

An Ancestry Tree Full of Emigrants

Anrochte – *June 7, 2014* – Franz Marcus Schulte and his wife Gertrud probably stood on the deck of the ship “Boston” when they arrived in the harbor of New Orleans on January 24, 1837. The emigrants from Anroechte had been living at sea for almost four months – a voyage into an unknown future. It was a future within the New World – the land of dreams: America!

In stark contrast to the Schulte family’s long voyage in 1837 towards an unknown future, four Stahlschmidts of modern times began from America in search of their past. Nancy, Agnes, Sharon and Paul, born in Missouri, together with Dr. Heinz Sprenger, followed the traces of their ancestors. Once those ancestors came from Anroechte: the Schulte line.

The local search began in Waltringhausen – more specifically in the Chapel of St. Anna. On September 20, 1766, young Anna Theresia Nonte (from the Bellencord farm of Anroechte) and Christoph Schulte (of Waltringhausen) were married by the pastor.¹ The couple had six children in the following years. One of them was Franz Marcus, born in 1802, who at 33 years of age, who emigrated to America with his wife.

“Ancestral research is a kind of puzzle work,” explains Dr. Sprenger. The 71- year- old researcher residing in Munich, whose ancestors were born at nearby Eikeloh, accompanies the Stahlschmidts on their tour of Germany. Together with Heiner Mendelin, head of the local Heimatverein of Anroechte, Sprenger has researched the Schulte line for his American colleagues. Such a search is extremely time consuming. Mendelin invested over 100 hours in searching for church records and other documents. Sharing his love for this work, 63-year-old Mendelin states, “It is a really exciting hobby.”

Using Synergy Effects for the Puzzle Work

“Many people are doing ancestry research in Germany,” tells Sprenger. He explains how contact was initiated between the different partners of this modern exploration team. “We are using the synergy effects between several parties and their approaches in order to attempt creating a whole ensemble of relations among them. However, realistically speaking, it would certainly be impossible to trace one’s ancestry back to Adam and Eve.”

The contacts to the Stahlschmidts in America were initiated using this synergy. In the 1990s, Paul Stahlschmidt (71) became strongly interested in finding his ancestors. Together with his wife, Sharon “Cookie” Stahlschmidt, he began his search. Reaching out by mail, Paul soon discovered a new cousin in California. They

¹ This is not quite correct, since that marriage in reality took place in the church St. Alexander of Mellrich

began to collaborate on research until a certain breakthrough was achieved in 2012. This occurred when Paul came in contact with Heinz Sprenger via different steps on the Internet.²

In America, the Schulte story began in Missouri. In the year 1834 the "Giessen Emigration Society" formed their plans to found their own German Republic in the USA, free from the constraints in Germany. "One aspect, of course, was to make money," Sprenger explains. "So far, however, the land was not suitable for sowing seeds and reaping crops. These early settlers from Anroechte certainly knew how to prepare the land for farming. They cleared the forests and farmed the land in order to make their own living and earn money. Poverty and lengthy military service requirements in Germany were the most common reasons for their voyages to America."

Franz Schulte and his wife Gertrud Kegel successfully arrived in the New World. The farmer and his wife settled in St. Charles County, Missouri. In later years, Schulte contributed the money for erection of the first hospital of St. Charles. In addition, he donated part of his farmland and a house. Today it is a hospital with 400 beds. His daughter, Maria Margaretha Schulte, born September 5, 1839, married Engelbert Stahlschmidt, born in Warstein. Engelbert had immigrated to America with his parents when he was only 3 years of age. This bond of marriage explains how the connection of the Schultes and the Stahlschmidts was formed.

Stone, Chapels, and Local Sightseeing

For three weeks the related Stahlschmidt troupe explored the path of their ancestors in Europe. In addition to the walk through the community of Anroechte, they also visited the chapels of Mellrich, Waltrighausen, and the church St. Pankratius of Anroechte. They made visits to the Stone Museum and the stone quarry to "see a demonstration and discover how stones are broken in Anroechte," according to Mendelin.

Of course the Stahlschmidts will also visit Warstein. Paul and Sharon complete their travels at Niederlauterbach in Alsace (France) where are Paul's grandmother's roots.

The ancestral search of the Stahlschmidts will be continued....

² Anne Schulte-Lefebvre of Zurich helped to establish the contacts via the "Sauerland" ancestry list



Heiner Mendelin, Paul and Cookie Stahlschmidt, Heinz Sprenger, Nancy and Agnes Stahlschmidt in Anröchte