

**Newsletter # 16 TGAC**

**Dresdner Porcelain – Fine Art of china making and porcelain painting:** Since 1872, the delicate luxurious Dresden Porcelain has been manufactured in Freital–Potschappel located in the outskirts of the residential city of Dresden. A few specialized workers have kept alive the old skills and long experience through all economic and social up and downs. Until today, traditional porcelain items are manufactured and painted according to original samples in a great inexhaustible variety. This pure handcraft is guaranteed by the trademark which symbolizes the crossed letters “S” and “P” above the written word “Dresden”. The letter “S” stands for “Saxon” and refers to the state of Saxony and “P” stands for porcelain. The full German name of the Dresden manufactory is “Saechsische Porzellan–Manufaktur Dresden”. Dresden is considered the “Cradle of European porcelain. Since the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, porcelain had been imported by European royalty from China at enormous costs. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of Augustus II "the Strong", Electoral Prince of Saxony and King of Poland, endeavors were made in Saxony to unlock the secret of porcelain manufacturing. The alchemist Johann Friedrich Boettger claimed that he was able to make gold out of basic metals. In order to ensure that Boettger wouldn't leave in case of a failure, Augustus the Strong imprisoned Boettger in the magnificent fortress “Koenigstein” where he had a laboratory. He didn't succes in making gold but as a result of a “side project” Boettger got close to the recipe for porcelain. So Augustus the Strong moved him and his laboratory back to the more comfortable Dresden – in to the vaults beneath the “Bruhl Terraces”. Finally in Dresden in 1708, white porcelain was manufactured for the very first time in Europe by Johann Friedrich Boettger and Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus. Augustus II ordered to build the first porcelain manufactory 1710 in the town of Meissen, about 15 miles up the river Elbe.

Part of our unique “Porcelain Art Tour” to Germany – September 08 – 22, 2011 is an exclusive 2–days Porcelain Painting Class at the Dresden Porcelain Manufactory.

For further information, tour program and registration go to:

[http://cultourinaria.com/Porcelain\\_Art\\_Tours.html](http://cultourinaria.com/Porcelain_Art_Tours.html)

<http://www.dresdner-porzellan.com>

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**Plauener Lace – the perfect Christmas gift:** Located in the beautiful Vogtland region in Saxony, the town of Plauen is the home of exquisite fine lace. The trademark “Plauener Spitze” (Plauener Lace or Saxon Lace) is famous all over the world for its premium quality traditional textile manufacturing. Already in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, Plauen was a center of textile production. In 1780, the so-called tambour embroidery is cultivated in Plauen – finest East Indian coths were imported and embroidered here. In 1828, over 2000 people in and around Plauen made a living by embroidering. Due to the growing demand, first experiments with hand embroidery machines were made in 1836 and in 1859 the company “Schnorr und Steinhauser” brought a fully functioning embroidery machine into service. With this invention, the era of a new industry and the industrial revolution of the Plauener embroidery crafts has started. Plauen developed into the most important center for the German lace and embroidery industry. When the fabricant Theodor Bickel invented the production of machine embroidered tulle lace in 1881, Plauen and the Vogtland region became known also on the international market as a premium quality embroidery center. In 1900 at the World Exhibition in Paris, the “Plauener Lace” was awarded with the Grand Prix for the “miracle of the Plauener pattern”. At the prosperity of embroidery production in 1912, about 16,000 embroidery machines existed in and around Plauen and Plauen was the one of the big cities in Saxony. Today, about 40 companies in the Vogtland region manufacture these still highly requested handicraft products made of Plauener Lace. Most of the companies are family-run small and mid-size businesses and the art of lace manufacturing was passed along several generations. The variety and quality of the finest patterns is just amazing. Plauener Lace products can be bought at special shops or online – But another perfect opportunity to enjoy a wide selection of fine handcraft and to buy laces for yourself, family or friends would be to join us for a wonderful Christmas Market Tour to Germany. The German Christmas Markets are the perfect places to buy all kinds of handcrafted traditional products and Christmas decoration: glass ornaments, nutcrackers, candles, nutcrackers, Christmas pyramids, wooden angels and much much more... Can you think of a more authentic and special Christmas gift from Germany – while you get to enjoy a unique Christmas Market Tour?

**Join us for an exclusive small group German Christmas Market Tour 2011.  
Travel date: December 09 – 18, 2011**

[http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/Christmas\\_Markets.html](http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/Christmas_Markets.html)

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### **German beer from the Watzdorfer brewery in Thuringia – a quality experience:**

Nestled in the valley below the castle ruin Greifenstein, Watzdorfer brews quality beer since 1411. Back then, the family “von Watzdorf” exercised their right of beer brewing at their open-air “boiling court” and mill. Today in Watzdorf, the beer is brewed with the use of real Thuringian highland barley out of controlled-integrated agriculture. The confer of the marks of quality “CMA” and “original Thuringian quality” is the demand and obligation for the Watzdorfer brewery. Their beer products are: Pils, Export, Black beer and Bock. On the premise of the brewery there is also a brewery museum and a beer tavern. In old fashioned atmosphere you can not only taste Watzdorfer beer, the large panoramic window allows a direct view in the Sudhaus (mash house). In the museum you can dive into the fascinating history of the “art of beer brewing” and experience the contrast between historic and modern brew techniques. But of course, the Watzdorf region has much more to offer for its guests. Watzdorf in the state of Thuringia is part of the so-called “Land of Olitaeten” . You won’t find the word Olitaeten in a dictionary, not even a modern German one! But an old encyclopedia defines them as all kind of oils, essences and fragrances produced in the Thuringian Forest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and before. Trade was growing especially in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. For hundreds of years Olitaeten traders went on their journeys and brought prosperity and prestige to the impoverished forest region. And what does almost every traveler enjoy ? – A fresh beer in a local tavern or guesthouse!

