

**This website is about the history of the Blomeier / Blomeyer family from Eastern Westphalia, Germany. We can trace back our ancestry to Johan Blommeier, a smallholder in Wallenbrück/Herford district (born ca. 1525). Descendants by now live all over Germany, in the USA (Indiana et al), Mexico and South Africa. They flourish in three major branches with ca. 300 members alive world-wide: The elder one, the younger one and the »Bockhorsters«.**

**A connection neither to the Upper Palatine Blomeiers nor to the Blomeyers from Northeim district is proved. The »Ahnenliste« gives an account of ancestors of the first twelve generations. Data from the 13th to present 17th generation (26 more pages with c. 1000 additional names) are available to family members on request.**

**For any question or addition, please contact [blomeierblomeyer@web.de](mailto:blomeierblomeyer@web.de) !**

## 7. English Version

»Surely a historian's object should not be to amaze his readers by a series of thrilling anecdotes; nor should he aim to at producing speeches which might have been delivered, nor study dramatic propriety in details like a writer of tragedy: but his function is above all to record with fidelity what was actually said or done, however commonplace it may be.«

Polybios II, 56

### 7.1. Origins and Name

The region between Teutoburger Forest and the hills of the Wiehengebirge in today's Northwest Germany attracted permanent settlers about five or six thousand years ago. Before them, only hunters on band level occasionally had striven through its woodlands, sharing them with bear and bison. Although archaeologists and linguists draw quite a precise picture of the life of these early pre-indoeuropean settlers and cattle breeders and of the Eurasian »battle-axe-people« who later replaced them, in regard of the history of today's individual families this would be of interest only when latest techniques of genetic research would be applied, as has been done in the Harz region and in the Alpine area and proved continuity of the indigenous population over thousands of years. Fund sites in our area among others are Werste (Bad Oeynhausens/megalithic tomb), Künsebeck (Halle/pottery) or Dreierwalde (Hörstel/flintstone-dagger). Although the evolution of the Saxon tribe during the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries in later north-west Germany was preceded by the migration of some dwellers across the Rhine, the situation might be described in similar terms in our area. Tribal consciousness developed first among distinguished clans and their warriors rather than among the mass of scattered peasants<sup>1</sup>. The later Blomeyers' home area *Wessigau* and *Graingau* were known as part of *Angria* first, since the times of the Salian dynasty they usually are regarded as parts of Westphalia.

Cores of settlement in the parish of Wallenbrück<sup>2</sup> (in older versions *Woldenbrugge* etc), now part of the town of Spenge/Herford district, were, according to local historians, Baringdorf and Düttingdorf, Wallenbrück with its St Mary church itself and the hamlet of Helligen at the ancient road from Herford to Osnabrück. New onomastic reflections do not draw back the name Helligen<sup>3</sup> from a Saxon man's name any more - as is undisputed for its individual farms - but explains it as taken from the topographical situation. Thus it meant the slight hill reaching down to the southern Mühlenbach creek. The original name might then have been *Helding*. Also it is possible to explain it from the middle low German expression for a territory routed out, what would also make sense in the context of establishing a new village. Whether the village had been founded in Saxon times or after the later

<sup>1</sup> On the historical background see K. Hauck: *Das Wissen Widukinds von Corvey von der Neubildung des sächsischen Stammes im 6. Jhd.*, in: H. Stob (Ed.): *Ostwestfälisch-Weserländische Forschungen zur geschichtlichen Landeskunde*, Münster/Westf. 1970, p. 1-16. Recent archaeogenetic research led to the theory, that the first permanent settlers were almost wiped out by an early form of plague when those moved in, who can be identified as our forefathers. The name of the major local creek Warmenau e.g. derives from indo-germ. »our«/water.

<sup>2</sup> On Spenge's history see: W. Mager (Hrsg.): *Geschichte der Stadt Spenge, Spenge 1984*; C. Hartmann u.a. (Hrsg.): *Spuren der Geschichte in Wallenbrück und Bardüttingdorf, Bielefeld 1992*, sowie M. Vollmer: *Die Flurnamen der Stadt Spenge, Bielefeld 1996*. G.H. Griese: *Heimatgeschichte des Amtes Spenge*, o.O. 1926; id.: *Wallenbrück. Ein Heimatbuch deutscher Geschichte, Herford 1932*, is not adequate in title and tone to today's methods any more, its content in some respects outdated. But one cannot deny his effort of academic achievement. Griese (to [J1367b], s. p. 71f.), born at Lenzinghausen is based among others on the Praestationsregister of Enger bailiwick from 1721, its 1686 Kataster, the Ledebur family archive. Cf. also: W. Wissmann: *Neunhundert Jahre Wallenbrück. Festschrift zur 900-Jahrfeier, Spenge 1952*. Among the ca. 30 parishes of the county, Wallenbrück was one of the smallest..

<sup>3</sup> Cf. mndt. helle/Abhang, nhd. halde Abhang; comp. engl. hill. B. Meineke: *Die Ortsnamen des Kreises Herford, Bielefeld 2011*, S. 124f. on Helligen. In older sources also Hellingen, Heilgen etc; in Low German »Helligen« is common. The place names of Baringdorf und Wallenbrück are meanwhile traced from persons' names, s. *ibid.* p. 366ff. and 292ff.

Frankish conquest, cannot be decided. Elder thinking believed, single farms were Frankish, cluster settlements Saxon. Reliable written sources exist from the beginning second millennium AD.

On the early history of the Blomeyers we can nevertheless only speculate. At the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century a dedication of the main farm of Wallenbrück, according to some historians including farms in the peasantry of Helliggen, to Osnabrück church is recorded<sup>4</sup>. The north and west of the Ravensberg county then was part of this diocese. According to this, in the clan of the dedicating lady the name of Widukind was still in use, which in the region is remembered as name of the leader of the pagan resistance against Frankish conquest. W. Mager convincingly suggested the said nun belonged to the nobles of Oesede<sup>5</sup>. Until late middle age farms in Helliggen and Wallenbrück however were property of monasteries such as Herford abbey and St Dionysios convent of Enger. The convent, consecrated to the patron of the victorious Franks, had been founded by the widow of the first German king Henry I on her patrimony for his commemoration in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century. Each of the twelve canonicates had one large farm to substitute him. Legend therefore made a number of farms in Enger and south of it deriving from the prince's companions. It is generally accepted, that queen Mathilde, Henry's second wife, was from the Widukind clan, was born near Enger and grew up under guidance of her aunt in Herford abbey. From Enger collegiate church the Wallenbrück one may have been branched off as proprietary church. Uncertain is it to connect the place-name »Wallenbrück«, settlement near Waldo's bridge, to count Waltbert, Widukind's grandson and presumed great-grandfather of Mathilde. He maybe also was count at the Grönegauas late as 859, descendants were in high clerical offices until late 10<sup>th</sup> century, the last known bishop Liudolf of Osnabrück<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless we can speculate carefully, that the mentioned farms had once been part of the estate of the said *dux*, who is buried in near Enger church, and his warriors. After their defeat, his men like him converted to christianity. From one of those farms the Blomeyers later stemmed from. Not much more can be said of our early forebearers.

The earliest notation of a *Blommeyge* in the sources is an entry in the Werburg manorial roll dated from palaeographic features and archival context to 1548. Annually he had to pay *fourteen bushels of oat, four hens and three guilders from the goat field*<sup>7</sup> (»Seygenkampe«) to the lord of the manor. No further taxes were to be paid, with exception of the church tithe of course. To be ratable, the farm might have been established the year before, and maybe non-repayment years have to be estimated. However, no names of individual family members are mentioned, just the cottage as an economic unit. A Johan Blommeier [0101a] is first mentioned a few years later in the Ravenberg *Urbar*<sup>8</sup>, a ducal account of the county's inhabitants from 1556. Johan is described as bondsman with wife and children to the squire Johann Ledebur<sup>9</sup> of Werburg<sup>10</sup>, a man of eldest noble stock in the region,

<sup>4</sup> Historischer Verein für die Grafschaft Ravensberg (Hrsg.): *Ravensberger Regesten 785-1346, 2 Bde., ed. by G. Engel, Bielefeld u.a. 1985; ibid. fn. to nrs. 80 and 97 anno 1097.*

<sup>5</sup> W. Wehrenbrecht: *Spenge im Mittelalter*, in: W. Mager (Ed.): *Geschichte der Stadt Spenge*, p. 39-72. Also comp. W. Hillebrand: *Besitz- und Standesverhältnisse des Osnabrücker Adels 800-1300 (Vorarb. z. histor. Atlas Nds, c. 23)*, Göttingen 1962 p. 86-89. O. Merker: *Das Werden des Territorialstaates am Beispiel des Amtes Grönenberg*, in: *Verein für Geschichte u. Landeskunde Osnabrücker (Ed.): Osnabrücker Mitteilungen 74 (1967)*, p. 1-36 gives an account from earliest times of the 17th century comprising all relevant factors influencing the area.

<sup>6</sup> K. Schmid: *Die Nachfahren Widukinds*, in: *DA 20 (1964)*, p. 1-47. Teacher Griese contributed to the collection of the memorial place build 1937 in an ancient farming burgher house near the church (modified in 1983 and 2005), from 1948 on he was in the board. Following the »Vita Mathildis Reginae antiquior«, Widukind himself established several »cellulas«, see Ravensberger Regesten 1, p. 91 no. 1.

<sup>7</sup> LdArch Münster Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 1762, no pages (s. appendix). Maybe to be dated up to three years earlier, for in 1544 succession at the Werburg estate might have demanded a record of incomes. A »Saigenkamp« north of Helliggen village still exists, but is no more part of the Blomeyer farm (Flurnamenatlas, p. 10).

<sup>8</sup> Griese (1932), p. 76ff. and F. Herberhold: *Das Ravensberger Urbar von 1556, Teil I Text, Münster 1960, Nr. 1216. Its statistical analysis -with incorrect dating- was done by K. Schreiber: Das Urbar der Grafschaft Ravensberg vom Jahre 1550, Münster i.W. 1906.*

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Johann III. Ledebur, who inherited the Werburg in 1544. Most prominent family member in Westphalia certainly was the historian Leopold von L. (1799-1877). Information on the most important offices and estates of the family contains G. Frhr. v. Ledebur: *Die Ledeburs. Geschichte der Uradelsfamilie Ledebur*, Kiel 1984 (Ms.), particular p. 113-131. Generally on the regional gentry see A. Fahne: *Geschichte der westphälischen Geschlechter*, o.O. 1853 (ND Osnabrück 1966), S.264 f.

<sup>10</sup> Manor house, whose name is taken from »Wederburg« and means »opposite (to the elder Mühlenburg)«. Today municipal property, the gatehouse serves as marriage room and local archive; records set in only ca. 1815. Parts of its' water ditch still

from a family dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The near Mühlenburg, Werburg and others were their main residences since they assumed them as fiefdom by the count of Ravensberg in early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Shortly before the 30-Years-War (1618-1648) the Ketteler family inherited the Werburg, soon the von Münchs, both also from ancient local families, and finally the von dem Bussches who owned it for more than two hundred years until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>11</sup>. Today the remains of the Werburg houses a history museum for children, the gatehouse is used as municipal archive and for wedding-ceremonies. The Ledebur were owing most bondsmen in the bailwick in their days, just second to the count, his tenant-in-chief. This was the duke of Jülich then, to whom the county was a secondary territory which he visited rarely. The local nobility therefore was almost free to exercise their will. They were under-tenants to the counts, later their bailies as well as hereditary marshals to Herford abbey, later county governors and members of the provincial diet. Their importance for the county is illustrated by the fact, that the common measure bushel often was described as Ledebur bushel, their leadership of the shire's knights' association and the fact that they assembled the local lords in the Wallenbrück church. There was even a saying that they were offspring of the counts<sup>12</sup>.

According to the *Urbarium* the Blommeier cottage owed neither service nor contribution to the ruler. He can hence not have been initiator of the establishment of the farm. Only in later years the ruler's administration installed most new small-estates. Johann II of Werburg also had the right of *Besat* i.e he was permitted to put men of his choice in charge of farmsteads. The more farmsteads, the more income from fees, contributions and statute labour. Motive might have been the great drought of 1540. On the whole the number of small farms in north east Westphalia has doubled between ca. 1450 to 1650. By satisfying the people's need for land, peasant uprisings as in south and central Germany had been avoided. Around 1640 as much as 147 bondsmen were counted for the Werburg estate. Most of them might have been established on former waste or common grounds (markland). No remark in the *Urbarium* tells us, Blommeier's cottage had also been erected this way, but this is not sufficient to assume he was a villager. His payment to his lord just was too low for such an interpretation. As border he rather was part of the village's middle class.

The topographical situation also supports the assumption that the farm had been built near markland. Blommeier's cottage stood just uphill the Ellerbach creek, which separated Helligen from the two manor houses Werburg and Mühlenburg and east of the still existing wood *Holmke*<sup>13</sup>. Woodland like this traditionally was used for spatial separation. Together with southern Vahrenhorster birch trees it was the border to Spenge parish. The markland was used for hogsleas, collecting fire wood and leaves for cattle food, mushrooms, berries etc. Details were fixed by the greater farmers in an annually newly negotiated markland statute. The more the population grew, the more important common waste grounds became. A later right of villagers to transport cattle over Blommeier's field also indicates the establishment of his farm near the markland. Unfortunately, local history is little productive in this respect<sup>14</sup>.

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*exists. A volunteer association takes care of the main building. See A. Wehrenbrecht: Die Werburg. Aus 500 Jahren ihrer Geschichte, Bielefeld 1994. The Mühlenburg is used as residence house and restaurant.*

<sup>11</sup> *The files of the Werburg were taken to Münster state archive in the early 1970s. They are part of the Depositum Benkhäusen, of which they make up to a third. Benkhäusen, ca. 30 km north of Wallenbrück near Espelkamp was main residence of the last Werburg owners. The 4000 Ledebur files are less well registered Cf. Nordrhein-Westfälisches Staatsarchiv (Ed.): Das Staatsarchiv Münster und seine Bestände. Territorialarchive von Minden, Ravensberg, Tecklenburg, Lingen und Herford, ed. by W. Reininghaus, Münster/Westf. 2000. Ibid. p. 34ff. A basic bibliography on constitutional, administrative, economic etc works of the (imperial) county.*

<sup>12</sup> E.A.F. Culemann: *Geographische Beschreibung der Grafschaft Ravensberg (1745)*, in: *Jahresbericht des Historischen Vereins der Grafschaft Ravensberg 54 (1947)*, p. 85-187, p. 142.

<sup>13</sup> *Cf. ndt. holt/wood; the suffix from -beke/creek, hence meaning »wood at the creek«. »Ellerbach« from ndt. Ellex/aldertree.*

<sup>14</sup> *Schreiber, passim. S. Brakensieck's: Agrarreform und ländliche Gesellschaft. Die Privatisierung der Marken in Nordwestdeutschland 1750-1850 (Forschungen zur Regionalgeschichte 1), Paderborn 1991 (Diss. Bielefeld 1990) is despite it's case study on Ravensberg p. 17-184 of little use, though it is of excellent use to get an idea of everyday life then.. See also Griese (1932), p. 95.*

According to general historical experience the Blommeier cottage will not have been established long before it's first mentioning. In Henry IV Ledebur's last will<sup>15</sup> from 1468 among five dozens farms and cottages it is not mentioned yet. No house of another lord would have been accepted so close to the Werburg, so this is our *terminus post quem* for the installation of a Blommeier farm. Three generations of unknown Blommeiers therefore might have preceded Johan. During a church visitation in September 1533 by the ducal governor, Spenge villagers complaint about the three Ledebur brothers, who »slain die marcken zu und berauwen die kirspelsluide und andere. Derhalven sich zuschen inen irrungen und gebrechen erhaven, dan die holtzgraven wollen sich die marcken als für ir eigen anziehen und undergewinnen«, and also Wallenbüchers complaint about the Werburg lord<sup>16</sup>. Their high-handednesses must not have included purely enclosing the common land for their own cattle stock. A more efficient use would have been to install new farms. Maybe therefore the founding of the Blommeyge farm was done under Johann II. Ledebur around 1530, who had inherited his estate in 1505. In this case, an unknown additional generation would have to be assumed before [0101a]. No proof, but maybe another hint of a late creation of our name is its absence in the Sondermühlen, Bruchmühlen and Rollinghof registers of husbandmen, which are kept in Osnabrück state archive. The first one contains hundreds of names from the Westphalian-Lower Saxon border area including Hellinggen and dates back in parts to the 1480s, but no Blomeyer. To this list could be added the files of Herford's St John, Bielefeld's St Mary, Osnabrück's St. Gertrudis and those of the Enger church (back to 1538). No files of more distant estates stored in the said archive were examined when insight demanded permission of private depositors such as Arenshorst, Krietenstein, Ostenwalde and Palsterkamp. Chances for new findings are small anyway.

As *Blomen farm*, as it might have been called in those days, we can imagine a straw covered, half-timbered house of some 40 to 40 feet. It's gate lead to an open fire place (»Herdstuie«) at the end of the hall (»Deele«), the cattle beside the walls. Right and left to the fire the eating and washing corners, beyond a chamber, a storeroom and maybe the best room (»Stube«). The open tallet stored hay and chicken, smoke conserved the grain stored there and left by the main gate (»Nuinduir«). It was smelling from wood, clay, sweat and manure. For centuries this type of building remained unchanged<sup>17</sup>. Some 200-year old oaks indicate, that the original building was located closer to the creek. Possibly some shards, an iron shutter or a penny of earlier residents is hidden in the soil. A more impressive successor building today stands at Spenge's Ledebur road. Since the first mentioning it is owned by the Blomeier family. The cottage's early inhabitants lived a comparatively contemplative life<sup>18</sup>. Untouched by the religious quarrels of city people and the enmities of the princes, events which would shake their world had long passed over respectively were still a lifetime ahead. From their duke Wilhelm V the Rich, who visited the county only once in 1556, not to mention his father-in-law king Ferdinand I in faraway Vienna or the king's brother emperor Charles V they heard, if at all, only in the Sunday prayer. Nobody yet possessed a clock.

Johan Blommeier [0101a] was not a free man. Already in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century only the seventh part of the population was, mostly the poor on which taxation was senseless. Becoming someone's bondmen however always was an act of free will of a man or woman (s. [0501c], p. 58), who then inherited this status to their offspring. His cottage was only a few *Ruten* (engl. *rods*, ca 600 yards) southeast of Hellingen hamlet, where the oldest estates of the peasantry were concentrated. Among them only the hereditary, hence older markman Bruning and the villager Rexmann (also Rekesman, Recksmann etc) also were Ledebur's bondmen. It is probable that

<sup>15</sup> DWUD Rep. Ledebur, Nr. 14, extract in Wehrenbrecht, p. 240f.

<sup>16</sup> Protokoll der kirchlichen Visitation der Grafschaft Ravensberg vom Jahre 1533. Nach den Akten des königlichen Staatsarchivs zu Düsseldorf mitgeteilt von Pastor A. Schmidt in Vlotho, in: *Jahrbuch des Vereins für evangelische Kirchengeschichte Westfalens* 6 (1904), S. 135-169, hier S. 150ff. See also Brakensieck p. 38, Griese (1932) p. 98 and Urbar p. 231. Also interesting the given number of ca. »300 communicanten« in Wallenbrück, i.e. people participating in the eucharistie, from which only small children were excluded.

