

*Numerous errors in spelling and composition such as sentences without verbs etc..
Examples: Aprill for April, Bassen for Basen (lady cousins), Veteer for Vetter (male
cousin), ale for alle, freilich correctly spelled in one place, and vreilich a couple of lines
down, wier instead of wir, Kammerrathen for Kameraden (also, a horizontal line above
a letter indicates reduplication, i.e. an m with a dash above it means mm, but here it
appears with the doubling superscript plus the spelled out mm. These are not just
archaic variants, but are errors such as one might expect from persons who are not
experienced writers.
Some inferences are freely interpreted,*

Schonningen (?), 8. April 1867

Dear Brothers and Sisters-in-law:

We have received your latest missive and learned that you are all well, as we, thank God, are also. I have to announce at this time that I have made the decision to come to you in America. Now be so kind and write promptly if this is the way for me to go, and once I sell out here, . . . in that I don't like it here at all anymore, for the expenses keep getting bigger and the income is getting smaller; one spends much money for small purchases. Kindly write promptly how I should proceed so that I can sell this summer and if I should take the money with me or not. I can't think of any news to write - I always have enough old stuff. My wife can attend to that on the next page. Now I will close my writing with many regards to all the brothers- and sisters-in-law, and am looking forward to an early reply. Your faithful brother-in-law Georg Siber.

There is a sidebar in what seems to be a different handwriting: The cousin Joseph Laute (?) has written good things, so Hülbenbauer has gotten the notion to emigrate, and the have left, too.

(Next page::) Beloved brothers and sisters. So, now I have to write a few lines and ask you to send us a card how we are to arrange our travels. Write, too, how it is with clothing, if we should buy a more or less new wardrobe, especially for Georg, and how many yards of cloth one would need for an overcoat and if it is necessary to bring one or not, and how it is to pay for the freight. We would have been better off, of course, had we come to you in America 4 or 5 years ago. But we believe that if we sell in the summer, we won't be out anything (*the German here is an unfamiliar and/or badly structured idiom, and I am guessing*). Of course, as far as I am concerned, it would have never occurred to me to go to America because we are advancing in age and have paid dearly for everything we need in the house. Write exactly how it is, whether we can buy land in your vicinity and approximately what one has to pay per acre in our currency. As I see it, my husband will become an American in short order as far as the farm work goes, but he won't be able to dismiss

his German points of view. I always say he has to change his whole mindset, or else I won't go along. I am already fearful about this journey, can't make up my mind if it is the right thing for us or not.

I don't know of any special news, but have something to tell the sister Katharina, especially about the unmarried boys and girls. The Bernhard, for instance, is still not married; the wife he wants doesn't exist. The M . . . Triebelhorn would have married him, but it was common gossip that he was after the maid whom you probably know, who was in their service. The B . . . T . . . wanted to get to the bottom of it and he and his buddies followed him and met him on the way to her. Now she is in service with the Marianna at the Haken Inn, so his plans fell through. Now he is busy running to . . . every Sunday and every evening. She has been waiting for this long enough, and she was his mardi gras partner. But the wedding is unlikely to be soon. She has no trousseau and no trunk. What I want to say about the old stud, he came repeatedly, after you left, and always said the Katharina is coming back - it came to him in a dream and he had spoken with you. Personally (*implying Katharina*), she doesn't like it at all, and when you (*Bernhard addressing the letter writer*) write a letter, he would want to add a few lines. But since we got your letter and learned that you do like it there, he has not asked about it again and in fact has not come into the house anymore.

I have trouble making sense out of the next paragraph. You have to figure it out for yourself.

Otherwise I know nothing new. When your letter comes, I want to write at least my greetings and if he were the Bernhard (*or if it were up to Bernhard?*) you would not be in America and the young man is rather offended that he has no wife yet. The Aspens will have already written about itⁱⁿ her letter. It is all her fault.

(Insert in a different handwriting:) Greetings from Johanna Siber to all my cousins, especially to the little cousins and Julie.

I almost forgot about the girl: She is as before (*"she is still the old one"*) still has no husband. She and Daniel went together all winter to the Maiers and . . . for the evenings. She would have wanted to marry him, but her father would not allow it. Now I want to conclude my writing with many greetings for all you siblings and in-laws, your sister Theresia Laute. Greetings also to Jakob and Franzel and Julie and Thadde's wife and Karl and Julius Franziska. Give my regards also to Viktor and her husband.

Last page of this letter, in a different handwriting. Too many crucial words are undecipherable to make a reasonable translation. It is addressed to "Dear Sister-in-law Katharina etc." and deals with money matters, apparently un-met obligations, and casting blame. Signed "your brother-in-law Joseph."