

Myths and Anecdotes of the Region

Even today, people from the countryside surrounding Much are called „Mücher Heufresser“ (Hay-Munchers of Much).

“The Hay-Munchers of Much”

Once upon a time, a catholic priest, a doctor and the mayor sat in a pub in Much. Good natured the mayor jested: “Priest, you have much sway over your people, but I doubt you would get your faithful to eat hay”.

“Let’s make a bet”, the priest replied, “My faithful will eat hay if I command it”. The other two did not want to believe the priest’s claim, thus the bet was made.

On the following Sunday there were many people in the church.

After the sermon the

priest tucked a bundle of hay under his arm and said: “„Here I got valuable healing herbs from our Bishop, which grew on the graves of saints. Since you cannot make a pilgrimage to those places, you may all eat from them. Thou shall never get sick or be tempted by the devil anymore and will thus not burn in purgatory. Those who want to protect themselves must eat from these herbs,” he claimed.

The priest made his round and gave each man, woman and child a few straws, which they chewed faithfully. The mayor and the doctor stood there dumbfounded, as they lost their bet.

According to this myth, even today, people from Much are thus called “Hay-Munchers”.

“Heralds”

The teacher, Adam, addressed the three classes of a small village school of Birkenfeld: “The meaning of two words has been explained to you and I hope you’ll remember their significance for a lifetime. Next week I will question you about their meaning again”.

Later, one of the pupils, with the nickname “Knoll”, heard the word “heralds” on the radio. Since he didn’t know what that word meant, he wrote a sentence containing the word on a piece of paper and stuffed it into his pocket, to ask the teacher about its meaning. As Knoll, like every day, picked the milk from the farmer, who also was his family’s landlord, he came across the farmer’s young wife, who had just laid an infant into a wooden basket. Knoll, who was fond of little children, played with it. A fly settles on the child’s cheek and Knoll reaches into his pocket to scare it away with the piece of paper then walks off with his milk.

The next day the farmer’s wife wouldn’t give him any milk. Knoll’s mother had no explanation for her behavior and confronted the farmer’s wife. “Why don’t we get any milk of you anymore,” she asked. “After your son placed that damn piece of paper in my child’s basket, you won’t get any milk of me no more,” was the gruff reply. Dumbstruck Knoll’s mother didn’t know what was going on.

“Don’t be stupid,” the farmer’s wife cried, “You know damn well what I’m talking about”.

“By god, I have no idea what you’re talking about. What did the piece of paper say,” Knoll’s mother wanted to know. “It reads there are people that are he-ralds, but my child is a girl,” The farmer’s wife retorted. Angrily she turned away and since that day the family Knoll would not get any milk.

Heinz von den Hoff

“The Framers That Argued in Their Grave”

Once upon a time, in one of Cologne’s diocese, lived two peasant families in mortal enmity.

Both had their leaders, two haughty framers, who constantly sparked and fuelled new disputes with no end. It so happened that both died on the same day.

Because both belonged to the diocese Neunkirchen and God wanted to make an example of their evil and strife, both corpses were interred in the same grave.

All people present could not believe what they saw, as both corpses turned their backs against the other, heads and heels, and started kicking each other like untamed horses.

Immediately, the people took one corpse out, and laid him in another, more distant grave.

And so the dispute of the dead was the cause for peace and harmony of the living, because who does not argue in life shall rest in peace after death.

Cäsarius of Heisterbach

“The Devil’s Chest”

5m length, 1m width, 1-1.2m thick, 20.000kg

The Legend of the Devil’s Chest 1. Edition

Many centuries ago, the citizens of the nearby village of Winterscheid fell into disfavour, in God’s eyes, through dissolute life. God bade the devil to punish the people of Winterscheid. The Devils took a large stone and threw it on Winterscheid. However, he aimed so bad that the stone hit the ground far off the village. The citizens of Winterscheid seized on this as a warning and improved their lifestyle.

The Legend of the Devil’s Chest 2.Edition

Hundreds of years ago, two bachelors from Neunkirchen and Winterscheid courted the same maiden. The maiden gave her favour to the bachelor of Neunkirchen. In anger and disappointment the bachelor of Winterscheid flung a heavy stone towards Neunkirchen. However, his aim was so bad that the stone came to a rest halfway to Neunkirchen.

The Legend of the Devil’s Chest 3.Edition

Near Beiert lived a poor farmer, who could not feed his large family because of poor harvests. The devil came to him and offered to give him money and treasures in return for his soul. In his distress the peasant agreed and got a big chest with money and other treasures from the devil. When the devil came to collect the soul, the farmer fled into the chapel of Beiert and was therefore safe from the devil. In anger the devil buried the treasure chest under a large rock, now known as the Devil’s Chest. Rumour has it that the stone can only be lifted Friday midnight at full moon.

The Legend of the Devil’s Chest 4.Edition

Under the large rock, called „The Devil’s Chest“, a gold treasure is rumoured to be buried. The one that lives a genuine life and has a good reputation can lift this stone at midnight under a full moon,

when Beiert Owl hoots. Only those would come into possession of the gold treasure.

The Legend of the Devil's Chest 5. Edition

From this spot a miller from Bröltal had to watch as a flood destroyed his mill to a large extent. He swore against God and uttered curses. Following that, there was a big growl of thunder and a huge stone fell from heaven and buried the blasphemous miller and his family under it.

The Legend of the Devil's Chest 6. Edition

One day it happened that in a wild night, the pagans came together to pay homage to the devil by dance and sacrifice. Finally, the devil appeared in person, and all danced around it. But suddenly a big rock came loose and buried the devil underneath it. The hope of the pagans, that it would be easy for the devil to lift the rock, was not fulfilled. The pagans were baptized. To this day, the devil is still buried under the stone, and everyone should be mindful not to lift it, because then the devil would come back into the world.

Directions and the 7th Edition of "The Legend of the Devil's Chest" can be found in the hiking tips.