

OSTFRIESEN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA



AMERICAN-OSTFRIESEN JOURNAL

*Eala Frya Fresena! Lever Dod Als Slav!\**

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*Leer's Synagogue*

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**Eala Freya Fresena! Lever Dod Als Slav!**  
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- Foster and increase interest in the culture, history and customs of Ostfriesland.
- Provide and exchange historical and genealogical information for those of Ostfriesen heritage.
- Preserve and celebrate our Ostfriesen heritage.

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***JOURNAL MAIL ADDRESS—NEW:***

***OGSA Editor, 15695—368th Street, Almelund, MN 55012***

**MOIN, ALLE!**

We are living in uncertain times. It's the first time the world has ever seen this type of catastrophe and all of us have been affected by this. OGSA has never had to cancel a conference before, and this was an incredibly difficult decision to make. Since we don't know how long the effects of COVID 19 will last—we canceled our conference until next year. Stay safe everyone. We have no other meetings planned for this year until we know when it will be safe for our members. The MGS Library is closed until further notice.

In January I was informed that I needed a knee replacement, I was pretty bummed and canceled the tour to Ostfriesland in May. Not that I had to, but just in case something went wrong. Nothing did go wrong and now I have a great new knee—but it turned out that we could not have made the trip anyway. This may be the first year in more than 20 years that I will not be in Ostfriesland at least once.

I'm sure you've noted the articles in our journal translated by Gisela Schmidt. Gisela is my cousin who lives in Emden. After Rudy died, she offered to translate articles so OGSA members can keep up with what is happening in Ostfriesland. Many of you have commented on how much you enjoy her contributions. *Thank you, Gisela!*

We are pursuing other membership options to help our members keep in touch—and offer you more learning possibilities. We are also looking at video-taping some lectures which would be available to all of you! If you have an expertise in any of these areas, please let us know! If you have ideas of other ways we can help you or articles you'd like to see in this journal—we need to hear from you. *We will also be updating our website this year!*

Thanks to those of you who voted for board members. Marsha Othoudt (Woodbury, MN) and Dirk Weeldreyer (Jenison, MI) join the board this year. We now have three board members who virtually attend our meetings! This is a good sign of the times.



**IMPORTANT NOTICE!**

Due to the ongoing uncertainty of the Corona Virus medical situation, OGSA is canceling our 2020 conference until **July 29-31, 2021**. So save that date!

While we are months away from the conference date for this year, we stand to lose a substantial amount of money if the situation does not improve before we hold our event.

*If you have made hotel reservations*, make sure you call and cancel them today!

**RENEW your OGSA membership for 2021 anytime!**

*\*Eala Freya Fresena!  
Lever Dod Als Slav!  
Hail, Free Frisians!  
Better Dead Than Slave!  
(front cover)*

**PLEASE NOTE:** *The OGSA office is closed at this time. Delivery of orders may be delayed.*

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# Jewish Memorial Stones

Nearly 290 *Stolpersteine* (commemorative “memorial stones”) have already been laid in Emden. *“There are still a few hundred to follow,”* said Gesine Janssen, member of the *Stolpersteine* Working Group Emden. In addition to 21 of these stones in Emden, five will be laid in the Krummhörn for the first time on November 16th.

More than 460 Jews were murdered in Emden during the Nazi era. But it is not only for the Jewish victims that the working group wants to lay these memory stones. *“We also want to give a name to the politically persecuted from Emden,”* explains Jürgen Neubert, also a member of the working group.

Now the Emden group is also expanding its activities to the rural area. After the Krummhörn, memorial stones in Hinte are planned for next year. *“Often the murdered Jewish families who lived in the Krummhörn are not mentioned. It is a fallacy to think that there were victims of National Socialism only in the city,”* says Janssen, who lives in Uttum.

Artist Gunter Demnig will install the 75,000th memorial stone on December, 29th, 2019. The small plaques are distributed in 26 European countries – but most of them are in Germany. With the project, Demnig wants to keep alive the memory of all the victims of National Socialism.

The memorial stones, made of brass, are laid in the sidewalk in front of the last place of residence of the victims. Demnig himself brought in almost all the commemorative plaques.

Demnig had the idea for the memorial stones in Cologne in 1992. He laid the first memorial stones in Berlin-Kreuzberg in

1996 – at that time, this was still illegal. Only later were the plaques recognized.

The 72-year-old wants to bring the name of the murdered and displaced back to their homeland with them. *“A person is not forgotten until his name is forgotten,”* Gunter Demnig quotes the Talmud.

The memorial stones are all handmade and not made in a factory. This is particularly important to the artist because it is such a complete contrast to the mechanical destruction of human beings in concentration camps. *“For me it is important that each stone is made individually for each person,”* says Demnig.

The 72-year-old now has a nine-strong team. But every inscription for the victims runs through his computer. Demnig thinks it is important that the biographies of the victims are read aloud during the installation of each stone.

It costs 120 euros to produce and lay each *Stolperstein*. This is financed by sponsorships. The artist has already won more than 20 awards for the project, including the Federal Cross of Merit. ♦

PHOTOS:  
“*Stolpersteine*”  
(memorial plaques)  
in front of homes in Aurich)

*Ostfriesland-Zeitung*, 7.11.2019  
and 18.11.2019  
Translated by  
Gisela Schmidt



[en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stolperstein) > wiki > *Stolperstein* :  
*A Stolperstein (plural Stolpersteine; literally "stumbling stone", metaphorically a "stumbling block") is a set-size, 10 by 10 centimeters (3.9 in × 3.9 in) concrete cube bearing a brass plate inscribed with the name and life dates of victims of Nazi extermination or persecution.*

[www.stolpersteine.eu](http://www.stolpersteine.eu) > :  
*There are now STOLPERSTEINE (lit. “stumbling stones or blocks”) in at least 1,200 places in Germany, as well as in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Ukraine.*



# Emden's Jewish Cemetery



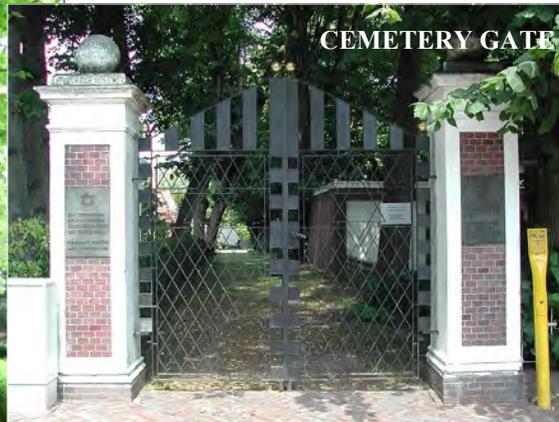
PATH FROM THE GATE

Standing in front of the iron gate on the Bollwerkstraße (street) in Emden, you don't immediately notice what's behind it. The star of David in the gates give a hint: it is the entrance to the Jewish cemetery.

The city once had the oldest and largest Jewish community in Ostfriesland. Today the city is no longer home to descendants of the former Jewish inhabitants.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass, which occurred November 9th, 1938), Dr. Rolf Uphoff, chairman of the Max Windmüller Society, showed the Jewish cemetery to *Ostfriesen-Zeitung* reporters, and explained some of its history.

The gate was restored in the 1990s. Where now large, white spheres adorn the pillars, there were once books – they symbolized the collection of sacred writings of Judaism. They are believed to have been knocked down during World War II, Uphoff said. "Although the



Jews were persecuted during the Nazi regime, they were still allowed to bury people in this cemetery," the 56-year-old said.

Today, only the trees are regularly pruned. Otherwise, nothing will be done. "The cemetery is like a biotope," says Uphoff. Many tombstones are covered with ivy or moss, some tombstones have been damaged by the weather.

Walking across the cemetery you see graves from three centuries. The oldest were laid out at the beginning of the 18th

century. Here you will find the so-called "Portuguese gravesites". In Hebrew the tombstones say who is buried here: they were Spanish and Portuguese refugees who had settled in the city and were welcomed there because of their contacts, which benefited trade.

According to Uphoff, "Germanization" [assimilation] can be clearly seen on the newer part of the complex: no more Hebrew script is found on the tombstones, the grave sites are firmly framed, only rarely a Star of David or a menorah can be seen.

Non-Jewish members of families have also been buried here. The last graves were laid in the 1960s. According to Uphoff, the people who were buried in this cemetery were once part of the Emden population: families of bakers, and butchers, or other trades people.

A monument was erected in the cemetery: the names of 465 Emden Jews are recorded on the three black columns shown below. Behind many is a date of



NAMES OF THOSE INTERRED IN THE CEMETERY



**CONCENTRATION CAMPS**



death, for others not even a year. It is not known when and where they died.

The *Stolpersteine* (stumbling stones/memorial plaques) Working Group helped to clarify some of their fates. Often the lives of these Emden inhabitants ended in a cruel death, as Uphoff reports.

On the granite columns are also the names of people who lost their lives in the Night of Broken Glass 1938. *"This must not be forgotten,"* says Uphoff. ♦

What is today being written online about the Nazi era is frightening. He would like to see more education for the younger population, so that the harsh events of the past are not erased or forgotten, but serve as lessons for the future. Translated by Gisela Schmidt.

Editor Note: The state of this cemetery is truly shocking. The cemetery appears to have no upkeep. Many headstones are broken, have fallen down or need to be straightened. There is no or limited mowing of the grass.



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# Leer's Jewish Synagogue



LEER'S SYNAGOGUE

Albrecht Weinberg heard with great interest about the construction project planned for a site on the Heisfelder/Friesen Straße in Leer. A large residential and office complex is to be built where an old gas station has been crumbling for years. But among the ruins there may still be remains of the old synagogue in Leer.

For Albrecht Weinberg, this place of worship was an important part of his life. The now 95-year-old celebrated his Bar Mitzvah (comparable to the rite of confirma-

tion) there in March 1938. Eight months later, the Nazis set the church on fire.

*"The synagogue was really a great building. I was one of the last guys to celebrate their Bar Mitzvah there,"* Weinberg says. He remembers that there was only one small party. *"Many Jews were no longer in Leer at that*

*time."* The Weinberg family had lived in Rhaderfehn, where Albrecht was also born, but the Nazis moved them to a back room on Bremer Straße (street) in Leer.

During *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass, from November 9th to 10th, 1938) the synagogue was burned and Albrecht Weinberg, who was just 13 years old, was driven to the slaughterhouse in Leer and later deported.

After his liberation from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, Weinberg lived in New York until 2012. Now he resides in a home for seniors in Heisfelde, Ostfriesland.

For almost 50 years, the church stood on the area between the disused gas station and the former liquor factory of Folts & Speulda. It was quite impressive: *"The synagogue stood on a plot of almost 900 square meters (9,700 square feet), the building had a floor area of about 400 square meters (4,300 square feet),"* explains Wolfgang Keller.

Keller is chairman of the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation Ostfriesland. Together with Weinberg, the company wants would like to speak to the investor and the architect of the planned residential and office complex. Their intention: *"That there is also a dignified memorial for the former synagogue."* ♦

*Ostfriesen-Zeitung*, 5.11.2019  
Translated by Gisela Schmidt

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## Leer's Jewish Population & Synagogue

The first known Jewish presence in Leer was in 1611. The largest Jewish population there was 306 in 1885. The Jewish population in 1933 is unknown. In 1925, 289 Jews lived in Leer, making the community the third-largest in East Friesland. Leer was home to a Jewish cemetery by the middle of the 17th century. The last burial conducted there before the *Shoah* took place on June 11, 1939.

A Jewish school was established on Kirchstrasse sometime between 1840 and 1850. During the first decade of the 20th century, the community opened a new school. The building also housed an apartment for a teacher—on Deichstrasse (present-day 14 Ubbo-Emmius-Strasse). The synagogue on Heisfelder Strasse was inaugurated in 1885.

On Pogrom Night, SA men set the synagogue on fire. Jews from Leer and the surrounding areas were assembled at the fairgrounds; the women and children were later released, but the men were sent (via Oldenburg) to Sachsenhausen, where they were interned until the end of December 1938 (possibly January 1939).

In late January 1940, local Jews were ordered to leave Ostfriesland by April 1, 1940. By then, Jewish properties had been confiscated, and Jews had been forcibly moved into the ghetto located at the corner of Groninger and Kampstrasse.

The Jewish school was closed on February 23, 1940, and the ghetto was liquidated on October 23, 1941. In March 1943, the municipality bought the Jewish cemetery,

after which, in May of that same year, Dutch slave laborers were forced to remove the gravestones from the oldest section of the Jewish cemetery.

Approximately 20 to 30 Leer Jews survived the war. Miriam Hermann, one of the survivors, was deported to Theresienstadt on February 10, 1945. Almost 90% of the community perished in the Shoah. After the war, a stone tablet bearing the ten commandments which had once stood above the synagogue door was found in a neighboring vegetable garden. In 1984, the tablet was transferred to the Ichud-Shviat-Tzion synagogue on Ben Yehuda Street in Tel Aviv. ♦

SOURCE:  
(<http://germansynagogues.com/index.php/synagogues-and-communities?pid=59&sid=808:leer>)

# With "Great Audacity" She was Murdered

Although not really striking, a gravestone in the cemetery of Upleward makes a powerful impact as a reminder of a woman whose life tells of particular strength – and of particular tragedy. For Mettje Peters Fegter helped shape the village in the 19th century, but she ended up as the victim of a murder. Her history is closely linked to that of the *Gulfhof* which two investors are renovating – and they've been deeply impressed with her story.

