

HESSEN

Page

- 2 September 1985 visit to Unterhaun: Martin came from “Hesse Kassel”
- 6 Cities in Hessen and Location of Unterhaun near Bad Hersfeld
- 7 History of Hessen

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M E M O R A N D U M

From: Don Sondergeld

Re: Visit to Martin Sondergeld's Birthplace -- Unterhaun, Hesse, Germany

On Tuesday, September 3, 1985 I flew to London, England, as I had business at Abbey Life in Bournemouth, on England's south coast. On Friday, September 6, I flew to Frankfurt -- a quick, trip to Germany, as I had to be in Chicago on Monday, September 9. I spent Friday night and Saturday morning with friends (Mr. and Mrs. Ronnau) in Marburg, 60 Km north of Frankfurt. On Saturday afternoon, I drove to Unterhaun, a small village 95 Km east of Marburg and 6 Km south of Bad Hersfeld.

I knew that my great grandfather Martin, and his third wife, my great grandmother, Anna Barbara Elizabeth Hagemann, had come to America from Bad Hersfeld. Martin was born in 1823 and Barbara in 1834.

Why did I go to Unterhaun? A Rita Lischewski, who I had engaged to do some research at the state archives in Marburg, had given me information on Anna Barbara Elizabeth Hagemann -- which proved she came from Unterhaun (not Unterhausen as stated in her obituary). I thought that perhaps Martin came from Unterhaun too, although Rita could find nothing about Martin. The proof was in a letter that was waiting for me at the Ronnaus' in Marburg.

It was as follows: On April 18, 1852, Barbara applied for permission (when she was 17) to go from Unterhaun to Kalcobes (about 1 Km north of Bad Hersfeld and 7 Km north of Unterhaun) to work as a maid. The application stated she was 18, was 4'10", had "brown" hair, "good teeth," "round chin," "arched" forehead, "full" face, "healthy" colour, and "freckles."

Ten years later, on March 13, 1862, Mayor Hartwig of Unterhaun issued a document stating Anna Barbara Elizabeth Hagemann had a good reputation and there is no reason against her emigrating to America.

I arrived in the Unterhaun area at 5 PM on Saturday, September 7. I had previously written to a Heinrich Sondergeld from a list someone sent me of a dozen Sondergeld's in the Bad Hersfeld area, as he was shown as an innkeeper- I thought I would obtain lodging at his inn and ask questions about Sondergeld's and Hagemann's, as an innkeeper should know a lot. The inn is in Rotensee, a small village abutting Unterhaun. Unfortunately the inn was closed -- but Heinrich's daughter Margret was there and asked me to wait for Heinrich, who would be along soon. Heinrich's wife Anna was milking the cows located in a barn attached to the inn.



Heinrich Margret Don Anna

Although neither Heinrich, Anna, or Margret spoke English, I fumbled along with my German and was saved by the appearance of a German woman who rents rooms for herself and her two young children in another house owned by Heinrich. (Her ex-husband is an American, who now lives in America.)

This woman indicated she had translated my earlier letter to Heinrich and his family and they had planned to respond. After a beer, Heinrich asked if I would like to see the house in Unterhaun in which Martin Sondergeld was born and where his brother's widow currently lives. I thought about it a very short time and said yes. It turned out that Heinrich's great grandfather, Georg, and my great grandfather, Martin, were brothers. What a small world!

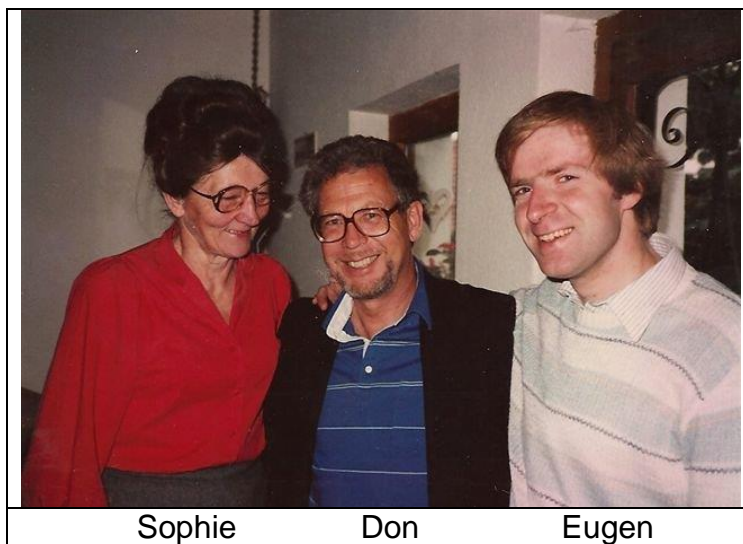
Before we left Heinrich's inn, which is at 5 Schulstrasse in Rotensee (a small village that abuts Unterhaun), I learned that Martin's older brother Georg, was born around 1911. He was 12 years older than Martin, who was born in 1823. Georg had a number of children, which included Friedrich Johannes, the eldest. Georg and his son Friedrich drove horses on a farm for a living. Friedrich had four boys (Adam, Ernst, Jacob, and Heinrich) and two girls (Elisa and Katherine).

