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2016 Annual Conference

September 23 & 24, 2016

Save the date! *The German Texan Heritage Society* 2016 Annual Conference will be held in the beautiful Hanslik Hall at the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center located at 250 W. Fairgrounds Road La Grange, TX 78945



Inter-Cultural Relations with Germans in Texas

As Germans moved into Texas, they found others here from different cultures. Our conference will examine the interactions between these peoples, the elements of German *Kultur* brought to Texas, and how this mix of cultures created what we know as Texas today.

Our speakers will include:

Friday

Dr. Walter Kamphoefner: German-Slavic Relations in Texas and the Midwest
Dr. David Chroust: Lives among Germans and Memories of Germany
Dr. Kenneth Hafertepe: The Material Culture of German Texans
Dr. Marc Pierce: Investigating Texas German in the 21st Century

Saturday

Dr. Christopher Wickham: Cultural Intermediary in Texas: Emil Kriewitz
Dr. James Kearney: Friedrich Strubberg and the Penateka Comanches
Dr. Kay Goldman: The Evolution of an Identity: From Jewish, to German, to Texan
Matthias Fingerhuth, M.A.: Semantic Variation in Texas German Language Shift



On Saturday we will also have our annual membership meeting and tours of the area. The grounds of the Texas Czech Heritage & Cultural Center have a number of historical homes and buildings which contain items from the late 1800's and early 1900's.

On Sunday, September 25, you are invited to attend the Texas Wendish Heritage Society's annual Wendish Fest in nearby Serbin, Texas. A German Church service will be held at 10:30 am in the St Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin next to the festival grounds. Enjoy the famous Wendish Noodles and learn about those "other Germans" at the Wendish Fest!



Watch the *E-Kurier* for updates on the program and other information! <http://www.germantexans.org>

OUR SPEAKERS

Dr. James Kearney will speak about his research on the relationship between Friedrich Strubberg and the Comanches. His paper is entitled “Friedrich Armand Strubberg and the Penateka Comanches of Central TX.” Dr. Kearney received a cross-disciplinary Ph.D. in history and German from the Department of Germanic Studies at UT-Austin where he currently works as an adjunct instructor in history. His publications include – Nassau Plantation: The Evolution of a German Texas Slave Plantation (University of North Texas Press, 2010) which was nominated for the Tullis award; Friedrichsburg by Friedrich Armand Strubberg which he translated, annotated, and illustrated (University of Texas Press, 2012) which was the winner of the Summerfield G. Roberts Award for the best Texas Book of 2012; “European Immigration in Texas in the 19th Century,” in Appreciating Texas History, Bruce Glasrud and Light Townsend Cummins, eds. (University of Oklahoma Press;) Co-author of a translation of Detlev Dunt’s Reise nach Texas im Jahre 1833, with critical annotation, which was the first book published in Germany about Texas. He is currently under contract with the University of Texas Press for another book entitled, The Complete History of The Society for the Protection of German Emigrants in Texas. A GTHS board member, he has recently been elected as a member of the TX Institute of Letters for his scholarship on German-Texans.

Dr. Christopher Wickham, a professor of German at the University of TX at San Antonio, will present “Cultural Intermediary in TX: Emil Kriewitz between Germans and Comanches.” Dr. Wickham received a B.A. in German and Linguistics and an M.Phil. in German from the University of Reading (UK). His doctorate was earned in German Literature at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He has served on the UTSA Faculty Senate and the national executive council of the American Association of Teachers of German. He is on the editorial board of *Monatshefte für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur*. Dr. Wickham was for many years a summer faculty member at the prestigious German School at Middlebury College and leads the study abroad program UTSA in Munich. He is the author of *Constructing Heimat in Postwar Germany: Longing and Belonging* and is co-editor of *Framing the Past: The Historiography of German Cinema and Television* and “Was in den alten Büchern steht . . .”: Neue Interpretationen von der Aufklärung zur Moderne. His published articles include studies on Austrian and German cinema, German poetry, dialect, regional culture, portrayals of Native Americans by German painters, and the writer, botanist and traveler, Adelbert von Chamisso.

Dr. Kenneth Hafertepe, chair of the Department of Museum studies at Baylor University, will present material from his latest two books, The Material Culture of German Texans, and Historic Buildings of Fredericksburg and Gillespie Co. Prior to his arrival at Baylor he was director of academic programs at Historic Deerfield, a museum of New England history and art. He serves as the chair of the Committee on Museum Professional Training of the American Association of Museums. A long-time member of the Texas State Historical Association, he has served on several program committees and chaired that committee twice. He is also a longtime member of the Society of Architectural Historians. He is the author of numerous books and articles on such historic buildings as the Smithsonian Castle, the French Legation in Austin, and the Spanish Governor's Palace in San Antonio, as well as a biography of Abner Cook, the architect of the Texas Governor's Mansion. He holds the master's and doctoral degrees in American civilization from the University of Texas at Austin. His areas of specialization include American material culture, decorative arts, and historic preservation.

Dr. Walter Kamphoefner will present, “German-Slavic Relations in Texas and the Midwest.” Of Missouri German heritage, he earned his Ph.D. at University of Missouri-Columbia in 1978 and has been professor of history at Texas A&M since 1988, where he teaches in the field of immigration history. He was recognized by his peers in the Organization of American Historians as a Distinguished Lecturer for 2012-17. Currently president of the Society for German-American Studies, he has published widely in the field of immigration and ethnicity, with articles in four languages and three books out in both German and English. One of the pioneers of transatlantic linkage studies with his monograph *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton, 1987), he has since worked intensively with immigrant letters, but also has research interests in bilingual education and the immigrant language transition. Since arriving at Texas A&M, he has taken Booker T. Washington’s advice to “cast down your bucket where you are,” so that he now knows almost as much about Texas Germans as about those in his native Missouri.

Dr. David Chroust earned his Ph.D. in history from TX A&M where he works as a Slavic Resources Librarian at Cushing Memorial Library and Archives. A specialist in Czech history his dissertation concerned the development of the Czech language press in 19th century America, the role it played in Czech involvement in the labor movement

of the late 19th century and the relationship of the Czech and German labor leaders. His paper is entitled, "Lives among Germans and Memories of Germany: Writings from Czechs in America," and follows the theme of his dissertation discussing the interaction of Germans and Czechs of this era.

Dr. Marc Pierce, an associate professor of German at UT-Austin, will present "Investigating TX German in the 21st Century." Dr. Pierce received his Ph.D. in German Linguistics from the University of Michigan. His areas of professional interests are historical linguistics, Germanic linguistics and philology, and Scandinavian studies. His published research is mainly in the areas of historical linguistics and the history of linguistics, and he teaches a variety of courses in Germanic linguistics and philology (including the history of the German language, various older Germanic languages, and the structure of the German language.) He also teaches courses in German language and literature, the history of linguistics, Scandinavian literature, and Great Books. His published works include studies of TX German as part of the TX German Dialect Project.

Adams LaBorde will present "Teaching History through Language Games: The German and Comanche Treaty." He is a former graduate student at the UT-Austin Department of Germanic studies. There he studied the historical development of German and Germanic languages. In addition to German, he is proficient in Old and Middle High German, Old Saxon, Old English, and Old Icelandic. His presentation is of a semester-long role playing game co-developed with Dr. David Huenlich and Devon Donahue-Bergeler with help from Dr. James Kearney. The game teaches both German language and German-Texan history by having students assume roles of various figures involved in the Meusebach-Comanche Treaty.

Matthias Fingerhuth will present "Semantic Variation in TX German Language Shift." A former assistant instructor of German at UT-Austin where he is a doctoral candidate in Germanic Studies, he recently received a fellowship to complete his Ph.D. He received the equivalent of a B.A. from the University of Cologne, where he also received his M.A. in Germanic studies, English Studies, Medieval and Modern History. As a participant in the TX German Dialect project his work, in part, focuses on the development of TX German, the focus of his master's thesis, and of his presentation. He is currently working on a professional paper he will submit for publication about New Braunfels German.

Interested in her German-Jewish heritage, Dr. Kay Goldman pursued that interest earning a Ph.D. in history from TX A&M with her dissertation concerning the immigration of 19th century German-Jewish Texans. More recently she has become interested in the ethnic identity of German-Jewish immigrants in Texas. An independent researcher, she will soon publish a book chapter in Texas Identities: Moving beyond Myth, Memory and Fallacy in Texas History. She has also published the annotated memoir of Rebecca Cohen Mayer who traveled on the Santa Fe Trail with her husband Henry in 1852 and Dressing Modern Maternity: The Frankfurt Sisters of Dallas and the Page Boy Label winner of the initial Lou Halsell Rodenberger Prize in Texas History and Literature. Her presentation is entitled: The Evolution of an Identity: From Jewish, to German to Texan.

2016 German Texan Heritage Society Annual Meeting September 23 & 24, 2016

Hanslik Hall at the Texas Czech Heritage and
Cultural Center located at
250 W. Fairgrounds Road La Grange, TX 78945



Program Advertisements

The 2016 Annual Meeting of the German-Texan Heritage Society (GTHS) will be held in La Grange, Texas, Saturday, September 24th, 2016. 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 or organization as a memorial or in honor of someone. The German-Texan Heritage Society is a designated IRS 501(c) (3) organization, and as such is tax exempt.

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For questions about advertising in the Conference Program, please contact Manuela Markley at gths4manuela@gmail.com or call 512-467-4569.

Thank you for supporting your non profit.

Calling all Texans of German heritage!

The **Texas German Dialect Project**
at the **University of Texas at Austin**

NEEDS *YOUR* HELP

100 years ago, **Texas German**—a dialect of German completely unique to Central Texas—was spoken by over 100,000 Texas Germans. Now, with less than ~6,000 speakers, it is on the verge of dying out.

In an effort to preserve the language, history and culture of the Texas Germans for future generations, the **TGDP** at **UT Austin** is interviewing and recording Texas German speakers, and creating an online archive of their language and stories.

**Help us preserve this precious and unique
aspect of German culture in
Texas—BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE**

(512) 910-5047

texasgermandialect@gmail.com

<http://www.tgdp.org/support>

See Page 91 for Details on how to order this wonderful 34" by 28" map—proceeds benefit the Texas German Dialect Project headed by Hans Boas at the University of Texas

German TEXAS

German immigrants and their descendants form the most significant European element in the history of the settlement of Texas. German immigration to Texas began in the early 1830s, when Texas was still part of Mexico. Organized immigration began with the Adelsverein in the 1840s and continued into the 1850s, after revolutions in Europe sent politically oppressed people fleeing the continent. After the German city-states and Prussia were unified in 1871, Texas saw a decrease in European immigration. For decades, Germans continued to form a distinctive group of Texans, but it became unpoplar to be German following World War I, and Texans of German ancestry began to integrate more into American society.

German immigrants first settled around the town of Austin County, and along the wagon trail that stretched from the Gulf port of Indianola north to Fredericksburg. After the construction of the railroads made the interior of Texas more accessible, Germans moved north and west, settling towns like Muenster near the Red River and Marienfeld in the Great Plains.

Although German Texans have become integrated into American society to a large extent, areas around the original settlements still retain a distinctly German flavor, from the German names of major roads in northern San Antonio to the 8,000-10,000 people who still speak Texas German today.

Komm mit nach Texas!

Timeline of German Texas

- 1831** Johann Friedrich Ernst received a land grant in the northwestern part of present-day Austin County from the Mexican government. He started farming and filed the area so much that he wrote glowing letters home to his native Odenburg, Germany. Ernst's praises of Texas were soon published in the book *Reise nach Texas*, which had a stable effect on German opinions about Texas.
- 1832 - 1840** Inspired by Ernst and other publications detailing the abundances of Texas, a steady stream of German immigrants moved into the area. Most settled what are now Austin, Fayette, and Colorado Counties.
- 1836** Some Germans actively participated in the Texas Revolution, winning the state independence from Mexico. One of these, a Prussian survivor named Herman Ehrenberg was a survivor of the Goliad Massacre who wrote about his experiences in *With Milan and Fannin: The Adventures of a German Boy in Texas' Revolution*.
- 1838** Ernst established a settlement on his farm, which eventually became Industry. It is said the name was inspired by the hard working Germans in the area. Tobacco was an important crop; the town produced cigars and other goods.
- 1842 April** A group of twenty-one noblemen in Germany set up the Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas) - also known as the Adelsverein. The major goals of the society were to acquire land in Texas for settlement and to create a German colony in the New World. They expected to make a profit as the land became populated and developed.
- 1842 Mai** The Adelsverein sent two men, Counts Joseph Boss-Waldeck and Victor August von Leiningen-Westerburg Ab Leiningen to the Republic of Texas in order to purchase land for new settlements. The two men visited the coastal regions of Texas and naively thought that the entire country was it was there.
- 1844** Meanwhile, west of San Antonio, Henri Castro began settling his land with immigrants from Alsace. The town they founded, Castoville, was laid out like an European village. It soon became known as "Little Alsace."
- 1844 Juni** The Adelsverein purchased rights to settle parts of the Fisher-Miller Grant in Central Texas. The mostly arid region between the Llano and Colorado Rivers and was never inspected by representatives of the organization, though it was touted as an advantageous investment. Adelsverein commissioner Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels began purchasing land and establishing the infrastructure necessary to transport settlers to Texas.
- 1844 Dezember** The first Adelsverein immigrants arrived in Carlshafen via Galveston. They had come by ship from Europe and were expected to build new communities in Texas.
- 1845 März** since there were no provisions for the settlement of the Fisher-Miller Grant, the first German settlers began building a town near Comal Springs. Solms-Braunfels named it after his European estate, and the town of New Braunfels came into existence.
- 1845 Mai** Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels returned to his army career. John O. Meusebach replaced him as the Adelsverein manager in Texas. Unlike Prince Carl, Meusebach remained in Texas and later became a member of the state senate.
- 1846** Meusebach founded the town of Fredericksburg on 11,000 acres of land. The three major German towns in Texas - Carlshafen, New Braunfels, and Fredericksburg - were all way-stations along the route from the coast to the Fisher-Miller territory
- 1848** As revolutions wracked Europe, many of the literate class seeking political freedom fled the continent. Many well-educated people left Germany for Texas in the ensuing years, and established colonies known as "Latin Settlements" (at Latium, Comfrey and other sites) to pursue more ethereal activities such as writing, music, philosophy and politics. Most of the Latin Settlements did not last long, as many of the so-called 48ers soon moved to larger cities.
- 1849** Victor Witte and other 48ers established the town of Comfrey in Washington County, while other 48ers organized a commune that would later become the town of Boerne.
- 1850s** Unstructured German immigration continued, mostly through the port of Indianola. As the number of settlers in Texas increased, so did the number of encouraging reports in letters to friends and relatives in Germany. This attracted more immigrants, eager to flee the instability of Northern Europe during the 1850s.
- 1860s** Texas joined the Confederacy a few months before the start of the Civil War. With Union blockades of Confederate ports, immigration from Europe in Texas all but ceased during the war. The 48ers took a very pro-Union stance, and supported the emancipation of slaves. Fifty-six percent of voters in Gillespie County voted against secession, which put them, and by extension all German Texans, regardless of their political leanings, at odds with Confederate Texas.
- 1860s** Immigration increased after the war, but never quite reached the level it had before 1860. As access to water increased and transportation between Central, Northern and Northwestern Texas improved, Germans began moving into more remote regions.
- 1900** Texas was home to about 200,000 ethnic Germans, who constituted about 6% of the state's population. Most remained in Central Texas.



The house in which Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels lived. He lived here from 1832 until 1837. The house is now a museum, the first of its kind in Texas.

New Braunfels

The first German immigrants to settle New Braunfels were led by Nicolas Zirk. In March of 1845 they built the house where the Goliad-Boerne Road meets Central Creek on a site chosen by Adelsverein leader Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels. Within a few weeks, the prince had foundations laid for the Sophienberg which was meant to be the immigration society's headquarters. The town's original permanent main square was located on the road between San Antonio and Austin, as well as on the main road that immigrants traveled inland from the Gulf. New Braunfels soon prospered and by 1850, it was reported as the fourth largest town in Texas.

Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels

Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels (1812-1876), founder of the town of New Braunfels, grew up in Germany and had royal lineage linking him to the royal families of England, Belgium, and Russia. He was a general in the Austrian Army, and in 1847 was promoted to captain of cavalry in the Austrian Imperial Army. He held assignments in Eastern Europe, Bohemia, and the Rhineland. While stationed at the garrison of Betschke he read Charles Sade's *Fanny Hill*, was attracted to the town, and became enamored with the idea of German settlement in Texas. He took a job offer from two army doctors to direct German immigration to Texas as the commissioner of the Adelsverein.

Solms-Braunfels established Carlshafen as a port for German immigrants and named it after himself. He worked diligently to bring Germans to Texas who would build their lives in the area. He was named as the barkeeper of the local's Anglo settlers. Subsequently, he founded New Braunfels, named after his ancestral hometown of Braunfels in Hesse, and returned to Germany in May 1845. In 1846 he published a state guide to Texas. Solms-Braunfels continued his military career in Europe, serving in the Austro-Prussian War, and retired as a general in 1860. He died in 1876, and he is still remembered for his tireless promotion of German immigration to Texas.



The house in which John O. Meusebach lived. He lived here from 1846 until 1850. The house is now a museum, the first of its kind in Texas.

Fredericksburg

Fredericksburg was founded on May 6, 1846 by John O. Meusebach when 120 settlers arrived from New Braunfels. He named it after Prince Friedrich of Prussia, an influential member of the Adelsverein. Surveyor Hermann Witte laid out the town along the same lines as the German family village along the Rhine River. Fredericksburg was intended as a way station on the road from the Gulf of Mexico to the Adelsverein's land north of the Llano River. In reality it became the end of the road for many Germans heading into Texas.

Fredericksburg became one of the largest German towns in Texas. The first newspaper in town, the *Fredericksburg*, was established in 1857. Until 1860, almost all of the town's residents spoke Texas German. With the arrival of the rail system in 1913, the town became more cosmopolitan. Today, Fredericksburg is an important commercial center and tourism plays a large role in its economy.



The Nueces Massacre monument in Comstock.

The Nueces Massacre

The Nueces Massacre took place on August 10, 1862. This violent confrontation between Confederate soldiers and Texas Germans occurred in Kinney County in southern Texas, when sixty-one peaceful German Texans fled to Mexico to avoid the Confederate army draft. They were overtaken by southern soldiers. Thirty-four Germans were killed. The force of their movement in Comstock commemorates the event. It is the only Union Civil War monument in the south and west of Germany.

Indianola

Sam White and William Cook founded Indian Point in 1846. Two years earlier, Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels had selected an adjacent area as the landing place for immigrants from Germany and named it Carlshafen. Briefly, the two places were distinct settlements, but in February of 1849 they jointly became known as Indianola. The name is preserved in two settlement names: Solms and New Braunfels.

Indianola developed into an important deepwater port and supplied German immigrants, US Army units and Anglo farmers alike. Additionally, it was the closest Gulf port to San Diego, California, and became the western terminus of the transcontinental route to the Pacific Ocean. Indianola quickly became the second largest port in Texas after Galveston and the 1850s was selected as the terminus for Charles Morgan's transatlantic line. Indianola was so important in the Civil War that Union gunboats sailed from New Orleans to occupy and loot the city in October of 1862. When rebels it boosted a population numbering more than 1,000. In September of 1875, Indianola suffered a direct and catastrophic hit from a hurricane that killed much of the population and destroyed the city. It was rebuilt, but then was again obliterated by a hurricane in 1886, and by 1890 the site of the city had been completely abandoned. It is remembered as an important site for Europeans who applied it to their land in the 19th century.

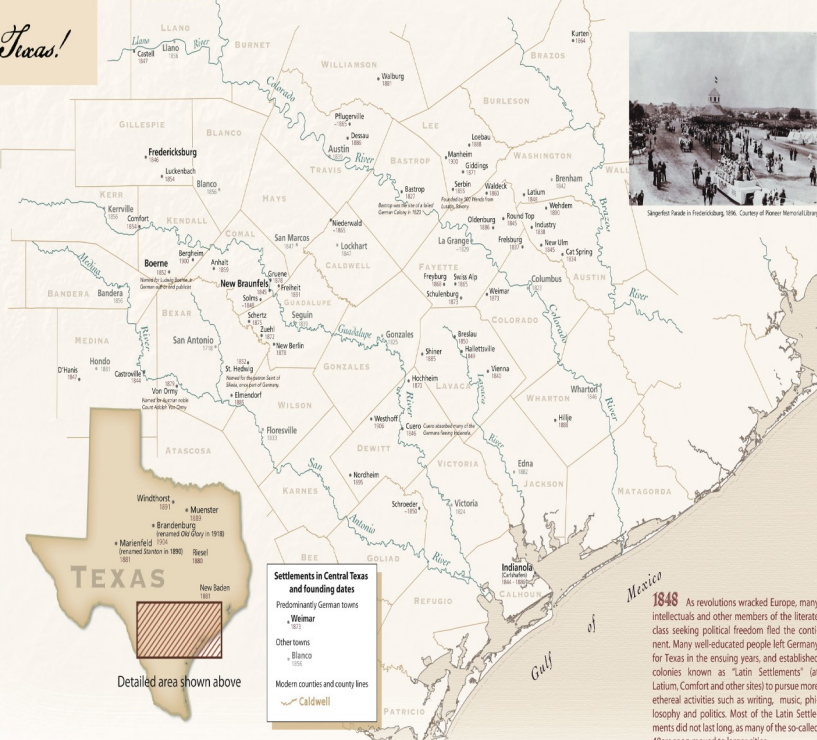
Bringing Music from Abroad

Though German appreciation for music was common cultural knowledge, the immigrant musical presence in the new home became noticeably lively only after the successful settling of the land by the Adelsverein in 1844. In the following years, singing and playing instruments in groups became popular. In 1853, the numerous organized German singing societies held a Singers' (Singer) in New Braunfels and formed the Texas State Singers' (Singer) in 1856. However, many of the local singing groups have survived and still give regular performances, especially at festivals like Wurstfest, Oktoberfest, and Oktoberfest, where dancers and the four German folk bands. Additionally, most of all, can still be heard at various country dance halls founded by Germans, such as Greiner Hall.

Texas German

Texas German is a group of dialects present in the state, once heavily spoken in Germany to the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico. In the 1840s, those Germans quickly became predominant in the area by the end of the 19th century. It was spoken by nearly 90% of the residents of Comal County. There were also many German language newspapers, schools, churches and social clubs at this time. However, German language and culture became unpopular with the advent of World War I, and today only an estimated 8,000-10,000 people speak Texas German.

English	Texas German	Std. German
skunk	des Strinkkatze	das Stinktier
alpine	das Luftschiff	das Flugzeug
without	mitaus	ohne
wherever	wannere	was auch immer
ferce	die Fencce	die Zaun
water faucet	der Wasserhahn	der Wasserhahn



Revised by Hans Boas, participation of Hans Boas, University of Texas at Austin

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OPERATIONS

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In Memoriam



Joyce Schroeder Nelson

Joyce Schroeder Nelson of Austin, age 85, died May 9, 2016. Joyce Schroeder Nelson was born on July 16, 1930, to Otto and Amelia Schroeder in Dime Box, Texas. She was reared in the community of Wesley, graduated from Brenham High School, and the Brackenridge Hospital School of Nursing.

In 1950, she married F. Murphy Nelson M.D. While Joyce and Murphy lived in Galveston she worked as an operating room nurse in the Special Surgery Unit of John Sealy Hospital.

After moving to Austin in 1956, she became an active member of the Women's Auxiliary to the Travis County Medical Society. For many years she worked to recruit future nurses and health care personnel in the Austin area and throughout the state. Joyce served as president of the Women's Auxiliary of the Travis County Medical Society and Health Career Chairman for the Women's Auxiliary of the Texas Medical Association.

A life-long member of the Lutheran Church, Joyce was an active member of St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Austin since 1956. Joyce was a faithful member of the Women of St Martin's Lutheran Church, serving the organization as President for four years. She was also a past president of the Church's Alter Guild.

Joyce was preceded in death by her husband, Murphy and brother Otto Schroeder. She is survived by her children Sandra Kristoferson and husband John of Denton, Texas; David Nelson and wife Carol of Marble Falls, Texas; Stuart Nelson and wife Beth of Austin, Texas; grandchildren, Joel Kristoferson and wife Tara Kaufmann M.D., Kari Chambers and husband Patrick, Kyle Kristoferson, Courtland Kristoferson, Scott Nelson and Clay Nelson; great-grandchild Hudson Chambers; step-grandchildren Catherine Bedell and husband Kent, Dave Helms and wife Amy; step-great-grandchildren Hayden Bedell, Harper Bedell, Alison Helms and Rachel Helms; a sister, Angeline Eckermann of Houston; sister-in-law, Ann Schroeder of Austin; numerous nieces and nephews; and close friends Margaret Hitzfeld, Dennis Sweazea, Matt Wall and Dwayne McAdams.

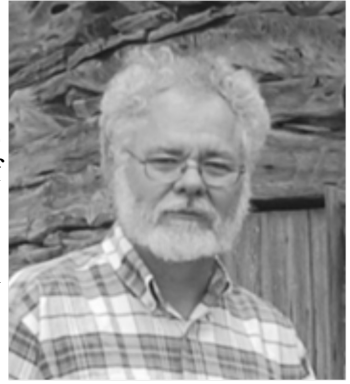
Friends, desiring to do so, may make memorial contributions to the St. Martin's Lutheran Church Alter Guild or Hospice Austin.

Funeral services will be held at 11 :00 a.m. on Monday, May 16, 2016 at St. Martin's Lutheran Church, 606 W. 15th Street. Interment will be private.

Obituary and memorial guestbook available online at www.wcfish.com

Joyce was a long time member of GTHS and was responsible for my joining the organization in 1995. She was an active participant in the Christmas Market and Maifest and for many years baked the little ginger bread men for the bags of goodies given by St. Nickolas to the children attending the Market. At Maifest she could usually be found in the apartment kitchen slicing buns for the sausage sandwiches or slicing the apple strudel to be put on plates and covered with clear wrap, ready for sale. She loved attending the annual meetings and catching up with old friends. We attended many of the annual meetings in the late '90's and up until about 2007, when Joyce became a devoted caretaker for her husband in his waning years. For many years she was always a willing volunteer to work on "mail outs" for the office. We always had a fun time laughing and talking while getting the work done efficiently. If Jim West was around at the time, he would always amuse us with his "corny" jokes and good humor. Those were good times, times I will always remember fondly when I think of my dearest friend Joyce. May she rest in well deserved peace. **Memories from Margaret Hitzfield, Round Rock**

President's Notes



Guten Tag!

Your GTHS Executive Board and Board of Directors have been planning and working on a number of issues important to the society. Some of these are routine annual events and others are non-routine matters which have possible long term consequences and benefits.

First, planning is near completion for the 2016 Annual meeting which will be in La Grange, Texas. Be sure to save the date in your schedule, - Friday and Saturday, September 23rd and 24th, 2016. The meeting will be at the Texas Czech Heritage Facility. We are planning many exciting events including formal presentations, entertainment, and tours of several local attractions. Some of the tours and events will provide you with access to unique places so be sure to check out our formal program that will be coming out soon.

Second, we have been continuing to evaluate possible sources of revenue to sustain the society. Our membership is continuing to slowly decline and we need to determine ways to generate sufficient income to continue our present level of member services. I encourage each of you to solicit new members and communicate any ideas you may have to generate revenue for the society to a board member.

We have a number of members that have been asked to represent their communities by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). We applaud the THC and all those that will provide historical background and information on their German Texan history and continuing German Texas contributions in Texas for the THC German Texan Heritage Trail Web site and booklet.

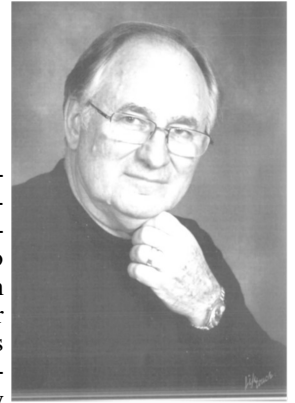
Speaking of our Culture and Heritage, I was amazed at the Czech Heritage Center in La Grange and how they have been able to keep the younger people involved. I realize that it might be hard in this day with all the electronic devices. However I would like you to consider things like presently your grandchildren or great-grandchildren a heirloom and photo of the person it belonged to. You could do this when they come for a visit and also tell them about the relative and even put this history on paper in your handwriting as a special memory. My wife received a necklace that belonged to her great-grandmother as a gift – she luckily knew Ida as a small child and spent time with her for many years so the necklace was a great memory of Ida from Connie's Oma. Another thing to consider is teaching the young ones to count by playing "An Sezten" or straight dominoes with them. This is even fun for the older ones that may not have learned when they were young. Then as the children grow older, you can teach them "Shoot the Moon" and eventually "42". Only we can preserve our Culture and Heritage – no one else will do it for us!!!!

I look forward to seeing you at this year's convention. In the meantime, don't forget to tell your German friends about GTHS, invite them join and come 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)



Known as the "First Lady of Texas," Ima Hogg was born in Mineola in 1882, the only daughter of Texas governor "Big Jim" Hogg. Ima Hogg became an arts patron and a philanthropist. She helped establish the Houston Symphony Orchestra in 1913. She also founded several mental health programs focused on education. But perhaps her most tangible legacy is found in the historic properties she gave to the state. Those include the Varner-Hogg Plantation near West Columbia and the Winedale museum near Round Top. Winedale, located near Round Top, is a division of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at The University of Texas at Austin. Winedale preserves and makes accessible its research collections of nineteenth-century buildings and their period furnishings, sponsors public programs, and serves as a conference site for nonprofit educational groups. Miss Ima, as she was widely known, had a fine connection to German-Texans. As a child in the Governor's Mansion, she learned German at the knee of a maid in the Mansion. Later, fluent in German, she spent two years in Berlin studying piano, and made many pilgrimages to Germany to hear operas and concerts. Miss Ima's connection to Winedale started with her friend, Hazel Ledbetter, buying the Wagner homestead, an architecturally significant house at Winedale in Fayette County, and convincing her friend, Miss Ima into making the restoration a site to study German culture - architecture and furniture- which had been transplanted to Texas. She was fascinated to learn of the indigenous Texas-German culture. Hence the opportunity to combine her loves of Texas and Germany was realized. She brought in other buildings to the original site. She decided to donate the restored property at Winedale to her beloved alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin. Many of us attend the annual Shakespeare at Winedale Festival each summer and think of Miss Ima. I saw "Much Ado About Nothing", "Romeo and Juliette", and "King John" at Miss Ima's Winedale earlier this 2016 summer. Miss Ima has indeed Left Her German Mark!

Miss Ima's legacy also includes her masterpiece, Bayou Bend. It was her stately home on Buffalo Bayou in Houston. Each room was appointed with authentic early American furniture and significant art. In 1957, she gave the home, its collection along with the surrounding grounds and gardens to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She continued to add to the collection until her death in 1975. The Varner-Hogg Plantation, which Ima Hogg donated to the state in 1957, is now a Texas Historical Commission property. Visitors can see the majestic plantation house, pecan orchards, numerous original outbuildings, and outdoor features including James S. Hogg's bathtub, second owner Columbus Patton's cemetery, and sugarcane mill ruins.



Ima Hogg, ca. 1900. Image courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

In the 1840s, German noblemen formed the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas (Verein zum Schutz deutscher Einwanderer in Texas). Also known as the Adelsverein, the Society had both philanthropic and commercial aims. Its initial base was its showplace 4,000-acre Nassau Plantation just south of Winedale. The Society's commissioner-general, Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, dashed about the countryside near Round Top with his fellow nobles and hosted lavish parties and horse races. The Society eventually promoted German colonies farther to the west to avoid Anglo-American influences. By the time it went bankrupt in 1848, the Society had brought in more than 7,000 settlers and firmly established Texas as a destination for succeeding generations of German immigrants.