It is the year 1851. It is still ten years before the beginning of the American Civil War. There is a woman in Upleward who has been dealt a hard lot in life. Mettje Peters Fegter is 44 years old, has four young daughters, and is a widow.

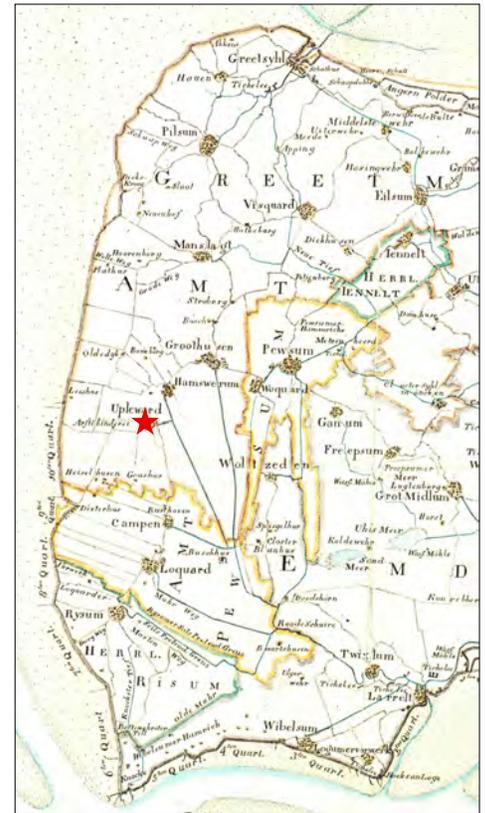
What would even today be a sad stroke of fate was then a very heavy burden for a woman. But the five Fegter women were not discouraged. The mother, Mettje, buys the "*Heerd zu Upleward*", today known as the Ohlings *Gulfhof* (home with attached barn) which was at least 80 years old and in need of renovation.

Metje's family lived in Upleward at that time, but she had been born in Wirdum. In 1837 she married Everts Hinderks Boomgaarden from Jennelt, who was eight years younger. Today's two investors, Timo Hinrichs and Helge Heyen, did some research after buying the *Gulfhof*, and discovered the following information:

At the 1837 wedding, Mettje Peters Fegter was already heavily pregnant, because only two weeks later she gave birth to her first daughter, Mettje Eben Janssen [Boom-garden], whom she named after her mother.

By 1844, daughters Geertje, Aafke, and Memke had joined the family. But in 1846 tragedy struck: her husband died at the age of 30.

But Mettje Peters Fegter did not give up. It is not known where she lived with her daughters in the following years [1846-1851], probably on the farm in Upleward which her mother Mettje Eben Janssen had taken over in 1837 for 25,100 guilders.



But in 1851, after her father died, his children and grandchildren inherited the farm, but apparently could not afford to keep it. At an "*öffentliche licitation*" (auction) Mettje Peters Fegter purchased the entire property for 21,700 Reichstaler and began to renovate the building.

This is what Peter Nanninga current resident of Upleward found during his search for Low German stories. Even today the beams of the original barn still exist — they were used to build the new barn in 1851; and the new owners are also in the process of renovating the entire family living quarters of the *Gulfhof*.

The new owners want to preserve as much as possible in order to highlight the history of the venerable farm building. The mighty farmhouse seems to have done well with the investment, because after the pre-



The former *Gulfhof* of Mettje Peters Fegter Boomgaarden



History of a murder: In this 1874 newspaper article the act was described in details

viously turbulent years there were no further changes of ownership.

Instead, Mettje Peters Fegter ended up handing over the farm to a daughter, according to a report that appeared in an East Frisian newspaper in 1874 — and which highlights the sad reason for that transfer. The strong widow and mother at the age of 66 was found murdered in her home on the other side of the village.

On March 31, 1874, "a robbery murder was committed in our village with outrageous audacity," the paper indignantly complains on April 4, describing that the widow's home is located directly on the footpath to Hamswehrum. When passing the house you can look directly into the living room of the "widow".

On that day, a maid wanted to bring her a lunch at around 1 p.m., as always, but found the house locked. "She summoned a son-in-law and a neighbor" who gained access and found the dead woman. "She was strangled in the hallway to her living room by several cloths wrapped tightly around her neck". A cupboard in which she kept money and securities had been broken into. But the murderer had missed a box in which several hundred Talers were stored.

The course of the act is reconstructed on the basis of the evidence: an empty letter with her address on it, and a penny for messenger wages still in her hand, suggest that the murderer must have sneaked in falsely posing as a messenger boy.

A suspect is quickly identified: "An already persecuted deserter, who used to work as a farmhand on the farm of the widow, is strongly suspected of the crime." Hopefully, the report concludes, he will be arrested soon. Whether this was actually achieved is not known, and that part of the family history has been lost.

But today's owners want to remember the widow and her family. The future apartments in the farm build-



ing will carry their names. Timo Hinrichs emphasizes: "This is how we want to preserve the memory of Mettje Peters Fegter."

SOURCE: History of a murder: In the above April 4, 1874 newspaper article the act was described in detail.

NOTE: A *Gulfhof* is an old Ostfriesian farm building which incorporates living quarters for the farm family at one end, while the "barn" of the farmstead stretches to the other end. The wide low roof is supported not by the exterior walls but by wooden posts which form a wide hall (the "Gulf") down the center of the barn end. This provides storage for hay and other crops and for equipment. Stalls for the animals are tucked under the roof on either side of the "Gulf". This architectural style developed in northern Germany during the 1500s and 1600s. Today, many of those expansive roofs sport solar panels! ♦

Ostfriesen-Zeitung, January 11, 2020 / Translated by Gisela Schmidt  
Also see *Gulfhof* Restoration article on Page 17.



OLD & NEW GRAVESTONES FOR METTJE PETERS FEGTER BOOMGAARDEN, HER HUSBAND & PARENTS IN UPLEWARD CEMETERY

# *Dorfschiffers Remember: Anecdotes from Daily Life*

Published in the January 2020 edition of the OGSA newsletter was an article I wrote about the importance of the *Dorfschiffers* (the village shippers, who carried freight and passengers around the waterways of Ostfriesland via canal boat) to the transportation needs and the economy of Ostfriesland from the Middle Ages up into the 20th century.

Since submitting that article to the editor, I received as a welcome Christmas gift an exceptional book which gives further descriptions of the lives of those of our ancestors who plied the canals and streams of Ostfriesland.

Entitled *Dorfschiffer: Tee aus Emden, Korn aus der Krummhörn*, by Gunther Hummerich and Wolfgang Lüdde, this book was published in Norden in 1992 (Verlag Soltau-Kurier). Loosely translated, the title is: *Village Shippers: Tea from Emden, Grain from the Krummhörn*. Much of the book focuses on the day-to-day activities of the *Dorfschiffers* and their work as freight carriers and transporters, work which contributed greatly to the economy of Ostfriesland from early times up to the mid-1900s.

One chapter is especially charming, as it looks at the remembrances of some of the last *Dorfschiffers* — but most of the reminiscences come from their children, who themselves were quite elderly by the time of this book's publication. In sharing these memories, Hummerich and Lüdde provide those of us who are their descendants with a clearer picture of the lives of our Ostfriesen ancestors.

Included is a chronicle of the memories of one Fokko Boots, the son of Harm Boots, who was the last *Dorfschiffer* from Loquard. Fokko was 84 years old and living in Rysum when interviewed by Hummerich and

Lüdde, so his reminiscences refer primarily to post-World War I and the 1920s. As a child he had often accompanied his father on his regular runs to Emden from Loquard. Fokko notes that as soon as their boat was tied up at the harbor in Emden, his father immediately changed clothes, switching from the blue/white striped tunic and blue pants of the working man to finer clothing.

He changed clothing because his work attire inevitably had gotten dirty, and he didn't want to go into the Emden shops seeking the goods his Loquarder customers ordered while looking dirty or disheveled. Harm Boots almost always took his bicycle along on these trips, so that he could more quickly get around to the various shops in Emden, complete his purchases, and be all the sooner on his way back home.

In an interesting form of early good business relations, Harm and a few other Krummhörner *Dorfschiffers* would go to Emden in the last days of December to make the rounds of the various businesses they patronized, to wish them a good New Year, all in an effort to make sure of good relations going forward. And sometimes it went the other way.

Gretus Hoogestraat, son of Wessel Nannen Hoogestraat, the last *Dorfschiffer* in Freepsom, recalled that merchants from Emden would walk out to his village in the

early days of January to wish them a good New Year. Gretus' mother always sent them home with bacon and sausages.

Hummerich and Lüdde also share the memories of Weert Mammen, the son of the last *Dorfschiffer* from Logumer Vorwerk, who reminisced about getting out of school every Tuesday and Friday to help his father take goods to Emden for market days. None the less, he was still obligated to complete his school homework, even though he inevitably returned from Emden exhausted.

Beginning as early as age 12, Weert often found himself in the leather harness towing his father's heavily-laden boat along the canals. That strenuous labor, however, caused some crippling of his rib-





cage, from which he suffered consequences throughout his entire life. Child labor of this sort was common—*Dorfschiffers* might have said essential—to the boating traffic of early Ostfriesland.

Theodor Brunken, son of Pilsum's last *Dorfschiffer* Karl Brunken, often accompanied his father on trips to Emden. They would frequently meet and convoy to Emden with the Greetsieler *Dorfschiffer*, Martin Boomgarden. Unlike many other *Dorfschiffers*, they had space on their boat which allowed them to spend the night aboard their craft while moored in Emden, rather than needing to hurry homeward. That relieved the pressure of having to get around to the Emden stores the same day they unloaded their cargo from Pilsum.

One delightful story illustrates the flexibility and creativity of the *Dorfschiffers*. Hummerich and Lüdde shared the memories of Garrelt Hinrichs, son of Garbrand Hinrichs, the last *Dorfschiffer* from Campen. On one of his trips to Emden, the water level in the canal was unusually high, so high that he could no longer get the boat under a bridge at Twixlum. Garbrand Hinrichs tied the boat to the canal shore, and set off to the nearby Twixlum schoolhouse. There he

explained his problem to the teacher and requested his help.

The teacher and all the school's students followed Garbrand back to his boat and climbed aboard. The added weight lowered the boat in the water enough so it could slip under the bridge. Once on the other side, the teacher and students disembarked. The children got a brief respite from their lessons, and they all helped the *Dorfschiffer* complete his run!

Sometimes the skippers weren't so fortunate. The authors also relate how one overloaded boat, when confronted with a storm, ended up swamped and sank in the canal with its entire cargo. Other boats occasionally collided when moving through the canals in the dense fog which often plagued the Krummhörn.

Eede Harms Bloempott, son of Rysum's last *Dorfschiffer*, Jan Bloempott, describes how his father and uncle bought their last canal boat in Papenburg, where many boats were built. It was during the post-World War I period of hyperinflation in Germany, and they carried the cash to purchase the boat to Papenburg in two large sacks.

As the authors chronicle the reminiscences of the men who worked as *Dorfschiffers*,

they also provide some information about the women who assisted them. Often it was the wife of the villager *Dorfschiffer* who went around the village, gathering the orders to be filled at the stores in Emden. And it was also often the wife who distributed the goods brought back to the village after the run to the city.

Women with young children at home would have been unlikely to have accompanied their husbands and the boats during regular runs, but once the children were old enough, the whole family might take part and contribute to the labor needed for the trip. It was not unusual to see wives in harness walking along the towpath and helping to tow the heavily laden boats. Luckily, by the 1930s, many of the boats were powered by engines.

And Hummerich and Lüdde didn't miss the irony of those *Dorfschiffers* who ferried thousands of bricks to Emden, all destined to build solid roadways, which would shortly put these same *Dorfschiffers* out of business.

For hundreds of years the *Dorfschiffers*, an occupation often passed down from father to son to grandson, provided a necessary service to the villages, and were the lifeblood of commerce in Ostfriesland.

In their book, Hummerich and Lüdde capture the day-to-day challenges of the work which involved the efforts of an entire family for it to be a successful enterprise. It's wonderful that they have captured so many memories concerning this work, which with the advent of railroads and good roads, has forever ceased.

Today the canals and waterways of Ostfriesland serve mainly for drainage of water from the land, and for recreational boating. ♦

## KLOSTER APPINGEN:

# Fire, Stormfloods, Plagues of Mice, and Cattle Disease

**Summary:** What is today the *Domäne* (state-owned estate) of *Kloster Appingen*, near Greetsiel, has a long and checkered history which began over 560 years ago, and which acquaints us with, among other things, the piety of the cloister residents, the majesty of princes, and the satisfaction as well as the sufferings of the later tenant farmers. The author, Eva Requardt-Schohaus, looks back to earlier times:

Back when the East Friesian “half island” was not yet protected by its “Golden Ring” of dikes [prior to about 1300 AD], the Ostfriesen people living on these very flat lands built their towns and dwelling places on man-made earthen piles called *Warfen* or *Wurten*. We are reminded of these earlier times before the construction of the dikes by a map of Ostfriesland which dates from about 800 AD.

