

Der Brief

Summer 2016



The Newsletter of the Historical Society of North German Settlements in Western New York and Das Haus, Ein Haus und Der Stall German Heritage Museum. 2549 Niagara Road - Bergholz, Niagara Falls, NY 14304. www.dasbaumuseum.org, dasbaumuseum@gmail.com

The Mehwaldt Issue



Board member Don Schroeder holds a Mehwaldt crafted piece.



Mehwaldt Death Ended Bergholtz Pottery Era

THE INTERESTING career of Niagara County's first "potter", Charles August Mehwaldt, was the subject of last week's story. There are still some phases of his career and some explanations of how specimens of his work became collector's items, yet to be related.



LEWIS

His equipment was crude but his finished product in view of that fact, was remarkably well executed.

In later years his daughter described their crude method of preparing the "glaze" thusly — "We children helped to grind the lead for the glaze. There was a large stone in one corner of his workroom. From the ceiling a pole was suspended, with a flat stone on the end of it, and this pole had to be kept going round and round in order to grind the lead in the tub. My brother and I would

stand on chairs and take hold of the handles and turn it round and round. We would count 100 and then rest. How our arms used to ache!"

RED LEAD WAS used for the glaze, also tea lead which had been burned to ashes. Some of the lead was mixed with animal blood to give a darker glaze, and the mottled effect was produced by splashing the darker mixture upon the surface with a small brush. The potter either dipped the dishes into the glaze or pouced the liquid over them from a cup.

Although Mr. Mehwaldt adopted no distinctive mark for his pottery some pieces had the letter 'M' scratched in the biscuit as with a sharp-point. He attempted little decoration but some pitchers have rows of impressed lines at the top and others more elaborately have a sort of fluting made the same way a housewife makes edges of crust around a pie.

ATTACHED TO ONE side of his house was a little

shop for the sale of these wares with many orders coming from neighboring towns. His daughter reported "A plate could be bought for two cents and pitchers varied in price according to size. A good one could be bought for 10 cents."

In her account published by the Buffalo Historical Society about Bergholtz Pottery, Mrs. Ada W. Camehl reported "I found a man who was a small boy at the time the potter came to this country, and who entertained me with stories of their long acquaintance. In his German-flavored English he told how many a time he had watched with Mehwaldt all night over the fires of the kilns. Soft wood was used for fuel, either pine or basswood, and the firing was an affair of over a day and a night, with constant watchers in attendance to keep the required temperature."

HOW SLEEPY WE used get watching the fires! If it got too hot, it bust; if too slow, they cracked," he said. The ruin of a kiln full of material was a serious

loss in those days of poverty and struggle. He said that the American clay differed so materially from the clay which the potter had been using in Germany that much experiment and loss were necessary in order to get satisfactory results. He gave me a pantomimic account of the potter sitting at his wheel, kicking it with his feet to make it revolve, and puddling and shaping the wet clay with his hands. He said that for two years before his death Mehwaldt was unable to work, as he had injured his feet by the constant effort required to turn the wheel.

THAT THERE WAS no one to carry on the business after his death was a source of great disappointment to the potter. "He was proud of his calling," said his daughter, "and would tell how many generations his family had been potters, and he did not want the business to die with him."

Upon his death however, the works were destroyed and the house was sold. Today nothing remains of the once flourishing pottery

which stood for so many years in the village except the pieces of the peculiar mottled ware still on the shelves of nearly every home for miles around."

IN 1839 THINGS happened in Germany which had a profound influence on the history of Wheatfield.

Frederick William III, King of Prussia, decreed that disciples of Martin Luther accept the new doctrines of the Reformed Lutheran church, but rather than accept the revised teachings, or imprisonment for refusal to accept, hundreds of families emigrated to America where religious freedom was to be found. Several hundred of these families from Bergholtz in Prussia formed the "Lutheran Evangelical" and appointed three men as agents to go first to America, and purchase land. These men were John Williams, John Sy and Frederick Moll who came to the Town of Wheatfield in Niagara County. Why they chose this area is not known but the land was

cheap, largely covered with a virgin forest, and with wheat producing qualities in the fertile soil. These men purchased about 2100 acres through Washington Hunt of Lockport, agent for the land owners in the central and southern parts of Wheatfield.

THE SITE OF New Bergholtz was surveyed into 121 lots of one acre each in 1843 and the newly arrived emigrant families each was to have one lot. The site first accessible by foot or Cayuga Creek soon was reached by a road cut through the forest to the river and canalized Tonawanda Creek. A large communal barn was erected for the lumbering teams. A number of families lived in this barn and others in Buffalo, until their new log cabins could be erected. In a fairly short time a log cabin was erected on nearly all of the home sites.

