# Researching the Huppatz family

My great great grandfather Johann Huppatz emigrated from near Cottbus in 1850 to South Australia. He eventually settled at Peters Hill with his wife Maria nee Sonke and four sons.

This is the story of his younger brother Matthes, who also intended to migrate to South Australia, but died before he could do so.

**MATTHES HUPPATZ**
**(28 October 1820 – 6 August 1853)**

**married 7 November 1846**

**LOUISE SONKE**
**(4 September 1824 – 24 September 1858)**

**Children:**
1. Friedrich Wilhelm (10 Sept 1847 – 15 Nov 1935)
2. Martin (1850 - )
3. Maria (1854 - )

**Matthes**, brother to Johann Huppatz, was born in Turnow, Brandenburg, Prussia. He married Louise Sonke who was born in Preilack (youngest sister of his sister-in-law Maria Sonke), daughter of George Sonke, a large farmer. Louise's name in birth records was Elisabeth and was also known as Lisa-Luise.

Matthes and Louise's three children were born in Preilack, Prussia.

Monika Sonke, a Berlin historian, carried out further research regarding the Huppatz ancestors. No record for the emigration of Johann Huppatz and his family was to be found in the archives at Potsdam. This raises the question as to whether Johann somehow managed to evade the government bureaucracy as many did in those times.

In the course of her research, Monika found information relating to a younger brother of Johann. Matthes Huppatz lived at Preilack, not far from Peitz, Tauer and Turnow. The information concerned a series of correspondence between Matthes Huppatz, the Royal Government head office in Frankfurt/Oder and the government administration in Cottbus.

The correspondence was translated from the old German Script by Monika and the letters revealed the following:

**January 31, 1853.** Matthes Huppatz advised the government authorities that he wanted to sell his farm and emigrate to Adelaide, South Australia. The letter revealed that he lived at Preilack and was a 32 year old farmer. His wife Louise (nee Sonke) was 28. He had two sons, Friedrich aged five (born 1847) and Martin aged two (born 1850). It appears that he did not know the birthdates for his wife and sons as he was unable to provide them for the authorities.

**February 25, 1853.** Cottbus administration requested the Royal Government to grant the farmer, Matthes Huppatz of Preilack, a permit for emigration as the necessary clearance from the military had been approved (military service was compulsory in Prussia).

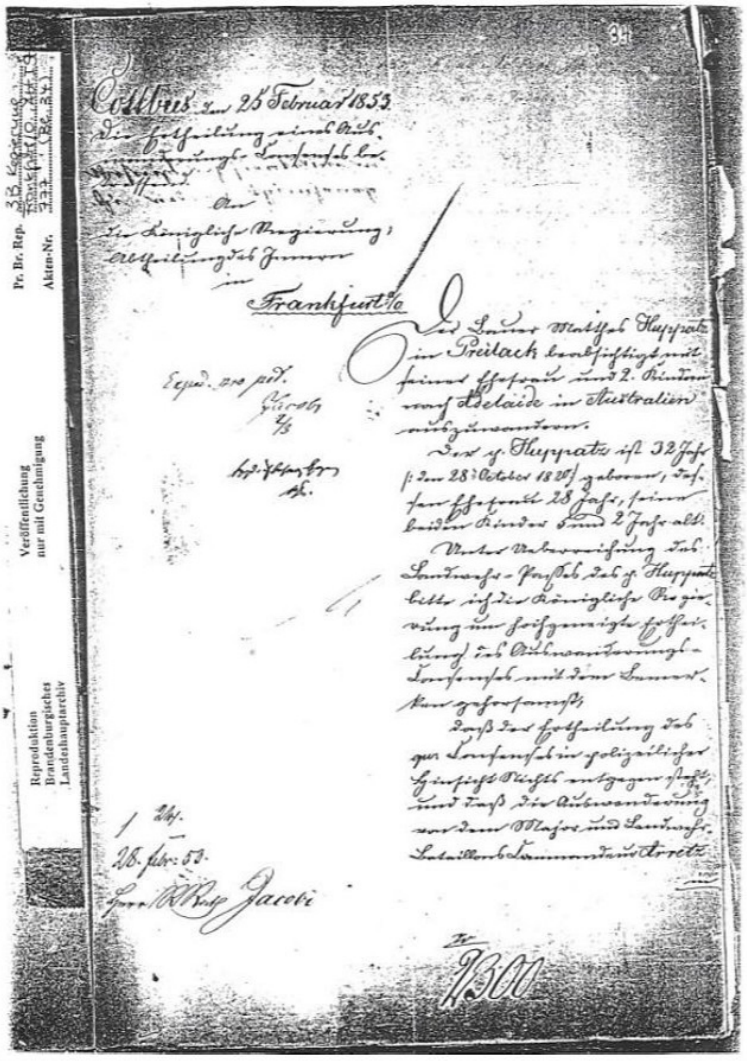
**March 2, 1853.** The Royal Government forwarded to the Cottbus administration the certificate of release from Prussian citizenship for Matthes Huppatz, a farmer of Preilack. It reiterated that the certificate was valid only for the named Matthes Huppatz, his wife and two children. The release was to take effect upon handing over the certificate. There was a charge of 15 silver pennies for the certificate. The Royal Government requested details concerning the valuation of any assets that he was to take with him to Australia.

**March 24, 1853.** A letter was sent by the Cottbus administration to the Royal Government. It detailed reasons for a postponement of the farmer Matthes Huppatz's emigration to South Australia. His farm had not sold; he had interested buyers, but a price was yet to be agreed upon. With a sale price of 3,000 thaler, he would have assets worth 1,500 thaler after payment of all debts.

There were no restrictions on people who wanted to leave the country at that time. However, certain regulations were required before departure took place. The letters give some indication of the necessary procedures and documentation that was required before an intending emigrant was able to leave Prussia in the nineteenth century. It was a frequent occurrence that many people left the country without relinquishing their Prussian citizenship as required by law.

In the records at Potsdam, Monika Sonke found a so called "cancellation" note or an annulment of the files concerning the planned emigration of Matthes Huppatz. He died in August that year before he had the opportunity to emigrate. His wife, Louise, was left a widow with two young sons. An entry was found in the Peitz church books for Matthes Huppatz, recording his death on August 6, 1853.

It seems feasible that Matthes had corresponded with his brother Johann, even though it would have taken several months for a letter to reach Adelaide by ship. It would have taken even longer before a reply was received. The fact that Johann and his family, as well as nearby neighbours, had already emigrated probably influenced Matthes to make the decision to take his wife and sons to start a new life in South Australia.




*25 Feb 1853 document*

Postscript:
Johann's nephew, Friedrich, the elder son of Matthes and Louise, came to Adelaide by 1875. Australian records show that the Huppatz who emigrated was named Friedrich and was about the same age as Matthes' son and was born in Brandenburg, Prussia. His full name was Friedrich Wilhelm Huppatz who became a hotel publican, and later a police constable in Adelaide.

The above extract, compiled by Rona McDonnell, is taken from the family book entitled *The story of Johann and Maria Huppatz and their descendants*.

*Rona McDonnell (nee Huppatz)*