



Castle Ahrensburg, Caroline Grünberg's childhood home. © PodracerHH / Wikimedia Commons

A fairytale love story

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

In *Friends of Westgarthtown News* Vol. 12, No. 1 (April 2008), we included an article about **Johann Friedrich and Caroline Grünberg**, original settlers at Westgarthtown. Since 2008, we have discovered more about the Grünberg (also spelt Gruenberg) family, including the surprising fact Caroline was a nobleman's daughter.

Friedrich and Caroline arrived in Australia aboard the *Godeffroy* in February 1849. They were from Altona in Holstein and both aged 31. They had been married on 1 June 1844, but only after receiving special approval to do so from King Christian 8th of Denmark, who then ruled Holstein.

The Grünberg's marriage was an unusual one. The King's permission was required as Friedrich, son of Christian Johann Michael Grünberg, tailor and Elisabeth Anna Agneta (née Langbehn), was a commoner, whereas Caroline was of noble birth. Caroline Friedericke von

Schimmelmänn, born 15 February 1817, was the daughter of Graf Carl von Schimmelmänn and Ilsabe Catherina (née Dablestein). Approval was granted for a Lutheran pastor to dispense with banns and all other formalities and marry the couple in Caroline's family home, the Castle Ahrenburg. However, Caroline's surname was recorded for marriage purposes as Dablestein, rather than von Schimmelmänn.

Friedrich Grünberg was an original landholder at Westgarthtown, or Dry Creek, as it was then known. He purchased 20 acres on 24 May 1851 (Lots 27 &



Above: Timber residence built by Friedrich Grünberg at 36 Lesney Street Richmond; Caroline's headstone at Boroondara Cemetery (Kew).

28, Parish of Keelbundora) for £20, suggesting he and Caroline had selected their land when the first Germans settled there in March 1850. In order to legally purchase his land, Friedrich had been naturalized as a New South Wales citizen on 3 May 1851. His occupation was given as carpenter.

Friedrich's land at Westgarthtown — a narrow portion with creek frontage — was located each side of today's Gardenia Road in the vicinity of Melaleuca Drive, Thomastown. The Grünbergs do not appear to have remained there long, however, as on 18 February 1852, Friedrich bought an acre of land at Richmond for £25/12/- (Lots 3 & 4, Portion 8, Parish of Jika Jika), which he immediately set about subdividing. He also built a timber residence, which still stands today, at 36 Lesney Street.

By 1854, Friedrich had purchased more land between Brighton and Mary Streets in Richmond, which he also subdivided and built houses on. The access road he created was first known as Gruenberg Street, but by the mid 1860s, it had changed to Lesney Street.

On 4 May 1855, Friedrich sold his land at Westgarthtown to Gottlieb Knobloch, an adjoining landholder there, for £50. According to Richmond rate records, Friedrich's occupation was given as cabinet maker and he and Caroline remained at 36 Lesney Street until 1861, when they moved to another of his houses nearby.

During 1859/60, Friedrich was involved in a legal dispute with the Melbourne and Suburban Railway Company, whose newly constructed line ran through

some of his land at Richmond. He sought increased compensation for land taken for the railway and also for depreciation in the value of land he owned beside the railway.

Friedrich continued to purchase land in the Richmond and Hawthorn areas and build houses for sale or lease. In 1865, he transferred ownership of several of his properties to Caroline, although retained others, including 36 Lesney Street. This property was finally sold during the early 1880s to Henry Vanheems, an architect. The house is today included on the Victorian Heritage Register as a relatively intact and rare representative of the gold rush inspired boom in Melbourne's inner suburbs.

Friedrich, Caroline and their daughter Johanna (born c. 1850) made several trips to Europe, the first as early as the mid 1850s. During the late 1860s, Johanna completed her education in Germany and France, before returning to Melbourne to teach languages and music. By 1876, the Grünbergs were living in Brighton Street.

