
Die Deutsche Ecke

The German Corner: #6

Cranberry Prairie

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In northwest Germany family names were often taken from the name of the farmstead on which a family resided. These farmstead names have of themselves several possible origins: the dwelling place name, the given name of an ancestor (as mentioned in #4), or the status or occupation of an ancestor. A family name does not have to come from a farmstead name, but may come directly from the given name or occupation of an ancestor. And as well, the family name may be the origin of the farmstead name. The dwelling place name, from which a farmstead name is derived, refers to the site at which the dwelling place of that farmstead or family was located. The dwelling name indicates a person living or dwelling in a house by, near, at, on, upon, or in a place described by its natural form or physical characteristic, including woods, fields, and rivers. As northwest Germany is known for its low-lying wet wastelands, having soft spongy ground and areas of open water, many of these descriptive names are those for moors, bogs, marshes, fens, and swamps. Among these descriptive names are those names ending in **"-mann"** and **"-er"**. These two suffixes indicate the man who is the one living at or belonging to that place. For example, *Pöppelmann*, *Moormann*, and *Bäumer*. *Pöppelmann* indicates the man living in or by the poplar trees - the "poplar-man"; while *Moormann* indicates the man living in or by the moor - the "moor-man". *Bäumer* indicates the man living by a tree or a gate (a beam) - the "tree-er" or "gate-er". Names ending with the suffixes **"-mann"** and **"-er"** are also used as possessive endings meaning "the one of" or "the man (son) of" and "belonging to". Names that originate from an occupation usually end with these same suffixes. There are yet other names that incorporate the landholding status of an ancestor or family. Two such common ones are the names ending in **"-kötter"** and **"-meÿer"**. **"-Kötter"** refers to a cottager, the holder of a small farmstead, and **"-meÿer"** refers to the major or head farmer of a farm-neighborhood to whom, in earlier times, taxes and good were paid for collection by the landlord. Some of the descriptive words incorporated into names in northwest Germany include: **borg** = hill; **brink** = raised meadow or its edge; **brock** = swampy thicket, bog; **haus** = house; **heide** = heath, moor; **hoff** = farmstead; **horst** = moist woods, thicket; **kamp** = field; **kuul** = hole, pit; **loh / lage** = woods, clearing in a woods; **mesch** = marsh; **moor** = moor.

<i>A German - Latin Lexicon:</i>	LATIN	GERMAN	ENGLISH
	<i>Viduus/a,</i>	Witwe/er	widow/er
	<i>Juvenis</i>	Junge	youth
	<i>Virgo</i>	Jungfrau, Mädchen	maiden
	<i>Teste/a/es</i>	Zeuge/in/en	witness/es

<i>From whence they came...</i>	KINGDOM OF HANNOVER
Lemförde:	Schröder
Lingen:	Sürmann
Mariendrebber:	Pohlmann
Melle:	Hühne
Mensinghausen:	Berner
Meppen:	Müller, Wolken
Merzen:	Göcke, Grunkemeÿer, Pulskamp, Schmidt, Schwärtmann, von der Haar
Messingen:	Reulmann / Rulmann
Metteln:	Hackemöller, Rengers