At that time there already existed, in the district known today as the *Krummhörn*, the *Warfen* villages [villages built on man-made earthen mounds] of Visquard, Manslagt, Pilsum, Hauen, Akkens and Appingen. At that time, Visquard was situated directly on the northern bank of the Sielmonker Bay. Even today, academics debate as to whether Appingen was named for a lordling named “*Appo*” or whether it originally was [a settlement] called “*Auingen*”.

Liudger, the first Bishop of Münster, was a missionary who worked to convert the Friesians to Christianity toward the end of the 8th century AD. Thereafter, Charles the Great [Charlemagne of France, crowned as the first Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire by the Pope in Rome in 800 AD] placed the newly Christianized district under the supervision of the bishoprics of Münster and Bremen.

Thus Münster acquired the overlordship of the region of “*Emisgonien*” which included the districts known today as Overledingerland and the Moormerland, as well as the

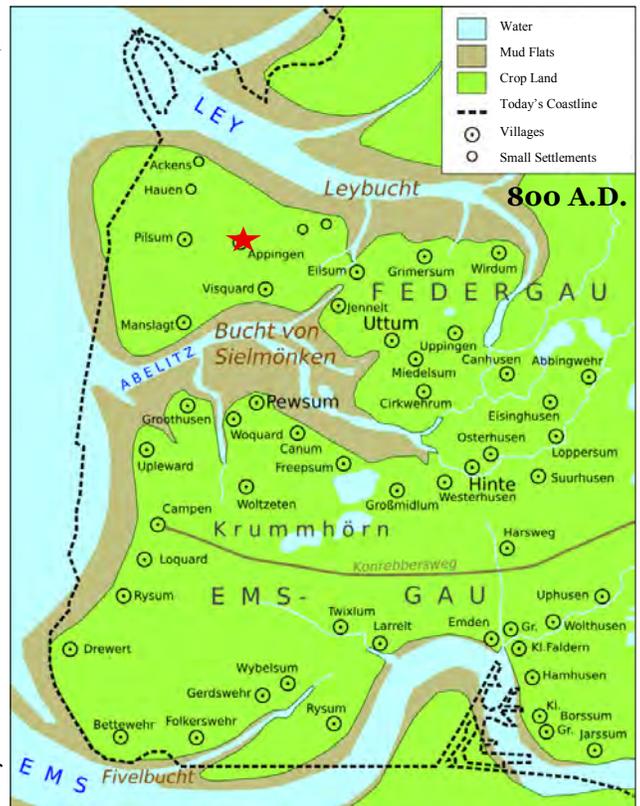
northern *Krummhörn* region called the “*Federitgau*”, which included the villages of Visquard and Appingen. The *Propstei* [diocese] of Uttum then administered both these villages, which had already been named in documents of the 10th to 12th centuries, along with its other holdings. About 1200 AD, a parish church was erected in Appingen, dedicated in honor of the Virgin Mary.

In the early Middle Ages, the ancient settlement played a dual role as a sea-port and as the primary residence of the *Hauptling* (noble chieftain) family Cirksena. But in the middle of the 14th century, competition—in the truest sense of the word—to Appingen’s status arose quite nearby.

New land was recovered from the sea north of the ancient parish, and was called “*Grede*” or “*Groden*” [reclaimed land]. In 1388, the new fields, sited near a new sluice built to drain the fields around Appingen, were first referred to in documents as “*Gredsyle*” or “*In de Greit*”. The *Hauptling* Cirksena family then moved their residence to the budding harbor town of Greetsiel, accompanied by most of the residents of Appingen. By the end of the 1300s, the Virgin Mary was honored by the building of a new church in the “*Siel in der Greede*” [Greetsiel], and the church in Appingen was reduced in status to a chapel.

### FOUNDING OF THE CLOISTER

Even so, the *Hauptling* Enno Cirksena took care that the once consecrated church in Appingen did not sink into insignificance — after all, many of his



ancestors had found final resting places there. He transformed the Church of St. Mary into the nucleus of a new cloister, the last to be founded in Ostfriesland. In 1436 the first monks took up their work there. Founded and endowed by Enno, Appingen was already by 1438 accepted in the provincial capital of Mainz as the 26th cloister of the Carmelite order in that Low German province.

The prior at that time, Heidenricus Mynenboldt of Cologne, worked for 40 years in the cloister in the *Krummhörn*, which in its heyday sheltered about 20 friars. Additionally, it operated a mill and a brick yard. Among Mynenboldt’s most notable successors were the Greetsieler Friedrich von Appingen, who served as prior three times; and Johannes Kruse, whose four terms of service as prior (from 1500 to 1523) stands as a singular accomplishment in the history of the Carmelite Order in Ostfriesland.

In 1519, adherents of the Cirksenas, the masters of Greetsiel, also founded the cloister of Atens in Butjadingerland; it also remained under the patronage of Count Edzard Cirksena until the end of the century.

The close relationship between *Kloster Appingen* and the noble Cirksena family can also be seen from the seal of the convent, which displays not only the Virgin Mary as patroness of the mendicant order, of the cloister, and of the old church in Appingen, but also displays the eagle of the Virgin, the heraldic escutcheon of the house of Cirksena.

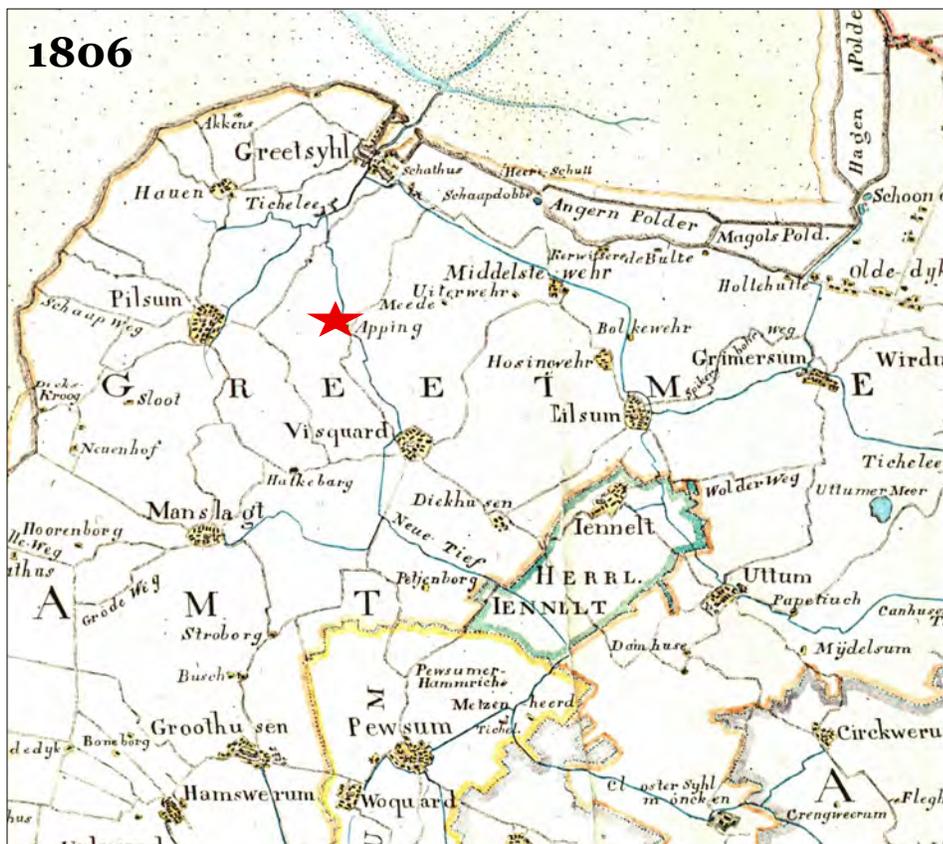
### REFORMATION TIMES

In 1526, at the beginning of the Reformation, Helenus of Emden was named as the last prior of *Kloster Appingen*. Dr. Günther Leymann of Aurich, in his essay about *Domäne Kloster Appingen\** (subtitled: “an agrarian-historical exploration of over 600 years of a marsh-farmstead in western Ostfriesland”) surmises: “Probably by this time the currents of Reformist thought had developed such strength—even within the cloister—that the holy fathers of the Order, who now had responsibilities in many places, were without counsel” to combat the new theology and its impact. [\* published in volume 2 of the expanded 2nd edition of *Die Acht und ihre Sieben Siele*, c1987 by *Obersielrichter* Gerhard Steffens]

The history of the Ostfriesland cloisters, which had been of immense economic significance during the Middle Ages, ended during the reign of Count Enno II (1528-1540). The monks left their workplaces, which soon fell into ruin, and Enno II confiscated a whole group of cloisters—their lands as well as their contents and treasures of religious goods.

*Kloster Appingen* also suffered from the feud between Enno II and the *Junker* Balthasar of Esens: in 1531 Balthasar set aflame both *Kloster Appingen* and *Kloster Dykhusen* by Visquard.

*Kloster Dykhusen* was fully destroyed, but *Appingen*, although now deserted by nearly all its monks, was still habitable. And so it transpired that the Dominican



nuns from Visquard resettled in the Carmelite quarters of Appingen, where only Hermann of Appingen remained. Reports Dr. Leymann: “After the death of the priest who had come with the Dominican sisters from Dykhusen to Appingen, he [Hermann] took on the job .... In the year 1541, he made the decisions concerning the rights of residence of the nuns.”

A few years later, the nun’s convent was dissolved and *Kloster Appingen* returned to the ownership of the Cirksenas. Countess Anna of Oldenburg, the widow of Enno II, rented out the lands, firstly to a pastor named Memmo, in 1545; and in 1548/49 to Johann Barth, the bailiff in Greetsiel. According to Ubbo Emmius, all that remained to be seen of the cloister buildings in 1616 were ruins in an overgrown field.

### The 1600s: Tenants Leasing the Land

In 1643, the Count of Ostfriesland had a new *Grashaus* (state-owned hay storage barn) erected on the *Warf* of *Kloster Appingen*, which was about four meters above sea level. *Grashaus* was the term used since the beginning of the 16th century to describe all such farmsteads, erected on meadowlands, which were in the posses-

sion of the counts of Ostfriesland, or the church, or a cloister, and which were managed by a supervisor and worked by a tenant farmer.

When Karl Edzard, the last count of Ostfriesland, died childless in May 1744, the landholdings of the state were transferred to Prussia, the new overlord of Ostfriesland. From then on, the *Kriegs- und Dömanenkammer* (Dept. of War and State-Held Farmlands) was responsible for the supervision of the so-called *Dömanen*.

Gunther Leymann has exhaustively studied the records of the Greetsiel *Rentamtes* (Finance Office), in which the tenancies of the *Domäne* known as *Kloster Appingen* are documented continuously since 1614.

Therein Leyman discovered much human drama: the tenants, pushed again and again to the edge of ruin by storm floods, plagues of mice, and cattle diseases, pled again and again for a reduction or postponement of their overdue lease payments. Because the rents received from the widely scattered, state-

owned farmsteads constituted the main source of income for the *Landesherren* (lords of the land), they also shared in the sufferings caused by the merciless forces of nature.

### The 1700s: Hard Times

For example: In 1700, Philip Herlin, whose ancestors had come to Ostfries-land about 1590 from Flanders, could not fully pay the annual lease cost of 277 *Talern*, because his low fields had been flooded since a storm flood in 1699. Three years later the Grashaus in which he resided, and all the harvest stored there, was lost to a fire. Thankfully the cattle - including 20 dairy cows - were all rescued.

After much negotiating, the *Rentamt* (office supervising tenants) decided that the *Gulfhof* [style of farmhouse which incorporated both human living quarters and a barn for animals and produce under one roof] would again be rebuilt. Herlin was allowed to retain his tenancy, but he had to invest a hefty sum of his personal savings - about 1000 *Gulden* - in the reconstruction. At the end of his tenancy, from 1711 to 1714, a cattle disease [murrain] swept through the Krummhörn.

Herlin's successor, Dirck Wolter, who took over on an annual lease payment of 320 *Talern*, suffered the trials and consequences of the infamous Christmas Eve Flood of 1717 as well as the lesser floods of the following years. [Ed. note: these lesser floods, in the years shortly following 1717, were the result of the breaching of dikes which had been repaired as quickly - and thus not as well - as possible, due to lack of manpower and materials in the immediate aftermath of the devastating 1717 flood....]

In 1718, Joost Ammersbeck, the Greetsiel official who oversaw the tenancies, complained: "*The fields remain infertile due to [the flooding by] salt water, and it looks bad in the entire district. Money cannot be collected, nor is it possible to make an inventory of households*".

The annual public auction which determined leases for the state-owned *Domänen* took place in 1719 on July 27th in Greet-

siel, as per usual, but Ammersbeck reported that "*no one, not even the current tenants, wanted to bid anything*". Dirck Wolter was eventually allowed to renew his tenancy for 200 *Talers* per year, and that continued until his death in 1737.

Johann Hayen and Sieke Oeyen, married to sisters, took over Appingen in 1743. In 1745 they lost 10 cows, 13 steers and all the calves due to an epidemic, and were forced to sell the remaining five cows. That year, they could only pay 40 of the 337 *Reichstalern* due for their annual rent. An investigation of their circumstances by the *Kriegs- und Domänenkammer* in Aurich reported: "*They have neither servant boy nor maid, but do all the work themselves, with their wives and children*".

