people and patients and you can well imagine what a stress this was on Elfriede.

Now all of that is over and then Elfriede became ill and I had to stay on the couch for a couple of days but we have had it for a long time to come and want no more. I have since together with Willi had an attack of pneumonia and a few weeks later of diphtheria but managed with God's help and constant watchfulness and care turn it all for the best. This time we had the doctor in to help. I will look upon this as learning experiences.

The physician pronounced my treatment as very satisfactory and approved the methods used and Willi is completely recovered.

May 4th

Elfriede found this letter when sorting the laundry and so now you have two letters with the same events repeated. Well, you just have to suffer through them; there is not much else of interest to tell. Because of the miserable wind it feels hundreds of degrees warmer.

I have written a few lines to the others; this is a day of grateful memory for us all during which we all think of each other. Stay well and happy, let us soon hear good news

from you and with the best regards and many kisses from our big and little ones to yours.  
Your Wilhelm  
P.S. Been lying here until today May 15, there was no delivery to town.

**1871 May 21 Letter signed Julius Meissner, Pittsburgh, to Gustav.**

Pittsburgh May 21 1871

My dear Gustav

Your letter is in my hands and many thanks for it. I hope you are well and that you are happy in your new location. I am just back from Chicago and spent 3 days in Decatur but did not have time to come to St. Louis. I have arranged for a lot of work in Chicago, for about \$12000. The same in Joliet. My burrs are working in Decatur and call for much steam. I was on the road for two weeks. In the beginning of July I had to go back and went on to St. Louis and Cincinnati and then here again. I installed a total of 5 boilers in the last place in Cincinnati. I have to go to Syracuse tomorrow to install a grill and then to New York State for 14 days; if all goes well and I make another 15% I will have to manufacture another 3-400 furnaces. I have made \$30000 in labor since the first of the year and have almost as much in sight until fall from Pittsburgh trade and the entire West. As to the letter from Folz and Otilia: I had quite a lot of extra outlays for salaries and improvements; also advertisements, signs, free lunch and cider. Otilia will be coming with Jack and the crew and go on to Iowa to see Wilhelm; she will then visit us for a full day. I am going to send Lana to the Alleghany Mountains in June. July sees me back in Chicago and then I go to St. Louis and visit you finally. L. and I are all well and hope the same for you. I will soon write again but I have a lot going on.

Your faithful Julius (Meisner)  
25 Vine Str. Pittsburgh

Answd. July 3<sup>rd</sup>

**[circa 1871 June 18] Letter signed Elfriede to Alwine.**

[circa June 18, 1871]

Dear Alwine!

God only knows how I have become so lazy about writing but you know how it is. I wish you could write more often and tell us about yourself and even more do I wish that you could visit us once. But that is not to think about. It has certainly that you lucky thing, so unexpectedly get to see your mother visit and maybe the very unexpectedness doubles the pleasure. That you are so happy there is a great joy for us, dearest Alwine, and makes us feel calmer because you went through some pretty rough times here.

I wish I could see the fat little Emmy once the poor little heart must be suffering from the heat. It is very hot here too and dry but the fruit tolerates it well if not quite as well as expected. I am alone here with Elly this afternoon, who plays very nicely but does slow me down, she brings all kinds of things over here and says thank you; now she comes and asks for water so I better listen and go with her. The dear little heart, I wish you could see her, she rides already with Ernst and Louise and Betty and is quite happy with that. One of her lower corner teeth is still missing.

Louise Methfessel had another little boy two weeks ago Sunday. I have really only seen Louise once as I have little time to go out with all the things that need to be done. The tax party had a propaganda meeting at the Luschen's and in the evening they all came over here. I wish you could have been here. I assume you are celebrating July 4<sup>th</sup> in St. Louis. Herrmann's had a ball at Whitsuntide and I went over to L.M. at 10 o'clock because she was all alone and had been expecting for so long. Her darling husband who really did not behave very well and instead of looking after his wife would not leave the dance until midnight. So I stayed till then. Thank God, dear Alwine, that our husbands are made from more tender stock and love us more than beer and dancing. Madam Best saw I at Louise's place and also Tette was here some time ago. Everybody sends their regards. The children send their greetings to you both, the little boy and dear little Emmy and wish often that you were here.

Berthe has her hands full. 150 chicken, 40 turkeys, only 4 ducks, no geese as yet. Lambs are plentiful. The sheep need to be sheared next week and look very good. The cows give good milk. I and Louise do the milking and we have sold a lot of butter. Eggs are also plentiful. We have gotten as much as 80-90 eggs a day.

A couple of weeks ago little Mr. Grewey lost Queen for us and the groomer, Wilhelm and Mr. Selmer looked for her several days until W. finally got her back. Winni is stabled at Louise Best and she is very happy with her.

Dear little munchkin, write soon, you got to have more time than I. You write that you are up to your ears in fruit of every kind; that we cannot say because so far we have seen little. Let us have an exchange, you send us some fruit and we will send you first class sausage and ham. I almost forgot to tell you that I now have a fabulous washing machine, quite different from yours but washes only so so and I also got a new clothes wringer. And are you coming this summer as we expect? Day after tomorrow I am going to town for the first time since you left.



Live well, dear little Alwine. Give our regards to G. and your dear mother; it makes me happy that your mother has taken little Emma as a special favorite. Kiss little Emmi from me; with deepest love, your Elfriede

**1871 June 22 Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to Gustav and Alwine.**

Blackttown, June 22, 71

My dear Gustav and very best Alwine!

You must not be mad at us because we write so rarely. We are so much more grateful for your lovely letters. We can only be so very pleased that the sadness which so often follows a departure to other lands has been offset by the pleasing circumstances now offered you.

We hope that you, dear Gustav and your family are well again-- Alwine writes that the climate change does not seem to suit you. You have to consider the overriding point of view often taken upon such changes: Does the work in the humid greenhouses seem easier than the same work in the open air? Please write me about this as I am concerned about willingness to work in others.

We are up to our ears in work as always happens when we run out of stone and the planting must be done and it is a pain when there is no way to get to one or the other. Now, it does please us when we see progress and that we do have; it is a little overgrown around here, as easily happens but we are well paid for our efforts. I have only one helper and cannot afford any more so you can understand how much there is to do and now we have lost another week of the remaining time and I had a horse die on me, but we got successfully through it with the help of the son of the youngest Gradys.

I put the seed corn on your list; we kept the tables, particularly the kitchen one which was too wobbly to send; so also the Baby-Chair if even you try to nail it. Also enclosed is the contribution to the note. There were some more things and I cannot remember exactly what nor have I had the time to pull out the boxes so it is all in there somewhere.

Harvest outlook which for a time was very good has again dimmed – the drought has literally burned the wheat. We have had a couple of weeks of changing early heat with almost sea like showers but too late for repair of the damage already done. Bolmer came yesterday from the fields deeply disturbed; he does not even need to attempt to harvest his wheat and as it is with him so is it for Wilmer and many others absent a miracle. A propos of Leland forward his and Methfessel's note for signature together with mine. It would be better because I do not even know the sums.

One can see some branches of the wine and had it been cut back at the right time in the spring it might have given a good crop, especially from the Clinton vines and those others protected by the drought. On the Concord—there are many grapes if they survive—but most that have survived are coming back very slowly and many of the very young plants were beaten down and we have had an awful time getting them up again but after this year it looks very good and encouraging. I have now all the Clintons on trellises. Can I leave them in the rows they now are in with only 4-5 feet from each other when I have the stock properly planted or must I in the fall put them in rows but at wider spaces because of need for sun and air?

I put out a bunch of trees this spring: going west from Shoemaker all the way to Burwell Clough and then on the side along the border 4 rows of locust and a grove having first to take some down and replant and then along the road to Gilder willows[?] were planted as late as the day before yesterday.

The fruit trees are being eaten up by bugs, the maples do not grow, the box elder only a little better.

