

Witze Pruiksma to his children and grandchildren
Paterson, New Jersey to the Netherlands
November 22, 1895

Dear children and grandchildren,

We are able to report to you that we are all, by God's grace, still enjoying good health, and hope that you will receive this letter in good health also. We were pleased to receive your letter on the 10th of this month.

Mother is sitting here sewing and Grietje will also begin to sew with the machine. Everyone is back home and have eaten, and now one is here and another there. Aaltje and Anne have gone to the girls' society. Jelle and Klaas are visiting a neighbor and Argen has gone to the English school. There whoever wishes can receive English instruction free of charge.

Mother is getting used to life here, and is with our neighbor lady to Hermansen to drink tea. This afternoon I went to a farmer for two cows but he was not at home. That is 1 1/2 hours from here. We walked there, I and a son of Job. Faber. There we drank tea and then rode back by electric car for 5 cents a piece. A person can travel cheaply that way.

We butcher a cow every week. I have now butchered 5 and plan to kill another next Monday. The first one was too fat and was still giving milk. There was 131 pounds of fat and 15 pounds of gristle which I trimmed off which together amounted to 146 pounds of fat. It weighed 531 pounds and for \$25. That is cheap isn't it? The meat we sell for 10 cents without bones, and 6, 7, or 8 centss with bone, and the fat also for 8 cents. We can easily dispose of it. The first hide we sold for 4 cents a pound, the other for 3 cents so that does not amount to much.

A good milk cow, with fresh or new milk, here costs \$50 to \$60 and if it does not bring that much then it is taken to the butcher. Then a cow is worth \$15 to \$30. The ones I saw Monday I bought from that man for \$23. I had that one for three weeks. The other one he wanted to keep until he had another one. Now, this week he dropped in on mother to tell her I could now get the cow. Now I will get it tomorrow, and will butcher Saturday and Monday. If you want a quarter of it, the front for 6 cents or the rear for 7 cents, then you had better come over and Aukje also. Jok of course does not have time.

I have butchered one cow and three hogs at another place. I had to burn off the hair with straw. To butcher a cow I charge \$1, and then saw it up into 4 parts, and that is all. If I have to cut it all up, as is done by the farmers in Friesland, then I get \$1 for that. For a hog I also get \$1.

Yesterday, November 21, I butchered two hogs for a farmer. He is also a Friesian. There we had coffee and cake and brandy with raisins in the cup and spoon. There we said to one another, "Let's imagine we are in Friesland." Here, of course, there is talk every day about the old Fatherland. It will never be forgotten, and if people could make a good living many would return but that is practically impossible and what a constant worry. Those who are here have no worries if they are well and have work. Then he is as well off here as the best farmer in the Netherlands. I said no worries. Yes, there are some here, but of an entirely different kind as with you. America is a good country for everyone, but everyone is not good for America.

Mother will correct my mistakes.

Greetings from your loving father,

Watze