

# THE JOURNAL



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# GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

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Warren Frederick  
403 King Elder Lane  
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# SAVE THE DATES

(more information coming soon)

## September 20-21, 2013

# *ANNUAL MEETING*

# *In WINDDALE*



The 215-acre complex is home to a collection of eight historic structures, a research center, nature trail, and a picnic area. Weekend tours take visitors through homes furnished with period antiques and details such as stenciled ceilings that recall the German heritage of the area. Located four miles east of Round Top via FM 1457 then north on FM 2714



Planning is underway for a great annual meeting to include tours of this historic area, great speakers and hands-on instructions. It is also the time we honor members who have given much back to the organization through our Ehrenstern Award. Nominations/application paperwork follows. Deadline for submission of your nomination is September 1, 2013.

# Ehrenstern Nomination Guidelines



As a member of GTHS, you have the opportunity to nominate particularly talented, dedicated, active fellow members to be considered for the Ehrenstern Award in recognition of his or her dedication to furthering the goals of the Society. We believe that when such excellence is demonstrated, it is appropriate that it be recognized. We are depending on your knowledge and good judgment to help us honor deserving recipients. **Please get involved!**

## Guidelines for Nomination

1. The candidate must be a current member of GTHS and must have been an actively involved member of the Society for a minimum of five years.
2. Evidence of leadership in other German heritage, cultural or preservation organizations at the local, state or national level will also be considered an asset.
3. The candidate must have demonstrated some combination of personal commitment, innovation, talent, leadership and other qualities that contribute to the preservation of his or her community's German-Texan heritage and culture.

## Nomination Procedures

1. Nominations\* should include the name of the nominee, contact information and, in 500 words or less, a description as to why this person deserves the Ehrenstern Award. The nominator must also include his or her *own* name and contact information.
2. Nominees will be notified prior to the Annual Meeting and asked to fill out an application detailing their service to GTHS and other organizations. Only after receipt of this application will a nominee be considered for the award.

The GTHS Board will normally choose no more than two recipients each year. Recipients will be awarded a certificate at the Annual Meeting and recognized for outstanding contributions to GTHS and local community.

## Selection Criteria

Recipients will be selected based on active participation in GTHS, membership in other German heritage, cultural or preservation organizations, and participation in the local preservation of his or her community's German-Texan heritage and culture.

Deadline for nominations is September 1, 2013. Please send your nominations to:  
Mary Whigham, 16100 McCraven School Road, Washington, Texas 77880-5008  
Or [mjwhig@texasbb.com](mailto:mjwhig@texasbb.com) or (936) 878-2892

# Past Ehrenstern Award Recipients



**1984**

Daphne Garrett\*  
Gilbert Jordan\*  
Leola Tiedt\*

**1985**

Theresa Gold  
Irma Guenther\*  
Dona Reeves-Marquardt  
Anna Thompson

**1988**

Mary El-Beheri\*

**1990**

Elizabeth Lehmann\*

**1991**

Lisa Kahn  
Miriam York\*

**1994**

Dora "Dat" Morrow\*

**1995**

Frances Heimer Copeland\*  
Patsy Hand  
Rodney Koenig  
W. M. Von-Maszewski

**1996**

Ann Lindemann  
Helga von Schweinitz

**1997**

Helgard Suhr-Hollis

**1998**

Charles Kalteyer

**1999**

Arlene Burges  
Ted Gish\*  
Anita Killen\*

**2000**

Teresa Schwaus Chavez  
Ewing "Wing" Evans  
Christa Prewitt

**2002**

Connie Schneider Krause  
Michael G. Krause

**2003**

Christine Mills  
Robert Neely  
Muriel Vaughn

**2004**

Mimi Parris  
Rev. Robert Pfennig  
Annette Stachowitz  
Philip L. Sterzing

**2005**

Theodora Vanderwerth  
Boehm  
Barbara Evans

**2006**

Van Massirer  
Rolf Stachowitz\*

**2008**

Siegi Keimling  
Julia Mellenbruch  
Christa Rabago

**2009**

Terry Smart

**2010**

Glen Treibs  
Gerri Gehman West

**2012**

**Charles Locklin**  
**Liz Hicks**  
**Jean Heide**

\*Deceased

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# Application for the Ehrenstern

The Ehrenstern award is presented to GTHS members who have been actively involved in the Society for at least five years and who have volunteered their time and shown their dedication through active participation in furthering the goals of the Society.

*Please type or print – use black ink! DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS July 13th...*

## 1. Applicant's contact information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Description of involvement in GTHS, including volunteer positions held.

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## 3. Membership and participation in other German heritage, cultural or preservation organizations.

<u>Years</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Leadership/volunteer role &amp; # of years</u>
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## 4. Previous honors received from the above-mentioned organizations.

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**5. Description of contributions to preserving German-Texan heritage and culture in your local community.**

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**6. Any additional information, further documentation and/or letters of support may be attached.**  
(Please note section number to be continued, if additional pages are attached.)

**7. Nomination originally submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Send to Mary Whigham, 16100 McCraven School Road, Washington, Texas 77880, 936 878-2892**  
**Email: [mjwhig@texasbb.com](mailto:mjwhig@texasbb.com)**

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**THE JOURNAL OF**  
**THE GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
**VOLUME XXXV - NUMBER 2, SUMMER 2013**

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- 088 Genealogical Inquiries - Liz Hicks**
- 092 Ahnenpass - we are recognized by The Immigrant Genealogical Society**
- 092 Ahnenpass Followup - Liz Hicks**
- 093 Helga's Corner - NEW - Helga von Schweinitz**
- 093 Advertise Your Family Reunion - Angelina Kretzchmar**
- 094 Happenings at the German Free School - Helga von Schweinitz**

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- 095 Life in the Bluff Community - submitted by Rodney Koenig**
- 098 The German Free School - submitted by Liz Hicks**

**PEOPLE**

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## OPERATIONS

### 120 Minutes of the March 17, 2013 Board Meeting Books we sell

#### Vielen Dank to these contributors

Rodney Koenig - Houston  
Liz Hicks - Houston  
Flora von Roeder - Houston  
Mayme R. Bass - Rosenberg  
Terry Smart - San Antonio

Angelina Kretzschmar - San Antonio  
Anne & Mike Stewart - Comfort  
JT Koenig - Austin  
Carl Luckenback - Fredericksburg  
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## *In Memoriam*



### **Thomas Hugh Rothermel**

Thomas Hugh Rothermel of Brenham died on March 28, 2013, at the age of 88 years. Funeral services are scheduled for 2:00 p.m. Monday, April 1 at Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Carmine with Pastor David Tinker officiating. Burial will follow at the Carmine Cemetery in Carmine. Visitation will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sunday, March 31 at Memorial Oaks Chapel in Brenham.

Thomas Hugh Rothermel was born January 14th, 1925 in Burton to Bailleux and Nathalie Ponfick Rothermel. He was baptized June 7, 1925 at St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church in Burton by Rev. V. Crusins. He was confirmed March 17, 1940 at St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church in Burton by Rev. E. Eiben. On December, 28, 1947, Tom was united in marriage to Dorothy Geraldine Noak at Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Carmine by Rev. Leo H. Simon.

Tom attended Burton schools before entering Brenham High School. Tom was a member of the record-setting Brenham High School Cubs football team in 1942. They completed the season with 12 wins, no losses and no ties on the way to win the regional championship in the Class A division of Texas schoolboy football. Soon after he was drafted out of high school at the age of 18 into military service during World War II on June 30, 1943. After being discharged January 13, 1946, Tom attended Blinn College, Brenham, Texas. In 1950, he graduated from Southwest Texas University in San Marcos, Texas with a Bachelor of Science degree with an Elementary Education Major. He completed his graduate degree with a Master of Education in 1957 at Sam Houston University, Huntsville, Texas.

He was employed by Southwestern Bell Telephone, Camp Warnecke in New Braunfels during summer breaks from teaching, Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance, City of Houston-sign administration, and USDA Inspector. Teaching positions were: New Braunfels Ind. School District, Goodwin Rural School District, La Grange Ind. School District, and Barbers Hill Ind. School District.

He served as a Military Policeman attached to the 1369th Military Police Co. [AVN] during World War II from June 30, 1943 to January 13, 1946. He served in China, Burma, and India. He received the following military medals: Asiatic-Pacific Campaign medal with 2 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct medal, 3 overseas service bars, and sharpshooter, rifle, and World War II Victory Ribbon.

During his lifetime, Tom was a member of St. John's Evangelical & Reformed Church, Burton, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, LaGrange, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Baytown, Sharon Lutheran Church, Pasadena and Martin Luther Lutheran Church, Carmine. He was a member of the church Men in Mission. As well as a life member of the China, Burma, India Veterans Association, American Legion Post #48 and Veterans of Foreign Wars, James Dillon #7104.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Dorothy Noak Rothermel of Brenham, daughters: Connie Sue Rothermel Bird and husband, Marshall of Splendora, Pamela Ann Rothermel Guthrie and husband, James of Pasadena. Granddaughters: Rachel Diana Bird Poffinbarger and husband, James, of Splendora, Johanna Ruth Bird of Houston, and Moriah Ashlee Guthrie of Pasadena. Great-granddaughters: Camille, Corinne, and Cristin Poffinbarger of Splendora. Also; brother, James D. Rothermel and his wife, Dorothy Ann Hodde Rothermel of Brenham, sisters; Nathalie Rothermel Landua, Annie Laurie Rothermel Thaler and husband, Raymond of Brenham and sister-in-law, Joan Smick Rothermel of Brenham. Nephews: James D. Rothermel, Jr. and his wife, Cindy of Alvin, Donald H. Rothermel and his wife, Debbie of Katy, Michael D. Rothermel and Cheryl Kimbo of San Jose, Calif., Charles E. Landua of Burton, & Raymond C. Thaler, Jr. and his wife, Linda of Brenham. Nieces include: Annette Thaler Turner of Brenham, Laurie Rothermel Satterfield and husband, Dr. William Satterfield of Elgin, Laurell Landua Smith of Burton, Lavonne Landua Spacek and husband, Larry of Austin; and numerous great-nephews and nieces.

He was preceded in death by his parents, father-in-law and mother-in-law, Herbert and Clara Keng Noak, his sister, Mary Louise Rothermel, brother, William A. Rothermel, brother-in-law, Charles Landua, Sr..

Serving as pallbearers are: Charles Landua, Jr., James D. Rothermel, Jr., Donald H. Rothermel, Raymone C. Thaler, Jr., Larry Spacek, and James Poffinbarger. Honorary pallbearers are: Arnold & Magdalene Knuppel, Pat and Diana Armentrout, and Milton and Evelyn Haack.

Memorials may be directed to Martin Luther Lutheran Church Memorial Fund, Carmine or to Brazos Valley Hospice, Brenham.

Funeral services are entrusted to Memorial Oaks Chapel, 1306 W. Main St., Brenham. To post a tribute to the family, visit [www.memorialoakschapel.com](http://www.memorialoakschapel.com).

## *In Memoriam*



### **Carolyn Elizabeth (Rothermel) Fuchs**

Carolyn Elizabeth (Rothermel) Fuchs, 83, of Carmine, wife of Otto L. Fuchs, Jr. died January 12, 2013 in Scott and White Hospital in Brenham. Funeral services are scheduled for 2 p.m., Thursday, January 17, 2013 at Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Carmine, with Pastor David Tinker officiating. Burial will follow in Oak Hill Cemetery in Burton. Visitation will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Wednesday at Foehner Funeral Home in Burton.

Carolyn Fuchs was born April 14, 1929 in Burton to Carl Norman and Erma (Broesche) Rothermel. Baptized April 13, 1930 at St. John's Evangelical Church in Burton by Pastor Adolph Walton, she was confirmed at St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church in Burton on June 13, 1943 by Pastor Paul Kniker. It was in this same church that she was united in marriage to Otto L. Fuchs, Jr. on July 28, 1951 by Pastor E. H. Schwengel.

A graduate of Burton High School and Blinn College, she obtained a B.S. degree from Sam Houston State University, where she majored in biology and minored in chemistry. Miss Carolyn pursued a career as a teacher, teaching for 2 years in Ganado ISD and 31 years in Round Top-Carmine ISD, retiring in 1990.

Carolyn was a faithful member of Martin Luther Lutheran Church, where she served on the church council, was a member and officer of the Ladies Aid, member of the choir for over 40 years, and spent many hours volunteering at Fishes and Loaves, representing Martin Luther.

She served as an officer and member of the Quade-Werchan Auxiliary Legion Post #338 for 61 years, and was a member of the National 42nd Rainbow Division Auxiliary and the Texas Chapter of the 42nd Rainbow Division Auxiliary. Other memberships include being a life member of Texas Retired Teachers Association, Fayette County Texas Retired Teachers Association and Round Top-Carmine Mothers' Club. Community organizations Carolyn was involved in include: Carmine Chamber of Commerce and Fayette County Fair Floral Committee. Her love of genealogy was evident in her memberships in the Washington County Genealogy Society and the German-Texan Heritage Society.

She was a 1960 Census taker, election official, sales clerk at Victorian Dream and used her love of music to play the alto saxophone in the Burton High School Band.

Her family was very blessed with her cooking talents through her delicious meals. Her specialties were chicken salad, steak and gravy, home-canned foods (especially her pickles and corn), homemade bread, coffee cake, chiffon cake, peanut butter crunch and cutout teacakes. Her care packages were always treasured. She was a very talented seamstress, spending countless hours sewing for herself, her daughters and grandchildren. Embroidery was her favorite handwork.

Carolyn loved gathering antique rose cuttings and using her "green thumb" to root them to share with fellow members of the Texas Rose Rustlers and family. Her love of flowers was evident in her preservation of family plants for decades. Her family was the love of her life. She was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She will be missed.

Survivors include her husband, Otto L. Fuchs, Jr. of Carmine; daughters and sons-in-law, Carobeth and Bruce Bockhorn and Rebecca and Mark Kuecker, all of Carmine; grandchildren: Lucas and Chris Ann Stroeck, Carolise and Benjamin Kelly, Dawn and Gary Bolcerek, and Clint Kuecker; great-grandchildren: Graceyn, Braelyn, and Kaleb Stroeck, and Jessalynn and Jaseton Bolcerek; step-grandchildren, Lee Bockhorn and Laura Fiedler and their families; sisters-in-law, Dellora Manske, Shirley Mueller, and Joyce Fuchs; and numerous nieces and a nephew. She was

preceded in death by her parents, father-in-law and mother-in-law, Otto Sr. and Elsie Fuchs; her sisters, Mattie Marie Rothermel, Nina Ellermann and her husband Henry Al, and brothers-in-law, Edison Manske, J. D. Mueller, and Howard Fuchs. Serving as pallbearers are grandsons, Lucas Stroeck, Clint Kuecker, Benjamin Kelly and Gary Bolcerek; and great-nephews, John Henry Dana, and Justin Dana. Honorary pallbearers are granddaughters, Dawn Bolcerek, Carolise Kelly, and Chris Ann Stroeck.

Memorials may be directed to Martin Luther Lutheran Church Memorial Fund.

Funeral arrangements for Carolyn Elizabeth Fuchs are entrusted to Foehner Funeral Home, 13560 W. Washington St., in Burton. To post a tribute to the family, visit [www.memorialoakschapel.com](http://www.memorialoakschapel.com).



## *In Memoriam*



### **Hugo Joseph Gold**

Hugo Joseph Gold died on March 11, 2013, in San Antonio, Texas. He was born on September 29, 1930, in Nueces County, Texas, the son of Hugo Henry Gold and Christine Ida Hoelscher. He attended Violet Public School, was graduated from Corpus Christi College Academy, and then served in the U. S. Army, 1951-1954, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, and Yokohama, Japan. After his Army service, he attended Del Mar College and was graduated from Texas A&M University in 1960 with a BS degree in mechanical engineering. He had a long career at Kelly AFB and received many certificates for outstanding service. He was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and was awarded the Cross of Military Service by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Hugo was preceded in death by his parents, his brother-in-law, Jesse Kimmel, and nephews Timothy O'Grady, Lucas

Kimmel, and F. B. (Chip) Wood. He is survived by wife Theresa Gros Gold, married January 11, 1964, and sons Joseph Hugo Gold (wife, Eilene) and John Henry Gold (wife, Teresa), and granddaughter Jana Gold. Other family members are his brother John W. Gold, wife Macie; and sisters Elizabeth Kimmel, Bernadette (Michael) O'Grady, Mary Christine (Jerry) English, Alice (Barry) Wood, and Walieta (James) Kimmel, 24 nieces and nephews and numerous other relatives.

#### **Services**

Services will be held Thursday, March 21, at the Church of the Holy Spirit, 8134 Blanco Road, with a rosary at 9:30 a.m., followed by Funeral Mass and reception. Burial will be at St. Joseph Society Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, c/o Church of the Holy Spirit, P.O. Box 460729, San Antonio, Texas 78246-0729.

**Our condolences to Theresa, a long time supporter/contributor to the German-Texan Heritage Society from its very beginnings.**

## Life Member News!

**Corrections** to new Life Member Elo Toll's info.

- His family name was Biehle (with an "h")
- He was not in the air force but in the USAR, US Army Reserve
- He asked if we could mention his grandmother Theresia Tschatschula -

*HI Großmutter!!!*



Congratulations to Arthur and Frances von Rosenberg who became life members as of 3/2013.



And we also recognize Michael Froehls as a new life member! Michael is with KOOP (FM 91.7) in Austin and he interviewed Helga von Schweinitz and Annette Stachowitz recently on his radio show, "The Global Wanderer." The gals had a chance to talk about the Germans to Texas, our "Trails" project and what GTHS does to preserve and promote the German-Texan heritage.

**Welcome Michael.**

From left to right, Annette Stachowitz, Michael and Helga von Schweinitz.



## President's Notes

Is my math correct? Are we truly into our 35th year (2013-1978)! Coral or jade are the appropriate gifts for the 35th....I am leaning more toward good old Washington's (one dollar bills) in increments of \$35!

