

Die Auswanderung aus dem Kreis Limburg - Weilburg
in den Kreis Bastrop - Texas

The Emigration from Limburg - Weilburg County
to Bastrop County - Texas

von: Manfred Kunz, Bad Camberg, Germany

translated by:

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Manfred Kunz: translated by Carol Marlo

The Emigration to Texas in the Nineteenth Century

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In the next hundred years many citizens emigrated to North America from our homeland. In 1840 it came about that the region of Nassau was counted among the poorest in Germany to an ever-increasing extent. The reasons for emigrating were poverty, overpopulation, and economic trouble in our land. The hoped-for goals in the new land were: plentiful and affordable land, economic success, and social betterment. The destination of emigrants in the middle of the last century was particularly the state of Texas, which had separated itself from Mexico in 1836 and which gave to the settlers good homesteading land, called land grants.

On April 20, 1842, under the chairmanship of Duke Adolph von Nassau in the castle at Biebrich, the Association of German Nobles and Gentry for the Protection of German Emigrants in Texas was formed. They called themselves the Texas Association, or the Nobles Association of Mainz.

The association supported the emigrants for the ocean crossing and in their new home with lands, seed, and stock. In 1844 Prince Carl von Solms-Braunfels became general commissioner of the association. In Texas he bought a grant from a Frenchman, which turned out to be a swindle. A second grant was obtained from Henry Fisher, which was 250 kilometers from the nearest German settlement and was in the undisputed hunting grounds of the Comanche Indians. In addition, they found there no farmland for the settlers.

Prince Carl von Solms-Braunfels then bought a strip of land on the Guadalupe River on a spot where, according to the Indians, there was good water. Here was established on 21 May, 1845 the town of New Braunfels.

Also, Kuno Damien Baron von Schutz (born 25 February 1825) from Camberg lived in New Braunfels after its founding and was active for a short time in the Texas association. He was a son of the counselor for the Nassau duchy, Hugo von Schütz of Holzhausen, who was also the founder of the School for the Deaf and Dumb in Camberg. In 1846 there was published in Wiesbaden a book by Kuno Damien von Schutz called: "*Texas: Advice for Emigrants to this Land*". He writes in this book that the emigration by farmers and various tradesmen chiefly promises profit; in comparison, clergymen, pharmacists, and school teachers

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Prince Carl came to the association with great economic difficulty and then returned to his home in Lahn. Due to this, the settlers had to suffer much. Otfried Baron von Meusebach from Dillenburg undertook the direction of the Texas Association. He found a fertile region of 15,000 acres, about 100 kilometers north of New Braunfels, for the first settlement. Here he established on 8 May, 1846 the town of Fredericksburg, named for Prince Frederick of Prussia.

Also the St. Raphael's Association for the Protection of German Catholic Emigrants with Peter Paul Cahensly of Limburg, later delegate to the Reichstag, supported our fellow-countrymen in Texas.

In confidence, with the protection of German princes and through publicity in the press, the number of emigrants increased. In the year 1850 was published in the Duchy of Nassau General Intelligence newspaper an announcement by an

emigration society. The price of the fare from Biebrich to New York amounted to 68 Gulden for an adult and 54 Gulden from children from one to twelve years. In the same price was included among other things sufficient sea provisions with 12 pounds of meat and 100 kilograms of baggage for each adult and 50 kilograms for each child.

Most of the Nassau emigrants left from the ports of Antwerp, Bremen, or LeHavre. The contract for the ocean crossing had already been arranged by an agent in the homeland, of whom there were sufficient at hand. Employed as agents in our area by the emigration society were:

E. J. Biegel, in Limburg (about 1868)
Philipp Bouffier, Merchant in Camberg (about 1850)
Karl Jung, Merchant in Weilburg (about 1850)
Anton Muller, in Villmar (about 1881)
Carl Schneider, in Weilburg (about 1850)
Carl Streicher, Goldsmith in Limburg (about 1850)

In 1836 there were in Texas 218 German settlers. In november and December 1844 three ships brought 292 settlers there. From October 1845 until April 1846 there were 36 ships bringing 5200 settlers. In 1846 the provisioning was not well ordered. Means of transportation from the port inland was lacking. The United States annexed Texas, and a war broke out with Mexico. Because of these conditions, 1000 immigrants died of infectious diseases in the port and on the way inland. By 1850, 20,000 German settlers lived in Texas. They brought to their new homeland great performance as pioneers.

