

# In the Footsteps of our Forefathers

## Germany 2018

**August 31, 2018** – I left Pittsburgh at 1:00 p.m for my flight to Philadelphia. My flight arrived around 2:15 in Philly. I wandered around the airport for a while trying to find a suitable souvenir for someone in Germany. I finally decided on a picture frame of Philadelphia. It doesn't cover the German history in America but the frame depicts some early American history – Liberty Bell, Ben Franklin, flag of the colonies, etc. After that, I wandered around for about an hour before I headed to my sister, Charan's, gate. We theoretically had about another hour before Kal and Marie were to arrive from Dayton. Unfortunately, due to weather delays, they were rerouted to London. So, Charan and I spent a couple of hours waiting for our flight to Amsterdam, which departed on time.

**September 1, 2018** - We arrived in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, around 9:40 A. M. after spending an interminable amount of time (it took at least an hour from wheels down to disembarkation) slowly cruising to the gate. Once we disembarked we tried to catch up with Marie and Kal and their quest to get to Amsterdam. I had an email waiting that they would arrive around 2:00 P.M.



Charan and I decided to go to the Rijks Museum. We put our baggage in storage rather than carting it around the Museum, good thing, too many stairs. We were intrepid explorers as we made our way via the #379 bus to the museum. We spent several hours there mostly on the second floor admiring Rembrandt paintings and those of his contemporaries. The museum also had exhibits of furniture, delft china, and many other interesting items. It was now time to

again find the #379 bus going back to the airport. Success. We saw it right away, unfortunately, we had to search for our tickets. After finding them it was another 20 minutes until the return bus arrived to transport us back to the airport.

Half an hour later, we picked up our baggage and had some lunch. I looked again at my email from Marie only to realize that we had missed the Tinka's expected arrival time. We searched everywhere in the Arrivals Terminal (did I mention there are 4 arrival gates all in different corners of a vast terminal) as well as the Rental Car locations with no luck. I spent 90 minutes in line at Avis just to find out if the Tinkas had picked up a car from them yet. (They hadn't.)

After about two hours of relocating ourselves several times around the terminal and grabbing caffeinated beverages to keep us on our feet, we pondered what to do next. My phone and iPad were both running out of energy. My power converter didn't want to work.

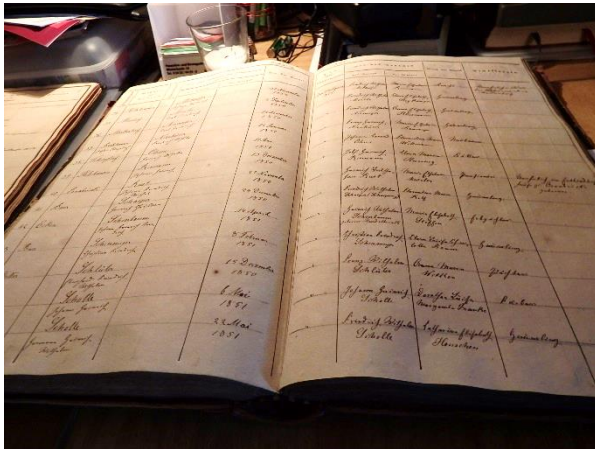
Charan's phone wasn't picking up any messages. So, before my cell phone ran out of juice, I made a Vonage phone call and sent an email home to Jim and Jaime, then gave my cell phone to a lovely Amsterdam Airport employee who let me recharge my phone in a plug where my converter would work.



(None of the ones I had tried previously would fit my converter.) At 4:55 P.M. Jaime sent an email letting us know that the Tinkas had arrived in Amsterdam and were at the car rental counter. We got another caffeinated drink, and I finally found a power outlet that would work with my converter. I was finally able to read the email at 6:30 P.M. So, better late than never, we headed over to the rental counter only to find that Marie and Kal were still in line waiting for their car to be assigned. Once through the line, we headed to pick up the rental car. This was challenging since the car wasn't where we thought it would be. We finally found the car and loaded it up. Charan's and my luggage fit in the trunk very well, since poor Kal and Marie were without checked luggage, an occurrence that added to an already stressful day.

