

# THE JOURNAL



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# GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

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**Position #9, Term 2013-2016**  
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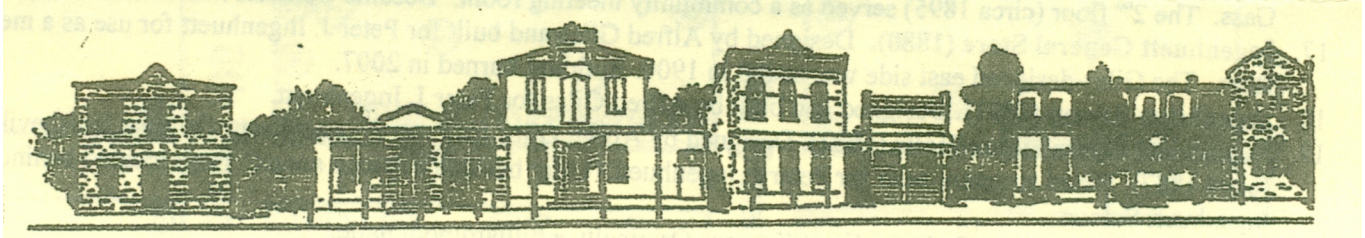
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# German-Texan Heritage Society

## 2014 Annual Conference

### Comfort, Texas



**Registration Deadline: July 25, 2014**

Register online at  
<http://germantexans.org>  
 & save \$5 per registrant

- Membership in GTHS is not required so bring a guest
- Please print or write legibly. Your name tag will be made from this information.
- Use one sheet for persons at the same address.
- Make a copy of this sheet for persons at different addresses.

NAME (1st registrant) \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME (2nd registrant) \_\_\_\_\_  
 MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 TELEPHONE/E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

# of persons attending full conference	_____ x \$55	\$ _____
# of persons attending one day only _____ Friday _____ Saturday	_____ x \$40	\$ _____
Late Fee if Registering after July 25	_____ x \$5	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$ _____

\_\_\_\_\_ Check enclosed payable to GTHS. Mail to GTHS, P.O. Box 684171, Austin, TX 78768-4171  
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 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ V-code \_\_\_\_\_ (3 digit # on back of card)

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**German-Texan Heritage Society  
2014 Annual Meeting - Comfort, Texas  
August 8-9, 2014**

**Hosted by GTHS and the Comfort Heritage Foundation, 7th & High Street**

The Comfort Heritage Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Comfort's historical heritage. The CHF maintains the Treue der Union Monument, and was instrumental in the restoration and rededication of the monument in 1996. The Foundation also owns and maintains the Brownsboro Cemetery. The Old Comfort State Bank Building was restored by CHF, and houses the offices, archives, and museum of the foundation ( <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txchf/>).

**Comfort, Texas – established 1854**

The town was laid out by Ernst Hermann Altgelt along the banks of the Cypress Creek above the confluence with the Guadalupe River. The early settlers were mostly Germans, who were freemasons, freethinkers, political activists. The town was a center of Union sentiment during the Civil War, and lost many young men at the battle of the Nueces in 1862. Comfort is the second largest town in Kendall County. It is located at the junction of Texas State Highway 27, US Highway 87, and Interstate 10 (became part of Kendall County when Kendall County was created in 1862). Much of the original town site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Significant architectural sites include Bolshevik Hall, Turner Hall, a Theater, and numerous half-timber and Victorian structures.

**Friday, August 8**

- 9:30-1:00      Registration for early arrivals at VFW Hall, 626 Front Street  
Lunch on own –suggest Comfort Pizza, Fritzie's BBQ, or High's all on High Street while taking an independent walking tour of historic downtown Comfort (much of the original townsite is listed in the National Register of Historic Places). Map provided (49 historic buildings located between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets).
- 1:00-2:00      VFW Hall, 626 Front Street, (Registration, Vendors, Door Prizes)
- 2:00-2:15      **Laurie Castro** – Welcome from Comfort Chamber of Commerce  
(<http://www.comfort-texas.com/>) – Listing of Antique shops, Lodging, Comfort info.
- 2:15-2:45      **Anne Stewart** - Founding of Comfort, Ernst and Emma Altgelt
- 2:45-3:15      **JoAnn Stiles** - Comfort Post World War II
- 3:15-3:30      Break
- 3:30-4:15      **Kevin Klaus** – Texas General Land Office (Records and Online Resources)
- 4:15-4:35      Showing of Frank Manitzas' DVD Battle of Nueces (leading up to and aftermath)
- 4:35-5:00      **Brenda Seidensticker** on Battle/Massacre on the Nueces River
- 5:30-7:30      **Roy Perkins** – Comfort Heritage Foundation Museum, 7th & High Streets with social and simple supper.  
(Drawing for Friday Door Prizes)
- 8:00              Folk Opera at hill next to Treue der Union Monument or a venue in Comfort in case of rain.  
**Please bring lawn chairs, flashlight, and bug spray if attending.**

**Saturday, August 9**

- 8:00-9:00 VFW, 626 Front Street, Registration, Vendors, and Breakfast Table
- 9:00-11:00 **Mike and Anne Stewart** - Tour of Comfort Cemetery + Grave Dousing Demo (rods provided for those who want to participate).  
**Harry Seidensticker** – Original church built in 1892 – 38 years after Comfort was Founded (Lutheran, but used by all denominations until they built their own) “Der Deutsche Evangelische Kirche”  
  
Last chance to shop when tours begin
- 11:30-12:00 VFW - GTHS Business Meeting (App presentation, Tour Maps)
- 12:00 -1:00 Catered Meal by **Guenthers’** (Drawing for Saturday Door Prizes)

**(Tour-car caravan style) Need head count for Hermann Sons Tour**

<b>Tour</b>	Leaves from Comfort VFW Hall - 626 Front Street also Hwy 27
1:00 pm	Leave for Hermann Sons Altenheim Home taking Hwy 27 W & Hermann Sons Rd E
<b>1:10 pm</b>	Arrive at Hermann Sons Altenheim Home and begin Tour ( <b>220 Altenheim Rd E</b> )
1:45 pm	Leave for Seidensticker home on FM 473 East
<b>2:00 pm</b>	Arrive at Seidensticker home and begin Tour ( <b>302 FM 473 East</b> )
2:55 pm	Leave for SA & AP Railroad Bridge on River Bend Road
<b>3:00 pm</b>	Arrive at SA & AP Railroad Bridge and begin Tour
3:20 pm	Leave for Brownsboro Cemetery further down River Bend Road on left side
<b>3:25 pm</b>	Arrive at Brownsboro Cemetery and begin Tour
3:45 pm	Leave for Bat Tunnel State Park on Old #9 Rd or Hwy
<b>4:15 pm</b>	Arrive at Bat Tunnel State Park and begin Tour (Old San Antonio Road)
4:45 pm	Leave for Luckenbach taking Old #9 Rd or Hwy and Grapetown Road
<b>5:15 pm</b>	Arrive at Luckenbach and begin Tour ( <b>FM 1376</b> )
5:30 pm	Leave for Sisterdale taking FM 1376 South
<b>6:00 pm</b>	Arrive in Sisterdale and begin Tour ( <b>FM 1376</b> ) at Historic Sisterdale Dance Hall
??????	Last Tour ends - Have a Nice evening in Sisterdale or trip home

**Hermann Sons Altenheim – Helen Widner (need count for this stop)**

The Order of the Sons of Hermann was founded in Texas, July 6, 1861. Since 1916, the order has maintained a retirement home in Comfort, TX.

**Seidensticker home** – currently owned by Charles and Brenda Seidensticker .....Built by Charlie’s grandfather, Henry Seidensticker. Construction took two years, 1912-1914, to complete due to rain in 1913. Rock for the home was quarried from field in front of house. **SA & AP Railroad Bridge** – Built in 1887 out of wood, part washed away in flood of 1900. Metal trestles were added between 1900 and 1930’s. Ran until early 1970’s when H.C. and Charlie Seidensticker purchased it to keep it from being torn down for scrap.

**Brownsboro Cemetery** – This cemetery and a few houses are all that remain of Brownsboro. Located on the north bank of the Guadalupe River and River Bend Rd., Brownsboro was one of Kendall County’s earliest settlements dating back to 1848. Though Brownsboro had been a thriving community, a flood in the 1870’s, the railroad passing it by in 1887, an another flood in 1900 led to Brownsboro’s demise. The school and post

office were moved to higher ground near the intersection of Hwy. 473 and Old #9 in 1897, and remained there until 1944. Land was donated for a cemetery in 1870. The Comfort Heritage Foundation later acquired the cemetery, applied for and obtained a historical marker. The CHF cares for the upkeep of the cemetery.

**Bat Tunnel State Park** – (aka Old Tunnel State Park) located approx.. 13 miles north of Comfort. The 16.1 acre site was acquired in 1991 for the specific purpose of protection and management of a colony of approx.. 1-3 million Mexican Free-tailed bats. Website: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/oldtunnel](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/oldtunnel)

**Luckenbach** – Located in southeastern Gillespie County, the community was settled in the late 1840's and early 1850's by German farmers. Among these were brothers, Jacob and August Luckenbach. Jacob was a veteran of the Texas Revolution. The first post office was established in 1854 with a dance hall, cotton gin, black smith shop, store and saloon by the late 1800's. Several family cemeteries and a Catholic Cemetery were also established. The population of Luckenbach by the 1950's was twenty. Luckenbach was made popular by Willie Nelson's song, Luckenbach, Texas.

**Sisterdale** – (Farm roads 1376 and 473) was founded in 1847 by Nicolaus Zink, a German freethinker who surveyed New Braunfels for Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels. This community and the Sister Creek valley became one of the famous "Latin Settlements" as Zink was joined by Forty-Eighters fleeing the aborted 1848 revolution in Germany. The community was one of the centers of German abolitionism and Unionism before and during the Civil War. In 1884, the est. pop. was 150, with a shingle mill, cotton gin, and a grocery store. The population in 2000 was 63. See Biesele's *The History Of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* for additional information. Also, <http://www.sisterdaleancehall.com/history/>

Local historian and former Kendall County Judge, Bill Whitworth, will tell us about Sisterdale, the surrounding region, and the iconic Sisterdale Dance Hall.

**Across the street from the Dance Hall, the Sisterdale VFD is holding a Bar-B-Que fund raiser and dance at the Fire Station beginning at 6 pm. Dance begins at 8 pm. GTHS is invited to attend (Dinner and Dance NOT included in GTHS registration).**

## OUR SPEAKERS

**Anne and Mike Stewart** met at the University of Texas in Austin. Library Science for Anne and Mike in Electrical Engineering. New Mexico is Mike's choice of residence so the Stewarts divide their time between the mountains and Comfort. *Comfort Women in Comfort History*, written in 1992 as a thank you to the Comfort community, was their first joint writing endeavor. They followed it with two books about Comfort in the Civil War: *The Story of Comfort's Monument* and hanging from a White Oak Tree. They've written countless articles on Comfort's heritage and history for area newspapers, the GTHS Journal and the Society of SW Archivists. They are charter members of the Comfort Heritage Foundation.

**Brenda Seidensticker** was not born in Comfort but returned at age 3 when her parents returned to Comfort and bought her mom's parents' small farm after dad retired from the military so she was raised there. A lover of history even in school, she finally took time for it the last 25 years. Her great grandfather, August Hoffmann from Gillespie County was a survivor of the Battle at the Nueces River in 1862 and lived to be the oldest surviving participant dying in 1935 at 92 years. Her great grandfather, Anton Bohnert, Sr. arrived in Comfort in 1854 and her husband's great grandfather, Heinrich Seidensticker arrived in 1855. She and husband of 41 years have farmed and ranched with Charlie in a few professions in between. They have 3 children and 4 grandchildren whom they are teaching German to. Brenda is the state director for Texas Make It With Wool and active in Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers. She has been President of the Comfort Heritage Foundation for 3 years and was vice-president before that. She only learned of the GTHS in the last 5 years or so and hope to promote it and help gain members. She was chairman of the 150 Commemoration of the Battle and Massacre at the Nueces River in 2012 for which she was honored with a Comfort Heritage Foundation Award given annually.

**Kevin Klaus** developed a love of history from an early age listening to stories told by his Great Grandparents and Grandparents who grew up in East Texas. Over the past 30 years he has collected and researched his own family, using government records, letters, photographs, family Bible information, and stories. Beginning in 1990, he served eight years in the United States Army. In 1998 he was honorably discharged from the Army in New Mexico, and returned home to Central Texas where he grew up. Kevin has a background in Anthropology, Archaeology, and Public History from the University of New Mexico, and currently working on his certification to become a certified genealogist. Over the last 10 years he has served as one of the lead researchers in the Texas General Land Office Archives and Records Program Area. During his time at the Land Office he has searched the early Court of Claims files and archival collection to learn more about the history of Texas and discover the amazing collection of personal letters of early soldiers and pioneers who helped settle our great state.

**Accommodations: Please make reservations a.s.a.p. as tourist time of year.**

**Meyer Bed and Breakfast**

www.meyerbedandbreakfast.com  
845 High St., Comfort, TX 78013  
(888) 995-6100 or (830) 995-2304

(2 night minimum stay, for rooms with more than 2 people, a \$20 per night charge will be added (max. 8 people), includes full breakfast.

**Executive Inn**

32 U.S. 87 Business, Comfort, Texas 78013  
(830) 995-5332

Others (do search at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) for information)

- A Stay In Comfort Guesthouses
- B&B On Cypress Creek
- Carrington House Bed & Breakfast
- Camp Comfort
- Comfort Riverview House
- Cypress Creek Guesthouse
- Haven River Inn
- Heirloom Bed and Breakfast
- Holekamp House Bed & Breakfast

**(Following about 15 miles from VFW Bldg. in Comfort)**

**La Quinta Inn and Suites**

36756 IH 10, (10 Johns Road), Boerne, TX 78006  
Toll Free: (855) 675-0067 or (830) 249-1212

**Comfort Inn and Suites Texas Hill Country**

35000 IH 10, West Boerne, TX 78006  
(830) 249-6800

**Hampton Inn and Suites**

34935 IH10, West Boerne, TX 78006  
1-830-816-8800

**German-Texan Heritage Society 2014 Annual Meeting**  
**August 8 – 9, 2014**  
**VFW, 626 Front St.**  
**Comfort, TX**

**Program Advertisements**

The 2014 Annual Meeting of the German-Texan Heritage Society (GTHS) will be held in Comfort, Texas, August 8-9 with the Comfort Heritage Society serving as host. You are invited to support this event by purchasing an advertisement to be printed in the Program. We anticipate that approximately 125 people from surrounding towns, and other areas of Texas will attend this conference.

Please consider placing an **Ad** for your business, organization, as a memorial or in honor of someone(s). The German-Texan Heritage Society is a designated IRS 501(c) (3) organization, and as such is tax exempt.

<b>Cost of ad:</b>	<b>Business Card (3-1/2"x2")</b> .....	<b>\$ 25.00</b>
	<b>1/4 page (across or vertical)</b> .....	<b>\$ 50.00</b>
	<b>1/2 page</b> .....	<b>\$100.00</b>
	<b>Full page</b> .....	<b>\$200.00</b>

(1/2 page, 1/4 page dimensions are based on a 7-1/2" x 10" full page)

For best quality reproduction, send an exact digital copy of your ad to the advertisement Chair, Mary Whigham at [mjwhig@texasbb.com](mailto:mjwhig@texasbb.com). You may mail a printed copy of the ad to Mary at 16100 McCraven School Road, Washington, Texas 77880, to be scanned.

Make checks payable to GTHS and mail to: GTHS, 507 E. 10th, Austin, Texas, 78701 or pay with credit card thru paypal online at [www.GermanTexans.org](http://www.GermanTexans.org).

Please include a contact name, address and phone number with your check. All advertising copy must be received by July 14, 2014.

For questions about advertising in the Conference program, please contact: Mary at:  
[mjwhig@texasbb.com](mailto:mjwhig@texasbb.com) or 936 878 2892

Thank you!

**THE JOURNAL OF**  
**THE GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
**VOLUME XXXVI - NUMBER 2, SUMMER 2014**

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- 065 The German Free School (continued from Spring Journal) - Liz Hicks**
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- 067 Interviewing an Immigrant**
- 068 A Visit from Bundesrealgymnasium class 6A in Spittal/Drau – Austria**

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## OPERATIONS

- 112 **Minutes of the December 2013 Board Meeting (Approved) and Minutes of the March 2014 Board Meeting (Unapproved)**  
**Books We Sell**  
**Membership/Renewal Flyer (for YOU to give to a potential member!)**

Vielen Dank to these contributors

Ann Dolce, Spicewood  
Darlene Quiring, Sugarland  
Eddie Wolsch, Seymour  
Doris Voltin, Rosebud  
Angelina Kretschmar, San Antonio  
JT Koenig, Austin

Edie Tyler, Austin  
Terry Smart, San Antonio  
Flora von Roeder, Houston  
Charles Locklin, Austin  
Rodney Koenig, Houston

### Keep them in your Prayers

Jim West, husband of Gerri West is battling cancer. Both Jim and Gerri are long time supporters of the GTHS, Jim being the go to guy for IT issues, setting up microphones for our annual meetings and Gerri serving on the board as Treasurer, running the Christmas Market and previously active in the Guild. I know we all pray for a positive outcome.

Your Editor

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## *In Memoriam*

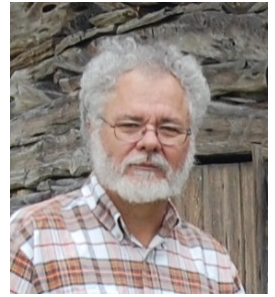
### **Julius Rivera**



Julius Rivera was born December 4, 1917 in Timaná, Colombia and lived a full life until his death on February 19, 2014. His wife, Linda Gerstenberger Rivera, and children Lisa Rivera (Kumar Amin), Julian Rivera (Melanie Gantt), and Marcos Rivera were by his side during a brief and merciful final illness at home. Four granddaughters brought joy to his life: Lakshmi Amin, Lekha Amin, Liliana Rivera, and Lola Rivera. His surviving brother is Carlos Enrique Rivera of Timaná. Celebrated as a scholar of integrity, Dr. Rivera was a Professor Emeritus at The University of Texas at El Paso. His contributions to the fields of sociology and anthropology are reflected in numerous publications including edi-

tions of *Latin America: A Sociocultural Interpretation* and a collection of his poetry, *Poemas y Evocación*. An eloquent supporter of justice, his life's work brought opportunity for students to view the world as critical thinkers and intelligent citizens. Instrumental in establishing the Lifelong Learning program at UTEP he was a sustaining contributor through his 80s and embraced new ideas even in the final days of his life. Widely travelled, Julius was a Fulbright Scholar in Santiago, Chile, and served the National Science Foundation in various capacities as well as organizations committed to peace across the world. In honor of his appreciation for libraries and librarians, donations may be made to The University of Texas at El Paso Library, 500 West University, El Paso, 79902. A memorial service will be held at Remembrance Gardens in Austin at two in the afternoon on April 18, 2014. Memories are shared at [www.JuliusRivera.com](http://www.JuliusRivera.com).

## President's Notes



Your GTHS Executive Board and full board have been meeting frequently and dealing with numerous issues. Several of these are of special interest to the membership.

First, planning is complete for this year's annual meeting which will be in Comfort, Texas on August 8-9. Be sure to check out the details and registration information in this copy of the Journal. We have planned many exciting topics including formal presentations, entertainment, and tours of several local attractions. Some of the tours are to unique places you cannot go and see as a member of the general public. You should be sure to make your hotel and/or B&B reservations early as this area does not have accommodations on every corner as do some of the high tourist traffic areas of the state

Second, we have also been working hard on the German Texas Trails i-phone APP project which we introduced to you at last year's annual meeting. The further we get into the project the more we learn about all the details. We are not rushing into this as we want to make sure we have the startup funding secured as well as a high quality product. We have been actively developing content and soliciting startup funding via both grant applications and contacting individual and corporate benefactors. If you have a German Texan point of interest in your neighborhood that you want to be sure we include, or have a suggested benefactor we should contact, drop us a message and we will work on incorporating this information into our data set.

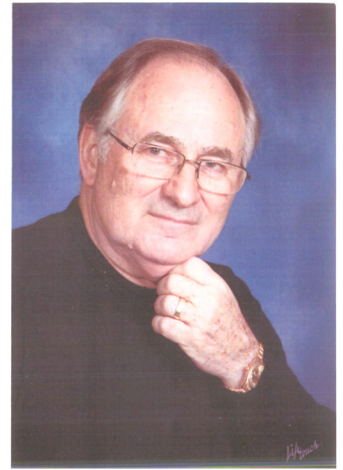
I look forward to seeing you at this year's convention. In the meantime, don't forget to tell your German friends about GTHS and invite them to the annual meeting. We all need to actively promote our German Heritage and traditions.....

Michael Krause  
President, German Texan Heritage Society

## LEAVE YOUR GERMAN MARK

By Rodney C. Koenig (past President of GTHS)

In the last issue of the GTHS Journal, I wrote of James Dick, the Founder of Festival Hill at Round Top. Since then, my son Erik Koenig and I visited the Presidential Library of George H. W. Bush at Texas A & M University in College Station. The Presidential Library is a rare treat. Having visited a number of other Presidential Libraries, such as the Truman Library in Missouri, the Kennedy Library in Massachusetts, the Nixon Library in California, the Johnson Library in Austin, the Hays Library in Ohio, and other Historical centers in Washington, the Bush Library at Texas A & M was well worth the trip and a very interesting visit.



George Herbert Walker Bush was born in Massachusetts on June 12, 1924 to Prescott Sheldon Bush and Dorothy Walker Bush. His father was U.S. Senator from Connecticut. President Bush attended Phillips Academy Andover, was captain of the baseball team and was Senior Class President, graduating in 1942, after which he enlisted in the Navy. He became a Navy pilot and flew Navy torpedo bombers, ultimately flying fifty-eight combat missions. He flew off the USS San Jacinto at times. On one mission, he was shot down by the Japanese in 1944, bailed out over the ocean and was rescued by a Navy submarine, being awarded the Distinguished Flying

Cross. Near the end of his Naval Service, he married Barbara Pierce in January 1945. He was discharged from the Navy in September 1945 and then enrolled at Yale University, where he became captain of the baseball team and was elected to Skull and Bones Society, an exclusive society on Yale campus. After graduation from Yale, Bush moved his family (then wife Barbara and young son George) to Midland, Texas. The Bushes had six children, George, Robin, JEB, Neil, Marvin and Dorothy. Robin died very young of leukemia.



Bush got into politics in Texas, served as Republican Party Chairman in Harris County Texas, and was elected to the House of Representatives from Houston's Seventh District. After an unsuccessful run for the Senate, Bush was confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, thereafter became U.S. envoy to the People's Republic of China in the mid 1970s, and also was named as director of the CIA. During the Presidential Campaign of 1980, Bush became Ronald Reagan's choice for Vice President, serving for two terms as Vice President. Then in 1988, Bush won the election to become the 41st President of the United States. In his inaugural address, Bush spoke about the plight of homelessness, crime, and drug addiction. He advocated volunteerism and community involvement, pledging to support "a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good." When East Germany opened its borders and Germans tore down the Berlin Wall separating East and West Berlin in early November 1989, it marked a symbolic end to Communist rule in Eastern Europe. I still recall the news of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Some criticized Bush for his failure to gloat over the fall of the Berlin Wall, which was likely a good diplomatic move, but it cost him dearly with the hardliners in his party. Events in 1989 moved along at such a rapid pace that President Bush's natural inclination toward gradual change was severely challenged. After the Berlin Wall fell in November of that year, members of the Bush administration discussed German reunification as some future reality, perhaps even five years in the future. Very few people imagined that a unified Germany would exist in less than a year. Even more surprising was that a united Germany would become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Bush was a one term President.

After George H. W. Bush left the Presidency, he and Barbara came back to Houston. They divided their time between Houston and Kennebunkport, Maine, where the Bush family had long had a residence. Bush also threw himself into preserving his legacy through his presidential library. The George Bush Presidential Library and Museum was dedicated in 1997 on the west campus of Texas A & M University in College Station, Texas. The library and museum holds the official documents and private papers from Bush's career including his presidential years. The grounds are beautiful and also contain a grave site at which daughter Robin Bush is buried and where both President Bush and Barbara plan to be buried. Bush also joined with former President Bill Clinton after a tsunami from the Indian Ocean struck Southeast Asia in December 2004. The two former Presidents created the Bush-Clinton Houston Tsunami Fund, a national fundraising campaign to provide assistance to damaged communities throughout the region.

