

Ray Killian is a brother to  
Paul Killian, who was in the service with  
Paul Thompson



Belk Stores Services Inc. / 308 East Fifth Street, P.O. Box 31788 / Charlotte, N.C. 28231

Ray A. Killian  
Vice President

July 10, 1979

Dear

Recently, Betty and I toured some of the most interesting cities and places in Europe which we had not visited previously. At the end of June, we spent a few days in Munich, Germany. We had understood that there were some "Killian" identities in Wurzburg. So, on June 30 we planned a visit to this city -- a distance of about 250 kilometers northwest of Munich.

We went by train from Munich, passing through the beautiful German farming countryside. We stopped briefly in Nuremberg, scene of the famous World War II war crimes trials.

In Wurzburg, a beautiful city of about 200,000, we learned some very interesting "Killian" information. It seems that after the first Roman Emperor was converted to Christianity, efforts were made to also Christianize all areas under Roman control. This included what is known today as England, Scotland, and Ireland. This is the reason Christianity arrived in Ireland before it was spread to central Europe.

So in the year 689 the Irish missionary Killian, who had arrived in Munich, Germany, some years previously, was "murdered in the Duke's court." In the 11th century, a Romanesque basilica (church) -- the fourth largest in Germany -- was "built on the burial site of St. Killian." (Missionary Killian had been sainted by this time.) This Roman Catholic church today is known as the "Dome" and is most impressive in size and in the richness of its statuary and overall furnishings. Remember that Irish Missionary Killian was Catholic, as were all Christians and churches until the Reformation of the 15th and 16th centuries.

In the city of Wurzburg, the most famous and imposing center of attraction is the Wurzburg (residence) palace. It is visited

daily by thousands of tourists. A Wurzburg brochure describes it as "one of Europe's most splendid palaces -- with imposing staircases, magnificent ceiling paintings, and parade courts." A picture of the palace appears in the center of the enclosed card. The typical parade ground is shown in the front and a beautiful formal court garden in the back. 2

The right wing of the palace is the location of the "Killian Chapel." The entrance door is where the dark spot appears on the right wing of the palace.

When we arrived about 1 p.m. on a Saturday, a wedding was in progress and the chapel was closed. The lady guarding the door would not let us in. You can imagine our disappointment, since we had to catch our return train in a short time. But with the "luck of the Irish," I had a card with "Killian" on it and we showed her the card. She then smiled and let us enter to stand quietly in the back.

The wedding was in progress and every seat was filled. The music, the ceremony (in German), and most of all, the beauty of the interior of the chapel was breathtaking. We have seen scores of famous churches throughout the world, but we both agreed that this was the most awe-inspiring.

A picture of the chapel interior is on the other enclosed card, and viewed from about the same location where we stood to view the wedding. We were told by a couple on the street that the chapel is a favorite place for weddings and baptisms, since ceremonies in the chapel are supposed to assure good luck and long life.

A book about the palace states that "the ceiling frescoes were painted to honor the martyrdom of Killian, Apostle of the Franks. The stucco decoration and sculptured figures on the High Altar were in memorial to Apostle Killian." It appears that because St. Killian was the best known and revered Christian personality of the area, that the princes and rulers who built the palace named the palace chapel after St. Killian.

Killians from that early arrival from Ireland continued to live in the central area of Germany. As I recall, the Killian genealogy book traced the name only back to about the 17th century and stated that Killians at that time were living in this vicinity and were scholars and leading tradesmen. The Killians also became part of the Lutheran Reformation, as did most

Germans and Northern Europeans where Luthernism became the state religion.

One of my purposes for being in Europe at this time was to chair and speak to a group of top business executives from throughout Europe and Africa. This meeting was held at the Belgium coastal town of Knokke, about 125 kilometers north of Brussels. Some of the business executives attending from Ireland and Denmark said that there were Killians living in these countries today.

