

## Dornburg Survived Because Of One Hessian Family

If you were to stumble upon the [Hessian](#) town of Dornburg in 1636 you'd probably be wondering where everyone was. You see, that was the year the dreaded bubonic plague (or Black Death, if you will) wiped out the entire village except one family.

From that surviving family, Dornburg has flourished to more than eight thousand residents living in the shadow of an old Celtic settlement and where the ice doesn't melt in summer.

Sounds silly, right? Let me explain...

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It's not like its eternal winter here where you're off skiing or tobogganing in August. Under the basalt mountains, air freezes the water vapor in the air. Then during summer the air reverses, but doesn't quite unfreeze the ice — so it stays all year long.

All right, I'm not a geologist or scientist so I'm doing the best I can to explain it.

How about this? A nearby brewery back in 1869 started using this “cooling” action 8 meters down to keep beer cold. Leave it to us Germans to take a natural phenomenon and make it all about the [beer](#). ;-)

Right over by what's called the *Ewige Eis* or “Eternal Ice” is that old Celtic settlement from around the 6th century B.C. It's a place of myths & legends (isn't one always about love? Of course it is — as the locals about Hilda.); and all sorts of archaeological finds were found here.

The foundations of a 13th century chapel were also found — although it wasn't discovered until

sometime in the 1960's.

Want to learn more of Dornburg's history? Great, because it has its own Village Museum in Wilsenroth (one of the five villages that make up Dornburg). Here you're able to see how people used to live in this [Westerwald](#) town.

One way to see how peeps used to live is to visit the Blasius Chapel, a place of religious life (dedicated to the Archangel Michael) since the very early 9th century. Too bad you can't see what it looked like back then since this one didn't come along until 1746.

Another piece of Dornburg's history is the Parish Church of St. Margaret built atop the ruins of a 10th century castle tower. And there's the Church of St. Matthew, that's not anywhere as old as the 800 year old tree right outside its door.

From the looks of it, I'm sure glad I waited until the 21st century to see Dornburg — certainly much better than had I come in 1636. ;-)