Bush became involved in politics again through the careers of his sons, Jeb Bush and George W. Bush. Both sons held elected office: George was governor of Texas (1995-2000) and Jeb was governor of Florida (1999-2007). When George W. was elected President in 2000, the Bushes became the first father and son to be elected President since John Quincy Adams was elected in 1824. Within the Bush clan, the first President Bush was often referred to as "Forty-One," and the second as "Forty-Three." Both George H.W. and Barbara continue to be revered senior citizens. George H. W. Bush has truly left his Mark on Texas and is a President of whom we Texans can be proud!

How will you leave your German Mark? Consider a gift of a percentage (say 10%) of your estate to a worthy cause, such as the German-Texan Heritage Society or the German department of Texas A & M University or the university of your choice. If you desire help, please call Rodney C. Koenig at 713 651 5333 or email me at [rodney.koenig@nortonrosefulbright.com](mailto:rodney.koenig@nortonrosefulbright.com).

Rodney C. Koenig | Of Counsel

Fulbright & Jaworski LLP

1301 McKinney, Suite 5100, Houston, Texas 77010-3095, United States Tel +1 713 651 5333 | Fax +1 713 651 5246



Bush Proposed Grave site at Texas  
A & M at the Bush Presidential Library.



## Genealogy Inquires: 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 mail to 746 Edgebrook Dr., Houston, TX 77034-2030. We reserve the right to edit queries. Queries are published as space permits.



### **Retzloff/Retzlaff – Komoll – Krueger – Roecker/Röcker – Reichert**

Dorothy Bonkowski, 655 Farm Road 477, Seguin, TX 78155, e-mail: [dottieb@lcb.com](mailto:dottieb@lcb.com). Would like to know how to find the answers for her Retzloff immigrants to America.

Friedericke Reichert Retzloff (Mother's name unknown) and Ernst Ludwig Reichert were born 25 Jan 1824 in ? Germany. She married \_\_\_ Retzloff born about 1822 in ? (Germany) between 1840 and 1848. It is believed Friedericke came to America with daughter Bertha. Friedericke and Mr. Retzloff had 3 children: Ernestina Louise born 12 Jan 1848 in ? Germany; married Wilhelm Komoll born 04 May 1849 in Polloff/Pohlheim, Germany. Emigrated to NY 1 August 1885 w/4 children. Friedrich born in Germany, married 25 March 1872. Johanna Wilhelmine Franciska Henriette Krueger/Krüger. They emigrated 21 December 1883 to Baltimore, MD with their 5 children. Bertha born 18 Feb. 1858 in ? Germany, married Wilhelm Roecker/Röcker/Raker. Bertha and Wilhelm emigrated to America between 1884 and 1886.

**Reply:** To fill in the blanks as to the WHERE in Germany or Prussia, you should use every available source of information for the emigrants and their children here in the U.S. Baptismal records for American born children should provide the WHERE in Germany for their parents. I'm assuming the passenger lists only gave Prussia or Germany as place of origin for emigrants? See if you can find the Declaration of Intent and Naturalization papers for the emigrants. These records are usually in the District Clerk's Records in Texas. From census records, I would look in the Gonzales County District Clerk's records.

From research done in reply to your 2012 query (Winter, 2012 issue of the "Journal"), your Retzloff/Retzlaff family were from Wutzig, Kreis (like county) Dramburg, Pommern (now Poland). You need to see if Wutzig parish records have been microfilmed by LDS (Mormans). Use their website: <https://familysearch.org>, click Catalog, and do place search for listing of microfilm available for rental and sent from Salt Lake City Library to a family history library near you. You should use this website to see how the emigrant's children answered the place of birth for their Father and Mother on children's Texas Death Certificate.

**In addition, these sites sent by GTHS member, Mrs. Maurine Lee, may offer some help:**

A map source is from the Federation of East European Family History Societies: <http://feefhs.org/maps/indexmap.html>

They have maps from an 1882 atlas showing German Empire-East: Pomerania—Prussia.

They also have a BLITZ Information Center for fee-based genealogy research services: <http://feefhs.org/members/blitz/frqblitz.html> (this homepage lists about 32 other sources/links, primarily Russian, but also includes some German, Polish, and Jewish sites)

Another German site (must use translator): is Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ostdeutscher Familienforscher e.V. or <http://www.agoff.de> In 2011 they had about 12 research centers.

### **Bracht**

Tommy Brock, 1719 Mission Springs, Dr., Katy, TX 77950-5059, e-mail: [tlbrock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tlbrock@sbcglobal.net). I would like to know the history of my great-great grandfather, Victor F. Bracht from the time he came back to Texas from Mexico after the Civil War and became Postmaster in Rockport. I know at one time he was a businessman in San Antonio. Also, what became of his brother who immigrated to Texas. I believe he was a doctor.

**Reply:** There is quite a bit of information on Victor F. Bracht on the internet. Since you live in Katy, TX and not far from Clayton Library, 5300 Caroline St., Houston, TX 77004, I would recommend you make a visit to this genealogical library. You can access several databases such as [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) in the library for free. Use this link <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Bracht&GSfn=Victor&GSmn=F.&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=46&GSentry=4&GSob=n&GRid=85252932&df=all&> for a photo, family information, mention of his Rockport, New Braunfels and San Antonio residence and business enterprises. Have you done a google search for Information? Do a search at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) for “Victor F. Bracht”~Texas. I’m sure you know he was a well known early Texas German? There will be various records for him in the counties in which he lived. Deeds, probate, tax records, Declaration of Intent, Naturalization will be in county courthouse.

In addition, information for Dr. Felix Bracht (born 1808, died 1882 Cibolo Valley, TX) can be found at <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=52631269>; and in *A History of Texas and Texans*, and *The German Settlement of the Texas Hill Country* (both google books).

### **What did emigrants bring with them on board ship?**

Peggy Neill, 1114 Woodworth Drive, Alice, TX 78332-3748, e-mail: Lempeg@sbcglobal.net. Would like to know what emigrants brought with them to U.S. How many boxes, luggage, etc.

**Reply:** *The Cabin Book* (a GTHS book) will give you some insight to the voyage to Texas. A google search may provide some information. In some respect, it would depend on when the immigrant came. Most belongings were put in steerage. My grandmother, Elisabeth Richter, emigrated in 1872. She had a steamer trunk with clothes, photos, personal items. I am not sure if she or her mother brought a few dishes that were made in Germany. There may have been restrictions by ship, ship’s Captain, or shipping line as to what immigrants could bring.

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_did\\_immigrants\\_bring\\_with\\_them\\_from\\_their\\_homeland](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_did_immigrants_bring_with_them_from_their_homeland) examples: bible, tools, items to help them in the new land.

## **Genealogy Websites**

**ShipIndex.org** <http://www.shipindex.org/ships>

example: s/s Reform the free database contained 3 citations from 3 resources, including one book, one journal and one online resource.

### **A list of the top 100 genealogy websites by number of visits:**

<http://www.genealogyintime.com/articles/top-100-genealogy-websites-of-2014-page02.html>

**Ancestral records:** [http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Tools/free\\_Genealogy\\_search\\_engine.html](http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Tools/free_Genealogy_search_engine.html)

### **Surname Distribution Maps (Where is your surname found?)**

[http://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Surname\\_Distribution\\_Maps](http://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Surname_Distribution_Maps)

### **“German Genealogy Websites You Won’t Want to Miss” – *Internet Genealogy* April/May 2014**

issue: German Roots: [www.germanroots.com](http://www.germanroots.com); German Genealogy Network [www.genealogy.net](http://www.genealogy.net); Kirchenbuchportal (church register portal for German Archives) [www.kirchenbuchportal.de](http://www.kirchenbuchportal.de), then click link [www.kirchenbuchportal.findbuch.net](http://www.kirchenbuchportal.findbuch.net)

WorldGenWeb-[www.worldgenweb.org](http://www.worldgenweb.org); [www.progenealogists.com/specialtysites.htm](http://www.progenealogists.com/specialtysites.htm)-

Click German link for articles, gazetteers, etc. Atlas of the German Empire: [www.library.wisc.edu/etext/ravenstein](http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/ravenstein) (Atlas 1883 German Reichs). One should consult this publication for more details on these mentioned sites.

## **For Those of You Who Are Thinking About Publishing Your Family History: (with permission from Ann)**

Liz Hicks forwarded you email to me and asked me to contact you. I have published several books on my family genealogy and have a couple of suggestions. The first one, I had printed here in Austin by a local printer that prints dissertations for the University of Texas. The document was hard-back, pages were 8 ½ by 11, and it was all printed in black and white and included many images. I was able to select a cover graphic and text. The cost was about \$65 per copy (230 pages). I was very pleased with the quality of the work, but I had to fund the entire printing and then mail to family members that wanted a copy. I mailed out about 150 books so this got time consuming.

The second book was a similar format, but I used lulu.com for the printing. Lulu is an online, on-demand printing company. With this process, you upload your document to Lulu, and Lulu prints and mails when someone orders a book. It takes about a week to 10 days to get the book. Anyone can go online and get a copy. You can set it up so that the book is protected from public view and only those to whom you give access, can purchase the book. I used this method since I wanted to protect the privacy of those living family member.

With Lulu, you can pick from various sizes, binding types, paper quality, color or b/w, etc. You download a template for your pages – the templates work well with Microsoft Word or similar word processing programs. Lulu has lots of tutorials on line and a good help line as well. You can design your cover and include images if you wish and have the opportunity to review a proof of the book. You can even make changes later if you wish.

The quality of the images in the book was not quite as good as the quality of the images in the first book, but the benefits to me far out-weighed this. I did not have to pay Lulu to publish the book. I did not have to bother about mailing. I just sent the private link to family members and they did the rest. I was able to set the price for the book. The actual cost of the book was about \$25 for 430 pages. (Page size I chose was 8.25x10.75 inches) I added on a few dollars to the price to recoup my expenses in the research and purchasing of photographs from libraries. Much more affordable.

There are other on-demand companies, but I am very pleased with Lulu and plan on using them again. If you want to look at my book, check it out at this web address: <http://www.lulu.com/content/hardcover-book/john-h-robinson/9324298>

I hoped this helped.

Ann

Ann Johnston Dolce  
20120 Siesta Shores Dr.  
Spicewood, TX 78669  
512-971-1944 cell

**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)

-Continued from 2014 Spring “Journal”

Descendants of any Student, Teacher or Trustee of the German Free School are invited to send additional information and photos for publication in the GTHS “Journal”. Please send to Liz Hicks, genealogy editor, 746 Edgebrook Dr., Houston, TX 77034-2030; via e-mail: [erootrot@usa.net](mailto:erootrot@usa.net).

The 1858 list of students of the historic German Free School appeared in the Summer, 2013 *Journal*. **The list of GFS Trustees appear below:**

**George Paul Assmann** (1849-1910) 1883 Trustee, Gunsmith and Locksmith  
**Frederick “Fritz” Bastian** (1818-1906) 1881 Trustee, book binder.  
**Dr. J. A. Brown**, 1858 Charter Trustee  
**Francis B. Forster** 1879-1880 Trustee  
**David Friedman** 1881 Trustee, saloon proprietor  
**Reinhold Haschke** (1843-1940) Trustee, Puck saloon proprietor  
**F. Heger**, 1858 Trustee  
**Henry Hofheintz**, 1872 Trustee  
**William Kluge** (1820-1880), 1872 Trustee, ran a saloon and restaurant  
**Rudolph C. Koerber**, 1879-1880 Trustee, pecan merchant  
**Carl Krohn** (1817-1899), 1858 Trustee, butcher  
**Captain Max Maas** (1842-1913), 1881 Trustee, City Assessor and Collector, IRS Deputy Collector  
**Richard Newton Lane**, 1879-1880 Trustee  
**Joseph Martin** (1811-1870), 1858 Charter Trustee, Civil Engineer, draftsman TGLO.  
**Carl “C.L.” Ludwig Nitschke** (1813-1888), 1881 Trustee, cabinet maker, Austin City Sexton  
**Charles William Pressler** (1823-1907), 1858 Charter Trustee, surveyor, cartographer and chief draftsman of the Texas General Land Office.  
**Frederick Reichow** (1831-1894), 1872 Trustee, Carpenter, builder  
**Wilhelm Martin Sattler** (1808-1880), 1858 Charter Trustee, bookbinder and postal contractor. He helped organize the Comal Union School in 1850.  
**Jean Schneider** (1818-1862), brewer, member of committee of 3 to choose first teacher, 1858.  
**Joseph Schuber** (1833-1922), 1872 Trustee, contractor and builder.  
**Edward Schütze** (1824-1902), 1881 Trustee, brother of Julius Schütze, draftsman TGLO.  
**August Schwartz**, 1858 Trustee  
**Edward Steiner** (1839-1903), 1883 Trustee, painter, carpenter, and ran beer saloon.  
**Fred Steussy** (1814-1880), 1858 Trustee  
**Henry Steussy**, 1858 Charter Trustee. Printer  
**\*Frederick William Sutor** (1819-1878), 1872 Trustee. Cabinet and saddle maker, Sutor Hotel, and operated general store with a Mr. Hirshfeld circa 1859 Austin.  
**Edward “Ed” Tips** (1832-1872) 1858 Trustee, brother of Walter Tips, connected to Runge family.  
**Henry Vogel** (1841-1915), 1883 Trustee, Carpenter  
**William von Rosenberg** (1872-1901), 1858 Charter Trustee. Civil Engineer, draftsman and land Agent. Author of 1894 *Kritik* (first critical account of German immigration to Texas).  
**James Wahrenberger** (1855-1929), is listed as a possible Trustee. I believe it was his father, John Wahrenberger (1812-1864), who was a possible Trustee of the GFS. John emigrated to Austin in 1839. His son, James, was the first Texas architect with a professional architecture degree. Completed a project for the Capitol which won second prize in a competition. He designed the Methodist Episcopal Church in Austin (1878), Fayette County jail in La Grange (1881). James Wahrenberger moved to San Antonio circa 1883.  
**August Wahrman** (1826-1888), possible Trustee, Blacksmith  
**Carl Weise** (1827-1879), 1872 Trustee, carpenter



**Christian Wilhelm** (1817-1897), 1858 Charter trustee.

**August Wolf**, (1830-1913), 1883 Trustee, carpenter and miller.

**\*Frederick Wilhelm Sutor (1819-1878)** emigrated to Texas on the s/s *Henriette* in 1853 with wife, Emilie Henrietta Schulke. Frederick had been a cabinet maker in Germany. Probably, because of the hardwood trees in the Austin area, they settled in Austin, Tx. A home on the west side of Congress Ave. between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets was build. This is where the old Sutor Hotel was later located. This home was damaged by fire. After Frederick's death in 1878, his widow, obtained land located back of the capitol. Emilie Schulke Sutor obtained rental property, and one piece of property was 306 E. 11<sup>th</sup>. She and her family were living at this address at the time of her death, Sept 8, 1917. Frederick and Emilie Schulke Sutor are buried in Section 1, Lot 375 of Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, TX.

Their children:

Johann (1853) died in infancy according to family information, but a John Louis Sutor is listed among the 1858-1883 list of students.

William J. (1854-1913) married Bell Battersby), William was a Student of the GFS, business manager for Carmona Lumber Co., Member of Austin Hook and Ladder No. 1 volunteer firefighters

Louise (1856-1909) married Joseph A. Hofstetter

Emily (Emma) (1858-1947) married Frank Seery

Arthur (1860-1873) drowned Colorado River at age 13

Frederick Gustav (1862-1933) married Sofia Mayer

Matilda "Tillie" (1863-1947) married John Creaton

Adele (1865-1952) never married

Bertha Agnes "Bettie" (1867-1948) married William "Will" Goodrich

Agnes Lena (1870-1960) married Andrew Vogel

Frederick W. Sutor information from family files of Austin History Center.

### **1858 Students, Henry and Ludinde [sic] Sauer:**

Henry Sauer (July 21, 1847-Jan. 29, 1916), and his sister, Lucinde "Lindy" Sauer (1851-1884). Were students of the German Free School in 1858. They may be the children of W. and Ellen Sauer. All are buried in Section 2, Lot 466 of Historic Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, TX. Henry married Jennie Settegast April 20, 1872 Austin, TX. Henry ran a meat market, and in later was in the furniture business.

Lucinde married Hornbrook Thompson Oct. 1, 1867, also in Austin. Unfortunately Lucinde "Lindy" Sauer Thompson died in 1884 at age 33 of a "paralyzed brain" according to Austin City Sexton records.

*Austin Statesman Newspaper*, January 30, 1916

Henry Sauer, aged 70 years, one of Austin's best known citizens, died at his home, 1200 Red River Street, this morning about 7 o'clock. He was born in Galveston, TX, but had been a resident of Austin since he was 9 months old. He is survived by his wife and one sister. Mr. Sauer was an ex-Confederate veteran and was a member of Heart of Oak Camp, Woodmen of the World; the Friends in Need, and the Select Knights. The funeral services will be held tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon at 2:30 o'clock from the family home. The services at the residence will be conducted by August Ziller. Interment will be in Oakwood Cemetery under the auspices of the Woodmen of the World.

## Helga's Corner

### O wundervolle Runkelrübe

*Deutschland, das Land der Dichter und Denker.* I see the greatest poet and thinker in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832). Whether Faust argues with Mephisto about the meaning of life, or a *Knabe* (boy) learns that roses have thorns, the simple language with *Rhythmus und Reim* (rhyme) lifts Goethe's readers' spirit.

For a while I read a poem by Goethe every evening before closing my eyes. I also read the English translations in the same book. *Du liebe Zeit!* Some translations are admirably good, but others!:

„Sah ein Knab' ein Röslein steh'n	Urchin saw a rose – a dear“
„Seht den Felsenquell	See the mountain spring
Freudehell	Flash gladdening”



*Balladen* are a favorite of mine. Besides having *Rhythmus und Reim* they tell a story: *Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind?*.....

Or *Es war ein König in Thule*..... There lived a king in Thule.....

Recently I come across too many poets who can't even rhyme, not to mention *Rhythmus*. *Ein Gedicht als Exempel* :

<i>Früh am Tage, spät</i>	Early in the day, late
<i>am Morgen.</i>	In the morning.
<i>Und?_</i>	And?

In search of good folksy poems I dug up some old magazines like *Die Hausfrau* and also nostalgic regional publications written for the generation that includes many thousands of refugees from parts of Germany which were given to Poland or Russia after WW II like Silesia (Schlesien). Speaking of down to earth: In *Jahrbuch der Schlesier 2014* I read that a man in *Schlesien*, F. C. Achard, discovered that a certain beet could be turned into sugar and would therefore abolish slavery in the sugar cane industry with all its cruelty, and thus it would spread peace on earth. An ode to this humble vegetable was then created and began with this poetic first line:

**O wunderville Runkelrübe.**

## Interviewing an Immigrant

When Phillip Taylor, Assistant Chief of Police in Elgin, Texas, signed up for a history course at Austin Community College in early 2014, he was asked to interview a person who had immigrated after 1947 and to write about it. He contacted the German-Texan Heritage Society in search of such a subject and was introduced to GTHS member Hans von Schweinitz, who had come to the United States in 1957 at the age of 23. The initial two hours of interview turned into at least four long evenings of lively conversation, a CD and a paper.

It became obvious during the interview that the actions and reactions which immigrant Hans displayed when adjusting to the American way of life, were influenced strongly by his experiences in his younger years in Germany. An example would be the period of hoarding basic food like sugar, flour, cans of Crisco and cartons of cigarettes after he bought his first house in Texas. He had been hungry too many times in his teens.

Chief Taylor never considers himself completely off-duty and therefore always entered the von Schweinitz home displaying a gun and a badge on his hip and sporting a big black hat to complete the impressive appearance. The interview in printed form will be added to the GTHS Trenckmann Library.

The photo shows Hans von Schweinitz being interviewed by Phillip Taylor, Assistant Chief of Police in Elgin, Texas.





## Our Helga's been busy!

Prof. Mag. Rittchen, Prof. Mag Pontilli, Catherine Duncan and the students from the Bundesrealgymnasium class 6A in Spittal/Drau - Austria enjoyed an afternoon listening to the history of German Texans narrated by our docent Helga von Schweinitz.



# Community Events

Your are invited to a  
 Supplemental Historical Marker  
 Dedication for  
 Heinrich (Henry) Marx  
*the marker gives Henry recognition  
 for building*  
 "The Old Rock Store"

*The Supplemental Marker will be mounted under the  
 original marker by the front door of the original building.*

**Come and be part of the Dedication**  
*We will be giving special recognition to Henry's  
 Grandchildren*

**Date: May 17, 2014**

**Time: 10:00 to 11:00 a.m**

*(before the M&R Reunion)*

**Place: "The Old Rock Store"**

*(Austin Pizza Garden's Parking Lot:*

*6266 Hwy 290 W. in Oak Hill, Texas)*

*If you have any questions, please call (512) 914-303.  
 Thanks,  
 Edith (Edie) Tyler*

Submitted by Edie Tyler



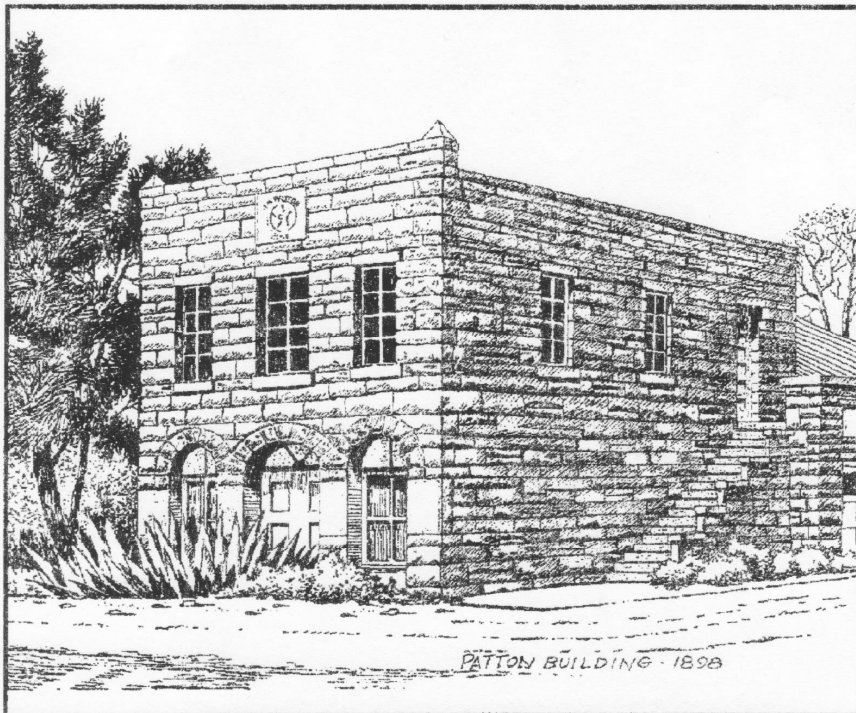


**Heinrich (Henry) Marx**  
(1854-1931)

**Henry was a Master Mason by trade from Germany.**

He came to Texas in 1882 to work on the original State Capitol Building, settled in the Oak Hill area, because of its abundance of limestone that he used for building material. When he first showed his wife, Eliza, the land he bought, he said, "This is where I will build you a Mansion". He quarried each stone, hoisted it on his wagon with pulleys, hauled it to the building site, chiseled it with his simple hand tools, hoisted it again, and laid each limestone one at a time, to build a beautiful home for his family, the original Oak Hill School, and this Historical Landmark.

**"The Old Rock Store" is a permanent display of Henry Marx's Exceptional Craftsmanship.**

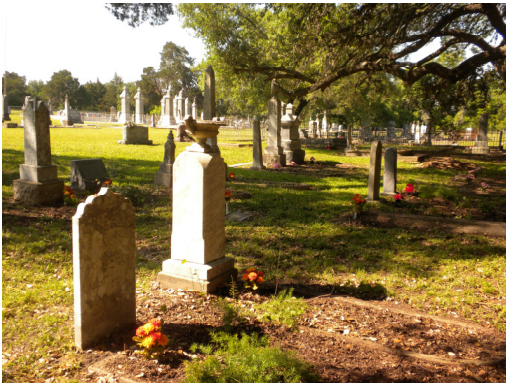


## The Old High Hill Cemetery

By Darlene Graf Quiring  
President, Old High Hill Cemetery Association

The Old High Hill Cemetery is located on the E. Anderson League approximately three miles northwest of Schulenburg on FM2672 in Fayette County, Texas. High Hill was really a combination of three communities: Blum Hill, Oldenburg, and Wursten.

The Old High Hill Cemetery is located in what was the community of Blum Hill. The original part of High Hill was named Blum Hill after Robert Blum (1804-1848), the German political activist who organized the Vaterlandsverein, advocated mass education, freedom of the press, and the right of free assembly. He was arrested and executed in Vienna. Blum was a tragic victim of Germany's Revolutions of 1848.



