

**THE FLEINGAU
&
FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ORIGINS OF THE SURNAMES
FLINNER, FLEINER, FLEENOR, FLEENER ETC.**

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In 1961 Else Rath-Hoering of Germany wrote the book Flyner – Fliner – Fleiner, a history of these related families. In this book the author affirmed that the family Flinner was also a variant spelling of this surname.⁽¹⁾ In it the author equates the region around the Town of Flein, located on the Neckar River south of Heilbronn, with the ancient term “Fleingau” (Region of Flint). The author further states that the area was conquered by invaders from the Jura Mountains whose clan name was ‘Staufen’.

A copy of this book was brought to the United States of America by Fleenor family genealogist Elizabeth Evans, who gave this author a copy so that he could explore it for any documentation of a direct connection with the American Fleenor family. It is documented that the American Fleenors are descended from the immigrant family of Johann and Anna Flinner. ⁽²⁾ No evidence of a direct connection was documented in this book.

After this, this author mailed every German in Germany with the surname Flinner, and who had a telephone, a letter asking for information on these related subjects. An exchange of letters yielded a few contacts, including one man who went to the Town of Flein and wrote to me that he could find no evidence of the connection of the Fleingau and the Town of Flein.

Since then Google Corporation has been busy digitalizing many of Europe’s and America’s oldest books. Google has placed them online where they can be read and downloaded. A review of these books by this author has raised doubts that the Fleingau was originally the same place as the Town of Flein.

Ober-Steuerrath von Memminger⁽³⁾ identifies the Fleingau as having been in the region of the Town of Blaubeuren, which at one time was included in the County of the Danube, and was earlier called ‘Flina’, and is located in the Pleonunger Valley. He references two ancient histories: A) Richard Murbach the Good’s Book of the Year 760, and B) a book written a century later containing documents about some old cities in Wuerttemberg. He explains further that two old Roman roads traverse

the region, and that there are evidences of Roman occupation. The name Fleingau is explained by an official of the Emperor in his history of Elschingen as having been the “Region of Stones” (flinz), which he identifies as a ‘high rock’ (cliff). He further speaks of the “Fleinsboden” (Bottom Land of the Stones), which was named after flint flagstones found there. Using the same reference, another book⁽⁵⁾ also states that the Fleingau was also called “The Stone Region”.

There is some ambiguity about the definition of the ancient word ‘Flinz – Fleins’. Some experts⁽⁶⁾ consider it to have been an old German word for any stone. Others say that it meant a pebble⁽¹⁾. The highly regarded German dictionary, Brockhaus, says that the term is a current regional dialectic word for ‘flint’, otherwise known as ‘Kiesel’. It is the origins of the current English word ‘flint’.

All of these older texts say that the Fleingau is near the town of Blaubeuren. The Blau (blue) is a 15 km long river in Baden-Württemberg, southern Germany, and a northern tributary of the Danube. The source of the Blau is the karst spring of *Blautopf*, in the Town Blaubeuren, in the Swabian Jura Mountains. It flows east through Blaustein to the city of Ulm, where it empties into the Danube.⁽⁷⁾ The Town of Flein sits on the Neckar River, which is a tributary of the Rheine River.

In summary, if Rath-Hoering is correct in saying that the area around the Town of Flein is called the Fleingau, it is documented that a much older usage of that name applied to an area 132 kilometers to the southeast of Flein. The documented date for the earlier usage of the term goes back at least to the year 760, as compared to the Thirteenth Century for the Town of Flein. The fact that this older Fleingau lies in the Jura Mountains is compatible with Rath-Hoering’s statement that the people of the Town of Flein came from the Jura Mountains. This adds considerable antiquity to the various surnames derived from the Fleingau.

Also, about half way between Flein and Blaubeuren lies the Flinberg (Flint Mountain), near the ‘Schwaebish-Fraenkisher Wald’ (Swabian - French Forest), a nature preserve in the center of the Town of Murrhardt.⁽⁸⁾ This observation raises the possibility that there is an entire area of flint running east to west within and north of the Jura Mountains, and which likely is connected to the origin of the above listed surname variations. This new understanding greatly raised the author’s curiosity, and encouraged further research. Somehow, it seemed to fill a void in our understandings of who we were, and where we had come from.