It is raining this morning so I plan to write a few letters, had the weather been different there would have been no time—enjoy your time with your husband dear bride as long as he is still with you; say hello to little Anna who gave us so much unexpected pleasure and then yawned at me, the dear little soul—to ask you to visit us here when Margareta is away is more than we can ask; regards also from Lelands.

Now, with love regards and kisses from large and small to you all.

Your Wilhelm

We are in total agreement about the sale of the R. Farm; only wish it were over.

Have not been in town since the announcement of the mortgage; will get the details the day after tomorrow.

D.W.

**1871 June 26 Letter signed Fritz, Richmondhill, to brother Gustav.**

Richmondhill, June 26 1871

My dear Gustav

I received your check for \$100 today together with your nice letter of June 23rd. I will first pay Ravic and Steven \$50 each and tell you more about these things next time as I do not have time today; I will look up Tanner next and arrange that matter.

I am terribly upset that the box of silver ware arrived in such bad shape but it is not our fault. Our shipping clerk, Mr. Arnold himself packed it and I advised him to use the greatest care and he has packed it all in the best way in the trunk. I had that encased further but they must have mishandled it frightfully on the way or it could not possibly have gone this way. Perhaps a trunk was not the best way and a box would have been better and maybe I should have packed them myself from the beginning. I did the best we could but agree that it is hurtful what happened. What do you want to do with your fine furniture now; we sent it to Hermann today as we have permanently rented a back parlor there to have a place in Brooklyn to put our head down; to have a house here must one spend much.

We have rain here like never before and everything in the garden is luxuriant, the weeds the most so. We have not had much heat in June, it will surely come in July but everything grows well.

I am going to Bethlehem tomorrow to take our Helene home and we are glad over that. Agnes has not been well these days: she has had some jaundice; she is better today, she worked too hard in school and now she again has devoted enthusiasm.

Say hello to Aunt Alwine from us and the brothers and grandmother if she still is with you. Her departure will make you feel sad but we are looking forward to soon having her here.

We hope the trip in this heat will not be too hard on her.

Your brother  
Fritz

**1871 Aug 6 Letter signed Julius, Joliet, to Gustav.**

Joliet, Sunday night. Aug 6, 71

My dear Gustav

Got your lines. The last three weeks I have been between Chicago and here and maybe I will get to St. Louis and visit you in Bushberg if I can find the time. Still have not been in St. Louis. I have lined up work here for \$22000. I have been here for two days and put grates under boilers which must be done in haste because the mill runs tomorrow. We are talking about \$9000 worth of grates here alone. I will be back in 2-3 months. I still have to visit La Salle and Rock Island, and maybe Wilhelm if I can find the time. Must soon go back to Pittsburgh; Lana and I should not be parted for too long. I hope you are all well and healthy and satisfied with your lot. I have visited August. Have you read about the big explosion on the Staten Island ferry Westfield which killed 100 and injured 150? That must have been terrible. Well, I must back to the mill and work soonest. Warmest regards.

Your Julius

**1871 Aug 22 Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to brother Gustav.**

Blacstown, Aug. 22, 1871

My dear Gustav!

Thank you so very much for your kind gift of grapes which I just received together with your lines.

The ones on top were gorgeous but under that layer half looked like they were mostly fallen or torn off grapes—is that a stroke of genius from Raymond or are your people up to hi-jinks? I find the latter hard to believe but can also not think you did it. He said that he had sold all of the Delaware grapes when your letter came but mixed up a sample box of Delaware #1 grapes and this was the real thing and first class and tasted really good in comparison with those in the boxes of Concord grapes.

[in margin:] With kindest regards from Elfriede and the children to you yourself

Your brother Wilhelm

I have often wanted to send you some lines but have not been able to—always work up to my ears. Everybody is well; the harvest is average and not yet threshed.

And now for just a little business letter: On Sunday, September 3rd, that is in 12 days, there will be a huge party and as instructed, I order now 3 cases of wine each with 12 bottles and, being a good, drinkable wine should not cost more than 50 cents per bottle plus transportation. Payment preferred is Cash on Delivery or immediately after the festivities. This will help the cash position of the Society which expects a great deal out of Waterloo. In any case with prompt delivery will you get prompt payment, because here the wine is sold for cash.

Can you swing this for me and deliver at the right time so send it my way to Waterloo and put the freight on my bill.

[in margin:] Not enough going on; Horstmann is waiting for your letter.

**1871 Sept 15 Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to brother Gustav and Alwine.**

Blackhawk Sept. 15

71

My dear Gustav and  
Alwine!

At least for today heartfelt greetings and a thousand thanks—it is impossible for me to define how I was delighted and at the same time disappointed—more later. At first you must be bold but still always patient etc. In the same way I work more or less always and am everyday in the fields from morning till night.

Oh, my dears it is just too much to contemplate. Live well till next time; with all my love and thousands of greetings and kisses—

Euer teure Wilhelm

**1871 Sept 30 Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav.**

Waterloo Sept. 30, 1871

My dear Gustav!

A couple of weeks ago I sent you a fleeting greeting and a thank you for your unexpected wine gift. I did not have time to add any details.

Today I have some time which I usually do not—so first accept my congratulations on your little niece, who arrived here happily 8 days ago and who is fat and sassy, just like the rest of us and who has not given her mother any grief, thank God. All is quiet at night and all goes well.

Mother and all the offspring, young and old, send their best regards to Uncle Gustav and Aunt Alwine who know them so well.

It is too bad that our families are so far away from each other!

Eight days ago August came by but stayed just over night but we did get to visit. The baby announced itself only 8 hours after he left.

As usual I was the Chief Engineer, except when it started crying. I also as usual cried for help.

Last night came your friendly lines PLUS the wine to Elfriede at home and will she ever be glad for that. I and Ernst were taking the wheat down and stayed over night. It sounds as if you are happy and well situated and that gives me great pleasure.

God willing I could cross mountains and meadows to get where my children have been working since what seems forever but it will still be a few weeks before the harvest is over. It is sort of mediocre but for a long while it looked hopeless. We are getting about 10 bushels per acre. Barley and corn are very fine but the prices miserable.

The small fruit is all in and animal feed cut together. About 140 acres of land have been reseeded and my farm will now be all in grass except for a small portion in fruit trees the rest feed. If I stay healthy I would like to keep my part of the lower estates as a trial ground for wheat; a good harvest from these nourished by water inundation will pay for itself and then I can sell my old pastures for half price. Well, I did sell my fruit with some resistance but now there is no more chance or hope for that: the railroad has taken control of all of that.

Well, we will make the best of it until next chance. Hope we can stay afloat that long.

I was hoping to pay off some debts, big and small this year but it all depends on the market. But it delays so much that I never know where I stand and just have to wait. It hangs on a hair and I will not know until the end how much I make. Many a miserable dollar has been lost this way this year. And I do not need your experience to console me by telling how common this is. Well, we must hope for the best.

Everyone who knows me has been fair and above board and hopefully they will have patience for a while.

The last few years have been very difficult and I cannot wait for winter to come to see if this will make a difference. It depends on circumstances.

I have had the opportunity to taste and learn about your wines, thanks to your kind attention and the small order I put in. I have observed how well they were received and believe that it could become a lucrative business. Beginning on a small scale it might



realize well with time and if nothing else it will make for a trip down to you and to see your loved ones again.

Your wines have gotten such a good reception and although because of the size of the bottles (which as you state are half again as expensive), still come out about 20% less than what we are used to and so I have no doubt that one could make a very nice profit on it. If I could have the general distribution rights for this area and its surrounds, we could get together with someone in the City and it should pay off most nicely. Anyway we should be able to cover the city and so pay the interest and expenses and in a small measure the start-up costs. When the distribution is a little wider it will pay off well. We should keep it on cash basis with net profits then adding to hopefully increasingly good returns and because of lack of similar business here we should keep doing well. As long as we stay on cash basis all will go well and I am well enough known to expect to do well. It does come back to price and the chance that Bush will put his wines at my disposal, preferable exclusively and that remains the question.

Now about the unexpected and not entirely welcome disposition of the wine when it arrived.