From a description of buildings done in this year [1745], it appears that both families resided in what was one of the oldest styles of the Ostfriesian *Gulphaus*, one that was covered by a pantiled roof. According to Lehmann: "*It appears that the roof over both sections of the Gulphaus, both the residence in the front end and the barn at the back end, exhibits a steep sloping; and on the southeast side of the building, both at the front and back, are indentations which, due to the low exterior walls of*

*the threshing floor, have affected the operation of the barn doors.*"

In the spring of 1746, the authorities allowed the suffering tenants to plow up pasture lands in order to plant spring wheat. "*But total economic collapse was no longer preventable*". Jan Hayen was imprisoned [as a debtor] in the Greetsiel fortress; Sieke Oeyen fled and next reappeared in Appingen in August.

In the meantime, Moderke Gerdes, Jan Hayen's wife, had in desperation sent a pleading letter to the King of Prussia: "*Your Kingly Majesty's most gracious heart will hopefully be moved to the most benevolent sympathy when with deepest humility I describe how I and my three poor small children live in deepest poverty and suffering, and experience great hunger, without my husband to help provide for us.....*"

She points out that the situation is no fault of their own, but is unfortunately much more directly the result of the loss of their cattle due to the afflictions visited on them [or on the region?] by God. She therefore requested that her husband be released from prison, and that their remaining debt be forgiven. Leymann writes that apparently this request was at least partially successful.



Another unlucky tenant, Taco Jacobs, who was an in-law of Philip Herlin, also suffered through the cattle murrain and storm floods. But he came through these difficulties and managed to pay his annual rents, in the amount of 289 *Talern*. He would certainly have continued longer as tenant at Appingen if he hadn't been outbid at the spring 1767 public auction in Greetsiel by Jan Habben of Suurhusen, who offered 405 *Talern* annually.

At any rate, Habben almost immediately recognized that he had overextended himself and turned the *Grashaus* lease over to his brother-in-law Cornelius Gerriets Dircks in April 1767. In 1769, Dircks lost 19 of his 23 cows and a number of his young stock to a new type of cattle disease. Although he was able to recover, he had to leave the tenancy in 1773, because he was outbid at the public auction that year by Willms Wessels, whose bid of 538 *Reichstalern* was accepted as the highest bid.

But Wessels also overestimated his financial capabilities. In April of 1773, he was already requesting permission to plow up additional fields—and Aurich denied his request. As the authorities detailed in an inspection report, he sank into “melancholie” (depression): “*He left plow and horse standing in the field a number of times, and retired to bed ..... he feared he was going to become poor simply by working his land...*”



This time the “*Nein*” came from Hannover, because the rents from the land could not cover

Wessels died shortly afterwards, so he did not experience the cattle murrain of 1774 and 1775. His widow married his brother, Reemt Wessels, who had to soldier through the following years of heavy rains, drought and storm damages, as well as another plague of mice in the summer of 1786.

When his lease expired, in May 1791, he requested that he be allowed to extend it for at least six years without a public offering or auction. He noted that he had only managed to pay “*the exorbitantly high rent*” of 500 *Reichstalern* due to income from his own personally inherited fields and income from other scattered leased fields.

### The 1800s: Expansions & Renovations

Wessels remained at Kloster Appingen until his death in 1813, and he even built an additional barn at his own expense. His economic situation was excellent: in 1803, he had 33 cows, 12 young stock, and 10 horses grazing on the fields at Appingen.

Soon the additional barn was no longer meeting his needs, so in 1810 he proposed enlarging the barn at his own cost by widening the two *Gulfs*. The government in Aurich refused his plan, even though the tenancy supervisor in Greetsiel had endorsed it.

Reemt Wessels son, Wessel Gerdes Reemtsma, who took over Appingen in 1816, also ran into a brick wall with the bureau in Aurich. In 1818, the *Landbau-meister* (state’s master architect) supported his request to enlarge the barns, because the old barn was quite obviously too small and had become dilapidated.

the high construction costs (estimated at 1544 *Talern*). [Ed. note: After the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815, Ostfriesland had been passed from Prussia to the Kingdom of Hannover, whose head was also King George III of Great Britain.]

Finally, in 1819, Great Britain’s royal agricultural affairs office in Hannover gave the project a green light. But Reemtsma had to agree to renovate the residential quarters at his own expense, and to pay up front or pre-finance the barn expansions. Entire construction costs were estimated at 2472 *Talern*. In exchange for that agreement, his lease was extended to 1834.

In the summer of 1820, the reconstruction was completed, but Reemtsma was allotted no good fortune with his renovated home: on Jan. 14, 1821, the *Gulfhof* burned down to its foundation walls. Twenty cows died, and the entire harvest stored in the barn portion of the *Hof* was destroyed. Luckily, he had ensured the *Hof* for 2700 *Talern* with the *Ostfriesischen Landschaftlichen Brandkasse* (Ostfriesian rural fire insurance company), which had been founded in 1767; so he was able to rebuild within the same year.

But the fire was only the first act in a string of unending misfortunes, which Reemtsma detailed in a letter to the *Domänenkammer* in Hannover in 1830: In the summer of 1824, I was struck by a totally destructive and ruinous plague of mice; In 1825, all the land was flooded by seawater; In the summer of 1826, a terrible drought ruined the hay and grain crops; In the winter of 1826/27, my winter barley and oilseed rape crops froze; In the summer of 1827, legions of destructive insects ruined my field beans; and In 1828 my field crops were totally destroyed by a plague of snails.

Additionally, grain prices reached rock bottom—and no industriousness could counter that.

Reemtsma continued: “So calamity after calamity conspires to undermine my situation and to reduce me to poverty, from which I shall not be able to redeem myself unless the highest authority takes note of my great but blameless misfortunes and makes a significant remission of the terms of my lease and gives respite and support of this person by postponing the payment of all debts — for which I hereby make repeated and earnest supplication.....”

The district office in Pewsum concurred that the rent, of at least 900 *Taler*—was set too high and should be lowered. The *Domänenkammer* in Hannover forgave a quarter of Reemtsma’s debt of 2100 *Taler*, but held out for the rest of the payments due. So in 1831, with a heavy heart, he had to give notice, renounce the lease agreement, and leave *Hof Appingen*.

The new lease arrangements ultimately attracted a bidder, namely the *Landwirt* (farmer) Thees Janssen Edzards of Woltzeten, who won the bid with a “knocked down” offer of 630 *Talern*. So began the era of the Edzards family in *Kloster Appingen*, which would last until 1926.

The first tenant, as well as his son Jan Friedrich Edzards - who was the first to arrange a 12-year-lease (from 1870-1882) - both successfully managed the agricultural enterprise, helped by rising prices for crops and a growing economy, which lasted until 1875. Jan Friedrich Edzards is notable in the history of the *Domäne* as a great planter and “friend of trees”. In 1868, there were 460 fruit trees, 100 “wild” trees and four Linden trees counted on the Appingen Warf.

After Edzards died, on Sept. 29, 1896, his son Theodor Edzards successfully continued the enterprise. According to Lehmann, he was “an industrious and well-respected man. In 1898 he was elected the village mayor of Visquard, and due to his love of justice and freedom, he was unanimously re-elected [for a second term of service]. Above all, he had a reputation as an excellent stock-farmer and cattle breeder. He



was also later honored with the position of *Oberamtmann* (high magistrate) due to his exemplary activities in the agricultural field”.

Already by 1830 the tenant family enjoyed two parlors (which included the sleeping cupboards) as well as a kitchen and a cellar. Sleeping quarters for the servants were at that time located in the main hallway of the house, and in the summer kitchen.

At that time, when there were as yet no paved roadways, butter and cheese, which were produced on the farm in the *Karnhus* (buttery) were transported to the markets in Greetsiel and Emden via the canals and waterways. The tenant at Appingen owned a number of punts (long narrow flat-bottomed boats propelled with a pole) which were listed in an inventory from 1830.

By 1876, the residential portion of the *Gulfhof* consisted of four living areas, well-furnished with sofas, corner cupboards, bureaus, clocks and mirrors. The housemaids slept in cupboard beds in the main hall of the house; the *Knechte* (servant boys) slept in a bedroom in an adjoining farm building.

### The 1900s: the Last Leaseholders

In 1906, Edzards negotiated an 18-year lease for 8500 *Reichsmarks* per year. At the beginning of this lease, the barn was enlarged by the addition of another *Gulf*, and a second story was added to the south wing, thereby adding two bedrooms for the tenant’s family members and for the female servants.

In 1903, the Appingen *Domäne* consisted of approximately 83 *Hektar* [a *Hektar* is about 2.5 acres], of which 17 *Hektar* were used as *Grünland* (grass-lands). On the croppable acreage, which Edzards worked with teams of horses, he followed a specific crop rotation: 1) fallow land; 2) barley or rye; 3) oats; 4) clover; 5) oats; 6) field beans or peas; 7) wheat.

In the last year of his tenancy, Edzards livestock consisted of four broodmares, five foals, seven work-horses, and a 56-head herd of registered, purebred Ostfriesian cattle, which included 20 milk cows.

Estate servants at that time included three *Knechte* (servant boys), three maids, and four *Landarbeiterfamilien* (agricultural laborers and their families). When Edzards died childless in 1924, his widow continued managing the operation on her own.

The farmer Tjark Rewerts of Eilsum rented *Domäne* Appingen from 1926 to 1944, and

then from 1953 on, together with his son Habbo, until 30. April 1962. They also unfortunately experienced a string of misfortunes — inflation and world economic crises combined to keep milk prices ruinously low, so that Rewerts was always in debt.

In 1935/36, the state, with Rewerts agreement, handed over about three *Hektar* of Kloster Appingen land to the worker Barnhard Casjens, for residential purposes; and 24.2 *Hektar* to farmer Onke Bremer. Rewerts himself continued to work 72 *Hektar*, of which 52 H. were croppable.

Rewerts livestock included eight brood mares and six pigs, of which four were sows. The cow herd included 20 milk cows, whose production of 4500 kilograms of milk, measuring at 3.5% butter fat, was above the average. Due to poor road conditions, Rewerts skimmed the “white gold” from the milk on the farm and transported the cream via Visquard to Pewsum.

The *Kleiweg* (clay-topped road) which ran from Appingen for 1.9 km (1.2 miles) to

Greetsiel, and for 1.5 km (.9 miles) to Visquard, was quite impassable during rainy times. That was finally improved during the 1950s: after the catastrophic rains of 1952, the road was rebuilt, though only temporarily, using crushed concrete atop a thin sand base. From then on, the milk produced by the cows at Kloster Appingen could be transported directly to the creamery at Pewsum.

In 1959, Rewerts was farming 37 *Hektar* of cropland and 17 *Hektar* of *Grünland* (pasture and haylands). His herd consisted of 15 milk cows and 30 head of young stock, which produced 5,256 kilograms of milk measuring at nearly 4% butter fat.

Technical progress and innovations took place slowly on the state agricultural Domänen. An inventory from 1959 lists a 25 horsepower Lanz tractor as well as four horses, a type of *Bindermäher* (binder or reaper), a milking machine, and electric pasture fencing. Rewerts retired due to ill health, and thus the last *Pächter* (tenant leasing the farmstead) left Kloster Appingen.

Thus began a new chapter in the history of the *Domäne*: the state of *Niedersachsen* (Lower Saxony) took over management of the estate on October 1, 1960.

**[Summary of events since 1960:** Since then, the state sets a business plan for the *Domäne* each March, and a business manager handles the milking herd and cattle and horse breeding operations. Research concerning breeding and forage cropping has been conducted in conjunction with the University of Göttingen. Record keeping is now computerized.

The *Domäne* has been enlarged some by purchase of acreage from retiring neighboring farmers. But it has not all been smooth sailing: as did the tenant farmers, the state owned estate has also dealt with cattle disease, bad weather and needed barn renovations as well as economic ups and downs, especially the changes in availability of agricultural workers, and the introduction of evermore powerful field machinery....] ♦

## The Gulfhof Being Restored With Passion

Many holes in the old walls, bare beamw, the roof open and everywhere rubble. But when Timo Hinrichs walks through the barn, he has a different picture in mind: 16 apartments under the expansive roof, warm light and brick red walls, a hall between historic beams. He is one of the two builders who renovate the former farmhouse in Upleward an der *Ohlingslohne*.

Construction began in October 2019, and Timo Hinrichs now dares to make a prediction: this year they are starting to bring the venerable, but long orphaned building, to life. And it is almost exemplary in the region.

In April 2018, Timo Hinrichs and Helge Heyen bought the old farmhouse. They want to invest two million euros with their real estate company "33Quadrat" to get the building out of its slumber after 40 years of vacancy.

Hinrichs wants to help preserve the old farmhouses as jewels in the Ostfriesen villages – and to do so sustainably by using them economically with new apartments.

*"I've always liked the old farm buildings."*

The building looks like a construction site, which started in October: walls and windows broken, only the beams from the roof remain. The bare beams in the middle of it don't look strong enough to be sturdy.

Timo Hinrichs is proud of this: it is older than the farm built in 1851. The widow Mettje Peters-Fegter, mother of four girls, had the farm built on the same location of an older barn. A feat that the new builder recognizes with respect. ♦

Ostfriesen-Zeitung, January 11, 2020, translated by Gisela Schmidt.

