

John Fontenay

Hamburg Ship Broker

and Merchant

Founder of the Foundation
John Fontenay's Testament

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Dieter Gartmann and Harald A. Kirsten

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Foreword

The existence of this book only became possible once the administration of the John Fontenay Testament was again controlled by the family as of 1995. This changed course is mostly due to Harald Kirsten, who in the year 1975 for the first time called the widespread members of the Fontenay Testament together for a family day in Hamburg. With great personal dedication, and thanks to his integrating personality, he initiated the change that led to the desired outcome at the end of 1994. As the chairman of the advisory board Harald Kirsten then decisively shared in steering the fortunes of the testament and in particular he actively supported the family research. During his term on the advisory board, from 1995 to 2005, a total of 12 "John Fontenay Newspapers" were published, which were sent to the family members and additional interested parties. In this newspaper, the research results concerning John Fontenay's life and surroundings – as well as his testament, today a family foundation – were published.

As the years passed Dieter Gartmann, Gerrit Aust and Dr. Burghart Schmidt in particular brought numerous surprising results to light, with great dedication from which the life of John Fontenay successively surfaced. In the same way Harald Kirsten and other family members added numerous interesting details from written records and collections. Thus Fontenay's life and that of his family by marriage, the Kirsten family, during the Hamburg time (from 1800 to 1835) is relatively well documented. There are no certain findings, on the other hand, about his early life, from his birth in 1770 until his arrival in Hamburg. There is however so much unusual evidence that fits together like clockwork that it seems justifiable to mention it, and to include further considerations as research results in the appendix.

Responsible for summarizing the reports published in the "John Fontenay Newspaper" was Mathias Eberenz. With admirable meticulousness and endless patience he put the individual articles in chronological order and highly readable form. For this, we would like to take this opportunity to express all our thanks. This first edition of the John Fontenay story has now, after more than five years, been once again edited and updated by Dieter Gartmann. And so we have here ultimately a piece of Hamburg history which brings to light not only John Fontenay's life, but also his surroundings at that time in Hamburg and those of today's Fontenay foundation.

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Introduction

Fontenay. The name alone excites the imagination. “Sounds rather elegant, somehow French or English. Did a nobleman once live here?” This is how many Hamburg residents react when they encounter “Fontenay,” “Klein Fontenay” and “Fontenay-Allee” on the street signs during their Sunday afternoon walks along the Alster – between Moorweide and Alsterufer, between the Hotel Intercontinental and Warburgstraße. Without realizing it, these passersby are on the trail of long-hidden secret.



The streets Fontenay and Fontenay-Allee

In Search of Clues

The first clue as to the personality behind the name Fontenay is given by a bronze plaque in close vicinity to the Alster shore, next to the Hotel Intercontinental. It displays the portrait of a certain John Fontenay, who lived between 1769 and 1835. From his memorial, which stands somewhat inconspicuously in the shadow of the colossal war memorial for the honour roll of the German-French War of 1870/1871, this Fontenay looks his viewers straight in the eye. He is very self-confident, perhaps even a little stern. The high collar and elegantly knotted cravat under his prominent chin suggest that this is the portrait of a wealthy, educated citizen.