The barrel arrived to my destination without ado just as Mr. Horstmann was getting my order for the Society housekeeper as C.O.D. from the express Office. Obviously enough—for these people—he thought it was the wine ordered especially since there were no expenses attached not even for express mailing. So he takes the barrel and tells me when we meet that the wine has arrived but not in bottles but little barrels and on he goes and I do not think of asking him the details and he hauls the barrels away in the sweat of his brow.

I can feel your amusement when I am running around madly (like a king) to the offices asking about bottles and then finally looking at the Freight Bill, running back to the depot—still no bottles and none ever came.

I am still in hope of receiving my wine but plan to keep the other kind I received because it did arrive in a timely fashion and I might as well have it in case people arriving for a feast, expecting to have a good glass of wine at a low price to go with all the other food. It did after all only cost me what it is worth.

I had retreated with half a dozen bottles so as not to ruin the celebration but kept a few back to try them out. I also got some of the other variety but that has already been tasted and approved of by August and then gone through many other hands and palates and assessed as being somewhat “off.” That is sort of an indication and I have considered mixing the two. Now it was a wedding gift from you and as such gave us great pleasure but has in all other ways confounded us. Now I have probably bored you long enough but we must get together and appraise a bottle soon again. Your young and beginning business would benefit from this and that is the least I can do for you: if it is prophetic remains to be seen. I’m sending a couple of lines to Bush and besides yourself you need hardly a better referee than that. Even if only a couple of hundred dollar income result from this, it is still worthwhile. You could always consider the use of a cheaper bottle for the wine. Seriously, dear Gustav the bottles have not struck me with admiration but rather done me well: Also I can barely get over the effects of the bad winter.

Bush has had some bad times: Heinrich L. dies from Typhus fever. Mrs. Koch has been seriously ill but is now better. The old folks at Methfessel’s are not in the same league but have kept up remarkably well.

Koch starts a new bank with his brother in Nast.

Now stay well, hug and kiss wife and kids from all of us and let us hear from you very soon and in details.

I have included the copy to Bush.

With all my love

Your Wilhelm

**1871 Oct 9 Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav.**

Waterloo, October 9, 71

My dear Gustav!

I wrote you 8 days ago and I hope you have the letter in hand and that you are all well and healthy.

I had enclosed a letter to Bush with a small order and a draft attached—I might not have had his address quite correct and I do not have it here. No answer yet.

Let me soon hear from you. Elf. and the children are well and healthy, thank God—am in a hurry but with all my love, greetings and kisses, trust and peace I remain

Your Wilhelm

Please use the address Wm T. Meissner in the future.

(The other signs himself still Wm Meisner.)

I have forgotten to mention Bush's letter. The response came. We are having terrible weather here.

**1871 Oct 21 Letter signed Elfriede, Black Hawk, to Alwine.**

Black Hawk, October 21, 1871

Dearest little Alwine!

I know, I am a terribly lazy letter writer. But you would excuse me if you knew how in the last couple of weeks before the little lark was born everything got to be so heavy and I could not get any of my work done. The baby is thick and fat and much stronger than Elly was. We were planning if it was a girl to name her Alwine after you but the name is so long to pronounce and the abbreviations not nice so now she is Helene Alwine. Once she is christened you got to come and see her and hold her. You should see how much Ella loves her little sister; she is so tender it is touching. You should see Elly: she is such an accomplished little tease and has all of her five brothers under her command. She can name them all—Ern, Wiwi, Babba, Johnny, Welmy. She is so amusing and tries to say all kinds of things and it sounds so funny. I wanted her to say papa instead of father but the little rascal thought I was speaking of apples (which she calls papa) and immediately wanted an apple!

Fat little Emmy has long since been walking; you, naughty Wine writes so little about your children and we would really like to hear much more. The brothers are always asking what little bubba and Emily are doing and you do not write anything I can tell them. Right now we have no outsider to help; it is difficult to find good people and so the kids have to help a lot on the farm. Louise and I had to take a load of barley to town yesterday—Wilhelm with another wagon ahead and the children behind. Ernst had to stay home. All of them have been riding horseback this summer; Bertha at a gallop in the corn fields behind the meadow.

O, dear Alwine how much we would have to talk about if we could see each other and why did you have to leave. I wish W. could get enough done so he could make a trip to you; it would truly be good for him and there is so much work to be done! Troubles that this summer has brought on him. August was here two days and it is lucky he did not stay longer because the Baby was born the same night he left. The little lark is as quiet as Elly was, she looks a little like little Louise, it is really too early to tell.

Totte Koch is expecting an addition to her family this month and hopefully it will all go well because she has been very sick. I have not seen Louise M. in ages; she still has not been here when all the other German housewives have been over; Louise does not seem to have time but she does have time to go dancing! Fanny Benk has now also sealed her fate and gotten married to a fat butcher in La Crosse; he is her sister-in-law's brother and it is not from love but he does have money.

Sunday. Leschen and Methfessel were here today, Louise said Totte has left Waterloo, they are in Dyersville, Koch and his brother have started a bank.

**[Margin note:]** Greetings and kisses for old and young from your Wilhelm.

It is very hard on the Leschens now that Totte is gone. Henry's death has severely affected the old ones although senior seems still strong. I visited the nurseries in Waterloo once. Everything was neat and clean but the house seemed so empty and deserted. They were no longer using the big hall and on the ovens stood utensils.

I am up to my ears in work; which means that the winter is getting closer and nothing is ready. It is not small potatoes to take care of 7 children and makes for plenty of

work; then there is the house for I have to do most of it as Emma cannot do the hard work. Mrs. Hirst has unfortunately only been here a few days and as good as I had it with Elly have I yet to have again as you, dear heart predicted. We got a letter from Knorr yesterday; Otilie has had a little daughter.

Be good dear little Alwine. You must excuse my poor penmanship; the tip is bad and the holder worse. Thousands of greetings from the whole herd also from Baby to dear aunt and dear uncle. My eyes are closing; it is late and all gone to bed.

With warm kisses

Your Elfriede

[1871 or 1872] Dec 7 Letter signed Teresa [Bush], St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner.

St. Louis Dec 7 [1871 or 1872]

Dear Mrs. Meissner!

You are soon going to call me impolite because I am so late in answering your dear letter which really made me so glad. But I am really rather busy, in part because my parents which I must wait on hand to hand and in part by my little household because I made a not very good choice of housemaid. Helena is already now going to school. I do not need to ask how it goes with you. My husband says that you and your loved ones look very well especially the children who are as round and rosy cheeked as one can hope for. My husband could hardly tell me enough about your wonderful hostessing last week and what a pleasant day he had spent out there with you. I hope that you very soon will give me an opportunity to have you all over here and I will accept no excuses for no-show as I really look forward to seeing you. So there! And let me know one or two days ahead. Mrs. Süch I have only seen once and not visited since I got here. She is quite well and was happy with your letter and saves the response for a conversation.

I have been asked to give you kindest regards from my sister and parents. My parents are feeling good in and over their new house.

You must excuse me for not getting your errands done until late but through a misunderstanding the lace ended up as a little pillow and I did want to send it all together but the shoes could not wait any longer so I will send the lace today. I promise you to be more prompt next time. I see now that my scribblings are adopting such dimensions that you will be scared when you see them and I still have things to tell and questions to ask. Above all I need to ask if you have had Nicola immunized? The black sickness (smallpox) is now so much talked about that it seems good foresight to have the small ones immunized as soon as possible.

Well, I have to leave well enough alone for today but I do expect an answer from you very soon.

My best regards to your husband and many kisses to the children from

Yours

Teresa

Please give also your mother our best regards.

**1871 Dec 10 Letter signed Wilhelm, Blackhawk, to Gustav and Alwine.**

Blacktown, December 10, 1871

My dear Gustav and Alwine!

Oh, how long it has been since I let you have a sign of life. But, it has been such a suffering and unhappiness here it is nothing but worries. Not just work and the complaints about that. The last two months we have not had any workers—first because we could not find any and now because we do not want to hire anyone. The salaries are too high and we do not know where to get the money.

