

From Michael Bless  
 To Johanas House  
 % Chas. Karthaus  
 Baltimore, Maryland  
 Deliver on your arrival in Virginia  
 in North America

Diersheim  
 April 7, 1828

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law and friends,

Received your letter from the 10th of June on the 28th of August and see you are all well. Thank God I am well also. My wife is not so well. The day we received your letter she was down with a fever. She had gone to the wedding of the daughter of Michael Granzen. Just a week ago my wife had a baby son, but he was born dead, so you see she is really not well. We had 4 sons and 5 daughters, 1 son and 1 daughter died. The daughter's name that died was Katarina, her Godmother was Katarina House.

A bad tragedy occurred here on the 29th of June, 1827. 10 young men from Diersheim took a shipload of wood to Strasbourg. The wood was delivered, the money was paid and the 10 men were on their way back to Diersheim to their mothers, wives and children. A storm came up and the empty boat went down filled with water. 8 men lost their lives, only 2 came home. The 2 that came home were David Rusie and Michael Brosam. The oldest of the 8 men lost was our brother-in-law, Michael Schreiner, 38 years old. One mother lost her 3 sons, Michael, George and Hanz Kramp. Johan Brunk, Hanz Kramp, son of Schneberben and Michael Kramp, the dam builder's son and Michael Konig, the shoemaker's son. 6 weeks later Michael Brosam, the one that was saved, took another ship load of wood to Strasbourg. On the way back in the same place, their boat filled again with water. This time 2 lost their lives. This time George Brosam and Michael Schreiner, the son of the glaser of Bischepheim. Michael Brosam was saved again; also Michael Herlings and George Gerber.

Hans Herling did not go to America as he had planned but got married to Barbara Vogtin from Beutesheim. He passed away after about 2 years of marriage. They had a son, Johanas, but Barbara was pregnant with another child. The child, a son, also died after 6 months. She is still a widow.

Our sister Margarete is still a widow. She has no house of her own anymore. Our brother-in-law, Michael Schreiner, sold the house while he was still living to pay debts. Christian Schreiner, brother of Michael, bought a house of Martine Saulhaber and Martine Saulhaber bought a house from Michael Schreiner. Our sister is renting a house from Andreas Buerdel's wife. She is a divorcee. Mrs. Buerdel bought the house from George Bless.

Write to me again next year how you are. Greetings to all of you from Michael Bless. This is all the news. Greetings from my wife & children.

Your Brother,  
 MICHAEL BLESS

Dear House  
 Write my address to Mr. Steits in Brunswick, New York.

Karl Humel



From: John Klotter  
To: Mr. George Shitz (Sheets)  
Buckland  
Prince William County, Va.

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York  
August 30, 1829

Dear Sister, Children & Friends

Good blessings and greetings and the Love of Jesus Christ. We were happy to receive your letter, and to know that everything is well with you. We are well and happy too. We were blessed with 6 children: Magdalena, Regena, Kathrina, Barbara, Johan and Freidrick. My son Freidrick had a painful death. Two years ago in September my husband Johanas was burning some trees and bushes on some unfinished land, the little boy had followed his father, he came too close to the fire and his clothes started to burn; he died 15 hours later.

This was a sad experience for us, but God helped us in our sorrow. The next year we were blessed with another little boy. He will be one year old in September. His name is Johan Vallentin. Magdalena is married to a man by the name of Jacob Freidrick Long, a year ago last May. She has a 9 month old girl, her name is Maria.

I would be so happy if you and Barbara could visit us, we are still on the old place 3 miles from York. We have 50 acres of land. We sold 60 bushels of corn and wheat. We got 50¢ a bushel for corn and \$1.50 for wheat. We built a new barn last year. Everything is paid for, but we had to have a new well. This well cost us \$150 and it is not paid yet. This well has good water almost the whole year, but by September it is partly dry. If God is with us for two more years we will have paid for the well. This land is good, everything grows on it. We also planted fruit trees 4 years ago and some of them bring fruit already.

We like this place so much we would not sell it for \$600, so I think we will live and die here. You write in your letter, that you are not very happy where you are and plan to go to Ohio; it would be nice, if you would come to York, but you must know what you like to do. Your religion is not welcome there, we have no trouble here and go to church every Sunday.