Adam was the eldest (3/23/86 - 3/8/50). Georg lived in a house, one of the 5 oldest in Unterhaun (built in 1699) at 5 Weihergrund Strasse. Adam also lived there, as did Adam's oldest son Karl (2/9/13 - 6/20/76). Karl's widow Sophie (nee Ketelhut) and her youngest son Eugen (5/14/57) currently live in the Sondergeld house where Georg and Martin were born.

Adam had three children: Karl (3/19/13 - 6/20/76), Heinrich (11/5/19), the innkeeper I had met, and Maria (5/5/22), who is married to Herbert Kruger. It is probably 3 Km from Heinrich the innkeeper's house to his older brother Karl's house, in which Karl's widow Sophie, and son Eugen live. Heinrich's sister Maria Kruger lives halfway at 17 Rotensee Weg in Unterhaun. Her house is directly across from the graveyard in which Adam and his wife Elisa (nee Biedenkapp) are buried -- as is Adam's brother Ernst, and Adam's son Karl.

Heinrich and I drove to the house built in 1699 at 5 Weihergrund Strasse in Unterhaun, after viewing Heinrich's father Adam's grave and the grave of Heinrich's older brother Karl.

In Unterhaun I was introduced to Karl's widow Sophie (4/21/30), Karl's son Eugen (5/14/57), and Sophie's very good friend Heinrich Schott (5 years older than Sophie). Heinrich Schott is an attorney (paralegal). At 8 PM Heinrich Sondergeld left to go home, but I was invited to spend the night on the third floor of this lovely 7 meter X 17 meter house. Although invited to have something to eat, I drove into Bad Hersfeld to see it from 9 PM to 10:30 PM and had some bratwurst. Upon returning, we continued talking and drinking beer until 2 AM. Eugen had gone out for the evening with a lovely 19-year-old girl, and was the only one that spoke English. We continued our conversation from 7:30 AM - 10:15 AM the next morning. I then left to drive to Marburg, to catch a train to Frankfurt, so I could fly to JFK.



I learned a lot from my visit. I will not list information on the many Sondergeld's descended from Martin's brother Georg. I should mention that Karl and Sophie had two children before Eugen (5/14/57). Dr. Klaus Peter (11/17/51) is the oldest, and does operations research (as a mathematician-physicist) in Munich. He has a wife Dagmar (nee Kraus) and a son Gregor (8/17/84). I talked on the phone with Klaus Peter. His English is excellent, having taken courses in Santa Barbara, California after graduating from the University at Gottingen. He has done work on a Georg Sondergeld genealogy and will send me a copy. Karl and Sophie also have a daughter Herlinde (2/13/53) who is married to Herman Eimer-Sondergeld, and they have a son, Alexander Sondergeld (12/28/80) -- as Herman Eimer took Sondergeld as his surname after marrying Herlinde.

Adam, his son Karl and his grandson Eugen were Tischlermeisters (master carpenters). I saw examples of their work in the Sondergeld house. (This included wood carvings, cabinets, and chairs.)

Unterhaun is very old. The Haun River flows through Unterhaun and the railroad runs along the river. The Haun River flows into the Fulda River between Unterhaun and Bad Hersfeld. The name Unterhaun has been in existence from around 1600 AD to today. From perhaps 900 AD to 1600 AD it was called Niederhuna, which means the same thing. In 1858 there were 96 families and 575 people in Unterhaun.

