

THE HUDSON GREEN

ISSN 1529-6016

Volume 16, Issue 2

JUNE 2005

NEWSLETTER OF

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My Recent Research in Germany

By Harold Schroeder, Ph.D.

There's good news and bad news about doing genealogical research in Germany. After confirming that two of my families of interest emigrated from Mecklenburg, I visited that area of the former East Germany last October. The trip was very productive for one family, not for the other, because of how records could be accessed.

First, some background about Mecklenburg may be of interest. Prior to 1871, when Germany was unified as a result of Prussian expansion under statesman Otto von Bismarck, Mecklenburg was one of more than 30 loosely allied German states. It was situated in a fertile agricultural plain, with many forests and lakes, along the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. The state religion became Lutheran in 1549. In 1621 it was split into two duchies: Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a division that is important for genealogical research (as we will see). Both duchies were ruled by "Junkers" [pronounced Yunkers], who were feudal landlords with absolute authority over peasants, clergy, teachers, and other laborers in this pre-industrial age. One Junker is recorded as saying "What do they need besides a loaf of bread, a salted herring, potatoes, cabbage, and a small garden to develop? Is not one garment adequate for the most part?"

Junkers, from *Jung Herr*, or "young lord", were usually younger sons who were denied an inheritance. They were descended from the dreaded Teutonic knights who fought heathen Slavs during the crusades. They became an oppressive landed aristocracy with enormous fortunes and political power from Reformation times when they became Lutheran until after World War II.

Although Junkers inherited their large estates, 1

eventually they were able to appropriate the peasants' small plots when a prolonged economic depression depleted the market for the crops of small farmers. Peasants, of course, had no way to avoid greater poverty because of the total control exercised by the Junkers. They were unable to move without permission; they needed permission even to marry. Women and children did heavy labor from sunup to sundown. The situation demanded reform, and serfdom was eventually abolished. It was a mixed blessing, however. Previously, the Junker was expected to care for all who lived and worked on his land when they became old or sick. Now he was freed from this obligation as peasants gained the right to move freely. Economic conditions, however, did not change (Germany was a fairly late entry into the Industrial Revolution) and peasants continued to work for starvation wages. Thus the stage was set for the large emigrations of Germans to America beginning in the 1840s and continuing through the end of the century. The large estates were not dismantled until 1945, when the Soviet Military Administration instituted a land reform.

Since my families came from the peasant class, I found it fascinating to see the small villages where they had lived and worked. The villages often consist of a dozen or so small houses, next to the livestock pens and barns, on the edge of large farms. They are not far from the larger town where the Junker lived in a castle or manor house, and where the church was located. It is not difficult to reconstruct their lives in imagination.

Research on the birth and marriage records of the first of my two families was the good news. Civil authorities did not begin to keep records in Mecklenburg until 1876; prior to that the events were registered at the local parishes. I also knew, before I left Hudson, that these

records were now at a central location in the city of Schwerin, at the Mecklenburgisches Kirchenbuchamt (church record office) on the Munzstrasse 8, and records after 1876 were maintained at the Mecklenburgische Landesbibliothek (library). The latter office has been closed, but my interests were for earlier dates, so that was not a problem. Knowing only the approximate year of an event, I found the records to be well maintained and easily accessed with the help of a (required) research assistant at the office. I was surprised when the assistant was reluctant to give me one record book because the entry for the groom was with a different woman than my records showed. It turned out that he married the "proper" woman the next year. I choose to assume his first wife died rather than that he was a bigamist, although I was unable to confirm this.

Research on the second family was less successful. I discovered that this family came from Mecklenburg-Streilitz, where the state failed to centralize the records. It is necessary to know which local church records to search. When I found a sexton at the church in Richtenberg, he was able to share a great deal of the history of a beautiful though not very active church, but was unable to find the relevant records. He suggested they may be located at the main church for that district, but my time did not permit me to check it out on this trip.

Two important points remain: I was surprised at the end of each search by a charge of 30 euros for the services of the assistant. This apparently is legitimate since they insisted upon giving me an official receipt, but I was not forewarned. Second, some basic fluency in German is required. Mecklenburg is in the former East Germany, where for more than a generation Russian, not English, was the required second language.



Harold Schroeder researching in Schwerin, at the Mecklenburgisches Kirchenbuchamt (church record office.)

