



## The Thirtieth Celebration of German Unity

By Han-Werner Hamann

After the fall of the the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Federal Republic of Germany (West) and the German Democratic Republic (East) formed the new Federal Republic of Germany.

When World War Two ended, America, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union divided the German Reich into four separate zones administered by each of them. In 1949, the three western zones unified under the Federal Republic of Germany, but the Soviet Union created the German Democratic Republic and walled it away from West Germany and the Western powers to become a symbol of the Cold War.

For almost forty-five years, the border between the greater East and West ran between West and East Germany. The Soviets secured this border with fencing and automatic weapon systems to keep East Germans from fleeing. But on August 13, 1961 the Soviets began construction of the Berlin Wall, it became a deadly trap for those seeking to enter the West. While a few were able to make the passage, many people died trying to cross from the East into the West.

By November 1989, the Cold War had taken its toll on East Germany and the German Democratic Republic began to collapse. The East Germans desired their freedom; they demonstrated against the state and its leaders. The border soon cracked under political pressure and the Berlin Wall came down. With the collapse of the East German government in 1990, negotiations began for complete reunification. And on October 3, 1990, Germany was completely reunified.

Germany designated October 3 as German Unity Day. Each year the primary celebration is held in a capital of a German state. This year Kiel, the capital city of Schleswig-Holstein, will host the celebration.

On October 3, 2019, Germans will celebrate Germany Unity Day for the thirtieth time. The slogan "Courage Connects" invites Germans to Schleswig-Holstein and the city of Kiel in celebration of unity. The Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein

Daniel Günther has written an invitation for this day.

### "COURAGE CONNECTS"



It takes courage to repair the dike during a storm surge or run out with the lifeboat to save lives. It takes courage to rebel against a regime of injustice and fight for freedom. And it takes courage to defend a united Europe and

democracy every day. For thousands of years, it has been courageous people who hold our community together.

With our slogan "Courage Connects" we want to build a bridge between past, present and future, between the real North and Berlin. Schleswig-Holstein is characterized by its position between the seas: people have always bravely opposed wind and waves—as a community. The relationship between Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein, which has developed into a deep friendship over time, shows that this cohesion can also overcome borders.

The same qualities also help us today: we want to boldly promote the energy transition and digitization and at the same time be the connecting element in the heart of Europe.

Thirty years ago, the courage of thousands of Germans brought down the wall in Berlin and reunited the people of East and West. Finding common ground in diversity and coping with great challenges - this is what the Day of German Unity stands for. We have achieved a lot and we have a lot to do. Let's look optimistically into the future and shape it together.

~ Daniel Günther

More Information: <https://mut-verbindet.de/>

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*ASHHS Headquarters*

The **ASHHS Goal** is preserving and promoting the heritage of Schleswig-Holstein in the USA. We encourage cultural exchange, family research, study of the languages and dialects of Schleswig-Holstein, conferences and other programs pursuant to the above objectives.

The **ASHHS Newsletter** is published bimonthly for its members. Contributions are welcomed. Submitted material remains the property of the submitter until publication. Please cite sources and give others credit where due. Observation of copyright privileges is required. Responsibility for accuracy of printed information lies with the submitter, not with ASHHS, the ASHHS Newsletter, or the Newsletter committee. Corrections will be published if given in writing. The Newsletter committee reserves the right to edit material for space, form, spelling, and grammar.

### Deadlines for Submissions

Dec 15 for Jan/Feb Issue  
Feb 15 for Mar/Apr Issue  
Apr 15 for May/June Issue  
Jun 15 for Jul/Aug Issue  
Aug 15 for Sep/Oct Issue  
Oct 15 for Nov/Dec Issue

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## ASHHS

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**ASHHS Policy** on Publicizing Events and Activities of other Societies and Organizations: As a matter of mutual interest and courtesy, this Newsletter may publish articles and notices about German-American events and activities which are not sponsored or organized by ASHHS or its board of directors. The publishing of such material in the Newsletter shall not in any way imply any ASHHS responsibility for the content, results, success or failure of such activities and events.

**The ASHHS Genealogical Research Policy:** ASHHS provides research assistance for its members only. Members who desire this assistance should contact the genealogy director by regular mail or e-mail. The ASHHS genealogy director maintains and utilizes access to a variety of available genealogical resources to assist in all research activities. The genealogy staff will strive to locate information and assist members in their searches. However, if the desired information cannot be located, the genealogy director may provide the member with a list of alternative research sources. Members are expected to pay for any expenses (such as photocopies, printing and postage) associated with a search. The ASHHS genealogy staff will provide 3 hours free research to members, after which there is a minimal fee if further research is desired. The e-mail address of Karen Puck, the ASHHS genealogy director, is [kpuck2015@gmail.com](mailto:kpuck2015@gmail.com).

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# Conference Registration Form

Low German Friendship Conference Registration  
September 27-28-29, 2019

Registration is for Friday evening welcome dinner, Saturday Conference (includes lunch and dinner) and Sunday lunch (after Sunday church service). The total price is \$125.00 per person. Prorated price is listed below if you do not plan to attend the entire conference. Please fill out this form and include your check made payable to ASHHS Low German Friendship Conference and send to:

ASHHS  
C/O Mary Burchett  
5513 Woodland Avenue  
Davenport, IA 52807

NAME 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Any questions, please call:

Franz Neff (563) 340-7480

Mary Burchett (563) 355-6274

Hans-Werner Hamann Whatsapp +49 16096981960

Friday night only \$15.00

All day Saturday \$60.00

Saturday night only \$35.00

Sunday lunch only \$15.00

## ~ Help Wanted ~

*Do you enjoy genealogy, ancestry and research?*

ASHHS is looking for a volunteer to assist Karen Puck with genealogy.

The volunteer must be computer and internet savvy and have experience with genealogy and ancestry.

Volunteer must be local to Eastern Iowa.

If anyone is interested, please contact me at [danielwholst@gmail.com](mailto:danielwholst@gmail.com).

