

## A TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER IN UEFFELN MARCH 21, 1591

by Erich von Fange

This is not a pretty story. Some of our ancestors were caught in a bizarre chain of events, costing many lives, a massacre that is still a constant troubled memory in Ueffeln, more than 400 years later. We thank our Dutch cousin, Peter, for helping us dig out the story from the book on the history of Ueffeln, where the full story is found. The event is called the Blutbad (Blood-

bath) in Ueffeln today. The map shows the places involved in this story, and also includes the location of the terrible battle of the three Roman legions at the time of Caesar Augustus defeated by our German ancestors led by the great hero, Herman (Arminius) in 9 A.D.

One of the keys to this event was the old medieval town of Lingen, 25 miles west and a bit north of Ueffeln. About the time of Martin Luther's death in 1546, Lingen was sold to the mighty Emperor Charles V. Later his famous son, Philip II of Spain, inherited it but in 1597 passed it on to the House of Orange, the same family that rules Holland today.

About a century later, the town became part of what is now Germany. Holland freed itself from the tyranny of Spanish rule in 1579, but Lingen, just east of the Dutch border, with its formidable castle fortress, served as a base for Spanish guerrilla raids for decades after this time. Time after time Spanish soldiers travelled all through the Osnabruck region, which included Ueffeln. Osnabruck at this time had neither the soldiers nor the wealth to fight or bribe the gangs to stay away from the

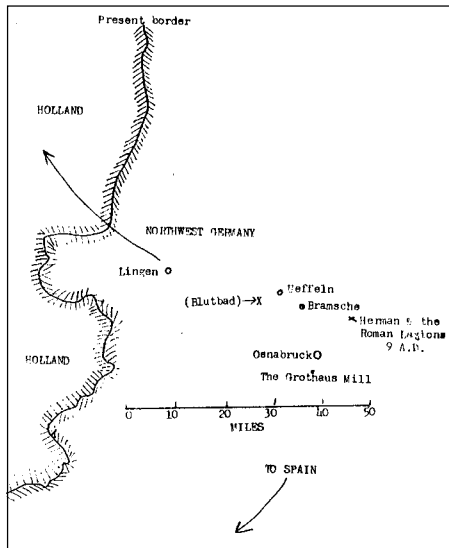
region. In this lawless time, roving gangs of Dutch soldiers and Germans also plundered the weak. No one was safe, and these robber gangs went from village to village to attack the huts of every peasant.

Very near to Ueffeln is a thick-walled 'safe house' where our ancestors, among others then, fled for safety if they could during such raids. The Ueffeln church tower was also a refuge of last resort. Arrows, and later on guns, could be fired from narrow slits inside the safe house and the church tower. One can imagine the fear of our ancestors when they emerged, wondering if the gang had really left the area, or were lying

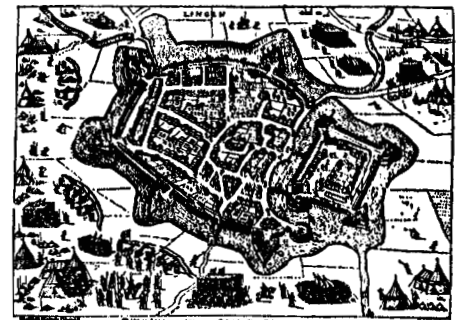
in ambush in the surrounding forest. In this dreadful time, one of the gangs, called Blue-Flag, was led by a German thug named Cord von Grothaus. He was smoldering with hatred because years before the soldiers of Osnabruck had destroyed his father's mill and other property near Bramsche. His revenge against the leaders in Osnabruck was a constant series of raids, plundering, and taking captives.

In October 1590 Grothaus and his 60 mounted Spanish hirelings raided Bramsche and made off with many farm animals and other plunder. Other raids continued and the towns were given the choice of paying huge bribes or facing still more attacks. Filled with lust for plunder and violence, the army of Grothaus grew larger. Desperate messages went out from all the town leaders to assemble and fight the Grothaus' gang. About 800 farmers assembled

(Continued on page 8)



Map showing Ueffeln and the other locations in this story.



### Die Belagerung der Stadt Lingen vor 350 Jahren

Only a small portion of the Lingen fortress exists today. This old medieval town and castle on the river Ems canal is about 40 miles west of Ueffeln. The town and castle were sold to the emperor Charles V who was active during the life of Martin Luther. It then was inherited by his son, Philip II of Spain, during which time the Ueffeln massacre took place. In 1597, Lingen was ceded to the House of Orange, who monarch still rules Holland today. Ownership passed to German rulers in 1702.