In 1972, seven small villages just south of Bad Hersfeld in Hesse, Germany, formed a town they are part of. The town is Hauneck, whose name is related to the River Haun that flows through the area. The seven villages (population in 1972 in parenthesis) were: Bodes (206), Eitra (393), Fischbach (95), Oberhaun (564), Rotensee (516), Seiglos (272), and Unterhaun (1,024). This totaled 3,038 in 1972.

By 1984 the population of Hauneck had grown to 3,641, with Unterhaun still the largest village with 1,353 people.

The main highway is number 27, that runs south from Bad Hersfeld to Hunfeld. About 6 Km south of Bad Hersfeld on both sides of the highway is Unterhaun, and Rotensee is just east of Unterhaun. There is a Shell station on Route 27 in Unterhaun. If at that point you go east towards Rotensee, you go by Maria Sondergeld's house on the north side of the road and the graveyard is across the street. Further east on the same road is her brother Heinrich's inn and house on the north side of the road in Rotensee. If instead you go west, you cross the Haun River and a railroad track, and soon come to Sophie Sondergeld's house, built in 1699, in which Martin and Georg were born.

In 1977 when Eugen was 20 (his father Karl had died the previous year), he remodeled the house. The basic structure, sitting on 1600 square meters of land, is 7 meters wide and 17 meters long. About 45% of the building closest to the street was a barn for hay and a stable for cows and pigs. Eugen remodeled it, so the barn and stable could be used for other purposes. This three story structure now has Eugen's workshop on the first level where the barn area was, and a utility and furnace room where the stable was. Attached is an architect's drawing of the building and one of the property. Not shown are two large rooms off a center room on the third floor.

Although I had driven to Unterhaun expecting to find some information on the Hagemann's, and little (if any) data on Martin Sonderaeld -- the reverse was the case. I did learn that the church in Unterhaun was perhaps built by a Hagemann and that some Hagemann's left Unterhaun in 1840 to go to America.

Sophie Sondergeld made a number of phone calls when I was there, to some Hagemann's in Unterhaun to see if they were related to Anna Barbara Elizabeth Hagemann. No luck. However, she will ask the minister of the church in Unterhaun to review the church records. Also, Sophie's friend Heinrich Schott, has a daughter Sylvia who is married to a minister (and lives near Hamburg or Kassel). Heini Schott will ask his son-in-law to assist in finding information on Barbara Hagemann from church records.

CITIES
in
HESSEN, GERMANY

KASSEL

MARBURG

Tann
Rohrbach
Wehneberg
BAD HERSFELD

Unterhaun, Rotensee
Oberhaun

Oberlengsfeld
Schenklengsfeld
Oberufhausen

Wetzlos Neukirchen Eiterfeld
Wehrda
Beurghaun HUNFELD

FULDA

FRANKFURT
Darmstadt

- Notes:
1. Bremen is 250 km north of Marburg. Marburg is 90 km north of Frankfurt, and 60 km west of Bad Hersfeld. Bad Hersfeld is 50 km south of Kassel, and 40 km north of Fulda.
 2. Steinbeck-Hallenberg is in Thuringen, about 60 km east of HUNFELD.
 3. The borderline between Lutheran and Catholic Germany ran between Schenklengsfeld and Ufhausen.
 4. The 7 villages of Unterhaun, Rotensee, Oberhaun, Eitra, Sieglos, Bodes, and Fischbach were joined to form the town of Hauneck in 1972.
 5. Many of the villages along the Haun River have "Haun" in their names. The Haun River flows north through Hunfeld, Neukirchen, Oberhaun, Unterhaun, and into the Fulda River at Bad Hersfeld. The Fulda River flows north from Fulda and is west of the Haun, goes through Fulda, Bad Hersfeld, and Kassel.

HISTORY OF HESSEN

100 b.c. The tribe of the Chatten, the ancestors of the Hessians, take possession of their future home country, the land between the rivers Fulda, Eder and Lahn. Since these old times, the Hessians are considered to be parsimonial, proud, sometimes harsh and reserved.

1264 Heinrich the Child is the first Count of Hessen and manages to make Hessen a main principality of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.

1526 Philipp the Generous introduces Reformation so that Hessen is mainly protestant since then.

1567 Hessen is divided among the sons of Philipp, and essentially two parts remain: the northern Hessen-Kassel, later called Kurhessen, and the southern Hessen-Darmstadt. Wilhelm the Sage becomes the first Prince of Hessen-Kassel.

