



KNOW YOUR ROOTS

Mary Durland, Author/Researcher

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THE GREITENEVERT FAMILY AND WHAT HAPPENED TO LAMBERT?

Maybe if I tell you that the wife of Johann Heinrich Schueneman was a Greitenevert it will ring a bell. Yes, Maria Catherine Greitenevert was married to Johann in 1845 and with her new husband and brother Lambert and her brother-in-law Bernhard and her mother-in-law set sail for the new world in 1847 from their home in Ochtrup, Germany. (Maria Catherine is one of our maternal grandmothers and is buried in the Johnsburg cemetery.) They left Ochtrup where the Greiteneverts were an old established farm family going back several generations. This is the oldest known picture of the farm. The name Greitenevert is so old that it is a combination of two names, Groten and Evert, and it evolved into what it is today. The town of Ochtrup itself is very old and along with the church St. Lamberti their records survived during all the wars.



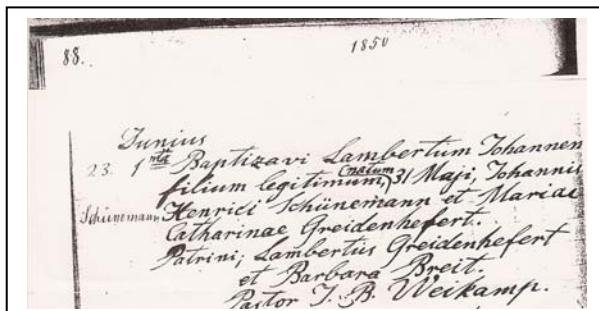
Maria Catherine was born in 1821 in Ochtrup as was her father and many earlier generations as I mentioned above. She was 24 when she married Johann Heinrich Schünemann and there was much turmoil in Germany at the time. The town of Ochtrup was particularly affected by the economic situation and there were many stories about how it was possible to purchase the land in America. Even to the extent that there were men who traveled from town to town selling and arranging emigrations for a better life.

In order to emigrate one had to obtain permission from the government. Nevertheless, sometimes young men of military age who didn't want to go into military service, which was obligatory, would leave secretly. In all the records I have of Ochtrup, I have every indication that our family was one who did have permission even though Johann, Bernhard, and Lambert were of military age.

Particularly, the subject of this newsletter, Lambert, was not only of military age but he was unmarried and could have been looking for excitement. He was not a young

man, born in 1815, and perhaps tired of being a farmer, so at age 32 he joined Maria Catherine's group. We know he arrived with them in Chicago in 1848. I have his ship's record.

There is another record of his being with the group because in researching the



birth of Johann's and Maria's child at St. Peter's Church in Chicago, I found this record. It may be hard for you to read the Latin but it says that the child of Johann Heinrich and Maria Catherine was baptized Lambert Johann in 1850 and the Godfather was Lambert Greitenevert. So I know Lambert Greitenevert was in Chicago in May of 1850 and Lambert

was at the Baptism. Besides that, I also learned that my grandfather was named after his uncle Lambert but he never used that name. However, since his father chose to anglicize Johann to John and his son chose to use John, in order to keep them both straight after I learned about the baptismal name I always referred to the son as Lambert John.

After 1850 Lambert Greitenevert seemed to disappear. There was no mention of him in the family. What happened to him? Where did he go? There was no record of his returning to Germany.

This is what I think happened. In 1850 in Chicago a cholera epidemic broke out, lasting until 1854. Over those years there were 8850 deaths reported in a city of only 70,000 population. The cemeteries could not keep up with the dead and although extensive records were kept, they were often lost. I believe Lambert was one of the victims. I found this one account from August 1850 which explains it all.

"1850 CHICAGO EPIDEMIC LETTER (to his brother)

Chicago, Aug. 3, 1850...I arrived in Chicago early Saturday morning. I found that many of my old acquaintances & old residences had died....there was a man near the States well & hearty yesterday, weighed 200 lbs, about 27 years old died last, there is a great many sick in Town..."

I do not say this is Lambert but I do say this could have been what happened to him. Of course, his family buried him but sadly the downtown area burned in the fire and many records were lost. Maybe one day, I'll find proof for certain that Maria Catherine and her husband Johann Heinrich would have given Lambert a fitting funeral in the church, but I have to find the records.

In the meantime in Ochtrup the Greitenevert farm remains in the name of a Greitenevert although he is an adopted son. I visited the farm and also later met a descendant of Maria Catherine who is no longer farming. The farm is expanding as you can see, and will remain in the Greitenevert name.



(Webmaster & Technical Advisor: Jerry Larkin)