

Storchenfreunde Nieder-Klingen
c/o Gottfried Götz
Lengfelder Str. 11
64853 Otzberg
Germany



Governor
Pat Quinn
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16 - 100
Chicago, IL 60601
U. S. A.

August 13th, 2013

Request for permission to use the name 'Illinois' on a hiking trail sign in Nieder-Klingen/Germany

Dear Governor Pat Quinn,

at the beginning of June 2013, my wife and I, Gottfried Götz from Nieder-Klingen/Germany, visited Betty and Eldon Greenwood with whom we have been friends for many years. The Greenwoods live in Chatham, Illinois. We have seen and admired the State Capitol and the Lincoln Memorial in Springfield, Illinois.

Eldon Greenwoods ancestors in the 5th generation emigrated from Nieder-Klingen, Germany via Pennsylvania to Illinois in 1851. The prior community Nieder-Klingen chopped down a part of a forest named 'The Americans' and sold the wood to pay for the journey of the 'Grünewalds' to the U. S.

While doing some historical research in Nieder-Klingen, Dr. Roskopf, a historian, has followed tracks of the emigrated Grünewalds up to Eldon Greenwood in Chatham. I have met Eldon Greenwood in 1995, when he visited Nieder-Klingen and our local executive body Ernst-Ludwig Kühnle. In 1999 I have visited Eldon Greenwood for the first time in Chatham, Illinois, and stayed with him for several days. More visits followed in 2000, 2005 and 2013. Eldon and his wife Betty visited us in Nieder-Klingen in 2001. We have developed a deep friendship by our numerous visits and regular mails.

During my last visit in Illinois in 2013 I read that more than 20% of the Illinois people have German roots. While discussing this with Eldon we developed the following idea:

In the middle of the last century, there was much poverty in Germany and other European countries. As a consequence, many people emigrated, so did the Grünewalds with their 4 children in 1851. To remember these emigrants of Nieder-

Klingen, a sign was placed into the forest of Nieder-Klingen in 1991. The text of the sign is attached as a copy.

Since October 2010, there is a (non-profit) network in Nieder-Klingen which is called 'Klinger Storch.de'. Among its more than 130 members are also Betty and Eldon Greenwood. The aim of this network was to resettle the stork which had disappeared 74 years ago in Nieder-Klingen. On a voluntary basis, the 'Klinger Storchenfreunde' built a stork nest. This year, in 2013, the nest was settled by a pair of storks for the first time! The successful settling made us create an 5 mile stork hiking trail. This can all be seen on our home page 'Klinger Storch.de'.

To remember our and many other emigrants, we now would like to build a 2nd hiking trail (about 5 miles) called 'Illinois'. This trail goes from Nieder-Klingen to the sign 'The Americans' in the forest. The route will be developed by us. The marks of the trail and signs explaining the background of the trail will also be placed by us. The home page 'Klinger Storch.de' will inform about the trail as well. The costs for the trail should be minimal, since our members will complete the tasks on a voluntary basis again and hardly any material needs to be bought.

By using the name 'Illinois' (the new home of our emigrants and the history behind it), we would like to remember emigrants in general, but especially the Grünewalds/Greenwoods. In addition, we would like to deepen the relationship between the people of Illinois and Germany, respectively offer a platform for meetings and visits.

We therefore officially ask you for permission to use the name 'Illinois' for our hiking trail. We hope to build new and deepen existing friendships among both sides. Maybe the people in Illinois would like to come and visit the home of their ancestors in Germany. Our network 'Klinger Storch.de' would be an ideal basis.

If you would like to visit us now or at a later inauguration (hopefully 2014) of the trail, we would be happy to pick you up at the airport, book a nice hotel and show you everything you could be interested in. Nieder-Klingen is only 30 miles from Frankfurt/Main.

Our regional newspapers would be notified by us accordingly in case you give us a positive answer to our request. Of course the same could be done in Springfield. Should you have any questions, you can contact my friend Eldon Greenwood, Chatham, phone 217 483 2338.

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As a second step, maybe business relationship between people/companies on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean could be developed. There is already contact with Rick Brandt, the owner of Brandt Consolidated, Springfield.

Yours sincerely,



Gottfried Götz



Sabine Halbig

Members of Klinger Storchenfreunde

Our request and project is supported by:

Thomas Koch, local executive body, Nieder-Klingen
Matthias Weber, mayor of the community Otzberg (which Nieder-Klingen belongs to)
Klaus Peter Schellhaas, district chief executive of Darmstadt-Dieburg
Manfred Pentz, member of the Hessian parliament, Wiesbaden
Kirsten Lück, principal, Otzbergschule Lengfeld
Volker Specht, president of the hiking club 'Odenwaldclub', group Lengfeld

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