Session 1C: Pauleen Cass: They weren’t all Lutherans - A case study of a small group of German Catholics who emigrated to Australia from Dorfprozelten, Bavaria.

The conference presentation will draw on this paper but will use photos and images to illustrate the story.

The presence of German migrants in Australia’s early colonial days is well known. Much research, especially in the area of family history, focuses on the German Lutheran experience. This paper will present an alternate view which emphasises the particular migration experience of a small group of Bavarian Catholics from the village of Dorfprozelten, situated on the banks of one of Germany’s great rivers, the River Main.

In the cold winter days between December 1854 and January 1855, over 50 people left their home village of Dorfprozelten in Bavaria to migrate to Australia. They farewelled not only friends and family, but the traditions and environment familiar to them throughout their own lives, as well as to generations of their ancestors. Their departure represented the loss of 5% of the town’s population - an impact which would have rippled through their network of neighbours and family. Although there were occasional single departures, this was the largest mass movement from Dorfprozelten to Australia.

Each family had made the difficult decision to migrate to New South Wales in far-away Australia where experienced vinedressers were in demand. They were unlikely to have taken on this challenge lightly and were perhaps influenced by letters sent home by the first known couple to come to Australia, the Nebauers. Australia was also being heavily promoted in the vine-growing regions of Germany including the Rhineland, Nassau, Baden and Württemberg. While Bavaria was not a primary target, this particular sub-region along the River Main lay directly across from the state of Baden and close to the Frankfurt base of Wilhelm Kirchner, one of the primary recruiters of German labour.

Frankfurt provided a travel hub for emigrants from the southern Germanic states and it is most likely that for the Dorfprozelten families, the first phase of their migration travel was by boat along the River Main to Frankfurt en route to a European port for embarkation to England and thence on the long sea voyage. The first group of four families and two couples was scheduled to sail on the Commodore Perry, a brand new, state of the art clipper ship built for Baines’ Black Ball Line in Liverpool. On arrival in Australia they are all listed on its Board Lists as assisted immigrants under the New South Wales (NSW) Government’s Bounty scheme for vinedressers.

Closer inspection of the Lists reveals an anomaly however. An annotation indicates that 14 of these German vinedresser families actually arrived on the Boomerang, another Black Ball Line clipper, via Melbourne. Only one Dorfprozelten family, the Zöllers, travelled on the Boomerang though there were close links with another family from nearby Fechenbach, the Diflos.

The experiences of those who travelled on the Boomerang and the Commodore Perry were quite different despite the high quality of each ship, and each voyage had its own particular challenges. The passengers on the Commodore Perry’s maiden voyage to Australia were a mix of Scottish and German emigrants. The Scottish group were especially selected by the St Andrew’s Society to take up settlement in Van Dieman’s Land while the Germans were under the auspices of Kirchner’s bounty-assisted migration scheme. The ship may have been under-
provisioned due to the high numbers on board ship for the long voyage or it may not have been fully subject to the usual guidelines of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners (CLEC). Whatever the reason, by the time of its arrival in Sydney, 64% of the heads of families on board complained to the Board about the provisions, with comments including:

“provisions not issued according to scale” (repeated comment)
“complaints that he had no… to cook his provisions” (Hock)
“provisions not cooked according to German custom” (Kaüflein)
“bought provisions from the Scotch emigrants”
“complaints that the provisions were not issued according to the scale he was led to expect by the agent in Germany” (Krebs; similar from Zöller, F)

It can be seen that the larger ship, the mix of cultures and confined spaces had already had an impact on the immigrants’ perception of their voyage. Perhaps the complaints were, in part, an expression of frustration of all the new challenges facing them during the voyage: some passengers appear resentful of their treatment relative to the British emigrants, while others such as Prözlker Vincent Kaüflein already missed traditional German cooking.

The passenger lists reveal the varied backgrounds of the Germans on board the Commodore Perry.⁸ The non-Catholics were classified as Church of England by the Board’s enumerators and comprised 62.5% of the total German passengers who had set sail or been born on the voyage. The Catholics numbered 37.5% of the German group and despite regional differences this may have provided a level of commonality with each other. Interestingly the non-Catholic emigrants had nearly twice the level of ship-board mortality of the Catholics, possibly attributable to greater economic deprivation in the regions of origin and poorer health on boarding. Only two of the immigrants had relatives already living in the colony: Eugen Nebauer, the founding Dorfprozelten emigrant to Australia was the cousin of brothers Josef and Vincenz Kaüflein. Two of the female immigrants were sisters: Clara Neubek and Louisa Wörner. Two of the immigrants were brothers though they had different surnames: Georg Günzer and Dominicus Kuhn. Clara (aka Rosina) Hock was a cousin to these two men.