By 1860, German settlers in the Round Top vicinity owned 129 farms, and Round Top was becoming a largely German community. German immigrants introduced new cultural elements into the area's predominantly Anglo and African American society. They brought their own language, food, architecture, music and art, and the Lutheran Church. The Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Round Top (f. 1866) houses a hand-carved cedar pipe organ built by Johann Traugott Wandke. The half-timbered Kneip home, now known as the Schueddemagen House, nearby typifies the Texas-German town house of the 1800s.

Joseph George Wagner, a cobbler from Breslau (Silesia), immigrated to Fayette County in 1853 and settled in Round Top in 1854. Just before the Civil War he had saved enough money to buy land on the Nassau Farm. During the Civil War, Wagner made shoes for the Confederate army. By 1882, ready to add to his holdings, he purchased the fine old house that William Townsend had begun and Samuel Lewis had completed. Wagner's purchase of Lewis's house reflected a general pattern in the region after the Civil War: the transformation of large Anglo plantations into smaller, but prosperous, German farms. The elder Wagner lived in the house until his death in 1899, and his descendants lived there until the early 1960s. Their home is the one that Miss Ima donated to UT.



Portraits of Joseph and Maria Wagner, ca. 1880s.

Rudolph Melchior (d. 1868) was one of the many skilled craftsmen and artists who came to the Round Top-Winedale area in the 1850s. He later resided in the community of intellectuals at Latium in nearby Washington County. Melchior applied his decorative artistry to the many fine homes in the region, including the residence at Winedale now known as the Wagner House. In the upstairs parlor of the home, Melchior's ceiling art depicts the four seasons, with a central wreath of morning glories framing a green parrot, a favorite German motif. The source for his decorative ideas can be seen in Melchior's Tage Buch, or "Day Book," of sketches made on his journey to Texas in 1853.



Wagner House decorative art by Rudolph Melchior, ca. 1850s, photograph by Rick Williams.
Winedale Photograph Collection

How will you Leave Your German Mark? Will you help restore historic German-Texan buildings as Miss Ima did? Will you take the time to review your will or life insurance beneficiary designation to include GTHS or the German Department of your University? Will you check your IRA, 401(k) or 403(b) plan to include a German Charity as a named beneficiary? Of course you should take care of your family, but do consider leaving 10% of your estate or a fixed dollar amount to support the GTHS Journal or the outreach efforts of your favorite German cultural group. For assistance in leaving your German Mark, please call me at 713-651-5333 or email me at Rodney.Koenig@NortonRoseFulbright.com. You may also call any of our officers or Board Members shown in the inside cover of the Journal. In any event you should Leave Your German Mark.

Genealogy Inquiries: Liz Hicks, Genealogy Editor

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

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



Hering – Kush

Hubert Sehr, Im Trift 5, 56479 Hellenhahn-Schellenberg, Germany, e-mail: hubertundrositasehr-hellenhahn@t-online.de would like to find relatives of the brother of his great grandmother. Wilhelm (William) Hering came from Germany to Bexar County, Texas. He was born 21 December 1847, and died September 29, 1936 in San Antonio, Texas. His last known residence was 116 Wyoming St., San Antonio, TX. Some of the surnames who may be “Cousins” are: **Praeger, Pruske, Bernhard, Hering** of San Antonio; **Bernhard** Boerne, Texas; **Schulze**, Floresville, Texas. I would like to hear from any cousin, even “distant” ones.

Reply: William Hering’s Texas Death Certificate has parents: Joseph and Maria Gross Hering both born Germany. Occupation: Cabinet Maker. Place of burial: St. Michael’s Polish Cemetery, San Antonio, TX; phone: (210) 649-1248, Zizik-Kearns Undertaking Company.

1900 US Federal Census for Bexar County, Texas, San Antonio: (Wyoming Street) year of immigration given was 1877 Lists William and Francis’s children: John Hering age 17 born 1883 Annie 25 Mary 23 William 21 Kate 19 Lizzie 16 Tillie 13

1910 Bexar County Census does not include son, John, but lists Cecilia age 9 and Son, George age 7 and other children listed on 1900 census. Since John would have been about 27 years old, he may have been living by himself, and may be the John Hering born 1883 who died 3 June 1956 in Taylor, Williamson Co., TX. He is buried in the Bryan City Cemetery in Bryan, Texas.

Year of immigration given for William Hering on the 1910 census was 1884. By the 1920 census William states he is naturalized.

How Did WWI affect the German Language in Texas?

Mr. Charles Eckert, e-mail: masonchc_tx@yahoo.com would like to know if there is any information on how WWI affected the German language in Texas. Mason Texas Historical Society is looking for information for a speaker series or speaker.

Reply: GTHS board member, Richard Gruetzner, provides this information. Matthew Tippens addresses this topic in his book, “Turning Germans into Texans” (see <https://www.amazon.com/Turning-Germans-into-Texans-Assimilation/dp/0984357203>). Mr. Tippens gives talks on the subject, and lives in New Braunfels area.

Henry Hofheintz (J. Henry Hofheintz)

Suzanne Faught e-mail: Suzanne.faught@gmail.com My ancestor was Henry Hofheintz, German Free School Trustee, another was his daughter, Catherine Hofheintz, a GFS student. Henry established and ran a store in Austin, the main buildings still stand as the Moonshine Grill, corner of 3rd and Red River. The store was in operation for 98 years until it closed in 1952. I have just started genealogy research on this side of my family.

Reply: J. Henry Hofheintz (probably Johann Heinrich Hofheintz) was an 1872 Trustee of the German Free School. Actually, there were two Hofheintz students. Elizabeth and Katherine Hofheintz appear on the 1858 list of students. Katherine married George Kuempel. Henry (1822-1880) is buried with family members in historic Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, Texas.

I did not find Henry on the WPA Index to Texas Naturalizations Texas State District and County Courts 1846-1939 (microfilm). I checked the 1867 Voters Registration lists for Travis County. Henry said he became naturalized as being in Texas at the time of Annexation. It appears your Henry Hofheintz was a Fisher-Miller colonist. He was granted 320 acres part of Bexar Co. then, now Tom Green County, TX and sold his land grant to a M.A. Dooley. It's survey #227, 320 acres, which means he was a single man at time of grant. Land is on the Rio Concho River. This

from the Texas General Land Office land patent search.

http://www.glo.texas.gov/ncu/SCANDOCs/archives_webfiles/arcmaps/webfiles/landgrants/PDFs/1/5/7/157725.pdf

References for genealogists:

The Grand Duchy of Oldenburg Emigrants celebrate the 100,000 person mark. The database contains the emigrant and family members they could trace in Germany or the Country to which the emigrant migrated. Database: <http://www.auswanderer-oldenburg.de>

Helpful research tips:

Latin Genealogy Word List – https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List

German Genealogy Word List – https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/German_Word_List

Czech Genealogy Word List – https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Czech_Republic_Genealogical_Word_List
(where it appears there is a space, is actually an underscore _)

Marriage Licenses to be picked up!!!

http://www.galvnews.com/news/article_184d09b7-1393-56f4-978b-804a1b90d6ff.html?mode=story Galveston County clerk's office wants to reunite old marriage licenses with relatives www.galvnews.com The county clerk's office has 88,000 marriage licenses from 1838 to 1965 for relatives to pick up.

An excellent history of the earliest German Immigrants into Texas:

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/png02>, from Ann Parkinson, President, **Atascocita-Kingwood Genealogical Society** www.atascocita-kingwoodgenealogicalsociety.org

What the German-Texan Heritage Society Means to Me By Kristi Lee-Nordin

Although I'm not a native Texan, I followed the adage that says, "While I was not born in Texas, I got here as soon as I could!" I'm now approaching a point where I've lived in Texas nearly as long as my home state of Minnesota. Granted, I've been in and out of both states, and several others in between, but my nomadic wanderings have always brought me back to Texas. The diverse heritage and rich history coupled with the beauty of the land and the people make it a place like no other. Perhaps this is what brought the German settlers of the past here and what those with German descent continue to see today.

More than 10 years ago we joined GTHS seeking a place where our children could learn about their heritage as well as some of the language. Quickly we began attending events and visiting places that we learned about through GTHS. Experiencing the impact that the early settlers had on architecture, food and local culture was eye-opening and we very clearly saw how history was shaped. I was especially impressed by Hans Meusbach and his work with the Comanche. Meusbach's wax figure in the German Free School is a compelling presence which made me want to learn more about the man and his work. I was really touched to understand that he inspired other settlers to strive for peaceable solutions with those who were already here.

At the heart of the Meusbach story and so many others is the GTHS itself. It is a hub linking people, activities and places throughout Texas together but it also has an impact beyond our borders to communities throughout the U.S. and across the world. This was so clear to me when hosting two German exchange students who connected with our organization and learned more about the impact of their ancestors here in North America. They were fascinated and enthralled and very proud of their countrymen's contributions to Texas history. This point of pride was accentuated when learning the history of the German Free School building in Austin and its pivotal role in offering equality in education for all peoples regardless of their beliefs or backgrounds.

What we have in the GTHS is a precious and rare gem to be valued and protected for current and future generations. Our German heritage is a critical part of all of our stories but one that doesn't end with the past; rather, it continues with the legacy that we build for our children, grandchildren and all future generations of Texans. The spirit of

the early immigrants is indeed ours to preserve and to share with all.



Son, Rick and hubby, board member Kristi—daughter Amelia and son Andrew. Photo courtesy of Rainey May Zeller

Elephind: A Digital Newspaper Collections Search Engine

Elephind is a great service that searches online digital newspaper collections. Best of all, it is available free of charge.

Elephind.com is a search engine that operates much like Google, Bing, or other search engines. The one thing that is different with Elephind is that it searches only historical, digitized newspapers. It enables you to search, for free, across many newspaper sites simultaneously, rather than having to visit each collection's web site separately.



At this time, Elephind has indexed 2,779 newspaper titles containing more than two and a half million editions, ranging from March 1803 up to January 1, 2015 in some titles. The Elephind search engine has indexed 149,363,907 items from 2,779 newspaper titles. These include such well known sites as the *Chronicling America* (the U.S.'s Library of Congress) and *Trove* (National Library of Australia), as well as smaller collections like *Door County Library* in Wisconsin. Many of the smaller newspaper sites are not well known and may be difficult to find with the usual search engines but are searchable from Elephind.com. A list of available newspaper collections that have been indexed so far is available at <http://goo.gl/VRQN5I>. Additional newspaper collections are added to Elephind's indexes frequently.

I found that Elephind operates in much the same manner as Google and other search engines. If you already know how to search for things in Google, Bing, Yahoo, or elsewhere, you already know how to use Elephind. In fact, there are two search methods available on Elephind:

1. When you first visit the site at <http://www.elephind.com/>, you are greeted with a very simple search box containing one data entry box. You can search for words or phrases in much the same way as you do on Google although not all of Google's sophisticated Boolean search terms are available on Elephind. You can find tips for using the search box at <http://goo.gl/3T6JuH>.
2. When visiting the site at <http://www.elephind.com/>, you will also see a highlighted link of "Advanced Search." When you click on that, a more sophisticated search form appears allowing the user to narrow the search to any combination of specific newspaper titles, country, or a range of dates.

I did a search for my own last name between the years 1811 and 1890 in the United States. It returned far too many "hits" for me to search through so I started narrowing the search by specifying first names and cities or towns of interest. I was soon looking at information of interest.

I was impressed with the clarity of the newspaper pages I was able to view but, of course, that is under the control of the individual newspaper collection. Elephind does not host the images on its own web site. Instead, it merely links to newspapers found on a wide variety of servers in a number of different countries from around the world.

Elephind.com is a great tool for family historians, genealogists, and researchers to search historic digitized newspaper archives from around the globe. Will Elephind locate newspaper articles about your ancestors? There is no way to tell in advance. You need to try it for a while to see. It is a free resource so why not try it to see for yourself?

Elephind may be found at <http://www.elephind.com>.

Elephind is continuing to add more newspapers, so if at first you can't find what you're looking for, check back later. You also might want to add your name to the Elephind mailing list at <http://eepurl.com/ndGhb> to receive an email message every time a new collection is added.



Hope you find some wonderful new info!!! Blessings~

Ann Parkinson

Atascocita-Kingwood Genealogical Society

www.atascocita-kingwoodgenealogicalsociety.org

Helga's Corner

Tripping in Germany.

If you want to find out about a country, go there and get sick or injured. Last April, I flew to my hometown *in Deutschland*, Herford, stumbled (*stolperte*) on the sidewalk and fell flat on my face, had injuries (*Verletzungen*) and got sick (*wurde krank*) and *landete im Hospital* a few days later. Fortunately (*Gott-sei-Dank*), I had *eine gute Reiseversicherung* (travel insurance) and no broken bones. My face was blue, red and purple and featured a pattern of sparkling skin abrasions. *Eine Ambulanz brachte mich ins Hospital.*



I shared a room with a lady from a little village nearby. I never knew how resourceful I can be when circumstances require. That lady couldn't sleep at night and was given two sleeping pills (*Schlaftabletten*). But she didn't take them and asked me to throw them *ins Klo* (into the toilet). *Natürlich habe ich die Pillen selbst geschluckt*, took them myself and flushed the commode to pretend I had disposed of the pills. I know one should not flush pills down the drain, and I had only acted "as if", *als ob*. *Dann waren wir beide glücklich. Meine Zimmernachbarin grunzte die ganze Nacht, aber ich konnte etwas schlafen.*

Supper, *Abendbrot im deutschen Hospital*: It consisted of a slice of rye bread (*Roggenbrot oder Graubrot*), a cubic cm of *Butter*, *eine Scheibe Fleischwurst (bologna)* und *etwas Velveta*. Many Germans eat only *eine Scheibe Brot zum Abendbrot*. I am too Americanized and wanted real food and felt deprived while in the *Krankenhaus*.

The funniest and most embarrassing aspect of the experience was my *Nachthemd*, my nightgown. Since I was literally picked up from the street, I had to do with one of those gowns the *Hospital* generously hands out to poor people that come in as patients. These things open to the back, and you have to use at least one, but better two hands to keep your private derriere private.

I have traveled a lot in my almost 80 years, and I managed to cope with many an odd situation. One of them occurred deep in the desert of Saudi Arabia. We were on a bus to go shopping in an oasis. The driver stopped half way there and announced "peee peee", We all found a place behind the dunes and also discovered a group of nomads, men, women and children. They were packing up, and then all of their women went to one side and squatted down to relieve themselves. All of them bared their bottom in full sight of the men. Our American men didn't know where to look.

If you want to get sick or injured in a foreign country, don't chose Saudi Arabia, because many Saudis consider your misfortune Allah's punishment for something you did or didn't. Been there, done that. But they have wonderful bread in abundance, which I remembered fondly when I chewed that one single slice in the hospital at supper time in Germany.

Helga

Bulletin Board

Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure to send you the latest bulletin of the world organisation Confédération Internationale de Généalogie et d'Héraldique (CIGH) published yesterday. On page 41 you can find some information about DAGV, GAGP and the upcoming first ever International Germanic Genealogy Conference in July 2017. This is just before the international CIGH congress will start in Glasgow next month where I will have the great honour to represent my country within the international family of genealogy and heraldry. I wish you all a great Sunday wherever these lines might find you. Warmest greetings your German colleague Dirk Weissleder

ALLEMAGNE

**Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft
genealogischer Verbände e. V.
(DAGV)**

We search the traces of old families

The DAGV is the umbrella organization of the genealogical and heraldic associations in Germany. It was founded in Frankfurt/Main on May 28th/29th, 1949 and is registered in Stuttgart. The organization sees itself as the successor of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher familien-und wappenkundlicher Vereine" (association of German genealogical and heraldic societies), founded in Kassel on Nov. 29th, 1924 which was dissolved later.