Mr. Hunt had presented the settlers with a team of oxen and otherwise had taken a direct interest in their settlement. The village had been laid out in

nearly a rectangular form with parallel streets 68 feet wide, crossing at right angles. They were given such significant names as Washington Street, Hunt Street, Luther Street, Niagara Street, Sy Road, etc.

The first market products were ship timbers, staves and potash derived from the hardwood ashes, with the canal and river giving cheap transportation to both eastern and western markets.

AMERICA'S LARGEST F

EST. 1940

Robert

Pages From the Past – (Der Brief re-visited, past articles of interest)

Back in March of 1978 the Society published an article in Der Brief titled “The Old Bergholtz Pottery”, authored by Ms. Ada Camehl and mentioned in the piece above. The article was taken from the “Buffalo Historical Society” publications where it still resides. It is from Volume XXV and was first printed in 1921. We have obtained permission to reprint the article again in this current issue. You may remember that Das Haus was the residence of Ms. Justine Grobengieser Mehwaldt, widow of the famous village potter and her sister in the 1880’s. We do have several pieces of Mehwaldt pottery on display at Das Haus, a few of them are gifts from Mr. and Mrs. George Camehl.

Carl Mehwaldt was born in Brussow, Prussia in 1809 and trained to become a master potter, his family’s trade. He migrated to America with his wife and family in 1851 and set up shop in Bergholz. Mr Mehwaldt’s residence as well as his kiln were located in Bergholz directly across Niagara Road from the current museum. He used local clay and produced all kinds of ceramic “redware” pieces for the community. In 1855 – 57 Carl lost his wife and two young sons. He married Justine Grobengieser 6 months later. Tragedy struck Carl’s family when three of his sons joined the Union army to fight for their adopted country. One returned with an injured hand and the other two died in Virginia. We can only imagine the grief felt by Carl and his family. Below are some of the “official” brief comments provided in the 8th NY Heavy Artillery roster documents.

Roster of the 8th Regiment, New York Volunteer Artillery

MEHWALDT, ALEXANDER. — Age, 22 years. Enlisted, January 2, 1861, at Rochester, NY, mustered in as private, Co. B, January 2, 1864, to serve three years; wounded, June 3, 1864, at Cold Harbor, Va; transferred to Co. I, Tenth Infantry, June 5, 1865; also borne as Mehwaldt, Alexander; prior service in Co. A, Twenty-fifth Infantry.

MEHWALDT, G. G.—Age, 21 years. Enlisted, July 29, 1862, at Lockport, N. Y.; mustered in as private, Co. B, One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Infantry, July 29, 1862 (which became the Eighth Artillery, December 19, 1862), to- serve three years; killed, June 3, 1864, at Cold Harbor, VA

MEHWALDT, HERMAN.—Age, 18 years. Enlisted, December 20, 1863, at Wheatfield, N. Y.; mustered in as private, Co. B, January 5, 1864, to serve three years; wounded, June 18, 1864, before Petersburg, VA.; died of such wounds, June 26, 1864, on board steamer Connecticut.

The ceramic wreath pictured on the front page shows Mehwaldt’s artistic abilities with clay. It is our understanding that there are at least two of these “memorial” wreaths created by him to honor the memory of his two sons that were killed in the Civil War of their adopted country.

One or both of these wreaths were displayed in the original Holy Ghost church for many years. In the attached article by Mrs. Camehl she describes these works of art beautifully. She also mentions a chandelier that Mehwalt had created for the church. We believe that both of the memorial wreaths are still in one piece in different parts of the country. Additionally, Mehwalt must have created other specialty pieces. Last summer a visitor came to Das Haus with a wooden box with ceramic pieces in it that look very much like those in the wreath pictures. (see front page for picture). It turns out that the mystery visitor was indeed Bob Mueller who attended a recent meeting and shared that these pieces were from a decorative piece that hung in the Elmer Wolf house at Walmore and Jagow roads. As a young boy Bob remembers that while running around the house one day this precious decoration fell to the ground and broke. The pieces were kept and saved and that is what is pictured on the cover of this issue of Der Brief.

A much more complete and detailed account of Carl Mehwaldt and his life can be found on pages 30 - 43 of Eugene Camann’s second book, “More Prussian Transplantings in Wheatfield”. The Society offers both the Camann books for sale at the Das Haus Meseum or by completing an order form from our website and sending it in or by calling (716) 795-2890 or any of our board members.