The bronze plaque on the Fontenay memorial

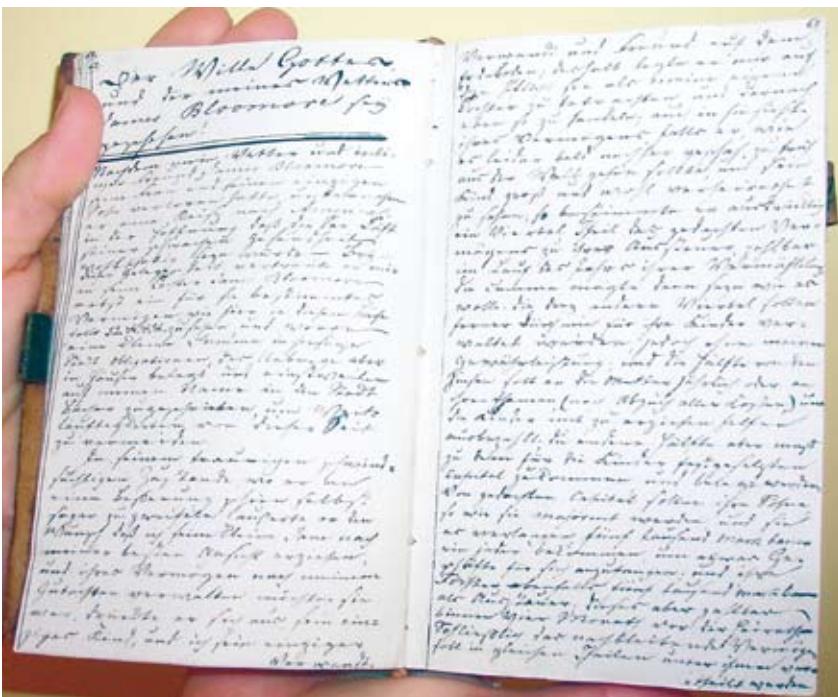


The Fontenay memorial

Was this John Fontenay a citizen of Hamburg? An Englishman? A Frenchman? And why do these three streets of houses, which border on some of the most exclusive properties along the Alster, bear his name? Even more: one of the streets is simply named after its owner, “Fontenay” – with no further addition such as “street” or “way”.

Evidence from the Past

Only a few hundred meters away from Fontenay’s memorial, at Alsterufer 34 which is the seat of the family endowment “John Fontenay’s Testament”, a small notebook can be found, well-protected behind the glass of a display cabinet. It is John Fontenay’s notebook. It contains a total of sixty pages of text. Sixty pages of writing, composed in black ink using a fine quill, temporarily taking us back in history, to the twenties and thirties of the 19th century. They afford us a first impression of the man Fontenay, even if the notes appear trivial at first glance. Fontenay notes in great detail, for example, the costs of his spa trips to Bad Nenndorf. This reveals, however, his aptitude for business. He holds forth for pages about the German language, which confirms the conjecture that he is not from Hamburg. And he makes a list of the not-so-insubstantial wealth which he intends to bequeath on his four stepchildren. He does the same with a hand-



John Fontenay's "booklet" contains 60 pages of handwritten notes.

some sum of money which he manages at the request of his deceased cousin James Bloomore in trust for Bloomore's daughter Jane. At least this much is clear: the man was not poor. On the contrary.

John Fontenay: Ship Broker and Merchant

John Fontenay, by unanimous report of the few other written sources which have survived up to the present, was one of the most successful ship brokers in Hamburg in the first third of the 19th Century. Following his election as broker in 1801, he brokered more than 100 sailing ships in the first year alone. And in the years that followed, Fontenay and his partner from England, Thomas Goulton Hesleden, ranked among the most successful in their branch. Thus John Fontenay amassed considerable wealth over the years, which he invested in property, particularly in property outside Dammtor along the Alster. Thanks to smart and daring decisions, even harsh setbacks such as the occupation of Hamburg by the French from 1806 to 1813 and the resulting economic demise of Hamburg, did not prevent him from leaving a legacy of great wealth. To go back further: John Fontenay was already an affluent man when he married the equally well-to-do widow of a Hamburg butcher in the year 1802 in Hamburg. Anna Catharina

Birth in Philadelphia?

It is a little strange: John Fontenay never, as far as we know, celebrated his birthday in his lifetime. His exact date of birth has not been passed down, only the time frame of his birth is known. Depending on the source, counting back from his stated age, it was the end of 1769 or the beginning of 1770. On the family gravestone, which has meanwhile been brought to the Ohlsdorf Cemetery, it merely states: “born 1770”. Accordingly, it is highly probable that John Fontenay was born around the turn of the year from 1769 to 1770. Conception, nine months earlier, would then have been in April of 1769. This means that even with a theoretical two to four week leeway in timing, Jane Fontenay very probably became pregnant during the passage from Jersey to Boston on board the “Molly”. The long voyage and crowded conditions on board the “Molly” could also be seen to support this conclusion: there were, after all, 33 male and mostly single passengers on board, 24 of them not yet 16 years of age. Such a young motherhood would not have been unusual, as according to the precepts of the Anglican Church in the 18th Century, girls were allowed to marry as young as twelve years old in exceptional cases.



