This map from Eugene Camann’s book, “Uprooted From Prussia Transplanted in America” shows different areas surrounding Berholz that were identified by the early settlers using different names. We believe that Ploewen is named as such because many the first settlers on Jagow road (Hellert, Schulz, Jagow) were from the village of Plöwen in Prussia. The Village of Plöwen still exists in Germany today. Other families from Plöwen who migrated in 1843 include Goers, Miers, Rubbert, Sy, Voelker, Wolf, Ziem and Fahrenwald. The Village is approximately 6 kilometers from Bergholz, Locknitz, being a larger village in between. Do you know the background for the other names? Our board members have some ideas and we will share that information in our spring Der Brief! In the meantime, more about Plöwen….
More on Plöwen from a Behm/Hellert research report by Jens Müller-Koppe, Bremen, 29.08.98

The Plöwen parish registers begin with July 8, 1678 in which marriages and burials were recorded. There were separate registers for Plöwen and Bergholz until 1871, however there was also one book from 1805 onward that recorded entries for Bergholz, Locknitz and Plöwen.

Historical background – Plöwen

Plöwen is an old village near Locknitz. It’s history was connected very much with the castle and Town of Locknitz. The origin of the village name refers back to Slavian times, as it is derived from “Plow” (=boat) and “plowu” (=to swin, to go by boat). This name refers to the placement of the village Plöwen near a lake of about 1.5 km in length. This lake, which was very famous for very good fish (“Bleien” or freshwater Bream) until the 18th century was drained at the beginning of the 19th by a canal which leads into the Radow near Locknitz. The lake west of Plöwen is now forgotten, the fields and meadows which are much lower than the main part of the village, - and which continue to be wet even today, remind us of the original shape of the landscape. Note that Bergholz thinks that the ‘oe’ in the name Plöwen was originally spoken like Ploëwen, with the long ‘o’, but without an ‘Umlaut’.

The history of Plöwen before the 30-years war was the history of the conflicts in the border region of Brandenburg and Pommern. It was mentioned in records of 1412 (this is very late, as it is clear there was a village a long time before this). There was a very deep impact on Plöwen from the “Pommerscher Erbfolgkrieg” 1468-1472. The village and the whole area of Locknitz, passed back and forth between Brandenburg and Pommern. The situation in Plöwen was more confused after 1479 when Bogislaw X, Duke of Pommern did not cede the whole village to Brandenburg but only the main part. The smaller part which was already the property of the Pommeranian knights in the 15th century continued to remain in Pommerania. There was not a clear border between Brandenburg and Pommern. Each village seemed to be half and half. To make it even more complicated, the small Pommern part of the village was devided into three parts around 1479. One part belonged to the church of St. Marien in Settin, one part to the noble family of Ramin and the last part to the Graf von Lapwell family, later named “Gut Wihelmshof”.

The impact of the 30 Years War was dramatic. After the fighting and massacres in Pasewalk in 1630, the soldiers treated the people in the areas of Locknitz and Settin unbelievable badly, killing most of them. It seems that the village of Plöwen was practically wiped out after the end of the war. It was mentioned that there were only the ruins of the little old stone church remaining in Plöwen after 1630. The fields were full of weeds even decades after this catastrophe and there were only three families left and one widow in the Brandenburg part of Plöwen by 1685. The Pommern part of the village was leased by a Swedish civil servant, Ernst Lille, who began to develop a farm there.

It was Brandenburg/Preussen, which provided the initial push for the new development of Plöwen. In 1685 it was Friedrich, Wilhelm I., “der grobe Kurfurst’ who took over Locknitz after a long legal struggle and developed an electorate “there. Within the next years after 1685 plans were initiated to re-cultivate and resettle the desolate villages around the area. Amongst the first settlers there were a number of refugee (Huguenot) families, one half of the first 14 farms of the “new” Plöwen village (Brandenburg part) were inhabited by these French Refugees. The Refugees were concentrated in the Pommern part of the village, so we can presume that there was a majority of people of French origin around 1700 in Plöwen. The “Huguenots” had there own “Gemeinde” (small local government) in Plöwen, which belonged to the French-reformed parish of Bergholz.