Long story short (I know too late for that) we left the airport at 9:00 P.M. Marie drove us from Amsterdam, Netherlands to Osnabruck, Germany. We arrived at our hotel around midnight hoping that we still had rooms since we didn't book for late arrival. Luckily, the Hotel Walhalla had kept our rooms for us!

**2 September 2018** - At 9:15 this morning we met our German cousins for Sunday morning services at the same church where our great-grandfather was christened and baptized. After the service, the pastor, showed us the record books with both listings.



After a tour of the church, we had our photos taken for the local paper. Below is the article that appeared in the Buer Newspaper. I have translated it to English for convenience purposes.

## EXCITING LOOK IN CHURCH BOOK



A fascinating look into the church books with (from left) Wolfgang Dreuse, Ingo Krahn, Marcia Elving, Kalman Tinka, Charan Niehaus, Maria Tinka, and Jurgen Kramer. Photo: Peter Schatte

BUER. Sisters from the USA in the footsteps of their Melle ancestor... When Friedrich Wilhelm Nienhüser left the parish of Buer in 1870 to seek his fortune in the United States of America, he opened a new chapter in the history of his family, which continues to this day. On Sunday, Marie Niehaus Tinka from Ohio, Marcia Niehaus Elving from Pennsylvania and Charan Niehaus from Missouri, three descendants of the emigrant in the parish of Buer walked in the footsteps of their ancestors. They were accompanied by Wolfgang Dreuse and Jürgen Krämer from the board of the German-American Circle of Friends Melle (DAF) as well as their relatives Reinhard Voß and Regina Haase from St. Annen. During their stay in the parish of Buer, the guests from the USA visited the historic Buer Martini Church, visited the parish, climbed the tower and toured the America grove. In addition, they met in Sehlingdorf with Bernd and Sonja Jouvenal, on whose estate Friedrich Wilhelm Nienhüser was born. A special note was given to their short visit by attending a service in the St. Martini Church in Buer, (where Friedrich Wilhelm Nienhüser had been baptized) to which Pastor Ingo Krahn welcomed the guests from the USA by name. But that's not all: In order to give the three sisters an insight into their family history, the clergyman kept historical church books ready, in which it was noted that Friedrich Wilhelm Nienhüser was christened on 24 January 1851 in the predecessor building of today's church and on April 23, 1865 was baptized in the then still new Martini church. It is thanks to Wolfgang Dreuse that the three sisters reached the home of their ancestors. The DAF chairman, who is also involved in the Working Group on Family Research Osnabrück, succeeded in restoring the family ties some time ago - with encouraging results, as the first visit by his cousins Marcia Elving and Maria Tinka was documented in 2009. A look back: It's the year 1870. 19-year-old Friedrich Wilhelm Nienhüser emigrates to America. Like thousands of other Melle residents this young man from the parish Buer, wants to look for his luck in the distance. On May 21 of that year, the royal district captain granted him the emigration permit to Melle - a historical document that has been in the Lower Saxony State Archive in Osnabrück for quite some time. With the destination port of Baltimore, Wilhelm Nienhüser leaves on the S. S. "Leipzig" from Bremerhaven from the old world. After a stopover in Southampton, he reached on June 3, 1870 the destination port Baltimore on the east coast of the United States. Wilhelm Nienhüser goes to the up-and-coming American city of Cincinnati in the state of Ohio. A large part of the population living there is of German descent. The city has German churches, three publishers who bring German-language newspapers on the market, and countless German clubs. The German way of life is maintained with local food and drink. "Although the German emigrants prove to be extremely close to one another, the young man from the parish of Buer changes his name. Wilhelm Nienhüser becomes William Niehaus - a surname Marcia Elving and Marie Tinka use up to their weddings - as well as their sister Charan Niehaus, "explains Wolfgang Dreuse. After his marriage William Niehaus opened in Cincinnati a retail store in the German district "Over the Rhine". He died of tuberculosis at the age of only 32, leaving a young wife, two sons and a daughter.



