

August 2013

## **Introduction by Paul Stahlschmidt**

For those of you that don't know I have been researching Stahlschmidt's in the St. Louis area since the mid 1990's.

Early in the journey I met up with a cousin I never knew that lives in California via "snail mail" who was doing the same thing. Over a 10 years period we discovered that all the Stahlschmidt's in the St Louis area could be linked to either Anthony or Adam Stahlschmidt. We suspected that they were probably related but none of their decendants had information that would prove our suspicion.

We knew that information to find their relationship would be in Catholic church records in Germany. But, which church and in what town? We had no clues. Several letters/notes were written and many internet searches were done. In 2004 I found Anne Schulte-Lefebvre's research of Stahlschmidt's on the internet. Anne lives in Zurich, Switzerland. I sent her an e-mail. She responded that her research was on the Protestant side of the family. She thought that someday we might be able to connect the Catholics and protestants together and encouraged me not to give up and keep trying.

On New Years day of 2012 I noticed on the Stahlschmidt's Facebook groups page that Anne was a member so I sent her a New Years greeting and told her that I still had not found a church. She quickly responded and said she thought our family may have emigrated from Warstein and she had someone that might help and she would have him contact me. He responded within a day from Anne's note. His name was Heinz Sprenger who lives in Munich, Germany. Heinz said he would help and the church we needed to look at was probably the St. Pankratius parish. Heinz could not get the church books there in Germany easily but we could get them here in the USA thru the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon). We put together a four member team consisting of Lorayne Mitchell, Anne Schulte-Lefebvre, Heinz and myself. The plan was that Lorayne and I would get the church books (on microfilm), make digital images, send to Heinz via the internet for translation and Anne would act as controller. This was a very big job as in the past year and a half we have sent over 3500 pages to Heinz for translation/interpretation, etc.

Along the way we discovered that Anton (Anthony) Stahlschmidt was a member of the Giessen Emigration Society (<http://mo-germans.com/>) that came to the USA in 1834 aboard the Ship Olbers and Ship Medora. We learned that Dorris Keeven-Franke of the St. Charles County Historical Society was working with the Sommer-Republik ([http://www.sommer-republik.de/index\\_english.html](http://www.sommer-republik.de/index_english.html)) in Germany to create a documentary of the Giessen emigration to the USA. I met with Dorris in June of 2013 and told her of our project and she asked to be a 5th wheel so now we have 5 members in our group.