

Michael Wendelboe met Mary Lund on the train from Medicine Hat to Lethbridge, as she was on her way to a job in the New World. He seems to have been quite taken with her, and she with him. Mary's situation was not what she had expected to find, and she wrote Michael very soon after arriving at the farm at Notre Dame, east of Stettler. This is Michael's answer to that card, as translated by Clara (Wendelboe) Sparks.

July 29, 1910  
Barons, Alberta

Dear Friend:

I was glad to receive your card last evening. You can believe it was so good to hear a few words from you again, but I was sorry to hear there was no one to meet you when you got to Stettler, I began to remember that you did not have much money. I wish had *allowed* you some in Medicine Hat so that you would have been sure even if you had to stay a week in a hotel. But it doesn't help to cry over spilt milk. What has happened cannot be changed.

*Say you, kid!* You must *(by God)* [*a Danish expression ( )*] not laugh at my spelling and grammar because I seldom write in Danish. So I hope you are at your destination for this time and have some rest because you must need it by now. Kiddie, you little tot, I would like to be a little mouse and watch what goes on in your new place. See if you are flirting with your new boss or his brother.

You can believe that I was properly taken to task last night after the mail arrived. My Father is manager of the Post Office (is Post Master) and saw your card and he told my sister and she bawled me out for not telling them I had met you. Girls are like that sometimes. They want to know everything and then is the Devil loose. Be careful what you write on post cards because the old man can read the whole thing before I get it.

Everything is nearly the same as it was before I left unless a bit more dark. [    ] this summer set me back around \$4500.<sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> dollars. But of course I can't always be making money. I have a 1/2 section with wheat which is burning up with the drouth. A [*car load binding twine*](*a railroad car load*) (twine is what we tie the wheat bundles with) I had to let go back to Winnipeg because there was no crop.

But I have my own business here in town that brings me a bit of money now and then. The day after I came home I took in about \$145.<sup>65</sup>/<sub>100</sub>. It is usually about \$80.00 a day, now in the drouth. But I think if I can I will sell my store here and go to British Columbia, we will see.

July 30-10

I did not finish yesterday because I went out to my *ranch* and sold 3 horses, didn't get back till 12 o'clock in the night, the grain was soaked by a large rainstorm, the first for 3 months. Today I should have driven 2 of the wild horses, they are 3 years old and have never been harnessed.

Say mary, let me know how you like your new job and how much you are paid, for if you don't get a fair wage there I can find you one around here and I will help you with your ticket. Sorry to say I am more interested in you than I have ever been in any girl and hope you are just a little interested in me. Maybe I am mistaken. I have always been undisturbed by girls. But shame on you! I don't know what kind of a witch you are! because you really have disturbed me.

That was a dandy girl you sent me. She is one who can sure come along when there is no one around. Herman Hendrikson has been busy since he came home. I have not seen his sister since. If she wants to see me she will have to come to town where I usually am. The train is in now so I must close for this time. I hope that you are well and things go well. Affectionate greetings and many thanks from one who wants to be your friend and protector in all good and bad.

Michael

Remember what you promised to be sincere and honest with me. + + +

Michael and Mary exchanged correspondence several times over the next few months. This is Michael's answering letter to Mary's second letter.

Barons

Aug 24 1910

Dear Friend:

I received your letter with pleasure. I had nearly given up hope. I thought you were married already but didn't think that you would be so cruel to me. Now I can say that you had a good reason for moving.

I am very glad you did not like him. Now there is still hope. Mary I wish you had come down here instead of working in Blackfalds so that I could look after you a little. I would be delighted to see you again soon. If you had telegraphed me I could have got you a job at a Doctor's wife right beside us. Now they have got a Swedish devil, a long legged beanpole with an eagle nose. It was real lucky that you got another place so quickly. Are they Americans that you work for? They have not planned marriage with the son? I am jealous! Are there many Danes in Blackfalds? Is there anyone who takes you to dances or other entertainment? Next Friday I will be going 9 miles out in the country to a dance. If I could just take you along. I went to Lethbridge twice since I came home. We have had quite a bit of rain the last while and a snow storm but it wasn't much. The good times with parties and amusement begins soon. During the summer everyone is too busy to go anywhere. You write as if you would like to see me again but must give it up for this time. What do you mean by this? Are you not free to see me if you want to? Is there anything that forbids you to see me? Just tell me if that is true. I'm telling you, I am coming up to see you some time and argue with you a bit. Last night I dreamed I was out in the mountains, you and I and another couple, and as we strolled along you left me and went to the other fellow. I woke up and I was so heavy hearted.

What is the name of the people where you are working? Is Blackfalds a large town? Say, Kiddo, for God's sake or mine let me have a picture, if not to keep then as a (*temporary*) engagement. I am almost at my wit's end wanting to see you. I will be going to Lethbridge soon and then I will get myself pasted on a piece of paper to send you.

*Now, you.* Don't let me wait so long next time for if you knew how much I yearned to hear from you. you would write every day. Tell me if your job is to last long? If not then I'll find you one here. Or I'll find you one here and then you can call quits to the one you have. I think you will like it here for there are many Danes. You needn't be afraid to be engaged to me. When I am home I am an entirely different person from when I am on holiday looking for adventure as we were, and if I have not made a mistake - with you it is much the same. I have nothing more to do with that little Finn girl.

I am glad that you are on the *main line* because there it is easier to come there and back in a short time. I am working like a slave these days. It appears that it

4

will be a hard winter for all this year, for there are not many who have much harvest.

And now may you live well till you hear from me again. Hope this finds you as well as it leaves me.

Your loyal and always devoted

Mikal

Write soon and tell me Mary. ++

Michael wrote again in late August, from a hotel in Lethbridge. Here is what he wrote in reply to another of Mary's letters.

Dallas Hotel (Lethbridge)  
Aug 31-1910

Dear Mary:

I received your letter yesterday. So many thanks. It did me so much good. It was nearly as though we sat in the train and visited. Today I went to Lethbridge and am still here but am going home tomorrow. I was out to see the people that I thought might want you and you can come if you come at once. It is a real good family. The woman has had quite a few girls who could not speak English so that's nothing to worry about. The wages are \$4.<sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> to start but if you suit them they will give you \$5.<sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>. But the wages are not the most important. It is only one mile from Barons so we can see each other quite often. I have a horse and buggy which I use quite often. In the town lives my Father, Mother - 2 sisters and a brother and wife, also 4 Danish families as well as some Norwegian families. So you won't lack for people to visit with.

I nearly forgot! ?????

Dear Mary - now you must give up your job at once and come down here. I am sending you \$20.<sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> along with this letter to be on the safe side. I have written a telegram for you to send me. Will you please send this as soon as possible after you get this letter? Merely fill in the day and date that you are coming. The best thing to do is to go to Claresholm and I will get you there. If I am not at the station then go to the Wilton Hotel and wait for me, you won't have to wait long, believe me.

Now my darling, I hope you can see this is the best for both of us. We need to become more acquainted, we need each other in all things.

Yours as always loyal and devoted.

Mikal

N.B There are 4 children but none very small. I am sure you will like it there.

My own girl. Goodbye.