Friedrich died at Altona in Holstein on 5 October 1887, aged 69, during a visit there. Holstein was then a Prussian province, having been annexed from Denmark in 1864. His estate, a block of vacant land in Mary Street, Richmond valued at £100 and £2,840 cash and debentures, passed to Caroline.

Caroline returned to Australia and lived at 32 Lesney Street until her death there on 7 October 1902 aged 85. She left real and personal estate valued at £2,610/17/10. However, the terms of her will, combined with two

subsequent wars against Germany, meant it took over 50 years for her estate to be settled. Pastor Max Schramm of the Doncaster Lutheran Church was her executor.

In her will, made in 1901, Caroline left detailed instructions for her burial and memorial. She directed that 'at my funeral three mourning coaches be provided, and that no flowers be used, and that further, my body be attired in my usual black clothes, and that I be buried in the Boroondara General Cemetery in the Lutheran portion numbered 331. I direct that my grave be enclosed with iron railing about two feet high on a stone foundation with grey head stone on which is to be inscribed in the German language the Twenty Eighth Verse of the Eleventh Chapter of the Gospel by Saint Matthew.'

It was Caroline's next direction which caused the long delay in settlement of her estate. She left all her £2,220/17/10 savings, less death expenses, to the Ahrensburg church in Germany to invest and use the interest to support 24 inmates of the church's poorhouses. Her cottages at 30 and 32 Lesney Street were also left to the Ahrensburg church, but only after lifetime possession by her great-nephews Christian Frederick Grünberg and George Gottsleben Grünberg, the sons of Christian Grünberg who arrived in Australia in

FRAULEIN GRUENBERG, who has lately returned from the Continent, wishes to give LESSONS on the PIANOFORTE, also in French (which she has studied in France), German, and English. Terms reasonable. Apply Mr. Gruenberg, Lesney-street, near Church street station, Richmond.

An advertisement taken out by Johanna Grünberg upon her return to Australia (*Argus*, 3 April 1869).

1863. What became of Friedrich and Caroline's daughter Johanna is not known.

George died in 1916 but Christian lived on until 1944. During this time, the 1920 Treaty of Peace Regulations following the First World War allowed for Caroline's estate to be vested in the Public Trustee ie. confiscated for reparations. However, legal difficulties delayed proceedings and despite a mountain of paperwork, the matter had still not been resolved by the end of the Second World War, when the National Security (Enemy Property) Regulations were implemented.

Caroline's estate was finally settled in 1953 when it was granted exemption from the Enemy Property Regulations and £1,270 from the sale of the cottages and £70/5/11 previously accrued rent was paid to the Ahrensburg church.

Research update

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

Many historical articles have appeared in *Friends of Westgarthtown News* since its inception in 1997. As new information becomes available, or more accessible via digitisation, we have been able to fill gaps in our knowledge of Westgarthtown's early settlers. The revised and enlarged article about Friedrich and Caroline Grünberg in this issue is a result of the discovery of new material in newspapers, the Public Record Office of Victoria and the National Archives of Australia. Below are some other recent discoveries.

Rudolf Grassmann, a *Pribislaw* passenger, settled at Westgarthtown in 1850 (see *Friends of Westgarthtown News* April 2008, Vol. 12, No. 1), but by 1852 was living at Callitini Farm at Yarra Bend, near Melbourne. We had previously reported the name as Cattetine Farm, but this was a transcription error. Grassmann left Melbourne for Europe in October 1852 aboard the *Calphurnia*.

Joshua Hammond, a non-German Westgarthtown resident from 1871-93, was featured in *Friends of Westgarthtown News* in April 2010, Vol.14, No. 1. Thanks to Melinda Tam, a Nebel descendant, we now know that Joshua moved to the Maryborough area of Western Victoria, where he died at Blackmans Lead on 24 July 1897, aged 74. He had been living with a granddaughter, Mrs Alexandria Johnson. Joshua's occupation at the time of his death was given as gardener and he was buried in the Maryborough Cemetery.