The health of the passengers on board ship provides an objective view of the success or otherwise of the voyage. The German emigrants lost 16 children and one adult on the voyage, nearly 8% of the total 216 who embarked on this brand new ship.⁹ The Dorfprozelten families experienced low mortality on board, losing one child, little Maria Diflo, aged 1.¹⁰

The German emigrants scheduled to travel on the Commodore Perry may have been split into two groups because the ship was over-booked with the group to Van Dieman’s Land as well the German vinedressers to Sydney. As the ship was already scheduled to land passengers in Launceston all the St Andrew’s Society passengers may have been loaded on the Commodore Perry and the surplus Germans trans-shipped to the Black Ball Line’s other ship, the Boomerang.¹¹
This subsidiary group was relatively balanced with religious affiliations being evenly split. They were also much more fortunate in terms of health as no German lives were lost on the voyage, despite some complaints about food:

“complains that the cook did not cook…their provisions properly”
“complains that the English emigrants were treated better than they were”
“complaints of the cook”

However the Boomerang’s passengers were not short of other challenges. The Boomerang had sailed from Liverpool on 7 February at 1.10pm and their voyage took them past Teneriffe and the Island of Bonavista. In early May along the southern latitudes they encountered icebergs and gales which damaged a lifeboat, and destroyed 30 sails, and they also lost one of the crew overboard. The captain recorded five deaths and two births, and while there were 30 cases of measles, none proved fatal. When they arrived at Hobson’s Bay, near Melbourne, on 11 May 1855, they had been at sea for 92 days. All the families who had sailed on the Boomerang were transhipped to the Yarra Yarra and travelled to Sydney, arriving there on 21 May 1855, and listed as assisted passengers. For some of the passengers, including Josef Zöller and family from Dorfprozelten and their acquaintances, the Charles Diflo family, the long voyage was not yet over.

Once again they transhipped to a coastal vessel, probably the Sarah Ann, for the final leg to Moreton Bay. They were to experience one last challenge before landing at their final destination. While waiting in the Bay overnight on 15 June 1855, the anchor came adrift and it was only the heavy chain which prevented the ship from being wrecked on nearby Flinder’s Rocks. No doubt the 95 German immigrants on board must have been enormously relieved to be safe on land even though a further tedious land leg remained. The Ipswich correspondent for the Moreton Bay Courier reports on the misconceptions of the immigrants: “Many go from the ship into the interior. For all these Ipswich is a resting and a starting place. Those hired in Brisbane are hurried up here with an impression that they will be almost at their journey’s end.”

The second group of Dorfprozelten families left Hamburg on the Peru on 17 January 1855. The ship had been contracted by Kirchner and Co and had 375 German emigrants on board. For these Dorfprozelten families the voyage should have been less stressful as all passengers were German. The vinedresser families on board the Peru were drawn predominantly from Württemberg, Baden and Nassau but Bavaria was also well represented. There were seven Dorfprozelten families or couples (26 individuals) among the 36 Bavarians who arrived in Australia as well as others who came as part of the single passengers contracted privately. The Peru arrived in Sydney on 23 May 1855 and was placed in quarantine due to the presence of scurvy and fever on board. The Sydney Morning Herald described it as being “in a very dirty and disgraceful state.” Although the paper reports 36 deaths (3 adults and 33 children), the Board Lists document 32 deaths, 26 being children under four years of age. Two children and one adult belonged to the Dorfprozelten immigrants: Dominicus Kuhn lost his wife and had no relations in his new country to help him care for three children under twelve.

A total of 59 assisted emigrants from Dorfprozelten have been identified and of these four died on route, a mortality rate of 6%, much higher than the 1% experienced by East Clare migrants across a similar time period. The hardships faced by the Dorfprozelten emigrants would have been reported back in letters to family and friends at home. This one phase of migration represented the only mass migration from Dorfprozelten. The only subsequent
migrations which can be found were of small groups of people, mostly individuals following earlier family members.\textsuperscript{25}

Further major life changes occurred once the Dorfprozelten people disembarked in the colonies. After a lifetime spent in close proximity to, and familiarity with, their fellow immigrants and their families at home, the immigrants were dispersed to their employers in far-reaching corners of the colony of New South Wales.

There were six geographical locations to which the Dorfprozelten people were sent: Hunter Valley district (4 families); Moreton Bay region (5 families); Cooma and the Monaro district (1 family); Sydney (possibly 2 families); and the Lidcombe area (1 family). While the employer’s name is listed against each family on the Board Lists and the bounty was to be paid accordingly, it appears that this did not always occur and the immigration agent, in this case Kirchner, shuffled the families in response to the circumstances such as adult “children”, employer bankruptcy or other events.\textsuperscript{26} Such adaptations can be noted with the Dorfprozelten vinedresser families.