## Foster Parents Offer Stability, Love

by Phillip Brownlee

I half-expected chaos when I visited Barry and Deanna Von Fanges' home in north Wichita this week. But I should have known better.

After all, you don't become the Salvation Army's Treatment Foster Parents of the Year for nothing.

The Von Fanges have six children ranging in age from 19 to 4 (the youngest three of whom are adopted). They also care full time for two or three special-needs foster children.

Instead of bedlam, the Von Fange household was relaxed and under control. I was instantly impressed—and became even more so as I learned about their foster-care experiences.

The Von Fanges first became foster parents in 1993, when Deanna worked as a counselor at Greiffenstein Special Education Center. Her principal asked her whether she would consider becoming a foster parent to a student whom officials were considering placing in a mental institution.

"My first reaction was, 'No! Life is easy now. I can sleep in on Saturday,'" she said. "But I didn't want him to go into a mental institution, either."

So Deanna discussed the idea with Barry, who is a Wichita police lieutenant, and with their three daughters. Although the family had some initial concerns, such as protecting the daugh-

ters against abuse, they all reached the same conclusion.

"We decided we had a lot to offer him," Deanna said.

The boy stayed with the family for the next year. Since then, the Von Fanges have had about 60 special-needs children stay in their home, though they have lost track of exact total.

"I wish we would have taken pictures," Deanna said.

Unlike some families, the Von Fanges' birth children don't resent their parents spending so much time caring for other children. But Kristin, their eldest daughter, said they realized growing up that they weren't a normal family.

"As I got older, it was like, 'Gosh, Mom is busy a lot,'" she said.

Both Deanna and Barry said this support from their children has been essential.

"When we were named foster parents of the year, I wished it could be foster family of the year," Deanna said.

Of course the Von Fange household isn't always as peaceful as I witnessed this week. They have four holes in a bedroom wall from one outburst.

But the Von Fanges say that, all in all, they have great success with their foster children because they treat and love them as if they were their own children.

"I don't want us to go out and for people to be able to tell by how they're dressed or how they act which ones are birth and which ones are foster

kids," Deanna said.

They also note that while being a foster parent requires sacrifices, there are many rewards, including:

- Barry has become a more patient police officer through his experience working with troubled children.
- They have the three wonderful children they have adopted.
- Their birth children aren't afraid of people who are different from them.
- Deanna said she is less selfish and more well-rounded.

There is also a joy from helping children who need loving care.

"It's a neat thing to know that you've changed someone's life," Barry said.

Diane Hirschfeld, director of therapeutic foster care for the Salvation Army, said she is impressed with the Von Fanges' unconditional love and their willingness to take the toughest cases.

"It is rare that they every say no to a child," she said.

The Von Fanges are uncomfortable with such praise, or when people call them saints.

"That's hard to take," Deanna said. "We don't look at it like that."

Rather, the family members believe that they are merely using the gifts God gave them, and that others could do the same, if they chose.

"Anybody who has a kid or can raise a kid can be a foster parent," Barry said.

Deanna added: "You just need stability and love."

And at the Von Fange home, both are in abundance.

*Editor's Note:  
Congratulations to Barry and Deanna Von Fange of Wichita, Kansas for this recent honor. We are proud of the example you have set and the blessing you have been to all your children.*

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*Phillip Brownlee, an Eagle editorial writer, writes a personal column for the Op-Ed page on Saturdays. You can reach him at brownlee@wichitaeagle.com or at (316) 268-6262.*

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# The Zuroeveste Letters

Part XVII in a series

This continues an ongoing look at the letters of Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste, a German immigrant arriving in the 1830's, the same time as our ancestor Gerhard Von Dem Fange. The text of these letters is provided courtesy of MaryBeth Glick, Columbus, IN.

Cincinnati, February 21, 1840 (continued)

Dear parents, brothers and sisters:

Little is known here about manuring, although in some places it would probably be good to do so. Recently I read in D. Pardieck's letter that my sister Catharine Maria married last fall. May God grant His blessing. I have not met any coming from your area in Germany, but this year many Germans from other areas have arrived. Times are bad here now for the newcomers. E. Kieskamp, as I have heard, has again moved to New Orleans. He brought a number of letters which came here. I have been looking for news from you for a long time, but have received none. The last letter I received from you in the past summer had already been written in the month of February. So a whole year has passed since I heard from you. But I hope that I will soon receive a letter from you. This letter you will receive without cost, because I am paying for it here. The bearer is Arnhold Schulte of Furstnau. He will remain there for a while, and then return to America, and particularly to Cincinnati. I cannot write to you of items of special interest to you at this time. Please write to me again as soon as possible, concerning all circumstances, how you all are getting along. Many greetings from us to all of you - parents, brother and sister, relatives and friends.

