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*Postmarked December 24, addressed to J. Sternberger, Portage City, Columbia Co., Wisconsin. The letter date is unclear; 2 numbers look like either 3 or 5. Best guess is 25. December 852, a line over the 852 presumably meaning 1852. Cannot explain discrepancy with postmark. Due to misspelling, inconsistent capitalization, and dubious grammar, some of the translation is guesswork and some is paraphrased.*

Dear Friend:

I don't want to keep you in the dark about my situation and my absence. I wanted to wait until I was more secure and could send you a few dollars of which you are surely in need. But things turn out different from the way they were imagined.

Our trip was delayed. We started in a bad season with bad roads, much snow, frequent spots that were impassable, often not a house for 20 or 25 miles. We worked in Rock island for 14 days in order to make some money to continue our travel. But at this time of the year work is poorly paid . . . . If I had gotten to Rock Island 6 weeks earlier, I could have earned at least 20 dollars in those 6 weeks, but I got in on the tail end. It was the same in all the packing plants along the Mississippi (sic) wharf. People work one day and are laid off for two. There is a shortage of cattle. I can't get to St. Louis because I have no money and it is still 400 miles from here.

I have no choice but to wait things out here, because I realize that even if I get to St. Louis, two more months will have passed, the butchering will be over everywhere, and I will have missed the business opportunities.

I will wait here. Someone has asked me to manage his butchering plant because he is not familiar with the work, but that is not for certain; meanwhile I will look around for another job.

I met Peter in Rock Island. He looks well and healthy. As I heard from people, he went through a hard life *crisis* (?), but he made it. Beyond that I am not writing anything about him except that he is . . . . (?)

*He will not need money from you after he sells a stove (or furnace) (?). I hope he will correspond with you.*

Sincere regards and kisses for you and Hans Schleifen. Write to me as soon you as get this, your loving friend Klamat.

Martin sends his best greetings to his kin. Hopefully, he will work next week. The address is Aquamaka (?) City Ilionois and Mississippi (sic).