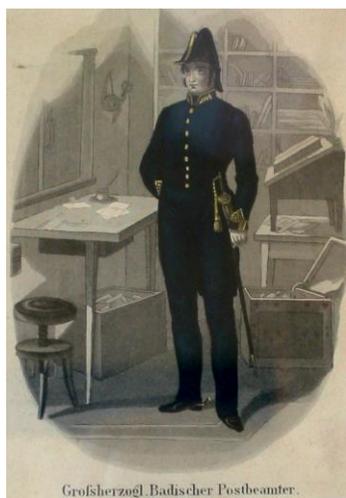


Chips of Alabaster: My Great German Search – Continued, 2004

By Oriole Vane Veldhuis

The main reason for travel this year was to discover more about the German heritage of my great grandmother, Elise Harrer. She left Heidelberg in 1867 expecting to marry Percy Criddle in London.

On moving to Canada, neighbours knew Elise as a Mrs. Vane, widow, living as an unpaid servant in the Criddle household. Percy and Elise's five children, Criddles in England,¹ were now no longer acknowledged as Percy's children. Contact with their German relatives was totally lost after Elise's death. One hundred years later, we are

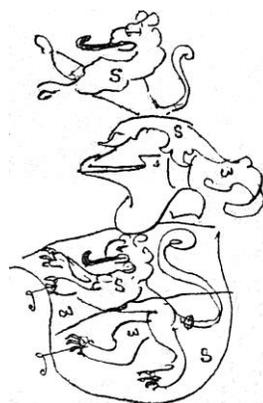


Grand Ducal Postmaster

searching for our lost heritage, knowing only that Elise Harrer had come from Germany.²

Initial research showed no possibility in Elise's immediate family for relatives in Germany. Last year's miracle was to discover and visit descendents of Elise's uncle Friedrich in Loerrach. His son Hermann followed his father and his uncle Carl's footsteps to become a Grand Ducal Post Master. He ended his service in Loerrach where his branch of the Harrer family still lives. They are Hans-Eugen Harrer and his nephews, Hermann, Hans-Joachim Harrer and their families. We visited these relatives for another memorable weekend.

Uncle Hans-Eugen gave me a challenge: to decipher and investigate a "Document of Nobility" (copy) his grandfather, Friedrich Harrer had received in 1903 from Vienna. It outlined the nobility, with a coat of arms, bestowed in Graz, Austria, in 1453, and amended in Vienna in 1630 to "Joachim Harrer, Town Judge at Wels, Austria, and also to Michael &



Harrer, 1453

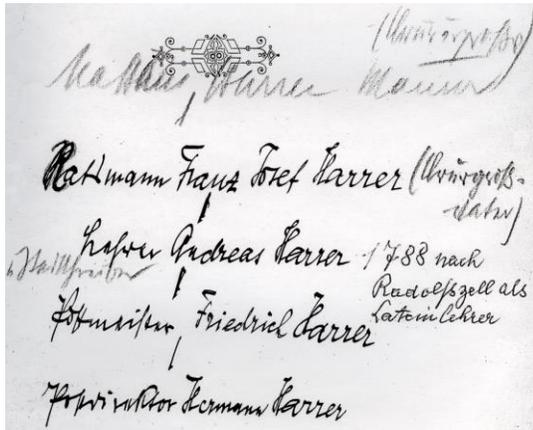


Joachim Harrer-1630

their sister." Jokingly he said, "We will see you next year in Wels." Valerie Knobloch, our Alabaster relative and her friends in Germany, are helping to decipher this old document. Once translated, I will need to seek expertise in heraldry.

¹ 1881 British Census, 131 St George's Rd, Southwark, St. George Martyr, Surrey, England. FHLFilm 1341120 PRO Ref RG11 Piece o531 Folio 21 Page 21.

² Her maiden name documented on all six of children's birth certificates.



Mattaus Harrer- Mason – Great great grandfather.
 Frans Joseph Harrer – Ratmann (councillor) great Grandfather)
 Andreas Harrer teacher- (to 1788 Latin teacher in Radolfzell (Research indicates he began in Stockach)
 Friedrich Harrer. Postmaster

Last year, Hans-Eugen showed me an old 1895 *History of Stockach*³ and made a copy of an end page with faintly written names going back five generations. During the winter, I studied microfiche⁴ from the Stockach Catholic Church records. With great effort, I located Harrer ancestors back to 1691 when their church records began.

An archivist in Stockach, Dr. Yvonne Istas, went back even earlier. In Hans Wagner’s history of Stockach, *Aus Stockachs Vergangenheit*,⁵ she found a reference to “Harrer” just after the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), which left



Death calls!