Seriously, we continue our efforts to meet our mission. We held a "springfest" at the German Free School that included Maipole dancers, food and good German beer. All that came had a great time. Those of you in Austin continue to enjoy Stammtisch, German film nights and a speaker series. And for those of us out of town, we are looking forward to our annual meeting in September and the launch of our IPHONE APP along with a quarterly Journal that I hope you enjoy.



For the first twelve years of the organization, work was accomplished in private homes. We graduated to a small office space, moving on to the German Free School in 1991. Volunteer staffing/events coordination were the name of the game for many years. Paid staff became a necessity as we expanded services and volunteers became more scarce. And events/memberships/operating fund donations paid the bills. We enter our 35th with new challenges.

Recent bequests have given us the funds to upgrade our systems that were sorely in need. A new phone system required that we change our numbers so make those changes in your address book. Our website is being retooled as we speak to allow for a more efficient way to do business. We did not send out a Schulhaus Reporter lately and not having heard an outcry, it will be discontinued. We will continue the Journal and ask that any of you that would accept it via email, please let me know. This will also save printing costs/ mailing costs that continue to escalate.

While both memberships and donations to the operating fund have diminished, expenses have not. And while our events (Maifest, Oktoberfest, Christmas Market) continue to bring in about the same amount of monies, the expenses to hold them continue to grow and Austin volunteers continue to fade. Grants to keep the building in good order are utilized but the stuff of running the building (utilities, insurance) continue their upward climb. **WHAT TO DO?**

We believe the IPHONE APP will be a very useful tool to keep our mission alive and ask your help in identifying points of interest to be included. We will be soliciting "sponsors", advertisers for the app so your help in identifying those entities that would benefit from exposure on this statewide "German trail" would be most welcome.

We are not alone in our declining memberships, donations as many nonprofits are experiencing the same issues. Our challenge is how to meet these issues. We have a long range plan and a committee to explore more ways to use the million dollar facility we enjoy in the German Free School to generate the revenue we need. Your feedback and ideas would be greatly appreciated so let me hear from you.

We have recently tapped another generation of Koenig's - JT to be exact. He will be filling the position vacated by Carl Luckenbach and for those of you who don't know, he is Rodney Koenig's wonderful son who recently moved to Austin and who contributed three of the articles you will be reading in this Journal. WELCOME JT.

**SO** mark your calendars for September 20, 21 for our annual meeting in Winedale. This is an area steeped in history and we are planning a great event. Nominate that person you have always admired for the Ehrenstern Award, nominate a person for a board position **AND** your birthday wishes in the form of Washington's will be gratefully accepted!

Mary

**I have included a VERY rough draft of what the IPHONE APP might look like and do on the next page...Check it out and give feedback!**

# The Project - Smart Phone App

Organization - The German Texan Heritage Society (est. 1978), a state wide 501c3 organization dedicated to promoting awareness and preservation of the German cultural heritage of Texas

## Scope of Smart Phone App

- Identification of those pathways from the coast to settlements within the state  
- Highlights/history of those settlements and people/what to do/what to see

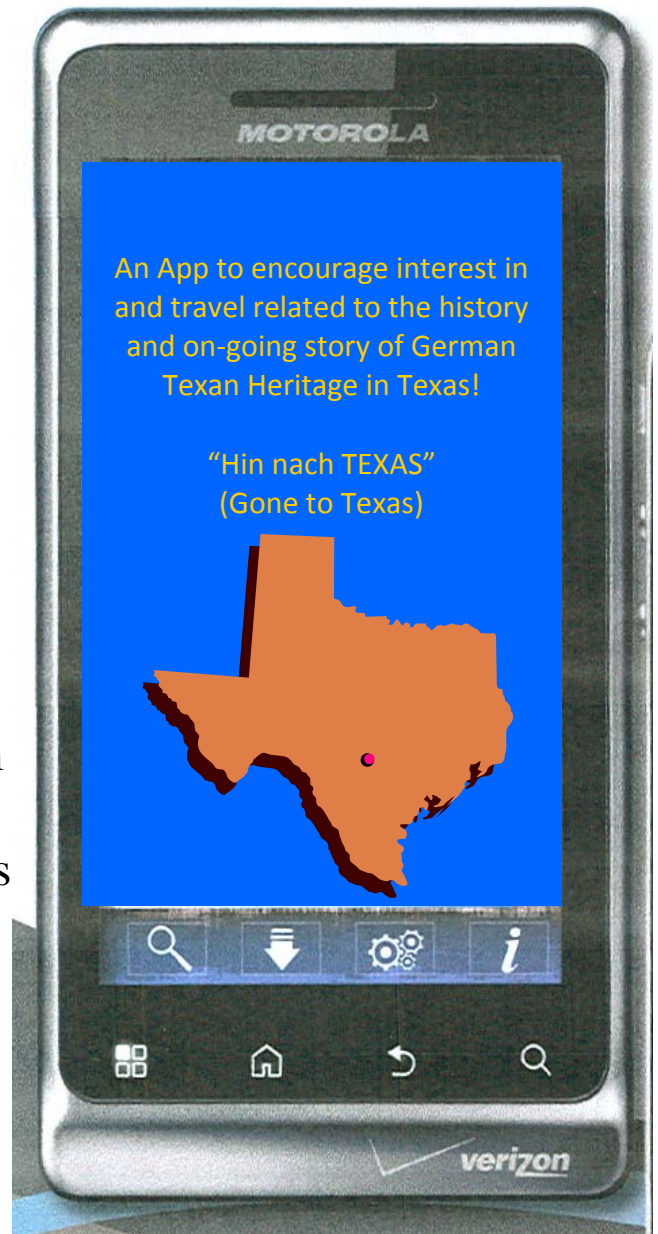
### **A Vision of how it works**

Choose to start where you are or want to start.

Choose a distance from where you are or another location.

Choose your categories of German interests, early settlers, historic sites, food, festivals, music, etc.

Items of interest will come up automatically and you can choose where you want to go first.



### Sample Areas of Interest:

- Communities big and small
- Language classes
- Architecture
- Food, Beer & Wine
- Early Texas Sites
- Lodging
- Music - Festivals
- Early Migration Routes
- Museums-Libraries
- Famous German Texans
- Cemeteries

## LEAVE YOUR GERMAN MARK

### By Rodney C. Koenig (past President of GTHS)

We have a number of German related entities in the Houston area. Two singing clubs, Houston Saengerbund & Houston Liederkranz meet weekly and sing at the statewide Saengerfest on May 4-5, 2013. The German Consulate for the Southwestern United States is located in Houston. Several universities, such as Rice University, University of Houston, University of St. Thomas, and Houston Baptist University all have German courses. In fact Houston Saengerbund provides scholarship funds to Rice and University of Houston. Other groups present in Houston include Texas German Society, Houston-Leipzig Sister City Association, Deutsche Samstagsschule Houston (German Saturday School) and the newly created German Center Houston.



A person leaving her German Mark is Dr. Ute Eisele. Dr. Eisele is the Founder and Principal of Deutsche Samstagsschule Houston which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2011. The school meets on Saturdays at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Rice Village, offering classes for preschool, kindergarten, elementary and High School. Adult classes are also offered on Saturdays and Tuesdays. The school observes traditional German festivals and celebrations including Christmas Market, Karneval, Easter and other holiday festivals. Dr. Eisele has been the founder and heart of this wonderful school. Additionally Ute has served as President of Houston Leipzig Sister City Association which fosters cooperation between the cities of Leipzig, Germany and Houston, Texas. Bach Society Houston is very active in this association since Johann S. Bach was cantor at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig.



Ute Eisele

Finally, Ute Eisele is also Founder and President of the new German Center Houston. Its inauguration took place on February 20, 2013, at the McClain Gallery in Houston. German Consul General Hans Jochen Gühlke was in attendance and greeted guests, as did Houston Symphony Maestro Hans Graf. Mezzo Soprano Sonja Bruzauskas sang at the opening, along with other delightful entertainment. The new Deutsches Kultur Zentrum is a virtual center and hopes to continue to sponsor German cultural events throughout the city. Its website is up and running. See [www.GermanCenterHouston.org](http://www.GermanCenterHouston.org). Ute Eisele can be seen at numerous German functions throughout Houston. She has truly left her German Mark in her founding German Saturday School and German Center Houston.

How will you leave your German Mark? Perhaps you will start a lecture series on German Culture at one of our universities. Perhaps you will write articles about your German Family or heritage. If you wish to leave a portion of your IRA, 401(k) or life insurance, consider naming GTHS or some other German charity as a beneficiary of such IRA. You may decide to leave a dollar amount or a percentage of your estate to GTHS in your will. For help in providing a legacy, call Rodney C. Koenig at (713) 651-5333 or e-mail me at [rkoenig@fulbright.com](mailto:rkoenig@fulbright.com). Any officer or board member of GTHS can also help.

## Genealogy Inquiries: Liz Hicks, Genealogy Editor

If you have information that will assist with the following queries, please respond to the submitter at the address given.

Do **YOU** have a genealogy question? Send it to Liz Hicks, Genealogy Editor, e-mail: [erootrot@usa.net](mailto:erootrot@usa.net) or 746 Edgebrook Dr., Houston, TX 77034-2030. We reserve the right to edit queries. Queries are printed as space permits at no charge.



### LISTICH – SENS – VON MANTEUFFEL

Charles “Chuck” Kalteyer, 70 St. Stephens School Rd., Austin, TX 78746-2425, e-mail: [ckalteyer@austin.rr.com](mailto:ckalteyer@austin.rr.com), would like to know if Louise Amelia Listich Sens was related to Rittmeister Friedrich August Wilhelm von Manteuffel (1771-1846).

**Reply:** According to <http://geneagraphie.com>, Friedrich A.W. von Manteuffel born Oct. 22, 1771, and died 9 Aug. 1846, had a daughter, Kathinka von Manteuffel who married a Listich, and had a son, Engelhard Listich. Editha Sens Kalteyer’s Texas Death Certificate has her mother as Valeria Listich. Perhaps, your Louise Amelia went by Valeria? A “Vareria” Sens died 18 March 1925, Bexar Co., TX. I will have to see if her parents are named on her death certificate, and go from there. You will have to use what you have and work back from there. If you can find your Listich ancestors in the same parish as the Engelhard Listich you may find the connection.

### WEBER

Glen Treibs, 1099 Treibs Rd., Fredericksburg, TX 78624-6763, would like to know place of birth for Anna Weber (1802-1878), and name of her husband. Anna may have been Elisabeth Anna Weber, and had a son, Peter. They lived in the Perdernalles community of Gillespie County, TX.

**Reply:** Lots of Webers/Webbers in early Texas. 1848 Tax List of Gillespie Co., TX has Ann Elizabeth Weber, 100 acres, value \$75, on the John Hays survey. 1849, same, but 200 acres, value \$150. 1850 tax list, an Engelhardt Weber is listed on John Hays and Lewis survey with Ann Elizabeth Weber, note: part of 640 acre tract. The only Weber on the tax list prior to 1846 is a Joseph Weber, no survey mentioned (may not have owned land). Also, 1846 a John Webber is in Travis County, John Weber survey. According to “A New Land Beckoned” by Geue, there were at 20 Webers who emigrated before 1848. Of interest, Elisabeth Weber, from Siefhofen, Nassau, Germany, came 21 Nov. 1846, age 36, husband buried near Pitch Creek, Texas (from New Braunfels Church records). Using the German Emigration Contracts online at the Texas General Land office ([www.glo.texas.gov](http://www.glo.texas.gov)), weed out the single Webers. A married man would have received 640 acres as opposed to 320 for a single man. Gillespie Co., TX was created 23 Feb., 1848 from Bexar and Travis Counties. A search of probate records in all of these cos., and possibly Comal may turn up Anna Elisabeth Weber’s husband. I certainly would see how she got that land on 1848 Gillespie tax list. Did she buy it? Did she inherit it?

### CLAR – CLARE – KLAR – DELHEIM – ISAACS – HYMANS - MOSES

Liz Clare, 1806 Kingwood Cove, Austin, TX 78757, [liz\\_clare@hotmail.com](mailto:liz_clare@hotmail.com)

I am looking for information about both parents and descendants of Max Klar (Clar/Clare), born 1847, Saxony, Germany, emigrated to U.S. in 1860’s. He settled in Boston, died 1912. Max married Lisette (Delheim or Isaacs?) in 1869. I am a descendant of son, Emanuel (Manny) Clare and wife, Matilda Richards. Other siblings, Charles born 1872, married Henrietta Phillips in 1897, was living in Rhode Island 1920s-1930s; Sarah Clare (1883-1958) married Hyman/Herman Moses (1881-1943), died Queens, NY; Frida Clare (born 1879) married in 1905 Morris/Maurice Hyams. They were living in Boston as of 1930.

**Reply:** As you determined from your research, your Klar/Clare ancestors were Jewish. As with any ethnic or religious group, there may be records that pertain to that specific group. Other than the standard genealogical research tools, census, naturalization, probate, military and land records, I would look for religious and organizational records for your ancestors. Please do not forget obituaries in regular newspapers and newspapers specific to the religion.

The (not free) [www.AmericanAncestors.org](http://www.AmericanAncestors.org) of the New England Historic Genealogical Soc. has (3) hits for your Clar: Mass. Vital Records, 1841-1910; Mass. Vital Records, 1911-1915; and Mass. Grand Lodge of Masons Membership Cards, 1733-1990. You can access this site at some libraries (Clayton Library Houston, TX).

Cyndislist ([www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com)) has several links for Jewish genealogy. Also, Boston is the location for the 2013 International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Contact information for this conference is [chairs@iajgs2013.org](mailto:chairs@iajgs2013.org) (Jay Sage & Heidi Urich). For people who have not attended before, see video, Passport to Your Past, [video.iajgs2013.org](http://video.iajgs2013.org). Please do not forget to do a subject search for Jewish Gen. at <https://www.familysearch.org>.

### **WENGER – GEMURR – CHRISTOPH**

Liz Hickman, e-mail: [lzhickman712@gmail.com](mailto:lzhickman712@gmail.com), (713) 868-3559. I am researching Hermann Josef Wenger (baptized Josef Hermann), born Bockau, Lower Silesia, Prussia. After 1945, Polish name was Bukow, Dolnoslaskie province. He was one of seven children born to Reinhold Wenger and Anna Gemurr. All born Bockau. Children, Anna Marie, 1878; Johanna Agnes, 1879; Josef Hermann, 1881; Anna Hedwig, 1882; Anna Margareta, 1883; Hedwig Clara, 1885; and Robert Paul, 1886. Baptismal records from LDS (Mormon) film #1456664. My grandparents, Hermann and Pauline Christoph Wenger were married in Essen, Germany in 1912. Hermann died in 1917, and Pauline returned to her birthplace, Weizenrodau, Silesia, (now Pzsenno, Poland). In 1927, she and her son, Alfons/Alfred Paul Wenger emigrated to Waukesha, WI where she had cousins. I would like to find where Hermann Josef Wenger is buried in Essen, and connect to his siblings and share information.

**Reply:** My first thought is look for church records for death of Hermann. There is a German version of google. It is [www.google.de](http://www.google.de). Use this site for Essen newspapers for possible obit for Hermann. The LDS have filmed some city directories for cities in Germany. The churches, newspapers, list of residents (relatives), etc. should be listed in these. The periodical, "German Genealogical Digest", volume 1, fall 2001 contained very helpful information on the people, history, country, naming practices and RECORDS of Silesia. Clayton Library has this periodical. Helpful websites for Silesian ancestors: <http://www.ggsnm.org/Regional%20Pages/Silesia.htm> (e-mail lists, maps, archives, records); [wiki-en.genealogy.net/Schlesien](http://wiki-en.genealogy.net/Schlesien); [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/autwgw/agssci.htm](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/autwgw/agssci.htm); and <https://familysearch.org> (click collections, or do a place search for Silesia).

### **KLIER – SCHLICKUM**

Chuck and Carrol Timmerman, e-mail: [doonboggle@yahoo.com](mailto:doonboggle@yahoo.com) seek information on Wilhelm Friederich Eduard Klier who arrived 1849 in Texas, along with brother-in-law, Jakob Julius Schlickum. Julius Schlickum was a "free thinker", while wife, Theresa Klier Schlickum was from a devout Catholic family. In 1859, three of their small children died. Where are they buried? The family were living in Boerne and/or San Antonio at the time of the deaths.

**Reply:** Use Texas county tax lists to see where the family was living at the time of the deaths. You can track someone year by year by using the county tax lists. Use the San Antonio newspapers to see if mention of children's death. Even if deaths were in Boerne, the San Antonio newspaper(s) may have still reported death as Schlickums were former residents with business interests in San Antonio. Since mother was Catholic, see if any death records in Catholic church. St. Mary's in San Antonio has quite a few records for Catholic parishes in and around Bexar County. It is possible the children were buried on land the Schlickums owned? I'm sure you have tried [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) and cemetery surveys by local genealogical societies? These surveys can normally be found in the local public library.

### **SCHÖNERT – SCHOENERT - SCHOENER**

Herman G. Schoener, 3230 Margaret Mary Ln., Belleville, IL 6221; (618) 236-0679, e-mail: [Poph103040@aol.com](mailto:Poph103040@aol.com) seeks Schönert/Schoenert relatives in U.S. and Germany. His ancestor, Herman Kart Schönert, and brother, Oscar changed their last name to Schoener upon 1882 arrival in Texas. Herman was born in Nebra on the Unstrut, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. There is another Schönert listed in Gleina, not far from Nebra, Germany. The Schönerts were Lutheran.

**Reply:** Have you tried looking in the German telephone books (online) for Schönerts listed in towns close to those you mentioned? Be sure to look at godparents on baptismal records to find relatives. There are mailing lists on [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com) where you can post queries (surname and location). Look for digitalized records of civil and parish records at <https://familysearch.org> click continental Europe, then Germany.

**KUPPERS**

Charlene Farris, e-mail: [cfarris7@austin.rr.com](mailto:cfarris7@austin.rr.com) seeks place of origin/birth for Johann Kuppers who arrived in Texas in 1866 with 17 yr. old daughter, Catherine. Catherine married John Benjamin Varga. Catherine and John Varga are buried, along with one child in the Confederate Cemetery (City Cem. #4) in San Antonio. Johann disappears after 1880, no children born in U.S. various records give conflicting places of birth in Germany.