<sup>17</sup> Vgl. L. Volmer: *Von der westphälischen Bauart. Hausbau in Ravensberg zwischen 1700 und 1870, Essen 2011 (Diss. Münster 2005), esp. p. 61ff. and 488ff.*

<sup>18</sup> G. Angermann: *Volksleben im Nordosten Westfalens zu Beginn der Neuzeit. Eine wachsende Bevölkerung zwischen Reformation und Renaissance, Obrigkeit und Wirtschaft (Minden, Herford, Ravensberg, Lippe), Münster/Westf. et al. 1995 tries to illustrate everyday-life in a period short of written sources.*

Blommeier's cottage had been split of the former's farm<sup>19</sup>, if not installed on markland. For a marriage of Johan Blommeier's grand-daughter [0302b] to a Bruning, about which we know from a later record<sup>20</sup>, would not have been allowed according to ecclesiastical law would they be kin so close to each other. A marriage between a Blomeyer and Rexmann in contrast was contracted only three generations afterwards for the first time. One can also assume that for a new cottage the sons of the villagers, who surely provided the necessary investment capital, were preferred. Up to a fourth of its arable land had been separated for the new farmstead. And in the oldest registers Blomeyer is usually listed directly behind Rexmann. Certainly the Rexmann farm or possible predecessors at that time existed already for seven or eight-hundred years. From Griese's and W. Wehrenbrechts's evaluations of the medieval rolls we can carefully conclude Rexmann maybe still was freeman in late middle age. Hartmann counts him among the most ancient Helligen estates<sup>21</sup>. A farm like this provided the settlers with everything needed for daily life, from meat to grain, milk, beer, honey, firewood and lumber, wool, linen and leather. Enough to give a surplus to a saxon, frankish or german nobleman, under whose protection most of them came, who in exchange overtook military service. What was not produced locally could be bartered with neighbours or like iron goods bought from travelling merchants. This way of life came to an end at the time in which the cottage must have been build, Johann Blommeier [0101a] called his home. When surnames came in use in the high middle age, the Blomeyer ancestors thus were named Rexmann for two or three centuries. Only with right on his own soil Johan won an own identity. Possibly nee owner of a new farm place named Johan got the new surname Blommeier to differentiate him from Johan Rexmann, who is also mentioned in the *Urbarium*<sup>22</sup>, and perhaps was Blommeier's father or brother. Johan was one of the most popular first names then, among male Blomeiers alone almost a third bear it in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Family names in those days were not once and for all fixed. In Spenge for example, the sources mention one and the same family within 150 years as Eickmeyer, Eickinhove and Unter der Eiche, all meaning »farm at the oaks«. Should we therefore meet a Blomert/Bloemer/Blomenkemper in the registers it could be a person otherwise called Blomeier. Also the husband, who usually transferred his name to his wife, could adopt her surname when he overtook her family's estate<sup>23</sup>. From time to time in following centuries Blomeiers were hirelings at Rexmanns'.

The meaning of the name *Blommeyge* is not difficult to explain<sup>24</sup>. To give a short version, it is most improbable that there is any connection to the Osnabrück patricians of the 13<sup>th</sup> century called Blawe, nor to a *Bleeke*, the place where linen, a traditional product in Ravensberg county, was put to dry after its bleaching. In 1604 a *Blomenwiese* (flower meadow) is mentioned in the records<sup>25</sup> close to the Blomeyer cottage. Our family name therefore rather means as much as *tenant at the meadow*. As most German surnames it is a place name. Similar names in Wallenbrück bore Jurgen by de Linden (George at the lime trees), Jurgen vor dem Baum (George at the tree) or Thonius Ellersieck (Anton at the alder creek). Related names of even meaning are for example Klee- and

<sup>19</sup> H. Hirschfelder: *Herrschaftsordnung und Bauerntum im Hochstift Osnabrück im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert (Osnabrücker Geschichtsquellen und Forschungen 16)*, Osnabrück 1971, p. 87. A »house Rekesmann« is mentioned as *Ledebur* property first in 1468 in *Ledebur's* last will, later it comprises 64 acres ground.

<sup>20</sup> LdArch Münster Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 2869.

<sup>21</sup> Griese (1932) p. 76ff., Hartmann p. 149. In the files also »Recksmann«, »Rekesmann«, »Reckmann«, »Rextmann«, »Reickmann«, »Rukman«; from ancient German place name »Hecke«/hedge, or »recke«/hero, or maybe from a man's name »Raghar« or so. In none of the Westphalian record collections (Darpe, Engel, Philippi/Bär) and the DWUD nor at Kenter anything is said about this farm. Likewise few Ravensberg cattle lists from the 1490s in Duisburg state archive are of no use. Naming predominantly used endings –ing (Helligen, Bruning, Cordinck), –mann (Rexmann, Tiemann) and –meier in successive centuries from highmiddle age to early modern times.

<sup>22</sup> See *Urbarium* p. 313, Nr. 1264.

<sup>23</sup> See E. Storck: *Der Hofname in der Grafschaft Ravensberg*, in: *Ravensberger Blätter* 8 (1949), S. 63ff.

<sup>24</sup> Introduction to onomastic K. Kunze: *Namenkunde*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. München 2004, also H. Bahlow: *Niederdeutsches Namenbuch*, Walluf et. al. 1972. To be incorporated into the manuals the name B. is too rare. Exception: R. Zoder: *Familiennamen in Ostfalen*, vol. 1 Hildesheim 1968, p. 255. His proves for the 16th century from Oschersleben, Goslar and Hannover rather confer to the Uslar B. (see above). His hypothetical deduction from an elder »Blomann« is unproved (but comp. fn. 116).

<sup>25</sup> DWUD, Rep. *Ledebur*, Nr. 133. Even in the *Urkataster of Bünde district* (repr. Hüllinghorst) 1826/28 the area between *Helligen* and *Ellerbach* is called "Oben Wiesen" (upper meadows), Vollmer, p. 54 does not know about it anymore.

Koppelmeier or Weidemann. A geological MA thesis of H. Lohmann<sup>26</sup> from Spenge describes the high level of ground water in that particular area which might have made pasture at an early stage more effective than ploughing, so our assumption is supported from this view as well. Imagination of willows with flowers (German: Blumen, formerly *Blomen*, compare *bloom* in English) indeed made sense before the input of all sorts of chemicals to the soil and its suppression by heavy machines had disturbed its ecological balance<sup>27</sup>. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century *blômholt* is used to describe a prolific stock of trees well suitable for pig feed. *Meier/Meyer*<sup>28</sup> in Low Germany's early middle age was a name for Frankish reeve farms, but its meaning changed in time. In early modern time combined -meyer/-meier names no longer indicated an elevated position in a village hierarchy, but were given to people who hired a small estate for a certain time, usually for lifetime but with customary right to pass it to one's children. The increasement of such small-holdings had become a necessity when the population loss of the Black Death in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was balanced again in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as the now surplus of agrarian population could no longer, as in earlier centuries, found new villages in untouched forests, settle in new towns or emigrate to the Baltic. As a result two centuries later a massive, economically endangered population of small holders was characteristic to the Minden-Ravensberg country and -meier-names can be found there in the most dense concentration within all of Germany until today. Writing either with y or i made no difference. Likewise the names e.g. Henry and Elizabeth sometimes in local dialect were spelled Henrich or Hinrig resp. Elsabein or Ilsabein. In the records we find at least nine different writings, such as Blameyer, Blohmeier or Blohmeyer<sup>29</sup>. Sometimes in official documents, the clerk puts it Blomeyer, but the signature looks Blomeier. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century liked to add diacritics onto the y (ÿ, ŷ).

As father to an adult daughter Weßell (in use only in the Netherlands, in modern German: Werner) [0201a] Blomeyer might have been a son of Johan Blommeier. His daughter Anke (Anna Katharina) [0301b] already had an illegitimate son called Jost (Josiah) [0401a] when she married to Knigge's tiny cottage in Spenge in 1603. From the document permitting her change to Spenge we learn that she and her parents formerly had belonged to the Mühlenburg Ledeburs. It must had been an easy thing to the Werburg Ledebur to exchange Blomeyer sons, as the small farmstead could not nourish more than one man and his family anyway. Even teenagers could be changed between the lords, e.g. Johann Hinrich [Ä0602c] a few days before his fourteenth birthday in 1687<sup>30</sup>. In everyday-life however little altered for the respective person. The Knigge family is still flourishing around Spenge in our days. Although a new hereditor was born soon, a son of widow Johan Knigge's first wife overtook the farm in 1620. We do not hear from any other offspring from Weßell.

Hinrig Bruning, who married a Blomeyer's and his wife Grete's (Margarete) daughter [0302a] october 1<sup>st</sup> 1607 and overtook her family's cottage<sup>31</sup> could have been son-in-law to an unknown sibling of Weßell. This way of succession was applied only when no male heirs were available to manage an estate. As was the custom, Henry will have adopted the family name Blomeier. In the third generation thus the farm was surpassed by the female

<sup>26</sup> H. Lohmann: *Die siedlungsgeographische Entwicklung der Gemarkung Spenge (Msch.)*, Bielefeld 1971, p. 7 and 50. Also R. Zoder: *Die niedersächsischen Meier. Eine sozial- und agrargeschichtliche Studie an Hand der Familiennamen auf »-meier«*, in: *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte (NF) 23* (1951), p. 1-88.

<sup>27</sup> More in K. Ditt u.a. (Hrsg.): *Agrarmodernisierung und ökologische Folgen. Westfalen vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert (Forschungen zur Regionalgeschichte 40)*, Paderborn et al., esp. p. 47-84 R. Gudermann: *Der Take-off der Landwirtschaft im 19. Jahrhundert und seine Konsequenzen für Umwelt und Gesellschaft*.

<sup>28</sup> L. Schütte: *Schulte und Meier in (Nordost-)Westfalen*, in: A. Mayr/K. Tenlitz (Hrsg.): *Bielefeld und Nordost-Westfalen. Entwicklung, Strukturen und Planung im unteren Weserbergland*, Münster 1995, p. 211-226; also G.H. Griese: *Die Meierhöfe und ihre Entstehung: Ein Beitrag zur Siedlungsgeschichte Ravensbergs*, in: *Jahresbericht des Historischen Vereins für die Grafschaft Ravensberg 45*, Bielefeld 1931, p. 107-122. To draw -meier from »meggen«/mowing looks interesting in combination with the name's prefix, but is rare and almost never provable.

<sup>29</sup> Occasionally also »Blomayer« (e.g. *LdArch Münster*, A 204/XII, 4); until the 16<sup>th</sup> c. frequently »Meiger«. In the church books of the 1650s »Blameyer«; in *ibid.* Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 8823 once »Bloemejer«. [Ä1216b] signs announcing child-birth several times as »Blommeyer«, what years later was corrected officially. His cousin [Ä1217c] at that occasion was so exited that he wrote »Blomeieler«. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century occasionally officials write a first name »Carl«, but the man himself signs »Karl« on the same document. In printed works diacritics never are used.

<sup>30</sup> *LdArch Münster*: *Stift St. Mariä auf dem Berge*, files no. 137, p. 320 (exchange letter) and *ibid.* no.162, p. 12r.

<sup>31</sup> *LdArch Münster*, Dep. Benkhausen, Nr. 7478, p. 110 (list of Werburg bondsmen 1600-1660). Before Bruning had been bondsman of the Sparrenburg bailiff, see *ibid.* p. 79r.

line for the first time, what also was to happen again several times later. Children were born to Henry and his wife between 1607 and 1622: Lüdeke, Johan, Anne, Jost and Henry [0405a-e]. It was thought to be worth noting Johan's birth »uf palm«(arum), i.e. palm sunday 5<sup>th</sup> april 1612 (april 15<sup>th</sup> after introduction of the Gregorian calendar in 1700). Griese mentions a Caroline Blomeyer [0403b] who married farmer Ernst Grönegress in 1622 but does not tell us his source<sup>32</sup>. She might have been a sister to Jasper [0403a] and can be interated into the lineage with difficulties only. Maybe she was a daughter from an earlier marriage of [0301c]. Sewin (colloquial version of Severin) [0301a] married the widow of the large Helligen estate Tieman in 1601 and died in 1644. His exchange from the Mühlenburg to Herford abbey makes us believe him to be Weßell's son, too<sup>33</sup>. It took place 28<sup>th</sup> of august 1601, which is the first exact date of the family history. For the woman he was her third husband, offspring is not known. He must have been a man of qualities, otherwise the Herford chapter would not have agreed to the marriage, which made him head of a farm at least five times as big as his uncle's [0201b] one. His first name, rare in the region, is noted only once in the *Urbarium* for the whole bailiff in Spenge and once for free under-bailiff Klingenberg in Wallenbrück<sup>34</sup>. An under-bailiff's, i.e. a farmer competent of reading and writing used as administrative aide, daughter would not have been an unadaequate bride for farmer Rexmann's son Johan Blommeier or one of his sons, so the name might had been introduced by such a marriage. Apparently Severin himself was capable to write; at least he could put his name under a debt directory. [0301a]'s intention must have been to survive this spouse and generate offspring with a younger wife. But after being plundered by soldiers in 1626 he was almost corrupt and had to be sold to Meyer zu Ohsen, neighbor Blomeyer among the creditors with seven *Reichstalers*, cousin Knigge with ten, but not [0301c]. Severin himself was mistreated so badly that he had to stay »full five weeks in bed«<sup>35</sup>. Soon after in Lenzinghausen a Herman [0301c] married wealthy Elisabeth Bockhorst<sup>36</sup>. Kenter's date of marriage 1610 had not been confirmed, but the conclusions drawn from the year of release of one of his wife's sons from her first marriage 1626, which usually not happened before the twelfth year, and from the probable handover of the farm to Herman's daughter from his presumed third marriage around 1650 do not contradict the assumption that he had been grandson to [0101a]. He married another time in 1618 and if we do not want to introduce an unknown branch we shall assume even an additional earlier marriage from which he had [0403a/b]. The other six children are not recorded in the ancestors list, because they did not bear our name. All three siblings [0301a-c] aquired farms. We lack proof, but regarding rural marriage customs it could likewise be possible, that they were half-siblings to [0302a] from a former marriage of their father, thus farmer-children who just lost their claim to inheritance to offspring of the new couple. Mentioning Bruning's wife's firstname might indicate this interpretation, but this cannot be decided as long as we lack additional documents. Werner [0201a] then might have been farmer Blomeyer. To record his daughter Anke's letter of change might be another hint, for it would be rather unusual to keep the one of a mere hireling's child. A particular charm of this combination is the necessity of just one instead of two unknown in the second generation of the reconstructed descendance. Also Jasper's ascension to the farm (see below) would become even more plausible. Werner Blomeyer's dependence to the Mühlenburg instead the Werburg however is not brought into accordance.

Unfortunately, the Wallenbrück church books which had been made obligatory by the ruler's mandate in the 1580s had been destroyed during the 30 Years War, those from Spenge had been lost when the parish house

<sup>32</sup> Griese (1932), p. 128. *His announcement to publish Wallenbrück family trees in vol. I of the Ravensberger Geschlechterbuch was not realized. The hint possibly was from Enger pastor Gerh. Kenter (1913-86), but is not reconstructable from his left papers at the Bethel archive and at Gelsenkirchen Conservation Association. Grönegress was bondsman to the von Cappel in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, searching in the deposit of their successors in the Westphalian Archive Departement lead to no results.*

<sup>33</sup> LKArch Bielefeld-Bethel: Kenter collection 20,4 Fasc. 3p. C with reference to information of Griese from 1956, who then was an experienced researcher. Also *ibid.*. Fasc. 4 n. p. Blomeyer has 20,4 Fasc. 4 his own page, whose information does not exceed the already known.

<sup>34</sup> Urbar no. 1349 (»Segewin«) and 1253, see B. Hüllinghorst: *Protokolle der Vogtei Enger des Amtmanns Consbruch (1650-1654)*, Herford 1993, p. 242. Rarely also »Wessel« (no. 995 and 1328).

<sup>35</sup> LdArch Münster, Fürststabe Herford, files 620 p. 24 and *ibid.* no. 962 p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*: Kollegiatstift St. Mauritz vor Münster, files no 0/L9/6 p. 33. Bockhorst owned ca 39 acres.



burned down in 1765<sup>37</sup>. Others might have been destroyed at the great city fire of Herford 1638, behind whose presumptively certain walls they might have been brought before. Lacking data in later times also has to be complained of. During the Seven Years War troops quartered in Wallenbrück and will have used church books to make fire or to produce bullet paper. Most documents we rely on for the early family history are the surviving records of the Werburg archive in Münster State Archive (deposit Benkhausen) and the church books in the Lutheran Archive of Westphalia in Bielefeld-Bethel. Files and church books concerning Blomeiers in Lower Saxony mostly are stored in the Church Book Archive and the State Archive of Osnabrück.

To maintain the interests of the House of Brandenburg in the quarrel over the succession to the died-out house of Jülich the county Ravensberg had been occupied by troops of the prince of Orange as early as 1615, then from 1623 for some ten years by those from the catholic party<sup>38</sup>. Several times it had to suffer marching armies through its territory. The very time of suffering however were the years 1633-36 when both war parties occupied it simultaneously. From nearby Bielefeld we know that it lost a tenth of its threethousand inhabitants in the hot summer of 1636 by plague. In the 1670s Münster and French troops raided into it, after the prince-elect had dislocated his army in the West to support the Dutch General States against another French attack. Compared to other parts of Germany such as Mecklenburg or Silesia losses in north-west Germany were modest however. Despite this, the location of the Blomeyer farm close to the main road from Herford to Osnabrück and to the Werburg manor could have made it an object of plundering troops, who killed family members or took away their food reserve so they had to starve to death. A siege of Bielefeld's Sparrenburg in spring 1625 failed, the prisoners including Ravensberg dwellers who were forced to support, were punished by cutting off noses and ears. Maybe young Lüdeke [0405a] took part, but armies were small at the time, so regular soldiery of any of the few known Blomeyers is improbable. The Werburg afterwards was occupied and plundered by imperial dragoons<sup>39</sup> and almost certainly the Blomeyer farm was affected. Thus from the 1650s onwards, when written documents<sup>40</sup> exist in greater number we read of few family members only: Hermann [0501a], whose death is recorded 1655, Hinrig [0501b], and Elisabeth, Jasper's wife. She might have been »the old Blomeyer's« who died september 3rd 1679<sup>41</sup>. 1667 a Jürgen Blomeyer [0601a] must be born, as his dead is recorded in Wallenbrück at the age of 59 in 1726. Neither he nor his parents left any traces as they probably were servants all life long. Berend (Bernhard) Blomeyer [0501d] will be dealt with in the next chapter. If we do not want to introduce more elusive individuals to the reconstruction of the lineage, Jasper shall have been brother to Caroline, Hinrich and Berend Jasper's sons. Biologically another generation between these two is possible, but we have no evidence of this.

It goes without saying that to every generation we have to add several young deceased infants who were not recorded. Prior to times documents are available no extensive branching-out of the family should be assumed. Successive bad harvests in the 1570s and sinking average temperature during mid-16<sup>th</sup> till late 17<sup>th</sup> century reduced plant-growing, consequently food-supply and thus margins for population growth. After the Schmalkaldic war 1546/47 during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the danish-swedish war, the Dutch struggle for freedom and Huguenott wars provided well-paid service-opportunities as lansquenets to Westphalian country folks as well<sup>42</sup>, but reduced the possibility of founding families. Maybe therefore all then living Blomeyers knew each other. The given data are in accordance with a request of a Jasper Borgmeier, married to Elisabeth Winkeling-hauß, from june 1662 in Werburg's protocoll book<sup>43</sup> to overtake »Blomeyers stette« for twenty-five *Reichstalers*

<sup>37</sup> See G. H. Griese's *Die ersten Kirchenbücher in Ravensberg*, in: *Ravensberger Blätter* 6 (1949), p. 50. Wallenbrück church-book are incomplete 1766/67, 1771 and 1823 (baptisms) and 1762-66 (marriages).

<sup>38</sup> K. Salge: *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg in der Grafschaft Ravensberg*, in: *Jahresbericht des Historischen Vereins für die Grafschaft Ravensberg* 36 (1922), p. 1-55 (Diss. Münster 1921), Bielefeld 1922.

<sup>39</sup> Wehrenbrecht p. 175ff.

<sup>40</sup> LKArch Bielefeld-Bethel: KB Wallenbrück 1655-1687, p. 64, 81, 101 u. 108, as well as p. 67. Hermann's age is unidentifiable, maybe 48 years. He cannot have been Bruning's son then. An entry at *Do(min)ica 13 trinitatis*, i.e. 22<sup>nd</sup> august 1655 has Henry as godfather.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>42</sup> Angermann, p. 87f., 149, 297.