## *An ASHHS Membership*

## *Makes a Great Gift!*

You will find the application on the back cover.



## From the President

By Franz Neff



Moin moin!

This year has been busy and is going fast. We are quickly approaching the Low German Conference. Please see the adjacent article for information. This issue also contains the registration form. We ask that all registrations be submitted by August 20, 2019.

We are excited to celebrate the 30th anniversary of ASHHS. The conference committee has been working hard on planning a wonderful time for every visitor. Additionally, we have arranged stays at five hotels, including the conference hotel in which we have reserved a block of ten rooms. Hotel information and maps to their locations is found on page seven.

I want to thank everybody who has tirelessly worked to make this conference a success. I look forward to meeting all of you!

Yours truly,  
President Franz Neff



## Low German Conference Information

The annual Low German Conference is this September on the 27, 28, and 29. The details for this conference are in this newsletter on pages 3, 7, and 8.

Page 3 is the registration form that includes the different costs if one chooses not to attend the entire conference. Please feel free to cut out or copy the form as needed. Please submit by August 20, 2019.

Page 7 includes lodging information, the conference hotel, and maps. ASHHS has chosen five hotels that are listed by numbers 1 – 5. Line 1 is the conference hotel. Each number corresponding to each hotel is marked on the maps showing that hotel's exact location. The top map shows all five hotels as they are situated on the map. The four lower maps are close up maps of each of the five hotels.

Page 8 contains some further information about the conference including its theme of "Immigration" and some of the events. It includes contact information if one has any questions. Franz is the ASHHS president. Mary is the chair of the conference committee, and Hans-Werner is our German contact. Please feel free to ask them anything about the conference. You may also contact me at [danielwholst@gmail.com](mailto:danielwholst@gmail.com).

We are all excited about the conference, and we look forward to seeing as many of our members and guests as possible.

**See a listing of the items  
ASHHS has for sale on  
the inside of the back cover**

## Calendar ASHHS Quarterly Meeting August 18, 2019

The American/Schleswig-Holstein Heritage Society (ASHHS) quarterly meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m., on Sunday, August 18, 2019, at the Walcott American Legion, 121 W. Bryant St., Walcott, Iowa.

Marcie Siegel traveled on some of the rivers in Germany by boat. She will be presenting a travelogue on the second half of her trip on the *Rivers of Germany*. After the travelogue, Franz and Sam will be playing some lively music. Come and join the fun!

Light refreshments will be provided. The program is free and open to the public. The Walcott American Legion is handicap accessible. For more information, call Mary Ann Muller 563-284-6640, or e-mail [leemarmul@aol.com](mailto:leemarmul@aol.com).

## New Email Address

The ASHHS office now has a new email address. please make note of it. It is: [ashhswalcott@gmail.com](mailto:ashhswalcott@gmail.com)



# Schleswig-Holstein: The Homeland of the Rhea

~ By Hans-Werner Hamann

South of Lubeck alongside autobahn 20 just shy of Mecklenburg and north of *Ratzeburger See* lies a portion of land unique in all of Europe. A land upon whose occupants might claim is their New South America. It is the land of the Rhea.

The Rhea is a bird, a large bird and member of the ratite family. A ratite is a flightless bird that doesn't have a keel on its sternum. The Rhea is the largest bird among the ratites, and it is exclusively native to Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and their adopted homeland of Eastern Schleswig-Holstein. They live and thrive in the meadows there among the cows and fields.

The only wild Rhea/Nandu population in Europe, it has carved itself a home in the past two decades. It is a thriving community. Last autumn, the census recorded 560 animals which was more than twice the count in the spring of 2018. They all descend from those that escaped an enclosure near Lubeck at the turn of millennium shaming Steve McQueen and Clint Eastwood whose own escapes from Nazi Germany and Alcatraz



pale in comparison.

In German this big bird is called Nandu. While flightless, the Rhea can run up to 38 miles per hour. At maturity their height is between 1.25 and 1.40 meters at their head, and their back can reach up to 1 meter in height with a weight of 20 to 25 kilograms (44-55 lbs). The roosters are normally larger than the hen. Their necks are fully plumaged with loose tattered plumage on their bodies that varies between gray or brown, and they have the largest wings of all ratites. Their legs are long and strong with a three-toed foot. This individual subspecies

is distinguished mainly by the proportion of black feathers on the neck fletching.

Outside of their adopted homeland, they usually roam the vast grasslands and savanna habitats that extend from Pampa, central Argentina and Uruguay, across

the Gran Chaco to the northeast of Brazil. They avoid forests and the highlands instead preferring low altitude grasslands.

Most of those who knew of the outbreak wasn't concerned. They believed the Rheas could not survive the harsh northern winter outside the enclosure. However, the Rheas proved more adaptable than many expected, and these native South American Rheas, more accustomed to warm climates, defied snow, moisture, and cold and significantly multiplied due to lack of natural enemies and an excellent food supply. But they still preferred their native climates, and they thrived in the hot and dry summer of 2018. This was quite evident when observers counted a remarkable number of young birds last fall. But all are not happy. Farmers and rangers, whose land has been usurped by the Rhea, have sought to curb the development of their numbers by tapping Rhea eggs to reduce birth rates. However, once the Rhea detects no life in the egg, they simply build new nests and lay more eggs. They are a resilient and an industrial species.

~ Continued on page 6



# Quarterly Meeting Connects to our Heimat Forever

By Daniel W. Holst



ASHHS held their quarterly meeting on May 19, 2019. After a review of the financial business, we discussed the Low German Friendship Conference being held from September 27-29, 2019 at the new Cambria Hotel in Bettendorf. Some events will be held elsewhere. A block of ten rooms have been reserved for guests, and Mary Burchett is heading the planning committee. More details on the conference is contained on pages 3, 7, and 8 of this newsletter. It was also announced that the 2020 Low German Friendship Conference will be in Bredstadt, Germany.

