

**Gesendet:** Dienstag, 15. November 2022 um 05:42 Uhr  
**Von:** "Scott Biba" <scottbba@gmail.com>

**Betreff:** Questions about witch trials in 1597 Birstein

Hello Mr. Hartmut Hegeler,

I was given your contact information by Peter Kauck, who said that you had done extensive research on the witch trials in 1597 Birstein.

My ancestor, Margaret Faust, was accused of being a witch in Rinderburgen in May of 1597, along with 3 other women from there. I thought that they were taken to Budingen and held in the tower there. I have been to Budingen and toured the castle and the witch's tower. But have since found some information that says that they were interrogated and tortured in Birstein. I have the book "Walter Niess – Hexenprozesse in der Grafschaft Büdingen", 1982, and have read information on Anton Praetorius.

Peter indicated that the women from Rinderbügen accused of witchcraft in 1597 were really questioned embarrassingly in Birstein at the time, in all other cases the trials took place in Büdingen. The events surrounding these three women even led to a scandal in Birstein at the time.

I have many questions and thoughts about what happened there. I can't find any information online about a witch's tower in Birstein.

- Was there actually a witch's tower, like the one in Budingen? If so, does it still exist?
- Where were the interrogations held?
- Why was it that these women went to Birstein instead of Budingen like the rest?
- What I read in the Niess book is that they were first accused by "Eulen-Ann" from Budingen and ordered there (to Budingen) first and confronted. But since Rinderbügen belonged in the Wolferborn court that they were not arrested on the spot. Then they were brought before the mayor of Rinderburgen for interrogation. After that they were taken to Birstein for their interrogation and torture. Is this your understanding of what took place? Did they go to Birstein because they were from Rinderburgen? Or was there another reason?
- What is the scandal that Peter is referring to?
- Besides what is in the Niess book, do you have any more information about the women or their families?
- After they died, what was life like for their families? I understand that the family was liable for costs. Did they live in shame after those events? Were they treated any differently by the community? Or were their lives fairly normal apart from the fact that they no longer had a wife or mother?
- My research shows that Margaret had 2 sons at the time. One was 12, and the other was 7. What was life like for children in a small village like Rinderburgen? Did they go to school?
- Many people that post the stories of Margaret on the genealogy websites have incorrect information, such as saying she was tortured in Budingen and the wrong methods of torture, compared to what is described in the Neiss book. Are you aware of the story of Anna Faust, who was the mother of Margaret's Husband, Kunz? I have come across information that she was accused in 1562 and was released. I found this story on a genealogy website and don't know if it is true. This is the story that I found. I don't know if any of it is true.
  - " In 1562 Anna Faust was put on trial for witchcraft. She underwent horrible torture and "confessed" to outlandish crimes, such as practicing witchcraft for 20 years. She hexed the milk of the cows of Greta Russel of Lindheim. She spoiled the milk of cows of Kunz Decker of Dudelsheim and was said to have caused Kunz to develop a sudden hernia. She confessed to wearing long black clothing and dancing in the Pfaffenwald with her hoof-footed lover, Lucifer. She was said to always eat black bread and black broth. Her testimony and confessions were so fantastic that the Court refused to believe her. Since she had been horribly tortured, it was felt that the prosecutor had put words in her

mouth. Indeed, Anna Faust recanted her whole confession and the Court was so amazed that it let her go free."

I would greatly appreciate anything that you can tell me about those events.  
I look forward to hearing back from you.

My Best Regards,

Scott Biba  
Waunakee, Wisconsin USA