From 1850 on, the citizens of Nassau had to publish their intentions to emigrate in the Intelligence newspaper. In 1850 there were only individual persons in some editions, but by 1854 the newspapers claimed several pages of published intentions. The citizens of Westerwald and Rheingau were particularly willing to emigrate. If one reads the notices, he can see for himself the troubled condition of the people; not everyone emigrated in a spirit of adventure.

It is known that entire villages sold all and packed their suitcases. It was a painful bleeding in our Nassau. Thousands, who left full of hope, did not arrive in the New Land. Terrible conditions prevailed on the ships. Many died before they even reached England or before the ocean voyage was over.

In the Nassau Intelligence newspaper one reads that in 1847-48 in the port of New Orleans, 17,500 immigrants arrived. In 1853-54 there were 36,000 persons. Here the paper writes that in 1853 yellow fever broke out among the immigrants and 8400 persons died of it. A literal quotation is: "Incredible is the devastation and indescribable the misery which this epidemic disease has produced within five months." Further, one should be advised not to land in New Orleans from July through October; in any case, there were no sailings to the port of New Orleans from any European port in the months of May through September.

History of Bastrop County, Texas

From 1845 on, Austin was the capital of the state of Texas. About 130 kilometers west of Austin is Fredericksburg, the settling land of that time. To the southwest, 80 kilometers from Austin, lies New Braunfels; and to the south-east 70 kilometers lies the city and county of Bastrop. The area around Bastrop, some 300 kilometers from Galveston and 800 kilometers from New Orleans, which was the arrival port for the Nassau immigrants, was for many from our country their new home.

Long before the white man came, the region around Bastrop was the dwelling place of the Tonkawa and Comanche Indians. The first Spanish expedition, which came through the region of Bastrop, was in 1691, as Don Domingo de Tera'n sought to find for the first time a way from the Spanish grants to East Texas. There El Camino Real, or the Royal Highway - the main road for all the pioneers who were moved through Texas and who had to cross the Colorado River by today's Bastrop - was an important strategic point. In 1805 was established here Fort "Puesta del Colorado" (Post of the Colorado) to protect the traffic on this highway.

In 1825 the region became the first colony of Stephen F. Austin. In 1837, when the town took shape, it was named Bastrop and was made a court seat. Many of its citizens served in the Texas Revolution (1836) and in the war against Mexico - 1846-1848. One of the seven armament factories of the Confederacy was found here. Likewise, the oldest pharmacy in Texas is here. The first courthouse was built in 1840. Some years after, a later mayor of Bastrop, Pinckney Hill, built a second courthouse from the sale of a slave and a donkey. The present building is the fifth and was erected in 1883. In 1891-92 the townspeople built a prison which served until 1973. Many interesting stories are told about the jail, where the prisoners were on the second and third floors and the sheriff lived on the ground floor.

(Continued in the next issue.)

CORRECTION!

A very nice letter from member Norman R. Peters of Washington, D.C. points out a serious error in the Christ Church Burials article in our Spring issue: "the statement that it has always been a common practice for families to be interred together is not true." Of course it isn't. Mr. Peters cites some branches of the Society of Friends (Quakers) who have never buried their dead in family plots; and (nearer home) neither did early Catholics in Missouri. And there are other examples we could mention to our further embarrassment. We apologize to our readers for this stupid error and thank Mr. Peters for bringing it to our attention, and also for the quote from his grandmother: "Souls are united in Heaven; bodies don't need to be on earth!"

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DELINQUENT TAXPAYERS IN GASCONADE CO., MO., 1831-1832

From the Jeffersonian Republican, 26 Nov. 1831 and 19 January 1833.

William Brasell
 Margaret Butlar
 William C. Bailey
 James Cayl
 Dr. D. Cason
 Jacob Carrel
 William F. Garner
 Lewis Griffyn
 Ignatius R. Gatewood
 Haswry (?) Howard
 John Hocomb
 David Jackson

William Kelly
 Robert Lasetter
 Daniel Lovell
 Joshua Owen
 Frances Pecas
 David Perkins
 Francis Nixon
 Francis Philips
 William Pendleton
 Hiram Robertson
 Joseph Russel
 Thomas Owens
 Collector: William Clark