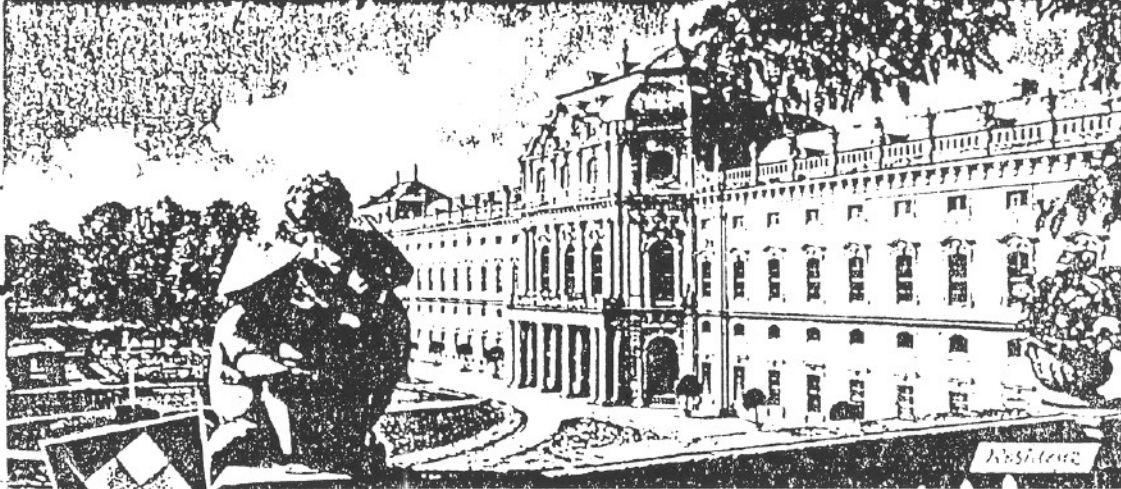
Betty and I wanted to share this bit of Killian "roots" with you. Although the Killians might not have been a part of kingly royalty, at least some like the Irish missionary Killian were venturesome, courageous, and highly religious. Also, his sacrifices were recognized by having been sainted, having a great church built over his burial site, having the royal chapel in the Wurzburg Chapel named Killian, and having the central paintings, stuccos and statuary created in his honor.

The thrilling view of the magnificent Killian Chapel in itself was almost worth the time and expense of the entire trip. The two enclosed cards will give you a feel for the imposing size and ornateness of the palace and the brilliance of the Killian Chapel.

If you wish, you're certainly welcome to share copies of this letter with your children -- still another generation of Killians.