After that period there was a continuous development of Plöwen in the 18th & 19th centuries. There were 61 houses, 83 farm buildings (Wirtschaftsgebaude), 129 families and 687 people in Plöwen in 1865. The occupation of most people was farming; the main crops were rye and oats, and little peas. The special thing that the French settlers brought to Plöwen was tobacco on about 50 acres. Nearly unknown in other parts Pommern and Brandenburg (and all of Germany for that matter). Most of the barns had special set-ups for drying tabacco. This new crop was especially welcome for the poorer families to get some income from selling this rare product.

The soil was, and still is poor, although half of it was used as a farm fields in 1865. There were 90 horses, 180 cattle, 1200 sheep, 200 pigs and 60 goats in Plöwen that year. There were 4 mills (2 wind mills and 1 water mill) and a brickworks as well (150,000 bricks a year). Documents from the period have listed the following occupations for Plöwen: 2 millers, 1 brick maker, 5 linen weavers, 1 wheel maker, 1 smith, 1 joiner, 3 tailors, 1 shoemaker, 2 traders (“Victualleihandler”) and 2 inn keepers. 62 of the 129 families were “Einlieger-Familien”. They had no houses by
themselves and lived on day-laboring for tobacco in the summer and cutting wood in the winter. There was also some peat-cutting west from Plowen. The great farms (estates of the Pommern part of Plöwen) were divided in mid-19th century.

The church of Plöwen is very old but it is not clear when the first stone church that was destroyed in 1630 was built. The Plowen church is associated with its mother church in Locknitz. The French Refugees had the right to use his Lutheran church from the moment they settled in Plowen in 1687/1690. On the 18th of August 1848, a great fire destroyed the church and a great majority of all houses in Plöwen! The church had to be rebuilt again in 1851/52. The Geographer, Heinrich Berghaus wrote that Plöwen already looked very hospitable after the village was rebuilt in 1862, a very short period of time to recover from such a catastrophe, at least when you think of the number of people who left Plöwen after 1843 for America.

![Plöwen Church – Side Door](image)
Bergholtz folks offer feast of good food memorabilia

By SUSAN GREENWOOD
Gazette Staff Writer
BERGHLTZ — Good food that's what people think of when they talk about this tiny German community. The famous chicken chowder, sausage and baked goods, these are the things Bergholtz is known for.

Saturday night members of the community will be able to feast on the well-known German-American fare when the Historical Society of North German Settlements in Western New York sponsors a goose and ham dinner. The society's doing it in typical German fashion with hard work producing a groaning festive board.

They hope to serve over 400 people family style at tables for 10. Serving starts at 4:30 p.m. In the hall of Holy Ghost Lutheran Church, Luther Street, and continues until 7:30 p.m.

For the past month an informal group of women have been meeting to plan the meal and they've come up with a menu that reflects their German-American background. Guests will have baked goose and ham, whole potatoes, bread dressing and gravy, homemade applesauce, butternut squash, peas, sweet-sour cabbage, celery sticks, German rice pudding and beverages.

Along with the food there'll be an extensive display of German antiques and memorabilia. The passport of the Camann family will be shown as well as a traditional wedding wreath. Several pieces of Mehlwald or Redware pottery will be displayed and maps of the section of Germany where the original families lived. These detailed projections even include the family flecks.

ALREADY WORKING — Left-handed Mrs. Frances Voelker was busy with her left-handed paring knife early this week while working on home-made applesauce. — Gazette Photos.
SWEET SOUR CABBAGE

2 pounds green cabbage
2 quarts water
2 tablespoons vinegar
1 tablespoon salt
2 teaspoons brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

Cook cabbage, vinegar and water together for 15 minutes. Season and refrigerate until served.

GERMAN RICE PUDDING

2 cups cooked rice
1 quart milk
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Mix rice with milk and sugar. Add salt and nutmeg. Serve hot or cold.

REESE F. CAMERON - RARE WARES

Early descendant of the Moravian settlement in the 1800's. On his head is a beaver board top hat and elbow is a family passport.