After adjourning from business, we were all transported, some of us for the first time, back to our Heimat of Schleswig-Holstein. Ingaborg Stoemer gently guided us through voice, song, and presentation as she recounted her (and our) life and travels from her hometown of Niebüll.

Inga sings in a German chorus, and she led us in song first with *Wo die Nordseewellen spielen an den Strand*, and then we welcomed (finally) May's arrival with the song *Der Mai ist gekommen*. It was wonderful hearing the crowd sing German with her.

In description and picture she walked us across Schleswig-Holstein from her hometown of Niebüll which coincidentally also

resides in DeWitt, Iowa. The Hausbarn Museum in DeWitt was originally built in 1727 in Schleswig-Holstein Germany, then carefully deconstructed and reconstructed in DeWitt, Iowa in 2008.

She engaged the audience with travels to where the North Sea meets the Baltic Sea and with stories of the Isle of Sylt. She talked of her life as a child within Schleswig-Holstein and how its culture and geography has changed throughout her life. It was a remarkable presentation, and a storytime reminiscent of those as a child sitting around the family listening to lives of adventure and longing.

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## The Homeland of the Rhea

~ Continued from previous page

A side effect of this lone European population (for good or bad) has become the rise of Rhea tourism. On nice weekends, excursionists make a pilgrimage to *Ratzeburger See* to see the only wild population of South American raptorial birds in Europe. However, they clash with the landowners upon whose land the tourist must walk over to see the Rheas. Understandably, the farmers and rangers are upset about both the Rheas and the tourists.

Rheas love rapeseed. And the vast yellow fields near Utecht "welcome" many Rheas. They pluck at the young shoots and are

indifferent to visitors. One can walk up to them and only within a few meters will the Rhea jump up and look at you, then they will lower their heads again and continue their snack. As one farmer has said "they know exactly that they have no enemies here." Additionally, the farmers do not appreciate the tourists who feed the Rhea with apples and chips.

At the end of March, the Rheas were counted again. The farmers believe that due to the last mild winter hardly any young birds were lost. Since the young need two to three years to sexual maturity,