Matthew Ames
 Bilbery Hincky
 Tisdell Spencer
 John Spratt
 Wm. Shivers Jr.
 James Southworth
 Thomas Owens
 Leonard Reed
 Wm. Wad(t)kins
 Wm. Weatherford
 William Thomson
 Drury C. Wright

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THE EMIGRATION FROM LIMBURG-WEILBURG COUNTY TO BASTROP COUNTY, TEXAS (II)

Manfred Kunz: translated by Carol Marlo

The first settlers from Limburg-Weilburg County

On 10 October, 1846 at the port of Indianola arrived the sailing ship Bohemia with 115 immigrants, probably all German, on board. A 67-day sea journey which had begun on 4 August (not September, as written) in Antwerp was at an end. The passenger list now available in Texas gives information concerning names and hometowns of the immigrants. From our county were the following families with the number of persons:

Camberg: Adam Becker (7), George Becker (2), Martin Diehl (1), Heinrich Grimm (1)
Philipp Jager (1), Franz Low (3), Johann Low (1).

Erbach: Joseph Hollingshausen (7), Mathias Nink (6), Johann Pfeiffer (1).

Limburg: Ludwig Nicolaus Ernst (1), Eva Gartner - widow (1).

Würges: Hubert Meurer (5), Peter Pauli (5), Georg Waldschmidt (4).

Of the 115 passengers on the Bohemia, 47 persons were from our county.

Also the sailing ship James Edward under the leadership of Captain Webster brought 172 German emigrants to Texas on 30 November, 1846. The ship left Antwerp on 17 September and arrived in Indianola in 74 days. From here came the following families:

Villmar: Christian Brahm (6), Anton Eisenbach (1), Christian Eisenbach (1),
Wilhelm Eisenbach (1), Nicolaus Eufinger (1), Johann Faxel (6),
Johann Geis IV (1), Anton Rossbach (1).

Würges: The brothers Andreas, Johann Franz, and Peter Meuth, each (1).

At least 21 persons on this ship were from our homeland.

Of some of the emigrants, it is known where they went from Indianola inland. Many of the passengers of 1846, as well as later passengers up to 1855, settled in Bastrop County. The author (of this article) can relate their fate; in the last year he has been in contact with some of the descendants of the emigrants and has formed new friendships in Texas. Of the passengers on the Bohemia and the James Edward (1846) the Becker, Brahm, Diehl, Nink, Eisenbach, Eufinger, Faxel, and Meuth families went to Bastrop County.

One of the known citizens would be Adam Becker of Camberg. In the old country he had a cartwright's shop with a separate house and also did a little farming. His application for emigration to Texas was placed on 8 June, 1846 at the duchy's office in Idstein. Besides his wife he had five children in age from two to 13 years. The money brought with him at this time was 2800 Gulden. Adam Becker had a contract with the Texas association for himself and his family. He was promised a 500-acre piece of land in the San Sabo land grant area. For the cost of the land and for passage to the land he had to pay 500 Gulden. With him went his brother George and his wife, as well as their brother-in-law Martin Diehl, who remained single and lived with the Beckers the rest of his life.

As with the Becker family, so went it with many of the emigrants at this time in Texas. After a 9-week sea voyage, the Beckers arrived in Indianola. Their youngest daughter, Charlotte, did not survive the voyage and was buried at sea. With 10 or 12 families they traveled the 210-km distance to New Braunfels. The association placed an oxen cart at their disposal. The road was a track which other carts had left behind from previous trips. In the region of New Braunfels the Indians were believed to be very hostile, and in Grand, where their land lay, it was then very dangerous to homestead. Adam Becker feared for the lives of his wife and children. As he heard that the Indians to the south and east were less numerous and more friendly, he determined to go to Bastrop County. Here around Oak Brook he cleared off new land and built an impressive

log house of cedar. The house had two floors, six rooms, and a large central hall. At several points he built slate notches to fight off Indian attacks. Near the house he built an outbuilding 3.5m x 4m (?) in size - the first Catholic church in Pin Oak, used until 1869. Pin Oak is not a town in the usual sense, but a settlement for distant outlying farms. In the middle they built the church, the cemetery, the school, and a mill to process cotton. If one visits the little cemetery of this church, one would think he lingers in a cemetery in Goldenen Brund. Many German names, particularly from our region, can be read on the tombstones.