1868 Kurhessen becomes a Prussian province, called Hessen-Nassau, because it fought on the Austrian side in the German war and lost.

1945 The Prussian province Hessen-Nassau is united with the west-Rhinean parts of Hessen Darmstadt to form the modern German state "Bundesland Hessen".

NOTE 1: When Don Sondergeld was looking at Census Records in Ohio he noted Martin Sondergeld was born in "Hepe Capel". He looked on maps of Germany. Called the Research Departments Public Librarian of Hartford and New York and could not find this place. He subsequently hired a retired genealogist, Dale Kellogg who called him one day and said "I know where your grandfather came from". It is Hesse Cassel. The "p" in the census record was slanted and was not a "p" but a shorthand way of writing "ss" in German script.

NOTE: 2 <http://www.vondonop.org/hessen-kassel.html>

Hesse-Cassel

(The text of this document came from the Encyclopedia Britannica edition of 1905)

(Kurhessen, i.e. Electoral Hesse), now the government district of Cassel in the Prussian province of Hesse-Nassau. It was until 1866 a landgraviate and electorate of Germany, consisting of several detached masses of territory to the Northeast of Frankfurt am Main. It contained a superficial area of 7699 sq. mi. and its population in 1864 was 745,063.

History --The line of Hesse-Cassel was founded by William IV, surnamed the wise, eldest son of Philip the Magnanimous. On Philip's death in 1567, William received one half of Hesse, with Kassel as his capital; and this formed the landgraviate of Hesse-Cassel. Additions were made to it by inheritance from his brother's possessions⁽¹⁾. His son, Maurice the learned (1592-1627), who turned Protestant in 1605, became involved later in the Thirty Years' War, and after being forced to cede some of his territories to the Darmstadt line⁽²⁾, abdicated in favor of his son William V (1627-37). His younger sons received appendages which created several cadet lines of the house, of which that of Hesse-Rheinfels-Rotenburg survived till 1834 (qv Hesse-Rotenburg). On the death of William V. whose territories had been conquered by the Imperialists, his widow Amalie Elizabeth, as regent for her son William VI (1637-63), reconquered the country and with

the aid of the French and Swedes, held it, together with part of Westphalia. At the peace of Westphalia (1648), accordingly, Hesse-Cassel was augmented by the larger part of the countship of Schaumburg⁽³⁾ and by the abbey of Hersfeld⁽⁴⁾, which had been secularized as a principality of the Empire. The Landgravine Amalie Elizabeth introduced the rule of primogeniture⁽⁵⁾. William VI, who came of age in 1650, was an enlightened patron of learning and the arts. He was succeeded by his son William VII, an infant, who died in 1670, and was succeeded by his brother Charles (1670-1730). Charles's chief claim to remembrance is that he was the first ruler to adopt the system of hiring his soldiers out to foreign powers as mercenaries, as a means of improving the national finances. Frederick I, the next landgrave (1730-1751), had become by marriage king of Sweden⁽⁶⁾, and on his death was succeeded in the landgraviate by his brother William VIII (1751-60), who fought as an ally of England and Prussia during the Seven Years War. From his successor Frederick II (1760-85), who had become Roman Catholic, **20,000 Hessian troops were hired by England for about 3,191,000 to assist in the war against the North American colonies.** This action, often bitterly criticized, has of late years found apologists (v. Werthern, *Die hessischen Hilfstruppen im nordamerikanischen Unabhngigkeitskriege, Cassel, 1895*). It is argued that the troops were in any case mercenaries, and that the practice was quite common. Whatever opinion may be held as to this, it is certain that Frederick spent the money well, he did much for the development of the economic and intellectual improvement of the country. The reign of the next landgrave William IX (1785-1821) was an important epoch in the history of Hesse-Kassel. Ascending the throne in 1785, he took part in the war against France a few years later, but in 1795, peace was arranged by the treaty of Basle. For the loss in 1801 of his possessions, on the left bank of the Rhine, he was in 1803 compensated by some of the former French territory around Mainz, and at the same time was raised to the dignity of Elector (Kurfurst), as William I. In 1806 he made a treaty of neutrality with Napoleon, but after the battle of Jena the latter, suspecting William's designs, occupied his country, and expelled him. Hesse-Cassel was then added to Jerome Bonapart's new kingdom of Westphalia, but after the battle of Leipzig in 1813, the French were driven out and on the 21st of November the elector returned in triumph to his capital. A treaty conducted by him with the Allies (Dec 2) stipulated that he was to receive back all his former territories, or their equivalent, and at the same time to restore the ancient constitution of his country. This treaty, so far as the territories were concerned, was carried out by the powers at the congress of Vienna⁽⁷⁾. They refused, however, the elector's request to be recognized as "King of the Chatti" (Konig der Katten), a request which was again rejected at the conference of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818). He therefore retained the now meaningless title of elector, with the predicate of 'Royal Highness'.