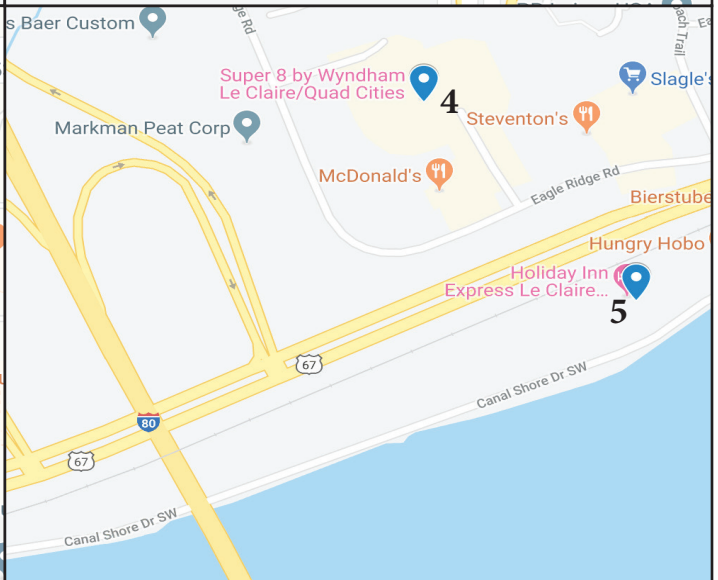
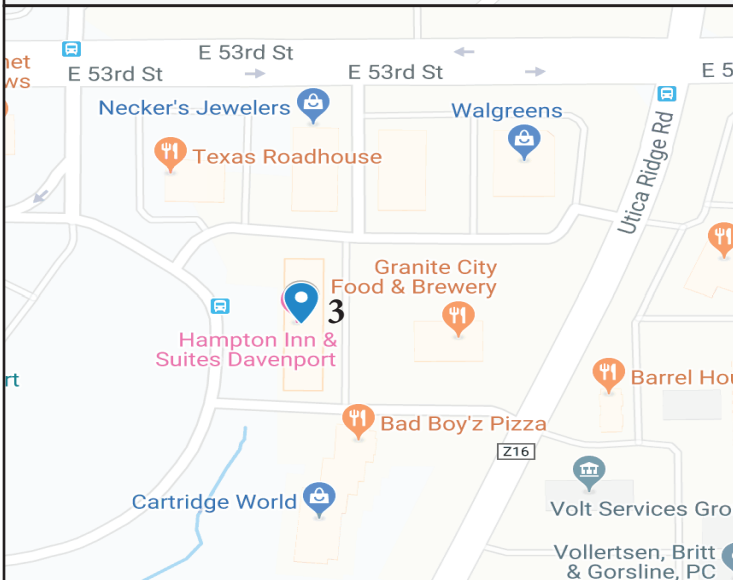
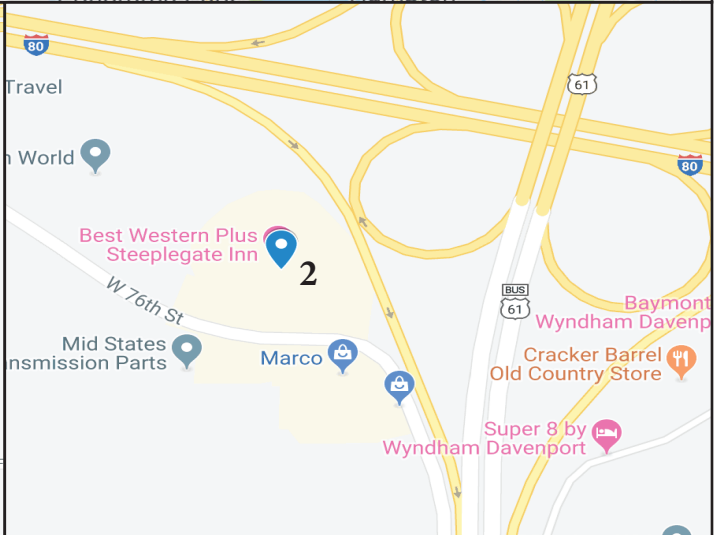
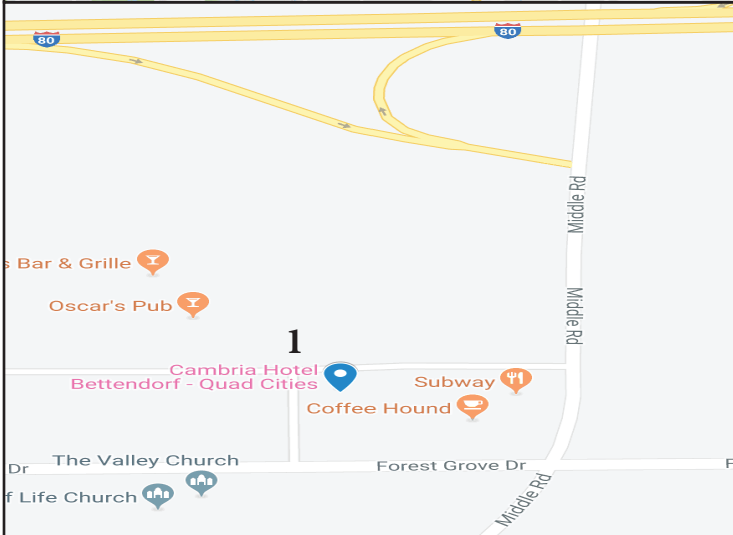
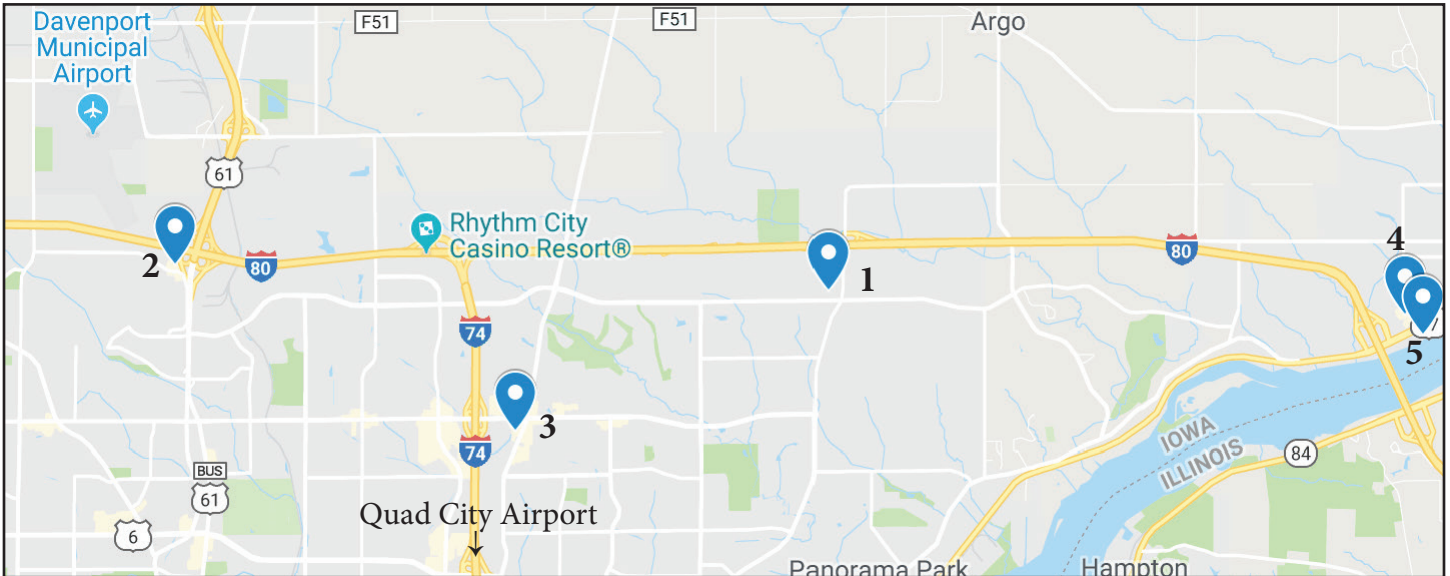
they expect a population explosion by 2020. Most likely the wild Rheas may exceed the limit of 1000 Rheas, if nothing happens. Last autumn it was suggested to shoot the male animals. But ecologists believe that that will not work unless all are shot—which, in his opinion, no politician will order. He says, "the Nandus will simply react with a higher reproduction rate."

For now, and most likely into the future, Schleswig-Holstein will continue to host their new citizens, unique to all of Europe.



HOTEL INFORMATION FOR SEPTEMBER CONFERENCE

1. **Conference Hotel:** Cambria, 5061 Competition Dr., Bettendorf: 1-800-424-6423
2. Best Western Steeplegate, 100 West 76th St., Davenport: 563-386-6900
3. Hampton Inn, 5290 Utica Ridge, Davenport: 563-441-0001
4. Comfort Inn Riverview, 902 Mississippi View Crt., LeClaire: 563-289-4747
5. Holiday Inn Express, 1201 Canal Shore Dr., SW, LeClaire: 563-289-9978



# Low German Friendship Conference

Low German Friendship Conference  
September 27, 28, 29, 2019  
Davenport, Iowa

Please join us in celebrating the 30th anniversary of the American/Schleswig- Holstein Heritage Society. Thirty years ago a group of people of Schleswig- Holstein descent decided it was time to start the society that is known as ASHHS (the American/Schleswig-Holstein Heritage Society). Along with quarterly meetings, other social events, and genealogy, a conference is held annually. Originally known as the Plattdeutsch Konferenz, because of the friendships that developed, it became the Low German Friendship Conference.

