

A BIG Surprise

A Family trip to ancestral homes in Norway and Germany

Submitted by Ginny Wegenast



Ginny with 2 children, 2 spouses, 5 grandchildren and 1 Great Grandchild

In June 2018, after about 18 months of planning with Brekke Tours, I took 10 members of my family (including 4 generations) to Norway and Germany. The trip was designed to see a little of each country, but to focus on the Ancestral homes of my mother in Norway and my husband in Germany.

Brekke assigned us a bus driver from Tretten who made arrangements for us to visit 2 family farms and meet the people who live there today. The Hong farm was where my great-grandfather Hans Olsen Strom was born, and the Strøm Farm was where his father lived and married his second wife before coming to America. It was this farm that they took their surname from when they arrived in America.



Strøm Farm (left),
Hong Farm (below)

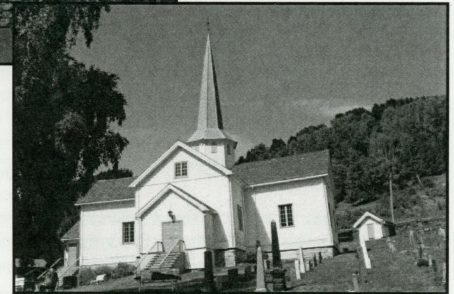


Brekke also made arrangements for us to visit and go inside the Øyer Church where Hans was baptized and

where his father married both his wives. And the Ostre Gausdal Church where Hans was confirmed.



Ostre Gausdal Church (left),
Øyer Church (below)



But the BIG surprise came when we arrived in Germany and met the guide Brekke had chosen. Ute Mehlhorn is a genealogist and co-owner of a small tour company that specializes in trip planning and implementing for small groups to visit the home of their ancestors in Germany.

We did not know ahead of time that she had contacted the Archivist in the small town of Holzhausen, where the name Wegenast has been part of the community since 1614. He in turn contacted a 4th cousin, Traugott, and together they planned our day in Holzhausen.

Our cousin and the Archivist met us for dinner the night before and the next morning, having taken a day off from work, Traugott met us, along with the Mayor, the Pastor of the family church and the Archivist who took us around Holzhausen.

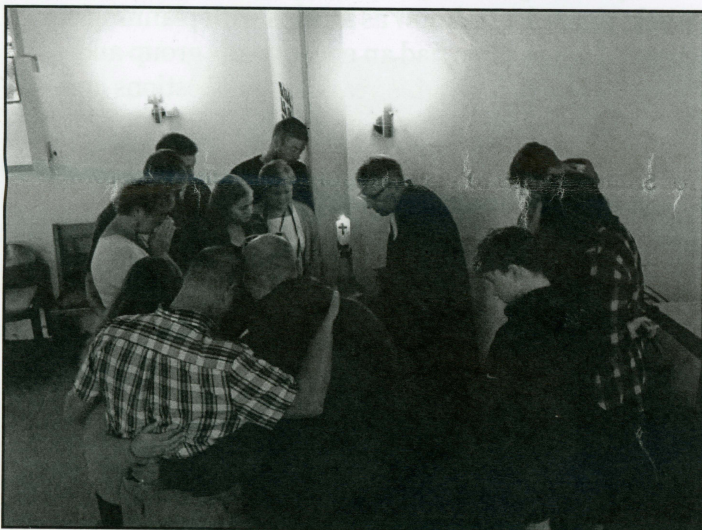
We saw a well that had brought fresh water to Holzhausen that was designed and built by Andreas Wegenast in 1771:



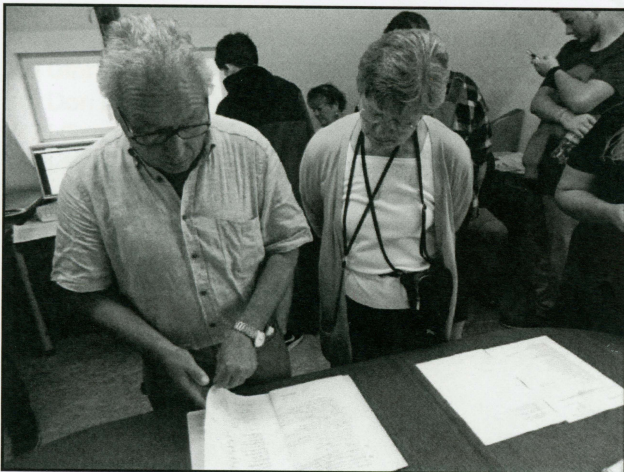
... and were shown the rock wall that was the remains of our 5th great-grandfather's home.



The Pastor conducted a brief memorial service in the church where ancestors had been baptized, confirmed, married and buried for 4 centuries. We each lit a candle for the loved ones that have gone before us and are very much a part of who we each are.



We visited the archives and saw actual documents that related to our family.



Then the ladies of the community served us a lunch that was a very special and very local Swabian pasta called Maultashen.



The day concluded with a visit to the cabinet manufacturing plant owned and operated by Traugott and an interview by the local newspaper which ran a story with pictures, 2 days later.

SULZ

Nummer 153

Auf den Spuren ihrer Vorfahren in Holzhausen

Familie | Die amerikanischen Wegenasts sind zu Besuch / Feier in der Georgskirche

von Marcel Steinhilber

Sulz Holzhausen. Wegenast aus den USA besuchen Holzhausen und machen sich auf die Spuren ihrer Vorfahren. Ortsbürgermeister Gregor Fischer begrüßte eine kleine Gruppe aus Holzhausen. Über ihn kam der Kontakt zu Henke. Für die Besucher geht es um einen historischen Ort, ein Programm, das am Nachmittag im Gläuberschulhaus stattfand.

Inschrift am Beckhaus Am Sonntag des Beckhausfestes zeigte Herwart Kopp dem Besuchern die Inschrift eines Beckhauses. Bevor es in die Georgskirche ging, dort hielt Pastor Thomas Lohmann eine kleine Feier auf Englisch zum Gedächtnis an die Mitglieder der Familie Wegenast im Holzhausen Archiv verweilt.




Besuch in den USA in Holzhausen. Herwart Kopp (Dritter von links) zeigt und erklärt den Wegenast-geschichte den Besuchern. Mit auf dem Bild: Pastor Thomas Lohmann (rechts).

Das Archiv ist das älteste in Holzhausen. Herwart Kopp hat im Archiv mehrere Dokumente zu den Wegenast, unter anderem eine große Namensliste und natürlich den Stammbaum, ausgestellt.

I know that many Norwegians have married Germans. I am writing this article to encourage you to contact Ute if you have a dream of visiting your ancestral home in Germany.

The German American Connection



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