

Birth Mbr. Feb. 7, 1939

Mr. + Mrs. J. Fries.

Dear Margie, Your letter and present received. The biggest present I got for the occasion, Thanks. My birth day came off quite pleasantly this time. On Jan. 30 all the brothers and sisters had a surprise on me. And on Jan. 31, the young people had a supper at the Church and a program with some negro singers from Lincoln. They dedicated one song to me: "The old time religion," to which I responded and the audience heartily applauded.

Had letters also from Lillie + Eugene's family. Lillie + Sherman were spending a vacation in Pueblo at that time.

Am now trying to answer all of you which is quite a problem for me. But as I wrote Lillie also, tho I scarcely write to you once a year, I never forget to pray for you children at least once a day.

You have probably heard that John Van Engen (your cousin) from Adams, fell out of a tree and broke his back. He is in a hospital at Lincoln. Doctors say he can not live. John Van Engen Sr. + Will from Colo. were over here last week.

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We are all well. I still feel spry. And I am as busy as ever. Lately I have been tinkering with a beet drill, which I got to working fine as it seems. Am going to raise more of the "Mangel-wurzes" that you saw. Had 150 baskets of them, but the cow wants still more. I built a wood-splitter that draws more attention than anything I ever made. There must have been some 200 people that came to look at it. They usually come in little groups. Many of them ask where did you get the idea? And yet the idea and construction of it are very simple. Now I hear of others that are trying to build one like it. The winter has been unusually pleasant thus far. Had no zero weather. Ploughed a piece of garden on the 6th of Jan. no frost in the ground. January seemed like March every day. Our next door neighbour came back from California yesterday. She says she likes it better here. Our music teacher is busy Phyllis behind my back, which makes writing still more difficult.

Yours with fatherly love and Gods blessings.
 Let us hear from you soon again. J. W. DeBelle