Welcome to Ortsbürgergemeinde St.Gallen
• History of the monastery of St.Gallen
• History of the town of St.Gallen
• History of the canton of St.Gallen
• History of the Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen
• The Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen today
History of the monastery of St. Gallen

- In about 612, a group of Irish monks, led by Columban, arrived in the region of the lake of Constance.
- In Bregenz (Brigantium) they re-established Christian traditions and fought against pagan customs.
- In Arbon (ancient roman castle Arbor Felix) they found a Christian community.
- Gallus, a member of the group of pilgrims was sick and was left behind, whereas Columban and his friends crossed the Alps and went to Italy. In Bobbio, Columban founded a monastery where he died in 615.

*Hl. Gallus und Hl. Columban
Crossing Lake of Constance*
History of the monastery of St. Gallen

• Gallus wanted to live as a hermit in the loneliness of the forest, praying and serving God.
• In the valley of the Steinach, he stumbled over a stump. He considered this as a sign of God and decided to stay at this place, about 20 km south of the Lake of Constance: „Haec requies mea, hic habitabo.“
• As the legend tells, Gallus ran into a wild bear. He told him to fetch wood to light a fire. In exchange, Gallus gave him a piece of bread and ordered that the wild animal should never harm human beings or animals.
• The bear became the heraldic animal of the town.

Saint Gallus and the bear (Ivory Carving).
History of the monastery of St. Gallen

- After the death of Gallus, monks from various regions came to live at this place and founded a monastery.
- Abbot Otmar (689-759) ordered the construction of the monastery and the church. The monastery was active until 1805.

Schematic presentation of the famous plan of the monastery, created ab. 825
History of the monastery of St. Gallen

- In 818 the monastery obtained liberties by being under the direct authority of the king and having the right of free election of the abbot in 833.
- In 926 Hungarian troops invaded St. Gallen. Wiborada had warned the abbot about the imminent danger.
- The monks and the treasures of the monastery had been evacuated, but Wiborada died during the occupation of the town because she had refused to leave the church she lived in.

*Respresentation of the attack against the retreat of Wiborada*
History of the monastery of St. Gallen

- The Heyday of the monastery extended from 9th to 11th century.
- The monastery had extended land property in Switzerland and Germany.
History of the town of St. Gallen

- Settlements near the monastery began soon after its foundation. The buildings were protected by a wall since the second half of the 10th century.
- Mention of a CIVITAS at the end of 11th century
- 1170 Right to open a market
- 1228 Charitable foundation of the first hospital
- 1281 Liberty granted to the town by King Rudolf I. of Habsburg
- 1312 Treaty with the towns of Zurich, Schaffhausen and Konstanz
- 1451 Free town and ally of the Confederation
History of the town of St.Gallen

- The development of the production of linen was responsible for the economic growth of St.Gallen. The farmers produced the raw-material (flax and hemp) and did the spinning and the weaving. The town itself prepared the linen for the market (fulling, bleaching, colouring).
- Exportation extended from Valencia in Spain to Warsaw in Poland. (peak in the 15th century, decline in the 18th century)
- The cotton industry, especially the production of embroideries, replaced the linen industry and reached it’s peak in the 19th century.

*Bleaching of linen on open fields outside of the town. („Bleichen“)*

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History of the town of St.Gallen

- 1354 first mention of a Mayor of the town of St.Gallen
- The political organisation of the town changed during the centuries. The „small council“ was composed of the acting Mayor, the past Mayor, the representative of the king and the representatives of the 6 guilds.
- The 6 guilds were the guild of the weaver, the blacksmiths, the millers, the tailors, the shoemakers and the butchers. They were completed by the union of the merchants (Gesellschaft vom Nothenstein).

*Double coat of arms of the town, eagle of the german empire, imperial crown.*

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History of the town of St. Gallen

The town grants liberty.

Oriel „Zum Bären“
History of the town of St. Gallen

- The church of St. Laurenzen was (and still is in a certain manner) the place or worship for the inhabitants of the town and its surroundings.
- The assembly of the citizens of St. Gallen was always held in this building. The Citizen’s community still maintains this tradition by gathering the citizens together once a year in St. Laurenzen.
- In the Middle Ages the original measure for the linen production was shown in the church. The tower was the place where a guard was on duty.

