<https://sites.rootsweb.com/~lawebste/lec/Misc/GERMANTOWNARTICLE.htm>

Germantown:

A community 8 miles from Minden, La. on Old Military Road

People and former histories, as told by Luther Longino, M.D. in his book “Thoughts, Visions, and Sketches of North Louisiana” 1930, in the Shreve Memorial Lbrary, Shreveport, La. (notes only, taken, by L.E.C.).

The group of Moravians came from the principality of Hapsburg, North Germany, where Count Von Leon owned an estate run under typical feudal system of the time. When he instituted some social reforms there he was tried for treason and banished. Largely thru Masonic influences, he was allowed to leave the country with all his people and all their personal belongings, tenants and families on chartered vessels. He had written to President Andrew Jackson, requesting permission to enter the U.S.A. and was welcomed as the type of citizen wanted in this country.

They settled at Economy, Pennsylvania, where they lived 2 years, but left because of the cold weather there and moved to Louisiana. They settled at Campti, La. Swamp fever got most of them, including Count Leon. A Mr. Teautsch who was sent out for urgently needed supplies and food was too long returning. His delay caused a search. Only his bloody clothes were found, supposedly he was a victim of wild animals. His widow and 3 children remained with the colony. The boys later became expert rifle shots. Mr. Dugal Stewart, father of D.W. Stewart, was a near neighbor. A few descendants are still around Sikes Ferry.

In 1835 the condition and pitiful plight of the colony came to the attention of President Jackson and he granted several thousand acres of land in Claiborne Parish, So they moved from Campti, La. to higher ground, the high hills of what is now Webster Parish. Masonic relics belonging to the Countess Leon are still at Natochitoches. When coming to settle in the new word they had brought paints, pottery and art objects, etc. with them. Their customs and ideas were unique, their language, etc. kept. They were Lutherans. The houses were pecuiiar in that there were no gables. It was in this old town that the first municipal band in Claiborne Parish was organized. The first piano in Claiborne Parish belonged to the Countess.

The town was run as a socialist state. Their Lutheran preacher was Peter Kiser, father of the Couniess. They lived and ate by the bell, were patient and systematic in all they did. Their foreign food was mentioned by an outsider passing thru who had stayed overnight with a Mr. Stakousky, where a dish of sweet potatoes was served. He later had the dish served at his home, always calling it Stakousky potatoes. Mr, Bopp was a merchant, Stakousky a bookkeper, Jenkins, the Doctor, and Langford the carpenter. There was a Mr. Maxey Krouse.

The Countess had two daughters and a son. Joseph disappeared, either on a trip to New Orleans, some said, or died in Old Trenton of yellow fever. Elizabeth maried Jacob Stahl. Anna Colombia was engaged to marry Francis Bopp. He was too long returning from the Ozarks where he was building a home for her, and she married a music teacher named Schardt, and lived at Bastrop. Francis Bopp was the father of Mrs. Kennonand Frank Bopp of Minden.

The Countess and daughters moved to Hot Springs, Ark. where she died in 1881. Mrs. Schardt lived to old age in Hot Springs, some descendants live on. Later the colony was managed by Dr. Krouse, Ben Jenkins, and Mr. Stakorsky. They had a large mercantile store and speculated heavily in cotton. It finally failed and the colony disbanded and died out. Some lived on, many were and are yet buried in cemeteries on the hills overlooking the old colony site.

Note: Some old German families, with descendants in Webster and Claiborne, did not come here with the Germantown Colony, as some think. Mr. John Murrell, who came from Tenn., 1818, settled 12 miles N.E. of Minden. He was an early settler, and with other early settlers of Claiborne, heard of some destitute families on Loggy Bayou near the Red River that were

starving. He went to see about them and borought tnem back home in wagons where they lived two years. These were German immigrants and they finally settled on their own in the German community. One of that number was Long Jonn Miller wno was well known in the Bethelem neighborhood for over 50 years. Frank, Jim, and Willie Miller, Ben Langheld of Claiborne Parish, Mrs. Maggie Greer of Miinden and the Miller families lived near Evergreen. They and possibly others are direct descendants of those stranded and impoverished immigrants brought trom Loggy Bayou near Red River in 1818. One of these immigrants died while living with Mr. Murrell and was the first white man known to be buried in CIaiborne Parish.