This year the conference will be held on September 27-29 at the new Cambria Hotel in Bettendorf. The hotel will be finished by early summer and is located right off Interstate 80. The Friday evening welcome event will be held at the German American Heritage Center. The theme of the evening will be “Immigration” as the building was once the hotel where many immigrants spent their first night in the area. There is also an excellent immigration museum in the building.

The price for the weekend will be \$125.00. It will include Friday’s evening meal and Saturday’s lunch and dinner. There will be music and speakers at both events. Sunday church service and meal will be at the Hickory Garden Restaurant. Please send your reservation to us on or before August 20, 2019.

A block of ten rooms will be held at the Cambria for \$129 per night: five rooms with one king-sized bed and five rooms with two queen beds.

We look forward to seeing you in September. Any questions, contact:

Franz Neff,

phone 563-340-7480,

email: [fmneff@speedconnect.com](mailto:fmneff@speedconnect.com)

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[Ha-WeHamann@t-online.de](mailto:Ha-WeHamann@t-online.de)

## ***We Want to Know More About You!***

We would like to get to know all of our ASHHS members and newsletter readers. Our editor has written about his genetic profile on page 8, but we want to know more about our members. Would you be willing to write a similar profile about yourself and submit it to us, with a photograph of yourself, for publication in a future newsletter? It should, of course, contain your name and place of residence (city, state and country).

You could tell us about your position with ASHHS (member, board member etc.), education, career, family, hobbies and additional information (such as accomplishments).

The profile and photograph should be emailed to me, Daniel W. Holst, your newsletter editor, at [danielwholst@gmail.com](mailto:danielwholst@gmail.com). Please write “ASHHS Profile” in the email’s subject area. I look forward to hearing from you!



# Crosses of Distinction

By Daniel W. Holst

“Crossings”

~ 22 April 1864, Somewhere in Schleswig-Holstein

Ailbe Stuhr bit off a piece of the hard, stale bread. Careful to chew only on his left side so as not to fail the precarious coagulation from the long bloody gash bandaged across his right cheek. If only he could sleep. His bed of straw rattled along with the constant squeal of the wheel flanges as the train crawled and clacked across Schleswig-Holstein from Flensburg to Kiel.

Three days ago, Ailbe belonged to a Prussian artillery company bombarding Dybbøl against the Danes’ last stand. Assessing their victory, Ailbe walked through the streets to the shelled Holstein Hotel. He entered the barely standing hotel and found a dozen or more civilians dead upon the floor where they had sought shelter from the exploding shells. Smoke rising around him carried the aroma of ash and death along ghostly wisps that tethered him to a world he could never unsee. Tears flowed from the realization of this battue of Danish civilians unknowingly led to slaughter. But that moment of immense sorrow imploded when a young boy jumped out of the shadows and cleaved his cheek with a sharp knife. He cried out and fell. His fellow soldiers shot the boy dead; amidst the miasma of pain and the blood, he swore it was the face of his own son gracing the dead boy whose lifeless body collapsed. But such pain soon suffocated his conscious, and he woke next to the medic with bandages around his head waiting for transport to Flensburg. His face, stained blood red, burned and throbbed with each breath. Thankful, at least, that the anesthetic thoughts of his wife and family back home in Segeberg could at least partially assuage the pain.

~ 7 May 1870, Wahlstedt, Segeberg District, S-H.

Emmeline Stuhr stirred, awoken by the groans of pain and helplessness that disturbed her husband’s sleep. The scar along his right cheek ever a reminder of their long-ended war against Denmark, but his nightmares continued. She wished the doctors could help, but while they said he was physically fine, perhaps, they thought, it might be neurasthenia, a new American diagnosis. Regardless, she knew he suffered something. While he was the same, he was also different. At times more attentive and sensitive, but

also distant and askew to the reality that life required. Never mean or cruel, he needed his time alone, but he also hated it. So, she worked their household to be the wife, mother, and partner to the man who fights and works for them every day. Some days she struggles to hold them all together, but she never doubts, nor will she ever, the love she has for Ailbe, and his love and commitment to her, the twins, and their precious daughter.

“Ailbe, Ailbe,” she softly said hoping to calm whatever evil kept his sleep unsound.

He woke up and looked at her with fear in his eyes. “Emma, the twins...are the twins okay, are they safe?”

“Yes, Ailbe, they are asleep in their room. Do you want me to check?”

“No, that’s okay,” he said as his eyes calmed, and the red escaped his cheeks.

“Are you having that dream again? About Dybbøl and the boy?”

Ailbe tried to breathe to slow his mind; he sat up and held his head in his hands. “Yes, I am, but now I see our boys among the dead then rising up and attacking me. Slicing me across the face each time.”

Emmeline put her arm around Ailbe’s shoulders and leaned her head next to his, if only she could take away this demon, if only she could. But she couldn’t, so she did everything she could, she closed her eyes and prayed. A prayer not of words but of emotional supplication and heartfelt desire for her, Ailbe, Hansi, Harimann, and Elsie. A prayer for help and guidance.

That morning, Ailbe walked outside. His sons were doing their chores while Elsie worked the garden. Looking down the road, he saw Koenraad, his neighbor, driving his wagon to deliver the most current copy of the *Schleswigsche Grenzpost*.

“*Moin* neighbor,” said Koenraad.

Ailbe replied, “*Moin*, my good man. What’s new in the world?”

“Well, get this, America has granted the right to vote to their former slaves.” But assuming a more somber and contrite composure, he continued. “The Prussian government has called Napoleon the third ‘fat, affable, but fragile.’ But the real news is the rumor that Napoleon needs war with Prussia to preserve his rule.”

~ Continued on page 13

# The History of Probstei, Schleswig-Holstein

By Scharlott Blevins ~ Continued from previous issue

## The Slavic Period

In looking back at the history of our area, the large Slavic union of clans of the Abotriten should be of greatest interest. The collection of Slavic clans spread out over the area from Kieler Fjörde all the way to the Oder River and included eastern Holstein and all of Mecklenburg. In Schleswig-Holstein these are the present counties of Plön and eastern Holstein, parts of the counties of Segeberg and Storman the City of Lübeck and the Duchy of Lauenburg.