Church St. Laurenzen
History of the town of St. Gallen

• Joachim von Watt (VADIANUS), was the son of a rich merchants family. After studies in foreign universities, he came back as medical doctor. He was also philologist and historian. In 1526 he was elected Mayor (for the first time of a total of 9 periods).
• In 1524, the „great council“ decided, that the sermons should be delivered strictly according to the Bible.
• In 1527, the „great council“ declared the „Reformation“. Citizens of the town were no longer permitted to attend catholic masses.

Vadian, reformer of St. Gallen

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History of the town of St. Gallen

- In 1566 it was decided to build a wall separating the catholic monastery and the protestant town. It divided the perimeter until 1798.
History of the town of St. Gallen
History of the town of St. Gallen

- The fortifications of the medieval town were destroyed during the 19th century. The development of the town needed more space. The open fields were covered with new buildings. The surrounding villages also profited of the development of St. Gallen as the industrial centre of the region.
History of the town of St. Gallen

- The economic growth led to a growing amalgamation of the independent communities in the region.
- In 1918 the settlements of St. Gallen, Straubenzell and Tablat made a fusion to become the town of St. Gallen as it is today.
- The local Citizen's communities defended their independence. As a consequence we still find two different communities in the boundaries of the modern town:
  - Ortsbürgergemeinde St. Gallen (incl. former Ortsgemeinde Rotmonten and former Ortsgemeinde Straubenzell)
  - Ortsgemeinde Tablat
History of the canton of St. Gallen

- Until the end of the 18th century, different rules coexisted in the region of the town of St. Gallen:
  - Town of St. Gallen (ally of the confederation of the 13 cantons)
  - Abbey of St. Gallen (ally of the confederation of the 13 cantons)
  - Region subject to the abbot of St. Gallen
  - Appenzell (full member of the confederation of the 13 cantons)
  - Region subject to one of the full members of the confederation
  - Region subject several or all members of the confederation

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History of the canton of St.Gallen

• The French Revolution led to the decay of the so called „Ancien Régime“ of the Confederation.
• On April 29th 1798 the citizens, during a meeting in St.Laurenzen) accepted the revolutionary constitution (Helvetische Verfassung).
• On 1st of Mai 1798 the helvetic flag was shown on the tower of St.Laurenzen.
• Different solutions for the reorganisation of eastern Switzerland were tested and discussed (for example the creation of a canton „Säntis“, which was not successful).
• In 1803, after direct intervention of Napoleon, the new canton of St.Gallen was founded.

Meeting after the acceptance of the Helvetic Constitution 1790.
History of the Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen

- During several centuries, a clear distinction between citizens and other inhabitants of the town was made.
- The citizens participated in the common goods of the community and enjoyed political rights.
- Only after the French Revolution, („Liberté, Fraternité, Egalité“) the political rights became available for all inhabitants of the new born community of the town.
History of the Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen

- The former Citizen‘s Communities survived in our canton.
- The dual system „Political Community = Community of the inhabitants“ vs. „Citizen‘s Community“ goes back to the 19th century.
- The Citizen‘s community of St.Gallen claims to be the successor of the ancient imperial town and republic of St.Gallen.
- The constitution of the canton of St.Gallen of 1831 fixes the separation of the Political Community and the Citizen‘s Community.
History of the Citizen’s Community of St. Gallen

- The distinction of the mission and the property of both the Political Community and the Citizen’s Community of St. Gallen was signed on June 29th 1832.
- In 1831 the town of St. Gallen had 9301 inhabitants: 85% Protestants, 15% Catholics; 50% citizens of the town, 40% Swiss of other regions and 10% foreigners.
- The federal constitution of 1874 granted full political rights (for local and cantonal matters) to every Swiss citizen independently of his citizenship.