Adolph Schmutsch, a great grandson of Christian and Sophia Ziebell, served Australia in both the Boer War and First World War (see *Friends of Westgarthtown News*, April 2009, Vol. 13, No. 1). From recently digitised newspapers, we now know 'Dolph' and his wife Mary moved from Melbourne to Bendigo during the 1940s, where they both died. Mary died in 1949 and 'Dolph' on 20 July 1951 aged 70.

Winter family

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH



Sketch of the Winter's house at Westgarthtown by Geoff Borrack.

Friedrich Julius Winter (1810-66) from Neu Buckow, Mecklenburg arrived in Melbourne aboard the *Pribislaw* in February 1850 with his wife Maria Katharina (née Techel) and four children — Johann, Maria, Louise and Dora.

Friedrich was naturalized as a New South Wales citizen on 16 December 1850 and as a Victorian citizen on 31 January 1853. On 2 May 1851, he purchased 50 acres at Westgarthtown (Lots 9 & 10, Section 25, Parish of Keelbundora) for £50. This land, located between today's Tramoo and Dickens Streets, extended from High Street, Lalor to the Edgars Creek. The Winter farmhouse and outbuildings stood in the bend of the creek at today's Ella Court.

A further six children were born in Australia — August (1851), Eliza (1852), Heinrich (1856), Emma Bertha

(1857), Emily (1859) and Heinrich (1861) — two of whom (Heinrich (1856) and Emma Bertha) died in infancy.

In 1858, Friedrich Winter leased his farm at Westgarthtown to neighbour Johann Maltzahn for £72 per year and moved to 480 acres at Epping, owned by Charles Campbell of London. The rent on this land (part Sections 5 & 6 in the Parish of Wollert), together with buildings, fences, walls etc was £156 per year.

Friedrich died at Epping on 24 January 1866 aged 55 and was buried at Westgarthtown. His farm at Westgarthtown, which had been leased by Wilhelm Gene (or Geue?) in 1863-64 and then by Georg Nebel, was valued at £480. Friedrich and Maria's sons Johann, August and Heinrich continued to work the farm at Epping until 1880, when they held a clearing sale there to dispose of their dairy stock, horses, pigs and farm implements and returned to Westgarthtown.



Winter farmhouse and outbuildings, 1956.

The Winter family remained at Westgarthtown for another 70 years. On Maria Winter's death on 13 August 1898, aged 80, she was buried with Friedrich and several children who had predeceased her — Heinrich (born and died 1856); Emma Bertha (1857-58); Maria Jr (1841-61 m. 1859 Joachim Dau); and Johann (1839-91 bachelor).

Friedrich and Maria's remaining children were Louise (1844-74 m. 1865 Heinrich Bollmann); Dora (c. 1849-1925 m. 1869 Joseph Hill); August (1851-1923 bachelor); Eliza (1852-1935 spinster); Emily (1859-1921 m. 1879 John Ward); and Heinrich (1861-1904 bachelor). As well as Friedrich and Maria Winter, all their children except Louise and Dora were buried at Westgarthtown.

The farm was valued on Maria's death at £560. It passed to August Winter, who farmed it until his death on 9 May 1923. It was then owned by his sister Eliza Winter. Following her death on 31 March 1935, the farm passed to Eliza's niece Mary Bold (née Ward), who had lived there with her husband James and sons John and Charles for over 10 years. John Bold (1913-76) trained as a teacher and was principal of nearby Lalor Primary School during the 1960s and early 1970s.

The Winter farmlands between High Street and Mount View Road were sold and subdivided for housing during the early 1950s. The remaining seven acres along the Edgars Creek was sold to Wasyl and Tamara Kruczkowski, who lived in the old house until subdividing their land in the 1960s. Ella Court was named after their youngest daughter.



Winter gravestones in the Westgarthtown Cemetery.