Stockach a field of death.” She translates Wagner as: “During that time, people were plundered and starving and dying by the hundreds. As of December 1628, the plague prevailed. Few records survive, but in 1661, a mason, Michael Harrer, emerges. The name Harrer is from then on in the next one and a half hundred years perhaps the strongest represented and- in a good sense, the most frequently mentioned Stockacher family.”⁶



Hans Kuony by Sculptor Werner Gürtner from Unberlinzen

I found the town of Stockach fascinating. Unusual, I thought, to have a bronze jester perched on a cannon ball in the town square.⁷ It seems the memory of Stockach-born court jester Hans Kuony’s wisdom is highly honoured. Before attacking the Swiss in 1351, Hans Kuony offered this advice to his Lord Archduke Leopold of Austria: "Ihr ratet wohl, wie Ihr in die Schwyz hineinkommen wollt, nicht aber heraus." Translated this reads, “You have planned well how to get into Switzerland, but not how to get out.” The archduke threw this warning “to the wind” and the rebellious Swiss Canton of Ur slaughtered the Austrians. A tradition instituted by the Archduke’s brother, continues each year when a current

³ Jakob Barth: *Geschichte der Stadt Stockach*. 1894

⁴ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. (LDS) Salt Lake City, Utah. Microfiche of Katholische Stockach # 875037

⁵ Wagner, Hans, *Aus Stockachs Vergangenheit*, Konstanz, 1967/1981.

⁶ Wagner, Hans, *Aus Stockachs Vergangenheit*, Konstanz, 1967/1981 p. 71. Dr. Istas translation

⁷ Town of Stockach, http://www.stockach.de/tour1_stadt.htm (As viewed at time of printing Sept. 2004)

Jester has the privilege to conduct a mock trial of an important politician of his choice at the annual “Karneval Fasnacht.”⁸



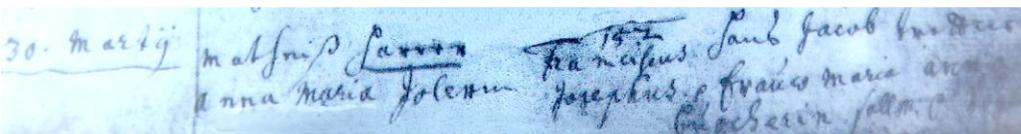
Napoleon death as no respecter of power or position. It was a colourful glimpse of the life and times of my Stockach ancestors. We walked to the archives, and if I had been able to read the faint old German writing, I could have spent many fascinating days there. Dr. Istas pointed out the building where *Amtmann* Franz Josef Harrer had his offices as an Austrian administrator.



The homeopathic and medical doctors fighting over patient!

Due to Stockach’s strategic location just north of the Bodensee (Lake Constance) on main east-west, north-south trade routes, every army on continental Europe looking for conquest seemed to march through it. Over the centuries, its citizens found themselves reluctant hosts to officers, troops and horses by the thousands from Italy, Sweden, Spain, Russia, Austria, and most often France.¹⁰

During the Spanish War of Succession, the city was burned to ashes on the 25th of May 1704. The day my husband Art and I arrived the *Suedkurier* (newspaper) printed the headline, “**300 Years Ago Today Stockach Was Finished.**” It is unusual in Germany to have a town with no building older than 300 years, but these invaders had totally torched and destroyed everything including the beautiful church. When the townsfolk found their way back from the forest, even their wells had been blown up. They found shelter as best they could in their cellar holes.¹¹ It was during that time that Matteus Harrer and his wife, Anna Maria, had several young children,



including my ancestor Franz Josef, born 1701.¹²

⁸ Carnival Home Page http://www.rrmagazine.com/Artikel/Travel_Feb_2001.html and for information from Stockach: info@fasnacht-stockach.de (As viewed at time of printing Sept. 2004)

⁹ http://www.stockach.de/museum/aus_terr.htm Town of Stockach (As viewed at time of printing Sept. 2004)

¹⁰ Herr Kurt Schmidt of Stockach-Lizenhausen showed us his research in Stockach and sent copies of war years 1799-1804.

