Town of Milwaukee the 12th of June 1859

with joy I greet you

of this is

Much loved Uncles and Aunts, Nephews and Nieces

Since I have felt for a long time like writing you a letter it seems
to me that I cannot postpone any longer, I have begged father many times
to write to you but it seems that he cannot get to it, so I wish so far as it
is in my power to get a letter on to you, since I am as we all are
desirous to hear from you, I would perhaps have written earlier had my health
permitted, and hope that you will accept it with love,
since father last wrote we have received three letters from you, two from uncle
Jan Schipper and one from Cousin Jan Lindenbergh, which were very welcome and a joy to us,
(pity enough that they were not answered sooner,) from your letters
we learned that uncle Jacobus and Aunt Sara have passed from time to Eternity,
may it be that they have entered the land of Eternal rest
then is their happiness great and they are freed from all misery, the loss is
always painful, but there is still a sweet recollection remaining, and if then the hope
may be lively of seeing them again, we also learned from them that
aunt Martina has been ailing considerable time, but yet became better, and that all
others were well, from Cousin Jan's letter we learned
that things were going with them as before, his mother once said when we were going to Amer-
that even if she could get to America in her slippers she would not want to be there,
but it seems to me they would nevertheless be better off if they were here, at any rate he
and his sisters, but they will perhaps see no opportunity for that, we have
often longed that we might sometime see one of our relatives here, it is possible too
for one who is diligent and is willing to work to make headway here, although this year
and last year times have not been so good here, as a few years ago, but
still wages are none the less always high compared with Holland, it would have to be they
outside of them I expect no one here, and would not dare nor wish to recommend it to any one else!
As far as our situation has changed somewhat, in the year 1854 we
moved from town Holland [Sheboygen County] where we formerly lived, about forty miles south-
ward & miles from Milwaukee, this is a large city, father had been called here for Reli-
gious work, to work as leader here, for which a yearly salary
of one hundred dollars was given him and free housing, so it was but a small piece of ground
that he worked, (there are almost thirty Holland families here,) but this