F Castilla\textsuperscript{27} was scheduled to employ five of the Dorfprozelten families. However for whatever reason, his employees appear to have been transferred to other employers, primarily in the Moreton Bay region. Only two families may have actually been employed by him, the Krebs and Franz (Michael) Zöller families, both of whom remained in the Sydney area. Families who were allocated to him but who went to Moreton Bay were Andreas Diflo and family, Josef Zöller and family and Franz Ignaz Zöller and family. Carl Wörner and wife were employed by J Ferrett at Walloon Station in the Darling Downs while Thomas Bilz and wife were sent to JL Brewster at Moreton Bay.\textsuperscript{28} Those moving into the Moreton Bay region were in a different situation from those who were employed in NSW, as the region had been opened for free settlement comparatively recently and had a less established infrastructure. It also had a minimal wine industry and it is highly likely that those who went there were employed in capacities other than vine-dressing. On the positive side, it gave them the opportunity to play a part in the development of what would become the new colony of Queensland only four years later.

The emigrants’ employers were prompt in relocating their new workers to their new place of employment to ensure they could not be tempted to default on their contracts. The Moreton Bay Courier of 21 April 1855 alludes to the fact that the squatters themselves reneged on their agreements and used the workers as shepherds in the distant corners of their properties.

The Moreton Bay Courier’s Ipswich correspondent reports that “nearly all the Germans hired by these parties as far as my observation goes, are hired as vinedressers, the reason being that they would not have hired as shepherds...It is certain that legally most of these men can refuse to do any thing which is not directly concerned in the cultivation of the vine. So we may expect to hear of the squatters setting up in that line – for sheep bear as much similitude to vines, considered as objects of care and occasions of responsibility, as babies do to flowers...”\textsuperscript{29}

Deception was not the sole prerogative of the employers. The emigrants’ occupations prior to migration were not exclusively focused on vinedressing and a number had worked as stonemasons. Others had earned their living as Taglöher/Taglöherin or labourers who worked on a daily contract basis. Given the importance of the vine industry in the River Main region, they would certainly have worked in the vineyards on a casual basis, enabling them to
meet the colony’s need for workers who understood vine-growing. Equally they were accustomed to responding to economic circumstances which required them to put their hand to anything and may have adapted to the unanticipated occupations they were allocated. Only two workers were qualified workers in the wine industry: Josef Kaufftein and son Anton (Correction –this should be Adam) listed their occupations on arrival as “wine cooper” which correlates to the family’s traditional occupation (Küfer) as listed in the village’s local history.  

It is surprising, given the funding required to attract these German vinedressers to Australia, that their arrival in the regions goes almost entirely unremarked in the local press, other than to comment that they had already been allocated to employers. The arrival of the Peru’s German passengers is noted in the labour market report of 30 May 1855. In the early 1850s Bavaria was experiencing a famine due in part to the failure of the potato crop which so affected Ireland. Food staples such as meat were limited, and heating materials difficult and expensive to obtain. In contrast many immigrants were amazed by the food and ready availability of firewood in Australia. German wages and working conditions were poor and workers were heavily taxed. Potential migrants were willing to accept wages which seemed like riches to them but which were below colonial market rates. For example, colonial country wages in May 1855 were listed as £25 to £30 for shepherds; £40 to £50 plus rations for married couples who were farm labourers and £20 to £25 for hutkeepers. On arrival the wage discrepancies sometimes caused problems and heated debate in the local newspapers. The Courier was blunt on the topic: “There is no school where the shepherd may have his children taught, no church-going bell reminds him of the else-where sacred repose and worship of the Sabbath; no medical aid is within reach in the event of an accident or sickness… Whether any amount of wages would justify a conscientious man in cutting off himself, his wife and his children from almost all the decencies and civilizing influences of life is a question to be settled at another time.”

It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the “vinedressers” were otherwise occupied or their reallocation to other employers unless they happen to be named in other sources such as court reports or church records. It is important to note that the first place to look for such records is in the Catholic parish closest to where they lived and subsequently to search other denominations.

The size of the parishes and the intermittent visits by the priest were major differences for the Dorfprozelten immigrants. They were accustomed to a rich community life in which the church played a pivotal role both in terms of religion and socio-culturally. Once in Australia they were cut off from spiritual nourishment at a time when they were probably most at need. It is evident from baptismal records that children were not able to be christened for up to two years whereas in Dorfprozelten a newborn child was usually baptised within 24 hours, and sometimes on the afternoon of the birth. In contrast Andrew and Juliana Diflo’s first two Australian-born children were baptised by Father William McGinty of Ipswich parish during his pastoral visits to remote locations on the Darling Downs. Where the family lived in proximity to the church, baptisms took place with the promptness encouraged by church policies: George Kunkel’s children were baptised within a week or two of birth even when the family was living on the railway line.