With the fall came not only a very rich harvest but also ticks—damnation and pock on all of them here! So now we have poverty and pest and in addition other sorrows—and I am only one of hundreds or thousands. Everybody spent more than they had. The income might at first soothe our sisters' disappointment but what next?

But, dear brother, not a word to outsiders, this we must bear ourselves!

I can hardly write anything more but wanted to give you a sample as we first heard of it—a propos the wine on request which Best ordered 5-6 weeks ago for about \$40-50 I must tell you it is not at all a “solid performer” as he has let me know and I had Selmer here until early morning and shared the letter with him and under these circumstances Bush cannot do anything for me; not a good start and adds to all the other troubles!

Do not expect much more, dear Gustav, we carry on barely and love you truly.  
Greetings to all                      Your Wilhelm

**1871 Dec 21 Letter signed Fritz, Newark, to Gustav.**

Newark, December 21, 1871

My dear Gustav,

I have not had any direct news from you for several months and I hope that you are all well and happy during these cold winter months. Your living is quite different during winter compared to summer but one is as busy as the other and one gets used to everything if one must, as long as it brings in business. I see that here in our place; we have now been at the Landing by Carl's place and I still feel out of place and would much rather be in old Richmondhill—at least one is used to that.

Your work in the nursery must be a great compensation; it is at least more pleasant during the winter than any other occupation. How it all is going to work out will not be clear until the year has run its course. Winter got started very early this year, already in November and the old Allen got sick for 4-6 weeks and I fell behind like so many others and with the frost the vegetables got stuck in the ground and were either lost or the rabbits ate them (and have they ever multiplied since you left), and I have no time for hunting them down—during the week nothing but work and on Sundays I have other duties that take up my time.

Carl is now happily back in Hamburg; his visit was a short one and in 18 months it will be my turn to relieve him.

If at all possible I will then make a round trip in the West and hope then to see you next year once more.

I sent you yesterday a small box for Christmas, hopefully it will come at the right time with Adam's Express to St. Louis and then it will be forwarded to you: use it for happy celebrations with each other.

Nothing has changed at the Richmond farm; Carl and Julie had time off and we used it to lay out everything and to plan and so we will be ready to start putting in the new roads at New Year. We shall put the main road on top along the border and not use the lower road anymore: this will make the building lots look much better. The building costs will be the same; we had a lot of difficulty in keeping the road to the little farm. As it is now we have established one of the best views on the whole island. I have had a lot of work from this undertaking and hope to bring it to a satisfactory end.

Many heartfelt greetings to the two of you and the children and a happy new year.

Your

Fritz



**1871 Dec 28 Letter signed Julius, Pittsburgh, to Gustav.**

Pittsburgh Dec 28. 71

My dear Gustav

Your kind lines have arrived and we thank you and your wife so very much. Lizzie would and should write herself but she is so busy with the baby that she never gets around to it. Things are alright with us, the baby boy never rests during the day and there is so much to do. He is always agitated and sleeps little.

Best wishes for the New Year; may the New Year bring you all satisfaction and good health and fulfill all your quiet wishes. We celebrated Christmas quietly among ourselves. Mother-in-law was here. Julia got her first Christmas tree and was very happy over all the gifts: she did not know what to open first. This year we had the tree kind of to ourselves. Next year Willy be better able to appreciate it. Willy is now 2 months old and Julia 2 ½ years. The latter is a darling child, occasionally wild, but gives us great pleasure. She is a little behind in speech, but in other respects spirited and will certainly improve and stay healthy. So far concern is unwarranted and she has been spared diseases. I have been on traveling foot a lot. We would like to go again the days after Easter to attend to my business. I am hoping that if all goes well I will make \$30000 which is good this year. The Chicago fire did not hurt me and I have still been able to install \$20000 worth of graters. I will be back in Chicago in February and will then go on to St. Louis if nothing comes in between and will come and see you if possible.

Would you check out a certain Mr. Hitchcock No. 25 South Main St. St. Louis? He is in the oven manufacturing business. Burke and son might be able to tell you what kind of man he is.

Nothing new otherwise. We still live in the old house but may have to move out in the spring. Where to we do not know. With best regards from Lizzie to all of you

Your faithful Julius

1872 Jan 4 Letter signed "W," Blackhawk, to Alwine.

Black Hawk, January 4th, 1872

Dear, sweet Alwine!

Should I not be ashamed of just accepting things from you lovely people and not send you anything? Work has become almost impossible, we cannot get any outside help and so the children and I must often help out. I had hoped we would have slaughtered by January 15 but that is not the case. The children have made some small things for dear aunt Wine but you will have to wait for anything else until I can send you something from the slaughter.

Hopefully you have gotten through the merry Christmas celebrations alright and those little stumps have been laughing with joy. Lots of cheer here. I had bought each child a [word unclear] and here come all these things from you lovely people; the big box was almost inexhaustible: It was filled with whistles and tables and what-not's for children as well as butter churns and thousands of other things. I handed it all out and the tables were full of stuff and the children were delighted to squabble over the loot. Miss Elly made a joke out of it all and held out her hand and said thank you. Our Christmas tree was unfortunately only a stand-in for a real green tree in that it had only a stick in the middle but looked pretty good in all the shining lights. People's eyes also shone in the many candle lights and they, too, enjoyed the wonderfully green Christmas tree.

I must thank you so much, dear Alwine for all the pretty things and also how I felt when you left and how it all comes in handy just as if ordered. I put the dress together rather quickly and wore it during the holidays and it fits me so-so.

Little Helen has already since Christmas had on all the things from Aunt Alwine. Many thanks, dear heart, for all the trouble and work you have gone to for our sake. I did not get much ready for Christmas; there was an endless row of things to repair and I did not get started on anything new and still is not ready. Elly is a vain little rascal and acts like a fool when she gets a nice frock and of course Wiwi has to put it on her and then she will not give it up. You sent so many things for me, my heart, and I am so grateful to you. Oh, if we could only see each other once again; I regret so much that you are no longer here!!!

Many regards from all your friends; they ask often about you. Poor Mr. Selmer broke his leg just before Christmas and still rests over there at Horsman's. Otherwise all are happy and well. Mrs. Kock has a little daughter and Mrs. L. Lüscher is expecting.

Now, dear little Alwine, I can no longer avoid wishing you, warmly and heartfelt, a Happy New Year and a happy birthday soon to come. I wish from my heart that all will go well for you. The children enjoyed your letter very much especially the part that little Ludwig remembers them. I wish I could see the children together again. Elly has relived the New Year's Eve with you [word unclear] she now says Mama and calls you Tata Wemi. She repeats everything; [word unclear] she says Tady instead of Lady.

A thousand greetings to Gustav and the children and, once more many thanks to you dears for your love from your Elfriede.

PS. I could go on babbling for ever but it is already late and W. wants to get an early start tomorrow for Waterloo where he plans to stay a few days.

Yesterday, Jan. 5, your dear last lines came into our hands and shortly thereafter your dear gifts. A thousand thanks, you dear people. They have given us much pleasure.

Your [word unclear], Winki, concerning Bush were most welcome and I have written him, [word unclear] that it will in no way do [word unclear] [words and meaning unclear]. As soon as possible [two words unclear] and, until then, with love Your W.

**circa 1872 Jan 23    Letter signed Elfriede to Alwine.**

[circa January 23, 1872]

Dear Alwine!

Surely you have been expecting to see W. at your place during these weeks but unfortunately XXXX is sick and since 4 days in bed and I have not felt well the last couple of days. I hope you are all well and so also your couple of little ones.

Eight days ago it was our birthday, dear little Alwine, please accept our heartiest wishes and may God keep you well and fulfill your hopes and wishes.

Hopefully you have all been satisfied and happy recently; we have even if I do not feel good at the moment.

You are not getting any birthday cake; I am not in a position to bake it now as we are in the process of slaughtering and with W. sick no time is left over. I am sending a little something to live on as a little birthday remembrance.

There have been no letters for us recently—I really long to hear from Mama.