The elector had signaled his restoration by abolishing with a stroke of the pen all the reforms introduced under the French regime, repudiating the Westphalian debt and declaring null and void the sale of the crown domains. Everything was set back to its condition on the 1st of November 1806; even the officials had to descend to their former rank, and the army to revert to the old uniforms and powdered pigtales. The estates, indeed, were called in March 1815, but the attempt to devise a constitution broke down; their appeal to the federal diet at Frankfurt to call the elector to order in the matter of the debt and the domains came to nothing owing to the intervention of Metternich; and in May 1816 they were dissolved, never to meet again. William I died on the 27th of February 1821, and was succeeded by his son, William II. Under him, the constitutional crisis in Hesse-Cassel came to a head. He was arbitrary and avaricious like his father, and moreover shocked public sentiment by his treatment of his wife, a popular Prussian princess, and his relations with his mistress, one Emilie Orlopp, created countess of Reichenbach, whom he loaded with wealth. The July revolution in Paris gave the signal for disturbances; the elector was forced to summon the estates; and on The 5th of January 1831, a constitution on the ordinary Liberal basis was signed. The elector now retired to Hanau, appointed his son Frederick William regent, and took no further part in public affairs.

The regent, without his father's coarseness, had a full share of his arbitrary and avaricious temper. Constitutional restrictions were intolerable to him; and the consequent friction with the diet was aggravated when, in 1832, Hassenpflug was placed at the head of the administration. The whole efforts of the elector and his minister were directed to nullifying the constitutional control vested in the diet; and the Opposition was fought by manipulating the elections, packing the judicial bench, and a vexatious and petty persecution of political 'suspects', and this policy continued after the retirement of Hassenpflug in 1837. The situation that resulted issued in the revolutionary year 1848 in a general manifestation of public discontent; and Frederick William, who had become elector on his father's death (November 20, 1847), was forced to dismiss his reactionary ministry and to agree to a comprehensive program of democratic reform. This, however, was but short lived. After the breakdown of the Frankfurt National Parliament, Frederick William joined the Prussian Northern Union, and deputies from Hesse-Cassel were sent to the Erfurt Parliament. However, as Austria recovered strength, the elector's policy changed. On the 23rd of February 1850 Hassenpflug was again placed at the head of the administration and threw himself with renewed zeal into the struggle against the constitution and into opposition to Prussia. On The 2nd of September, the diet was dissolved; the taxes were continued by electoral ordinance; and the country was placed under martial law. It was at once clear; however, the elector could not depend on his officers or troops who remained faithful to their oath to the constitution. Hassenpflug persuaded the elector to leave Cassel secretly with him, and on the 15th of October appealed for aid to the reconstituted federal diet, which willingly passed a decree of 'intervention'. On the 1st of November an Austrian and Bavarian force marched into the electorate.