Our motto is: *detegimus antiquorum generum vestigia*. (*We search the traces of old families*). The purpose of the DAGV is to support the work and the exchange between the member associations, the interests of the genealogists among experts as well as in the broad public. At present the DAGV has 67 member associations with more than 22,000 single members. DAGV is member of the international association "Confédération Internationale de Généalogie et" and is very engaged in international exchange.

A significant achievement of the DAGV is the access to the "Personenstandsregister" (register of births, marriages and deaths) in local archives for genealogical research. The access to these certificates is allowed because of the "Personenstandsänderungsgesetz" which became effective on Jan. 1st, 2009.

For genealogical research registers in Germany are now available: register of deaths over 30 years old, register of marriages over 80 years old, register of births over 110 years old. This is a tremendous improvement for genealogists. Some current projects of the DAGV are: - Familienkundliche Literaturdatenbank (genealogical literature database) <http://famlit.genealogy.net>, - Forscher Kontakte (FoKo) (Database to seek for researching contacts regarding a region or a name) <http://foko.genealogy.net/> <http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/FOKO>. DAGV informs about its activities and their member societies in the DAGV-News (since 2012) that can be downloaded for free at http://dagv.org/?Veroeffentlichungen_DAGVNews.

Learn more about DAGV and get in contact! When having our annual meeting of members the Deutscher Genealogentag (German Genealogists Day), also takes place. It is organized by one of our member associations. Our activities can be read in the DAGV-News (<http://news.dagv.org>), which can be downloaded from our website. Visit us on web at: www.dagv.org or come at our "Deutscher Genealogentag" (German Genealogists Day)! Deutscher Genealogentag (68th German Genealogists Day) Sep. 29th - Oct. 2nd, 2016 in Bregenz, Lake Constance, Austria. Researching lake side – experience the lake. Deutscher Genealogentag (69th German Genealogists Day) Sept. 29th—Oct. 2nd, 2017 in Dresden, Germany.

DAGV is co-founder of the German-American Genealogical Partnership (GAGP) formed in May 2015 in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA. In July 2017 there will be the very first International Germanic Genealogical Conference (IGGC) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (Dirk Weissleder, national chairman contact: dirk.weissleder@dagv.org).

Dear colleagues, it is with pleasure and honour to send you a copy of my very first interview to a French genealogy magazine (La Revue française de Généalogie) that is printed by more than 30.000 copies. I attach an English translation for a better understanding. Thank you everyone engaged in GAGP where ever you live. I am proud of my American (and German) colleagues! Warmest greetings and take care, **Dirk Weissleder**, Vorsitzender **Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft genealogischer Verbände e. V. (DAGV)**

"Bringing ahead the exchange between German and French researchers"

Dirk Weissleder (President of the German Federation of Genealogy)

Biography: Dirk Weissleder, 47, has presided over the German Federation of the Associations of Genealogy (Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft genealogischer Verbände e. V.-DAGV) since 2012 and the German Federation of

Associations of Families (Bund der Familienverbände e. V.) since 2007. He stresses the differences in genealogical research between Germany and France.

Is genealogy a popular pastime in Germany, and are there many genealogists there?

Yes, it is a popular pastime in Germany, as well as in the genealogy associations that exist there and elsewhere. The German Federation is comprised of 67 associations with about 22,000 members. We have been in existence since 1949, and in 1990, in the reunification, we welcomed genealogists from the new regions.

How is genealogy organized in your country?

Genealogical research is totally regional in Germany, and the Associations are profoundly rooted in their own regions. But the genealogists can come from each of the sixteen German regions.

German ancestors can be traced to what period in history?

Parish registers are the oldest genealogical records. A researcher can go back until 1580-1600 when the preservation acts were enacted. Also there is a civil unified act from 1874 by the former German Reich. These records by law must be delayed as follows: The researcher must wait for 110 years from the present to research births, 80 years for marriages, and 35 years for deaths.

Are there many original archives that are digitized?

Nothing, or very little. Each region is independent and maintains its own system of archiving. There is not a digitization project to my knowledge in any of the sixteen regions.

How can the Genealogy Associations help to manage research?

The genealogist must first gather as much as he can from his family then from the town or regional halls. The researcher needs to know that copies of the information must be paid for in Germany. Then, the researcher must go to an association. All associations are regional and have the best local expertise to help the genealogist. The members of these associations have made many of the vital records available in each city, quarter, or village. These records are often digitized and accessible through the association and sometimes on the internet. These associations can guide you to their own publications and records or to those in archives and libraries. They can also direct you to the services of competent archives in the neighborhood.

Are there many Germans with French roots?

Unhappily, we don't know. I don't know of any surveys on this subject. There are certainly more of those with French roots in southern Germany than in the north because of the proximity of France. The Protestant French Huguenots fled to Germany in the 17th Century, and they are represented by an association in our Federation. Our Minister of the Interior Mr. Maiziere is descended from this Huguenot migration.

Are there many French genealogists who research their German roots?

This is a more recent issue. Seventy years after the end of World War II, there are actually requests to search for German ancestors from the children of German-French relationships during the occupation. Genealogy associations are there to help answer questions and thereby strengthen friendly relationship between our country and our families. Genealogy helps build relationships and people connect.

Specifically, how can the French do their research?

They should write to the Federation who will immediately send their requests to the associations who are in the areas in question. The best way to do this would be in German or in English. Few Germans speak French.

Are there genealogy conferences that bring associations and genealogists together?

We have Genealogy Day (Deutscher Genealogentag) that is the culmination of all genealogical activity in Germany. One time each year, usually in September, between 500 and 750 genealogists meet in a different venue each year. Associations and volunteers are given the opportunity to present their work and give help and guidance to others. A number of commercial vendors complete the group. The organizer is the German Federation of Genealogists (DAGV), and the host of the conference is always a local group. Otherwise, we participate in numerous conferences: the end of September-the beginning of October we will be invited to Austria and then to Dresden. And we would like to develop exchanges with France, to bring a French delegation to Germany and to go to France, ourselves, to speak about French and German genealogy. I would like to bring about exchanges between German and French researchers to learn more about French genealogy and help the French to understand German genealogy.

Do archivists have a public policy about the genealogists?

In Germany, we have public archives, those of churches, and also private archives. The attitude toward genealogists is getting better. Some historians, archivists, and libraries have always been extremely good. But we don't yet have the great and wonderful relationship that one finds in Holland and Great Britain.

Is genealogical research using DNA authorized in Germany?

Only case by case. The Federal Constitutional Court of Karlsruhe, the highest German court, recently ruled that it is not a general and systematic right to seek a father using DNA. It is still a matter for experts, and that in Germany, it is far from being the fashion as it is in the United States. The Germans are skeptical because the temporal dimensions of genetics and of genealogy are completely different from each other.

Meyer's Gazetteer Now Online, Indexed and Fully Searchable! Fritz Juengling Ph.D., AG[®]

An extremely exciting development in German genealogical research has recently occurred. *Meyers Orts-und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs* (Meyer's) has now been indexed, put online, and coupled with the *Karte des Deutschen Reiches*. Although versions of Meyer's have been online in various places for some time, this version has many features that set it apart from all others and make it an invaluable tool for German research.

History of the project

As early as 1994 Marion Rainey felt inspired to index Meyer's. So, she set herself to the task and for the next 20+ years has spent countless hours indexing the multi-volume work—without any compensation or indexing help. After some time, Brad Coleman, a computer programmer, volunteered to help with the technical and computer aspects of the project. The result of their work is a powerful tool for German research. Their desire is to have this new tool online and free for all researchers forever.

Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-lexikon des deutschen Reichs

This is the most important of all German gazetteers. The goal was to list every place name in the German Empire (1871-1918). It gives the location, *i.e.* the state and other jurisdictions, where the civil registry office was and parishes if that town had them. It also gives lots of other information about each place. The only drawback to Meyer's is that if a town did not have a parish, it does not tell where the parish was, making reference to other works necessary.

To access Meyer's:

Type 'meyersgaz.org' into the URL box. Once you have done that, you will come to the Meyersgaz.org homepage where you will see a search box. Type the name of your place in the search box. You can use a wildcard * (an asterisk) in your search. For example, '*gheim' will return 'Balgheim, Bergheim, Bietigheim, Billigheim' and anything else that contains 'gheim.' Also, you can type only the beginning of a name and it will return all places that begin with those letters. For example, 'Neu' will return 'Neu Abbau, Neu Abschwangen, Neuacker, Neuafrica' and many others. You do not need to include umlauts, as 'Munchen' will return 'München.' You can type umlauts if you wish, but you should not expand umlauts, e.g. 'ü' as 'ue', as that will return no hits. Now, a list of places with that name will appear—all those places of the same name, but with other jurisdictions which will help you identify your town. Choose the town for which you want more information.

Once you are on the town page, you will see the name of your town and a menu that includes the following items: Entry, Map, Ecclesiastical, Related, E-mail, and Feedback.

Entry

You are on the 'entry' page. You will see the entry as it appears in Meyer's, the extraction of the entry, the explanation of the extraction, and a map. The extractions include and are primarily limited to jurisdictions and parish information. The explanations are helpful for those who do not speak German or are not familiar with the old jurisdictions. For example, you will learn what *Kreis*, *Bezirkskommando*, and *Landgericht* mean. By clicking on 'View entry on PDF of the original page,' you can see the entire page on which the entry appears. Click on 'Show previous and next entry' to see the previous and following entries. If there was a correction in the Meyer's addendum, this will also be indicated.

Map

After you have read the information on this page, click on 'Map' in the menu or on the map itself. You will now see your town on the old *Karte des deutschen Reiches*. This set of maps was produced during the time of the German Empire and so corresponds chronologically to Meyer's. You can zoom in and out. If you click on the words 'Toggle Historical Map' in the upper right-hand corner, you can switch to Google Maps. This is especially helpful if you are searching in Poland or other areas of the former German Empire that are now in other countries. This is because you can get the current, *i.e.* non-German, name of the town. If you hover on 'Toggle Historical Map,' you will see a menu. If you click on the menu items, you will see pins appear on the map that correspond to what you have chosen, either Jurisdiction (all places where other jurisdictions are given, such as *Kreis*, *Bezirkskommando*, and *Landgericht* that are included in the entry), Catholic parishes, Protestant parishes, or Jewish synagogues. This will help you determine the location of the nearest parishes, *etc.*, within a 20-mile radius, should you need to do an area search. You can also click on the pins and the names of corresponding towns will appear.

Ecclesiastical

When you click on 'Ecclesiastical,' you will get a list of nearby towns that have parishes or synagogues and with the distance from your town. This will also help you determine the nearest parishes, *etc.*, within a 20-mile radius, if you need to do an area search. This is the same information that you saw under "Map," but in a different format.

Related

'Related' provides a list of other towns that refer to your town as another jurisdiction, such as *Amtsgericht*.

E-mail

In this section, for the town in which you are searching, you can add names and your email address so that others who are searching for the same names can contact you. Then you can collaborate and share information. (Please add your search names and contact information!)

Feedback

Finally, you can also give feedback. This includes corrections, suggestions for improvements or new features, how you use the data, or just a word or two to compliment the owners of the site.

As with most projects, this is a work in progress and will evolve over time. Additions and corrections are being made as of this writing. It is possible that other features may be added in the future. In the meantime, it is hoped that researchers will use this very valuable tool in their research.

To learn more about Meyer's, especially the many abbreviations, see:

Uncapher, Wendy K. *How to read & understand Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs*. Janesville, Wisconsin: Origins, 2003.

References:

Karte des Deutschen Reiches. Berlin: Kartographische Abteilung der Königlichen Preußischen Landesaufnahme, 1845-1916.

Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs. 5th edition. Uetrecht, E. (Erich) Leipzig and Wien: Bibliographisches Institut, 1912.

Submitted by:
Fritz Juengling Ph.D., AG@
German, Dutch, and Scandinavian Research Specialist
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Via Liz Hicks, Houston

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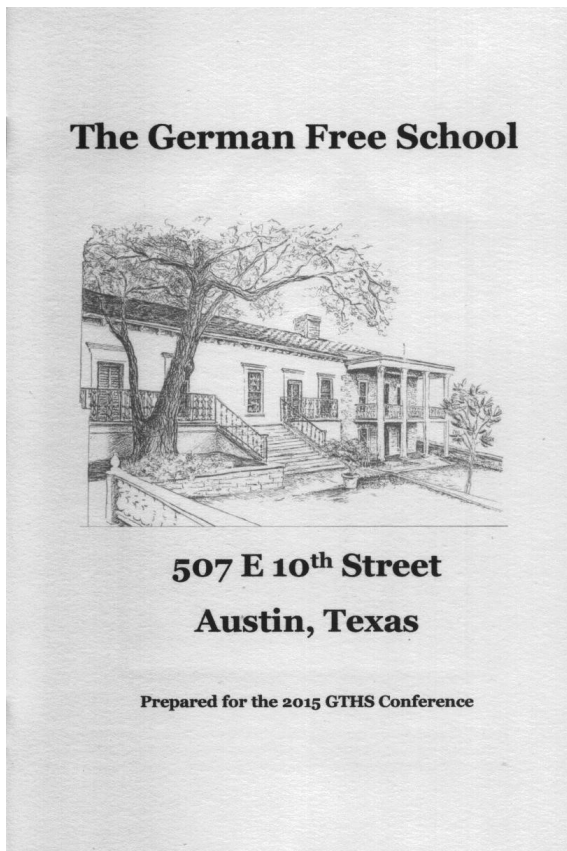
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Built in 1857, the German Free School is one of the “Hidden Gems of Downtown Austin.”

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Community Events

How Do You Pronounce Kuykendahl? The German Settlers of Northwest Harris County

By Stephanie Gomez



The Theiss family first arrived in Klein in 1846. Descendent Edwin "Butch" Theiss wrote a family history in 1978. All photos courtesy of Klein, TX Historical Foundation unless otherwise noted.

about their town's heritage. Among the numerous historic markers located in Northwest Harris County are ones pinpointing the original Trinity Lutheran Evangelical Church and the Theiss House. Northwest Harris County also has many antique shops, museums, and educational centers where locals and visitors can find photographs and other valuable information regarding the community.

Several different groups of European settlers founded these local communities, with one of the largest and most influential being the German settlers who arrived during the nineteenth century. Like others who have crossed borders attempting to achieve a higher standard of living, many German settlers came to America in pursuit of economic opportunity and religious freedom.² Further, Kaiserism, a type of autocratic rule they experienced in their homeland, caused a significant number of Germans to look to North America, where personal freedom replaced an oppressive governing body.

Immigration to Texas proved to be a popular choice among the Germans. Friedrich Ernst is credited with being the first German to establish a German settlement in Texas in 1831 near present-day Austin. Enamored with his new home, he wrote to Schwartz, a friend in his hometown of Oldenburg, to persuade Schwartz to move to Texas as soon as possible.³ In response to Ernst's enthusiasm, Schwartz took the letter to a local newspaper, which soon published it. Word spread through Oldenburg and several neighboring towns, causing many to consider Texas as a possible home. Texas had a significant African American and Mexican population, but the number of German Texans more grew rapidly, exceeding 750,000 by 1890.

The abundance and accessibility of fertile land were critical factors for many of the immigrants when choosing where to settle. Present day Northwest Harris County contained several booming German settlements, such as Spring, Klein, and Rosehill, which now make up the Greater Tomball Area. Although the community was originally named Peck, the city changed the name to Tomball in 1907 to honor Congressman Thomas Ball who brought the railroad to town, boosting business and economic growth.⁴

Although the prospect of moving to Texas offered Germans a new start in life, albeit under challenging conditions, the availability of affordable land became one of Texas's most captivating benefits. Texas desperately wanted settlers and offered land to them at a low cost. After making the long, hard trip from Europe, many German pioneers took advantage of this offer and started from scratch to build homes and cultivate the land.⁵

In the northwest corner of Houston sits the Tomball community, known for its safe suburban feel, old town buildings, and superior school districts. On a quick walk through Tomball, the visitor is exposed to a variety of delights that add to the community's character: small restaurants with the most comforting southern dishes, antique shops and boutiques full of treats and treasures, over forty historic sites, and its unmistakable German influence.¹ That very same charm is found in towns throughout Northwest Harris County.