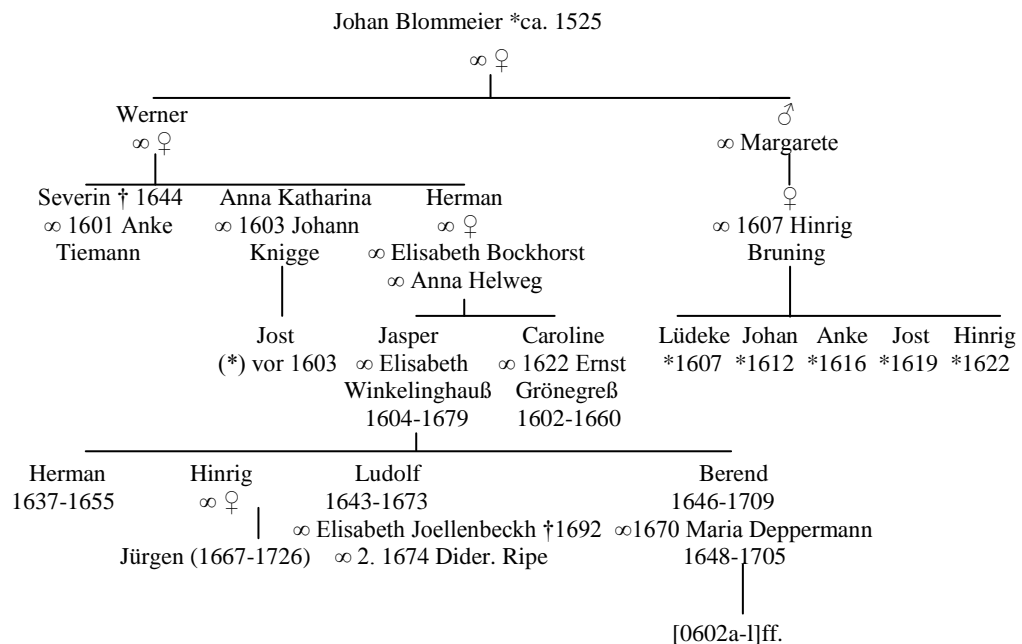
<sup>43</sup> LdArch Münster, Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 838, p. 1. On Borgmeier in Enger bailiff see *ibid.* *Visitationsregister 1720*, p. 573 and *Urbarium No. 1369*.

if we assume that the mentioned Jasper in already progressed age acquired the small freehold place Borgmeier in Spenge for a short time, but the bigger Blomeyer farm in Helligen soon after, so beared a different name only for a short time. Maybe his presumed father [0301c] had already noticed with anger that his cousin and Henry Bruning had inherited the grandfather's place. Borgmeier's heir is reported to have married the miller's widow and rejected his father's farm<sup>44</sup>. First known Blomeyer freeman for a while, Jasper might have been capable to raise the fee for overtaking a new home twice within such a short period. Three adolescent sons were ready to help him at work. His predecessor might have been one of the BruningBlomeyers. He could even support [0501c]'s new farm with fifty *Talers* five years later<sup>45</sup>. Maybe his »wealth« came from his wife ? We know of the Winkelinghaus farm from Griese, and earlier, a Johann Winkelinghaus was among the main creditors to his uncle Severin<sup>46</sup>.

Ludloff [0501c], likewise Jasper's son, shall have been a brother to Berend, who named one of his sons like him [0602e]. He pledged his lord Heinrich Ledebur of Königsbrück »deeply and continuously«, to let him leave whatever way he wanted to take, what he finally recorded on february 26<sup>th</sup> 1668. He overtook his father-in-law Jollenbeckh's cottage on Wallenbrück markland belonging to Sondermühlen estate<sup>47</sup>. Thus the liberation had been condition just to get the farm. Ownership of a however small farmstead with some arable land to produce food was estimated more than an abstract liberty. Soon however, he expired his soul. Death-fee war released *ex singulari misericordia* because of heavy damage from storms and new quarterings<sup>48</sup>. In 1674 Hermann Meyer zu Helligen and Berend Blomeier confirm to Ludloff's minor Anna Ilsabein her right of residence in the cottage where her step-father was living by then. Son Jobst Henrich is not mentioned anymore, he had died in infancy<sup>49</sup>.

Our prosopographic knowledge is dense enough anyway to start counting generations with Johan Blommeier. In consequence, we can trace back our roots to the times of Martin Luther.

The given schedule shall demonstrate, how the family-tree in it's early stage might have looked like, but also gives an idea of how fragile this reconstruction in many aspects is:



<sup>44</sup> LKArch Bielefeld-Bethel: *Kenter collection* 20,5 Fasc. 4, p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> LdArch Osnabrück: *Eigenbehörigenbuch Sondermühlen*, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Griese (1932), p. 115 and fn. 34.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.: *Charters Sondermühlen* Nr. 250 and *ibid. Manorial rolls Sondermühlen* Rep. 563 Nr. 188, Bl. 23. *The cottage*: Urbar Nr. 1256 in Wallenbrück parish. In the church book he is called »Luelff Jölmke«.

<sup>48</sup> See fn. 45, p. 50. In 1672 the Brandenburg prince-elect dislocated his army in the west to support the Dutch General States against the French attack.

<sup>49</sup> Hüllinghorst, p. 768f.

## 7.2. The »Bockhorst« Blomeyers

Berend Blomeyer's letter of exchange from Königsbrück's Ledebur to Werburg's still exists<sup>50</sup>. Blomeyers had become Königsbrück's men probably by Berend's mother. As husbandman he probably spend his lifetime in his home region. Neighbour Rexmann bought himself and his wife out to release from bondsmanship in 1694, Meyer to Helligen did so 1713<sup>51</sup>. In October 1670 he married Maria Deppermann<sup>52</sup>, probably born 1648, from Baringdorf, who gave birth to her first child seven months later. Generally women were seen no longer as brides but as wives once the marriage contract was completed<sup>53</sup>. Her family were a Münster canonical's men. Possession of a wife, a horse, three cows and a pig demonstrated Berend's social position. Two thirds of Wallenbrück estates owned less cattle, a sixth a lot more<sup>54</sup>. According to custom and law Berend's minor Jobst Henrich [0602k] succeeded him. Deviation of heritage rules occurred, as we have seen already, often enough to incorporate it as paragraph 1 into the *statute of property*<sup>55</sup> from 1669. By this codification on behalf of the Great Prince-elect we are well informed about the social and economic situation of the county at that time. Among freemen usually the eldest son inherited an estate, the youngest among the unfree.

A three-field economy was the foundation of the Blomeyers of the time like of most Germans then. A third of the arable land grew summer, another third winter grain, the rest being fallow ground for the cattle. Mostly rye and oat was produced, later potatoes were added. Potatoes, buckwheat groat and rye bread in milk were the major food. Potatoe pancake (»Pickert«) still is a popular dish in Eastern Westphalia. Before introducing potatoes it was also made by buckwheat. People usually ate with their fingers and from the same pot or the daily stew with a wooden spoon. Water from creeks and fountains in preindustrial time was drinkable everywhere outside the few towns. Flax, though of great importance to local economy, grows well only one in eight to twelve years on the same field, therefore no more than a twelfth of the soil was covered with this plant.

In the next generation Johann Albert Heinrich [0715e] hold the farm. Soon after his death in autumn 1758 a Johann Henrich Niemeier (here also writings *-meyer*), maybe from Spenge, where they are still numerous, married widow Anna Maria née Bruning. Johann Albert's cousin Dietrich [Ä0701f] also married a Bruning maiden. Widow, he espoused a cousin of his wife, who also had lost her husband. The Brunings certainly were good matches were they from the hereditary marksmen of that name. [Ä1111b] and [J1248e] likewise married two women of same surnames (in case of (the first no sisters); widower [Ä1225a] his widow sister-in-law. In hindsight we have difficulties to analyze the underlying marriage and acquisition strategies<sup>56</sup>. As no bachelor or widowed brother of the deceased was alive to replace him, Niemeier gained widow and farm Blomeier. Like the above mentioned Hinrig Bruning he adopted the farm's name and is called in Wallenbrück church-books from then on *Colon Blomeier*<sup>57</sup>. This was as common as until recently in Germany adopting a husband's name by married women. Then, son Caspar Heinrich [B0823e] from the second marriage overtook the farm. When he died, his second wife Cathrine Döpker married to Johann Wilhelm Bockhorst, who like his wife's former father-in-law fifty years ago accepted the name Blomeier. Managing the Blomeyer farm secured his family's existence in the »year

<sup>50</sup> LdArch Münster, *Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 3112. On Königsbrück estate only two kilometers west of Helligen at the Warmenau creek see Griese (1932), p. 85f. Today owned by a von Richthofen.*

<sup>51</sup> Griese (1932), p. 115ff.

<sup>52</sup> Literally »Marieken«; according to LdArch Münster *Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 3112 daughter of Hinrich and Anna Dippermann, whose eldest of seven children girl Maria is recorded in KB Wallenbrück 1655-1687 p. 74/1656, so that she might be born in 1648.*

<sup>53</sup> P.F. Weddigen's: *Historisch-geographisch-statistische Beschreibung der Grafschaft Ravensberg in Westphalen, 2 vols. Leipzig 1790, insinuation p. 47: »Sobald der Ehecontract geschlossen ist, sieht der Bräutigam die Braut als seine Frau an, daher Kindtaufe und Hochzeit nicht weit voneinander entfernt zu seyn pflegen« can be transferred to the ancestral generation. Also trial before relations were practised to find out if a girl was skilled and diligent enough.*

<sup>54</sup> LdArch Münster, *cattle register Sparenberg district (ca. 1676), p. 117f., here p. 121. Numbers varied in time, cattle was sold after the grazing period for example and it is uncertain, if weak or animals to be slaughtered always were included.*

<sup>55</sup> See W. Upmeyer: *Die Minden-Ravensberger Eigentumsordnung von 1741, Hildesheim 1906.*

<sup>56</sup> See C. Fertig: *Familie, verwandtschaftliche Netzwerke und Klassenbildung im ländlichen Westfalen 1750-1874 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Agrargeschichte 54), Stuttgart 2012 (Diss. Münster 2010), with examples from Löhne/Herford district.*

<sup>57</sup> LKArch Bielefeld-Bethel: *KB Wallenbrück 1759 Bl. 255, 1760 Bl. 261, 1764 Bl. 13etc.*

without summer« 1816. Mean brother of three, Joahnn Wilhelm had little chance to overtake his father's farm in Lenzinghausen.

One could doubt with good reason whether their offspring is one kinship with physical progenitors of Berend [0501d]. Yet all posteriority of Johann Wilhelm Bockhorst-Blomeyer undoubtedly became members of the Blomeyers and got the name in accordance both with custom and law. Only from 1828 onwards it was no longer allowed in Prussia to change names when overtaking a new cottage. Even [B1014c] and [Ä1005e], born thirty years after that law, often are called by their wives' names in the sources. In addition we may assume that when Bockhorst son [B0925j] overtook his new name Dammann, he wished to be part of the new family as well. Today the Bockhorst-Blomeyers are Blomeyers since six generation by descendance anyway; by undisputed use of the name for two-a-half centuries they acquired a claim to belong to the kinship even if the above reconstruction should be wrong. Stemming from the same farmstead as all other Blomeiers they should be accepted as such; naming this branch »the Bockhorst Blomeyers« sufficiently indicates their particular situation. Much more falls into account, that Johann Wilhelm's same-named father apparently descended from [0301c], whose second daughter Agnes of his marriage with Anna Helweg had been his principal heir<sup>58</sup>: In this case, no Bockhorst-Blomeyer would have a drop of Bockhorst blood in his venes, but more of Blomeyers' than any other name-carrier ! In fact, the descendants are closer related to the elder branch than members of the younger branch are.

The lost Spenge church books indeed are replaced by a Lenzinghausen protocol-book and a St. Mauritz roll of all local farms<sup>59</sup>. They permit a reconstruction of the ancestral line between 1650 and 1750. A gap remains just during parallel Blomeier generation five. We only know of Agnes's daughter Anna, but a farmer and potential son Johann Henrich, married to Anna Wibbig is also recorded. And what is even more, Johann Wilhelm Bockhost senior's first wife was Anna Maria Elisabeth [0823a], thus their son descended from [0301c] in both paternal and maternal line. Johann Wilhelm junior's mother-in-law, eldest daughter of Helligen farmer [0715a], previously had been sister-in-law to his wife by her first meanwhile deceased husband. Catherine Döpker's mother cannot be identified clearly for slight variants of first names in church books<sup>60</sup>. Probably she was [Ä0802e], coincidentally in all relevant Bünde church-books certainly a Blomeyer. She can rather not have been half-sister of Caspar Heinrich [0823e] from his mother's first marriage, for in this case he would have had married a niece, Bockhorst junior a cousin. If the affiliation to [Ä0701f] in the ancestors' list is correct, Catherine Döpker instead just was great-granddaughter of his step-uncle of second degree respectively great-granddaughter of a step-uncle third degree of Bockhorst junior. With some probability she knew about her grand-mother, whereas rather improbably Johann Wilhelm had an idea about the origin of his great-great-great-grandfather. In any case posteriority [B0925e-h] were part of the Blomeyer kinship not only by their father's gaining of name and farm, but also through their grandmother's descendance. Only children from Niemeier's son Caspar Heinrich's [0829e] marriage with Catherine Griese did not descend from Herman; but posteriority of them seems to be small and is known only up to the 13th generation in Osnabrück [B1386a/b]. Living »Bockhorst« Blomeyers thus are connected by the Döpker marriage to the elder branch, or by [0832a]'s marriage to Berend's minor [0602k]. Whoever therefore brought up the rumour still believed by old [B1283a] from Lengerich, the »Bockhosters« had nothing to do with the rest of the clan did not know the sources. Parson Kenter cannot have been it, his name is found on the users' list of the relevant documents.

Berend's successor gave one smoked hen as ground due to the government's revenue office a year, some bushel of straw to the bailiff, another four chickens plus eighteen bushel oat to lord von dem Bussche whom he also

<sup>58</sup> *Again ca. 1700 female succession took place, see fn. 41/Visitationsregister p. 617.*

<sup>59</sup> LdArch Münster: *Kollegiatsstift St. Mauritz vor Münster, files no 0/L 9/7, p. 9r, 44, 72 and ibid. no. 0/L9/8 p. 7, also LKArch Bielefeld-Bethel: KB Spenge 1765, p. 95. The ancestral line runs backwards from Johann Wilh. (\*1781) his father of the same name (\*1747) and Anton Hinr. (\*1695) to Agnes's son Johann Henr. († before 1710) Is the reconstruction correct, Johann Wilhelm Bockhorst would even be part of the eight (Blomeyer-) generation into which he married at Helligen. A genealogical table spreading from Herman to Johann Wilhelm in the appendix p. 144. Ibid. p. 2 Agnes's husband Herman Schefer is still noted as farmer. Spelling of the surname also »Boic(h)horst« (»living at the beeches' wood«).*

<sup>60</sup> LKArch Bielefeld-Bethel: *KB Bünde 1768 p. 359, 1771p. 380; 1773/76/80 n.p; KB Wallenbrück 1744 p. 177. The name Döpker is also frequently written in variations. Strange however, that the widow's new bride was a hireling's, not a farmer's wife ash ad been customary.*

owed one day work a week<sup>61</sup>. He had to help the bailiff hunting wolves as well and to watch for smugglers. The tithe was for Königsbrück manor, the parson got three gifts for his substitution a year, the sexton at easter five pace eggs and six pennies, the poor about a penny per month. Additionally he had to pay almost twelve *Talers* taxes a year. One *Taler* was the price for a pair of men leather shoes or ten horseshoes. Compared to the first register we know of, taxes had been increased a lot since the Great War's ending, almost certainly when Berend overtook the farm<sup>62</sup>. It has been reduced later during the French occupation when male labor force was short. Reductions also were negotiated in case of bad harvest, cattle diseases or general misery. In later times help during the harvest and weekly service, which consisted of transport of hay, stone or letters, repair of streets and bridges etc was extended to manufacturing of flax, whereas the due to the revenue office had been turned into a money tax. The lords however lost more and more control over the rural population in the course of centuries to the state government<sup>63</sup>. Not without reason in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the saying was common "You walk like going to manorial service", what meant slowly. What is more, obligation to stay all life onto an estate ceased to exist other than *de jure*. Working for the master one day a week was anyway little compared to duties of the population in eastern Prussian territories. Apart from that there was a right to be paid when working for the lord.

Children spend a year serving at the house of their parents' lord. In wartime, obligations were more intense. Grain and flour had to be carried to the forces, sick and wounded soldiers to be transported, cannons to be pulled. Guard service in the parish or at the border to the principality of Osnabrück was another duty, not that much for fear of enemies but do detect deserters. Horses used for the said purposes the farmer often did not get back. Apart from these duties people lived unencrouched by their superiors. Less law - as already in Rhinish cities or fashion, as in our days - but usage still directed life. Making debts however demanded permission from the lord. Anyone's farmstead was in one's own responsibility anyway. Before the last Ravensberg smallholder had bought himself off from all levies and bondsmanship it though took many decades.

The habit to release a wife from her lord's rule for money was preserved until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Blomeier paid for the permission to espouse his bride 46 Reichstalers in 1709<sup>64</sup>. Even then marriage obviously was an expensive pleasure. If the lord of the manor demanded a sum too high, marriage did not take place. This happened to [B0823e], who after the death of his first wife intended to marry Margarete Manter. His sixty-two years old father, describing himself in Job's words as "old and rich of life", asked for a reduction of the eighty *Talers* demanded, as he had to pay his only daughter's dowry recently and had also lost ten horses, a filly and two cows while owner of the farm (interestingly he mentioned the girl together with the horses) without ever asking "the gracious lordship" for remission. Finally, to conserve the farmstead which was in need of a housewife, a marriage to the said Catharina Döpke was allowed - for ten *Talers* only. The Manter girl meanwhile was married to Theenhausen burship.

Blomeyer in 1721 did not possess many cattle, just one horse and two cows<sup>65</sup>. Neighbour Meyer to Helligen owed each three horses and cows, the wealthy Meyer to Baringdorf even five horses and nine cattle. To plough the heavy loam and clay soil four horses were regarded as necessary. Using oxen would have been easier of course, but to do so the country folks were to proud. Blomeyer's grounds seemed to be insufficient at that time to feed enough horses. He must have owned not more than fifteen acres. Farms of these sizes were called half-meier. Full-Meier was only who owned thirty or more acres. The wealthier farmers headed the village community. In Helligen, these were Einhaus, Bruning, Tiemann, Wehrenbrecht and Coring with each around one-hundred acres. There were however also quarter-Meiers and even sixteenth-Meiers in the Ravensberg and Osn-

<sup>61</sup> E.g. LdArch Münster, *Dep. Benkhausen Nrs. 5706, 5129, 7883, 9930 and ibid. Nr. 7088, p. 16.* Different from other imperial states, in the Jülich territories rather the Spanish attacks on the Rhine area than the »Türkengefahr«, which for the first time forced even the common man elsewhere in the Holy Empire to pay a quasi-permanent contribution to substitute fortresses and almost regular armies to stop the Osman advance into Hungary and to the Reich's borders, had been the main reason to establish a pre-absolute taxation system. In this context the dukes enlarged Sparrenburg castle to Westphalia's greatest fortress.

<sup>62</sup> Griese (1932), p. 115ff.

<sup>63</sup> On the lords' duties and rights generally see Hirschfelder, S. 87ff.

<sup>64</sup> LdArch Münster, *Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 6643.*

<sup>65</sup> Griese (1926), p. 60. In his work from 1932 this information is omitted.

brück burships then. Neighbourly help in field-work, house-building, sickness and funerals etc were also common without saying. Maybe however the small number of animals just was a consequence of the extremely dry year before after which fodder to sustain cattle was short. In this case it is probable that usually Blomeyer lend horses to more wealthy hirelings and big farms to plough for money. At the end of the century the farmstead displayed a wealthier image.

This is clearly revealed by an inventory from 1789<sup>66</sup>, written on the occasion of the death of Anna Maria née Bruning, wife of Johann Heinrich née Niemeier. The property's value had to be examined in order to calculate the heriot that was to be paid when someone died to the manor house. A table with six chairs, another old table, an old iron oven, a clock, a cupboard and a wardrobe, a cup-board for dairy products, a bedframe in the chamber, another old bedstead, a wooden box, a tube, five spinning-wheels with whims, two pieces of linen, five table cloths, four handkerchiefs, crockery, knives, a cask for cabbage making, a saucepan and a pan for pancakes, an iron pot, two copper pots, a cart, a plough with two harrows, thrashing fails, two hacks, three rakes, two old cars with equipment, harnesses, two old cows worth twenty Talers, a cattle with a two calves, a pig, two old mares of fifteen and fourteen years belonged to the chattel. The most worthy property were two more horses of two and ten years, being taxed to fifty Talers. In all mobile property summed up to more than 177 Talers in december 1789. The master had claim on twenty. The clothes of the deceased were already given to her children, who wore them themselves or gave it to the poor. Certainly some caps and aprons were among them, decorated with colored embroidery and bands typical for the folks' wearing<sup>67</sup>.