We visited an overlook that gave us great views of Melle and Buer, both areas in which our ancestor had lived.



It was a bit of a hike to get to the top of the tower but it was worth it for the views.

We viewed the oldest house in Buer. Then visited the museum and saw old paintings and attire of former Buer residents, as well as a bell making machine. We then visited the site of the original school.



Our cousin Wolfgang treated us to a delicious and convivial lunch. We continued our quest by visiting the cemetery. Our cousins, Wolfgang, Mecke, Regina, and Reinhard went to various sites with us,



to places where our great grandfather had lived. He had been a tenant farmer in Buer prior to emigrating to the United States. We saw the main house where the owner of the farm lived, (now a working farm and a bed and breakfast) and the area in which our grandfather had grown up. The cottage where he had lived is no longer in existence. Then we visited the American/German friendship park with its commemorative plaque which has been created and planted with American trees to welcome its American visitors.



After a brief rest, we had dinner with Wolfgang, Mecke, and Holle followed by a quick walk around the Osnabruck E(s)t Gut markets. (Translation Osnabruck is (eats) good.) Food vendors had multicolored lighted tents set up everywhere. It was lovely.



Then back to the Hotel Walhalla for a great night's sleep.



3 September 2018

Information was scant on the luggage situation. So, Marie and Kal were again without luggage. Today was the day for further investigating our Wullweber ancestors in Hude. We began our drive through Osnabruck striving mightily to program the GPS. With the German language there are special characters - umlauts which give the vowels unique sounds. So that a u is pronounced differently than a ü. This created a problem as we were using the English version of the GPS. Our initial results for Hude listed a



four hour trip – our destination was actually only a half an hour away. We knew this could not be the correct destination. So, our technical experiments began. After approximately 15 minutes (with Marie and Kal discussing the map they had brought along) we finally figured out a way to get the correct Hude input into the GPS. Now we would arrive sooner, but still 10 minutes after our expected arrival. Thankfully we had built in some extra time or we would have arrived very late. We were met by four gentlemen. The former mayor, George Klosterman and his son Ralf who grew up in the Wullweber house, Bruno Matzke from the historical society, Jochen Selbach, church member and translator, and Ludger Von Husen, the town genealogist. Our first stop was a hospitality hall where we were served delicious cakes. We proceeded to the Wullweber farm and were able to go for a tour through the timbered thatched roofed house which is now used as a small store.





We visited the Prote House – built in 1782 and we visited the Kaiser house built around the same time. Both of these homes were at one time owned by our ancestors and remain half-timbered thatch roofed homes.

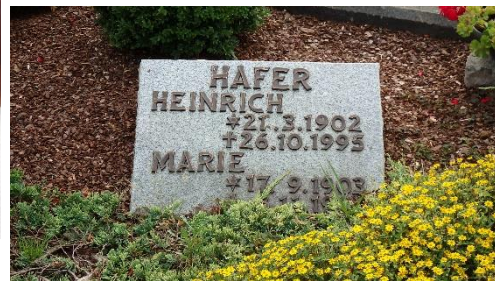


We visited the Burlage church which had members of the Klostermann family – step siblings of the Wullwebers.

The church is one of only a few baroque style churches. The cemetery in this area was outside the church. Many churches in other communities have moved the cemeteries from just outside the community churches to further away for health reasons.



The cemetery in Germany is quite different from those in America. The family is responsible for maintenance for their plot. When there are no longer any members of the family, the plot is returned to the cemetery to be recycled.



After our return from Hüde, we met at Cousin Holle’s house. Holle lives in the house where she grew up. She and Mecke hosted and entertained us talking about various family members. Wolfgang was unable to come due to a genealogy commitment. Mecke and Wolfgang will meet us just before our departure tomorrow.