To further compound the emigrants’ problem most of the Catholic clergy were Irish men who could not communicate with them in their own language, limiting the non-religious benefits of the sacraments. The frustration of the Germans in the Darling Downs was apparent when they
complained in 1869 to Archbishop Quinn in Brisbane that their priest, Father Robert Dunne,\(^{38}\) was unable to properly minister to them due to the language barrier. Among those listed on this petition were Dorfprozelten people Andrew Diflo, Joseph Zöller and Carl Wörner as well as others who married into these families.\(^{39}\) Despite their linguistic frustrations they continued to support the establishment of the church through their contributions to fund-raising for new churches. The Wörner, F Zöller, and J Zöller families all contributed to the subscriptions for the Toowoomba RC church while Georg Kunkel and Carl Diflo were subscribers to the Ipswich church fund in 1859.\(^{40}\) There is some evidence of defection to other denominations but the majority continued their Catholic observances and died and were buried as Catholics.

Because the Bounty regulations required the immigrants to be married prior to departure, the usefulness of church records is limited to baptisms, the marriages of the single and younger immigrants or remarriages.\(^{41}\) The age distribution of the Dorfprozelten immigrants is heavily weighted in the upper age limits further reducing the likelihood of baptismal records.\(^{42}\) Nevertheless where church records exist they can provide valuable insights into the location of the workers and their continued interaction after settlement.

In the early years of the colonies priests ministered to their human flock among the sheep-stations and remote properties where they were employed. As a result baptisms were often witnessed by another worker and again long-term connections can be seen over time. The concentration of a group of Dorfprozelten immigrants in the Moreton Bay district, especially the Darling Downs and Ipswich, provides useful examples of these linkages, even decades after arrival. Carl Wörner witnessed his friend, George Kunkel’s wedding in Ipswich in September 1857 as well as that of a shipboard friend in December 1858.\(^{43}\) The 1880 marriage of Kate Zeller who was an Australian-born child of Francis Ziller and Catherine Bidel (or Beutel) reveals that her parents were living at Pikedale near Stanthorpe when she was born c1860.\(^{44}\) The witnesses to this marriage, John McQuillan and Annie and Mary Scholmier, allude to the difficult life that Catherine (Beutel) Zöller had experienced in Australia when her husband, Francis Zöller, died in April 1862 leaving her with two children to support.\(^{45}\) She subsequently married Christian Schullmeier\(^{46}\) in July 1862, and after his death, Christian Branniger or Brannigan in 1866. Widow Hildegardis Günzer’s second marriage in 1872 to Franz Bodman was witnessed by Andrew Diflo, a fellow Dorfprozelten person. In contrast the Maitland group appear to have had little inter-linkage in the lives of fellow Prözlers who lived close by.\(^{47}\) Even the Kauflein and Nebauer families who were related do not appear to have witnessed each other’s church events, as far as can be ascertained. Church records also show the cross-national marriages of some of the Dorfprozelten families, especially to Irish-born Australians who shared a common religion. While this became more common with their descendants, there were a number of early instances of German-Irish marriages including those of George Kunkel and Mary O’Brien (1857); Mary Ann Zeller (sic) to John O’Brien (1874); William Zeller to Maria Falvey (1881) and Annie Schulmeier to John McQuillan (1883).\(^{48}\) Although it is obvious that the younger immigrants would have a better chance of quickly becoming familiar with a second language, some of the older ones presumably had some prior understanding of English.

Linkages continued into second and third generations even though younger people were not always aware of the reason why the families maintained social contact. The cluster of residents at the Fifteen Mile Creek near Toowoomba provides interesting insights. This area includes at least a dozen blocks of land occupied by first, second and third generation Dorfprozelten people, the Kunkels, Ganzers, McQuillans, and Zöllers.\(^{49}\) Oral history interviews and newspaper reports of weddings have provided valuable information on life in
this area. They shared the products of their farms, played tennis, visited each other, celebrated family events such as weddings, and no doubt gave the German-speakers a chance to communicate in their original language. 50

The goal of land-ownership was a prime motivator for the Dorfprozelten immigrants, one shared with their fellow immigrants from other countries. Despite the theory that they could not purchase land prior to naturalisation, it is apparent that this was not a practical constraint. David Denholm is clear that there are repeated instances where land purchase came first. 51 The naturalisation papers of Andreas Diflo explicitly state that he wished to be naturalised “having recently purchased land at Drayton”. 52 His referees include William Beit of Westbrook Station for whom he presumably worked on arrival as Beit states that he had known Diflo since his arrival in the colony on 18 September 1855. Similarly George Kunkel purchased land in 1874 yet was not naturalised until 1902. 53 Almost all the Dorfprozelten immigrants achieved their goal of land-ownership and established their own farms. It is interesting to see that they maintained other German traditions on their properties: land purchase documents tell us that they grew grapes and fruit trees on their land just as occurs in yards in Dorfprozelten even today and oral history tells of wine making and traditional pork butchering skills. 54

