



Luxembourg Heritage Society of Southern Minnesota



NEWSLETTER

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Winter, 2009

We Get the Luxembourg Emigration Display!

Our friends in Lamars, Iowa had the pleasure of having the great display "Luxembourg - America Migration" for several weeks before members of the Luxembourg Heritage Society of Southern Minnesota got it from them to display in our area.

It was installed in the Sleepy Eye Dyckman Library for several weeks in December and early January under the watchful eyes of LHS-Board member, Gail Christensen. It was then moved to the Marktplatz Mall in New Ulm until the end of January when it was sent back to Remsen, Iowa.

The display, which consists of 30 - 3' x 7' panels and is very well constructed, covers a wide array of Luxembourg emigration, but also has information on life in modern Luxembourg, too.

(Remember "*emigration*" means leaving a place and "*immigration*" means coming to a place. So one's use of the word correctly, depends on the situation you are referring to.)

The display is owned by our "mother organization" the Luxembourg-American Cultural Society (LACS) from Wisconsin and has even appeared in Ellis Island, New York! We thank them for the honor of being able to bring this close to many of our members.

If you didn't get to see it up here, a trip to Iowa is worth it, but bring a camera and notepad to record some items of interest to you. It is our hope that it will be available somewhere nearby again. Maybe the LACS Cultural Conference may have it on display and possibly it will be in a format for everyone to see on-line at some point in the future.

(Consider joining the LACS for a long list of benefits. Their web-site can help you with his or we can provide some membership materials, too. Look at www.luxamculturalsociety.org for more info.)



New Board and Officers

At the Annual Meeting, per our Bylaws, we took application for, and voted on, new Officers and Board members. While a slate of candidates was discussed at the November Board meeting, any LHS member could run for any position. A paper-ballot vote was done at the Annual Meeting with these results:

Terry Sveine	President, second term
Judy Beech	Vice, President, second term
Gene Bertrand	Treasurer, second term
Peggy Tauer	Secretary, first term (as Secretary, second term on Board)
Ron Schmitz	Board Member, second term
Gail Christensen	Board Member, second term
Steve Vescelus	Board Member, first term

Aside from Mr. Vescelus, this is the same Board and Officers that began our organization.

Our Bylaws state that *"...an officer is elected from the rolls of dues-paying members at the Annual Meeting for a one-year term...and...no one can take more than two consecutive terms...(with)...at least one term elapsing before being re-elected..."*

The scenario for 2010 is to now have an entirely new set of Officers and Board members (except Steve) While this isn't inherently bad, it will require new people needing to learn the ropes, but we have no doubt that the membership is full of qualified candidate to take over the helm in 2010!

Remember, we (generally) meet the last Thursday of each month at Gene Bertrand's shop in Sleepy Eye at 7:00pm. We've opened the meetings to any members and welcome you to attend and give ideas.

Membership Contest Results

As you recall from a mailing in November, to bolster new memberships, the Board decided to create contest with a prize of a meal for two at The Kaiserhoff Restaurant or George's Fine Steaks, both in New Ulm, for the member who brought in the most new members.

We had no new members come in during the qualifying time period, so no prize will be given out.

We have, however, added a few new members recently and our membership now stands at 54 members, including several husband-wife memberships. We feel that our group is growing and efforts like the web-site and more group activities will only see the numbers continue to rise.

"Pioneer Biography" Plea

The popular segment of this Newsletter, "Pioneer Biography," is hold since we have no new submissions.

We know that many of our members have done genealogy or other family history and have much information written down, and so we extend the offer to submit a story on your ancestors.

This has been one of the most well-received articles in the Newsletters, so don't feel "who would care about my people" – that's not true, in fact, it's just the opposite!

Send your stories -with pictures if possible- to the President's address on this Newsletter mailing area.

The Annual Meeting Was Fun!!!

The meeting was designed to have a few segments: arrival and socializing; a fine meal with good conversation; a short business section; and the presentation/program. The general consensus was that we succeeded on all accounts.

With Ellie Sveine manning the check-in table, we saw 21 people attend our event, even though the winter weather kept two couples snowed in from Sleepy Eye and Sherburne.

We gathered at the Holiday Inn's sizable "German Rivers" banquet room and shared stories, welcomed some members who had not attended any events before, pointed at a map of Luxembourg to ancestral homes and compared family histories.