*See article on page 8-9.*



## Ostfriesen Names

# A Universe in 24 Index Boxes

His universe consists of 24 index boxes. Spread over two rows of shelves, they are always at hand to the right of the desk. Aabel is on the first index card, it is light blue, after all it is a male name. Thousands more follow: Aabke, Aadam, Aadolf, Aafke ... finally Zywer is at the end. The Zywer card is pale pink because Zywer is a name for women.

This universe was created by a slender man of 85 years. Manno Peters Tammerna has short white hair and a big white bushy beard. The Nortmoorer is considered to be the expert for the first names of the region par excellence. His *opus magnum* (most important work) was published ten years ago and bears the unadorned title "*Namensgebung in Ostfriesland*" ("Nomenclature in East Frisia"). Including Tammerna's bookmark, the handsome volume weighs 1,937 kilograms (four pounds) – and it is the result of years of work.

It all started when Tammerna was about 15 years old. He noticed the first names of his schoolmates because they were different from the typical German ones like Hans or Michael. He followed up, asked spellings, wanted to know what the fathers were called by their classmates, and where their families came from. Patterns revealed themselves and showed him the way into

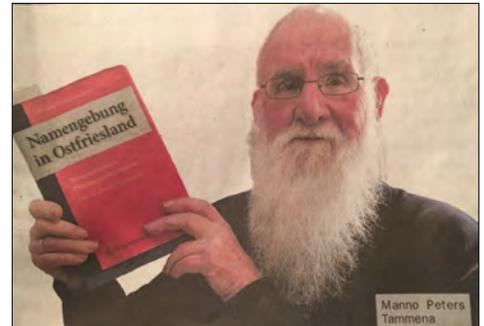
the Ostfriesen past. Tammerna recorded everything on scribbling pads. His universe began to grow.

The names became a life's work. Manno Peters Tammerna has collected exactly 47,030 first names – different spellings included – to this day. Index card for index card he recorded location, their origin, their history.

He has scrutinized countless church books, OSBs and other documents — and naturally, he has also visited the dead by viewing their gravestones. His wife smiles and says: "*We know all the cemeteries in Ostfriesland!*"

"[Tammerna] has worked on a very large project with incredible meticulousness," says Reinhard Former of the *Ostfriesische Landschaft*. The former editor-in-chief of the "*Ostfriesland Magazin*" has also, in his previous role, overseen Tammerna's book projects. Another comment Former provides: "*He still doesn't leave questions unanswered.*"

Tammerna's universe is expected to continue to grow. "*Of course, it's my target to register all Ostfriesen first names,*" he says. "*Even though I can never achieve that.*" Even now, after all these years, he



still finds names which haven't made it into one of his index boxes.

Perhaps more will be added via his latest project: Tammerna is now examining the Emden marriage contracts from 1509 to 1590. He wants to find out more about the Ostfriesen history – and in doing so he finds .... names, names and more names! *Ostfriesen-Zeitung*, 14.12.2019

Translated by Gisela Schmidt

## ENDOWING OUR FUTURE

### *It's Easier Than You Might Think!*

The purpose of our Heritage Endowment Fund is to financially sustain the mission of the Ostfriesen Genealogical Society of America (OGSA) for perpetuity. You can make a significant contribution to endow our future...and it's easier than you might think.

Several giving strategies can benefit you while funding our endowment:

- Direct gifts to OGSA
- Direct gift to one of our named legacies—you can make a gift in honor of someone.
- Securities
- Bequest through your Will.

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***If you place a monetary gift in our Heritage Fund with the Lutheran Legacy Foundation—all funds are given a 20% match.***

You can also create a Legacy Fund in honor of a family or person when you make a gift of \$20,000 or more.

***Learn how you can help sustain OGSA into the future!  
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***Ostfriesen Genealogical Society of America (OGSA), P.O.  
50919, Mendota Heights, MN 55150***

# Archeological Finds

## Treasures Found Under Downtown Emden

Underneath Emden are sleeping probably a lot of ground monuments like remains of old houses built in the early Middle Ages, the time between the fifth and the eleventh century, explained Dr. Jan Kegler, archaeologist at the Ostfriesische Landschaft. On the property in the Bollwerkstraße at the corner of Hof von Holland (street) the excavation which started in October 2018 uncovered the remains of four different houses in different layers noted the leading archaeologist Agathe Palka.

After the dilapidated house was torn down Palka and her team uncovered a tiled floor. "We found many items", said Palka happily. For example there were zinc spoons, tile shards with special designs, three wooden barrels and even a tobacco pipe.

The reason for this preservation is not only found in the methods of construction used during these times, but also in the Ostfriesen soil. "The heavy marsh soil preserves organic substances like wood or leather for a long time."

Meanwhile their excavation reached the third house – in a depth of six feet under street level. They also expect to find another dwelling under these three which could be from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Until now Palka only speculated about what the finds indicate about the former inhabitants of the dwellings.

The content of the barrels, along with the leather and chemical remains could point to a tanner living in one of the dwellings. Until December 7<sup>th</sup>, Agathe Palka only has until December 7th for further excavation. After that, the owner of the property wants to start building his house.

Ostfriesen-Zeitung, 20. November 2018  
Translated by Gisela Schmidt

## Archaeologists Find "Jackpot Like in the Lottery"

In these walls Hauptling Ocko I. tom Brok lived, and in front of them he was killed in 1391. A team led by excavation expert Matthias Zirm uncovered the site of his castle in Aurich using chisels and brushes, layer by layer. And so the Ostfriesen chieftain Ocko I. who, at times, ruled a large part of this region during the Middle Ages comes to life.

For the archaeologists of the Ostfriesische Landschaft this find caused a sensation. "We are still totally hyped about this excavation", said the project manager Dr. Sonja König. "This is like winning a jackpot in the lottery." In August, at a depth of about three feet, researchers found two brick buildings under the former post-office and adjacent parking spot. These two building date to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

At that time most of the dwellings were built with timber and clay, the archaeologists explained. Only a Chieftain could afford a brick home. The rooms they found were similar to those in residential and commercial buildings. Also included is a fireplace where Ocko I. and his family likely warmed themselves.

"Archeology discoveries give insight into a time where no drawings exist for the structures or of the Haupling family," explained Dr. Rolf Bärenfänger. Finishing this task has now been taken over by archaeologists who are producing a 3D Model from their photos and their findings, giving visitors a glimpse into the Middle Age in Aurich. "We want to document every brick and fugue," said König. Four displays have been installed on the site interpreting the importance of the archeological find.

Ostfriesenzeitung 23.  
November 2018 /  
Sonntagsblatt, 15.  
Dezember 2018  
Translated by Gisela  
Schmidt





# News From Ostfriesland..

## VW will Put into Action a

### Liquefied Natural Gas Freighter from Emden

Volkswagen christened two liquefied natural gas (LNG) powered car carriers in Xiamen, China, on November, 15th. At the beginning of next year, the "*Siem Confucius*" will sail the so-called America Tour (see chart) from Emden through several ports on the east coast of Canada and the USA to Mexico, related in a statement from Volkswagen. The second ship, the "*Siem Aristotle*", will transport vehicles from Ostfriesland across the Atlantic to America on the same route starting next spring. VW is the first company to use LNG car carriers for overseas traffic, it said.

The ships, which are around 200 meters (656 feet) long and 38 meters (125 feet) wide, are intended to replace two of the nine conventional heavy-oil freighters that have been used on the Americas circuit. According to the announcement, the "*Siem Confucius*" and the "*Siem Aristotle*" are each powered by a more than 17,000 hp engine from MAN Energy Solutions. The 13 decks can accommodate about 4700 vehicles per ship. The LPG drive could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 25 percent and nitrogen oxide emissions by up to 30 percent. *Ostfriesen-Zeitung*, 9.11.2019 / *Ostfriesen-Zeitung*, 26.11.2019



The route of the car carriers between Emden and America

## Emden Remains the Third Largest Car Port in Europe

Emden remains the third largest car terminal in Europe – after Zeebrugge (Belgium) and Bremerhaven (Germany). However, uncertainty for trade, caused particularly by events such as the approaching Brexit, and US economic policy, as well as Turkey's battered economy, have caused a loss of exports. With a total of 1.35 million vehicles, the port of Emden handled 8000 fewer vehicles than in 2018. But this is still the fourth best result in their history. The record of 1.45 million vehicles in 2017 remains unsurpassed. *Ostfriesen-Zeitung*, 4. Januar 2020

## Mourning for Marron C. Fort

Dr. Marron C. Fort from Leer, former head of the organization "*Niederdeutsch und Saterfriesisch*" (Low German and Sater-Frisian) at the University of Oldenburg, died on December, 17, 2019, at the age of 81. Fort, born in Boston and became a German citizen in 1988. Fort was on the staff of the university from 1986 to 2003. He devoted himself to the research and



documentation of the Low German, and especially of the Sater-Frisian languages. Fort was awarded the Order of Merit of Lower Saxony in 2012 and the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2015.

Marron C. Fort grew up in New Hampshire (USA) and studied German, English, Dutch, Scandinavian and Mathematics.

In 1963 he came to Germany for the first time for a study semester. This was followed in 1976 and 1982 by two visiting professorships in Oldenburg, where he remained after 1986.

Fort became known, among other things, for the publication of a Saterfrisian dictionary (1980) and the translation of the New Testament and Psalms into Saterfrisian (2000). Fort has always set great store by speaking the languages to be explored perfectly, the university said. Because of this he gained high recognition in the region. *Ostfriesen-Zeitung*, December 20, 2019

ED NOTE: Mr. Fort spoke at a meeting that I attended several years ago. He was fluent in all forms of the Frisian language and was well-respected in the academic world.

### NOTE: SATERLAND FRISIAN DIALECT

Saterland Frisian, also known as Sater Frisian or Saterlandic (Seeltersk), is the last living dialect of the Ostfriesen language. It is closely related to the other Frisian languages: North Frisian, spoken in Germany as well, and West Frisian, spoken in the Dutch province of Friesland. It is considered an Indo-European German dialect.

The last remaining living remnant of Old Ostfriesen is an Ems Frisian dialect called Sater Frisian or Saterlandic (its native name being *Seeltersk*), which is spoken in the Saterland area in the former State of Oldenburg, to the south of Ostfriesland proper. Saterland (*Seelterlound* in the local language), which is believed to have been colonised by Frisians from Ostfriesland in the eleventh century, was for a long time surrounded by impassable moors.

This, together with the fact that Sater Frisian always had a status superior to Low German among the inhabitants of the area, accounts for the preservation of the language throughout the centuries. Another important factor was that after the Thirty Years' War, Saterland became part of the bishopric of Münster. As a consequence, it was brought back under control of the Catholic Church, resulting in social separation from Protestant Ostfriesland since about 1630. Catholic religious law demanded a confirmation of the non-Catholic partner, so marriages of Saterlanders were seldom contracted with Ostfriesen for many years.

SOURCE: [en.wikipedia.org > wiki > Saterland\\_Frisian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saterland_Frisian)

# Ostfriesland in an American Textbook

*Ostfriesen-Zeitung*, January 21, 2020  
Translated by Gisela Schmidt, additional  
comments by Lin Strong

"*Marianne does homework*" and "*Marianne gets mail*" are the titles of two stories in a textbook with which students in the USA learned the German language in the 1980s. According to the textbook, Marianne Müller lives in Westgroßfehn.

"*Does Marianne exist?*" Paula Klinger, a German high school teacher in Minnesota, addressed this question to the community of Großfehn in 1983. Because they didn't know the answer, they forwarded the letter to local teacher, Lisa Buß. "*That's where it all started,*" says the former English teacher.

Buß soon discovers that Marianne Müller really exists, and the girl actually lived in Westgroßfehn. Her parents operated a restaurant there, called "Helgoland". Marianne Müller had come to be in the textbook through her uncle, who was a textbook author in New York.

Klinger replied to Buß and the two teachers became pen pals. It doesn't take long and the their students started to exchange letters and later emails. "*I then promised my sixth-grade students that if they were diligent correspondents, perhaps we might fly to the United States,*" says Buß. In 1999 the time arrives, and she travels to Minnesota with 24 students. A year later these US students visit Ostfriesland.

In the USA, Buß then makes an acquaintance who will help shape her future life: she met Lin Cornelius Strong, a board member of the Ostfriesen Genealogical Society of America. They felt the students from the *Fehn* area should get the chance to meet descendants of Ostfriesen emigrants. "*But our students didn't speak English very well, and the Americans hardly spoke German anymore,*" remembers Buß. But what both sides could speak was Low German.

Arranged by Strong, the group boarded a yellow school bus and traveled to the Bunde Christian Reformed Church near Clara City,

MN. Local residents who still spoke Low German—although with some English interspersed, loved meeting and speaking with these students.

In 2005 Buß returned the favor with her help. In that year 130 OGSA members visit Ostfriesland walking in the footsteps of their ancestors. Buß traveled with them through Großfehn and relating the history of the area and their ancestors. Enquiries about some emigrant families arose— and so Buß delved into genealogy. Since then, she has spent many hours doing research for numerous family histories and reunited some families, such as Pat Branstad's.