Please sit back and enjoy the original article written by Mrs. Camehl in 1921.

THE OLD BERGHOLTZ POTTERY

BY ADA WALKER CAMEHL

I am one of that company made illustrious by the membership of Horace Walpole and the gentle Elia. "China's the passion of my soul," and I love, as did Charles Lamb, the vari-hued and quaintly drawn creatures "in this world before perspective" which I find upon the tableware of the early housewives of my country.

Much besides pottery do I gather from my quickly made acquaintanceships over a broken teapot or a Nan-kin bowl. Tales of pioneer life and hardship, sidelights upon familiar incidents of our national history, together with the ever personal stories of the great human comedy, are poured into my ears as I bargain at farmhouse door or in country kitchen for ancient treasure. "Those plates were on the table the day father entertained Governor Clinton and his party when they stopped here on a coaching tour through New York State to inspect the canals," explained a lonely old woman, with conscious pride. "I carried that teapot in my hands when we moved down from the farm, for fear the little swan would be broken off from the cover," said an aged housewife, with the feminine love for a China teapot glowing in her faded eyes—and there stood the dainty piece of Bristol still intact, with the graceful little swan still mounting guard over the fragrant Bohea. May its future owners be as gentle with this fragile treasure!

The story I have to tell is a hitherto unexploited romance of the pioneer days of our country, a tale of

transplanted old-world enterprise which failed to take deep root in the land of its adoption. I came to the knowledge of it quite by accident, through a chance remark. While on a china-hunting tour through the Niagara river region, a German woman, with whom I had bargained for her ancient treasures and heirlooms, handed me a small mottled, reddish-brown pitcher, saying:

"You may have that pitcher. It was made by my father many years ago, over at Bergholtz."

I carried the little plebeian brown pitcher home, placed it with my more showy lustres and rich blues, treasured in my memory the information as to its origin and resolved to follow up the trail.

The result of my investigations has been the discovery of the fact that not five miles from the spot where the Frenchman La Salle launched the *Griffon*, the first sailing vessel on the Great Lakes above Niagara Falls, a German potter in the middle of the last century set up his wheel, and using the clay of the neighboring fields, for nearly 40 years fashioned with his own hands a variety of crockery and tableware which for honest workmanship and artistic merit deserves a place beside the wares of any American potteries of his day.

In 1808 in Bruessow, a village near Berlin in Germany, was born Charles August Mehwaldt. He came of a line of potters; his father and grandfather before him had spent their lives at the potter's wheel. After he had learned the trade young Mehwaldt, as was the custom of the country, passed several years as a journeyman potter, his *wanderjahre*, in search of experience taking him over Russia and into the Holy Land. On his return to his home he found the country in a state of political unrest. Greater liberties were demanded by the people, while free America, beckoning across the sea, with an alluring hand, was welcoming many citizens of all classes into voluntary exile.

In 1844 a man of wealth, Williams by name, gathered together several families from the neighborhood about Bruessow and brought the little band to the United States. They bought a piece of land in Western New York on the Niagara frontier, cleared the timber and built a hamlet of log houses; and in 1847 they erected the still standing German Lutheran church. Remembering the village of Bergholtz from which many of them had come, they named the new home New Bergholtz—later dropping the "New."

Today this settlement consists of about 200 inhabitants, nearly all of German descent, with two German Lutheran churches, a general store, a postoffice and a blacksmith shop grouped about a village green. Set down in the midst of a foreign race, these people still cling to their own national tongue and manners, and it was not many years ago that a traveler, passing through this village, imagined himself in another land when he saw upon the feet of several of the inhabitants the wooden shoes of the German peasant.

Fired by the glowing accounts which came back to the Fatherland from this transplanted colony across the sea, in 1851 a second company was formed to follow the first, and among these people were the potter Mehwaldt, his wife and their five children. They set out in a sailing vessel. The voyage lasted seven weeks, and, as seems to have been the not uncommon fate of sailing vessels during those years, the ship ran ashore and was wrecked upon a sandbar off Long Island. The passengers were rescued by means of a tub, which ran on a cable from the mast to the shore, and the German party came on to Bergholtz, making the journey across New York State by way of the Erie Canal. Upon their arrival they found that the great epidemic of cholera of 1851 had visited the settlement, and had taken away many of their former associates.

Here Mehwaldt bought a log house and two acres of land and set up his pot works. His outfit was of the most primitive description, and consisted of a small brick oven for firing the clay in his back yard and a wooden kick-wheel. These, with his hands and his Old-World training, were all his capital, and here he worked alone at his trade until he died in 1887, at the age of 79 years.

