

## What Georg Bruns Told Wöstendöllen

His great-uncle Johann Heinrich Bruns, a tenant farmer in Hohenbögen, born 28.12.1769, was a capable man. He had everything in order, even the apples. He came down with a winter-day ailment and soon died (though according to the data this may not have been so very early [editorial note: he died at age 60]). That was a big misfortune and disadvantage for the farm and the children.

Then his wife, Maria Margareta Lüers, became addicted to alcohol. Thus the farm was neglected and was brought into debt. The children could not be at school, but had to work at home. The sons finally left the farm, and it seemed the daughter [Elisabeth Bruns] ought to have a rich farmer's son to marry and to make the farm prosperous again. But the sons got all the inheritance from the farm, as well as a few shirts and linen pants.

But then Elizabeth Bruns married a farmer's son, Hermann Henrich Schweinefuss of Westerbakum, who really had money. He took on the surname Bruns. But he had poor economic skills. The cows in the spring were so meager that there were barely enough to keep going. Georg's father [an unnamed brother of Elisabeth Bruns] would often have a servant help out with leading the cows out of the mud and wet pasture.

Both parents died early, and the children were housed with their father's relatives. The inventory of the farm was sold. With these proceeds they paid their debt. Then the farm was leased.

Elizabeth's oldest son, Hermann Heinrich, went to his uncle, who was a pastor in Heinrichswalde in East Prussia. Yet he [Hermann] rarely came to school so that afterwards he could only write his name. After this he served for years as a servant. How pitiful was this way of life is demonstrated by the fact that a farmer had said to him: "Heinrich, here is the bread cupboard, you must cut the bread for yourself." (In previous times it had not been even possible for the farmers to have enough to eat.)

He then married Maria Ana Aka (Kötter Mertens) Oythe. Here they remained for some years. Then they moved to her parents' farm in 1871 near Hohenbögen. The Oythe house was sold and still stands today in Wöstendöllen (Jansen [the family name of the house]).

Hohenbögen, in the beginning, was difficult. But in the hard school of life, what Heinrich Bruns had become was a man who learned how to work his way up. First he herded cows. He had brought four good cows with him. Then he bought a young horse, bred it and then soon had two horses. So things went slowly but surely upwards.

In the region there were such large birch trees standing at the entry to the farm that local landowners wanted to include their own cows. Their house would have been totally disintegrated [that's what it says but I don't know what it means---too many cows too close to the house?]. But after years he had so much money that he could buy more expensive land: "Klaus Meadow" (estimated to cost 100 ducats), the "Spiekermann's parcel" in the ash forest called "Faskenlüers." On the other hand he rejected some land in the heath that would be cheap to buy because he didn't believe in its worth.