

**Social History Sources  
For  
The History of the Town of Geradstetten  
From the Proceedings of the Church Court  
1707-1847**

**Sozialgeschichtliche Quellen  
zur  
Geschichte der Gemeinde Geradstetten  
aus den Kirchenkonventsprotokollen  
1707-1847**

**By**

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## Translators' Preface

*Kirchenkonventsprotokolle* are the proceedings of local church courts or councils that for two hundred years after the Thirty Years' War kept the law and order, and maintained civil and church rules and customs in the Duchy of Württemberg in southwestern Germany. The social history provided by these proceedings is nicely put into context in the foreword below.

These records were contemporaneous, informal, and handwritten with no view, we imagine, of publication some three hundred years later. A busy pastor who recorded the proceedings was more concerned, we believe, in keeping the local peace than in leaving for prosperity a sweetened gloss of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century village life. The citizen-mayor and the town council that presided as judges at the hearings, simple men who farmed and made wine for their livelihood, were more concerned with getting home at night after a hard day in the fields than with the niceties of due process. Thus the record may seem blunt and austere at times, with tales of penury, petty crime, wayward youth, illegitimacy, and marital spats, but there are transcendent moments here, sad, hilarious, and tragic all at once, yet of a soaring universality that reaches out to us across the centuries.

Hans Rilling has done a marvelous job of researching these old records, and transcribing the most interesting parts of them, from the original manuscripts. His work includes many facsimiles of the yellowed pages that indicate the skill needed to penetrate the old German cursive. He generally remains true to the original text, leaving archaic spelling intact, along with long sentences that are notably innocent of punctuation rules that we can fathom, a rich dose of Swabian dialect, and a liberal sprinkling of the Latin in which these pastors, despite the Reformation, were trained. Dates are often defined in reference to church holidays. Currency needs constantly to be referenced in the context of fines to the Duke or the church treasury that the courts could impose; the two money systems of the times are described in Herr Rilling's appendix. We cannot hope to fully translate all the linguistic richness or the amusing vagaries of the German text, but attempt to give a hint as best we can by keeping intact the Latin references, the rambling sentence structure, and the flowery baroque references to the upper authorities in Schorndorf or Stuttgart.

Again, we are grateful to Hans Rilling for recognizing the importance of these materials as a primary source of social history. On a more personal note, let us reveal that among the *dramatis personae* of these proceedings are many of our ancestors. We note these with an asterisk. This work of Hans Rilling was originally brought to our attention by our cousin Karl Siegle, who read us some excerpts one October evening in the year 2000, in particular the 1769 marital disagreement of Wendel Mack and his wife Margaretha, born Seibold. (See page 24.) What a pleasure it is now to learn, after our genealogical research, that the spunky Mararetha and our parents, Christian as well as Berta Palmer, share a common ancestor, Leonhard Knauss, 1647-1713. Indeed, out of the rocky beginning of this union came their son Johann Friedrich, who married Margarethe Mayer, the sister of our (great)<sup>3</sup> grandmother.

## Foreword

After his 1991 book, "Built on Solid Ground: 500 Years of the *Konradskirche* of Geradstetten," Hans Rilling brings us the following work out of the parish and town of Geradstetten. Inspiration for this new historical work was the anniversary of the establishment of a separate and independent church in Geradstetten on 13 December 1496, exactly 500 years ago.

The book includes representative selections of the proceedings of the *Kirchenkonvent* [church court or council] of Geradstetten from the years 1730-1847. Similar church court proceedings existed in practically every old Württemberg parish. Having remained untouched for many decades, these records provide a kind of Sleeping Beauty insight into the life of those times. History concerns itself with the great political issues of the day and, compared to these, the daily struggles that can be found in these proceedings might seem banal and ordinary: tales of illegitimate children, marital discord, superstitions, and evidence of deep and painful poverty. Only since the emergence of the social histories of the last decades have we been awakened to the treasure that lies in the records. Most likely, there is no other place in Europe where the social life of the entire population is so completely recorded, without gaps, as in Württemberg, for a period of more than two hundred years after the establishment of the courts in 1644. Although some losses of the record have resulted in a few holes - even in Geradstetten the Church court proceeding from between the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were lost and thus only start with 1730 - nevertheless the existing record is impressively thick. The 500-year history of the Konrad Church in Geradstetten, together with these church court proceedings, draws a fascinating, intimate picture.

How important these church court proceedings are as a source of social history will become evident when we imagine what our descendants, in several hundred years, will know of our life today: Now, most records are dateless and anonymous or eventually eradicated. In today's climate of individual rights it would be impossible to reveal personal and intimate details in the way they are recorded in the church court proceedings and to maintain those records. Even though the protection of the individual is desirable and understandable from the modern perspective, we need to recognize that our descendants will be unable to understand, from current records, what the toils and tribulations of our daily life were in a concrete way, with names and families included in the history.

By contrast, we understand quite well how life proceeded for the inhabitants and the families of the small town of Geradstetten between the years 1730 and 1847. The excerpts provided by Hans Rilling provide deep insight into the realities of life in the pre-industrial communities of Württemberg. One thing is of particular importance for the reader: In these excerpts, the past speaks to us directly. These impressions are far more first-hand than those presented by textbooks that report of these conditions. You will not find "the good old days" in Hans Rilling's book. In fact "the good old days" have never existed for the experts, the historians who know of the real conditions. The increase of understanding of these conditions in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>

centuries among the experts and amateurs alike is one of the most important consequences of these series of historical sources. It is our wish that this volume of a series of Geradstetten historical sources finds many readers and is sold out as quickly as the previous volume.

Backnang, May 1996  
Gerhard Fritz

## **The Community of Geradstetten in the 18<sup>th</sup> and Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

Geradstetten, which lies of the north side of the Rems River, is an old wine-growing town that is mentioned in the historical record as early as 1291. The greatest part of the town belonged already at that time to the Duchy of Württemberg, and the rest belonged to the Lords of Zillhardt of Dürnau until the end of the Middle Ages. The Zillhardt's sold their portion to the House of Württemberg in 1687. The church has been an independent parish since 1497 when the Bishop of Constance approved the dissolution of ties with the Winterbach mother church. As in other areas of Württemberg, the Reformation was established in Geradstetten in 1536, as determined by its patron, the Duke of Württemberg.

The boundaries of Geradsetten include an area of about 6.5 square kilometers on both sides of the Rems. It extends from the heights of the Schurwald on the south up to the heights of Buoch on to the north. Included in the town boundaries are three hamlets: Bauersberg, Kernershof, and Rollhof. Since the time of these proceedings they were designated by these names, but in earlier times they were generally referred to by the names of their owners. In the chaos of the Thirty Years' War they were totally destroyed, and only since 1700 were they once again occupied. They are mentioned often in the following records since those who inhabited them were not always the most law-abiding types.

After the Thirty Years' War the population rose steadily.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Inhabitants</b>
1630	565
1655	220
1712	576
1730	727
1775	987
1807	1377
1850	1877

The most important source of income was growing grapes for wine. Among the 1377 inhabitants of 1807, 211 were vineyarders and 68 were craftsmen, many of whom also worked in the vineyards on the side. The flood plane of the Rems, because of frequent flooding, was mostly managed as green space. In good years, the growing of grapes for wine provided for a certain level of comfort. Industrialization only became noticeable near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Of the town pastors, who simultaneously served as chairman of the church court and often ran the proceedings, Pastor Stöltzel (1726-1756) and Pastor Beringer (1781-1810) are most noteworthy. Both spent almost three decades in Geradstetten and earned the respect and admiration of its inhabitants.

During the years recorded in this book, the position of mayor was constantly in the hands of one family! The records of inspection visits by higher authorities indicate that the six Lederer\* mayors who followed each other were clever and highly respected office holders. Mayor David Friedrich Lederer\* (1812-1847) in particular made himself invaluable to the community with his many projects, such as improving the condition of the woods, building a schoolhouse, construction of the bridge, as well as the lifting of several old feudal restrictions.

# The Proceedings of the Church Court of the Town of Geradstetten

## The History of the Church Courts

The church courts were the arbiters of church customs and rules in old Württemberg. They were given the task, after the devastation of the Thirty Years' War and the subsequent loss of law and order, to restore order to the land. They were established in 1644 on the recommendation of Valentin Andreae, Chancellor of Tübingen, who had observed a similar church-run system in Geneva during his long stay in that city. One has to concede that the church courts had achieved their goal in only a few decades, since already by the 1700's, Württemberg was again an orderly, Christian community of high repute.

In the course of time, the darker side of this legal system came to the fore. Since it depended in part on neighbor watching neighbor, the citizens became involved in denouncing each other. This was encouraged by the reward of part of the penance money to the person who brought the accusation of wrongdoing. And often, in its eagerness, the church court did too much good. Taken as a whole, the church courts and their "*Stundenleuten*" [sitting members] had a deep influence on the life of the town. These records of actions by the church court give us today a deep understanding of the social life and thought of the town during these times.

The church court's influence waned during the 1800's. This came about because of the economic and social changes after the beginning of the industrial revolution. As we can see from the record, the church actions shrank to include mostly issues dealing with schools and the care of the poor and the sick. By the 1870's supervision of the schools [formerly the responsibility of the church] was transferred to the newly established town school board. In 1887 the community of the town (municipality) and the community of the church (congregation) were separated by law. Church affairs were thus handled by a church council, which took over the remaining duties of the church court. The records of the church court were ended in 1892.

## The Records of the Church Court in Geradstetten

The transaction records of the church court in Geradstetten exist back to 1707. In the archives of the church, seven volumes, 34x22 cm, some completely bound in leather, some bound in leather along the spine, can be found under Inventory #7 and #9. The pages are not necessarily consecutively numbered since some pastors started their records with newly numbered pages. The pages are written in a single column, records of interrogations in two columns.

Later, Pastor Drehmann (probably around 1890) made annotations in the margins labeling the theme of individual negotiations. The books are in relatively good condition, the corners somewhat frayed (mice-eaten?), but the legibility is often poor because of faded ink.