The years during which Mehwaldt came to America and began his work belong to that period which has been called the dark ages of our nation's history. Human slavery was in practice. The Great West was a glittering lode-star to the adventurer. Railroad travel was in its infancy. American ceramic art had long been an established fact, and many potters had come from Europe to try our clays, among them James Clews and William Ridgway, authors of many of our best loved old blue dishes, but "the staples of ware fabricated on this continent are few and not of a high degree of perfection," wrote Horace Greeley in 1853, concerning the specimens of American-made pottery at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in New York City. It was not until that event, which proved to be the renaissance of the potter's art in the United States, the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, that this country fully awoke to the possibilities hidden in our soil.

As the Civil War drew near Mehwaldt's sons were swept away with patriotism for their adopted country. "They would go into the barn and sing patriotic songs all night long," said their sister, in telling me of her early life in her father's home. Finally, the three boys ran away and enlisted in the Northern army. Two of them met death on Southern battlefields; only the third returned home. As memorials to his dead soldier boys, the potter made two wreaths of clay flowers to hang upon the walls of the church, with the photographs and

the war records of the soldiers, and an American flag. Upon a little shelf above these ornaments stood a bouquet of immortelles under a glass dome. Upon these wreaths the potter seems to have lavished all the wealth of his artistic fancy. They are sixteen inches in diameter. The flowers were modeled from the common garden and wild flowers, which grew about his home—the sun flower, rose, daisy, myrtle, zinnia, water lily, buttercup—all massed within a bed of green leaves. Loving care and thought are felt in the modeling and arrangement of these flowers, leaves and buds, and each tiny petal and stamen was closely studied before being fashioned into clay. The colors were evidently put on after the wreath was fired; they are now somewhat faded and soiled, but were once no doubt the nearest approach to the colors of nature which the potter could command. These wreaths are not only unique and interesting examples of our pioneer ceramic art, but they are also mute witnesses of that tragic period of our national life.

For his church Mehwaldt also made a huge chandelier of clay which for many years was the chief artistic feature of the barn-like structure, and which is spoken of by the people of the village today as a marvel of achievement. The chandelier was about four feet in diameter and held two rows of candles. The large round central piece was surrounded by small scalloped saucers for holding the candles, and all were held together by festoons of coloured clay balls strung on wires. I rescued several of the pieces of this chandelier, as well as a pair of tall pewter altar candlesticks, from a heap of discarded objects in the church loft. The chandelier was made of coarse reddish clay, well modeled and colored, and the fragments show considerable originality and skill.

Mehwaldt made quantities of chimney crocks, earthenware crocks of all sizes, butter crocks, with handles, to

be hung in wells to keep the butter cool; cooking utensils, candlesticks, all manner of table-ware—platters, plates, sauce dishes, cups and saucers, mugs, pitchers, sugar bowls, vegetable dishes, teapots and teakettles—all either of reddish brown color, mottled with dark spots or of plain dark brown. This dark-colored table-ware would have suited the country housewife in the story who, weary with much dish-washing, drove to town one day for the express purpose of buying a set of dishes "that wouldn't show dirt."

These dishes resemble somewhat the brown mottled ware of the Bennington potteries, which was made about the same time, but they lack the rich green and blue shades and the hard metallic glaze of the Vermont specimens.

Potter Mehwaldt also fabricated several German tiled stoves, and quantities of milk pans. The pans were discarded, however, as soon as tin pans came into general use in the neighborhood. At Christmas-time he turned out many little dinner sets for children, and toys made in the form of pigs, owls, roosters and birds, with whistles in their tails. When these figures were filled with water the whistles gave out a variety of tones. An inkstand is of more elaborate workmanship than the table dishes. It is nine inches long and five inches high. Above the large space for penholders are two receptacles resting in holes in the top. One of these is for ink, and the other has a perforated top through which to scatter the sand which was used in those days in place of blotting paper. Each end of the stand is decorated with a rose blossom and branch in relief, while from the front hangs a row of heart-shaped figures. I have also seen a large bread-mixing bowl which he made, with the words "Give us this day our daily bread," in German lettering around the outer edge.

The clay which Mehwaldt found in that section was

of the common red kind, coarse in quality and required much working. "It was not like it was in the old country," said his son, in talking about the experiences of his early life. "It took father a long time to get the right mixture of sand. He had to experiment a great deal, and that meant a great loss. He first formed the wet clay into large lumps like cheeses, piled them on the floor of his workshop, and then took a circular knife and shaved them down very fine, and took out all of the stones and hard materials. He then worked the mixture on the floor with his bare feet. We boys helped with this, and it was pretty cold work in winter time. He then cut off small pieces of the clay and kneaded them on a table just as bread is kneaded. He had to get out every particle of stone or hard substance. All this was very hard work, and he said that if he were a young man he would get up some kind of a machine to do this work."