One of the obvious challenges faced by these Bavarian immigrants was that of language. The concentration of Germans in the Darling Downs area meant that they were able to be closely involved with other German-speakers and German culture despite religious differences. There were German bands in Brisbane and Toowoomba and on the occasion of Governor Bowen’s 1860 visit, there was a German display at Drayton. 55 During their contracted period of employment there were usually other Germans to whom they could speak although for the first time they were working together with Irish, Scots or English immigrants. After their contracts were completed some chose to work in the employ of German businesses, such as Oelker’s brickyards in Toowoomba, making communication easier. Their geographic isolation in the early years precluded the children’s attendance at school but as they moved closer to the towns after the contract period was completed, education became available as schools were opened up. School enrolment registers for the Darling Downs reveal a high representation of German names, including Dorfprozelten descendants.

Despite language difficulties, the Bavarians were not averse to engagement in civic life or immune from involvement in legal issues. George Kunkel and Charles Diflo are among the signatories to an 1863 petition which objected to the appointment of Johann Heussler as the Continental Immigration Agent and nominated Adolphus Hasenkamp in his stead. This petition generated heated debate in the media of the day as well as in local meetings. Although there was an official view that the signatories were simply troublemakers, it seems equally apparent that they must have felt strongly to have pursued the challenge. Perhaps their own negative migration experiences coloured their view that Heussler was not a disinterested party having many business interests dependent on Germany. 56

Tragedy came to many of the Dorfprozelten families even after their arrival in Australia. Some men died young probably from illnesses first accrued in Germany 57 and left their wives with families to support. The widows turned to other German men with whom they could communicate. 58 The high incidence of accidental mortality during early settlement demanded much of the whole family. Young adults and teenaged children were left with the challenge of helping out in a new country. Some were called as witnesses at inquests into the deaths of family members. Michael Zeller was required to testify at the inquest of his step-father,
Christian Schullmeier, who was killed in a dray accident at the brickworks where they both worked.\textsuperscript{59} Similarly Phoebe Difflo testified about the events of her brother’s (Anton) 1861 death by drowning in Ipswich even though she was only seven years old.\textsuperscript{60} Older children acquired responsibility for supervising younger siblings after a mother’s death or while she was busy with the demanding household work. A momentary distraction could end in disaster like the drowning of five year old Patrick McQuillan, son of James McQuillan and his late wife, Annie Schullmeier.\textsuperscript{61} Other Dorfprozelten people were caught up in legal wrangles: George Kunkel was a witness in support of Carl Diflo’s case regarding a large nugget of gold found at the Tooloom goldfields.\textsuperscript{62} Diflo remained in jail for two years because he couldn’t or wouldn’t present the gold nugget to the court.

Their work on the remote properties of Moreton Bay District (later Queensland) exposed them to people vastly different from them and all they had been familiar with previously – the indigenous people of the country who were being pushed back by encroaching European settlement. Joseph Zöller was a witness to a case regarding the theft of money by an Aboriginal man in 1858 and when called before the court was interviewed through an interpreter. He mentions that he “understands English a little” and that he was working with fellow-German, Michael Appel at the Drayton Swamp in January 1858 when the incident occurred.\textsuperscript{63}

Those single men and families who worked on the outstations were at the forefront of this clash as well as experiencing the greatest dislocation from society. In addition to language difficulties and culture they were acclimatising to a different physical, cultural and social environment as well as the British bureaucratic systems.\textsuperscript{64} Meanwhile their homeland was also changing following the influence of the 1848 revolutions and increasing industrialisation. Germany came into existence as a federation of the states in 1871 and the significance of their home states waned almost in parallel with the engagement in their new country.

With the coming of World War I, the survivors of this first generation of Dorfprozelten immigrants, and their wives and children, came under the microscope of the authorities and their loyalty was challenged. Some of them had been naturalised for decades, most had lived in Australia for over sixty years yet they were regarded with suspicion or alienation. The Dorfprozelten group were fortunate in this regard perhaps because their assimilation into the Catholic community may have moderated people’s attitudes to them as they were less likely to be seen as a group set apart by language and customs holding fast to \textit{Deutschtum} or culture.\textsuperscript{65} The fact that George Kaufline was Mayor of Cooma during this period further suggests that German ancestry was not necessarily seen as an indicator of disloyalty.\textsuperscript{66}