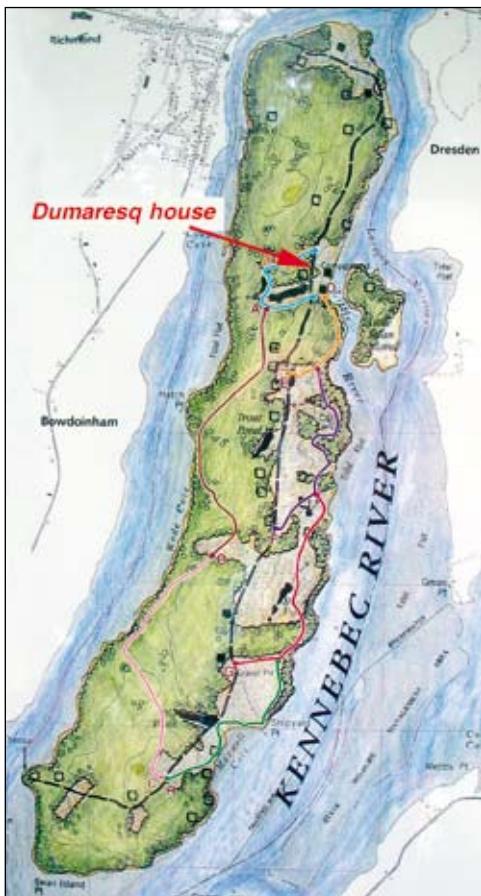
Philip Dumaresq. His family descended from an old aristocratic dynasty from the Channel Island Jersey. He himself was considered to be influential in Boston.

But what became of Jane Fontenay once the pregnancy became apparent? According to her contract, Jane Fontenay was bound to the party who paid her costs for the ship transport. This was in force until the “first owner” “transferred” the indentured servant – Jane Fontenay – to someone else. One could also say “sold”. The agent of the sailing vessel from Jersey entering port at the Boston Harbour, “Molly”, was a certain Philip Dumaresq, himself the descendant of a well-known aristocratic family from the Channel Island who now lived on the other side of the Atlantic. As we know today, Philip Dumaresq was likely also the initiator of the sale of the boys and girls to Boston families.

A number of things would seem to suggest that Jane Fontenay was the only passenger of the “Molly” who came to the Dumaresq family as an indentured servant. The fact that Dumaresq’s 24-year-old nephew Stephen was on board the “Molly” is especially striking.

Presumably he had the job of collecting the boys and girls in Jersey and of looking after the well-being of the young people entrusted to him on board. Perhaps – but this is pure speculation – Stephen Dumaresq very particularly “looked after” Jane Fontenay during the seven-week-long voyage that was accompanied by severe storms. Besides, she was practically a family member, because a relative of Stephen’s – Jean Dumaresq, a Jurat (a kind of minister) on Jersey – was also the godfather of Jane Fontenay’s oldest brother Jean. What path Stephen Dumaresq took after 1770 remains unclear. It is only known that he had no legitimate offspring. All the more interesting, therefore, are the life circumstances of his uncle, Philip Dumaresq, whose family at that time was among the most distinguished and influential in Boston. It is also interesting that no evidence of John Fontenay’s birth has been found in any church records in Boston

up to the present. Why? Because John Fontenay was presumably born on Swan Island, an island in an idyllic location on the Kennebec River, about 200 kilometers north of Boston.



View of the Kennebec River from the Dumaresq home.

Map of Swan Island.



The Millentor around 1800. The city council had it built as the eastern gate around 1659 – as an exit from the city to the rope walks (the rope makers manufactured ship's rope). The gate was in existence until 1805, when the bastions along the city wall were voluntarily razed. The citizenry wished thereby to demonstrate openness and neutrality.

considers that they were able to afford a garden house outside the city. And certainly not with his business partners. They definitely spoke his language – especially since Fontenay was mostly in charge of ships going to and from England.