Below is a translation of the article which appeared in the Hude paper.



Ludger Von Husen and Jochen Selbach (l.r.) welcomed the visit from Cincinnati descendants of the family Wullweber, in the Hüde village house. Photo: Brauns-Bomerma

## American sisters on forefather's search in Hüde

HUDE • The German emigrants' house in Bremerhaven allows visitors to access online databases that provide comprehensive information on emigrated ancestors. The US-American company Ancestry works with the National Archive in Washington: The passenger lists of the ships that came from all over the world in the US-American ports and the lists of the national census that took place in the USA since 1790 every ten years. It also contains information about the Hüde born Friedrich Heinrich Ludwig Wullweber.

The sisters Marie Tinka, Marcia Elving, and Charan Niehaus came from Cincinnati, Ohio to Hüde to cultivate genealogical research and to fulfill the long-cherished wish of visiting the 53 Wullweber homestead (now the Klostermann homestead) in the heart of Hüde. Accompanying them was also Marie's husband Kal.

In the village house they were welcomed with coffee and cakes by Bruno Matzke (Village Association of Hüde), Ludger von Husen (archivist "Old Office of Lemforde"), Jochen Selbach (honorary translator) and the present-day landlords of the Wullweber homestead Georg and son Ralf Klostermann.

The descendants of the 1860 emigrant Friedrich Heinrich Ludwig Wullweber entered their journey into the past well prepared. Marie Tinka, youngest of the three sisters, had already started more than seven years ago with the exciting research into their roots in Germany. Additional places on the three sisters travel route were Osnabrück, Hude, Braunschweig and Wittenberg.

"Marie had contacted me long ago, and I sent her everything I knew of the history the farm." recalls Ludger von Husen. "And that's a lot. The information is going back to the first half of the 18th century. But Marie Tinka also came up with a whole blotter full of research and a started family tree, images of the farm and the Burlager church, newspaper articles on corresponding persons, marriage and confirmations, deeds, birth and baptismal notes and pictures of tombstones."

The first clue of our ancestors Wullweber goes back to the year 1744, "explains Marie. Before Anton Wilhelm Wullweber, a former soldier from Hamelin, acquired the farm of Henrich Philipp and his son Johann Friedrich Winter, he married Anna Margarethe Prote from farm No. 32. After the death of his first wife, he entered in a second marriage to Anne Marie Regine Kaiser of farm No, 24. The latter farmstead burned down later, and Wullweber acquired the Winter farm. From now on it was called Wullweber.

Per the heir right in Hude, the youngest son inherited the farm. The next generation tore down the old house and in 1867 built a new one, which today is the Klosterman House. The older brother Friedrich Heinrich Ludwig Wullweber lived at the end of the year as a tenant farmer. In 1860 he left his homeland with his still-living children, but without his second wife Marie Margarethe Luise Backmeier and moved from Bremerhaven on the ship Industrie to America. He found his new home in Baltimore.

Was it the poor relatives of the farmer, a broken marriage, Had he entered the journey without the knowledge of the wife? "The questions that Ludger Von Husen formulated also interested the descendants.



It is known that the abandoned wife was divorced from him in 1863 in his absence she married the son of the horse butcherer whose profession was, in spite of great necessity, considered as dishonorable. When we visit the church in Burlage, Selbach told us, "They were marginalized by others, and made to sit separately while in the Burlager church. If they were invited at weddings, the dishes they used were then destroyed afterwards. Is that not Christian?" he asked ironically with regard to the lack of respect to this professional group.

Many known still existing names appeared in the script of Marie Tinka. Anyone interested in studying the research can contact Ludger von Husen or the village association

## 4 September 2018

This morning we departed Osnabruck. Wolfgang and Mecke met us after breakfast. We exchanged farewells and good wishes. Last night before we left Osnabruck, the Tinkas had great news. Their luggage had finally arrived!



