

Welcome in Aschach at the river Danube



Aschach, situated at the southern riverside of the river Danube, has a very old history of human habitation. The Celts and the Romans lived here. The border of the Roman Empire went along the river Danube. It had made strong fortifications, and was called LIMES.

As the mild climate made it desirable to live here, its vineyards, boat building and the revenue from taxes on bypassing ships let the little fishermen's village grow to a trading community. The village was first mentioned in a document of the monastery of Kremsmünster, stating the duke Tassilo of Bavaria donated to the abbey two vineyards including their caretakers in Aschach. Aschach was also mentioned in three documents dating 777, 791 and 802.

1371 Aschach was mentioned in the Schauburger Urbar with 60 houses, right for justice and fortification, two small churches, the chapels in honour of St. Laurence and Saint John and the toll house.

1512 the emperor Maximilian granted Aschach the right of a market and gave it an emblem with two grapes. The right to hold markets made the inhabitants more wealthy, which shows on their houses in the "golden row" on the Kurzwernhartplatz and the Ritzbergerstraße upstream from the church.

As the dukes of Aschach and the Schauburgers had no male heirs, the castle of Aschach went to the Liechtensteins. In the year of 1622 emperor Ferdinand II gave castle and land to the counts of Harrach. With Lukas von Hildebrandt, one of the most famous architects of his time, the count enlarged the castle of Aschach.

Emperor Josef II made Aschach an independent parish.

Aschach had a changing population of mariners, workers, citizens, trading people and craftsmen, while the neighbouring Hartkirchen was the home of the more stable peasants.

Aschach also attracted painters like Josef Abel, Albert Ritzberger, Karl Schade, Franz Kober and Fritz Cernaysek, who lived there for longer or shorter periods.

Aschach suffered an occupation by the Bavarians 1620, the peasant's uprising and the war with French 1809, but was spared in world wars I and II.

There were also many floods, the ones with the biggest damage 1789, 1809 and the last big one 1954. There were also drifts of packed ice and a big fire, causing lots of damage.

When the income from the toll for shipping the Danube ceased, Aschach had to seek next sources of income. One was the Schopperei, the buildings of the wooden ships for the Danube. Another one was the production of bricks and a production of picture frames.

1936 a starch factory was founded (today a part of a company called AGRANA), 1975 a factory for mixed fodder. 1962 a bridge across the river Danube was built, which replaced the old ferry and 1963 the big power station, at that time the biggest in Centraleuropa.

Connections: Train Aschach - Wels, buses Aschach – Linz and Aschach – Wels. Stop on the shipping route Vienna – Linz – Passau.

Aschach and its vineyards.

The vineyards were cultivated since Roman times in Aschach and 13 other places in Oberösterreich.

The vineyards of the proprietors Schaumberg, Stauf and St. Nicolaus (bishop of Passau) yielded from the Zehenten (tax, 10% of the yield had to be paid) more than 1000 buckets (56,6l each). In the years of 1664 - 1665 of an area of 120 ha was noted. Around 1445-1446 more than 1000 000 l of wine were shipped. The climate changed and there were fewer and fewer vineyards. During recent years there are efforts to revive the growing of wine.

Aschach and the Maut (tolls)

The Danube is an old way for trade and transport. 905 a toll station is mentioned. Salt from the Salzkammergut was shipped to Bavaria. 1190 we find the first document of the toll in Aschach. The counts of Formbach had the right to ask toll, after them the right went to the proprietors of Schaumburg. The toll was leased after that, but the incomes and the proceedings were kept under strict control. The toll officials were like the judges, under high esteem.

The shipbuilders guild in Aschach

Many mariners, merchants and innkeepers had their home in Aschach. At the times of the toll every ship had to stop in Aschach for the toll. On the way to Linz there was a rock in the water, called Kachlet, and it was advisable to engage a navigator if you did not know the route very well. A special order regulated the traffic. Upstream the ships were pulled by 30 or even 40 horses.

1775 the toll was transferred to Engelhartzell, Aschach had much less income and tried to compensate by fishing and building ships.

Aschach as place for ship building.

There is a long shipbuilding tradition in Aschach. The location on the Danube is favorable and also the many ash trees growing in the vicinity. The name Shopper comes from the work of Schoppen, which means to fill in all the cracks in the ships, rafts and rowing boats. The ships produced included large Steinzillen, able to load 100 tons of stones and ship them downstream from the big quarrels, along the borders of Danube. Those stones were needed to regulate the bed of the Danube. There were built also smaller boats, Trauner (for 20 tons) and Waidzillen. Later Polyester was used instead of wood in the building of the Zillen.