Deggendorf Marks 1,200th Anniversary

By JOHN J. GREELEY
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ONCE UPON A TIME — in 750 A.D., to be exact — the Duke of Bavaria, Odilo, built a court in the area where the road to Bohemia crossed the Danube River. The duke chose a man named Tekko as ruler of the court and put him in charge of the peasants and fishermen who made their living there. And so the city of Tekko began.

During the current month of August, the 17,000 people who now live in the ancient river settlement of Deggendorf,* formerly Tekko, will celebrate the city’s 1,200th anniversary.

Visitors from all parts of Germany, western Europe and the United States as well, will gather for the traditional spectacle, celebrated once in every hundred years. A spectacular “battle of flowers” leads the list of events, which includes native poet and composer competitions, productions by folklore groups and a soccer match on motorcycles.

A trade fair showing local Marshall Plan-aided enterprises will lend a touch of the modern world, and one day has been especially designated to honor the town’s 16,440 refugees.

The majority of the events will call up the flavor of the ancient city, and show trades and rural customs that have survived the passing of centuries.

Five hundred white pigeons will be released to fly across the city and herald the opening of the festival.

PARADES AND PAGEANTS will depict the city’s past.

The city will produce a pageant honoring Tekko, and the Benedictine Monastery College of Metten will tell the story of Charlemagne, who once held sway over Deggendorf.

The city’s Homeland Union will chronicle all of Deggendorf’s history. St. Godehard and Guenther will be honored by the Niederalteich Monastery School. The citizens of Datting will offer a pageant of the Pandurs.

Employees of Deggendorf’s modern-day post office will dress themselves up in the costumes of the old-timers and ride on an old post carriage. Antique fire equipment, dating back hundreds of years, will be demonstrated. Young

* Pronounced “Deck-en-dorf.”

This was the winning poster in a competition conducted in connection with the 1,200th anniversary celebrations scheduled to commence in this old Bavarian city Aug. 11.

and old will sport the ancient guild costumes, one more addition to the historic trappings which will transform the city.

Bock beer for all will froth into the glasses of spectators at the goat auction at the brewery Moos. Poultry and rabbit shows will highlight the forenoon of August 16. A gigantic cattle exhibit and the awarding of prizes will occupy Friday, August 18. For this, entries of prize cattle have been received from all parts of western Germany.

RURAL YOUTH DAY, aided by the local resident officer, is being booked by the local Farmer’s Union. Fruit and garden specimens from Lower Bavaria will vie for blue ribbons. Public demonstrations will be given by members of the Jungbauern, German counterpart of America’s 4H Clubs. Youngsters will ogle exhibits of bee-raising and fish-raising, and displays of small animals and farm machinery.

As though this weren’t quite enough to fill the nine-day festival, there will also be boxing matches, football games, productions by the band and artists of Radio Munich. Swimming and boating events for adults and children are threaded through the carnival schedule. On Refugee Day, August 20, there will be exhibits of outstanding refugee handicrafts and these newest residents of Deggendorf will show their talents with songs and dances and poems. Representatives of the Ministry of Interior and Bavaria’s Refugee Ministry will inject a thoughtful note in speeches on the outlook for refugees in Bavaria.
was firmly defeated. Under Charlemagne, the little village was elevated to the status of a “King’s Court.” Later it became the property of the Arnulfingers, until the Duchess Nudith awarded it to the Niedermuenster Monastery in Regensburg.

Soon after its founding, the village threw a bridge across the Danube. Being of wood construction, the bridge was dismantled each fall and reassembled each spring when the dangers of ice had passed. Visitors can still see the original house of the bridge tollkeepers standing in a fine state of preservation. It is Deggendorf’s oldest structure. Approaches to the bridge were controlled from the Vindelstein castle, of which but a few blocks of stone remain today.

In 1250, WHEN Duke Otto II of Bavaria saw that his country was endangered by the inheritance claim of the Bohemian king Ottokar, he decided to convert Deggendorf into a fortress. Since the old site, between river and hills, was far too narrow for a fortified city, plans were drawn for the new city where the valley broadens. It was provided with a wide and beautiful city square, centered by the town hall, and surrounded by strong walls with towers and gates. In the 19th century, the bridge was moved up closer to the new city.

In the course of its history, Deggendorf has many times been besieged and conquered. In 1843 it was burned down to such an extent that only 33 houses were left standing. Another catastrophic fire occurred in 1820. In 1634, the population of Deggendorf was decimated by a plague.

In the early days, the city was famed for its grain, cattle and pig markets, its breweries and numerous skilled craftsmen. Later it became a center of commerce, because it was at the crossroads of the Danube and Bohemian road. Important soap and wax factories, textile enterprises, a shipyard and, in the past decades, a Danube shipping fleet have in later years become an integral part of the Deggendorf scene.

And this year, the city that Tekko built, nestled in the beautiful Bavarian Woods mountains, looks forward to another 12 centuries of progress and change.

Florida Shells on Exhibit in Bavaria

Residents of two counties in eastern Bavaria — Deggendorf and Bogen — are displaying keen interest for the State of Florida as the result of an assortment of sea shells recently received from there.

Twelve boxes of selected shells, sent by the Lee County Chamber of Commerce at Fort Meyers, Fla., are being exhibited in schools throughout the two counties.

“This is the first time,” declared John J. Greeley, US resident officer at Deggendorf, “that many of the children in Deggendorf and Bogen have had the opportunity to see such beautiful shells. As a result, interest is being aroused for the State of Florida, particularly for Lee County.”

Mr. Greeley said that when the present exhibition tour is completed in the two counties, the shells, properly identified, will be placed in a permanent exhibition.