From your obedient son, Johann Heinrich Zur Oeveste

(To be Continued . . .)

## The Topeka Capital-Journal January 05, 2000

Walter Carter VonDemfange Jr., 52, Topeka, died Sunday, Dec. 26, 1999, at a Topeka hospital. Mr. VonDemfange was an engineering associate for the Kansas Department of Transportation. He served in the Army in Korea during the Vietnam War. He was born Jan. 7, 1947, in Kansas City, Mo., the son of Walter Carter VonDemfange Sr. and Alta Viola Nesbitt VonDemfange. He earned a master's degree at the University of Missouri, Rolla. He served in the ROTC at Rolla and was a member of the Pershing Rifle Drill Team. Mr. VonDemfange was a former member of the Smoky Valley Chapter of Engineers in Salina, the National Society of Professional Engineers and the honor society of Phi Kappa Phi. He married Catherine Kestly. She preceded him in death. He later married Helen Suter on March 19, 1988, in Salina. She survives. Other survivors include a son, Donald VonDemfange, Hartford; and two sisters, Betty Steely, Kansas City, Mo., and Patricia Clark, Washington, D.C.

Cremation is planned. Graveside services with military honors conducted by Post No. 379 of the American Legion of Cawker City will be at 1 p.m. Thursday at Prairie Grove Cemetery in Cawker City. Memorial services will be at 3 p.m. Friday at Newcomer Family Funeral Home.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 1315 S.W. Arrowhead Road, Topeka, 66604, or to the American Diabetes Association, 3210 E. Douglas, Wichita, 67208, or to the charity of the donor's choice.

## Where Are These People?

Please help us find the following people - we need 39 new addresses out of the 382 we send the Newsletter. Also, check the web site for the latest addresses needed:

Joni Abell;	Angela Kroells;
Jason Audemberge;	Walter Kruckenber;
Olga Behrman;	Victoria Lesh;
Jon Bell;	Jessica Mehl;
Carry, Corbin Cain;	Barbara Meyer;
Clara Claycamp;	Mary Nunn;
Curtis Crawford;	Kim, Steve Obermueller;
Kelley, Monte, &	Betty Starks;
Tammy Eckelman;	Jerrell Thetford;
Rachel Ellis;	Dennis, Gregorie
Lisa Ellwein;	Troeger;
Evelyn Fellwock;	Dana, Kevin Vogt;
Esther Fleetwood;	Alvin, Carl, Catherine,
Jeff Herbert;	Gary, Howard, Paticia,
Marilyn Hinson;	Von Fange;
Ila King;	Beth Wever.

## Die Familie Von Dem Fange

The VON FANGE Genealogical Newsletter

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## 1975 INTERVIEW WITH ALVIN AND EMMA VON FANGE (Part III)

**Question:** What were the liaisons?

**Emma:** Well, they usually had debates.

**Sylvia:** Local people?

**Emma:** Yes, local people. They'd choose up sides and then have debates. It got just real hot sometimes.

**Sylvia:** About when did this take place?

**Emma:** Oh, about 1914, 1915, along there in those years. Of course, it was usually the school marm, as they called her, she usually sort of organized it, but then it was usually the district that would come together and have each month, or whenever this was designated to come off, why they'd have certain ones who would have the program, be on the program.

**Sylvia:** (Asks a question)

**Emma:** Yes, they also had recitations. They were good, too. The teacher usually would have a box supper and the children usually would recite then.

**Sylvia:** Do you remember how much a box sold for at a box supper?

**Emma:** It all depends on who the girl was. (laughs) Oh, sometimes they'd go as high as \$5 but that would be— She would be unusually popular! (laughs some more) Sometimes they'd bid \$5 and they'd be disappointed—it wouldn't be the right girl — so they'd sometimes buy as many as three boxes to get the right girl. (all laugh) That was on these box suppers. Talking about box suppers, when we had our first



*This picture of Grandpa & Grandma Von Fange and their dog Coco was taken in front of their little smokehouse on the farm in 1981 by Brenda, their 16 year old granddaughter. She had them make this special pose so she could enter it in the 4-H Club Photography Division at that year's Tri Rivers Fair & Rodeo in Salina, Kansas, where it won a blue ribbon!*

child, Orville, no, it was Cecil already — we boarded quite a few of the school marms while the school was still open — and she had a time, it was sort of hard to get auctioneers so Dad here, he had to go down and auctioneer. It wasn't long then — I had to stay home here, of course, and then Cecil came along—.

