



Letter from Max Bredig to Georg Bredig, September 17, 1938

Bredig, Max Albert. "Letter from Max Bredig to Georg Bredig, September 17, 1938," September 17, 1938. Papers of Georg and Max Bredig, Box 1, Folder 22. Science History Institute. Philadelphia.

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Courtesy of the Science History Institute, prepared June 8, 2025 03:14 UTC

Translated by Jocelyn R. McDaniel

English Translation

Image 1

Max A. Bredig

Montague, Michigan, September 17, 1938

Pine Bluff Resort

Dear Father,

There are still two weeks until your grand seventieth birthday. However, it doesn't help that our great distance forces you to think about it now. Of course, it's a pity that I can't be there when you celebrate but know that you're in my thoughts.

It's going to be a quiet celebration. Yet, I think that I inherited my own aversion to lavish parties from you, and that you will not miss one now, including the scientific conferences that would have happened under other circumstances. We have all been able to realize now that only personal fulfillment counts, and that external recognition is indeterminate. However, you didn't miss out on the latter, and your achievements are still celebrated today! Here is one

example from many. At the conference in Milwaukee today, I was introduced to Professor Evens, likely the former President or Vice President of the American Chemical Society. He immediately asked me what my connection was to the "the Bredig"! Everywhere I went, I met people who either knew you as a renowned scholar from scientific literature, or who spoke about you with admiration if they knew you personally. It was also nice when Dr. Weissberger, formerly of Leipzig, and now employed at Eastman-Kodak in Rochester, told the story about your mother slapping you after you returned from finishing your secondary school exams.

If this or that worry now overshadows your birthday celebration a little bit, it is because of fate and events that no human could possibly prevent. On account of my permanent move, some things will improve there too. I will find a job and we will find a solution for any eventual complications, even if there are no ideal solutions on this earth.

I'm always particularly happy when I still receive good news about your health. That's the most important thing. Moreover, on your birthday, I wish that it stays that way for the next twenty years!

I want to now tell you a little bit about myself. I don't know when I last wrote in detail. I didn't have my correspondence folder with me on the trip. Yet, hopefully you will have received my postcards from my trip. I've been traveling for two and a half weeks. I had to give up my room on September 1st because the landlady only wants to rent it out for the entire next semester. She also gave me a hard time for trivial reasons. My things are now in storage with a shipping company. That was very practical decision for me, especially since I had to travel for some time and was able to save money. I first went to Canton, Ohio, where the Timken Roller Bearing Company is located. My latest work in Ann Arbor was done

Image 2

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on this company's behalf. After I applied there, they invited me for an interview. The laboratory people there were very nice and engaging. I spent about 3 hours with them and received a tour of the laboratory and factory. However, the business people who will make the decision, did not commit themselves at once. Perhaps, I'll hear some news when I return to Ann Arbor tomorrow. On the return journey I drove through Akron (rubber industry) and Cleveland with my well-running car. These cities are nicely situated on Lake Erie. I then drove back through Toledo, Ohio to Ann Arbor. Unfortunately, I haven't had any contact with anyone in the rubber industry yet. Otherwise, I would have visited them if I had the opportunity. I don't think they are doing well! After a day in Ann Arbor and a day with my Mrs.

Marx, Lore Marx, and Walter Marx here in Montague on Lake Michigan, a particularly beautiful spot on the way to Milwaukee, I took the steamer ship there with my car. I didn't learn anything scientifically at the conference, but I tried to meet people and establish relationships. Dr. Weissberger, formerly of Leipzig, was particularly nice. Through him, I met the radiographer at Eastman-Kodak, who might be able to help me one day. Nothing definite has come out of it yet. I next met a man who works in the phosphate industry and gave me some hope for this field. I want to try and apply to Monsanto soon. Finally, I met Dr. Egloff of the Universal Oil Products Company, who have a wonderful laboratory in Chicago. Ipatieff and A.V. Grosse, who produced protactinium, also work there in leadership roles. I later took a tour there. I doubt whether there will ever be an opportunity for me there, although I also filled out their application. Ipatieff says hello. I also met Willstätter's daughter in Milwaukee. I then went to Madison, a very charming college town, where Walton also remembered you fondly. The same goes for McBain, although he can't do much for me. The organic chemist I., who previously worked in Freiburg, also spoke very reverently about you. He is now on the East Coast and works in industry. In Chicago, Beutler in particular, who has been working in the university's Physics Department for one year and whom I know quite well from Berlin, was particularly nice and helpful. Through him, I spoke to the X-ray expert at the Armour Institute of Technology, who said there might be a position for me there in the future. The research department there is only in its infancy! I also spoke to two very important people in the steel industry. Since one of them works in the same field as my first job in Ann Arbor, maybe something will come of it! So, as you can see, I more or less have some encouraging prospects, but nothing definitive yet.

The day before yesterday, I returned to the eastern side of Lake Michigan. After two or three days of rest, I will return to Ann Arbor on Monday at the latest and will especially resume my letter-writing more. Since I don't yet know where I'll live, it's best to keep writing "c/o Fajans" in the near future. I'll probably eat at the university club. It's apparently much better there because of its cleanliness. The allergy treatments have helped, and I think I'm immune now. I didn't have any allergic attacks to eggs during my three-week trip!

(left margin)

Mrs. Marx just received the letter from you and Marianne. She is now writing letters here at the same table as me! This and the fact that we live with local "Swabians", our hosts, creates a very homelike atmosphere. Many heartfelt wishes for you, and warm regards to Marianne, Viktor, the boys, P. Homburger, Mrs. Cotiaux, and the Neumanns etc.

Love,
Your son Max