Branstad's great-grandparents, Harm and Trentje Kleen, née Bohlen, had emigrated from Spetzerfehn to Iowa in 1900. Branstad, a college teacher, and Buß offered American students opportunities to spend a week in Ostfriesland learning about the culture and customs – but in 2018, it was for the last time. Buß: "*In that summer Pat retired.*"

For her contribution to genealogy and international understanding, the mayor from Großfehn, Erwin Adams, honored the 76-year-old Buß at this year's community New Year's welcoming celebration.

Her commitment to the Striek Blacksmith Museum was also honored. "*Without Lisa Buß, the treasure [that is the smithy] wouldn't be what it is today,*" Adams said.

But to attribute all success to her is unjust, says Buß. The association

"*Historische Schmiede Striek*" has 140 members, including 46 active members who work in the garden, in the smithy, and at events. "*We are a wonderful community,*" she says.

And Lisa Buß has other plans. Since the 1970s she has been working with Focke Focken, Helga Assing and Monika Peters, members of the school support group, on the tradition of decorating the bridal path. Students up to the fourth grade can exhibit their flower pictures in the smithy.

"*But we would like to have a central place in every Fehn village where bridal path pictures are exhibited,*" says Buß. For this she wants to talk with the local mayors.

Ed. Note: Lisa and her community of dedicated friends are to be commended for preserving these traditions.



1999 Picture of Paula KJinger & Lisa Buß



Lisa with American Textbook

## What is a Braut Pfad?

If you walk down the streets on *Himmelfahrt* (Ascension Day) in Großefehn, Aurich, Norden or other small villages in that area, you may come across small shallow boxes filled with sand and decorated with flower petals, blooms and/or greenery. Or an entire sidewalk filled with these boxes.

This custom is not known in other areas of Germany, or even in some areas of Ostfriesland. However, in this area, many school children still maintain this tradition—and it is and has been encouraged by local teachers, especially former teacher and OGSA member, Lisa Buß of Mittegrosfehn.

An explanation for this event comes from early Ostfriesen history. The tradition comes from the times when the House of Cirksena ruled Ostfriesland. There are many variations on the story. A young Cirksena Princess waited for the arrival of her groom. As he was riding horseback on his way to the wedding, a rival attacked and murdered the groom. The waiting bride received news of this crime and died as a result of the shock. Another version says she sank into such grief that she died a few days later. The future bride and groom were buried on the same day. The wedding flowers which were strewn on the bridal path for the celebration of their new life together—were instead used for their funeral procession.

This story is touching, however, it cannot be substantiated. The medieval tradition of having a bridal path was a reality. Folk lore states that this Cirksena bride died of shock following the death of her future husband. Other legends indicate that brides were covered in yellow flowers which would signify the path of continued life, or marriage and childbirth.



**Dat Brautpfad, (The Bridal Walk)** by Toni Wübbens  
(From the Ostfriesen Society of Hannover Newsletter, 5/1960)

In Aurich peal the bells so loud,  
*Himmelfahrt*, and the Princess is bride!  
From all the steeples it sounds bing, bong,  
On this day the groom will come.

The children strewed before dew and day  
Many dear pansies and violets so blue.  
They rose early, before the night was half past,  
And secretly and quietly prepared a bridal walk.

A beautiful bridal walks with a golden flower  
Of buttercups so yellow and colorful.  
The Princess, she had a scary dream,  
A little bird sang in the Linden tree.

It sang such sad songs throughout the night,  
The Princess climbed softly to the balcony high.  
And when the sun stood in the heaven,  
She tied a red silk scarf around her locks.

So she stood and looked for her dearest one,  
Her heart beat so fearfully and so loud.  
She saw in the distance a little cloud of dust,  
Quickly she took off her little red silk scarf.

And let it wave in the wind  
And she laughs and cries like a happy child.  
Many riders on horseback were coming near,  
The royal son urged his horse onward.

He chased so fast, he chased so wild,  
Brightly mirrored the sun in helmet and shield.  
He rode across the field, he is already quite near!  
“My dearest, my dearest, I greet you!

“Now only through these dark spruce woods,  
Then I’ll be yours again, my joy and my pride!”  
What horrible sound rings from the woods?  
Where is the rider? What takes him so long?

The horse so slowly went up to the castle gate,  
A bloodied corpse in the saddle hung.  
The Princess came down from the balcony,  
Her dead groom lay at her feet.

She sank to her knees onto the ground,  
And kissed his pale lips;  
Then all grew dark before her eyes  
And her heart broke in misery and wretchedness.

The bells peal so hollow and so heavy,  
They carry the lovers to the altar.  
The flowers are all wilted and weak,  
And the eyes of all are all damp with tears.

The bells peal bing, bong, bing, bong,  
In the grave they place the bride and groom.  
Many hundred years have past since then,  
But the old custom is still kept alive.

Children still strew flowers on *Himmelfahrt*,  
On the bridal walk before dew and day  
And listen with fearful countenance  
When their grandma tells them the old tale.

*The picture at the bottom was part of a contest judging the best entry. (Ostfriesland Tour 2009)*

*Thanks to Lisa & her friends for their work in preserving this tradition!*

# Growing Up in South Dakota

*Dr. Henry Reemtsma was a Presbyterian Minister and Missionary. He and his wife, Pauline Latta, served as missionaries among the Navajo in New Mexico and Arizona.*

My grandfather was Jan Hinrich Reemtsma. According to records he was a [master] baker and it was from him my father learned the baking trade. The Pewsum OSB also lists him as a shop keeper and barkeep.

My father was a good baker and could have made his living at it, but he did not have the means of securing the equipment needed when he moved to South Dakota.

Jan Hinrich Reemtsma was born in Pewsum, northwest of Emden, on June 7, 1821 and died June 19, 1871. He married Grietje Swart, who was born January 19, 1812 in Critzum. She died in 1860 leaving her husband with four children under the age of 11. Jan married Tette Harms Bauer in 1863 and after she died less than three months later after childbirth, he married Anna Helena de Vries.

His oldest son, Berend Jansen Reemtsma, born May 26, 1849 in Freepsum, was a twin of my father, Hinderk Jansen Reemtsma.

Their sister, Fenke, was born the March 12, 1841 and died the December 4, 1873 in Emden. Fenke married Rikus Daniel Duis, a sea captain who piloted ships between Hamburg and Russian ports and New York. He visited us in South Dakota once while

his ship was being overhauled.

Their third son, Reemt Janssen, was born the 27th of January 1857. He married Frauke "Fannie" Goljenboom in German Valley, Illinois on August 21, 1885. (OGSA member Lynn Reemtsma is descended from this line)

My father and his two brothers immigrated from Ostfriesland to New York in 1867-70 era. At that time he and his twin brother were 18 years old and the younger brother was 10. They landed at Ellis Island as did most of the people who came from northern Europe. From there, the three brothers went to Pennsylvania.

Each immigrant had to have at least \$25 in order that they would not become a burden on the community. The three boys learned English as they worked in the woods of Pennsylvania, hoping they would be allowed to stay in the United States.

Friends and relatives persuaded them to come to Illinois after a short time in the lumbering industry. Bernard, the older son, acquired a farm and a family at Forreston, Illinois, and the younger brother, Reemt later acquired a farm and raised a family at German Valley, Illinois.

My father, Hinderk Jansen Reemtsma, decided that he would follow Horace Greeley's advice and go west to South Dakota. One reason may have been that he heard that one could acquire a section of land by filing on it and improving it

later. He must have gone to Marion, S.D. before January 1874 as that is the date on which he married his first wife, Maria "Mary" W. Joachims (also know as Mary Jacobs), on March 2, 1874 in German Valley, Illinois. They had three children, two of them died as children. [Maria was born June 17, 1855 in Simonswolde, Ostfriesland].



**DR. HENRY REEMTSMA**

The family must have gone back to Illinois as the record shows that Mary Jacobs Reemtsma died in Forreston, Illinois in January of 1884.

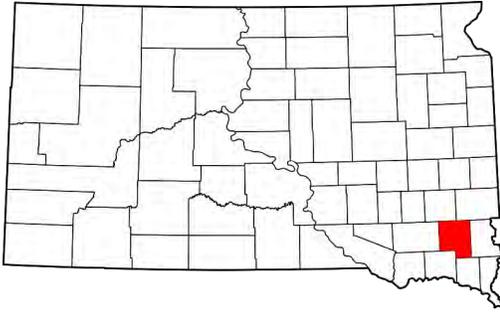
[NOTE: The family was most likely not in S.D. as the children's birth dates show they were born in Illinois. Actual date of Maria's death was March 17, 1884 in Baileyville, IL].

After his first wife died, Dad married Elste Ludwig, my mother and they had ten children. [She was born on January 1, 1861 in Lincoln, Illinois]. Unfortunately, our family Bible has been lost or was burned in a fire and there is no definite record of the names and dates of six of the children. Bernard Jansen was born September 16, 1889, Ariana, a sister, was born October 8, 1891. I was born September 16, 1893 and Elsie, my younger sister, was born March 8, 1899. Ariana, Elsie and I are the sole survivors of this family.

A month after Ben (Bernard) was born the family moved to South Dakota from Illinois. We moved to Marion, called Marion Junction, which was the junction of the Milwaukee Railroad which traveled to

37 32	Reemtsma H	M	M 30		1	Farmer	
	— Mary	W	F 25	wife	1	keep house	
	— Tilla	W	F 5	son	1		
	— John	W	M 4	son	1		
	— William	W	M 1	son	1		
	Lock Henry	W	M 14	servt	1	farm laborer	4

1880 Illinois Census, Ogle County, Maryland Township. H. Reemtsma, Mary and children: Tilla (Talkea), John and William. (all children and Mary born in Illinois.)



the grain on the field where the grasshoppers were eating the growing crop. This was done in order to keep them from going on to the next farm. It was quite a site according to Rolvaag to see the flames consuming the wheat. That farmer lost his wheat but the other neighbors, because that had saved their crop, would help contribute toward his profits for the year.

Scotland and Menno and connected with the main line between Mitchell and to the east at Marion.

We moved from Illinois to South Dakota two weeks before South Dakota became a state the middle of October 1889. South Dakota became a state along with North Dakota November 2, 1889. At that time there were four children, three from the first marriage to Mary Jacobs.

South Dakota was originally part of Dakotah Territory which is now the states of North and South Dakota. it remained a territory until the Enabling Act admitted the two states on the November 2, 1884.

The farmers were gamblers. They gambled they would have enough rain and not too much, that hail would not hit the crops or the grasshoppers would not eat the ripening grain.

As an illustration of the grasshopper plague I recall reading in O.E. Rølvaag's book Giants in the Earth describing the clouds of grasshoppers which would come over the country, settle on a field and in 10 or 15 minutes the entire crop on which they had hoped to reap a profit would be gone. They also ate the leaves off the cottonwood trees. There was very little you could do to rid yourself of the grasshoppers except burn off

Dad built a large barn where he kept the horses which were used either by himself and the older boys or rented to those who wanted to visit relatives or friends in nearby communities. One of the tasks which we boys had in those days was to keep the animals in good trim. We curried them, watered and fed them.

When you built a house, it didn't have to be much of a house but a house in which you had a stove and a bed. One night a month you had to actually spend the night on the farm or some member of the family could do it. The procedure was that when dad went out there for the night, usually alone, sometimes one of the older boys went with him. He would stop at the home of a neighbor and tell them that he was spending the night on that section of land so that later when it came time to prove the right to have the land, these neighbors could testify that he had actually spent at least one night a month in that house on that section of land. And so it came to be that dad owned a section of land in what was to be South Dakota.

It was also necessary to plant some trees because that section of South Dakota was known as the treeless prairie and in order to encourage the people to plant the trees it was made one of the conditions of acquiring the land.

Marion, the town where I was born and where I grew up is in the southeastern part of South Dakota, not a large place, just a small village with some 500 or 600 people. It was halfway between Sioux Falls and Mitchell, forty miles north of Nebraska and 30 miles

west of Iowa. It was originally called Turner Junction named for John H. Turner, but latter the name was changed to Marion Junction in honor of the daughter of an official of the Milwaukee Railroad. In 1938 the Junction was dropped and from that time on was known simply as Marion. e large numbers of them in the area.

Dad had a transfer business hauling hard and soft coal, lumber, furniture, etc. When a car of coal came, part of it would be taken to the lumber yard and stored until needed or would be taken directly to the homes and put into the basements of the homes for the people who had furnaces. People also used anthracite and bituminous coal. They were used to heat a large stove in which you put the coal in the top of the stove after you shook down the ashes. These stoves were lighted in October and kept burning continually day and night until April.

It was one of my duties after I came home from school to shake down the stove, empty the ashes and get one bucket of hard coal and put it into the top of the stove, and place a second bucket beside the stove. In the morning Dad would get up and shake the ashes and emptied fresh coal into the stove. That was getting up time.

Meanwhile Mother had started breakfast and soon the family gathered around the table for the morning meal. There was always a prayer by Dad, and this was usually very lengthy. When the meal was finished, each person who could read was given a copy of Dad's German Bible and we would read a chapter or a psalm and then Dad would offer another prayer. We were never too busy to take the time after breakfast for devotions.

The school was just down the alley a block away where we learned the three Rs. When I attended the high school at Marion it went only through the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. When the bell rang for 9:00 or 1:00 we could cut through the alley and arrive before the children had all gone into school.

In summer we had picnics, Fourth of July



celebration, ice cream socials, etc. Every town had its own baseball team.

