Found in the Files – 2018 Marks the 175th anniversary of our ancestors migration to America and the establishment of St. Peters, St. Martin’s and “The German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Neu Bergholz in the Town of Wheatfield”, otherwise known as Holy Ghost Evangelical Lutheran Church. In honor of this event, over the coming issues, Der Brief will be reprinting in these pages, portions of the 150th Holy Ghost anniversary booklet.

Chronicle of Holy Ghost Lutheran Church - Bergholz, N.Y.

One hundred fifty years ago almost five hundred Lutherans from in and around Bergholz, Prussia transplanted their congregation five thousand miles to western New York. In October 1843 they established the community of New Bergholz and on November 19 of that year they organized the “German Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Bergholz in the Town of Wheatfield”. When their first church was built in 1847, this congregation became known as Holy Ghost Lutheran Church.

In 1817 King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia had decreed a merger of the Lutheran and Calvinistic Reformed churches into the State Union Church. He then prepared a uniform worship manual to be used in all churches. At the Rohr compliance was quite optional but beginning in 1850 its use was strictly enforced by the imperial police. Pastors who refused to comply faced stiff fines and imprisonment.

When Lutherans from the neighborhood of Bergholz, Bruessow and Plewen attended the Union church, they could not tolerate the rationalistic preaching and the lax, uncaring attitude of the state sponsored clergy. Even more objectionable to them was the observance of the Reformed communion practice prescribed by the official worship manual. They soon concluded that the Union Church was false and, beginning in 1836, they stayed away and formed their own private worship groups without pastors. Under the leadership of Johann Pfuhl, Carl Voelker, Johann Hellert, Friedrich Ferchen and August Moll they met secretly in homes, barns, and woods to sing hymns, study the Bible, pray and read sermons. They used confessional Lutheran worship materials sent to them by a congregation of dedicated Old Lutherans in Breslau, Silisia.

August Grobengiesser and Christoph Friedrich Camann of Bruessow visited a congregation of Old Lutherans in Berlin. Here they accepted membership in the Old Lutheran Church. Upon their return, Camann openly denounced the Union Church and proclaimed himself a Lutheran. For this he was arrested and imprisoned.

In 1837 the persecuted Lutherans in Bruessow unexpectedly met two men with whom they would later become much better acquainted in America, J.A. A. Grabau and Heinrich von Rohr had to stop overnight in Bruessow because their horse went lame there. They were fleeing from the imperial police after von Rohr had helped Grabau escape from prison. Meanwhile, persecutions were becoming more severe. Imprisonments were more frequent and harassments, fines and confiscations grew more oppressive. After a year in prison, Camann was released. However, even though he was again allowed to practice his blacksmith-making trade in Bruessow, all rights and privileges of citizenship were withheld from him because he had been imprisoned for violating a religious regulation. His citizenship was not restored until three years later, after the old king’s death.

King Friedrich Wilhelm III died in 1840 and was succeeded by his son, Friedrich Wilhelm IV. In 1841 the new king issued a Toleration Decree which liberated all Lutheran pastors from prison and allowed Lutherans to again worship in public. However, their religious freedom was far from complete. Lutheran churches were now placed under Union Church control. Their members were not allowed to worship in their old churches with bells and steeples. Official acts performed by Lutheran pastors were still not recognized by the state. Worst of all was the strict requirement that Lutheran children must attend state schools where Union Church doctrines were taught. Unless they complied and received a state confirmation certificate there, they could not obtain employment after completing their schooling. Parents were deeply concerned that their children might either lose their Lutheran faith by attending the state school, or be deprived of a livelihood if they didn’t attend. This became their most urgent and immediate reason for considering it necessary to leave Prussia. So under the strong prodding of Pastor Karl Wilhelm Ehrenstroem, who was then serving them, deliberate emigration planning was begun.

Pastor Ehrenstroem was serving Lutheran congregations also in Wallmow and Nipperwiese where similar planning was underway. He had vehemently opposed the Union Church since 1833 and was imprisoned at least eight times for his zealous support of Lutheranism. He and his associate, Pastor Kindermann, had only recently lost their membership in the Breslau Old Lutheran Synod for refusing to comply with the Synod-supported conditions of the 1841 Toleration Decree and for advocating emigration. In April 1843 Ehrenstroem went to Hamburg to make transportation arrangements for his congregations’ departure from Prussia. While there he was arrested and imprisoned for his libelous denunciations of government and state church officials.