The Court consists of the following named persons:

- Pfarrer, bzw. Vikar*: pastor or, when available, vicar, as chairman
- Schultheiss*: mayor representing civil authority
- Heiligenpfleger*: treasurer in charge of the church funds
- Richter* [Judges]: members of the town council

The themes of business conducted by the church courts were many and included almost all aspects of life during those times:

- Social: care for the poor, donations, marital problems, beggars, midwives, and "*geschworene Weiber*" [midwife assistants]
- School: building, truancy, selection of the schoolmaster
- Church: visits by church officials, Sunday observance as a holy day, place in pews, magic and witches
- Order: insults, bad gossip, drunkenness, smaller offenses, beatings

The court met, according to need, 6-7 times a year and was generally led by the pastor. On the occasion of official visits, the church dean supervised the actions of the court. At each meeting, up to six items of business were handled. Generally, they were divided among the main themes:

- 20% school and town business
- 50% general order
- 18% offenses of custom and morality
- 12% other

The minutes of actions taken were continuous and began, for example,

Actions of 27 June 1776, presided by M. Fischer  
and ended with the statement:

Concluded by, or business conducted by, followed by the signature of participants

A majority of the business handled by the church court dealt with marital strife, the behavior of young couples, illegitimate births (discretely designated as "*Nächtlicher Zuwandel*" by Pastor Drehmann). The details recorded here about marriage difficulties are very revealing. Much is specific to the times and hard to understand without knowing the context.

The church council was not stingy with imposing penalties. Violations against the order were fined twice: once for the "*Herrschaftlichen Strafe*", fines that went directly to the civil authorities, and then with a penance sum that went to the church treasury. The size of the first was determined by the severity of the offense, either a large violation or a small one. Women were charged with a smaller "women's violation." If one could not pay, one spent several hours or several days in the "*Zuchthäussle*," the small jail in the courthouse. Those who were incorrigible were struck with a rod.

Disbursements for church construction, school, and care of the poor came from the church treasury. Nowhere do you find disagreements with the penalties imposed, monetary fines were debts of honor, and those sentenced were always eager to have their good name restored.

The following excerpts are sorted according to topic. This sorting was not always obvious since the subjects often touched on several areas of life in the community. Themes chosen were those that would give us a particularly good look at life in those times. Within each thematic grouping, the excerpts are arranged chronologically.

The text of the excerpts is generally maintained in the original language, only punctuation and spelling were changed when it was deemed necessary. Inserts by the author are placed in brackets. The author hopes, in this way, to make the text more intelligible to the modern reader. [Translators' note: We have not attempted to convey archaic language, spelling, or regional dialect.]

“Church council proceedings are a pleasure to read today,” claims Bischoff-Luithlen. One can only agree with this claim from the archivist with some reservations. Certainly, they are often hard to read, the handwriting and the ink were not always of the best. Of course, sometimes the images bring forth a chuckle. But often we read reports of man's destiny, of poverty and helplessness, which today give us pause.

## Poverty of the Farming Inhabitants

The topics of poverty and begging are dealt with throughout the church court proceedings. Early on, the words of Pastor Johann Georg Keppelmann describe for us the great poverty of the inhabitants of the Remstal after the 30 Years' War: *...because of the great overflow of beggars, and the increasing poverty, which was so great that almost half the population were themselves forced to beg.*

Most of the inhabitants again soon achieved a certain level of comfort. The population also increased rapidly during the first decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, there was a sharp splintering of the properties in the Duchy of Württemberg. Thus families had to derive their livelihood from ever-smaller parcels of farmland and vineyards. Many younger sons had to pursue occupations other than farming to survive. Or they decided to emigrate. The poorest got jobs as day laborers. To these less well-off inhabitants, including the soldiers just released or escaping from the war, came as well those *who did not want to hurt themselves with work.*

So it is not surprising that the town folk were constantly being expected to come to the aid of the poor citizens and pull them up out of poverty. In particular, during years of poor harvest and increasing cost of living, food had to be distributed to the poor. The cost of this was borne mostly by the well to do, with the remainder made up by the church and the lay government. Nevertheless, genuine need was carefully ascertained, and those who were able to work had to take care of themselves. The proceedings document each case, and the facts presented are often depressing.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century has been described as the Century of Begging (Bischoff-Luithlen, 1979), and the records verify this. They show the constant effort of those in charge to limit begging, even if they could not eliminate it. When, how, and how often the poor individual of the town could beg was carefully determined. Supervision was delegated to the Beggar Supervisor, and the beggars were issued identification buttons (*Blechle*). Child beggars were strictly forbidden. Foreign [out of town] beggars were rigorously expelled. Foreign sick people were put in carts and, as soon as possible, delivered to the next town, since one lived in constant fear of imported epidemics.

Already in earlier times the town supported a poorhouse. We do not know where it was first built, but probably it stood in the Mühlgasse, certainly outside of [the center of town] Etters. In 1723, Obere Hauptstrasse 37 was designated the poorhouse, and it was still in the possession of the town at the beginning of this century [1900]. The proceedings tell us that the old, sick, handicapped, unwed mothers and children, lived there together as a community, isolated from the other inhabitants of the town and avoided by them. Often the bailiff had to see to the order there and also keep peace in the house. Thus poverty not only meant being without the means of support, but also being without political power and social privileges.

*Minutes of A Church Visit 1676*

*(30 years after the war)*

Alms for the poor were solicited by ringing the bell, but the money collected for this entire year was no more than one *Reichsthaler* because of the overflow of beggars, and the mounting poverty, so that half the people in this area are themselves beggars.

*Actum d. 13. Marty 1731*

*Bread Distribution, Begging Days*

All poor who presented themselves for charity in Schorndorf are to share 12 Pf [pounds] bread in the following proportions:

1. Michael Hek, 2. Daniel Hek, 3. Jacob Thoni, 4. Michel Mayerle, 5. Johannes Schwegler [...]  
8. Georg Kurtz, all 1 ¼ Pf.  
Conrad Eisenbraun and Johannes Heim 1 Pf each.

Monday and Saturday are to be the begging days.

*Actum d. 12. Aug. 1736*

*Child Beggars*

Margarethe Linderin, who sent her children to Urbach to beg, is to be jailed for several hours.

*Actum d. 14. May 1751*

*Begging Days*

The interest earned from the school and other grants was distributed to the children and the homeless, partly in books, partly in cash.

The begging days were regulated, and it was determined who was allowed to participate. Hanns Michel Schechterlin\* and Jacob Barchet are allowed to beg with the others on Saturday.

*Actum d. 22. Mart. 1756*

*Distributions to the Poor*

On Penance, Bed, and Fast days, offerings were gathered at the church door and distributed among the poor as follows:

(24 names followed with sums from 4-25 x

Total: 4 fl. 2 x.

*Actum d. 13. Jun. 1757*

*Begging Badges*

All people unable to support themselves should report to the pastor and mayor, and they shall be allowed once or twice a week, to go from house-to-house to ask for alms, the man or the wife,

but not the child, and these people shall wear a tin button indicating they have permission to ask for alms.

*Actum d. 11. Junii 1759*

*Grant Distribution and Begging*

Church court was held this morning, whereby it was agreed that the grant money usually distributed on *Georgii* should be distributed now:

The sum totaled 9 fl. 24 x.  
Those who share in the proceeds are:

Hanns Jerg Bühler	12 x
Johannes Retter, the elder	12 x
Michael Schechterlen's widow	24 x

(24 persons follow with contributions of 9-24 x.)

After receiving the specific amounts, the poor were warned that they were to stop all street begging here and in other towns. Those who could not stop should present themselves to the mayor or members of the town council, so that their needs may be ascertained, and that poor without means should receive relief, but that order be maintained.

*Actum d. 14. Jun. 1763*

*Street Begging*

Jacob Palmer, a citizen of our town, daily begs in the streets, pretending in places where he is not known that he has a lame hand, despite the fact that the hand is sound and healthy. Therefore he is sentenced to 60 hours in jail.

*Actum d. 3. dbr 1764*

*Street Begging*

Nothing happened except that Jacob Palmer, Hanns Jerg Schwegler and Daniel Linderer's wife were firmly warned against begging on the street.

*Actum B.B.L. 3. Sept. 1762*

*Burying a Beggar Lady*

It was decided that Anna Margaretha Eisenbraun, born Heck, a widow, who was brought here by the beggar's cart, and died here at 2 in the morning, should be buried at 7 P.M. in a separate place, but in our churchyard.

*Actum d. 4. Sept. 1765*

*Board Money*

Antonius Majer has boarded Magdalena Hässelin, a poor and wretched daughter of a citizen, and asks for a contribution from the court, whereupon the same way as on *Georgii 1765/66* it was granted, namely 4 fl., half from the township and half from the church.

*Actum d. 22. Junii 1765*

*Alms*

Margaretha, surviving widow of the former schoolmaster George Weber, states her abject poverty and asks for a weekly stipend. In view of her true state of neediness she is awarded 10 Creuzer weekly until further notice, half from the community, and half from the church.

*Actum d. 23. Aprilis 1767*

*Street Begging*

Hanss Jerg Hummel's widow and Heinrich Seibold, carpenter, are given to be the kind of people who allow their children to beg from every passerby traveling on the roadway. They are warned to take note that if this happens again they will be made an example of and severely punished.

*Actum d. 4. Dec. 1767*

*Bread Distribution*

Concerning grants of bread to the local homeless listed below, it was resolved by the town that in order to carry out its intentions, the following poor should receive charity bread in the indicated portions, 2 to 4 pounds, as:

(21 names followed with 1-4 portions of bread indicated)

This is to be started next Sunday and repeated 10 times.

*Actum d. 24. Jan. 1772*

*Begging Days*

In oversight of begging it was decided that Margarethe Hümmler and Anna Maria Heck, who no longer are in such need of begging, should only be allowed to beg once a week.

