

Wenstrup – Wisendorphe (1200 – 1400AD)

The second authentic recording of the Wenstrup / Wisendorphe name occurs in the year 1240 in a parish index of the Osnabruck bishop. During this time was recorded a collection of goods from farms in the Damme Mountain region. Taxes at this time had gone up, and approximately one third of a farms total production was to be collected. During this time the goods were collected by the parish bishop, and were collected for the good of “Godescalcus.”

Godescalcus (Latin for St. Gottschalk, Prince of Vends) (d. June 7, 1066) - St. Gottschalk was a poor Catholic who attended the monastery of St. Michael at Lenzen for his education. He was the son of Udo Prince of Abrodites. Udo was killed during St. Gottschalk time at the monastery and he crossed back over the Elbe to the area of Hanover and gathered a loyal Saxon army in revolt. Eventually he was captured by a competing Saxon army under Ratibor and was imprisoned. He was later released and escaped to Denmark, with many of the Saxon peoples loyal to him and his father following. After the death of Ratibor he returned home to northern Germany and regained his Princely position. He was repentant for his sins of being a warrior in carrying out his fathers revenge and led the life of a devout Catholic. The religious leaders of northern Germany became very much supporters of St. Gottschalk and to this regard St. Gottschalk established monasteries in Lenzen, Lubeck, Ratzeburg, Mecklenburg, and one close to the Wenstrup farm in Oldenburg. Thus at these times the collection of taxable goods by the church was carried out in the name of Godescalcus.

It appears that during this time the Wenstrup farm was a Mayorial farm. That is there was a higher level farm acting as a liason between the Osnabruck bishop and the smaller farms. The Mayorial farms were responsible for the collection of the goods of all the farms in their jurisdiction and delivery to the bishop in Osnabruck. On the goods index of the Osnabruck bishop the lesser farms are designated by the term “mansus” and the mayorial farms by the term “curia”. The Wenstrup farm was designated “curia”. In addition to its collection duties for the bishop, the Mayorial farms during this day were also responsible for teaching and aiding the smaller farms to generate a higher yield of produce. As a reward for these duties, the Mayorial farms were given certain privileges by the bishop and these duties could be passed on generation to generation.

The Wenstrup farm during this time was a relatively high yielding farm with respect to other farms listed in this area. In the index a collection of the following goods is recorded:

32 bushels of malt wheat	31 chickens
2 bushels of malt barley	31 cheese heads
8 denare of wine	15.5 ounces of eggs