German name changes were common during the patriotic hysteria of World War I but among the Dorfprozelten group, any changes which occurred had taken place well before the War and appear to have been a pragmatic response to British incapacities of pronunciation. The changes which took place were generally to English spellings which sounded approximately how their German names should be pronounced: Diflo to Difflo; Hennig to Henny; Käuflein to Kaufline; Wörner to Werner or Warner; Zöller to Zoller/Zeller then Sellars. Others remain completely unchanged: Kunkel, Bilz, Krebs, Kuhn, Neubeck and Nebauer. Where the names are spelt incorrectly it is generally the fault of the original writer or the transcriber. Where the individuals themselves are in control of the spelling it remains correct: wills are a good example of this.
The response of the Dorfprozelten descendants to Australia’s call to arms is varied and appears to have some connection to the inter-marriage of the families. Where the families are German-German there is a lower incidence of enlistment but where the families are German-other the response rate increases. Some families have no representation in the 1st AIF while others have an almost complete enlistment. Families with grandsons fighting in this war include the Diflos, Gunzers, Kaufline (Worlands), Kunkels, and Zellers – 17 identified enlistments and five deaths (James Paterson, Edward and Robert Worland, George and Thomas Zeller). The Chinchilla Zellers have donated photographs of their family to Queensland leaving a memorial of this branch of a Dorfprozelten family. Two Dorfprozelten descendants gave distinguished service with one Military Medal (George Volp) and one Military Cross (Edward John Worland).

The obvious question to ask in conclusion is whether the hopes of the Dorfprozelten immigrants were fulfilled in their new land. Equally obviously this question cannot be answered from their own perspective, since none left diaries to consult. In material terms they succeeded in their goal of land ownership and economic independence. None found themselves dependent on the Benevolent Asylums in their old age. The older immigrants who may have left Bavaria to avoid military conscription for their teenaged sons were also successful in coming to a more peaceful (albeit rather more hazardous!) life, only to find their grandsons leave for battle against their original homeland. Only one family died leaving no descendants – Carl and Louisa Wörner. The others left thriving family trees grafted with marriages into other nationalities and cultures. Their contribution to society and agriculture enriched their new communities and diversified Australia’s otherwise Anglo-Celtic perspective – they were an early and important part of Australia’s multi-cultural heritage.

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I am interested in hearing from any descendants of these Dorfprozelten families.
Names involved with these families include Bilz, Coe, Morse; Diflo, Muhling, Ott, Erbacher; Diflo, Nevison; Gunzer, Ganzer, Volp, Hock, Gollogly, Bodman, O’Sullivan; Hennig, Henny, Courts, Robson, Paf, Middlebrook; Kauflein, Kaufline, Afflick, Agnew, Engelmann, Foran, Goodwin, Lawless, Murrell, O’Keefe, Worland; Krebs, Wistof, Ambrosoli, Miller; Kuhn, Brigden, Rose, Miller; Kunkel, O’Brien, Paterson, Connors, Lee; Zöller, Schulmeier, Brannigan/Branniger, McQuillan, O’Brien.

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<td>ZÖLLER</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEUS</td>
<td>Anna M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boomerang</strong> arr Melbourne 11 May 1855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZÖLLER</td>
<td>Joseph M 44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anna Rosina 39 (nee Neubeck)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oswald 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carl 8</td>
<td><strong>Johann Caesar</strong> arr Moreton Bay 9 February 1856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unknown</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>GÜNZER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KUNKEL</td>
<td>Georg Matthias</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOCK</td>
<td>Hildegaris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GÜNZER</td>
<td>Anna 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GÜNZER</td>
<td>Anton 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grasbrook</strong> arr Moreton Bay 1 June 1861</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DÜMIG</td>
<td>Franz 27</td>
<td>LOHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LÖHR</td>
<td>Anna 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UMSCHEID</td>
<td>Rosina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The population of Dorfprozelten in 1850 was 1084 people, of whom all except one were Roman Catholic. In the twenty years 1840 to 1860, the village’s population increased by only 92 people (births net of deaths). Veh, G. *Dorfprozelten am Main*, Benedict Press, 1995, pp50-51.

Eugen Nebauer and his wife arrived in Sydney on 5 August 1852 on the Reicherstieg. State Records New South Wales (SRNSW), *Persons on Bounty ships to Sydney, Newcastle Moreton Bay, 1848-66*, NSW Archives Kit, CGS 5317, microfilm 2463, 4/4927.

This is evidenced by the notation on the ship’s manifest indicating that one child of a German family was born in Liverpool, and another child was left in Liverpool due to ill health.

The Commodore Perry was launched in the American fall of 1854 in the Boston shipyards and is believed to have sailed to Liverpool in December. http://www.eraoftheclipperships.com/page36.html. The Sydney Morning Herald of 27 April 1855, page 4, also describes it as “one of the largest and finest vessels that has entered this harbour.” The ship’s cargo included 300 tons of coal and 2250 sacks of salt and was captained by Captain G Mundle who also had his family on board. By the time it arrived in Sydney it had 312 passengers in the steerage, ninety-five more than are listed on the Board’s List for the ship.