Meanwhile, families of the Bergholz congregation were making the necessary arrangements to emigrate from Prussia. They were disposing of their property to generate travel funds. They were packing their trunks and cases for the trip. They were arranging for the care of relatives who were staying behind. Besides all this, each family had to obtain an exit permit from government officials. Upon applying they were asked why they wanted to leave. Their simple reply was “God wants it so!” Many families were required to wait an unduly long time after applying because the officials attempted to prevent them from leaving. So that those with insufficient travel funds would not have to stay behind, some well-to-do members of the congregation set up a travel fund for their benefit.
In May 1843 most permits had come through and on Pentecost Day (June 4) the emigrants set out under the leadership of Johann William. After tearfully bidding farewell to those staying behind, the emigrants mounted horse-drawn wagons and set out for the Oder River port of Kurow. Here they boarded large riverboats, each holding up to 150 passengers, and sailed south to the Havel-Finnow Canal. On this they traveled west, entered the Elbe River and sailed into Hamburg harbor. While most of the Bergholz congregation followed this inland waterway route, one group from Ploewen traveled overland the entire distance to Hamburg with horse-drawn wagons.

The Bergholz congregation of about 500 members was too large for all to fit in the same sailship. The ships accommodated only from 100 to 150 passengers each. Most Bergholz families came to America on these three ships: Bark Rainbow (35 families), Bark Kangmonham Roy (26 families), and Bark Reform (21 families). Seven
families came on the Bark Sophonia and two families each on Bark Hualco, Brig Edward and Brig Sir Isaac Newton. According to a letter written by Johann William, the food was fairly good, but the water was extremely bad. The very worst, though, was the seasickness which affected everyone, and some quite violently.

The child, Friedrich Wilhelm Jagow, was born while his parents were in Hamburg just before their ship left for America. Wilhelm Krull, Maria Moll and Wilhelmine William were born aboard ship on the Atlantic Ocean. Carl Friedrich Werth was born in New York City right after his parents landed in America. There were three times as many deaths as births on the sea. Reported buried at sea were Paul Stawasser, Charles Wittkop, Caroline Perchen, Augustine Schulz, Christine Prostrock, Johanne Bino, Wilhelm Bredow, Christine Burow and Frederike Hauer. All except two of the deaths were infants. Worship services and school classes were regularly conducted on board ship. Special services were held for burials and also during times of severe storms and again when the storms had been safely weathered.

The first ship to arrive in New York Harbor was the Brig Edward on July 24, 1843. On October 30 the Brig Sir Isaac Newton was the last to arrive with Bergholz congregation passengers aboard in 1843. Because living costs were so high and the surroundings were so strange to them in New York City, the Prussian emigrants set out for Buffalo as soon as possible. Moving up the Hudson in steamer-towed barges and along the Erie Canal in mule-drawn barges, they arrived in Buffalo. They had chosen this city as their initial destination already before leaving Prussia. They had been attracted here by letters received from earlier Buffalo settlers. Temporary housing was arranged for them in Buffalo by Heinrich von Rohr who was teaching school there while studying for the ministry under Rev. J.A.A. Grabau.

The Bergholz congregation elected Friedrich Moll, Johann William and Johann Sy as their trustees to locate and purchase a suitable settlement site. Von Rohr suggested six possible locations to them which he visited with the trustees: (1) Cattaraugus County near Lake Erie, (2) Indian Bush six miles south of Buffalo, (3) North Bush just north of Buffalo, (4) Town of Eden 20 miles south of Buffalo, (5) Erie Canal shore six miles south of Lockport, (6) Town of Wheatfield east of Niagara Falls.

The trustees considered the latter two sites the most suitable and called a meeting of all men of the congregation. After both sites had been visited, the opinion seemed overwhelmingly in favor of the Erie Canal location (now Pendleton). When the official vote was taken, however, it was unanimous for the land in Wheatfield. (The Erie Canal land cost $18 per acre but the Wheatfield land cost only $9 per acre.) Both of Ehrenstroem's other congregations also settled in Wheatfield: the Wallmow group founded New Wallmow north of Bergholz and the Nipperwiese congregation established Martinsville southeast of Bergholz.

The Bergholz trustees bought 2120 acres of land as the main settlement site. They also bought an additional 600 acres of land along Ward Road intended for their Prussian friends and relatives who would be following them to America. The land was heavily wooded and much of it was marshy. Roughly in the center of the main parcel bordering Cayuga Creek was a 130-acre plot that had been partially cleared of the largest trees by an earlier logging operation. This was laid out as a planned community with 121 one-acre building lots, church property and appropriate streets. On October 12, 1843 the community was officially established as the village of New Bergholz. However, because the surveyor who drew the map captioned it NEW BERGHOLTZ (with a "T" inserted), the village name has been officially misspelled ever since. Each male member of the congregation, 21 years and older, received one of the 121 village lots. Those who were farmers could obtain additional land apportioned from the property surrounding the village.