**Reply:** Texas Confederate Pensions are online and printable at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) (not free site, but many libraries subscribe). If Catherine Kuppers Varga had a widow's pension file, she should have said where she was born. Her death certificate should have place of birth (in Germany) if completed correctly. "WPA Index to Texas Naturalizations, Texas State Dist. and County Courts 1846-1939" has John (anglicized Johann) Kuppers, 54 born Prussia filed Oct. 15, 1872, Dist Court, 23 Civil Min, book H, pg. 62, original papers bk. C, pg. 366 of the District Court; John G. Kuppers, 41, Germany, Oct. 15, 1894, Probate minutes, bk. Z, p. 267, original papers filed book F, pg. 298, County Court; and Peter Kuppers, 28, born Germany, Declaration filed Jan. 28, 1876, District Court book E, page 789. Ship Passenger Lists Port of Galveston, TX 1846-1871-s/s/ Weser date Nov. 26, 1866, Johann Kuppers 48, Reinprussen, farmer with Peter 19, Catharina 17, Agnes 15, Johann 14, Wilhelm 12, and Maria age 19. Check with the San Antonio Public Library as they had a card index to newspaper obituaries at one time. You may have to "bite the bullet" and look at parish records for the places you have identified in Germany. Make sure they were in Reinprussia as of date of emigration. Meyers Orts (Lexikon) is online at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com). Look for the town names which will indicate if had a parish and what denomination, civil and military district.

**KUGEL – WESTERFELD/WESTEFELD**

Eugene Watson, e-mail: [dripspring@yahoo.com](mailto:dripspring@yahoo.com) seeks information on George Westerfeld born Germany, emigrated to Texas between 1860 and 1870. He was married to Hedwig Kugel. I have land transfer from Julia Kugel, daughter of Hedwig and Frank Kugel dated 1884. I do not know when Hedwig died. George Westerfeld owned 10 acres in Lockhart at one time, but lived in Hays County, Texas

**Reply:** Does the land transfer actually say daughter of Hedwig and Frank Kugel? Where did you get the name of Hedwig's husband? Did Julia have any children born in U.S. If so, look for baptismal record as should say where in Germany Julia was born. The first names you mention are anglicized. There was a Johann Georg Westerfeld (company of 4 persons) who emigrated to Galveston in 1853 on the s/s Neptune, from Holzhausen, Germany. Also, a Johanne Kugel who emigrated through Galveston in 1847 on the s/s Charles N. Cooper. The originals of these ships' list will provide more information. Try the Briscoe Center for American History at UT-Austin, or even try a google search for passenger list. Using <https://familysearch.org>, Germany, Births and Baptisms, 1558-1898, I found Johann Georg Westerfeld born 30 Jul 1805, Holzhausen (vor der Höhe) Hessen, Germany, parents: Nicholas Westerfeld, Margaretha Andermann. There is also a Johann Georg Westerfeld born 28 May 1822 same place, and parents, Heinrich and Maria Götz Westerfeld. These are possibilities. A Mrs. G. Westerfeld, age 60 years is buried in Section A of the Lockhart City Cemetery. Perhaps the City of Lockhart has sexton records (records of burials) for this Cemetery, which might give at least a date of death.

**TREBUS – KÖPPEN – LOHL**

Robert Pruessner, 201 McDermott St., Apt. 108, Deer Park, TX 77536-4995, e-mail: [rdpruessner@aol.com](mailto:rdpruessner@aol.com), and his sister, Kay Hudspeth of Ontario, CA share the following letter from a relative in 1910 Trebbin, Germany. The following letter was translated and transcribed by Dr. Elke Hedstrom. Harry Carl Trebus, born 13 Oct. 1853, Trebbin, Germany had 2 brothers and one sister in Germany as of 1910. Robert and Kay would like to know about their German relatives.

"Trebbin, February 16, 1910

Dear Uncle, [Harry Carl Trebus]

You might be wondering who the person is writing you a letter. You do not know me. However, I am going to write you about me so are informed. My name is Emil Heinrich Friedrich Köppen, grandson of your sister Karoline Lohl, maiden name Trebus. As you yourself know, your sister did not have any children of her own. However, she took in her niece when she was very little, and raised her as her own daughter. The niece is my mother. She is the daughter of your brother August. I was born on October 13, 1895, which is your birthday too. In honor of you, I was also named after you. Presently, I am 14 1/3 years old. From the time I was little, my mother and my grandmother told me that I had an uncle, living far away in America, whose birthday was on the same day like mine, and he had the same first name like as I. I have been very much interested in you. Each time, when I celebrated my birthday with my friends, I said a toast to you, and I sent my best greetings for the future across the ocean to you, my related birthday child. I had always planned to



write a letter to you. Since my confirmation is coming up, I just have to tell you my wishes. This year, on March 20, I will be confirmed in our local "Marienkirche" (St. Mary's Church). Therefore, I am asking you, dear uncle, and I hope you are not cross with me, to visit us, if it is possible, together with your daughter. I hope that I do not ask for this in vain. In case it is not possible for you to come, then at least send me a reply please. Your sister Karoline has been a widow again since two years. She is living with us now. Twice she had a stroke already, and she is very weak. Your brother Wilhelm is in the same shape like she is. Your brother August had a leg, which was in very bad shape, and all of us feared he would not recover. My mother has been suffering from bad nerves for seven years now. All of them would like to see you again before they die. You wanted to know something about Trebbin. You were asking some questions in your last letter, dated October 3, 1903. I will give you an answer to them now. Your sister Caroline will be 67 years old on April 21. Old Mr. Schottmüller has been dead for a long time. His youngest son is running the pharmacy now. Dear uncle, I am sure you still remember the old school house located near the church. They are building a new one now. It will be the largest building in Trebbin and the surrounding area. It will be five stories high, and it will have 14 class rooms, It will have two rooms for cooking, 3 administrative offices, 5 places for the custodians, 2 rest rooms and 6 hallways. In addition, there will be an auditorium and an attic for ventilation. The heating system uses steam. The building will be christened in August. When everything is said and done, the building will cost 215 000 "Mark". The inhabitants have to pay 8 "Mark" taxes per person for it. By the way, the amount of taxes has increased tenfold in the last ten years. Other things have changed too. If you would visit Berlin now, you would hardly recognize it. The entire area, up to Groß Lichterfeld Süd (South) and in each direction, is a sea of houses now with about 4 000 000 inhabitants. Trebbin is reaching up to the "Galgenberg" (a hill), the fisher houses and up to "Löwendorf" (a village). My father is a bricklayer. He has built us a small house. We are living behind "Stiesler's" mill on "Otto's Lauseberg" (a hill). In case you really could come, everyone would be happy to see you. I am closing with this request, and I wish you and your daughter Elsa all the best for your future life.

I remain with best wishes, your nephew, Emil Köppen  
Everyone is sending their greetings.

Address: To the Family of Friedrich Köppen, Trebbin, District of Teltow, Barutherstr. 12, Prussia, Germany"

**Reply:** Try this link for Karoline Trebus Lohl

[https://familysearch.org/search/record/results#count=20&query=%2Bgivenname%3AKaroline~%20%2Bsurname%3ATrebus~%20%2Brecord\\_country%3AGermany%20%2Bany\\_place%3A%22Germany%2C%20Brandenburg%2C%20Teltow%22~](https://familysearch.org/search/record/results#count=20&query=%2Bgivenname%3AKaroline~%20%2Bsurname%3ATrebus~%20%2Brecord_country%3AGermany%20%2Bany_place%3A%22Germany%2C%20Brandenburg%2C%20Teltow%22~) Do a google search for German telephone books to possibly find relatives. How about writing to the church mentioned in the letter and ask the pastor if any present day church members by your surnames. Thank you and Kay for sharing this letter.

### <<< Odds and Ends >>>

Clayton Library, Center for Genealogical Research, 5300 Caroline St., Houston, TX 77004, to access the digital project the library participates in, use Books.familysearch.org (no www). This will open up the Family History books and you can search all books in the archive.

<http://script.byu.edu>

This website offers guidance in deciphering old handwriting styles. Languages covered include English, German, Dutch, Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

<http://imigrants.byu.edu>

Immigrant ancestors project, uses emigration registers to locate information about birthplaces of immigrants in their native countries, sources not used on [www.Ancestry](http://www.Ancestry) and <https://familytree.org>. Example: a search for Jean Basset turned up "Emigration: previous residence: Petworth, Sussex, England, male age 29, occupation: servant..." and all this time I thought he died in Sussex Co., England.

Not sure how to find a library located where your ancestor lived? A guide to library resources <http://www.librarysites.info>. You can find presidential, law, public, academic, state and special libraries. There is also a link for libraries not in U.S.

Texas State Library and Archives: Their resources at <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/arc/genfirst.html>. Some online collections listed at <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/landing/collections.html>. Some examples: Vital statistics Indices, Index to Confederate Pension applications, Texas Adjutant General Service Records, 1836-1935, Republic of Texas Claims, to name a few.

Baptisms 1851-1914 of the Trinity Lutheran Church, 106 N. DeLeon, Victoria, TX, 77901 are posted on the usgenweb site for Victoria County, Texas. This is the link to the website:  
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txvicto2/trinitybaptisms18511859.html>

We are recognized in the Immigrant Genealogical Society Newsletter, June 2013:

### Ahnenpass

Have you ever wanted to see the internal travel documentation that German citizens were to carry during the years of the Third Reich? It was called an Ahnenpass, and if someone in your extended family had one and someone saved it, one of these can take you several generations back from the individual for whom it was issued. The Ahnentafel ("ancestor table") found inside is just a form of pedigree chart, showing lineage as far back as one's 3rd great grandparents. But the pages provided for the official certification of the information found had room for even more remote ancestry. The point, of course, was to be able to show "Aryan" ancestry (note: look up "Ahnenpass" on Wikipedia!). Keep in mind that it was expensive during the world depression of the 1930s to pay the fees that obtained those certifications - not to mention the expense one went to in finding the church books with the data needed. A full copy of one of these scarce booklets is to be found in the Spring 2013 issue of "The Journal," the quarterly of the German-Texan Heritage Society. See pages 38 - 52, and the initial page about the Rossow family of Guadalupe and Gonzales counties, Texas & their German relations of Potsdam and Rastenburg, for whom this applied. **(Ed. - Thanks to Liz Hicks)**

### Ahnenpass follow-up

In the spring, 2013 GTHS "Journal" pgs. 37-52 we published an example of an Ahnenpass. For those interested in additional information, Roger P. Minert, Ph.D., A.G., authored an article which was published in volume 13, no. 4, winter, 1997 of the "German Genealogist Digest". Dr. Minert gives the historical background for this document starting with the passing of the Nürnberger Gesetze (Nuremberg Laws) in 1935 Germany. These laws defined the status of an individual based on that person's racial heritage. A person with four Aryan grandparents was classified as of German blood. A person with at least three Aryan grandparents were classified as a Mischling 1 (1<sup>st</sup> degree cross-breed), a person with two Jewish grandparents were Mischling 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> degree cross-breed), and persons with three or more Jewish grandparents were officially classified as Jews. The Nuremberg Laws carefully defined the status of the offspring.

Dr. Minert also stated that the certification of entries in the Ahnenpass could only be provided by the civil registrar or the church recorder based upon original entries in their records or certified extracts of unquestionable reliability produced from their records. Entries could not come from another Ahnenpass, family tree, or a family history book. It seems only certified records of original documents would be accepted for documentation of one's ancestry.

It should be remembered that the creation of the Ahnenpass was political, and not created for genealogical purposes. However, finding one of these documents can be like finding the proverbial "gold mine" for a family genealogist.

For more information on the Nuremberg Laws and a sort of DNA chart used to determine who was and who wasn't a Jew go to the history place website: <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/triumph/tr-nurem-laws.htm>

## Helga's Corner

**F K K**

***Frei – Körper - Kultur*** (free body culture) means running around naked and elevating it to a cultural event. It happens in homes, but in Germany also in public within dedicated areas called F K K. We have nudist camps and parks in America, but they are not frequented by as many people as in Germany. Austin, that weird town in Texas, has “Hippy Hollow” where clothes are optional, but few straight folks venture there. In Germany there is no snickering (*kichern*) when you hear about a couple spending their vacation in a nudist resort. The best of them are along the German coast of the Baltic Sea (*Ostsee*), where during socialist times many beautiful stretches of beach were reserved as “F K K Strand”, and they are kept as such after Germany united.



Other areas are not officially dedicated for that life style, but one uses them in beautiful weather. A group of Texan high school students were sightseeing in Munich one sunny day in July when they ambled in the part of town where in the fall the Oktoberfest takes place. There is an extensive lawn, *die Wies'n*. The young Texans soon realized that they were surrounded by naked bodies of both sexes and all ages lying on the grass. Obviously, locals were taking advantage of the healthy sunshine and exposed as much skin as possible. The poor teenagers were embarrassed and did not know where to direct their eyes. One of the boys told me years later that he still feels guilty about seeing what he could not avoid to look at, although he had a steady girlfriend at home.

All creatures great and small (*die großen und die kleinen*) are born naked, even the Baptists, but culture wraps us in concepts of what is proper. On a trip along the Adriatic coast of *Jugoslavien* with American friends, we checked into an elegant hotel and went to the pool for a before dinner splash. *Mensch!!!* Every body in and around the pool was nude (*nackt!*), and they all talked German. I realized then that the three big letters “F K K” over the entrance indicated the nature of the hotel to German tourists. One of our guys, John, decided that he was not going to sit on a chair where most likely one of those shameless (*schamlos*) nekkit guys had sat with a bare bottom. So we all checked out and moved to a “decent” hotel (*ein anständiges Hotel*).

“They should at least act Christian like: wear a fig leaf (*ein Feigenblatt*) like Adam and Eve”, preached John. “Actually, two *Feigenblätter*, one for the front (*vorne*), one for behind (*hinten*)”.

*Weise Worte:*

*Dem Glücklichen schlägt keine Stunde.*

When you are happy, you ignore time.

**A Suggestion from Member, Angelina Kretzschmar, San Antonio**

**“Can you add a column in the Journal for pending family reunions in Texas, date of reunion, place & contact. This would help us to find our relatives/ancestors!”**



**Editor - WILL DO!**

Advertise your family reunion in advance!

Most of you will be in the planning stages for months in advance so let us know before the fact. Deadlines for Journal submissions are on the inside back page.

## Happenings at the German Free School:

The GTHS Headquarters, the German Free School in Austin, TX, also known as the German-Texan Culture Center, is hosting a popular exhibit called “Tear Down This Wall”. The “wall” is the one that divided Berlin into East and West.

The display consists of three panels covered with photos, newspaper articles and clippings, and some art work. There are also a three dimensional replica of the wall as it winds its way through Berlin, and an album with additional material. It shows the situation before the wall was built, its effect on the people living there, then the activities in East Germany leading to its downfall, including President Reagan's impressive appeal: “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”



It was created as a “History Day “ project in 2012 by five girls, then in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Grisham Middle School in the Round Rock School District, Texas. It won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the National Competition.

**Pictured (not in order): Helga, Khira Patel, Nitj Malwade, Devika Patel, Hamsini Nathan, Srija Reddy**

During a presentation at the German Free School in April of 2013, the fascinated audience heard how the research was conducted and how much the girls learned about German history, the Cold War and about German-American relations.

The girls' names are Khira Patel, Devika Patel, Hamsini Nathan, Niti Malwade and Srija Reedy. Their teacher's name is Mrs. Rank. The accompanying mother at the presentation was Mrs. Dilpa Patel.

The exhibit can be viewed at the German Free School until another place claims it, most likely the German Consulate General in Houston. The parents of the girls will entertain invitations by other respectable hosts to house the display. Get in touch with the GTHS office or Helga von Schweinitz at [helgavs@aol.com](mailto:helgavs@aol.com) to establish the contact.

**Submitted by Helga von Schweinitz, Austin**

# Community Events

## Life In The Bluff Community, Part I

By Carolyn Heinsohn, Fayette County Historical Commission, *The Fayette County Record*, April 16, 2013

The Bluff area, which has been documented as one of the oldest communities in the county, was first settled by Anglos in the 1830s and was named after the 200 foot bluff on the south side of the Colorado River. It was known as the most picturesque section of the county where the best view of La Grange could be had from Kreische's Bluff, where Monument Hill State Park is now located. German, settlers, who left their country during or soon after the turmoil that resulted in the 1848 revolution, were the next group to settle in the Bluff area. F. Lotto, who wrote an early history book on the county, said that "the Germans who settled in that part of Fayette County were a highly educated, intelligent class of immigrants, friends of liberty and democrats at heart".

In the late 19th century, the Bluff area was developing into an identifiable community, although it encompassed a large area from the Colorado River south to Cedar and present day Hostyn and southeast to the "Y" at present day FM 155 and FM 3233. Two of the most historical sites associated with the Bluff community, other than the tomb for the remains of the Dawson and Mier Expeditions, are Kreische's brewery and his home. The first phase of the brewery was started shortly after Heinrich Kreische's marriage to Josepha Appelt in 1855 and was mostly completed by the early 1860s. Kreische employed many of his German neighbors, who lived in the area, to help build his brewery and then to help operate it after completion. Kreische also built the Bluff Schuetzen Verein, pavilion that was featured in a previous "Footprints of Fayette" article.