"We children helped to grind the lead for the glaze," said his daughter. "There was a large stone in one corner of the workroom. From the ceiling a pole was suspended, with a flat stone on the end of it, and this pole had to be kept going round and round in order to grind the lead in the tub. My brother and I would stand on chairs and take hold of the handles and get it round and round. We would count 100 and then rest. How our arms used to ache! I can imagine I feel it in my shoulders yet, I was that tired."

Red lead was used for the glaze, also tea lead which had been burned to ashes. Some of the lead was mixed with animal blood to give a darker glaze, and the mottled effect was produced by splashing the darker mixture upon the surface with a small brush. The potter either dipped the dishes into the glaze or poured the liquid over them from a cup. He tried to make blue ware and white ware, but was unsuccessful with the materials at hand.

Mehwaldt adopted no distinctive mark for his pottery. Several pieces have the letter M scratched in the biscuit, as if done with a sharp-pointed stick. The forms are simple and good and show little attempt at ornamentation. Several of the pitchers have rows of impressed lines around the top, while the more elaborate plates bear around the rim impressions which the potter made by pinching the soft clay between his thumb and forefinger, "just as we fix pie crust around the edge of a pie," explained his daughter.

The little shop for the sale of these wares was attached to one side of the potter's house, and many orders were filled for the neighboring towns. The ware sold for a low price. "A plate could be bought for two cents," said his daughter, "and pitchers varied in price according to size. A good one could be bought for ten cents."

In a recent pilgrimage to the little village I found a man who was a small boy at the time the potter came to this country, and who entertained me with stories of their long acquaintance. In his German-flavored English he told how many a time he had watched with Mehwaldt all night over the fires of the kilns. Soft wood was used for fuel, either pine or basswood, and the firing was an affair of over a day and a night, with constant watchers in attendance to keep the required temperature. "How sleepy we used to get watching the fires! If it got too hot, it bust; if it was too slow, they cracked," he said. The ruin of a kiln full of material was a serious loss in those days of poverty and struggle. He said that the American clay differed so materially from the clay which the potter had been using in Germany that much experiment and loss were necessary in order to get satisfactory results. He gave me a pantomimic account of the potter sitting at his wheel, kicking it with his feet to make it revolve, and pulling and shap-

ing the wet clay with his hands. He said that for two years before his death Mehwaldt was unable to work, as he had injured his feet by the constant effort required to turn the wheel.

That there was no one to carry on the business after his death was a source of great disappointment to the potter. "He was proud of his calling," said his daughter, "and would tell how many generations of his family had been potters, and he did not want the business to die with him." Upon his death, however, the works were destroyed and the house was sold. Today nothing remains of the once flourishing pottery which stood for so many years in the village except the pieces of the peculiar mottled ware still upon the shelves of nearly every home for miles around.

The museum of the Historical Society contains a few specimens of the Bergholtz pottery, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Camehl.



THE BUFFALO THEATER CUP.—See p. 176.



EXAMPLES OF BERGHOLTZ POTTERY.—See p. 60.

Follow Up – In our 2016 winter issue we published an article on Plöwen, Germany. A village where many of our ancestors come from. One of our knowledgeable society members, Alan Moll, was able to add some additional information.

The picture of the door is from *Spuren der Ewigkeit, Schätze der Pommerschen Evangelischen Kirche*, a book full of pictures of Pommern church antiquities. Although the church was destroyed several times, the door is believed to have survived from the 13th century structure.

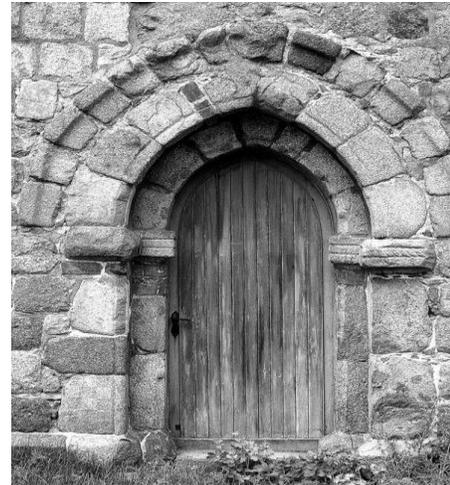
Plöwen has always been a diverse community. During the 1693 land survey, the village had a Swedish Pomeranian section, a German Brandenburg section, and a French Huguenot section. The church was, and still is, used by both the Germans and Huguenots (separate church services). Even today, the mayor of this German village is French – Jean Sy, relative of the Town of Wheatfield Sy's. He is also the lay leader of the French reformed members in Plöwen. [The following translation was made by Esther Bauer in 2005, with a few changes by Alan Moll]