Located in the village was a large barn which had in the past served to shelter oxen for the logging operation. When the congregation came out from Buffalo onto their newly acquired property, the women and children were temporarily sheltered in this barn. The men built themselves lean-to windbreaks in the woods to provide some protection from the elements. It was already late fall and winter would soon descend on them, therefore, more adequate shelter had to be provided promptly.

Washington Hunt, who had sold them the land and was also the Congressman representing Wheatfield, came to their aid. He gave them a considerable quantity of lumber for building their first houses. He also gave them a yoke of oxen to help them with the construction. The men now began building 24 log houses on lots which were spaced evenly throughout the village. Among the very first to be built was the school house located in the center of the village. The first teacher was August Stawasser who had come along from Prussia and had taught on board ship. Within one month all 24 log houses were ready to be occupied, which attests to the determination and diligence of the workers. The 500 congregation members then moved into the 24 one-room buildings and experienced real "togetherness" as four or five families shared each house.

Only the barest necessities were available to the settlers
that first winter. Chairs consisted of one-foot diameter logs sawn to chair height. The packing cases in which they had brought their belongings served as make-shift tables. Beds were mats placed on the earthen floor at night and rolled up against the wall during the day. There was no road through the heavy forest to accommodate horses or wagons. Therefore, Johann Sy and Friedrich Goers trudged tirelessly over the difficult foot trails to bring flour, salt and other staples from Buffalo and Lockport. Perhaps the most serious problem plaguing many of the new settlers was the nagging uncertainty, “Did we do right in leaving Prussia?” Because Pastor Ehrenstrom had been separated from them and they were now without their own pastor, had this really been a God-pleasing move? They sent an appeal to the Prussian king begging for Ehrenstrom’s release so he could come to serve them in America.

The congregation had been officially organized on November 19, 1843 as the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Bergholtz in the Town of Wheatfield. The organization meeting was conducted by Elders Friedrich Ferchen and Carl Voelker. Worship services were regularly held in a large barn furnished for that purpose until 1847 when the Holy Ghost Church was built. At the outset, in the absence of their own pastor, Rev. J.A.A. Grabau came out from Buffalo periodically to preach and administer the sacraments. In between his visits the elders conducted “reading” services.

Rev. J. A. A. Grabau

Miscellaneous

Our second installment from the Wurlitzer Centennial Cook Book. For all of you who wondered what Little Richard was refering to in his song, now we know.

**Tutti Frutti**

**PREPARE**

TAKE large glass jar with lid; % cup of brandy to serve as conserve. Now begin with early fruit, strawberries, etc., by taking a cup of fruit, % cup of sugar, and add to brandy. Keep on until you have fruit of every season. Oranges, pineapples and bananas can also be added the same way. Seal, and leave until conserve thickens.

**Grape Casser**

TAKE grapes before they are ripe; remove stems, and put the fruit in a kettle with just enough water to prevent scorching. Stir often and cook until tender. Rub through a colander, then measure the pulp. To every quart and a half add % lb. brown sugar; % cup of white vinegar; a heaping teaspoon each of ground cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, salt, white pepper, and % teaspoon of ground cloves. Boil steadily until the casser is reduced to less than half the original quantity and very thick. When cold, bottle, cork, and cover corks with sealing wax.
The passing of Richard Milleville and Janice Kirchner in 2017 leaves Alice Lange as the last remaining Milleville child who grew up in the above homestead. Pictured below are Hugo, Beata and the children.
Many a discussion in our ancestor's kitchens and parlors centered around the machinations of the Lutheran Church hierarchy and who or which synod would speak for Lutherans in America. Splits amongst the leaders of the church caused rifts that are still in place in 2018. One of the first splits in American Lutheranism had to do with the Buffalo and Missouri Synods. Although this is a somewhat difficult topic for 21st-century Americans to understand, it is part of our heritage and so included here is a brief synopsis of the establishment of the Buffalo Synod from the point of view of a professor at Wittenberg Seminary in 1915.

