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Family News Letter 2011

of the v.Tiesenhausen Family

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Family trip through Estonia

About 800 years ago, at the beginning of the 13th century the progenitor of our family Engelbrecht Tiesenhausen was awarded a fiefdom in Estonia. His liege lord was Hermann von Buxhoevede, bishop of Dorpat and just like the bishop of Riga Albert a brother in law to Engelbrecht.

This was a valid reason to go searching after all these years for traces of the family in today's republic of Estonia. It started in early August 2011. A small but harmonic group of cousins – 15 grown ups and 2 small children – met on a beautiful clear and sunny Sunday afternoon in Reval / Tallinn after starting with individual flights from their homes.



A guided tour thru the city with special focus on our family interests led the group first to the dome district of Tallinn where the important families used to live in the old days. The nicely renovated Tiesenhausen palace across from the dome carries a plaque in Estonian and English which explains its history and who its former owners were, first the Tiesenhausen who built the house and later

the Wrangell family. This is also described in a broader way in the book by Carl Mothander „Barone, Bauern und Bolschewiken in Estland“.

In the dome an epitaph commemorates Ferdinand Graf Tiesenhausen who was killed in action in 1805 during the battle of Austerlitz. And a beautiful plate of arms commemorates the Estonian district administrator Fromhold Tiesenhausen (1627-1694).

Outside, next to a spot which is very popular with tourists, there is a red house which also used to belong once to our family. Unfortunately today it holds one of the less tasteful tourist souvenir shops.



Tallinn Dom

From Tallinn onwards the journey continued on Tuesday eastward. In Kirla / Kiiu our first goal was the tower house, built by Fabian Tiesenhausen in the 16th century. This old building did already house a small restaurant during the communist times. It seems like even today it attracts enough people to survive.

After an improvised egg liqueur tasting the family moved on for a rest at the Baltic Sea coast where, given the beautiful summer weather, one seasoned and one very young lady even dared to take a bath in the chilly waters.

In the afternoon there was a visit to the nicely renovated castle Saggad / Sagadi. Today in the refurbished farm buildings there is a hotel and the group enjoyed an afternoon coffee break on the roof deck.

Wesenberg / Rakvere, our next stop, plays a prominent role in our family history. In 1669 the Estonian district administrator Fridrich Tiesenhausen purchased from the Broderode family not only the manor Wesenberg, but also the neighbouring city. It was not before 1783 that the privileges of the Tiesenhausen family on Wesenberg were revoked and the citizens were freed from their duty to pay tribute to the family. The Estonian writer Jaan Kross has made these frictions a topic in his novel "Die Frauen von Wesenberg".

Since the 800th city anniversary there is a huge statue of a European bison next to the city on the hill before the ruins of an old castle which reminds somehow of the bull in the Tiesenhausen plate of arms.

Narwa the old border town to the Russian Empire is also connected with our family. Otto Johann Tiesenhausen (1752-1830) was a general in the Russian army and commander of the Narwa fortress. His direct descendant Kira Tiesenhausen from Moscow belonged to the travel group. After enjoying the impressive picture of the fortress Iwangorod on the eastern side of the Narwa river and the Hermannsfeste on the western side facing each other directly, the group continued its course along lake Peipus towards Dorpat / Tartu.

In Dorpat a guided tour led us to see the beauty of this old, now nicely renovated, university town in which numerous Tiesenhausen have received their academic education.

Odenpäh / Otepää not only is the winter sports center of Estonia, it also had once a sturdy castle on which in the 13th century our forefather Engelbrecht lived as

vassal of his brother in law Hermann Buxhoevede, the bishop of Dorpat. Today there are only very meagre ruins remaining from this castle, but it gives a nice view over the beautiful end moraine landscape which allows to understand why our ancestors became attached to this country.

The next stop was Weissenstein / Paide where the protestant church was recently renovated. Our forefather Engelbrecht Karl Konstantin Tiesenhausen was parson in this church. It is an interesting anecdote how he received this job. As a young, recently ordained protestant clergyman he visited the Sunday mess during a stay with his friend doctor Hermann Hesse, who was the uncle of the famous writer with the same name. In midst of his sermon the parson of Paide had a breakdown. While the doctor took care of the parson Engelbrecht got up from his seat and continued the sermon. The parish was so impressed that they elected Engelbrecht after the death of the unfortunate parson to become his successor.