We all send greetings to all cousins and friends. Magdalena and her husband send special greetings to Johannes House. They would love to see him again. We received only one letter from you and you say you sent three letters, so I believe you are writing the address wrong.

Please write it to:

Puisilfarm in York County  
York Township

Johan Klotter



From Michael Bless  
To Johanas House

Diersheim  
October 27, 1849

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law,

Greetings to you and your children. Received your letter and am happy to hear you are well and doing fine. We are not too well, but our children are all well. We have 12 children, 2 of them died. The living children's names are Barbara, Michael, Katrina, Martine, Margerete, Christian, Elizabeth, David, Ludwig and Frederick. Christian died 5 years ago. He was 21-1/2 years old. I guess Keller told you all about us and how many children are married.

Dear sister and brother-in-law, if Keller had not gone to you and told about us it seems to me you had all forgotten about us. The last letter we received from you was more than 20 years ago, you still lived in Virginia. I have thought often of you and where you are in America. If I had come to America I would not have been able to find you since I would not know your address. Four children are still unmarried and I think should go to America. Elizabeth would like to go and if you think it would be a good move please write to me.

You still have money here according to your guardian Johanas Jung. There is still about 200 fr. If one of my children should come to you they could use this money for the trip but it is up to you to say.

We had a bad time over here. We tried to be free like you in America but it did not work out. There was a revolt in 1848. The top men were put in jail and Haker took off to America. The Diersheim people put on a parade to Offenburg in wagons decorated with flowers and each wagon had a flag, black, red and gold. These were the freedom colors. Now we have two parties, democracy and aristocrats. There is so much trouble here, it was like a war of the poor and the rich. The Grand Duke, after he saw what was going on in Offenburg left by night to France. There was war between one state and the other. Three of our boys had to be freedom fighters, Martine, David and Ludwig, but Martine was married so he came home, Ludwig came home because he just turned 18. Only David had to stay but he came home after 10 days. One day 120,000 Prussians came over the state line by Mannheim on the Rhine and Neckar, but a big fight drove them back, then they went over the Rhine at Phillipsburg and Knielingen. Then they came to Rederath and Rastatt. Rastatt is a fort. The Prussians took it over but not for long. Many people had to flee and went to Switzerland, some to America, because they did not like the form of government.

Now I better quit about this kind of news and tell you some about our sister in Lauterbourg. We went to Lauterbourg to show your letter. 3 of our sister's girls are still at home. Katrine was married but her husband passed away. She has one boy 10 years old. Barbara also has a boy who is not married. All send greetings to you and please write again. Also greetings to Keller. I am 60 years old. If my children would go to America and would take care of me there I would come if I would be 70 years old. I am always your friend and brother.

MICHAEL BLESS



From Michael Bless  
To Johanas House

Diersheim  
July 26, 1850

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Dear Sister and Brother-in-law

Greetings to all of your children, your mother and brother and sisters. Received your letter early in May and read where you are all well and I am real happy about it. We are all well too. You sure are wondering why I haven't written to you before but I had trouble from one side to the other because Johanas Jung, your guardian would like to be relieved of his responsibility. He is getting too old and can't remember things. Nobody wanted to take over this job of being guardian. So the mayor asked me (Michael Bless) to take over this job. So I took over. After all legal bills are paid there should be about 200 fr. left.

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law, you say if I get the money I should send it to you with somebody we can trust. This money still has to come into my hands but without authorization I cannot send it. If it gets lost I have to stand good for it. David Rusie told me he asked his brother Michael Rusie if I should give this money that is still in Germany to his son Michael. He would take this money and come to you in America and he would like to repay you after he gets there. He means well if he would keep his word. They would not give Michael Rusie the money because at this time he is a soldier and nobody would trust him as he would desert the army and go to America. I would not give that money to anybody without security so you have to tell me now what I should do. Should I send the money by bank check or you could write an authorization yourself. If you want to give it to somebody tell me whom and how much. Your mother has to sign it too and then be notarized.

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law, I am very sad, my daughter Elizabeth is ready to come to America. She is going to bring this letter to you. She is going to Jacob Ehrhart's stepson, Hans Hechler who came to America last year. She was ready to go at that time because Hechler talked to her about it but her sisters and brothers talked her out of it. He wrote her 2 letters already and urged her to come. They bought a farm and house in Wisconsin, Jefferson County, Fort Atkinson. She has told everybody for a whole year that if she really had an invitation to come she would come. Now she is not going to be stopped anymore. With her goes Michael Stephen, he is the son of my brother-in-law and on the 8th of August they go to LaHarve. It goes a little too fast for us, we did not know anything about it a week ago.