When the common ground had been distributed among the village people, Blomeyer succeeded in acquiring more arable land<sup>68</sup>. Despite this it is surprising to read that in the time of French occupation it's value was estimated officially at 1900 francs. The average in the Canton Werther to which parts of modern Spenge then belonged, was only a third of that sum, only a fifth of all farms being worth more than a thousand francs. The lord of the manor, direct neighbour to Blomeyer, was forced to encounter the economic crisis that evolved due to the blockade of North Sea trade by the French and to pay debts by releasing virtually all his property not yet hired, including the house's garden, the sheep stable, the gate house etc, but Blomeyer got by no means more advantage from this than anyone else. Additionally acquired land seems to have been used to improve the dower house<sup>69</sup>. The explanation for his comparative wealth in this difficult time might have been that none of the daughters had been married yet, so no dowry had to be paid, and the eldest son had married under French regime when marriage fees had been abolished. Generally, farmers tried to keep the number of children low to avoid high costs. Berend [0501d], it is true, was next to [J1126f] with fifteen children from two marriages the most productive Blomeyer. Four of them were girls whose posterity we do not follow here as little as that of any other women marrying to other families and not continuing the family name. Berend's sons Hinrich Wilhelm [0602b], Lueleff [0602], Hermann [0602i] and Thonnies [0602j] met death young. Furthermore he was living in a time of economic recovery after the devastations of the 30 Years War. Son Johann Jobst [0602h] despite two marriages had only one daughter. From Johann Jürgen's [0602d] two marriages likewise only three children were born, while his son Jobst Henrich [0705a] had nine from two wives. Second marriage was because of high childbed mortality almost normal. Nine out of sixteen male descendants of Berend up to the generation of his great grandchildren married twice. Three *copulationes*, as was the term of the time, occur just once per generation (known cases: [B0901g, R0910c, B1014c, Ä1114b, Ä1310b, R1361e, Ä1428c]). Similarity of names of the two wives of Hermann Heinrich [J0910c] two generations later also lets us presume kinship. Maybe a sister or cousin took place of a deceased to take care of two infants left behind. [J0910c] first was too young to participate in the Coalition Wars against revolutionary France, afterwards, when our home area was part of short-

<sup>66</sup> See Fn. 64.

<sup>67</sup> Description see Schwager, p. 12f. and Weddingen, p. 45ff. W. (1758-1809), Bielefeld teacher, parson in Kleinenbremen near Minden and writer, became the founder of Westphalian ethnography.

<sup>68</sup> LdArch Münster, A 204/XII, 4; *ibid.*, Dep. Benkhausen, Nr. 2703, p. 1557; register from 1812 and *ibid.*, no. 125. Fields' names in detail in Hartmann, p. 147. 1900 fr. were ca. 500 former Reichstalers. Separations throughout the province started in the county for demographic pressure.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 6155, p. 25. Usually the »Leibzucht« should not consume more than a sixth of an estate.

lived kingdom of Westphalia of Napoleon's younger brother Jérôme and from late 1810 until late 1813 as Departement "Ems supérieur" even part of the *Empire*, almost too old to be forced into the *Grande Armée*, mostly composed of Germans, who almost entirely perished returning from the Russian campaign in 1812. Caspar Heinrich [J0920h] and Hermann Heinrich [B0925d] were on the more lucky side. [J0920h] was only enlisted into a depot bataillon, which remained in Germany. But he died from wounds received in besieged fortress Küstrin in autumn 1813. Saddler [B0925d] served only from november 1812 onwards, when the campaign was already known to have failed. Before he had served for three years in the Prussian army, so he knew how to conduct. He managed to detach himself from likewise besieged Spandau citadell less only a few months after. His elder brother [B0925d] even stayed less in a new unit, that emerged from the National Guard reserve, which he might had left before first encounters at the Elbe river<sup>70</sup>, as many of his comrades did who did not want to risk their necks for French aims any more. Yet he remained missed. A note to the birth-entry of [B1012c] on july 1<sup>st</sup> in 1815 In Wallenbrück's churchbook tells us about him that it was still unknown whether he was still alive. The boy was illegitimate, as was his younger brother. And [Ä0905e, Ä0902j, Ä1001a, B1012b/c, J1009e, J1010a] were born subjects to the usurper. About a third of all men in an age to marriage were killed, eighty alone in Spenge and Wallenbrück, mostly in their twenties<sup>59</sup>. No wonder, that in no canton more donations for the liberation armies were given than in Minden and Ravensberg. Noblemen and city dwellers, among them womens' associations, also hiremen and jews gave their *Groschen*. Nowhere more men volunteered these troops, often starting in their smock frocks, getting arms and uniforms only on the march. Most of them were enlisted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> (later 15<sup>th</sup>) Westphalian Militia-Infantry-Regiment, which was involved into the Ligny affair, but not into the one at Waterloo three days after. The regiment had almost as many wounded as the other five Westphalian militia regiments altogether. It later took part in the capture of Paris.

Lack of sources prevents knowing whether Blomeyer men were among them. But it is probable, as six to eight Blomeier males in conscription age which ended at 32 were alive in Wallenbrück parish at this time and each fifth man was conscripted or volunteered. The 4<sup>th</sup> bataillon, raised in Bünde where they would have been enlisted detached at the end of may however to build the core of a new regiment to be used for besieging French garrisons in the Meuse-Moselle area and did not engage into active fighting. At least the name does not appear on the casualty list - nor on the commendation list. Possibly a son to [B0823f] died from a shooting accident soon after the campaign<sup>71</sup>. More documents of Osnabrück bataillons survived in Hannover state-archive, but they tell us nothing about participation of any of our ancestors.

Hireling [J0910c] hence draw benefit from an inevitable surplus of women and took a third wife 1825. On musketeer [Ä0805g] we also know that he was in the ranks at this time. His infantry regiment 10 (von Wedell) was based in Herford and Bielefeld. As Prussian troops lacked battle experience since the Seven-Years-War, during which the western provinces were separated from their king of course, and the regiment arrived lately on the Jena and Auerstedt theatre 1806, after which it was dissolved, the Blomeyers probably had no casualties under Prussian command. In contrast, two thirds of those Westphalians recruited to the Napoleonic armies perished, out of thirty who marched into Russia only one returned. [Ä0825b] had died as soldier in Mainz in 1794, but fighting had ended the year before. At least, at the side of the king of Prussia, Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe

<sup>70</sup> SDH matriculae 128<sup>th</sup>, 129<sup>th</sup> and 151<sup>st</sup> RI, p. 401, 93, 62. Also see LdArch Münster, *Regierungskommission Bielefeld No 95*, p. 87 u. 92. *Incomplete* is F. Overkott: *Eine Verlustliste aus dem Rußlandfeldzug Napoleons (1812)*, in: *65th Jahresbericht des Historischen Vereins für die Grafschaft Ravensberg (1962/63)*, p. 48-58. On [J0925a] also see KB Wallenbrück marr. 27.04.1832. *Donations* *ibid.* No 96 *passim*. *Modern German historiography focusses on constitutional theories of the French regime, the extreme casualty rate is not worth to refer to anymore* (e.g. B. Sunderbrinck: *Revolutionäre Neuordnung auf Zeit. Gelebte Verfassungskultur im Königreich Westphalen: Das Beispiel Minden-Ravensberg 1807-1813*, Paderborn 2015 (Diss. Hagen/Westf. 2012). *We lack examinations of single units such as from Brand, Fr. B.: Die Heldenschlacht. Das 129e Régiment d'infanterie de ligne »d'Oldenbourg« im Rußlandfeldzug Napoleon I 1812/13*, Oldenburg 2003 (p. 51-55). *Neighbours forced into the 127th and 128th sister regiments had a chance to see Moscow. In total the maelstrom initiated by the French revolution devoured three to five million lives. The B. lost 3 of 12 men born 1765-90, one of each branch. No participation of B.s in the Spanish campaign 1808/09, in which men of the Ems-Departement suffered mostly during the siege of Girone, are recorded in detailed files in Osnabrück, Münster and Herford archives. Generally, military files are one of the best sources on live of ordinary people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

<sup>71</sup> D. Ziesing: *Das Minden-Ravensberger Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment (2. Westfälisches) in den Befreiungskriegen 1813-1815*, Münster 2016, p. 320f.; Jobst H. Lefthalm (2nd. Rgt.) died feb. 11<sup>th</sup> 1816 in Münster.

and young ensign Clausewitz a Blomeyer had attended the siège to liberate the prince-elect's capital from French troops and German jacobins. Neither losses are known according to the - incomplete - regimental church books from the unification campaigns 1864-71. Cuirassier [J1130a] died from "enteric fever" (typhus) shortly before their beginning during his service at Hamm.

Johann Heinrich [B0925f] still was a minor when he inherited his father's farmstead. Therefore his stepfather Bockhorst from Lenzinghausen managed it until he was 25 years old<sup>72</sup>. Fifteen Talers was the annual tax of both cottage and dower house in 1830<sup>73</sup>. Most Wallenbrück estates paid less than five Talers, the few villagers fifty and more. In 1839, [B0925f] finally bought off all obligations laying on the farm. This costed him two hundred Talers in gold and four hundred in silver<sup>74</sup>. Saving them took more than fifteen years, for just that decade grainprices were in decay. The Werburg administration even had to apply for Bünde law court to get its money. Nevertheless, for a short historical moment in [B0925f] the ideal of passing centuries appeared, the independent farmer ploughing his own ground.

Gottlieb Heinrich [B1014f], married to Friederike Wellmann, build a new farm house in the then common style in the late 19th century, which still stands. It has since been enlarged by some modern buildings. His grandson Heinrich [B1276a] had been adopted by his uncle Gustav [B1146g]. His natural father was from the long established Spenge family Hempelmann. Adoptions occurred in later times as well, e.g. worden [Ä1316a, J1345a, Ä1527b/c, Ä1529a], but not among relatives. Hilda's [Ä1225f] son left the family by accepting his stepfather's surname as later did [00000]; unknown is, if [J1471], adopted in early childhood after the death of her mother and a new marriage of her father, ever learned about her ancestry. The reason of Gustav's adoption was to maintain the Blomeyer farm in the hands of the family of course. Gustav hold marriage in 1931 together with his brother [B1146f], the brides being twins from Blasheim<sup>75</sup>. Maybe they had met at the great cattle market there. Short to his death the younger adopted his wife's nephew 2<sup>nd</sup> grade [B1274a] and made him heir of her Lübbecke farm. Son and grandson of the heir make the second and third generation of these new Blomeyers, the farm though is put into leasehold. Legally they are not part of the kinship, for according German law adoption of adults does not create this to relatives of the adopting. Artificial continuation instead of biological thus seems to be a feature of the youngest family branch. Meanwhile Heinrich's daughter [B1394a] is in charge of the farm. More cannot be said about its present situation, as unfortunately the present owners refuse responding letters.

Formerly rural Helligen meanwhile has changed its outlook to the extreme. An industrial site, established since the late 1960s, now covering almost half a square mile is dominating; it almost advanced at shouting distance to the Blomeyer farm. Recently it has been enlarged by a waste deposit site. Blomeyer construction company, founded 1927 by [J1262f] also runs such a site in nearby Lenzinghausen. Thousand-year-old Rexmann estate has gone, being replaced by a foundry, the name itself is almost perished. As predicted by the first *Oberpräsident*, formerly venerated but in the NRW-state buried in oblivion Freiherr von Vincke, the country saying »Good freed doesn't get on third breed« became true here again. The disappearance of the Blomeyer farm also seems to be a question of time only.

But modern life provides alternatives. One of the »Bockhorsters«, Friedrich Heinrich [B1152a], began to build up a bourgeois existence in the interwar period. His father and an uncle [B1016c] had tried to establish an agricultural trade near the fright before, but it had to be abandoned when the station expanded. Similar to famous August Oetker a few years earlier in the backroom of his Bielefeld pharmacy, he started putting baking-powder into small bags in Bünde, and also applied similar marketing methods as the Bielefeld entrepreneur did, who was however much ahead. His young wife contributed the investment capital from her dowry. But Friedrich's main

<sup>72</sup> LdArch Münster, *Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 6643 passim*.

<sup>73</sup> Wissmann, p. 56.

<sup>74</sup> LdArch Münster, *Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 9197 and 6643. The »Courant« was the standard silver coin.*

<sup>75</sup> *Their maiden name von Behren did not indicate a noble descentance. Such names are not rare in north-west Germany. As the same is true about the names of [Ä1316e], [J1361d], [J1363a] u. [J1563b]'s partners, no B. ever married an aristocrat. A single von Blomeyer in: Archivamt LWL: Haus Brincke (Pz 7), legal files count Kerssenbrock/v. d. Bussche from 1728 shall find a similar explanation. Brothers [B1150b/e] also married two sisters. A double marriage also had the sisters [J1128d/e] in South Africa, brothers [Ä1331a/b] later in Werther.*



product, known as »Weltkrone« was sold all over the German speaking countries and the business was profitable enough to pay university fees for all his three sons [B1281a/b/d] and to marry the daughter, who kept the books, into another business family. Widowed, she married another businessman, who was a farmer's son himself. The eldest tended towards theology. In the western campaign he survived the failing attempt to seize Dutch air-base Valkenburg by one of the first airborne operations, later he was missed in southern Ukraine and declared dead in 1959. The second was killed into action near Leningrad. His family was told he got a head shot when on patrol. But this is insecure; many company leaders wrote home a casualty died quick and without much suffering to relieve the families' pain. The third survived, but deceased after his studies in chemistry on a journey in Helsinki. The Bünde factory had been shut down already at this point of time; [B1281d] had no healthy constitution, so that the concession for the food company was not prolonged. A rarity as historical remain is a small bag of baking powder preserved in Herford communal archive (dep. A 2068) from a price-control examination in 1940. Fifty years after, Ralf Hubert [Ä1413d] was in a leading position at the board of the Bielefeld company, now a global player.

### 7.3. The Younger Branch

According to heritage customs, only one son if there were several, could inherit a farmstead anyway. Most men in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century thus had no choice than falling on hard times as hirelings and spinners. To popular song, the linnen weaver became prototype of the poor man. This was true to most Blomeiers as well. Out of five adults, four were agricultural labourers around 1750 [Ä0602h, Ä0701j, J0705a, 0715f]. In contrast to free contract workers who had to be paid even when weather conditions did not allow field work, hirelings had to be paid for done work only. Often they had a close relation to a certain villager, ate at the same table and had a long lasting contract, their children keeping horses and cows of the villager. If possible, hiremen owned half an acre or so garden land on their own. Most of them kept some chicken, sometimes a goat or even a pig. None could afford a horse. Sheeps usually were bred by manor farms only. In the garden rapes and turnpipes, onions, peas and cabbage was produced, other vegetables rarely. Growing fruit trees was not worth it, as it was widely believed that the fruits would be stolen anyway<sup>76</sup>. Slaughterday was once a year, seldom a hen was on the fire. Today's Germans consume approximately fifteen times as much meat and poultry. Home-production of food is almost cancelled even in house gardens since the 13<sup>th</sup> generation, whereas only seventy years ago there were seven Blomeyer farms, [B1144f, B1146f/g, B1148e, B1152b, J1130b, Ä1219a] and in South Africa [J1248e]'s. At least [J1553a] tries establishing an ecologically orientated farm near Osnabrück.

Between mid-16<sup>th</sup> and mid-18<sup>th</sup> century the number of hirelings had doubled. Eight hundred people lived on ca. fifty farms, some of them in shelters only. Demographic pressure was so intense that the common grounds had to be distributed from 1769 onwards. Starvation was seldom only because the potato had been introduced, all possible land was put under the plough (never before or after central Europe was less covered with woods, Spenge's city area istv still almost free from any woodland), the main Ravensberg and Osnabrück product linen faced high demand and people started to discover the use of clover to improve soils and as food crop. It has to be kept in mind of course that half the population died before reaching maturity. A fifth alone from small pocks and diarrhea which for the most part infected children. No medical help was possible, the universal medicine for all kinds of diseases was brandy mixed with aloes<sup>77</sup>. Maybe the high death toll was the price to be paid for a description like that of the Minden royal councilor Culemann, who wrote about the country folks in 1745 they ...

<sup>76</sup> J. M. Schwager: *Über den Ravensberger Bauern (1786)*, in: *Ravenberger Blätter 1/1981*, p. 5-18. *The institution of hirelings exists until the post-war area, when the rural regions were industrialized, too. Only from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century fruit-trees decorated streets, meadows and gardens all over the province – until an order of the EEC in 1969 to regulate fruit-production led to cutting half a million trees in Westphalia alone in a few years.*

<sup>77</sup> Weddigen, p. 45. *Other remedy were bleding for those who could afford a quack, or magic saying practiced by old women.*

“...have strong limbs, nice faces and are well bred. The women go clean in linen cloth, the male are useful for warfare and all sorts of arts. The language among the higher states is high German, low German among the commons. Most burr a little when talking.”<sup>78</sup>

Fourty years later, Jöllenbeck parson Schwager had noticed first hints of increasing care for dressing - among the male villagers ! Some were shy to wear their wooden clogs any more, even hirelings' wives drank (cheap) chicory-coffee, villagers' sons began smoking tobac co. He did not see that these new habits might have been the reverse side of obligatory military service, which he expressively praised, that gave Ravensberg men, in contrast to inhabitants of ecclesiastical principalities like neighboring Münster or the small county of Lippe a broader horizon of the world outside their homeland. Nevertheless, Bielefeld teacher and parson Peter Weddigen's sketch of the rural style of eduction cannot have been nothing but a phrase of enlightened civilization critique when he said, that children ...

“...are educated the tough way, early getting used to the various changes of air, heat and cold, and rarely only one sees a weak or sick boy or a pampered girl; but the more vivid and strong childs which give prove that their parents never faced the debauchery of young age common to the higher classes.”<sup>79</sup>

While at work, children were under supervision. The death of eight-year-old Hermann Heinrich [B1260c], found drowned in a neighbor's pond, was an exception. Used to hard work from childhood on, pregnancy was not perceived as a physical burden as it is in our days. Besides, marriage and giving birth started much earlier than today in an age biologically more adequate. A few days after birth young mothers carried on daily work. Another reason for population growth was the comparatively high degree of freedom people exercised in north-west Germany's countryside. Parallel to the decrease of the lords' powers limitations to marriage and reproduction of the landless fell. About half the population in the Northwest was free as early as the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, thus long before the French and Prussian reform era. Villagers and landed gentry welcomed the increase of population, for it rendered work cheaper. The depending part of the Wallenbrück population belonged in even shares to noble, ecclesiastical and royal estates.

The outclassed, be they free or bondsmen could survive only by additional work. In the Herford St. Mary file mentioned above, a brother and a relative of the wife of late [Ä0602c] plead to release the decease fee, for he had left nothing but six minors<sup>80</sup>. This after fifty years of work. Brother Johann Jürgen [J0602d], also mere hireling is progenitor of the younger branch. Mean of three brothers, this group can also be called “middle branch”.

But as linen, woven since stone-age times, is one of the oldest products of human culture and was a daily care of the country-folks for centuries, we remain to it for a few lines. Seeds were imported from Courland mostly. Sowing of the blue-blossoming plant onto extensively plattened fields happened in early spring, harvest in july. Flax-bushels dried on the field for two weeks, then the stalks were rippled to get the seed capsules, from which linseed-oil was made. Soaking the plant into water for several days separated fibres from the bark. To get rid of stiffy elements, the flax was beaten week-long. A dirty work mostly done outside or in the barns. Before hatching the straw, the last bark rests were drawn off. To get a particularly fine material it could be scraped on a hard piece of leather additionnally. Some fields from Schildesche village via Häger and Wallenbrück, combined with water containing not too much lime and skilled work produced a spun smooth as womens' hair, it was said. From autumn to January was spinning-time, interrupted only from Christmas to Epiphany, when all work not essentially necessary stopped. A chummy time which was passed in order to save lightning and firewood in the neighbours' chambers in succession. In folk-art and -poetry spinning thus was extremely present. The string drawn by thumb and fore-finger from the rock was moistened, send onto the spinning-reel and drawn up a wind-lass. Birch-oil avoided spinning fingers sore. Before weaving this yarn was soaked again and treated with potash.

<sup>78</sup> Culemann, p. 92; on Enger bailwick p. 135ff. Indeed, no overweights are seen on photographs until mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. »Schnarren« means pronouncing the »r« by the throat.

<sup>79</sup> Weddigen, p. 44. Service with dutch V.O.C. was another opportunity of 18th century men to escape a narrow rural world. Several Wallenbrückers are found among some 3000 men and women from Ravensberg county and Osnabrück in the company's Den Haag archive, no B. however.

<sup>80</sup> See fn 30, no. 162.

Toxic waste different to modern textile production did not evolve. The main trading posts for linen were in Herford and Tecklenburg. A quality shirt was worn life-long. Was a cloth finally of no use anymore, the rags got new life in a paper-mill as one existed in Herford since 1462; the eldest documents of our history survived because of the durability of its' linen compounds.