While Tomball, Rose Hill, Spring, and Cypress may not be as well known for their German influence as Fredericksburg or New Braunfels, the local German heritage offers a pivotal point of interest, and many efforts have been made to preserve this history. The Tomball Museum Center located on North Pine Street in Tomball and the Wunderlich Family Farm located on Theiss Mail Route Road in Klein aim to educate the community



Charlie Klein hands out mail in a horse-driven carriage.

The settlers and their families encountered many hardships. Disease ran rampant throughout the community, and many suffered spells of malaria, yellow fever, and other deadly diseases. These diseases had the capacity to wipe out entire families, if not communities.⁶ Even through sickness, though, the settlers persevered.

The German settlers faced the same challenges as all pioneering peoples. Residents' lives were bustling and busy, leaving little time to become discouraged by the challenges that lay ahead. From the mother and father to the youngest of children, Tomball residents worked as a group to ensure their families' livelihoods and society flourished.

In addition to growing crops for food, the settlers kept a variety of animals, which aided their survival and helped make their lives comfortable. Horses, oxen, and mules were used for transportation and pulling wagons. Sheep's wool was turned into yarn for fabrics used in clothing and blankets. Pigs, chickens, and cows provided the settlers with meat, eggs, and dairy products.⁷ In addition to tending to crops and animals, other everyday chores also proved to be burdensome and demanding. The settlers bathed and washed their clothes in a nearby creek, and the women often carried home extra water needed for tasks like cooking or cleaning. Wells had to be dug by hand, making them inaccessible initially. Further, the amount of water available in the well depended on its depth and the amount of rainfall.⁸

Due to the difficulty of obtaining water, clean clothes and bathing were luxuries. Laundry water had to be heated, clothes had to be presoaked, and then manually scrubbed with homemade soap, a scrub board, and human hands. After scrubbing, they were wrung and air dried. Bathing was reserved for "Saturday nights" to ensure that the settlers were squeaky-clean to attend church or special occasions. Family members shared the water, with young children and women bathing first. On the other days of the week, the settlers partook in a sponge bath and general foot washing.⁹

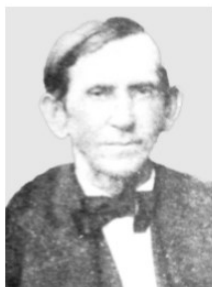
Following in the footsteps of their ancestors, today's Northwest Harris County residents retain a sense of community and comradery. Well-aware of their roots and German heritage, families have kept in touch with old traditions. This has allowed them to produce long-lasting friendships and marriages with others in the community. Through good times and bad times, they have counted on each other for support.

For their efforts and good deeds, many of the German families have been honored throughout Tomball and its surrounding area. Today parents who reside in that area probably send their children to a school in the Klein Independent School District, such as Mittelstadt, Benignus, or Hildebrandt. They might purchase their groceries at the Theiss Farm Market, or use Stuebner Airline, Telge Road, and Huffsmith-Kohnrville Road on a daily basis. A large number of descendants continue to reside in the Tomball community while serving as influential community figures, beloved by residents. Many descendants who understand the importance of conducting genealogical research and preserving artifacts have made an effort to educate people about their families, especially members of the Klein, Theiss, and Wunderlich families who serve as prominent examples of this enthusiasm for regional history.



Frederika Klein (middle) seated amongst her family members

Johannes Adam Klein and Christina Frederika Klenk decided to elope and immigrate to North America to take advantage of the opportunities there. Their hometown of Oberndorf was a charming place, although economic hardships and religious differences between the citizens and the national government created repeated problems. After a brief stint in Switzerland Adam and Frederika went to Le Harve, France, a bustling port city with large numbers of Germans who intended to leave. On November 25, 1851, Adam and Frederika boarded the Elizabeth Hamilton and set sail to New Orleans.¹⁰



The Klein name is one of the most recognizable in Northwest Harris county. Shown is Johannes Adam Klein who emigrated from Germany with his wife Christina Frederika.

Many of the immigrants who traveled on these ships did so in steerage, with minimal accommodations and unfavorable conditions. Families did not have the luxury of privacy, ventilation, or personal space and had to provide their own food and bedding. Almost all of the immigrants faced terrible spells of seasickness, with nowhere to go to seek relief for their nausea. The voyages often proved deadly, however, no one died on the Elizabeth Hamilton during its 1851 voyage. Despite the hardships Adam and Frederika encountered crossing the Atlantic, family legend has it that they were married en route by the ship's captain.¹¹

The newly wedded Kleins arrived in New Orleans on January 26, 1852, after spending two months on the ship. Initially they made their way up the Mississippi River, where Frederika already had family. After meeting her brother Matthias Klenk, the Kleins made their home in Hermann, Missouri. Adam did not stay long before leaving to search for gold in California. The trip and the time spent in the West took a toll on Adam who experienced illness, hunger, and robberies. Despite this he came back to his wife a wealthy man.¹²

Thanks to Adam's newfound wealth, the Kleins traveled to Galveston in the hopes of moving to Texas and settled in the area near Buffalo Bayou. Seeking to purchase land, the Kleins looked to Reverend Casper Braun, who had emigrated from Wurttemberg, Germany, to help them find housing in Houston. Instead they opted for the fertile farmland available northwest of the city, purchasing more than 300 acres of land for about thirty-three cents an acre near Rose Hill.¹³ Soon other German settlers such as Peter Wunderlich and Heinrich Theiss joined the Kleins.

Peter Wunderlich was the first of his family to arrive in America. A series of family letters, which have been preserved and translated, document the enthusiasm of both Peter and his family. Unlike the Kleins before them, Peter had a rather pleasant voyage to Galveston, and joined up with the Strack brothers (another well-known name in Tomball) who accompanied Peter to Tomball.¹⁴ Unfortunately, he arrived there at the same time that Heinrich Strack's wife and children died of illness. Peter himself became ill with fever "so bad," he said, "I can't remember the next two months [following my arrival]."¹⁵

Nevertheless Peter's letters are brimming with words of admiration and positivity when describing his new life in Texas. In his first letter to his family, Peter writes, "Biding [sic] you farewell was not easy for me, for immigrating to a foreign country was uncertain, too. But I am quite happy that I have done it...Texas is an excellent country in which the people can live very well. I wish you all were here, then you would have a better life than in Germany."¹⁶ He continued to tell his family tales of his work in Texas and of its economic differences and similarities with Germany. Not all talk was business, however, and within a year Peter wrote to his family about how much his life had changed since coming to Tomball.

Peter made a good salary and had the hope of increasing his income with each coming year. He wrote to his parents of his marriage to Katharina Hofius and their lives in the house of Jacob Theis, the son of Heinrich Thiess who arrived in 1846. Throughout his letters, Peter writes of the good news in Texas, his love of the weather, and the ever-growing opportunities, which starkly contrast to the worries of his parents, who lacked those opportunities in Germany. Peter also updated his parents on the lives of the other citizens in the community. His letters always ended with something along the lines of "Greetings from Hermann Strack and his brothers," or "Say 'hallo' from us to Mr. Head," reinforcing the sense of connection between the communities in Tomball and Germany, as well as the personal connections between the families.¹⁷ Although they were thousands of miles apart, the German Texans and their families in Germany remained involved in each other's lives.

The histories of these families exist thanks to the efforts of many of the descendants, such as Edwin "Butch" Theiss, who dedicate their time to unraveling the mysteries of their families' past. In his books *My Life in Klein* (2009) and *Theis/Theiss Family History* (1978), Butch goes into great detail, retracing the steps of his ancestors and piecing together their stories. These important historical accounts enable people to understand how the community has developed.

The Theiss/Theis family arrived in Klein in 1846, when Johann Heinrich Theiss and his wife, Katherina, immigrated to the Tomball area from Bottenhorn, Germany, after getting permission from their local government to come to Texas. Sailing out of Antwerp on the *Bohemia*, they came with help from the *Adelsverein*, an organization founded in Braunfels, Germany, to assist the German immigrants who "were sent to get things ready" for the thousands of immigrants coming into the United States. Although Butch originally thought that his family stopped at Indianola, Texas, at Matagorda Bay with the intention of heading towards New Braunfels, his new, ongoing research indicates that they actually stopped at Galveston due to numerous difficulties settlers encountered at Indianola after the Mexican government began buying those lands.¹⁸



Throughout the Tomball area, Theis is seen with two different spellings, Theiss and Theis, although they refer to the same family. The change in spelling resulted from confusion amongst Butch's ancestors, William Theiss from Klein and William Theis from Rose Hill, both of whom were cotton farmers. Butch explains that when the two men took their cotton to the Cotton Exchange in Houston, a clerk mailed checks to them and often the Theis in Klein received the check that belonged to the Theis in Rose Hill and vice versa, requiring them to travel to each other's homes to exchange checks. He adds, "That happened pretty regular, so they made a gentleman's agreement. The one at Klein added another 'S' to his name, and the one at [Rose Hill] stayed with the single 'S'."¹⁹

Peter Wunderlich built this home in 1891. His homestead at Wunderlich Farms in Tomball offers educational tours for all to enjoy.

The Theiss family owned a large portion of the land from Huffsmith-Kohrville to Spring Cypress and throughout the Rose Hill and Klein communities, which they farmed from generation to generation. The family continued to grow as children were born and later married, having their own children. Today thanks to Butch's efforts, they hold a

Theiss/This family reunion every two years. Although he no longer serves as the chairman, he continues to play an active role in its management. The reunion is no small event, evidenced by an effort to draw out a Theiss family tree that grew to 120 feet long with about 3,000 names. The Theiss/This family reunion has caused descendants of other German families to the area to start their own family reunions.²⁰

In addition to his dedication to recording his family's history, Butch served many years as a school board member for the Klein Independent School District between 1967 and 1985, and



Klein Independent School District re-named its stadium Butch Theiss Field in recognition of Butch's many years of service. Photo courtesy of Butch Theiss

worked for the district from 1985 to 2002. Upon graduating from Klein High, Butch

enrolled in an extra semester of course work to join the Bearkat football team when it started in September 1947. Butch continued to be an important member of the football team, serving as an on-call member and helping the team in whatever way he could. Along with the duties working for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Butch helped take care of the stadium lights by climbing up the poles to change out the light bulbs for twenty-five years, and he remains highly involved with the team. To show its appreciation, the district honored him in 2010 by renaming the Klein Memorial Stadium, which he had taken care of all those years, Butch Theiss Field.²¹

Without the efforts of individuals like Butch Theiss and his colleagues, the German heritage of the quaint, suburban town of Tomball would be completely lost. Even so, some people who have spent their whole lives in the town are unaware of the German roots. Through the research of regional and genealogical history, individuals can gain a personal understanding of what it means to be German, Scottish, Mexican, or a mix of ethnicities. When asked what he wants younger generations to know about this history, Butch replied, "I want them to know about the hardships they [immigrants] went through when they came to this country....These were ships that carried cotton to Europe... Then after they got here, coming to a new country, not knowing anybody was a very hard thing to do...suffering through all the perils and conditions... it had to be very hard...They were pioneers, they struggled, and they helped build this country."²² To show their appreciation for the efforts of the German settlers who built Tomball from the ground up, modern residents have memorialized them throughout the community. Those hard-to-pronounce names that decorate the local schools, streets, and businesses stand as a testament to the struggles, achievements, and perseverance of Tomball's early German settlers.

Stephanie Gomez is a senior at the University of Houston majoring in political science and history as well as a frequent Tomball German Heritage Festival attendee. (Editor's note: no footnotes available with article to print)

Thanks to [Houston History](#), [Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative](#) for use of the story

Submitted by **Liz Hicks, Houston**

The Round Top House: Frontier Landmark by Neale Rabensburg

The Fayette County Record, May 17, 2016

"ROUND TOP!" shouts the stagecoach driver as the pinnaled Round Top House comes into view. It's 1849. Passing to the right are cultivated fields planted high with corn and ahead to the left is the first glimpse of the white-painted way station with its roof-top tower beckoning the driver and his weary passengers. In the coach below, one younger man cannot wait and pulls



Local high school students dress in traditional German outfits and perform at the Tomball German Heritage Festival. The festival is held in Old Town Tomball during early April and celebrates the town's heritage through music, costume, and food. Photo courtesy of Tomball German Heritage Festival.

his hat, and he pokes his brow through one of the left side, canvass-covered widows to get a clearer view of the approaching Round Top House. He sees it and a few other buildings nestled beside a grove of mature live oaks, which will offer welcoming shade. A woman seated on the opposite side is startled by an exuberant group of slave children, who have appeared suddenly from a row

of corn. A few of them are able to keep pace with their arms out-stretched. She recovers with a laugh and digs into her cloth bag stick of rock candy tied in paper wrap. She tosses it out her side window in the direction of the lead runner, who catches the treasure and darts back into the corn field with the others following in hot pursuit.

The dust covered passengers are about to reach one of the landmark facilities on the route between Houston and Austin, where they will be able to take a needed stretch, receive a thirst quenching drink and undoubtedly make a hurried visit to the euphemism. Stagecoach and way station personnel, however, will not remain idle but will be performing routine wagon maintenance and a change of horse teams.

Within a short time, the stagecoach driver announces his call to load up, and he and his passengers are once again on the trail descending Soergel Hill for their next anticipated stop at Earthman's farm near Nechanitz. However, less than two miles down the road, the stagecoach passes through an emerging settlement on Cummins Creek where there is a recently completed, small building on the left. There is signage labeling it as the "Round Top Post Office". Any stops here will be brief for the pickup and delivery of mail pouches and packages. Discerning passengers, however, are rightly confused since the Round Top name appears both here and two miles back at the way station on Soergel Hill.

The Round Top House (RT House) was an early 19th Century structure located in the northeastern reaches of Fayette County, Texas. This modest, frontier facility, which had a distinctive roof top appendage or cupola, was both a dwelling and a place of business; however, for a brief moment in time, it was the focal point for the region and became the namesake for two communities. The RT House was built by the pioneer Captain John York during the late 1830s or the early 1840s. York, as an Indian fighter, designed the building with a faceted cupola with ports for viewing or shooting at unwarranted visitors such as the periodic Comanche raiding parties that plagued the area prior to 1848. It is believed the RT House was designed to serve the traveling public as a way station and was particularly important for freight haulers driving wagons laden with goods from the coast into the central Texas region. Undoubtedly, there were peripheral buildings associated with the RT House including a blacksmith shop that served not only the passing element but members of the local community as well.

In anticipation of his planned move to DeWitt County, John York sold 100 acres of his Winn League holdings, which included the RT House, to Isom McMillin. McMillin kept the property for only a short time and then sold it in February 1846 to Alwin H. Soergel. Alwin and one or more of his Prussian traveling companions lived in the RT House for a few months; however, by the late summer or early fall of 1846, Alwin decided to give up his short-lived agrarian lifestyle and took employment with the

Adelsverein (the German Emigration Company) where he was able to continue with his writings and his sojourn across the State of Texas. Alwin appointed his cousin Ernst Soergel, who was also an employee of the Adelsverein and working as an assistant overseer at the nearby Nassau Plantation, as manager of the RT House and its 100 acres of land.

Ernst Soergel was probably involved in the negotiations with officials over the relocation of the region's postal services to the RT House in December 1846. The newly appointed Postmaster was Henry A. Robertson, who lived a short distance to the north on what is now Leonhardt Road.

The RT House became an immediate focal point of the community because it was not only the region's postal center, but it was also a gathering place to read and discuss state and area news as well as local postings.

If the way station services had been curtailed during the recent sales to McMillin and Alwin H. Soergel, then Ernst would have certainly reinstated those services following the 1847 announcement of a new Houston to Austin stagecoach route that was to run literally by the Round Top House.

The Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register, Houston Texas, May 10, 1847 issue wrote: "New Road to Austin ... We learn that Col. Crump of Austin county, has recently caused a route to be surveyed from Houston, in a direct line to Austin, and finds that the distance between the two places is only 142 1/2 miles. By either of the old routes the distance is over 160 miles.

This (new) route crosses the Brazos, nears Jones' Ferry, passes through the town of Travis, and by the Round top house on the dividing ridge between the Yagua [Yegua] and Colorado, by Earthmans and runs on to the high lands east of Bastrop, to its termination at the capital".

Less than two years later, the Texas Democrat, Austin, Texas, March 3, 1849 issue reported the following: "We learn from the Telegraph that the new road from Houston to Austin, leading by Bellville in Austin County, and by the Round Top House in Fayette County will soon be opened. This road, it is said, will be about thirty miles nearer than the old route by San Felipe and La Grange or that by Washington and La Grange".

It would appear that this stagecoach route would have overlaid with much of today's highway FM 1457 between the communities of Shelby in Austin County and "new" Round Top on Cummins Creek. In those early days, the route towards Austin would have passed through the emerging village on Cummins Creek and proceeded west via today's Round Top Road for approximately 1-1/2 miles to its intersection with the "old" La Bahia Trail (today's Weyand Road). The route on the La Bahia Trail would have turned south and crossed Cummins Creek until it intersected the "old" Gotier Trace. At this junction, stagecoaches, riders and other conveyances would have proceeded in a westerly direction over a revamped Gotier Trace to Bastrop and the Capital beyond.

In September 1847, Alwin H. Soergel sailed from Galveston, Texas for Prussia after receiving notice of his brother's illness. He would never return to Texas. During

the following month in Fayette County, Ernst Soergel was a party to the "Shootout" at Nassau Plantation. He and a few other men as Adelsverein supporters staged an attack on the plantation to retake it from illegal occupiers. These men met in the early morning hours at the RT House and formulated their plan of attack. Unfortunately, two men were killed during the "Shootout", and Ernst was indicted for one of those killings. Eventually, he was acquitted; however, his reputation was greatly diminished. The "Shootout" also affected the RT House with Ernst as manager. Within nine months, the RT House lost its status as the region's postal center.

Ernst Soergel took residence in the RT House sometime during the late 1840s after losing his position as assistant overseer at Nassau Plantation. The Adelsverein was in decline and was about to lose the plantation for default on a lien due to non-payment for food supplies and other services rendered for the survival of Fredericksburg. Arthur Meerscheidt, who had recently arrived from Prussia in early 1850, lived with Ernst in the RT House for several months while his own property in the adjacent Jack League was made ready with new improvements. Arthur married that same year into the von Rosenberg family and decided in 1853 that it was his duty as an in-law to advise his Aunt Auguste about Ernst Soergel's unsavory reputation. The spinster Auguste, who was the sister to Arthur's mother-in-law, was about to marry after a brief two week engagement.

The marriage had been prearranged by the von Rosenberg family, and Auguste advised her nephew-in-law, Arthur Meerscheidt, to mind his own business. Conversely, Ernst and Auguste Soergel and the Arthur Meerscheidt family were very close friends and relations for the rest of their lives. It seems apparent that Ernst and Auguste along with their adopted daughter Elisabeth Spangler/Spengler made the RT House their home from the 1850s through the American Civil War. The adopted daughter Elisabeth married in 1868 to Auguste's blood-related nephew, Carl August Walter von Rosenberg - (vR), who was Arthur Meerscheidt's brother-in-law. Walter vR purchased the RT House and its 100 acres in 1875 from his father-in-law, Ernst Soergel. Ernst undoubtedly attained the property through an assignment or will from his cousin Alwin H. Soergel, who died shortly before the sale.

It is assumed that Ernst Soergel continued with the way station services at the RT House during the era of stagecoach travel. Ernst had purchased other properties in the region following the American Civil War and probably lived in a larger abode elsewhere. In 1875 his health began to decline, so he and his wife Auguste moved into the new, two-level home of their son-in-law, Walter von Rosenberg. The house was located near Boggy Creek inside the town limits of "new" Round Top off Cummins Creek. Ernst died in that house in 1880 after suffering a relapse from a previous illness associated with respiratory problems. His burial location remains an unknown, but it is believed by the von Rosenberg Family of Texas that he was interred near his sister-in-law, Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg, in the Soergel Hill Cemetery (now Richters Cemetery), which is but a stone's

throw of the Round Top House.

It is unclear as to how long the Round Top House may have survived. Hopefully, it remains partially intact and is now within the structure of a larger farmhouse or outbuilding. The Wagner family occupied much of the Alwin H. Soergel tract during the 20th Century. Their old home place location is believed to be among a new complex of buildings known as A Light Unto My Path, which lies adjacent and immediately to the east of the Richters Cemetery off FM 1457. The aforementioned complex of buildings was undoubtedly the same site for the early 19th Century Round Top House and its peripheral outbuildings.

The Round Top House was more than dwelling or a simple place of business. It was the focal point of the community for a brief moment in time and for many years a comforting way station for teamsters, settlers, mail carriers, stagecoach personnel and passengers and the general local public. It had become a topic of statewide conversation during the late 1840s. It served the community, albeit, for a short time, as the region's postal center and as a place to gather and share the news and gossip. It was also the namesake for two separate communities. One of these thrives today and is now the cultural heart of Fayette County. It was, unfortunately, the staging ground for the "Shootout" at nearby Nassau Plantation in October 1847, where two deaths occurred. During the early 1850s the RT House received a new lease on life when it became a part of a greater community with the advent of the Round Top Church and Academy.

This building was designed as an educational facility for the region's Anglo plantation society with the weekends devoted to worship for its faculty and registered students and perhaps those supporters living in the surrounding community.

The Round Top House was for a number of years an important landmark for the local community and the passing traveler; however, by the turn of the 20th Century, it was nothing more than a fading memory.

Fortunately, Leonie Rummel Weyand and Houston Wade gave it a brief mention in their 1936 book, *An Early History of Fayette County*. In that publication they quote from the May 12, 1852 issue of the *Texas Monument* newspaper printed in La Grange: "Round Top got its name from Soergel's white house, which had a tower not round but octagon shaped. The house was attractively situated on the summit of a hill."

Submitted by Neale Rabensburg, Round Top Area Historical Society

Outhouses a Unique Reminder of a Simpler Time, *The Fayette County Record*, April 15, 2016

Five relict outhouses in the Round Top city limits recall a time before indoor plumbing in the town, an era within the memory of Round Top residents of a certain age.

Those were the times when a "bathroom" came with a path. Also known by many other names, an

outhouse is a small structure, separate from a main building, which covers a pit latrine.

Although in violation of the county wastewater regulations, the duplex outhouse behind M.E. Schulze's Grocery in Round Top was in regular use until he closed his business just a few years ago.

One day at Merton's, as the place was known, a van stopped out front and two or three high school girls came in and asked for the bathroom. They were directed out the back door. Less than a minute later they reentered by the same door and hurried back out the front. Apparently they didn't care for the facilities, even though the womens' side was outfitted with a red toilet seat.



A one-holer on the former Dennis Sacks property, now owned by local entrepreneur Mark Massey *Photos by H. H. Howze*

"Mayor Don Nagel installed the first septic tank in town about 1950," Round Top native Doug Kuntzen recalled. Nagel also installed the first septic tank in town for indoor plumbing. Water came from pumps on local wells.

The town got water from West End Water Supply in Industry starting in 1978 when the lines were extended from Shelby.

"We knocked a lot of windows out of the courthouse, playing ball on the town square," Kuntzen recalled in a phone call earlier this week. Of course, the windows had to be repaired by the perpetrators. The school (seven grades) was next to the Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Discipline was "old school." "If you got a whipping at school, it wasn't anything compared to the one you got at home," Kuntzen said.



Another one-holer at the Round Top Rifle Hall

Town marshal Ernst Emmerich, a World War I veteran, ran a tight ship in those days - without a gun. Kuntzen recalled an incident when a man had been creating a disturbance arguing with his



An almost hidden two-holer at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Emmerich hit the man across the back with his cane and then handcuff him with a dog collar," Kuntzen said. "Get in my pickup;" the marshal instructed him. "If you cool off, I'll take you home, otherwise I'll take you to jail."

Round Top State Bank president Ronny Sacks remembers Emmerich as well. "He was marshal for about 45 years, until the '60s," Sacks recalled. "He was also the town barber and ran a garage with my grandfather."

The Round Top bank president in those days was Edgar Fricke. For a while the bank had no telephone. Customers had to call Nagel's service station around the corner to summon Mr. Fricke to the phone.

Another thing. "When someone died, the church bell rang all day on the day of the funeral," Kuntzen said. How does Kuntzen feel about all the newcomers and changes in town?

"Ninety-percent of them are fine people," he said, "but if you want too much change, you need to stay where you came from"



The duplex privy behind the former M. E. Schutze grocery.

Submitted by Rodney Koenig, Houston

German Pride? Jai! - Fredericksburg, Texas

By Pam Windsor, *German Life*, June/July 2016



German immigrants would be proud of how Fredericksburg, Texas embraces and showcases its rich history. More than 170 years after the earliest settlers arrived from Europe, their influence remains evident throughout the city and surrounding county. Whether it's the landmark eight-sided Vereins Kirche in the center of Marktplatz, the downtown businesses with signs bearing notably German words, or the annual Oktoberfest, it's dear the city has not forgotten where it came from.

"Fredericksburg has a predominately German heritage," explained Evelyn Weinheimer, a direct descendant of those immigrants who traveled by ship in the late 1840s to colonize part of Texas. "We're trying to preserve our German story. We're trying to preserve the German traditions, the strong faith, a belief in education, and a strong interest in fun activities like dancing and music."

The first group of 120 Germans arrived in Fredericksburg in 1846. They were part of a wave that came to settle parts of the state after a group of noblemen called the *Adelsverein* (The Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas) bought a large section of Texas and offered packages that included ship passage, a town lot, and some acreage for a farm or a ranch. Difficult conditions in Germany made it an appealing idea, although those who traveled here had a much rougher journey than expected. They thought they were coming to the Republic of Texas, but by the time they arrived it had become part of the United States and the U.S. had just gone to war with Mexico. That meant many of the horses, carts and wagons that might have been used to transport the new arrivals from the Gulf of Mexico to where they were headed, had been put to use. Many were forced to walk through the vast wilderness and many died along the way.

In addition to the harsh terrain, Native Americans roamed the region posing a threat to the newcomers.

Fredericksburg's founder, the former Baron Otfried Hans Freiherr von Meusebach who became simply John O. Meusebach in his new country, arranged to meet with the Comanches to negotiate a peace treaty that would allow both groups to co-exist.

"It allowed the Germans to come and go as they pleased," Weinheimer said, "and the Native Americans could come and go as they pleased. But that did not bind all of the Native American tribes. We still have stories in our family genealogies of various young men, young women that were killed, homes that were burned, and young boys that were kidnapped."

Still, Fredericksburg itself was never attacked which allowed it to prosper.

Today statues near the Vereins Kirche in the Marktplatz commemorate Meusebach's historic meeting. The Vereins Kirche is a replica of the one built soon after the settlers arrived and used as a church, school and community hall. The original was demolished in 1896, but a new one was constructed later. Today, it houses a museum with artifacts and exhibits detailing Fredericksburg's beginnings.

Several blocks away, the Pioneer Museum Complex offers a snapshot of early life. All ten buildings are authentic, with two in their original locations.

"The log cabin would have been their first type of architecture," noted Weinheimer, once they graduated from living in crude shelters either made out of the canvas from their wagons or just trees with holes in the ground and trees stood up around it. That's because there was nothing when they got here. And then eventually, they got to the beautiful limestone buildings you see today."

Limestone was very common throughout this part of Texas and even used to bond the logs together in those log cabins.

The one room Kammlah House was built in 1849, with additions added as the family grew. Four



Top left: The Pioneer Museum Complex
 Top Right: Charles Nimitz and Grandson Chester Nimitz after Chester graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1905.
 Bottom, Fredericksburg's German Christmas Pyramid at the Town Marktplatz, Courtesy Steve Rawles

generations of Kammlahs lived here before the home was eventually sold to the Gillespie County Historical Society in the 1950s.

Outside Fredericksburg, the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm shows life on the farm for those early pioneers. The Sauers moved here from Fredericksburg in 1869, building a tiny log cabin to house their family of six. The home grew as more children came along. The Sauers sold the property to the Beckmann family around 1900 and the Beckmanns built a second, more elaborate house next door. Part of a state park complex today, the homes and the farm still reflect the time period.

"We show their way of life," Park Ranger and Interpreter Stephen Baerhge said. "Some of the cheeses we make, some of the sausages we make are uniquely German. We've actually got authentic German items in the buildings, as far as pictures and items on the walls."

Germans considered education a priority and built a number of schools in and around Fredericksburg. At one time there were 44, today 12 still exist.

"Sunday Houses" were also popular here. These were small homes built in town and used on the weekend when families would travel in from the farms to sell their wares at the market on Saturday and go to church on Sunday. Many "Sunday Houses" have been turned into bed & breakfast establishments.

On Main Street the former Nimitz Hotel still stands. It was owned by immigrant Charles Nimitz, a former German merchant marine. Today it's a museum honoring his grandson Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz who went on to lead America's military in the Pacific during World War II.

Germans who came to Fredericksburg were either

Catholic or Lutheran and built separate churches and cemeteries. It's interesting to note there is a Catholic cemetery at one end of town and a Protestant cemetery at the other. Early headstones are all in German.

Mark Wieser owns Das Peach Haus and has worked to protect Fredericksburg's unique heritage.

"Most locals are very proud of their German ancestry," he explained. While he and some others still speak German, the language was lost to many families across America after the U.S. government restricted speaking of the language during World War I and later World War II. Fredericksburg was able to avoid much of that national pressure during World War I, but was affected later. "We were basically isolated until about 1930. Until then the only way to get here was by train, driving by car was very, very difficult until the roads were paved. So, I grew up speaking German. "We still speak German when I get together with my sisters."

The German language is often heard in some of the German restaurants and businesses downtown. Der Lindenbaum is owned by Ingrid Hohmann who grew up in Germany's Eitel Mountains. Many of her employees are German, too, such as Barbara Otters, who moved from Munich seven years ago. Otters says people come from all over Texas and elsewhere to enjoy Sauerbraten, Pfeffersreak, Schnitzel, Rinderbraten and other dishes.

"Everything is homemade. Ingrid is always watching and training the kitchen staff to make sure the quality is always the same. She is always looking over their shoulders," she added with a laugh.

The Old German Bakery & Restaurant currently owned and operated by former East Berlin native Lutz Henschel serves bread and pastries made from scratch, as well as a full menu for breakfast and lunch featuring many of his grandmother's recipes.

Opa's Smoked Meats offers traditional German sausages such as bratwurst and knockwurst and other items such as German potato salad, but as Tony Hamilton explained, it also offers a little different twist.

"We're a traditional German market in that we have some traditional German sausages, but if you look in our case, you'll find we've kind of fused a little bit of Texas into this. So, it's also kind of 'Germany meets Texas'."

Fredericksburg is well known for its three-day Oktoberfest that hails on the first Saturday of October. Some 22,000 people have attended the event in recent years doubling the city's population for a short time. Centered around the Marktplatz, it's a round-the-clock event.

"You hear the German-Czech music, you see people wearing costumes and authentic German clothing," said Debbie Farquhar who oversees the festival. "We have numerous booths serving German food and we have an entire bar dedicated to German beer only."

As in Germany, Christmas is a special time in Fredericksburg. The city hosts a tree lighting ceremony at the Marktplatz alongside a specially built, large wooden pyramid. It's similar to-although much bigger than-the traditional table top pyramids in Germany.