We know a lot about Abotriten especially on the basis of the Slavic Chronicle of Helmold von Bosau. Helmold was a pastor in Bosau on the large lake in Plön and lived approximately from 1120 to 1177. In his history of the Slavs he combined everything which others had reported to him and which he himself had experience.

The first Slavic immigrants appeared in the area of eastern Holstein in the area near the coast around Lütjenburg and Oldenburg. And they seemed to have concentrated in the area around Plön and the upper Trave and the coastal area near the Bay of Lübeck. They built small settlements each with a fortress with a central point. Several neighboring settlement areas were under a little kingdom and a king was at the head of the Abotriten tribes/clans since the end of the 8th century. Then the power of the clans was still significant. Just before the middle of the 11th century a large west Slavic unifying state was created which included the entire SW Baltic Sea coast: it went from the Kiel Fjörde almost

to the Oder River.

The history of Abotriten is closely connected to the history of the neighboring peoples. Perhaps is "the Danewerk" the most powerful archaeological memorial of Schleswig-Holstein. It was erected by the Danes as a protection wall to protect the advancement of the Slavs.

The King of the Franks "Charlemagne" allied himself in battle with the Slavs against the Saxons and gave them after the victory over to the Saxons in year 804 the entire north Elbe region, and supposedly elevated the Slavic Prince Drazko to King.

However in a few years later the rule over the north Elbian regions was taken from them and in the following centuries the Slavs moved back to eastern Holstein and Lauenburg. Between their settlement area and the area of the Franks empire which actually belonged to the German Empire and the Saxon settlement areas of Holstein and Storman, a so called Limus saxoniae or Saxons Wall was erected. It ran from the Elbe near Boitzenburg up to the Kiel Fjörde.

The land of the Abotrites was Christianized by the Archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen. In 968 or a little later the Bishopric of Oldenburg was founded. The origin of the German Empire under King Henry I and its powerful development under Emperor Otto promoted the German influence on the Abotrites.

In contrast the heavy loss of Emperor Otto II in 983 in Cotrone against the Sarazenen had a difference effect. The long absence of the Emperor and the reports about

his defeat were used by the Abotrites in 983 for a revolt. Christianity was again extinguished and the German influence diminished.

However, the Slave Prince Gottschalk was successful from the year 1043 on to promote the spread of Christianity again. Gottschalk was raised in the Lüneburger Kloster (Monastery) of St. Michael; he married Sigrit, the daughter of the Danish King Swen Estridson and built up his rule in Abotrite land with Danish and Saxon support. Churches and monasteries were founded and church life was newly organized. His strongest supporter was Archbishop Adalbert from Hamburg-Bremen. His power depended upon the fact that he was the guardian of the German King Henry IV, who after the early death of his father had been crowned King already at the age of three.

When Heinrich IV came of age in 1065 and took over the business of ruling himself, Archbishop Adalbert lost power. Gottschalk also lost his hold on him (Henry IV) and was toppled by his Abotrite enemies in 1066. To them Gottschalks leaning on Denmark and the German Empire as well as its Christian influence had gone too far. Gottschalk was killed. And many priests suffered the same fate. The Cross of Ansverus in Ratzeburg still recalls today that the Abbot Ansverus and eighteen of his Monks died a martyred death.

The page of history turned again after a short heathen interlude. Heinrich (1090-1127), a son of Gottschalks from his marriage

# The History of Probstei, Schleswig-Holstein

By Scharlott Blevins

with the Danish Princess Sigrít was successful with the help of the Saxon dukes to win back control of the kingdom. He had his seat in Alt-Lübeck and therefore in Wagrien. He created an Abotrite which stretched from the Kiel Fjord to the Oder River. He seemed to recognize that only the conversion of his people to Christianity could secure this empire permanently. As a Christian Empire it would have stood on the same level next to the Christian Empires of the Germans and the Danes. He gave the priest Vize-lin in 1126 the mission to work with the Slavs. However, Henry who perhaps had carried the title of King (Latin-King of the Abotrites) was murdered later in 1127. Perhaps in this deed the striving for freedom and independence by the Slavs showed itself anew; the Slavs saw in their close dependence on the Saxons and in their Christianization the loss of their independence and their uniqueness as a people. However, murdering Henry from Alt-Lübeck proved to be a serious mistake. Not in opposition to but only in working together with the strengthening of the German Imperial power did they have a chance to keep their independence.

## *The German Conquest*

The Abotrite Empire was a direct neighbor of the Saxon Duchy, which went from the Rhein to the Elbe, and also extended from the Eider up to the Saale and Unstrut. From 1106 Lothar from Supplinburg Duke of Saxony. In 1125 he was chosen King of the Germans and in 1133 Emperor. His only

child, his daughter Gertrud married Heinrich the Proud, Duke of Bavaria who belonged to the Welf Clan. With this the significant Duchies of Bavaria and Saxony were united under one ruler. The son from the marriage of Heinrich the Proud and Gertrud was Heinrich the Lion. He married in his second marriage Mathilde of England in 1168. It is understandable that Heinrich the Proud as well as his son Heinrich the Lion strived to possess the crown as King of the Germans and Emperor of the Germans. But after the death of Emperor Lothar III, his son-in-law, Heinrich the Proud was not chosen as King but rather the Staufer Konrad the III. In deed Konrad took the Saxon Duchy from Heinrich the Proud and gave it to Albrecht the Bear from the clan of the Askaniers. Konrad in turn deposed the Count of Holstein and Stormarn who was a Schauenburger and appointed by Lothar III. He named Heinrich von Badewide as the new Count of Holstein-Stormarn.