After an hour, we were called to the tables to enjoy a wonderful meal of bourbon chicken, potatoes, green beans and bread and salad. With a short refreshment break, President Terry Sveine explained the process of voting for Officers and Board members before handing out paper ballots, with the results mentioned in an article above.

We were honored to have as a speaker, Kevin Ries from Edina (who came with his brother, Tom). Kevin was born in Rollingstone, MN, but grew up in Sleepy Eye. He is now a realtor in Edina, MN and serves as "Honorary Consul of Luxembourg to Minnesota." He has graciously invited some of our group to a gathering of Luxembourg descendants at his home and has been to some of our formative events, so he was no stranger to many of the group. He entertained us with an interesting overview of Luxembourg and capped the night by presenting a video he has of Luxembourg that covered many aspects of modern life there. It was very well done and all of us learned a thing or two, or three....!

As we wrapped up the night, new friends' hands were shaken, new family tree info was logged and smiles were present everywhere. A good night indeed!

Rene Returns!

Our old friend, Rene Daubenfeld from Luxembourg, is returning to Sleepy Eye and New Ulm this coming summer. Plan on coming out for a chance to visit with him and the tour group of Luxembourgers that he will be bringing. Look at www.haffren.lu for Rene's web-site with the details.

They have come to southern Minnesota five previous times, and it was always a wonderful experience. In fact, it was the gathering of us Americans of Luxembourg descent in 2005 for their first arrival that was the genesis of our L.H.S. group!

They will arrive in New Ulm on August 31st where they will be greeted and given a City Tour of New Ulm, ending with an American-style picnic at the New Ulm home of LHS-members, Terry and Ellie Sveine. Grilled hamburgers, American potato salad and other typically American picnic items will be served in an informal setting. Everyone is invited to attend.

Get the date on your calendars now! (By the way, Labor Day weekend is not until Sept. 5-7 this year, so it should work well for many of us.)



Consul, Kevin Ries, Peggy and Janet Tauer

"A Movie and a Meal"

On a sunny, but snowy and windy Saturday afternoon, February 21, we went through with our plans for the "Movie and Meal" event, despite what Mother Nature threw us. Seventeen people gathered at the Community Center in Sleepy Eye and we had a great time!

The group was asked to bring Luxembourgish food if possible and while not all of it was specifically Luxie, I think it's fair to say that a person from Luxembourg would have felt right at home. Delicacies included: head cheese, bouneschlupp (been soup), roulanden (rolled beef), fruit torte, knudelen (dumplings), spatzle and treipen.

LHS member, Bob Arens, not only helped save the day by running the DVD movie through his lap-top computer, but he held a treipen-judging contest, as well! He brought four types of triepen (a Luxembourg blood sausage) and had us rank them for taste and appeal. The results were:

1. Kalmes' Restaurant from St. Donatus, IA (tie)
1. Schmidt Meat Market (with raisins) from Nicollet, MN (tie)
3. Schmidt Meat Market (without raisins) from Nicollet, MN
4. Pekarna Meat Market from Jordan, MN

The movie was supplied by LHS-member, Suzanne Bunkers. It is called "Heim ins Reich," which by using my limited German, means something like, "Home in the German State." It referred to the Nazis using that slogan to legitimize their invasion of Luxembourg in World War II as a way of repatriating Luxembourg back to her "historic German roots."

The 2-hour movie uses archival movie footage and many interviews with older Luxembourgers. While it requires one to read subtitles about half the time, it was fascinating and very well done. After-movie discussion included surprise at the length of the occupation (May 1940 to mid-1944), the conscripting of Luxembourg male youth to fight against Russia for Germany, the extent of the concealment of Luxembourgers in hidden buildings and bunkers, and the number of Luxembourgers put in concentration camps with some dying there.

If you have a chance, watch this very enlightening movie that will likely keep you spellbound!



Easter Monday

The traditional celebration of "Emmaus" takes place in Luxembourg City on Easter Monday where crowds gather behind the Royal Palace to buy one of the small bird whistles made of baked clay which are only available that day.

The town of Nospelt, about 10 kilometers northwest of Lux City, is famous for their clay, bird-shaped whistles (shown at right) called "peckvillchen."

They celebrate this day, which they call "Eimaischen," in a similar fashion, but add a unique twist by having lovers exchange the peckvillchen with each other.