Spinning and weaving linen however received a severe stroke by English and Scottish machine spinning after 1820. Linen was replaced by cotton from India and the United States. Soon the county was the poorest part of the province. Its population density in contrast was the highest, ca 150 people per square kilometer. Cigar-making was not common yet, and later often only a by-job for women and children. Only after the mass emigration to the United States after the years of starvation in the 1840s, when industrialization provided jobs for the poor and artificial fertilizers for the depleted soil and new methods of producing improved agrarian productivity the crisis was over. In 1900 the Helligen farm's ca. thirteen hectares is half the average of a Wallenbrück farm.

Emigration was a risky undertaking with many suppositions not easy to exercise. Hundreds of inhabitants from Wallenbrück and Spenge left for America. Others emigrated to the Ruhrgebiet's industrial cities. So did many of this branch, which stems from Johann Jürgen [J0602d], Berend's third son. The first five generations were hirelings. Before inviting workers from the Prussian east into the newly developing mine landscape the labor potential of Westphalia and the Rhineland was exploited. One of the first hints on labour migration is in the Royal Prussian Central Police Paper of January 1860. Hand worker Peter Heinrich [Ä0902I] was announced there because he was expelled from Werl to his home village Bardüttingdorf but did not arrive there yet<sup>81</sup>. Expulsion was common to get rid of unemployed whom to sustain in case of poverty a public duty existed for the home towns only. And the major business in the town was salt refinery, whose season workers usually were released at the end of the year to be newly employed in spring. Apparently, Peter Heinrich had not established a family in Werl yet. Fifteen years later another hireling Peter Heinrich [J1130c] became pit-overseer in Gelsenkirchen. To nourish his extensive family he held two cows in what was to become the "city of thousand fires"<sup>82</sup>. In those days, all six bailiffs of later Gelsenkirchen together were composed of less than three thousand households. Only between 1885 and 1928 disregarding communal and provincial borders a district, then a city was constructed. Some of his sons and daughters moved to neighbouring Essen communities where the famous mine »Zollverein« was hugely extending at the time. Now, being closed down it is on the world cultural heritage list of the UNESCO. The connection to Eastern Westphalia was long kept. Five of his seven sons [J1253a/b/c/e] chose wives from Eastern Westphalia, grandsons [J1366a/d] even returned to Eastern Westphalia; so recently did [J1576a]. Gustav H. Griese, school director in Gelsenkirchen-Horst, head of the local home preservation association and married to Peter Heinrich's granddaughter Hedwig [J1367b] initiated two huge family meetings 1958 and 1960 visited by more the eighty family members of the twelfth to fourteenth generation. Young attendants remembered them even sixty years later. The newspapers reported about these events<sup>83</sup>. Dressed in costumes of Essen theatre, members of the family presented a selfwritten play "The cousin of Wallenbrück", honorary guest was the then owner of the Helligen farm Gustav [B1146g]. Griese also edited two numbers of a family newsletter, further activity was put to an end by early death. Griese's suggestion also led to naming the Ravensberg Street in Heßler, which actually got its name from a long demolished moated castle, but also reminds of the many miners settling there from Northeastern Westphalia. His favourite nephew Otto [J1470c], bank clerk in Gelsenkirchen, was the first Blomeyer to apply for a coat-of-arms. It has been registered in the German Heraldry Roll (DWR) in 1980<sup>84</sup>. It is blazoned argent charged with an oak of seven branches, in pretence a half-timbered

<sup>81</sup> Kgl. Preuß. Central-Polizei-Blatt XLII, Berlin 1869, p. 84.

<sup>82</sup> *Even agricultural farming still was common between Ruhr and Lippe then. Wide areas were covered with buildings only fifty years later, even more after WW II. Alas, sulphuric acids emissions soon affected plant growing too much to continue this way of existence. Cf. G. Grotdrees: Höfe, Bauern, Hungerjahre. Aus der westfälischen Landwirtschaft 1890-1950, Münster-Hiltrup 1991, p. 22ff.*

<sup>83</sup> See Heimat-Rundschau 21./22.06. 1958 and Gelsenkirchener Stadtanzeiger 14.05.1960.

<sup>84</sup> See Deutsche Wappenrolle (DWR) vol. 34, Neustadt a. d. Aisch 1981, p. 68, registered 04/06/1980 Nr. 7462/79. [J1333b] also designed a coat-of-arms, displaying a red-brick wall underneath which three roses grow from green soil. Siebmacher's ordinary of non-noble coats contains c. 30 similar motives until 1960 alone, sometimes in the like colours and identical crest, so that the possibility of mistaking is high. But none similar to the one described p. 78f. among 400 with rose-motives.

housefront with a top sable, on a helmet with a wreath vert sable argent a blackamoor dressed gules argent in chevrons. This rather strange image had been drafted by the leading German expert in heraldry, O.F. Neubecker from Berlin, but the explanation given for its design that can be historically accepted refers to Otto's great-great-grandmother's families' origin only. It is thus not adequate for the Blomeyers as a whole. He got licence to carry this escutcheon only for himself and his male descendants i.e his son Heinrich Otto [J1565a]. No other Blomeyer therefore can claim to bear it.

In the long run the Blomeyers did not get rooted in Gelsenkirchen. Germans there as in many West German cities now are on the retreat to orientals; the rise of the Rhine-Westphalian industry to its dominating position as historical phenomenon as such was as sudden as short-lived. Almost a century after its employment peak of over 570.000 miners and a half during which it was kept alive only by subsidies, Westphalian and thus German coal mining had stopped in 2018. About twenty-five Blomeier men were miners during three generations. Today, this branch of the family is a disparate one, members living at the Lower Rhine area, in Bavaria and elsewhere. More than a hundred of them and of the Blomeiers in Bielefeld and Osnabrück area living in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have not been identified for archival restrictions hitherto. But two thirds of the German Blomeiers still house in the region of origin, though most of them from the two other branches. [Ä1228e] from the Osnabrück area became a miner too, but as pensioner he returned to Eastern Westphalia. It should not be forgotten to mention that Ravensberg's [Ä1327a] likewise chose his bride from Gelsenkirchen, as did [Ä1429d]. After the early death of his great-grandson Frank [Ä1307b], male descentance of Johann Wilhelm [Ä1005e], who also was a miner in Dortmund, seems to have ceased.

Another Peter Heinrich [J1009j] called "the Bielefelder" walked from Spenge to the border of the Rhine province. His son Heinrich [J1120f] possessed a small band weaving where all family members had to help. Their products were widely used as hat and button ribbons, trimmings of paraments, aprons etc. After his sick father widowed, Heinrich carried him on his back from Oberelfringhausen to Nächstebreck to give him residence in his house. Another story is told about him, sounding cruel to modern ears. When his wife, born in Hessa at Philippsthal, became sick, her young sister came to take care of her. The brother-in-law apparently liked her a bit more than allowed, so that she gave birth to a boy [J1246i] at the age of seventeen. The father tried to get rid of the baby and as a result he had to spend some time in prison. Now, demographic control by various ways of infanticide was not uncommon to many parts of Europe at all<sup>85</sup>, but exposing a newborn into an outside toilet was a different thing. To be mentioned that according a family tradition six earlier children had already died young (no proof has been found in church books so far). When his recovered wife died some years later he married the sister a quarter of a year afterwards and had another five children with her who all survived except one. So did baby Heinrich. But one does not want to imagine the domestic atmosphere in the last years of the first marriage. Of the four men of this branch in the 14<sup>th</sup> generation two died young, one is bachelor, one [J1458a] affected by the substance thalidomid in his mother's womb, so only descentance of [J1357b] who moved southwards to the Westerwald will continue it.

Uncertain is the origin of another, also small branch of the family tree. Johann Friedrich Wilhelm's [B1140a] mother could have been [B1013b]. In this case her offspring would belong to the Bockhorsters. In his church book entry instead of the parents is only written »in Altenessen«. Factories, in which unmarried women from northeastern Westphalia could go to work had not been erected in that small Ruhr town then. Only in the following years Cologne bank Abraham Schaafhausen made the parish the center of German coal mining. Was it shame about the illegitimate birth of her son that made her leave her home county? Their relatives who settled a generation later at Emscher creek, not to speak of the Eastern Westphalians, they apparently never met. Descentance probably neither exists as [B1140a]'s great-grandsons [B1491c, B1493a] did not survive bombing of the Ruhr area in the war. At least we know where she lived, whereas from many other family members in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who sought work in road-building or as house-servants elsewhere we have no information at all.

<sup>85</sup> *Confirmed by Schwager, p. 9.*

In Eastern Westphalia the age of industry started with delay. Bielefeld linen agents began to manufacture their products in their home town in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>86</sup>. Europe's biggest flax spinning mill was in Bielefeld. Soon "Bielefeld wear" had a name nationwide. Many young girls from the town-ships around could add to the family income as seamstresses and ironers. The young men produced sewing machines but also bikes and electronic devices. Living next to the city of Bielefeld it took however forty years longer before a Blomeier settled there than it did in the case of Osnabrück. Bielefeld weaving mills had open branches in Spenge before. Shoemaker Franz from Dissen, like many early Blomeiers in the city actually an »Osnabrückian« comes in 1888 and stays a number of years. So did bricklayer Wilhelm [Ä1216e] after the turn of the century. »Postilion« Friedrich [Ä1230c] left again soon, as did clockmaker Hermann [B1144i]. Only a generation later there were Blomeiers in Bielefeld as many as were in Osnabrück.

Some also went to work in the new factories or in the new steel work of Malbergen, whose worker colony became the town of Georgsmarienhütte<sup>87</sup>, e.g. [J1009c] and [J1119b]. Before them, [J0910c] had married three times across the Warmenau creek. All efforts to keep industrial workers such as the so called (mechanics and) "new-farmers" Johann Friedrich [J1240b] and his son Friedrich [J1345a] in touch with the soil were doomed to fail in the age of machinery notwithstanding.

A bricklayer's son, Jobst Heinrich Hermann [J1243c] becomes paviour after World War I in Osnabrück, later owner of his own building company, which son Georg [J1355b] after his death enlarged to a company with three hundred employees, the biggest Blomeier undertaking hitherto. A wound at his hand he received during World War II when building an air shelter, not severe but neglected effected blood-poisoning and took the founder's life<sup>88</sup>. Among craftsmen like them it was still in use to wander around for a few months having finished the apprenticeship. Usually they stayed in northwest Germany. Take as an example Jobst's younger brother Johann Heinrich [J1243e], another bricklayer. After his lessons in Buer the bachelor worked a couple of months in Cologne, in the residence town Detmold, and for two years in the provincial capital Münster before he spend some time in Hamburg. The females usually worked as house maidens before marriage in cities like Hannover or Kassel, some in the Netherlands, the catholics in Münster. Essen's Maria Anna, widow of [J1253i] first was cook, then house keeper and lady companion to a ennobled Bredeney factory director's widow who even considered her in her last will. Until early post-war times the majority of all employees in Germany were workers or domestic servants like them.

A different reason but poverty also made Hermann Heinrich [J1009k] leave his country. Grown up fatherless he also lost his mother young and got under the influence of a teacher couple. Six brothers and sisters had three different mothers, the eldest was twenty-five years older than he was. After an apprenticeship as shoe maker and some years wandering around the adult became student at a Lutheranian missionary school in the Lüneburg heath. His surviving, hand-written curriculum vitae is a rare document from someone of his background. Near Ravensberg also was a hot spot for missionary engagement, but he was subject to the king of Hannover. 1868 he left to pray in Africa. There he died 1882. His grave also still exists, what is seldom in the homeland of his family after so long a time. This quiet man was to become "pioneer ancestor" of all South Africa Blomeyers (see chapter 8.6.).

<sup>86</sup> M. Stemme-Sogemeier: *Bielefeld und seine Industrie*, 2nd ed. Trautheim u.a. 1953. For an earlier period H. Aubin: *Das westfälische Leinengewerbe im Rahmen der deutschen u. europäischen Leinwanderzeugung*, Ardey 1964.

<sup>87</sup> Very instructive on this interesting process S. Meyer: *Schwerindustrielle Insel und ländliche Lebenswelt: Georgsmarienhütte 1856-1933, Münster/Westf. 1991 (Diss. Osnabrück 1989)*, p. 139ff.

<sup>88</sup> Hermann Blomeier KG (Hrsg.): *50 Jahre Hermann Blomeier KG Straßen- und Tiefbau, Osnabrück 1959. In peak up to 800 men worked for them building railtracks and motorway. Short before its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary the company was shut down.*

## 7.4. The Elder Branch

The Osnabrück line derives from Johann Hinrich [Ä0602c]. His son [Ä0805a] had an *infans spurius ac adulteria genitus*<sup>89</sup> in addition to eight legal children named Christian Henrich with Margarete Katharina Schleisiek<sup>90</sup>. Details will never be reconstructed, but the Jöllenneck parson wrote about the cottage girls...

“(...) among this class of people the males are the coy ones, the females are wooing (...). They know the art to coquet as well as the ladies, reveal the bosom and other attractions, impudently little by little, for that helps more than doing it at once. Does the juvenile stay coy she helps with brandy, and does he not follow her invitation to bed she visits him in his.”<sup>91</sup>

Having prenuptial children was no rare thing in later generations as well, for example [J1009e], [J1119a], [J1126f], [J1243d], [Ä1416b], [Ä1512a], [Ä1531a] oder [Ä1537a]. Within the family history we know about four dozen illegitimate children, starting with [0304a] and *ex filia Blomeyers* ([0602a] ?). Christian Henrich died 1837 in Redecke in the parish Neuenkirchen, where his mother's family came from<sup>92</sup>. Since then Blomeyers lived to both borders of the Warmenau creek. Connections were loose from the beginning. In the Neuenkirchen records only a Caspar Henrich and a Anna Maria, probably [B0805e/f] are mentioned, as godfathers to J.H. Schürmann's children from Schiplage<sup>93</sup>. The mother was not a née Blomeyer. Their father and Christian Henry's father were cousins. While descendants of Christian Henry, who stayed in the Grönegau area for three generations, are numerous in Germany and America, living offspring of his brothers ended in the male line a few decades ago in Wallenbrück or are short before. As from [Ä0805g] less than a handful male progenitors are alive, these facts legitimizes to call this branch the »Osnabrückers« oder »Meller« for today's assignment of Neuenkirchen parish to this town.

A kind of second founder of this branch is hireling Heinrich Wilhelm [Ä1006c], who had forty-one grandchildren from the eleven children with his wife Catharina Hölscher, more than any other Blomeier. Not all reached adult life of course. Second to him is [J1130c] with twenty-nine grandchildren. Until today the Osnabrück and the Gelsenkirchen branch are the most numerous ones. Having fifteen or twenty grandchildren was not uncommon a thing.

The division into branches mainly serves for better orientation. But to differentiate between “Lower saxon” in and around the cathedral city Osnabrück and “Westphalian” Blomeiers around Bielefeld respectively between Lutheranian and catholic Blomeiers would not make much sense. Particularly not in an age when religious convictions generally are slackening and interconfessional marriage has become an normal matter. Besides, Osnabrück has long been confessionally mixed and had been ruled since the 30 Years War successively by roman-catholic bishops and protestant princes from the Welfen dynasty. Among others [Ä1040e], [J1119b] and [Ä1221a] married catholic women<sup>94</sup>, the first's educated son [Ä1149d] with a Lutheranian one again, whereupon the children were educated as catholics. Unfortunately, contact among [Ä1221a]'s was abandoned after his marriage. It is true, in uniquely catholic parishes as Riemsloh or Wellingholzhausen and even in mixed ones like Krukum we meet Blomeyers<sup>95</sup> exceptionally only, but the pre-reformation ancestors of Johann Blommeier of course prayed to the Roman saints for some sevenhundred years, as did their fathers to their pagan deities.

<sup>89</sup> KrKBAmt Osnabrück: *KB Neuenkirchen, births 1767-1791*, p. 7.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid. death roll 1837*, p. 53, not as in the birth-entry from his brother [0701i], of whom neither marriage nor death is recorded.

<sup>91</sup> Schwager, p. 9. refers to hirelings' daughters only, farmers' daughters whose only ambition was to marry another farmer had to consider her reputation.

<sup>92</sup> E.g. LdArch Osnabrück, *Personenstandsregister Neuenkirchen, Rep. 491 Nr. 1515, 1527, 1535, 1539*. Only among the Schleisiek, not the B. the first name Christian was in use.

<sup>93</sup> KrKBAmt Osnabrück: *KB Neuenkirchen 1781-1785*, p. 112 and 150.

<sup>94</sup> The very first inter-confessional relation was the one from which [J1122a] was a product. The list is incomplete; in Gelsenkirchen e.g. [J1385e] married into a catholic family, so did [B1387a] in Gladbeck.

<sup>95</sup> See *Gemeindelexikon*, p. 119f. Conversion happend for practical reasons to allow marrying a catholic. Schwager p. 17: »Very religious a man is he not, and backward in religious matters. Religion does not find much attention, and from generation to generation he is used to regard it a minor matter, seriously to deal with only on the death-bed«. Thus the Ravensberg pious revival movement was a temporary phenomem.

Around 1530 small Wallenbrück still had a brotherhood dedicated to the veneration of the Body of Christ, and one more St Mary brotherhood<sup>96</sup>. Today, approximately a sixth of all Blomeiers is catholic again. [Ä1217c]'s wife worshiped the reform church, [Ä1334c]'s in Indiana converted from the Methodist church when she married. Apparently, [B1142b/c] also followed this confession. Exercising the St Jacob pelerinage as Volker K. Friedrich [Ä1413d] did twice is no longer a catholic privilege. None took vows or the veil, but the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> generations are faced with non-baptized family members for the first time. Both the ecclesiastical principality Osnabrück as well as the Jülich, later Brandenburg county Ravensberg were part of the imperial district of Westphalia, the county's jury court until the 16<sup>th</sup> century sat on Schiplage heath east of the Warmenau. Some Osnabrück Blomeiers e.g. [Ä1221c/d] and [Ä1413d] returned to Ravensberg, likewise some Blomeiers from Herford district moved to Osnabrück. The Werther Blomeiers [Ä1327] and [Ä1328] and their offspring "actually" are Osnabrückers. Regarding the low level of social and spatial mobility in ancient times it is a statistical matter of fact anyway, that including maternal descendance and crossing pedigrees the whole population with ancestry having settled to both sides of the Westphalian-Lower saxon border for five hundred years and more is biologically related to each other<sup>97</sup>. Bridegrooms from non-Prussian states as for [Ä1210b] and [Ä1222c] from Bavaria and Saxony were exceptional at their time. Blomeier men in the region of origin took wives from more than one hundred different families so far. This network of kinship is demolished only during the past thirty years since marriage partners are more often chosen from more distant regions. Already after the Second World War four out of five Häger siblings [J1383a-e] married to a Saxon and three Silesians. Silesians in particular took refuge in Westphalia after their expulsion from what is Western Poland now. What is more, both lines share a common development, albeit professions like steel-worker or stoker appear one generation earlier among the Osnabrück's than among those who stayed at the countryside for longer. Living conditions of the working class in a city like Osnabrück were not much better though than for the rural population. Four out of five respectively six children of [Ä1107a] as well as of [Ä1114b] still died in infancy. Men in the jobs mentioned often had to work in shift system contrary to human condition all their life.

The first Blomeyer noted in Osnabrück servant record book<sup>98</sup> in may 1859 was Louise [J1122a], worker. The municipal poverty committee gave her residence in the apartment of the tailor widow Freese in Gold street, close to St John's church (whose deacon administered pre-reformation Wallenbrück). She was the byblow daughter of a Margaret Simpson from Osnabrück and Corporal Johann Heinrich from West-Hoyel [J1009c] who served in the 8<sup>th</sup> infantry bataillon, then in garrison in Osnabrück. The soldiers were, unusual for a German army but, as the king of Hannover then was king of Britain, following the British example, dressed in red coats. In his regimental roll he is described as of average size (5 feet 3 inches), slender, blond, blue eyed with round front and ordinary nose<sup>99</sup>. His six year service term he had started at the age of nieneteen in Nienburg. Louise's likewise illegitimate son [J1244b] changed his family-name once she had married a railroad worker who adopted him. A handfull more Blomeyers moved to Osnabrück<sup>100</sup> within the next decade. Accommodation - by chance ? - some of them got in the neighbor's house in Gold street. Among them Friedrich Wilhelm [Ä1007e]. He and his cousins were employing the opportunities a developing city like Osnabrück offered in imperial Germany<sup>101</sup>, having teared down it's city walls to get place for factories and workers' homes and having gained access to railroad after the brother war with Prussia 1866. In 1896 day laborer Friedrich Wilhelm is a huckster, ten years later he owns a drug store, retired he calls himself "privateer". His son, gardener Heinrich Ludwig [Ä1113d] soon be-

<sup>96</sup> Visitationsprotokoll, p. 150.