Oldenburg, a second village, named for the German province of Oldenburg, was established about one and one-half miles north of Blum Hill approximately 1860. St. Mary's Catholic Church is located in what was Oldenburg.

About the same time, the village of Wursten developed between Blum Hill and Oldenburg. Apparently it was named after the good sausage that could be purchased there at the Anders Butcher Shop.

The early German settlers of the area were John F. Hillje, Henry Graf, Henry Tauch, Friedrich G. Seydler, George Herder, F. Kleinemann, Charles Hinkel, William Fahrenthold, and Ludwig Eschenburg. Major landowners were the Hillje and Fahrenthold families in the Oldenburg area, with Henry Graf toward the northwest, and the Tauch and Seydler families toward the southwest.

The High Hill Post Office, established in 1860, united three adjacent villages and gave the community cemetery its name.

The Old High Hill Cemetery is on a six-acre tract which was once the property of George Herder (1818-1887), a German immigrant and a veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto. The land was originally conveyed by John Herndon, N. W. Faison, and Henry Ebeling for the purpose of erecting a schoolhouse or college.

Families who cherished the rolling hills of the High Hill countryside and its good farm land expressed the wish that it be their burial place when plans for the school did not materialize.

Following the tragic War Between the States and the Reconstruction Period, the High Hill community grew to include six stores, a cotton gin and gristmill, the first oil mill in Texas, two schools, three blacksmith and wheelwright shops, two saloons, a hotel and stage stop, as well as a community of dramatic players, a Turnverein, a Maennerchor and orchestra.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Texas Turnverein, begun as a gymnastic society, was often the center of community life with social, intellectual, and benevolent goals. The 1870s were the heyday of Turnvereins in Texas. "Turners" from Austin, San Antonio, New Braunfels and High Hill attended a Turnfest (gymnastic contest) and convention in San Antonio in 1871.

The Maennerchor was a German singing society in Texas to preserve German songs, music, and language. The choir and orchestra were in great demand at the state Saengerfest sponsored by German immigrant choral societies in Texas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 1870s, the thriving community of High Hill began its decline when the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroads built their line about three miles southeast and the town of Schulenburg was founded. Many of the High Hill people and businesses moved to the new town. High Hill had refused the railroad's offer fearing that the railroad would destroy the tranquility and culture of the town.







Many pioneers who developed the agricultural, business, and cultural pursuits of the community are buried in Old High Hill Cemetery. A few are:

- John Christian Baumgarten (1836-1912), who erected the first cottonseed oil mill in Texas for friend, John F. Hillje. John Christian Baumgarten worked diligently to have the railroad build through the area that would become Schulenburg and is recognized as "The Father of Schulenburg."
- Louis Schulenburg (1810-1887), after whom the town of Schulenburg is named.
- Friedrich Gustav Seydler (1806-1869), father of the first Wendish family to immigrate to Texas.
- Paul Stuercke, Sr. (1827-1902), professor and in charge of the public school for 30 years.

The oldest stones in the cemetery mark the graves of August Wolters and Friedrich Eicholt who died in 1861. The cemetery contains about 400 graves. Many of the old High Hill settlers buried there have living descendants who remained responsible for its upkeep for many years. Family members cared for the site until 1963, when the Old High Hill Cemetery Association, Inc. was organized.

**Submitted by Darlene Quiring, Sugarland  
Rodney Koenig, Houston**

## THE FIRST GERMAN TOWNS IN TEXAS

from The German Heritage in Texas ©2013 by Terry L. Smart

During the nineteenth century, German immigrants flooded into Texas and founded new settlements stretching from the Gulf Coast region to the Hill County and northward from there. Some of the first German settlements have remained small communities, but a few are now cities. Below are historical descriptions for some of the first towns founded by German immigrants.

The town of Industry in Austin County has the distinction of being the oldest of the permanent German settlements in Texas. It dates its founding to 1831, when Friedrich Ernst acquired a league of land in Stephen F. Austin's colony and subsequently laid out a town for German immigrants. Ernst advertised the sale of town lots at a low price that attracted newly-arrived Germans, many of whom landed at Galveston, then moved inland to Austin County. By the 1840s, Industry had a post office, a general store, a drug store, and a small hotel managed by Ernst's wife. Ernst and other German settlers at Industry and at nearby Cat Spring organized the *Teutonia Orden* (Teutonic Order) as a society to promote German fellowship and to preserve German culture. German Methodists at Industry organized a congregation in 1847 and built their first church a few years after the Civil War ended. In 1875, they established a cemetery adjacent to the church building. Edward Lindemann and Franz Getschmann opened a general store at Industry in 1884 that has remained in operation since then. Industry's population never was large. The 2010 U.S. Census reported it to be 304.

Cat Spring is another German settlement in Austin County that traces its origins back to the 1830s. It was founded in 1834. The name probably derived from the shooting of a bobcat (or perhaps a cougar) at a nearby stream by one of the early settlers. The first German families to settle at Cat Spring included the Amsler, Kleberg and von Roeder families. Other immigrants soon arrived from the Duchy of Oldenburg, the Kingdom of Prussia, and other German states. The Rev. Louis Cachand Ervendberg visited Cat Spring and organized a Protestant congregation whose members built a church and schoolhouse in the 1840s. In 1856, farmers organized the *Landwirtschaftlicher Verein für Austin County* (Agricultural Society of Austin County), which remains an active organization. Early members obtained seeds for crops and assisted fellow immigrants who lacked experience in farming or raising livestock. The first post office opened at Cat Spring in 1878. A spur line of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad line reached Cat Spring in the 1890s, and about that time its population may have peaked at 300 to 400. Cat Spring's population in 2010 was 200.

New Braunfels, the county seat of Comal County, had a population of 57,740 in 2010. The city was founded by Prince Karl of Solms-Braunfels and named for his ancestral castle in Germany (*Schloss Braunfels*). It was the first town in Texas established by the *Adelsverein*, a colonization society in Germany made up of members of the nobility. Acting

as the *Adelsverein's* agent, Prince Karl purchased more than 1,200 acres of land as the site for the society's first colony. The *Adelsverein's* colonists landed on the coast of Matagorda Bay, then traveled inland by ox cart and wagon, led by Nikolas Zink. They reached the site for the new town in March 1845. Zink directed the building of a stockade (the *Zinkenburg*) as protection against "Indian" tribes in the area who might be hostile. Prince Karl's headquarters building (*Sophienburg*) was named for his fiancée in Germany (Princess Sophia of Salm). Settlers soon organized Catholic and Protestant congregations. By the 1850s, the town had a *Schützenverein* (rifle club), an agricultural club (*Verein für Land und Gartenbau*), and a *Gesangverein* (singing society) known as *Germania*. A German language newspaper, the *Zeitung*, began publication in 1852. A dramatic society organized in 1854 performed more than thirty plays during its first four years. The town's *Turnverein* (athletic club) had a nine-pin bowling alley. The New Braunfels Academy, incorporated in 1858, was among the first tax-supported public schools in Texas. The Guadalupe Hotel (later the Schmitz Hotel) opened in 1858. The Krause Building, erected in 1860, became the Hoffman Opera House. J. Jahn began a business that manufactured furniture, and the Louis Henne Company produced handmade tin ware. A nursery at New Braunfels started by J.J. Locke may have been the first commercial nursery in the state. The Comal River provided a source of power for cotton gins, grist mills, and saw mills, and later for a hydroelectric plant. In 1846, the Texas Legislature created Comal County and made New Braunfels the county seat. The original courthouse built in 1860 was replaced by the present courthouse in 1898. Many German houses built in the nineteenth century have been preserved, including the *Fachwerk* home of botanist Ferdinand Lindheimer that dates from 1852.

Fredericksburg, the county seat of Gillespie County, had a population of 10,530 in the year 2010. It was the second colony in Texas established by the *Adelsverein*. The town site was selected by John Meusebach, a German nobleman who replaced Prince Karl of Solms-Braunfels as the *Adelsverein's* agent in Texas. The town's name was chosen to honor Prince Frederick of Hohenzollern, a member of Prussia's royal family. Fredericksburg's first settlers arrived by wagon train from New Braunfels in May 1846, escorted by a small group of *Adelsverein* troops. The colonists erected huts or tents for housing and set to work planting crops. In late 1846, settlers built an octagon-shaped building known as the *Vereins Kirche* (the Society's Church). It was used as a church building and also served as town hall, school and fortress. All the town's able-bodied males constituted a militia for protection against attacks by hostile "Indians." However, the danger of attack by Comanche tribes was removed by John Meusebach's seeking out the Comanche chiefs in 1847 and concluding a treaty with them. The arrival of U.S. troops in 1848 to establish Fort Martin Scott provided additional security for the new town. In the 1850s, Fredericksburg's population may have reached 750. The town had several churches, perhaps a dozen stores, a saw mill, a grist mill, and blacksmiths, wheelwrights and furniture makers. When Fredericksburg became the county seat of Gillespie County, its first courthouse was at the corner of Main and Crockett Streets. A two-room stone schoolhouse was built in 1856 with John Leyendecker as teacher. After the Civil War, a German newspaper (the Fredericksburg *Wochenblatt*) began publication, Townspeople organized a *Turnverein* (athletic club) with a gymnastics school and a bowling alley. They also organized a singing society known as the *Concordia*, and a *Schutzverein* (rifle club). The present Catholic, Lutheran, and Methodist churches at Fredericksburg trace their founding to the 1840s and 1850s.

Castell is a small community founded in 1847 on the Llano River by German immigrants from Fredericksburg. It is the only settlement to survive among five colonies the *Adelsverein* established along the Llano River. Castell's name was chosen to honor Count Karl Frederick Christian of Castell, a member of the *Adelsverein*. The *Adelsverein* provided start-up provisions for Castell's first settlers, who built log cabins for homes. Three years after its founding, the settlement probably had a population little more than thirty. These first settlers included a teacher, a carpenter, and a blacksmith. Twenty years later, the population still was small, but by then the settlement had a general store and its own post office. During the 1850s, German Methodist and Lutheran clergy from Fredericksburg regularly visited Castell to conduct religious services outdoors or in settlers' homes. After the Civil War, German Methodists erected a building to serve as a church and parsonage. In 1880, they began construction of the present Methodist church at Castell and established an adjacent cemetery. In the 1890s, German Lutherans built a church near Castell. In 2010 Castell's population was 72.

The town of Comfort in Kendall County was founded only a few months after the first German colonists reached the site of New Braunfels. Comfort was founded by German immigrant Ernst Hermann Altgelt. He was sent to Texas from Louisiana by his employer at New Orleans to survey land his employer had acquired. Altgelt decided to remain in Texas. He purchased about 1,000 acres of land north of San Antonio where he laid out lots for a new town he named Comfort. Altgelt recruited land buyers among the large German population at San Antonio and elsewhere. By December 1845, he had sold thirty town lots and eight houses had been built. Within another year, Comfort's population had grown to perhaps fifty or more German families. At that time, "Indian" raids still were a danger to the new town, so Altgelt obtained a brass cannon from New Braunfels as a means of sounding an alarm in case of attacks or other emergencies. When fired, the cannon could be heard by all Comfort's residents. In 1856, settlers built a one-room schoolhouse, and a post office opened with Theodore Goldbeck as the postmaster. For a short time, residents produced



a handwritten newspaper, *Der Bettelsack* (The Beggar's Bag). In 1860, they organized a *Turnverein* (athletic club). Its club building at 601 Walter Street included a bowling alley. By the start of the Civil War, so many university-educated Germans had settled at Comfort that it was known as a community of "Freethinkers," religious non-conformists, and political radicals opposed to slavery and secession. During the Civil War, a group of Germans opposed to the Confederacy had set out for Mexico in 1862. They were overtaken near the Nueces River in a surprise attack by Confederate troops and many were killed. The Confederates left the bodies unburied. After the Civil War ended, a group of men from Comfort rode to the site of the 1862 battle. The group returned to Comfort with the remains of the German dead. The remains were interred at Comfort and the *Treure der Union* (True to the Union) monument was erected to honor them. Comfort had a German male choir known as the *Liedertafel*, a German brass band, and a *Schutzenverein* (rifle club). Other organizations included a chamber of commerce, a volunteer fire department, an orchestra, a Parent-Teacher Association, literary societies, sewing clubs, and a Sons of Hermann lodge. The town had stores and saloons, as well as a hotel, opera house, livery stable, cotton gin, and a lumber yard established by the San Antonio company owned by German immigrant Ed Steves. There was no church at Comfort until 1891, when a Lutheran congregation was organized. The population of Comfort in the 2010 U.S. Census was 2,363.

Sisterdale was another early German settlement in Kendall County. Sisterdale was founded by Nicholas Zink, the German immigrant who played an important role in establishing New Braunfels. Zink left New Braunfels in 1847 and moved into Kendall County. The new settlement he founded there derived its name from its location in a dale between two parallel creeks known as the Sisters. A group of university-educated Germans soon followed Zink to the new community. These included Edward Degener, Adolf Douai, Ernst Kapp, Ottomar von Behr and others. Sisterdale became known as a "Latin Settlement." Germans used the term "Latin Settlement" to describe any group of *Lateiner* (university-educated intellectuals) because the study of Latin was at the core of university education in the nineteenth century. At Sisterdale the *Lateiner* sometimes gathered at the town's small log schoolhouse to discuss literature and politics. Some of them held unionist, anti-slavery, and abolitionist views, and they later became leaders of German opposition to secession. Sisterdale's first post office opened in 1851. After the Civil War, there was a shingle factory at Sisterdale, a cotton gin, a saw mill, a grocery store, and a dance hall. The town's population never was large and began to decline about 1900. In 2010, Sisterdale's population was 110.

About a year after Nicholas Zink founded Sisterdale in Kendall County, another German immigrant, Valentine Hoffman, moved from Austin County into Washington County, where he was founder of the small community of Berlin. Some of the other early settlers at Berlin were F. W. Schürenberg and Herman Knittel. Berlin was primarily a Lutheran community. The Rev. Johann G. Erbiner organized Eben-Ezer Lutheran Church about 1854 with a congregation of forty. The following year, members built a log cabin to serve as a church and a schoolhouse on eleven acres of land donated by Ludwig Lehmann. Lehmann also provided land for a cemetery. A school opened in 1855 with William Bohne, F.H. Elert, and F.F. Spreen as school trustees. After the Civil War, Hermann Knittle opened a general store, F.W. Schuand had a blacksmith shop, and the Lutheran settlers erected a new wood frame church building. Berlin has remained a small community since its founding. In 2010, the population was 40.

Yorktown was founded in 1848 by German immigrant Charles Eckhardt on land belonging to John York, an Anglo-American, and was named for York. The site Eckhardt selected for a new town was located along one of the routes followed by newly-arrived Germans moving inland from Matagorda Bay to New Braunfels. Eckhardt built Yorktown's first log cabin in 1848, and in 1850 he opened a general store. The first Germans to settle at Yorktown included C. G. Hartman, Peter Metz, and Andreas Strieber. About ten years after its founding, Yorktown had a school, a German band, a *Gesangverein* (singing society), and a theatrical club. A post office opened in 1871. By 1900, Yorktown's population was about 800. By then the town had an opera house, a newspaper, and perhaps fifty businesses including hotels, grocery stores, blacksmith shops, cotton gins, and saloons. German residents organized a Sons of Hermann lodge and several social clubs. The town expanded southward from its original location toward a branch of the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad built in 1886. Yorktown's population in 2010 was 2,092.

Frelsburg is a small community in Colorado County with a population of 75 in the last U.S. Census. The first German immigrant in the area was Friedrich Zimmerscheidt who probably arrived about 1834. Several years later, Frelsburg was founded by Peter Pieper, William Frels and his brother John Frels. The new town was named for William Frels. Some of the early townspeople came from the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg and the Duchy of Holstein. When German Lutherans organized a congregation (Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church), William Frels donated land for a church building, a parsonage, a school, and for a cemetery. German Catholics in the 1840s organized St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church and built their church on land donated by Peter Pieper. They also established a cemetery and later opened a school. Prior to the Civil War, Frelsburg had a post office, a blacksmith shop, and several stores. Cotton was a major crop on the surrounding farms, and following the Civil War the town had five cotton gins, as well as grist mills and a saw mill. There was a bakery, and a shoemaker's shop and a tailor. A two-story building for a secondary school to be named Hermann University was built at Frelsburg about 1869, but it later closed for financial reasons. In the 1870s, two

railroads were built across Colorado County. Unfortunately for Frelsburg, these two lines were laid to the north and south of Frelsburg, bypassing the town. Thereafter, the population dwindled as settlers moved closer to the railroads.

Boerne is a city with a population in 2010 of 10,471. It is the county seat of Kendall County. Boerne was founded by Germans and was named to honor Ludwig Boerne, a nineteenth century German poet, historian and political activist. In 1849, several members of an unsuccessful German settlement on the Llano River at Bettina acquired land near the present site of Boerne northwest of San Antonio where they hoped to establish a new community of university-educated colonists like that at Bettina. But after two years, they abandoned the settlement and sold their land to German-born Gustav Thiessen and John James, an Anglo-American. These two men laid out a town site and chose the name Boerne for it. German Catholic settlers organized a congregation in the 1850s and after the Civil War built the first St. Peter the Apostle Church. Boerne's post office opened in 1856. After Kendall County was created in 1862, Boerne became the county seat. Its courthouse was built in 1870 (and is still in use). By the 1880s, the town's German residents had a singing society (the *Boerne Gesangverein*) and a German band (the Boerne Village Band) founded by Karl Degner. (In recent years, it was among the oldest active German bands in the United States.) The town grew quickly. A large part of its population remained German. Boerne schools offered instruction in both German and English until World War II.

High Hill in Fayette County was founded by Germans in the 1840s, but it was not first known by that name. The earliest arrivals included Protestants from the Kingdom of Prussia and Catholics from Moravia in the Habsburg (Austrian) Empire. These established three small rural communities known as Blum Hill, Oldenburg and Wursten. When the area's first post office opened, postal authorities referred to all three communities as High Hill, and the name stuck. After the Civil War, High Hill had schools, a general store, a grist mill and a cotton gin. Settlers organized a *Turnverein* (gymnastics club), a German men's choir, an orchestra, and a dramatic society. German Catholics founded St. Mary's Parish and in 1875 erected a wood frame church and opened a parochial school staffed by nuns of the Congregation of Divine Providence. By the 1880s, there were several stores at High Hill along with a small hotel, a brewery, and blacksmiths and wheelwrights. A community cemetery was established on six acres of George Herder's land. High Hill's population reportedly peaked in the 1880s. However, it began to decline later after the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad bypassed High Hill and built its line through Schulenburg. As a result, some of High Hill's residents relocated at Schulenburg. In the year 2010, High Hill's population was 176.

Meyersville is located in DeWitt County. It was founded in the 1840s by Peter Bluntzer and other German immigrants. They named the new settlement for Adolph Meyer, one of the early settlers. By 1851, the community had grown to more than twenty families. German Lutherans organized St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church. A log cabin served them as a schoolhouse and church until 1867, when the congregation erected a limestone church building. They later established a cemetery on land donated by the Thieme Family. German Catholics organized St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church and in 1859 built a wood frame building as their church. It was replaced in 1880 by a larger structure. The end of the Civil War in 1865 brought an outbreak of lawlessness in DeWitt County that forced Meyersville's settlers to organize an armed militia (known as a posse) for the protection of homes and stores against roving bands of marauders. After law and order were restored, the town grew to include a cotton gin, a grist mill, grocery stores, a small mattress factory, a saddlery, a blacksmith shop, and a brewery. Germans on the north side of the 12-Mile Coletto Creek called their settlement Lower Meyersville, and the German settlement on the south side of the creek was known as Upper Meyersville. Eventually the two merged as Meyersville. Meyersville's population in 2010 was 110.

Millheim is a town in Austin County founded by Germans about 1846. The earliest arrivals settled on lands near a mill on Clear Creek. Wilhelm Schneider reportedly suggested *Muehlheim* (Home of the Mill) as the new community's name. This name later was anglicized as Millheim. After the Civil War, Millheim had a dance hall, a post office, a brewery, a bowling alley, and a *Gesangverein* (singing society). In 1872, residents organized the *Milheim Harmonie Verein* (Millheim Harmony Society) as a German social club. Club members built a hall used for dances and other community activities including school plays, club barbeques, and *Maifest* celebrations. Millheim's population in 2010 was 170.

New Ulm is a town in Austin County founded by German immigrants who arrived in the area during the 1840s. The new settlement did not get its present name until its first post office opened in 1872. At that time, Lorenz Mueller reportedly selected the name New Ulm to honor the city of Ulm in the German Kingdom of Württemberg. The town grew steadily. By the time of the Civil War, New Ulm had six stores, five blacksmith shops, three breweries, and a small factory making cigars from locally grown tobacco. Townspeople organized a *Schützenverein* (rifle club) and a *Turnverein* (athletic club). German Lutherans organized a congregation (St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church) in 1867 and built their first church that same year. By the 1890s, New Ulm had a schoolhouse and new businesses that included a small hotel, shoemakers, and tailors. The town's population in 2010 was 974.

Shelby is another community in Austin County that dates back to the 1840s. Shelby's German founders included the Vanderwerth, Ohlendorf, Rothermel, and von Roeder Families. The early arrivals settled on lands near a grist mill operated by Otto von Roeder. Their community was first known as *Roedersmuehle* (von Roeder's Mill). But this name was changed to Shelby when the first post office opened in 1846. The new name honored the postmaster David Shelby,

the first Anglo-American in the area. Prior to the Civil War, Shelby's settlers opened a school and organized an agricultural society (*Landwirtschaftlicher Verein*). After the Civil War, a *Gesangverein* (singing society) adopted the name *Harmonie Verein* (the Harmony Society). Its member built a large hall (Harmonie Hall) used for dances and other community activities. The hall, built in 1883, is still in use. By 1900, the town had churches, a hotel, general stores, saloons, and a drug store. There also were blacksmiths, saddle-makers, and physicians. Shelby's population in 2010 was 300.

In 2010, the town of Welcome in northwest Austin County had a population of 300. The town was founded by German immigrants during the 1840s. Some the first settlers were immigrants from the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg. One of these, J. F. Schmidt, reportedly selected the name Welcome for the community, perhaps to encourage immigrants to settle there. A group of about forty German Lutherans organized a congregation (Salem Lutheran Church) and in 1868 built a church on land donated by Henry Schmidt. This was the first church at Welcome. The town later opened a school and residents founded a German male choir, the *Welcome Männerchor* whose members built a hall (*Halle des Welcome Maennerchor*) in 1899 to serve the choir as a concert hall. It remains in use for a variety of community activities.

Submitted by Terry Smart, San Antonio

## Solar firm: The future is bright in S.A.

By Vicki Vaughan, Staff Writer

*San Antonio Express-News*, April 1, 2014

San Antonio gained a new corporate citizen Monday when a German-based maker of electrical equipment said its San Antonio manufacturing center will become its head- quarters for the Americas.

KACO new energy GmbH is the latest company to establish a base in San Antonio as part of CPS Energy's strategy to lure energy suppliers to the city.

KACO has a deal to make utility-scale solar inverters for OCI Solar Power. Last year, CPS inked a deal to buy electricity from five solar plants owned and operated by OCI.

The company's inverters are designed to maximize the efficiency and reliability of power flowing from the solar plants.

Jurgen Krehnke, CEO of KACO North America, drew applause from CPS Energy's board of trustees when he outlined the company's plans at the utility's monthly meeting Monday.

"We have decided to relocate the factory to San Antonio," Krehnke said. The company said it has about 30 employees now and wants to hire about 20 to 25 new employees immediately.

By year's end, KACO plans to employ about 70 at the San Antonio plant, Krehnke said. They'll be responsible for a range of functions, including manufacturing, finance, distribution, procurement and customer service.

KACO will close its facility in, the northern California town of Grass Valley, which was its headquarters for the Americas, Krehnke said.

Germany-based KACO is the world's third-largest maker of inverters and has manufacturing sites on three continents, Krehnke told the CPS board.

As part of what CPS Energy calls its "new energy economy," the city owned utility will buy 400 megawatts of solar electricity from OCI Solar Power to be generated by five solar plants.

Alamo 1, the first solar plant, began producing 41 megawatts of solar power in November. All of the solar plants are scheduled to be completed by 2016.

A megawatt can power 200 houses on the hottest days when air conditioners are running and about 500 homes during average conditions.

KACO plans to serve customers in the United States, Canada and Mexico, Krehnke said. While KACO makes inverters for residential, commercial and utility- scale users, for now it's only making large-scale inverters in San Antonio for OCI.

It said it plans to add production lines to make residential inverters at the San Antonio plant, but not as part of the CPS/OCI deal.