Dear Sister, I think it would be nice if you could be together. She could come to you or you to her. I told her she should try to come to you. The last letter I wrote to you I sent with Jacob Ribs. He went to New Orleans. This family went to Texas and with them is David Rusie the soldier, Michael Rusie's brother's son. The old father, Jacob Ribs, died at sea and his wife died 2 days later before they got to their son.



Page 2  
(7-26-1850)

Dear Sister, 2 weeks ago we visited our sister in Lauterbourg; she is well again but her husband has bronchitis. The girls are fine and all send greetings. Our sister still thinks of your last day in Germany with her and you came down the hill so fast that you almost broke your neck. I don't know much news any more. We still haven't recovered from the war. We are still occupied by the Prussians. Our soldiers still must go to Prussia to work but there are not too many here, most went to America.

Also, I would like to let you know Elizabeth Keller, daughter of Keller's sister, would like to go to America, but she cannot go, she is not 21 years old yet. Michael Rusie's sister, Katrine, would like to have a letter, her address is Michael Koenig and tell him greetings from her and her brother to all of you.

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law, I don't think I will ever come over because of my age. My wife and I are both 60 and have 5 children married. Some day we will see each other and our hearts will be full of joy that nobody can take from us.

Dear Sister, greetings to Keller, if he is not too far from you, I would like to hear from him, how he is and if he is well. He must be a happy man, I bet he wished he was only 30 years old. Dear Keller, I still like you very much even if we had some differences in Germany. You outbid me on some land but this is all forgotten. Greetings to your wife and children and live a good life so that one day we can put our tired head down and can say we lived a good life.

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law, greetings to all of your children, your sister and brothers. Dear Brother-in-law, an extra greeting from my wife, to your mother-in-law and on your house and sister Katrine. She still thinks about her childhood years.

I write this letter to you on the last night that my daughter Elizabeth is with us. I can't think anymore so I send only love and stay always your brother and friend.

MICHAEL BLESS



From Michael Bless  
To Johanas House

Diersheim, Germany  
October 25, 1851

Dear Sister & Brother-in-law:

Greetings to you, your children and your families, also, to Mr. Keller and his wife. I wrote to you and I hope that you received the same because Elizabeth Keller told me she would take the letter along. She was gone about 8 days when I received your letter with the papers. I went to the court house with those papers but they don't want to have anything to do with those papers because they are not authorized. He asked, "Was this letter written by him?" And I said, "Yes, it looks like the same handwriting." But let's wait a half year and if nothing happens up to then we see what we can do. This time is not over yet.

Now, it's time for Jacob Schriener again. He wants to come to you too, but it's risky to send the money thru him, because if he don't have any luck over there the money might be gone so I better wait 'til spring then go to Strasbourg and send it thru a money order, but you have to let me know where I should send it to.

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law, in the letter I sent thru Elizabeth Keller I gave her the address of my daughter Elizabeth but I am going to put it again in this letter in case you did not get it from Elizabeth Keller. I just wish you could get together with my daughter Elizabeth. We sure worry about her. Now Mother is all alone and after she has raised so many daughters and can't be with them. I am alone also, because my son David had to go in the army on September 30, 1851. Ludwig works on a boat on the Rhine. He and Hans Gramzy had a boat built and transports gravel with it. This fall I will have to do the plowing all by myself. I still have Frederick but he is too little to help me.

Dear Sister, you write in your letter how you were at a church revival and that they took in 300 people all at once. Please tell me what you mean. Now, I like to end my letter and I like to tell you that we have not had a good spring. No fruit on the trees, potatoes no good, we got a little bit more than we put in the ground. We should have had 300 baskets full but they made only 35 and those are not fit to eat, but I trust in God, He knows best what's good for us. If he wants to take care of us His hand is never too short. If He can't help us any more and calls us home it is well. Now greetings to all of you there present. Written in a hurry.