<sup>97</sup> *Statistically extinction danger is banned only in the 8th generation; see O. Forst de Battaglia: Wissenschaftliche Genealogie. Eine Einführung in ihre wichtigsten Grundprobleme, Bern 1948.*

<sup>98</sup> LdArch Osnabrück, Rep. 3b XVIII, 53, p. 25 u. 27. Confirmed by St. Catherine and St. Mary church matricles.

<sup>99</sup> HStArch Hannover, Rep. 45a I Nr. 562, p. 78, 336, 368 etc.

<sup>100</sup> *Next to the Wallenbrück church books certainly the most important source for the family history: LdArch Osnabrück, Melderegister 1870-1930 vol. 7, Rep. 3b XVIII, Nr. 116.*

<sup>101</sup> *Overview in R. Spilker: Von der Industrialisierung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg, in: G. Steinmascher (Hrsg.): Geschichte der Stadt Osnabrück, Belm 2006, p. 453-467.*

comes dealer in seeds, before 1900 he runs his own seeds-shop in Commenderie street, now calling himself Louis. He was the first Blomeyer with a telephone 1908.

[Ä1111d] however spend some time in prison in Lingen. We cannot know the reason as files are not conserved for so long a time. But as he was already more than sixty years old when condemned it will not have been an act of unreflecting youthful aggressivity. In the early 1920s young shop assistant [Ä1222b] also spend some time in jail<sup>102</sup>. Victim of a crime possibly was [J1466e], a young police-officer one day found shot with his gun; circumstances never had been cleared. Bielefeld businessman Peter Heinrich [J1254f] ended his life voluntarily with a rope during the 1930s.

About twenty-five Blomeyers fought in World War I, mostly infantrymen. Compared to the following war Blomeyer losses remained low however, just two »Bockhorsters« [B1144k, B1264a] from Werther and Wallenbrück, two from the Ruhr area [Ä1110c, J1253i], [Ä1115c] from Dissen, and another [Ä1213c] from Wallenbrück, all at the western front. [Ä1110c] near Verdun for example. Human imagination hardly succeeds to produce an idea of his last days, which can however be well reconstructed by the regiment's war-diary<sup>103</sup>. Staying for days without water in summer-heat below fort Douaumont on a treeless battlefield marked by innumerable shell-craters and stinking decomposition of mens' bodies, under enemy attack and gas grenades, death might have meant relief for soldiers. The exact day of his death can only be assumed, the spot surely was in the range of sight of the huge Douaumont ossuair, which might keep some of [Ä1110c]'s bones, too. Three others [B1144i, Ä1221c, J1246a] at least fought in the same battle. Exhaustion was lethal to [B1144k]. After days of forced marches his unit had to move into the most advanced position, the young man carrying his gun, combat pack and two ammunition boxes of thirty pounds each. After the company had rest in a small wood which covered the advance, he remained alone for a short while. The wood of course attracted French curtain-fire. A comrad later wrote to his parents, he had found him head, neck and breast full of shrapnels. The memorial book of Werther parish contains more than twohundert biographical sketches of each of the casualties, many of them with photographs. It is an unique source for local and family history. Contemporaries however judges completely different on the late Wilhelminic state as is common today. A new edition therefore is unlikely. It seems worth to report on that account, that one of the presumably few remaining copies, although completely tattered had been rescued and restored in the process of our family research. Musketeer [J1234i] died in a military hospital in Upper Austria from blood-poisoning after a shot into his knee. Part of almost the final levy was Franz Wilhelm [Ä1115c] from Dissen. Recruited to the militia at the age of almost fifty he deceased already in Cellelager training camp. Julius Hermann [Ä1311a], enlisted at eighteen, returned only 1920 from war prison. Brothers Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm and Friedrich August [Ä1221c/d] from Redecke burship settled in Werther after the war. The elder had returned from service invalid but found work like his brother in a tube-factory and produced five children in spite of his handicaps. Similar to him half of the ca. twenty-five serving men of the family were wounded, Hermann [B1144i] from Werther for example in late 1916 near the infamous »Homme mort« height north of Verdun<sup>104</sup>. It is unknown if any decoration hung around like for [B1144f] and [Ä1311a] had been honoured by posteriors. [Ä1221c]'s brother's wife worked as midwife and helped hundreds of children to be born, among them her later daughter-in-law (to [Ä1331d]). In the rural part of the country, none fell victim to the Bri-

<sup>102</sup> *Machine fitter* [Ä1332a] shortly before the ban of the communist party in new West-Germany had been impeached to distribute insulting and defaming pamphlets about the federal government by Düsseldorf prosecution office, but his lawyer claimed he did not know of his comrades' use of his address. Which could not be disproved so the notice of appeal was refused by the federal high court of justice. 1954 the case underfell an amnesty bill. See LdArch Duisburg: NW 337, no 2452.

<sup>103</sup> H. Mauenbacher: *Das Metzger Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 98. Nach den amtlichen Kriegstagebüchern, Oldenburg et al. 1923, p. 36f.*

<sup>104</sup> *All data according the casualty lists 795, 1100, 1131 and 1205 at www.genealogy.net and VDK/Kriegsgräbersuche online. Usually several weeks passed between the actual date of death and the entry into those lists. The ancestor-list shows the one of the entry into the army list. Identification is complicated for recess of birthday and regiment in the third year of war. Heinrich Gustav [B1144k] is no. 249/p.250 in Frhr. Rinck von Baldenstein, W.: *Das Infanterie-Regiment Freiherr von Sparr (3. Westfälisches) Nr. 16 im Weltkriege 1914-18, Oldenburg 1927, formerly known as the »Hacketauers«, his biographic sketch p. 484f. in: P. Kienecker (Ed.): Das Kirchspiel Werther und der Krieg 1914-1918. Zum dankbaren Gedenken an unsere Gefallenen und Kriegsteilnehmer, Werther i. W. 1920. Additionally lancier Johann [Ä1243e ?] from Osnabrück might have deceased in a Hannover military hospital, but this had not been confirmed yet.**



tish food blockade that was kept up after the armistice either; neither was the entire province occupied up to Weser river again as was threatened, for a Reichstag majority felt coerced enough in time to surrender to Versailles treaty demandings. Only few industrial cities like Essen and Gelsenkirchen later were occupied to enforce implementation of the imposed regulations.

In the Second World War all family branches suffered more losses. On the whole we lost eleven non-commissioned officers and troops at least, now mostly at the eastern front<sup>105</sup>. The remains of some never were found. In addition air-raids in the Ruhr area killed two mothers with two boy childs and a baby [00000, B1491c, B1492f], old [J1253d] and Feldwebel Kurt Heinrich [J1370b] who was on holiday there. Also [Ä1371a]s son never met his father. [00000]’s orphanage was evacuated to small town Geseke when a bomb hit their air-shelter and tumbling concrete blocks killed him together with ten other children and some nurses. Hundreds of locals attended the funeral albeit none of the dead was from that place<sup>106</sup>. Friedhelm’s [Ä1325e] mother died from a stroke after the war when she believed to identify her youngest son erroneously. Teenager Günter [Ä1331d] survived an air-raid on Bielefeld on a sunny september saturday afternoon only because he left a station-inn’s vault early enough. All others who took shelter there were killed, the town burned four days<sup>107</sup>. [Ä1327a], enlisted at young age as anti-air-gunner, returned sick to death; the apprentice had survived the great bombing only because extraordinary over-hours that day, so he did not sit in the train home in which dozens, mostly young girls, died. Young Ernst-Wilhelm [B1283b] also could call himself lucky. Entering the army short to defeat and prisoner to the Soviets in Saxony after a failed attempt of escape, a Russian physician took the half-starved-to-death to her house as footman and took care of his recovery. Second Lieutenant Julius [00000], instructor at Posen army school, spend four years in Soviet war captivity.

Without those twenty losses some twenty or thirty Blomeiers more as posterity of the killed would be alive than actually are in our days. To give only one example: from the 6000 inhabitants of Werther alone more than 500, including three Blomeiers, were killed<sup>108</sup> although the community did neither saw active fighting (apart from some shooting Eastern 1945 to welcome the US-Army), mass rape or forced expulsion as the eastern territories of Germany did, nor bombing like Osnabrück city, onto which in seventy air raids concentrated in autumn and spring 1944 and finally on palm sunday 1945 approximately 700.000 bombs were dropped to devastate two thirds of the entire city, its center completely. The annexation of the ruins as considered in Dutch government the British occupation force afterwards inhibited. Gelsenkirchen and Essen branches had less military losses, for miners were partly reserved from military service.

Wilhelm’s [B1389a] attempt shortly after outbreak of war to remove to his wife’s dutch home by pretending family difficulties failed and made him be jailed to death for desertion. His commander-in-chief turned capital-punishment into fifteen-year imprisonment beginning at the end of war during which he was obliged to forced labour. Only a day before capitulation Americans freed him gaunted to fourty-three kilograms from imprisonment near Remscheid<sup>109</sup>. On his children [B1492a-d] nothing is known: Did they survive the war ? Or were they separated from each other after their mother’s death and given to other families, never knowing anything about their origins ?

Dissatisfaction with the dictatorship otherwise was expressed rather in a state of drunkenness like by [Ä1221a]<sup>110</sup>. His transfer to a Hamburg SS-Police-Bataillon<sup>111</sup> end of january 1945 when the *Reich* was in ruins

<sup>105</sup> [B1270d] is not recorded there, because he died as civil driver of the Wehrmacht in Graudenz/West-Prussia military hospital.

<sup>106</sup> H. Schürbusch/A. Winter: *Nacht über Wattenscheid. Chronik des Krieges in unserer Stadt, Essen 2009*, p. 22f. Heinrich, born 02.06.1939 cannot be identified, for Essen authorities refuse to release information on him before end of archival restriction period in 2049 to non-descendants - which a five-year-old naturally cannot have ; maybe he was son of [B1389a].

<sup>107</sup> H.-J. Kühne: *Augenzeugenberichte: Der Großangriff auf Bielefeld am 30. September 1944*, in: *89 Jahresbericht d. Histor. Vereins für die Gft. Ravensberg (FS Vogelsang), Bielefeld 2004*, p. 449-466.

<sup>108</sup> Kriegerverein Werther/Westf. (Hrsg.): *Die Kriegsoffer des Amtes Werther 1939-1945*, 1958, p. 5.

<sup>109</sup> LdArch Duisburg: *Rep 163, no 109. Most of the ca. 300.000 Wehrmacht deserters left their units near the front or short to capitulation. Three quarters of the 30.000 sentenced death penalties were executed.*

<sup>110</sup> LdArch Osnabrück: *Geheime Staatspolizei, Kartei 1928ff. (Rep. 439 Nr. 19).*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*: *Schutzpolizeikommando, file W. Blomeier.*

already, on the other hand did not make air-shelter-corporal Johannes Fr. W. [Ä1222b] automatically a criminal. From almost completely accessible denazification files<sup>112</sup> we learn, that all of the mostly younger men from the family joined the new state-party after it seized power, as did more than six million fellow citizens. All were classified into the lowest category, inclusive Osnabrück brothers Georg and Gustav who had been applicants to the SS in summer 1933 for a few weeks respectively were connected to her afterwards as support member. Gustav's case was the most extensive, but his parish priest and an employee of half-jewish origin who survived the regime unharmed in his firm finally discharged him of suspects. Details on Georg's stay to superintend construction works of his Berlin company in occupied Poland 1942/43, for which he was reserved from military service, were not found yet. Only Wilhelm [00000] had joined the party already in 1930 and became local functionary in Heepen for two years before his military service. From war-imprisonment he therefore was transferred to former concentration camp Neuengamme in summer 1945 for about three years. Bielefeld neighbours supported his release, a former political inmate among them, who described him as "idealist who believed to serve higher national and social ideas without already understanding the true character of the party then". He also was fined to a sentence of sixhundred *Reichsmark*. Accountant Friedrich [Ä1223h], aide to a local party-functionary, from Ibbenbüren was also held in prison for more than a year after the war.

In a different way victim to the regime became Lina, wife of [J1260j]. Already her mother shall have „always been somewhat stupid“<sup>113</sup>. After the death of her father and her second pregnancy she became mentally ill too, sometime believing to be bewitched. In Gütersloh's hospital for the insane schizophrenia was diagnosed. According to the 1933 from Scandinavian examples decreed law to prevent genetically sick offspring Bielefeld health authorities ordered to sterilize her. The same happened to Peter W. Heinrich [B1280a] from Westerenger. His grandfather, Bockhorst grandson [B1016b], was said to suffer from occasional falling sickness, his father stifled from a seizure, brother [B1280b] died as baby »from spasms and intense imbecility«. Heinrich visited a school for weeks only, not to think of an apprenticeship. His mother, for »he did not know about the sexual«, complained against the order throughout all appeal stages until the young man died from natural cause at home and before the regime could have executed more lethal measures<sup>114</sup>. In spring of that year transports from West-Germany into the euthanasia-institutes had started. As no further cases are known, the disease surely has been introduced by [B09251]'s wife Marie Niederbremer from Rödinghausen. In her kinship the disease had occurred in the halfcentury before the said marriage<sup>115</sup>.

Of Osnabrück descendance also was Bauhaus student and architect Hermann A.W. [Ä1301a]. His career was not foreseeable. He attended Dortmund school of arts only against his Osnabrück born father's declaration. In early postwar Germany he edited the soon well-reputed magazine "Bauen und Wohnen", in which he confessed, independently of the needs of his time, his tendency to normification and montage as modern principles of building, against all historicizing attempts. This makes him among all Blomeiers as an individual as the industrial worker from Essen or Bielefeld as a type to an exemplary man of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He could exercise his opinion in some public buildings in South-west Germany; some of them now classified as historic monuments themselves. Single among Blomeiers so far he became object of an (unpublished) biography and was honoured with the Federal order of merit. His widow Hedwig Emilie was the longest living Blomeyer ever. She passed away in her 107<sup>th</sup> year. Son and grand-children also are architects and artists like stage and television actress Anna-Katharina [Ä1507d].

Not yet identified is Ursula [to 000000] (1920-2005), whose ash is buried at Schinkel cemetery in Osnabrück. Also unknown so far are her five children. Together with her she-donkey »Aunt Tilly«, for which she knitted a

<sup>112</sup> *Members were [Ä1223h, Ä1311a, Ä1331a, J1347f, J1354b/c, J1370a, 00000]; see ibid.: Denazification committees 1946-49 (Rep 980), no. 31774, 35495, 35557, 43265; LdArch Duisburg: NW 1004-20101, 1035-04320, 1039-B-04735, 1057-MG-04521. Further party-members might not have survived war and captivity.*

<sup>113</sup> *LdArch Detmold, Erbgesundheitsgericht Bielefeld/Blomeier files 1936ff.*

<sup>114</sup> *In august 1941 the first few hundred mentally sick from the province were gassed in Hessian Hadamar. According to Mrs Schaaf/memorial institute Hadamar from march 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 no B. is listed among the victims. The same is true referring to the list of deposit R179 in the Federal Archive, Koblenz.*

<sup>115</sup> *KB Rödinghausen, funerals 1806-39, p. 32. Marie herself died from abdominal cancer (KB Wallenbrück 1883, no. 34).*

body-suit, after touring throughout the country the »oldest barrel-organ player of the world« became a post-war Berlin original. In the small community of barrel-organ players she is remembered until today<sup>116</sup>. She is said to have been a humorous person, but photos of her Berlin time also display a lonesome old lady.

No relation between our family and the Blomeiers from Bavarian Upper Palatinate or the Blomeyers from Us-lar/Northeim district in Lower Saxony can be proved. Mobility over such a huge distance in early modern time was improbable. The Ledebur had no possessions there, and land was already then too valuable to leave it to foreigners. Therefore we can assume that the name Blomeier has been invented three times independently. Both other families are of peasant origin, the Lower Saxon freemen and raised early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to bourgeois status. They are associated in the "Familienverband Blomeyer e.V."<sup>117</sup>. Near Kiew, one of our casualties [00000] and one of the Upper Palatinate's are laid to rest on the same resting place.

To make a difference between those Blomeyers and us, nothing would be more obvious as calling us the "Westphalian" Blomeyers. To differentiate from the Bavarian and the Northeim Blomeyers, we could likewise introduce the diacritics again. The owner of Beck manor in Löhne near Herford is one of the Lower Saxons, his father having been member of the Parliamentary Council in Bonn who drafted German Basic Law in 1948/49. Our folks did not enter the political stage to any great extent so far. Statistically, about two handfuls of family members might have joined a party. Bricklayer August [B1264c] sat in Spenge community-council for a few years since 1929 representing Bardüttingdorf village on the ticket of a single-list. Young type-setter Wilhelm [00000] in Bielefeld was already mentioned above, Hermann [Ä1301a] designed mayor of his Baden residential town for two weeks by the French occupation force in summer 1945, Uwe [Ä1429c] some time was member of a local council for an independent party, so is [J1574a]. Parson Matthias [Ä1425b] has been advising citizen in a Bielefeld council committee. Closest to high politics so far came [B1283b] and [J1576b]. Son of a hotel-owner, [B1283b] worked in Munich's »Vier Jahreszeiten«, then got a job in the Federal Diet's restaurant in Bonn. Hans Hartwig's father [J1445a] for some time was in charge of the Lutheran parish in Mexico-City, where son [J1576b] learned to speak Spanish like his native tongue. After his studies of tropical agriculture he therefore entered the Adenauer foundation, a think-tank named by the first Federal chancellor. For this institution he spent fifteen years in Latin America. Having been head of its London office he was in frequent contact to the greats of British and German politics; currently he works in Mexico-City. Some influence on public affairs had [J1472b]. Like the aforementioned she is from the younger branch. In charge of book-keeping of one of the most eminent employers of Gelsenkirchen in the 1980s, the St. Georg Company, she found out about the corruption of her superiors at the expense of thousands of disabled people. Although widow, soon released from her job and without any help of public authorities she fought for truth for many years, revealing one of the great scandals in NRW state. Finally, the head of the city administration quit "for the sake of health", other men responsible went to jail

<sup>116</sup> K. Krug: *In memoriam Ursula Blomeier*, in: *Der Leierkasten* 38 (2/2005), p. 24-28. A daughter apparently is married to a former GDR state functionary and like him member of the socialist party in a Brandenburg district council.

<sup>117</sup> Website [www.blomeyer-ev.de](http://www.blomeyer-ev.de); see also *Stammtafeln der Familie Blomeyer. Hofbesitzer Johann Christoph Blomeyer (1761-1823) aus Wiensen und seine Nachkommen. Aufgestellt nach gesammelten Unterlagen und Angaben durch Dr. jur. Friedrich Blomeyer, Haus Beck bei Löhne. Nach des Verfassers Tode herausgegeben von Eduard Blomeyer, Paulsdorf, Gör-litz 1927 (258 p.). Areas of residence of the branch were predominantly northern Hesse, Thuringia, Silesia. Emigrants went to Brasilia. None of the Eastern Westphalian B. can be related to their prime ancestor Christoph (\*1612). Werner von Us-lar, mentioned in a collection of documents in Wolfenbüttel state archive (Rep 1 Alt 31a Nr. 189c, Bl. 60ff.) was a Goslar citizen without connexion to the knights of Us-lar at the Weser area, and his marriage 1579 at Königsbrück possibly relates to the Lausitz town of this name, not to the Eastern Westphalian estate. Pure speculation would it be to construct a relation of bride to a son of Johann Blommeier who accompanied her to the Us-lar home, later was freed and honoured with a farmstead or so. Spelling of few Us-larers' offspring in the USA also is -meier. Wrong spelling could be »Blomeier«/»Blomann« for »Bloom« etc in KB Tecklenburg 1732-1809 (par. Leeden) in the 1790s (n.p.); variants to Blo- without any -meyer etc in Tecklenburg county in W. Leesch (Ed.): *Schatzungs- u. sonstige Höferegister der Grafschaft Tecklenburg 1494-1831 (Veröffentlichungen d. Histor. Kommission Westfalen XXX)*, Münster 1974, pass. Less probable this is twice for [J0820b] in KB (Pr.) Oldendorf (1754ff.) B/D 1777/79 to there frequent »Bolmeyer«, »Lo(h)meyer«, »Blomen«, »Blomenkamp« (e.g. Bl. 208, 212, 217 etc), where Hermann Heinr. [J0820b] in near Minden might have been soldier. Completely unique so far is Statius (Eustachius) Blomeiger 1609 as citizen of Obernkirchen near Bückeburg in: *LdArch Bückeburg: Urkunden Obernkirchen (Orig. Dep. 29) no. 9, maybe an ancestor of later Blombergs. In CB Obernkirchen (1620-71, Hannover Church Archive) p. 11 a god-father »Matthis (?) Blomejer« is recorded in 1620, uncertain p. 290 (1666). P.s 64 , 208, 238f., 339, 350 (1640-54) as in all younger churchbooks »Blomberg«, p. 167/294 (1634/1668) »Blome«, but no link to Wallenbrück B. A relation to the Us-lar Blomeyers up the Weser river seems more probable.**

for years<sup>118</sup>. [J1472b] never got a reward, but gave an example of civic virtue to her fellow citizen as well as to the Blomeiers.

