

Berlin October 20, 1946

My dear Uncle Gustav! <sup>a</sup>

You are probably astounded why all of a sudden you are getting so much mail from Germany. I heard through Aunt Emma that you are still enjoying good health and want to find out about the fate of your siblings in Germany. There is much to write, but first I want to tell you about me so you know who is writing to you.

I am Anna, the youngest daughter of your brother Karl and wife E...<sup>b</sup> you will probably remember me, my parents often told me that you held me during my holy baptism; however, many years have past and I am myself 50 years of age. For the past 27 years I have lived, been here in Berlin, and am married. My husband works for the railroad/train service. Since he was not a Party member he had to spend 3 years in the war, but was lucky to return home in July of 1945. I have a son who is 26; sadly he also had to join the war until he was wounded in 1942. We need to thank God the Almighty that we are here.

The war/air raids/fighting have destroyed much of Berlin. This senseless war has brought much misery and hardship. My old parents really had to suffer. Mother being 86, and Father being 82, in January they had to flee their old home in East Prussia, and were relocated close to Berlin; we were glad they were close. We were able to see each other only once or twice, shortly thereafter the fighting affected our area as well. On May 23, 1945 they were ordered back to East Prussia. I begged for them to be allowed to stay. I could not get permission and with a heavy heart I had to let my parents and my sister go back. During their three week journey they had to suffer terrible atrocities by the Poles; the Polish soldiers robbed them of all their possessions. When they arrived back in East Prussia their homeland on June 10, 1945, they were ill with fatigue from the return journey which was to take its toll. Father closed his eyes forever on July 5, 1945 and Mother followed him on October 7, 1945. They are now both resting in the old cemetery in their homeland that is no longer our homeland. I will never realize my wish to see, or be in a family grave. Unfortunately my only sister is in that same area. If I could only have her here with me; she suffered extremely though all of this time. She lost one son to the war; from the other sons and her husband she has no information as to their whereabouts. Oh, dear Uncle we are all so ripped apart it's indescribable. Uncle Friedrich lost everything when he was burned out in an air assault and had to flee with his wife to East Prussia; if they survived I don't know, he has not made contact with anybody; none of us wanted this war, nonetheless, we all suffer; we starved during the war, and we are still hungry today, the rations are just not enough. We have little bread, even less meat and fish is almost not to be had. Chocolate and Butter and many other things we don't know what they are anymore. Our dresses/suits, shoes and stockings are all worn out and are torn; there is nothing on the market, everything has disappeared. I visited with Aunt Emma and read your last letter to her. I am glad to know you and your children are doing well; I am sending greetings to all my cousins, maybe they can think about their cousin in Berlin. I also read about the accident Aunt Helene had, very unfortunate something like this to happen in her old days. I wish her a speedy recovery. For you dear Uncle Gustav I wish much health and the best. May God our Master grant you many more years. Many heartfelt greetings from your niece Anna Steguweit.

Berlin N.O. 55

Pilckem Str. 19

Hopefully you can read my writing.

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<sup>a</sup> I believe this to be the first letter from Anna (Klaedtke) Steguweit; youngest daughter of Karl Klaedtke, born in about 1895

<sup>b</sup> Name not legible; difficult to decipher