Public Records Office Victoria. For online access to unassisted immigration lists at the Public Records Office of Victoria, including the Boomerang’s passenger list, refer to: http://proarchives.imagineering.com.au/index_search.asp?searchid=23

The Sydney Morning Herald 28 May 1855, page 4, reports an extract from the Liverpool Journal of January 6, 1855: “The Commodore Perry, a magnificent ship, is lying in the river and will sail on Monday with 750 bounty emigrants for Sydney and Launceston, those for the former port being principally German.” At the time there were 23 vessels on the Australian berth, clearly indicating the extent of movement to Australia in this peak period.

The composition of the non-German immigrants has not been considered in this analysis.

It appears that the passengers from the Commodore Perry who were destined for Moreton Bay were trans-shipped to the schooner, Vanquis (129 tons) which left from Sydney on 11 May with 50 German passengers and arrived in Moreton Bay on 20 May 1855. The Moreton Bay Courier, 2 June 1855, page 2. No statistics have been calculated for the British passengers.

Maria Diflo was the infant daughter of Andreas and Juliana Diflo.

The Age-Melbourne 12 May 1855, page 4, Shipping Intelligence. The Boomerang sailed with 334 passengers in intermediate and steerage. The agents were Mackay, Baines & Co, and the Boomerang was a ship of 1824 tons captained by Captain Brown. Nothing suggests the second group were delayed by illness.

The Age-Melbourne 14 May 1855, page 4.

Extract from the Captain Brown’s log as documented in *The Age-Melbourne* 14 May 1855, page 4.

The Dorfprozelten immigrants are recorded as unassisted passengers on their arrival into Melbourne as the Victorian government had not provided the funds for their voyage. The ages and names of the German passengers are more accurately reported on the unassisted immigration lists for Victoria than in the Yarra Yarra listings and also provide additional detail to that shown in the Board Lists for the Commodore Perry.

SRNSW, *Shipping Master’s Office: Passengers Arriving 1855 – 1922*, NRS1327 Microfilm 401. These passengers are listed among the inward passengers to Port Jackson from Port Philip and although there are differences in ages and spelling of the names, the family composition is recognizable. The excellent “Mariners and Ships in Australian Waters” website at http://mariners.records.nsw.gov.au/shipdate.htm provides online access for those who are unable to access the microfilm. Researchers should also refer to the film when possible to confirm spellings and names as their own familiarity with a name may make it clearer.

The Sarah Ann departed Sydney on 8 June and may have included some of the Commodore Perry’s passengers as well as the Peru’s.

The Moreton Bay Courier, 23 June 1855, page 2.

The Moreton Bay Courier 21 April 1855, page 2 under Domestic Intelligence, Ipswich.

SRNSW. *Persons on Bounty ships to Sydney, Newcastle Moreton Bay, 1848-66*, NSW Archives Kit, CGS 5317, microfilm 2471, reference 4/4953.

Where individuals died on the voyage, their place of origin can not be accurately ascertained but it seems likely that they generally came from the same region as their spouse or parents. These passengers have been documented in this as a query.

The Kopittkes have documented all passengers on this ship from Hamburg, including the single passengers, three of whom came from Dorfprozelten. Two appear to have been sisters of Eugen Nebauer, Rosine and Elizabeth. Kopittke, E and R. *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australia 1855*, Queensland Family History Society Inc, Brisbane, 1998. The Peru did not leave on its outward voyage until early July and it is currently unclear whether the passengers from this ship were forwarded to Moreton Bay via the Vanquis or the Sarah Ann.
It carried a cargo of slate, battens and bricks as well as furniture and commercial products.

The Dorprozelten children who died on the voyage were Clara Kauflein (7), daughter of Joseph and Anna Kauflein and Thomas Neubeck (1), son of Alois and Clara Neubeck.

Their literacy skills were 100% for Dorprozelten passengers over 10 years of age, maximizing the opportunity to stay in contact with those in the homeland.

A search of the Immigration Deposit Journals for NSW and also those extant for Toowoomba did not reveal any formal remittance payments.

Refer to the excellent journal articles by Jenny Paterson in AncesTree, the journal of the Burwood and District Family History Group, for more information about such occasions in relation to other ships. Also her presentation to the 1994 Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry, Brisbane. As some employers of non-German labour specified particular religions eg no Catholics, it is possible that this occurred with the vinedressers also, and that Catholics may have then been directed elsewhere. It must be said, however, that without further research this is only conjecture.

Frederick Castilla who is shown as at Sussex St, Sydney and Botany.

Single immigrants George Kunkel (unidentified ship) and George Günzer (Johann Caesar 1856), and Franz Dümig (Grasbrook 1862) were also employed in the Moreton Bay district.

