

September 28, 1732

Our dearest Heinrich,  
may the blessings of our Lord be upon you. Remember to pray every day and his grace will keep you safe. Father reminds you to seek out a house of worship that God may see you are steadfast in your faith. We are well and try to do God's will in all matters.

Your sister, Margaretha has given birth to a healthy son and has named him Johannes Heinrich after Father and yourself. Her husband has taken ill for some weeks now so I have been helping her care for the baby. Father must tend to their harvest as well as his own. Remember all of them in your prayers, my son.

Christian writes to me from the Carolina Colony that he and your brother have settled there. He does not know if it will be permanent but for now they are content. The hunting is good there and they have built a small house but they must wait until spring to see if the land is fertile.

Father has smoked two deer and wild boar for the winter and we have plenty of corn and wheat put aside. If you decide to journey home, there will be plenty of food for all of us. God has blessed us in our choices but we wish to see you and your brothers again before we die.

Your Uncle Abraham has gone back to Palantine. He says he will return with his family next year but he could not be happy with them so far away. Remember him in your prayers my son, that he may have a safe and fruitful trip.

Walk with the Lord and find a church as soon as possible. May God watch over you and keep you in the path of his light.

Our love be with you,  
your mother, Elisabeth Ritter

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June 3, 1733

Our dearest Heinrich,  
May this find you in the grace of God and may his will be done in all ventures.

It was a blessing to read your letter. Father is satisfied with your working as a blacksmith although he hopes you will find your true vocation in farming the land. He is learning to speak this language but I cannot even though I see the merits of it. I do not see the merit of changing your name and find it uncomfortable to address you as such, so I will not.

We have two new cows which give enough milk to sell and the chickens lay eggs every day. I work daily at making preserves from the berries your sisters pluck on their daily outings. Your father trades the extra jars for honey and flour at the settlement. There are pears growing in abundance but father forbids the girls from venturing into the forest. There was an attack on a settlement not so distant from us and he fears they may be taken as wives by the savages.

Keep God in your heart that there will be no room for evil to enter and his blessings will be manifold in your life.

Your mother, Elisabeth

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February 10, 1734

Our dearest Heinrich,

May God's blessings be with you. We are well and trying to follow the path our Lord has shown us. The Reverend Houser has visited and proclaimed the settlement to be all he wished. He is a Godly man and turns to his Bible at all times for guidance as I hope do you.

Your brothers write to us of good fortune in the Carolina colony and your uncle has sent word of much success to the east of them. He tells us the land is fertile there and assures us there is a place for all of you near where he has settled. If it is God's will, may all of you be reunited soon.

Say your prayers and do not consort with bad men. Strive every day to seek only the grace of God.

Your mother, Elisabeth

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May 9, 1734

My dearest Heinrich,

May this letter find you steadfast in your God. He will not abandon you if you give your will over to him.

Spring is at last here and we must praise God for it. The winter was too cold and too hard for my old bones. I have used all of my horehound in making teas for the croup we have suffered but hope to replenish my stores soon.

Father has the girls pulling stones from the soil in hopes of enlarging his crop this year. They pile the stones near the big Chestnut tree that he can build a fence around the farm with them. The cow will give birth any time now and Father thinks it may be twins if God is willing.

My son, you speak too often of this young girl, Sarah. I have hidden your letter that your Father will not read it and be angry with you. I know the ways of the heart and how easy it is to be impulsive when the heart quickens at the sight of a comely girl. Gird yourself up against these desires and pray that God will keep you from making a mistake.

No matter how much you may admire her, she is not for you. Her faith is not ours, her customs are not ours and neither are the ways of her people. Be strong, Heinrich. Read your Bible and look for answers in it regarding all things.

Your mother,  
Elisabeth

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November 24, 1734

My dearest Heinrich,

May this letter find you still in God's grace. My son, you have angered your father with marriage to this girl. You should not have allowed base emotion to guide you and while Sarah may be God fearing, she is not of our people. No good will come of your stubborn will as father believes you have dishonored your faith and your family.

I will pray for you although father says he will not. My strength fails me, Heinrich. Walk every day in the light of our Lord and ask father for forgiveness.

Your mother, Elisabeth

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November 12, 1735

Our dearest Heinrich,

May God grant you wisdom and comfort in your time of mourning. We were heartbroken over your young wife's death and will pray that God takes pity on her immortal soul.

Father begs you not to leave your son too long in the care of Sarah's family. They may be of the Christian faith but it is best for children to be raised by their own father. Therefore, he has written to my relation, Augustus, about his daughter, Augusta, who has recently become widowed.

Augustus lives but a short distance from your brothers in the settlement of Salsberry and he is agreeable to a marriage. He instructs that you should present yourself to him at once. He has pledged her husband's land to you if you and Augusta marry. It will provide you with a living and more important, it will give your son a mother.

Obey your father and God will increase his blessings upon you. Pray for his guidance, Heinrich and may he lead you in the right path.

Our love be with you,  
Your mother, Elisabeth

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December 19, in the year of our Lord, 1736

Our dearest Heinrich,

May this day find you and your son under the protection of the Lord and may he continue to show you his grace.

It was with great joy that we heard tidings of your union with my relation, Augusta. She is of stout stock and if God is willing, she will bear you many sons. I hope you have already brought Jesse from

Virginia to be part of his new family. While Sarah's family may miss the child greatly, his place is with you and his new mother.

Your brother, Fredrick writes that he has also married to a good woman of the Reformed religion in Salsberry. We are blessed in our children and God bestows his favors upon us by giving us two new daughters. Although your sisters, Elisabeth and Hannah did not live, your wives shall be a comfort to us in our old age.

The ground is already covered by snow here but it is not so cold today. This is fortunate as there will be a funeral for Gebhard Engel this afternoon. He was found along the banks of the Leckhaw River but it is not known if he froze to death or if hard work caused his heart to stop. His mule was nearby and still saddled.

Father wishes to hear about the land my relation has settled on you. Is it as fertile as Augustus has written? Father hopes you will write him in detail of these matters as he does not want you to be taken advantage of by anyone. As for me, I would like to hear more about your son and wife. Please be generous and tell us all things that God would have you share.

God be with you and keep you and your family safe.

With much love and affection,  
Your Mother and Father

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November, in the year of our Lord, 1739

Dearest Heinrich,

It is with great sadness that I must tell you that our Father has died. He took a fever a fortnight ago and never recovered. Mama sat by his bed with poltices and wraps into the night but to no avail as his spirit had gone to be with the Lord long before his body had passed.

Please convey to our brothers this sad occurrence as I am busy consoling Mama. The funeral was yesterday morning and she has taken to her bed since. I know you will want to come home to help but it would not be wise as the weather has already gone bad. Pray wait until Spring and she will be in better spirits and may brighten at your visage then.

Say a prayer for our Father's soul and another for the rest of us. May God be with you and your family.

Your sister,  
Maria