

Translated by Torbjörn Höjer, Håkan Höjer and Randy Honebrink in Lidköping, Sweden
2003.05.29

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West-Union, Aug 21st, 1910

Beloved Brother and Family.

We hope you are well. Times goes by, and we with it. And you dear brother, completely forget to write us. Let us not forget each other so that we neglect sending a few lines to each other from time to time. We do not know for how long we can talk to each other in this simple but joyful way. But since we neither hear from you nor get any letters, I would like to write to you shortly. First and last we may thank God for our good health and all the blessings we enjoy every day for both body and soul, but that we so often forget in days of health and prosperity.

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This summer has been unusual dry, many places in this country have had the worst harvest, especially in North Dakota and Canada. And forest fires have ravaged terribly and have laid waste both villages and cities. Our sister's son Oscar Wig, who is in the city of Havkins, Wisconsin, wrote us that all men of the city spent a whole week mid July working against the forest fire, to save that town - you did read about it in the papers.

In this area only a little rain has fallen, not enough to reach down to the potatoes. Therefore they will be quite bad.

But oddly enough the crops around here will be better than expected. The wheat output is 20 through 25 Bushels per acre. In the area where we had corn last year we got 28 B per acre and in the other area 23 B. Last Thursday morning the 18th this month, we harvested and got 400 B. of wheat, 226 of oats, 36 B. of rye. A good crop this year.

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But the hay harvest was rather small. We got a 4th compared to other years, only 25 loads. On the highlands there was no hay at all, so this year there will be no straw stacks burned. I have given away one of our straw stacks to a small farmer living 2 miles from here and they will fetch the straws during this week.

We have a lot of hay left since last year, so we will manage. But many farmers have not enough hay for their horses while they plow. Then they will have to live off of straw.

Around East-Union and Carver they do not get more than half the harvest, apart from around here, as in Bragnum, where the crop stands in all types of weather. Our baby Walter works by the threshing machine this year and earns \$ 1.75 a day. And Oscar helps some neighbors transporting the crop from the machine. And Ada and Anna also help making food etc. at different places, so that we three old ones are alone at home sometimes. That is the way it goes in America.

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We have done some extra work and been in kind of a hurry for a while. We had two masons for almost two weeks. They rebuilt our basement, with brick arches and concrete and cement. And they dug and built, with bricks and cement, a so called cistern, or a reservoir, which holds 3,750 gallons of water. In it we will collect rain water from the gutter to use for washing clothes, because it is soft, apart from well water which is too hard for washing.

There will be a feast in our church next Sunday the 28th this month, when a new pipe organ will be tested and dedicated. They have replaced the old one. The girls sewing association in the parish has been working for a new organ for several years and now the girls bought it and are giving it to the parish. It costs 1,200 \$. Today the old organ was heard for the last time in West-Unions church.

[The letter ends here. Are there pages missing?]

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15 Jan 1913

On the day after Knutsday, yesterday afternoon, I was finished with this letter, and sealed it, but today I have to break its seal, to tell what happened here tonight. We became very surprised yesterday evening. Just as I and the boys had gone to the barn to milk at 7:30 there came a whole row of carriages rolling, trotting so the hard ground shook, and 8 big loads appeared. In the next minute the house was full of people, a total of 63, who gave us a nice clock, and \$5 gift, and at 2:00 in the night we had a nice good meal with coffee.

And there was quite a bit of leftover coffee and small breads, so we have party food today, too. And two barrels or 8 gallons of beer was drunk, and they amused themselves as well as people can. At 4:00 we were alone again. This was the 4th party in this form, as we have experienced since Lucia night, except for the ordinary Christmas parties. The biggest so-called surprise party happened the 4th day after Christmas when we surprised our church custodian. Then more or less the whole parish joined and they honored them with a fine sitting sofa for \$20 and \$1.16 in money. The preacher got his on Christmas Day. Such gatherings happen more or less every birthday and wedding anniversaries, etc.

Now I have to stop immediately. The post is expected any minute. Goodbye for this time. I'm hardly awake yet.

Sorry, August

(Written sideways on left margin of Page 1)
The clock is like this portrait.

Note: According to Wilma, housewarming party Jan 13, they moved into the new house in Nov 1912.

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Cologne Minn.
May 24 1918

Beloved Brother and Family!!

I would like to immediatly write to you, as an answer for the expected letter I recieved at the 20th this month, after close to a 10 week journey. And I also thank you, and Frida, for the letter dated by you on New Year's day. It came to me after 7 weeks of journey. And that I have not answered since I just before sent the letter that I now see in your letter that you recieved. And then I sent Tåa Gustaf one, I think it was in the end of February, and asked him to tell you that I recieved your letter in those days. Thanks though for both the good and the bad news. Here there are many who have to go through the same sad experiences as

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the Herman family in Korsgården. Only in a very close group of people that I know of, there are 5 of our soldier boys who came home as corps from different training camps. And lots of them have been sick for longer or shorter time in the hospitals there. But many of Uncle Sam's quick boys are already in France target shooting at the Germans. And the American and Swedish-American boys are firmly convinced to beat the Germans.

Those who are not in draft age so they can join that class, they enlist, for they want to join in. The 25th this month, 80 boys here from Carver-County will travel from home to different training camps. The 7th this month a squadron of 34 went from Carver Co. This is the 4th troop to leave.

(written vertically in the left margin of page 2)

Please, write as soon as possible again. It is not worth to wait for each others letters, if some is missing.

(written upside down at the top of page 2)

Not long ago I got a letter from the Fred. Dalins. They had good health and felt well. Fredricks work is to clean and keep the heat up in a large house.

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27/5 1918. /

An addition

I did not send the letter this Friday because I would like to write more about the Saturday event when we traveled to the city to see our warriors departure. And we saw lots of situations in the moment of farewell. There were among them some newly wedded men, who you could say literally ripped themselves out of their young wives arms. And even more from their fiances, whose dams burst and the currents poured. All of it was like a big funeral. But there were not many who did not wipe their eyes dry. And so many people, that I have not seen such a crowd here before. And automobiles so they could hardly make their way through the streets. As the new soldiers were counted and put in order, first the sheriff, and then another, gave a speech of

farewell to them. And the music started with a march. And with the American flag in front, they marched to the station. And then good bye to them.

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They went to the lovely California, to one of the best field camps in the United States. The journey takes 3 whole days. It all made a sad impression, that we live in a serious time, not to play with. And may God help and strengthen our young men, that now march to risk life and blood for freedom and justice. And may we all pray to God for a swift and happy ending. If it lasts for long, the safety of the Swedish people is in danger too.

A couple of days ago we recieved a letter from our sister in law, Mari, that one of her sons left 2 weeks ago. He joined the Navy. And the other of her sons will soon leave too. Brother in law Billqvists son left 2 months ago. And brother in law Svantes son in St. Paul probably left this Saturday. Svante Skatte's son left 2 months ago. This is just the beginning, the prophets of doom tell us. How the atmosphere is among people you can almost imagine. But it is going silent and peaceful, everybody is patriotic.

D.S