President's Message



Here we are near the end of another outstanding year. Sincere thanks to everyone who made it what it was. Thanks to all of our members who have supported the group by attending, by participating in the running of the group, by planning and executing the program. We are currently planning our meetings for the next year. We welcome

thoughts from all of you for programs that you would like to see presented.

June brings with it the nomination of our slate of officers for the coming year. You might like to volunteer for the nominating committee, or for some other committee. These committees are the backbone of the organization. The programs, field trips, etc., all come from this group of hardworking members. If you are not now actively involved, please consider becoming more active.

Our Annual Meeting in June will feature **Amy Johnson Crow**. We have had Amy as a speaker in the past, and she always brings a new and interesting message to us. Let's have a big turnout for this meeting.

One other item of note: on June 18, instead of having the scheduled meeting on "Family Societies, Associations, Surnames & Reunions" your Board has decided to have members take a TOUR of the NEW HUDSON LIBRARY! You will see the new meeting room we will use, as well as all the other wonderful facilities of the library. This should, indeed, be a great opportunity to see what we have all been waiting for. I hope to see all members there.

Jack Kauffman Bowers

The Hudson Green Editorial Board

Editor.....Elsie Thomas
 Layout.....John Franklin
 Archives Acquisitions.....Gwen Mayer
 Membership.....Donna Walling
 Mailing.....Cole Waite

Nature Guide School

Based on material compiled by Gwen Mayer and written by Elsie Thomas

It is all but forgotten that in the late 1920s, a school for the study of nature was offered for several summers at the Western Reserve Academy in Hudson. At that time the Academy was spread over 31 acres of wooded campus, plus 500 acres of farm and woodland. It had its own farm and dairy, and American Elm trees in abundance.

The Nature School began in 1928 under the aegis of Western Reserve University in Cleveland, headed by its president, Dr. Robert E. Vinson. Harlan N. Wood was then the Acting Headmaster of the Academy in Hudson.

To quote from a brochure, the school was organized “for the professional training of teachers who wish to enrich their program, of playground leaders who are interested in directing nature clubs, of scout and camp-fire naturalists, nature counselors for summer camps, community and park nature guides, of parents who wish to be prepared to meet the nature problems in their own family, and of nature hobbyists who wish to broaden their training.”

The organizers felt that the demand for nature leaders was already greater than the supply. This was recognized when the Metropolitan Park Board of Greater Cleveland entered upon a program to extend the use of city parks, with a need for leaders to guide in the use of these resources.

With a staff of “18 well-known naturalists”, by 1931 the school was prepared to offer a rich program of activities embracing bird study; local flora; trees and forestry; field geography; advanced physical geography; gardening; agriculture; non-flowering plants; insects, handcraft; and outdoor leadership. Also training in such activities as horsemanship, camping and pioneering under expert leadership. Cost was \$155, which included room and board, library service, medical supplies, notebooks and miscellaneous materials. Credit was offered toward the Ohio State Certificate and toward the Bachelor of Science degree.

Children were not forgotten in this ambitious program. Trips, horseback riding, swimming, pioneering (actual experience in camping) and camp fires were regular features for them. Many of the children were drawn from the Village of Hudson from an organization known

as the Junior Nature Guides. This was a group of 25 “carefully selected girls between the ages of 10 and 18” who were actively interested in nature study. The fee for them was only \$95 (“far less than fees for good private camps,” the Nature Guide School pointed out), and they could elect to study mineral/rocks, birds, trees or flowers. The school ran for a period of six weeks from mid-June to late July. All these Outdoor Girls, as they were called, would be given a baby animal such as a lamb, chicken or duck to care for as part of their work. They were also taught to make birdhouses, blueprints, spatter work, and were required to keep a diary. They would get a “real woods experience” and would end each day singing around a big campfire. Thus they would become more knowledgeable Junior Nature Guides.

The adult program was far more ambitious, embracing Art, Biology, Geography, Astronomy (using the Academy’s Loomis Observatory) and Nature Education for Outdoor Leadership, which could earn them either college credit or a state certificate. Taught by experts in their fields, it was said to be the only school of its kind in the nation.

Both adults and children would also be taken to visit gardens of Hudson residents to observe different kinds of garden design (reminiscent of our annual Hudson Garden Club Tour). The phone number to call for further information was simple: 24.