*Actum d. 8. Mart. 1771*

*Donations*

...Church court was held and the indigence of the following persons was presented for consideration of a princely donation from the Duchy Church Council of the highly commendable Schorndorf administration, and thereupon each was given a certain grade, and this is reported here for compensation from this most commendable administration. The list of poor for which a

donation is respectfully requested are the needy:

1. Michael Sigle, aged 51 years, married, destitute.
2. Hanns Jerg Eisenbraun, aged 76, married, who because of limited means cannot support his many children.
4. Michael Gutbrot, a very poor and highly needy man with 7 children
5. Daniel Wagenhalssen's widow, a very poor widow woman, without the smallest provisions, with 4 children.
6. Daniel Heken's widow, with no means.
15. Hanss Jerg Gutbrot, the oldest resident here, of 84 years, very needy, without provisions, with 7 children
16. Antonius Majer, a poor man and father of 2 children of gouty conditions.
22. Heinrich Seibold, a man with 6 children without any provisions.
38. Christina Palmer, a woman with 2 illegitimate children, very needy, without any provisions.
45. Catherina Mayerlen, with 2 illegitimate children, without the smallest means

(In total 45 persons)

*Actum d. 27. Sept. 1771*

*Poor list, Beggar Overseer*

The poor were summoned to be questioned concerning the begging, and reproached for going about it:

Michael Mezger, a baker, . . . , who does not like to work.

Young Michael Sigle sends his wife Catharina out to beg, has a daughter Anna Maria, who has a bad leg, is unmarried, and is taken care of by him.

Hanns Georg Eisenbraun has his bread and just does not want to harm himself with work.

Johannes Bäder\*, who keeps a disorderly house, and even now as little as he has, cannot keep it in order.

Margaretha Hüml, in the poor house, who was just seized in Grunbach for begging, and brought back here, apologizes that she can't otherwise help herself.

Barbara Bühler, cannot otherwise help herself with her children.

Barbara Mack, she is old, has nothing but her little house, cannot earn anything.

Heinrich Seybold sends his children out begging.

(in total 18 people)

It is hereby ordered that:

1. Michael Mezger is to be assigned as begging overseer, for which he is to receive 5 x day wages, but for this he must be diligent in his office and must watch out for local and out-of-town beggars.
2. The poor who can take care of themselves are to be completely curtailed from begging:

(Eight names follow.)

To the contrary, the truly needy are allowed to beg here on two days, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Magdalena Retter  
Michael Sigle the younger with his daughter  
Daniel Eisenbraun  
Hanss Georg Eisenbraun  
Johannes Bäder\*  
Jacob Gruber's Daughters  
Hanss Georg Schwegler  
Heinrich Seybold's Children  
Helene Linder

It is strictly forbidden to go begging out-of-town: the more so that in the current times there is, here and there, something to eat. If however according to circumstances the poverty is found to be so extreme that they can no longer help themselves in this way, then they are given hope that there will be further assistance.

*Actum d. 17. Mart. 1772*

*Alms*

Magdalene, Hannss Jacob Palmer's surviving single daughter, a plain, simple person, is in such poor circumstances in the poorhouse that she can earn only the most modest sums. She is awarded 12 x weekly, half from the town, half from the church. Her caregiver, the elder Daniel Sigle, is hereby informed that he should look after the girl and insure that she uses the money wisely.

*Actum d. 16. Febr. 1776*

*Duchy Charity Candidates (Fructgratial)*

The following members of the poorhouse, who again applied for support, are certified as needy, and this register is forwarded to [higher authority in] Schorndorf:

1. Josias Schild, disabled, with wife and two children, 41 years old.
2. Friderich Aigenhör, poorhouse man with wife, 57 years old.



3. Michael Sigle, the younger, an old and poor man, 66 years old.
4. Johann Michael Mezger, beggar, with wife and two children, 64 years old.
5. Georg Friderich Bühler, sick and in the poorhouse, with wife and 2 children, 45 years old.

Widows

15. Regina, Caspar Maurer's widow, 3 children, 66 years old.
16. Anna Maria, Peter Eisenbraun\*'s widow, 69 years old.
17. Ann Marie Grossmänn, 62 years old.
18. Barbara, Andreas Palmer's wife, 2 children, 41 years old.
19. Catherina, Daniel Wagenlajssen's surviving wife with 2 children, 43 years old.

Single Women, some with Illegitimate Children

36. Magdalena Palmer, in poorhouse, 32 years old.
37. Margaretha Retter, 1 child, 46 years old.
38. Catharina Margaretha Gruber, a child, 32 years old.
39. Margaretha Schiller, 2 children, 41 years old.

That the above persons are certified as high needy and deserving of a princely contribution, witnessed by

M. Fischer, Pastor      Mayor Lederer

*Actum d. 2. Jul. 1779*

*Poor Box*

As the establishment of the poor box needs again to be renewed, in that from 1777,78,79, that is two years, nothing has been put in, so the entire citizenry was called to the Town hall, a meeting was held, and each person was asked, what he willingly would give, and then the donation for Georgii 1779/80 was organized, as promulgated here as a special consignment, to be posted in the mayor's office and the town hall. The donation consisted of 131 fl. 25 x.

*Actum d. 16. Jun. 1786*

*Town Poor*

According to the Duchy *General-Rescript* of 8 May of this year, a report on the circumstances of the local poor was composed in the following form:

To support these poor a community chest is established, to which citizens of their free will donated 130 fl. The town accounts are not sufficient to support these expenses because they are weak owing to the expenses of 300 fl. for a new clock. Apart from this no special arrangement and establishment is presented [for support of the poor].

The poor certainly will not be taken care of sufficiently with these monies and one or another of them will be driven to an emergency condition, and because all other means are futile, turn to harmful begging. Because of the road, more poor strangers just passing through than poor from our neighboring towns are becoming a burden, and they must as much as possible be

apprehended by the beggar overseer. From towns experiencing bad weather, one has a large influx.

*Actum d. 8. Aug. 1783*

*Beggar Overseer*

Because another beggar overseer is needed, so it was voted by the assembled town council, and the majority went to Jacob Hartmann, smith, and 18 fl. was budgeted for this.

*Actum d. 3. Jul. 1801*

*Bath Expenses for a Disabled Person*

Anna Maria, unmarried daughter of citizen and mason Jakob Schanbacher, 32 years old, paralytic for many years, and for one year lame on the entire left side because of a cold from a pelting rain. As her physician has recommended a *Boller* bath as the best treatment, but as she is wholly destitute, can not expect anything from her parents, and can in no way bear the costs of the bath treatment: so the church court deliberated on this, and agreed the community should undertake the costs, at the same time to seek a contribution from the poor box of the respected upper administration.

*Actum d. 18. april 1805*

*Clothes Money for Confirmation Candidate*

The orphan Leonhard Zieker, surviving son of farmer and vineyardman Andreas Zieker, was granted for clothes for his confirmation on account of poverty 6 fl.

So also Friedrika Hek, surviving daughter of Friedr. Hek, Tailor, likewise granted for her clothing for confirmation 3 fl.

*Actum d. 10. Jul. 1807*

*Support Money*

Dorothea, Georg Schalen's wife, lodged Anna Maria Schanbacher, a single poor person in her terminal illness, looked after and attended her for half a year, providing room and board, even as Anna Maria wasted away. As Anna Maria did not leave any assets behind: so Dorothea applies to the mayor's office for compensation. For this reason she was granted 1 fl. per week, totaling 26 fl. for half a year.

*Actum d. 18. Jan 1809*

*Poorhouse*

An announcement from the upper administration follows with respect to the poorhouse here and for support of the poor to be established:

1. a) that a poorhouse shall be available to a family  
b) when poor from out of town arrive in the evening, they shall be given a roof and protection, but no more.  
c) that permanent residents, a citizen of the town and his family who live in the poorhouse must pay 2 fl. annually to the mayor's office, and will not enjoy free support.
2. That weekly alms are to be enjoyed by
  1. Men over 82 years
  1. single women up to 21 years
  1. school girls up to 9 years

which annually totals 73 fl. 12 x, half from each per body (church and town).
3. That apart from this the poor will enjoy 215 fl. of donated bread, and to discourage begging a beggar overseer will be installed.
4. That the support of the local poor is to be taken away after 5 years.
5. That at this time there are no recommendations for improvement of these conditions.

Pastor, Mayor, and Town Council

*Actum d. 13. September 1816*

*Punishment of a Schoolgirl for Begging and Stealing*

Magrarena Staiger's illegitimate daughter Sabina, 12 years old, was not only seen begging in Grunbach, and transported here, but she also attempted to steal flour from a town council member's house, as well as potatoes from Grunbach. She was firmly warned against begging and thievery, and awarded punishment by the whip in school.

Witnessed by Pastor, Mayor, and Town Council

## Customs and Morals

A large segment of the dealings of the church court, along with marital strife, were concerned with the behavior of young couples and the occasion of illegitimate births, discretely described by Pastor Drehmann as *Nächtlicher Zuwandel*. These entries provide a particularly interesting glimpse into the social history of the times. One learns from these the values and norms of the society, as they were practiced in the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Clearly, the strict supervision of married and pre-married life exhibited here is today extremely foreign to us.

From the many records of extra-marital births in these proceedings, it is clear that the frequency of this event was not constant during our time frame. In the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, these numbers were lower, their frequency increased steeply during the second half of the century, then and achieved their height in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. At this time town and church were challenged, and apparently responded with success, since Geradstetten had the smallest number of illegitimate births in the community of Schorndorf. During 1750-1820, these constituted 5-6% of births.

Most of the proceedings on this issue followed the same sequence. For example:

*Actum d. 25. Sept. 1789*

*Pregnancy*

Eva Katharina, legitimate daughter of Johannes Heimen, citizen and vinyarder, was questioned about her unwed pregnancy in the following way:

Q: Are you pregnant and for how long?

A: Yes, since Johannis [St. John's Day, midsummer]

Q: By whom are you pregnant?

A: By Jakob Friderich Gruber, carpenter, legitimate son of Jakob Gruber, citizen and carpenter.

Q: Does he want to marry you?

A: Yes

Q: What property do you have?

A: Inheritance from the mother's side of about 50 fl.

Q: Do you wish to pay the penalty in cash or work it off?

A: She doesn't know

Eva Catharina Heimen

Jakob Friderich Gruber, 25 years old, was also questioned:

Q: Is the Heiman woman pregnant and for how long?