National Trust Heritage Festival

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) will conduct its 2014 Heritage Festival from 18 April to 18 May 2014. The National Trust's theme for 2014 is *Journeys*. Our focus for 2014 will be on that final journey Westgarthtown's settlers made — to their resting places in the Westgarthtown cemetery. More information will be provided in our April 2014 newsletter.



The 2013 National Trust Heritage Festival saw the launch of our new *Westgarthtown Heritage Walk* brochure. From left, Treasurer Léon Borrack with Mayor Cr. Rex Griffin; Phyllis and John Waghorn, Cr. Kris Pavlidis, Cr. Adrian Spinelli, Secretary Gillian Borrack, Vice President John Fry and Westgarthtown Tour Coordinator Tatiana Joukoff.

Melbourne Cemetery Stories Project

A Cemetery Stories Project is at present underway in relation to the Melbourne General Cemetery. Research will involve locating and recording personal information about the more than 1,600 people buried there with German and/or Wendish ancestry, in order to recreate their life stories and shed further light on the early history of Victoria.

Herbert Mees, General Editor of the 2004 book *A German Church in the Garden of God: Melbourne's Trinity Lutheran Church 1853-2003*, is project manager. Several families from Westgarthtown and surrounding areas, such as Krieger, Nebel and Ziebell, have relatives buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery. If you can assist with this historically valuable task, please contact Herbert Mees at herbertmees@bigpond.com

Wendish Heritage Society Australia

Do you have Wendish ancestry? The Wends (also known as Sorbs) are a Slavic people who spoke a Slavic language—Wendish or Sorbian. The Wends live in Lusatia, an area in eastern Germany which during the mid-nineteenth century was divided between Saxony and Prussia. Five families who settled at Westgarthtown were Wendish—Graff, Grutzner, Rosel, Wuchatsch and Zimmer.

The Wendish Heritage Society Australia researches and promotes the Wendish/Sorbian and Germanic heritage and family history in Australia. Its meeting room and research centre is located at the Ivanhoe Lutheran Church's meeting room, 27 Livingstone Street, Ivanhoe, Victoria and is open on the first Sunday each month February-November, from 1.30 – 5.30 pm. The Wendish Heritage Society Australia's postal address is PO Box 307, Heidelberg, Victoria 3084. For further details see www.wendishheritage.org.au

Thomastown Lutheran Church Services

Services are held on the fourth Sunday of the month at 2.30 pm at the Thomastown Lutheran Church, German Lane, Lalor. For further details, contact Irma Hatty on 03 9338 9064 or see the Calvary Lutheran Church website at www.calvarychurch.org.au

Visiting Ziebell's Farmhouse

Ziebell's Farmhouse is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month, 1–4 pm. For enquiries, call 03 9464 1805 or enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au

Tours can be organised for groups of ten or more people. For information and bookings contact Tatiana Joukoff on 03 9464 5062 or joukofftatiana@gmail.com

Trinity German Lutheran Church Archives, East Melbourne

If you had German Lutheran ancestors in Victoria, the Trinity Church Archives at East Melbourne may be able to help you.

The most commonly used records held by Trinity Church Archives are the marriage, baptism and confirmation registers, church minutes and correspondence. Information on many early members of the Trinity congregation is also kept.

The Trinity Church Archives are located at 22 Parliament Place, East Melbourne Victoria 3002. Opening hours are Tuesdays from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. For inquiries, please contact Renate Jurgens on 03 9761 1430 or at auntnati@optusnet.com.au

Ziebell's Farmhouse Open Garden 2013

For the second year, Ziebell's Farmhouse has been selected for inclusion in Open Garden Australia, and this year the garden promises to be more vibrant than ever. With a new guide to Ziebell's Farmhouse being launched across the November weekend, visitors will be the first to enjoy an expanded experience at our ever increasingly popular cultural heritage site — both indoors and out.

