

# Footprints in the Sands of Time

By Joani Little and Jim Busam

Landkern, originally called Kern, traces its history to 1051 when it was the smallest of the mountain villages belonging to the High Court of Klotten, a town a few miles down the Mosel River from Cochern. After 1335 Landkern, Illerich and several other villages became the property of the Archdiocese of Trier. A chapel existed in Landkern at least from 1511 and became a Church in 1512 with the appointment of a pastor. However, the parishioners were required to attend Holy Mass at Klotten on at least seven Holydays.

The Church of St. Servatius is the centerpiece of the village. Our ancestors, Jacob Minnich and his wife Anna Barbara Kramer, did not see this building as the cornerstone was laid in 1859, and they emigrated in 1854. The old church was declared unsafe in 1840, which probably accounts for our ancestors being married in 1851 at St. Vincenz in Illerich, the birthplace of Jacob. The baptistery would be familiar to them, also the organ, which the organist said was 200 years old.

Among the many old buildings is the *Fachwerkhaus* (timber frame house) built in 1650 and restored in 1979. The *lakobsbrunnen* is a spring with a stone house enclosure and a large stone trough, which probably served as the village water source in olden times. Now it is part of a park. Opposite the church are several other old buildings; one of which is "Zur Post", a hotel with restaurant and bar. The only other commercial establishment is a butcher shop with a lunchroom, serving breakfast and noon lunch.

In addition to Zur Post there are eleven *privatzimmer* and ten *ferienwohnungen*, one of which is Haus München. München is a spelling variation of Minnich. We contacted them for accommodations and to check on relationship.

They were booked for the time of our stay and put us in contact with Haus Garullis but requested we visit with them. Karl-Heinz München is *der bergermeister* and had to leave for business soon after we arrived but his wife, Edeltrude, made us feel welcome. She is also into genealogy but we were not able to connect families. She invited us back for Sunday afternoon coffee and cake with the family gathering. Among this group of about 12 were their three children (adults) who spoke English. We enjoyed learning about their family and the village. Commenting on the number of church steeples we could see, we were told that on a clear day you can see 20 villages from their back deck.

Edeltrude told us there was to be a beer and brat party in the park in the evening and urged us to come. She also made arrangements for us to read the church books in the church office. The woman in that office did not know any English so she called her son to come and help us, another example of the friendly cooperative people.

Landkern is still a small village, having about 830 inhabitants living in houses mostly built since World War II. In 1563 there were only about 100. When Jacob and Barbara emigrated in 1854 there were only about 350. One wonders why such a small village should be destroyed at least five times: Twice by French invasions, once in the 30 Years War and in both World Wars. St. Servatius Church had seven large bells in its tower until the German war machine needed metal during World War II. The villagers managed to hide one bell, which has been reinstalled.

There are not many thrills greater than walking in the footsteps and seeing the sights of our ancestors.

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