**A Concise History of the Lutheran Church in America by Dr. J. L. Neve** Professor of Dogmatic History and Symbology at the Wittenberg Seminary in Springfield, Ohio. 1915

**§ 30. The Buffalo Synod**

In the Year 1839, approximately 8 months after the Saxons, Pastor Grabau and his congregation in Erfurt emigrated to America. Amid his congregational members was also found the Prussian Artillery Captain H. von Rohr. The majority of these Prussian Lutherans settled in and around Buffalo, N.Y. Pastor Grabau recognized the lack of internal validity in a union between the Lutherans and the Reformists and recognized a particular trend towards the eroding of the old church order through the King's initiatives to bring about a union. The union agenda had also been forced upon him. When he and his congregation asked if they could practice one of the old agendas this was denied to them. For this reason, he and other Lutheran pastors were suspended and put in prison. Under the yoke of persecution his congregation in Erfurt urged emigration to America, where one could have the hoped-for religious freedom. Pastor Grabau resisted this thought in the hope that freedom might yet be gained in Prussia for the Lutheran Church. As long as there was still hope, he maintained, it was wrong to leave. When the Lutheran Church asked King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia for his indulgence and he responded in writing, telling them that he would tolerate the Lutheran Church only within the Union, Grabau himself decided to emigrate and he went in the Fall of 1839 to Buffalo, where the people settled.

During his time of tribulation, he came in close contact with the Lutherans in Pomerania and the Uckermark, who had gathered themselves around Pastors Ehrenström and Kindermann. They hoped that they too would emigrate. Then on June 7, 1840 the King died. His son and successor, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, did not agree with the prevalent church politics and after his coming to power he guaranteed the Lutheran Church certain concessions as a Church congregation. Consequently, the emigration of the Lutherans out of Prussia came to a standstill. At that time even the "Evangelical Lutheran Church in Prussia" (the Breslau Synod) took a stand against emigration. The educational issue became a distressful matter of conscience for the Lutherans in Pomerania and the Uckermark. The law stated that the separatists must send their children to the teachers of the Union School; they were not permitted to provide for their own teachers to educate their children. The people of Breslau submitted to this regulation while providing alternate means for their children's religious instruction. However, the followers of Kindermann and Ehrenström saw this as an erosion of their religious confession. In order to cast off such subservience they now decided to emigrate. It seems the people had lost faith in the Upper Church College [the ecclesiastic administrators] in Breslau and they found it displeasing that the Breslau College was placing the duties of the administrators in the hands of the clergy and giving the congregation ministerial duties — they were also displeased that the Upper Church College claimed to have the right to transfer pastors. In the admonition concerning emigration people finally saw Chilastic error. Pastors Kindermann and Ehrenström at first conceded to the Breslau Synodal Decree, but their congregational members vigorously opposed it. Subsequently the pastors left the Breslau Synod and decided to emigrate. The Upper Church College ordered that the émigrés be denied the Eucharist and it tried to impede the emigration by suspending Pastor Kinderman, removing him from Pomerania and transferring him to Breslau.

But this congregation held fast. At the end of 1842 **two emigrating congregations** were formed. The Pomeranians traveled in many ships from Stettin to New York, arriving in September while the people from the Uckermark came to Buffalo via Hamburg. Ehrenström was arrested in Hamburg for his provocative sermons against the United Church and he was sent back to Prussia. He came to America in 1844, shortly thereafter he succumbed to a strange fanaticism in which he attempted to perform miracles and then lost all faith. He traveled to Wisconsin and then to New York and finally to San Francisco where he supposedly died in a poor house. Pastor Grabau excommunicated him and took away
from him all influence among the Prussians. Pastor Kindermann and his Pomeranians settled in the woods not too far from Milwaukee. There Pastor Kindermann died among his congregation in Kirchhain in 1854. Pastor Krause resided in Freistadt.

The Buffalo Synod was established amid such tempestuous times. The first assembly occurred in Milwaukee and Freistadt, Wisconsin from June 12 through 25, 1845. Four pastors were present: Grabau, Kindermann, Krause and H. von Rohr. Pastor Brohm of New York was also invited but he declined to participate because his friends in and around St. Louis had not been invited. The assembly called itself the "Synod of the Immigrant Lutherans of Prussia". The common folk called it simply the "Buffalo Synod" and the name eventually stayed.