There were also several German-Bohemian families in the area who came from the same region in northern Bohemia as Josepha Appelt Kreische, namely the Hausmanns, Leglers, Schroeders and Meiers (Meyers). They were descendants of Germans who had colonized the borderland regions of the Czech Lands from the 13th to the 16th. centuries. Anton Legler first worked as a stonemason for Kreische, but eventually moved from the Bluff to Bridge Valley and then to Plum, Texas, where he was the owner of multiple businesses. As a young man, Frank Hausmann, Jr. worked for Kreische as a ferry man, hauling kegs of beer across the river into town to be delivered to various saloons. The Meyers' property located between the Kreische and Franz Hausmann properties had the Bluff waterfalls and a "swimming hole" that were popular public "hangouts" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

A German school, known as the Teutonia School, was built on an acre of land donated by George and Elise Willrich in 1860 to the trustees of the "Latin



Bluff School Play - 1930: seated front center: Delta Hausmann; her husband, Frank L. Hausmann, standing behind her on the right; others unknown. *Photo courtesy of Doris Otto*

Settlement" comprised of well-educated and culturally sophisticated local Germans. In 1873, Bluff's Teutonia Association was organized by local German-Americans to "promote and cultivate social entertainment, gymnastic exercises and benevolent purposes". This organization met at the Teutonia schoolhouse, which also became known as "Teutonia Hall". Eventually, through land sales, the Teutonia School was located on what became Edith Petter's farm on present day Petter-Rainosek Loop Road. After the school closed it was moved to the Louis Eck farm on Creamer Creek Road.

In 1876, a group of early pioneers in the Bluff area, including Otto Ling, Joseph and Franz Hausmann, Henry Loehr, and Messrs. Pescka, Hines and Grasshof, got together for the purpose of establishing a school. Heinrich Kreische donated a large cottonwood tree, and the men took their axes and cut logs to build the school building. The logs were taken to Paul Nordhausen, who owned a sawmill in the Bluff community. He cut all of the lumber free of charge. That same year, land was donated by Mr. Ling near Nabors Creek alongside the old Schulenburg Road, presently Highway 77 South. The Bluff School, a public one room school, was established with a Mr. Kruse serving as the first teacher. He stayed for two years. Following him were Messrs. Heilig, Dulzer, Hohstetter, Miss Templeton and others. Mr. Hohstetter supposedly was a very tall man, who wore a stovepipe hat and rode a bald - face horse. His description somewhat matched that of Ichabod Crane.

In 1886, the people of the Bluff community organized a singing club in order to raise funds to pay for the salary of the teacher. The salaries in those days ranged from \$30 to \$40 per month for a nine month term. Families with students attending the school also had to pay \$16 per year for the teachers' salaries. Later an organization known as the "Onward Club" held fundraisers for the upkeep of the little white schoolhouse. A newspaper article mentioned that the attendees at one of their meetings enjoyed interesting talks, songs and musical selections, including violin music by Messrs. Louis and August H. Hausmann and guitar music by Harry Gilliam. Louis Hausmann also gave a presentation about the history of the school at one meeting. Unfortunately, that newspaper article found in a scrapbook did not have a date attached to it.

An old program and a photograph for a play performed by the "Onward Club" in 1930 were kept by Delta

Hausmann in a scrapbook, as well as several newspaper articles mentioning various other plays and performances, some of which were presented in other communities throughout the county. The title of the 1930 play was "The Road to the City". Frank, Gus, Giralda, Delta and Bernice Hausmann all had roles in the play. Two more plays were performed by the club at the La Grange High School Auditorium to large audiences, providing a "neat" sum of money for incidentals for the school. The plays were directed by Miss Edna Legler, the teacher at one time. Hausmann family members were again well represented in the cast, along with members of the Janda, Eegler, Lueders and Bock families.

## Life In The Bluff Community, Part II,

April 16, 2013

In 1874, Ernst Engel, a German emigrant who arrived in Texas in 1860 and lived and worked as a merchant in High Hill, purchased eight and half acres of land from Henry and Dorothea Berghahn in the Silas Jones league south of La Grange on the old Schulenburg Road in the approximate locale of the Bluff School that was established two years later. The road ran through his land.

By 1879, he had built a general merchandise store, which housed a post office named Bluff, Texas. Engel was appointed postmaster and served in that capacity until May 14, 1904, when the post office was discontinued and all mail was routed through La Grange. A 1901 postal map corroborates that a post office named Bluff, Texas was located four miles south of La Grange on the Schulenburg Road. The location of the store was in the general vicinity of the Colorado Valley Telephone Co-op on Hwy 77 South adjacent to Petter-Rainosek Loop Road. Engel died on Christmas Eve, 1906; it is not known what happened to his store after his death. Later the Joseph Hausmann, Jr. business complex became known as Bluff, Texas, and the Hausmann Store had the local voting box, although it never housed a post office. So officially, it did not have the state-designated name of Bluff, Texas.

According to James Williams, who helped write a book about an outlaw, William Sherod Robinson, the Engel Store was robbed in 1879 by Robinson, who then was reported seen riding with his gang by the George Willrich home, which was located a short distance south of the Engel Store. Robinson, a former Milam County deputy sheriff who turned to a life of crime in 1879, organized a small gang of outlaws and made himself the leader. He and his men started out rustling horses in the Rockdale area, but then turned to robbing stores in other counties, one of which was the Engel Store at Bluff, Texas. The gang was soon captured; but after getting out of jail on bond, Robinson left Milam County for good, deserting his wife and four young children. He moved to a number of states, added the alias of "Ben Wheeler" and eventually was killed by a lynch mob in 1884 after a botched bank robbery in Medicine Lodge, Kansas.

Joseph Hausmann, Jr., whose parents purchased land in the Bluff area in 1866, received his limited schooling

at the Bluff School, was self-educated beyond that schooling, and was very skilled with his hands, according to his granddaughter, the late Ella Hausmann Barnes, who wrote a story about the family in the Fayette County, Texas Heritage history book. He was given a few acres of land by his father, built a "bachelor house" and then married Dora Loehr in 1882. He began a blacksmithing business in circa 1884. By 1893, he opened a cotton gin across from his blacksmith shop on what is now known as the Hausmann Gin Road. By 1898, he owned and operated a grist mill for grinding corn and a feed mill, both of which were adjacent to his gin. Before 1900, he also built a small store next to his blacksmith shop and a two-story home next to the store. The 1900 census lists Joseph as a merchant, which validates that his store was built prior to that time.

In R Lotto's Fayette County - Her History and her People, published in 1902, an ad states that Joseph Hausmann's Store had general merchandise, groceries, boots, shoes and hardware. It also states that he had a first class gin with all



**Joseph Hausmann, Jr. Blacksmith Shop - 1898-1900; second from left - Gottlieb Loehr; third - Joseph Hausmann, Sr.; fourth - Joseph Hausmann, Jr.; fifth - August Herman Hausmann; others unknown. (Photo courtesy of Pete Hausmann)**

improved appliances, and that his blacksmith work would be done promptly. The late Robert "Buddy" Loehr, a Hausmann descendant, recalled that the Hausmann Store sold "just about everything you needed, including guns, ammunition, dry goods, and cloth-you could buy wine by the glass there - good homemade wine and also cornmeal ground at the Hausmann's stone mill connected to the gin across the road. The store also sold ropes, buggy whips, nails - every thing related to a country store."

The Hausmann Store was enlarged in the early 1930s. Dora, the wife of Joseph, Jr., continued to operate it until 1936 with the help of their daughter-in-law, Olga, who was married to their son, August Herman, who also helped his father in the cotton gin, mill and blacksmith shop, eventually becoming a partner in those businesses. August also drilled water wells and installed Aermotor windmills, pumps, pipes and fittings. August's son, George, helped his father with the well digging. According to Warren Herzog, August's grandson, they made all of their own drilling equipment and ran their rig with a 1934 Chevy truck powered by Model A engine.

After 1936, when his mother, Dora, became too ill to work, August operated the store until his death in 1952. After August died, the store closed, but the gin continued operating until circa late 1950s when cotton was no longer a cash crop in Fayette County. The buildings sat vacant for several decades until the gin was disassembled in 1978, and all of

the ginning equipment was sold. The store and Blacksmith shop were sold in 2003 by August's descendants and were moved to the Marburger Farm antiques complex east of Warrenton.

## Life In The Bluff Community, Part III,

April 23, 2013

Originally, the Williams Creek Cemetery, located on Kruppa Road, was called the Bluff Cemetery, and the road was the La Grange to Weimar Road. The Bluff Cemetery Association was organized in January 1879. In July of that year, the Association purchased two and 86/100 acres of land from Hugo Lueders in Block 81 of Fayette County School Lands for \$50. Lots were assigned by a lottery. In 1912, the Association met in Joseph Hausmann's store to vote about a name change for the cemetery. Prior to 1900, the word "Bluff" referred to a very large area; however, by 1912, "Bluff" applied only to the Monument Hill area. Since the cemetery was located several miles from Monument Hill, the Association decided that the name should be changed to Williams Creek Cemetery after a nearby creek with that name. There are now over 200 burials in the cemetery.

At one time there was a Nehi bottling plant in a building that is still standing between Hausmann Gin Road and Petter Rainosek Loop Road. In the 1940s, the RC Bottling Plant in La Grange, which was located next to the Green Lantern Cafe, purchased the bottling equipment, bottles, etc. from the owners of the plant, who had moved out of the county. After the bottling company was discontinued, the old building was later used as a community center for a number of years. Buddy Loehr remembered playing his violin, mandolin and harmonica at the community center. He also recalled that Joe Kruppa performed there as well. Mr. Kruppa was a "one-man band" who played a bass drum and snare drum with foot pedals and a concertina all at the same time. In the late 1940s, Henry Kruppa, a relative, built and operated a store that was located south of the present-day Colorado Valley Telephone Co-op. The store remained open until the 1970s.

Between the 1860s and 1890s, the population of the Bluff community, which had been predominantly German with a sprinkling of Americans, almost doubled, rising to approximately 700 by 1900, partly due to a new wave of Czech immigration into the area from Moravia. The first Moravians arrived in the Bluff area in 1856 followed by a second group in 1860. After the end of the Civil War, many additional Moravian Czechs gravitated to the area. The Catholic settlers of the Bluff community built their first little log chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity in 1856 on the John Laux farm approximately three miles east of present-day Hostyn, closer to Kreische's Bluff. It served the local Catholics until 1869 when a second larger frame church was erected at the site of the present church and renamed Queen of the Holy Rosary, although in the church records, it was usually referred to as the Bluff parish. A Czech Catholic school was built in 1868, and the cemetery was established that

same year. According to some sources, Heinrich Kreische helped build both the second and third churches.

In 1888, a much larger and more impressive church was dedicated. That church burned in 1907; it was replaced the following year and served the Catholics in the area until 1966, when the present church was erected. The Kreische family had willed their 344 acres to the Hostyn-parish, so in 1952 after the death of Julia Kreische, the family property became the property of the church and the Archdiocese of San Antonio. In 1965, the property was sold to the Frisch Auf Corporation, so the parish razed their old church and built a new one, as well as making other improvements on their property with part of the monies obtained from the sale of the property.

By the late 1880s, the Czechs in the Bluff area had organized their lives and identities around their religion and heritage. A Czech Catholic fraternal insurance organization, known as the KIT (Czech Catholic Union), was founded in Bluff in 1889. The area around their church and meeting hall began to be known as "Moravan", the name that was adopted by the local leaders for their first KJT Lodge Hall in honor of their Moravian origins. Eventually, a store and saloon were also built in the Moravian area. By that time the Moravian community was developing its own identity and was no longer considered a part of the Bluff community, which probably then extended only as far as the Bluff School and Engel's Store. After those two places closed, the area that was known as the Bluff community was probably reduced to half its original size. The name "Moravan" was changed to "Hostyn" when Rev. Paul Kasper suggested a name change to the archbishop of the San Antonio Diocese in 1925 to honor a place of pilgrimage in Moravia that is located atop a hill similar to the one at Hostyn.

Although the Czechs and Germans in the Bluff area often conducted their lives in separate circles, they shared places like the Bluff School, Engel Store and Hausmann Store and gin. Eventually, the barriers were bridged between the Germans and Czechs, who connected more and more in the 20th century, even marrying one another, which was a rare occurrence in the 19th century.

There are only a few remaining structures left from the old Bluff community, but according to historical documents, the people who lived there were caring neighbors, who left behind a legacy of community support and involvement. Their lives were intertwined through marriages, work, church and organizations, and some of their descendants still own all or part of the original land purchased by their emigrant ancestors.

### Sources:

*Fayette County Texas Heritage, WJI. 1; stories on Bluff, Hostyn, and Queen of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Hostyn, TX - Fayette County Texas Heritage, WJI. II;* family histories for August H Hausmann by Ella Barnes; *Joseph Hausmann, Jr.* by Ella Barnes; Curtis Media; 1996. Gratteri, Len; Cook, Rod; Williams, James. *William Sherod Robinson, Alias Ben Wheeler*; Eakin Press, 2010 - Leffler, John J. *The Kreisches and Their World*; Morgan Printing, Austin, TX; 2008 - Newspaper clippings and paper memorabilia collected by Delta Hausmann, courtesy of Doris Otto, granddaughter.

Submitted by Rodney Koenig, Houston

**THE GERMAN FREE SCHOOL**  
**507 EAST 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET – AUSTIN, TX 78701**  
**(a little history of early Trustees, Teachers, Students and their families)**

**This is the first in a series featuring those Germans affiliated with the German Free School, either as a Trustee, Teacher, or Student. We invite anyone (especially descendants) to send additional information (including photos) to Liz Hicks, genealogy editor, GTHS, e-mail: [erootrot@usa.net](mailto:erootrot@usa.net) or to 746 Edgebrook Dr., Houston, TX 77034-2034. This material may be published in a future GTHS *Journal*.**

The German Free School was not “free” from a tuition stand point, but was established for “the education of youth, the promotion of useful knowledge and the advancement of sciences...accessible to all alike without regard to religious opinions.” The school opened in 1858 on land donated by Wilhelm Von Rosenberg, with August Weilbacher and Julius Schütze as the first teachers.

**1858 List of Students**

Augusta Bahn	Bertha Steussy	Emilie Hutter
Karl von Rosenberg	Anna Steussy	Henry Henninger
Arthur von Rosenberg	Margarete Steussy	Kath. Henninger
Bertha Riedel	Oscar Neumann	Henry Wetz
August Riedel	Otto Neumann	William Sutor
Anna Schmitz	Carl Riefenstahl	Theo. Miethe
Wilhelm Schmitz	James Kirchberg	Domenique Schneider
Clara Ohrndorf	Florian Zimmermann	Minna Green
Hulda Ohrndorf	Marie Fruth	Albert Schütze
Julia Ohrndorf	Terese Fruth	Mary Ann King
Karl Ohrndorf	Marie(Mary) Nitschke	Margaret King
August Kunze	Emma Lohmann	Amy Sparks
Mine Kunze	Theo. Neumann	Minna Thielepape
Anna Kunze	Oscar Hartenstein	Gertrude Thielepape
Karl Kunze	Henry Sauer	Chas. DeRyce
Hulda Becht	Ludinde Sauer	Paul Perner or Perser
Francisca Becht	Theo. Wilhelm	Walter Ragsdale
Marie Adam	Judie Wilhelm	James Wooldridge
Ther. Adam	Herm. Grothaus	Elias McLaughlin
Elizabeth Hofheinz	Louis Grothaus	John J. McLaughlin
Anna Martin	Heinrich Bols	Paul Bernd
Mina Ropel	Gustav Bols	Blucher Hutchins
Mina Schröder	Amalie Bols	James Wahrenberger
Peter Schröder	Fernando Wilhelm	Jacob Isensee
Elise Sattler	Carl Hoffmann	W. Mourn
Natalie Hartenstein	Kath. Hofheinz	Mark Neile
Richard Heyer	Gus Lohmann	Gus Cezeaux
Robert Heyer	Adolphine Sterzing	Thomas Harrel
Caspar Steussy	Carl Sterzing	Harden Baker
Agnes Dohme	Louis Sommer	Tom Harrell
Marie Krohn	Mine Sommer	Ernst Krohn
Wilhelm Bonnet	Ed Lea	Ida Scholz
Julius Jurgeson	John Pressler	Thos. Lea
Will. Thom. Kelly	Agnes Pressler	John Wheeler
John Kelley	Rudolph Arlitt	Casper Schuber



Fried. Reichow	Marie Begage	Albert Riesmann
Emilie Reichow	Joseph Begage	Ameilie Schrage
James Williams	Jane Kelly	Willie Crozier
Louis Sutor	Anna Ackerlin	Danny Crozier
Max Arlitt	Rosine Fruth	Henrietta Steussy

We begin (in no particular order) with **Joseph “Joe” Schuber**, 1872 Trustee. Joseph was born 10 October, 1833 in Germany. He emigrated at age 8 with his parents, Frantz and Catherine; brother, Friedrich; sisters, Marie and Elizabeth Schüber on the s/s Hindoo arriving La Harve to New Orleans 15 January 1841. Joseph married 3 December 1856 in Austin, Anna Steussy (born 17 July 1830 Switzerland, died 30 September 1877 Austin, TX). Anna was the daughter of Fredrich and Elisabeth Steussy.

According to the Austin City Directory 1881-1896, Joseph Schuber was a City Councilman. The 1889-1890 city directory lists him as a Contractor and Builder. Joseph worked for Calcasieu Lumber Company at one time. He served in the Civil War as a private in the 14<sup>th</sup> Texas Field Battery.

Joseph’s obituary appeared in the 5 February 1922 Austin Statesman newspaper. “Joesph Schuber to be buried today in Oakwood Cemetery. Body of Austin Pioneer will be interred by that of his wife. Funeral services for Joseph Schuber, aged 88 years, who died Saturday morn at 10 o’clock at the family home, 609 West 15<sup>th</sup> St., will be held from the residence at 3 o’clock Sunday afternoon with Chas. B. Cook or Rosengren-Cook directing. Interment will be held at Oakwood Cemetery with Rev. F. G. Roesner (Lutheran) officiating. The deceased will be buried beside the grave of his wife, who died 40 years ago.