*vvaughan@express-news.net*

Submitted by Angelina Kretzschmar, San Antonio

# Bethlehem Lutheran Church—Round Top

BY GESINE (TSCHIEDEL) KOETHER, *Fayette County Record*, April 1, 2014

Just like many of us in Fayette County we have parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc. who were baptized, confirmed, married and buried here in Fayette County. Being proud of my roots and fortunate enough to have some of my ancestors' baptism, confirmation and marriage certificates from Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Round Top, it made me wonder just why, how and when did Bethlehem Lutheran Church begin.

With the help of the book "Our God is **Footprints** **Of Fayette** Marching On", a centennial history of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church written in the 1960s by Reverend Martin H. Obst, John G. Banik and other contributors, many of my questions were answered. The Lutheran Church is the oldest Protestant Christian tradition, dating back to the Protestant Reformation and the person, Martin Luther, whose childhood, university studies and time as an Augustinian monk were spent searching for religious understanding. He believed that he found enough problems in the world and church to make significant changes. Rebellious against many of the rules made by the authorities, he nailed the 95 Theses to the Castle Church in 1517, resulting in some strong reactions and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. This movement, which spread, believed in recognizing the rights of individuals to follow their own personal convictions.

By the early 1800s, many Germans became restless with the lack of opportunity to make a decent living, that they had no voice in choosing the men who governed them and with the constant quarrels between the rulers requiring military service that took the lives of their sons. All of these concerns, as well as the advance of education and belief that Americans had declared that all men are free and equal, helped many families including Friederich Ernst to board ships from Germany heading for America - "the land of milk and honey". In the early 1830s, Friederich Ernst, his wife and ten-year old daughter arrived in America and settled in Industry, Texas. They are believed to be some of the first Lutherans, but it is difficult to say just who, when and where the first Lutherans settled. What we do know is that Friederich Ernst did write letters inviting other Germans to come and many did. The settlements spread up Mill Creek and over the divide to the Cummins Creek watershed. Letters from other families and friends in this land must have inspired a strong faith in those willing to risk everything to head to this new place to live.

Immigrants came from many places in Europe,



Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Round Top in the early 20th century. Photo courtesy of Paula Heinsohn

but Stephen F. Austin was known to have encouraged the Germans and Swiss to come. Many of these settled in the Round Top area once called Townsend. It is believed that as early as 1855 early Lutheran pastors started organizing the Lutherans in Roundtop. We know that Carl Siegismund Bauer (1792-1873) from Annaberg Sachsen, Germany planned and directed the building of the Bethlehem church with the help of his two sons, Carl Ehrgott Bauer (1828-1869) and Carl Traugott Bauer (1830-1869), and son-in-law Conrad Schueddemagen (1811-1900). In fact, Conrad and Wilhelmine Schueddemagen's house was also planned and built by the Carl Bauer.

The history of Bethlehem Lutheran Church begins with Conrad and Wilhelmine Schueddemagen selling both the land for the church and the cemetery to the church's congregation in 1865. The native limestone used to build the church cost \$2400 and was covered by free will offerings and paid off in only a few years. Many items were donated such as a heater, altar covering, pulpit and bells. It took two men to ring both the little and large bells at the same time for services. They were also rung when a member of the congregation died. Locally grown cedar was used to hand build the pipe organ in the balcony, which was donated by Traugott Wandke. There are 408 pipes and 51 keys. It was dedicated in 1867 and is still being played at church services and other special occasions, although the foot pump has been replaced by an electronic blower.

The church was dedicated October 28, 1866 and continues with an active congregation. This article just scratches the surface of all the dedication and hard work it took to make Bethlehem the church it is today. So many pastors, families, members and others contributed so much to make this church a success. It is nice to continue what my ancestors started back in 1848 with their settling in Fayette County, Texas. My search will continue for other evidence of what Fayette County and I have in common and hope to let you know what I find.

Submitted by Rodney Koenig, Houston



# People

## Comanche Nation Powwow no longer at Fort Martin Scott in Fredericksburg!

On 3/22/14 a powwow was held at the Comanche Nation headquarters in Lawton, OK, to raise awareness of the fact that a powwow could no longer be held at Fort Martin Scott at Fredericksburg to honor the 1847 Meusebach/Comanche Treaty. Organizers of the powwow were attempting to build support to have the powwow once again held at Fredericksburg. An online petition was developed to that end – [www.honorthetreaty.org](http://www.honorthetreaty.org). A 9/11/13 article in the TX Observer – “Fort in the Road” - [www.texasobserver.org/fort-road](http://www.texasobserver.org/fort-road) - discusses the controversy. As a member of the Wichita Falls German club I attended the powwow at the invitation of Brian Hasse, a fellow member. A descendant of MN German immigrants and adopted member of the Lakota Nation, Brian is an active powwow participant and participated in the powwow. After meeting the powwow organizer who announced that I was a member of GTHS, I was introduced to Betty Crocker who is a descendant of Gottlieb Fischer. His son, Rudi, along with Herman Lehmann, was captured by Apaches in 1870 in Loyal Valley then traded to Comanches. An aunt of mine who married into the family was formerly a Rabke and also a descendant of Gottlieb Fischer meaning Mrs. Crocker and I are distant relatives by marriage. According to her, Herman and Rudi married Comanche sisters.

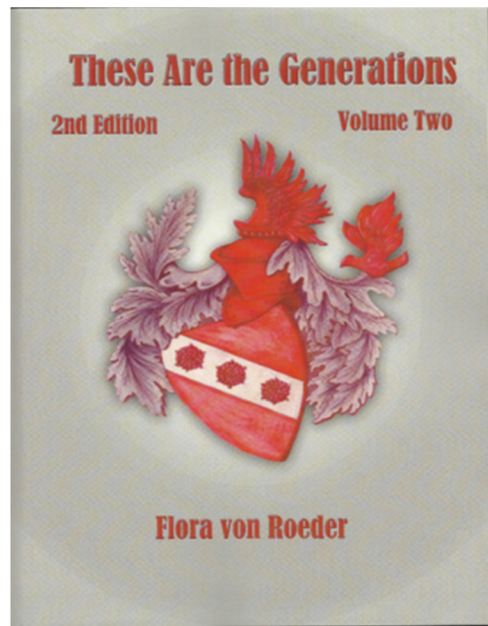
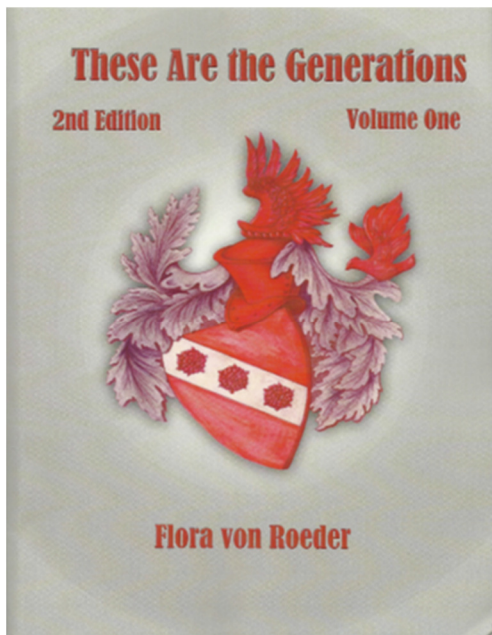
Pictured are Eddie Wolsch, GTHS member, Brian Hasse, Wallace Coffee, Chairman of the Comanche Nation, Klaus-Jochen Guhlcke, Consul General of the German Consulate in Houston, and Larry McCurtain, coordinator of the powwow.



Brian Hasse, Wichita Falls German club member and adopted Lakota tribe member, in full powwow regalia ready to dance at the Comanche Nation powwow at Lawton, OK, commemorating the Meusebach treaty.



Submitted by Eddie Wolsch, Seymour



### **(A Biography of the von Roeder Family And Its Role in Texas History)**

With a history that extends back to the 13th century, a segment of the von Roeder dynasty of Harzgerode and Hoym in the Harz Mountains of Saxon-Anhalt, Germany, was replanted in Texas in 1834 with the arrival of Lt. Anton Ludwig Sigismund von Roeder, his wife, born Caroline Louise Sack, and his large family of children. They founded the little settlement of Cat Spring in Stephen F. Austin's colony and, from there, spread to neighboring counties. They participated in the Texas Revolution and the development of the new republic. They were enthusiastic supporters of statehood and not so enthusiastic about secession from the Union but remained loyal citizens for the most part.

Of the original ten immigrant von Roeder offspring, eight have descendants to the present living in most of the U.S. states, Australia, Canada, Mexico, France, Germany, and Hong Kong. Succeeding generations have played important roles in architecture and art, business, education, engineering, farming and ranching, government, journalism, law, medicine, music, publishing, etc., and many of these succeeding generations retain some of the well known names of the early generations: Binz, Cornelius, Dahlman, Dross, Eckhardt, Engelking, Flato, Gresser, Hill, Hoff, Hughes, Kleberg, Regenbrecht, Riedner, Viebig, Wisian, Wundt, and, of course, in variations von Roeder, Roeder (w.o. the "von"), von Raeder, von Rader.

A collection of more than 250 photographs dispersed throughout the work enhances these biographies, giving the reader an idea who, from his/her past, he/she might resemble.

706 pages of narrative in two volumes preceded by "Contents" and followed by "Indexes" in each volume.  
Place your order to: Amazon.com    Volume I - \$30.00    Volume II - \$25.00    Plus Tax and Shipping

**Submitted by Flora von Roeder, Houston**



# German Engineering

*Austin Couple Buying Up  
Local Properties With Plans  
for German Restaurant,  
Biergarten & Wine Shop*

**By H.H. HOWZE**

*The Fayette County Record, February 11, 2014*

La Grange is getting its own version of Austin's historic Scholz Garten - a place to enjoy German food, beer and wine inside or outside under the trees - and some of that wine will be made in Fayette County.

The entrepreneurs and prospective proprietors are Sven and Lori Mesecke, who have purchased and are renovating two historic La Grange houses on the same block - one to live in and one to house the restaurant/beer garden, in addition to a commercial property on Colorado Street which will serve as a winery. They hope to be in business sometime this year.

The two are still engaged in successful business careers in Austin - Sven is co-founder and VP of Nitero, a wi-fi innovation lab and Lori is president of Nereus, a tech-industry public relations company. "We hit 40 and began thinking about what to do with our lives - a strategy for second careers," Sven said Thursday. "After we looked at the properties, we asked each other, 'Are we going to do it?' and decided 'Let's do it.'"

The couple has been living in Sven's mother's guest house in La Grange for about a year and will stay there until their home on the corner of Main and Fannin Streets is ready.

"We love it here:" Lori said over coffee at the Latte on the Square. She and Sven still travel related to their jobs, but spend as much time as possible in town supervising their local projects. Their 40-acre property near Hostyn will be the location of the Bluff Winery vineyard. "The trellises are going up, but grapes are a cash crop in Texas— there's no surplus and there is a shortage of root stock. We need babies to get started," Sven said. He has enough stock on hand for five acres of vines, but if he can find more, he may double the initial acreage.

His father, who owned a steel company in Houston, bought the vineyard location when Sven was in high school. Sven spent time there and got attached to the rural serenity. (He subsequently went to college at Texas A&M in College Station.)

The actual winery, complete with tasting room and performance space, will be in the 3,000 sq. ft. building at 730 E. Colorado which is under extensive renovation with the help of an architect.



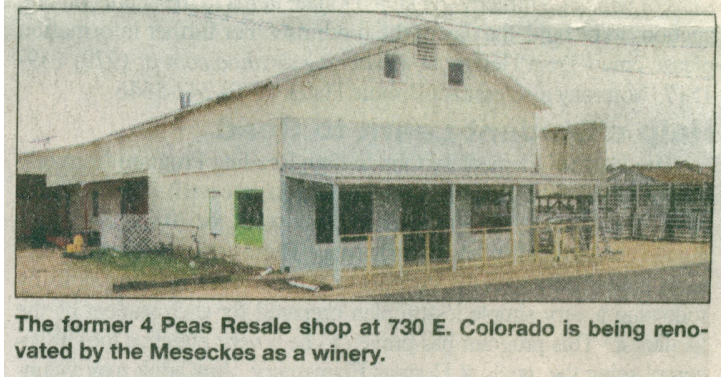
**Angel Martinez of Paige is shown here in front of the historic house at 443 N. Washington in downtown La Grange he is helping to renovate, which is set to become a new German themed restaurant with an exterior biergarten.**

*Photos by H.H. Howze*

Sven's eyes light up when he talks about it. "We'll have all kinds of music, I'll be able to control the lights with my phone. It will be state-of-the-art."



**Sven and Lori Mesecke have also bought this historic home at 256 W. Fannin and are renovating it to live in. It's on the same block as their new restaurant.**



**The former 4 Peas Resale shop at 730 E. Colorado is being renovated by the Meseckes as a winery.**

**Submitted by Rodney Koenig, Houston**



# The von Rosenberg Family of Texas



## NEWSLETTER



SPRING/SUMMER ISSUE      APRIL 19, 2014

### 2014 REUNION - JULY 18-20, 2014 AT CAMP LONE STAR IN LA GRANGE, TEXAS

Greetings Family! The 73rd annual reunion of the von Rosenberg Family of Texas will again be happening this coming Summer on July 18th through July 20th. As was agreed to by the family at last year's reunion, we will again be meeting at Camp Lone Star just outside La Grange, Texas. A registration form for those of you who wish to attend can be found at the back of this newsletter. Please plan on attending, as we want and encourage as many of our fellow von Rosenberg relations to come and enjoy the festivities.

### NEW FAMILY WEBSITE UPDATED

Did you know that the new von Rosenberg Family of Texas website ([www.vonrosenberg-family.org](http://www.vonrosenberg-family.org)) has been updated to include all known past newsletters as well as a new online interactive family tree?

Our most recent Past-President, Neale Rabensburg, had compiled almost all the past newsletters sent out by the Family Association over the past seventy-five years, and this Spring, JT Koenig, our current President scanned all of those past newsletters and with the aid of our Branch V co-historian, Robert Barritt, uploaded all of these documents to the family website. Why is this important? Because valuable and interesting data can be gleaned from these past newsletters.

Case in point; JT Koenig recently was contacted by a Mr. Klaus Besemann, who insisted that he was a member of the family, however JT could not figure out how he was related and Mr. Besemann did not know the exact relationship. He did however know for certain that his father, Eberhard Franz Besemann, had visited the family reunions in the 1990s, and that somehow the Besemanns were related to the von Rosenbergs. Using this scant information, JT reviewed the past newsletters and found in the June 1991 edition, where it was mentioned that Eberhard Besemann had attended the 1990 reunion, as well as others prior to that date, and that he was from the Froelich family. This snippet of information steered JT to look at the old *Familie Froelich* book by Reinhold Froelich, wherein he found the connection! Klaus is indeed related to the von Rosenbergs; by blood to those descended from Peter Carl and his first wife, Johanna Froelich, and by marriage to those who are descended from Peter Carl's second wife, Amanda Fallier. His lineage is now listed in the online tree; Klaus Besemann > Eberhard Franz Besemann (1923-2003) > Franz Otto Gustav Besemann (1894-1977) > Lina Anna Elvira Froelich (1857-?) married Franz Karl Gustav Besemann > Heinrich Gustav Victor Froelich (1813-1878) > George Froelich (1772-1816) brother to Christoph Froelich, Jr. (Johanna Froelich's father). Check the newsletters out and see what you discover!

### FAMILY OFFICERS 2014-2015:

#### President

Jon Todd "JT" Koenig  
(Branch IV - Carl Eugen)  
[jtkoenig@yahoo.com](mailto:jtkoenig@yahoo.com)

#### Vice-President

Gloria Miele  
(Branch VII - Carl Walter)  
[gymiele@gmail.com](mailto:gymiele@gmail.com)

#### Secretary

Pati Dukett  
(Branch V - Amanda Caroline)  
[patizue17@gmail.com](mailto:patizue17@gmail.com)

#### Treasurer

Darlyn Cartwright  
(Branch VII - Carl Walter)  
[darlyncartwright@gmail.com](mailto:darlyncartwright@gmail.com)

#### Family Historian Chairperson

Jon Todd "JT" Koenig  
(Branch IV - Carl Eugen)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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FAMILY NEWS / BIRTHS / HONORS / MESSAGES	6
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## NEW FAMILY WEBSITE UPDATED, CONTINUED

As mentioned on the previous page, the family website also now has a fully functioning online family tree, which can be reached directly from the website. This resource will allow anyone with internet access to be able to explore their von Rosenberg ancestry and, as there are currently no plans to publish an updated genealogy book (the last one was published in 2001 and is current only up through 1999), this online tree will serve as the repository of family additions since that time (as well as for anyone who was missed or was incorrectly reflected in the 2001 publication). All one has to do is contact one of the administrators of the website (JT Koenig, Gloria Miele or Robert Barritt) via the contact button therein and request access via log-in (so as to see living people). Without this log-in access, you will be limited to seeing only deceased individuals. You can also contact any one of these three people to have information about you or your family updated. Several of you have already done so.

The hope is to also add the past reunion minutes to the website, as these too have a great deal of valuable and informative data which members of the family may find interesting. Look for these in the coming months.



**The von Rosenberg Family** Descendants of Peter Carl Johann von Rosenberg  
[Historical Society](#) [Family Tree](#) [Annual Reunion](#) [Newsletters](#) [Home Page](#)

A nearly complete collection of Reunion newsletters is posted here. Please note that some reunion years had only one newsletter while others had two.

[73rd Reunion Nov 2013.pdf](#)  
[72nd Reunion May 2013.pdf](#)  
[72nd Reunion Dec 2012.pdf](#)  
[71st Reunion Apr 2012.pdf](#)  
[71st Reunion Nov 2011.pdf](#)  
[70th Reunion Apr 2011.pdf](#)  
[70th Reunion Dec 2010.pdf](#)  
[68th Reunion May 2010.pdf](#)  
[68th Reunion Dec 2009.pdf](#)  
[68th Reunion May 2009.pdf](#)  
[68th Reunion Nov 2008.pdf](#)  
[67th Reunion May 2008.pdf](#)  
[67th Reunion Nov 2007.pdf](#)

## The von Rosenberg Family Genealogy Pages

◀ PEDIGREE CHART    ▶ PHOTOS & HISTORIES

LOG OUT	What's New	Statistics	Dates and Anniversaries
Photos	Histories	Cemeteries	Places
Documents	All Media	Headstones	Albums
Reports	Sources	Bookmarks	Contact Us
Most Wanted	Repositories	Access Log	Administration

SEARCH:

First Name:

Advanced Search

Last Name:

Surnames



[Change Language](#)

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## UNDISCOVERED GEMS ABOUND IN UNEXCEPTED PLACES

Did you know that our family's history could be lurking just under your nose and you didn't even know it! That's what recently happened to President, JT Koenig, when he was visiting his local history center in his hometown of Austin. On a visit he made to the Austin History Center he was making to research some matter for his role as Board member of the Texas German Heritage Society he came across a number of listings for von Rosenbergs. Knowing that numerous members of Branch I (Carl Wilhelm) had made Austin their home, he asked to see the files for these listings wherein he found file after file and box after box of original von Rosenberg letters, photographs, notebooks, journals and drawings, some of which are shown below.

This discovery got him thinking about what else might be out there that has been forgotten about, and as he suspected there is quite a lot of information and history to be found if you just know where to look for it. Some of the places which currently hold von Rosenberg and related family data are:

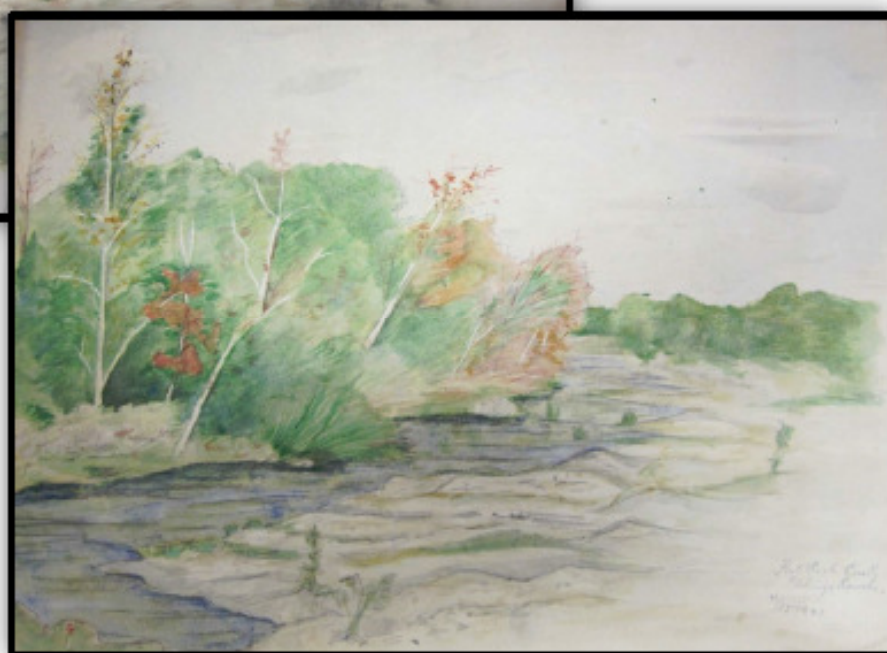
- **Fayette Heritage Museum & Archives** located at 855 S. Jefferson St., La Grange, Texas 78945; this is the "designated" repository for the von Rosenberg Family of Texas, and is where it is planned the remaining artifacts and documents will go.
- **Austin History Center** located at 810 Guadalupe St., Austin, Texas 78701; holds a great deal of data, ephemera and photographs mainly from Branch I.
- **Texas Collection Library at Baylor University** located at the Carroll Library Building on the Baylor Campus, Waco, Texas 76798; holds a mint condition copy of the *Familie Froelich* book.
- **Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas** located at 2300 Red River St., Austin, Texas 78712; holds numerous files and collections relating to the von Rosenberg and allied families including the letters used and transcribed by Biesele.
- **German Texas Heritage Society** located at 507 East 10th St., Austin, Texas 78768; holds a tatty copy of *Familie Froelich*, as well as numerous books and records regarding the von Rosenberg and allied families.
- **Institute of Texan Cultures** located at 801 César E. Chavez Blvd, San Antonio, TX 78233
- **Clayton Library Center** located at 5300 Caroline St, Houston, TX 77004
- **Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** located at 35 NW Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84101; holds numerous records including church and family tree records from past centuries
- **Deutsch-Baltische Genealogische Gesellschaft e.V. (DBGG)** located at Herdweg 79, D-64285 Darmstadt, Germany; holds files on many allied noble families including von Stempel, Froelich as well as von Rosenberg data.
- **Herder-Institut e.V.** located at Gisonenweg 5, 35037 Marburg, Germany; holds records relating to the family from the medieval period



Picture of Carl Wilhelm von Rosenberg's journal and notebook dated 1836 in which he wrote poems and prayers. This was found in the collection at the Austin History Center.



### UNDISCOVERED GEMS ABOUND IN UNEXCEPTED PLACES, CONTINUED



Watercolor Paintings by Walter Wupperman, husband to Else von Rosenberg of Branch I (Carl Wilhelm) showing scenes from Germany (Top) and Texas (Bottom) found in the Wupperman Collection at the Briscoe Center.



Hugo, Paul and Robert Hornberger, sons of Anna von Rosenberg Hornberger and William Christian Hornberger, from Branch In (Carl Wilhelm) found in an album of pictures in the Hornberger collection at the Austin History Center, along with numerous other photographs.