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From Pernau / Pärnu we continued the next day via ferry to the island of Ösel / Saaremaa. There we saw craters a meteorite had hit thousands of years ago, a park with several old windmills of different vintage, and the picturesque cliff line at the Northern shore of the island. But mainly our interest was directed towards the castle of Ahrensburg / Kuresare. Here from 1527 to 1530 Georg Tiesenhausen resided as bishop of Ösel-Wiek. On the way back to Tallinn the next day we visited the three manors Peddast / Pädaste, Leal /Lilhula, and Lode / Kolvere which used to belong to the Buxhoevede family

During the entire trip the weather was beautiful and warm with lots of sun, it only rained once on the last day. We had long and cosy evenings with sometimes smart, sometimes easy, and sometimes silly conversations. The mission of the family union to groom and strengthen relationships between the family members was fully accomplished. This was at least the hard to confute conclusion of the chairman of the family union, Andreas Tiesenhausen.

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New Edition of the genealogic handbook

The new edition of the „Genealogischen Handbuch des Adels“ which covers the the „Freiherr“ part of the Tiesenhausen family is somewhat delayed. This is partly due to the families being dispersed across the world which slows down communication and partly due to changes in the management of the edition.

Our coordinator for this project, our family genealogist Sabine Röder, born Freiin v.Tiesenhausen, has done a terrific job to collect in countless telephone calls, letters, and e-mails all the numerous changes which have happened since the last edition in 1992. In a clean out session in October, Sabine worked with her brothers Wolter, Christoph, and Andreas thru the material. The existing information was reviewed, checked, and completed as required.

There are still some difficulties to incorporate the information about the Lituanian-Polish branch of the family which was recently discovered in Warsaw. It has to be determined how this information can be implemented into the existing

scheme of the handbook. There are also a few completions and clarifications necessary.

Finally, in the past year the editorship of the handbook has changed. The endowment "Deutsches Adelsarchiv", which edited the handbook in the past in cooperation with the C.A. Starke publishing company, will continue the project under its own management. As soon as the new handbook is published, we will inform you about the cost and how you can order your own copies of the handbook for you and your family.

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Genealogic research over the internet

The global accessibility of the internet significantly eases the genealogic research. There are numerous data bases which contain information about living and deceased members of our family. For example in Wikipedia, where you can find short biographies of Heinrich (1520-1600), the navy painter Paul (1837-1876), or the general and wing commander of the Russian czar, Ferdinand (1782-1805).

Also the Estonian public archive holds numerous documents about our family. You can access it under www.ra.ee or if you are interested in pictures under www.ra.ee/fotis. Legal documents like records of cases can be viewed, at least as summaries, under <http://ais.ra.ee>.

Data in Latvia can be viewed under www.lvva-raduraksti.lv. You can not only see public records but also church books and the results of the various censuses.

Finally, the „Verband der Baltischen Ritterschaften“ has its own data genealogic data base. To use this source "Genesys", for data privacy reasons, you need to apply for a permit from the president of the organization, Götz Baron v. der Ropp (praesident@baltische-ritterschaften.de). If you are interested in more detail, you should contact the administration of "Genesys", Eva-Maria Baronin v. Buchholtz (kurland@gmx.de).

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High decoration for Georg v.Tiesenhausen

Nobody less than Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, decorated Georg v.Tiesenhausen in February 2011 for his life long achievements the honorary medal of the North American Space Agency (NASA). As a co-worker of Wernher v.Braun, Georg Tiesenhausen developed, among other achievements during his long career at NASA, the moon mobile which was used during the Apollo missions in 1971 and 1972.

Georg Tiesenhausen studied engineering in Hamburg, became drafted to the army and was stationed in Peenemünde where he participated in the development of rockets. Already at that time he was recognized as a specialist for the construction of test and launch facilities. Later in the United States, he planned and developed for NASA the launch facility for the Saturn V rockets.

Georg Tiesenhausen has published many scientific papers and owns six American patents. He received numerous awards like the medal for outstanding achievements of the American Space Agency as well as praise from the Governor of Alabama and the American Congress. He was also named to the NASA "Hall of Fame".

Georg Tiesenhausen was born May 18, 1914, is about to donate a copy of his memoirs and other documents from his rich life experiences to the family.

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We commemorate our deceased

Waldtraut Baronin v.Tiesenhausen, born Andersohn was born September 19, 1916 in Odessa at the Black Sea, died September 4, 2011 in Rellingen close to Hamburg. She was widow to the medical doctor Benedikt v.Tiesenhausen, one of the re-founders of the family union in the seventies of the last century. The family mourns her together with her children Krista, Hans-Joachim, Madeleine, and Bernd.

News from the family

Theresa Andrea Elisabeth Freiin v.Tiesenhausen, was born April 5, 2011 in Frankfurt/Main. She is the second daughter to Matthias and Christine v.Tiesenhausen im Amselweg 3, D-61462 Königstein. The family congratulates the parents and wishes luck and God's blessing to the new cousin for her newly started way in life.

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