

Gerhard Schnause
Bahnstr. 18, i.Fa. Hans Eisfeld
(22a) Leverkusen-Schlebusch I,
British Zone, Germany

23 th May 1946

Dear Sir,

Hoping that you still remember me, I take the liberty to write this letter to you. I presume you are interested in my fate, as you were so kind as to speak to me personally so many times during the time of our detail was working for you harvesting your crops.

On January 21 I left our Camp in Dermott and was shipped back to this country via New York and France. We had a rather stormy voyage on a liberty-ship, so that we were glad to enter European soil on February 4. We had to stay in a camp near Le Havre/France for three weeks, before we were finally transported to Germany. I was released from captivity on March 4 near Cologne. As it was my firm intention not to go to my home-town in Eastern Germany, which is occupied by the Russian Forces, I tried to find an uncle of mine in Cologne. I had to learn however, that he was killed in a raid early in 1945; so I had to stay all by myself.

In the meantime I got connection with my wife, who is still living in Berlin. She had to suffer a great deal during the fight in that town, especially when Russian forces had occupied her home. She is young and good-looking, I believe, so that you can imagine the kind of suffering she had to endure. Now she is o.k. again, since she is now living in the American Sector of Berlin; she even found a job with the American Forces on the airport of Berlin-Tempelhof. I hope she will soon be able to come and see me. We have not seen each other since October 1942.

Destruction here in Western Germany is unimaginable. Living conditions are awfully bad. Food is very scarce. My imagination very often goes back to those lucky times when we were working for you. Of course I am glad I am a relatively free man again, but there is hardly a possibility to enjoy one's freedom. We are all working very hard to help to overcome the terrible destruction and emptiness left by the nazi regime; it will take years and years, however, before there will be normal conditions again. In general, the German population is very willing to try to correct its faults. There are, in this zone at least, no signs of unrest and trouble, as far as I know. Maybe some day there will be a truly democratic Germany. That is the political aim I'm working for. I am glad I had the opportunity to learn to know parts of the American Way of Life; I hope that is the aim for Germany in political respect. We are all living in a very close-knit world to-day, and therefore we have to find the means to live peacefully together in this our only and small world. Many millions of our world-citizens, however, have still to learn and acknowledge this fact.

I would be very happy, Sir, if you would find the time to write a few lines to me. I would like to know what is going on on your farm. How are the prospects for the next crop?

Food-rationing is the most difficult problem here at the time being. Finally I have to learn the feeling to go to bed hungry. If the German population survives these hard times, it will have learned a hard but just lesson. I simply cannot imagine how anybody in this country could ever desire a war again!

I have found a very small position with a private office, where I am doing general office work and occasionally some translating. At the time being, however, I am not much interested to improve my position, as all thoughts and energies are required to find food and shelter. When being hungry you simply cannot work as hard as you would like to. In some months, however, I hope to be able to fill a better position.

Since some days the American public is allowed to send parcels and packages to this zone, I wonder, Sir, if you will have the kindness to send me one? I hope you don't blame me for asking you this favor, but you always were so kind to me that I hope my wish is not in vain. Of course you will remember how much I enjoyed smoking my pipe (your dear father used to ask me for the brand I was smoking, remember?).

I hope you don't mind my writing this letter to you, but I think of you and your hospitable Parkdale very often with my best thoughts.

With my best wishes for you, Mr. O'Neal and your family I remain, Sir,

Very truly yours,

Gerhard Schnause

How are conditions for emigration into your country? Not very favorable for Germans at the time being, I guess. I really would like to work and live in your country, but so would many other millions of the world's population.

The former "Major" Menke is living in the British Zone, too. He is working on a farm.