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Preface

Presented here by Ulrich (Uli) Pfingstler is a history of the area that is known as The Zabergäu, which is part of the geography around the former Nike Guided Missile Base - Charlie Battery - 3rd Missile Battalion - 71st Artillery, located on top of the Heuchelberg.

Uli, who at the time lived in Brackenheim, is a friend several of us knew while stationed at the Battery in the late 50's and early 60's time frame.

We are pleased and grateful for all of Uli's efforts, his contribution to the Charlie Battery historical record, which continues to ever expand, and the renewal of old friendships.

!... Vielan Dank Uli ...!



THE ZABERGÄU

von

Ulrich (Uli) Phingstler aus Lauffen am Neckar



he “Zabergäu” is the region between two hill-rows called Heuchelberg (in the North) and Stromberg (South). “Charlie” was, as you know, installed on the Heuchelberg. Unfortunately I could not find out the explanation for the names for they seem to be very old ... (Strom = current, Heuchel = hypocrisy, but this makes no sense, possibly it might go back to the Celts).

The “Zaber” is a little “river” starting at Zaberfeld running from west to east and flowing in Lauffen into Neckar-River. Gau or gau (an old expression) means “region” - altogether it spreads out about 30km. The Zaber runs in the middle of the “valley”, through Pfaffenhofen, Guglingen, Brackenheim, Meimsheim to Lauffen ...

Kleingartach and Niederhofen etc. are located “over the hill” - Heuchelberg, their valley is the “ Leintal” (Lein=also a little “river” - Tal=valley). The Lein also runs to Neckar river.

The region has been settled since very ancient times. Before there was an original population (so called Stone-Age) which is not so much explored.

About 600 years before Christ the Celts started to settle - they withdrew or were chased away, or also slaved (maybe also mixed up) by the Romans who did unite for this purpose even with the Germanics at about the year 000.

The Celts looked about like the Germanics (tall, blond-hairy, blue-eyed) but the language was completely different (today Gallic - still spoken in Scotland, Wales and Ireland where they withdrew via France). There were still “witnesses” found from their time .. Names like Zaber, Neckar seem to be of Celtic origin ...

The Romans came into this region (elsewhere partly before) at about the pe-



riod of 000 and stayed here for about 200 - 300 years. They occupied with their legions but also “civilians” and old “retired soldiers” settled and farmed here. There are still very many objects of witnesses found of this period. Rests of old buildings, monuments, castles (called Castells), statues, farms etc. - Even word and expressions of their language (Latin) came into our language till today - for instance: window -german = Fenster - Latin = fenestra, wine = Wein = vino, stone - wall = Mauer = mura, street = strasse = strada etc. -

Due to the fertility and also to the climate this region was preferred by the Romans very much - (they called the zabergäu “little Italy”). - Temporarily Germanic tribes had settled beside the Romans - they lived beside each other - lived in peace or also not and got sometimes “mixed-up”, did trade, fought each other etc. -

Generally the Romans settled at preferred places: Along the rivers (Rhine, Neckar, Donau etc. etc.) because of fertility, warmer climate, water (very important) they built, founded little places, farms, already “towns” like for instance Kain (Colougn?= Lat. Colonia (colony) at Rhine River etc. - They had high cultures in architecture, literature, ways of life etc. It is very funny: Germanics had writing (called rune) but did not document their future like customs, lifestyle etc. - All the documents about Germanics were made by the Romans who described the Germanics very detailed (Tacitus). A real irony of history ...

Later - about between 200 - 300 p.Chr. - because of too much “robbery” and

maybe also because of too much brutality from the occupants the high cultured Romans were chased and driven away by the "wild and brutal Germanic, Teutonic barbarians" ...

The legions (soldiers) left but not all the Roman population (families ...) was able to follow and so remained here ... Also they had been here already since a long time. Probably they were "slaved" by the Germanics (slavery was not Germanic - the Romans introduced it here at that time).

Later they got mixed up ... and still today (till 1945 before many other influences came in here) you could realize in the southern parts of Germany there were much more dark hairy, brown eyed people as in other regions like North-Germany, were no Romans were - especially along the rivers ...

So you can see the foundation of the places around here and also elsewhere goes far back ... (see later "Birthdays of the places ... ").

Back to the zabergäu. This region (and also big parts of the South-West) then was settled and dominated by incoming Germanic tribes as the Franken, Alemannen, Suebians ...

By driving thru the country or watching the maps one may realize that the names of very many places end with ... "heim" or ... "ingen". This ending shows still today the foundation. - Places ending on "heim" (=home) were founded by the Franken - on "ingen" (7) by the "Alemannen" ... This population happened around 400-500 p.Chr. The dialect of our region is a mixture of Trankisch, Alemannisch and Suabian ... It is "Schwabisch" (suabian).