These disputes and the arguments between the Welfs and the Staufern were used by the Slavs to over-run the Holstein fortresses and villages. Heinrich von Badewide and the Holstens and Stormarns fought back and conquered and militarized the entire eastern part of Holstein in 1138-39. After Heinrich the Proud had re-conquered the Saxon Duchy in 1139, Albrecht the Bear and Heinrich von Badewide had to pull back. The Schauenburgers got back their offices as Count. Adolf II of Schauenburg completed the

conquest of Wagrien.

In order to settle the newly won land, he (Adolf II) put out a call to all inhabitants of the old parts of the empire to come to Wagrien. Helmold of Bosau left behind this call with this wording: "The Count sent messengers into all lands, namely to Flaunders and Holland, Utrecht, Westfalen and Friesland, that each one who had too little land should come with his family in order to get the most beautiful, most spacious, most fertile, most rich with fish and meat fields, along with the best areas with willows. To the Holstens and Stormarn he said the following: "Have you not submitted to the land of the Slavs and paid for it with the blood of your brothers and fathers?" Why would you want to come as the last in order to possess it? Be the first wander into this beautiful land, settle it and enjoy its gifts. For you have earned the best of it because you have taken it from the hand of the enemy'." Thereupon countless number of the various clans took off, took their families and possessions and came to County Adolf in Wagrien, in order to take possession of the land that was promised. And indeed the Holstens received first settlements in the best protected area west of Segeberg on the Trave River, on the plain of Schwentinefeld and everything that stretched from the Schwale up to Grimmelsberg and Plöner Lake. The Westfalen settled the Darguner area, the Dutch and Eutiner and Süsel settled the Friesians area. However, the land around Plön remained unsettled. He allowed the



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By Scharlott Blevins ~ Continued from previous issue

Slavs to settle Oldenburg and Lütjenburg as well as the other coastal area and they were obligated to pay taxes to him. “

As is stated in the very lively and colorful report by Helmold, the Plöner land, our area, remained untouched for the next period. It must have been covered by forest, interrupted by smaller settlements on the banks of lakes and rivers and in clearings near the sea.

## *The Colonization of the Probstei*

Some readers of our chronicle might ask themselves at this point whether it is appropriate to go into the Slavic period and the conquest and colonization of Eastern Holstein by German knights and land owners in such detail. The answer can only be yes because again and again it shows how the history of our homeland is connected with the larger political picture. The European migration of peoples, the origin of the Empire of the Franks, the buildup of the German Empire, the struggles for power among the German Dukes, the spread of Christianity and the crusades – all these events and occurrences have an effect on peoples lives in our out-of-the-way land area at the edge of the western Baltic Sea in and around Stein, Schleswig-Holstein.

That also applies to the colonization of the Probstei. In the middle of the 1200 century that Plöner Land still remained uninhabited. How did its settlement occur at the beginning of the 1300 century? Again here, the history of the Reich/Empire again plays an important role.

The already mentioned conflict between the Staufen and the

Welfs broke down after almost three decades of peace in 1180. Emperor Friedrich I Barbarossa, a Staufen, banned Duke Henry the Lion, a Welf, from the empire and took from him the Duchies of Saxony and Bavaria. After the surprising death of Barbarossa on a crusade (in 1190) his son Henry VI became King and Emperor. He died in 1197 after only a seven year reign. His son Friedrich II was only three years old when his father died. A yearlong battle for the throne broke out between Philipp of Swabia, a brother of the early deceased Emperor, and Otto IV, the son of Henry the Lion. One needs to know also that the German Kingdom was a kingdom where the King was chosen. After the death of a king, each time a new king had to be chosen out of a circle of the German princes. Of course, each king tried to extend the succession to the throne to his son, with partial success, so that some kings were actually chosen in childhood. But not always was this striving (to retain the title of king) successful. The Electors (Kurfürsten) had the last word (Kur = Wahl)(Wahl or election).

The above described events: the banning of Henry the Lion and the partitioning of the Duchy of Saxony, the throne battles and the Staufen Kings turning their attention to Italy – Heinrich VI was married to Konstanze of Sicily, who gave to him Lower Italy and Sicily – caused a power vacuum in the north. The

Danish King Knut VI (1182-1202) and his successor Waldemar II (1202-1241) took advantage of the situation in order to expand their rule. Besides Denmark it included Nordelbien, Mecklenburg, Pommern, parts of Prussia and north Estonia. Nordelbien, that means Holstein, Dithmarschen, Ratzeburg, Hamburg, and Lübeck.

King Waldemar II deposed the Schauenburg Counts and in 1206 named his nephew Albert of Orlamünde as Count of Holstein. Waldemar's sister, Sophie of Denmark was married to Count Siegfried or Orlemünde in 1181. Orlamünde is a city and castle in Thuringia. Count Albert was born of this marriage.

King Waldemar must have knighted this young man who was in his early twenties so that he ruled the conquered land as a representative governor because Albert owed everything to the king, he promised everything to be subject to him. His workings are still visible today in many documents. Evidently it was the goal of Count Albert to colonize the area northeast of Plön and Preetz which before then was only partly closed off. He founded in 1210-11 the Monastery in Preetz and gave one of his Vassals a part of what is today Probstei. With these measures during his reign he could make a name for himself and secure his power.

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# Crosses of Distinction

~ Continued from page 9

Ailbe cursed then reached up with his now clammy hands to rub his scar and asked, “What about Bismarck?”

“War would also be good for him. Bismarck believes that war with France would finally unite Bavaria and the southern lands under his rule.”

“You bring nothing but good news, my friend.”

Koenraad laughed and tossed a copy of the newspaper to Ailbe. “Here’s your copy. And remember, Mili and I want you all over for dinner soon.”

“We’re all looking forward to it.”

Koenraad drove off. And Ailbe strangled the newspaper with a clenched fist until the ink bled out and stained his hands. He could never welcome another war, and he would never let his sons join the fight regardless of the cause. In this he knew he was right. His sons would never share his suffering. They deserved a better life. And thinking of how America has dealt with the former slaves, he believed that perhaps America was the answer for his children.