*Treaty of 1832*
History of the Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen

• A Citizen‘s Community is a public entity under public law of all persons with citizenship in the same town.
• The Citizen's Communities bear different names: “bourgeoisie”, “commune bourgeoisie”, “Burgergemeinde”, “Ortsgemeinde”, “Ortsbürgergemeinde”, “patriziati”.
• The Citizen's Communities vary from region to region and differ according to their organization, competences and activities.
• The Citizen‘s Communities often participate in the decision of naturalization, they are active in the public sector (cultural and social sector), own hospitals and administer rural properties.

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View of St.Gallen form the hill called Bernegg, 1832
The Citizen’s Community of St. Gallen today

Where do we come from?

• The Citizen’s Community of St. Gallen considers itself as the legitimate successor of the old imperial town and city-republic of St. Gallen. It’s territory includes the former communities of Rotmonten and Straubenzell. Our historic roots represent the legitimacy and basis for our activities.

From the guiding principles of the Citizen’s Community of St. Gallen
The Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen today

Who are we?
• We understand ourselves to be a group of modern business organizations and institutions with tradition in the town of St.Gallen. We accomplish cultural and other tasks of public benefit. [1].

How do we develop our activities?
• Our business organizations and institutions act in full responsibility within the limits of strategic goals. Every unit is part of the quality label „Ortsbürgergemeinde St.Gallen“. We want to earn money in order to secure the dynamic evolution of our community and to guarantee the fulfilment of our tasks. The satisfaction of our customers is our highest goal.
• We welcome donations (in which we see a positive response to our activities), because we don’t have the right to impose taxes.

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The Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen today

Citizen‘s Council
President of the Citizen‘s Council

Health – Life in the Old Age (Geriatric Clinic incl.)

Forestry and Wood Production

Culture and Education

Real Estate

Corporate Center

Mandates, Sponsoring
(Foundations, Trusts, Museums of St.Gallen)
The Centre of competence „Health and Life in the old age“ comprises the residence Singenberg, the home for senior citizens and nursing home Bürgerspital as well as the Geriatric Hospital St.Gallen, which has a leading function in the public health service of the canton of St.Gallen.
The Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen today

1’221 ha forests

*The sector forestry and wood-production is based on the important property of the Citizen‘s Council. We are the 4th largest owner of forests in the entire canton of St.Gallen. The woods are supervised by a forest engineer and two forest wardens with a basis in St.Gallen.*
The heating system of Nahwärmeverbund Stadtäsge AG provides energy to the neighbouring buildings.
The Citizen’s Community of St.Gallen today

The Archives of the Citizen’s Community are installed in the same building. They are historical archives with official documents, transcripts of the proceedings of the city council and other written documents covering the time between the foundation of the town until 1799.

The Vadian Collection is a permanent deposit of the Archives of the Citizen’s Community in the cantonal library VADIANA. It’s core are the library, the publications and the correspondence (over 4000 autographs) of Joachim von Watt, called Vadian. They represent the summit of the culture of the 16th century.
About 100 medieval autographs are part of the treasures of the Vadian Collection. The more recent parts of the collection are chronicles, documents and descriptions of the history of St.Gallen.

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The Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen today

The sector „real estate“ (628 ha) covers 6 restaurants in St.Gallen, a vineyard in Thal, about 20 rural leaseholds and a certain number of residential buildings.

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The Citizen‘s Community of St. Gallen today

Stadthaus“ (Town House), Gallusstrasse 14, is the Corporate Centre, where the services for all business enterprise are provided (Human Resources, Corporate Finance).

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The Citizens gather every year in an assembly in the church St.Laurenzen. Over 800 citizens meet annually for an excursion leading them to beautiful places owned by the Citizen's Community.
The sector „Mandates“ is responsible for an important number of foundations, funds, cultural institutions (museums of St.Gallen, Stiftung Ostschweizer Kunstschaffen etc.).
Links…

http://www.ortsbuerger.ch/
Website of the Citizen‘s Community of St.Gallen

http://www.svbk.ch/
Website of the Swiss Federation of Citizen‘s Communities

http://www.vsgog.ch/
Website of the Union of Citizen‘s Communities of the Canton of St.Gallen

http://www.stadt.sg.ch
Website of the Administration of the Town of St.Gallen