Back to the church community at Pin Oak. Adam Becker was a very active member of this young parish. He placed the first church by his house, and using a donkey he hauled the first bell for the church from Indianola. Today the bell still hangs in the third church. Also he prepared the construction for the altar, the frame for the picture of the Crucifixion, and a church pew. In 1869 the parish built a new church two km north of the Becker farm, and a third church was built on the same place in 1910.

For 100 years a Thanksgiving banner has hung in the church "In Remembrance of the mission to Villmar 10-20 December 1832." This brightly-painted picture was brought out by the settlers from Villmar and kept in their church as a memorial. Every two months a priest from Frelsburg came to say holy mass. Then he performed baptisms and marriages. John Preuss wrote in one of his letters, "It is a blessing that one can be buried by a priest."

Mathias Nink from Erbach was a neighbor of Adam Becker. He was 36 years old and a baker by profession. His wife Angelina (born Rauch) was 26 years old as they, with their three children, abandoned their village. With a prairie schooner they travelled to New Braunfels and lived there for two years. They erected their cabin at Pin Oak in 1848, and three more children were born there.

Also the descendants of the Villmar settlers like Brahm and Foxel, which is now called Foxel, live still in this area. All of the inhabitants of Pin Oak were especially glad to have a man like Eisenbach. When the cotton harvest was over, he went with 10 or 12 teams of oxen on the marshy road to Houston to sell their wares. Often the wagons became stuck in the spongy mud. Eisenbach then took the 500-pound bales of cotton from the wagons, the oxen pulling until free, then he loaded the bales again. It should be related that he was so strong that a team of oxen could not move him and that he could also straighten horseshoes. In legend he walked as the strongest man in Texas.

In 1846 there were three brothers, Andreas, Johann Franz, and John Peter Meuth, from Würges, who settled at Sandy Creek in the Rockne area south of Bastrop. On 10 October, 1850 they bought 800 acres of land for \$260. The land lay on a hill, for which reason it is still today called Meuth Hill. Here they erected their log cabin. There were three rooms together. In the middle they built yet another room and set up a church. The first mass was read on 10 May, 1853, and was the wedding of Johann Franz Meuth and Catharina Brahm from Villmar. For 20 years the settlers gathered at Meuth Hill for God's service. Even a small cemetery is found here where ten persons, mostly relatives of the Meuth family, are buried.

Johann Franz Meuth settled later near Pin Oak and had a farm, where 2000 head of cattle could graze at the same time. For up to three months he and his cowboys were on the trail when he drove his cattle to Oklahoma City. In the last emigration of November 1855 came the fourth brother, Greg Meuth.

In the autumn of 1850 17-year-old Johann Preuss left Camberg to emigrate to Texas. Already in March 1850 he had obtained from the ducal authorities in

Idstein, the "Discharge from the Subject Union," after his father registered no objection. The family history relates that for the first year he lived with the Meuth brothers. In July 1856 he became a citizen of the United States. On 16 Oct. 1856 he married Maria Schaeffer, whose parents came from Germany. In 1857 the Preuss parents' home in Germany, an inheritance, was awarded and Johann Preuss (he called himself John in Texas) renounced it in favor of his brother Franz, giving him 600 Gulden for his departure. The document was certified by the consultant for the duchy of Nassau in New Braunfels.

In Pin Oak he bought 400 acres of land near Adam Becker and Mathias Nink. Later he wrote once to Camberg that he had cleared the land (reclaimed it?) from the woods and prairie. In 1897 he sent a picture of his new house to his brother in Camberg. Here one can see John with his wife and some of his children. The house was surrounded by a cedar fence and in the middle lay a lovely flower bed. Of the 400 acres he wanted to plant about 100 with cotton, corn, and potatoes. In 1887 he had 35 head of cattle, two mules, and four mares. In the last week of December he wished to butcher efficiently. He wrote that in one year he had butchered nine hogs and one head of beef cow. The meat would be salted and smoked, as he had learned as an apprentice butcher in Villmar. In 1893 there was no rain for four months, and John Preuss had to sell 40 head of cattle at a distress price.

John Preuss and his wife had 13 children, of whom two died as infants. Six children died before the age of 40, and two lived to the ages of 85 and 95. Daughter Mary married George Foxel, whose father Johann Foxel came from Villmar. Daughter Emma married William Meuth and son Christian took Mary Elizabeth Nink as his wife.