The poorer ones received a credit of ten years. Therefore, they could build a place for themselves and settle down. They also provided for the poorer ones that came later, to give them a chance to settle down before the price of land would go up. Besides, they also bought 600 acres of land for 8-9 dollars an acre along Ward Road. The poorer ones received a credit for ten years by buying lots. This was later the settlement of Johnsburg. They arranged it that the smaller farmer and working people lived near the church and school. Until they held church services in a barn that was made suitable for worship; also a school was built together with some of the first log houses. The larger farmers received their land farther away. If the servants did not have enough to do with the farmer they could work on the land and bring it into cultivation, or clear it, which was the American term. The wood could be sold in Buffalo for 40 dollars per cord, so earn some money. When they had cleared the land they could sell lots for 80-100 dollars and then build on their small farms, in this way the people could pay for their traveling expenses and land and so make themselves independent. William in his letter emphasized the importance of the wood. It could conveniently be sent down to Buffalo by water on the Canal. The land was still thickly covered with trees, oak, beech, walnut, and species which he did not know. Carpenter Hoffmeister was overwhelmed about the nice wood on his farm which would be ideal for wheel-making, and wrote to his stepson, Fritz Kant, whom he had to leave behind because he was on active military service, if he would, after serving in the Army, come over to this country, it would please him very much, as he knew he could use him in his trade. About the land he remarked that it was much on top and clay underneath but it was first class soil. John William wrote that he had purchased 130 acres that same morning at 9 dollars an acre and his brother Abraham bought 150 acres. They still had money to buy more land, but for three reasons they didn't. First, it would be hard work to clear the land; second, the wages were too high; and third, they could get 7 per cent on this money on loans.

This was now the new colony of New Bergholz, four miles from Buffalo, not far from the canal, as William wrote. There was nobody mentioned in his letter except himself and his brother Abraham. We presume that the majority of them came from Bergholz, Kreis Fremslau. The same held true for another place where some of the emigrants settled down, and called it New Wallmow. This was two miles north of Bergholz, and nine miles from Niagara Falls. There is little more known about the founding, except that they were able to purchase about 20 farms. The Historian, Pastor Engel, from Milwaukee, writes in the Sunday supplement on the "Ockermüller in America" in the list of Lutherans which dedicated St. Peter's Church in New Wallmow. We find some names that are not on our list. It could be that some of those that we did not know were among the immigrants or were already here from before. Among the list that Pastor Engel published we discovered that quite a few names on our list from 1833 were repeated: Friedrich Wendt (farmer) and his wife Wilhelmine, born Schulz; Wilhelm Wendt, his brother, later married a daughter of Ephrosyne Walk and moved to Bergholz; Christian Wendt, his brother, unmarried; Wilhelmine Wendt, sister, later married Christoph Walk; Widow Ephrosyne Walk, born Kleinemoch, property owner, and her children Friedrich Walk, unmarried, later married Minna William; Elisabeth Walk, later married the above mentioned Wilhelm Wendt; Christoph Walk and his wife Wilhelmine, sister of Christian Wendt, mentioned below; Christian Haseley and wife Charlotte, born Walk; Friedrich Haseley and wife Dorothea, born Fahrenwald, and after her death married Wilhelmine Wendt, a daughter of Christian Wendt; David Haseley who later married Frederike Pfuhl; August Haseley and wife Henrietta born Goerss; Johann Haseley came later from Prussia; Widow Maria Fahrenwald, born Winter, and her three children, Ferdinand Fahrenwald, unmarried; Gottfried Fahrenwald, unmarried, and "Henrietta
From: Iwan, Wilhelm, Die Altlutherische Auswanderung usw.

Fahrenwald, maiden, later married William Beutel; Christian Wendt and wife Dorothea-Sophie, born Dumerow, and children, Friedrich Wilhelm Wendt, later married widow of Johann Wallack; Wilhelmine Wendt, maiden, later married Widower Friedrich Haseley; Elizabeth Wendt, maiden, later married Karl Haseley; Martin Hinze and wife Judith, born Jenet, and daughter Sophie Hinze, maiden; Christian Kröning, master tailor and wife and children, August Kröning, unmarried, Wilhelm Kröning, unmarried; Friedrich Pruhl and wife, born Suckow, and children: Wilhelm Pruhl, unmarried, later married Ulrike Fahrenwald; *Frederick Pruhl, maiden, later married David Haseley; Ferdinand Pruhl, unmarried, later married Auguste William; Philipp William and wife, born Suckow, and children: Kenneth Jagow, unmarried, - Jagow and wife Albertine, born Gensrow; Widow Christine Krüger, born Wallack, and son August, unmarried; Friedrich Wilhelm Schröder, master tailor and wife Wilhelmine, born Schröder and daughter, married to Johann Wallack and after his death to Friedrich Wilhelm Wendt; Gottfried Wieland and wife and children: Gottfried Wieland, unmarried, Wilhelm Wieland, unmarried; Friedrich Blumrick and wife Christine, born Wolf; Christian Wolf and wife Christine, born Schutz; Friedrich Wieland and wife Christine, born Wiese; Martin Linde and wife and daughter Dorothea, maiden; Johann Steffen and wife and son Christian, unmarried; Friedrich Krüger and wife Christine, born Damerow; Johann Gloede and wife and son Wilhelm, unmarried, together 73 persons.