Already in 1840 Grabau sent a "pastoral letter" (hand-written, not printed) to the congregations without pastors in order to warn them against people who might pass themselves off as pastors without their having been properly ordained. This pastoral letter was sent by Grabau to St. Louis and because of it there developed a dispute between Grabau and Walther. Within it could be perceived hierarchical ideas from which people had divested themselves after difficult experiences. The result of this battle was that the Missouri counter-congregations (what Grabau called "gang or rabble congregations") developed within the region of the Buffalo Synod and because of this the dispute grew intensely heated and personal. In 1853 Grabau visited Germany in order to win friends to his cause. For a time, he maintained friendly contact with Iowa; he placed the Iowans in charge of the congregations near Madison and appointed the Iowans Sigmund Fritschel and Joh. Dörfler to the Buffalo congregations, for which he had no pastors. But when the dispute between Iowa and Missouri erupted Grabau positioned himself fully on the side of Missouri. The growth of the Buffalo Synod was relatively small due to its peculiarities and Grabau's harsh attitude towards the congregations. Even though a seminary for ministers had been established (in 1845), in which Grabau and later his successors taught, the seminary always remained small.

In 1866 inner turmoil resulted in schism between Grabau and H. von Rohr. Both had his followers and each group maintained it was the original Buffalo Synod. Von Rohr's far larger group held a colloquium in Buffalo with the Missourians and the result was that Hochstetter and eleven others joined the Missouri Synod. A small portion of the von Rohr contingent existed until 1877, at which time a portion of that group rejoined the Grabau sect while others joined other synods. Von Rohr's son was influential in the Wisconsin Synod.

In 1886 the Buffalo Synod underwent a revision in its synodal ordering with many of the old peculiarities quietly abolished. The small synods scattered from New York to Minnesota disassembled into two conferences, which meet twice yearly, while the Synod convenes every three years. In accordance with the old Saxon and Pomeranian models of church regime, the ministerium (that is, only the pastors) elects a senior minister as leader of its body. In the new Constitution of 1886 this title was abolished and the term "President" introduced to signify the respective leader of the corporation. Contrary to the Missouri Synod however Buffalo stresses that ordination is an essential part of the "rite vocatus" [the ritual of vocation] in the Augsburg Confession.

To the question of doctrine and practice the Buffalo Synod is as strict as its mighty opponent, the Missouri Synod. Its pastors are duty-bound to the collected books of the Concordia. The 11th article of Augustana is observed by its literal interpretation. There is no congregation which does not have private absolution. Only since 1891 has a general absolution been established. Serious sins are punished with excommunication and the rejoining can only occur after the fallen publically apologizes before the congregation. No congregation member may be a member of a lodge. Much importance is placed on the parochial school. The introduction of Sunday schools is relatively new. The pastors sing the liturgy. In Buffalo there is one theological seminary with two professors (Rev. R. Grabau and Rev. P. Rechtsteiner) and 12 students. The Synodal publication carries the name "Die Wachende Kirche" [The Vigilant Church]. Statistics: 35 pastors, 42 congregations, 5534 communicants.
Membership News – Please remember that your annual donation of $20 was due on April 1, 2018. Please send it in ASAP. Checks may be made out to HNSGWSNY. Many thanks to all those who have sent theirs in already!

Thanks to Judy Stroble for her donation in honor of Mabel Klemm’s 97th birthday!

Welcome to these new members: Robert Taylor, Stan Broadhagen, Valerie Lehman, Lois Breedow, Nancy Bushover

Upcomming Events -

April General Meeting – 4/19/18, Wheatfield Community Center, 7:00 PM, Topic, showing of the documentary, “Little Uckermark”.

Sunday, May 6, 2 – 4 PM – Das Haus opens for the 2018 season.

August 26, 2018 – Town of Wheatfield Family Picnic. Visit the Historical Society’s booth.

Saturday, Oct. 27th – 5:00 PM, ANNUAL HARVEST DINNER, St. James Fellowship Hall. Celebrating the 175th anniversary of our ancestor’s migration to America and the formation of Holy Ghost, St. Peter’s and St. Martins Lutheran churches.

In the last issue of Der Brief we asked who these nice looking young ladies might be. One of our board members, Richard Williams, was able to come up with what we believe to be the answer. The Friedrich Wilhelm Haseley II family (Born in 1839 in Wallmow Germany, died in 1912 in Walmore, NY) The sisters were:

Maria Aguste Elizabeth Walck
Mathilda Albertine Haseley
Hulda Agusta Sacht Hartman
Martha Maria Quandt
Agusta Albertine Mueller
Minna Elise Lewandowski
Albertine Regina Ferchen
Anna Klara Wurl
There were also 7 brothers.
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.

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<td>2549 Niagara Rd., Niagara Falls, NY 14304 – 2020</td>
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Enclosed is a membership donation of $20 (additional donations are very much appreciated)

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