**Sylvia:** Was he born then?

**Emma:** No, but it was getting pretty close. That happened, too. That's just remembering a box supper. So, those were the times. The box suppers really were quite something.

Of course, after awhile they sort of played out and, after World War I, it seems they sort of — well, really, the schools sort of started to thin out — the country schools. There weren't quite so many children in the districts any more, that made it — a lot of the time, they'd only have 5 and 6 — and then they disbanded it.

**Sylvia:** Do you remember any old sayings?

**Leonard:** Du beisten dina fagel! (laughs)

**Emma:** Well, when we'd go out

hunting or something, my mother would always say, "If you want to be sure and catch something, be sure and take the salt shaker along and throw salt on the bird's tail." That was one. Oh, they had quite a few.

**Sylvia:** Do you remember any verses or anything?

**Emma:** Well, I've forgotten them, I suppose. They'd come back to me if I —

**Sylvia:** Why don't we let you think about it for awhile.

**Alvin:** Well, I don't know if I really know much about that. All I know is my folks came to Kansas in 1888. There was a land deal made beforehand. There was a land agent that lived up here about a mile west and a half mile north. So he got in contact with the fellow that lived on this place. His name was Lyons and he wanted to leave this country. So he got my father and got to talking with him back and forth. They had to write letters, you know. And, they finally got together that they traded sight unseen.

**Sylvia:** And your father was coming from where?

**Alvin:** Indiana.

**Sylvia:** And where did he come from originally?

**Alvin:** He was born in Indiana. His forefather, he came from Germany and they settled, I'm not sure if it was the same place where they were, but anyway his father came to Indiana then and that is where all the Von Fange boys were born. My mother was born there, too. They lived in a community called White Creek, Indiana, but there is no town down there nowadays. A lot of them looked for a town there but it was just a community. Jonesville was really the place where they lived. Anyway, the farming was so bad there, they couldn't make anything.

There was a lot of deer and wild turkeys. I have heard, my father would tell me of turkey hunts that they had there. There was one in particular, when the train came, he was in town, and the engineer, he knew everybody around there, and he told them there was a big flock of turkeys south away from the tracks. There was a snow on, so he went home and got his gun and went down there where they were at, and he kind of shot at them to scatter them. The next morning he went out there to get them. There was another guy that wanted to go along with him to get in on the turkey hunt. So, he said, well, he'd have to be there so and so certain time, otherwise, he was going to go at this certain time. In place of that, he kind of played a trick on him and he went an hour earlier. So, he got there and he got where the turkeys were where he'd run them up and they flew all around. And he had his turkey caller, and, of course, he talked, called to them, and he told me it wasn't long before there was a big ole Tom came and lit right up in the tree above him. There was about two feet of snow he said that they had there. Anyway, he got him and the turkey fell down in the snow and nobody could really see him unless they knew he was there. So, my father went on then to a different spot a little further on and started calling again, and he got another one. And two turkeys is about all they could take of Toms so he went home with the two Toms and that was the end of that. But there were several hunts like that that he had there.

Let's see, where were we here? Oh, yes, we had come to Kansas and they made the trade and I think he's got a tape there that will take care of a lot of it there. Anyway, they moved

here and all they brought with them was a big trunk and, I believe, a table, or something, that they had shipped up by freight, but the farming tools, what they had, they left there and they took over here what this man Lyons had here in Kansas. And it was just a two-room house here. This room and that one there were the only two that were here. And they had a family of 12, well, not yet, but . I was born here in Kansas, by the way, in that corner of that room.

**Sylvia:** Were you the first child? the oldest?

**Alvin:** No.

**Sylvia:** The youngest?

**Alvin:** No, I wasn't the youngest. I had a sister yet, named Frieda, that was the youngest. There was Martha, then a sister Mollie, then I came in line, and then Frieda. The rest were all older and came from White Creek, Indiana. And they came by train. They had a station here in Lincoln and there always was a bus that came there, driven by teams, you know, and when they came there, it was kind of rough weather and there was no bus there or wagon to take them up town, so they had to walk. I had a brother-in-law that had married my older sister. I know he had to carry some of the smaller ones—that would be Minnie or Emma. By the way, Emma lives up here in the home now. She's 94 years old. So, they finally made it up town. They had to stay in town for a couple days before they had a chance to come out here.

