

Wiesbaden Airbase
Feb 27, 1961

Dear Son,

When I sent you that card last week it was just after I had gone thru the box of papers that you had sent me and I hadn't had sufficient reflection on just what information it contained so I am getting a letter off at the next nearest flight out of here to the States.

For the past week it has been just like spring and in fact it is spring here. Pussy willows have been on sale, jonquils and daisies are in bloom everywhere and the trees and shrubs are ready to leaf out while the birds indigenous to this area are busily engaged in making their nests. Of course one bird that I miss is the Meadowlark and its throaty spring song, and also the Robin as we know it. There is a bird here that has all of the features of our robin except the red-breast and it hops around & seems to listen at the ground for angle-worms and the --- call it "eine Robbie". However that is the only desirable bird that I have seen so far since the others which have been here all winter and ever since I came --are the English parrot, -the Starling, Magpie and the crow-of which I saw 18 in one flock last week.

The grass of course stays green all winter and didn't dry up any time since I arrived here last June. The only time that the lawns turned to a brown color since Stan & family came here, was in summer of 1959 when it was so dry that their crops were really suffering and all crops were short including the grape crop. However this shortage of grapes didn't reduce that income too much since the wine brought money times more than that which was made from the grapes grown in a wet year. It is naturally self evident why this is so-because there is less water taken in to the proportion of sugar and since there is never any sugar added, these wines cannot be compared to the ordinary wines one would get in the U.S. as the Ports or sherry-crème etc. The best wines in all of Germany is produced from grapes grown on the lands that drain into the Mosel-river since they don't have as much rain as they do in the Rhine Valley, and the very best ever produced since they have any record, were made in 1947-1953 and 1959 with the "1949er" in the lead. Last August Mae and I drove in her M.G. to Trier and visited in the area where my grandparents came from - that is my father's mother & my mother's father & mother were born in that part of Germany while my father's father was born in Nantes (*actually Nancy*) France. We stayed at the Christofel hotel in Trier and then made car-trips to various small towns where third cousins of my dad's lived and we were treated royally and gave each of us a bottle of the rare "59er" to take home and had all to drink that we could possibly hold along with the delicious food that they served. The place that impressed us most was Revinich where two old women- dad's distant cousins - lived and who still remembered my mother & dad when they visited there in 1910 for they were now only about as old as I am, though they looked much older and were "white haired" and slow on foot. The one old lady Mrs. Orth had had nine children and was living with one of her daughters who had married a man by the name of Kramer (Sometimes spelled Krammes) and he now had eight children about the ages of some of you younger ones of which a few were married. Josef Krauss owned a large vineyard and his four sons were in partnership with him in the business. Mae & I were really in luck as we drove into the small town because it is a problem to find any place by trying to follow directions from an address but as we were driving along, we saw four or five men at work excavating a plot in preparation to put up a new building for their winery establishment. I asked Mae to pull over to the side of the street and stop and I got out with one of the letters that you had sent me and I asked

if they knew a family named “Widowfrau Weber-Orth” and they were really amazed to hear an American ask any such a question. They looked at one-another and said “Ya hier” and then I showed them the letter that I had received and the photos that my dad had given them 50 years ago, and they called to a ruddy-faced old lady who was sitting at an upstairs window and looking down at us and Josef Krauss said “Mutter (his mother-in-law) hier ist Herr Lorang von Amerika” and we all went to the house and I showed the letter to “Mutter” that she had written to me during WWII telling me of the hard times they were having since her husband had been killed in the war. At the time I got the letter, I too was having difficult times and was really too depressed to even answer her letter, let alone sending any money. I explained to them the reason I did not write at the time and that as time went on I considered the futility of answering at all because in a letter that I could write in German it would be difficult to make them understand. Needless to say they harbored no ill feeling and we were really welcomed by everyone and they stopped their work and all joined in celebrating the event. They showed us their home – it was lovely and they took us through their winery which was all run by machinery and they had large vats full of green bottles all washed and ready to be sterilized in preparation for bottling whenever that time came. I said green bottles since all “Moselle” is bottled while the Rhine wineries use brown bottles and also I wrote of short crops, bringing in about as much big crops on a/c of the boost in price governed somewhat by supply & demand. but more by the superior quality due to sweeter grapes. But the rarest wine of all is made from grapes that have gotten over-ripe and look like and are called grapes because of being shriveled. These are picked separate by those who know what to pick out of some bunches there may be only 1-2 or 3 or so grapes that answer to that category and one person can pick only enough of these to make one bottle in a day’s picking but a bottle that measures 3 cups (1 ½ pints) will bring a minimum of DM10 (10 marks or about \$2.42) in Germany and as much as \$25.00 to \$40.00 in the States. I’m enclosing two labels like were on the wine bottles that they gave us and it is their own patented label. They can justly be proud of their product, that rare “Moselle”, as well as their family.

Now what I started my letter out with was important papers when I got to rambling in Europe & Germany.

What I need is any bill or canceled check since I left here, and the bank statements. (The June & July statements & November too) Any that I sent back for clarification I’d like to have back too and the July calendar envelope in the kitchen has my Genesee Union dividend report and if you put any other papers in any of those envelopes or filed them away anywhere else please send me anything that has a bearing on income or expense. Since you have been sending in income-reports you know what it is considered a farm expense and that interest income or expense & dividends etc have to be reported separate on the forms so if you will bear with me for now it will not be necessary to ever have to do a similar thing again.

As to the Genesee News that you sent I’ll have to leave them here because they’ll make overweight in my bagge at 80 cents per #. But if you want ‘em I’ll mail ‘em back for Rita sent me important clippings before. Love Dad.