There are many folk explanations of how this festival began, but most explanations seem to agree that the bird sounds from the whistles are associated with the coming of spring. No matter the reason, you can bet that Nospelt and other towns in Luxembourg will be alive with happy faces on Easter Monday!



MORE Language Fun

The editor of this Newsletter has received a few positive comments on the "Language Fun" article from last year and was asked to repeat the concept with some more Luxembourgish words and phrases.

Remember, in general, the pronunciation is generally more of a Germanic-style than French, although certain words will reveal themselves to be more obviously French.

Luxembourgish is a unique language and its roots are of the Franconian branch of Germanic languages, but it has distinctive influences from its southern neighbor and former occupier – France.

<u>English</u>	<u>Luxembourgish</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Luxembourgish</u>
hospital	klinik	parent	papp/mamm/eltern (m./f./both)
boat	boot	ball-point pen	bic
ship	scheff	wife	fra
prairie	prarie	husband	mann
grass	graas	church	kierch
grasshopper	heesprenger	nothing	naischt
Indian	Inder	polar bear	eisbier
rifle	gewier	snow	schnei
Christmas	Chreschtidag	New Year's Day	Neijoeschdag

All words are from the "Lycee Michael Rodange : Dictionary English – Luxembourgish" from 1995. (My computer does not allow for the occasional inflection marks, sorry.)

"A Mixed-up Luxembourg History Lesson"

Like all countries, Luxembourg's history is intertwined and confusing, especially to many Americans unfamiliar with the intricacies of medieval Europe. Too often, people assume that the political entities from Europe's past correspond directly to the borders of modern Europe and have similar power structures – which they rarely do!

Unfamiliar to many modern readers are places that once held substantial power. For example who knew that places such as Brabant, Limberg and Lorraine were all "Duchys" (ruled by a Duke) and held considerable power at one time? (Today these places are part of Belgium, Germany and France!)

In the following mini-biography, the "nation state" as we know it today, has not yet evolved. Power is held by powerful families who have a legitimacy to rule, but only as long as they can prove an accepted type of inheritance. For example, the Duke of Burgundy (roughly in eastern France) was often more powerful than the King of France. The King held power only in a small radius around Paris. To maintain an aura of legitimacy and to maintain the agreed-upon rules of power transfer to their sons, various dukes and other nobles nominally adhered to subservience to the King, but they often had more real power than he did. When reading history where various Dukes were interfering in situations, you may have wondered why the King wasn't taking over and this may help you understand why – he may not have been strong enough!

Through various inheritances and intermarriages, the same person may simultaneously be "Duke of this," "King of that," and "Count of the other" and it was not unheard of for some people to hold multiple secular roles in addition to being a religious person, as we will see in the person of Pierre d'Aspelt later on.

Intermixed into all of these overlapping strata of power, is the enigmatic "Holy Roman Empire." (For ease of understanding, think of this term as referring to the general area of modern Germany. Although technically speaking, "Germany" was not a country until 1871 when Bismarck created it in the form we know it as today. Prior to 1871 "Germany" was only a geographic and cultural reference.) The HRE was created during Charlemagne's time in the early 800s and was an attempt to unite the power and legitimacy of "Rome" (that is, the Catholic Popes) together with the hundreds of Germanic princes and religious rulers. In short, Charlemagne wanted the blessing and legitimacy of the Church, and the Church wanted Charlemagne's protection. After Charlemagne's death, the kingdom was divided between his sons, ending any real HRE, but it was revived again under Otto I in 962 when the Pope needed help and resulted in the German lands being somewhat united with the Italian lands.

Eventually a series of seven "Electors" elected the HR Emperor and, although an impressive sounding title, due to the enormous divisions and self-interests of the many local rulers, he often had little true power. To accomplish anything of substance, the Emperor needed to craft alliances and agreements, give transfers of lands and award titles to those whose favor he wanted and to achieve what he wanted. Therefore, the size and boundaries of the HRE often changed and power shifted around with time.

Into this mix in 1288 walks Henry VII (the 7th) of Luxembourg. He was regarded as a wise and forward-thinking prince who was a good leader. With the help of his brother, Baldwin the Arch-Bishop of Trier, and friend, Pierre d'Aspelt, the Archbishop-Prince-Elector of Mainz, Henry was crowned H.R. Emperor in 1308. As was common with HR Emperors at the time, they felt compelled to conquer (or reassert their perceived authority over) various parts of Italy, sometimes at the beck of the Pope. Whilst on campaign in Italy in 1310 Henry died of malaria (or some say by being poisoned by a Florentine enemy!)