The explanation for these bands of flint in the Jura Mountains, which gave rise to the numerous variations of the surnames mentioned above, is interesting. The complex biochemical processes by which flint in general is formed remain largely unresolved. What is clear is that flint, including that found in the Jura Mountains, is rock which occurs as inclusions within chalk or limestone. The general structure is a mixture of the silicate mineral quartz, calcite, and organic remains originating from seafloor sediments. These particular deposits are the remains of sponges and other marine animals from the ancient Tethys Sea lying

between Laurasia (Europe) and Gondwana (Africa) during the Jurassic Period 200-145 million years ago. The diverse organic components represent impurities in the quartz which contribute to flint's semi-translucent or opaque appearance and widely varied colors.

The transformation into flint continued as the Tethys seafloor crust was raised and pushed up on to Europe ahead of the collision of Africa with Europe and the folding of the Alps around 30 million years ago. A deep depression formed along the northern edge of that boundary as the European plate was pressed beneath the African plate. The displaced oceanic crust was both pushed ahead by the advancing collision, and squeezed ahead by the overriding more dense Alpine gneiss capstone. As the Alps continued to be raised to the south, enormous pressure persisted on the former intermediate seafloor formation as it was transported even further inland. In the Alps, these stresses were so significant that the metamorphic gneiss capstone of the highest peaks is actually of African plate origin. In the Jura and similar foothill regions, the former seafloor rock structure finally rested as a high plateau, analogous to a huge berm of material pushed ahead by the Alps. The stresses and pressures involved in lifting and transporting the seabed rock over millions of years were significant to the formation of the flint inclusions and limestone in this region. Weathering and erosion of the north face of the Alps and the more ancient displaced oceanic crust eventually filled the depression with a cobble arrangement, which subsequently weathered into the rolling hills topography that presently arcs north of the true Alps from eastern France to central Germany to Austria. The "Jura" flint was created and later revealed by these processes, and it is known today by various names across the region. (9, 10)

