

Letter from Kleinliebenthal - 1807

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[Translator's Note: Kleinliebenthal colonist trying to encourage friends back in his old homeland to come to Russia by revealing to them how good his new land has been to him. Kleinliebenthal located in Großliebenthal District—Kherson/Odessa and established in 1804. Grain harvest measurements are difficult to determine. In Bavaria, 1 *Scheffel*=222.357 liters. So I am going to apply that to a formula I came across on web-site <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Getreidema%C3%9F> which says 12 *Scheffel*=1*Malter*; 6 *Sesters*=1 *Malter*. This may be inaccurate in working out the below numbers, but it will give an idea of approximate volume. Currency and exchange rates are another problem to get exact. I came across the following formula but have lost the web-site address—1862: Sgr=silver groschen; f.=Gulden of Bavaria=60 kreutzer each marked xr; f.=0 40 cents. Information in square brackets are translator's notes.]

[Begin Translation]

Transcript.

Kleinliebenthal, 25 December, 1807.

Dear Brother!

With this I am sending to you a few lines and hope that you and your wife and children will be met with good health. With regards to us, we are also still kicking (*Frisch*) and healthy as long as dear God so chooses.

Now I also want to write to you and tell you where I am at.

I am in Russia, in the city of Odessa on the Black Sea, which is 600 hours from where you are. I also want to mention to you what I have received under Emperor Alexander Ptolovitsch. First of all, 833 florin, 20 kreutzer and a house, 4 oxen, 2 cows, 2 calves and 10 kreutzer per day per head for 3 years, as well as seed grain for 3 years, as much as one is able to sow, plenty of acres and pasture, I and my hired hand are unable to work it all. In this place, you work the land only once, work under the stubble and then sow winter grain on it, and it produced nicer results than at your place, the fields are also not rotated (*gemischt*). In this place you do not stockade (*stockt*) because there is no forest and fruit [trees] within 60 hours, and it is definitely much cheaper than where you are. And now I also want to write to you what I took in this year from the crops, and what animals I have. First, 60 malter (*Malter*) wheat, 20 malter corn, 21 malter barley, 15 malter oats, 300 *sester* potatoes (*Grandbieren*) besides the other small produce which grows *Reten* and *Kasser* in this place. I have 6 oxen, 4 cows, 4 calves, and 2 horses. And now, my dear friends

and acquaintances, you have read it, what I have achieved and what I have informed you about, and this kind of thing is available to everyone who comes here as a colonist. Now, whoever has the desire to go to Russia, be on your way so that you get here by the 24th of June (*Johanni*). One does not have to work as much here as back where you are and I would never exchange what I have here for all the riches where you live. It would please me very much, dear brothers-in-law and sisters, if this letter of mine appealed to you, so come on over because this place is better than where you live.

Odessa is 2 hours away from here, it is a seaport where one can buy and sell everything that one has or desires. The goods are shipped out to sea from this place. So produce does not cost much. As there is war with the Turks and the English, right now a *malt* of wheat costs 3 fl. and, if the shipping lanes are active, the cost of a *malt* of wheat is 12 fl. But we do not have any folks by us, or any child among us, who is a soldier. Your Emperor Napoleon, the Austrians and we are united against the Turks and the British. We have a 10 year reprieve from paying taxes.

My brother-in-law *Schnalzholz* (*Schmalholz*) Bernhard also lived here and always brought accusations against you at the head office (*Oberamt*), but he has not been around here for the past half year. He left and no one knows where he went. That which the people told me is all true and I have not yet had any lack of things in these three years. For these three years I have also been a landlord (*Wirt*).

Whoever wants to come, take this letter along so that it can be of help to you. If you choose to come, make it so you arrive here by 24 June (*Johanni*) so that you can make hay. It costs nothing and, when it is time to cut the harvest, the Russians charge us every third sheaf to cut and also a 5th or 6th *sester* to thresh the grain. Your route will be to Ulm, Regensburg, then your travel pass will take you to Vienna and, in Vienna, you will receive a travel pass from the Russian ambassador to go to Russia. From Vienna, the route is via Brünn, Olmätz, Lemberg, Brody—which is the last city in the Kaiser's Poland, then Rattwille, an hour into Russia's Poland, then on to Kremnitz, Litnitz, Bollsching, Balte, and Odessa.

The one who wants to come should take all his cloth (*Getuch*) and clothes with him. We came out of Poland. If you come, or not, send me a reply, as soon as possible, by way of the fellows from Oberlauterbach near Lauterberg [about 32mi/52km north of Munich/Bavaria].

I am closing my letter with a thousand-fold greeting to brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law and sisters and their children, including all acquaintances and kinsmen; in addition, a greeting to the people of my godfather, also a greeting to the pastor and mayor, as well as a greeting to Xavier Buchtunger and his family.

I have to tell you yet one more thing that my little girl Magdalena died, but her place has already been taken by a little boy.

I remain yours faithfully,

Mathias Tschan

Michel Müller got married here and left, but I do not know where he went.

Transcript.

Honorable (*Hw.*) Mr. Josef Tschan
Citizen in Oos near Rastatt
in Oos
origin (*Quelle*) 530 Wegzug,

[Note at end of document]: Collected fragments concerning the frequent emigrating to Russia, Poland, etc., whereby, if put together, would make up a file. 1808 1V. 2.

[End of Translation]