Louise Methfessel is right now in Waterloo, she plans to visit you, she said; perhaps you have already seen her. How is sweet little Emmy, can she stand up yet? Ella has been cranky the last few days.

Live well and many regards to your better half; when are you coming to see us?

Please, dear Alwine, send me the two small boxes from Christmas, I use them for aromatic herbs.

Much love and well wishes

Your Elfriede

**[1872] Jan 29 Letter signed Teresa Bush, St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner. Includes note signed Isidor [Bush].**

St. Louis 29th of Janaury [1872]

Dear Mrs. Meissner!

Am I not a very bad correspondent! or as we say in German, a lazy letter writer? I would rather not start making excuses for my not having written because when I think about it, I handled that poorly. But I am so overcome by your kindness that I hope you are not mad at me and will accept the good intention rather than the poor action. My warmest thanks for the pickled sausages etc you sent to us. All that we have tasted so far is so very good. My husband is particularly fond of the bratwurst which he praises as particularly fine. You have certainly taken a lot of trouble over the whole thing and I really do not know how to thank you enough for all of it.

I hope that you are all well and that the cold weather has not brought you another round of colds. How goes it for the children? Are they still happy and well?

My husband and I have promised each other that we will visit you as soon as the weather gets warmer. I hope this will be soon because I am already looking forward to seeing all of you.

There is not much new to tell you about us. We are still in good health and that is the best.

My parents send big greetings to all of you.

Also now warmest greeting to you and your dear husband from me and please show me that you are not mad at me by answering soon.

Yours

Teresa Bush

January 30, 1872

We expected a letter from your husband today—now we sway between the thought that the mail here in the evening is not always “on time” and so is not delivered and the fear that something has occurred.

With greetings and request for information

Your

Isidor

**1872 Feb 2 Letter signed Wilhelm to Gustav and Alwine. Letter is written on letterhead of Central House, J.J. Sanford, proprietor, Waterloo, Iowa.**

Waterloo, Iowa, Feb 2, 1872

My dear Gustav and Alwine!

You good people must be mad at us for sure but you know how we have it and even if the will is there we do not get a good start nor tell a good yarn.

We have been at work all the time and if we have not thanked you in writing for your gifts, presents and letters we have done so a long time ago in our hearts.

My fingers are cold; I can hardly hold the pen but I wanted to take this opportunity for a greeting, be it ever so fleeting.

Well are we all, praise God. I managed to see August briefly today and discuss some business but nothing can be expected from him. In about half an hour am I going home to the threshing which we have not been able to do any of for 3 weeks—it has rained and been terrible weather day in and day out; we have not gotten around to slaughter but we hope for better times, God knows and so goes it. Nobody shows up for roll call apparently (of the workers) but the overall outlook is better. Well, thank God, it only hurts when we laugh. As soon as I can manage will you get a longer letter from me, dear Gustav, and so will the women from Elfriede—if she has not already written—Nothing more for today except kisses and greetings and all our love.

Your Wilhelm

**1872 Feb 25 Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav.**

Waterloo, Feb 25, 1872

My dear Gustav!

You and your dear wife must be mad at us because we do not do any better and unfortunately cannot be expected to improve very soon, my dear boy.

I would have much preferred to write you sooner but I have had so much work all winter and even the evening hours have been tied up with the children's schoolwork.

Chucking corn, threshing and collecting fruit and berries and thousands of other jobs around the house and yard have been piling up with no peace and quiet and there is no room to add anything. You I am sure have nothing to add to that. Slaughter is coming up and then all the orders.

Yesterday I worked with fruit and farming: I got 140 pounds of winter apples and more than 50 pounds of wheat. God knows how much was lost while threshing in snow and storm. Well, thank God we have finally gotten through this time before hail would destroy more during spring. If all of our farm country now freezes and the harvest of wheat suitable for brewing hangs on a nail because we cannot harvest without outside help then we will finally become insolvent.

How tired we all are of the rat race in which we now find ourselves.

Do not be mad at us, dear Gustav, if we appear to ignore you—it really is not our fault; we are truly a plagued people and it is already January and quite obvious and the little people worry with us.

I better try to figure out what the future brings, waiting around the corner just not more complaint and work without end every day.

All of us are well, thank God—and we hope the same for you. Let me soon hear from you. I am sending off the berries tomorrow that I have here in town. At home the water stands high and I cannot expect to get back before it is flooded but I still have lots to do here in town—best of luck for now; would have liked to send of a bunch of letters from here because I have written nobody for a month but be good and forgive and write soon.

With thousands of greetings from old and young to all of yours and yourself from your little nieces Gickky and Emmy. Yours faithfully

Wilhelm

**1872 Feb 27 Letter signed J.H. Meissner, Barnums Hotel, to Gustav.**

Barnum's Hotel, Feb. 27, 72

Dear Gustav.

I do not have the time to see you again; I must get on my way. I wanted out of here earlier this evening but then I had to see somebody and it got to be too late. The outlook is good; I have been promised about \$10000 worth of work. One always waits for the other to take the first step. I am thinking of offering a guarantee here if Marshall Willens will. Perhaps I will return in 6 weeks. I hope you will keep well and happy until then. I am going to leave a large lead ore oven on trial with Bush. With my best regards

J.H. Meissner

Did you get my letter on Sunday; I forgot it on the train and so it was delayed over Saturday on the way.



[1872?] Feb 29

Letter signed Teresa Bush, St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner.

St. Louis, Feb. 29 [1872?]

Dear Mrs. Meissner

With this comes a part of the things you ordered and the rest I hope to be able to send in the beginning of next week. Your dear letter made me very happy and I see with pleasure that the beds are now seriously to your liking. Today is my plan to make you another proposal. Yesterday I hired a married woman to take care of the kitchen out there. She and her husband plan to move to Bushberg next Monday and as I will not come out until April and plan to keep Marie so perhaps, if you have not already hired someone else have good use out of this woman. She seems to be a very nice person, has seen better days but will now take any job offered. I will not start paying her until April 1 and I am sure she would be happy to have any kind of a little side income before that. She previously took care of women the first week after delivery. But, if you rather want another woman do not let me influence you. I have only talked about this as a possibility with her. The person mentioned by Mrs. Geider is the same one I spoke to you about earlier; hopefully are you now well situated with a choice to make.

Would you be so kind as to let Marie know that she is to arrange the room under yours (the one Christina slept in) for the cook. Also that she is to continue to do the work as now; but when Rafael comes out the new cook will take care of his meals.

Please give the yeast cakes in the package to Marie.

My husband has probably already told yours that he is feeling much better. After he slept so well Friday night he got up healthy and cheerful. Probably the raw wind was it that gave him a headache. Rafael is still not feeling well and he must take lots of medicines but that has not kept him from going to work.

Once more best regards from all of mine and especially from  
yours

Teresa Bush

My regards to you loving husband and kisses to the children.

**1872 Mar 16 Letter signed Wilhelm, Waterloo, to Gustav.**

Waterloo, March 16, 1872

My dear Gustav!

It is almost 3 weeks since I wrote you last—hope that you are all well as we are—except for my rheumatism which this year is worse than in a long time and which has made me quite indisposed lately.

We cannot let your birthday pass without sending you mine and the others best birthday wishes.

I hope with all my heart that you finally will reach the long desired goal in the best manner possible. Success cannot be far away after all your effort and work. That these expectations that I have and others will soon be filled hope we to hear from you yourself and it will be a great pleasure. You have since long already been where you can see the door to the future that will be opened by your diligence.

There is not much new to tell about us; we did finish the slaughtering—now comes spring quickly and all that follows it and then work starts piling up and to the sides all year long. Tonight there will be a surprise party to end the season—open secret. I wish they would at least one party make more of an effort to party during the rest of the year.

I received a letter from Ottilia this morning—she plans to go to Germany with the children during the course of the summer and to stay there. First she will be in Mühlhausen and then Ernst will follow her later: one after the other! I do not quite get it with this separation: his continual irritability over which she complains will certainly not get less from this!

