

Sybesma, Siebe  
Platte, South Dakota - the Netherlands  
Sybe Sybesma to relatives

Platte, South Dakota, September 8, 1945

Dear relatives,

Many years have gone by since we heard something from you. And now, we would like to hear how you all are doing. Did you experience hardship? Is there poverty? We are healthy and have a family of twelve. Ytje is in Denver for health reasons. Things are going reasonably well for her. S. has passed away three years ago.

Please send some kind of response. We long to hear something from Friesland now that the mail service works again.

Be greeted by all of us.

From your cousin,

Siebe Sybesma

Sybesma, Siebe  
Platte, South Dakota - the Netherlands  
Siebe Sybesma to relatives

Platte, South Dakota

November 26, 1945

Dear cousin,

Friday We were pleasantly surprised to receive a letter from you. After all it had been quite a while since we mailed you a card in order to find out how our relatives were doing. Well, we were glad to hear from you about your good health. It is almost 38 years ago that we emigrated. Those beginning days are days we will never forget in our life time. Probably we will never have to experience them again. But weird things happened throughout this war as well. Ytje, my sister, we call here Ida, has a son Clarence who was top gunner at a Forbess airplane. They flew 30 times over the European mainland and flew three times over Leeuwarden and Franeker which was not too far away from you. A few times he realized that he was near some relatives. Fortunately he returned from the war safely and did not need to participate in bombing activities against Japan since it all had come to an end suddenly. Ida herself had to go to Denver in July because of tuberculoses. Since then she underwent surgery three times: six ribs were removed from her and one of her longs has been put out of work. Her latest surgery took place a month ago and as far as we know everything is going well with her. They have 11 children of whom 2 sons were enlisted in the military. One daughter, my sister, lives 100 miles East of us. They have three sons and three daughters. One son served on an air balloon as captain. His task was to detect submarines in the South American seas. He too has returned home safely and is now attending school with Jan. Things are going well

for Meltje and her husband. They have 2 daughters and one son married. One of the girls lives in California as well as one of ours . She is working in a store in Belflower, a town where many Dutch, especially Frisian people reside. Siene passed away already three years ago due to cancer. He was spared long suffering. His wife and four of his children are still living on the farm. There are 11 children of whom 7 are married. They all live near by her in the Sioux Center area. Geertje lives in Sioux Center. Her husband died 5 years ago. She has all of her children married except for two. One is still at home and the boy, he is 28, just returned home safely after having been stationed for 3 1/2 years on the Philippines. Yes we have enough to be thankful for as family. After all we did not lose one family member due to the war. Geertje herself is not very strong although she is improving at the moment. We visited her for a few hours last week. We live about 175 miles West of Sioux Center and have twelve children, 4 sons and 8 daughters. The oldest is 23 years, her name is Bertha. She is home at the moment but will begin to work as a registrar in a store this coming winter. Clara is 21 years old and is employed in a large store in Belflower, California since two years. Then we have 2 sons Clarence and marines, and another daughter followed by two sons again. The rest are all daughters. The youngest one is 7 years. Our sons were not required to serve in military service because we own and operate a large farm of 1,100 acres land with many cows to milk. We all enjoy great health and intend to enclose a picture of us in this letter. The situation is stable here. Everything is priced reasonably since the prices are government determined. This is much better than 14 years ago when it refused to do anything about it. At that time everything was rather cheap and the farmer became poorer every day. They said everything had to run its natural course. But now they try to prevent that which happened then from happening again.

Let us hope the government succeeds in its attempt. Because if everything decreases in price it can only result in nothing else but disappointment and dissatisfaction. We often heard that in the Netherlands people in the cities as well as in the country had much money. Is this really true? We thought the Germans had stolen every penny? A few weeks ago, we received a letter from G. Sybesma in Zaandam, Noord Holland asking for bike tires. But we cannot send him those since they cannot be folded due to the iron wires in its fabric. Here many goods are scarce too like underwear, clothing, and other household articles as well as machines. It all involves money. There is here abundantly for as long as people are willing to work. but they all want to earn more money. However it is said that all prices are to be determined by the free market after New Year. We look forward to this. The government is too lenient in its actions. Just like its dealings in regard to German war criminals in Europe. Things are not proceeding with speed. Why not punish the guilty? Our sons had to give their lives and now the government is so weak in its dealings that the murderers there in Germany keep their lives. Those soldiers coming back from the war can tell quite some stories but they all are glad to be home again. My wife's sister still has three sons enlisted. One of her sons is here in this country. Another one is in Japan, he went through a lot, and an other son was sent to Europe last week. As far as we have heard, not one of the 22 enlisted soldiers from this municipality died or got wounded in combat. How are things at your place? Did the war destroy anything? Did it cause severe damages in Franeker? We read about the liberation of prisoners in Leeuwarden and about the derailment of a munition train near Workum. yes, those are inspiring heroic deeds. But it will probably take a generation or two before the Netherlands is where it was prior to the war. No I better stop writing. Ida underwent surgery for the fourth time this

week but it doing exceptionally well. Fred, her husband, visits her every time they perform surgery on her. Can you remember Enne Innema? They lived here one year already before we came and used to live in Roptazijl. Currently they reside in Sioux Center. We visited them this summer. I believe they have two sons and two daughters. Now we will try to mail to you that which you requested although, for us civilians it is hard to come by whereas for soldiers in the military it is available abundantly. There they do not know what to do with it all. Well, dear ones, God's indispensable blessings is what we wish to you for Christmas and the forthcoming year 1946.

Be greeted by all of us.

S. Sybesma, wife, and the twelve.