Dad had a livery stable where he had a number of horses, some for carriages and some for heavy hauling and it was the duty of the boys to keep the horses curried and watered, along with keeping the stables cleaned.

When people wanted to go to another town to visit or folks wanted to go to the country, they would hire a team, sometimes one sometimes two horses and a buggy. Then when they returned we would brush down the horses and put them in the stables and feed them. Most of these trips people took were for one day only.

In addition to coal for fuel, people burned wood. When a tree blew over or became too old, it would be sawed into proper lengths and that too would be put into the basement along with the coal supply.

Corn cobs were also used as fuel. An uncle who lived on a farm about ten miles north would line his hayrack with canvas or some other material and then would load unshelled corn cobs which were usually left outdoors. The cobs made a good starter for the fire in the kitchen range. The range also had a tank at one end so there was always hot water.

The kitchen range was not kept heated during the night but would be started each morning and soon it would be ready to have mother and/or the older girls make breakfast.

The house where we lived was two-story. Mother and Dad slept on the first floor, the children slept in their rooms upstairs. The stove pipes which ran to the chimney had one length which had tubes running through so the heat would go into these rooms, but the smoke would go up the chimney.

### AMBITIONS

When Dad moved to South Dakota he had several ambitions. One was to establish a business which would support him and his future family. Another was to help the founding of a church. Another was to marry and raise a family and to help with a good school.

Dad became an elder in the newly organized Emmanuel Presbyterian Church of Marion and was an elder for almost half a century. This was in the days of perpetual eldership when men were permitted to serve as long as the congregation re-elected them every three years.

Dad served on the school board for many years. Each time his term was up he would say he would not run again. But the neighbors persuaded him that since he had several children in school and there were very few men who could devote the time to it, that it was his duty to serve another term and so he served until all our family had finished the school in Marion. Another one of his ambitions was to make it a good Christian community.

His other ambition was that his boys, especially Ben and myself, would receive a college education which was not the accepted norm in those days. More about that later.

Just as an example of how he took his membership in the church and as a Christian very seriously, I recall the one time that he did not partake of communion, he did not even go to the service. The situation was that he and a neighbor, Mr. Henning, had a quarrel and Saturday afternoon Dad realized that he and Henning had not made up after that quarrel. So he went to Henning's house but returned with



a long face and told Mother that Henning would be back on Monday. So ..., "I will not go to church tomorrow.

He based this on the Bible verse "when you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that a brother hath fought against you, lay first your gift on the altar and be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer your gift. He applied the same thing to the partaking of the Communion.

Dad and Mother were strict disciplinarians. There were some things we were just not permitted to do on Sunday. For example, we could not take a baseball and go out and toss it from one to the other. That was not considered a thing to do on Sunday. Instead we read Bible stories, rehearsed our catechism. We were permitted to go visit the neighbors. Those of us who grew to adulthood I'm sure are glad that Mother and Dad were such good disciplinarians because it meant we had a good foundation for our later life.

I might mention that we were not poor, we were average. There were some in the community who were more affluent:



the banker, the storekeepers, attorneys, doctors, the man owning the lumberyard and flour mill and owners/managers of other establishments.

The farmers, who were many of our neighbors, were dependent on having a good crop in order to put a little money in the bank. Dad always kept a bank account so that when it came time to pay the taxes or other large expenditures the money was available.

### ROAD TAX

One part of the taxes we paid was a road tax. Men were required to give a certain number of days in the spring to repair the roads.

If they could not donate the time, to keep the roads in good shape, they had to hire someone to do their work. And that is where Dad and Will were able to make money. Having teams and wagons they were paid a higher price than the ordinary laborers who used pick and shovel to fill in the ruts and then a large iron bar was hitched behind a team of horses and this would drag over the road to keep it in good shape. During the wet weather it was often necessary to drag the road after each shower.

### MARION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The man who started the church was Rev. Phillip Witte. He became involved in a land deal and some of the people thought he should not have done that so he was asked to resign.

The next minister was Hilko de Beer. He's the man who influenced my early life more than any other minister. He left and went back to Ohio and Mr. Mueller was called. He had twin boys my age, and we usually played together. He also edited a Sunday School paper which had a series of questions that you could look up in the concordance or in the Bible and get the answer.

Usually there was a prize, it might only be a card with a Bible verse on it, for all those who answered all the questions and so every week on Sunday afternoon, it was our pleasure to answer these questions and write them out and hand them to Rev.

Mueller at the evening service or Young People's Society. The YPS met at 6:30 and the evening service at 7:30.

When Mr. Mueller returned to St. Louis to his previous congregation, Hilko deBeer was called to return, and on the third call he accepted the position. He was the man who persuaded me to become a minister and to go to University of Dubuque for college and seminary which was his alma mater.

These ministers were busy men. They looked after the spiritual and sometimes mundane matters of their members, buried the dead and married the living, and baptized infants and adults. They usually owned a team and buggy and called on the members who lived in the country. With the elders, they called on members to ask about a contribution for the church. Most people pledged and paid by the quarter.

When people became delinquent, one of the elders or trustees would remind them of this and usually the money came in shortly after, meaning that the minister was able to receive his salary. They sometimes borrowed the money at the bank because they felt their church obligation was something that they were responsible for.

The minister was always paid. Much of the work of the ministers was that of counseling with people who might have quarreled with their neighbors, or husband and wife having had a quarrel and even have gotten to the place where they would not speak to each other.

While dad was very willing to help in many community causes there was one thing he always refused to do and that was to sign a petition that a certain man be granted a license to run a saloon. We usually had two of them in the village and every spring they had to come before the town board and be granted a license to run it.



On one occasion a man whom dad liked came to him but dad assured him that he could not sign a license for anyone to sell liquor. The man protested that somebody was going to get the license and he had always treated people right so he felt that his license should be renewed. However, Dad was adamant and said he would not sign anything which would give a man the right to sell liquor.

Dad was not averse on a hot afternoon after he had finished his work and some friends with him dropping into the saloon for a glass of beer. Among the Germans and Dutch that was not considered the same as drinking hard liquor which could make you drunk. So we saw Dad go in but if anyone said anything we always said he just went in to get a glass of beer and that was true.

The fellowship with other men over the glasses of beer was rewarding and they could talk over the matters of the community - what needed to be changed, about upcoming elections and many other matters which dealt with the welfare of the community.

Dad was always a Republican. In fact, I'm sure he would not vote Democratic no matter how good a candidate was - not unusual since the Republicans were in control of South Dakota for many years during that era. One of my memories was going with Dad and a group of men to the county seat at Parker to hear William Jennings Bryan on one of his unsuccessful attempts to become president.

Another time I heard William Jennings Bryan when he was on the Chataqua Circuit. This was an annual event every summer when tents were erected and pews from the nearby churches were

placed in them. Programs took place every afternoon and evening.

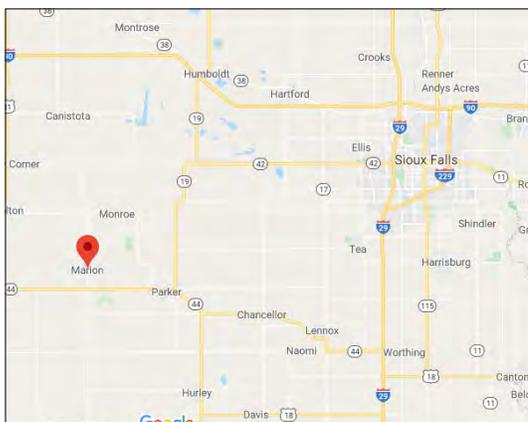
Chatauqua was a great event in the life of the people of small communities such as Marion because it was the only contact most of them would have to hear men of the calibre of Bryan. Part of the Circuit program was choirs, orchestras, soloists and plays performing for the enjoyment of all. Chatauqua usually lasted from Monday through Friday and on Saturday the group would move on to the next town.

Occasionally a small circus would come to our community but many of us did not have enough money to attend. I remember one time I just begged Dad until finally he and Mother decided that I could go to the circus but I was not to spend any money at the side shows. The 25¢ admission was found. These circuses carried a small menagerie, usually one or two lions, tigers, bears and various other animals that had been trained.

In the tent were pieces of equipment for the high trapeze events. Trapeze artists, tight-rope walkers and other people performed feats startling to us. All used safety nets in those days and it seems to me that safety nets should be used at all times, even though today some of the artists perform these feats without aid of safety nets.

In my boyhood Marion had three churches beside our own Presbyterian church. There was a Roman Catholic, a Reformed and a Methodist. Nearby there were several Mennonite churches.

In the early 1930s an explosion of gas which was being used to heat the church



blew up a large part of the Roman Catholic church. Fortunately it was before the service and most of the people were still outside waiting to go in. There was probably a leak in the furnace or the pipes to the furnace. There were 12 people killed. We heard this news in Fort Defiance and as they gave the names of the people who were killed it was quite a shock to me because I had gone to school in the grades and high school with a number of them. The church has since been rebuilt and is now in full operation.

The reason our folks helped to organize the Presbyterian church was because the Reformed church was what we called the Free Reformed and their teachings were different from what the folks had known and been brought up with in Illinois. So the new church was begun.

Mother died of a heart attack in December 1912. At that time I was in my last year at the University of Dubuque and Ben was in his second year of a three-year seminary course at McCormack Seminary in Chicago. Mother was always most helpful to people in the community and brought many babies into the world. Today she would be called a practical nurse.

### ILLUMINATION

In the home in the early days, kerosene lamps were the principal means of illumination and we had them of various sizes in the different rooms. In the front room, the main parlor, there was one suspended from the ceiling on chains so that it could be pulled down to fill the bowl with kerosene or to light it. It was a weekly task to see that there was kerosene enough in each of the lamps. Each lamp had a gauge to tell you when it needed filling.

Then came the gasoline lamps and lanterns. Each one had one or two silk mantles you carefully tied on the



holder then burned it and it was ready to use. Since these mantles were really just ashes you had to be very careful not to jar or touch them or you would ruin it and a new one would be necessary.

The next step in lighting came when the home owners formed a co-operative to install a gas system. A large tank was installed by one of the local men and then pipes were run to the various homes and businesses and these were placed underground so they would not freeze.

The homeowner was responsible for the pipeline from the main line to his house and installing pipes within the house and various rooms and halls. Since they had to meet safety requirements companies were organized to put in the necessary pipes and lights. The Danes Brothers had the monopoly for many years.

This was sufficient until a company was granted a franchise to install the electric lines. The duly elected village council granted the franchise in which the company pledged to install lights on certain street corners. Each householder entered into contract to install a line from the main line to his house. The meter was installed for each home.

The State Utility Commission set the rate for kilowatt hours. These rates could only be changed by an order of the Utility Commission. Rates might vary from village to village according to the number of users on each line. Included in the permit given to the Electric Company was an arrangement for certain street light for which the city paid monthly.

City sewers were then installed. The village bonded to buy the necessary pipes

and engage the company to dig the sewer lines. Main lines were laid and each home owner contracted for the laying of the line from the main sewer line to his home. Some distance from the village they installed a large septic tank into which the individual sewer lines emptied. The first pipes were steel, later on to be replaced by plastic.

It was a great day - one of real progress when we "graduated" to indoor plumbing. One difficulty arose when tree roots snaked their way into the pipes through small openings and clogged the pipes. If the problem could not be remedied with cutting tools, the pipes had to be dug up, the roots removed and pipes replaced. Homeowners paid an annual rental fee which covered the expense of removing such obstructions.

Such were the difficulties to be overcome to have the facilities we now take for granted.

As for outdoor illumination, when the gas lines were installed, the village put in street lights on various corners and the lamp lighter went around each evening and lit the gas lights and turned them out at day-break. Some time in the early days, Marion moved from the primitive to the present era of luxury". Rural electrification came soon after helping the farmers to begin the automation of their farms. Next came the installation of the telephones in Marion.

### **SICKNESS AND ACCIDENTS**

In a large family, childhood diseases were rampant and often reached epidemic stages. Two of the children in my family died from diphtheria.

There were also various accidents. The most serious of which was when my brother John, somewhat older than I, was playing cowboys with some other boys at the school and someone lassoed him and jerked him back. He hit his head on a stone and died very shortly after-wards.

My sister Ariana was climbing over a fence when a dog came at her and she fell to the ground and contracted spinal meningitis. She was married and widowed and is today living in a Lutheran home in Lennox, South Dakota.

Another accident was when Harold, who was 10 years younger than I, was hit by a car and his leg was broken. First, it was set wrong so that when he walked the right leg between the knee and the hip was two inches shorter than the left. He was always to be a cripple unless he underwent surgery.

The man who caused the accident had us take Harold to the hospital, have the operation, and he paid all the expenses. Dad took him to Mitchell (30 miles away), they reset the bone and put in a silver plate which was riveted to the bone.

The doctors told us that after the silver plate had served its purpose it would be absorbed by the body and there was nothing to fear. A few years later Harold had an attack of appendicitis and Dad again took him to the Mitchell Hospital, but the appendix ruptured and he died before they were able to operate.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

At first, our only transportation was to walk or by horse. Wagons and buggies were very common and in winter, sleighs were used. Then came the day, while I was in my teens, when the first automobile came to Marion. I remember the two Rebs which were owned by a doctor and a dentist.