¹¹ Based on p. 71. Wagner, Hans, *Aus Stockachs Vergangenheit, Konstanz, 1967/1981*

¹² LDS, Salt Lake City Utah. Microfiche, Katholische Stockach # 875037

Matteus was a *maurer* (stonemason/brick layer) so one expects there would be plenty of work for him. Somehow, the town and family did survive. Franz Josef later became town *Amtmann* (magistrate) between 1772-1778,¹³ and in this function gave



Home of Austrian Administration
rebuilt 1706

his signature to some letters/contracts, for example a new Capuchin hospice in Stockach.”¹⁴ Hans-Eugen Harrer from Loerrach told me Franz Joseph died a very old man, but I was surprised to learn he lived to 1795! He had married Maria Eva Thumm in 1746 and their youngest child born 1764 was my ancestor, Andreas Harrer, a master teacher.¹⁵

My curiosity about that title “Ludi Magister”-“master teacher” for Andreas Harrer has been satisfied by translating a single page. An amateur historian, Herr Schmidt had given me this page in Stockach. He

located the item in Freiberg’s archives during his research of that period of history and copied it for me. He had read my notice in the newspaper of my traveling from Canada to Stockach in May seeking information about the three Harrer ancestors Matteus, Franz Josef and Andreas. Initially we thought it was a Certificate for Andreas. More careful translation revealed that indeed, Herr Andreas Harrer was qualified to teach advanced students. This was an examination record dated 1800, of student Simon Grundler von Hinderwang. The teacher was Master Teacher Herr Andreas Harrer. Officials of education placed their seal on the student’s record in approval his knowledge of the theory as well as ability in the subject areas of: reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. The young man was well recommended to become a teacher.¹⁶ *1

The end of the century brought more hostilities as Napoleon’s armies began their conquests. At first, the Austrians were able to hold back the invaders, but at the Second and Third Battles of Stockach, Austria was defeated with heavy losses.¹⁷ Stockachers who could not afford to feed the French militia stationed in their town had to pay their debt to burying thousands of Austrians killed in the battle at Liptingen.¹⁸

Andreas obtained a teaching position in Stockach in 1788. *“The councillors arbitrary Choice was Andréa’s Harrer, much to the vexation of the officials, the son of councillor (ratsmann) Franz Joseph Harrer to be the teacher. He indeed got the position: He brought namely, a very*

¹³ Wagner, Hans, Aus Stockachs Vergangenheit, Konstanz, 1967/1981. P.43

¹⁴ Dr. Ista in letter quoting Hans Wagner

¹⁵ LDS, Salt Lake City, Utah. Microfiche, Katholische Stockach # 875037

¹⁶ Staatsarchiv Freiburg, Bestand B743/9 Nr. 117

¹⁷ <http://www.napoleonseries.org/reference/military/batlists/2ndcoalition.cfm> (As viewed at time of printing Sept. 2004)

¹⁸ Herr Kurt Schmidt in conversation in Stockach, May 2004

good testimonial, in which his performance was presented and upheld, that he finished several schools and was very experienced in Music especially in violin playing and organ----- “19

Fifteen years later Andreas must have decided life would be better in the nearby town of Radolfzell on the shores of Lake Constance. He gained a contract to teach there in 1803.²⁰ *2 Very quickly Andreas found a wife, Catharina Reutheman from a local family and married in 1804.²¹ However, things did not go well for him. Perhaps he expected too much. Shortly after signing the contract Andreas asked for “higher pay than the Grade I teacher”, which the contract had specified.²² The authorities replied that it was disrespectful to question a contract and Andreas gained nothing but a reprimand. Archival sources quoted in the *History of the City of Radolfzell*²³ suggest its citizens were not progressive when it came to education or managing the town’s affairs.



Old Radolfzell

Sadly, over and above that, Napoleon’s invading allies (Württemberg) did not limit their destruction to Stockach. Radolfzell was also battered. Its impoverished citizens were compelled to feed their conquerors. Starving people could not afford to put education high on the list of priorities. In a plea to the Magistrate, Andreas complained in a letter, that he could not stay healthy to teach their children with only rotten and frozen potatoes to eat.²⁴ His wife, Catharina, left the family by 1909.²⁵ We have evidence that Andreas wrote the authorities again that he would have to give away his children unless he received help.²⁶ There is no record located as to whether this happened. We do know from Andrea’s family page that his oldest child, Maria Apolonia died in childhood.²⁷ How did the two young sons, Carl and Friedrich, survive?



Radolfzell schoolhouse where Andreas lived and taught

¹⁹ Jakob Barth: *Geschichte der Stadt Stockach*. 1894. p. 397

²⁰ Teachers Contract: Musterlehrer Herr Harrer, June 11, 1803. Auszug aus der Akte VI 6 2/27-1 des fom Stadtarchivs Radolfzell.

²¹ LDS, Salt Lake City, Utah. Microfiche Katholische Radolfzell # 890586

²² Harrer, Andreas: letter to Magistrate and translated.