Fontenay Receives the Broker's Staff (Maklerstock)

Although John Fontenay is not listed in Hamburg address books prior to the turn of the century, it can still be assumed that he had been living in the city for a while by this time. It is possible that he had been in Hamburg for at least five years. At least this can be gathered from the wedding log from January 1802. Fontenay was presumably already working for a Hamburg ship broker in 1800. This much can be assumed, at any rate: Without the necessary professional experience, Fontenay would hardly have been elected as ship broker in May 1801. Fontenay's decision to go to Hamburg could be a consequence of the enormous boom in trade experienced by the city between Elbe and Alster shortly before the turn of the century in the course of the revolutionary wars.



The broker's staff, emblem of the sworn Hamburg broker.

Trade with England grew especially rapidly. Most of the ships which Fontenay brokered in his name in 1801 had England as their destination and usually came to Hamburg loaded with coal, linen, and colonial goods.



Fontenay Becomes a Hamburg Citizen

His election as broker, and also his wedding plans with Anna Catharina Kirsten, obligated John Fontenay to take the citizen's oath in 1801. Anyone wanting to engage in a trade, marry, or purchase property in Hamburg at that time could only do so with the aid of the "Bürgerlichen Befugnis" (authorization of citizenship). This required taking an oath before the Hanseatic City Council in the town hall, swearing to always act in good faith and loyalty toward the city and the council, to pay one's taxes, and obey the law. The acquisition of these lesser citizenship rights (*kleines Bürgerrecht*) cost the equivalent of 225 euros; three times this amount was charged to applicants for greater citizenship rights. For this, the "greater" citizen gained the privilege of hunting on city estates and of using the "big scales" for the goods he traded.



The Hamburg city hall on Trostbrücke in John Fontenay's day (middle right). The façade of the building which was built around 1650 and completely renewed in 1772 was decorated with statues of German emperors. The city hall existed until the Big Fire of 1842. In the background is a bank and to the right a number of private townhouses. The building in the foreground housed a paper business.

As a broker, Fontenay was not interested in these privileges. Consequently, he merely acquired “lesser citizenship”. Since Fontenay was undoubtedly not the son of a Hamburg citizen, he was, however, obligated by law to bring at least one citizen of the Hanseatic city with him as a supporter. John Fontenay’s choice was the ever-ready lease-holder of the Raths-Schenke, Nicolaus Ludolph Wolters, who, as we know today, turned up in countless other registrations of that time. So while John Fontenay repeated the oath – the wording was the same for both citizenship rights – the inn-keeper Wolters was able to earn a few extra marks, as he conveniently served as notary public at the same time.

The acquisition of Hamburg citizenship did not, incidentally, automatically grant Fontenay political rights as well. In order to be politically active in Hamburg, one was required to be what was called an “Erbgesessener”: the male owner of a piece of property within the city limits. In addition, one had to have a sum of 2000 taler at one’s disposal, the equivalent of 35,000 euros in today’s currency. Although Fontenay quickly became the owner of a house in the city and somewhat later purchased his first estates in front of Dammtor, he nonetheless avoided political and even social involvement his whole



The Hamburg city militia exercises on Großneumarkt, around 1800. This army of mercenary recruits consisted of an infantry of 1,800, an artillery of 80, and 84 dragoons (cavalry). Together with the civilian militia, its purpose was to defend the city. The foot soldiers wore the Hamburg colors: red and white.

life. Apparently, he was only interested in his affairs as a broker and the family into which he married in 1802. John Fontenay himself remained childless, but when he married Anna Catharina Kirsten he suddenly became the step-father of four children at once, all of whom he provided for lovingly up until his death in 1835.