**Sylvia:** This would have been what year?

**Alvin:** 1888, that's when it was.

**TO BE CONTINUED...**

## FAMILY PHOTOS



**Curtis Von Fange (passenger seat) and his children (left to right) Christina, Stephanie, Jonathan and Kimberly**  
(courtesy of Christina Von Fange)



**Four generations: Anita Von Fange Mehl, Gary Mehl, Adrienne (Mehl) Aguilar, and Angela**  
(courtesy of Gary Mehl)

## OUR MAILBAG

**Delores Buttenhoff** (G7), Lincoln, KS, mailed 6 more post cards to the Meiers from the early 1900s and a recipe. One post card from Ivah Hubbard shows the main street of Jonesville, IN about 1908; another is a picture of a Mrs. Ella Harris and daughter(?) from Gresham, NE. Thanks again Delores!

**Phyllis Von Fange** (G6/G14), Salina, KS, e-mailed comments and questions regarding the last Newsletter - thanks! She also sent a welcome address correction.

**Jim and Carolyn Schneider** (G8), Huntsville, AL, e-mailed us with an update on Jon Bell and compliments on the last issue. Thanks Jim!

**Doris Von Fange** (G8) gave us an address we needed and informed us of the death of cousin Gary Deiter.

We extend our sympathies to his and all the families who have reported the loss of loved ones in recent months.

**Karen Steely**, descended from the Von dem Fange branch that settled in Kansas City in the 1850s, sent a picture of her ancestor Henry Von Demfange, Sr. and an updated Family Tree for Windows files of her research.

**Helen VonDemfange** wrote us of the death of her husband, Walter. We were so pleased that we got to meet Walter at the last Kansas reunion, where he also met Karen and her mother.

**John Vondemfange**, Canton GA, sent greetings and a request for the Family Handbook.

Another VonDemfange cousin, **John Rucker**, sent for a handbook,

and is interested in exploring his family history.

**Professor Antonius Holtmann, University of Oldeburg, Germany**, sent an e-mail thanking us for the last Newsletter and informed us that his book on the **zur Oeveste** letters is now on the Internet at <http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/nausa/zuroev/000.htm>. We look forward to the English translation coming in a year or two.

**James Simpson** (G7), Seattle, WA, informed us of the death of Eunice Achterberg Simpson in 1997 and of her mother, Martha Wolting Achterberg in 1999. We extend our sympathies to the families. James also gave us family updates and new addresses.

**Harriett and Orville Von Fange**, Overland Park, KS, sent a change of

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## OUR MAILBAG

*(Continued from page 6)*

address for **Paul Von Fange** (G14) (name sounds very familiar!). They enjoy the Newsletters and sent for a Handbook.

**Florence and Al Winter** (G13), Wichita, KS, whose mother was Martha Von Fange Meyer, sent an e-mail address update, thanks for the work on the Newsletter and some of his family history. They also sent an article from the Wichita Eagle on Barry and Deanna Von Fange (see reprint elsewhere in this issue) and an address change. Thanks, Florence!

**Doris Hackman** (G32), Seymour, IN, sent a change of address - we sure do appreciate those!

**Kirk Bassett** (G26), Belvedere, CA, provided additional information on his mother, Cordelia, daughter of Louis F. Von Fange.

We were saddened to learn of the death of **Alan Von Fange** (G15), Jonesville IN. We extend our sympathies to the family.

**Mabel and Harold Tormoehlen** (G18), Brownstown, IN, sent a tremendously valuable packet of information from her and husband Harold's research. Harold is a German Research Consultant for the Jackson County Genealogical Society. Information included much on the Nentrups who settled primarily in the Jackson County area (and all of us descended from William and John D. Von Fange are also Nentrups - remember, the Von Fange brothers married two of the Nentrup sisters!), comprehensive articles from the

August 6, 1873 Brownstown, Indiana Banner on the Germans and their culture, maps, obituaries, newspaper articles - great family resources. Thanks so much, Mabel and Harold!

**Jim/Madonna Head** (G15) sent news and pictures, including their new home at Monument CO. Jim is deep into genealogy and we thank him again for his work in finding our Iowa cousins, the Fangers.