Judging from the material in library archives, the school did not enjoy a very long life, for we have no record of it after 1934 and no information on why it ended. We have pictures of children who attended, but alas, no names for those doing genealogy research in this area.



Thumbnail Sketches of Current HGSG Members



Sherry (O'Neill) Beam: Around 1985 Sherry's mother, Genevieve (Jones) O'Neill, received an article on the subject of "Orphan Trains." Genevieve was interested in this because she had the final adoption papers for her mother—Sherry's

grandmother—Jennie Jones, who once rode on an Orphan Train. These were trains on which orphans and children whose families couldn't provide for them were moved to other places for adoption. Jennie was born December 28, 1887. When she was just four years old, a nun accompanied her on a train journey from New York to Chicago, where a widow named Annie Stack adopted her. Apart from this, Genevieve didn't know much else about her family, although she knew her dad, Thomas Jones, died when she was three years old.

Sherry became interested in tracing her family, so in the year 2000 she joined HGSG after reading about our meetings in the local paper. She assumed that trying to find Thomas Jones in Chicago would be like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Then she learned that the Illinois State Genealogical Society had announced the availability of death records from many counties in that state. So Sherry went to the Illinois Vital Statistics file for death records and printed out all the Thomas Joneses from Cook County. She was fortunate in having her grandfather's exact date of death, so she was able to find his record. In doing this, she also found that her great-grandfather, John Jones, father of Thomas Jones, died when struck by a train six weeks after her mother was born in 1919. From Thomas's death certificate and cemetery records she has discovered more names to research. She terms it a "gold mine waiting to be explored."

Sherry grew up not knowing her grandparents, most of whom were dead before her parents had even met, so she has found this to be a wonderful journey and hopes to uncover more records for her 86-year-old mother because it would mean so much to her. She has also had great success in researching her husband's family, learning that many were "first families" in several counties in western Ohio. She feels as if she is living history through the lives of those she has been researching. She has also developed wonderful friendships with fellow genealogists, she says, who continue to inspire her.



Donna (Schiefer) Walling: Donna, our current vice-president who has contributed greatly to HGSG, says she was first exposed to genealogy during a 1976 visit to her dad's cousin Barbara, whose husband Evans was working on their family history. He generously shared his pedigree chart with Donna, gave her some books, and answered her questions. At this time she was living in Florida, and since she had no computer, she did her research primarily by letters to family living in Pennsylvania.

When her second child came along, all research was put on hold and not brought out until 1989, when her son had to do an 8th grade Civil War project. Donna's great-grandfather had participated in that war. Afterward, the family history was again tucked away until 1995, when her daughter wanted to do a family tree for an extra credit history project. Once again they dusted off the family history information—but this time it would stay out.

When Donna's family came to Hudson, Donna joined HGSG in 1997, and there formed a close friendship with another member, Mary Jane Leenstra. They supported each other through learning a genealogy computer program (Family Tree Maker) and did their research together.

Because most of Donna's research is in Pennsylvania, her trips home are always divided between family and research. Her parents were always willing to go to a cemetery to look for that elusive relative. Her father believed she had taken him to every cemetery in Berks County!

Like all of us, Donna regrets that she didn't question her grandparents about their youth. Her father's parents came from Germany, as did her mother's, though several generations earlier. Her maternal grandmother was a dedicated obituary clipper, so Donna has made it her mission to see how many of these obits actually concern relatives. She would also like to visit Germany to see firsthand where her families originated.



Charles Richard Weese: Charles joined HGSG in 1993, although his interest in genealogy dates back to the 1970s when he was in his 20s. His father's mother had kept scrapbooks of newspaper clippings concerning the family, mostly from the 1930s through the 1960s. His mother (a Vance) also

talked about her side of the family “every chance she got”, he says. Both sides of his family had annual reunions that Charles attended with his family each year. Other than recording some basic information, Charles had little time for research in those days because of working. He let the hobby slide until the 1980s. Some of his research has been comparatively easy to do because both sides of his family lived in only two counties since before 1840. But since both families have apparently been in this country since the mid-1700s, he has found that few records exist of poor frontier areas for those years.

Charles was born in Ohio and had lived in Jackson County his entire life except for attending and graduating from Ohio State in 1971. After that he lived in Tennessee and Arkansas until 1992, from where it was difficult to do research before the days of the Internet. Transferred to the Alltel location in Twinsburg, Ohio in 1992, research was then easier, even though he still lacked free time. After a couple of years of attending HGSG meetings, he began to directly participate by presenting some programs, then serving as a trustee, and eventually becoming president of the group, serving from 2001 to 2003. He remains an ex-officio member of the board, although his participation is now limited because he is building a house in Jackson County and will eventually move there.

