

## Trans. of Thomas' Notes on *Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern*

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Trans: A Skrimshire, Jan. 2007

### “Tales from the Hunsrück Villages”

*Anyone who has seen “Tales from the Hunsrück Villages”, will be able to develop an even deeper appreciation of HEIMAT.*

The documentary film “Tales from the Hunsrück Villages” was produced in the autumn of 1980, at a time when Edgar Reitz and Peter Steinbach were working on the preparations for HEIMAT. The film represents a preparatory work, which at the same time is, in a sense, the polar opposite of HEIMAT. In HEIMAT the leading characters Paul and Hermann, following the example of Reitz himself, leave their Heimat and seek their fortunes elsewhere as many Hunsrückers have always done. “Tales from the Hunsrück Villages” on the other hand deals with those who have stayed rooted in their Heimat. Here these people speak for themselves, they can tell us in their own words about their life experiences, without being directed by an interviewer's questions. In this way Reitz succeeds in drawing an undistorted and very authentic picture of the Hunsrückers and their way of life.

The film team corresponds in essential respects to the one that created HEIMAT: Edgar Reitz wrote the script, and was in charge of the camera work and the direction. Nicos Mamangakis produced the music. In addition: Cutting: Heidi Handorf; Assistant Director: Petra Kiener; Production management: Inge Richter; Editing: Joachim von Mengershausen from WDR.

Outstanding characteristics of the film are the mixing of material in black-and-white and colour, already being tried out here (e.g. almost all the sequences about the slate miners of Bundenbach are shot in black-and-white), as well as Edgar Reitz' voice-over commentary which stands in the best tradition of the early New German Film, especially Reitz' own, as well as Alexander Kluge's.

Unfortunately the film is rarely shown on television. The [Pro-Winzkino in Simmern](#), which has a special connection with Edgar Reitz and his films, has shown it a number of times in Reitz retrospectives, and I saw it there for the first time at the end of October 2002. The basis for the following information is a DVD copy obtained from the [Recording service of WDR](#). A DVD-Edition of the film will be available from 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2007 on, edited by Kinowelt (see [heimat123.de-news](#) and [mediography](#)). For all those who do not yet know the film, about which there is little information elsewhere, I would like to convey an impression of it with the following table, listing the sequence of scenes.

### Sequence of scenes in “Tales from the Hunsrück Villages”

Direction, Script and Camera: Edgar Reitz.

No.	Content (parallels with HEIMAT if any)	Endpoint (h'm's")
1	Landscape shots (for 3'13"), then tracking shot through Schnepfenbach. Voice-over: Letter from Hunsrücker Emil Hahn who had emigrated to Brazil, written in Porto Allegre on 12.11.1867	4'10"