Surviving Mr. Schuber are five daughters, one son, six grandchildren and one great grandchild. Daughters: Mrs. W.L. Nitschke (Kate), Mrs. Joseph Fischer (Mary), Mrs. C. E. Smith (Anna/Annie), and Miss Lula Schuber, all of Austin. Mrs. W.H. Driver (Josephine) of Galveston. Fred W. Schuber is the surviving son. The six grand children will be active pallbearers. They are Ervin F. Fischer, Herbert J. Fischer, Cornelius A. Fischer, Emmett Smith, George McDonald, and Herbert Nitschke (obit/newspaper is in error. Herbert Nitschke was not related to the Schubers. He was the son of Robert E. Nitschke, Sr., the half-brother of Wilhelm Lewis Nitschke {Kate Schuber’s husband}). Honorary pallbearers: Max Irvin, Joe Goodman, William Besserer, Morris Silver, Joe C. Petmecky, Abe Williams, and Morris Hirshfeld. ....Joseph Schuber served as a member of Hood’s brigade....served 14 years as member of the Austin city council, chairman of the street committee. He was an active member of the Ancient Order of United Workmen of which he was secretary for 42 years. Complications from a severe cold (Pneumonia according to his death certificate) cause of his death.”

Joseph and Ann Steussy Schuber are buried in Section 4, Lot 177 of historic Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, TX. Link to memorial at <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSI=schuber&GSIman=1&GScid=5704&GRid=53741251&> (www.findagrave.com).

Additional information on Joseph and Anna Steussy Schuber may be found in the family files at the Austin History Center, 810 Guadalupe St., Austin, TX 78701, [www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/](http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/)

To be continued....next: **George Paul Assmann**, Trustee 1883, gunsmith and locksmith.

Submitted by Liz Hicks, Houston

# People

## TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATED AT ENGELKING FAMILY CEMETERY

by **Flora von Roeder**

Approximately 75 descendants, spouses, and allied family members of immigrants, Ferdinand Friedrich and Caroline (Lina) von Roeder Engelking, and Austin County, Texas, Historical Commission figures convened at the Millheim Harmonie Hall on Saturday, March 23, 2013. The gathering was in anticipation of dedicating a Texas State Historical Marker at the Engelking Family Cemetery located on the original Engelking homestead.

Exhibits on display included artifacts gathered from a site where once stood the Engelking home, a painting by an unknown artist depicting the original Engelking home, family documents relating to the cemetery, etc. Also present were Austin County newspaper writer of local history, Herbert Kollatschny, whose book *The Settling of Cat Spring and Early History of Austin County*, was for sale, and Flora von Roeder, whose translation entitled *The Engelking Letters* was also for sale.

Following a catered lunch, a short business meeting was held whereby a sign-up sheet was passed around for the purpose of forming a committee to organize another reunion. Then a caravan made its way to the cemetery site to unveil the marker and pay homage to those who rest there. Austin County Historical Commission Chairperson, Grace Holtkamp, and Austin County Historical Commission Marker Acquisitions Chairperson, Joy Neely, and husband, Bob, were present for the unveiling, as were Marion Engelking Douglas of Austin, who began the application process of putting the site on the State Historical Listing, and Charlotte Hill of New Braunfels, who followed the necessary channels whereby the historical marker could be acquired.



**Austin County Historical Commission Marker Acquisitions Chairperson, Joy Neely of Bellville, and Husband, Bob**

The Rev. Pat Clark of Houston gave a short invocation. Adult burials in marked graves include the original Engelkings—Ferdinand Friedrich and his wife, Caroline (Lina), nee von Roeder; two adult sons, Sigismund Engelking and wife, Anna, nee Zimmermann, and Friedrich (Fritz) Engelking and wife, Anna, nee Trenckmann; an adult daughter; Caroline (Lina) Engelking and husband, Wilhelm (Willie) Regenbrecht; and an adult grandson, Peter Engelking and wife, Emma, nee Blaschke. Also buried in marked graves are three young children of Sigismund and Anna Engelking, namely Carl, Marie, and Felix Engelking. Also buried in a marked grave is the young daughter of Lina and Willie Regenbrecht, Lillie Regenbrecht. Buried in unmarked graves is a young daughter of Charles and Louise Langhammer Engelking, Valeska (Leddie) Engelking, and five young children of the elder Engelkings, an unnamed stillborn daughter, Franz, Otto, Ida and Rosa Engelking. Also buried in an unmarked grave is Uncle Wash, an old Negro man who worked for the Engelkings, who saved the lives of several of the young Engelking children who were being stalked by Indians. Following their rescue, he suffered a heart attack and died. He was given a burial in the family cemetery for his bravery.



**Sarah Rutherford Starr of Tyler and mother, Martha Cooke Rutherford, of Longview.**

Engelking was an immigrant from Schlüsselburg, Westphalia. He studied law at Halle University and later worked with future immigrant, Robert Justus Kleberg. When Engelking arrived in New Orleans in 1839, two of his first acquaintances were Ernst and Joseph Kleberg, younger brothers of Robert and Louis Kleberg who had immigrated to Cat Spring in 1834. The two older Kleberg brothers had married von Roeder sisters, Louise and Rosa, and begun families when Engelking arrived. Engelking purchased

land at Millheim from Louis Kleberg who died in 1847. Engelking married the youngest von Roeder daughter, Caroline, in 1842 and the widowed Louise Kleberg married Ernst Kleberg in 1850. Ernst Kleberg and Ferdinand Engelking were active members of the Cat Spring Agricultural Society and remained Austin County citizens all their lives; whereas, Robert Kleberg and his family moved to De Witt County in 1847 living in the Five-Mile Coletto settlement near Meyersville until their later years when they moved to Yorktown. Joseph Kleberg died aboard ship while on a return trip to Germany.

Photos were made of some descendants present standing around the marker or in front of tombstones of their ancestors buried there. The accomplishment of getting this cemetery on the Texas State Historical List is important because it means that no matter who owns the property, this site cannot be destroyed for any type of commercial endeavor as have many small family burial sites of this nature.

**Marie Engelking Dunn of Kingsland, Corinne and Dorace Engelking Klatt of Orange Grove, and Walter Cornelius of Keller**



**Submitted by Flora von Roeder, Houston**

**A Look Back**

**Seal for the German-Texan Heritage Society, Designed by Glen Lich in 1979.**

**Appeared in the GTHS Newsletter Vol. 1, Nov. 1979, p. 3**



**Submitted by Terry Smart, San Antonio**

## Texas German fading into history

*Houston Chronicle*, March 6, 2013

By Kyrie O'Connor

When Kaye Langehennig Wong was a little girl in Katy in the '60s, her parents would take her to visit her grandparents in Fredericksburg. "My grandparents lived in a stone house on Main Street," she says. "I played with horny toads and walked down Main Street listening to the ladies in the shops talking in German."

Wong's father spoke only German until he went to school. "My parents spoke German to each other when they didn't want us to know what they were saying," she says. But like many parents of their generation, they didn't teach her.

The German Wong heard on Main Street was unlike German spoken anywhere else in the world. Texas German, the result of the flood of German immigrants into South Central Texas in the 19th century, is an amalgam of many of the dialects spoken in what is now Germany but was, until 1871, a collection of independent states.

When Germans settled in other parts of the U. S., they tended to cluster with people from the same original area. In Texas, they mixed freely, thus creating a unique language stew.

Hans Boas fell in love with Texas German when he was driving from



**University of Texas Professor and researcher Hans Boas at his home in north Austin on Monday, Feb. 25, 2013. Boas is working to document a dying dialect of the German language, which is spoken mostly in Texas. (Ashley Landis for the *Houston Chronicle*)**



**Jim Kearney at his ranch near Weimar, Tx. Monday Feb. 25, 2013 (Dave Rossman/For *The Chronicle*)**

Northern California to Austin in 2001 and happened to stop in Fredericksburg. It's been a topic of study for him since then. But he doesn't have time on his side.

Boas, a professor of Germanic studies and linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin, isn't trying to revive the language - it's too late for that - just to save the sound of it for posterity. He is trying to preserve the voices of as many speakers of Texas German as he can.

### ***Aging population***

Only about 8,000 people speak Texas German now, down from perhaps 150,000 in the 1940s - census all older than 60. Virtually no young people speak the language, and it will be dead in 30 years.

Think of Boas as a zoologist studying a nearly extinct species. Even if it dies out, "with a zoologist, you're likely to find bones to dig up, you can kind of classify it and figure out its habitat," he says. When a language dies out, if there are no documents or recordings, it's gone forever.

Jim Kearney is also an amalgam, a scholar/rancher who still lives on and works the family ranch in Weimar. "I put on different hats," is how he puts it. Tall

and lean, with a serious mustache, he looks like the rancher from Central Casting. But Kearney, who has his doctorate and will be teaching a course in European immigration into Texas at UT this fall, has encyclopedic knowledge of the German history of Texas.

German immigration, a push-pull of overpopulation and lack of opportunity in the Old World and abundant land in the New, began while this was Mexico, especially in what are now Austin, Colorado and Washington counties. A married man in good standing could get a league of land, 4,428 acres - enormous by European standards.

"They were not paupers," Kearney says. "You could not leave if you were a debtor."

They settled along the tributaries of the Brazos and Colorado rivers - not in the river valleys where the slave owners grew cotton and not in the low, wet prairies. Most of the places they settled, if you cocked your head at the right time of year, looked like Germany.

In 1842, a group of German noblemen formed the Adelsverein, whose aim was to send settlers to Texas and establish trade. The first try was a near disaster, stranding colonists in Indianola with few provisions. Many died of cholera, but the rest made

their way west and founded New Braunfels. The Germans learned how to farm Texas from friendly Mormons and established a successful (and respectful) treaty with the Comanches. "It shows how things could have been different," says Kearney.

### ***Inconvenient language***

After 1848, a wave of Freemasons and disaffected intellectuals made a beachhead in Texas. They founded towns such as Comfort, which had no church for 50 years.

Although the noblemen founded a plantation in Round Top, with slaves, the rank-and-file Germans, firm believers in human rights, were resolutely anti-slavery. In the Civil War, this caused strife, says Kearney: lynchings, martial law, gangs, culminating with the massacre by Confederates at the Nueces River of a group of German Unionists camping on the way to Mexico. All told, 28 of the 60-some Unionists were killed.

A new wave of postwar immigrants followed the coming of the railroad, barbed wire and windmills.

In general, the Germans who settled here were not like their Anglo

counterparts, says Kearney. "They were completely devoid of the Puritanical," he says. They loved music, singing and dancing, joining clubs and leagues, drinking beer. They were civic-minded: proud of being Americans and proud of being Germans.

But after two World Wars and much discrimination, their language became inconvenient, and it started to die.

Professor Boas is trying to get data on and record the voices of as many speakers as he can. Before 2008, he was recording about 10 a month. But as the economy tanked and funding dried up, he's now able to fund only one every two months. Raising funds is slow going. Boas has theories, but no proof, about why money is so tight.

There's the memory of discrimination, and there's a lingering shame. "Their teachers said 'You speak bad German,'" he says. "Scientifically speaking, there's nothing like a bad language. Every dialect is a purely functional system." But the stigma lingers.

### ***No two sound alike***

He has recorded 400 speakers so far. No two have spoken exactly the same way, not even siblings. It depends who their peer group was, what exposure to English they had, what clubs they joined. And the Texas German spoken near the coast is not the same as that of the Hill Country.

As Kearney points out, one of the wonders of Texas German is that the original settlers had to invent words that didn't exist in traditional German. Skunk, for example. They settled on "Stinkkatze" - "stink cat." And sometimes the existing English word worked its way in.

But the language is disappearing. "You can still hear it if you find places where the speakers hang out," says Boas. "But it's more and more difficult."

**Submitted by oh, so many of you!  
Lu Hollander, Brenham, Rodney  
Koenig, Houston, GTHS Office, etc.**

## **Local Author Wins Outstanding History Contribution Award**

At the 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Sons of the Republic of Texas in Tyler, Texas on Saturday April 13, James C. Kearney, a local rancher, historian and author was presented with the Summerfield G. Roberts Award for the most outstanding contribution in 2012 to the history of Texas.

Dr. Kearney's book, published in May 2012 by the University of Texas Press, is titled: *Friedrichsburg, Colony of the German Fuerstenverein*. This book is an annotated translation of a novel written by the original director of the German Immigration Company in Fredericksburg, Friedrich Armand Strubberg. Although the love story depicted in the novel is fictional, it plays out within the historical framework of the foundation years of Fredericksburg. The novel thus has great historical importance.

The purpose of the award is to encourage literary efforts and research about historical events and personalities during the days of the Republic of Texas, 1836-1846 and to stimulate interest in this period.

The award was made possible through the generosity of the late Mr. and Mrs. Summerfield G. Roberts of Dallas. Mr. Roberts was a former Executive Committeeman of the Sons of the Republic of Texas and a Knight of the Order of San Jacinto. A student and lover of Texas history, he had eight great-grandparents who were all residents of the Republic of Texas.

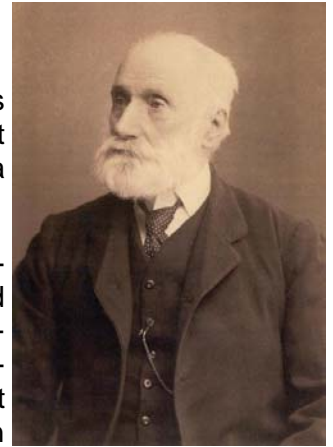
James Kearney and his wife Paulina were honored at the luncheon, where he was presented a plaque, a medallion, and a check for \$2500. In the fall of 2013 he will be teaching a course on European Emigration as an adjunct lecturer at the University of Texas, in Austin.

**Submitted by Mary Whigham, Washington**

## Johann Ludwig Karl Heinrich von Struve

The man who was the progenitor of the Texas Struve clan, known to his family as Heinrich von Struve, was born August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1812 in Stuttgart, Germany, the youngest son of German diplomat Johann Christoph Gustav von Struve (1763-1828) and Sibilla Christiana Friederike von Hochstetler (1773-1842).

As the youngest son, Heinrich had many avenues open to him. He studied with private tutors and attended both Gymnasium and Polytechnicum in Stuttgart and Karlsruhe, as well as the Bern Riding Academy in Switzerland, run by his uncle Konrad von Hochstetter (1780-1867). After the death of his father in 1828, Heinrich entered into military service with the Royal Russian Army, this being due to the fact that his father had been the Czar's ambassador to various royal courts of what were then multiple German states. In this service Heinrich traveled to Poland, but he found military life unsatisfactory and requested discharge which he was granted the day before the November Uprising in Warsaw, and thus escaped what would have been his certain death.



Von Borowski Shield

After his discharge, Heinrich studied law at the University of Goettingen, where his brother Gustav von Struve (1805-1870), also resided. Following his studies, Heinrich traveled back to the conquered Polish lands, to the province of Posen, where he acquired work as an overseer to an estate of Prince Maximilian Karl von Thurn und Taxis. From there he took on the administration of another of the Prince's estates in Silesia, in the Prussian controlled region of Poland, and became acquainted with local nobles, Baron Georg August Wilhelm von Borowski (1784-1849) and his wife, Baroness Henriette Johanne Amalie Tugendreich von Prittwitz und Gaffron (1789-1861). Of more important note, was his introduction to their youngest daughter, Baroness Stephanie von Borowski (1818-1843), who would become Heinrich's first wife.



Von Prittwitz und Gaffron Shield

In Silesia, Heinrich purchased a small estate from his father-in-law, and there he and Stephanie ran a working farm, and it is there in what was then called Froeschen that their small family grew with the birth of their two sons, Friedrich Wilhelm Amand (1838-1902) and Louis Joseph (1839-1921), and daughter, Silly (1841-1847).

*Edle und Ritter von Hochstetter.*



Von Hochstetter Shield

Sadly, Stephanie died in 1843 of "fever", which required Heinrich to find a mother for his three children. He found a partner in his cousin, Wilhelmine Charlotte Margarete "Minna" von Hochstetler (1823-1903) whom he had known when living with her family in Switzerland. Following their marriage, a new addition was born in 1847, Stephanie, named after Heinrich's beloved first wife.

All would have been well, except for the revolutions which then rocked the German states in 1848, and because of a perceived liberality in Heinrich, most likely due to his close relationship with his brother Gustav who was in fact a liberal agitator, Heinrich and his family evacuated to Berlin for fear of arrest by the Czar's forces, who by then had begun to exert control over most of Poland. It was in this climate that Heinrich decided to emigrate to Texas, and on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1848, the family sailed from Hamburg for Galveston aboard the *Bark Colonist* arriving on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Heinrich purchased 400 acres in the vicinity of Rutersville in Fayette County, and proceeded to acclimate to Texas, where life was hard but rewarding. Four more children were born to Heinrich and Minna; Konrad, Alexandrine, Sophie, and Amy. In addition to farming, Heinrich tried his hand at a cigar company, a peach brandy business, and a carrier business, none of which became terribly successful but which kept the family going and enabled them to become integral to the then growing community of German families flooding into Texas and especially into Fayette County. The Struves, as they were known, were members of the "Lateiner

Settlement”, a loose association of the educated German expatriate families which included the Rombergs, Loessins, von Rosenbergs, Willrichs, and de Lassaulxs to name a few.

The Struves lived in harmony with their German and “American” neighbors until the drought of the late 1850s. However, by 1860 Minna, whose father Konrad von Hochstetler had been stable master to the Royal Prussian Court and thus has been brought up in the comfort of nobility and privilege, had had enough and demanded that the family return to Europe. Thus in December of 1860, the Struves returned to the fatherland, all except for the two eldest boys, Amand and Louis, who chose to remain in their adopted homeland and enable the Struve name to become firmly rooted in Texas.

Despite his acquiescence to his wife’s request, Heinrich continued his adventurous ways after his return to the Continent; running a spa in Switzerland, meeting the Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II during a visit to Brazil where his daughter Stephanie lived while her husband Paul Larcher helped build their railroads, traveling to Edinburgh, Scotland where his daughter Amy served as a governess to an aristocratic family, and making three trips back to Texas to visit his sons, Amand and Louis, who had married and begun large families of their own in Burnet County and Fayette County, respectively.

Heinrich died in Rothenburg in der Odenwald on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1898 at the age of eighty-five having led a surprisingly adventurous life, and just before his passing he published an autobiography; *Ein Lebensbild*, so that all of his descendants can know these adventures themselves and take pride in their forefather’s accomplishments.

