



A festival event in 1949

(FAHNENJAGEN) Flag Chasing

We lived in Dibbesdorf/Braunschweig, Germany, for a few years where we made many friends. Once a year the village people came together for a celebration called "**Fahnenjagen.**" The best English description I can come up with is "Flag Chasing."

At a distance, an arch was set up and in the middle top a hoop was fastened. One by one, the men on their horses held a flag in one hand which they had to get through the hoop while riding real fast. You had to be an expert rider to enter this contest as the horse was spurred on to full speed to gallop under the arch and you had to be real accurate to get the flag through the hoop. Many men competed for the top prize. The man who was the fastest with the flag won the honors and was declared "King for the Day." Of course, there were many misses but they were all good horsemen and the competition was tough. Afterwards, a fest dinner was prepared. If I remember correctly, the King had to pay for all the drinks. Looking back, it was a fun day.

Before the actual chase the men marched in the street dressed in formal clothes with top hats and fancy scarves. I took pictures of the event in 1949 and 1950, including a picture of my husband riding his favorite horse. I believe he was one of the contestants who won a prize.

A friend and I loved to ride horses and considered ourselves excellent riders. We wanted so badly to join the men but they said, "No women allowed." That

made us mad so we decided to show them. We dressed up as clowns with white painted faces and big red noses. We got big Lotte, a Belgian horse, out of the barn and carrying a small ladder were on our way to the starting line. Placing the ladder up against Lotte, we climbed up and somersaulted down the other side. We repeated this several times and did many other tricks. The crowd loved it--everyone clapped and laughed. Our performance was a big hit. We felt much better showing them we could ride a horse as well as any man. We were confident that we could poke the flag through the hoop faster than any of those guys competing, including the "King for the Day"!





uncle Willi Herbert cousin Guenther



Wagon full of woman and children