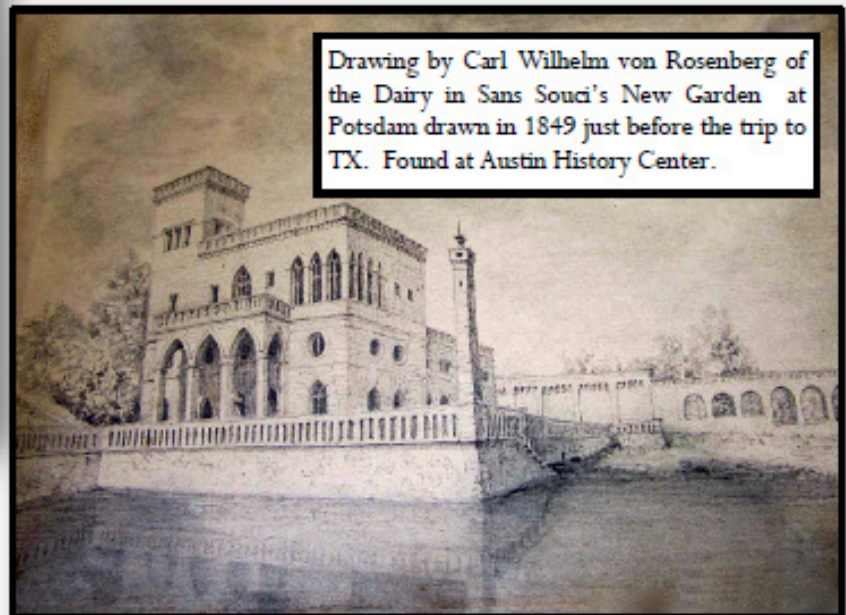
### UNDISCOVERED GEMS AROUND IN UNEXCEPTED PLACES, CONTINUED



Painted drawings by Peter Carl's first wife, Johanna Dorothea Froelich (1797-1826) in her autograph notebook which was brought to Texas in 1849. It was found in the family collection at the Fayette Heritage Museum & Archives



Froelich Family Wappen (Coat of Arms) also found in the vRFoT Collection at the Fayette Archives







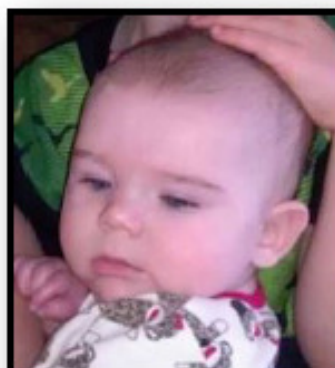
## *The von Rosenberg Family of Texas*



### Family Notices

#### BIRTH NOTICES

- JASE HAMENDE son of Scott Hamende, Jr. and Danielle Leigh von Rosenberg, born 6 Aug 2013 in Granger, Williamson County, Texas — Branch VII [Jase Hamende > Danielle von Rosenberg > Alvin Michael von Rosenberg > Alvin Walter von Rosenberg > Walter Albert von Rosenberg > Carl Walter von Rosenberg > Peter Carl]
- ALARIC REX WILSON son of Fredrick Bernard Wilson, III and Luciana Lucio, born 28 May 2013 — Branch VII [ Alaric Rex Wilson > Fredrick Wilson, III > Shena Louise von Rosenberg > Alvin Walter von Rosenberg > Walter Albert von Rosenberg > Carl Walter von Rosenberg > Peter Carl]



#### MESSAGES

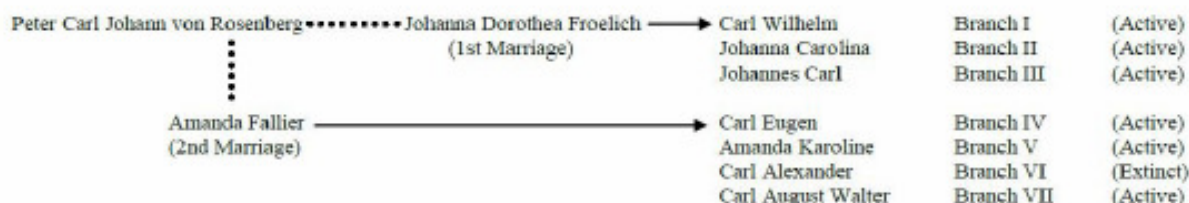
A Karen Harrison is trying to contact Jean von Rosenberg. Ms. Harrison contacted the vRfOT via Facebook through her friend Valerie Knuettel. She has lost Jean's contact information and wishes for Jean to call her, however she is legally blind and cannot find or track down Jean's contact information. It is believed that Jean is in fact Jean Ward von Rosenberg, wife of Edgar and mother to Kirk von Rosenberg. If you have her contact information, please provide this to JT Koenig who will pass it on to Ms. Harrison.

#### AWARDS & HONORS



- Justin James Peters has been accepted into and is attending Texas A&M's nuclear engineering program which only accepts roughly 200 applicants per semester. Branch V [Justin Peters > Pamela Meerscheidt > Phil Meerscheidt > Alexander Otto Meerschiedt > Paul Meerscheidt > Lina von Rosenberg > Peter Carl]
- Albert Karl von Rosenberg has been honored with the Department of the Interior's Superior Service Award for his outstanding contributions to the development, preservation, and protection of the resources of the National Park Service. Karl serves as the program manager for the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration program at the Denver Service Center. Branch IV [Karl von Rosenberg > Albert Lee von Rosenberg > Albert Friedrich von Rosenberg > Alex Eugen von Rosenberg > Carl Eugen von Rosenberg > Peter Carl]

## Deep Roots and Strong Branches of The von Rosenberg Family of Texas



### BRANCH HISTORIANS

#### CHILDREN OF PETER CARL JOHANN VON ROSENBERG & JOHANNA DOROTHEA FROELICH

- Carl Hermann von Rosenberg (line extinct 1827)
- Branch I: Carl Wilhelm von Rosenberg & Auguste Franziska Anders  
Historian, [Arthur von Rosenberg](#)
- Branch II: Johanna Carolina von Rosenberg & Herman Gustav Hellmuth  
Historian, [need volunteer](#)
- Branch III: Johannes Carl (Charley) von Rosenberg & Julie Wilhelmine Gross  
Historian, [Dr. Derrick Pined](#)

#### Children of Peter Carl Johann von Rosenberg & Amanda Henriette Louise Fallier

- Branch IV: Carl Eugen von Rosenberg & Theodora Anna Henriette Sack  
Co-Historian, [Billie Beth Baker](#)  
Co-Historian, [JT Koenig](#)
- Branch V: Amanda Caroline von Rosenberg & Arthur Carl Meerscheidt  
Co-Historian, [Robert Barritt](#)  
Co-Historian, [Neale Babenhurg](#)
- Branch VI: Carl Alexander von Rosenberg (line extinct 1864)  
Historian, [Neale Babenhurg](#)
- Branch VII: Carl Walter von Rosenberg & Franziska Elisabeth Spengler (Sörgel)  
co-Historian, [Art Green](#)  
Co-Historian, [Gloria Maule](#)
- Branch VIII: Charlotte Wilhelmine Libussa Froelich & Herman Gustav Hellmuth  
Historian, [need volunteer](#)
- Carl Friederich Wilhelm von Rosenberg (Line Extinct 1844)

#### Historians Emeritus:

[Arthur von Rosenberg](#) (Branch I)  
[Ray von Rosenberg](#) (Branch VII)  
[Ann Barnes](#) (Branch I)

### WEDDINGS

- PAMELA ANN PETERS nee MEERSCHIEDT, daughter of Philip Alexander "Phil" Meerscheidt and Fredia Bell Green, married Paul Ciaramitaro on Lake Conroe, Texas on 14 Dec 2013—Branch V [Pam Meerscheidt > Phil Meerscheidt > Alexander Otto Meerscheidt > Paul Meerscheidt > Amanda Caroline von Rosenberg > Peter Carl]



### AWARDS & HONORS, CONT'D

- KYLE RAYMOND WALKER, son of Mike Walker and Shirley Marie von Rosenberg, graduated with a BA in Science Industrial Distribution from Texas A&M in August, 2013 — Branch VII [Kyle Walker > Shirley von Rosenberg > Alvin Walter von Rosenberg > Walter Albert von Rosenberg > Carl Walter von Rosenberg > Peter Carl]

### PASSINGS

- DOROTHY LOIS TRIPANIER nee ADAMS, daughter of Aleck Adams and Tennie McCoy, passed away 21 Feb 2014 in Temple, Texas at the age of 91. Ms. Tripanier is survived by her husband, Arthur Tripanier. She was born 25 Sep 1922 in Prescott, AZ — Branch IV [Dorothy Adams > Aleck Adams > Eugenia Concordia von Rosenberg > Carl Eugen von Rosenberg > Peter Carl]



# The von Rosenberg Family of Texas

## Gifts that Keep on Giving!!!



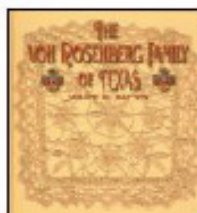
*"Books are eternal, but T-Shirts are nice too."*



**The von Rosenberg Family of Texas, 1949**  
\$5.00 plus shipping



**The von Rosenberg Family Record, 1974 Volume II**  
\$13.50 plus shipping



**The von Rosenberg Family Of Texas, 1999 Volume III**  
\$25.00 plus shipping



**Von Rosenberg Family of Texas Cookbook, 1993**  
\$14.95 plus shipping



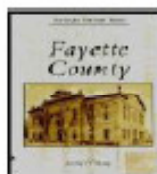
**Ancestral Voices, The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families (1844-1897), 1978**  
\$25.00 plus shipping



**Emigration of the von Rosenbergs to Texas 1849, 1976 Third Edition**  
\$6.50 plus shipping



**The Froelich Familie (East Prussia) 2005**  
\$15.00 plus shipping



**Fayette County, 2011**  
By Jon Todd Koenig  
\$22.00 plus Tax  
(Contact Library, La Grange, Texas for Availability/Purchase (979) 968-3765)



**The von Rosenberg Family of Texas, The Emigration Story and Much More, 2012**  
By Ann Barnes  
\$15.99 plus Tax/Shipping  
(Availability/Purchase Online @ [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))



T-Shirts (Sizes & color vary)  
\$15.00 plus shipping



CD Photos von Rosenberg Family  
\$15.00 plus shipping

Please feel free to make purchases of the any of the above at the coming Family Reunion, where we will have a table set-up for the sole purpose of selling family reunion items. These sales help offset the costs of the Reunion and ensure that we can continue to have such events well into the future.





# The von Rosenberg Family of Texas Reunion Details



Highlights of the 2014 Reunion will be:

- Golf Tournament @ Lost Pines resort in Bastrop on Friday, July 18th. Tee-time set for 12:00noon, however this is subject to change. Contact Drew Cartwright or Bill von Rosenberg for details. Bill's email is [billvr1229@sbcglobal.net](mailto:billvr1229@sbcglobal.net)
- Framed copy of the von Rosenberg Stammtafel shown in last Fall's newsletter to be auctioned off as part of the silent auction
- Prizes will be awarded during the Business meeting for the family member who traveled the farthest, for the youngest family member in attendance, for the oldest family member in attendance, the couple married the longest, and for the oldest member of the branch best represented.
- Three historical presentations, each of short duration, will be given by Cynthia Thornton, Neale Rabensburg and JT Koenig. Ms. Thornton will discuss her new book, *The Times of Round Top*, which discusses in great detail many of our von Rosenberg ancestors. Neale will give a PowerPoint presentation on some of the more interesting homes of the von Rosenbergs and allied families. JT will give a brief presentation on the maternal lines of Peter Carl including those of his mother, Maria Wilhelmine von Stempel.
- A wine and cheese reception after the presentations
- Saturday night will feature something new; an outdoor Bar-B-Q and brew fest put on by von Rosenberg family members. Camp Lone Star will provide sides only. Cooper Bechtol will play DJ for anyone who wishes to kick up their heels.
- Sunday, following the devotional service and brunch, the Fayette Heritage Museum & Archives will have the entire von Rosenberg Family collection on display in their research room upstairs for viewing as family members leave for home.

Friday 7/18/2014	Saturday 7/19/2014	Sunday 7/20/2014
8:00am	Coffee & Pastries @ Camp Lonestar	Coffee & Pastries @ Camp Lonestar
8:30am		
9:00am	Check-in Day Visitors @ Camp Lonestar	
9:30am		Devotional Service @ Camp Lonestar
10:00am	Silent Auction Begins @ Camp Lonestar	
10:30am	Saturday Brunch @ Camp Lonestar	Sunday Brunch @ Camp Lonestar
11:00am		
11:30am	Business Meeting @ Camp Lonestar	Check-out for Overnight Guests @ Camp Lonestar
12:00am		
12:30am		
1:00pm		Von Rosenberg Family of Texas Collection Presentation @ FHMA in La Grange
1:30pm	Presentations @ Camp Lonestar incl; Neale's on homes, JT's on maternal lines and Cynthia Thornton's new book	
2:00pm	German Wine & Cheese Reception @ Camp Lonestar and History Fair	
2:30pm		
3:00pm		
3:30pm		
4:00pm	Games, Cards, Dominoes, Movies & Visiting @ Camp Lonestar	
4:30pm		
5:00pm	Bar-B-Q and Brews outside @ Camp Lonestar (weather permitting)	
5:30pm		
6:00pm		
6:30pm		
7:00pm	Karaoke DJ & Dancing @ Camp Lonestar	
7:30pm		



# Registration Form



## The von Rosenberg Family of Texas



# The 2014 Reunion



July 18-20, 2014

Camp Lone Star

La Grange, Texas

To make a room reservation for a one or two-night stay at the Johnson Retreat Center of Camp Lone Star near La Grange, Texas, please complete the requested information below and return to Darlyn Cartwright at Email: [darlyncartwright@gmail.com](mailto:darlyncartwright@gmail.com); Postal Address: 7805 Comfort Cove, Austin, TX 78731. Should you need to speak to Darlyn, you can call her at (512) 708-0100. You may also coordinate Camp Lone Star stays by emailing Gloria Miele at [gymiele@gmail.com](mailto:gymiele@gmail.com) or by calling her at (210) 241-1436. **Use a separate form for each bedroom if you plan to reserve more than one room.** Please note that room accommodations come pre-packaged with meals. Please give ample notice of any cancellations of room reservations or changes as to number and names of occupants.

For those family members who are not staying overnight at Camp Lone Star, we ask that you register as well using this form if possible. Day visitors are asked to pay \$10.00 at check-in for each day they attend to help defray the cost of the facilities rental. As part of this fee, lite breakfast and brunch will be included. **DO NOT SEND MONEY AT THIS TIME.** Personal checks and/or cash will be collected during check-in. Thank you.

Your Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Important)

No. of **Day Visitors Only** for Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ No. of **Day Visitors Only** for Sunday \_\_\_\_\_

Available Room Rates (All Choices Are Bundled into a Packages Including Meals; lite breakfasts / brunches / sides on Saturday night)

Two-Night Adult Package Ages 18 & Above.....	\$117.00/person
Two-Night Children Package Ages 6-17.....	\$93.25/person
One-Night Adult Package Ages 18 & Above.....	\$78.00/person
One-Night Children Package Ages 6-17.....	\$63.75/person

**Note: Children Ages 5 & Under Who Are Accompanied by a Parent Stay, Visit & Eat for Free**

No. of Adults (18 years of age & older) \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Children (6-17 years of age) \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Children (5 years of age & under) \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Nights (1 or 2) \_\_\_\_\_

If staying only 1 night, then which night? (Mark one only.)

Friday Night (July 18th) \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Night (July 19th) \_\_\_\_\_

Available Room Accommodations at the Johnson Retreat Center. (Mark one only.)\*\*\*

North Wing (10 Rooms Total) \_\_\_\_\_ A typical room in this area has a private bath & is furnished with one queen size bed and two singles. Each room can accommodate as many as four people.

South Wing (10 Rooms Total) \_\_\_\_\_ A typical room in this area has a private bath & is furnished with three bunk beds. Each room can accommodate as many as six people.

Estimated Date & Time of Arrival: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of All Room Occupants: \_\_\_\_\_



## Looking back to look forward-German-Texan Ethnicity and the German-Texan Heritage Society—Part II

Saskia Wegener



### 3. German-Texans: A Comeback

It is a valid question to ask why German-Texan ethnicity experienced a revival in the 1970s. Surely, enclaves like Fredericksburg and New Braunfels survived and maintained their German heritage throughout the decades before 1970, but the memory of the general heritage and contribution of German immigrants to the Texas landscape had faded. Russel A. Kazal encapsulates various reasons for the general formation of new ethnic movements in the 1960s and 1970s when he writes: “The Vietnam War discredited ‘the Anglo-American establishment,’ antiwar and civil rights protests cast doubt on the virtue of a uniform American national culture, and a resurgent black separatism fueled more general affirmations of pluralism and group identities” (2). After the African American Civil Rights and Black Power movements had been in the center of the American social and political agenda of the 1950s and 1960s, other ethnic and racial movements began to form or to continuously grow, among them a White ethnic movement (Spickard 333, 396, 411-412). Though I do not question the influence the Civil Rights Movement must have had in terms of making aware the lacking representation and preservation of the German-Texan heritage and memory, I contest how far the formation of the White ethnic movement of the 1970s connects to the German-Texan movement, as Paul Spickard argues that the former largely consisted of the descendants of Eastern and Southern European immigrants, who were mostly working or lower middle class, only some with an education (411-412). The GTHS, however, was formed following a symposium at Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University at San Marcos) and therefore had a scholarly background (Journal 1, 1)<sup>5</sup>. Also, the White ethnic movement was in large part focused upon political concerns and equality, and resented the Anglo-American business elite (Spickard 412), which would partially confirm the assertion of Kazal. Again, this was not the case with the German-Texans, but the spirit of distinguishing themselves probably caught on. Their primary goal was to establish an institution that would preserve, commemorate and promote the cultural heritage that the German-speaking community of the 19th and early 20th century had established ([germantexans.org](http://germantexans.org)), to make it visible again after its disappearance behind the Anglo-normative curtain. That is not to say that the founders of the GTHS were opposed to the Anglo-normative establishment, but they wanted to add to it, what had already been there.

In the following I am going to summarize the history and development of the GTHS, which will also shed more light on why this particular movement got under way. I will examine some of their publications, in order to find out how they deal with and represent their heritage and how their ethnicity re-developed. Additionally, I will evaluate the questionnaire that I distributed among some of the GTHS members to find out about their ancestors’ history and their personal experiences with and attitudes towards German and German-Texan culture, in how far it is and was part of their lives, and to determine why they joined the GTHS. Since there is no official account written about the GTHS, its founding, its motivations, etc., I had to rely on various other sources. For once, the publications offered some information, though I had to rely on only five journals: the very first journal, two from the 1980s and the two latest editions. Unfortunately, I was not able to locate the digitalized collection of all journals. Secondly, I experienced support in finding information from the employees of the GTHS, and from their current president Mary Whigham, as well as advisory board member Helga von Schweinitz. Lastly, the information that is publicly accessible on the society’s website was considered, too.

#### 3.1 The German-Texan Heritage Society

One name is crucial to the founding and furthering of the GTHS: Mary Mathis El-Beheri, and the history of the society starts with her. In 1974 El-Beheri, a German high school teacher in San Antonio started a research project with her students that would last for several years (El-Beheri 88). In order to make the learning of the German language more rewarding and more interesting for her students, she decided to include historical research on German-Texans and on the person of Julius Berends in particular.

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<sup>5</sup>If there is no author given for the article or passage I am quoting, I will instead give the number of the Journal (1- 5) and the page. The first Journals published were named “Newsletter”, but since they have been titled Journal since at least 1989, I will use this term for all the publications discussed.

She taught her students to read the old German handwriting and how to conduct historical research, and together they managed to paint a picture of Berends (cf. "We love you Julius" in *Retrospect and Retrieval*, 83- 140). They presented their research at the 1978 Southwest Symposium "Multicultures of the Southwest: A Symposium on the Texas Germans", organized by Dona Reeves Marquardt and Glen E. Lich. But El-Beheri did not only want to provide a better learning experience for her students, she aimed for a higher goal, stating:

My goal is to re-create in San Antonio a sense of its German community. I want us to find as many ancestors of the 1845- 1875 German families as possible and get their stories on tape and in picture.[...] I want us to make a pictorial record of German San Antonio showing it as the heart and soul of Texas German. With drawings, maps, newspaper articles, old pictures and new pictures, family records, and interviews, we can bring the San Antonio German community back to life. Its historical significance has been overlooked too long. In our interpretation, San Antonio will be the Center of German life, as it was in the 1850s, 60s, 70s, and even later. (El-Beheri 87- 88)

This statement can be considered quintessential to the idea of establishing the organization that would follow the symposium, only that it would not just be the German heritage of San Antonio that was to be brought back, but all that was lost or thought to be lost in connection to everything German in the whole state of Texas. To a certain degree, it also reflects the process I called re-assimilation or recalling earlier. After the symposium it became evident that there was a real interest and need for the organized preservation of the German-related heritage in Texas, and according to the first GTHS Journal that was published, a group consisting of Mary El-Beheri, Dona Reeves, Patrick McGuire, Anna Thompson, Maria Watson, and Susan Clayton got together shortly after the symposium and founded the German-Texan Heritage Society (Journal 1, 1). By then, the organization did not have a permanent location and the Society's headquarters were unofficially based at the Southwest Texas State (now Texas State) University German Department ([germantexans.org](http://germantexans.org)). It is interesting to note that not all of the founding members were actually of German or German-Texan heritage, because it opposes the definition and concept of ethnicity which I stipulated previously to include a common geographic origin, language or dialect, shared traditions, values and symbols, common literature, folklore, art and music, settlement patterns and institutions that specifically serve and maintain the group. It is especially noteworthy that the driving force, Mary El-Beheri, was "a German more by interest than through blood although she had German ancestors on Continental soil before either the USA or Texas officially existed" (Journal 1, 2). Furthermore she originated from Arkansas, so that her dedication to the preservation of the German-Texan heritage is even more surprising.

On the other hand, Paul Spickard's requirements of a shared interest, a shared institution, and a shared culture are met, if one thinks of the shared culture as one inherited more by interest than by ancestors. Up to the present day, everyone who is interested in the German-Texan history and culture is welcome to join the GTHS and, as has been explicit since the beginning, German ancestry is no prerequisite: "We must not exclude those who, out of love or interest, have become devotees of the German-Texan culture. We all have a common bond" (Journal 1, 3). That German-Texan heritage had fallen into oblivion because Germans were embarrassed after two World Wars, as El-Beheri notes in her editorial comment to the first GTHS Journal, means that there had to be someone the Germans were shamed by or were hiding from. As described in the previous chapter, it was their fellow countrymen within the Anglo-American population, as well as the population that had assimilated to the Anglo-American standard. Admittedly, the people of German descent had assimilated into the panethnic group of White Americans as well by that time, but it was the hostility they experienced that led them to sometimes completely abandon the remains of their heritage. The reasoning that the corrupted image of the uniform American culture, led by an Anglo-American establishment, gave cause to feel less ashamed or shame-free can therefore hold up. Furthermore, by 1978 a generation of German-Texan descendants had grown up who had never witnessed the war or had ever been a part of it. It is just to assume that at least some of them were interested in their heritage and in bringing the memory of the contributions their ancestors had made to the state of Texas back to life. Additionally, those of an older generation were given the chance to look back and share what they had known as children, teenagers or adults, and that they or their parents had chosen to leave behind.

Six months after the founding of the GTHS, the first journal was published in January of 1979, and in the same year the first of the society's annual conferences was held in Austin, by which time the organization had grown to 500 members (Whigham). Five years later, the Society had grown to about a thousand members, even though in the previous year a group of people had broken off to form what would become the Texas-German Society (Whigham). There seem to have been several reasons for the split-up, but according to Mary Whigham, the foremost one was that some of the breakaway group "felt some discomfort with what they saw was a higher educated focus" (Whigham). Nevertheless, the GTHS continued to grow, even though most of the members only met once a year for the annual meeting. Merely the members who lived in the Austin area, the Capitol Area Group, met for a professional organization dedicated to encouraging and advancing the scholarly study of the history, language, literature, and culture of the German element in the monthly meeting with a cultural program (von Schweinitz). By 1989, the Society was affiliated with the Society for German-American studies, "an international professional organization dedicated to encouraging and advancing the scholarly study of the history, language, literature, and culture of the German element in the Americas" ([sgas.org](http://sgas.org)), which gives

further proof that the GTHS' track was and is mostly a scholarly one, as I will discuss later. A small office space had been rented, where once a week one of the members would listen to messages left on the answering machine and take calls.

In 1991, the Society received a message from Austin-based artist Dr. Kelly Stevens, inquiring about a possible interest on the side of the GTHS in inheriting the building that used to be the German Free School in the 19th century. Stevens had acquired the building in the 1940s and had made it his home. Along with the building he bequeathed a fund to the Society to maintain and manage the property ([germantexans.org](http://germantexans.org)). The German Free School had been built by German settlers in 1857 and became Austin's first chartered school a year later. The "free" in the name of the school, however, did not mean that the education offered was for free; students had to pay tuition, and those who could not afford it were being supported by the city of Austin. The "free" was in regard to the school's admission policy as it was "accessible to all alike without regard to religious opinions" (Kalteyer). The original structure consisted of two rooms, one for the schooling of boys, the other one for girls. When Austin's city schools opened in 1871, the German Free School transitioned from a charter school into a public school (Kalteyer). In 1872 living quarters were added to accommodate the schoolmaster Julius Schuetze and his family; unfortunately, the school closed shortly after 1884. The Schuetze family purchased the building and continued to live there, though ownership changed after Julius Schuetze's death in 1904. The building served different purposes until Stevens bought it in 1948, though no clear records survived.