In this oldest time, a third congregation was founded, martinsville, four miles east of Tonawanda on the Erie Canal. Here they bought a considerable piece of land from Vanderwood under the leadership of Teacher von Rohr and Attorney Clinton. Most of these people came from Niperwiese and surrounding areas.

The Governor of the State of New York, Washington Hunt, was very kind to these new settlers. Von Rohr writes he knew him to be a good Christian. He was a good friend to the poor and needy around the Lockport area where he lived and had a warm feeling for the Prussians. On his own expense he picked a surveyor, Mr. Bayn, and had Bergholz and Johnsburg laid out in lots at a cost to him of $200. He donated four acres of land in the middle of Bergholz as church-, school-, and market-place, upon which was built a church, school, and parsonage. He sent to the poor settlers, in order to help them build their log cabins, a strong yoke of oxen and an ample supply of boards. He gave a credit for ten years for the 600 acres on Ward Road. He supported them in the beginning, when they had to get the forest cleared by providing Brother Johann Sy and his brother-in-law Friedrich Gührs with a year's credit so they could procure flour and provisions both winter and summer over the bad roads from Lockport and Buffalo. At von Rohr's request he was always ready to loan money to the small poor farmers and craftsmen for building and tools. "For many years he was a great support to us and to later immigrants," says von Rohr.

When we look back to the first occupations of our immigrants, we see them working hard and long to make the woods and swamps theirs. We see them rooting up the trees, working the timbers into housebeams or shipping them on the canal, draining the swamps, in the fields sowing and harvesting, building houses or working on their craftwork. We can understand when some wanted to burn the trees in the American way, but others felt it was a waste of money. William figured that some of the nice logs would be worth from $20 to $40 in Germany, but he realized that they could not do otherwise under the circumstances. Through their ceaseless work they made the land better and healthier. It is also clear that they won the Governor's favor. But they were pleased with themselves and how they were getting on in the world. Near the end of 1843 the by no means well-to-do Master Cabinetmaker Hofmeister wrote that he had been able to buy only 22 acres, that his relatives should come, that he would meet them in New York and give half of his property to his brother. The richer William also would even get
them over from Germany. This they could do only because they were successful and wanted to share this with their friends that they had to leave behind.

With all these hardships, they never forgot why they came over, that is to live their religion and faith. The letters from America and Australia confirmed this. Church and School were the most important. William writes, "with God's help we found a place where we can spend the rest of our lives and that God would grant them steadfastness to abide in the Word of God."

About church building and congregational affairs in the so-called Ehrenström churches, we are not too much informed. We only know that Pastor Graebu took care of them until Pastor Ehrenström, who had been imprisoned in Magdeburg for a year, was released by the King in the fall of 1844. But they found him to be a false prophet, he was not true to the Word of God and was suspended. In 1846 Pastor von Rohr was called from Humberstone, Ont., and served the three congregations, Bergholz, Wallmow, and Martinsville.

We don't know much about the church life. Ehrenström didn't have too many followers. After the cleansing process, church and congregation, under F. v. Rohr was very much alive, since Pastor Rohr and Pastor Graebu still worked together. Bergholz, after having church services in a barn, started to build a church in 1846. It was 100 feet long, and was finished in 1851 and dedicated on the 11th Sunday after Trinity. It was a frame structure without a steeple, built at a cost of $2,000, and had 100 members. 100 families before Johnsburg became a branch of it. Von Rohr says that in 1839 the foundation was laid for a brick church in Bergholz. Also in Wallmow a church was built in 1846. Professor Benecke wrote about it at that time that its proportions made it a stately building. The same Benecke wrote that on Dec. 12, 1848 a church had been completed in Martinsville, it is supposed that both of these villages had temporary places for worship services.

