

Letter # 10

June 30, 1930

Brazil Forest, Krauel River

For here we have no lasting city, but we look for the city that is to come. Hebr. 13: 14

On, on, my heart to heaven, on, on, where glory flows,
In this world's constant chaos we're offered no repose!
Where God's own lamb is pastured, a city waits for us,
There, there is your dear comfort; on, on, where glory flows.

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Children,

Our whole family sends you all a greeting of love. On Sunday we received your truly welcome letter with photographs. It brings us a great deal of joy. We received the letter in church, where I immediately read it to numerous friends. Sunday was a special day for us, since we celebrated my birthday. Sunday evening we had a bit of an evening tea, since our neighbours Heinrich Derksen . . . (?) and Mrs. David Toews had also had birthdays the previous week. We celebrated these three birthdays together at our home, and then I read the letter aloud. Maria, your happy birthday greetings were sent in good time, for which I thank you most heartily. Even if from one perspective we're sorry that we haven't been able to get together, we're still lucky enough that we can visit via letters, so we're very happy when we receive letters from you.

Maria, you once wrote then, that Papa would write, so right after we received your letter I began to wait; and finally it came on Sunday. All of you, simply write often. That John really had, or more correctly said, was able to take leave of the world in his youth. The most lovely lot fell to him, leaving him with the best inheritance. When we look at him on the photograph, it's almost as if we should speak to him.

I almost don't know what I should write, what exactly might interest you. One thing was especially interesting. On Sunday morning we talked about this—if only you could subscribe to the *Rundschau* [an international German Mennonite newspaper] for us, and that day a letter arrived in which you, dear brother, offered us the paper. If you give us the . . . could send the *Rundschau*, we would be very thankful. Franz wrote from the ship, and after that we've received no response, and no newspaper.

We have a few months of work behind us. On our farm we've hacked out two hectares. Now we're working on Abram Dück's place. We live and work together. Temporarily we've built ourselves a small hut. First we set up a frame, and then we brought up the roof. It's a roof of shingles that we split in the forest and then applied ourselves. It's a nice, waterproof roof. The walls we made out of palm trees that we split and then nailed on vertically. The walls of course shrank quite a bit, but we've already smeared [calked] them on the inside.

It's now winter here, but we haven't had any frost yet. And in these three months we haven't had any wind. In . . . I said, if we should ever re-settle again, I would wish a warm climate beside water. We have both of these! The climate is very comfortable(soft), as hot in summer as it sometimes was in Omsk. And enough mosquitos—or maybe too many. Directly across from our farm we have a river with very fine water, which we drink. And ten fathoms [also a traditional English measure of land; 1 fathom= 6 feet] from our house, across the pasture flows a little creek that we can dam for a nice watering site. Our farming at the moment still looks a bit meagre, but we get some goods and money for food, so that we eat and still have a bit of money left over. We were given a gift of 350 Millreis (?)

for a cow. I added a bit to that, up to 440 Millr. for a cow and a calf. We have two, and Abr. Dücks have one.

The very idea of getting rich we simply banish from our thoughts, and then we're OK. Initially I was very discouraged. I continually remembered what we had had, or if we had come to Canada, but I've settled down more now. Toward that, we get a lot of letters out of Russia, and they have a major influence on me. Over there the people are all in total poverty, no horse and no cow, and many have been banished into forced labour in the cold north. In a letter I was told that if I had stayed there, that would have been my lot. I find this work difficult, because the work in the forest is hard, but actually I'm much healthier here than I was there. When the external voices subside, our spirits calm, and then one can also sleep better. The church work in Russia was difficult and associated with danger, and here it's totally different. I have the same church position here as I had there. A month ago we had a church organizational meeting, and there I was voted in.

Because we're living in the forest like this, and after all the tumult, we've found so quiet a home here, we gave our community the name "Waldheimer Mennonite Brethren Church." [*Wald* = Woods/Forest; *heim* = home. *Waldheim* was a common village name in the Russian Mennonite colonies.] We *Omsker* [from Omsk] mostly live together, as follows: Johann Regier's children, Wilhelm Janzen, Peter Rempels' mother Barbara Reimer, Abram Dick, Jacob Fr. Hüberr, Jacob Kasdorf, Heinrich Derksen, David Töws, Hans Abr. Regier.

The farms here range from 20 to 45 hectares, and 200 fathoms (1 *Faden* = 6 feet; see above) wide. Our farm is 26 hectares. On the one hand, it's as you write, but when one considers the need to clear the land [hacking], then it's still a lot. In the work here we have to get used to something completely new, since farming here is totally different. Initially it always seemed to me that nothing would ever happen here, but now I'm already seeing things differently. For instance, for Easter we were invited to New Hope [*Neuhoffnung* = a neighbouring German Lutheran settlement]. Those people have been here 7 years, also settled in the jungle, very poor. But now their life is pretty good. They have up to 4 to 5 milk cows [vs. beef cattle], 2 to 3 horses, 50 to 80 pigs—which they fatten and sell. They had a lot of fruit, especially oranges, plums, apricots, pears, grapes and much more. The apricots are very cheap, have never eaten as many as now. When I had seen all this, and the people then added that we should just settle down, soon we would have everything, then I felt a bit better. At the moment, of course, we have nothing to complain about since we are totally supported in terms of food and tools for our work. Only our plentiful clothes are still mostly from Germany.

We have 8 chickens and bought a rooster, and soon we'll be given 6 more as a gift, in addition to each family getting a piglet. Most of us were once persons that didn't count on a couple of chickens or a piglet, but after we were so completely plundered in Russia we thank God and our fellow man for each offering of love.

You, dear brother, ask if we could visit each other via airplane [literally air ship]. Although our hut is just 7 meters long and 5 meters wide, don't hesitate to come, we'll find a place. You could go hunting here, shoot an antelope or tigercat. Monkeys and squirrels often chase around in the trees.

Well, I'll close. It would, of course, be great to converse in person. Please greet everyone from us, since there are many there that know us. How is H. Giesbrecht, please write to us. You children as well, you all write, like Maria has.

In conclusion, a hearty greeting from us and from our children.

We remain your brother and sister. Jacob and Helena Hüberr