A: Yes, for a quarter of a year

Q: Do you wish to marry her

A: Yes

Q: What will your parents give you?

A: My father says he will not give me anything

Q: Do you wish to pay the penalty in cash or work it off?

A: He doesn't know

Jacob Friederich Gruber  
Pastor, Mayor, and Town Council

All questioning ended with a question about their means, because they were always assessed a cash penalty for their offense and the town wanted to avoid being financially responsible for mother and child.

#### A. Trysts [Nächtlicher Zuwandel]

*Actum d. 3. July 1732*

*"Nächtlicher Zuwandel"*

HanssJerg Bullinger Mason from Schlechtbach, who works for HanssJacob Ebersberger, was seen climbing into the bedchamber of Ursula Margaretha, daughter of H. Thoni, during the night of John the Baptist, but he was chased by Thoni before he could do anything further. He was fined 1 Pf H. 43 x

*Actum d. 28. May 1733*

*Dance and Lyre*

Further is was brought forward that on *Domenica Misericordia* (Sunday after Easter) that there was dancing to the accompaniment of a lyre player in Johannes Palmer's house on Bauersberg, however because Joh. Palmer, Michel Hasselin, and his wife, as the reputed dancers, denied doing anything bad and insisted the lyre player had only performed for a piece of bread, and only played hymns, the proceedings were postponed until further evidence could be produced.

Item: as a nuisance it was brought up that HannsJerg Mayer's wife and maid chased a soldier around the house at night, but as the soldier was not [now] present he could not be questioned, they excused themselves by saying the soldier ran after them, that they could not help this, and they ran away from him, thus the matter must be laid to rest pending further investigation.

*Actum d. 12. Febr. 1735*

*Foul songs*

Johannes Palmer of Bauersberg complains against Michael Schiller's boys that they sang nasty songs, to the delight of their father, before the maid's room, spoke lustfully and annoyingly to the

maid, for this reason also these were brought before us.

At the hearing Johannes Palmer and his maid stuck to their statement, but Schiller wishes to plead ignorance and the boy pushed all blame on Michael Mayerlen's son, however because he lives on a distant farm and was not easily brought at hand, further examination had to be set up for an upcoming meeting.

*Actum d. 3. May 1741*

*Night Tryst*

Josias Hasert of Hepsak was fined because of a night tryst with Magdalena Schweglerin, Joh. Frid. Bäder's maid

a 2 Pf. H[eller]

*Actum 19. oct. 1747*

*Dance and More*

Daniel Wagenhalss, because he allowed all manner of dissoluteness in his *Karz*, fined.....1 Pf H.

His wife because she herself danced with the soldiers in their house, fined 22 x

Rosina Retter, for the same reason

22 x

Christina Layss

22 x

Regina, Gottfried Kurtz's wife

11 x

What further followed is specially noted because of its confusing nature, and what Friderich Heck and Christina Layss said on 18 Jan. 1748, and signed to, is here set down again and noted.

Friderich Heck says: As he wanted to go to bed, he heard the maid Christina Layss singing out of Daniel Wagenhalss's window: "Today I won't go to bed." As he had had the intention of marrying her, he found this suspicious, and went to Jacob Retter\*'s house, where the maid was in service, and where the soldier was quartered, hid himself and watched to see what would happen.

At a quarter to twelve o'clock the maid and soldier went home together and kept company with each other in the living room until 12 o'clock. As the clock struck twelve, the maid wanted to go to bed, the soldier had her in his arms at the living room door, kissed her and fondled her. At this, Heck ran to them and became involved. He could not say what further happened, out of concern, that if she became pregnant, he could get into trouble.

The maid Christina Layss could not deny that she was in the *Karz* without *Kunckel*, and went home with the soldier. She did not know what time that was. How long she was alone with the soldier she did not know, did not hear the clock strike. Cannot deny that as she wanted to go to bed, the soldier came to her, put his arms around her, and said: What did she want with that fellow (Heck), she could not live with him.

Signed, Christina Layss

*Actum d. 17. Nov. 1774*

*Entering into the room of a maid*

It has been brought to the attention of the church court, that Gottlieb Sigle, a vineyard worker with Daniel Sigle, entered the bedchamber of Maria Catharina Layser, Michael Siglen's maid, on the night of 21 October. The "Wolgert" also saw Sigle entering, and took his shoes. Sigle admits to entering, but claims he only stood at the chamber door, and warned her that the boys in the streets say that Seybold, a soldier, wants to come to her. The maid says that she opened the chamber door, and remained standing in the doorway. She was not yet undressed. Neither could deny that he took his shoes off and climbed through the window, and that he had prior acquaintance with the maid.

Sigle was fined 1 fl and 2 Pf Heller to the church treasury, and 1 fl 26 x fine, and the maid was fined 1 Pf Heller. With the warning to avoid such suspicious meetings.

## B. Marital Discord

*Actum in Curia Die 27. Augusti 1726*

*Marital Discord*

Daniel Retter\* the younger, because he was accused of abusing his wife and his in-laws, especially as he came home drunk from the church path to Hepsach, was warned with stern words of severe punishment if he did not behave better, and because he promised improvement, he was let go with this verbal punishment.

*Actum d. 17. Marty 1745*

*Dissolute Husband*

HannsJerg [?] on account of his rigid ways and tyrannical behavior toward his wife is admonished to reform and warned, should any thing else be heard of him, he will be reported to the higher office.

As he promised to improve and asked his wife for forgiveness, he was released without punishment this time.

*Actum d. 4. Febr. 1768*

*Marital Discord*

Johannes Bühler\* behaves in a most hostile fashion toward his wife for some time, and because he has nothing to say about this, it was decided that Bühler should spend 24 hours in the town jail.

*Actum d. 25. Apr. 1769*

*Marital Discord*

Wendel Mack, a young citizen, newly arrived here, married Margaretha\*, daughter of Matthes Seibold\* several weeks ago. Margaretha is reported to be very hostile to him and completely remiss in performing her wifely duties. The couple was brought to the church court and the wife was immediately asked what it would take to have her resume her wifely duties.

She did not know what to bring up, except her objection that he was not handsome enough, and rather too dark bearded.

The wife was strongly reprimanded for her flippant testimony, with the warning that if she did not behave in an orderly way to her husband, the court would take a dim view of this and act accordingly.

According to the church register, the couple was married on 1 Feb 1769. Proof that she took her husband into her heart came two years later when a son, Johann Friderich\* was born, and the following year when a daughter, Anna Maria, arrived on the earth.

### C. Immoral Behavior

*Actum d. 25. July 1732*

*Cultivation of Morals on the Bauersberg*

As the Bauersberg is a domicile of all manner of foul riffraff and especially of Joh. Palmer. The community talk is that he held his own father, Hanss Michel Palmer, to be a whore because he had committed adultery with the maid. He [Joh. Palmer] raged mightily about this private memory, thus he together with his wife were ordered to be reprimanded for bringing up this unseemly behavior, reminded to behave in a Christian manner, and warned under threat of severe punishment away from entertaining any suspicious persons, in particular his maid Margaetha Dober of Grunbach.

*Actum d. 3. obr 1742*

*Pregnancy*

Magdalena, Joh. Schwegler\*'s daughter from Rollhof indicates herself that she is pregnant, and indeed by Joh. Ernst Bühler, the surviving son of G. Bühler. The original proceedings, where questions and answers were put, was witnessed and signed at the Town Hall, and was respectfully sent to the upper officer, so that only a small summary is given here.

NB. Bühler declared that he would give the Schwegler girl honest answers before the upper office, but as soon as he left the Town Hall, he made himself unavailable and joined the Army.



*Actum d. 30. Febr. 1737*

*Hearing*

Questions by Pastor Stölzel:

Answers:

What is your name?

Barbara Fischer

Your father?

Franz Fischer, citizen and tailor of Winterbach

Since when are you pregnant?

Since eight days before Easter

Who do you say is the father?

A soldier named Pfleiderle, a Tambour, of the Catholic religion, who passed through last Shrove Tuesday

Where was he with you?

In my house a little, by night. Item: also by day in the Schaal's Wash House.

How long was he with you?

Several days

When are you due?

Around Christmas

Do you have any wages owed you?

No, I collected all.

*Actum d. 1. Nov. 1782*

*Pregnancy*

1) Sabina, surviving legitimate daughter of Johann Jacob Bühler, citizen and vineyardman here, was pregnant for the second time and was therefore examined here as follows:

Q. Are you pregnant and by whom?

A. Yes I'm pregnant, by Tobias Gottlieb Zeiher of the *Obrist Riegerischen* Regiment of the Asperg Fort

Q. How long are you pregnant and where did it happen?

A. 3 weeks after *Lichtmess* she became pregnant in Markgröningen

Q. Does he admit to being the father and does he want to marry you?

A. Yes he does want to marry me.

Q. What are your means?

A. None

The said soldier Zeiher presented himself to the office and gave himself as the father.

2) Christina Catherina, the sister of the above, who is pregnant for the first time, was examined immediately following:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Q. Are you pregnant, how long, and where did happen?           | A. Yes, 24 weeks, and it happened in the bedroom.  |
| Q. Did you sleep with anyone else?                             | A. No.   |
| Q. By whom are you pregnant?                                   | A. By Johann Jacob Siglen, member of the above named regiment at Asperg, the surviving son of Johannes Siglen. |
| Q. Does he admit he is the father, and does want to marry you? | A. Yes, and he wants to marry me if it is allowed.   |
| Q. What do you have as means?                                  | A. She does not know, it won't be much.  |

The matter was signed by the two sisters:

Sabina Bühler  
Catherina Bühler

*Actum d. 11. Maj 1798*

*Forbidding the Cohabitation of an Engaged Couple*

It was complained that the widower Johannes Lederer accommodated his fiancée, the Bühler woman, not only during the day but also overnight; so it was commanded of him and his fiancée that notice of wrongdoing would be sent to the upper office if they did not desist from overnighting until the marriage was properly executed.