Amelia Preuss was the youngest daughter. At a young age, Land Foxel courted her. Her parents were opposed to him and preferred Henry Nink. Both suitors met in a saloon in Smithville and fought each other. On their return to Pin Oak, Land Foxel shot the 19-year-old Nink near the Preuss farm. Even today the Nink and Preuss families are silent about this incident. The settlers from Goldenen Grund had much contact with each other. They lived miles away from each other; yet, if a celebration occurred, all were invited. So on the occasion of a wedding at the Preuss farm, 150 neighbors attended.

Writing was the only contact of the settlers with the old country. Often John Preuss forced down the homesickness. How often he wrote, "Oh, could I once more have the happiness of seeing my beloved homeland." For him and for many others a return or visit was not possible. Many letters home have remained and were already used in publication of Hessian emigrants' stories and in Texas.

In 1905 John Preuss sold his farm and moved to the city of Bastrop. Three years later his wife died in a train accident, and he died 7 August, 1916. In the funeral procession to the cemetery in Pin Oak, there were 20 to 25 teams, and his son George in an automobile. John Preuss raised a large family in Texas. Since that time the fifth generation is growing up and more than 500 descendants could be recorded in the family history.

The years 1855-56 brought the high point of mass emigration from Camberg and environs. In Camberg, Dombach, and Würges, more than 280 citizens wishing to emigrate to South America, due to the want and misery, had finally to remain in their own region.

On 11 November, 1855, 31 inhabitants of Würges, in age from nine months to 46 years, packed their sea chests and went to America. Many of them came to Texas and numerous descendants of these emigrants still live in Texas today.

The family names of the settlers in Bastrop County were: Bernbach, Eichhorn, G6rz, Hartmann, Meuth, Wilhelm and Wolf.

Philipp and Catharina G6rz had a 9-month-old son. They settled north of Rockne near Walnut Creek. Their first house was a tent. With brother-in-law Johann Hartman they bought 900 acres of land for \$950. After her third child, Catharina G6rz died; Philipp married a second time and had six more children. The oldest son, Johann, born in Wufges, married Nettie Meuth. The G6rz family led a very religious life in Texas; many of their descendants were priests and members of religious orders.

The path in the New World of some of the emigrants became known through their accomplishments. There were hundreds of fellow citizens from the County of Limburg-Weilburg who moved to the New World and of whom in the 150 years since, nothing more is known.

(Source: Manfred Kunz, April 1990, for the 1991 Yearbook, Limburg-Weilburg Co.)

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THE AMMONS/HART BIBLE

Contributed by StLGS Life Members Betty-Jo Wagoner, who writes: "This Bible was found in the possession of Mrs. Hattie Essman of Vichy, MO during a visit to Maries County in May, 1990, researching the Hart family. She permitted us to copy the information and photograph the Bible, which was published by the American Bible Society, New York, 1888. We were interested in the Hart line and know nothing about the Ammons family; Mrs. Essman, a Hart descendant, also knows nothing about the Ammons family."

Kansas City November 22nd 1882
Mr. H. B. Ammons to Mrs. Lee Ammons

Kansas City Missouri

Born to Mr. H. B. Ammons and Mrs. H. B. Ammons February 14th 1884
Julia F. Ammons

Mr. David Hart died April 1st 1883
Mrs. Rebecca Hart died Jan. 14th 1880

Mr. Chas. E. Hart died Nov. 19th 1922
Mrs. Lula E. Hart wife of C. E. Hart died Oct. 31st 1921

Mr. H. W. Hart was borned Dec. 12th 1850
Mrs. Martha J. Hart was borned March 1st 1849
Mr. Joseph D. Hart borned Sept. 4, 1872
Mr. William J. Hart borned Mar. 4, 1875
Miss Francis J. Hart borned June 13, 1876
Mr. Chas. E. Hart borned June 3 1879
Mr. Walter L. Hart borned April 28, 1882
Miss Minnie E. Hart borned May 25, 1885

Died April 20th 1892 John W. Ammons was born 1818, Feb. 7th
Father of Cora, Henry and George Ammons
"I believe a good man." (signed) the wife of his son, Lee Ammons
(I hope he sees the Glory of God)

Martha Jane Hart died Aug 1, 1932
Hargus Washington Hart died March 31, 1938

(Copied by Mrs. Douglas Hart of Houston, MO, Mrs. Betty-Jo (Hart) Wagoner of Arnold, MO, and Mrs. Grace (Hart) Rhodes of Wichita, KS.