When the cross and the sphere underneath the cross were removed from the church tower of Plöwen on the 19 of June 1986, the carpenters salvaged a bottle which held the document below. The bottle was opened by Pastor Wittenberg in the village nurse's ward on the twentieth of June in the presence of the mayor, gardener, his¹ secretary, the carpenters, the village nurse, and oldest members of the church Willi Wulkow and Paul Holz.

The document is as follows:

In the name of the Lord of the Trinity!

On 13th of June in the year of salvation 1852, the restoration of the church and the tower, which had burned down on the 18 of August 1848 together with the northern half of the village, had advanced so much that the knob and cross could be placed on top of the tower. The rebuilding of the church had begun in 1851; the outside walls of the burnt church, within which the foundation of the tower was laid, were reused. The construction was supervised by building inspector v. Dömming from Prenzlau, and according to estimate will cost 700 Reichsthaler. The carpenter's work was done by master Kosch and the masonry by master Zastrow from Brüssow. After 3 years earlier already 3 farms had burned down², in the huge fire of 1848. Ten farms including their outbuildings³ were reduced to ashes, as well as several cottages, the church, and the school house.



About 40 families became homeless. As a result of the fire, many farmers rebuilt in their fields outside of the village. The school was rebuilt in 1849 and was consecrated on the 1st Sunday after Michaelis. The Evangelical-Lutheran church in Plöwen has about 450 members.

Currently C. Oelgarte, superintendent from Löcknitz, is pastor in Plöwen; the office of the sacristan is managed by sexton Kurth from Bergholz, and the school board by teacher Bootz.

Church elders are village mayor Jahnke and the farmer Fr. Goersh.

As a result of the poor harvest of 1851 the cost of food was very high. A wispel⁴ of wheat went for 60-65 Reichsthaler, rye 50-60 Reichsthaler, barley 36-40 Reichsthaler, oats 24 to 28 Reichsthaler, potatoes 16 to 20 Reichsthaler.

May the Lord God bless the community of Ploewen. May his mercy and protection rule our church, and may it become a place of peace and healing for this and for future generations. May the word of the cross of Christ prove it's power of salvation to all who will hear about it in this house of God. May this be granted by God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Ploewen, the 13th of July 1852. Oelgarte. Su. Zastrow, master mason Jahnke, village mayor Kosch, master carpenter in Brüssow Bootz, school teacher in Ploewen

¹ unclear whose secretary, but likely the mayor's

² presumably they were burnt down in 1845

³ including barns

⁴ a wispel is about 37.4 American bushels

Emigrants Identified as from Plöwen in Eugene's and Iwan's Books

Between 1843 and 1847, about 54 adults and 51 children emigrated from Plöwen. There may be more, because emigration records for Plöwen do not exist for 1843. The names below are those that could be identified as from Plöwen, and only those who emigrated for religious reasons. Some of the families, for example the Behms, may have only lived in Plöwen briefly prior to emigrating. All, except for possibly the Gombert family, settled in Niagara County, New York.

In subsequent years, other families (Behm, Senechal, Werth, Thurmann, Zimmermann, etc.) also left Plöwen and settled in Niagara County.