Then later came other makes. The Ford, because of its low cost, became a very common vehicle, and at that time a new Ford cost \$500. These were always black because Henry Ford said they could have their Fords in any color provided it was black. I never knew why he preferred black, but maybe the paint was cheaper. Then came the trucks and instead of hauling the grain after threshing to the elevator in wagons drawn by horses, many of the farmers acquired trucks and used them to bring grain to market.

### **FARMING**

In the early days, oxen were used. They were very slow and had to be prodded to make them go but they were very strong and could pull heavy loads. Many of the



Mennonites who lived in colonies near Marion used these oxen and finally replaced them with horses. They never did believe in using automobiles.

Horses were used to pull the reapers or binders when it was time to harvest the wheat, oats and rye. These binders tied up a certain size bundle of grain and threw them on the ground. It was necessary then for men to follow the binders and set the grain in shocks. Usually there were six or eight bundles making one shock and then one on top so if it rained, the crop would not be ruined.

### **FINANCES**

The family finances were supplemented with a large garden where vegetables were raised and then sold. We had two cows and sold the milk. We also had pigs and chickens.

Someone convinced Dad, that raising of pigeons would be a very profitable sideline as he had boys to take care of the birds. So on the side of the barn we built a large open place where the birds could exercise enclosed in chicken wire. Then inside the barn we built nests and roosts. Dad bought several very fine pair of doves and these became the start of the industry. The idea was to sell the squabs or young pigeons just before they flew out of the nest.

To me it has always been a miracle that hatched as they are from an egg less than two inches either way, they develop so rapidly that in six to eight weeks they are ready to be sold as squabs. You have to butcher them before they make their first flight out of the nest, otherwise they are no long squabs.

The flock increased very rapidly and soon we had more birds than we knew what to

do with. There was not much market in Marion or Parker so they were packed in ice and expressed to Sioux Falls and Mitchell where there were larger markets. Sometimes the market would be low and the profit would barely pay the cost of transportation and other times it would pay this plus purchase of additional feed for the birds.

It was our duty to keep the dovecote clean so usually on Saturdays that was part of our work, to shovel out the manure, put it on wheelbarrows and spread it on the garden for excellent fertilizer.

We also sent squabs as far as Chicago where there was a much larger market and again sometimes we made money and sometimes we didn't. Finally, when we had several hundred birds and they began to be a burden because of the cost of feed and everything, Dad was able to reach an agreement with some man who wanted to start in the squab business without going to the trouble of raising the breeding stock as we had done. As I recall, we sold them for 25¢ a pair and because of the large number, we came out fairly well.

After dad sold the livery stable he worked as a laborer at various jobs.

As soon as we were old enough we had various jobs to bring in extra money to help feed the family. I remember selling the Saturday Evening Post. I had a number of customers and each week as the Post came in on Thursday, I would go to these homes or business places and deliver the Post. Some of them paid me 5¢ each time, some paid by the month or quarter in advance. While the profit was not very large, it did net a nice sum when one had 30 or so customers.

Dad also sold milk, vegetables and eggs in Marion and Parker and other towns. He also handled a variety of articles which were useful in the homes. One of the main articles was Sayman's soap made from the root of the soap plant. The manufacturers claimed that the original Sayman learned from the Indians to make this good soap and he saw that the Indians used it to wash their hair. He then put it out in a small bar about 2" by 4" which sold for 10¢ or 3/25¢.

Dad also sold scissors, knives and home remedies as well as books. These books were often one that were published just after a great event such as the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. The company sent him a book containing some pages of description and pictures of the earthquake ruins and he would take orders from people.

During the summer, we older boys worked on farms during harvest and at threshing. Binders tied the bundles of oats, barley and wheat, and these bundles were thrown at intervals. We would collect six bundles to make a sheaf and then topped it with another bundle in case of rain before it was being threshed. The money we earned stood us in good stead when we left Marion and headed off for college in many different places.

One summer I was fortunate and helped run a telephone line. The gentleman who installed the line needed someone who was able to help him raise the poles after the holes were dug. We installed the poles and strung the wire. This meant we were away from home from early Monday morning until late Friday night or Saturday. We were able to rent a room with board and lived with them three or four days and move on to another farm. We were well fed and put on weight during the summer.

Another job I had was night operator at the telephone office. I had a cot for my many all night sessions; unfortunately, however, the previous user had left his mark - bedbugs. When I mentioned this to the owner of the telephone company, he and I burned some sulphur and other material which was to kill the bedbugs. It worked fairly well and I could then sleep in peace.

#### **THE ICE HOUSE**

The community had an ice house, but we did not have one on our own property. The community one furnished ice which was used for packing the squabs. to make ice cream, etc.

The ice house was a very interesting place. It was one the edge of a lake and in winter the owners of the ice house had a



team of horses and a saw with which they sawed the ice into blocks three feet long and two feet wide by one foot high.

The ice house was privately owned and the ice stored in the ice house was surrounded by sawdust. The lakes or ponds froze solid due to the extended cold weather. In the dead of winter the temperature might not get above zero for a week or two. People bought ice to make ice cream, put in cold drinks and pack articles for shipping, and for refrigeration.

#### **WINTER**

Dressing for the cold weather, many of us had short boots made of sheepskin with the wool turned in, and overshoes were worn over those boots. We also had fur caps, heavy overcoats and mufflers and wool mittens or gloves.

The extreme cold caused a lot of sickness and it's a wonder so many of us survived to adulthood. Home remedies were common as it was not always possible for the doctor to take care of all the sick. One such remedy was molasses and sulphur which we were given each spring as a tonic.

#### **GENERAL STORE**

One of the most flourishing businesses in Marion was the Jacob Hieb store. It was a General Store or "supermarket" where one could purchase anything from a pin to a threshing machine - groceries, dry goods, clothing, sewing machines and supplies - most everything needed for our daily lives.

Jacob Hieb was a Russian immigrant who began on a very small scale and enlarged his business with several warehouses, as well as the main store. Jacob had the help of his two sons who ran the store, garage and other departments. When Jacob Hieb died the establishment was owned and managed by his two sons. ♦

# It's All About Ostfriesen Tea!



## Where in the world is the most tea consumed?

The Ostfriesians are clearly the champion tea drinkers. With a per capita consumption of 288 liters (304.326 quarts) annually they top the chart for tea drinkers throughout the world. Their passion for tea trumps the English and the Iranians who drink an average of 238 liters (251.49179 quarts) annually. In addition the annual count exceeds that for the Japanese at 122 liters (128.91597 quarts) and the Chinese with 68 liters (71.854798 quarts).

And in the rest of Germany the count is a conservative 25.5 liters (26,417205 quarts) annually.

Tea is grown in more than fifty countries: Asia, Africa, and even in the European Azores. It is the major economic source of income in many of these countries.

How and why did Ostfriesland, the land of green pasture lands, bright yellow rape seed fields, light houses, windmills and canals in addition to a large population of low-German speakers, become a tea drinking country?

The first tea came to Ostfriesland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and within one hundred years it had become common among all social levels of the area. Up to that time beer was the basic beverage as it was in other parts of "intoxicated Europe."

The humanists declared it to be their opponent, and the Dutch doctor, Cornelius Bon-tekoe, published his *Traktat über das ganz ausgezeichnete Kraut Tee [Treatise on the Amazing Tea Plant]* in which he called for the use of tea in order to end overuse of beer. This admonition suited the Ostfriesians well, burdened as they were with a wet and windblown land causing them to suffer from the cold. A further cause for the widespread expansion of tea consumption was its lower and favorable cost. Thus the women served their families tea instead of beer.

No less favorable was the proximity to Holland with its leading sea faring economy

which also made tea popular. Already in 1610 the first tea was imported to Europe via the Dutch East Indies Company. Around 1720 a vast tea business existed also in Ostfriesland because many Dutch business people had emigrated and settled in Emden. And ultimately, in 1806 the Bunting Tea Distributor Company was founded in Leer and provided the mixture known as the "genuine Ostfriesian tea."

To this day there is a widespread "tea culture" in Ostfriesland, and the *Teetied* (tea time) is a part of the social life and the everyday life of the Ostfriesen people.

There are innumerable sorts of teas; however, Assam tea (from the Assam area of northeastern India) is the most important component of the Ostfriesian mixture. It is a strong, black tea with a sharp and fragrant, somewhat malt-like taste, and the reddish-brown color is a typical sign of a good Assam.

In the classical production of black tea there are five stages:

- 1) The freshly, harvested but withered tea leaves are placed in large ventilated vats and dried for 12 to 18 hours.
- 2) The leaves then are processed in special roller machines. This process produces a cell sap from the leaves and together with oxygen from the air creates the essential oils that give the tea its aroma.
- 3) The fermentation process is crucial to the quality of the tea. The leaves remain for up to three hours in this oxidization step which takes place in a damp fermentation room until they have a copper color.
- 4) The fermentation process is halted by drying with high heat. After about twenty minutes of drying the copper-colored leaves become a black, raw tea with only a 6% amount of moisture.
- 5) Finally the leaves are processed through strainers producing various leaf sizes: leaves, broken, fine granules or dusts.

The tea bag was first produced in 1904 by an American named Thomas Sullivan, an American importer of tea. In order to cut down the cost of shipping his samples he sent them in small, silk bags instead of metal containers. The customers dipped the bags in water thinking that is what Sullivan intended. Though that was not the intention, the tea bag was invented.

Another question: Is the tea in a tea bag as good as a loose-leaf version? The answer is simple: the quality is the same. Its more of a question of culture than of taste.

*How old can tea plants get?* Chinese plants generally reach the age of 100; Indian tea plants get to between 30 and 50 years old before they are replaced. The first harvest of a tea plant is possible after six years and the highest time of productivity is reached from ten to fifty years.

The Ostfriesian tea ceremony consists of the following steps:

- 1) The tea pot is filled with hot water which is then poured out after the pot is heated and before the tea is then put in the pot. The tea water is brought to a boil and then the flame is turned off and the tea is steeped for three to five minutes before drinking.
- 2) Before pouring the tea one places a *Kluntje* or *Kandis* (similar to rock candy) in the cup and pours the tea over it. This causes the *Kluntje* to crack when the hot tea is poured into the cup.
- 3) Then, with an Ostfriesian cream ladle, a drop or so of cream is added carefully at the edge of the cup so that a cream cloud rises.

Usually, the tea is drunk without any stirring. First one drinks the cream off, then the bitter tea, and finally, the sweet, *Kandis* flavored tea. After drinking three cups (the right of an Ostfriesian), the teaspoon is placed in the cup to indicate one is finished. ♦

SOURCE: Tea Statistics & Information Excerpts from a 2012 Bunting Tea Brochure.

## New Members—Welcome!

### New Members

Antrim, Kathie, 5400 Normal Blvd, Lincoln, NE 68506  
Email: [fcblaze@mindspring.com](mailto:fcblaze@mindspring.com)

Chizek, Robert, 1665-250<sup>th</sup> St., Garner, IA 50438 Phone: 650-703-2490 Email: [rcsos@prodigy.net](mailto:rcsos@prodigy.net) Researching: Ubben-Leer; Kardoes-Ditzum/Ditzumerverlaat; Sybering, Jeger-Simonswolde; Mouson, Klaesssen, Jurgens, Ihnen; Meijer, Kardoes-Weener. Other surnames: Martens, Thui-Simonswolde

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Pfeil, Dennis/Marge: e-mail: [farmerpfeil@gmail.com](mailto:farmerpfeil@gmail.com)

Simlness, Marilyn: 17200 W. Bell Rd., Lot 765, Surprise, AZ 85374 Email: [msimlness@hotmail.com](mailto:msimlness@hotmail.com) Phone: (530) 519-2744

Thomas, Nancy: 51 Howard Gneson Road, Duluth, MN 55811-1669

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Robert Cullen & Karen Leesman

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Rogers, Hazel

Tjaden, Max H.

Wendling, Bonita

Williams, David / Karen

### UPCOMING ISSUES:

- Norden's Theelacht
- Online OFB's
- The Levees of Harlingerland
- Herrlichkeiten Oldersum & Rysum
  - Delft Tiles
- Celebrating a Schutzenfest
- Logumer-Vorwerk

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*This series of books compiled by Hans-Georg Boyken has been out-of-print for many years. OGSA has obtained the rights to publish the six volumes with an index on DVD. The author excerpted data found in obituaries published in the Ostfriesische Nachrichten originally published in Breda, IA.*

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Contact Lin Strong for more information 651-269-3580 or email [Lin.Strong269@gmail.com](mailto:Lin.Strong269@gmail.com) /

**References available! Interested in other dates?**

*These tours are not sponsored by the Ostfriesen Genealogical Society of America.*



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**NEW DATES: July 29-31, 2021**



**Schloß Lütetsburg:** The construction of the original castle dates back to the Ostfrisian chieftain Lütet Manninga. His ancestral home in Westeel was lost to devastating floods between 1373 and 1377. As a consequence, he expanded the family property "Uthoff" into the moated castle "Lützborch." (today known as Lütetsburg).

The present Lütetsburg castle is a modern, four-story construction that was built 1956-1962 on



the 1517 foundation walls. The family zu Inn- und Knyphausen continues to live there today.

The attached park has a garden shop and restaurant. The park is open to the public and in May when the Rhododendron's bloom—it is full of visitors.