We plan, organize and escort “Cultural Beer Tours” to Germany on request for small groups and individuals. Since we are specialized in special interest custom tours, a “group” with us starts with a party or only 4 people! I am sure you know 3 (or more) people who would love to join you on a tailor-made beer tour – when and where YOU want to go! Just contact us and we plan the trip together with you – step by step.

Watzdorfer Brewery <http://www.watzdorfer.de>

Land of Olitaeten: <http://www.olitaetenland.de>

TGAC: [http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/German\\_Beer\\_Tours.html](http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/German_Beer_Tours.html)

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**German Ancestry – the fascination of the stories behind emigration:** An understanding of the historical events and situation of the area in Germany where your ancestors come from is very important to genealogical research and once you have identified the place of your family roots, it is a wonderful experience to travel there yourself.

Starting in the 1500s, German emigrants settled in America striving for a better life. They had left their homes for religious, political or economic reasons. Immigrants from Germany came “in waves” throughout the centuries depending on the situation and historic events happening in the areas of their home towns. In order to understand the specific reasons for your ancestors to leave Germany, a general knowledge of German history is very helpful. But even more relevant – and interesting – is the regional history and the specific events at the time of emigration. As an example, valuable areas have changed hands more than once between different kingdoms and even countries: Elsass–Lothringen (Alsace–Lorraine) belonged to the holy Roman–German Empire in the 1100s and to the French Empire in the 1700s. It became part of the German Empire in 1871, France in 1918, Germany in 1942, and finally France in 1945. In old Germany there have always been economic problems due to constant wars – but the impact of a war varies very much for different regions.

If you want to understand and “feel” your German ancestry, we highly recommend not just to travel to Germany on a – also wonderful – sightseeing tour, but to visit the area your ancestors came from. You will find many places which are preserved over centuries and still look like “old times”: churches, cemeteries, houses, streets, the countryside and even local handcraft and culinary specialties. According to our experience, the locals are very hospitable and open their doors and hearts. Most of the time contacting the mayor or the pastor turns out to be a precious initial contact to learn more about the history of an area and specific events which have caused your ancestors to leave their home. This works best in small towns and villages – I guess, no surprise there! Many towns have a local historical or even genealogical society with enthusiastic members – the very best source for anecdotes and stories. Some of these groups even run museums with authentic documents and artefacts. If you are lucky, the town hall also accommodates a local archive or library – the librarian or archivist is another person you might want to meet. With these people, you would have the perfect guides to truly and deeply explore your personal family background.

We know that the language is a barrier for many who don't speak German but this is where we – The German American Connection – can come in and help you out. We are specialized in custom German Ancestry Tours. Ute Boese is a native German and she plans and organizes tailor-made trips for individuals and small family groups. We also offer our assistance with family history research in Germany and Ute Boese can escort you on the trip – as your guide, chauffeur, interpreter...

TGAC: [http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/German\\_Ancestry\\_Tours.html](http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/German_Ancestry_Tours.html)

**Saale–Unstrut, the gentle south of Saxony–Anhalt:** Situated in the middle of Germany, the Saale–Unstrut region was once named “Tuscany of the North” by the sculptor Max Klinger. Vineyards and meadow orchards wrap the river banks of Saale and Unstrut in gorgeous colors. Splendid castles and palaces are perched on rocks and hills of shell limestone and mottled sandstone. Medieval towns such as Naumburg and Freyburg, abbeys such as Schulpforta and Memleben, and magnificent cathedrals like those in Naumburg, Zeitz and Merseburg resemble a string of pearls lining the roads along the rivers Saale and Unstrut – roads which were paved for kings and merchants in the Middle Ages. Archaeological finds such as the “Nebra sky disk” as well as the oldest sun observatory in history in Goseck near Weissenfels are testimony of the fact that the region was a cradle of early civilization. It was grave robbers who found the legendary 3,600–year–old sky disk near Nebra in 1999. After an odyssey of several years, the disk was seized by police during a feigned sale in Basle in 2002. This “Nebra sky disk” is the very first depiction of the universe in the history of mankind and therefore it is considered one of the most spectacular archaeological finds of the last decades and a real world sensation. The wonderful landscape of the Saale–Unstrut region was the setting for a chapter of human development. Vine was introduced to the region by Cistercian and Benedictine monks. A document made out by Emperor Otto III. in 998 provides evidence of centuries–old wine–growing tradition between the rivers Saale and Unstrut. The typical wines of the region, such as Silvaner, Muller–Thurgau and Weissburgunder with their fine fruity flavor, are offered with local culinary specialties. A visit would not be complete without a tasting of sparkling wine in the vaulted cellar of “Rotkappchen Sektkellerei Freyburg” with the largest carved wine cuvee barrel in Germany. Above the river Saale valley throne the legendary Saaleck and Rudelsburg castles. The Dornburg palaces are fascinating example of historic culture and architecture – the three buildings also represent the fashion of different eras and rulers. In Naumburg you find one of Germany’s most impressive cathedrals which was erected in 1028. Especially interesting inside the Naumburg cathedral are statues of the twelve cathedral founders and the magnificent chancel screen of the western choir, works of the famous “Naumburg masters”.

More information: <http://www.saale-unstrut-tourismus.de>

Travel with CULTOURINARIA: [http://cultourinaria.com/cultural\\_culinary\\_tours.html](http://cultourinaria.com/cultural_culinary_tours.html)

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**More news & travel tips:**  
<http://www.tgac-us.com>