Fontenay Marries the Wealthy Widow Anna Catharina Kirsten

The documents which have been passed down give no information about when and under what circumstances John Fontenay first met the widow of the Hamburg slaughterer Johann Friedrich Lorenz Kirsten, Anna Catharina nee Ballheimer. It is quite possible that Fontenay met his future wife in one of the Kirstens' shops near the harbour, at Schaarmarkt 26 or just around the corner on Schaarsteinwegsbrücke. Starting in 1778, the Kirsten family first lived over their butchery at Schaarmarkt. The business apparently ran so well that the Kirsten family then bought another house in 1798, at Schaarsteinwegsbrücke. Here John Friedrich Lorenz Kirsten set up his second butchery and then rented the adjacent house at Stubbenhuk 39, which included a garden on the canal, as his family had meanwhile grown by four more. Anna Catharina (nicknamed

a few candleholders, a table cloth, a plate warmer and a “mahogany nightstand with pot” from Fontenay for a total of 500 euros, at the same time collected over 400 euros for a few tables and chairs. Mr. Meyer pocketed 350 euros for a small mahogany portable lectern, leather chairs and a “desk made of Spanish cedar”. It is interesting that no books or paintings went under the hammer in the course of the auction. A possible explanation for this: Fontenay was able to store his personal articles of value at his brother-in-law Ballheimer’s for the duration of his absence. After the family’s return following the withdrawal of Napoleon’s troops in 1814 he would have brought the articles back to his newly built house. There would have been good reason for doing so, as the French did not treat Hamburg’s citizens or their property very gingerly.

Havoc in front of Dammtor

The best example of this is the brutal transformation of the city into a fortress at the command of the General Governor Louis Nicolas Davout (1770 – 1832). This had consequences – and some of them affected John Fontenay’s residence in front of Dammtor. Hamburg’s mayor, Rüder, called Maire in the French period, was forced to announce the following on July 9, 1813:

As according to this command of the General Governor, Prince von Eckmühl, all buildings, gardens, hedges, etc. within a radius of 150 toisen (285 meters) of the city, as measured from the outermost fortifications shall be razed, the owners are hereby informed that they should immediately move to demolish the above objects without a moment’s delay, as all should be concluded by the evening of the 11th and the Geniecorps has received the order to eliminate and destroy by fire all that has not been razed by then....



View of the destruction wrought by French troops in front of Dammtor in 1813. In the background on the other side of the Alster: the suburb St. Georg.



Jungfernstieg in the final days of the occupation by French troops in December 1813.

The house and property owners concerned did not act to follow the order of the French quite that hurriedly. But contemporaries of the time later reported that on December 19, “all the beautiful garden homes beyond Dammtor” had been “burned down”. Three days later the French quadrupled the radius within which everything was to be torn down to 600 toisen, or over a kilometer. On December 26 the botanical garden was burned down – and therefore also John Fontenay’s residence, which was the same distance away. The condition of this property was described in an inventory list made on November 20, 1815: “Due to the war events which took place, the buildings which stood on this ground have been completely demolished down to the outer walls of the residence and the foundation walls of the other buildings.”

The sad end of the first botanical garden also sealed the fate of its founder Dr. Johannes Flügge. He was forced to declare bankruptcy for his corporation; the property that Flügge had bought on May 2, 1810, was sold in a compulsory auction and went to the highest bidder and direct neighbour: John Fontenay. Dr. Flügge, so reports the “Hamburgische Correspondent”, died on June 28, 1816, only three months after the auction at the age of 41 from an “acute enteric fever” at the Barmbek hospital.

John Murray Forbes: American Consul during Fontenay’s Day

John Fontenay and the US Consul in Hamburg, John Murray Forbes – how well the two Americans living in Hamburg knew each other can no longer be ascertained today. Correspondence or other documents to this effect have not yet surfaced at any rate.

Chapter 6

Fontenay's Activities After the “French Period”

Back in Business

Fontenay and Hesleden had already brokered their first ships at the Hamburg port by June 8, 1814, and by the end of the year, they had brokered another 187 sailing vessels. This was equal to 22 percent of all the large ships that left the city on the Elbe at this time. Fontenay, who up until 1820 brokered almost every fourth English ship in the Hamburg port with his business partner Hesleden, can therefore be considered an example of those merchants who not only survived the difficult years of French rule in Hamburg intact, but who in the end were able to use them to their advantage. His temporary “exile” in France proved to be the right decision from both an economic and financial standpoint after all.