Submitted by R. T. Koenig, Austin



von Struve Shield

## Comfort Women in the Civil War

By Anne and Mike Stewart. Copyright April 30, 2013.

### Comfort: 1854 - 1866

Comfort women in the Civil War, as a subject, is an emerging facet of the town’s history that has been here-to-fore overlooked. It was not ignored or disregarded or forgotten on purpose. Women, with the exception of Wilhelmine Urban Stieler and her teenage daughter, Minna, were not the focus of German involvement in the Civil War. The German Unionist sympathizers involved in the Union Loyal League and its bloody consequences at the Nueces battle and massacre left room for no other discussions.

The men killed in battle and the prisoners executed later in the day at the Nueces River reigned supreme as the conversational topic of choice for generations. Still true today. Paul Burrier, Leakey historian, entered the scene in 1992, bringing the first bright light of documented history to bear on the controversial and contentious situation. Women, whether wives, mothers, sisters or daughters, simply did not figure in the equation.

During the war Comfort women did what all the women in the United States and the Confederacy did: they coped, they managed, they endured. They made coffee from ground up roasted acorns and cooked dandyllion and other greens for their children. They nursed the ill. They harvested crops. They taught school and operated their husbands’ mercantile stores. They managed farms and boarding houses and ranches. They cared for their families.

And in Comfort, these women also dealt with vigilante committees. These committees, these groups, these bands, these gangs, were made up of like-minded individuals, all male, who sought to bring their partisan version of control and order to the community by any means necessary: coercion, threats, violence. In Comfort there existed a watch group for both the Unionist and the Confederate camps.

The Comfort community was a Unionist town in Confederate Texas. The 1860 Federal Census enumerated a total of 296 people for the Comfort Post Office, with 91 of those individuals living in the town itself. See Figure 1. For a demographic breakdown by gender and age.

## Emma Murck Altgelt

Emma Murck married Ernst Hermann Altgelt and came to Comfort in the summer of 1855. Ernst, a pioneer entrepreneur, directed the surveying and platting of Comfort in July and August 1854, choosing September 3, 1854, as the official founding date for his German village on the far west Texas frontier. He opened a small mercantile general store. He imported two large black millstones and built Perseverance Mill on Cypress Creek. He bought an 8-pound canon to protect his town. He had a cabin built near the mill for his bachelor quarters. He wrote an article for the *Neu Braunfels Zeitung* challenging people to move to Comfort. He married Emma Murck.

Comfort, Texas, was fortunate that this well educated, adventurous young woman, idealistic, if not democratic, and eager to experience the “golden freedom”, if not the day-to-day rigors of a pioneer woman, came to town when she did because she wrote about Comfort for many years. After a bumptious courtship, Ernst and Emma married in San Antonio and drove home to Comfort through a thunderstorm.

Emma’s change from an independent and educated German female immigrant to a young married woman did little to change her chosen lifestyle. Due to the lack of furnishings in her husband’s store and early bachelor cabin, she hired a carpenter to remedy the circumstances. Her husband hired Fritz Schladoer to live on the premises and take care of all the day-to-day problems associated with life on a pioneer homestead.

Likewise, the thought of cooking anything, much less three meals a day, gave Emma a “headache.” This conundrum was solved by a “friendly neighbor” who took “pity on us” and supplied the necessary meals. Emma also had a servant, a “Negress”, whose name was Virginia. Whether this woman was a slave or household help is not clear. The end result was still one more person to take on the household tasks so boring to Emma.

Later, Emma hired a “German domestic”, Minna Maertz, to cope with the inconvenience of daily meals, kitchen problems and housekeeping. Emma’s mother, Ambrosihan Murck, moved to Comfort, lived with the Altgelts and helped with the domestic issues her daughter found so tedious.

In six short years, Emma and Ernst set up housekeeping, expanded his original log cabin into an eight-room log and fachwerk dwelling and started their family. Their home was located above Perseverance Mill on Cypress Creek, at the far west end of Main Street. Six of their nine children were born in Comfort: Antonio in 1856; Hermann Hugo, 1857; George Conrad, 1859; Helene Eveline 1861; Ida, 1863 and August Ernst, February 19, 1866.

Emma’s children did not seem to loom large in her early years on the frontier. In Emma’s “Sketches” of life in Comfort, she mentioned her children as “our contingent”, a part of the “little barefoot Comforters.” Later, her daughter, Ida, returned the favor, writing her father’s biography with no mention of Emma.

Emma rode horseback, participated in community dances and benefits. She wrote about Indians in the area: the Delaware and others. She wrote about visits with friends and relatives. She wrote about the environment, the rattlesnakes, the ticks, critters that lived on the creek and the wild free Texas space. She wrote about the Texas court system, politics and Comfort government: “a sort of communism prevailed.” She also wrote of revolvers with a surprisingly knowledgeable and comfortable air.

When she and Ernst rode looking for their missing cows, they took along a “revolver, a coffee pot and provisions.” Once thinking they had located their cattle, they crept forward, only to discover that instead of a bawling calf, it was an “Indian signal.” Emma “cocked” her revolver and waited anxiously for her husband’s signal. Emma grew used to the protection afforded by a firearm on the Texas frontier.

Texas seceded from the Union in March 1861 and life changed. The Altgelts and their friends and fellow townsmen, Fritz and Betty Holekamp, were Southern sympathizers before secession, while many of the Comfort citizens were university graduates who believed in the Union. Emma wrote of this ugly new division in her husband’s town. The environment of betrayal and distrust among her friends and relatives dismayed her. As suspicion and division grew, Emma decried the loss of the cohesive, united feeling of community.

Many men living in the Comfort area took the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America. Some volunteered in the military service and others worked as civilians in support roles, such as stonemasons, lime kiln operators and carpenters. Some cooperated with the Confederacy in spite of their private political beliefs. A number of men joined



the Union Loyal League in open defiance of the law. Still others left Texas for safer destinations, California, Mexico and Europe.

Ernst continued in his role as town founder and guardian. He made it known around town that the “latch” on his “chicken house door” was not locked at night, thus giving known enemies of the Confederacy a place of refuge. In September 1862, he gave a deposition at Eduard Degener’s trial in San Antonio in the Confederate court minimizing Degener’s allegiance to the north. Ernst said simply: He titled himself a “Unionist.”

On May 21, 1863, he wrote to the Confederate authorities seeking aid for Confederate “wives and widows” in need of assistance. Ernst walked a fine line between his political philosophy, his like-minded colleagues in town and the undercurrent of Union rebellion.

Early in the winter of 1863, Emma wrote to her Grandmother concerning conditions in Comfort. She said she thought that nothing had ever been as “horrible and bloody as our war here.” She grieved over the ruin of the town and the state. All we will have left at the war’s end is “widows, orphans, deserted farms, ruins, and gallows” . . .

Emma continued about the cost of everyday life: “Coffee costs 2.5 – 3 dollars for a pound and grain 100 pounds – 30-40 dollars.” She told her grandmother that vegetables and potatoes were non-existent. “Salted meat and bread are our only food.” The family’s clothes were made from tablecloths and bed linens.

One spring night late in May 1863, a group of men rode up to the doorway of the Altgelt’s home demanding that Ernst come out and show himself. As men loyal to the United States, they sought vengeance on a known Confederate. The men were on horseback, hats pulled low over their brows, their faces covered by handkerchiefs. Shots were fired. Threats were made.

Emma, eight months pregnant, armed herself with the revolver. Through a window, she shouted: “I will shoot anyone who comes through my door.” The men thwarted in their purpose, still ugly and threatening, finally rode away, leaving Ernst safe in their home.

With this visit from the Unionist vigilante gang, Emma feared for her husband’s life. She urged Ernst to travel to Europe and stay with his father until the war’s end. Reluctant but realistic, Ernst knew he was of no use to his wife and family if he were killed. He left for Germany in early June 1863.

Emma now on her own, became responsible for her children and mother, the people working in their household, Ernst’s store on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, their fields, everything. She gave birth to their sixth child and third daughter, Ida, June 19, 1863. Up and around after giving birth, she decided that fall to teach school. At first she taught in her home but later moved classes to the Comfort school in the park. She soon found herself “teaching all the children in the village”.

The school building itself was located in the northwest corner of today’s town park. There were windows and a doorway, with dirt floors and crude benches for the students. The Comfort School Association later went on record as saying that “Mrs. Altgelt brought the first orderly routine into the conduct of the school”.

Emma and her servant, Virginia, harvested the wheat and dried it, under trying circumstances, to sell. She graded schoolwork. She nursed her children through whooping cough.

It was well over a year later, April 1864, that Emma learned her husband was safe in Germany in the home of his father. When she wrote of her fear for their lives, Ernst replied: “Do not worry. Whooping cough sounds worse than it is.”

Emma struggled to keep food on the table, her family clothed and community relations balanced. She worried about making ends meet with little, if any, cash on hand. She felt the tension in her husband’s town. Letters were intercepted, conversations reported.

People stopping at the Post Office on 7<sup>th</sup> Street in the Faltin Store made certain not to speak his or her opinion to anyone. The uncertainty was nerve wracking. As the war wore on, Emma mourned the loss of southern men and resources and the decimation of German West Texas.

She and Ernst corresponded as best possible through the political upheaval and the blockade of Texas ports in the Gulf. In desperate need of funds, Emma wrote asking Ernst for money, a letter of credit, something to ease the financial strain. He encouraged her to “sell lots in Kerr or Kendall” if they were not yet sold. Ernst assured Emma that the county clerk could look into the legality of the sale for her.

At last Emma learned Ernst had sailed from Germany. He returned to Texas on April 1, 1865, in time to participate in the Battle of Palmito Ranch. He writes Emma from Matamoros to say he was shipping merchandise to San Antonio and could she pay the “freight of about \$900.00?”

“Come home,” Emma begged him. If he would only “bring enough merchandise” they could start a “third store.” If he wanted to, he could “teach school.” He answers Emma: “I don’t believe that we will remain in Comfort forever.”

Ernst, traveling through war torn and defeated Texas, reached San Antonio. He sent word from San Antonio that he was back home and sending Emma two horses. As luck would have it, that day Emma had ridden out to the Wolkenberg for a picnic with some other townswomen. Receiving the message, Emma rode home to find the two horses and a written note from him. Ernst followed in a wagon, bounding out to pick her up and exclaiming over her loss of weight in his absence. “What a tiny mite my wife is.”

After the Civil War, feelings ran high in the town of Comfort. Ernst’s brother urged them to join him in San Antonio. Ernst, reluctant to leave “our creation”, wanted to keep their home in Comfort for a summer retreat.

Perhaps the final defining moment in Ernst Altgelt’s life in Comfort came in August 1865. The men who had remained loyal to the Union went to him to purchase a small piece of land on the western rise of High Street. They planned to build something to honor the men killed and executed/murdered at the Nueces River on August 10, 1862. They wanted to bury their dead and mourn the loss of life.

Ernst, whose generosity to his town, extended to donating land for a school, a park, a market plaza and a cemetery, apparently chose not to donate this piece of land. Instead of donating this real estate to the committee, he sold it to them. All of their past shared experiences came to nothing: not the shooting or singing societies, not the celebrations at the junction of Main and High Street, not Comfort’s canon being fired to warn of beer going flat, not the singing festivities in Sisterdale at von Behr’s home, not the many community events enjoyed by one and all, exerted any influence on the meeting. The interaction may well have been uncomfortable and stilted: the town’s founder on the losing side of a bitter conflict and the committee on the winning side, but suffering heart-crushing losses.

This final interaction came down to money and hard feelings. The Union committee wished to purchase ½ acre from Altgelt and he obliged them. The deed specifies “Comfort Town lot No. 122 containing ½ acre of land to be used for the “purpose of erect a monument or monuments.” The deed was recorded in the Kendall County Clerk’s office on September 1, 1865.

Why Ernst did not donate this land for a burial site is a question in search of an answer. Generous in the beginning, he could have continued his largesse and donated the land for a memorial. Perhaps he offered and the Union sympathizers chose not to accept it. They paid Ernst Altgelt \$20.00 for the site. The Treue der Union (Loyal to the Union) Monument was built and dedicated in 1866. It stands on the same site today marking the final resting place of the men who died loyal to the United States.

By August 1865, the Altgelts decided to move to San Antonio for a more secure future, both physically and fiscally. Ernst moved first, as was the fashion in those times. He studied law, passed the bar and joined a law firm. He bought eighteen acres of land in what became the King William area.

Emma, pregnant now with their 6<sup>th</sup> child, shipped their household goods. Bad weather that fall did not make the move any easier. By January 1866, the Altgelt family was together in San Antonio, living in a “small, caliche house” at the back of the lot where their new home was being built.

Otto Brinkmann, Comfort resident and master carpenter, was employed by Ernst Altgelt to build their new home. The rate of pay agreed upon was \$2.25 a day. Three weeks into the job, cholera broke out in the city and Mr. Brinkmann

went home. To avoid the disease, it became necessary for him to remain in Comfort until the following spring. Emma gave birth to August Ernst on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Brinkmann completed the Altgelt's new dwelling and by May 2, 1867, their first house was ready for them. They lived at 226 King William Street from May 1867 to 1882.

Altgelt himself did not return to Comfort. He bought land in Boerne. Emma christened it Wassenberg, "after a mountain near her childhood home in Germany or "after the birthplace of her grandfather." Ernst, age 46, died from heart disease in 1878 and was laid to rest at Wassenberg, a few months short of their twenty third wedding anniversary. Emma, aged 44, never remarried. For years, she visited friends in Comfort, as faithfully recorded in *The Comfort News*. She died, age 88, in 1922. Her memoirs were published in 1930.

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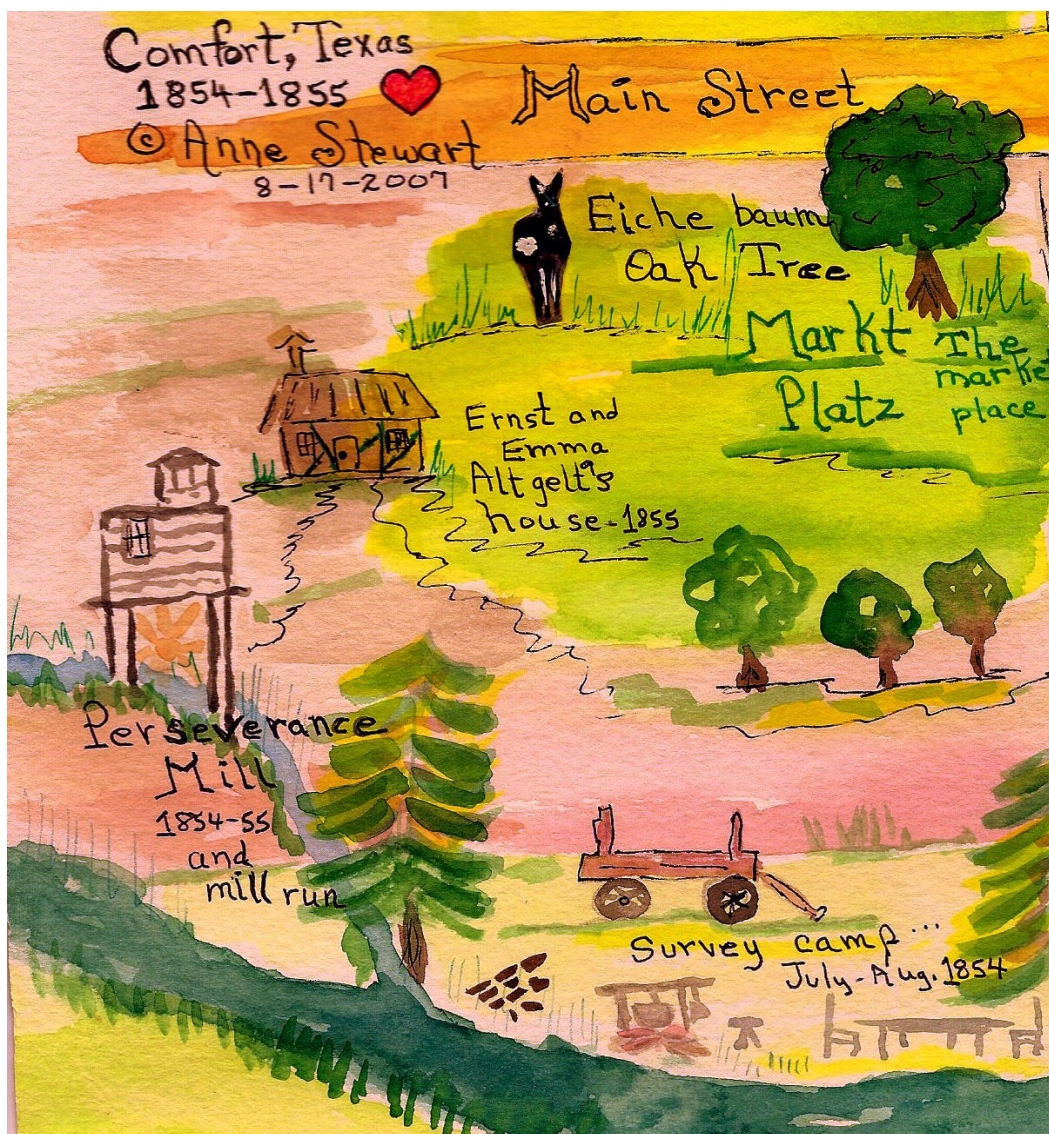
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## Otto Phillip de Lassaulx

Due to the peculiarities of Spanish surnames and the fact that the de Lassaulx family of Texas had the habit of having so many girls, the de Lassaulx name is now mostly unknown, however in the latter Nineteenth Century, numerous members of the family were well known in Fayette County and elsewhere. The emigrant father of the Texas line was Otto Phillip de Lassaulx.

Otto was born at 6:00pm on June 24, 1806 in the de Lassaulx family home located at the northwest corner of Clemensstrasse and Poststrasse across the Clemensplatz from the Electoral Palace in Koblenz, Germany, during the time when Napoleon's forces controlled the otherwise German city during the First French Empire. He was the second child and son of Johann Claudius de Lassaulx (1781-1848) and Anna Maria Mueller (1781-1855).