Then we headed off to Braunschweig. We filled up the car with gas and had lunch at an Autobahn stop along the way. We made a short stop at the very old Lutheran church in Malerton, where we believe our Windell ancestors attended services.

After the challenges of parking at the Hotel Wallhalla parking lot, we were looking forward to something a bit roomier in Braunschweig. We pulled into the alley where the hotel parking garage was. The first garage door closed before we were able to get through the second door. We were trapped between two garage doors. After a bit of searching we found a small exit door and were able to reenable the garage door mechanisms. Through the door, down a narrow tunnel, then to our assigned parking space. It was so tight that Kal had to pull forward and back up about six times to get a **little** wiggle room between the cars. We took a quick break and took our luggage to the room. Then we headed out into Braunschweig. As we walked around, we passed the street market.

We also passed the town Gates. Then we walked down the streets where the Juergens lived. We visited Echterstrasse, the home of Johann Friedrich Jaeger, and Guldenstrasse the home of Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Juergens. Backerlint was where Carl, August, and Wilhelm lived with their step grandmother after both their parents died. We also viewed one section of the old city wall.



We tried to find the Hohetor and Wilhelmini Gates where the Jaeger ancestors had had gardens but were unable to find them.

We stopped by the St. Martini church (the primary church of our Juergens ancestors) but it was closed due to illness. We will try again tomorrow.

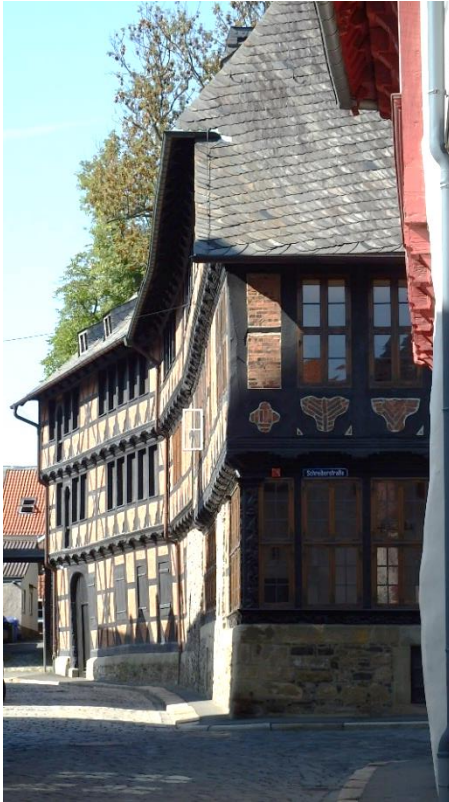
We returned to the hotel for a quick rest before heading to dinner. We ate at a wonderful German restaurant, had great food, and great fun. Then a short walk back to the hotel in order to get a good night's sleep so that we can be up early for tomorrow's adventures.





5 September 2018

Today we began the day by driving to the lovely city of Goslar, where Wilhelm was a citizen. It is an area that has been mostly maintained in the traditional German style with many half-timbered and slate homes. What a beautiful community!



After a very pleasant lunch we returned to Braunschweig to visit St. Martini Church which was the primary church for the Juergens family.





We also visited St. Andreas church where Carl's parents were married. Marie had intended to ascend the 389 steps for a spectacular view of the city, but we ran out of time.



Tonight we had our first pizza (a Tinka/Elving travel tradition). Then returned to the hotel to ready for our departure to Wittenberg tomorrow.

6 September 2018



Charan was very interested in visiting sites important historical sites of Martin Luther. Today we visited Wittenberg. We stopped at Luther church – the Academic facility where Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the wooden door.







These were items he wished to discuss with the academics of the time. His commentary made him so unpopular, he had to stay at a friend's castle for several years until he could safely be out in public.

