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**GERMANY'S RHINE VALLEY THROUGH THE AGES:  
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CAESAR'S LEGIONS, ARMINIUS,  
CHARLEMAGNE & IKE**

Germany's Rhine valley has been at the center of civilization for more than 100,000 years. In 1856 human remains of what became to be known as the Neanderthals were discovered northeast of Cologne and later dated to be more than 100,000 years old. The civilization thrived in central Europe between 130,000 - 30,000 BC.

During their quest northwards, Romans founded the cities of Trier in 30 BC and Cologne in AD 50. Cologne became the provincial capital for Rome for several centuries. The Germanic chief Arminius, or Hermann, handed Rome its first major military loss in AD 9, when he defeated three legions of about 25,000 soldiers northeast of Cologne and kept Roman activities to the left bank of the Rhine; we celebrated the 2000-year anniversary of the battle seven years ago. Early in the 4th Century, Emperor Constantine converted the region to Christianity and built the oldest still existing church along the Mosel in Trier.

Charlemagne established the Holy Roman Empire in 800, covering all of central Europe. He maintained his court in Aachen (west of Cologne) as well as many residences along the Rhine, including one of the most prominent in Ingelheim, near Mainz. Charlemagne introduced modern agricultural principles such as crop rotation.

The Middle Ages saw the rise of power of the Catholic Church in the area through its three Archbishop Electors of Cologne, Trier and Mainz, three of the seven electors of the Emperor. Most of the romantic castles along the Rhine and Moselle rivers are silent tributes to their excesses. The region produced many great men, among them Gutenberg, the inventor of movable type who was designated as the Man of the Millennium in 2000.

We recently celebrated the 500-year anniversary of Luther's reformation of the German church; it was followed by a counter-reformation along the upper Rhine, ultimately resulting in the 30-Year War which saw a clash of armies from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, France and Spain fight along the river more for dominance of the region than religion.

Napoleon's rise to prominence caused repeated destruction of villages, towns and most castles along the river and ultimately resulted in the dominance of Prussia over other German states with the formation of the Second German Empire in 1871 and later World War I.

World War II resulted in the destruction of many of the cities along the Rhine. On March 7, 1945, the 27th Armored Battalion of the 9th Armored Division arrived in Remagen, about 30 miles south of Cologne and captured the last remaining bridge across the river the next day. During the ensuing 10 days, 25,000 Allied troops crossed the river and shortened the war by many months. Following the war, West Germany established its government in Bonn, home to Beethoven, just south of the much larger Cologne.

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**Wolf Koch** grew up in the Rhine Valley in Oberwinter, a small town dating back to 886, located halfway between Cologne and Koblenz. He has previously prepared presentations commemorating the end of World War I, World War II, the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation, and covered various local and national historic as well as photography topics. He and his wife Linnea travel extensively; their interest in history has taken them to many historical sites in European countries, covering the period between the Stone Age and medieval times. Locally, they have been studying accounts of the Hopewell civilization, have traveled to many mound builder sites in Ohio, Iowa and Illinois and given many talks on the Hopewell civilization in the Rock River Valley. Dr. Koch, a Sterling resident, is a consultant to the oil and petrochemical industry and has been a professor of chemical engineering. Linnea Koch, a graphic designer specializing in exhibit design and interpretive signage is an accomplished photographer.