People coming from other parts of Germany or those who have studied the German language in the universities consider it as a real "cruel thing" for the pronunciation is very different from the proper German and is hardly understood by "newcomers" ... It takes them a while - many won't learn it in a lifetime ... More about this see "general German history .. "

As mentioned before the region was (and still is) very fertile. So agriculture goes far back and today wine-agriculture is dominating because of high rentability. Over here wine is not something to drink - it is still a tradition, religion ... but also a real science. It is discussed if the Romans started it over here or whether it came here later (see Wein=vino) ... in fact they have produced a very good wine in our region since ever formerly (till about the 1950's -1960's) working in the vineyards was most manual and very hard - one could compare some activities even as hard as manual wood-cutting. - Since about 25 years they also discovered the grapes are very good for producing champaign (called Sekt) and so they do it - Some Sekts are absolutely comparable to the champaign of the Champagne in France - but much cheaper ...

This region, and also big parts of the South-West, then was settled and dominated by incoming Germanic tribes such as the Franken, Alemannen and Suebians...

They started a very good marketing with the Haberschlacht wine all over Wurttemberg (one part of our state) In the 1950's ... 50 this wine became especially famous and very well known ... The other wines of Stockheim, Neipperg, Brackenheim etc. were about of the same standard but not so well marked ... Meanwhile all over the region around Heilbronn they improved very much ... Today they are all comparable but still the (red) wines of the zabergäu including Lauffen gain very many prizes, (golden and silver medals German wide) in competitions.

They also improved marketing like a real modern business - before it was considered and practiced as "farmer's work" and also (except Haberschlacht) as a very local "thing" - the Wurttembergers were much known for drinking their wine themselves and did not "export" elsewhere The wineries (cooperatives, also private possessions) have become very modern enterprises concerning business, methods, equipment, management, marketing, methods of production etc The settlement of the region(s) goes far back in history. When they date it on a special year - like Haberschlacht 750 years (1229-1979), Stockheim 1000 years (950-1950), Brackenheim 700 years (1280-1980) etc. - So this doesn't mean the real begin of the place as population, settlement etc. but the very first mentioning in any official document, mostly in ecclesiastical titles, also in documents of

knights, dukes, counts or of the proprietors of the place So people discovered the “birthday” of their place by this way as a reason for celebrating and also for reputation “ our place is older than yours “ also in prospects, brochures etc. etc. --

By the way it might be worth mentioning that Stockheim is the only place which stayed Catholic after reformation far around especially due to the regime of German (or Teutonic) knights Order. All the Zabergäu and also other distant regions were protestant. Because of this situation they were very isolated (only one other family in the Zabergäu was Catholic) and had their problems with the environs for instance for getting partners to marry etc. If they did “nothing find in the village” they had to go far to other catholic communities ... Also this situation changed completely after 1945 when very many other influences come “over the land” as people from other lands of catholic religion (whose ancestors had emigrated maybe centuries before) had to be integrated in “protestant regions” as well. ..

Also there were no wars, battles (see Haberschlacht), conflicts etc. of tactical or strategic importance except may be - so considered - the battle (Schlacht) near Lauffen (1534) when the Duke of Wurttemberg (Duke Ulrich) regained his terri-

tory (Duchy Wurttemberg) from Austrian regents.

After the World War II the situations all over Germany and so also in the Zabergäu changed completely in every respect - partly abruptly, partly stepwise. Indeed each family had been touched in any way from war-influences and also the following consequences.

A profound change happened with Brackenheim and the villages around when Hausen, Durrenzimmern, Meimsheim, Botenheim, Neipperg, Haberschlacht, and Stockheim were united to one community with Brackenheim as the municipal center - the “Capital”- in the 1970's. Now the places around Brackenheim got the additional name as for instance “Brackenheim-Haberschlacht” etc. At the beginning this caused indeed much change in administrations etc. Now “Big- Brackenheim” has some more than 10000 inhabitants and is also the largest “red-wine area” of Wurttemberg ...

This is a general description about the origins and also some about the development of the zabergäu. All the events of history like reformation, Famer rebellion against knight's etc. regimes, 30-years-war (1618-1648 very cruel), Napoleon, foundation of Germany as political state, world-war I and II of course touched the region but describing would be too voluminous for this entry.





The Zabergäu And The Leintal Detail Map



The Zabergäu From The Schloß Stocksberg

This is a wonderful panorama of The Zabergäu, with the village of Stockheim below. Actually this photo shows only part of the valley. If you refer to the detail map you will see it really starts around to the right and back to Zaberfeld. We can see, up and a little to the left of center, the city of Brackenheim. Then, a little further in the distance and to the right, is Lauffen am Neckar. The villages to the left of Brackenheim are probably Durrnimmern and Nordhausen. The high hills to the right is The Stromberg, and defines the other side of the valley opposite the Heuchelberg.