**Fontenay et Hesleden, Schiffsmakler, B. Cto. John
Fontenay, Admiraltätsstr. no 212 N. 9
Fontenay, John, B. C. Admiraltätsstr. no 212 N. 9**

John Fontenay and Thomas G. Hesleden were listed in the Hamburg Address Book as ship brokers from 1822 to 1827.

Fontenay Purchases Additional Property

After the end of the French occupation of Hamburg in May 1814 all property and houses in front of Dammtor had been destroyed and burned down. Fontenay, however, was not deterred from making further investments. At an auction as early as March 28, 1816, he bought the approximately 50,000-square-meter large, ravaged territory of what had been the (first) botanical garden, which had been founded by the botanist Dr. Johannes Flügge (1775–1816). Today, this property encompasses the entire stretch of the Alster between the Intercontinental Hotel and the street Klein Fontenay, and thereby constitutes the heart of the Fontenay lands.

On October 1 of the same year Fontenay was again active. He purchased a piece of property 2,410 square meters in size from Francois Diederich Bertheau for the

equivalent of about 40,000 euros. In 1818 Fontenay then bought three more pieces of property: a 4,382-square-meter area from the heirs of Johann D. Stehr for the equivalent of almost 65,000 euros on January 8, a 3,395-square-meter area for about 56,000 euros from the monastery St. Johannis as mortgage trustee for Peter Buck on January 15, and a 5,020-square-meter piece of land from Peter Stehr for the equivalent in modern currency of 33,000 euros on March 12. This was followed six months later, on September 15, by another piece of land – the eighth: 5,242 square meters from the heirs of Joachim Gaden. No information is available regarding the price because, like the first pieces of property, it was not sold publicly. A few years before his death, Fontenay then bought the last piece of land. On October 1, 1831, he took over the bill of sale for a 7,549-square-meter piece of land including the building on it for the equivalent of almost 250,000 euros from the broker Christian Krüger. This property, which was a foreign property surrounded by the rest of the Fontenay property, and which belonged to Fontenay's arch enemy Daniel Diedrich Scheel, would have been purchased at an auction on Fontenay's assignment by the broker Christian Krüger.

All of the property purchased by John Fontenay fell at that time under the jurisdiction of the St. Johannis Monastery, to whom the land tax then also had to be paid. The monastery attached additional conditions to the purchase of the land. It was not only



The picture with a view of the Fontenay's Alster shore was painted by the Hamburg artist Ascan Lutteroth (1842-1923). The romantic avenue was replaced by the street Alsterufer (lit. Alster shore) in 1910.

The Five “Tea Caddies” at Mittelweg

In 1824, John Fontenay had five other buildings built on Mittelweg between Fontenay and Klein Fontenay; because of their shape they were also called “tea caddies” in popular lore. The fate of the three northernmost “tea caddies” was decided in the last days of the war in 1945 when they were destroyed by an aerial mine. Besides this, a wall of the fourth building, occupied by the v. Heymann family, was blown away. After the war this building was repaired in a makeshift manner but in 1951 it fell victim to the wrecking ball, along with the fifth undamaged building. An important component of old Hamburg domestic culture now lay in ruins. In its place the NITAG house was constructed (later known as the DEA building). It was torn down again in 1994; today there is an multipurpose office complex here.

Fontenay’s Plane Trees

Undoubtedly the most distinctive tree on the Fontenay lands, which were once the cultivation garden of the St. Johannis Monastery, is the ancient gnarly plane tree directly behind John Fontenay’s former home at Mittelweg 185. It has been regarded as



View of all five “tea caddies”. Three of the houses were destroyed by bombs in 1945. To the right next to the “tea caddies” is the garden house of John Fontenay. Next to it is his residence.

Fontenay’s family tree to this day, because according to legend John Fontenay cultivated four descendants from it – one plane tree for each of his stepchildren – and planted them in the garden behind his house. The children, whose first names the trees bore, had to care for and cultivate them. When one daughter, Maria Henriette, died in 1833, it is said that Fontenay instructed his gardener to remove the young tree as a sign of mourning. The remaining three trees – together, of course, with the first “family” tree, which was meanwhile nearly 40 meters tall and six meters thick and entwined with ivy which was as thick as a person’s arm in places – are today under conservation protection as natural monuments.