MICHAEL BLESS



From Michael Bless  
To John & Catherine (Bless) House

Diersheim, Germany  
May 31, 1853

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law

Heartfelt greetings to you, your children and your friendships. Your nice letter I have received and I saw that you are all well and it has made us very happy. Thank God we are well also. I saw in your letter that I should send you money that's coming to you thru John Gerber from Links. But as far as I know he is not going right away. I would like to get your money over there if only I knew how. Maybe I could send by money order to a lawyer but let me know what address to send it to because I don't know much about those things. Let me know what I should do.

Of course, it would have been better if I myself could come over and my daughter Elizabeth told me I should come, it was very good over there. I myself believe it is better in America than it is in Germany but it is not very easy when you are old. Saying goodbye from everything is not easy even if some of them go along some would stay back.

In Muellerschang's letter he read that Hechler bought a piece of land for \$420. He probably believed that somebody from here would come over there but nobody wants to go so far. I talked to my sons David and Ludwig they should go over there but right now David is a soldier in the army and he would not be able to go over there. He is not allowed to leave the army unless the parents go with him. The young people do not realize what is going on in Germany. We think we might have some bad times. It is getting worse from day to day. We even hear war rumors that say the Austrians are going against Switzerland because they are keeping some of our people prisoners and they want them back. But I trust that war won't happen because God is looking out for us.

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law, my greatest wish would be if you could visit my daughter Elizabeth and she could come to you and you would have the pleasure of one of my children. I wrote to Elizabeth about this but she has a family already and it would not be so easy for her to come with them. I would like to know how far you are from each other.

Our sister in Lauterbourg died this winter. She has not been sick and was with her family at the breakfast table and at 9 o'clock she died. My son Michael, Barbara and Katherine were at the funeral. Her three daughters, not married, keep house together; they take care of the acre, they do the plowing, sewing and make hay. They all send greetings and wish you health and good luck.

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law, I would have written before but I always wait so I can give you more news about what's going on in our country. A year ago they tried to get Fredrich House or Fred (Fritz) Schulse but neither of those men got to be mayor, so they had a second election. A man by the name of Martine Stephen got the job. They are so many riots about this. People from Diersheim haven't got a good name because they make so much trouble for them. It was like a revolution. They go thru the money, they don't do anything for the people. Everything goes wrong.



Last year we had high water from the Rhine and the water was over everything but we had no trouble in Diersheim but they had trouble in Kehl and Aunheim so that one of the dams broke loose and the water was over the highway by Strasbourg. It took houses away and made everything like a wilderness. It was warm in winter and too cold in spring and now it is summer but all we have is rain. The acre where we plant hemp looks bad and if we can't get anything off this what would we pay our bills with. I have so much to pay, more than you would have. I still need \$50 to get hay. I sold my horse for 100 fr. and I ride to town with my cow. I have 3 cows, 2 bulls and 2 pigs.

Dear Sister, in Diersheim we have not got as many pigs in the whole town as you have. If you sold \$132 in pigs and still have 70 big and little, then you are rich. There are still farmers that haven't got any pigs in their stable because they are high; 1 pig costs 9 to 10 fr.

If you write me again this fall let me know how many pigs you have and do you have them all on one place and how do you feed them? and how many cows do you have? do you have a horse? Let me know how you fertilize your land and do you live in log houses? or do you have homes like us? because you have plenty of wood. I heard about this through your Brother-in-law, George Sheets. You also write that you make sugar, let me know, have you got a sugar tree? I am really nosey, I like to know everything about you because we cannot talk together anymore. I like to let you know also that Michael Russe's brother's wife died. She was in Rubrichtsau with her daughter, got sick and died. Now the old man is by himself. His son Michael works for George Gramzy, a carpenter. His daughter-in-law had 2 children by Michael but the children are not married yet. He did not do good in this marriage because she is sick and she is in Baden Baden for her health (arthritis). The doctor helped him so she got to go there without pay.

Now I want to tell you the costs; wheat costs 12 fr., 25# oats 6-7 fr. Now I have to finish my letter because my son-in-law, Martine Saulhaber would like to write a few lines so I wish you good health and hope that this letter comes to you. Good luck and 1000 greetings to your family. Also, give greetings to Mr. Keller's wife and children. Keller would probably say "If I only was young yet" because he is richer than all the families in Diersheim. Greetings again.