2	Innkeeper Lamberti on the “Three Kaisers” picture in Gasthaus Schmidt, Herrstein.	5’09”
3	Train journey on the former Simmern – Morbach – Hermeskeil line, storyteller (“Stickelscher-Erzähler”) Karl Windhäuser, Edgar Reitz’ former German teacher and sponsor, tells the tale of the young girl Kathrinchen’s first train journey.	7’08”
4	Slate miners’ choir, traditional slate workings in the Herrenberg mine near Bundenbach (Cross-cut to Frau Weckmüller picking blackberries in her garden, 8’41”– 9’04”)	10’03”
5a	A “self-build” house is being erected (continued in scene 9)	10’21”
6	Autumnal scenes, an apple orchard.	10’36”
7	A lineman on the old railway line. Train journey through the Hunsrück forests. Karl Windhäuser tells the tale of the stag that jumps through the open luggage van of the train.	12’24”
8	The old lady, Sett (Reitz: “the master key to the village”), with the help of her relative Rosa Müller, sets out her multifarious family relationships to the rest of the village.	15’40”
9=5b	The self-build house: Doris and Helmut are building a guest house. Cross-cut to: Doris’ father, a farmer, commenting on the situation for farmers (16’28”-17’22”). Topping-out ceremony.	18’18”
10	The Walter family in Woppenroth show the modern furnishing and facilities of their new house, and remember the old house, now demolished.	21’00”
11	Rudi Molz, innkeeper and farmer from Woppenroth, tells how eleven bombs fell to the north of the village in June 1940.	22’40”
12a	“The slate-miners of Bundenbach trimming roofing slates”.	24’30”
12b	Fossil finds in the sheets of slate.	25’53”
12c	How the mines were lit 80 years ago, before electricity came	27’19”
12d	Slate miners’ choir: “My father was a miner”, while panning over the valley of the Schmidtbürg to the Herrenberg.	29’10”
13a	American jet fighters over the Hunsrück (cf. HEIMAT, film 11, Maria’s funeral).	30’00”
13b	American GIs in a striptease bar in Lautzenhausen.	30’39”
13c	Drive through Lautzenhausen to Hahn Airbase (cf. also HEIMAT 3). Voice-over: a prostitute’s story about a visit from a farmer.	31’37”
13d	Frau Rabe and Herr Michels in conversation, on their drive to work on Hahn Airbase.	32’48”
13e	Alfred Michels from Bundenbach on his work as a trainer on the Airbase – “Alfred’s Training Room”.	35’49”
13f	Alfred Michels meets slate workers at the “Bildchen”, a little chapel in the woods near Bundenbach, and talks to them about its story <i>[see end for a version of the story]*</i>	39’37”
14a	Rudi Bast, master carpenter from Schlierschied, tells and demonstrates how shortly before the end of the War on 17.3.1945, he deserted and fled home.	48’20”

14b	Bast points out the site of a former American artillery post on the Leimberg, from which Schlierschied was bombarded with phosphorus bombs, and talks about the noise of the American aircraft.	49'05"
14c	Bast with the Scherer family. The father tells how during the American invasion the family were badly wounded by the explosion of a shell and lost a son, and he shows a piece of the shell.	51'39"
15a	Alice Sulzbacher from Woppenroth gives her sons a guitar lesson and in the presence of some holiday visitors talks about the family and their involvement with music	53'37"
15b	Choir practice for the Woppenroth women's choir, conductor: Alice Sulzbacher.	54'17"
15c	Choir festival in Schnepfenbach Sports Hall, the Woppenroth women's choir is there.	55'37"
16	Cut to Schlierschied church in autumn 1980	55'57"
17=14d	Rudi Bast describes and demonstrates how the villagers hid in a slatemine shaft from the Americans advancing on Schlierschied.	57'13"
18a	Blasting in a quarry. Gemstones in Fischbachtal, whose mining is nowadays uneconomic.	58'48"
18b	The agate grinder's mill. Ernst Biel, "Schliffer" (Grinder/Polisher), explains about the mill wheel and how it is greased, talks about the tradition of agate grinding and demonstrates the craft.	1'02'03"
18c	Ernst Biel in the kitchen of his house, watches his grandmother spinning.	1'02'38"
18d	Herr Leiser, agate grinder in Kirschweiler, in his workshop. Gemstones. About agate grinders' stools and chairs.	1'05'52"
18e	With the gemcutter Schuch in Kirschweiler: the craft, employment status of gemcutters, and specimens of gems.	1'09'36"
19a	The slate miners' choir sings the Schinderhannes song. Cross-cut to train journey (1'09'36" – 1'10'34"), actresses from the Kirchberg amateur drama group in typical costumes in a wood (1'10'55").	1'11'19"
19b	Scene from a play with the Kirchberg amateur drama group: Schinderhannes and Julchen. Actors: Manfred Kuhn (later: Anton Jakob in HEIMAT, Bürgermeister Toni in HEIMAT 3) and Helma Hammen (responsible for the Hunsrücker amateur actors and extras in HEIMAT 3).	1'11'58"
20	Tracking shots through villages and landscape: we see people, some of them at work – among others two people, I suspect the mother and brother of E.R., looking out of the window of the Reitz family house in Morbach.	1'13'29"
21a	History of newspapers in the Hunsrück. Examining the printer's craft.	1'14'24"