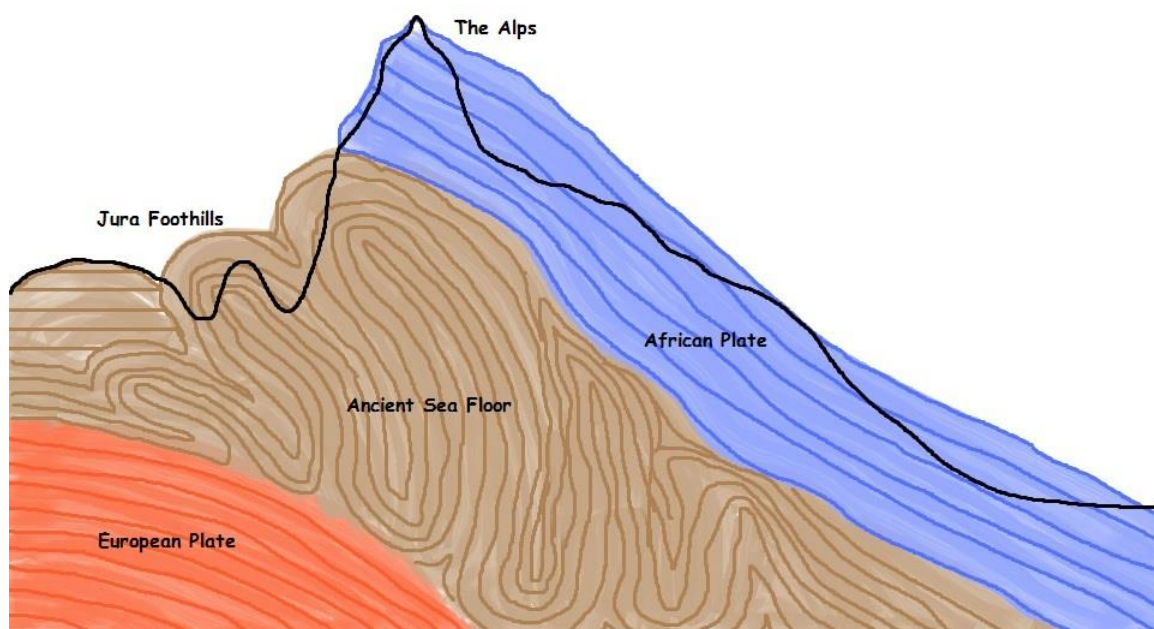
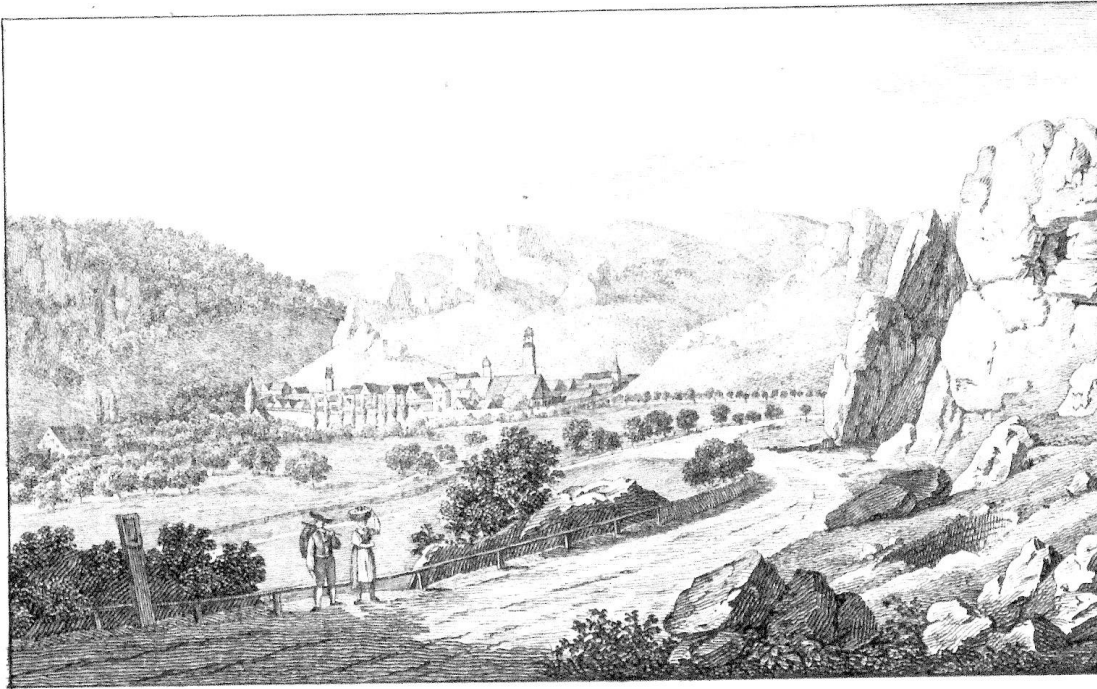


ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES H. FLEENOR



Blaubeuren.

THE VALLEY OF THE BLAUBEUREN, OR THE
FLEINGAU

REFERENCE #3

The Danube River (Danau Fluss) drains the northern face of the Alps and their foot hills, the Jura Mountains. It is the second longest river in Europe, and is geologically very old. It begins in the southwestern corner of Germany, in the Black Forest at the Town of Donaueschingen, and flows into the Black Sea. Its source is variously considered to be the confluence of two rivers, the Brigach and the Berg at Donaueschingen, or at a karst spring located above the confluence. On its ancient course it cut canyons through the northern siltation off of the Alps.⁽¹¹⁾ ⁽¹²⁾



THIS PHOTO CATCHES BOTH THE CONFLUENCE OF THE TWO RIVERS FORMING THE DANUBE, BUT ALSO THE DONAUBACH - THE KARST SPRING THAT MANY CONSIDER TO BE THAT RIVER'S ORIGIN. NOTE THE BLUE COLOR THE WATER IN THE SPRING.