*Actum d. 27. June 1798*

*Forbidden Bathing*

Just as a year ago, complaints were heard again that it was possible that unmarried persons of both sexes were allowed to go swimming until late at night and thus tempt each other into all kinds of lewd behavior. It was thus decided not only to urge parents to forbid this practice in their children, and warn the town watch to keep an eye open, but also to assign certain citizens the duty to watch for this behavior and inform the town if it occurred. Those who participate in this behavior should be treated in the same fashion as those who slip out together at night.

## **Magic, Charms, and Witchcraft**

Even Geradstetten had magic and witchcraft. Where there is faith, there is also superstition. The boundaries between custom, faith, and superstition vary according to time, place, and confession.

Particularly in the timeframe of these records, church and state fought with laws and sermons against superstition, witchcraft, and magic incantations on man and animal with laws and sermons. Responsibility for dealing with this fell mostly to the pastor and the church court.

They did not have an easy job. Many accusations turned out, on closer examination, to be malicious gossip, about what one had heard, one had seen, a mass of unsubstantiated or half-truths fill these books. Much that was considered witchcraft was really only the country art of charms attributed to old ladies who were feared to have malicious intent. Strong punishment would not be effective here, so the church court sought to restore and maintain the peace in the community through admonishments and persuasion whenever possible.

Many decades before the establishment of the church court, a woman from Geradstetten, Maria Rau, was really entangled in a case of witchcraft. Since she would not confess, despite urging, she was banished from the town, sent off in 1660 *“auf freien fuss.”* These proceedings are fully detailed by Anita Raith in the *Schondorfer Heimatblättern* so this book will not repeat them.

A few examples of these events will show us what problems those in charge had to deal with. We should be cautious in judging these times. Maybe our own descendants will look at our own blind faith in progress with similar amazement and lack of comprehension.

*Actum d. 3. Juni 1736*

*Accusation of Witchcraft*

Barbara Lauterwasser complains that Jacob Nuding called her by name as he passed her house and said: If you torment me again as in the past, then I will stretch you on the rack.

Nuding responds: He was troubled several times at night, that is why he said these words, but it meant only that he was vexed. Indeed, because of this he found peace at night. She thereupon walked into his house, calling him an old crooked rogue, she hoped to live to see the day when he was so crooked that he could not get out of bed.

Which the Lauterwasser woman also admitted to saying, she did this because he spoke so harshly in the open street against her honor, and cried out she was a witch, and she wanted her good name back from him and asked that for this he should be severely punished.

Upon notice to her that she similarly abused him badly, and is likewise culpable, she agreed to stand down from her pretensions, as long as Nuding did the same in the future, which he promised and likewise was satisfied with the settlement.



*Actum d. 23. Marty 1739*

*Sieve Turning*

Hanns Leonh. Hasert's wife turned the sieve [evidently like reading tea leaves] in order to find out how Margaretha Retter's son was doing, was thus fined 1 Pf Heller.

N.B. She said, according to the sieve turning, he drowned in the water, but after several days he showed himself alive and out of danger. Margaretha Retter, as she agreed to the reading, even if she said she [did not?] was fined 10 x.

*Actum d. 11. Febr. 1739*

*Instructions for Grave Digging*

Jacob Bühler\* is confined as grave digger, and is at the same time warned not to permit anything suspicious in connection with carrying boards, nails, or earth, and if he notices anything of this sort, it his duty to report it.

*Actum d. 21. Juny 1741*

*Superstition and Coffin Nails*

...that Georg Retter\*'s wife is however forbidden to tread on the churchyard apart from when there are burials, as it is related by the gravedigger that he found roots and herbs buried there, without knowing by whom, except his children once found the said woman in the crypt house.

So the woman denied this, as only children said it, and as recently a grave was dug, she also joined in and looked around the grave of the grave digger, but he was forewarned, because he knew that she used coffin nails. But [she said] the a dead gravedigger himself gave her the nails.

*Actum d. 6. obr. 1744*

*Visionary*

Georg Leonh. Häselin\* was reprimanded for his silly hypothesis, but his entire answer was confused, even under threat of purgatory he insisted that he has seen spirits in a green meadow.

*Actum d. 18. Marty 1746*

*Accusation of Witchcraft*

Ursula Margarethe Gutbrod brings a complaint against her brother Johann Adam Hochberger that he says she is a witch. Tailor Häselin testifies: Hochberger said he feels sorry that his sister is openly considered a witch by everyone. Having to listen to such things from others, he is embarrassed for her. She wanted to borrow beanpoles from Adam Eigenhör but he would not give her any. She then asked, what did he take her for, that she was a witch? Whereupon he answered, he did not think so, still he would not lend her anything like that. Hochberger said, his sister shamed herself with her borrowing.

*Actum d. 16. July 1750*

*Superstitious Fever Medicine*

Johann Balthasar Mack, because he permitted a superstitious fever medicine to be used by his wife, was fined 10 x. The wife was fined 1 Pf H.

*Actum den 9. Dec. 1766*

*Incantations*

In connection with this matter, it came out that the reported Palmer had received from Fried. Gutbrot an incantation to copy on chopping, shooting, and stabbing. He handed it over to the court at their request.

Gutbrot did not deny giving the young lad such an incantation, but did not think it would be taken in such a serious manner. He himself has neither the original nor a copy. He destroyed these after an instinctive bout of conscience. He recognized the error of his ways and ask for a fair punishment.

It was thus determined that

Frid. Gutbrot	3 small penances, also 4 Pf Heller to the church box
Michel Palmer	1 small penance, also 1 Pf Heller to the church box

owed as fines for their guilt.

*Actum d. 30. Jul. 1773*

*Accusation of Witchery*

Agnes, wife of old Johannes Eisenbraun\* the elder, complained that her stepson, Leonhard Eisenbraun\*, said that the whole town considers her to be a witch. She had wanted to borrow oatmeal from Sabina, wife of Jerg Schaal ...But she admitted that her husband no longer wanted to live with her if what they said about her was true.

Leonhard Eisenbraun said this much: His stepmother borrows so many things, oats, wood, matches, that he told his father, Johannes Eisenbraun, and begged him he should warn her. Otherwise one would consider her suspicious. In response, she came up to Johannes, and gave him sharp notice and reproached him with speech. He found out through his servant, that talk was going around that she was a witch.

(Pfarrer Fischer, after pages-long of discussion, came to the following conclusion)

Since the whole thing revolves around gossip, and nothing can be proven, Agnes Eisenbraun is left her good name. The others were warned to let go of these bad thoughts and live together in a neighborly fashion. Johannes Eisenbraun is admonished to ignore this gossip and to live in peace with his wife.

*Actum d. 22. Aug. 1776*

*Witchcraft*

Anna Maria\*, Matthias Siglen\*'s wife complains that Wendel Seybold\* scolded her as a witch, and as the butcher wanted to buy a sow from her, Seybold told the butcher the sow is not worth much, she feeds her pigs with other people's milk. She fattens up good pigs [she claimed], she used the milk of other stock. Seibold indicated that he himself had to smoke his pigs for three days, pigs she penned in, that she put the hex on his pigs, and walked around his house [means of casting a spell?] in the morning.

In the mayor's house Seybold had further related that the butcher, as he was buying the pig previously mentioned, said that he previously had bought two milk calves from her and she also wanted to put a hex on them, but he made the sign of a button in front of her nose. Further, Seybold accuses her of over drinking, and that she once set out in the creek a child who had fever. Along with this Matthias Sigle said that Seybold told him to his face, were his wife not a witch, then he would not have 200 fl. for his building project, and these 200 fl she conjured up from butter.

Wendel Seybold admitted that he berated her as a witch when she walked around her house in the morning, which occurred a year ago. No reasonable woman walks around her house in the morning. It was also true that she drank to excess, and about the 200 fl., he said if his wife could make 200 fl. out of butter, he also could have the stonemason work on his house. She herself said that she had made the 200 fl out of butter.

Stephan Kurz, mason from Haselwarth, who was at the time working on Siglen's house, appeared as a witness and reported that he heard that Seybold said to the butcher that the Siglen woman fattened pigs on other people's milk. He heard nothing further.

The butcher Dobler was sought as a witness, but because he did not stay in a single village, he could not be brought at hand.

The Sigle woman apologized for walking around the house, but she was only looking for some tools and had nothing bad in mind. She cannot let the matter rest and bring disadvantages to her children, and demands satisfaction to clear her good name. She confessed again that a year ago she retrieved some of the mason's equipment from Seybold's house, but not in the morning, rather in the evening.

Here are our findings, that Wendel Seybold is not only to apologize to the Sigle woman and return to her her good name, but also because of his improper behavior to pay a Duchy fine of 1 "outrage" at 1 fl. and 1 Pf Heller to the church treasury, with the admonishment that in the future he should refrain from such talk and live in a neighborly way with her, and in the same way the Sigle women should turn over a new leaf and practice Christian friendship. Matthias Sigle was told, as he caused the stonemason to appear as a witness, he needed to pay him the daily wage of 12 x, or otherwise settle with him.

When the finding was read out, Seybold would not shake hands with the Sigle women because he was so headstrong, finally however after a long lecture he gave her his left hand and at this point walked out of the town council room, so he was punished with another 1 fl. Duchy fine. That decided, the bailiff was sent out to bring him back, but he ran away and would not allow the bailiff to bring him back, but because the Sigle woman sought no further satisfaction, and said she forgave him, the matter was put to rest.

Case signed by Pastor, Mayor, and Town Council

*Actum d. 23. Maj 1777*

*Buried Treasure*

Leonhard Retter however, because no witness could prove his cursing, was not only reminded to keep his house in order, but also warned that the talk in the entire neighborhood was going around that with certain others he was in association with a woman in Ludwigsburg, who wanted him to bury some treasure, and to transport various articles of a suspicious nature to the treasure site. However, he would not confess to having anything to do with this.