Michael Bless the 2nd

From Martine Saulhaber  
To Jacob Schriener

I like to let you know that I received your letter from the 15th of October, 1852, and heard that you bought a very big farm and we are very glad about this and happy about it. I should have written you before how it is in Kehl. The man says that he does not owe you any money and he only laughs about it. But I told him that he was mistaken that he (Jacob Schriener) could go to the law.

Friendly greetings on all of you.

Martine Saulhaber



From: Michael Bless  
 To: Mr. Johannes Haufs (House)  
 In Mooresville, Indiana  
 Morgan County

Diersheim  
 February 14, 1854

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law

Thank you for your letter, we are glad to hear you are all well and happy. Thank God we are well too. Greetings to your children and to Keller and Schreiner.

You write you had a dry summer and the land did not bring much fruit and vegetables. We had a wet year, so much has rotted in the ground and we had so many mice this year they did a lot of damage. Some people did not get enough out of the ground to plant for the next year. Everything is very high priced and if we would not get from other countries, we would have to go hungry. I am sure God in heaven will take care of us, but so many people do not believe in God and make trouble and say, "Let the county take care of us." 32 families are getting some extra groceries from the county, every day more are applying for help and we have to pay for them.

We had a letter last fall from Elizabeth and Hechler. Hechler's mother died on the 31st of August, 1853 and a son of Hechler's died. He was 2 years old, they buried him beside his grandmother, he died November 7th, 1853. The parents are very sad, but believe in God and God will give them peace.

Hechler tells us he is doing fine with his 7 acres of land. They had 304 bushels of wheat, he sold it for 72¢; sold 12 bushels of barley for 45¢ a bushel, and 153 bushels of oats for 25¢ a bushel. His farm is almost paid for, he still owes \$100 to Michael House, his neighbor. He hopes to sell 2000 pounds of pork, this will bring \$100. It sure is easier to get rich in America than in Germany.

Hechler wrote he is not able to make the trip to you in Indiana, he is too busy and you write you are too old to go over there; because you are too old I am afraid this may be you never will get together.

This spring a few of the young men from Diersheim leave for America, so I hope Ludwig, our son, will go too, if I have money enough. He needs at least 150 fr. We are having a boat built to transport gravel. I paid 250 fr. down, but still have a debt of 150 fr. I will try to sell the Hohlenweg acre and hope I make some money on it. If only you had asked us to come over there 20 years ago. If Keller had not come to you with my letter, you would probably have forgotten us, you were still in Virginia when I received your last letter, more than 20 years ago. I wrote 4 letters but I received no answer. Was ready to come in 1842 but my wife was against it, now she is sorry. We are too old now. More people would go to America but can't sell their houses, believe me, it is no good in Germany anymore.



Page #2  
(February 14, 1854)

Now there is a rumor of war; the Russians and Turkish people are fighting already and burn and destroy everything. We pray to God he will be with us. It was so cold in December and January but we still have so many mice they do so much damage. I told you about this at the beginning of the letter. School boys are out to kill mice. They get 3 fr. a dozen from the City.

It is really hard, many families eat turnips 3 times a day. It was also a good year for apples. We still have 8 bushels left.

Wheat cost 20 fr. for 25 lbs., barley 12 fr., corn 13 fr., oats, 6 fr. The price for beef is 10 fr. a lb., pork 15 fr., veal 9 fr. I sold vegetables and meat for about 100 fr. Sold a cow for 56 fr. We still have a horse, 2 cows, 2 calves and 2 pigs. We butchered 2 pigs for the winter. As you see it is hard to make a living here.

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law, we sure hope to hear from you before our son Ludwig arrives there. If not, so I hope you look out for him as he will be a help to you. I hope God will be with all of us, if we have not much in material goods, God is with us, this we know.

Hope this letter will arrive at your house and find you in good health as it leaves us. Greetings to you and your children. Hope Susanna and her sister will write to us. We love you all. Goodbye until we meet again.

MICHAEL BLESS

Jacob Uhl left Germany without a goodbye. We think he is with Michael Rusie, his brother-in-law. His wife sends greetings to her husband and brother. She plans to go there too.