[#] In this space is a sticker in the original, evidently having a motto reading (perhaps in
English) "joyous greeting". The circle indicates its size only. The colors and print
have utterly faded.
leadership lasted but three years, in the year 56 the 18th of May mother died she had had a stroke, and was bedfast only seven days, she had otherwise been fairly well, we then found ourselves in trying circumstances, for Janet had married, and I had become ill the last of March, then we had no one who could do our work, and we tottered on thus until June then Willemina Meuwaen from town Holland came to live with us, you have perhaps learned things from her sister she lived with us almost five months, and was then married, we were very glad to have her with us, it was through her that we heard some things about you, then father married again on the 29th of May 57 with a woman living here a widow she is a native of Gelderland, she has no children, and is seventeen years younger than father and has 20 acres of land here, when father married this woman trouble arose in the church, for reasons they could not themselves prove, but many think that it was to get out of paying him, now this is the way this matter came to an end, there is among the Hollanders in America quite some division, mostly in regard to religion, and the Holland ministers want to sort of rule here, but here it is free America, so father is now farmer again, in the beginning he bought a hundred acres of land here, for 1500 dollars but sold a part of that again, so that he now still has almost 40 acres left, of which a large part is hay land, which in winter most of the time is under water, the past winter he had quite a busy time of it, he had eight animals to take care of, one horse, four cows, and three calves, and the for two stoves make wood, and now he has to work hard again, in town Holland he had the boys at home but that is not the case now, but mother too helps quite a lot, she did this formerly too and rather likes to do it now too, she is quite a robust woman, sometimes she has some headache but otherwise she is always well, father too is so well in America that I often wonder at it, he has never yet been ill here, once a while a cold and the fever but really sick not yet, a few years ago he was so fleshy I think you would hardly have known him now as far as my condition is concerned, that is not so good, as I told you I became sick in 1856 and that from nervousness and serious colds so that I was entirely bedfast, during this illness I have now already had four doctors, to whom we have paid a great amount of money, to one we have had to pay a matter of 81 dollars and yet no cure, some doctors here charge shameful fees, and in the case of this one I just spoke of the main object was money, and a Holland doctor at that, but that one cannot rely on, the first time I had those nervous attacks, was at a time when three persons died so suddenly of the cholera, the husband was
within the space of five hours in good health and dead, and his wife lay from Sunday noon until Monday evening, now and another girl of my age had watched all night over this woman a thing indeed I wish had not happened, but many were so frightened that they ran away, it is usually the case that people think of themselves most, then this girl also died two days later, which shocked me deeply, now the custom here that women also go to the grave, and americans have the custom of bringing the corpse into the church to a place in front of the pulpit (if it is not a contagious disease), now there the casket is opened and every one that wishes to view the remains can do so, then the minister preaches a funeral sermon and addresses the relatives, this done burial follows, also when our dear brother died some americans came to see him, now I was at the grave too of this girl, and was in great distress, but could not weep, on arriving home this became still worse, then I suddenly gave way to crying and some thought that I too was getting the cholera, but a man who understood it said that it was my nerves, and since that time whenever but the least thing happened, this would recur again and again, last summer I was a time or two at Janet's, I had not been there in more than two years, and she lives within shouting distance from us, at present I am still weak, and have to spend a part of the day in bed, but can nevertheless get about better than previously, I am discouraged of course at times, but at other times I keep surrendering everything to the Lord, and say 'may it then only be to his Honor, and for binding me closer to his service' Janet as I told you earlier was married the 8th of May with a young man from the land of kazand, his name is Jacob De Swarte, they have two children, but the first a girl died, being seven months old, now they have a dear little boy twenty months old, who makes a lot of his grandfather, and is also named after him, they have a fair livelihood, they bought four acres of land from father, and then he works some too for others, they also have a cow, Janet too is not strong, and not free entirely from my trouble either, her husband and child are both well, Isaac and James both live in Michigan, they have been there three years already, they work there in sawmills, and earn about twelve to twenty dollars a month, beside board, James was home only four weeks ago, we see him about every year, Isaac was home last fall, we had not seen him for two years, Isaac was married too the first of March this year, with a girl from northholland, her name is trijntje wagenaar, Isaac thinks he will yet be a farmer sometime in town holland, they together bought that forty acres of land from father and then he wants to take over James' share, for they worked quite hard there, and too it is quite
good land, the past year has been an unfortunate one for the harvest, there was straw indeed but no grain, in some places there was nothing in it at all, one could simply blow it away, we had had much rain in the spring, and in the summer black rust made a heavy attack on it, potatoes, beans and peas were fairly good, up to the present crops are doing very nicely this year, provisions are quite high here at present, there is here at present considerable talk about the war that is impending in Europe, which so people think is the cause of this, flour or sifted meal, for unsifted meal one does not know of that is the best from winter wheat here, is 9 dollars for two hundred pounds, which is four dollars more than last winter, but where Isaac and James live it is twelve dollars, and oats and potatoes a dollar a bushel, father says 2½ bushel make a hectolitre, you are no doubt familiar with the fact that coffee is 15 to 18 cts a pound, sugar 10 to 15, butter 12 to 26 a dollar is 2½ guilders, groceries too are quite high, compared with holland, also cloth goods, one cannot count a dollar here as more than a guilder in holland, but we have as yet no regrets that we are in america, one has to work hard here too but freedom is quite a pleasure, too it is here a healthy region, father thinks of course once in a while of his friends, but for the rest he is in his element, Isaac and James too thought that they would never have gotten on so far in holland, this land of which I spoke they bought from father for 500 dollars, and they have reached the point now that it is their possession, they have now rented it for five years for 40 dollars a year I wanted to tell this too that they are both taller than their father, James sometimes imagines that he is going to see holland once more, he is a