REFERENCE #12

One of these canyons encircles Blaubueren. The current course of the Danube is to the south of the town, but a massive semicircular old channel of the ancient Danube lies to its north. The western half is now dry, but at the apex of the arch of this old channel another karst spring originates, the Blautopf (Blue Pond or Kettle). It emerges as a stream from a large cave system extending from the limestone mountains. It is 22 meters deep, and can produce a flow of 32,000 liters per minute. This water forms the Blue River (Blau Fluss), which runs to the southeast down the old channel of the Danube.⁽¹³⁾



THE BLAUTOPF AT BLAUBUEREN - NOTE THE BLUE COLOR

REFERENCE #13

The word 'Danube' has its origins in Proto-Indo-European, the 7,000 year old language originating near the Caspean and Black Seas. It simply means 'river'. The Danube empties into the Black Sea, and these Proto-Indo-European speakers

migrated up it's valley, making it the site of some of the earliest human cultures.^(4, 14) The term 'Blue' has been associated with it from earliest times, long before Johann Strauss II wrote his famous "Beautiful Blue Danube" waltz.⁽¹⁵⁾ It is reasonable to assume that from prehistoric times it has been called 'The Blue River', which would have been spoken as 'The Blue Danube'. Given all this, it is possible that the present Blue River Valley was called this when the Danube flowed down it, and the current flow from the Blautopf just assumed that name when the main river shifted to the south. It is the limestone dissolved in the water which gives the river its distinctive blue color.

However, human occupation of the current Blue River Valley was far older than that of the Proto-Indo-European speakers. A stone figurine of a woman dating back 40,000 years has been found in a cave near Blaubeuren. It is the oldest known representation of a female ever discovered.⁽¹³⁾

The beds of flint occurring in the Fleingau, and all along the northern edge of the Jura Mountains extend to the west from Swabia into France. With documentation of human occupation of the area going back 40,000 years, it is not surprising that the most noted Neolithic (New Stone Age) flint projectile points have been found there. Solutré, in east-central France near Mâcon is where they were first discovered, and this type of points and the people who made them are called 'Solutrean'.⁽¹⁶⁾



SOLUTREAN POINTS

REFERENCE #17

A graveyard with multiple burials in a peat bog has been excavated in Florida. The DNA from these bodies is European, and the flint tools associated with them are Solutrean dating 20,000 years ago. Solutrean points have also been discovered in three sites in Virginia (Cactus Hill south of Richmond, Saltville in Southwest Virginia, and in a mammoth skeleton caught up in a fishing net off of the continental shelf), in sites in Maryland (Delmarva Peninsula), and in Pennsylvania, all dating back 20,000 years. This flint has been spectrophotometrically identified as having come from the French Jura Mountains. Additionally, figurines and projectile points made from soapstone originating in Spain in the Solutrean artifact zone have been excavated in Ontario, Idaho(18, 19, 20). One fourth of the Lake Superior region's Ojibwa (Ojibway) Indian Tribe's DNA is derived from Europe 15,000 years ago, the other three fourths being of Siberian origin.(21)

The oldest traditional flint points discovered in the United States before these Solutrean points were the Clovis type. Many authorities now believe that the Clovis point is derived from Solutrean.