People here are pleased with their strong sister-city relationship with Vg Monrabaur, Germany, It began in 1991 when local couple George and Nelda Vogel, traveled there to trace their ancestors. While they never located any "Vogels," they did forge friendships with townspeople from the region where many of Fredericksburg's early settlers originated. And as Nelda Vogel recalled, they cemented that friendship in a big way five years later.

"In 1996 when Fredericksburg became 150 years old, 48 of them came over and I found host families for all of them. And those host families have remained friends with the German guests all these years."

New friendships have followed in the years since with other trips to and from Germany. And there's also an ambitious student exchange program. Rose Marie Mazanke is President of the sister-city group.

"We're very active as far as young people go. I think that's one of the challenges Fredericksburg faces going into the future: maintaining the heritage, the culture, the food and the traditions. The student exchange program is a very important part of that."

The determination to hold on to that heritage remains a top priority. As Fredericksburg looks to its future, plans are already underway for a major celebration in 2021 when this German-American city celebrates its 175th anniversary.



Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest draws huge crowds and doubles the town's population. Courtesy Robbyn Dodd.

Submitted by Eddie Wolsch, Seymour

People

Matthaeus Kneschk's Burial Site

The accompanying photos are of the grave marker my brother made for me of my Wendish immigrant ancestor, Matthaeus Kneschk who led his family to TX in 1877 from Weisswasser, Prussia. Arriving as most did with little other than the clothes on their back, after settling first near Serbin then for a time in Williamson County, they migrated to the newly developed town of Sagerton in Haskell County, in 1904-05, due to the cheap land made available by the laying of railroad tracks through the region. The site of his grave had been lost until a relative, Norman Kneschk, shared its location with me. In digging the holes for the marker posts I uncovered the lone brick which served as his original headstone, a testament to the hardship and poverty they endured.

The marker is made from mesquite wood and cedar posts from the homeplace, the farm which my grandfather, Emil Wolsch, Matthaeus's grandson, pieced together from the first homesteaders after returning from service in WWI. The rocks at the base of it are also from the homeplace which lies on the bank of the Double Mt. Fork of the Brazos River near Neu Brandenburg (Old Glory,) in Stonewall County. Fairview Cemetery, so named because it overlooks the Double Mt. Fork, is about three miles from Old Glory, with both Sagerton and Neu Brandenburg settled primarily by Germans from the Washington County area. Emil's father, August Wolsch, immigrated with Matthaeus's family and later married Matthaeus's daughter, Augusta. Matthaeus is buried next to them.

The Bible verses used for the text were chosen to reflect the fear Matthaeus, without means and illiterate, must have felt as he uprooted his family and moved them across an ocean into the unknown. Encountering the unforgiving climate of the Rolling Plains, where summer heat and drought routinely shrivels crops to a crisp, no doubt his faith sustained him as he and his descendants adapted to their new home.

As a Wend from Weisswasser, he spoke a dialect of Ober Sorbian. Dr. Heinz Richter, a professor of Sorabistik Studies at the University of Leipzig, provided the Ober Sorbian spelling of his name while Trudla Malinkowa, affiliated with the Sorbian Institute and author of Shores of Hope, provided the German and Ober Sorbian translations. I am indebted to both and appreciate them for taking the time to help me with this project.

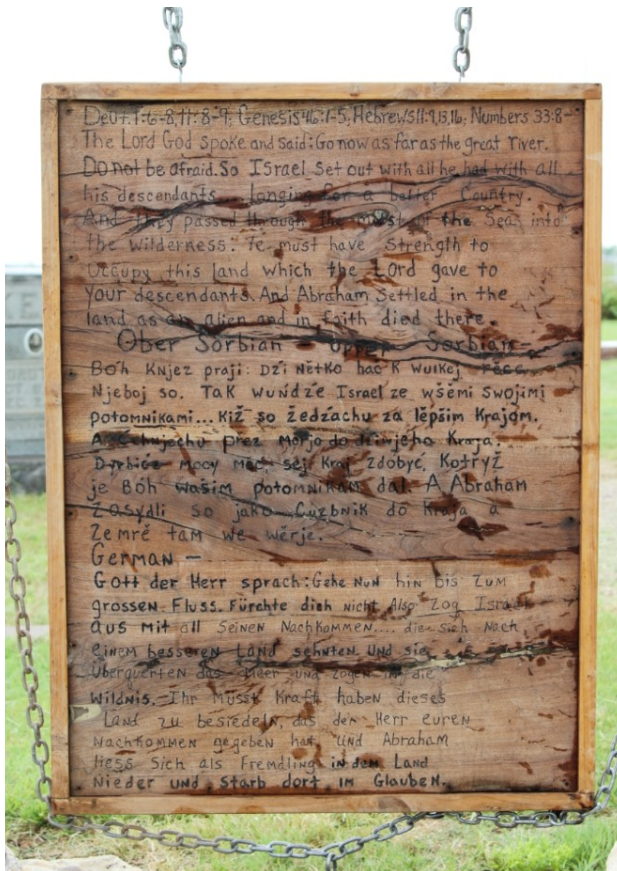


Front -

Hier ruht in Frieden
Jan Matej Kněžka
Johann Matthaeus Kneschke
John Matthew Kneschk
geboren am 5. März, 1833 in Weisswasser, Preussen
gestorben am 9. Januar 1909 in Sagerton, TX

Here rests in peace
Jan Matej Kněžka
Johann Matthaeus Kneschke
John Matthew Kneschk
Born March 5th, 1833 in Weisswasser, Prussia
Died January 9th, 1909 in Sagerton, TX





Back -
 Deut. 1:6-8, 11:8-9; Genesis 46:1-5; Hebrews 11:9,13,16; Numbers 33:8 -
 The Lord God spoke and said go now as far as the great river.
 Do not be afraid. So Israel set out with all he had with all his descendants.....longing for a better country. And they passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness. Ye must have strength to occupy this land which the Lord gave to your descendants. And Abraham settled in the land as an alien and in faith died there.

Ober Sorbian – Upper Sorbian –

Bóh Knjez praji: Dži nětko hač k wulkej rěce. Njeboj so. Tak wuńdže Israel ze wšěmi swojimi Potomnikami... kiž so žedžachu za lěpšim krajom. A čehnjechu přez morjo do dźiwjeho kraja. Dyrbiće mocy měć, sej kraj zdobyć, kotryž je Bóh wašim potomnikom dał. A Abraham zasydli so jako cuzbnik do kraja a zemrě tam we wěrje.



Submitted by Eddie Wolsch, Seymour

Editor’s Note: Board member Eddie Wolsch and I discovered we have ancestors buried in the same old cemetery out of my family’s stomping grounds, Old Glory, Rule, Sagerton. We are working on a historical marker and will entertain you with that history soon!!!



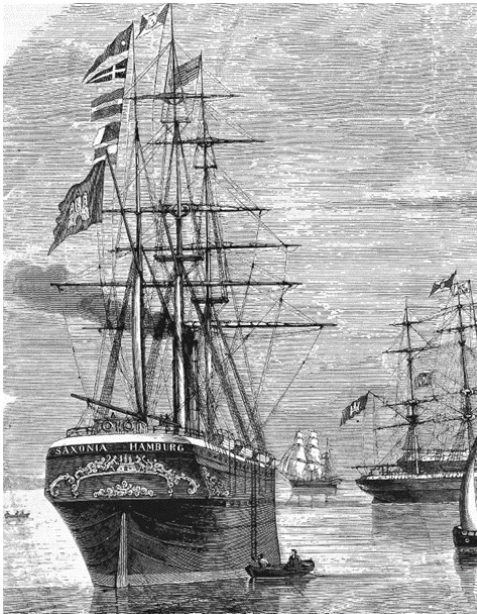


Figure 1 Saxonía in Harbor

Gruetzners Come to Texas

Prologue

Hamburg, Germany 6 April 1872

A man and his small family exit the carriage that has transported them from the train station to the Hamburg American shipping company's pier in the port of Hamburg. As they huddle together against the cold wind coming off the Elbe River, they gaze at the steamship *Saxonía* which lies tied up at the dock. With three masts for sails, and one smokestack for the steam engine amidships, the *Saxonía* measures 311.7 feet in length and weighs in at 2,684 gross tons. After seeing that their heavy trunks have been taken aboard the ship, Johann Gruetzner, a 42-year-old merchant from Gross Dehsa, a small village of some 507 inhabitants northwest of Loebau in the Kingdom of Saxony, motions to his family and they head up the gangway under the watchful eye of Captain Winzen. With Johann are his wife, Magdalena, one daughter and a son. Each first class cabin ticket for the four family members cost Johann \$130.00 in gold (about \$2,600.00 in today's money). Johann presents their traveling papers and is directed to their accommodation in the first class cabin portion of the ship, joining a total of

230 passengers making the voyage.

The journey across the Atlantic is relatively uneventful. The cabin is spacious compared to the bunk spaces provided for the passengers in steerage. The voyage lasts for one month, terminating at the Port of New Orleans on 6 May 1872 after a brief stop in Havana, Cuba where the US Consulate screens the 230 passengers of the *Saxonía*. From New Orleans the family travels westward overland to their new home in Texas.

Chapter One

The surname Gruetzner (Grützner) is a German name, although the family is actually of Wendish roots. The name had been "Germanized" at some point from the original Wendish name of Hedusch. This may have occurred in the 1840's as records have been found in the Lutheran churches of Bautzen wherein the name is shown as Hedusch with Grützner shown following it in parentheses. The Wendish people, or Sorbian people as they now prefer, are a small ethnic minority of Slavic origins that presently are contained in the Lausitz or Lusatian area of eastern Saxony where Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic come together. They are an ancient people that once occupied all of the eastern half of modern Germany but who have been conquered and assimilated over the centuries, reducing their number today to less than two hundred thousand.

Exactly why the Gruetzners decided to leave Saxony is unclear. Although The Saxon Lutheran Church was not suffering from the governmental oppression that had pressured the Prussian Wends to take their Lutheran faith to Texas in the 1850's, there were some doctrinal differences between the Saxon church and some Lutheran congregations, especially regarding the rationalization movement. The serfdom of the Wends had ceased decades prior to the departure of the Gruetzners and Johann apparently was doing well enough as a merchant since he traveled in first class. One possible reason was the series of wars which had taken place in the recent past involving Saxony. In 1866, the Austro-Prussian war had pitted Prussia and its allies against Austria and its allies which included Saxony, Bavaria, Hanover and other small entities. The Prussian victory led to a reshaping of the German speaking kingdoms and the forming of new confederations. As recently as the year prior to the Gruetzner's departure, Prussia, Bavaria, and Saxony had fought together against France in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871. There was a substantial rise in emigration in the decade following the war. The seemingly ever present wars taking place in and around Germany may have led Johann to risk a move to Texas rather than subjecting his family to another war which might involve his young son going to war.

Johann was taking his family westward overland to Fedor, Texas where his wife's brother has been serving as pastor of the small Trinity Lutheran Church since 1871. The community of Fedor, formerly known variously as Bluff Creek, Moab, and West Yegua, after the creek that flows through the area, was eventually named after Fedor Soder, the second owner of a small store that also served as the post office for that area. In 1872, it was located in the far western portion of Burleson County but the area would become Lee County when it was organized in 1874. Unlike some other Gruetzners who had immigrated to Australia in the 1840's and 1850's, Johann's wife, Magdalena,

wished to move to Texas where her brother, Reverend Johann August Proft, was serving other Saxon Wendish Lutheran families. The Trinity Lutheran congregation was an outgrowth of the St. Paul Lutheran Church of Serbin, Texas where a large group of Lutheran Wends from Prussia and Saxony had settled in 1854. The Gruetzners may have stayed briefly with Rev. Proft until they obtained a place of their own.

The first order of business for Johann in Texas was the purchase of land. He purchased three parcels, totaling 1,025 acres located in the old John Brown land grant, and paid for it with gold. The purchase was made in two parts with the first part concluded on 20 May 1872 in Jasper County from M. C. Moulton of Jasper and the second in Fayette County from Adam Adams of Jasper County on 5 June 1872. Each contract was for \$1,500 in gold or about \$30,000 in today's dollars. Apparently the parcels were jointly owned by individuals residing in the different counties and two contracts had to be drawn up to complete the sale. On 14 July 1872, Johann and Magdalena sold to Rev. Proft 114 acres of their land (for \$585 dollars in gold or about \$11,700 in today's dollars), so he could have a place of his own instead of depending on the congregation for a place for him and his family as he found the parsonage a "miserable place." This may have been because of the lack of good water and the prevalence of malaria in the area. The church parsonage did not have a well and relied on water transported there in barrels.

Unfortunately, the summer of 1872 in Texas did not bode well for the merchant turned farmer. Johann developed peritonitis (inflammation caused by an infection of the abdominal lining which might have been due to a perforated ulcer or intestine) and died on 17 August 1872, leaving behind his wife Magdalena, his 15-year-old daughter Maria, and 12-year-old son Carl August. Pastor Proft conducted the funeral service of his brother-in-law. The death is recorded in the church's death register but it is unknown if the burial was in the church cemetery or on the family land as no grave marker has been located. Reverend Proft also experienced tragedy in 1872. His infant daughter Bertha died on 3 September, followed three days later by his wife of one year, the former Dorothea Koch. He remarried his second wife, Dorothea Stahmer in July of 1873. That happy occasion was shortly followed by the death of Johann Gruetzner's only daughter, Maria, of dropsy (edema) of the lower abdomen on 19 August 1873. (Dropsy or edema is not actually a disease itself, rather a symptom of a disease and in this case may have indicated a heart problem.) Maria's death is recorded in the parish register but her grave site has yet to be determined.

Chapter Two

Magdalena Gruetzner remarried on 5 July 1874. Her new husband was Johann Wilhelm Wolf who was living in nearby Bastrop County. Out of this marriage came the birth of twins on 12 April 1875, Emily Magdalena Wolf and Johann Wilhelm Wolf Junior. Magdalena's new husband died on 7 September 1878, again leaving Magdalena with children to raise on her own.

Things began to improve for the family line in June of 1882 when Carl August Gruetzner married a 19-year-old Wendish girl from Serbin named Johanna Maria Wuensche. They were married in the Trinity Lutheran Church of Fedor by Reverend Maisch. This marriage eventually resulted in the birth of sixteen children between 1883 and 1910. Most of these births were recorded as having taken place in Lincoln, Texas. The family's address had changed from Fedor to a Lincoln address but was also briefly a Schkade, Texas address. A new post office was created for the area and named after the first postmaster who owned a small store in which the office was located. John A. Schkade was appointed postmaster for the new Schkade, Texas in February of 1903. He was replaced by Hermann Marburger in February 1904. The post office was closed down effective 31 December 1904. As such, Schkade was the location given when Magdalena Gruetzner Wolf died on 12 November 1903. The cause of death was reported as consumption, or what is now known as tuberculosis. Shortly after her death, the post office in Schkade closed and the mail was again handled out of Lincoln. Magdalena's death was recorded in the death register of St. John Lutheran Church of Lincoln, however no marker has been found in the church's cemetery. Carl August passed away from tuberculosis on 24 October 1911 and is also buried at the St. John cemetery. His tombstone gives his name only as K. A. Gruetzner and indicates a change in the spelling of his name Carl (Karl.)

And so, the last of the Saxon born Gruetzners was gone. But the name survived through the eight sons of Carl August and Johanna Maria and the bloodline also continued with the eight daughters. From Lee County, the name spread to Bastrop County, Harris County, Anderson, Milam, Travis and many others where the name Gruetzner now stands.