²³ Gotz, Franz. *Geschichte der Stadt Radolfzell*, (History of Radolfzell) 1967 p.180

²⁴ Harrer, Andreas, Letter to Council. June 11, 1803

²⁵ Familienbuch, Haus # 52. Katholische, Radolfzell

²⁶

²⁷ Family Page received from Catholic Church in Radolfzell

With Austria's defeat, Württemberg gained Radolfzell as a reward for fighting with the French. The people grieved their fate and suffered under the heavy hand of this new administration. The King provided no funds to help the population feed itself, or the troops stationed in their town and certainly none for education. "A particular evil for the teachers was created by the Württembergish school ministry declaring the schoolbooks printed during Austrian times by the publisher, A. Wagner, were useless and were removed. Since Radolfzell could not agree on what was better and newer, (although there were prescriptions regarding the texts), the whole school was empty of books."²⁸ Imagine the problems the two teachers faced with up to 130 students and no books. When the Grand Duke of Baden took control of Radolfzell five years later in 1910, there was much celebration.²⁹ The very progressive Grand Duke of Baden instigated many positive changes and improvements although education had to wait before real improvements could be made. The schoolhouse built in 1658 had needed updating for 100 years

Andreas kept his teaching position through the turbulent times. He lost it in 1812 and supported himself as a *schreiber* (secretary) for the *Rathaus* (Town Hall). By 1829 it is recorded that Andreas was not in a position to earn money or care for himself. It seems he was provided a flat to live in, the necessary clothes, and was delivered daily ½ pound meat, good soul food, and each evening for his supper a little jug of wine. In the evening of March 19, 1836, he was overtaken by a massive stroke, which paralyzed his left side. On March 24 he died leaving a small amount to pay his debts, his Latin dictionary, and old text books which were sent to his sons Karl and Friedrich who at that time lived in the north of Baden.

As young men, the Harrer brothers, Carl (1805) and Friedrich (1808), found work with the bustling *Baden* Postal Service (transportation of people and "Royal" mail). They went on to serve in several towns and cities in the province of Baden. One of the policies of the Grand Duke of Baden was to transfer officials in order to bring about unity in his Dukedom. For instance, religion had been divisive in the past due to a very Catholic south and Protestant north.



Our day in Radolfzell was fantastic! The archivist, Achim Fenner, on holiday, left pertinent pages from his book, *History of Education in Radolfzell*³⁰ and other records from the town archives that have helped fill in the Harrer story. His co-worker, Peter Seigle, guided us through the museum and archives.

²⁸ Fenner, Achim. *Schule in Badischer Zeit 1810-1918*. Primo-Verlag Stockach 1987 p. 22

²⁹ Gotz, Franz. *Geschichte der Stadt Radolfzell*, (History of Radolfzell) 1967 p.182

³⁰ Fenner, Achim. *Schule in Badischer Zeit 1810-1918*. Primo-Verlag Stockach 1987

The old town looked picturesque with flowers everywhere. We enjoyed a relaxing lunch in the former moat, now lovely gardens. Sailboats dotted the sparkling blue lake. We found it hard to believe so much suffering had occurred here.

Returning to Stockach for the night, I wanted to meet a “living Harrer” before we left the hotbed of Harrer ancestors. We found “Roland Harrer” in the phone book and were soon knocking on the door. Dorothea greeted us with a smile, called her husband, and together they invited us into their home. We spent a wonderful evening sharing their family meal and old pictures. I have traced their family back to Carl Harrer, born 1748, with father Franz Joseph Harrer the father Andreas.³¹

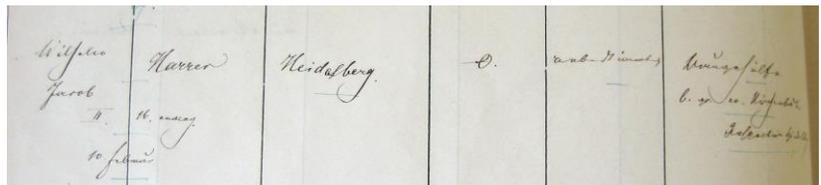


Next morning early, we were on the train heading for Heidelberg. I carried photographs of a dress that tradition claims was Elise’s. After trying every authority in Manitoba, I was certain the Textile Museum in a suburb of Heidelberg would be able to give an accurate date. My hopes were high, but when I showed my pictures to the receptionist, she said very clearly, “We can not help you.” I was utterly let down. My face must have shown disappointment for the person in charge softened and offered to phone a renowned costume expert, Dr. Fuchs at Heidelberg’s well-known Kurphälzisches Museum. He agreed to see us as soon as we could get downtown. Ushered into his office he quickly looked at my pictures and drew a sketch. We were definitely looking at a concert dress of 1875-79. He repeated that such a dress was worn to concerts - it was not a wedding dress.