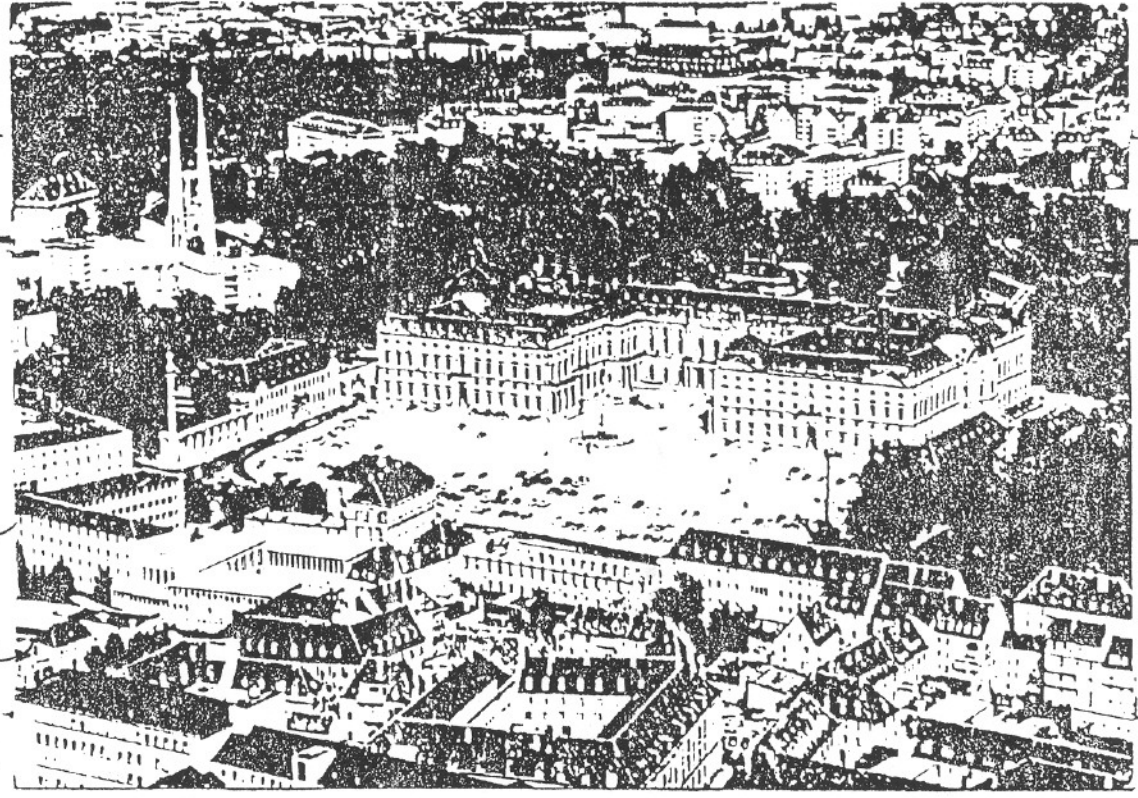
Our warmest regards,

over  
page 3  
of letter on  
back



Kellian  
Chapel  
is  
inside  
of  
this  
Palace

Grüße aus WÜRZBURG

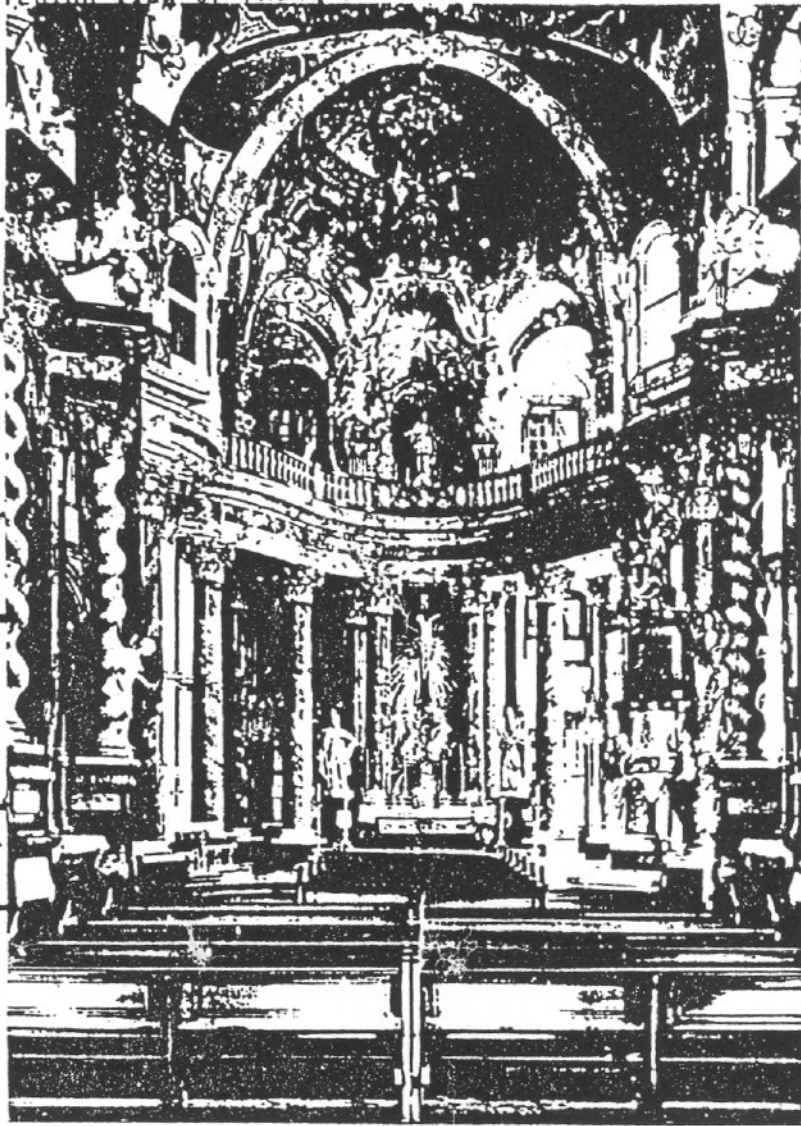


Kellian  
Chapel  
is  
inside

AERIAL-VIEW OF WÜRZBURG CASTLE

Page 3  
of letter on other side

INTERIOR VIEW OF FRONT OF KILLIAN CHAPEL, WURZBURG PALACE



*Killian  
Chapel  
in  
Wurzburg  
Palace  
in  
Germany*



*Note:  
Betty taught  
school in  
Denver, N.C.  
Business Edisc.  
Both from Concord  
Area.*

*Ray  
and  
Betty*

*Killian*

\*RAY AND BETTY KILLIAN IN FRONT OF WURZBURG CASTLE,  
SHOWING FOUNTAIN\*