Michael



From Michael Bless  
 To Johannes Haufs (House)  
 Mooresville, Indiana  
 Morgan County

Diersheim  
 May 28, 1854

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law

Greetings to you and your children and all your friends. Michael Rusi wrote he would like one of his family to come to America. Fredrick Rusi, the son of Katharina Rusi is ready to come; so is my son Ludwig. As you know, you still have money to get from here, so I promised 100 fr. of this to Frederick Rusi; my son would bring the rest, but Jacob Rusi would also like some of the money so the wife of Jacob Uhl could go to her husband. Michael Rusi, son of David, would also like to go to America and have some money. We believed Jacob Uhl to be with you, but his sister wrote, he is still in New Orleans. He couldn't go any farther, he ran out of money.

There was a meeting in the county house last night to determine what to do with the old man David Rusi. He is old and poor and the county has to take care of him. So the decision was to send him to his children in America, the county will pay 60 fr. to this trip. Now you have to write me who gets the money. I promised the money to Katharina's son, he is a good boy, the rest is up to you. But please write me how to divide the rest of the money. I see to it that I get a note from each of them.

Dear Sister, I think there are 4 of you to get this inheritance, the children from Sheets and you, Michael Rusi's wife and Barbara Butner. I would like to know if you had received my letter before Rusi wrote to me. I wrote 3 letters-to you, Elizabeth and Schreiner. I went to the postoffice myself, yours and Elizabeth's letters went over LaHarve, but the letter to Schreiner over Breman. I like to know which one got there first. Hello to Keller, he sure was lucky that he went to America. It is hard to earn a living here. Keller's father-in-law died on his way to the church on Good Friday, Michael Bless the first, was with him, he died in his arms.

There is an unrest between the Catholic and protestant churches; the Catholics like to get back the Cloister estates they lost in the revolution in 1848. We like the present government. We do not want a revolution again. May God be with us, we all sing with Martin Luther the song, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God. Our government official Frederick sent an ambassador to the Pope in Rome to settle this unrest.

Now I better stop writing about all this. We are looking forward to a better year. So far everything looks good on our field, so we don't have to go hungry, it's God's will. As I was writing this letter, Katharina Rusi came over, she is now ready to let her son Frederick go to America and if Michael Konig should die, she would sell out and go to America also. Katharina told me that Jacob Rusi had a letter written by Christian Humel, but he did not tell me or Katharina anything about it. So you see he is not honest with us, his relatives.



Page #2  
(May 28, 1854)

Dear Michael Rusi, I will put a note in this letter from your brother's son, as you see he needs some money. I believe if he had enough money, he would rather go to Texas to David than to you. I really feel sorry for him. If he takes that woman along, right now she is in a poor people's bath in Baden-Baden. If he bring her along he would have to get a maid for her.

Hope you receive this letter in the best of health. We are all fine. Greetings to all of you, from your brother,

MICHAEL BLESS, the 2nd



From: Michael Bless  
 To: Johan Haufs (House)  
 Mooresville, Indiana, Morgan County

Diersheim  
 April 23, 1859

Dear Sister, Brother and Children

Greetings to you all from us all. Heard from Rusie you wrote a letter to Uls (Uhlis?) and told them to tell me to write to you. I was so sure I had written the last letter. I am so forgetful lately. As I opened your last letter a gold dollar rolled out, this sure surprised me. Thank you so much for the same; will never spend the money, but keep it as a keepsake.

We had a very dry summer in 1858 but the harvest was good. Our hemp was not too long, but I sold it for 20 fr. 100 lbs. Wine turned out very good but still better in 1857. Sold wheat in 1857 for 10 fr. for 25 lbs., in 1858 for 8 fr. Had plenty of potatoes in 1858 and sold 100 lbs. for 12 fr. Winter started early last fall. We had to work hard and fast to get the potatoes in the house before frost. Winter was mild and spring came early, so we were able to put oats and barley in ground at the beginning of March.

I haven't too much news, only there are war rumors. All young men have to serve the army. Barbara's son Fredrick left today; he was put in the artillery. Barbara is not very lucky; lost her husband Martine Saulhaber October 1857 on a Sunday morning. He had been working all day Saturday in his workshop, it must have been a stroke. Our son David went to Bishofsheim to the doctor, but too late. Martine Saulhaber's death came as a surprise; he had not prepared his family for all the work he left behind. The oldest son was travelling, he was in Switzerland at the time and could not come to the funeral. The two older sons have been taking care of the father's blacksmith shop. But the second son has to go to the army, the next boy is almost too young. Barbara and her husband had 14 children together 8 are still living. This is not easy for Barbara as a widow. Karl Kiummel, the city accountant died of a heart attack. The oldest daughter of the Fautenbacher's died this spring. She left one son 20 years old. She had been a widow for a long time. Magdalena and Barbara live in her house, Maria is married to a baker, but not too happy.

