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# Die Deutsche Ecke

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The German Corner: #5

Cranberry Prairie

David A. Hoying

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In the last issue I said that we would return to the thought that sometimes our last names are not our "real" last names at all in the American way of thinking. Generally our last name is that of our father. It is the family name that has been passed down the male line for generations. However, in northern Germany the last name could be that of the mother, with no hint of illegitimacy at all! In fact, the name could be carried down through the mother for several or more generations. Last names are usually taken from the farm on which a family lives. It is the farm name that is the family name. In northwest Germany farms are inherited as a whole. The farm is not divided up between inheritors. The farm is usually inherited by the eldest son, or if there is none, by the eldest daughter. Also too, it may not necessarily be the eldest. It could be a younger son or daughter, or a daughter if there are only younger sons. When a daughter is the inheritor, upon her marriage her husband takes her last name as his last name, that is, he takes the farm name as his own. So do the children that they will have. For example: Maria Winner is the inheritor of the Winner farm. She marries Johann Stickfort. His last name now becomes Winner, and their children will have the Winner name. In Church records and the like, Johann will usually be identified as *Johann Stickfort genannt Winner*. Children may also be identified by this method, but more than often they are not, just having the mother's last name. This taking of the farm name by the husband can often be confusing for those researching their families, especially when they think only in terms of the family name being carried down by the father alone. Other possibilities for name changes occur when the widow of a farm inheritor remarries. Her second husband takes as his name, her last name or farm name of her first husband and so do their children. Also it occurs, when a farm is purchased by an outside or nonrelated person, or when it passes on to other relatives not directly related. Indications of this change of name or the taking on of the farm name in records are usually shown in records by the use of certain Latin and German terms. These terms are placed between the personal last name of a person and the assumed last name of the person, as is shown above. The terms used are these: **jetzt** = *presently*, **genannt** = *known as*, **conductus / dictus** = *to be of use*, **nunc** = *now*, **sive** = *or*, and **vulgo** = *commonly*. The assuming of names is mostly evident in Neuenkirchen, Oldenburg. There are probably not many families there that follow the norm.

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<i>A German - Latin Lexicon:</i>	LATIN	GERMAN	ENGLISH
	<i>Patrinus/a/i, Levantes</i>	<b>Pate/in/en</b>	sponsor/s, Godparent/s
	<i>Sponsus</i>	<b>Bräutigam</b>	groom
	<i>Sponsa</i>	<b>Braut</b>	bride
	<i>Maritus</i>	<b>Gatte</b>	husband
	<i>Uxor, Marita, Mulier</i>	<b>Frau</b>	wife

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<i>From whence they came...</i>	KINGDOM OF HANNOVER
<b>Gehrde:</b>	Vornholt
<b>Haltern:</b>	Wehmeÿer
<b>Harpstedt:</b>	Morhmann, Rudebusch
<b>Herzlaken:</b>	Bruns
<b>Hilter:</b>	Benne
<b>Hoya (County):</b>	Dammeÿer, Grubemeÿer, Quellhorst
<b>Hunteburg:</b>	Bernhold, Brüning, Dickmann, Düwel, Melcher, Meÿer, Vallo, Wübker
<b>Jakobidrebber:</b>	Harmes
<b>Iburg:</b>	Schröder, Wacker, Wenker

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