

Fritz Becker
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Germany

Germany, May 1 st, 1946

Dear Mr. Gregory,

After 3 years as German prisoner of war in the U.S.A. I have just come back to my beloved homeland and I beg to remember, that I worked in the beginning as hey[sic]-baler, than [sic] as corn-picker and at last as cotton-picker on your farm during last harvest-time. My name is Becker, black curly hair, 1 st. Lt., and I used to pick more than 100 pounds of cotton. I think these items will help you to get me back in your memory.

I left our last camp in Dermott on January 20 th, 1946 and arrived at Le Havre, France on the 5th of February. The trip by train from Dermott to New York was very quick and comfortable. In New York we had a little rest of 2 days, than[sic] we left N.Y. harbor on the S.S. CODY. We had a fine 9 days – voyage to Le Havre. There was a movie on board and we were allowed every day to be on deck and we could enjoy the mostly quiet and often wonderful ocean. I for my part had the pleasure to become known to the American chief officer of our ship who was German born and still more, he was born in my own home-town. So we both had happy hours in remembering and talking about our common home-town, our news and experiences and so on. In Le Havre we had to stay for 2 months – a very long time – and than[sic] came the long longed for day of release.

Now I am living in my home-town Mülheim on the Ruhr again. My parents and relatives are still alive[sic] and sound just as I left them 4 years before. My home – town has been shelled and bombed several times but it looks not as bad as I supposed when I heard the news i[sic] USA. If we could get cement and other building-material, all damages would very soon be mended. Our big iron-works in Mülheim-Ruhr are still in operation, but work is stopped to a great extent by the Britisch[sic] forces of occupation. Only the coal-mines are running as before.

I got a place as a clerk at the Mülheim iron-works. During my long time as P.O.W. I learnt[sic] one useful thing, to speak and write English and that is very useful to me now.

We nazis once said that we wanted guns instead of butter. The British now want coal instead of butter and I think, that they get more coal now than we got guns then. So you may imagine that our belts become tighter and tighter. But all try to be very disciplined and they hope all for a better year to come, especially awaiting a better living when the new crop is in.

When I came home and met with my relatives, I always had to tell about America, and you can imagine that I often gave short reports of my farm-work on your farm, because during these 3 months with you I learnt[sic] more about your country and men than all the 2 ½ years before behind the barbed wire.

I hope this will find you all well and with my best respects to Mrs. Gregory and trusting to hear from you soon, I remain,

Yours truly,

Fritz Becker

Please remember me to Mr. O' Neill too and give him my best. I hope that is sickness is over again.