Before we leave these Eastern settlements, we should take a short look at the spreading out which the Lutheralans did from here. We want to point out that Bergholz was a kind of motherchurch. The first settlers made a wise move when they bought 600 acres on the Ward Road which was later called Johnsburg. As such it belonged to Bergholz for a long time, it is situated between Bergholz and Martinsville. In the year 1853 they organized and also built a church with the support of the Motherchurch, Bergholz. Its 74 member families consisted of brandenburgers, Pomeranians, Mecklinituppers and savarians. Wollcottsville, about 12 miles away from Wallmow was organized in 1859. About 70 families from Wallmow Bergholz, Johnsburg, and Buffalo bought 2000 acres of land at $25 an acre from a man named Wollcott, who also donated 50 acres of land and $100 for the erection of a church. Not far from Wollcottsville another congregation was formed by von Rohr in 1855 which was Wollcottsburg. For a while it was served by a Martinsville Pastor, before they called their own pastor. These are the congregations in New York State. Other churches in the States of Michigan and Illinois were organized from here, Rohr states.

We want to take a look at other settlers, who in 1843 went with Pastor Kindermann, as they had already decided on Wisconsin as their goal. More went this time than in 1839. At that time Wisconsin was still new to them. There is no exact figure, but at least half or more went out West. Pastor v. Rohr was more informed about the settlers in New York State. About Wisconsin he wrote only that Kindermann's congregation was mostly Pomeranians that came from Kammin, had settled about 20 miles from Milwaukee, 6 miles northwest from Freistadt, the larger part in Kirchhain, a smaller one in Watertown, and another in Cedarburg. Luckily we have other sources with more information. In the German archives we found three letters from Wisconsin immigrants in 1843, by the names of Radeke, Reil, and Jäger. Also newspaper articles which some had sent back gave us more information, especially from Pastor Engel and Miss Mathilda Schley, Milwaukee, who was a niece of one of the settlers. That is why we know quite a lot about these Wisconsin settlers.

Editors Note: Since this article was published in Der Brief in 1974 the Society has obtained a complete translation of the entire Wilhelm Iwan book (Volumes 1 & 2). If you wish to read the entire document please contact HSNGSWNY.
Membership News

As most of you know we will be changing our membership fee structure to make it easier for everyone to use. All memberships will expire on March 31. Renewal fees are due on April first of every year. Members have or will have received a letter explaining this change in detail and letting people know what their actual dues for this year will be. Thanks to all for bearing with us while we work to straighten out our membership terms and renewal structure.

As you see, Der Brief has a new look. The board continues to search for a new editor so if any of our members would like to get involved with the Society in this way, please contact John Schultz (695-6741) or any other of the board members. Der Brief will be a quarterly publication going forward. We hope to continue providing interesting articles having to do with the Prussian/German migration to America in 1843 as well as the lives and stories of the first immigrants and their descendents as they settled in the towns and villages around Western New York.

Most of you have probably noticed that there is now a new cedar shingle roof on Das Haus. Thanks to all who continue their memberships, attend our meetings / events and contribute of their time and money to keep the history of our ancestors alive and available for all to see and explore. We will continue to improve and maintain our museum throughout the coming years with your help!

Many Thanks to all who participated in our first basket auction. Thouse who bought tickets and especially to those who brought a basket to bid on. That was an unexpected and very appreciated gesture!

Upcomming Events

January Meeting – 1/21/16, Wheatfield Community Center, 2:00 PM, Topic – Old Time Winter Memories
February Meeting – 2/18/16 Wheatfield Community Center, 2:00 PM, Topic TBD
March Meeting – 3/17/16 Wheatfield Community Center, 7:00, Topic – John McNamara talks about the Einhaus
June 11 – Einhaus Grand Opening (SAVE THE DATE!)

St. James Lutheran Sunday School “Upper” Grades – 1951 – 75th Anniversary Booklet
(The names will be provided in the next issue of Der Brief)

Der Brief is published quarterly by the Historical Society of North German Settments in Western New York, Das Haus und Der Stall German Heritage Museum, 2549 Niagara Road, Niagara Falls, New York 14304. (716) 795-2890. We are a 501 c 3 organization. Email address: dashausmuseum@gmail.com, web address: www.dashausmuseum.org.
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 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 _________________________________

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