In 1993, the German Free School Guild was founded as an arm of the GTHS, "a volunteer service arm of the society to support the facility as a historic cultural center." (Kalteyer, [germantexans.org](http://germantexans.org)). By taking possession of the German Free School, the GTHS was finally able to establish a permanent headquarters. Shortly after the building was renovated, the Trenckmann Library was introduced, which offers members and visitors a database for genealogical research as well as information on a variety of German and German-Texan topics. It also houses the Society's Pioneer Library which contains books the first German settlers had brought to Texas. Having a permanent site also allowed the GTHS to establish more activities and programs than the annual conference. As the furthering of education relating to everything German and German-Texan was and is one of the GTHS' main goals, they started to offer German classes in 1999 ([germantexans.org](http://germantexans.org)). Furthermore, activities like a German *Filmnacht* with showings of movies made in Germany, lectures on different topics, and festivities on different occasions on the premises of the German Free School extend the GTHS program today for the current members. Additionally, a *Stammtisch* is being held every week, where members get the opportunity to have lunch together, and more importantly, to speak German. The GTHS has started to regularly host three events: the Maifest, the Oktoberfest and a Christmas Market. The festivals seem to veer away a little from the focus on historical accuracy and preservation, but they are "the fun part of our German heritage" as Mary Whigham put it, and they fulfill the expectations of visitors, who seem to want the somewhat stereotypical Germanness with Dirndl and Lederhosen (Whigham). The important fact for the GTHS is, that these festivals do draw visitors, which not only helps to promote the main goals of the Society, but also renders fundraising money. Other than that the GTHS finances itself via members' fees, money from Kelly Steven's estate, donations, and sometimes grants from the city of Austin, among others, which are generally imparted to maintain the historic German Free School building. The latter is a historic landmark, and both the City of Austin and the Texas Historical Commission have graced the site with historic plaques. "In 2010, the German-Texan Heritage Society was named Preserve America Stewards in recognition for its preservation of the German Free School and furthering its mission of preserving the German culture in Texas." ([germantexans.org](http://germantexans.org)). It is an approved 501(c)3 non-profit organization and this year, the Society celebrates its 35th anniversary. Apart from the quarterly Journal, the GTHS has published a number of books ([germantexans.org](http://germantexans.org)). It is obvious that many changes and developments that happened over the years cannot be included in this overview, but it can be said that by now, the GTHS is a well-established organization.

### 3.2 GTHS Objectives

From the beginning, the GTHS' primary goal was to revive the German-Texan heritage and to educate others about it (Journal 1, 1). All of the founding members and all of the editorial board members of the Society's first Journal, with some overlap, had a scholarly background that was in one way or another associated with the German language, German-Texan history, heritage, art or genealogy, to name a few. Although I mentioned earlier that the Society's members did not have any political objectives, the first Journal called up public figures, i.e. senators or legislators, to step up for the German-Texans like the LaFayette lawyer and Congressman James Dometgeaux had done for the Cajun Americans in Louisiana, by enforcing the use of the French language in Louisiana. Now the German-Texans of the GTHS aimed for the same (Journal 1, 7) – could the German culture experience the big comeback they hoped for? Obviously this objective was given up, since later journals never mentioned it again, and German language use throughout Texas was not realized. But the members had in mind other ways in which they could educate the greater populace. In the first Journal, members were encouraged to write small articles for the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, a German-language newspaper. Topics were to be mainly of historical content, but articles about the state of Texas in general were supported too,

(Journal 1, 32). Besides focusing on how they could get the word out about German Texas, the first Journal also provided different ideas for its members.

For those who had just started to discover their German-Texan identity, an article by Glen Lich, whose work on German-Texans I used for this thesis, and Lera Tyler gave step by step instructions on how to conduct genealogical research (15- 19). In relation to that, Gilbert J. Jordan, Emeritus Professor at Southern Methodist University, described how to gather German heritage materials, which he divided into two groups: “the oral and written traditions in the minds of people, and second, their actual material possessions.” Furthermore, he listed sites of material culture that would need to be studied and/or preserved, such as homes, churches, or cemeteries. (Journal 1, 30) Today, the GTHS owns a large variety of material heritage, ranging from books and documents, such as birth or wedding certificates, to furniture and wedding dresses of the German-Texans, which in part are presented to the public at the German Free School building.<sup>6</sup> To further their own education on the topic of German Texas, the readers of the Journal were provided with lists of books, sometimes written by other members and descriptions of research projects by other members. But the first Journal did not only offer material on the scholarly side, it also showed the social and more folkloristic side the Society would develop. Scattered throughout the pages, German proverbs could be found, announcements of family reunions, as well as event calendars, announcing exhibitions of German-Texan artists, lectures on German-Texan topics, and so forth. In sum, the groundwork was being laid. The newly founded Society and its growing membership had to find a basis from which they could start and the most obvious place to start was at home in Texas, in the members’ own family histories, in their attics and in their neighborhoods. The education of others was still important, but for the time being it seemed more vital that knowledge of German-Texan history and heritage be distributed among those who were going to spread it further. The German-Texan ethnic identity had to be developed first. It was not, however, a “nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation”, as Gans had partially described the character of symbolic ethnicity (9). Nostalgia, if present at all in the beginning, was a small element. The main focus, as mentioned before, was a scholarly one.

The second and third Journal under examination repeated some of the things already discussed in the first Journal. After the first edition offered ideas and help on how to conduct genealogical research, the 1984 Journal offered insights into the genealogical research of members, and even provided a member exchange list. Articles covered historic persons, like Fleet Admiral Chester William Nimitz or German-American swimmer Johnny Weismuller, the latter extending the focus on German-Americans in general (Journal 2, 188/192). New additions to the Journal were newspaper clippings from various sources, such as the San Antonio Light or the Hill Country Recorder. The articles covered either topics regarding the GTHS itself, which of course supported the self-confidence of the Society, or topics that dealt with other German-Texan or German-American affairs. That the scope of the topics widened and took German-American issues into consideration shows how the German-Texan identity started to settle and maybe became more embedded in the members’ minds. Now that their ethnicity had been revived and somewhat reestablished, the focus that was put on German Texas before could be loosened a bit. That can be said even more so for the fall of 1989 edition of the Journal. By now, the GTHS was affiliated with the Society for German-American Studies, as already mentioned. The German-Texans had recovered their spot on the map of ethnic groups and had proven to be a seriously active force in the effort to preserve the German-Texan heritage, being recognized by the larger German-American network. The scope was widened once again and next to German-Texan and German-American subject matters, the GTHS’ had started to glance at their ancestors’ homelands. The edition in question was published shortly after the reunification of the two Germanys, and therefore covered said topic with several newspaper clippings (Journal 3, 171- 172). Furthermore, German jokes and cartoons broke up the more serious topics, as did the articles and newspaper clippings covering *Fasching* and *Oktoberfeste* (Journal 3, 194, 203, 232), foreshadowing the folkloristic site the GTHS would develop.

The leap to the last Journals to be discussed is far greater than before, as no other Journals were available to me, and I will discuss the two latest editions from the spring and summer of 2013 together. Between these and the last Journal discussed, 24 years had passed, and obviously a lot changed in this time. Still, the main focus of the Journal today is on historical topics like the article about the women of the German settlement Comfort in the Civil War (Journal 22013 105- 109), or historical people, like the poet Johannes Romberg (112), and on genealogy. Furthermore, other research articles are published, as well as book reviews. Tributes to members and obituaries have become part of the Journal as well. Other things got lost, or better, were moved to another publication: the *Schulhaus Reporter*. This publication includes shorter articles and addresses informal topics, like event announcements and coverage, and other trivia. The additional publication shows how the development of the Society and the German-Texans has continued. “Work” and pleasure have found their places side by side, and the fact that a whole publication mainly for trivia has been

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<sup>6</sup>During my internship at the German Free School in 2012, I catalogued most of the material possessions of the GTHS for insurance purposes



established, albeit considerably smaller than the Journal, can be seen as proof of how far the German-Texans have gotten today. They had to build a serious foundation first, upon which the “fun part” can now stand up. Had they started with both at the same time, chances might have been that they would not have been taken seriously, and that this renaissance of their German ethnic identity might have failed. Publicly, the GTHS formulates its objectives today as follows: We envision that the people of Texas today and in generations to come will be well informed about the cultural values and heritage of German-Texans and that they will embrace the societal benefits of all cultural and heritage diversity within the communities of our State. As a nonprofit organization we are committed to the preservation of the history and heritage of German-Texans by promoting and providing educational experiences in its culture and language and by encouraging within our Texas public schools, colleges, private institutions and other organizations similar learning opportunities in all of the heritage, values and language that make up the unique culture of our state. We believe in and support these values: That cultural heritage diversity is a significant social influence that promotes positive growth and development within Texas communities and in our American way of life. That educational experiences in culture and language in our schools and colleges contribute to the social and economic vitality of our State, and that engaging in shared celebrations of our German-Texan heritage with other Texas heritage groups expands our understanding of common values in cultures and enhances our bonding identities as Texans. ([germantexans.org](http://germantexans.org)).

American, Texan, German-Texan. All three identities matter, all are combined in the self-image of the GTHS. The development took stages, and it will continue. The next effort is going to include a smart phone app which will allow the user to explore the history and heritage of the German-Texan immigrants and settlers (Journal 5, 86). Advancing technology will facilitate to preserve the past.

### 3.3 The Questionnaire

The final section evaluates the questionnaire that I distributed among some of the members of the GTHS out of curiosity about their motivation to join the GTHS, to what degree they “feel” German and why. Additionally, during my work on this thesis I found that I had to leave out many topics and aspects of the German-Texan ethnicity and heritage that could be worth further research and provide an outlook on such. Unfortunately, I got only 34 replies. I realize that this can only partially represent the GTHS’ members. I asked the participants to answer the following questions:

1. When did you/your family come to Texas?
2. Why did you come here? Do you know why your family came here?
3. What does your German heritage mean to you?
4. What do you associate with the word “German”?
5. Does it/did it affect your upbringing, family life, values, traditions (i.e. specific cultural habits)? If so, how?
6. Are you member of the GTHS? If so, why did you join? What does it mean to you?

I also asked for the age and the sex of the participants. Seventeen of the participants are male, seventeen are female, at an average age of 64 years. The youngest participant is 37 years old, the oldest one is 88.

The results are:

1. All of those who answered were either descendants of German immigrants to Texas, or had emigrated to the US/Texas from Germany themselves. They or their ancestors came to Texas between the years 1833 and 1997, with 26 people naming a date in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the date of arrival, and only 7 in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One was not able to make a statement. This is particularly interesting in light of the first members of the GTHS, who, as I have mentioned earlier, were not all of German heritage or had a direct connection. It seems that though people without German heritage or connections are welcome to join the GTHS, most members do claim German ancestry or associations.

2. Not all of the participants were able to answer this question. Those who had come to Texas themselves in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, came because either they or their spouse had a job opportunity. Most of the participants whose family immigrated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century named economic and political reasons as a motivation for their ancestors to leave their homeland. Some came with the Adelsverein.

3. The majority (21) of the participants stated that they are proud to be of German heritage. Some also emphasized the values their German heritage brought with it (hard work, discipline, Christian values, et.al.). Only six people stated that their heritage means nothing or very little to them. I found it to be particularly interesting that the majority found pride in their heritage, given that a large number of them were born shortly after or during the war, and it would be interesting to find out how people of the same generation in Germany or German-speaking countries feel about their heritage.

4. A lot of the answers to the fourth question mirrored the answers of the third. The participants associated the following traits, values, or ideas with the word German (in no specific order): work ethic, family, neatness, cleanliness, ingenuity, industrious, thrifty, organized, morality, respect, pride, stubbornness, independence, food, beer, the Holocaust, Nazi-Germany, language, Gemütlichkeit, intelligence, creative, piety, honesty, frugality, discipline, education, craftsmanship. Again, this list only reflects a portion of the answers. A comparison as described for the previous question would be interesting, as it would be to find out to what degree the fact that the German-Texan heritage had been forgotten influenced the answers.

5. Again, a question which is worthy of further research. Those who came to Texas as adults themselves were obviously affected by their upbringing in Germany. The other, larger part of German-Texans who were born and raised in Texas stated predominantly that they were at least partly influenced by the cultural heritage of their ancestors, be it in their upbringing (strict, disciplined), or the way they celebrated Christmas or other holidays. Most of them, however, did not learn to speak German, either because their parents had not been able to, or because they refused to pass it on to their children. It is arguable if the ethnicity they experienced is a symbolic one, i.e. if it is or was limited to special events rather than everyday life. A strict upbringing does not necessarily require a German background.

6. Since the questionnaire was distributed via the GTHS, it was obvious that all participants would be members. The reasons they joined were also not surprising. Interest in the history of German Texas and German America, a way to connect and share cultural interests with other German-Texans, an interest in genealogy and the wish to preserve and promote the heritage of German-Texans were main reasons to join the GTHS.

## **Conclusion**

Ethnicities change and they will keep on changing, especially in an ever more connected world like ours. For the German settlers who came to Texas initially, the change was less rapid to begin with, and to a certain degree, change was unwanted. They stuck together, they hung on to their old traditions and their old way of life, but because they were not at home anymore, and because they inevitably were influenced by their new environment, an ethnicity formed that was no longer German, but German-Texan. Two World Wars with a German aggressor accelerated their assimilation into White America to a rate that is unparalleled. It was possible, because they were, after all, white people, who did not stand out in the greater Anglo-conform mass. The memory of their contributions to the development of the state of Texas and their cultural heritage faded. It took a new generation to remember the heritage the previous German-Texans had left and to revive it and make it part of their own lives. The German-Texan Heritage Society served as a gateway and as a catalyst for that development. Starting as an organization with a clear scholarly focus, it grew beyond that, although it never lost its educational focus. It gave people of German and German-Texan descent a place to share their culture and their tradition and it will continue to do so. John Quincy Adams was wrong. Although the contemporary German-Texans have certainly grown into an American skin, to use his phrasing, looking back to their ancestors' achievements, traditions and culture enriched their lives, rather than disappointed them. "Looking back to look forward" should therefore be considered more than just the title of this thesis. It reflects the history, the development and possibly the future of the German-Texans and the German-Texan Heritage Society.

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### Declaration of Honesty

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die Arbeit selbständig angefertigt, außer den im Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis sowie in den Anmerkungen genannten Hilfsmitteln keine weiteren benutzt und alle Stellen der Arbeit, die anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen sind, unter Angabe der Quellen als Entlehnung kenntlich gemacht habe.

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Unterschrift

## My Long Awaited Trip To Visit German Ancestors by Eddie Wolsch

In July of last year, I took a long-awaited for trip to visit the villages from where my great-grandparents immigrated from in Germany. Having minimal German language skills and never having travelled abroad, I was able to do this thanks to The German American Connection. Not only did guide Ute Boese make all travel arrangements in Germany, contacting and arranging visits with relatives, she translated and took care of all details which allowed me to focus on enjoyment of the trip. I highly recommend her services.

I first spent several days in Lausitz which is the Wendish region south of Berlin. My Wendish grandfather's parents, August Wolsch (Wolske) and Augusta Knetschk (Kneska,) were born in the adjoining villages of Gablenz and Weisswasser near the Neisse River which today forms the border with Poland but at the time of their immigration in 1877 was within the newly created German nation.



The Slavic tribes which inhabited this ancient Sorbian region (known as Wends in TX but Sorbs in Germany,) predated the Germans there until Karl der Grosse (Charlemagne) began the Ostsiedlung through expansion of his empire east of the Elbe which was occupied by Slavs. He began conquering and Christianizing the Slavs in the 9th century which was continued by his successors. The Slavs within the territory which made up the later German nation founded in 1871 were slowly conquered and assimilated in the Middle Ages except for the Sorbs of Lausitz. Although conquered in the 10th century and Christianized for the most part by the 13<sup>th</sup> century they resisted attempted forceful acculturation, attempts which did not end until after WWII. Although their defiance of



forced Germanization through suppression of their culture and language, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has allowed them to maintain their Sorbian identity to some extent today, just as with other ethnic minorities the language is slowly dying out. While my relatives knew of their Sorbian past and that their names had been spelled differently at one time, none of them could speak the language. The simple fact of decreasing numbers had done peacefully in a few generations what earlier coercive attempts over centuries could not.

Lausitz (Luzica,) so-called by the Sorbs, was actually part of the province of Schlesien which extended east of the Neisse which, like the rest of the German principalities and Central Europe in general, had shifted between rulers since time immemorial. The Gablenz/Weisswasser area of Schlesien had been part of Saxony after it became a principality shortly after the time of Karl der Grosse. It only became a part of Prussia after the 1815 Congress of Vienna which redrew the boundaries of the German states after Napoleon's defeat. Just like so many other immigrants, my Wendish ancestors who immigrated were poor, just one generation removed from serfdom, and knowing which kingdom or country they belonged to was not foremost on their minds at the time of their immigration, to say the least. It does explain, however, why my genealogical quest was so difficult.



When they became members of the church in Sagerton, Haskell County, their birthplaces were listed as Weisswasser, "Oberschlesien, Deutschland" which in reality should have read either Niederschlesien or Oberlausitz, Prussia. They immigrated in 1877 to the Serbin area with members of their extended families, including likely Noacks since August's mother was a Noack and Noacks from Weisswasser also immigrated at the same time. The Noack name is very prevalent today throughout the region and I ran across the name frequently including the owners of the Gasthaus we stayed at while in Lausitz. In the early 1880s the Wolsch/Kneschk clan then moved to Williamson County, after several stops in between, where my grandfather was born in 1888. Some were added to the clan as they made their way west from Serbin as they married into the family such as Frank Lowak, whose dad had been born not far from Gablenz, east of it in Bohemia, on the present border of Poland and the Czech Republic. Others chose to stay after marriage such as one of Matthaues's daughters did when she married the Wend August Marosko. Around 1904 they moved to Sagerton in Haskell County, due to cheap land made available by the railroad when tracks were laid through the region. Matthaues was the eldest of the clan who immigrated, born in 1833 not long after Napoleon's army marched through the region devastating it on his way to Bautzen and then Dresden. His father, as had his ancestors back to at least and probably before, the time of Luther, had been born in Braunsdorf, current Bronowice, on the east bank of the Neisse in present Poland, near Weisswasser, which we also visited. A small village, it has an old cemetery which was grown up and we did not have time to visit it. No doubt generations of Kneschks rest there. Being illiterate, Matthaues was not likely fluent in German and no doubt never learned more than a few words of English, dying soon after their arrival in Sagerton. Struggling for survival at home then in TX, it is understandable why Matthaues and his clan were not concerned with the geographical accuracy of the name of the kingdom or country of their birthplace.

Though conquered with their homeland eventually split between Saxony and Prussia, the Sorbs were never completely assimilated until the recent past. Similar to other minorities in the modern era of mass communication and universal education, their situation today is comparable to the Spanish-speakers of Texas. Their culture and language predates that of the dominant culture in their home region of the country they are citizens of where their ancestors have lived for generations. Unlike the Hispanics of Texas, however, whose numbers are increasing, the Sorbs' numbers are decreasing with many, such as my relatives, knowing of their Sorbian background but having lost their use of the language in the last couple of generations similar unfortunately, to the German-Texans of my generation. However, as a federally protected ethnicity they have a strong cultural preservation program in place with bilingual schools available as well as a Sorbian press, theater groups, heritage fairs, and museums. Street signs throughout the region were both in German and Sorbian and in Bautzen in particular, which is the ancestral cultural capital it was not hard to find speakers of the language. However, only a small percentage of the younger generation consider it their Muttersprache.

Staying in a central location we toured the entire Lausitz region visiting museums and the old town centers of Cottbus and Bautzen, cultural capitals of Nieder- and Oberlausitz, respectively. I spent time with my distant cousin Peter Bresagk and his family in Weisswasser who is descended from the sister of Matthaues Kneschk. He gave me a

photo of her daughter, dressed in traditional Wendish costume which he said as a proud Wend she always wore. We spent a day in nearby Muskau Park which my ancestors helped build in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A UNESCO World heritage site, it straddles the Neisse River with part in Poland and part in Germany. Prince Hermann von Pueckler-Muskau built the park which contains several thousand acres. An avid landscape architect who travelled widely, he spent time in England studying gardens there, incorporating English garden principles to some extent into his park. Due to his wealth, and the work of his Wendish serfs, it and the castle they also built for him as his living quarters on the grounds are of unsurpassed beauty. The work entailed building the park was phenomenal considering its size and the fact that 19<sup>th</sup> century tools – picks and shovels - were used. Part of the Neisse was even diverted to create an island purely for aesthetics.

I next spent time with Heinz Wolschke and Undine Wolschk Schillack. Our common ancestor was Johann Wolsch, born in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in Gablenz. Due to the attempts at forced assimilation, the Wolsch name is spelled in Germany today as Wolsch, Wolschk, and Wolschke and is fairly common in Lausitz. In the Gablenz church records it is spelled Wolsch. However, the variance in spelling was explained to me by Heinz Richter, professor of Sorabistic Studies at the University of Leipzig, who was originally from Schleife, very near Gablenz. Herr Richter was kind enough several years ago to not only correspond with me but to send me a tape of his mother speaking the Schleife dialect and of him pronouncing Wolsch/Kneschk in Wendish and spelling the names in their likely original Wendish spellings. According to Herr Richter, the names were Germanized to Wolsch and Kneschk in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and with civil and church records kept in German, not Wendish, they would have been recorded as such. Unable to meet Herr Richter due to him being out of the country, he arranged for me to meet his brother and sister-in-law, who manages the Schleife Wendish Cultural Center. She not only took me on a tour of the museum but also arranged for a tour of a nearby Wendish heritage farmstead. There, the guide explained that the barn and various buildings - Backofen, etc. - as well as the farmhouse, had been relocated and tools gathered which had been used from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The patriarch of the farmstead, born into serfdom in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as was the tradition, passed down the rights to the farmstead to his eldest son who built a room for his father to live in. It was there that his father spent time at a small table used for a desk in a small, sparsely furnished room and recorded his life on the farm and the customs and traditions of his people of that era. Considering that education at that time for serfs was rudimentary speaks to his intelligence, literary predisposition, and foresight to record for future generations the culture and social life of that area. His memoir was so extensive and detailed enough that it formed the basis of a later Ph.D. dissertation. Being of similar persuasion and background, I have built a cabin on my farm where I spend time in similar pursuits. Leafing through his manuscript at his desk gazing out the window at a farmstead similar to that of my immigrant ancestors, the years and miles melted away. I felt a kinship with this man who bridged the gap between me and my immigrant ancestors because he lived the same life they did but who also had the same interests and background I did. In addition to tours, an educational program has been developed in which in the summer students spend time there learning about the daily life of their Wendish ancestors. Having grown up on a farm I appreciated the thoroughness and depth of detail of the recreation of 19<sup>th</sup> century daily life on a Wendish farmstead. The guide not only demonstrated use of the tools used to cultivate and harvest crops but of how tedious it was to process them, especially of the creation of yarn from flax. A time-intensive process, he demonstrated the process from start to finish explaining how it was also an important social activity. Similar to quilt-making which I remember from my grandmother and her sisters, the women of the village helped each other spin and weave cloth. In so doing they planned the various social events which revolved around the church calendar. The men also communally harvested crops. With the church the focal point of the villages it served, these communal activities were important to village life and helped with cohesion of the community. In addition to this farmstead, my relatives arranged for me to visit similar heritage farmsteads in Rietschin and Gablenz. Maintained by the Gablenz Heritage Society, one of the members was our guide at Gablenz. He explained the various uses of the herbs in the herb garden, food processing, and animal usage. He also elaborated on Wendish customs and festivals outside of the church calendar which developed around the agricultural cycle including the Maipole, common to Germans as well as Wends, which has pagan roots as do several of their customs. I also spent an afternoon at a Wendish cultural fair in which craftsmen had booths demonstrating spinning, food processing, and various other handicrafts such as how roofs were built from river reeds, woodworking, sausage-making, etc. On stage, dancers and musicians performed with traditional instruments and costumes. After spending time at the farmsteads I realized that the social and daily lives of my ancestors were not much different than those of my grandparents and parents and to an extent, mine. Other than the vast improvements technology made to the standard of living of my parent's generation, much was the same. Life in our farm community revolved around the church and school with national and state political affairs far removed from the concerns of daily chores and fieldwork, for the most part. Neighbors, most of whom were related and lived in small, adjoining farms, gathered regularly to help as needed with regular church picnics and the like. While different farming practices were used with different crops grown due to the semi-arid environment of the Rolling Plains, social and daily farm life were very similar, at their core. High German was the primary language at church and home up until the 1930s or so, with Platt spoken as well. Just as with my relatives I visited, family and *Gemueticlichkeit* were important, with plenty of food and beer – homebrew in my grandparents' generation – available when we visited.