Johann Claudius von Lassaulx

The de Lassaulx family (also known as von Lassaulx) were an aristocratic family with deep connections to both Koblenz, as well as the Rhine and Mosel provinces in general. Otto's father, Johann Claudius was the royal architect and building inspector (Bauinspektor) to the royal court of the Prince-Elector of Trier for which he built numerous public buildings in and around Koblenz including many churches along the Rhine and Mosel river valleys. Otto's paternal grandfather, Peter Ernst von Lassaulx (1757-1809) was the layman-controller of Koblenz, known as its Syndic, on behalf of the Prince-Elector, and Peter Ernst's father, Johann Claudius von Lassaulx (1723-1791) was an advisor and counselor to the Prince-Elector when the family lived in Trier in the Eighteenth Century. Otto's namesake and maternal grandfather, Otto Phillip Mueller, was the registrar at the Royal University under the Prince-Bishop of Wurzburg, and Otto's paternal grandmother's father, Hermann Joseph von Welter (1748-?) was the personal physician to the Prince-Elector of Trier.



Peter Ernst von Lassaulx



Johann Claudius (Peter's father)

The de Lassaulx family's roots ultimately reach back into the present-day German Saarland region to the village of Nennig, where the de Lassaulxs occupied the local castle, known as Schloss Berg, which they acquired through their familial connection to the von Musiel family. Before migrating to the Saarland on the eastern side of the Mosel, the family resided in the Lorraine region of northwestern France, specifically in the small village of Briey near Metz, where the first confirmed progenitor, Jean de la Saulx (1549-1609), served as Prevot (mayor) and where his son, Louis de la Saulx (1575-1632) was ennobled by Duke Henry of Lorraine on July 13, 1611. It is believed that Jean de la Saulx was the son of Count Gaspard de Saulx-Tavannes (1509-1573), Marshall of France under King Francis II.



Having such an illustrious ancestry lent Otto Phillip de Lassaulx many privileges, among them an extensive education in both art and architecture, but it also allowed him to coast on the achievements of his ancestors, specifically those of his respected father. It was this tendency to not complete what he started which ultimately led Otto and his family to come to Texas in 1849. In 1848, Otto's father died. Earlier that same year, Otto, who had been employed as the Bauinspektor of



Schloss Berg

Elberfeld, lost his position due to the catastrophic collapse of a building project he was overseeing. It was discovered that Otto had not actually completed his architectural studies and had perhaps misrepresented his qualifications for such a project. Thus, with his reputation tarnished and with his share of his father's inheritance, Otto set out for a new life in Texas with his wife, Margarethe Fassbender de Lassaulx (1811-1896) and his six daughters and one son. The question of why Texas was Otto's chosen exile is answered by the fact that the family already knew much about Texas via correspondence from Otto's cousin, Pierre Francois de Lassaulx (1811-1846). Pierre Francois had served as the French envoy to the Republic of Texas along with Jean Pierre Basterreche in 1841, when the two had approached the Texas Congress with a plan to foster French colonization to the infant nation under the ill-fated "Franco-Texian Bill".

After arriving in Galveston via Bremen and New Orleans on December 3, 1849 aboard the Brig *Reform*, the de Lassaulx Family made its way to Fayette County where Otto purchased land near the now lost Biegel community near present-day Fayetteville, and it was here that Otto and Margarethe made their new life; spending it raising their children, including their youngest child, Julia who was born in Texas, and it was here that their long lives ended in 1897 and 1896, respectively. They are buried in the Catholic cemetery in Fayetteville alongside their daughter and son-in-law, Clementine and Louis Joseph Struve.



Lianne

Of Otto and Margarethe's seven surviving children (one son, Johann Claudius Germaine, died at birth in 1848), only three daughters stayed in Fayette County; the eldest daughter, Anna Maria Liane de Lassaulx (1832-1922) first married Georg Wilhelm Willrich of Bluff. Their son, George de Lassaulx Willrich (1861-1932) fought in the Spanish-American War, was a prominent local attorney and served as Fayette County Judge. George's wife, Olivia Tuttle Willrich (1865-1944) was instrumental in the restoration and dedication of the Mier Expedition and Dawson Massacre monument and tomb on Monument Hill. Clementine Christine de Lassaulx (1844-1905) married Louis Joseph Struve (1839-1921) and was the primary caretaker for her parents. The Struves resided on the de Lassaulx property after Otto and Margarethe's deaths. The youngest child and daughter, Julia de Lassaulx (1852-1930) married Charles Notley Wade (1847-1918) and they lived in Ammansville as well as in La Grange.

The remaining de Lassaulx children scattered all over Texas and further south, and in some cases also made names for themselves. Elise (1834-1917) first married Christian Heinrich Giesbers (1820-1867) and after his death in the 1867 yellow-fever epidemic she married Johann Gerhard Fehrenkamp (1825-1881), living in Moulton in Lavaca County. Anna (1835-1867) and Marie (1837-1910) became sisters with the Ursuline Convent in Galveston. Anna, known as "Sister St. Aloysia", died in the same yellow-fever epidemic as her brother-in-law, however Marie, known as "Sister St. Augustine" survived and ultimately became Mother Superior and was instrumental in saving many lives during the Great 1900 Storm by sheltering hundreds of victims in the Convent. Barbara (1846-1930) married Charles von Zavisch (1840-1917) and lived in South Texas, and the only son, Clemens (1839-1916) migrated to South Texas as well and ultimately across the border to Camargo, Mexico where he served as U.S. Vice Consul. Clemens, or Clemente as he was known to his immediate family, married Carmen de la Garza Ortiz (1848-1903) and like his parents had seven daughters and two sons, however his sons did not pass on their family name to their offspring due to the Spanish naming conventions and thus there are no more de Lassaulxs living in Texas today. Despite this, the memory of the de Lassaulx ancestry lives on in Otto's descendants, who today call not just Texas home, but also numerous other states of both the U.S. as well as Mexico.



Clemente



Mary de Lassaulx aka Sister St. Augustine

## Johannes Romberg, German Poet of Texas, Part I: Biography

By Arnold Romberg, great-great grandson *The Fayette County Record*, February 12, 2013

Johannes Christlieb Nathael Romberg was born in northern Germany in 1808, the only son of a Lutheran pastor. He had a happy childhood and was educated at home and at school. As a youth he had to give up his studies because of a family financial disaster and a serious eye infection as a result of a hair cut. He avoided haircuts for the rest of his life. He was apprenticed to a merchant. He continued literary studies with Friederike Bauch, the daughter of his master, and married her in 1833. He set himself up as a merchant, but he never liked that profession.

He was exposed to and participated in discussions of liberty and democracy, of which there was very little in Germany at that time. Many Germans emigrated to the United States - during the nineteenth century more U. S. immigrants came from Germany than from any other culture.

In 1847 Johannes brought his wife and seven children to Texas to give them a chance at a better life. A last child was born in Texas. Since the child was native born and thus qualified to be President, he was given the nickname "Presidente", later shortened to Dente. He dropped the nickname later, but used "D" as his middle initial all his life. The family settled initially near Cat Spring on farm with sandy soil, but moved to better farmland in the Black Jack Springs area (near O'Quinn) on the the Navidad River in Fayette County in 1853. Shortly after that Johannes became a United States citizen. His naturalization certificate was signed by Nathanael Faison, who was Fayette County Clerk at the time. Johannes lived on his farm the rest of his life.

At first life was primitive - not at all like the life they had left in Germany. The first Christmas there were no decorations for the Christmas tree, so Friedericke hung sweet potatoes on the tree - the custom has continued in the family into the present. The



Rombergs had brought a number of carefully selected things with them to Texas. Johannes brought a large collection of books, including a forty-volume encyclopedia. Friederike continued the educations of all her children. Johannes' contribution was limited to regular encouragement.

The Rombergs, like almost all of their friends and neighbors, made a living with farming and cattle raising. Johannes did not care for business, but he had a lifelong love of philosophy and literature. The community included numerous cultured families. A few years before the Civil War, Romberg founded the Prairieblume Society, a literary circle for the local young men and women. (The community and the Society were the subject of a previous Footprints article by Donna Green). Each member was supposed to write something for each meeting. The submissions were collected and copied as a journal before being

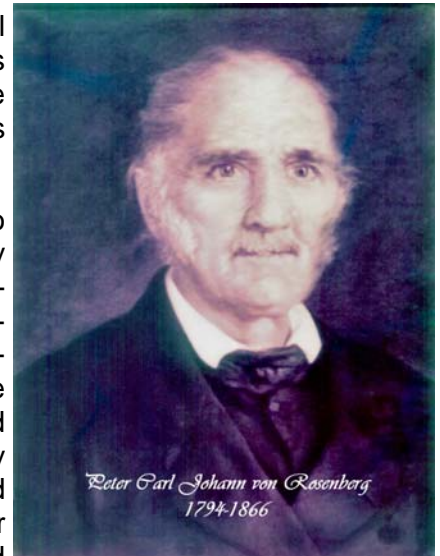
circulated, so that the other members could read and critique them without identifying the authors. Copies of four issues of the journal have survived. Memoirs written much later by several members comment on the monotony of farming life and the enthusiasm with which the Society's meetings were welcomed. The Society was very vigorous for a few years, but faded with the onset of the Civil War. Johannes later founded a reading club.

Submitted by Rodney Koenig, Houston

## Peter Carl Johann von Rosenberg

The immigrant father to all Texas von Rosenberg descendants, Peter Carl Johann von Rosenberg, was born October 2, 1794 at Eckitten, his mother's ancestral estate near Memel, in East Prussia (today Klaipeda, Lithuania). He was the third son born to Baron Otto von Rosenberg (1766-1817) and Otto's second wife, Baroness Maria Wilhelmina von Stempel (1768-1831).

His paternal and maternal lineage linked Peter Carl, as he was known, to centuries of Baltic German nobility, dating back to the thirteenth century when German knights known as the Livonian Sword Brethren and the Teutonic Order traveled from their traditional German homelands to the then pagan lands of the eastern Baltic (comprised today of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad and northern Poland) and embarked upon what is called the Northern Crusades. The purpose of this ongoing crusade was to pacify and convert the native peoples of the region and bring it into the realm of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Over time, and after many struggles (both won and lost), these knights and their relations gained fiefdoms as compensation for their efforts in the crusades and eventually a ruling class of nobles emerged which controlled and influenced the region well into the twentieth century.



Peter Carl Johann von Rosenberg

Peter Carl's ancestors include many of these early knights. Among the family names which can be counted among his forebears are; von Lieven, von Doenhoff, von Stael, von der Howen, von Veitinghoff, von der Osten-Sacken, von Lambsdorff, von Tiesenhausen, von Mirbach, von Knorre, von Uexkull and von Plettenberg. Among the most interesting ancestors was Peter Carl's third great-grandmother, Jacoba von Baggenessen (a.k.a. van Bakkenes), who was born in Delft, Holland and was a lady in waiting to the Duchess of Kurland. Another was Kaupo of Livland, the progenitor of the von Lieven family, who was a local ruler in the twelfth century, and yet another was Heidenrich Berthold von Plettenberg, Jr., Peter Carl's tenth great-grandfather via his son, Johann, and whose other son was the famed Wolter von Plettenberg who as Master led the Teutonic Order to victory against the Russians in the early sixteenth century.

His connection by blood and marriage to these noble families provided Peter Carl with immense privilege and opportunity and set his course in life which, early on, would never have included leaving such history behind in favor of a life on the Texas "frontier", however history had different plans.

Like his ancestors before him, Peter Carl entered the military early on in life, joining the Prussian army since by the time he was born, the region of Kurland where his family's estates lay, had become a part of the Prussian Kingdom. By the age of nineteen, Peter Carl was a lieutenant and a "Jaeger" in the Prussian Cavalry and took part in the Battle of Leipzig in 1813 against Napoleon's army. Family lore states that he narrowly escaped death in this battle when his horse was shot out from under him. Additionally, Peter Carl fought at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 under General von Bluecher, when the Prussian troops, alongside the Duke of Wellington's troops, conquered Napoleon and ended his plan for European domination.

Following his military career, and after his father's death in 1817 and his step-mother's death in 1819, Peter Carl inherited Eckitten. His father had divorced his mother in 1803 and despite the fact that Eckitten had come to the von Rosenbergs as a part of her dowry from Maria Wilhelmine's father, Gotthard Melchior von Stempel (1736-1814), according to the laws at that time, the land stayed with the husband. Nonetheless, Peter Carl inherited the property in 1819 and his mother came back to live with him and his new wife, Johanna Dorothea Froelich



Eckitten



Von Stempel Shield

(1797-1826), the daughter of Christoph Froelich and Johanna Dorothea Veithofer, whom he had married that same year.

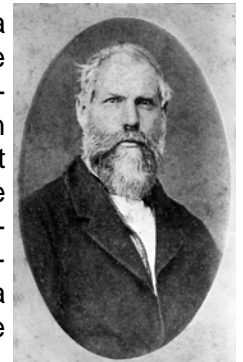
The young couple then commenced to live the life which had been set out for them as “junkers”, or what the English would call “landed gentry” and what Americans would call planters. The von Rosenbergs farmed, raised cattle, horses, pigs, doves and bees. They also ran a mill, as well as a brewery and a hotel in the nearby city of Memel. Life, in a word, was good. The family soon grew with the arrival of four children; Carl Hermann (1820-1827), Carl Wilhelm (1821-1901), Johanna Carolina (1824-1856) and finally Carl Johannes (1826-1906). Sadly, Johanna died in 1826, most likely due to illness acquired during childbirth as her youngest child was born just six weeks prior to her death. Peter Carl married again four years later in 1830, taking for his wife a young woman of French Huguenot descent, Amanda Louise Henriette Fallier (1806-1864). Amanda Louise had grown up in the city of Koenigsberg, East Prussia (today Kaliningrad), and was the second child of Jean Pierre Fallier, Jr. (1776-1841) and Anne Amalia Caroline Marquardt (1785-1828). The Huguenot Falliers had emigrated to Berlin from the Languedoc region of France in the mid eighteenth century to escape religious persecution, and then again to Koenigsberg a generation afterwards. The von Rosenberg family grew again as Peter Carl and Amanda Louise had five more children; Carl Eugen (1830-1913), Amanda Caroline (1832-1911), Carl Alexander (1833-1864), Carl Walter (1839-1903), and Carl Friedrich (1844-1844). Again, life was good, until the winds of change began to blow north from the lower German states up into the Baltic German region.



Carl Wilhelm



Johanna Caroline



Carl Johannes



Carl Eugen



Amanda Caroline



Carl Alexander



Carl Walker

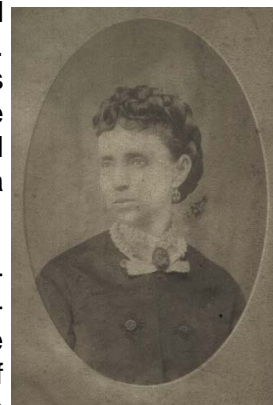
The von Rosenberg family had existed in the German Baltic since at least 1511 when Johann von Rosenberg had been enfeoffed with an estate near Goldingen (today Kuldiga, Latvia). Before that time the origins of the von Rosenberg family are clouded. Some evidence leads to a possible connection with the noble Czech von Rosenberg family of Cesky Krumlov fame. Other evidence points to an early Teutonic Knight commander known as Wilhelm von Rosenberg who died at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1410 and who is thought to be connected to the Munch von Rosenberg family of Dielheim and nearby Rosenberg in the present-day Baden-Wuerttemberg region of Germany. Still other legends state the family is of Swedish origin or possibly of Moravian origin, from the village of Rosenberg in Upper Silesia, controlled by King Matthias Corvinus of Moravia from 1469-1490, but which is known today as the Polish town of Olesno.

The change which altered the history of Peter Carl and his family were the German revolutions of 1848. In that year numerous popular uprisings occurred across the German empire demanding an end to the absolute authority and power of the various monarchs which ruled the numerous kingdoms, duchies and principalities that made up the Holy Roman Empire of Germany; Prussia chief among them.



Peter Carl's eldest surviving sons, Carl Wilhelm and Carl Johannes, had by 1848 become employed by the Prussian bureaucratic state and due to what were believed to be their liberal views on the uprisings, they were asked to give up their positions, which, after the Prussian monarchy regained its total control, caused their future prospects to be bleak. Because of this, Carl Wilhelm told his father that he was going to emigrate to the United States. Peter Carl at first tried to dissuade his eldest son from leaving, but after it became clear that he could not change his mind, Peter Carl declared that if his son was going to emigrate, then the entire family would do so as well. It was this loyalty to his sons, over his country and his ancestral lineage, that propelled the von Rosenberg family to leave behind hundreds of years of history, privilege and position to brave an unknown future in the New World.

Thus, on October 1, 1849, eleven members of the von Rosenberg family set sail aboard the Bark Franziska for Texas, after having sold all their family's holdings in East Prussia. They landed in Galveston on December 6, 1849 and began their lives anew as Texans and as Americans. Among the immigrants were Peter Carl and Amanda Louise, all the surviving children as well as a niece, Charlotte Libussa Froelich (1839-1918) who had been orphaned when her parents, Christoph Froelich, Jr. (1794-1846) and Eleanora Laura von Rosenberg (1802-1846), died months apart just three years before.



Libussa Froelich

Upon arriving in Texas, Peter Carl and Carl Wilhelm set out to find land to purchase, going as far as Bastrop, however they ended up purchasing what was known as the Nassau Plantation in northern Fayette County, which had been owned previously by the Adelsverein, but which through numerous machinations had ended up in the hands of Otto von Roeder (1807-1875), a fellow German aristocrat of similar class and station who had come to Texas with his family seeking freedom from Monarchical rule in 1834.

Nassau Plantation, rustic compared to Eckitten, included 800 acres as well as what was called the Herrenhaus (Manor House), described as one of the finest houses in Texas at the time. Additionally, Peter Carl purchased horses, cows, chickens, pigs, ducks, dogs and cats to start the process of what can only be deemed an attempt to emulate the life the family had left behind. He also purchased several slaves. This latter act may seem unusual for someone who was thought of as a liberal thinker (or Freidenker, to use the German phrase). However, the practice of slavery, while abhorrent and unacceptable today, was not unlike the practice of serfdom which still existed in the aristocratic world of East Prussia which the von Rosenbergs had only just left behind, and while this does not excuse the act, it does perhaps explain it.