- 1843 BEHM, Joahann(24), Wilhelmine Zimmermann(18), Wilhelm(1)
- 1843 BEHM, Michael(50), Engel(52), Wilhelm(22), Christian(19), Wilhelm(9)
- 1843 FAHRENWALD, Maria(44, widow, geb. Winter), Ferdinand(19),
Hermann Gottfried(16), Dorothea(21), Ulrike(14), Henriette(11)
- 1846 GOERS, Charlotte(25)
- 1846 GOERS, Christian(23)
- 1843 GOERS, Johann(24)
- 1843 GOERS, Karl Friedrich(25)
- 1846 GOERS, Karoline Wilhelmine(20)
- 1843 GOERS, Wilhelm(30), Henrietta(24)
- 1846 GOMBERT, Jaques(), Karol. Krüger(), Friedrich Wilh.(22), Johann(19),
August Friedrich(13), Karoline Wilh.(11)
- 1846 HASENBANK, Gottfried(39), Dorothea Friderike Gerloff(39),
Wilhelm Karl Gottfried(2)
- 1847 HASENBANK, Johann Friedrich(49), Wilhelmine Senechal(34),
Christine Wilhelmine(15), Chralotte Friderike Wilh(13), Joh. Aug. Friedr. Wilh'm(11),
Christine Wilhelmine(8), Charlotte Karoline Aug'e(6), Justine Dorothea Wilh'e(2)
- 1843 HELLERT, Johann(35), Frederike Schulz(30), Wilhelmine(4), Frederike Dorothea(1)
- 1845 Houdelette, Luise(29), Johanna(18) (daughters of Johann Houdelette)
- 1843 JAGOW, Christian(51), Johanna Dorothea Kindermann(41), Dorothea(14),
Friedrich Wilhelm (1/2)
- 1846 JAGOW, Michael Christian II(39), Marie Dorothea Rieck(35),
Freidr. Ferdinand Ludwig(8), August Friedr. Albert(6), Wilhelm Christ'n Friedr(1)
- 1843 MIERS, Christian(24)
- 1843 RUBBERT, Wilhelm(32), Maria Stenzel(33), [son](7), Wilhelmine(6),
Wilhelm(4), Caroline(1)
- 1843 SCHULZ, Christian Friedrich(52), Charlotte Miers(54), Christian(28),
Friedrich Wilhelm Christian(23), Wilhelm(19), Johann August(16)
- 1846 STROHFELD, David Wilhelm(41), Charlotte Auguste Kolpin(34), Friedrich Wilhelm
Martin Erdmann(11), Johann Friedrich David(8), Karoline Friderike Wilhelmine(5)
- 1843 SY, Daniel(65), Friedrich(25), Charlotte(21)
- 1843 SY, Daniel(29), Charlotte Goers(27), Frederike(4), Johann(2)
- 1843 SY, Johann(31), Justine Keibel(44), Daniel David(4)
- 1846 SY, Philip(30), Wilhelmine(22)
- 1843 VOELKER, Carl Freidrich(44), Anna Sophia Behm(26, 2nd wife), Wilhelmina(21),
Frederike(19), Henrietta(15), Ferdinand(12), Carl(9), Johann(7), Luise(4), Friedrich(1/2)
- 1843 VOELKER, Gottfried(43), Frederike Sy(30), Charlotte Henriette(5), Johann(1/2)
- 1843 WOLF, Carl Freidrich(36)
- 1846 WOLFF, Ludwig Ferdinand Carl(21)
- 1843 ZIEHM, Johann(50), Regine Broeker(50), Christine Caroline(25),
Frederike Wilhelmine Henriette(11), Carl(8), Christian(6)

Membership News

– The Historical Society would like to express our sympathy to the friends and families of Gertrude Ferchen, Phyllis Kroening, Lillian DuBois, and Audrey Walk. Four long time members that will be sorely missed.

- Wilma Lass recently had a seizure and fell and broke her hip. She ended up getting a pacemaker and a partial hip replacement and is now in rehab at Elderwood in Cheektowaga. She is in room 114W if anyone is shopping at the Galleria and wants to visit her. If you would like to, please send any letters or cards to: Wilma Lass, 2782 Niagara Rd., Niagara Falls NY 14304-2031.

– The Historical Society wishes to thank Chrisine Ferchen Stumph for her very generous donation in honor of June Stenzel, current board member and former president, for her lifetime of enthusiastic support for HSNGSWNY.

- Thanks to the St. James men's group for volunteering to paint Das Haus. This dedicated group of 8 painters were able to do a great job and finish in the early afternoon. Thanks to Larry Shaw, Duane DeVantier, Marshall Chapin, Dennis Milleville, Fred DeVantier, Morrie Johnson, Bill Buerger and John Schultz.

- A big thanks to Les Fuerch and Thrivent Financial for supplying the paint as part of their Thrivent Action Team project! Les also contributed and served some fine German beer for our EinHaus grand opening. Thanks Les, It was tasty!

- Thanks to Frances and John Barr of Pittsford, NY and Mr. Richard Williams of Savage, MN for their generous contributions to the society.

- This Spring Das Haus received a different type of visitor that decided to build a nest in the wreath on our front door. Mom and the little robins made it out of the nest successfully the week before our EinHaus Grand Opening.



Upcomming Events

August 21 – The Historical Society display at the Wheatfield Town picnic

September Meeting – Thursday, 9/15/16 at 7:00 PM at the Wheatfield Community Center

May – Oct. – Das Haus Museum is open every Sunday from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

October 29, 2016 at 5:00 PM– Annual German Harvest Dinner at the St. James Fellowship Hall behind the church.