The 163 year old Ziebell's Farmhouse and garden are owned by the City of Whittlesea and managed by volunteers from the Friends of Westgarthtown. The farmhouse and outbuildings are included on Victoria's Heritage Register. About 1200 square metres in size, the large informal gardens combine flowers, roses, shrubs, fruit trees and a vegetable patch. A semi-formal flower garden forms its centrepiece.

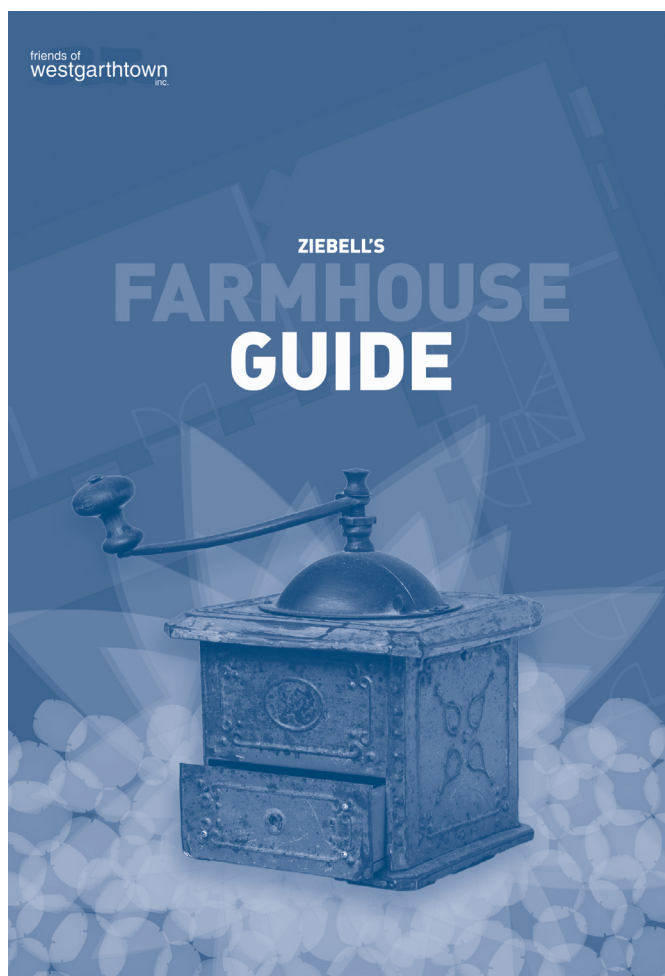
The garden features a 130 year old Cécile Brunner rose and a rare Queen of Sheba climber. Over 300 plants have been recorded. The more than 50 rose varieties include rare and historic roses, a number of which were imported by the Ziebell family in the 1800s. In November the garden is an explosion of colour.

Since 1995, volunteers have formed the backbone of the garden restoration project. Aside from the sheer magnitude of labour required, the single greatest focus has been ensuring the garden remains faithful to its origins. Many of the volunteers are descendants of the Ziebell family, including the project's visionary Sylvia Schultz who has provided the required experience, knowledge and guidance to undertake the project.

More than 160 years ago a pioneering family set out to create a haven that reminded them of their homeland. The result was Ziebell's Farmhouse Garden. We hope not only its beauty, but also its symbolism, inspires visitors: an enduring reminder to the dreams of an immigrant family to forge a new life in a foreign land. The garden volunteers now receive regular assistance from the City of Whittlesea.

New Ziebell's Farmhouse guide

A new 14 page interpretative guide to Ziebell's Farmhouse will provide visitors with a room-by-room overview of the house and outbuildings. Developed with the assistance of the local community and funding from the City of Whittlesea's Community Development Grants program, the format compliments the existing Garden Guide and encourages visitor engagement within the site. To be launched at the Open Garden, the guide is yet another reason to re-visit Ziebell's Farmhouse on the garden's peak weekend.