I am going to send out a bunch of letters from here as usual and prefer not to drive home late. The roads are very bad especially for sleighs and we have a hard time to get anywhere on these miserable long trips. Live well, dear brother; I hope you will stay well from now on and think kindly of us far away. With heartfelt greetings from home to home and all the old love.

Your Wilhelm

PS. Bush writes me politely but insists on remitting to Botrys for the last order—frozen wine which also includes my little lot but says also that he will be happy to allow me working space and time to arouse it.

Do not read into this my inclination that you without informed opinion get mixed up in this but is not what I said exactly what happened?  
I wonder what exactly drives him? DS

**1876 Sept 6 Letter signed Isidor Bush to Meissner. Letter is written on letterhead of Bushberg Grape Nurseries, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Mo.**

Bushberg, Jefferson Co, Mo Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> 1876

Dear Meissner!

Perhaps can I here relieve my anguish and suffering—when I write you in my agony and more than agony. I myself gave you the postal rates this morning at Fette's—and then went to the office not expecting anything bad—“9 hours late” it said about the next train; probably was the bridge at Kansas City out of order or something—so it (the train) could not go. 9 hours late would make it 6 in the morning—9 o'clock true evening time—which meant that the papers should have something if there had been something happening in Kansas City shortly after departure. There was nothing in the papers. Oh, only too soon and terrifyingly would I be torn out of my care freeness. First came the following telegram from Salisbury, Mo. “Julia, Harry, Adolph, Richard, Marie, Matilda, Claude, Mother, Minnie and Dolph sound. Balance doubtful—help R. Bush.”

I only knew that the balance meant my dear brother-in-law Carl Taussig, sen. himself and our darling Jaky—and that “doubtful” in these cases was the same as—Dead!

There were no news at the General Office of St.L. K. City and N.RR. —my dispatch was the first about a disaster! Soon after they also got the news and it spread through the whole town that my Carl Taussig and 2 nephews killed said to have been killed and on the Bulletin Board of the Republican was included as explanation of the nephews “sons of Isidor Bush.”

You can hardly imagine my feelings, torn by anguish and doubts, in spite of the assuring telegram from R. Bush. But I did then get a second dispatch as follows: “Uncle Chas, Blanche and my Jacy dead. When track clear we will leave here. If you can, meet us. Are as well as can be expected” —R. Bush.

Arr. probably this evening—as soon as a train can go.—to you. Carry on—Your  
Isidor Bush

**1880 Dec 26   Reproduction of letter of Friedrich Hecker, Summerfield, Illinois, to Adolf Blankenhorn, Karlsruhe.**

No 6090

Letter from Friedrich Hecker in Summerfield, Illinois  
to Adolf Blankenhorn in Karlsruhe.  
Summerfield St. Clair Co, IL.  
December 26. 1880

My honored friend!

I received last night your letter of the 3rd of this month.

In reference to your inquiries I can only reiterate: keep your fingers away from all railroad stocks, in particular those which from the beginning promise high returns and dividends. You cannot rely on the recommendations of the bankers here as they have only their own interests and profit in mind, never mind where and how they accomplish it. What I wrote to you was the outcome of my discussions with friendly and first class finance officers and business men, among them directors of well established banks. One of the best positioned railroads is the Denver R.G. Railroad as you can see from the forwarded notices and brochures etc. (which I really hope you got?). Their primary service area to supply the needs of the mines and products for Colorado and neighboring states. As far as the rapid settling of New Mexico is concerned they are at this time in better position than the competition represented by the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe, the Mexico-Pacific and the Arizona-California railroad. But, because the company needs more cash for new adventures, it is using all means to improve its position in the market.

Added are other important circumstances. In spite of the enormous gold and silver production in this country and in spite of the also enormous influx of gold from Europe (the steamships bring millions every week) which is best seen as a consequence of a fall in the reserves in the Bank of England (with an increase in the discount), the same in France and Germany. Gold is sparse in New York and so are the bank resources upon which the business world depends for its needs under normal legal conditions in spite of this very big influx. Thus the gold ships and the result of occasional purchases and sales by United States Treasury (ministers of finance) are regarded with great expectations. At the bottom of this phenomenon lie the giant purchases, storage of and speculation in grain products and provisions such as meat products of all kinds. Whoever borrows money for such purposes must stand security. That is accomplished with bonds and the railroad papers are a major factor as their total value now amounts to 5000 e, even 6000 millions. The bulls (which is what haussiers are called here; bears for Baissiers) now drive up the prices of the rail road stocks under these for them promising circumstances with all the tricks of the trade of bourse and financial world. This promotes the interests of those who need the money and have the stocks. The floor of business in the Union is now particularly favorable and because it is so work on railroads is unusually rewarding to which the failed crops and the bungling of finances in various states in Europe contribute mightily and as a consequence even middling quality rail road bonds are exceptionally highly priced.

You understand that such circumstances cannot be permanent. For this reason I have taken care to point out that only such securities as rest on a permanent basis (as far as this is possible today), such as bonds by US and some cities and counties give you adequate security and for that reason and the small supply their prices are high.

These are things and circumstances well known to even the children here. It is a pity that you have such small town views and overestimate your own importance over there. What comes so easy to every yankee is a subject about which you have neither the understanding nor the perspective. Nothing else can be expected when your government makes up your minds for you and blesses you. Victims of this situation are not the astute bankers but rather the small scale capitalists, pensioners and so on who without financial view and foresight fall into the trap and without meaning to are fleeced in the end.

Each one of our 20 year old young men is from childhood on used to the continent wide expansion of our Union and to a worldwide, all encompassing view of business and this is necessary if he wishes to prosper. He does not grow up with the limited horizons of Darm-Hessen, Baden or Prussia, and instead becomes a Yankee with the above results. While Europe is strapped in a many-colored jacket of nationalities, interests and conflicts, languages and customs etc. etc. we, on the other hand have an equal sized continent but unified in language, laws, and customs and have elbow room. You do not understand it over there, indeed, you cannot understand it and now the results hit where it hurts. The safest investment (as high as they stand) are the 4 and 4½% U. S. Bonds and the City Bonds of individual cities. Illinois has like Iowa and other states paid off the big debts of their states. Keep your fingers off the bonds of the once rebel states above all as more than half of these have already been repudiated and so the faithful once more cheated.

Now to the rest of your questions:

Mr. Nicolaus Grein in Hermann is a worthy citizen and wine grower. He calls riesling the seedlings he has raised out of American grape seeds. While the grape looks exactly like a German Riesling, it is still a mistake to claim that this vine is a descendant of German Riesling.

Let Mr. Husmann send you his own 1880 publication on grape growing in which you will find the best summary of the new varieties. My friend of many years, Husmann is a straightforward gentleman through and through and in every respect knowledgeable and reliable. Do not ever forget that in the West 5 cent pieces circulate as the smallest change and is equal to 7½ Kreuzer and that the dollar here is equivalent to our old Gulden, that is 1 dollar= 2 Fl.30.

I advise you most urgently to experiment with the seeds from Nortons Virginia Seedling and also Cynthiana. Not only will you get outstanding black and blue but also white and yellow grapes and stock of the most resistant kind and the same goes for Vitis rupestris.

You did not answer if you had received the seeds from Vitis rupestris that I sent via mail?

Make your Italian and other south European friends experiment with Herbemont and Louisiana (the American Ruländer). They are the No. 1 A grape and as highly rated are the mother stock and the seedlings.

With warmest greetings

Fr. Hecker

**1885 Oct 21 Letter signed Mama, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri, to Emma.**

Bushberg Oct. 21-85  
Jefferson County  
Missouri

My dear beloved little Emma

You can hardly complain that the reading my letters takes too much of your time, but you know how little free time I have. When you eventually return we will be able to rehash all that which now is committed to thought. Think of you we do often enough and "Emma Mallie" echoes still early through the house and when I wake up it comes unconsciously to my lips. Listen, little Emma, you know that Mrs. Black gave you a pair of gloves and they are still here. I am now going to put them in the letter and I hope that they will fit you better than the ones Mallie got.