strange young man with a very inquisitive spirit, I don't believe either he will become a farmer! but Dears now I have just a word more, which I hope will not offend you, when uncle Jan Schipper sent us his first letter he made mention of the many changes that had taken place there, but he says should we ever be able to report a change of heart, namely repentance, that would be something greater, and that was for him too a thing to be desired, he says the Lord has decreed any way who is to be saved and who not, this is indeed truly, but so, but in Deut 29:29 we read that the secret things belong unto the Lord, but those things which he revealed are for us, that is the intent of his decree, but his decreeing will we may as in no case argue with, he commands you to sow your acre, that you may be satisfied with bread, now you would not say would you I am not sowing and will therefore still have, this would be against reason, now the Lord offers you his Gospel, and he calls sinners, in Matt. 11 will we find, that he has no pleasure in the death of sinners, but therein that he repent and live, oh I certainly would wish it too that you could sometime tell us this one and that one has been born in Zion, ah what a glad message this would be, oh do not postpone the time, but work while it is day that night may not overtake you so that you cannot work, neither let the enemy make you believe as I have heard it here too, the Lord Jesus died for all mankind, or, it will not be so bad as many think, this will lead you to be unconfused, then it was of no use that the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, as we read john 3, or is it different God is merciful yes that he is too in the face of his son, but He is also righteous and He created us right and after His image, but we have lost his image through sin, so there is then no other way than through Jesus Christ his son, he himself says no one comes to the father than through me, Oh seek life in him where alone it is to be found, for He himself says my yoke is easy and my burden is light
As concerns us, I believe I may say that we are treading the path of our father, do not think that I have written this to boast, O no this is not my purpose, but the Lord is certainly worthy to be glorified for his blessings, and does not wish that the light stay under the bushel so far as I know, although it is accompanied with many a lament, and utterance, 0 that it might be really true, but indwelling sin and not living close to the Lord so often makes for anxiety and darkness, but we must say nevertheless that sin is a burden to us, at times it indeed has the upperhand but then in turn there emerges a sense of guilt, that it has sinned against that holy and good God, who is so worthy to be worshipped, Oh the service of the Lord is not hard, the world says and thinks of it that it is a melancholy life, Ah but of the fruits of which one has not tasted one can hardly judge, and should one perchance once taste how sweet it is to serve the Lord then he finds in this what he cannot find in the world, Isaac and James since a year ago, have also indicated that they could no longer hold out in sin, before that whenever we spoke to them of it they merely kept silent, and preferred that we speak of something else, but now they have to testify that it is their joy and life, James is even very earnest in inquiry, and in rebuking sin, yes he is outdistancing us all, he has now for a long time also had the desire to preach the word of God, even though he should be among the heathen, but should the opportunity not present itself he does not wish to force his way in if the Lord wishes to use him for it He himself will open the way, so father is to his great joy privileged to see that the imperfect prayers he so often offered in secret and in public have been answered, O what a great privilege it must be to be able to say, behold Lord here me and the children Thou hast given me, Oh how great this would be too for our dear grandmother who as we may believe has with her eldest son entered into the land of rest, to have been able to say this too, the Lord alone knows how many prayers she offered, both for you, and for us, Oh that Eternity to which there never is an end, is a dreadful word for the wicked but a word of comfort for God's people, to be privileged to be eternally with the Lord, I must say that during this sickness I have had the desire at times to be released, sometimes even to be rid of my miserable body, but also indeed from a desire to be with the Lord, and I know the time when I could say that nothing in the world looked desirable to me, but only more often so this would be to the honor of the Lord, but I must close for I could expati ate far here, but O consider before it is too late, is my wish and my prayer, if we shall see each other no more on this side of the grave then may it be on the other, now I have a request to make of you, should you sometime have the opportunity to have some information come to us sometime, about mother's family, who of them is still alive, her oldest sister lived at Ellewoudsdijk, her husband's name was Jan ten velde we have also learned that uncle William is schoolmaster in the land of Hulst, this would give us great satisfaction if you could do this, here is a little flower seed of pretty
little flowers, it is not so much the peculiarity of the flower but it grows so many little
flowers, and each flower blooms but for a day, whether you are lovers of them I don't know, if you
could send me some little seed it would give me delight, for with that I keep myself busy
much of the time, now cordial greetings from us to you all, from me, Janet and husband, Isaac
us and James and greet also aunt Willemijntje Mina had told, that they still
thought of coming to America, I would surely like to see them here sometime, again cordial
greetings, in my thoughts I am still often with you, so I sign myself your loving niece
if you can write back soon

Catharina J Brandt

LETTER 8, translation

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
as I read what Katie has written I find I have nothing
to add because her wishes for you pertaining to your salvation
are also mine. Nevertheless she is determined that I should do [write] something
So I hope then that when we receive reply from you you will come with
the message that one and that one in our relationship is born at Zion for this
is sure that the allhighest will confirm such and that those who
are still strangers to this may get pens toward this birth. I mean
a vision of God's Righteousness and Self-condemnation and thus
as one doomed in himself will in secret before the Lord
cast himself to his knees and at the foot of the throne of grace
make confession of all sins. such conduct will not
leave such a soul void of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ
namely what he is and will be for one so minded it would be impossible for me
to list all the bible texts that establish that yet read
only Isaiah 55 and Matthew 11 v 26 to 30 and on the other hand the threats
in the same chapter from v 16 to 24 now possibly you might seek
an excuse in v 25 yet to refute this for you I would
have to be able to converse with you. Much news from "eeland what
is going on in the world at large we learn from the paper
digging across the island laying of telegraph and railroads and
dying in of Schorren as too the running away of C Filius' horses
but write us sometime who are already dead of those I have known
and how things go with you. awaiting this your loving

Sister and Brother G Brandt your Sister Maria Brandt