

# The Fraktur

VOL. X, NR. 7

July 1997

(HANNOVERSCH) MUENDEN

## and the Weser Song

It was a wonderful idea, to honor the city and two of its musicians. And there was a chance to show an idyllic scene of river, mountains, a lad playing his guitar and musical bars and words to a song describing it. Also, there was the opportunity to depict the persons responsible for the song.

So the city fathers of Hannoversch Muenden had a 125 Pfennig piece of Notgeld issued, about the time your editor was born. "That ain't old," as we say.

There are some persons in the world who have a sense of curiosity, who want to dig deeper, question, make a nuisance of themselves. They make good newspaper reporters. And they make good Notgeld researchers.

Our good friend in Bonn, Wilhelm Eglseer, overlooking the Rhein and for-the-time-being part of the dual capital system of government of Germany, sent the note to a friend in the South Pacific. The recipient asked, "who were the guys depicted on the note?"

Therein lies the question to be answered and the plot thickens.

Who, indeed, were G. Pressel and Von Dingelstedt  
composer and writer, respectively?

[illegible]

50 PFENNIG  
JULY 1, 1921  
L-559

HANNOVERSCH MUENDEN  
Where the Werra and Fulda  
kiss  
They pay for it by giving  
up their names  
And here through this kiss  
The Weser River is German  
to the sea.





Depicted on the 125-Pfennig note of Hannoversch Muenden are Gustav Pressel, left, composer of the music, and Franz Ferdinand von Dingelstedt, the poet. L-560

Well, one can turn to an encyclopedia or biographical dictionary and find Franz Ferdinand von Dingelstedt, the writer of the words, but not composer Pressel.

What to do? What about looking in Hannoversch Muenden? But there is no such name in the German Zipcode book today. You must call Muenden, a shorter name for the same place.

Let's start with the city. A letter was written to the Municipality of the town, Department of Public Relations, by researcher Eglseer.

The reply came from the Department of Tourism, a handful of leaflets describing the wonders of the city.

Of interest to Eglseer was a description of the "Weserlied-Anlage," a park with a stone marker and a bronze plaque telling of Dingelstedt and Pressel; no mention birthdates, dates of death or professions.

So a telephone call is placed to the Department of Tourism. The lady replied, "That is all we know."

Eglseer queried, "You put them on town money about 1921, honor them with a park and a bronze plaque and know nothing of them?"

More success was achieved with a letter to the town's archives. He received more information than he needed but at a cost - 20 Deutschemark fee for the information plus a Mark for postage.

So we learn that Gustav Pressel was born in Tuebingen on June 11, 1827, died in Berlin on July 30, 1890. He was the son of a Protestant minister, "Dekan," in Tuebingen and became a student of theology, then a "vicar."

After 1851 he devoted full time to music and traveled to Prague, Vienna and Budapest and visited Verdi in Italy.

He composed several operettas and set music to many poems, including the "Weserlied," yet popular, the song of the undated 125 Pfennig Notgeld note.

Other communities along the Weser consider their town the birthplace of the song, particularly Rinteln, a Notgeld-issuing town. Antagonism arose between the towns when the Weser park in Hannoversch Muenden was dedicated to the writer and composer of the song. Pressel is the fellow seldom found in biographical references today.



The words to the song, a poem, were composed by Franz von Dingelstedt, born in Halsdorf, near Cassel, on June 30, 1814; he died in Vienna on May 15, 1881.

As did Pressel, he studied theology, plus philology, and was a teacher from 1836 to 1841. He became a critical journalist, expounding ideas not always in line with government policy, resulting in his departure "for health reasons" to England and France.

From 1843 to 1850, he was the royal librarian at Wuerttemberg.

He found a more salubrious climate in the field of the theater, and assumed a career as actor, then manager of opera houses in Weimar, Vienna and other cities. In Munich his efforts brought him recognition from the nobility by King Ludwig II of Bavaria, hence the "von" in his name.

The king was also a friend and sponsor of Richard Wagner, a contemporary of Dingelstedt, but Wagner never achieved recognition of nobility.

Later Dingelstedt was named director of the famous Imperial Court's theater and the Imperial Court's Opera House in Vienna.

Hannoversch-Muenden is known to American history buffs and Notgeld collectors for several other reasons.

Soldiers of the Duke of Hessel-Cassel hiked the 15 miles from Cassel to H-M to be transported by river boat to Bremen, where ocean going vessels transported them to America to fight the American Revolutionary forces, in the hire of King George III of England.

Silver in payment for the soldiers sent to the Duke of Hessen-Cassel by the Duke of Brunswick-Lueneburg (George III) was minted into the famous Blood Taler, as the Americans call it; the Stern (star) taler or Bluttaler (blood) taler to the Germans, Davenport 2303.

Eglseer points out the talers were in payment for the soldiers; the soldiers were paid in miscellaneous small change such as fractions of Spanish-denominated coins.

On another Notgeld bent, it is Hannoversch-Muenden which is responsible for the 2-Mark Notgeld piece depicting Dr. Eisenbarth extracting a tooth from a patient, L-560. To support the kind doctor, we have a reader, medical doctor, who will say that Dr. Eisenbarth was in reality a forward-thinking practitioner for his day.

#### THANK YOU

The Rusne, Lithuania (Russ, Ostpreussen) feature on the next page was graciously contributed by Frank Passic, 900 South Eaton St., Albion, Mich. 49224.

Passic is founder of the Lithuanian Numismatic Association and editor of the newsletter, "The Knight." He is a curator of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, 6500 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, Ill., and a part of the Lithuanian American Genealogy Society of the Balzekas Museum.



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