~ 10 May 1870, Munich, Bavaria

The Munich *Hauptbahnhof* was a dirty, busy place. Trains hissed and smoked, people and luggage slogged within an interweaving mass on platforms that trembled alongside the massive engines. Oil and grease indented the wooden platforms and walkways with footprints of travelers long passed. Every squeal and whistle would distract the crowds as they sought their own destination. Tikva and her daughter stood nervously within the mass. They came from Bucharest and just finished this leg from Rosenheim on a partially completed track.

For the last several weeks, Tikva, her husband Dawud, and their daughter traveled to Munich. Bucharest was no longer safe for them. The Wallachian Revolution of 1848 had finally united Bucharest under a Romanian flag. But having been ruled for years under the Ottomans, the Greeks, the Russians, and the Austrians, Romanian nationalism grew discriminatorily aggressive. Tikva had married her beloved Dawud. The marriage between a Jew and a Muslim was not uncommon, and acceptance from their traditional Ottoman millets may have been precarious, but it was safe. That is until growing Romanian nationalism split their communities.

Tikva, having corresponded with her aunt in Hamburg, learned how German leaders and their states have begun to welcome new visitors into their culture. Her aunt invited Tikva and her family to come there and live in peace and prearranged temporary accommodations for her niece and family in Munich. Departing the Munich train station, they eventually made their way to the *Bayerischer Hof* where Tikva’s aunt had arranged their stay. Walking up to the desk, Tikva explained their situation to the *Empfangsherr*. The clerk, prepared for their arrival, asked, “Where is your husband Dawud?”

The young girl lowered her head in shame. Tikva expected this question and struggled her answer through a wave of sorrow swelling tears, “I’m sorry, but he was unable to survive the trip. I hope that won’t be a problem.”

“I’m so sorry,” said the *Empfangsherr*. “But don’t worry your stay is all arranged.” And looking at Tikva’s daughter, he asked, “Is this your daughter?”

“Yes,” replied Tikva through her tears. “This is my daughter, Adamina.”

Adamina stood strong for her mother. Resting on her shoulders like the *epaulieres* of armor, her straight black hair framed a stygian distrust for all men following the murder of her father. But in his mid-twenties, the clerk was about eight years her elder, and she gazed deeply into his blue eyes searching for that hatred that killed her father and filled her. Finding nothing but genuine kindness, her dark eyes brightened, and she spoke the formal greeting that her aunt had taught her. Adamina smiled and said, “*Guten Tag*.” The clerk responded appropriately, and perhaps, at least for a time, Adamina felt safe.

~ 7 June 2019, 0600, Spandahlem AB, Germany

Kylie sat in the PAX terminal waiting for boarding on the C-17 Globemaster III. Noah sat with his fellow crew chiefs playing Spades, and Kylie along with her fellow specialists played Hearts. Pointy heads and crew dogs always had a friendly rivalry, but both were glad not to be weapon pukers. Weapon troops were a cliquish bunch. But all three groups along with supervision sat quietly, played cards, watched movies, read, or whatnot.

~ Continued on next page

# Crosses of Distinction

~ Continued from previous page

Spades and Hearts have been the staple of military card games for decades. The other staple of military life has been the ubiquitous hurry up and wait. This morning was no different. And everyone found something to pass the time while the C-17 loadmaster secured their equipment. Their classified mission brief instructed them to fly sorties from Ciechanow, Poland into Ukraine and present American Airpower in solidarity with the Ukrainian government, NATO, and

against Russian aggression. OPSEC and COMSEC would be tight in Poland, no FaceTime back home. Kylie was thrilled at this mission and felt secure in her training and leadership. She picked up the new hand dealt to her, unfortunately its only spade was the Queen. Unlike this current game of Hearts, this mission was fascinating. She thought, *what could possibly go wrong*. Then having lost that round, she lost the game of Hearts.

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## Historical Notes from *Crosses of Distinction*

~ Edward Dicey was a British journalist working for Britain's *The Daily Telegraph*. He worked as a special correspondent during The Second Schleswig-Holstein War and traveled extensively documenting firsthand accounts of the war. What happened at the Holstein Hotel actually happened. This is what he recorded in the book *The Schleswig-Holstein War 1864 Between Denmark and Prussia & Austria*.

*"The Town-hall, the Holstein Hotel, the Post Office, and all the shops near this little knot of buildings, were in flames. Fifty-seven people—civilians, not soldiers—had been killed and wounded during the morning in this quarter of the town"*.

~ The Prussians actually called Napoleon III "fat, affable, but fragile" as recorded by Geoffrey Wawro in the book *The Franco-Prussian War* published by Cambridge University Press. The reasons for the war for both the Prussians and the French were the primary reasons as also recorded by Geoffrey Wawro.

*"The Prussian military attaché's account of the Carnival ball in February 1870 offered a glimpse of it: Napoleon III, "fat, affable, but fragile," moving ponderously among his guests, speaking slowly as if stricken, drunken officers reeling around the ballroom, prostitutes dancing the can-can."*

~ Neurasthenia was a flawed medical diagnosis that attempted to explain stress related problems.

~ The 15th Amendment granting the right to vote was ratified in February 1870, the same time that the Prussians described Napoleon III. It makes sense that such news made the German presses. Speaking of which.

~ The *Schleswigsche Grenzpost* newspaper was first published in 1864 from Flensburg. I chose it simply because of its name and of course its proximity to the story.

~ Special thanks to Vanessa Longhitano from the *Hotel Bayerischer Hof* in Munich for providing me some historical facts and also some pictures of the hotel from that time period. I'll try to have those posted to the ASHHS Facebook page.

~ The railway from Rosenheim to Munich wasn't completed until 1871 hence the partially completed track that Tikva and her family traveled on.

~ The Wallachian Revolution and other Romanian history is real. PAX terminal is military shorthand for Passenger Terminal. OPSEC is Operational Security, and COMSEC is Communications Security. American forces are currently serving out of Ciechanow, Poland. I don't know if it includes an airfield. That may be fabricated.





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