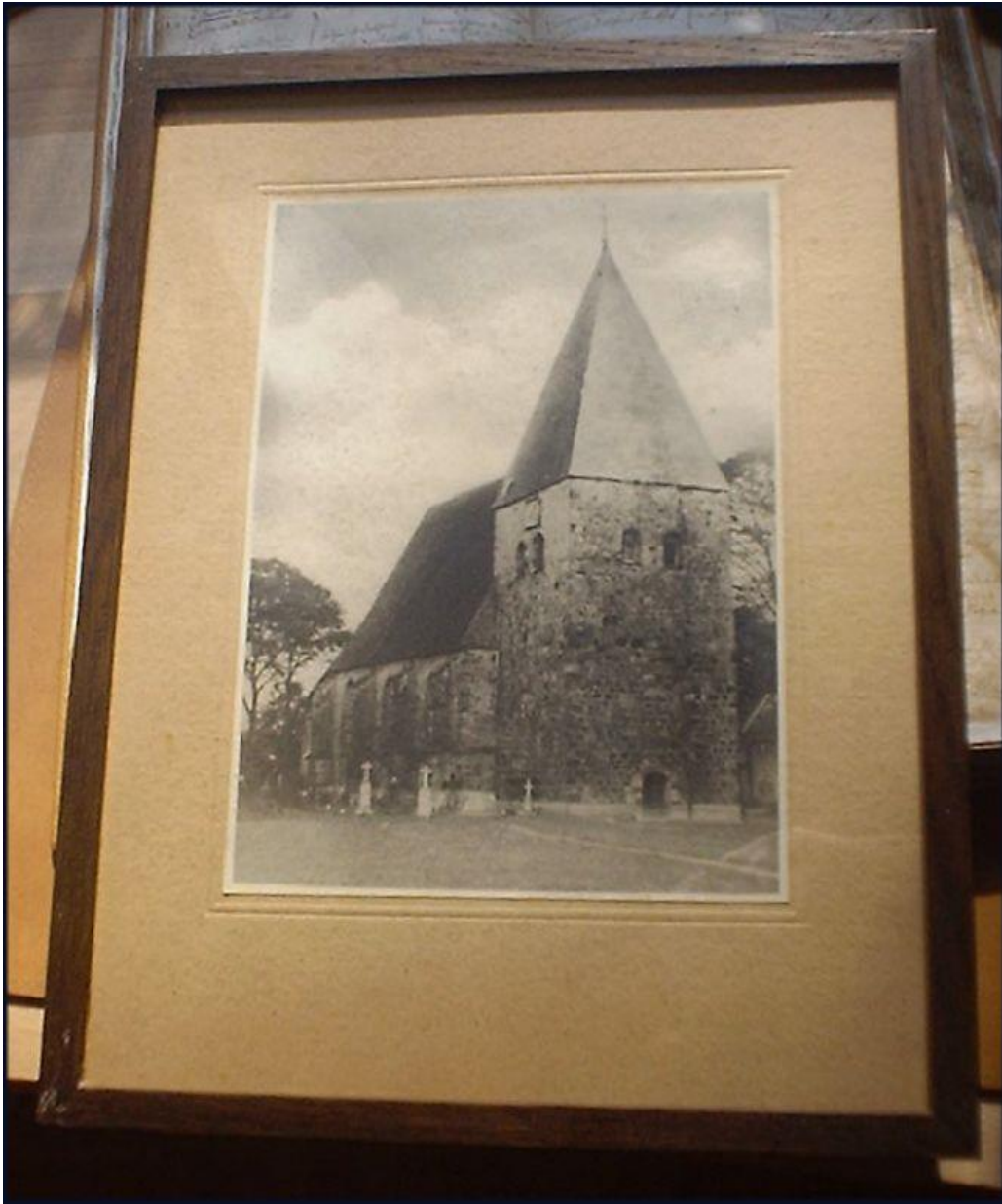
The index gives no mention of the goods required to be collected from the smaller farms “mansus” by the Wenstrup farm “curia” at this time. It seems that the smaller farms looked over by the Wenstrup farm at this time, would have been the small farms sitting on the western side of the Damme Mountains within a reasonable distance for oversight by horse.

It is also not seen at this time that there is any delineation of the requirements of the individual Wenstrup farms; but rather simply the collection of farms Wenstrup. The first mention one can see of separate farms comes from the tax lists of the 16th century, wherein it can be read certain concerns of a separate farm, the Gers-Wenstrup farm.

Twenty years after the mention in the Osnabruck parish tax index in the year 1260, comes another mention from the records of this office. There is reference to a “House of Johannes” and an inheritance listing of 7 farms including at least ½ of one of the Wenstrup farms. It appears that this Johannes of the time was a nobleman of some sort, possibly a Knight. Which of the Wenstrup farms would have come at this time to the House of Johannes, is not completely clear. Then only 19 years later (1279) there is correspondence between Drost Gerung of the town of Vechta and the office of the bishop of Osnabruck referring to this nobleman and the reference of mortgages of some of the Wenstrup farm properties.

Finally during this time period in the year 1285, according to a document written on 12 September, by bishop Konrad of Osnabruck, there is the mortgaging of several farms under the collective title of “these yards in Wenstrup.” These farms are recorded as mortgaged to the noble gentleman Rudolf of Diepholz and in the case of his death to his brother Konrad for 360 marks (Osnabrucker Denare). Upon repayment of this sum Mr. von Diepholz will relieve the mortgage paper. It was common practice during this time to mortgage land in order to obtain the goods and tools required to properly work the land.

Osnabruck is an old town and episcopal see of Germany. In the year 888 after establishment as a bishopric by Charlemagne the town received the right to establish a mint and toll-house. The town was surrounded by walls in the 11th century. Osnabruck also joined the Hanseatic league and was well known for its reputation in the textile trade.



12. Picture of the old Parish Church (2nd Building 13th – 19th Century) St. Bonifacius prior to demolition in the late 1800's.