*Dr. Carl Ludwig Fuchs
Kurphälzisches Museum*



Next day, we went to the Heidelberg town archives to search for traces of Elise’s missing younger brother, Wilhelm Jacob Harrer. We found a record in 1867 of a Doctor’s report that declared Wilhelm fit for military service. Was he a casualty in the next war with France?³²



³¹ LDS, Salt Lake City, Utah. Katholische Stockach Microfiche # 875042

³² The Franco-Prussian War , July 19, 1870 - May 10, 1871

We had saved our last afternoon in Heidelberg for the one landmark that would have been a part of Elise's life there, the castle. Inside, our tour guide explained that Ruprecht the First had built the earliest part of the fortifications.³³ This was the same



Ruprecht, who in 1386 founded Germany's first university. We know it as Heidelberg University but its official name is "Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg."³⁴ We had seen the memorial slab of King Ruprecht II and his wife Elizabeth in the splendid Church of the Holy Spirit.³⁵ The name Ruprecht (Rupert) kept reappearing in



later times and I realized that this name was very important to Heidelbergers. In a more modern part of the castle, our guide mentioned that Elisabeth, daughter of James I of England, had married a German Friederich V, Elector Palatine of the Rhine. It was their second son Ruprecht that we know as Prince Rupert, founder and governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. I suddenly realized Elise had managed to have her first grandson given the most famous Heidelberg name, Rupert. I wish my father could have known how important his name was to his grandmother.

My husband and I have had fantastic adventures on the trail of my ancestors! I would never wish such a hard life for my Great Grandmother Elise, but without her relationship with Percy, I would not be recording these adventures to the Alabaster Society.

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³³ Heidelberg Castle. English Version. Braus im Wachter Verlag, Heidelberg. 2002 p.8

³⁴ Heidelberg University Home page <http://www.uni-heidelberg.de> (as viewed at time of printing Sept. 2004)

³⁵ Travel Germany Home Page and click on Heidelberg, scroll down to Holy Ghost Church <http://www.hhog.de> (as viewed at time of printing Sept. 2004)

1. This certificate shows a student examination qualify academically for teaching.

Certificate

The presenter of this certificate, Simon Grundler Von Hindelwang from the P P Konis (?) _____district born in Nellenburg has taken part in the prescribed courses taught by Master Teacher Herr Andreas Harrer of Stockach and demonstrated during exam proved that he has learned, the following:

From the core (essence) book of methods (*Pedagogy Part of teacher training*)

1. Introduction and 5 main “ sections” of the prescribed courses (learning arts) good
2. The 3rd part, esp. the 4th-5th main subject fairly good

(*Content Section of Exam below*)

The Catechism

good

The German Cursive Script

good

The Latin Script (*as opposed to printing-old fashioned*)

fairly good

The Spelling (grammar)

fairly good

The Arithmetic

fairly good

The prescribed basic Spelling and Reading

good

The recovery out of Challenges/Difficulties (Oral exams)

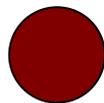
1. At knowledge of letters good
2. At Spelling (out loud like a spelling bee) good
3. Unison reading good
4. With dealing with tables (times tables)
5. Calligraphy (beautiful writing/penmanship) fairly good
6. Correct spelling (written work -grammar) fairly good
7. At dictation good
8. In Arithmetic good
9. Religious studies good
10. Use of catechism with questions and answers good
11. Teaching of church texts beyond the catechism good
12. And the things, about which the youth has no books –(*Psychology of youth*) good

With consideration of the written notations he may to those who need it be as recommended _____ (well?)

The record of this attestation dated _____(signature undecipherable)

20th/30th Oct 1803

Signatures _____



Seal –undecipherable

In Nellenburg and Gohenberg

2. Translated contract

The Master teacher Andreas Harrer of Stockach in reply to his submitted request and is herewith advised that the choice for the vacated teacher position for second grade has fallen to him and so he is chosen to be the teacher of second grade, that he is to enjoy the salary of the teacher of the first grade. The magistrate has placed this choice to district school commissioner ----- for the high *whatever* approval -----

That M. Harrer be prepared to meet the requirements and duties before the magistrate which of itself to his trusting knowledge and obedient behaviour herewith will not be withheld.

June 11, 1803 Radolfzell

Ex cons(iliu)m Magistrate

Burkhard