We all toured the facility and Charan stayed for the Wittenberg English Ministry service held in the English language and later took a tour of Lutherhaus. Kal came back to the hotel to recover from his driving travails. Marie and I stopped for an ice cream. Then the three sisters headed back toward our hotel.

After a short recovery time, we headed out to dinner at a great

restaurant. Most of us ordered appetizers, I ordered two. How could I pass up one that had potato pancakes and another Bavarian pretzel? After our dinner, we headed back to the hotel.



This hotel does not have air conditioning but it does have **easy parking**, so we are happy here. Plus, we have a nice large window with a very comfortable breeze.

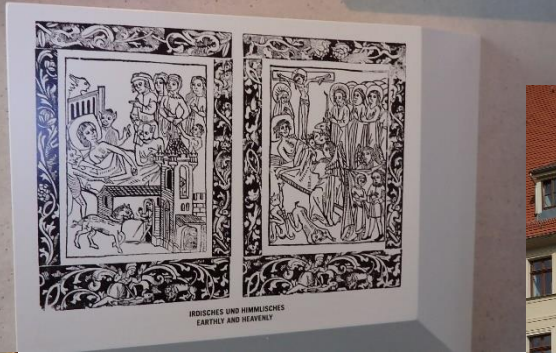
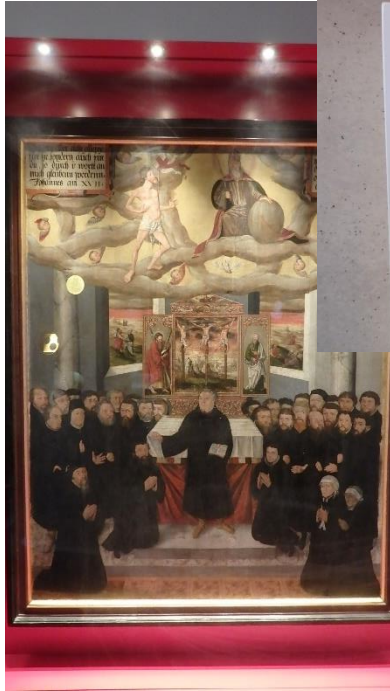
Tomorrow a couple more Martin Luther stops then on to Mainz.

## 7 September 2018

Our first stop today was to Eisleben Lutherstadt the birth and death place of Martin Luther. His birth home was mostly exhibits of his parents and his early environment. The portrait is of Martin Luther's parents in their later years and the room with Marie and Charan is how the family kitchen may have looked.



His death house contained facts about Luther's later years, his illnesses, his beliefs, and his friends and followers.



Shown below is picture of the ring Martin gave his wife. One interesting fact that we learned was that Luther's will was made invalid because he gave too many of his possessions to his wife upon his death.





8 September 2018

We next visited Mainz. This was the home of our Fenzel ancestors. Caspar and Sophia were Roman Catholic. Caspar ran a wine cellar and restaurant. Their first two German-born daughters were baptized in St. Peter's Catholic Church.

Carolina our Great-Grandmother was one of those two children. Their brother Caspar was baptized at Dom Katholisch (the Cathedral in Mainz) and Sophia was baptized at Stankt Quintin.

While in Mainz we visited each of the churches of our ancestors.



We also walked through the Open Market.



A very unusual site that Charan and I saw as we were visiting a grocery store, was a car being towed away (in a very unusual way) for illegal parking. Of course, this is much easier to do with the tiny smart cars widely used in Europe.







One of the most impressive sites we passed was the bombed remains of the Kirsche St. Christof. It was left as it looked after the bombing of Mainz. It described the rise of the National Socialist

Party, forced labor, prisons, adherence to party propaganda, removal of non-Aryans to concentration camps, and eventually the bombing of Mainz during WWII.



9 September 2018



Today we explored Kirsheimbolanden and Russingen. These were areas where Kal's family had lived. We met our French cousin. Imme, the daughter of our wonderful cousin Holle, is a French/German translator. Additionally, she also speaks and understands English very well. So, we felt very confident as we explored "KiBo" (a shortened version of Kirsheimbolanden).