The only news I can give you is that there will be a new bridge built from Kehl over the Rhein. They send a man 60 ft. down in an iron case. The man has to work away the dirt the drilling is done from the top. Many a man has lost his life down there. The pay is good, 5 fr. an hour, only people with a lot of debts will take this dangerous job.

Now a little news from our family. Our son David married Saloomea Kaiser from Rheinbischofsheim in December 1857. They have a little son 6 months old, he is a good boy. Now I will end my letter, please forgive me for not writing so long. Hope this letter will reach you in good health. We are not all well, but satisfied. Greetings from all of us here to all of yours. Greetings to Keller, Herzog, Uhl and Rusie. Lorenz Koenig would like to go to America but he can't sell his house.

MICHAEL BLESS the 2nd



From Michael Bless  
To Johanas House

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Diersheim, Germany  
April 4, 1860

Dear Sister, Brother and children and all acquaintances:

Our heartfelt greetings to you all, dear children. We are now growing older every day. How often we shall be able to let you hear from us we do not know. As we are growing in age, so we should grow in wisdom, grace of God and toward man. Now, my dear ones, I do not wish to write you too extensively since you shall be told verbally how everything is with us. There is again talk of war and war cries. According to the prophesies there shall break out a bloody war over Germany.

Dear Sister, we do not know at all what kind of a present to send to you. Our hemp has all been spun, and otherwise we do not know what we could send to you. So they were after me all week that I should let myself be painted (photographed), since Konig's (King) could so easily bring it along to there. I said always that I do not want to send my old head to America any more. So the days go by until today the 4th, they left me no peace. So I said if Mother would go along I have no objections. So today at 11 o'clock we go to Bischepheim. At 12 o'clock it was already done. Dear Sister, I have had a duplicate made. I think you could send one to Elizabeth. I hope you will have yourself done also and send to us.

Write to us some news. Hechler has also written to us. He writes they have had a year of failure. The wheat froze out. Then they sowed summer wheat in the spring. Then came insects that spoiled it, that not much of it was harvested. They haven't written for a long time either. Ludwig was mad at me. Two years ago he wanted to buy a property. He said it was 80 acres. He thought he could buy the land for twelve hundred dollars. He had only about 800 fr. If I could send him some of it, if he could pay only half of it, the rest he could pay later. I said what should I do. I don't wish to sell anything, and to borrow the money and pay the interest I don't wish to do either. He should go to Iowa to your son, there land is still less expensive.

I want to close my writing and wish to send you all many thousand greetings and to wish you to receive this in good health. Say hello to all the others, Rusi, Keller. Now dear Keller, I have often said of you, I have always had a longing for America, but have never gotten there; you have never wanted to know of it and you have gotten there. But thank God that you are there. I have said it so many times that you would have a hard time of it if you were here salary wise and leaseholds are very costly. Now farewell, I am remaining your dearest brother and friend.

MICHAEL BLESS



From: Johann George Schmitt  
 TO: Mr. Johannes Haufs (House)  
 Mooresville, Indiana  
 Morgan County

Honau  
 September 12, 1877

My dear Father and Brother Henry

Now I take the time to write to you and hope my letter will find you in good health. I had a good trip home, was not seasick. It took 15 days by boat. We had a lot of fun. On Friday, the 7th, in the morning we arrived in Bremerhaven, then on another boat to Bremen, the train left Bremen at 4 o'clock and I arrived in Strasbourg at 11 o'clock in the evening. I walked home to Honau. The fields really looked good, a lot of tobacco, hay and turnips, fruit trees are full of all kinds of fruit. Apples, pears. Wine is also plentiful. Plenty of wheat, 100 pounds cost 24 marks.

Kehl and Strasbourg are built up after the war better than before.

Jacob House, your friend is still living, so is Ludwig Bless, the one who lived with Henry. Please tell Henry to say greetings to all the neighbors.

Best wishes, your friend

JOHANN GEORGE SCHMITT

Note: George Smith is listed in the census of 1860 and 1870 as being a farm hand living with John House. His age was 37 and 47 years and he was born in Baden.