The highlight of my trip was the church service I attended in Gablenz. A small village, Gablenz is first mentioned in records in 1268 with the first mention of the church in 1346. Karl der Gross's descendants, Henry I and his son, Otto I, recognized as the first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, continued Karl's Ostsiedlung conquering and savagely Christianizing the Wends in that era. Monasteries were built and missionaries sent to Christianize the Wends. With no accurate records of when the monasteries were built, "first mentioned" had to be relied upon. The monasteries became the hub of the villages which developed nearby, unless they already existed at the site. Throughout my trip all the historical plaques on the churches used the phrase "erst erwaehte" - first mentioned. The areas my ancestors originated from – Lausitz and the Saxon region of Oldenburg and west of Hanover – were conquered by Karl der Grosse and his immediate descendants in roughly the 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Throughout both regions monasteries were built in that period by Karl and his heirs and the churches of my ancestors dated to that period. While the original Gablenz church burned and was rebuilt after the Reformation, its furnishings were original to the time it was rebuilt. My relatives and I attended a service which was also communion day and I took communion with them. The pastor had been contacted prior to the service that I would be visiting and he introduced me in German to his congregation, repeating it in English, telling them that my ancestors had immigrated from Gablenz and saying that "for today, there are no strangers among us, we are all family." Taking communion and worshipping in a church where centuries of my ancestors had before me, was completely overwhelming. As I watched the congregation leave, it was not hard to imagine August and his kinsmen visiting in the yard, just as we today, then slowly walking back home to their dreary lives of constant labor. It was at that moment, as I sat alone, letting the silence speak to me, that I felt the most connected to those people I had searched for most of my life. They became real, not something exotic from a far-away land, or noble in their ability to overcome great odds, but simply human beings dealing the best they could with their lot in life. Having also had the experience for a time of leaving church, returning to a drab existence, I could now relate to them.

After the Gablenz church service I was treated to a traditional Wendish meal at a relative's home in Gablenz. We spent time touring Gablenz and visited the cemetery, which had a monument within it dedicated to Russian soldiers killed in WWII. My relatives told me that the Russians occupied Gablenz several weeks and stole everything of value in the church which wasn't much since it was, except for the ornate pulpit, a simple, country church serving farmers. They also told me that the women fled to the forest prior to the coming of the Russians, and had to stay there until they left. The Russian penchant for rape preceded their arrival. The monument to the Russian soldiers was forced upon the people when East Germany was under Communist rule. However, growing up in the Communist system my relatives, at least some of them, were not antagonistic toward the Russians and were not necessarily enthusiastic about Capitalism.

Throughout my trip memorials to German soldiers killed in war were in abundance, a constant reminder that Germany had been an ancient battleground for centuries. Every church had a plaque or marker listing the names of those

killed in WWI and II with several listing those killed in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 which created the modern German nation. A marker in a Lausitz town near Bautzen even had an old stone with a commemoration of the withdrawal of Napoleon from the region scratched into it. Throughout both regions I visited from where my ancestors originated, my families' and related families' names were listed among the dead – Wolsch, Noack, Ganik, Diers, Luebben, Renken, Gefike, et al. Heinz Wolschke, a cousin, said that when his father returned from WWII his arm had been shot and he was disabled, unable to work the farm any longer. While he was away, their home had been partially destroyed by shells and his wife and kids had to live in a neighbor's



barn. War had been a constant in German life for centuries and they were not eager to talk about their experiences in WWII.

After leaving Lausitz we travelled northwest to the Oldenburg region where my grandmother's families originated from. On the way we spent an afternoon in Leipzig, visiting the St. Thomas Kirche where Bach was cantor, and ate lunch at the Auerbach Keller. Famous for its murals depicting scenes from Goethe's Faust, and as a place he frequented while a student at the University of Leipzig, a statue of him is in front of the restaurant. After roaming the city for a while, we resumed our trip arriving that night at our motel near Oldenburg.

According to family tradition although we can't verify it, my grandmother's father, August Tredemeyer, was born in Washington County in the early 1850s. His parents, Friedrich Treddemeier and Anna Franke, were born near Hagedewe, west of Hanover and east of Osnabrueck which at that time was in the Kingdom of Hanover, presently the state of Niedersachsen. Her mother, Helena Renken, was born and lived until age 10 or so at Roennelmoor, on the Jadebusen (Jade Bay,) northeast of Oldenburg before she immigrated. We were escorted around the Hagedewe area by a cousin descended from a Tredemeyer, Wilhelm Pape, an avid family historian and genealogist with a fair command of English, and Karl-Heinz Kloppenburg, a descendant of a Franke. They took me to the ancestral Treddemeier home in Hagedewe, which dates to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although no longer in the family, Wilhelm gave me a photo of the inscription above the door, which no longer exists, extolling the family's pride that they survived Napoleon's blockade in the Napoleonic War in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and even profited. This was quite an accomplishment considering that Napoleon occupied Hanover and Westfalen (present Niedersachsen,) just to the south of Hagedewe a few miles, with his troops ransacking the region. The people endured famine and hardship with the blockade destroying the economy. It is likely that the property had been in the family for centuries due to the tradition of serfs having the right to hand down to their eldest son the farmstead they worked, which the noble of the area owned. With serfdom ending in that region in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century – Wilhelm had a copy of the document freeing one of his ancestors from serfdom, dated to that era – its likely the farmstead we visited was the original farmstead handed down through the centuries. Another piece of evidence also supported this. The Diepholz archivist, Falk Liebezeit, took me on a tour of the Diepholz castle and museum which had artifacts and photos relative to the Platt culture of that region. After that, he took us to the ancestral Treddemeier church in Burlage, where we made an incredible discovery. Perusing the church records, he found the first Treddemeier, Johann auf der Tredde, dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to Falk, in Platt Tredde means trail and at that time people were named after landmarks and the like. Johan auf der Tredde, meant Johann who lives on the cow trail. Villagers at that time lived in the back of their barn with stalls on one side for milk cows and on the other for sheep and hogs. Every morning after milking, the kids would take their sheep and cows to the meadow held in common by the villagers and bring them home that afternoon. With the house on an old trail to a meadow, according to Wilhelm, (the village has only one road with just a few homes along this road,) it is likely Johann lived on the trail near where this house sits. A couple of generations after Johann, Falk also found the first Treddemeier, per se. According to Falk, a Meier was similar to a mayor except he was a tax assessor/collector for the noble, who owned the land. The villagers lived on the noble's land in exchange for a percentage of the agricultural produce and in later times a percentage of the profit made. The Meier kept track of the agricultural goods produced and collected the noble's share at the end of the harvest. As a Meier who was a descendant of Johann auf der Tredde, he became Treddemeier, with the name eventually changing to Tredemeyer. The Burlage church, which still serves Hagedewe and the surrounding villages, was originally founded as a convent. It was first mentioned in records in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and was part of the Bishopric of Minden, just to the west. According to tradition, which is likely judging by the history of the region, when Karl der Grosse defeated a large group of Saxons nearby in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, he celebrated his victory by creation of this convent. After the defeat of the Saxons, with battles throughout the region over several years, Karl built monasteries throughout Saxony to Christianize and control the Saxons. Nearby Minden received its name when Widukind, the Saxon leader finally defeated by Karl, told him in the Platt of that era, "was ist min (mein) ist jetzt din (dein.)" The last battle in the Saxon War was at Hase, just west of Hagedewe near Osnabrueck, in 783, at which time Karl finally subdued the Saxons. Also consistent with the history of the region, the earliest church records had entries in Hebrew and Latin as well as German. When Karl established the monasteries they were not just churches but schools at which learned men kept the classics of Greek and Roman antiquity alive, teaching them to the sons of the local nobility. Karl helped to spread the monastic tradition and its culture of scholarship throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. By so doing, this tradition kept alive the advances made in philosophy, mathematics, the sciences, literature and rhetoric, made by the Greeks and Romans of classical antiquity, in the Middle Ages when Karl's empire in Europe descended into chaos after his death. Although the earliest entry in the church records was just prior to the record of Johann auf der Tredde, Falk explained that the 30 Years' War of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century devastated most of Central Europe with up to a third of the population killed. The appearance of this Church record just after that period probably attests to the re-establishment of the church, with the records before then – 700 years' worth - destroyed or lost in the war. We then went to the church itself and Wilhelm showed me the original convent which was a small room and the Catholic statuary uncovered when it was renovated,



dating to at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century, probably before. Due to the German tradition of burying their dead around the church, and due to the age of the original convent, about 18 inches of dirt was mounded up higher than the original steps leading up into it, and all around the walls. Instead of stepping up to enter the convent you stepped down. I was literally standing on centuries of my ancestors.

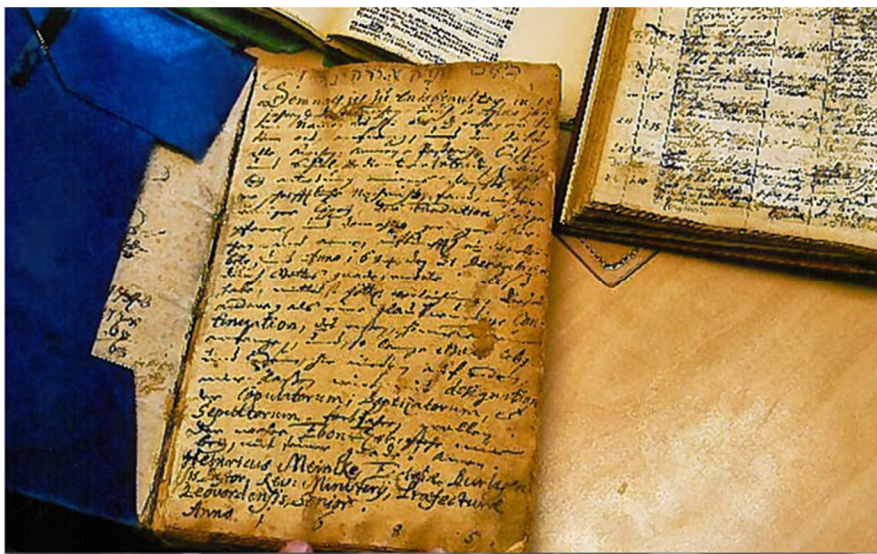
Due to land being a premium in Germany for centuries, the Platts developed a tradition of the man taking his wife's name if she was going to inherit the farmstead. This occurred if there were no male heirs resulting eventually in the Tredemeyer name dying out in Germany. For space reasons, if after 20 years no one of that name was buried in the family plot, the tombstone was removed to make way for another. This explained why there were no Treddemeiers buried at Burlage. However, Wilhelm explained that the Platt's have a saying that the people are still there, just not the name. He then took me to his parents' home near Diepholz and showed me his mother's cabinet, spinning wheel, and bolt of cloth, which she had inherited from her ancestors some of which were Treddemeiers, used as a dowry when married. All dated to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. He also showed me a framed collection of several tiles which had come from the Treddemeier homeplace. A tradition developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century of the men from that region hiring out every winter to dig peat in Holland, while the women spun cloth for extra money. Over time, one of his Treddemeier ancestors saved enough to buy tiles from a factory in Holland to cover the interior of the old Treddemeier home. He gave me a loose tile he had which I now have framed.

We then spent a day at the Cloppenburg outdoor museum, near Diepholz, in which a large number of barns and windmills have been moved and preserved, showing how the Platts of that region lived. Similar to their Dutch cousins, the culture and language of the Platts are not much different. They dug peat, drained the moors of sea water for farmland, used large wooden windmills, and wore wooden shoes. At the museum, we ate lunch and I had a bowl of chicken soup which tasted exactly like my grandmother's. I was transported instantly back 50 years to my grandmother's kitchen.

We then went northeast to the Roennelmoor area, where my grandmother's Renken, Gefike, and Luebben families and their Diers cousins originated. Through an Oldenburg genealogy society I located two researchers, one of whom was related to me. One spent a day showing us around the area and the several villages and towns these families came from – Roennelmoor, Schweiburg, Wiefelstede, and Rastede. Near Varel, the home of Friedrich Ernst, no doubt they all heard about the utopia that was TX from his letters. Platt culture and language, my grandmother's first language, was very much alive in the region with signs in the restaurant where we ate lunch in Platt and the waitress using it when she took our order. Although some elementary schools teach the language and it is a UN-protected language, it does not have federal support as does Wendish and is on the decline.

Again, we toured ancient churches including the church at Schweiburg, just a few hundred yards from the Jadebusen. Diers and Luebbens served as pastors down through the years, both of which are family names. A country church which still uses Platt in its services, it was the ancestral church of the Renken family. First mentioned in 1334 it was founded as St. Vitus as a cloister and was destroyed by floods when the sea broke through the dike, in 1686 and again in 1762. Due to their hardiness in reclaiming land from the sea, the Niedersaxons have earned their nickname as the “storm proof sons of the soil.” An elderly Diers cousin, who still farms, made the trip with us, and he showed me letters sent to his family by a Diers cousin in Old Glory (Neu Brandenburg,) TX. Immigrating in the 1890s, following an uncle, he had done well as a farmer and during WWII had sent care packages to his relatives, as had others from his church in Sagerton. He became the grandfather of Joan Druesodow Griggs, who had preceded me on a visit to the ancestral Diers farmstead in Klein Nethen, which was destroyed in WWII. It was Joan who had uncovered the book about his immigration experience and poems, her grandfather's uncle had written, who had also served in the Franco-Prussian War and was “ein echteDeutscher” – a true German - according to his obituary. Joan also has a copy of a love letter written on a fleur-de-lis by Gerhard Renken to his future wife, Thalke Gaefeke, penned in 1844.

I next visited a fellow researcher and distant cousin who gave me 500 years' worth of the genealogy of ancestral lines via the Renkens who also explained the history of the settlement of the Moorlands by the Saxons.



Due to the harsh conditions of the lowland moors, the Platt of that region have a saying – the first generation works until death, the second for poverty, and the third for bread. Originally handed down from the Ostfriesisch, their cousins, who moved into the area prior to the Saxons, in the early years of the Christian era, many Platts of the area are actually descendants of the Ostfriesisch who chose not to move west and were absorbed by the Saxons. Names like Thalke, Hinrich, and Meta, all of which were names of Renkens and Diers, are actually Ostfriesisch, not Saxon names. He described the work involved in draining the moors, which took generations, and of how occasional floods from the sea would wipe out their work and they had to start over. The Roennelmoor area is still crisscrossed by drainage ditches and the roads are higher than the surrounding farmland and houses must be built so that they “float” on the marshy land.

The last leg of my trip was to Bremerhafen where I visited the Emigration Museum and walked the docks where the immigrants departed from. We then spent a day touring Berlin, saw the Charlottenburg Palace and magnificent Berliner Dom, the Berlin Wall, and walked past the Reichstag, among other places. Thoroughly sated with more varieties of beer – all good – than I ever imagined existed, Leberwurst, Kopfkaese, Blutwurst (or as my dad and gram-paw would say in their TX accent – Blutwusht) and numerous varieties of sausage from the vendors at the market squares and sidewalk cafes, I had been thoroughly Germanized. I had a truly wonderful trip. And, as those who have done so can attest, walking in the footsteps of your ancestors is an experience beyond compare which I will be ever grateful for.

**Submitted by Eddie Wolsch, Seymour**

## **Hoelscher-Buxkemper Family Reunion**

The 31st biennial reunion of the Hoelscher-Buxkemper Family will be held in Temple, Texas, on July 5 and 6, 2014, at the Mayborn Center. Descendants of Anton and Mary Katherine Hoelscher, who came to this country in 1846 from Germany, gather biennially for a two day reunion. The first reunion was held in Westphalia, in 1954, one of the areas first settled by pioneer members of the family, which consisted of the parents and five children: Elizabeth, Anton, Jr., Joe, William and Ben.

Activities, in addition to visiting and fellowship, include a dance on Saturday night, domino tournament Saturday afternoon, silent auction on Saturday, sale of family souvenirs, raffle and Polka Mass on Sunday morning. A children's play area will also be available with supervision at all time.

Meals will be served Saturday evening and Sunday at noon, followed by a general meeting at which time awards will be presented to the oldest lady and oldest man present, youngest baby, largest family, couple married longest and shortest time, and for traveling greatest distance to attend the reunion.

For those who wish to tour the museum in Westphalia, one of the areas where the family first settled, there will be a guided tour from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, on Saturday, July 5<sup>th</sup>.

Further information may be obtained from Shirley Burk, Secretary-Treasurer of the Family, of Temple (254-986-8353) or from Doris Voltin of Rosebud, Chairperson of the reunion (254-583-4768). Registrations are being accepted by Registration Chairperson, Barbara Hoelscher of Salado (254-947-8700).

**Submitted by Doris Voltin, Rosebud**

# GTHS is proud to print the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place essays from the Texas State German Contest

## 1st Place

Steven Jiang and Angeline Rao  
Rustin Buck, Clements High School

### *Texasdeutsch ist nicht all right: Texas German, Its Linguistic Developments, and Its Uncertain Future*

A typical child's bedroom is the setting of bedtime stories about loving monsters, questionable green eggs, and a certain scheming feline in striped headgear. However, amid the rolling hills of Texas's bucolic Hill Country, some elders recall a favorite story of their childhoods: *Die Kuh ist über den Mond gejumpt*. The word *gejumpt*, instead of *gesprungen*, is one of a host of terms coined by German-Texans, who over centuries wove them into their unique regional dialect, "Texas German." Unfortunately, the Texans who grew up with these tales are now among the few remaining who speak their dialect. Texas German, born as a synthesis of German grammar, English loan words, and Texan colloquialism, is now in jeopardy after centuries of political change, demographic transition, and globalization, and despite efforts to preserve this voice of German-Texan culture, its future looks bleak.

Texas German's most apparent difference from Standard German is its heavy borrowing from colloquial English vocabulary. The German spoken by the first immigrants lacked terms to describe agricultural and technological advances that would come later, so while European Germans systematized new terminology for new times, like *der Hubschrauber* and *die Frisur*, Texas German assimilated English words for those same purposes, like *die Helicopter* and *der Haircut* (Gilbert). Consequently, English words now form "approximately one to three percent" of German-Texans' vocabulary (Adam). Texan colloquialisms bled through into this dialect as well: as German speakers intermingled with Anglo-American settlers, words like *die Roasting Ears* (vernacular for "corn on the cob") became common. This heavy patois led to both "r" sounds that erupt from the throat and the loss of the "ü" phenome's lip-rounding in daily speech, "pronounced" differences that make much of Texas German vocabulary unintelligible to Standard German speakers (Vine).

Texas German's grammatical framework also fundamentally shifted due to American influences. As Gilbert Jordan found while surveying Hill Country communities, the dialect mostly lost the dative case over time, matching English's similar equivalence between accusative and dative. Curiously enough, however, Texas German retained the dative case to indicate possession; instead of using the genitive ("wessen" or "dessen"), Texas German uses "wem sein" or "dem sein," similar to an archaic English possession form. While Standard German speakers would say *Dies ist das Haus meines Freundes*, a Texas German would usually say *Dies ist mein Freund sein Haus* (Jordan). Texas Germans also forgo formal "Sie" usage, instead almost always addressing others as "du" or "ihr" regardless of social circumstances, breaking an underlying social rule in Standard German (Boas and Schuchard). This largely results from the inconvenience of traditional European social structures in the rural outback of Texas, where immigrants formed tight-knit communities based on common heritage, and a relative lack of social classes bred a greater sense of familiarity (Gilbert). In fact, as Gordon Wilkinson's news footage *Chancellor Konrad Adenauer Visits Fredericksburg* shows, this difference almost led to some disastrously awkward diplomacy when German chancellor Konrad Adenauer stopped by Texas while visiting then-President Lyndon Johnson's ranch (see figure 2): the locals addressed West Germany's leader as "du"!

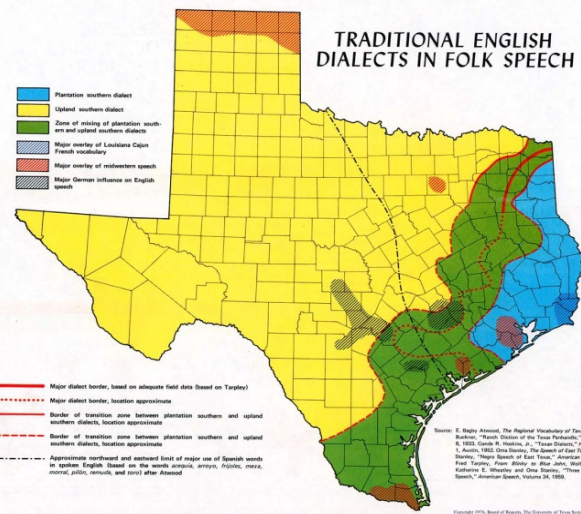


Figure 1. A map showing English dialects spoken in Texas. The black striped regions in the center represent the areas with significant German influence on English and thus the areas where Texas German communities are concentrated. Note that they are relatively isolated. Used by permission of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.



Figure 2. Konrad Adenauer and Lyndon B. Johnson visiting Fredericksburg.



Scholars have attempted to mine many more “defining” characteristics of Texas German, but ultimately, it is impossible to unify Texas German under a single sweeping description. Different areas, isolated in the past, evolved different variations on Texas German “so that a common word in La Grange, like *Schewer* (splinter) or *strakt* (straight), might elicit a blank stare in New Braunfels” (Vine). In fact, new analysis reveals that Texas German could actually “consist of at least five to six very different German dialects” (Boas). The main problem with creating a united community of Texas German speakers is that there is simply no one coherent “Texas German.”

This lack of unity is a large reason behind Texas German’s alarming decline, yet history also plays a large role. During World Wars I and II, the German community was scorned for alleged complicity in Germany’s actions, with German education banned in schools, German culture deemed “unpatriotic,” and English cultural assimilation forcibly “encouraged” (Plocheck). As thousands of German-Texans moved out of the region into areas where they would face less discrimination and thus have more opportunities, towns shut down German businesses and erected English ones in their place (see figure 3).

By the time Americans’ views towards German-Texans were rehabilitated after the wars, the dialect’s decline was already underway. Texas German is now “critically endangered” and estimated to go extinct by 2050, with only about 8,000 speakers remaining, almost all of whom are above the age of sixty (Adam). Additionally, the Census Bureau notes that Texas is experiencing dramatic growth in its Hispanic population, supporting one German interviewee’s observation that “*die ganz toll Mexikaner moven herein*” (“many Mexicans are moving into the valley” he lives in) (see figure 4; Interview by Glenn G. Gilbert). Moreover, demographic change has been accompanied by globalization. Latin America’s growing economic importance means many students are understandably opting to learn Spanish instead. Others are sticking

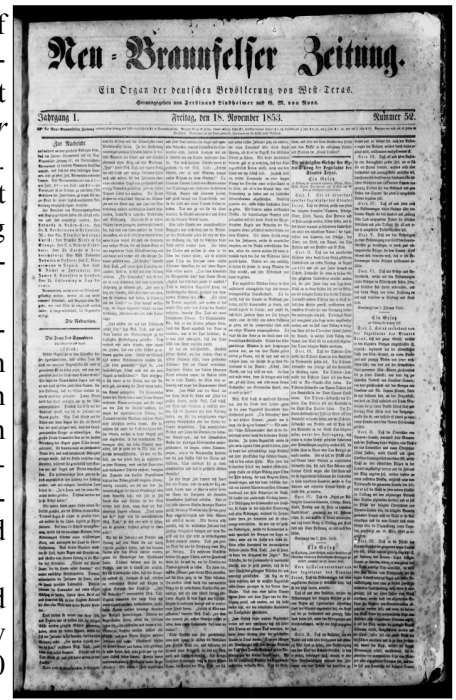


Figure 3. A copy of the *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung* from November, 1853. It discontinued its German-language content in 1957 due to low German readership,

exclusively with English and thus discouraged from using Texas-German, a dialect confined to their ancestors’ homes and a few remaining Hill Country establishments. Recently, English’s intermixing into Texas German has accelerated, with many natives admitting they’ve “forgotten a lot of German things” (Dir. Franz Strasser) as their communities speak more and more English to accommodate new residents and broadening business needs.

Fortunately, there has been a mounting conservation effort in Texas to preserve the Texas-German dialect. Hans Boas, linguistics professor at the University of Texas at Austin, has made headlines for the Texas German Dialect Project, which aims to record interviews with as many living German-Texans as possible, documenting both their lives and their dialect. Boas has gained international press coverage for his efforts, including an interview on National Public Radio drawing attention among American listeners, a *Der Spiegel* report informing European Germans about the dialect, and even a BBC article, in which Mr. Boas says he has already “recorded 800 hours of interviews with over 400 German descendants in Texas and archived them.” His research has led scholars in states like South Carolina to advocate for the TGDP as a template for documentation of their own states’ fading dialects (Fischer).