*Actum d. 19. May 1780*

*Witchcraft*

The midwife Erna Seybold brought complaint that Christoph Oetinger, shepherd here, accused her to be the cause of his wife's inability to nurse her baby, who always cried. The shepherd met some treasure diggers from Heutingsheim, who stopped by in Gundelspach, and they personally showed him the midwife in a mirror: she is the one who caused his wife to be unable to nurse the child. As the treasure diggers were here for a time and stayed with the younger Daniel Retter\* during the confinement of Retter's wife, these persons developed an enmity against her because she revealed their secret wares in a correct and legal manner, and then caused them to be banished from the area. They threatened to make a spectacle of her, and then it came out that they wanted to put her under suspicion of witchcraft, which as a midwife she could not abide, and therefore she demanded satisfaction, thereby to clear her name.

Herewith Oetinger was called up, who deposed according to following:

A man who is known as a treasure hunter had costly medicine, tincture of gold, etc., in his possession when Oetinger was sick, which make him well. At the time the child could not nurse, the man sought out the cause, and found that the child's throat was closed because the midwife had committed an error. Oetinger held this man to be a clever fellow, who could get to the bottom of matters, worth 10 Thaler in total.

At this point the decision was made that the shepherd was to be fined 1 "outrage" of 1 fl, and 1 Pf. Heller to the church treasury, and he had to shake hands with the midwife and attest that he had no suspicions about her.



*Actim d. 21. Nov. 1794*

*Magic Means to Uncover a Thief*

Simon Bäder's wife from Kernershof complains at the pastorate that Johann Georg Schäfer from the Kernerhof, because of pilfered cabbage, chives, and apples, cast suspicion on her house, and because of this, to investigate the theft, ordered a magic remedy through her mother's brother Rombold in Ebenhard, and that was done on Sunday *Dom XX* during morning prayer.

The remedy consisted of fresh oats on which a black stone lay in water. The water was seething and smoking, the oats stood in a little pail, under a tree belonging to Simon Bäder. His older son Johann Friedrich came out of church in Grunbach, saw this under the tree, told his mother, and then went up to it and threw it apart. Rombold ran down, searched for the stone and pail, and a maid of J. G. Schäfer had to gather the chards together.

Thereupon the Schäfers divulged that Friedrich Bäder would have seen what had happened, if he had not thrown away the oats.

As the matter had already come before the court, because of the suspicion of thievery, nothing could be decided, because no proof was there, so the matter was brought up because of profaning of Sunday and the use of magic. These facts cannot be denied, and Schäfer is admonished and punished by a fine of 2 Pf. Heller for the church box, and 1 fl. for the Duchy.

*Actum d. 8. Apri. 1796*

*Magic*

The two council members Johannes Specht and Tobias Schaal\* announced to the Pastor that their sons are under suspicion as the thieves who stole David Friedr. Lederer\*'s clothing, and that through means of magic they have not only come to the bottom of the matter but also cleared their sons of any wrong-doing, in that Jacob Friedrich Schäfer of Kernershof, the smith Matth. Enz, and a third person from Esslinglen while naked in the night of Holy Thursday to Good Friday made nails and drove them into trees, in order to cause their [the council members] sons to waste away, just as the trees would die. This magic business, which was undertaken on Good Friday, is taken up and examined in the following form:

The two council members were interrogated. How did they know what they described, were there witnesses to it?

A. The council member Specht answered in writing that Jacob Friedrich Schäfer after severe admonition by him and his son Abraham revealed the matter, showed them the willow tree with the holes in it, where the black arts practitioner drove the nails in, but pulled them out again, which nails Schäfer fetched from his room and gave over to them; which he also showed the court, with the understanding that they, the two council members and their sons now are fully content and no further satisfaction is desired, also that they ask that Schäfer be excused from punishment, as he uncovered the whole matter.

Jak. Friedrich Schäfer was brought in to tell the truth about the above. This he related as follows: David Friedr. Lederer\* with his in-laws Johannes Beutel\* and his wife\* asked for his help, if he could not say anything about their theft, whereupon he referred them to a citizen of Beinstein named Friedrich Schwarz of the weaving works, and then also according to their wishes sent them to Matthäus Seibold's boys, these had given Schwarz a note that he, Schäfer, delivered to Beutel, whereupon besides other signs that he did not understand, these said that Beutel should have three nails made. Who made the nails, and when, he could not say.

This however he could say, that his girls fetched the nails on Good Friday morning at 7 A. M. from Beutel, whereupon in the evening of that day Schwarz came to him in Hösslenwarth to have a drink with him, went home with him, and spent the night with him at his house. Then he, Schwarz, drove the nails into the willow tree on Easter Saturday morning before the sun came up, but in the afternoon at 1 o'clock he pulled them out again, and left with them. Schäfer then followed him to Heppach and took the nails back.

The smith Matthäus Enz, who was under suspicion for having made the nails in his shop with two others was questioned here, but wanted to hear nothing of the matter, that nothing like this happened in his shop, it must have occurred somewhere else.

David Friedrich Lederer\* could not deny that he asked Schäfer for help, but does not want to hear anything about him having held the two boys Abraham Specht and Tobias Schaal\* under suspicion. Johannes Beutel, who was questioned on the matter, said that he indeed sent Schäfer 3 nails on Good Friday, but from his nail basket, where he had all kinds of available nails, he did not need to have any made that day, and gave them to Schäfer because he promised to use them to retrieve the stolen clothes of his son-in-law. Even though he could have harmed the thieves [with these actions], he would not have been less the man for it. He does not accuse the two sons, nonetheless their fathers cannot speak well of them, and say they are not capable of such things.

On this he and the others were sternly admonished, and directed to live in peace and reconciliation with their opponents.

Signed Pastor and Town Council

## Disturbing the Peace

Order is necessary in a town. Whoever did not keep the peace, found himself before the church court. Whoever disturbed the order or peace had to answer to the church court. And there always were those who did not fit in the community of the town. Their names appear regularly in the records, whether it is Chirurgus Mühlecker, or the blacksmith Enz from Hebsack. In the case of penalty actions, the bailiff was usually in charge, but the investigations were often in the hands of the court judges.. If they were unable to resolve the issue, they called upon the *Vogtzedel* [Duke's representative, overseer] in Schorndorf.

Monetary fines were usually a part of the punishment. The community treasury and the church treasury were always low and could use the money. Whoever could not pay, ended up in the town jail for a few hours or days, and thus the bailiff earned a bit of money [for watching them]. So everyone was helped and the peace maintained. Pfarrer Stöltzel (1726-1756) instituted a particularly educational method of punishment. It was not for naught that he was formerly the Praezeptor in Marbach. He made the punishment include memorizing certain verses of the Bible, or writing these in beautiful script! For many wrongdoers, this was a more severe punishment than losing their freedom and subsisting on bread and water.

Long visits to the local inn [for a few glasses of wine] with ensuing chaos was common at all times, today as yesterday; also town folk [had to be dealt with] who could not keep their mouths in check or could not tell the difference between “my” property and “yours.” Sunday peace was in particular stringently observed by the church court, which also looked dimly on leaving town on festival days. Walking over the fields was not kindly looked upon. A finicky point, often found on the daily record, was improper behavior in church. Seating was tight in church, at times catastrophically so, due to the steep upswing in population at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. After the addition of two side chambers in 1753, this crowding was obviated and the complaints ended.

### A. Insults

*Actum in Curia D. 7. et 9. Febr. Anno MLCCXXVI as presented by the then Pastor M. Johann Cunrad Sorgers:*

Hanns Jerg Eisenbraun and Michel Schiller of the Bauersberg, because they falsely slandered and attacked the pastor, as the Mayor well knows. They are admonished to respect their superiors and warned to abstain from their Godless ways under sharp warning, whereupon the pastor was satisfied with the intercession.

*Actum d. 27. Febr. 1737*

*Flippant Talk*

HanssJerg Kurtz's wife was reported to have gotten into strife with Johannes Retter\*'s wife and, while leaning out the window over the street in the presence of children and others, yelled out loudly that if Retter's wife did not get enough [affection] from her husband, then she would have to find herself a *Flecken Hummel* [field bumblebee, that is one who goes from flower to flower]. She was convinced of her error and penalized for fighting in front of children: 10 Schilling

Because Johannes Retter's wife brought on this fight earlier, when she asked, when HanssJerg was not home, where was he flitting about [*in dem Flecken umhummlle*] and similar flippant words, was similarly penalized: 10 Schilling

*Actum d. 22. july 1740*

*Abusive Talk*

Anna Ursula Barchet is punished for bad talk about a church official by a fine of 1 Pf Heller, in addition to bad talk before the court, complaining the pastor ran out of bread whereas she did not bring enough. She is scheduled [by the court] in the absence of the pastor for one day in the town jail.

*Actum d. 25. Aug. 1745*

*Verbal Injury*

Michel Eisenbraun and his wife, likewise Michel Schiller and his wife, are punished for annoying quarreling on Sunday, fined

1 Pf Heller

Because of disgrace and abuse, both sides are put to Duchy punishment, the men both fined 1 fl.  
the woman both at 2 women "outrages"

Item: the farmers of the upper farms are forbidden to walk into the little shack by the church.

## B. Keeping the Sunday Peace

*Anno 1712*

*Playing Cards*

The 29<sup>th</sup> of January is the first time this year that the pastor and the appointed members of the court gathered, to hear the complaint that in citizen Jacob [?]'s house and lodgings of relatives of the court, cards were played by Matthäus Laile, carpenter here, and also Daniel Palmer, who was also part of the circle, [but the matter is] postponed, and as soon as he is again healthy as he is already scheduled for jail for penury, they can both work off their penalty there, in jail.

*Actum d. 16. Juny 1730*

*Working on Sunday*

Jacob was punished for mending socks in someone else's house on a Sunday, fined to the church treasury: 5 Schilling 11 x

*Actum d. 26. Jan. 1731*

*Bowling on Christmas Eve*

The previously accused [in the record, not recorded here] claimed, that during the Sunday when they were betrayed, others were also bowling on the meadows, but they could not convince anyone, except Johannes Friedrich Mayer\*, to give up the names of their comrades. He then gave the names of Johannes Eisenbraun\*, David Hek\*, and HanssJerg Schnabel, others he did not know the names of. Although the evidence was there that they had carried small bowling balls to the place, fearing punishment, they had stopped bowling soon after starting, so instead of punishment and in order to better instill a respect for Sunday, each was commanded to memorize the hymn "*Gottlob, nun ist es wider morgen*" and also, in neat writing, to copy Exod. 20, verses 8,9,10,11.