Not revealed yet is, from whom the name of the Blomeier cottage at Spenge's Hengstenberg street is given, which different to most hireling's home has not been demolished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and since 1991 is property of Udo [Ä1428b]. In any case it is too far away from the Helligen farm to have been an annex once. Probably the name came into use by long inhabitation of a Blomeier hireling.

Would there be a Blomeyer clanchief, this dignity certainly would belong to the eldest member of the eldest family branch. As far as we know, this is Hartwig [Ä1301b] from Werther, to whom his son Torsten [Ä1401a] one day will follow.

## 7.5. Blomeyers oversea

Emigration was not a new phenomenon in 19<sup>th</sup> century Northwest Germany. In the middle ages men from here seeking for land emigrated to settle in Mecklenburg, Pomerania and the Baltic region. The "century of emigration" however was the 19<sup>th</sup>. Between 1830 and 1900, 300.000 Westphalians left their province heading for North America alone, half of them from eastern parts of it. Earlier emigration to America had been dominated by South and West Germans. Westphalians mostly took the Weser railroad from Minden to Bremen. Agents of Bremen shipping companies were active in all the small towns, often shopkeepers or land lords. In Spenge and Wallenbrück, salesmen Joseph and Levi Ruben managed the business. The cheapest passage on a sailing vessel cost thirty Talers, a year's earning of a day laborer. The one on a more rapid steam-ship three times as much. It took two weeks at least to the shore of New England, on a sailing ship sometimes two months. Life on board was, following reports from that time, not to be described<sup>119</sup>. No human need that was not satisfied in a most liberal way... It was rather economic necessity that draw people to emigrate, less fear of "feudal suppression" as often is believed in America, e.g. at the Historical Society of Westphalia/Michigan, but pure poverty after the potatoe blight 1842 and following years of draught. "Consumption" as death-cause in forty-eight-year-old hireling [Ä0902c]s church-book entry might have indicated severe lack of food. Probably the said interpretation is part of American collective identity. Many of the noble estates in 19<sup>th</sup> century Westphalia were no more than huge farms to modern scale, many of its owners sold them as they were not profitable anymore, as did the Ledebur the Mühlenburg estate. During the 1840s and 50s legal conflicts between farmers and the Werburg administration yet increased<sup>120</sup>. A Blomeyer [Ä0902k], carpenter in Spenge, is mentioned only as witness to the "Spenge tumults" during the revolution 1848 however, in which the Werburg was attacked as well<sup>121</sup>. Two others signed a petition to reduce taxes to the lord of the manor<sup>122</sup>. More intense within rural society were conflicts between villagers and hirelings or between spinners and yarn-traders. By distributing common grounds, smallholders had gained less compared to their more wealthy colleagues. In the new world in contrast, although they usually had to plough the less productive lots close to river banks at the beginning, they could become rich as was said ironically within twenty years "like the prince of Schaumburg-Lippe". The average Midwest farm was indeed six times as big as the Blomeyer farm in Helligen. Soon, the development of a continental then international market for grain and meat lead to a concentration of agrarian business, immigrants henceforth stayed in the cities. So did the Blomeyers, with exception of carpenter [B1014b] who was a farmer for a while. Emigrants arrived either at New York or Baltimore and travelled via Ohio to St Louis or they sailed to New Orleans and

<sup>118</sup> R. Liedtke: *Die neue Skandalchronik. 40 Jahre Affären u. Skandale in der Bundesrepublik*, Frankfurt a.M. 1989, p. 130f.

<sup>119</sup> *Very illustrative on the emigration process* W. Kamphoefner u.a.: *Von Heuerlingen und Farmern. Die Auswanderung aus dem Osnabrücker Land nach Nordamerika*, Bramsche 1999, also U. Plaß: *Meller Auswanderung im 19. Jahrhundert (Grönnenberger Heimathefte 24)*, Melle 2006. *Social, economic, geographic etc conditions in Osnabrück land and Ravensberg did not differ much.*

<sup>120</sup> *Extensivly* Wehrenbrecht p. 95ff.

<sup>121</sup> D. Meyer (Hrsg.): *Tumult in Spenge. Acta specialia über den Tumult in Spenge d.d. 22./23. März 1848 (Quellen zur Regionalgeschichte 14)*, Bielefeld 2008, p. 253. *More generally* Wehrenbrecht, p. 196ff.

<sup>122</sup> LdArch Münster, *Dep. Benkhausen Nr. 385.*

took a steam ship via the Mississippi northbound. This journey lasted up to four months. Most were heading for the Midwest. St Louis and Pittsburgh in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were as much German towns as nowadays many American cities are Afro- or Latin American. There are several places called “Westphalia”, in south-eastern Missouri there is a populated place called Blomeyer (nine inhabitants) and a Blomeyer road; local country-singer Dwight Th. Vaughn in 2012 dedicated the song *Blomeyer junction* to it. They definitely got their names from »Uslar« emigrants. Settlers founded a New Minden, New Melle and an American Disсен. As most immigrant colonies do, the second generation still married within the community, also did they separate according to religious confessions. Until the third generation the language was preserved, in many places German schools existed up to World War I. But as early as 1915, before American entry into the war, streets and towns had to change names, music of German composers no longer was played in concert halls, use of German in school prohibited in 1919. Only German speaking church services were held until the 1930s<sup>123</sup>. Most German immigrants in northern America arrived in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. No surprise therefore, that they had national units during the Civil war. [J1132d]’s husband took part in it on the Union’s side, so did Bennien tailor Hermann Henry [J1009f], who is buried near Nashville/Tennessee after joining a regiment build of a German turner association in his new home Cincinnati and was, after a few minor skirmishes before, deadly wounded at Chickamauga creek in september 1863<sup>124</sup>, in which was fought for war-decisive the railroad-knot of Chattanooga. It was the last great victory of the secessionists, only eight weeks after amend was made a few miles away. [J1009f], certainly had no own experience with slave ailment. As in neighbouring Indiana slavery was forbidden and only few blacks lived in Ohio then, whereas in southern Kentucky beyond the river, which remained in the Union, it gradually came to an end in those days. His fellow citizens’ example, who almost entirely took up arms, and maybe a new sense of patriotism might have encouraged the already 47-year old to volunteer for the fight. Brother [J1009e] also emigrated in 1853, but no descendance to commemorate them was found. We should therefore be grateful that the American administration conserves his grave, now the oldest remaining one of all Blomeiers. Already three men of the tenth generation lived in northern states then; all strangely called Hermann Heinrich. Although two were much younger than [J1009f] and just [J1010e] had to care for a family, none more joined the troops.

On the emigration list of Spenge we read the names of two more Hermann Heinrichs [Ä1003c] from Bardüttingdorf and [J1010e] of Nordspenge, who left Prussia 1852/53. The younger alone and without permission of the authorities, the elder with wife and four young daughters<sup>125</sup>. [Ä1003c]’s notwithstanding small property left back might have been seized for not having fulfilled obligatory military service before emigration.

Johann Heinrich<sup>126</sup> [B1014b] also from Wallenbrück came over on the steamer »Berlin« to Baltimore in 1868. Having returned for marriage, this poor chap apparently ended his life in Indianapolis lunatic asylum. Traces of his two sons, who changed the name into »Blumeyer« and three daughters from south-eastern Indiana are rare in the archives. Son [B1142c] was in need of care as well. No descendance in the male line exists from him after his grandsons’ deaths. Living Blumeyers in the US apparently derive from a Hannoverian family of this name.

<sup>123</sup> *On the German culture see C. van Ravenswaay: The Arts and Architecture of German Settlement in Missouri. A Survey of a vanishing Culture, Columbia u.a. 1977.*

<sup>124</sup> G. Tafel: *Die Neuner. Eine Schilderung der Kriegsjahre des 9ten Regiments Ohio Vol. Infanterie, vom 17. April 1861 bis 7. Juni 1864, Cincinnati 1897, esp.p 123ff. and p. 239 Engl. Transl. Kent/Ohio 1987*. [J1009f]’s identity is proved by comparison of passenger lists (bark Franziska, 1853 Bremen – Baltimore), military sources and inhabitants register. His grave is in plot E 308 Nashville national cemetery. Cause of death was a fracture of his right humerus. On [J1009e], from (KgdM.) Hannover see Hamilton County Genealogical Society’s naturalization index (www.hcgsohio.org). Few other B. in the city were of Bavarian origin.

<sup>125</sup> Kreisheimatverein Herford (Ed.): *Amerikaauswanderer aus den Ämtern Spenge und Enger, in: Wittekindland. Beiträge zu Geschichte, Kultur und Natur des Kreises Herford 1, Löhne 1987, p. 136 u. 168.*

<sup>126</sup> *Two volume F. Müller: Westfälische Auswanderer im 19. Jahrhundert. Auswanderung aus dem Regierungsbezirk Minden (1814-1900), 1, in: Beiträge zur westfälischen Familienforschung 38/39 (1980/81), p. 3-711; 2 ibid. 47/48 (1989/90), p. 4-762 does not mention him. Registration of immigrants was imprecise, usually only the country of birth was registered. What makes it difficult to identify individuals is wrong spelling of names when registering new arrivals and inaccurate dates of birth as well as that only the home country or province of an immigrant was put down, no precise place name.*

Two more sons and one more daughter were born to [B1025e] to become the first “true American” Blomeyers. [J1025e] must have acquired some wealth, for he could give credit of 1600 dollars to his children [J1132d/f]<sup>127</sup>. We also know wife and children of Hermann Heinrich jr. [J1132f]. Before 1900 they had moved to New York City. From his army enrollment file from 1917 we know of Walter Henry [J1257a] that he was tall, slender, had brown hair and blue eyes, lived with wife and daughter Irene [J1372a] just a mile away from the Metropolitan Museum of Art 439/9<sup>th</sup> avenue at the Upper Westside Manhattan and earned his live as pharmacist. The young family father had not been enlisted to the ranks apparently, thus he did not have to shoot his German cousins abroad. Hopefully neither had to [J1224a] and sergeant Frederick Gordon [J1227b] from Richmond, who went into action with his machine gun detachment/327<sup>th</sup> infantry in Lorraine/ France the very last months of the Great War. According to the census list 1940 also an aunt together with two daughters and his bachelor brother George [J1257c], working in his brother’s drug store, were living in Walter Henry’s household. George joined the navy soon after his country entered the war, but his vessel USS Arizona stayed in American waters, because European harbours could not provide fuel to its new oil-fired engines; the ship was sunk during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour without having ever fired a single shot. Later, a son must be born either to one of them or to their brother Herbert, then living in Arlington/Virginia, for it can hardly be by chance that only a few blocks away cab driver Walter [J1482a] lived for decades in a tiny apartment. The area in *en vogue* among cultural people now, so a real-estate agency had offered him more than half a million dollars to move out. He accepted, but soon after half the sum was paid a heart-attack brought him into grave, possibly the last of his branch.

Young tailor [Ä1008e] from the elder line reported to the authorities 1857 that he wanted to emigrate to an uncle in Buffalo. The plea was supported “as the poor man could not help his old parents anyway, and for there were too many tailors at all places he surely would be better off in North America”<sup>128</sup>. Abolishment of obligate guild-membership of craftsmen had indeed since long resulted in a surplus of crafts like tailors and shoemakers which did not demand workshops and expensive tools. Fulfillment of military service often was another request to get emigration permission. In Richmond/Indiana<sup>129</sup> [Ä1008e] later founded his own family. In the 1880s this states’s population majority was of German origin. An American from the »Uslar« Blomeyers found a Johann Heinrich from Redecke/Gronenberg, who must have been elder brother [Ä1008b], during the research<sup>130</sup> for his own family tabular. Hermann Henry’s great-grandson Michael [Ä1436a], today living in a Los Angeles suburb has been the first Blomeyer to take a non-white wife, the half-Japanese Michie Furukawa. Their three children and grand-children all live in other regions of the Golden state. The only two known similar case of the said kind is Guido [00000], who has three sons with a Turkish woman. The first marriage of a Blomeier with a foreigner was that of [B1388a] with a Dutch, it failed after twelve years.

Apparently, his youngest sister [Ä1008i] and two nephews of Hermann Heinrich, Wilhelm Heinrich and Heinrich Wilhelm [Ä1115a/b] followed him. Sources are thin in this case, especially a problem is the lack of church books from Neuenkirchen 1854-74. So other documents from high school yearbooks to conscription forms have to replace them. Of high value are the records of Richmond funeral company Jones & Placke. Several of their descendants later worked at the then well-known Starr Piano Company, the biggest employer of the town. American Blomeyers thus can take pride in having contributed in making jazz music popular. The first Blomeyers who attended a theatre play or entered a cinema probably were, by the way, the cousins in St Louis respectively

<sup>127</sup> City Library St Louis, City Wills Herman/Magdalena Blomeier 28/02/1891 resp. 18/05/1899. *In Mark, 1000 dollars were adequate to four annual wages of a skilled worker. Witness in both cases Diedr. Wehrenbrecht possibly from the Wallenbrück family.*

<sup>128</sup> LdArch Osnabrück, Rep. 335, Nr. 789, p. 69f and p. 31ff. *The uncle should have been the husband of [Ä0920d]. Nothing is also known about [J1122d] from Bennien who got his emigration permit in 1867 (LdArch Osnabrück Rep. 335, Nr. 802 Bd.1, Bl. 141).*

<sup>129</sup> D. M. Royer: *The German-American Contribution to Richmond’s Development 1833-1933, Richmond/Ind. 1983. By chance Hermann [Ä1316a] on the way to his weekly choral society meeting met Royer 1990 at Osnabrück Neumarkt; the encounter led to a visit in the United States at Hermann’s wife’s distant relatives. Founded by Quakers, the city was known as a centre of the KuKluxKlan in the 1920s. A quarter of its inhabitants is of German origin. Generally on Indiana: E. E. Lyon (Ed.): *Indiana. Crossroad of America, Dubuque/Iowa 1978* and K. Dehne: *Deutsche Einwanderer im ländlichen Süd-Indiana (USA). Eine historisch-geographische Analyse, Passau 2003.**

<sup>130</sup> E. F. Blomeyer: *The Blomeyer Book, Bethesda/Maryland 1957 (Ms.), p. 15. Some of his combinations are incorrect.*

New York. The few descendants of Wilhelm Heinrich likewise left Indiana and today live near Denver/ Colorado. In Richmond Roy Herman [Ä1334c] and his wife Sharon are staying; they helped a lot to reconstruct kinship relations.

In Wisconsin Karl Friedrich [J1349b] also merely had a daughter [J1442a]. Brother [J1349c] arriving together with him on Ellis Island soon returned home. They could not know that other Blomeyers were already living a few miles upwards the Hudson river. At the turn of the century, the German migration wave to the United States had declined in favour to East Europeans, Jews and Italians. Recently, Annette [Ä1427a] emigrated to Florida. For her, in some aspect the »American Dream« came true. Wilhelm Adolf [Ä1302c], brother of architect Hermann [Ä1302a], and his wife Marion who first ran a *Hofbrau House* and other restaurants in a small coastal town in New England and later moved to Florida, had no children. Marion, a former actress soon became a local celebrity as “Lady Christmas”, whereas rumors, [Ä1301c] once had been cook of the “Führer” hardly were avoidable in postwar-America. His way had lead him from famous Berlin Adlon Hotel to Stockholm and Montreal. In the Sixties he appeared in a local broadcast-station in Maine as an early tv-cook. Altogether no more than a dozen and a half Blomeyers originating from Eastern Westphalia live there, all from the eldest branch. Most American Blomeyers seem to belong to the two other families of this name mentioned above; their ancestors mostly settled in Maryland, Missouri and Ohio.

Easier it is to follow the traces of those who emigrated to Mexico. Two Osnabrück brothers went there in the 1930s: Karl Heinrich and Wilhelm [Ä1310a/d]. The United States prior to this had radically changed immigration policy. Wilhelm married a very young girl from Ohio in Los Angeles, but she and her baby boy were killed in a car accident soon after<sup>131</sup>. Then Wilhelm moved to his brother Westphalia, being the granary of the whole country. *Señor* Guillermo never visited Germany again, his living as businessman in the industrial city of Monterrey and married another time a few years later. They benefited from the boom of the border town that enlarged its number of inhabitants to the twenty-fold within a century. Its’ inhabitants are reputed to have great self-confidence. Monterrey is the most wealthy and most secure city in Mexico - despite Patricio Adolfo [Ä1508c] was murdered at juvenile age. The federal state of Nuevo León<sup>132</sup>, of which it is the capital, is three times as big as brother did so several times although after the German-Soviet attack on Poland he was put under arrest despite naturalisation in his new country. His bold hope, one of his sons would once become president of the Federal Republic of Mexico so far has not been realized. His son Carlos Guillermo [Ä1406a] whose wife was of German origin as well, also became a businessman and director of a flavour factory. [Ä1508a] and [Ä1509a] continue the family with their two sons and one daughter.

While most German emigrants headed to North America, some inhabitants of Hannover kingdom sailed to South African crowne colony Natal. Among them Hermann Heinrich [J1009k], whom we have heard of already above. He was follower of a popular preacher from Lüneburg heath area. Earlier, his mission society considered to pray among Abyssinian tribes first (therefor their vessel was named »Kandaze«), but the sultan of Zanzibar inhibited landing, probably for fear of interference to slave trade. Therefore they turned to the South African coast, founding the settlement Hermannsburg east of Greytown, named to the center place of their movement and several other mission stations. In those days the protestant churches alone send more than ten thousand missionaries from Germany into the world. Which country could be more proper to welcome a Christian community than a land whose name stemmed from Jesus’s birth (Natal Portuguese “Christmas”) and was obviously blessed by nature ? Some settlers from Osnabrück county already lived there as cotton farmers. Formal colonization German governments avoided despite considerable German immigration into Transvaal and sympathy for the Boer case<sup>133</sup> with respect to British interests. As wide as the whole North west Germany, the country between the Drakensberge and the coast was inhabited by less than half as many people as Westphalia. Sugar cane, fruits of all sorts and tobacco grew in its climate, cattle and sheep could be herded in its higher parts. Only in the past

<sup>131</sup> Already then 30.000 lives were taken by car accidents in the USA annually. Also brothers [Ä1230c/e] were killed by such accidents.

<sup>132</sup> L. Hernández: *Geografía de Estado de Nuevo León, Monterrey 1971. Spelling of the Mexican B. is -meier.*

<sup>133</sup> H. G. Steltzner: *Die Deutschen und ihr Kolonialreich, Frankfurt/M. 1984, p. 178ff. and 187.* Wilhelm [J1128f] however served with the *Umvoti Mtd. Rifles during the Boer war 1899-1902.*

few years rain often is waited for in vain and in this part of the country as well rivers fell dry. Similar to the western half Northern American continent and Northern Mexico, it has to be expected, that the entire Southern Africa will turn into desert before end of the century. Wild creatures of course are extinct outside reservates, except antelopes. Members of the 13<sup>th</sup> generation however went to school with guns to protect from carnivores. Similar to Westphalia coal and iron was mined, harbours at the shore of the Indian Ocean guarantee contact to the outside world<sup>134</sup>.