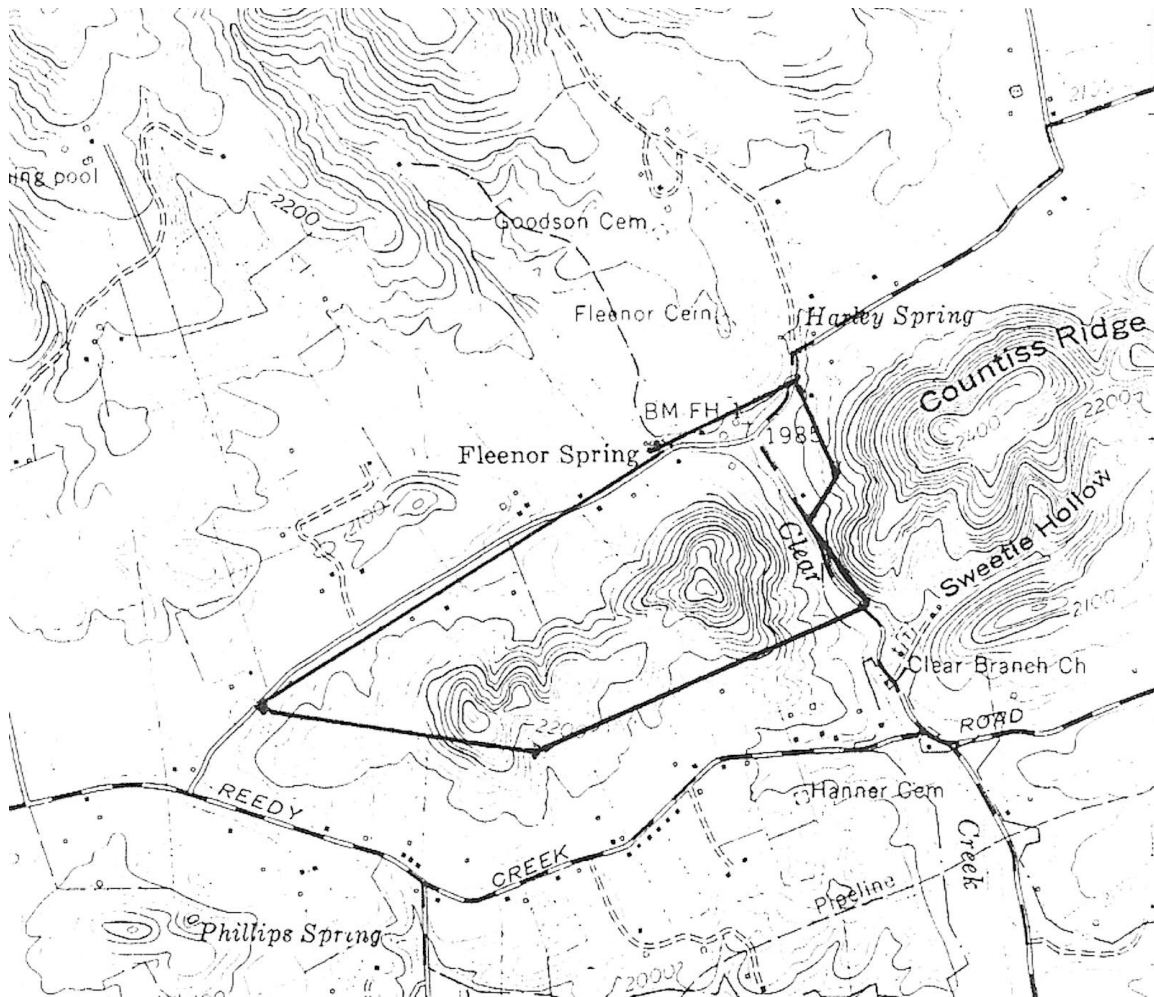


CLOVIS POINTS

REFERENCE #22

One could legitimately wonder what the point of all this is. The starting point of this journey was the settlement of the Fleenor family in Washington County, Virginia in the time period from the 1760's to the 1780's. They had come from Germany in 1754. Four of the brothers settled in the rolling hills of karst country surrounding a large spring and its associated pond, now labeled 'Fleenor's Spring'. They settled there precisely because of the fine limestone water that the spring produced. This water was viewed as being very desirable for the production of brandy, which the family produced commercially for four generations. They had come from the brandy producing area of Europe, the greater Rhine Valley (their ship's manifest had stated that all the passengers had come from either the Palatinate, Wuerttemberg, or Hanau). This spring is only thirty miles from the Solutrean flint points at Saltville. One of the brothers, Nicholas, later moved a little west to Lime Hill. The author's grandparents still lived on this land when he was young. He has fond memories of drinking their well water, which was as blue and

lime stone sweet as could be, as it sat in a white enamel ware pail, with a dipper floating in it.



FLEENOR'S SPRING (23)

The German habit of naming limestone springs and rivers 'blue' persists throughout the central Appalachians. Three miles from my home the Blue Spring emerges from a cave, and empties into a pond. 130 miles to the north the Blue Stone River flows through karst.

It has been observed that often the European settlers in the United States kept on going west until they found country that reminded them of where they had come from. The coal mining towns of Wales can hardly be told apart from the coal towns ten miles from the author's home. The old wooden single room churches of Alsace cannot be distinguished from those of Washington County, Virginia. The rolling hills with their karst springs and associated caves and ponds of Southwest Virginia are very reminiscent of those of the Swabian Jura Mountains, and the Fleingau. The eroded sediment mountains and valleys of the Fleingau look very

familiar to someone living within ten miles of Black Mountain and the Cumberland Plateau. It is a striking coincidence that Salureans 20,000 years ago and Fleenors in the 1700's both found themselves on parallel journeys.

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