Open Garden 2013

Date: 16 & 17 November 2013
Time: 10.00 am – 4.30 pm
Cost: \$7 per person. Children under 18 free.
Location: Ziebell's Farmhouse

Note: For this event parking and entrance to Ziebell's Farmhouse will be via Westgarthtown Lutheran Reserve, German Lane, Thomastown (Melway Map 8, H5).

Westgarthtown Descendant's Day

An inaugural reunion for Westgarthtown descendants and their families will be held at Ziebell's Farmhouse on Sunday 2 March 2014.

For many years the Unmack/Ziebell family reunion has been held on the first weekend in March. The Friends of Westgarthtown committee are thrilled to announce that the reunion has now been expanded to all Westgarthtown descendants. The event will allow families to come together and share information with one another, as well as provide a fantastic opportunity for descendants of all generations to see the preservation of Ziebell's Farmhouse and garden now owned by the City of Whittlesea and managed by the Friends of Westgarthtown.

For the 2014 reunion, the Friends would like to particularly focus on the younger generation with a view to keeping the collective heritage interest of this unique group of people motivated to share their knowledge with each other and tell their stories.

Where family trees exist, these would be good to build on and use for each family database. Should there be interest in building a family tree, the Friends may be able to provide guidance if needed. Further suggestions can be sent by email or post for consideration by the sub-committee set up to carry this suggestion to fruition.

Sylvia Vagg has volunteered to coordinate the event — please refer to the enclosed flyer and form for further details. With the cooperation of descendants, we will aim to compile a mailing list that, wherever possible, includes email addresses and mobiles making mass mail-outs simpler and cheaper. The logistics would be simplified if family descendants could appoint one or two coordinators to gather the contact details of their family. We look forward to seeing you on 2 March next year!

Westgarthtown on TV

In recent months Ziebell's Farmhouse and the Westgarthtown Reserve have appeared on two popular television shows. ABC1's Gardening Australia aired a segment on Ziebell's Farmhouse garden featuring Sylvia Schultz and Garden Coordinator Gillian Borrack. Channel 7 Melbourne's Coxy's Big Break aired a segment filmed within the Westgarthtown Pioneer Precinct featuring new Friends of Westgarthtown Vice President and former Mayor of the City of Whittlesea John Fry. To watch both segments, go to www.westgarthtown.org.au/news.

FRIENDS OF WESTGARTHTOWN INC.

ABN 74 674 258 165 Inc. Reg No. A0032721Y

Enquiries (03) 9464 5062

PO Box 95 Thomastown VIC 3074

enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au

www.westgarthtown.org.au

President	Rob Wuchatsch
Vice-President	John Fry
Secretary	Gillian Borrack
Treasurer	Léon Borrack
Committee	Paul Schultz
	Doretta Belot

Historian	Rob Wuchatsch
Heritage Architect	Geoff Borrack
Tours Coordinator	Tatiana Joukoff
Caretakers	Darren Kennedy
	Sheryl Kennedy
Editor	Rob Wuchatsch
Design	Léon Borrack

Westgarthtown is the oldest and most intact German/Wendish settlement in Victoria. Established in March 1850, it will celebrate its 165th Anniversary in 2015.

The Thomastown Lutheran Church at Westgarthtown is the second oldest surviving Lutheran Church building in Australia and the oldest still used as the principal worship centre of a Lutheran congregation.

Heritage Victoria has included the Lutheran Church, Cemetery and Reserve; and Graff's, Siebel's, Wuchatsch's and Ziebell's houses on its Heritage Register, recognising their outstanding heritage value and providing legislative protection for the future.

Ziebell's Farmhouse is Victoria's oldest German immigrant building.

Siebel's Farmhouse, erected in 1860, is the birthplace of Albert Siebel, who in 1934 established the Pura Dairy at Preston, to retail Westgarthtown's milk. Pura has now developed into a leading national Australian brandname.

Wuchatsch's Farmhouse is believed to be the oldest house in Melbourne to have been constructed, owned and continually occupied by the same family.