[Exod. 20 verses 8-11 include the admonition to keep the Sabbath holy, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment]

*Actum d. 9. July 1735*

*Sunday Observance*

Michel Schiller is brought forward, as he ate cherries between the afternoon services, and because he had no money, he should become acquainted with the town jail.

*Anno 1737*

*Sunday Observance*

Ulrich Launer and the older Michael Palmer\*, because they sneaked into the forest during Sunday school to look for bird's nests [*der Vogel Nester gegangen*] were both fined 5 sch.

Margaretha Haisch who on the monthly "*Buss und Bettag*" [Day of Atonement and Repentance] sneaked out of the sermon and into the fields, fined 11 x.

*Actum d. 2. July 1738*

*Church Holiday Observance*

Daniel Heck, because he went to evening service on Pentecost, sneaked out right away in the morning after church to look for bird nests, and as the other children also wanted bird nests, he swore so and complained and stabbed the Zwicker's boy, he was awarded one hour in the town jail, before that however he should get a good thrashing by the bailiff, which should be carried out at 10 o'clock in front of the schoolchildren and repeated 7 times to serve as an example, and

so it occurred.

*Actum d. 22. August 1749*

*Fishing on Church Holiday*

Hans Jerg Hasert and Ulrich Lauer were brought here because they went fishing on Pentecost right after Sunday School, and were punished by a fine of 10 x.

*Actum d. 19. Dec 1783*

*Playing Violin on Sunday*

Jacob, the elder Matthäus Siglen\*'s son played his violin in the evening on *Ferriae Simonis et Judae*, and after that it looked like there was a wedding party with him, therefore he was reported.

As he assured that he had no one with him, only played for himself, as he often does to practice, so he was warned not to play the violin in any prohibited manner, and thus provide opportunity for disorder.

### **C. Unworthy Behavior in the Church**

*Actum in Curia D 5. Aprilis 1726*

*Public Annoyance*

Magdalena\*, wife of the younger Stephan Siglen\*, for the perpetration of Godlessness in an open church gathering, that during the singing of the Sunday service she began an annoying argument and exchange with Catharina, Hannss Jacob Hutten's wife concerning the church board in the pew, during which she angrily pulled her off the pew, and also for creating an annoyance and sensation, she is ordered to pay a fine to the church treasury of  
about 10 schilling making.....22 x

*Actum d. 23. Febr. 1729*

*Mischief in Church*

Georg Michel Schaal\* and Jerg Schwegler were laughing in church during the prayer. Since they usually behave well, they are required to memorize Psalm 25 and will not have to pay the fine as long as they continue their good behavior.

[Psalm 25 has 22 verses including the 8<sup>th</sup> verse: Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.]

*Actum d. 30. Febr. 1737*

*Quarreling in Church*

Michael Thoni and Ernst Bühl, who exchanged blows and angry talk while in church, both, especially the instigator Thoni, who is assigned 24 hours in the town jail, Bühl however for 1 day, are assigned to the jailhouse.

*Actum d. 13. July 1739*

*Quarreling in Church*

Tobias Heim, who grabbed HanssJerg Eisenbraun by the hair in church and hit him in the face with his fists, because no money is to be gotten out of him, and he will not go to jail, is to be thrashed as an example by the bailiff.

*Actum d. 22. July 1740*

*Sleeping in Church*

HanssJerg Dolser, Peter Gutbrod, Andreas Bäder's wife, and HanssJerg Walter were each fined 3 x for sleeping in church. This money is to be given to Georg Retter as compensation for acting as the wakener.

## D. Inn Visits and Fights

*Actum in Curia D. 7. et 9. Febr. Anno MLCCXXVI in the presence of the then Pastor Vicarii M. Johann Cunrad Sorgers...*

(Note: Vicar Sorger was an accomplished calligrapher. His minutes are models of Baroque handwriting styles and expositions.)

Christoph Retter, Jerg Bihler, son of the old schoolmaster, Jörg Kurtz von Höselwarth, belonging to the parish of Buoch, Michel Straub, butcher, all working here for Hanss Jerg Häselen\* on Bauersberg, Joseph Mayerle, Jerg Nuding, all single, Jacob Schumacher, Andreas Bihler, Conrad Eisenbraun, a vineyarder of extreme poverty, were accused of drinking late into the night on *Ferriis Batholomae* in vineyarder Jacob Siglen's house and despite being told to go home by the night watchman, continued to drink, some until 11 o'clock, others until 2 o'clock, and then, still together, walked on the streets and made such a noise and disturbance that people were woken from their sleep.

Those that stayed until 2 o'clock are the following: Christoph Retter (followed by 4 more persons) are fined 10 Schilling each to the church treasury, totalling 1 fl. 28 x

Since particularly the last two are very poor people and not able to pay the fine, they must serve time in the jail and the others had a reduced fine of 44 x.

The innkeeper, Jacob Siglen, since he continued to serve wine to his guests freely, fined 5 Schilling.

If these fines, as herein described, are fully paid after the proceedings, the fine due the Duchy of 1 fl. will be ameliorated at the next session of the church court due to poverty.

*Actum 16. Jan. 1741*

*Neck in the Block*

Jacob Haselin for twice overstaying his time at the inn on Sunday, for walking across the fields on Sunday, for coarse talk against the town council, is punished by a fine of 1 Pf. Heller, which he is to settle within 14 days, or to spend six hours in the block anytime as atonement.

P.S. Expiated by time in block

*Actum d. 16. July 1750*

*Fighting on Sunday*

It was decided that

Johannes Retter*	2 fl Duchy Fine	43 x in the church treasury
Michel Bottwick	1 fl “ “	22 x “
Leonhart Siglin		22 x “
Jacob Wagenhalss		22 x “
HanssJerg Häselin*		22 x “
Johannes Seitz, Jac. Bottwick's servant		22 x “
HanssJerg Müller, Leonh. Häselin's servant		22 x “

all for dissolute arguments, partly fights, partly cursing, the rest for improper walking around on Sunday night, and for being present at the fights, they are to pay fines to the church treasury as written on the right column.

*Actum d. 12. Apr. 1774*

*Cursing in the Inn*

The innkeepers Martin Fischer\*, Ox inn, and Georg Sicher, Crown Inn, are informed that according to the rules of the Duchy Synodic office, in the future they may no longer pay an annual amount to the swear box, but rather must charge for each individual curse of swearing.

*Actum d. 17. Jan. 1783*

*Lichtkarz*

After it came out that the younger Daniel Retter\* and Johannes Lederer\* were having a disorderly *Lichtkarz* gathering of mostly single men, they were reported for this reason and ordered that as married men and heads of households they have the responsibility, and should be cautioned that long as this story telling [*Spinnen*] goes on that nothing improper happens, especially that the young men should be restrained.



*Actum d. 3. May 1790*

*Nighttime Mischief*

Friedrich Scheible, David Hasert and Bernhart Hek, weavers, reported that yesterday on Sunday morning after 3 o'clock in the morning, single young men from Hebsack made noise in ways never heard before, cursed, marched down the street in step, stole the weavers new posts and bent them, and in particular banged on the doors of the church cemetery, and demanded that those inside come out.

One learned that these youths were Christoph Wölppert, Johann Georg and Christoph Schanbacher, Thomas Weinschenk and Daniel Hasert, who came home on Sunday night after having spent much time in the Crown Inn getting drunk.

At the hearing they could not deny the matter, only that they were not calling out to the dead, rather they indicated someone threw rocks at them at that spot. Thus they assumed that there were people in the churchyard, but after looking around decided they were mistaken. They were therefore fined as follows.

1. Johann Georg Schambacker, who did the most, especially banging on the churchyard door and calling out

3 fl, Duchy fine  
2 Pf. Heller to the church treasury

The others

2 fl. Duchy fine  
2 Pf. Heller to the church treasury

The innkeeper of the Crown was sternly forbidden to allow people to drink so much and spend such a long time with him, with the understanding that the next time he would pay a double fine.

*Actum d. 26. Jan 1803*

*Drunkenness*

Jacob Friedrich Thoni\*, citizen and vineyardman, went home drunk on *Domenica III post Feriae Epiphaniae* the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Jan, yelled up the path, made noise in the house, complained, cursed, threatening the people in the house with a knife that he had in a sack, bawled and cursed out the window, and as the Pastor who lived opposite him called out and reprimanded him for this mischief, Thoni cursed him and called him the worst names, also escaped the peace officer who wanted to take him to jail, ran through the alleys, swinging a stick about him.

As however he is still a young ignorant citizen, for whom one could have hopes for improvement, so one did not want to give him the most severe punishment, rather he was to be fined as follows:

- 1) with one drunkenness gulden
- 2) for desecrating Sunday, 1 Pf Heller



*Actum d. 3. Dec. 1772*

*Theft of Wine*

During the Sunday night of the Advent festival, Michel Sigle, 19 years old, son of Matthaes Sigle, apprentice of shoemaker Jacob Friedrich Retter, was seen by several people leaving the house of his master at 12 o'clock with two large jugs and a loaf of bread. Two boys, Johannes Bäder\* and David Hasert, decided to wait for him to return and discovered that the two jugs were then filled with wine which he had procured somewhere and brought into his master's house. The night watchman Rohm then brought this to the attention of the mayor's office.

When Michel Sigle was asked about this, he admitted that during the night he climbed into his father's basement through a ventilation shaft and took the wine secretly and gave it to his master and his master's wife. In fact, he claimed that his master had told him to get the wine, and would beat him if he did not soon bring the wine.

This was not the first time he had procured wine from his father. The previous summer he had slipped some wine to his master and they had drunk it together, he had gotten the smallest part of it. Yes, the master had even offered him money for stealing.

Retter finally admitted that he had noticed for a while that the boy acted unruly, but only for the last 8 days. After much questioning, Retter admitted that he drank from the wine eight days before Advent on the *23 Domenica post Trinitatis*. Then his wife was questioned and at first she again wanted to deny it, but finally her husband convinced her to tell the truth and she admitted that she had drunk from the wine as well on that date.