But are these legends true? An exact dating of the Fontenay “family” tree has actually never been carried out. “To do that the tree rings would have to be counted,” said tree experts. While it is possible to count the annual rings on a tree while it is living



This large plane tree in the garden of John Fontenay's residence was once planted by the lord of the manor himself. In front of the plane tree: Harald A. Kirsten.



Two of the "tea caddies" at Mittelweg 180 and 181. They were built by John Fontenay in 1824.

with the aid of what is called core drilling, it carries the risk of fungi or other pests getting inside the tree though the hole. For this reason, the method is not advised. Nonetheless, the experts assume that the tree in Fontenay's garden is about 200 years old and was probably planted by Fontenay himself in 1807. The surrounding trees, on the other hand, are estimated to be quite a bit younger, and certainly were not planted during Fontenay's day.

The Fontenay Memorial

Many who take walks along the Alster will hardly notice the Fontenay memorial as they stroll along the shore. It is nearly concealed by the colossal war memorial for the honor roll of the war of 1870/71. When, and by whom, the original memorial for John Fontenay was erected has unfortunately not been passed down. But in a pencil drawing from the year 1878 it can be seen that the column originally stood in the midst of old elms – and also that it was probably much larger than the current monument. Since 1926, this much is certain, the Fontenay monument has been at its present location. That was when the neighbouring large memorial for the honor role of the German-French War of 1870/71 was relocated to this spot, having to give way to the increasing traffic at the Esplanade. It is also certain that the relief with the portrait of John Fontenay

Chapter 12

John Fontenay's Legacy

The Testament

John Fontenay founded his testament on October 25, 1831, shortly after buying the last and central property for the Fontenay lands from the mason master Scheel on September 5, 1831, probably thereby fulfilling a lifelong dream. The authenticating notary was his lifelong companion Heyn Wülbbern, along with Martin Bock as adjunct, i.e. assigned notary. Martin Bock and Heyn Wülbbern would certainly have drawn up

The original oil paintings of John Fontenay and Anna Catharina Fontenay have been lost. This photograph was probably taken in the early 20th Century.



the testament together. The Paulsen Testament from April 14, 1808, would also have certainly served as a model. Mathilde Kirsten, nee Palm, the wife of John Fontenay's stepson Heinrich Friedrich Kirsten, had had a fifty percent share in this testament since the death of her grandmother Dorothea Juliane Paulsen on November 6, 1835.

The testament was jointly signed by John Fontenay and his wife Catharina. As was customary at the time, Madame Fontenay had a curator at her side – Hinrich Gottlieb Schauer. Support of this kind was common in those days. It was intended to prevent women from being taken in by their husbands. The customary curatorial protocol dated October 24, 1831, in which Anna Catharina Fontenay solicited the support of Mr. Gottlieb Schauer for the “testament faction” was signed by the councilman and former mayor Mr. Amadeus Augustus Abendroth (October 16, 1767 – December 17, 1842). Abendroth had been the mayor or “maire” of Hamburg during the “French period”. Since he, as Martin Johann Paulsen's friend, became the executor of his will after his death in 1810, and, after the death of Madame Paulsen, the executor of the Paulsen Testament as well, he was undoubtedly closely connected to the Fontenay family.

Shortly before the witnesses and notaries signed the testament protocol between one thirty and two in the notary Heyn Wülbren's apartment – at bei der Börse 64, in the hall up one stairway – John Fontenay and his wife cut and tore up their previous joint testament. They thereby declared – surprisingly, from today's point of view – that this old testament contained no bequest to any kind of pious endowment. Only after this statement had been made was the old testament collected and declared invalid. It is also noteworthy that this earlier testament had already been drawn up on May 8, 1802, i.e., shortly after their wedding on January 26, 1802 and John Fontenay's acquisition of the house at Schaarsteinwegsbrücke from the property of Anna Catharina Fontenay on March 29, 1802. Unfortunately, this testament can no longer be found in the old notary files.