Charles is a member of the Ohio Historical Society, the Ohio Genealogical Society and four of its chapters. He was also a member of Western Reserve Historical Society until this year. He maintains three county websites of the USGenWeb Project (Jackson, Gallia, and Vinton Counties). Many of us have appealed to Charles to answer technical questions about genealogy on computers.



John (Bob) Williams: When he retired after working for ALCOA for 43 years, Bob decided to dig for his family roots. In 1997 he bought the genealogy software program Family Tree Maker, joined the Hudson genealogy group, and began research. Then he discovered that a cousin of

his was also doing genealogy research, so they shared information.

Doing much of his early research in Pittsburgh, PA, Bob was pursuing his great-grandmother, Mary (Doty)

Henderson, when he discovered further along an ancestor, Zebulon Doty, who had served in the Revolutionary War. Bob is now a member of the Lafayette Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. Yet another ancestor, Edward Doty, arrived in Cape Cod on the Mayflower as an indentured servant.

When researching his wife’s family, Bob started in Hudson and learned that Lee’s grandmother was a twin named Althissa Margarita Wampham. Her twin was Lettita May. The family had 16 children who were members of the Wampham Family Band that went around playing in various locations in the Western Reserve. A picture of this band can be seen in the Hudson Archives. Lee’s grandfather was a member of the Viers family who arrived in Hudson in 1881, coming from Buldger, Washington County, PA.

Soundex Code

This was submitted by our member Doris Hetzel, who says she found it an easier-to-use version of Soundex:

<u>B 1</u>	<u>1 B P F V</u>
<u>C 2</u>	<u>2 *CSK G J Q X Z</u>
<u>D 3</u>	<u>3 D T</u>
<u>F 1</u>	<u>4 L</u>
<u>G 2</u>	<u>5 M N</u>
<u>J 2</u>	<u>6 R</u>
<u>K* 2</u>	<u>Disregard letters I E O U W Y H</u>
<u>L 4</u>	<u>except initial letter of surname</u>
<u>M 5</u>	
<u>N 5</u>	
<u>P 1</u>	<u>*CSK is #2- use only one number</u>
<u>Q 2</u>	
<u>R 6</u>	
<u>S 2</u>	<u>An example: Hudson = H325</u>
<u>T 3</u>	
<u>V 1</u>	
<u>X 2</u>	
<u>Z 2</u>	

RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE ARCHIVES



By Gwendolyn Mayer

United States Catholic Chaplains in the World War
 Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors (4 vols)
 Gallia County, OH History vol.2
 Records of Ethnic Fraternal Benefit Associations in the US
 Index to McKelvey's Centennial History of Belmont County, OH
 The Archaeology of Ohio
 Tapestry of Faith-History of Methodism in the Cleveland District
 Germans to America-Series II, vol.7 1848-1849
 Italians to America vol.17 & 18 1901-1902
 Cavaliers and Pioneers-Abstracts of VA Land Patents & Grants-Northern Neck
 Guide to State Records-VA State Library & Archives
 A Guide to Episcopal Church Records in VA
 The Glacial Kame Indians
 Ohio Flint Types
 Ohio Stone Tools
 Ohio Slate Types
 A List of Early Settlers of Georgia
 Index to Marriages & Deaths in the New York Herald 1856-1863
 The Descendants of King George I of Great Britain
 Denizations & Naturalizations in the British Colonies in America
 Names of Persons Who Took the Oath of Allegiance to the State of PA
 Michigan Genealogy Sources & Resources
 West Virginians in the American Revolution
 Migration to South Carolina: Movement from the New England and Mid-Atlantic States
 Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War
 French American Genealogical Research-Emigrants from France
 The Jacob Swagler Family of PA & OH
 Some 18th Century Marriage & Death Records from York County, PA
 Bringing Modernism Home-Ohio Decorative Arts 1890-1960
 Ohio Archaeology
 Cemeteries of Hocking Township, Fairfield County, OH
 Index to Naturalizations of Fairfield County, OH
 Cemeteries of Richland Township, Fairfield County, OH
 A Guide to Genealogical Resources in Cincinnati &