As we entered the city we were greeted by this genial guy.



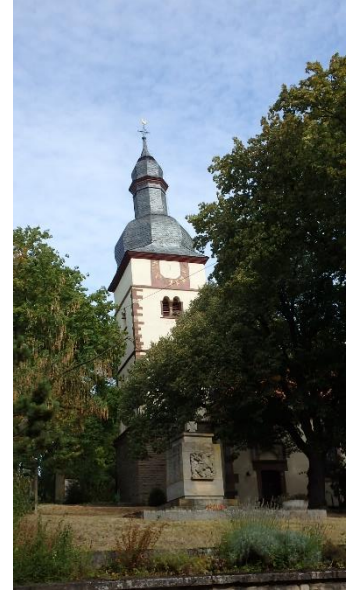


It was a city of walls and towers. We climbed the wall to get some great views. Also, on the wall was the honeymoon suite, which can be booked for an event.



Then we were on to Russingen.

There we noted many stone houses with tiled roofs. We visited the Protestant Church there.



With Imme's help we also looked through the cemetery, to see if we could find any members of Kal's family listed. But alas, we were unsuccessful.



We did take pictures of the old stones, so that we can browse the names later.



Unfortunately, while in Kirscheimbolanten and Russingen, we met no one of whom we could ask questions.

So, although, Kal saw the areas where his ancestors lived, he was unable to get any additional specifics about his family.



## 10 September 2018 – Lambsheim

Today we visited Lambsheim. This is an area of Germany where our Weyersmiller, Kautz, and Rasp relatives lived. They are all ancestors from our mother's side of the family. We decided to start by visiting the Protestant Church. There were a small group of people gathered outside. So, we enquired if the Church would be open soon. We were told that the local theater group would be holding a practice there, so it would soon be open. The wife of the town historian was there and told us that soon her husband would arrive, and that he could give us some information about the town.



He took us through the town, through a section of old houses, told us that there had once been two Protestant Churches but as enrollment had declined, they combined the two parishes.

He showed us the Town Hall.



He also pointed out the tripping stones, that are placed throughout Germany, Austria, and other countries, honoring the memory of

those whom the Nazis persecuted, first by taking away their homes and their possessions, then by sending them to the concentration camps for forced labor or extermination.

We each bought an English language copy of the town history. And I bought a book (German language) that talks about immigration and emigration to and from Lambsheim.

We were delighted to have been able to get so much information from such an unexpected source. What luck! Sorry, Kal, you never have this kind of luck.



Imme treated us to a lovely lunch between Lambsheim and Bingen. We tried some of the local dishes, which is a treat Imme enjoys on her travels. Imme then left us to travel home, as we continued our drive to Bingen.

Bingen, located along the Rhine River, was the home of the Fenzel family. Our paternal great-grandmother lived there. We visited the wall around portions of the city and a castle near where our paternal great-grandfather Caspar Fenzel worked.



The Basilika St. Martin was the Fenzel family church while living in Bingen



We also made a brief stop in Worrstadt to look for streets where members of the Brunner family had lived.





September 11, 2018 - Trier

Today was Charan's final day in Germany with us. We had finished our Genealogy Quest, so took one last day to visit the beautiful city of Trier – the site of Germany's most extensive Roman Ruins. Founded

in 16 B.C. by Emperor Augustus.

Port Nigra is the largest standing Roman city gate north of the Alps.

Looking much as it did centuries ago.

We enjoyed strolling around the

open markets as we took in the sights, sounds, and smells of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and crafts.

It was a lovely place for us to end our German Ancestry visit.



And now it was time for us to return to Amsterdam, turn in the rental car, and to spend the night at the lovely Crowne Plaza Schipol Amsterdam. Tomorrow, Charan leaves for Missouri and Jim arrives for our Scenic River cruise.