Be sure to send her a couple of thank you lines as soon as you can. Oh, little Emma, I enjoy my bedroom so much. I cannot understand how I could tolerate it so long in the dark rooms. Page also enjoys it but he is not there for so long. It does please him to be able to look out over the river in the early morning and the heavenly sun makes even the human heart grow warm.

Today is the day for ironing and you must not expect a long letter. I had just taken my baby to bed with me and was waiting for her to go to sleep. Then I saw the writing desk stand open and thought of my beloved Emma and the loved ones around you.

When did Aunt Bertha knit the stockings? I must get back to that again. What I cannot grasp is how Mallie's sleeves in her jacket get shorter by the day as it seems. I am going to put new ones in yours. Her red dress is too narrow in the skirt. Is yours too? I have the same fabric and am thinking off adding three large box pleats. I would like to make her a new dress for Christmas. The quilts must be covered. I have 6 shirts for the boys ready for the sewing machine. And so it goes on and on and at night my eyes close from tiredness. For the moment I am busy trying to convert the office in my little bedroom and that you can imagine is no small feat. Dear little Emma, one more loving kiss, enjoy and use well your time and be glad over all the deeply felt love that we bring you. Regards to everybody. All our love from your

Mama

Papa sends his love.

**1886 Apr 12 Letter signed Papa to Emma. Letter is written on letterhead of Bushberg Grape Nurseries, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri.**

Bushberg, Jefferson Co. Mo April 12 1886

My dear little Emma

Quickly just a greeting for today: hopefully it finds you well and not like our poor Eddie who wrestles with a rather severe case of mumps in which Baby Elsie keeps him company. That all of us, including Mama, James, Minnie and I myself have had it may not be known to you? I hope we have reached the end?

We feel so sorry for the poor Knorr children in their bitter fate and we think of them often. We have written them recently, just a few lines, but for so much pain it is hard to find any consolation. Please give them again our best regards and let us know how it goes with them. It must surely have been hard and sad days for all of you.

For today, dear little Emmy take this greeting with love. Stay happy, faithful and courageous. Greet all the loved ones and here is a kiss and love from Mama and the rest of us and from your Papa.

PS:

I would have preferred to write him myself but do not have the time so tell Uncle Methfessel, that we have a rather good Norton Cynthiana, Bushberger Growth 1885 which we however just decanted and needs to improve over the next 4-6 weeks. As soon as it is good enough to send I will forward it to Stobe. Please give Uncle Methfessel and the children warmest regards from all of us.



**1892 Mar 19 Letter signed Papa to Emmchen. Letter is written on letterhead of Bushberg Grape Nurseries, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri.**

Bushberg, Jefferson Co., Mo., March 19 1892

My dear Emmchen

I have yet to thank you for your dear birthday letter, and for your pretty chair covering as well as for your share in the gorgeous chairs with which you all surprised me on my birthday.

Well, now, "better late than never," my treasure. Take my heartfelt thanks and with them there will be another half dozen extra kisses for you. The chairs are really magnificent and gives me and the others much pleasure. From Mama I got a bunch of German porcelain and glasses and also a simply wonderful small nylon scarf which I am sure you will also like.

My second sheet of paper was smeared so badly on the other side so I took a new one but I hope you do not mind if I do not start the whole letter over again.

Hopefully you do not have so persistently cold as we do. This morning it was only 18° and from here on down to 10° every morning this week. Fortunately we still have some snow on the wheat fields or it would really look bad. Otherwise I do not think that the bad weather does much damage around here and it keeps me at work and business.

I better finish now if this greeting is getting off early this morning. Hopefully I will soon have nice letters from you. Best regards and greetings to Aunt Minnie. Greetings and kisses from all

Your Papa

PS. Did you get my Sunday letter with the Lace?

**1893 Feb 16 Handwritten lyrics to song celebrating the silver wedding anniversary of Gustav and Alwine Meissner. Document is written on letterhead of Bushberg Grape Nurseries, Bushberg, Jefferson County, Missouri.**

Bushberg, Jefferson Co, Mo, Feb 16 1893

It is today 25 years yodel-ee, yodel aa  
Since this silver wedding couple yodel-ee, hey daa  
Fighting for fortune and land  
promised to keep faith forever  
yodel-ee yodel-aa yodel-ee hey daa

How this now came about  
Tells happily a seminarist:  
In Richmond they both lived  
With Uncle Fritz and Mother

On a pretty afternoon  
Gustav said to Alwine:  
Come with me, I put the horse to cart  
Perhaps you will catch a man

And here they go through forest  
In love and full of romance  
Right soon there comes the first kiss  
And then the horse no further goes

All the leaves tremble  
With joy in the quiet place  
He does not have to go to Elysium  
Before he sees his angel come

With the engagement now in place  
Gustav turns the buggy around  
With effort does he get it done  
And bring to home the happy news

What they the nightingale confided  
Has grown most beautiful  
In happiness and joy, it is the truth  
They love today, the happy pair

And so it goes for years to come  
And you can live a golden dream  
We can so tell our golden couple  
We older brothers and a heap of nephews!

Yodel-ee and heidi too  
Yodel ee and aa

**1901 Aug 29 Printed lyrics, “Leid und Freud des Herrn Gustav Wilckens” [Regret and Comfort for Mr. Gustave Wilckens]**

Regret and Comfort for Mr. Gustav Wilckens. With the Melody: “Margarethe, girl without equal.” On 29 August 1901.

Daisy, Daisy, you my dear child,  
Sighs Gustav Wilckens very quickly,  
Daisy, Daisy, he remembers every day,  
How two eyes have made him insane.

His mother grieves for his pain,  
He also opens his heart to his friend,  
Max, a great thinker, gives him bold advice,  
Go quickly to Father Meissner, this is the only way.

However Father Meissner is not quite ready  
And says to our Gustav: Lord there is time,  
Our young daughter is barely bloomed,  
Should wait a year, now it is too soon.

He also tells the daughter: think this over,  
Of a hasty betrothal, nothing will happen,  
Nothing could be done, these words were hard to take,  
However in her heart hope lived on.

Yes, two hearts easily know the means and ways,  
And the father’s heart was softened soon,  
True love tolerates pain and separation,  
But the end leads to the goal, as you see.

Go then friends, they look at each other happily,  
Happiness will the future have in the house of Daisy and Gustav,  
Take your glasses and fill them all,  
Let love live on, without it nobody can be.

**1901 Aug 29 Printed lyrics, “Tafel-Lied zur Hochzeits-Feier des Fraulein Daisy Meissner mit Herrn Gustav Wilkens” [Invitation-Song for the Wedding Celebration of Miss Daisy Meissner to Mr. Gustav Wilkens]**

Invitation-Song for the Wedding Celebration of Miss Daisy Meissner to Mr. Gustav Wilkens on Thursday, the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1901

Melody: Enjoy Life

Now barely eleven years have passed  
Since a wedding was celebrated here,  
Then it was Amy and Fritz,  
That is a happy pair.

Today we celebrate the wedding of,  
Amy’s charming little sister,  
And we sit at the place of honor  
Gustav and little Daisy.

Then Daisy was the flower fairy,  
Could not think of,  
How it will be for life,  
To have a loving man.

Then as the pretty bloom,  
Brought out the lovely bud,  
Then our little daisy thought,  
Let’s think of what to come.

It was in last November,  
During her first dance,  
At dear Aunt Bieber’s,  
Everyone knows her!

Then for the first time,  
That she saw Gustav,  
She thought, this is a nice man,  
And he what a lovely fiancée.

And as they frequently met,  
Frequently on the skating rink  
Or in the cathedral,  
Live in their heart was loud.

The heart was taken by storm,  
And held fast for them,

To go through live together,  
Would the very best.

It seems that they were right  
Just look at them now  
How happy they both seem  
The bride as well as the groom.

Meanwhile only love makes happiness  
You unmarried please notice,  
Also you look for your love,  
Give up your freedom for this.