Before emigrating, Carl Wilhelm married Auguste Franziska Anders (1825-1897) in Berlin, and Johanna Carolina became engaged to Hermann Gustav Helmuth (1819-1900) and married him upon the family's arrival in Galveston. Both couples purchased farms near the Nassau Plantation. Carl Johannes also purchased land nearby and soon married a local German settler's daughter, Julie Wilhelmine Groos (1829-1894). The remaining children lived with their parents in the Herrenhaus.

The next child to marry was Amanda's only daughter, Amanda Caroline, who wed Arthur Carl Meerscheidt (1827-1887) who had emigrated to Texas from Braunschweig, Germany just a month after the von Rosenbergs. Interestingly, while the family at the time likely did not know it, Meerscheidt, whose full family name was von Meerscheidt genannt Huellessem, was a very distant cousin of the von Rosenbergs whose own family descended from Baltic noble lineage just as the von Rosenbergs did.

Following his sister was Carl Eugen, who married Theodore Anna Sack (1829-1904) who had come to Texas aboard the same ship as Arthur Meerscheidt, which is how she was introduced to Carl Eugen. Dorchen, as she was known, had first married Otto von Roeder's brother, Wilhelm von Roeder, in 1850. However when he died in 1852, she remembered the younger Carl Eugen and he won her hand in 1853.

In 1855, Peter Carl and Amanda decided to relocate to Round Top and in that same year, Carl Wilhelm and his family moved to Austin



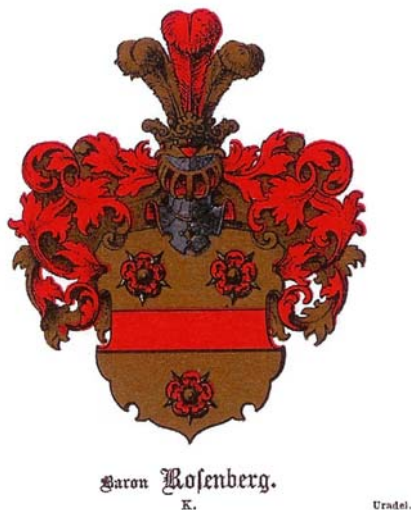
where he became Chief Draftsman with the Texas General Land Office. In the year following, Johanna Caroline died, leaving Hermann Hellmuth a widower. He eventually also relocated to Round Top to run a school after marrying the adopted von Rosenberg daughter, Charlotte Libussa Froelich. Carl Johannes followed, after a stint at Evergreen in Lee County, by moving his family to Round Top where he ran a hotel and store, which left Carl Eugene and Dorchen and the Meerscheidts to run the Plantation, no doubt with the help of the younger von Rosenberg sons, Carl Alex and Carl Walter.

Despite the continued presence of Carl Eugen and the Meerscheidts on the Nassau Plantation after Peter Carl and Amanda Louise's departure, Nassau Plantation would not stay in von Rosenberg hands for long. A lawsuit, the origins of which date to 1853, brought about its loss after suit was initiated by James Chandler. Chandler purported to be a debtor of the Adelsverein which had transferred title to the Plantation to Otto von Roeder, who in turn had sold it to Peter Carl. This lawsuit, after many years in state and federal courts, as well as the U. S. Supreme Court, ultimately tainted the von Rosenberg Family's claim so much that Peter Carl, Carl Eugen and the Meerscheidts surrendered title in 1866. The Meerscheidts moved to Round Top, as did Carl Eugene and the von Rosenberg association with Nassau Plantation came to an end.

In the intervening years, the family was also deeply embroiled in the Civil War. Legend has it that when Texas's Secession was announced in 1861, Peter Carl, then 67 years old, donned his former Prussian Cavalry uniform and rode through the streets of Round Top, extolling its sons to join the Southern Cause. All the von Rosenberg sons joined the Confederate effort. Carl Wilhelm and Carl Johannes joined the Engineering Corps in East Texas. Carl Eugen joined Waul's Legion and fought at Vicksburg. Carl Alexander and Carl Walter fought with Creuzbauer's Legion at the Battle of Calcasieu Pass. All survived save one; Carl Alexander succumbed to typhus while in hospital in Liberty, Texas in 1864. Following the war, Carl Walter went on to marry Franciska Spengler-Soergel (1850-1943) and lived in Round Top, Ellinger and La Grange, the Hellmuths moved to Bellville, and the Meerscheidts moved to La Grange.

Amanda Louise died at home on April 22, 1864 in Round Top and was buried in Soergel Cemetery (a.k.a. Richters Cemetery), and her beloved Peter Carl followed her two years later in death on October 22, 1866 while visiting the Meerscheidts, and because of this he is buried in the Old La Grange City Cemetery.

Today, there exist hundreds of descendants of Peter Carl Johann von Rosenberg in Texas and almost every other state in the country, and a reunion, begun in the 1930s, has been held each year since 1942 so that the Family's rich story and place in history can continue to be told for all future generations.



Submitted by J.T. Koenig, Austin

## My German Wednesday by Aileen Loehr

*The Fayette County Record*, Friday, March 15, 2013

Last week was one week I shall never forget. I have termed it my "German Wednesday." I had two German families who came to visit with me at the newspaper office (including one we wrote about in the Fayette County Record back in 1970!). I can readily say now, I have made new German friends and hope they will come back this way for a visit and a cup of coffee.

The first group was made up of Christa Jefers, Mia Beck and Kari Beck, formerly of Germany and now of Atlanta, Ga. Taking them on a tour of Fayette County was Norma Webb and Evon Brooks, both of LaGrange.

Christa is a 45-year international flight attendant with Delta Airlines, and she has also worked with Norma Webb, who was also a flight attendant with Delta Airlines. Christa still makes weekly international flights to Munich, Germany.

Her father, Karl Beck, used to work for Kodak Company in Frankfurt, Germany. They later sold their home and came to America with their daughter.

They visited with Fayette County Judge Ed Janecka and he told them about renovation of the of the courthouse and its history. From the quilt museum, they went to National Bank, where they met with Ken Zapalac who told them how fortunate La Grange was to have six major banks.

The visitors from Atlanta were in awe of what there is to



**Touring Fayette County and stopping at The Fayette County Record were front, from left, Evon Brooks of La Grange, Christa Jeffers and Mia Beck, both of Atlanta, Ga., back, Norma Webb group hostess of La Grange, and Karl Beck of Atlanta, Ga.**

do in Fayette County. They visited Round Top and could not believe Festival Hill where they saw the beautiful gardens. They toured the Festival Concert Hall where they looked at the venue and saw the activities that are held in the concert hall. They were amazed that one did not have to go to a larger city to attend some of the galas. They visited with James Dick, Richard Royal, Jeff Hipp and Lamar Lentz. They enjoyed cake served by Nataha and baked by Chef George Vatasaros.

They toured, the gardens of Texas Master Gardener, Harold Pieratt and saw the floral arrangements by Texas Master Florist Doris Pieratt. Evon, who was also a flight attendant and now a paralegal, treated her guests to dinner at Frisch Auf! Country Club.

"We really were honored and delighted to visit with

James Dick, "echoed the visitors. Other stops and visits were to City Hall and Walter and Sandra Stoever.

The second group visiting La Grange were Hans and Traute Hayen hosted on a tour by Carolyn Bennetsen. For the two weeks here, they resided with the Bill Grubes of Bastrop. Hayen and his wife are from Rastede, Germany.

As I began to hear what Hans had to say, he reminded me that I had been gracious to him and his wife the last time they were in Texas 43 years ago. He speaks very good English and his wife speaks only German.

And then I remembered.....Treute was a niece of the late Fritz Janssen who resided immediately over the hill behind us near Rutersville. Fritz and Traute's father were brothers. Treute still has that contagious smile and is so loving. Hans



**Aileen Loehr, center, was surprised and happy to see her friends from Germany, Traute Hayen, left, and Hans Hayen, right**

is an electrical engineering major at the Engineering Academy at Bremen where he received his degree.

He is also a die hard genealogist. At the Frerichs and Stahmer reunion held Sunday at Camp Luther Hill, they were special guests. Hans showed the family his genealogy chart of the Janssen, Frerichs and Stahmer family. All documentation was precisely computed by Hans and he now has a chart that is on a computer showing the linkage to the family going back to the 1600s.

While here, they visited the old Fritz Janssen homestead and the Rutersville cemetery. There, he took pictures of all of the graves of the Frerichs and Stahmers and other family member's gravesites.

One thing Hans and Treute and never seen was cemetery headstones already in place before the person had died. Traditions are very different in Germany.

After Sunday's reunion, Bennetsen told me that she had enjoyed the afternoon so much because it had reminded her of a time when relatives and friends would visit on Sundays instead of working seven days a week.

When we wrote about their visit in 1970, they fell in love with American hamburgers. One of the things that Traute did was to go home and treat her family to this delicious food.

Hans and Treute had this to say on Tuesday morning, "We met so many people, and family of course, and are glad that we made this trip. We are especially glad we got to eat those American hamburgers again. In fact, we ate at Red Lobster and it sure tasted good. So we have another delicacy to take home with us again."

Traute and his wife left Thursday to go back to Germany. Traute and Hans, you might have a guest at your doorstep, and it may be me! I know you know how to make hamburgers now.

**Submitted by Carl Luckenbach, Fredericksburg**

## ISAAC AND HULDA SOEHLER MANSUR BIOGRAPHY

Isaac was born in Urmia Persia 10 Sep 1887 to Roby Eshagh (Jacob) Mansur and mother unknown. (According to US census of 1920 and 1930, it states that the parents both were Persian, and spoke Syriac as well as son Isaac). Around the late 1890's and turn of the century, a Presbyterian Mission arrived in the area of Urmia. The Mansur family was the first in the village to convert to Christianity, and his father became an evangelist and worked with the Mission. He wanted Isaac to become a minister also. In 1903 at the tender age of 16, with only the clothes on his back and the sandals on his feet, Isaac left his family in Persia and joined a camel and donkey caravan headed for Russia. An "uncle" in Germany had offered to buy him a train ticket from Russia to Germany if he could find a way to get to Russia. Later, he would tell his children stories from that trek. He would sing songs in the old dialects that he had learned while sitting by a campfire under the stars at night. In his lifetime he was to learn 8 languages that he could speak: Aramaic, Arabic, Kurdish, French, English, Syriac, Hebrew, and German.

Once he reached Germany, he settled in Oberschelden where he worked the coal mines by day and attended school at night studying comparative theology and comparative religions. Unfortunately, he was looked down on, considered a second class citizen, and therefore not eligible for the ordained ministry.

It was here in Oberschelden that he met Hulda, the daughter of Heinrich and Henriette Mueller Soehler, born August 15, 1887 in Buhl, Westfalen, Siegerland, who happened to be Lutheran. Hulda had left home to work in a Lutheran Parsonage. Isaac took the required classes, was baptized and confirmed a Lutheran. However, Hulda's father did not approve of him and did not want her to pursue the relationship. It is interesting to note that Isaac's father also tried to convince him not to marry her.

Isaac's goal was to become a pastor in the Lutheran Church. To do that, he decided that he would go to the land of unlimited opportunity, America. In 1912 Isaac boarded an ocean liner, the Kaiser Wilhelm Der Grosse for America. He attended Pacific Lutheran College in Washington State and had a job in a quarry. One day, they were dynamiting and the crew did not signal to Isaac and a huge boulder fell on him and broke his arm in three places. After that he lost the use of his arm, and it was partially paralyzed. After 2 years, he enrolled at Luther Seminary on Phalen Lake in St. Paul Minnesota. It was here he received news of the death of his entire family back in Persia. The family and the Presbyterian missionaries were all murdered by the marauding Turks who had crossed the border to do this dastardly deed. It is hard to imagine the depths of despair and loneliness that Isaac must have experienced. He was totally alone, except for the God that he worshiped.

It was at this time, he wrote to Hulda and renewed their relationship. He graduated from Luther in 1917 and started his first parish at St. Paul Lutheran in Gilead Nebraska. He spent 2 1/2 years there and then decided he needed elocution classes. Afterward this, he returned to Germany and married Hulda. The couple married in Buhl, Westfalen, Siegerland Germany on November 1st, 1921. The service was officiated by Pastor Buss. Hulda chose to wear a white gown instead of the customary black that was traditional.

The couple boarded the George Washington for New York, and landed at Ellis Island on December 8, 1921. They picked up Isaac's belongings in Gilead, and Isaac purchased an Overland, (auto) and with the help of a parishioner, made the long and difficult road trip to Orange Grove, Jefferson Co. Texas, which lasted 2 weeks due to washed out roads and bridges, flat tires, running out of gas, and frequently getting stuck in the mud.

Three children were born in Orange Grove: Ester, Hermann, and Herbert. The family lived there from 1922-1925. Hulda was homesick, and wrote her sister Minnie in Germany and asked her to come over and help her. Millie arrived in 1923 and never returned to her homeland.

The family moved to Priddy, Texas and Isaac ministered there from 1925-1935. Hans was born in 1926. Hulda contracted TB in 1932, died on February 12, 1932 after a lengthy illness. How heart-broken Isaac must have felt as he had lost so much in his lifetime.

Three years later, he made the decision to marry Minnie. The couple was married on January 10th, 1935, and then the family moved to Welcome, Washington Co. TX. from 1935-1944. Then to Clifton, Bosque, Co. TX from 1944-1949, then back to Arneckville, Texas from 1949-1955, then back to Clifton from 1955-1960.

Minnie died on April 6, 1960. That same year at the age of 73, Isaac retired due to a heart ailment, and lived until his death in the Lutheran Clifton Sunset Home on May 1, 1968.

### *Memories from Priddy, Texas:*

During the summer for 6 weeks, Pastor Isaac would teach summer church school from 9-4. Hulda was ill and unable to help. However, her sister Minnie taught the children their ABC's in German and English. Pastor Isaac would teach the catechism, Bible history and commandments to the children and do it all in German. As the children got older, they would then be helped by to translate all that they had learned back into English....

Church services at that time were held in German, However, during WWII, they were forbidden to speak German so the services were held in English. In the 1950'S, German services returned once a month.

Isaac served 2 congregations in Priddy, where he would hold services at Zion Lutheran one weekend, and then on the next weekend hold services at St. John's Lutheran. The family lived in the parsonage at St. Johns in the Becker Mountain area.

Parishioners remembered that Hulda died while the family lived in Priddy and that the family then moved away to the Brenham area. Isaac later married Minnie on January 10,1935. They recalled the children's names: Esther, Hermann who later became a missionary, Herbert and Hans."

**Submitted by Mayme R. Bass, Rosenberg**

# OPERATIONS

[unapproved]  
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 17, 2013 MEETING  
GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The March 17, 2013, meeting of the German-Texan Heritage Society Board of Directors was called to order at 10 a.m. in the German Free School in Austin with GTHS President Mary Whigham presiding. Board members present were James Kearney, Larry Deuser, Warren Friedrich, Michael Krause, Liz Hicks, Charles Locklin, Bob Flocke. Members absent were Hans Boas, Daniel Bode, Julia Kleinheider.

Minutes of the previous board of directors meeting were read and approved.

### **Discussion and action on German-Texan Trails mobile application**

Larry Deuser made a presentation to the board on the proposed mobile application to guide visitors wishing to follow the German-Texan Trail (GTT). The plan is to try to launch the mobile app by Memorial Day. Board members will be responsible for developing information.

Overall editor and coordinator is Mary Whigham. Mary noted that content must be significant. Mary directed members to send suggested points of interest to Larry Deuser as well as organizations that might want to be listed and a list of newspapers from each board member's area of responsibility. Mary said, "We must find all of the German footprint.

Bob Flocke moved to approve the concept and implementation as outlined by Larry Deuser and discussed by the board, Liz Hicks seconded, and the board unanimously approved.

### **Discussion and action, \$5,000 for initial GTT project funding**

In a separate motion, Bob Flocke moved and Liz Hicks seconded, to approve \$5,000 for initial funding for the GTT App project. The Board unanimously approved.

### **The following concept for initial implementation of the GTT project was discussed:**

Mary directed that board members would seek points of interest and be responsible for marketing the GTT app in their counties of residence. Several members requested additional adjacent counties. Mary agreed to create a marketing brochure, and each board member will cover all 18 types of points of interest within his area of responsibility. Board members are responsible for content and marketing within their area. Larry Deuser moved and Liz Hicks seconded to have Mary Whigham order a GTT Plaque.

### **Report on new phone system and office management needs**

Charles Locklin briefed members on the new phone system for GTHS offices in the GFS. Upgrades include a wireless safety alarm system that does not rely on phone lines and a fire and security system. The new phone system is provided by Time-Warner which was chosen after a comparison with AT&T. TW provides better internet service along with the phone system appropriate for GTHS use. The TW system will cost \$30 per month more than the old system.

Charles Locklin further reported that the current GTHS website is old, difficult to use and not very helpful to visitors. Some of the code for changes isn't available anymore and the design is outdated. Charles checked with four potential website development sources. Rick Norton, a GTHS member, and his wife recommended Martin Hodges, a programmer who works for Loaves and Fishes. He would charge \$1,500 to design a new website and recommended Word Press as software. The total to complete and establish a new website would be approximately \$3,000.

**Discussion and action on continuing Jean Warneke's consulting contract**







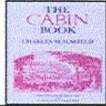

Jean Warneke's contract as a marketing consultant to the board of directors expires at the end of March. Mary Whigham suggested that Jean's work was not yet complete and that she would need more time to complete compiling suggestions on German Free School usage and marketing plans. Bob Flocke moved and James Kearney seconded to extend Jean's contract for three additional months at a rate of \$25 per hour with a maximum of 40 hours per month. The board unanimously approved.

The next board meeting was set for April 28 in Brenham.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40.

Submitted by Bob Flocke, Secretary

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