

A letter from Sigmund Fischler to Ruth Holländer

This four-page letter is the only one that I have that was written from one of my parents to the other. The word “keep” appears on the envelope.

One thing that surprised me is that my father wrote in English, instead of German. My mother had already been in the U.S.A. for six years and could certainly read English. I also imagine that that speaking German in the streets might have been avoided during the war. However, even if I do not know what language my parents used when together they certainly spoke in German with some of their acquaintances, all of whom were bilingual.

Aside from several references to me (“Herzela”, small dear one) the gist of the letter deals with the work conditions of my mother at -- summer camp, I believe -- in Tannersville, New York. My mother had complained about the long hours and low salary. My father urges her to hold on until August 25.

As words of encouragement my father quotes from *Lucky Peter's Travels*, an 1892 play by the Swedish author August Strindberg.

Life is not such as you saw it in your youthful dreams.
It is a desert, that is true; but a desert which has its flowers;
it is a stormy sea, but one that has its ports by green isles.

Dear Mauni and dearest Kerelle! Sunday, Aug 1st 1943 4PM
I just came back from "Wona" and my head is still
"bunoming" from all her "foolumping" but I had an
"excellent" dinner, she didn't know that I was coming;
after dinner I helped her washing the dishes and
in her "Kerimarkin" (Folding Christmas cards, a clean,
pleasant, pretty well paid work) He is going away on
Friday for a 2-weeks vacation. I had to tear all her
troubles with her roomers, whom she is throwing out
next week. Yesterday I visited Toonmokin, I would
love to lie if I could say that the party was in a
very sad mood, I only remained a few minutes.

My cold is so improved that I don't think it
necessary to go to the Dr, I drink a lot of hot milk
with honey that does me a lot of good. Yesterday
I was very busy with my "Hausfrauenpflichten"
At 2 o'clock I washed (Carlita the machine was broken
I hung up the laundry on the roof and left it till
9 pm, but this time the laundry didn't get too
clean! I brought all my shirts to Maxell for ironing
Then I took 8 sheets and 5 pillowcases to the
laundry. I brought at the 4 & P cases for the still
valid sheeps, the others I gave to Diving, for that

I'm sure you will be a good lesson.

Included I send the pictures and a one dollar (Next letter I send more, because I'm afraid it ~~was~~ the letter may get lost. Please keep the pictures well and claim your them in an envelope and either send them back or bring them yourself.

Whether I shall be in Talenceville again before the 25th I don't know. It is too horrible to be there for 1 1/2 days and then have to leave again. It is like giving one a good meal and just when it begins to taste the dish is torn from your hands. What I think about the two visits to you and Kerelle? Last year I read August Strindberg's Drama: "Lucky Peter's Travels" I found there the following sentence:

"Life is not as we see it in the dreams of our youth. It is a desert but a desert which has flowers, it is a stormy sea, but it has ports on green islands."

Dear Ruth! Those few hours with you and Kerelle were those "ports on green islands"

If you can stand it, hold out till Aug 25th for our Kerelle's sake. I love you as much as I do my child
August