Moreton Bay Courier, 21 April 1855, page 2.


The global figures were noted at the time of the ship’s arrival but beyond that little comment is made.

The Age-Melbourne, Wednesday 30 May 1855, page 4.

The Mailand Mercury 14 August 1852, page 4. Some years of this newspaper are digitised and the copyright held by the National Library of Australia. Please refer to the following website:


The Mailand Mercury 9 May 1855, p2 and 12 May 1855 supplement p1. Some years of this newspaper are digitised and the copyright held by the National Library of Australia. Please refer to the following website: http://www.nla.gov.au/ferg/issn/14403676.html. Also see The Courier 8 October 1861. German immigrants were sometimes seen as an alternative to Coolie or Chinese labour and subject to cheaper rates because of language shortfalls. However their similar heritage to British people and capacity for hard work was acknowledged. The role of German agents was hotly debated, in particular the fact that emigrants in the 1860s were not advised of their entitlement to land orders.

The Courier, 17 October 1861.

Son Joseph was born in May 1856 but not baptised until December 1857. Daughter Mary was born in April 1858 and baptized by Fr McGinty in May 1858. In both instances the family are listed as living at Westbrook, presumably the station run by William Beit. Ipswich RC Church indexes.


He had tried to learn some German but his efforts were ineffectual. Despite the linguistic handicap he was a tireless worker for his people, encouraging them to purchase land and supporting them in their endeavours. He was later to become Archbishop of the Brisbane diocese.


The North Australian, Ipswich newspaper, 15 November 1859, page 2. Lukas Ullrich from the Boomerang is also listed among the subscribers. Other obvious German names include Adam Fuchs, Ludwig Liebel, Laurence Liebler (?) and Jodocus Jochem (Peru).

The single immigrants had generally been recruited privately in response to advertisements for servants and shepherds. While the primary occupation of these workers was that of shepherd on remote properties, some were recruited as servants. It appears that George Kunkel benefited from his experience of his parents’ inn in Dorfprozelten, and possibly had better English skills, since he was employed as a servant.

Counterbalancing this problem is the fact that the older couples often had teenaged children who married within five years of arriving. Ironically it is one of the couples for whom no further records have been found, John and Rosina Hock, who may have changed their name at some time after arrival. It is now thought they might be John and Clara Hock from Warwick and Toowoomba in Queensland as Clara’s parents on her death are the same as for Rosina.

St Mary’s Catholic Church Ipswich marriage indexes. Louise Wörner was also a witness to this wedding.

Toowoomba Catholic Church records, Toowoomba Diocese and Queensland Births, Deaths and Marriages Indexes. The spellings reflect those in the records. Kate’s father Francis is listed as a farmer even though he was already dead yet her brother lists him as a stonemason. Kate had her mother Catherine Brannigan’s permission to the marriage.
Because he failed to produce the nugget.

Toowoomba Catholic Diocesan Archives for all marriages except George Kunkel and Mary O’Brien.

Queensland State Archives, SRS 5253-1-42 Reference 63/1480.

Those who had worked as stonemasons were typically vulnerable to lung disease.

The remarriages of Catherine (Beutel) Zoller and Hildegardis (Hock) Gunzer have been mentioned already.

Toowoomba and Darling Downs Family History Society. Deaths in Australia, Volume II 1866-1868, Extracted from Darling Downs Gazette 7 July 1866. The work done by this society is invaluable in tracing Darling Downs ancestors and events in their lives.

Queensland State Archives, Inquest JUS/N3, reference 63/1861, microfilm Z2839.

Darling Downs Gazette 3 February 1897 page 2 column 5.

Queensland State Archives, SCT/U1 1859-1860. Because Diflo wouldn’t or couldn’t provide the nugget to the court he was held on contempt of court for two years during which period his son died. The case generated much debate in the newspapers when he remained imprisoned for two years because he failed to produce the nugget. His name is reported as Difflo. Tragically his wife died less than a year later.

Moreton Bay Courier 1 May 1858. People, places and events relating to Drayton District and Darling Downs, 3 January 1852 to 31 December 1859, Hollis, M for Toowoomba and Darling Downs Family History Society, Toowoomba, 2001. The habit of German people communicating in German between themselves is referred to in both this case and the Kunkel-Diflo case above.

Archival records also show that they were particularly prone to arthritic conditions due to living in the open for long periods. They were also subject to vitamin deficiencies due to the limited supplies they received.

Detailed analysis of all Dorfprozelten names among the Commonwealth’s enemy aliens’ files or the regional Police reports would be necessary to ascertain whether any of them were caught up in what was often jealousy about property and possessions.


Australian War Memorial website for biographical details including honours and awards:


Bavarian Conscription in 1855 totalled 13,000 men or one-sixth of the army and they were being called up three or four months earlier than usual. The Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday 1 May 1855.