Hamilton County, OH
 The Value of Integrity-A Memoir of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs
 Creating a Perfect World-Religious & Secular Utopias in Ohio
 Fairfield County, OH Liberty Township Records
 Index to 1870 Census, Fairfield County, OH
 Some Descendants of Arthur Warren
 Petition Record Abstracts Fairfield County, OH
 Palatine Mennonite Census Lists 1664-1793
 St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church Fairfield County, OH
 Washington County, OH OGS Newsletters

New Members

Please add these renewals to your
 Membership Booklet:

James B. Straight
 189 Pinehurst Rd.
 Munroe Falls, OH 44262-1136

Andrea Peterson (formerly Mucha)
 49 Bard Dr.
 Hudson, OH 44236
 E-mail: andreamucha@yahoo.com

Meigs Adams
 E-mail: augustpch@aol.com

Akron-Summit County Public Library Ohio Death Certificate Update

The Special Collections Department of the Akron-Summit County Public Library is happy to announce that the Ohio Death Certificate Collection is now available for researchers on microfilm from 20 December 1908 through August 1952. They expect to have the complete collection up to and including 1954 by summer.

HGSG Members Help at OGS Conference in Akron, Ohio

By John and Betty Franklin

Eighteen Hudson Genealogical Study Group members volunteered to assist at the April 14 – 16 Ohio Genealogical Society Conference in Akron, Ohio. HGSG member Ted Minier was chairman for the whole event. Ted did an outstanding job of organizing and running the very successful conference.

The Ohio Historical Society brought their 1908-1954 Ohio Death Records' collection to the OGS Conference. Assisting Elizabeth Plummer and her staff from Columbus, the HGSG volunteers were trained in a short time to assist conference attendees to search the Ohio Death Records. They all worked hard, but we had a great time! Volunteers included Sherry Beam, Jack Bowers, Betsy Brennan, Nancy Brock, Betty and John Franklin, Grace Lewis, Marion and Will Else, Winnetta Kennedy, Trudy Painting, Pamela Turner, Dorothy Schroedel-Wilson, Helen Soblosky, George and Marge Solan, Cole Waite, and Charles Weese.



Betty Franklin, Jack Bowers, John Franklin, Cole Waite, Winnetta Kennedy, Nancy Brock, and Liz Plummer



HGSG volunteers assist conference attendees to search the Ohio Historical Society Death Records.

Nominated Officers

The following persons were nominated to hold office in HGSG for the 2005-06 season:

Jack Bowers, current President, for another term

Gwen Mayer, Vice-President

Frances Scalise, Secretary

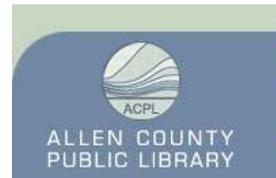
Richard Satava, Treasurer

also trustees Sherry Beam, John Franklin, and Trudy Painting.

The general membership will vote on them at the June Annual Meeting. We have members willing to serve as backups in the event of any of these officers being unable to perform their duties. The nominating committee was composed of Ted Minier, Gwen Mayer and Elsie Thomas.

Member Deaths

We regret the passing of our member Don Rasico, and of Helen Stokes, a former member. Those of us who knew them will certainly miss their presence.



Anyone Going to Fort Wayne Library?

For anyone thinking of planning a trip to the Allen County Public Library this summer, please be aware that they are in a temporary location at 200 E. Berry, Fort Wayne, Indiana, where they will be located until late 2006.

Curt B. Witcher, Manager of the Historical Genealogy Department, can be reached by calling 260-421-1386, or e-mailing Cwitcher@ACPL.Lib.in.us. He will answer any questions you might have.

Hudson Genealogical Study Group
Hudson Library & Historical Society
Dept. G
96 Library Street
Hudson, OH 44236-5122

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Annual Meeting

Amy Johnson Crow, C.G. and 3rd Vice President of OGS, will speak to us on June 11 in the Activity Room of the Congregational Church. She is always a pleasure to hear. Her topic: "Lineage." Members are invited to bring friends. We hope for a good turnout.

Next Meetings

- June 11 9:30 HGSG Annual Meeting:
"Lineage" by Amy Johnson Crow, C.G.
from Ohio Genealogical Society,
at Congregational Church
- June 18 9.30 Tour of new library for our
members
10:30 HGSG Board Meeting