**Marjorie (Fanger) Rathman** sent for a family handbook. She is interested in family history and will update us on the Fanger cousins in the near future.

Several months ago we received greetings from our Dutch cousin, **Peter van der Vange**, who was looking forward to receiving our last Newsletter. Greetings, Peter! **Henni van der Vange** sent us information about the origin of the VON FANGE name. Both Henni and Peter visited some of us in America several years ago. Some day we will put together all the information we have in our files on the Von Fange name - some very interesting stuff!

We received the sad news from **Roger Marty** (G28) of the death of his mother, **Dalice Marty**, in Gurley NE.

**Darla Obermueller Lotz** (G15), Hamilton, MT, sent a change of address - thanks!

**Dorothy Von Fange Werner** (G9) sent family data we had not seen before, and we thank her for many such helps over the years.

**Robert Welmer** wrote us seeking

information on his Welmer (G19) family history, which we were glad to do.

**Mary Von Demfange Scholz**, Fremont, CA, sent a change of email address and a long-missing mailing address.

**Marilyn and Royce Crawford (G20)**, Salina, KS, sent a nice note and a contribution. "...Always enjoy reading [the Newsletter].... [I] purchased your Von Fange Genealogical Handbook. It has been very helpful and fun to read. I did not know anything about my grandmother's family so this has been great."

**Don Pfortmiller** (G12), Wichita, KS, sent an address correction for Hugo and Delores Pfortmiller. Thanks Don.

We are looking forward to hearing from **Rüdiger von dem Fange**, Doebeln, Germany, on more of his research on the early history of the von dem Fanges. He is exploring place names that may have a connection with our family name, and he is the proud owner of the mysterious von dem Fange ring.

We had greetings from **Kathy (Von Fange) Fruehwirth** (G9) in Maryland with news of her family.

**Arleen Hieber** (G9) is busily tracking down data on her branch of the family. We are delighted that so many von dem Fange "cousins" are hooked on genealogy. It's exciting and never-ending too.

**Ted Von Fange** (G9) requested a family Handbook and also reported on a new great-grandchild and other family news.

## A TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER IN UEFFELN MARCH 21, 1591

(Continued from page 1)

in a field near Ueffeln on 21 March 1591. Untrained and armed with little more than farm tools, they were no match for Grothaus and his mounted Spanish gang. More than 300 farmers were killed and



An old engraving of the massacre at Ueffeln. We assume some of the victims were von dem Fange members.

now lie buried in the field, called Totenkuhle, near Ueffeln. We believe members of the Von Dem Fange family were among the victims of this terrible event. The leaders of Osnabruck begged for mercy and an end to such slaughters and

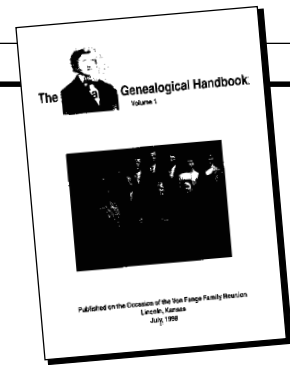
sent special representatives to Cord Grothaus to secure terms for peace. It seems horrible to us today to learn that Cord Grothaus agreed to stop his raids in that region upon payment of 4150 German Talers (from which we get our word 'dollar') for the damage done to his father's mill, about 14 Talers for each murdered farmer. From that day Cord Grothaus no longer raided the Ueffeln area, but his gang kept on plundering elsewhere. We are all survivors of survivors of this and other terrible times of the past.

### Contributions Support the Newsletter...*Thanks!*

If you feel you can help support a future issue, please send your check of any amount **made out to Paul von Fange** (NOT to the VF Newsletter!!) to the address below.

The following family members contributed to this and future issues:

David Nichols	Betty & John Von Demfange
Marilyn & Royce Crawford	Marjorie & Gary Rathman
Ted von Fange	Harriett & Orville Von Fange
Doris Von Fange	Harold & Mabel Tormoehlen
	James Simpson



## VON FANGE GENEALOGICAL HAND-BOOK

Get your copy of the 155-page **VON FANGE GENEALOGICAL HAND-BOOK** mailed to you postage paid with every donation to the VF Newsletter of \$20 or more! **Make your checks payable to Paul von Fange and send requests and payment to 'Erich von Fange, 808 Savannah River Drive, Adrian, MI 49221'.** This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! These handbooks were printed only for the reunion - so order now! **Only 39 left!**

The VON FANGE Genealogical Newsletter

Look what's inside...

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**EIGHT FULL PAGES!**