Henry's son, John (variously Jean, Jan, Johann, etc.) became the Count of Luxembourg at age 14 and married Elizabeth of Bohemia two years later. When the King of Bohemia died with no male heirs, the crown passed to Elizabeth and then by custom, to her husband, so by 1312 Jan was also King of Bohemia! As proof of this, in the Czech (or Bohemian) royal castle of Karlstejn one can still see the Luxembourg Coat of Arms on display.

John spent the next 30 years on the warpath, fighting in Belgian, Italian and Baltic regions. He was also trying to become the King of Hungary and so needed to curry the favor of the Great Teutonic Knights, a fanatically religious post-Crusading group who wanted to depose the semi-pagan King of Lithuania (a much bigger and more powerful place than today's small Baltic country!). John was eventually blinded in one eye while fighting in Lithuania – a fighting that led to no lasting profit.

John is credited with doing well for Luxembourg and built several churches, granted many municipal charters and supported the artisan class. He built a third ring of defenses around Lux City and established the "Schueberfouer," a fair which still attracts merchants and visitors to Luxembourg City. These activities helped spur the growth of an urban, trade-based economy and culture in Luxembourg.



Luxembourg's Henry VII



The Holy Roman Empire



John was a lavish spender and traveler and as a result he had accumulated many debts. To his dismay, his continual fighting failed to bring him the glory he wanted. He failed to launch another Crusade to the Holy Land, he could not secure Carinthia or Tyrol for Luxembourg, nor did he become King or Poland or Hungary, as he hoped. He also began to neglect his Bohemian provinces (which were physically separated from Luxembourg by the HRE.)

By 1340 he became totally blind, but that did not stop him from helping his ally, the King of France, during the Hundred Years War with England, where John was killed in 1346. His foe, Edward III of England, was said to have been awed by John's willingness to fight despite being blind and according to legend, he plucked three ostrich feathers from the deceased John's helmet and adopted the motto, "Ich Dien" ("I Serve"). Today, this motto and emblem of feathers is still used by the Prince of Wales in the United Kingdom (today's Prince Charles)!

Today, John the Blind is a Luxembourg hero whose memory and deeds are revered and he is buried in the basement of the Cathedral of Luxembourg, home church to our friend, Archbishop Franck.
(By the way, I got a Christmas card from Archbishop Fernand Franck of Luxembourg and he wishes all of us a Merry Christmas!)

.....Wow, who knew we'd go from a short lesson about power and defunct lands in Europe, frame a bit of the Holy Roman Empire and it's relation to modern Germany, add Bohemia to the *Count* of Luxembourg's (note: he wasn't yet "promoted" to *Duke*) holdings, learn about one of Luxembourg's national heroes, find out that the English Prince Charles uses a motto that originated upon the death of a Luxembourger, and get a holiday greeting from our old friend, Archbishop Franck?!

If you can follow the "game," history often yields lots of interesting connections!Terry Sveine

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Fun Facts and Recent Observations on Luxembourg

*Unusual Weather –

The coldest day of the year 2008 in Luxembourg was December 30 at -7.2 centigrade (19 Fahrenheit). Their December was, on average, the coldest in the last three years with less precipitation, too. January 7th saw another super cold (for them) spell of -15 centigrade (5 Fahrenheit).

Imagine what the first settlers to southern Minnesota felt about some of our typical winter weather, not to mention their impressions of their first blizzard experience! Can you imagine their letters sent back home, probably laden with phrases like, "...what in Heaven's name are we doing here?..." or "...you will not believe this!..."

*Cold Water –

The Moselle River had ice along much of its banks during that cold snap. The last time the Moselle River froze over completely in Luxembourg was in 1962, but with warm water released into the river from the nuclear power plant in Cattenom, France (about 5 miles from the Luxembourg border) it will not likely do that again.

However, the Saar River was nearly frozen near Saarlouis, Germany about 20 miles south of the Lux/German border. The Saar River empties into the German part of the Moselle about 10 miles east of Grevenmacher, Luxembourg.