21b	Dr. Hammes, formerly editor of the Hunsrücker Zeitung (1936-39 and 1946-69), talks about his journalistic stance, his love of music, and plays to us on the organ. (During the organ music we cut to pictures of the landscape, fields in the morning mist). Finally, Hammes talks about sport and the SV Woppenroth football team which was very successful in the fifties.	1'18'12"
21c	SV Woppenroth's legendary Eleven meet in a pub, the club song is sung, memories and anecdotes are exchanged.	1'21'00"
21d	Albert Sulzbacher, member of the legendary Woppenrother Eleven, and Emil Heidrich, doing forestry work. They talk about the work, and their experiences during the War.	1'24'05"
22a	The gravely ill Gustav Molz shows Peter Steinbach photos of his family home in Wolf an der Mosel. Then he sets off on the way there, with his son Rudi and his daughter-in-law Marga, in a maroon Opel Rekord. When he gets there old companions gather round him once more, greet him and talk about old times.	1'31'12"
23	Children playing in a copse. Albert Sulzbacher tells them how he too used to play there as a child, how the copses came into being in the course of land consolidation, and what ecological benefits they confer.	1'33'48"
24a	Excavations on a burial ground, over 2000 years old, near the Hunsrück Highroad (B 327), an archaeologist's explanation is repeatedly interrupted by the noise of American jet fighters.	1'36'22"
24b	An American family picnicking in the castle ruins of Baldenau near Morbach. Jet fighters.	1'37'20"
25	A Sunday at the Bundenbach slate mine. The slate miners (actively) remember the games of their childhood.	1'43'31"
26	Hunsrück faces. Portraits in black and white.	1'46'03"
27=22b	Jutta Molz and her grandfather Gustav cast their votes in the Parliamentary election of Oct 5 <sup>th</sup> 1980.	1'47'44"
28	Ferdinand Binches, Hotelier from Morbach, at the St. Hubert's Day Hunt of 1980. He puts his own shoot (not entirely without self-interest of course) at the disposal of hunters* from the Ruhr and Frankfort areas, who have none of their own. (cf. HEIMAT, film 10: the carpark for the hunters from Düsseldorf) [*In England "shooters", but sounds wrong in Europe!]	1'49'27"
29	Schneppenbach children's choir in the great cavern of the Herrenberg slate mine near Bundenbach. Soloist Marion Kullmann sings "Ave Maria". Cross cutting to landscape shots (cf HEIMAT, film 11 final chorus, also in HEIMAT 3 Ernst's intention of including a concert hall in the museum at a similar site.)	1'52'18"
30	Alice Sulzbacher has gathered children and others around a globe and "feels" with her finger the site of the Hunsrück. A mnemonic rhyme about it: "Mosel, Nahe, Saar and Rhine, close the Hunsrück all around".	1'53'19"
30-I1	Insert: "Grandpa Molz died on 4.4.1981. This film is dedicated to him".	
30-I2	Credits.	

\*Scene13f: the "Bildchen": the story of this little wayside shrine or chapel near Bundenbach, as told on an information board for tourists, is translated as follows:  
(for the German original see eg: <http://www.hunsnet.de/bundenbach/start.php3?spr=ge>, then choose "Tradition" )

"A long time ago, when slates were being mined here, a miner came out of the mineshaft driving a "Hunt" (open tramway wagon) to tip away the rubble. Here he saw a strangely dressed woman who beckoned to him. He called his workmates out of the shaft to show them this apparition. When they all came out the woman was no longer there, and just at that moment the mineshaft caved in. On that spot where the vision was seen, the miners drove a stake into the ground and fastened to it a picture of the Mother of God. The name "Bildchen" ("little picture") survived when later a chapel was built on the spot."