

Eau Claire 7 December 1879

Dear Grandfather!

I have been planning for a long time to write to you, but it has not come about on account of my uncertainty over what I am going to do this winter, whether I should go to school or to the woods. Finally, I have decided to go to the woods, as I hear from Tarald Olsen Estenstad that it isn't any worse to work in the woods than at the mills. The mill at Meridean shut down the first of last month, and when I settled my account there, then it was necessary to go to the town of Eau Claire to receive my money, as the mill in Meridean belongs to a company here in town\* and therefore I was supposed to go to the company office in order to get my money. When I had gotten the money I went to Peder Sneenslappen and acquired lodging as he rents a house here in town, and here I also heard that someone is digging a canal, so I thought I could get work at that, as the superintendents here are not impossible, but that I missed out on as there were too many people. Peder had worked at a mill here in town and it also quit at the same time as the one I worked at. But that mill started in again after a few days, and then they asked for more workers, so I got work here although it lasted only a week and a half. Since then I have had woodchopping until the last days. The reason I have not gone to the woods is that the weather has been so good and partly because it has rained, and we've had just a little snow and therefore the woods owners do not want any people. But I have <sup>promised</sup> ~~promised~~, or hired myself out, to work in the woods, ~~for Christmas~~, and I think I'll have to go in about a week. I have up until now been well and getting along fine for which I have the good God to thank. A tragic event occurred here in town the first of this month when there was an explosion in a planing mill and three men died immediately and five were wounded; these were Irish people and for that reason they were supposed to get work ahead of other people at the only mill which was scheduled to continue into the winter as the superintendent was also Irish.

Your welcome letter of the 2nd of last month I received today, just as I had begun with my writing to you, wherefore I offer my heartfelt thanks. And whereby I see that you are well as usual, but that Grandmother is keeping to her bed. I see that there has been an auction at home on the 4th of October and that you have set aside for me a ticking, with many other items, that shall be my property. Wherefore I give you my most heartfelt thanks for all the good that you and Grandmother have shown me. You ask me to greet K. Aspeggen; and that I will do; but Ole Heggen I can not meet as I hear that he is staying in Minneapolis, that is, Minnesota, and therefore is far from here. Note: When I go to the woods there is no point in writing until late into spring as I will not be coming from the woods before April and therefore will not get letters sent to me. I must quit with my writing for this time with an affectionate greeting to you and Grandmother from your devoted grandson A Solem. So I wish you a happy Christmas and New Year.

(There is an additional sentence in the margin of three of the four pages, as follows:)

I am supposed to greet you from Peder Sneen and family and Tarald Olsen Estenstad.

I must also greet you from K. Aspeggen. And he wishes that you would write him a letter.

This time I want to send you my portrait as a remembrance of me.\*\*

\*The Meridean Mill spent most of its life under the ownership of the Eau Claire Lumber Co. It was located on Meridean Island, in the Chippewa River, about nine miles south of Eau Claire. It provided boarding houses on the premises for its workers, as did most of the mills.

\*\* A copy of the portrait is included in this volume. It is a likeness of Anders at about the time of his 17th birthday - October 20, 1879.