Board Members Corner

– Board members of HSNGSWNY have been asked to submit an article to Der Brief regarding their early memories or other topic of interest. The following is from John Schultz.

My name is John Schultz and I have been on the Historical Society board for several years now. I am retired and one of my passions is genealogical research having to do with my family and the local German communities in particular. My mother's maiden name was Schultz, so that has added some complexity, and also fun to the search for my roots. My Immigrant ancestors settled in Bergholz and Martinsville. After a few generations they spread to Wollcottsville, Walmore, Pekin, Gratwick, Altamont Ill. and Niagara Falls which is where my immediate family lived. I was never interested in exploring my family's background until one day; I believe in the seventies, I happened to meet Eugene Camann when he worked at the Lutheran Social Services in Amherst. He told me things about my ancestors that were completely new and fascinating to me and I became quite interested in learning more. I asked if I could purchase one of his books and I did so that very night. The rest, as they say, is literally history. Now for some childhood memories

1. My first memories are of living in the upper flat of a house on Willow Ave. in Niagara Falls. I remember the sunlight coming through the front window and the blue couch in our living room.
2. My Grandfather, Fred Schultz, (mother's side, born in Altamont) and his brother, Ernie owned a grocery and butcher shop at the corner of Pierce Ave. and 18th streets in Niagara Falls. It was down 18th Street from St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Please take a look at the handbill at the end of this article. It describes the grand opening of the newly remodeled store in 1930. All of the small corner groceries belonged to the IGA,

(Independent Grocers Association) so of course, they all knew each other. He sold out when I was a little boy and he used to take me to visit all his grocery buddies every so often. Grove Smith had a grocery at the intersection of 15th and South Ave. and I remember how important I felt when allowed to go behind the meat cooler, and then Mr. Smith would give me a piece of baloney. What a thrill!

In conjunction with this story, I remember my mother taking me grocery shopping and walking by the new Loblaw's on 18th Street. I never could understand why we couldn't go there, everyone else did! Not until I was older did I understand that the "Chain" groceries quickly put the small independent grocers out of business, so of course, my mother felt poorly toward them. She continued to shop at any small grocery she could, even later in life she would still go to Slipkos instead of Tops.

3. My first school was at Trinity Lutheran on South Ave in Niagara Falls. I believe it was Kindergarten. At that time I had an ailment with my leg and wore braces. I remember this large man, either the school principal or a teacher meeting me at the door every day and carrying me up a huge flight of stairs that I couldn't negotiate too well on my own. I remember my parents talking about what an example of Christian love that man was. I wish that I could remember his name to give him credit, but I can't. If anyone knows who was the school principal of Trinity Lutheran around 1952 please let me know.
4. Sundays in my boyhood were probably like most others at that time. Sunday school, church and off to Grandma's for Sunday dinner in the early afternoon. In the later afternoon we would be visited or go visiting other family or relations. Every once and a while we would make the trip to Sanborn and visit my Grandmother's folks, (the Werth's) at their farm on at Town Line and Saunders Settlement. Currently on the NCCC property. An earlier picture of this house and the family can be seen on the home page of our website at <http://dashausmuseum.org/>. I do remember that this was a great place to play with cousins etc. The large Willow trees that we used to play around are still there if you look a little North from the corner.



Well, I have many more memories to share, but let's save those for another time.

Historical Society of North German
Settlements in Western New York
2549 Niagara Road – Bergholz
Niagara Falls, New York 14304-2020

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Join our Historical Society and receive Der Brief every quarter!

The Historical Society welcomes new members! If you find our newsletter and our mission interesting we hope that you will make a membership contribution and join us. Our mission is to educate adults and children concerning the heritage of the nineteenth century settlements of North Germans in western New York, and thus to preserve that heritage. We do this by preserving the history, artifacts, documents, manuscripts, publications, photographs, Plattdeutsch anecdotes, crafts and customs of these hearty immigrants, their descendants and the communities in which they lived.

We maintain Das Haus, EinHaus und Der Stall German Heritage Museum, sponsor an annual dinner, hold informative monthly meetings with special speakers, offer for sale books and other items published by the Society, and distribute Der Brief, our quarterly publication to 29 States and 3 foreign countries.

If you would like to become a member of our society, please fill out this form and send it to the address indicated.

Membership Chairman
Historical Society of North German Settlements in WNY
2549 Niagara Rd., Niagara Falls, NY 14304 – 2020

Enclosed is a membership donation of **\$20** (additional donations are very much appreciated)

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

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