This was a direct challenge to Prussia, which under conventions with the elector had the right to the use of the military roads through Hesse that were her sole means of communication with her Rhine provinces. War seemed imminent; Prussian troops also entered the country, and shots were actually exchanged between the outposts. But Prussia was in no condition to take up the challenge; and the diplomatic contest that followed issued in the Austrian triumph at Olmlitz (1851). Hesse was surrendered to the federal diet; the federal forces collected the taxes, and all officials who refused to recognize the new order were dismissed. In March 1852 the federal diet abolished the constitution of 1831, together with the reforms of 1848, and in April issued a new provisional constitution. The new diet had under this, very narrow powers; and the elector was free to carry out his policy of amassing money, forbidding the construction of railways and manufactories, and imposing strict orthodoxy on churches and schools. In 1855, however, Hassenpflug--who had returned with the elector--was dismissed; and five years later, after a period of growing agitation, a new constitution was granted with the consent of the federal diet (May 30, 1860). The new chambers, however, demanded the constitution of 1831; and, after several dissolutions, that always resulted in the return of the same members, the federal diet decided to restore the constitution of 1831 (May 24, 1862). This had been due to a threat of Prussian occupation and it needed another such threat to persuade the Elector to reassemble the chambers, which he had dismissed at the first sign of opposition; and he revenged himself by refusing to transact any public business. In 1866 the end came. The Elector, full of grievances against Prussia, threw in his lot with Austria, the electorate was at once overrun with Prussian troops; Kassel was occupied (June 20); and the elector was carried a prisoner to Settin. By the treaty of Prague, Hess-Kassel was annexed to Prussia. The Elector Frederick William (d 1875) had been by the terms of the treaty of cession guaranteed the entailed property of his house. This was, however, sequestered in 1868 owing to his intrigues against Prussia; part of the income was paid, however, to the eldest agnate, the landgrave Frederick (d. 1884), and part, together with certain castles and palaces, was assigned to the cadet lines of Philippsthal and Philippsthal-Barchfeld.

Sources: X.W. Wippernan, Kurhessen seit dem Freiheitskriege (Kassel, 1850) Roth, Geschichte von Hessen-Kassel (Kassel, 1876) H. Orflfe, Der verfassungskampf in Kurhessen (Leipzig, 1851) and works under Hesse.

Rulers of Hesse-Kassel:

- **Moritz, 1592-1627**
- **Wilhelm V, 1627-1637**
- **Wilhelm VI, 1637-1663**
- **Amalie Elisabeth von Hanau, Regent, 1637-1650**
- **Wilhelm VII, 1663-1670**
- **Hedwig Sophie von Brandenburg, Regent 1663-1677**
- **Karl, 1670-1730**
- **Fredrich I, 1730-1751 (also King of Sweden)**
- **Wilhelm VII, 1751-1760**
- **Fredrich II, 1760-1785**
- **Wilhelm IX, 1785-1803**
- **Wilhelm I, as elector 1803-1821**
- **Wilhelm II, 1821-1847**
- **Fredrich Wilhelm 1847-1866**

Hesse in the mid 19th century



The map was adapted from "THE ALTERNATIVE TO GERMAN UNIFICATION," The Anti-Prussian Party, Frankfurt, Nassau, and the Two Hesses 1859-1867; by Nicholas Martin Hope. Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, Wiesbaden, 1973

The list of rulers and information about Hersfeld and the Hanau principalities came from the Standard Catalog of World Crowns and Talers, by Chester L. Krause and Clifford Mishler, Krause publications, 700 E. State Street, Iola, WI 54990-0001

The arms were adapted from an image found at International Civic Arms.

1. Hesse-Marburg, which line became extinct in 1604 after just one ruler (Ludwig (III)IV 1567-1604.

2. In 1648 part of Hesse-Marburg was ceded to Hesse-Darmstadt finally settling the quarrel over dividing that territory.

3. In 1640 Schaumburg-Gehmen was divided between Hesse-Cassel and Lippe-Alverdisen. The two became known as Schaumburg-Hessen and Schaumburg Lippe. They were elevated into a county independent of Lippe.

4. Hersfeld, Benedictine abbey founded in 769 about 24 miles north-northeast of Fulda. In 1606 the landgraves of Hesse-Cassel replaced the abbots as administrators of Hersfeld. The abbey was secularized and became a part of Hesse-Cassel in 1648.

Rulers: Joachim Ruhl, 1591-1606; Otto of Hesse-Cassel, 1606-1617; Wilhelm II of Hesse-Cassel, 1617-1627; Imperial Occupation, 1627-1631; Wilhelm II of Hesse-Cassel, 1631-1637; Hermann III of Hesse-Cassel, 1637-1648.

5. The eldest son would henceforth inherit the entire landgraviate, it no longer could be divided amongst all the heirs.

6. In 1736 he also succeeded to the county of Hanau-Munzenberg upon the extinction of the line of the Counts of Hanau. Hanau-Lichtenberg going to Hesse-Darmstadt.

7. Among the additions to his territory was that of the Prince-Bishopric of Fulda, which connected Hesse-Kassel proper with the territories of the county of Hanau.

8. Also see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hauneck>