**[no year] Mar 14 Letter signed Teresa Bush, St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner.**

St. Louis, March 14

Dear Mrs. Meissner!

My most heartfelt thanks for your dear lines which as always gladdened me. I was particularly happy with your last little note from which I gathered that you now have hired a household assistant.

Were you happy with my purchases?

Is the wine list of the right size?

If I am not mistaken today is your dear husband's birthday.

Please give him my best wishes and may he get everything he asked for as well as and in particular the presence of his family, soon and forever.

My husband came back in a great mood from his little trip this morning.

My parents want me to forward their best wishes; my mother already enjoys thinking about spending a couple of days here at Bushberg with us next summer.

I could not get the chocolate you had written on your note. If you want chocolate in bars, let me know as well as if there is anything else you would like.

Please accept my greetings and kisses to you and the children and make me happy with another couple of lines real soon.

Yours

Teresa Bush

[no year] Dec 22      Letter signed Terese Bush, St. Louis, to Mrs. Meissner.

St. Louis, December 22

Dear Mrs. Meissner!

Many thanks for your kind lines and especially for the last ones in which you announce your welcome visit. I am already looking forward to that. You and your loved ones are most welcome here and I hope that out of the "New Year days" several more may come. You do not need to bring any bed linen for your overnight stay, I will ask for that from here. The breakfast is included and I hope they will give you really good cakes. Half an hour of airing (of the bed linen) should be enough. The attached notebook I want you to give to Marie as Christmas gift from me and the other little things are for the children who I hope will enjoy them and thus give you and Marie a wonderful Christmas which I wish with all my heart.

It is probably better if you let us know what day you plan to arrive. Then there will be somebody at the station who can bring you to my apartment.

I also wanted to ask you to ask Marie why she has not sent me any eggs. It is hardly likely that with so many hens none are laying eggs. She can put them in a small chest or basket in bran and you can perhaps bring them here. If it works well she should send them on a regular basis.

Finally, I look forward to see you all after this year and hope that the children stay healthy and nothing else keeps you from coming.

With warmest regards

Yours

Terese Bush



[no date] Long Friday

Letter fragment in Elfriede's handwriting to Alwine.

Long Friday

Dear Alwine!

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak and so is it with me. It rains constantly and the stupid kids are always ill at least one of them and W. is still not well and looks puny. I have also felt bad a couple of days and stayed in bed Monday and Tuesday!!! Now that I reached Long Friday I was greeted by the arrival of my brother and his family which planned to stay 2 weeks.

We had such a terrible wind on Saturday that we could not trust ourselves to leave the house. I worried a lot because when the storm increased one could feel the house trembling. Maybe you read about it in the newspapers. Our little outhouse was turned over by noon and the bigger machine storage was also blown away and W. suffered considerable losses. Willi started complaining over back pains in the afternoon and had a high fever by evening. On Easter Sunday he developed higher fever with headache and a catch in the side and was hallucinating and did not recognize anybody. You can imagine dear little Alwine how we all felt and there we had Methfessel, Leuchern, Petersens and my brother, all of whom stayed till 10 pm. I could not pay attention to anything else and W. had to be with Willy and as soon as he fell asleep we made him sweat and then washed him down and kept this up for several nights. By Thursday there was a slight improvement, thank God. Wilhelm had managed to break the fever with the sweat cure and cold washes. Willy needed one himself after that. Kathy too sick on Tuesday with stomach cramps and we had to send to Grundy C. for Emil and the doctor. She could go home on Friday. We asked the doctor to take a look at Willy and after he examined his chest he said the poor child had pulmonary fever but had overcome the worst, approved of Wilhelm's treatments and said we should stick with that. Thank God, he has now successfully come through and is rather happy, has an appropriate appetite but is still a bit pale. At the same time as Willy was sick Ernst got erysipelas which kept him in bed for 8 days. Now thanks to God is he all right again. Old Wilhelm had an attack of pulmonary fever but mustard plaster and sweating cured him pretty fast and then W. had a sore throat but yesterday he was ready to go to town with Ernst.

Will you excuse me now for not having written to you earlier? We got your letter in due time and have commiserated with you over your bad trip. Now you have already been in your house for some time and got it all nicely arranged. How goes it with your little boy and Emmy, hopefully are

**no date          Letter signed Alwine and family to Raphael and Minnie Bush.**

To the silver wedding celebrants  
Raphael and Minnie Bush

25 Years! It seems like a long time when it lies ahead of us and then how quickly it has flown by when it is over!

How many pleasures, how much joy you have brought us, but, naturally, deep shadows have not been lacking. Side by side we have stood feeling joy and pain together. It was a wonderful relationship!

So, let us once more extend our hands to you and accept from us our warmest wishes for your welfare.

Alwine and family

**no date Letter signed Gustave, Erie R.R. and Buffalo, to “Mr dear, faithful treasure.”**

[Translator’s note:] Gustav was obviously either just married or engaged which would be around 1866-1868. Letter probably is written before 1868. Gustav is in the Central time zone (Buffalo) and if the sun is already up where Alwine lives she is either still in Europe or on the East Coast. However, later in the letter Gustav says it is 5 in New York and he is at 6.30 so something is wrong about my deduction. I cannot find any way to identify the month it was written in.

Erie R.R. 27<sup>th</sup>  
5.30 am

My dear, faithful treasure

I have been lying awake on my bed for half an hour and thought about my dear girl and waited until it gets light enough to write you a couple of lines, dear heart. We have 20 minutes of switching train and while at your place the sun is already up since long it is here coming now like a fireball. [Illegible word] have I already the

Buffalo the 28th  
6.30 am.

Just as I had started writing yesterday was I interrupted by the conductor with the announcement that we were close to Buffalo so I had to get ready. Then I could not find an opportunity all day to write you a couple of lines, dear heart. Now awakens a new good day. According to N.Y. time it is now 5 am and you, dear heart, probably sit at the breakfast table with your mother. How often do not my thoughts go to you and seek you out in one of your chores and then I wonder if my loved one thinks of me?

Your dear loving picture stands before me on the table and looks so friendly at me and when I see it the longing to hold the sweet lovely original in my arms wells up within me and how I look forward to my return I cannot begin to tell you.

You will probably want to know now about yhe trip and how it has gone for me.

Rather well so far and I will give you a brief overview over everything I have done so far.

Monday’s trip on the Erie railroad was wonderful and my only regret was that my sweet darling was not there to share and enjoy the many outlook points and views that are offered on this route. You would have enjoyed them with me and now all I could say was “Oh, how I wish my little Alwine were here.” We are going to see the Niagara Falls tomorrow early and then I will miss you, dear heart, even more and so the tour does not give me quite as much pleasure and if I had not already started I would gladly have given it up and saved the pleasure until you, my dear, could have been part of it.

So, now I hope that the heavy clouds in the sky right now won’t ruin the pleasure completely. Back to my travel report. I took a sleeping car Monday evening and slept through the night fairly well and even dreamed a little of you but more about that later.

We arrived here in Buffalo at 5.45 and I had breakfast. I then took the 6.30 train to North East and arrived there at 10. The meeting was well attended but in my opinion the business coming out of there would be disappointing. The location and climate of this area is very good for wine culture, the best I have seen and a sound choice but more about that later by mouth. The planned excursion I skipped as it would take 3-4 days and

I did not foresee any practical consequences from it. I would much rather, should it become necessary, spend a few days extra in Rochester. I might be able to write about that tomorrow evening and will in either case send a note on Saturday evening, if you have not gotten another letter from me by then.

I hope that dear Mother has been quite well and that you, my treasure has seen to it that during this week has had plenty of rest. How glad I am that tomorrow I might have a letter from you which hopefully has nothing but good news.

But, my darling, now I see that I have only 5 minutes till the train leaves. Forgive the rush. I would rather chat with you for hours but I do not have the time. I hope you can read these scratches of mine. It will be better tomorrow.

With thousands upon thousands of greetings and a hearty kiss, treasure of my heart, your deeply loving and faithful

Gustav

Many regards to mother and all the rest.