Thus it was concluded that the boy Michel Sigle, who had already been thrashed by his father, was ordered to be locked in the jail for one day. Retter and his wife were fined 2 Pf Heller

Thus decided

Witnessed by: (Signatures)

## Community of Citizens

The Church court also had to deal with the town finances. The church and school had to be supported and many inhabitants were paid for small duties around town. Midwives and “*Geschworenen Weiber*,” women who were responsible for attending at births to make sure that things went well, had to be chosen. And every decade or so a new schoolmaster had to be chosen, and along with that came the visiting school and church delegations. The church court was responsible for the care of widows, orphans, and retired citizens, and to see that undesirables were removed from town.

Two towns in Württemberg had the misfortune to be almost completely destroyed by fire, Murrhardt in 1765 and Göppingen in 1782. The Duke required each community to contribute to help these towns rebuild. For Murrhardt, Geradstettener decided to make a collection from house to house. With Göppingen, they declined to contribute because of their own precarious circumstances.

*Actum d. 14. Feb. 1735*

*Note*

The Pastor does not know the tithing ordinances, he leaves these to the civil authorities.

*Actum d. 3. May 1741*

*Permission to Marry*

J. Michel Schechterlin, claims to wish to marry Catharina Eisenbraun, a woman of ill-repute. It was explained to him that under no circumstances would this marriage ever be permitted. Catharina Eisenbraun received the same explanation.

*Actum (without a date, 1765)*

*Tolling Mourning Bells for Kaiser Franz I*

We have just received a letter from the most commendable upper community office in Schorndorf dated 30 Sept and received 3 Oct, regarding mourning bells on the occasion of the death of His Royal Majesty Franz I, who on 18 August exchanged the worldly life for the eternal one. This was deliberated by the church court and it was ordered upon royal request that on Sunday afternoon between 11 and 12 o'clock the mourning bells would be tolled, to continue daily for 4 weeks.

*Actum d. 20. Nov 1749*

*Selection of a Schoolmaster*

A court meeting was held to choose a new schoolmaster but during the selection the schoolmaster died, whereupon the matter was postponed until a suitable new candidate is presented.

d. Dec. 1749. The schoolmaster selection fell to Eberh. Frid. Weeber

*Actum 1. oct. 1765*

*House-to-House Collection for Murrhard*

Church court was held today expressly to deal with the letter from the upper office, based on a Duchy communication, calling for a helping hand, a collection for the Murrhard fire that occurred on the previous *Batholomai* night of this year, in which the entire city was consumed, reducing it to a pile of ash inside its walls.

It was deliberated and decided the letter received should be handled in a timely way. A delegation of community citizens, church treasurer Josias Hasert, and Jacob Doni was to make a house-to-house solicitation, and a documented report of the results should be sent to the Donation Account Administrator, Mr. Hartman in Schorndorf.

*Actum d. 4. dec. 1778*

*Burial Costs of Mühlecker*

Johannes Mühlecker, Chirurgus died at Welzheim 2 Dec, and the Welzheim upper office wrote here that he left nothing behind for his burial, that payment should be sent; that then 2 fl. 30 x was taken from the town account and 2 fl. from the church account. Since this case should first be reported to the Schorndorf Duchy office, to determine if this restitution is to be paid, the matter is postponed until that decision is made.

*Actum d. 5. Nov 1779*

*A Returnee*

Johannes Jäger, 24 years old, born here 20 Apr 1755, son of a salt settler who was a citizen of Mundelsheim but gave up his rights when he moved away, is in our town for support in his poor and sickly circumstances on the advice of the upper office in Schorndorf on the basis that he was born here, and his father is buried here, and his father was not reinstated as a citizen in Mundelsheim. Because of his miserable circumstances he has for the last three weeks been looked after, and then put in the care of Fridrich Schnable, for support and shelter.

The returnee did not indeed last long at Fr. Schnabel's:

Johannes Jäger, who until now was supported and sheltered by Friedrich Schnabel\*, shoemaker, on 5 May left this house and went to Friedrich Schwegler for support under the pretext that the commendable mayor's office would allow the support money to transfer. Because this was not the truth, Schnable was questioned about this, and he said that Jäger is a demanding one, who was not satisfied no matter what the quality of care.

It was decided the support money should be due to Schnable until the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, and then begin

with Schwegler on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May.

And a year later the returnee Jäger disappeared entirely  
No one seemed to have shed a tear for him.

*Actum in Curia d. 7. Sept 1781 in praesentia Ends-Subsignirter*  
N.B. on 8 September Johannes Jäger left town.

*Actum d. 3. Dec 1779*

*Expulsion*

Christina Schwarz, who is pregnant by Retter, was asked why she continues to live here since she no longer works as maid for Thomas Palmer. Since her time to give birth is near and she must be taken care of and she is living in the Retter house, she was asked to leave the town and ordered to go to her father in Hebsack by Monday and have her child there so that all suspicious company with the soldier Retter will be prevented.

*Actum d. 18. April 1782*

*Bleaching Laundry at the Cemetery*

Because the churchyard door always has remained open during the bleaching of wash, it was decreed that this is now forbidden.

*Actum d. 25. April 1783*

*Misfortune in Göppingen*

After it was requested from his serenity the Duke's office to aid the unfortunate victims in Göppingen by tapping all possible accounts with a tax surcharge, and therefore all villages were asked what they could, of their free will, contribute: so this was deliberated, and it was found that no more than 5 fl could be pledged, the accounts could not support more, as today half of the account was going to pay for the new tower clock.

*Actum d. 21. Sept. 1784*

*Choice of Midwife and Two Geschworene Weiber*

Since the midwife Eva Seibold died recently, it is necessary to select not only a new midwife, but also a new "Geschworenes Weib" [midwife helper]. The vote of the women went to:

Eva, wife of Melchior Nuding, citizen and vineyarder 16 votes

For midwife helper:

Johann Leonhard Seibold's wife Catharina 30 votes

The elder Michael Lederer's wife Catharina	33 votes
Georg Michael Siglen's wife Barbara	36 votes
The younger Jacob Heck's wife Margaretha	2 votes
Tailor Heck's wife	2 votes
David Mejerlen's wife Regina	3 votes
The elder Johannes Heim's wife	1 vote

After several votes of the women fell to Nuding, she was selected and agreed to serve. Since she faced a difficult task, it was hoped God would stand by her and give her confidence and courage.

Since Regina Hartmänn, until now a midwife's helper, is sick and can no longer perform her duties, it was decided to chose two new helpers. Since most votes went to the wives of Georg Michael Siglen, the elder Michael Lederer, and Joh. Leonhard Seibold, but since the elder Michael Lederer's wife was already 50 years old, the other two were selected. Seibold took on the task only under the condition that she would not be forced to serve more than one year if she could not or would not serve longer.

*Actum d. 22. apr. 1799*

*Don't Serve Children Wine During Weddings*

It has been the experience that during wedding and church festivals, school children watch dancing late into the night, and people sometimes give them too much wine to drink. So it is strongly advised, especially to the innkeepers, not to allow this watching during the dances, at least not during the night. And easy-going parents and relatives are asked not to serve wine to the children but rather to keep the children inside by them into the night.

*Handled d. 29. Sept. 1809*

*Extra Pay for the Masons*

Also various accounts were settled. Because the masons had done such a good job with the churchyard walls, they are to share 1 Imi (16.7 Liters), 2 Mass (2 x 1.67 Liters) wine and 48 x worth of bread over and above the wine previously accorded them.

*Act. d. 18. Jan. 1811*

*Midwives no longer to prepare bodies for burial*

A church court was convened today to consider the strongest requests of 29 Dec 1810 and dates following. The two midwives were called in and were informed that the job of preparation of the dead for burial is to be separated from the job of midwife and under no circumstances are they to be combined.

At the same time an election of body wrappers and burial preparers was held. The majority of

voices determined the vote for the best person.



Rosina, wife of Josias Ehmann, shoemaker  
was elected and she was admonished to exercise care and caution in her office.

*Actum 12. Mart. 1817*

*Emigration to America*

Margareta Kurz from here who has the intention of leaving town, was questioned by the authorities today:

1. Why did she come to this decision?  
She wishes to seek her fortune in far away places.
2. Does she understand the difficulties and dangers that face her?  
She must and will face them as other émigrés have.
3. Does she know that by this decision she gives up all her rights for the rest of her life and can never enter Württemberg again?  
This she knows and she will never come back.
4. Does she have the necessary funds for this journey?  
She has enough to get to Amsterdam and the rest will come from somewhere.
5. Are her parents in agreement with this decision?  
Yes, they have nothing against it.
6. Will she persevere in this decision?  
Nothing will change her mind.

She bears witness to this testimony with her signature

Margaretha Kurz

Her father's agreement with his daughter's plan is attested to by his signature

Jacob Kurz

Witness to these proceedings

Pastor, Mayor, and Town Council

\*\*\*\*\*

We admire the courage of the young Margarete Kurz and hope that she found her luck in the New World. With this wish we close our report on life in Geradstetten in the old times. Among all the many, often depressing news items, we did find one small delightful notice. Pastor Jakob Stöltzel reports in the Church court proceedings of 1744 with pleasure:

*Nothing punishable came up and only friendly discussion ensued.*

It was probably not a "dry" conversation which took place here in Geradstetten because we know from Pastor Stöltzel that he was not averse to drinking wine. But that is recorded on another page and is a story in itself. [Translator's note: See *Mayday* in *Who Would 'a Thought*, this volume.]

## Index of Abbreviations

During the period described in this book, both Heller and Gulden were in use.

### *Heller*

1 Pfund Heller (h) = 20 Schilling = 240 Heller

1 Schilling (ss) = 12 Heller

1 Pfund Heller = about 43 Kreuzer (x)

### *Gulden*

1 Gulden (foder fl) = 15 Batzen = 60 Kreuzer (x)

1 Batzen = 4 Kreuzer

1 Kreuzer = about 6 Heller = about 3 Pfennig

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