With the same brig as [J1009k] eleven other missionaries as well as seventeen German brides came over to Natal. Brother Blomeyer some years later married Katharina Ruwe from Hoyel village. Having learned the native language, for almost “a decade until his early death he worked in simplicity and faith but without visible result among the ignorant [Ama]kabyles”<sup>135</sup> as head of mission at Emakabeleni valley in midst the thorny wilderness northeast of Greytown, “quite as his live was his dying in peace” (from consumption). Yet this quite man was to become ancestor to a flourishing family branch. His widow married former brother Wilhelm Kohrs<sup>136</sup> as his fourth wife. Some farming land was attributed to the mission stations and his eldest son [J1128a] stayed in this sector, but also worked a while as gold-pro prospector. Today none of the South African cousins is in the farming business any more. The former mission school is nowadays supported by the German Foreign Office.

Revelation of kinship relations was possible thanks to Erwin Louis sen. [J1361f], a retired engineer from Durban. The name Blomeyer was given up however by his cousin Walter [J1360a]. This decision had nothing to do with the death of his uncle sergeant Robert Herman [J1230g], who was killed in action at the beginning of the campaign against the colonial troops of Mussolini’s Italy in Somalia, then ally of the “Großdeutsches Reich”. While we know little about suffering and dying of the mass of *Wehrmacht* soldiers, we are well informed about the ending of [J1248g]. South Africa then was still part of the British Commonwealth and thus supported Great Britain in its fight against Germany and its allies. Robert Herman volunteered the Royal Natal Carabineers, an ancient regiment once established to counter Zulu raids. 1940 it was shipped to Kenia in order to march to southern Somaliland. Italian presence there was a danger to British oversea possessions and the passage to India. When his platoon advanced near the Jubba River just north of the equator they suddenly encountered an Askari deployment led by an Italian officer. The officer immediately waved a white flag, but when the South Africans moved forward to disarm the enemy they were shot at. The brigade could counter attack and caused heavy losses to the enemy, but it had lost thirteen men itself, Sergeant Blomeyer one of the first to be killed. The casualties were buried on the spot, later transferred to Nairobi war cemetery<sup>137</sup>. The scene is remembered as »white flag incident« in South African military history.

Before this, a more distant war theatre was seen only by Karl Wilhelm [Ä1215e]. He volunteered from his regiment in deep Lorraine countryside to the East Asian Expeditionary Force under the command of count Waldersee which was deployed to China in summer 1900 to support the other colonial powers’ fight against the *boxer rebellion*. The 20,000 strong German troops arrived too late however to face serious fighting. By chance the German envoye von Ketteler, whose murdering initiated the undertaking, belonged to the clan which owed the Werburg in the 17<sup>th</sup> century for some time; another Ketteler was in charge of the 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade, one of his regimental commanders a Ledebur ! Younger cousin, Franz Heinrich [Ä1218c] also volunteered - attracted by a sense of adventure or the higher payment ? In contrast to Karl he did not return, but died shortly before arriving

<sup>134</sup> G. Haccius: *Hannoversche Missionsgeschichte*, 3 volumes, *Hermannsburg 1905ff.*, esp. II, p. 238-444. Also see E. Rosenthal (Ed.): *Encyclopedia of Southern Africa*, London et al 1961. Durban harbor was bought from natives in 1824, but the short-lived Boer republic Natal annexed by the Britons in 1838 to become a crown colony in 1845; eastern Zululand was annexed to Natal in 1897, after the Boer war the former »New Republic« around Vrijheid from former Transvaal; 1910 it became province of the Union of South Africa, official name KwaZuluNatal (KZN) since 1994. German literature on the Natal region is rare. The assumption, [J1009k] had found the Hermannsburg settlement is incorrect.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., III, 1 p. 134. Haccius’ s opinion can be transferred to the whole undertaking of the Hermannsburg mission which was not yet integrated into the established church and could not keep with the Reformed and Anglican Churches. The concept of missionary colonist had no future.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. on his activity in Ethembeni p. 134f.

<sup>137</sup> Grave no. 111, image on [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) and the facebook site The Blomeiers/Blomeyers. Authorities are warning for danger of armed robbery outside the establishment which is located 10 km south-west of the city centre, and for aggressive bands of apes inside.



back home also from enteric fever on bord steamer »Batavia«, and is most probably the first Blomeier buried at sea. Maybe the medical private had infected in the ship's hospital. Embarking the on the »Batavia«, the emperor had delivered his famous »hun« speech to his troops the year before. We cannot tell more about this episode as all records burned with Potsdam army archive in april 1945. It marks the value of local inhabitants' registers to conserve information like this, which had dropped out already from family remembering. Forty years later book-keeper Paul William sen. [Ä1334b] served as fighter pilot in the Pacific. Enlisted as recruit, education at an officer school, then training as pilot had been offered to him. Not to cause anxiety at his family he told them about it only when he had passed final examinations. Maybe his uncle August [Ä1225b], who served in Europe in a maintenance unit of the Army Air service had inspired him for aeronautics. Either he or Leutnant Waldemar [B1281b] from Enger, who was killed in action at Lake Ladoga when the Red Army broke the siege of Lenin-grad was the first Blomeyer to become an officer, so were in the final years of the war Erich [J1379a] and Julius [00000]. Walter's change of name - to return to this - had another reason. He was engaged to a girl of Scottish origin named McDonald-Watson. Proud on her origin she insisted before marriage that he would accept her family name. Having executed the complicated procedure of name change, they split. The new name was a souvenir to him and is to his later descendants<sup>138</sup>. Despite this we should count them among family members, maybe there is an occasion for rechange of name one day. For not name-change as such, but marriage or adoption into a new family makes someone leaving his native one.

The South Africans should be welcomed back should one evil day develop a situation in the »rainbow-nation« similarly to so many other African states. The consulate of the Federal Republic however refuses German citizenship to them so far: [J1009k], who was born as subject to the king of Hannover, failed to apply for German citizenship after the German states united in 1871- how should he have done from the African bush ? On the other hand: had he applied successfully for himself and his children they would have been in danger of dispossession and imprisonment like all Germans abroad after 1914 respectively no later than 1919 due to article 297b of the Versailles treaty (or later by law no. 5/Allied Control Council). Hermannsburg missionaries in southern India e.g. were deported in 1915. By their mother, daughter of an emigrant, [J1562a-c] at least gained German citizenship again. Oliver [J1579a] also was born in Africa, when his father wored in Liberia. Common ancestor with the South Africans is the missionary's greatgrandfather [J0705a].

Emigrants in modern days to southern France and Spain are [J1481d] and [J1473b], [J1503b] is living in Italian Southern Tyrol. In 2008 [J1466d] returned to Europe (Hertfordshire/England) with her husband; a visit of [Ä1426b] to them in 2014 was the first meeting of African and German Blomeyers ever. Her grand-cousin [J1462d] lived some time by chance in the same county in California as [Ä1436a] and his family without knowing of each other's existence, but has now moved to Southeast England as did [J1460a], [J1556b] and [J1561a]. On the whole about a quarter of the over 300 Blomeyers worldwide lives ten thousand kilometers away from the home of their ancestors. As long as Kim Leslie [J1462a] stays in Brisbane, they are present on four of six continents. Nowhere had they settled before the expulsion of native peoples by other whites was completed; none participated in the conquest of the Wild West or possessed slaves.

## 7.6. Summary and Outlook

Since a *Blommeyge* had been mentioned first, Germany changed its constitution six times, hereditary serfdom has passed. The Ledeburs have left the county, the Münch have perished, prince bishops and counts have lost power. Ecclesiastical corporations have been abolished, but thousands of country communities like Wallenbrück and Neuenkirchen haven been ripped off autonomy, the province was fused with the northern Rhinelands by British authorities. The rulers of the county Ravensberg respectively German governments went to war sixteen

<sup>138</sup> In reverse Andreas, husband to [J1552c] overtook her surname when marrying; Sandra [Ä1607b] returned to her maiden name after divorcing.

times, four times resulting in defeat. Today, the Federal Republic's rulers do not insist to have a combat-ready army any more.

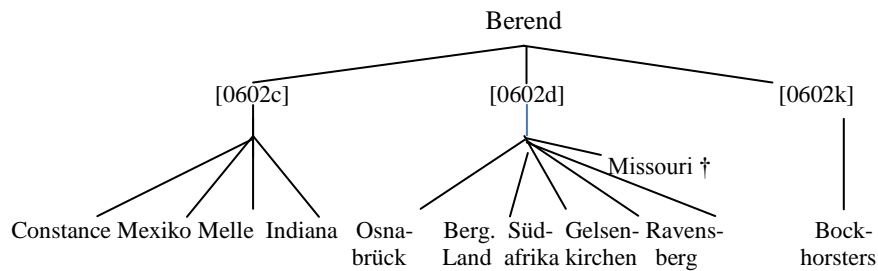
The comprehension of mosaic pieces into a wider frame permits to gain a likely clear image even of families who spend their existence in the shadow of greater events. Thus past turns into history. The source situation for the first generations with one liberation patent and three letters of exchange (all perfectly conserved), five entries into protocol-books, six into bondsmen-lists and tenure-books and ten into a church-book is satisfying. A handful documents concerning the Bockhorsters can be added. To know details about the lineage and individuals as is the case of the Blomeiers is rare for non-aristocratic families, despite popularization and facilitation of genealogical research by electronic devices, exemplary supplied by the Lutheran Church of Westphalia. The ever more numerous population of the Federal Republic from countries without tradition of written administration will never possess such knowledge. To demonstrate the dimension of immigration: City and district of Osnabrück were home to less than 400 foreigners among 80.000 Germans according to the census of 1905, half of them Dutch<sup>139</sup> - meanwhile the number of immigrants is more than a hundred times as high, while the number of natives only doubled. In Bielefeld, officially more than thirty-seven percent of its inhabitants are foreigners. Within fifty years, Westphalia faced four times as many immigrants than had left it in 200 years.

However, a *libellus vitae* like this, even when containing some 1800 names, can only display an intermezzo. And it remains us simultaneously, how transient the existence of individuals is. To sum up, the history of the Blomeyer family is not much different from that of a thousand of other families from the same region; evidence to prove methodical coherence in research finds place in two files<sup>140</sup>. Such congruency of their histories turns families into a nation. In revolving around birth, marriage and death, around work, soil and war it is exemplary. We might assume that the ancestor's farm in hamlet of Helligen near Wallenbrück was dependent to duke Widukind, from which ca. 1550 a small-holding was separated off. From its owner Johan Blommeier all Blomeyers/Blomeiers around Bielefeld and Osnabrück as well as their consanguines abroad are offspring. For centuries they walked behind the plough or sat at the spinning wheel before they specialized their professions and enlarged spatial mobility during industrialization; about a dozen family members from the two main branches emigrated to oversea countries after 1850. Silk weavers [Ä1327a/e] were the last working in traditional textile industry. From the 13<sup>th</sup> generation onwards, more and more family members entered the army of officials, academics and social workers, some became businessmen. The most successful among them certainly are Mark and his two brothers [J1461a-c] from Pietermaritzburg/KwazuluNatal, whose companies (e.g. *Blomeyers' electrical*) employ some sixty workers. Others are in the motor vehicle branch [Ä1428b/c], dealing with estates [Ä1427a], sweets *en gros* [Ä1437a] and scrap metal [Ä1526a]. [B1393a] runs a small building company. Spenge's machinery construction, founded in 1945 by Johann Franz [Ä1210f] had to be sold in 2018. Christof [J1487b] runs a hotel in a house erected ca. 1560 in Detmold city-center, where he hosts Germany's oldest regulars' table. Also Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dirk Reiner [J1551c], teaching architecture at a Berlin university college Dierk [J1553a] from Osnabrück shall be exposed, who was living for fifteen years in the Arctic region working for the Norwegian Polar Research Institute and gave lessons at the most northern university of the world. Together with [J1573b] and [J1462a-d] he shall be the Blomeyer who travelled the most. To be mentioned in a family chronicle in our days it does not take impressive commercial, academic or scientific achievements however. Everybody who breeds children to conserve the family serves it well. Also childless testators acquire a claim to be remembered if they do not let their heritage fall to the state or to distant affines of other families. In this context we might reflect about founding a family association or some sort of similar organization.

<sup>139</sup> See Gemeindelexikon X, p. 118ff. Among the 10.000 inhabitants of Enger bailiwick at some 1900 fireplaces in 1785 164 foreigners were counted; the expression then included non-prussian subject from other German states such as the Hessian county od Hannover electorate. See R. Gudermann/M. Nitsch (Eds.): *Agrarstatistik der Provinz Westfalen 1750-1880*, Paderborn et al. 2009, p. 41-43.

<sup>140</sup> *Setting standards: E. Timm: Reverenz und Referenz. Zwei Weisen der populären Genealogie seit dem 19. Jahrhundert und ein neuer genealogischer Universalismus ?*, in: Chr. Fertig/M. Lanzinger (Eds.): *Beziehungen, Vernetzungen, Konflikte. Perspektiven historischer Verwandtschaftsforschung*, Köln u.a. 2016, S. 209-232. Paradigmatic also A.E. Imhof: *Die verlorenen Welten. Alltagsbewältigung durch unsere Vorfahren - und warum wir uns heute so schwer damit tun*, München 1984.

Members of the main branches emigrated to North America, two to Mexico, one to South Africa. Including its oversea branches the family-tree looks as follows:



Families are not mere "social constructions", which can be changed to one's caprice. They are biological and historical facts. Until ca. 1950 Blomeier women on the average gave birth to three children. Nine men had ten or more children. To have more than ten with the same wife was exceptional. In the course of generations we observe an increase of births by the half from the well recorded seventh to tenth each, as in the twelfth one. In the eleventh generation there was a doubling. In the thirteenth generation our number is balanced at ca. 250 births as the highest number so far only to decline following general demographic trends massively, thus returning to the level of the eleventh generation with ca. 130 births in the fifteenth generation. Different child mortality in the past has to be taken into account of course. With regard to the ecological capacities especially in now densely populated Westphalia, where already a fourth (!) of the soil is covered with asphalt and concrete - an eternal legacy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - this would be a development to welcome, would not peoples from all over the world replace the locals. In the former, even more densely populated Rhine-Westphalian industry zone ca. thousand pumps have furthermore to be active permanently to prevent the deeply intoxicated grounds, of which a fifth already sank below ground water level to be swamped by upcoming stinking, salt, sulfur and poisons containing mine waters. No Blomeier of the first eleven generation would recognize his former country. Yet, as western half of the Soest plain this once was the most fertile soil of entire Westphalia. Foreigners will hardly take root there. Despite this and the possibility of extinction of the »Bockhorsters«, who suffered almost half the victims of the last world war and of whom Vico [B1494b] from Lübbecke is the known only male in the 14<sup>th</sup> generation, the family will certainly celebrate its 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2048.

Twenty-one times twins<sup>141</sup> were born, once a triplet [Ä1325d-f]. This is exactly the number to be expected statistically before introduction of artificial fertilization for humans as well. Curious only the birth of the twins [Ä1426a/b] on two successive days. Fairly complicated the offspring of [Ä1111d] and his wife who both had children from first marriages and produced some more together. Golden marriage jubilees were so rare in the past that they were noted in the church records. It seems that [Ä1006a] celebrated this feast first. In the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> generation some female Blomeyers of the younger branch decided to prefer relations to other women. Divorces apparently still are less frequent than on the average; for unknown reasons they are most common among the Osnabrückers. Also curiously, brothers [Ä1331a/c/d] all deceased at the same date.

Coats of arms are symbols of common origin. Many thousands of non-noble families have registered coats of arms in Germany, as did the Wehrenbrecht (1972) and Grönegreß (1963) from Wallenbrück, also the Lower Saxon Blomeyers<sup>142</sup> and those from Upper Palatine. An aristocratic monopole on coats of arms contrary to public opinion never existed. In Westphalia non-gentry families are known to have bore them since high middle age<sup>143</sup>. Coats-of-arms became common together with family names. Colours *gules* and *argent* of the county Ravensberg, Westphalia, Osnabrück diocese and the Ledebur barons alike fit best for any variation of a Blomeyer

<sup>141</sup> [0602, Ä0902, J0920, Ä1008, J1009, Ä1111, Ä1117, J1119, Ä1230, J1242, Ä1319, Ä1327, Ä1342, J1345, J1346, J1368, B1398, Ä1426, J1481, Ä1507, J1553].

<sup>142</sup> DWR LXIV, No 10283/27.04.1999. Colours azure and argent, shield per pale charged with house and farmer figure, crest three poppies.

<sup>143</sup> F. Philippi: *Wappen. Versuch einer gemeinfaßlichen Wappenlehre*, ed. Limburg/Lahn 1967, p. 46ff. Noble and non-noble families are easy to differentiate by the form of the helmet.

coat of arms<sup>144</sup>. A rose makes it »telling«, its six foiles represent the three major branches and three oversea branches and transfer the family history into a symbol<sup>145</sup>. The division of the shield (*per bend*) reminds of the Ravensberg and the Ledebur chevron; alternative options to display a chevron are already occupied on various coats-of-arms. Installing the *Blommeyge* farm was the origin of our family, probably we also owe our name to the Ledeburs. The black horse (*nag's head sable*) as crest derives from above mentioned *dux* Widukind and is part of Herford district arms, part of which the original home area of the Blomeiers now is. For the ancient sax-ons horses were sacred animals. The devise »*Ex unitate vires*« sounds very general a motto, but is adaequate to all kinds of extent social groups as genealogical ones. The English version »Union is strength« is engraved as regimental motto into Sergeant Robert Herman's [J1248g] tombstone, who like all world war II victims died a premature and unnecessary death and is buried thousands of miles away from both his South African and German kinship<sup>146</sup>. Remembering his fate in particular should shape the consciousness, how much more reasonable the world would ran, if those links would be more respected, which are older and should be closer than those who tie people to governments and states.

Names also are important carriers of identity. B is the letter most German family names begin with. And most Blomeiers in Germany at least will have faced more or less funny situations when a single letter of the name has been changed. The more important is the choice of a first name. Among male Blomeiers for centuries Johann/John and Heinrich/Henry dominated, both often in combination. At least a third of the Blomeier men in the first twelve generations was named Henry. Among females it was the classic biblical Anna, Elizabeth and Maria/Mary. And which name sounds more down to earth than »Heinrich« or »Henry«, a name nevertheless familiar in all European languages ? Of particular importance for obvious reasons is also the name Berend/Bernhard, though it had been given only four times. Fashionable Prussian names such as Wilhelm/William and Friedrich/Frederick occur from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, to be replaced by the fashion of Erikas and Reinhardts from the 1920s onwards. The second names for [Ä1406b] and [J1443b] hardly were chosen without consideration. Postwar Blomeyers are called Michael, Uwe and Jürgen. Lately newborns were given first names as exotic as short-lived and never used before. Yet nobody can know in advance whether they will ever be capable to fulfill or even wish to execute the grade of exclusivity their names force upon them. This aspect had to be mentioned finally as bygone generations leave nothing as lasting as their names. We already have given up their Low German dialect, their crafts and customs<sup>147</sup>, and their capacity to stand odds, also probably their piety. To express nevertheless that more than biological roots connect someone to his ancestry and his homely soil, few things are of better use than names.

(To be continued)

<sup>144</sup> Registered in the Lower Saxon Herald Roll (NWR) no. 16-2068 in 2016, published Kleeblatt 2/34 (2017), S. 47. Not at South Africa's state herald, which is an official authority different to German associations because in South Africa only arms for individuals can be registered. Entitled to carry are descendants from [0501d] who continue the family name, the descendance among of the »Bockhorsters« is mediated by [0301c], [Ä0802e] and [0823a].

Draft from Volker [J1426b], who also wrote this essay. After officer training and studies in history and geography he settled down in Münster, lived near the state archive, became member of the history association, home preservation association etc and was motivated by Griese's and Nolden's (architect in Bielefeld, husband to [J1429b], who had collected a third of the family-tree before) richly with photographes equipped work to continue their efforts 2014ff. On Ledeburs' arms see fn. 143, p. 96.

<sup>145</sup> Richmond is called »Rose City«, for formerly flowers were produced here at large scale; an annual »Rose Festival« remembers this trait of local history. In addition the peony-rose is one of Indiana's state symbols. If one likes, one can also interpret it as an allusion to the Osnabrück wheel or a spinning wheel. In Latin, from which »-meier« stems, our name is »flos maior« (»greater flower«); a heraldically not prescribed big motive would be another allusion. Symbolic charging should then be exhausted.

<sup>146</sup> Also former state motto of the South African Union and Natal province; engraved into the sword of Westphalian national hero Arminius (»Hermann the Cherusker«) at his Detmold monument is »German unity, my strengt; my strength, Germany's force«).

<sup>147</sup> An idea of the lost provides the booklet of Wissmann, *passim*, see also Weddigen, p. 47ff.

## 8. Literatur- und Quellenverzeichnis

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