The people who served as witnesses for John Fontenay's testament are a matter of interest, as they were all certainly well-acquainted with Fontenay, probably even friends. The first to sign was Hinrich Heldt. According to the Hamburg address book from the year 1831 he was a ship's captain, resident at Cajen No. 20. Apparently, then, even in his old age John Fontenay maintained seafaring contacts. Hinrich Heldt must have been a very respectable person in addition, for about 20 years later he was appointed to “Schiffer-Alter” (an expert on nautical questions). This made him the point of contact for all mariner concerns in the commerce and Elbe deputation. He also managed the poorhouse for mariners, which was founded for the board and lodging of poor, infirm sailors and their orphans.

The next witness to sign was Heinrich Christoph Baucke. This is a telling sign of John Fontenay's long lasting bond with old friends: H.C. Baucke was the son of the sugar broker Heinrich Erdmann Baucke, with whom John Fontenay lodged in 1801, the year before his marriage. Later, Heinrich Erdmann Baucke lived in the street Eichholz 28, as did his two sons, and ran a “tobacco and cigarette shop” at Große Bäckerstraße 69. Perhaps Fontenay visited him there on occasion and bought his tobacco wares

Time Line

December 19, 1755

Baptism of Jane (Jeanne) Fontenay in St. Helier on the Channel Island Jersey

May 1769

The schooner “Molly” arrives in Boston after seven weeks’ crossing

Turn of the year 1769/1770

Birth of John Fontenay, presumably on “Swan Island”, Maine, USA

April 21, 1770

Birth of Anna Catharina Ballheimer (Fontenay’s future wife) in Hamburg

February 18, 1776

Birth of Thomas Goulton Hesleden (Fontenay’s business partner) in Barton, England

May 21, 1788

Marriage of Johann Friedrich Lorenz Kirsten and Anna Catharina Ballheimer

Around 1797

Arrival of John Fontenay in Hamburg

August 2, 1799

Death of Johann Friedrich Lorenz Kirsten

May 20, 1801

John Fontenay is appointed ship broker and receives the broker’s staff

May 27, 1801

John Fontenay acquires the lesser Hamburg citizenship rights

January 26, 1802

Marriage of John Fontenay and Anna Catharina Kirsten

June 16, 1802

Thomas Goulton Hesleden is appointed ship broker

Around 1803

The company Blaydes, Loft, Gee & Co. is founded in Hull, England

August 1, 1804

John Fontenay purchases the ship “Frau Anna” (his brother-in-law Ballheimer acts as front man)

July 15, 1805

John Fontenay acquires the duplex at Admiralitätstraße 211/212 (residence and office)

June 7, 1807

John Fontenay purchases his first piece of property “in front of Dammtor” and moves into his garden house

April 11, 1810

John Fontenay auctions off his “movables and chattels” in front of Dammtor

Early May 1811

John Fontenay sells his shares of the ship “Frau Anna” in London (indenture)

1811/1812

John Fontenay and family in Morlaix, Paris, Clermont

1812

John Fontenay and family in Schleswig

December 26, 1813

Fontenay's garden house is burned down by the French

May 1814

John Fontenay returns to Hamburg with his family

Summer 1815

John Fontenay builds a new house in front of Dammtor on Mittelweg (still standing today)

January 3, 1821

John Fontenay returns his broker's staff and acquires the greater Hamburg citizenship rights

April 1823

Acceptance of Jane Bloomore as foster daughter and the beginning of the administration of her assets

1824

John Fontenay builds the “five tea caddies” on Mittelweg

1826

Restructuring of the administration of Jane Bloomore’s assets

November 11, 1827

Death of Fontenay’s business partner, T.G. Hesleden

1821/1829/1832

John Fontenay takes the waters at Bad Nenndorf three times

January 1, 1830

Kirsten & Co. founded with Fontenay’s stepson Heinrich Friedrich Kirsten

January 25, 1831

John Fontenay draws up his testament

March 7, 1835

Death of John Fontenay

August 6, 1839

Death of Anna Catharina Fontenay