Furthermore, many are returning to their German roots, embracing the culture and, in the process, rediscovering the historical voice of their culture (see figure 5). The Census Bureau’s 2010 findings showed that 49.8 million people in the US identify as German-American, up 6 million from 2000. While public schools roll back language classes in a time of budget cuts, independent Texan organizations, backed by increasing numbers of

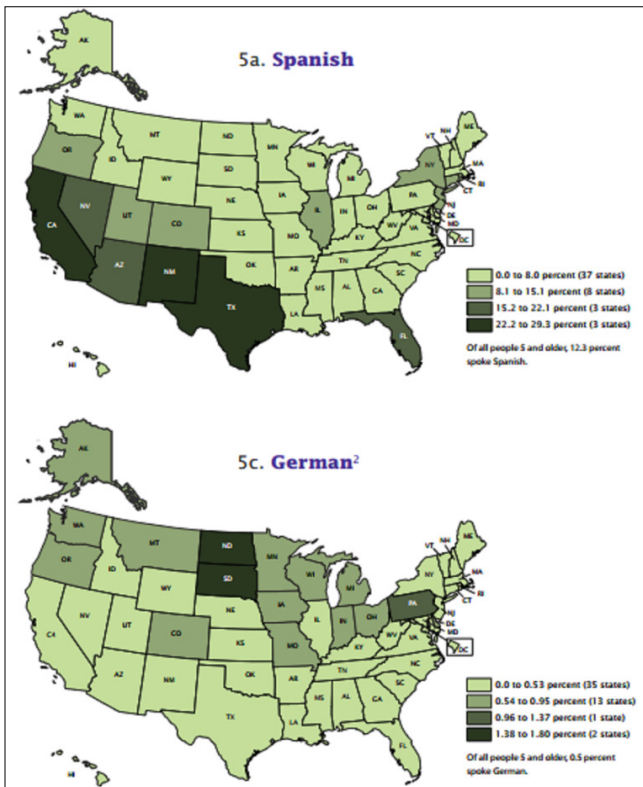


Figure 4. Data from the Census Bureau shows that 22.2 percent of Texans and rising speaks Spanish. In contrast, less than 0.53 percent of Texans speak German, substantially lower than the figure a few decades prior. As less and less people speak German, students have more incentive to learn languages like Spanish and English instead.



volunteers and donors, are launching efforts to rebound German education; Jean Warneke, executive director of the German-Texan Heritage Society, says that “classes offered by the society have become popular among teenagers (Bass). And even though most students are only exposed to standard German, increasing overall German language education is the first step to raising awareness of splinter dialects like Texas German.

But while there are reasons to be optimistic about this dialect’s preservation, it is ultimately up to the Texan-German community to continue these efforts. Policymakers should, first off, rebuild German language programs and increase Texas German’s public visibility, but German-Texans across the spectrum also need to act. Texas German’s long history of evolution, political change, and lifestyle shifts has produced an anchor to a culture, and while Texas German may inevitably succumb to the forces of modernization, its preservation would both serve as a monument to German-Texans’ cultural history and contribute to the linguistic study of dialect evolution around the world. German-Texans certainly want Texas to be remembered as the place *wo die Kuh jumpt*, so while they may not have to jump *über den Mond* to accomplish that, it will certainly be a long way there.



Figure 5. Picture of Fredericksburg's 2010 Oktoberfest celebration. Cities like Fredericksburg are now rekindling German cultural traditions, attracting thousands of visitors in the process.

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## 2nd Place Winner

Hannah Rumbarger  
William Johnson  
Cedar Park, Texas

### Fritz Goldbeck: A Study of German-Texan Settlement through Poetry

It is no secret that the first German settlers in Texas endured immense hardship in adjusting to a new life in an unfamiliar territory. This has been analyzed through various types of documents, including letters, journals, genealogy books, and vital records. But one genre is often overlooked: poetry. The experiences of early pioneer Fritz Goldbeck, expressed through his poetry, exposed the life of the original German settlers in Texas from a different angle.

Fritz Goldbeck was born 1831 in Idsingen, Germany (Robinson 166). When his family emigrated to Texas in 1844, the young Goldbeck, only 14 years old, had the astounding opportunity of being on the first ship, the *Johann De-thart* (Tiling 75), that brought German immigrants to Texas. Fritz Goldbeck then grew up among the first German pioneers in New Braunfels. Over his lifetime he worked many jobs, such as Pony Express rider, newspaper contributor, tax collector, Justice of the Peace, and Mayor of New Braunfels (Robinson 167-169; Tiling 75). Robinson notes that Goldbeck, “while living in Comfort... first enjoyed the taste of writing”, as this town had a newspaper called *Der Battel-sack* where Goldbeck was a regular contributor (167). From the time he was a teenager until he was an old man, Goldbeck used poetry as a way to cope with the circumstances of his life.

Heralded as the first German-Texan poet, Tiling describes Goldbeck’s poems as “in a simple and unpretending language, are descriptive of the settlers’ life on the prairies of Texas, and bring to memory many interesting facts and occurrences of the primitive days of the Lonestar State” (75). Indeed, this is true. Goldbeck’s poems explore a wide variety of topics that give us a close-up look into all aspects of pioneer life in a vast and unsettled Texas. In 1895 and 1896, Goldbeck published in San Antonio his collection of poems, *Seit fünfzig Jahren*, subtitled *Prosa in Versen*. This is a compilation of 140 poems from his two volumes of poetry that are mostly written in rhyming couplet style, as indicated by Robert A. Govier in his thesis about German-Texan poets in New Braunfels. The first volume included in the collection deals with Goldbeck’s life after arrival in Texas, approximately 1844-1846, and the second volume concerns his excursions to Arizona, Baja California, Mexico, and Texas (Robinson 169).

A majority of Goldbeck’s poems outline the initial experiences of the settlers. For example “Landung in Galveston. Weiterfahrt nach Port Lavacca” (Goldbeck 4) details how the German immigrants were elated to arrive in Texas, but soon had their first encounters with the unpredictable weather. The poet describes the storm that the Germans experienced while sailing from Galveston to Port Lavacca as “als käm er aus dem Höllenschoß” (line 26). While he uses a simile to illustrate the storm’s intensity, he also incorporates factual information, noting that the storm nearly carried the ship to Mexico and caused the boat to leak. The effective combination of rhetorical devices and actual events allows for Goldbeck’s writing to convey a simplistic tone while still providing substantial information. Additionally, Goldbeck’s poems talk about pioneer life as the Germans established a subsisting settlement. In “Die Pioniere” (Goldbeck 30), he describes the strenuous life of the pioneers:

“Sie hatten viel Mühen und Sorgen hier,  
Die Alten, die wirklichen Pionier‘,  
Sie haben gerodet, das Land gepflügt.  
Aus Blöcken ihr Haus zusammengefügt.  
Befanden sich häufig in großer Noth,  
Es mangelte ihnen öfter an Brot“ (lines 1-6)

The pioneers of New Braunfels toiled diligently to establish the settlement, and Goldbeck captures that with his rhyming prose; the reader can picture pioneer life through a comprehensible, honest poem. Much like the first settlers, the author himself maintained a good mood throughout his life as a newcomer in the state. The Germans were generally determined and optimistic in their efforts towards creating a successful colony, and this was reflected in Goldbeck’s writing. His good attitude allowed him to overcome tribulations in his life.

Goldbeck’s poems often discuss difficulties and daily hardships that he and other settlers became accustomed to, as well as tragedies he dealt with in his life. “Das Leiden der ersten Einwanderer” outlines such hardships, including feelings of homesickness for the mother country. Hardships that the Germans encountered are well-documented, but not in a way that is relatable and empathetic. Goldbeck’s poems, however, have these characteristics, which make them a

true exposition of what it was like for the settlers, and not just facts from records. On this note, his poems about weddings and death are especially efficient in highlighting settler life; they make for a more real account of life events compared to a plain marriage license or death record. Additionally, Goldbeck's poems about his failing health revealed emotions. In "Nach fünfzig Jahren", he wrote how being in a good spirit conquers the pains of his aging body.

Throughout assimilation into Texas, the German settlers made significant efforts to maintain their heritage. Goldbeck wrestled with this in his writing, most notably "Ein Germane bin ich" (Goldbeck 47). He writes:

"Fort mit dem trügerischen Schein,  
Ein Deutscher bin ich, will es sein!  
Ob ich auch englisch reden kann,  
Bin ich darum kein and'rer Mann." (lines 1-4)

The poet desires to be a German, and claims that he is not someone else just because he can speak English. Although the Germans were excited to arrive in America, maintaining their heritage was something they struggled with. Goldbeck captured this struggle in his writings. The intense desire to be German "implies the nationalistic image of a united, democratic Germany", Andreas Reichstein notes, "because Germany as a state did not exist until 1871" (126).

As German-Texan settlement continues to be studied through various sources, the emotional and personal side tends to be lost. While the hardships are widely known, true settler life is forgotten. Nevertheless, because Goldbeck expressed pioneer life through his poetry, including initial settler experience, life, and daily hardships, the reader can truly capture and relive the life of the first German settlers in Texas.

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### 3rd Place Winner

## The Eternal Language German

Author: Zennie Wey

Teacher: Keri Jaworski, LASA High School, Austin, Texas

German III, February 21, 2014

Over a century ago between the towns of Austin and San Antonio, the first Germans arrived in Texas and settled down (Remembering). There, they assimilated into the local culture, merging German with local dialect, successfully creating Texas German (German). The language development is exclusive to the area, but due to a tumultuous history and the out casting of German culture, the dialect soon began to dwindle. Now roughly 150 years later, Professor Hans Boas, from the University of Texas, has been archiving speakers of Texas German in order to preserve the dialect because it is on the brink of extinction. Despite the threat of extinction, Texas German will transcend time as a cultural phenomenon as seen through its word usage, grammar structure, and unique history.



German immigrants on their way



Map of Texas depicting Gillespie County, a county with a large number of German immigrants



Though limited in number of speakers, Texas German is a cultural phenomenon only found between Austin and San Antonio. Even though it is slowly disappearing, the impact that its unique history, coupled with its vocabulary usage and grammar structure had on the region will stand the test of time. Through the Texas German Dialect Project, the dialect will become immortal, living through not only audio and textual material, but also the memories of those whose lives have been touched by this unparalleled miracle.

In 1845, the ‘Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas’, a German group of noblemen, founded the city New Braunfels, Texas (Eikel). By the mid-1850s, this German-speaking city was among the three largest towns in Texas and as a result, the surrounding hill country was transformed into an area that spoke only German (Boas).

Within the dialect itself, one can see a *mélange* of five or six German dialects, as well as English. For example, “I have behaved myself” is *ich habe mich benommen* in German but in Texas German, it is *ich habe mich behaved*. The verb “behaved” is taken directly from English but it doesn’t have a “restructuring effect on the syntax of the German sentence in which it occurs” (Boas). Many times, some Texas German words such as *die Exhaustpipe*, *der Flyball*, and *das Sodapop* were simply English words with an article in front put into their lexicon (Vine). In addition to borrowed words, there are also examples in which words are made up. Back in the 1800s, animals such as the skunk didn’t exist in Europe so the word *stinkkatze* (stinking cat) was used to describe a skunk (Remember).

Furthermore, the grammatical structure used in Texas German differs from that used in regular German. Though the usage of the genitive case is also limited in German, it has not been used in Texas German since the 1960s save for a few phrases. The usage of the dative case has also slowly been dwindling, with the accusative case taking its place. This has led to a “non-oblique nominative” case, as dubbed by Glenn Gilbert, a professor at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, in which the accusative case functions as both the dative and the genitive case. For example, “Help me!” is “*Hilf mir!*” when the dative case is used but with the “non-oblique nominative case” (accusative) it is “*Helf mich!*” In some situations, the nominative case is actually used in the place of the accusative case. It is suggested that the accusative case may also be replaced by the non-oblique nominative case, meaning that even as that vestige slowly dies out, the language is still evolving (Boas).

The population of speakers has been decreasing since World War I and II due to “anti-German sentiments” caused by the presence of Nazi Germany (Boas). In 1918, a law that made English the only language taught in schools was passed, limiting the number of children not only learning, but also speaking German. German was, in a way, thought to go against American values so as a result, parents ceased to teach German to their kids, which greatly hurt the proliferation of the language (Remembering). After World War II, the number of German Texas speakers dwindled even more because English not only garnered even more popularity among younger speakers but it was also a symbol of prestige. A predominantly Texas German-speaking town was transformed into an English-speaking town (Boas). Because of the abating number of Texas German speakers, it is estimated that the language will cease to exist in roughly 25 years (Crystal).

Despite the dissipating number of speakers, the Texas German Dialect Project in the Department of Germanic studies at the University of Texas at Austin has been carefully archiving speakers of Texas German in order to preserve the rich culture and language. The archive consists of “audio and textual materials documenting sociolinguistic interviews with native speakers of Texas German” (Welcome).

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# OPERATIONS

## MINUTES OF THE December 1, 2013 MEETING GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Approved—see March mtg. for changes)

**German Texan Heritage Society Meeting**  
December 1, 2013 - German Free School

Meeting called to order at 10 a.m. Minutes prepared by Bob Flocke

**Members present:**

Hans Boas  
Daniel Bode  
Liz Hicks  
Mary Whigham  
Bob Flocke  
Larry Deuser  
Charles Locklin  
Jim Gudenrath  
JT Koenig  
Warren Friedrich

**Members absent:**

Michael Krause  
Julia Kleinheider  
Jim Kearney

**Minutes** for the November 3, 2013, meeting were approved.

**Treasurer's Report/Revenue Issues**--Charles Locklin gave a summary of the current income/expense budget. He noted that cash-back credit card is generating more return than account interest. Account balances as of end of the month in November, are as follows: (Treasurer's Report attached)

Checking	\$11,706.92
Credit Card	\$4,749.71
Savings	\$32,812.21
Investments	\$369,269.75

Charles Locklin also reported on information system upgrades. The GTHS website is pretty much complete. The developer is writing a users manual for the website, and the GTHS staff is receiving training on new website.

**German Trails Project**--Larry Deuser lead a discussion on the proposed action plan (Action Plan attached) for the German Trails Application Project. Information for the site and sponsors are coming in more slowly than expected. The action plan assigns tasks to both board members and to volunteers.

Tasks to be done by each and every board member and volunteers:

Identify content in all parts of Texas include people we can ask to provide it, specific sources or just do it yourself.

For your home region of interest provide details of sources, sponsors or jsut do it yourself.

Recommend individuals/groups to be asked to help and approach them.

Identify one or more advertisers with information that should be eager to help.

Input from San Antonio, Fredericksburg and North Texas has not been available, so special attention needs to be paid to these areas. Larry Deuser said also that there are many challenges facing the project, and that maintenance of the application will be labor intensive. Larry said that he will consult with BarZ--the project contractor--and develop a five-year program for application progress.

The board of directors unanimously agreed to commit to the schedule that Larry recommended. The three months ending on March 1, 2014 will include much activity by board members, volunteers and staff to complete tasks--each will present a status report at the next board meeting. The goal during this period is to significantly increase coverage and content quantity of information, pictures and videos. Several sponsors, donors and advertisers will be signed on to help fund the first year launch for at least \$10,000. Assess status for setting a launch date of May 1, 2014 and allocating resources. Start direct work with BarZ in February to prepare graphics, content insertion, overall operation and testing before launch, but don't pull the trigger without confirmation of available information.

**Election of Officers:** The board elected the following as officers of the board of directors for 2014 by acclamation.  
 Michael Krause, President  
 Charles Locklin, Vice President  
 Secretary, JT Koenig  
 Treasurer, Jim Gudenrath

**Election of Board Members:** In accordance with GTHS bylaws, the board unanimously appointed Mary Whigham as an ex officio member of the board of directors. In other action, the board unanimously appointed Connie Krause to replace Mary Whigham as a board member.

**2014 Annual Meeting**--It was reported that the Comfort Heritage Foundation has invited us to have the 2014 Annual Meeting in Comfort at the VFW Hall for a rental fee of \$200. A drawback is that there is no WIFI. Possible dates are August 1-3, 8-10 and September 27-29. Liz Hicks recommended August 8-10 because it coincides with the anniversary of the True to the Union monument.

A date for the next meeting was not decided upon.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

**German Texan Heritage Society – Full Board Meeting**  
 March 9, 2014 - German Free School, Conference Room  
 (Unapproved)

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m.  
 Minutes prepared by JT Koenig, Secretary

**Members present:**  
 Michael Krause, President  
 Charles Locklin, Vice President  
 Jim Gudenrath, Treasurer  
 JT Koenig, Secretary  
 Connie Krause  
 Larry Dueser  
 Bob Flocke  
 Liz Hicks

**Members absent:**  
 Mary Whigham  
 Julia Kleinheider  
 Jim Kearney

**Guests present:**  
 None

**Initial Discussion** – MK opened the discussion up and it was determined that Hans Boas was taken off the BOD and put instead on the Advisory BOD at the last BOD meeting in December, 2013 .

**Comments on last minutes** – The above change was noted. Also, Credit Card notation in minutes was changed to reflect instead PayPal. Otherwise, the prior BOD minutes were accepted as drafted.

**Topics:**

**Meetings** - MK discussed when the BOD would be meeting, as well as when the Executive Board would be meeting. CK requested that the minutes of the EB be provided to the BOD and that the BOD minutes be printed in the journal. No decision was made on either suggestion.

**BOD appointments** – The BOD failed to provide for an election of the new 2013 members (JK, JG and CK) at the annual 2013 meeting as required by the by-laws. They were appointed but not elected. This will need to be rectified at the 2014 annual meeting in Comfort. The Advisory Board needs to become more active. CK stated they need the BOD to direct them as to the action they should take. Examples; have Van get involved in Trails project, have Rod get involved in publications or property .

development, have Geri get involved in activities project, have Helga get involved in annual fund drive. Van will remain the liaison between the Advisory Board and BOD

**Committee Assignments / Meetings** – No change to assignments, however the meetings should be held the month before the BOD meetings and the chairs should present to the BOD at the quarterly BOD meetings.

**Office Management** – CL advised that no progress had yet been made on personnel and volunteer policy updates or on job descriptions, but he has spent much time with staff and improvements have been made to efficiency and morale.

**Budget & Finance** – JG presented the documentation to the BOD on the subject and BF moved to accept it as written. The movement passed.

**Annual Meeting** – LH reported the progress which had been made in securing a location in Comfort for the 2014 annual meeting. Much discussion had about excursions at the 2014 annual meeting. MK tasked the BOD to gather ideas for next year's annual meeting in 2015 (possibly for Schulenburg, La Grange or Austin). LH asked that GTHS sponsor a vendor table at the National Genealogical Conference in San Antonio. This was agreed to by all.

**Seasonal Events** – Maifest was discussed and CL volunteered to spearhead the effort for having this in 2014 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May. Oktoberfest was also agreed to by the BOD, with CL also volunteering to spearhead the effort to get this going for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in October. Christmas Market was then discussed and while CL agreed to also spearhead this effort insofar as planning it for the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in December, however the effort needs a designated volunteer(s) to do the work. Lastly, Easter was discussed as a possible event for 2015. No agreement on Easter was had and the subject was tabled. JK suggested that Ads be placed in the Texas Highways magazine for all seasonal events and the BOD all agreed. MK encouraged all BOD members to attend all events.

**Membership / Journal** – MK stated that he now had good lists for the membership and that he would be sending out an email asking for renewals from those who did not do so thus far in 2014. LH agreed to work with MK to tackle getting a phone list together so that personal phone appeals could be made to non-renewing members. Recruitment of new members was also discussed. CK asked that a recruitment call be placed in the Journal and that the renewal form also be placed in the Journal. CL suggested the Journal should be electronic, and that the Journal itself should encourage recipients to take it in that form to lessen costs. CK suggested that we procure advertisers for the Journal. MK tasked the BOD to come up with recruitment ideas for the next BOD meeting.

**German Free School Facility** – CL spoke to the numerous rentals which have occurred thus far this year. He spoke to the maintenance which was taking place of the building, grounds and gardens. Walls and rock retaining walls were repaired with grant from Austin of \$4,700.00. He alerted the BOD to a security issue which occurred (a break-in during the SXSW to the patio next to the office and the destruction of the color copier). The awning next to the carport needed to be replaced with a more permanent structure. BOD approved up to \$2,000.00 for this purpose.

**Book Inventory / Library** – CL provided the BOD with his prepared book inventory (of “new books” for sale by the GTHS). CL stated that the library's holdings were previously inventoried by Pam ?, and that Glenn Treib has three books which he loaned GTHS but which had not been returned to him that GTHS needed to find and return to him. JK asked about putting the library's holdings list on the website. This was discussed at length and Wendell Voight was named as a possible resource for helping this get done. It was explained by CK and ? that the past Journals were already scanned and that they too could be put on the website. It was also agreed that the BOD would meet after the meeting to sort the book donations in the basement to help facilitate getting the either donated to a good cause or added to the library or sold for funds. MK will handle what is to be donated. Question was raised as to whether we bulk sell our



“new” books or sell them one by one ourselves. CL was nominated as the “book” manager to help plan what should be done. On the subject of buying more “new” books, CL moved to work with MK and CK to look into buying more “Roemer’s Texas”. Nothing will be done on the Biesele book.

**Texas Trails** – LD spoke to the full BOD about the project, the pending grant applications and potential funding sources. LD did state that turn by turn navigation directions was included in application and that a PC website version is also now available from the vendor.

**German Classes** – CL asked for a brief blurb on the subject in advance of the next BOD meeting, stating that Melanie could prepare such for JK at his Language Classes Sub-Committee meeting. JK agreed to have this ready for next time.

**Memorial Brick Project** – LD and CL moved to proceed with investigating more on the project and CK was tasked with running with such investigation.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.



Founded 1978

## German-Texan Heritage Society

P.O. Box 684171 · Austin, TX 78768-4171  
 Tel: 512-467-4569 - 512-467-4574 fax - Toll Free: 855 892-6691  
 www.germantexans.org info@germantexans.org

Promoting Awareness and Preservation of the German Cultural Heritage of Texas since 1978

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### How do you want to receive correspondence from GTHS?

- The Quarterly *Journal*     email only     usps only  
 Other correspondence     email only     usps only

### Yes, I want to Join/Renew

Category	Annual Dues January thru December <small>(July-December 1/2 price for new members only)</small>	
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 (1/2 price not available)	
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Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 (at same address)	
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	
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# 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

# 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>

## 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)**

**DEADLINE: July 15, 2014**

<b>ADVISORY BOARD</b>
-----------------------

**TEDDY BOEHM, Brenham**  
**CHARLES KALTEYER, Austin**  
**RODNEY KOENIG, Houston**  
**ROBERT BOB NEELY, Bellville**  
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**GERRI WEST, Austin**

**VAN MASSIRER, Crawford - liaison to GTHS Board**

<b>BOOK REVIEW EDITORS</b>
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**GAIL FOLKINS AND KEVIN MITCHELL**

<b>GTHS LIBRARIAN</b>
-----------------------

**PAM TABORSKY, Austin**

<b>GENEALOGY EDITOR</b>
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**LIZ HICKS, Houston**

Send inquiries or responses for family history information to Liz Hicks at 746 Edgebrook Drive, Houston, TX 77034-2030 or email to [erootrot@usa.net](mailto:erootrot@usa.net)

<b>JOURNAL EDITOR</b>
-----------------------

**MARY WHIGHAM, Washington**

<b>WHERE DO YOU SEND THINGS FOR THE JOURNAL?</b>
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Send materials for the *Journal* (announcements, articles, news of reunions, clippings, and other information) to: GTHS *Journal*, c/o Mary Whigham, 16100 McCraven School Rd, Washington, TX 77880-5008 or email to: [mjwhig@texasbb.com](mailto:mjwhig@texasbb.com).

<b>WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING MATERIALS TO THE JOURNAL?</b>
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NEXT ISSUE

FALL 2014  
 WINTER 2014  
 SPRING 2015

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

August 1, 2014  
 November 1, 2014  
 February 1, 2015

<b>POLICY STATEMENT</b>
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Materials sent for *The Journal* will not be returned. All materials must include the contributor's name, a source and a date. All submitted manuscript articles must be typed single-spaced on 8 ½ x 11" white paper with right, left, top, and bottom margins no less than .7 inches. Electronic versions are preferred. Newspaper clippings should NOT be cropped closely. This can be done more accurately with our computer. All German materials must be accompanied by an English text. All submissions will be reviewed by the *Journal* editor and the Publications Committee. They have the right and responsibility to refuse materials that may not be in accordance with GTHS policies. The German-Texan Heritage Society, its volunteer *Journal* editors and its paid office staff are not responsible for errors or misinformation in submitted articles. All editors are volunteers, and are not paid for their services.

**GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
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**2014 ANNUAL MEETING in  
Comfort—August 8, 9—  
INFO INSIDE —  
Registration deadline is July 25—**

**Nominations for Ehrenstern  
Award due July 25 -  
See back of Journal for form**

**HAVE YOU RENEWED  
YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

***Promoting awareness and preservation of the  
German cultural heritage of Texas***