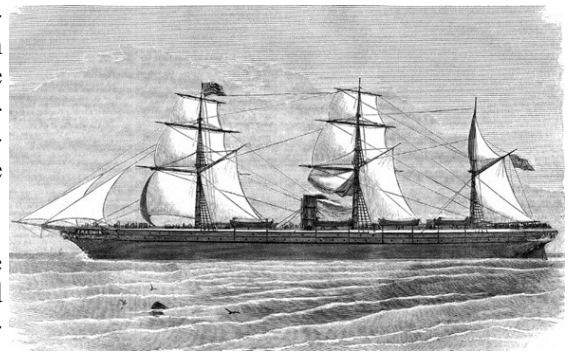


Figure 2 The Saxonian

Submitted by Richard Gruetzner, Burnet



Future Admiral Never Heard of Naval

Academy by Bartee Haile, *The Fayette County Record*,
July 1, 2016

Six months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Admiral Chester William Nimitz barely survived the crash of a seaplane in San Francisco Bay on Jun. 30, 1942. If an ancestor had mended his free-spending ways, the future architect of the American victory in the Pacific might well have served with distinction in a European navy. But great-grandfather Karl Heinrich Nimitz spent money like there was no tomorrow and ended up a destitute aristocrat. Opting to put an ocean between himself and his creditors, the high-born German emigrated to South Carolina.

His son Karl Jr. went to sea and later to Texas in 1846, where he joined the German tide flooding the recently admitted state. Thousands of his countrymen flocked to the Gulf Coast at the behest of the Adelsverein, a group of well-intentioned but tragically incompetent noblemen.

After a pestilence-ridden summer in a crowded camp, young Nimitz took his chances with a desperate inland exodus. Forced to choose between typhoid or Indians, he decided to risk a scalping.

As a founding resident of Fredericksburg, he tried his hand at clerking and for a time rode with the Texas Rangers. In 1847 he opened an inn that in stages was given the fascinating façade of a ship. For years the Nimitz Hotel was the only stopping place between Fredericksburg and California that offered travelers room and board.

A champion yarn spinner, the colorful innkeeper swore he had promised the sea a grandson as an admiral. A twist of fate made that tall tale come true.

Chronically bad health claimed Chester's father before the birth of his sixth child in 1885. The lad remained a Nimitz, however, when, as was common in those days, his widowed mother married the brother of her late husband. Soon after the wedding, the family moved to nearby Kerrville. An ambitious teenager, Chester set his sights on a West Point appointments were reserved for the sons of Army officers. As an afterthought, he asked if the lad would be interested in attending the Naval Academy. Chester had never heard of Annapolis but was anxious to give it a try.

His own diligence and the enthusiastic support of the community enabled the 16 year old to pass the competitive entrance exam with high marks. Half a continent away on Sep. 7, 1901, he was sworn in as a midshipman.

The Spanish-American War three years earlier had exposed a serious shortage of officers and battle-worthy ships in the long neglected Navy. In keeping with the modernization of the sea going service ordered by President Teddy Roosevelt, Chester Nimitz's class was the largest in academy history.

Spartan self-discipline and old-fashioned hard work helped the youth to excel. For four grueling years, he rose each morning at 4:30 to get a head start on his studies. The reward for this extra effort came at graduation with an impressive seventh place finish in a class of 114.

A rare mistake in 1908 jeopardized the future of the inexperienced ensign. Sloppy navigation caused a destroyer under Nimitz's command to run aground in Manila Bay. Found guilty of negligence by a mandatory court-martial, he was subject to dismissal but received only a mild reprimand.

Nimitz later repaid that leniency with an exemplary display of loyalty. During a long tour of duty in Europe, he mastered diesel mechanics which promised a revolutionary breakthrough in ship propulsion. Offered an annual salary of \$25,000 by a private firm for his invaluable expertise, he stayed in uniform for the princely sum of \$300 a month.

Nimitz made the most of his second chance. Promoted to lieutenant the year after the accident, he advanced to lieutenant commander in 1917 and captain later.

On the eve of World War , he made rear admiral at the age of 53. Nine days after the "day of infamy" at Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt barked, "Tell Nimitz to get the hell out to Pearl and stay there until the war is won!"

Quickly raised to the rank of admiral, he took charge of what was left of the battered Pacific Fleet. With quiet precision and relentless determination, Nimitz healed America's crippled naval wing and orchestrated the final triumph over Japan. On the deck of the battleship Missouri anchored in Tokyo Bay, he accepted the formal surrender of the armed forces of the Rising Sun in September 1945.

Buried on his birthday in 1966, Chester Nimitz never again lived in the Lone Star State. Nevertheless, he always remained at heart the boy from the Hill Country.

Summing up the sentiment of transplanted native sons and daughters everywhere, he once said, "You can take a Texan out of Texas, but you can't take Texas out of a Texan."

Signed first editions of "Texas Boomtowns: A History of Blood and Oil" are still available. Order yours today with a check for \$28.80 to Bartee Haile, Pt). Box 152, Friendswood, TX 77549 or online at harteehaile.com

Submitted by Rodney Koenig, Houston

Volksdeutsche by the Dozen, Part Five:

Fleeing Yugoslavia, Escaping the Communist Takeover: Jakob & Katarina Webel Flee toward Germany

James J. S. Johnson

In this fifth episode of the “**Volksdeutsche by the Dozen**” family history series, the ethnic-German family of **Jakob and Katarina Webel**, then living in what is today Croatia, face and struggle with the turmoil of life in the broken-apart country of Yugoslavia. Life in war-maimed Yugoslavia is unimaginably harsh. The family unit’s survival is often tenuous.

As the outcome of World War II becomes predictable the Webels make the hard decision to evacuate their native country. The country that was “home” before World War II would cease to be their family homeland after the Webel family emigrated, leaving behind extended family members (such as Jakob’s father). But where would they go next? Where could they go? Where should they go, to make a new home in post-WWII Europe?

As World War II ended in what was then Yugoslavia the then-occupying “winners” were often quick to exact revenge on people-groups whom they were ethnically adverse to. Ironically, the Yugoslavian “winners” included many Ustaše-allied Roman Catholic Croats, who had previously allied (as quislings) with German occupation Nazis, as well as Communist “partisans”.

In time this aftermath occupation transitioned into a Yugoslavian version of Communism, under Tito (i.e., Communist dictator **Josip Broz Tito**, a/k/a “**Marshal Tito**”), who aligned his political control of Yugoslavia with the Soviet Union whenever he deemed it advantageous to do so.

As Tito secured and increased his dictatorial control over Yugoslavia, he directed his “partisan” (i.e., Communist) military forces to impose especially harsh treatments against civilians who were ethnically **Hungarian** or **German** -- such as **Danube Swabian** Germans (like the Webels), as well as against ethnic **Serbs**.

Of special relevance to the Jakob Webel family (who were “Danube Swabian” Germans, ethnically and culturally, a/k/a *Volksdeutsche*), Yugoslavia’s post-war regime (under Marshal Tito) was enacting merciless reprisals against all having any kind of “German” identity, even those who had resisted the German invaders during the war.

In particular, Marshal Tito decreed that *Volksdeutsche* in Yugoslavia were enemies of the (new) Yugoslavian state – i.e., deemed untrustworthy and politically hostile to the new Communist government, as if their ethnicity alone made them outlaws (i.e., outside the protection of ordinary laws). As if they were criminals or POWs, these ethnic-German Yugoslavian civilians were captured (or ordered) and forced into “internment” camps (a/k/a concentration camps) – about **110,000** of the local Yugoslavian *Volksdeutsche* -- devoid of basic necessities, subjected to hard labor, deprived of decent healthcare and nutritious food, so that **> 40%** (probably about **46,000**) **died** as “enemies of state” inside such internment camps *after the war*.

Marshal Tito’s Communist soldiers savagely implemented other aspects of his so-called “ethnic cleansing” policies, to (allegedly) make Yugoslavia “safe” from perceived (or “foreseeable”) dangers of disloyal/disfavored ethnic groups (like the Swabian *Volksdeutsche*) who were suspected of being unsympathetic to Tito’s post-war Communist regime. In effect, ethnic Germans and Hungarians (and some others) were presumed to be “**fifth column**” traitors or spies, who stayed behind, strategically – on behalf of the retreating armies of Hungary and/or Germany. To combat this alleged “threat”, Marshal Tito’s atrocious dictatorship-enforced programs of terroristic mayhem, murder, and massacre followed the official closure of World War II (in Yugoslavia) – like a new war, on the heels of the immediately preceding (yet officially “ended”) war.

Ironically, many Roman Catholics (including Croatian **Ustaše** criminals) were shielded from these reprisals (and were shielded even from accountability for their earlier war crimes) by post-war forces, as part of the Rome-based “**ratline**” movement (a topic this report will avoid attempting to describe – see generally, e.g., [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratlines_\(World_War_II_aftermath\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratlines_(World_War_II_aftermath)) – noting the Roman Catholic Bishop Alois Hudal’s leading role) – yet Protestant “Germans”, such as Lutherans or Anabaptist-like evangelicals, had no such political “shield”.

The “ratline” operations after World War II were politically complex, sometimes realigning WWII “foes” as post-WWII “fellows”, including many examples of American acquiescence to Rome-facilitated protection of Nazi and Ustaše war criminals, to prevent the USSR accessing former Axis “foes”. [See, accord, Mark Aarons & John Loftus,

Unholy Trinity: The Vatican, the Nazis, and the Swiss Banks (St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), 432 pages.]

Communist-imposed reprisals included revocation of citizenship status, loss of property rights (to private homes and personal property), slave labor impositions, loss of physical liberty to move freely (via imprisonment in concentration camps), many forms of torture (including savage sex crimes against women and children), forced starvation, forced deaths by deprivation of health care (when illnesses were easily treatable), and deportation to Siberia (via arrangements with the Soviet Union's withdrawing Red Army). Similar fates were experienced by many Hungarians in post-war Yugoslavia.

Genocidal executions (including fusillading executions and torture-caused murders, as well as internment camp-facilitated starvations, etc.) of **Danube Swabian Germans** (like the Webels) were committed after the war, likely exceeding 60,000 – although “official” records of governmental post-war killings of noncombatant “Germans” (in post-WWII Yugoslavia) report only 27,367 such murders.

Genocidal executions of **Hungarians** were committed after the war, likely exceeding 50,000 – although official records only report about 35,000 or less. Genocidal post-war killings of **Serbs** likely exceeded 25,000.

Some of the more fortunate “Germans” (i.e., “Volksdeutsche” – ethnic Germans) of Yugoslavia were allowed to emigrate to Germany or Austria.

However, not waiting for the post-war government's “permission”, many ethnic-German Danube Swabians (including the **Jakob Webel** family) fled Yugoslavia after World War II “ended”, to avoid the cruel aftermath regimes that blended Communists and Croats.

Accordingly, many ethnic-German Danube Swabians (“Volksdeutsche”) fled Yugoslavia after World War II “ended”, to avoid the cruel aftermath regimes that blended Communists and Croats.

LEAVING YUGOSLAVIA

As the Allies gained the upper hand, against Germany, the German war machine was incessantly hammered on the east by Soviet forces, and on the west by British and American forces. What would happen next?

The German military leadership became especially concerned about the treatment of ethnic Germans in territories that became occupied by Soviet forces. So, as the Soviet military advanced against German-occupied territories in AD1944-AD1945, German authorities strove to evacuate German people to lands west of the **Oder-Neisse line** (what became the post-WWII border between East Germany and Poland, based mostly on the Oder River and the Lusatian Neisse River). Many ethnic Germans, who did not evacuate voluntarily, were vindictively expelled (or summarily killed) by the incoming Red Army of the Soviet Union.



- Political situation in 1944-1945 -

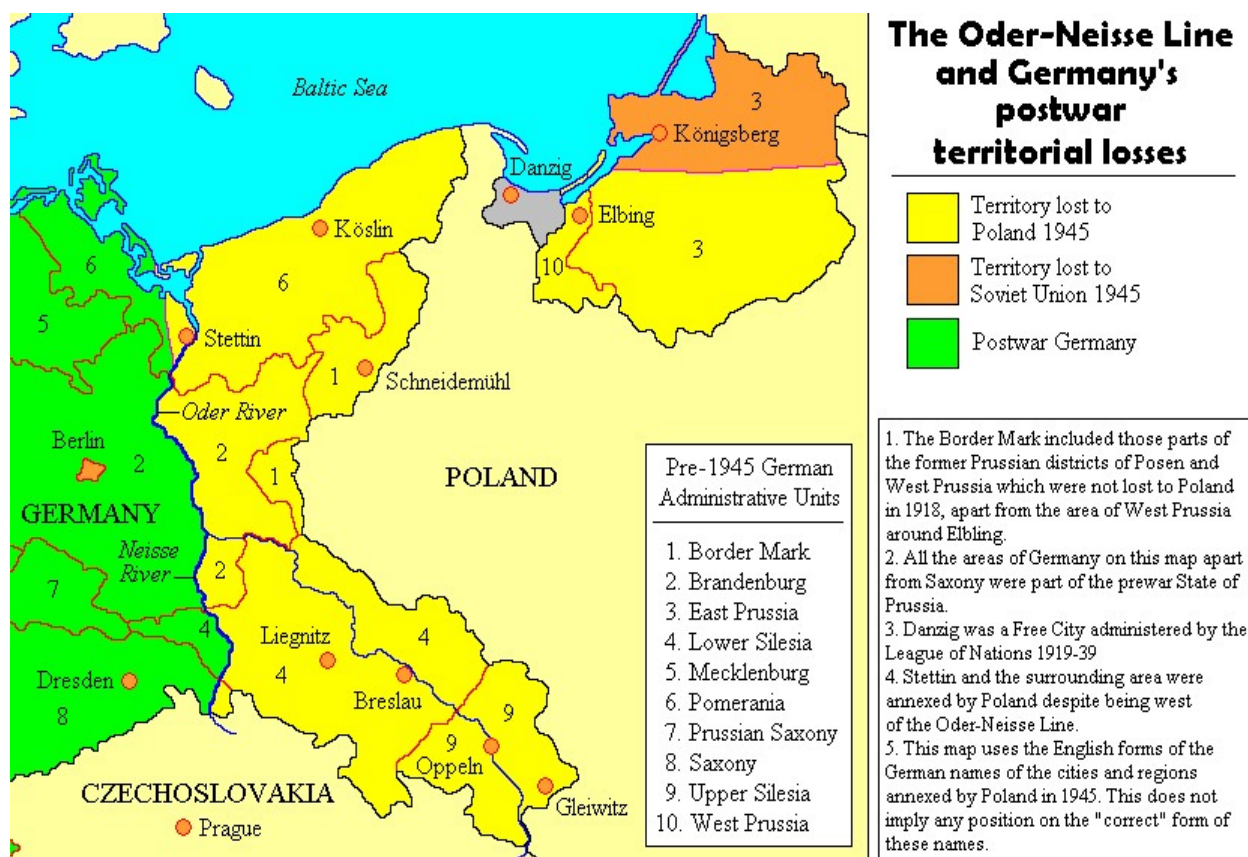
- international borders
- Syrmian frontline before April 1945

1. Liberated parts of Yugoslavia before April 1945:

- Vojvodina
- part of Vojvodina administered by the Military Administration in Banat, Bačka and Baranja from October 17, 1944 to February 15, 1945 (after February 15, 1945, this territory was administered by the Supreme People's Liberation Board of Vojvodina)
- part of Vojvodina that was administered by the Supreme People's Liberation Board of Vojvodina since liberation in 1944
- Serbia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina

2. Parts of Yugoslavia that were not liberated before April 1945:

- Independent State of Croatia



* * * * *

(A chronology-of-events discussion is reported on page 69-7, beginning with Robert's birthday [see pages 69-70] as a time-cairn. Dad [Jakob] Webel recalls who the German Army tried again to recruit him – and he recalls how he claimed exemption due to the number of children he and Mom then had, so the German recruiter told Jakob to serve as a clerical “volunteer” [see pages 70-72]. Then the interview shifts to recalling that the war's outcome was then foreseeable.)

* * * * *

MOM: *And I have to run the store again by myself with Reini.*

DAD: So I was every day there-

MOM: *And Else stayed home and take care of the children and cook and do what she can and she had this long hair.*

DAD: At that time already it was we all saw that Germans will lose the war we all saw, before that we know. They came, the Americans, they came, they put on the town, Vincovci, and bombs and bombs, many, many.

DAUGHTER: **The American people did?**

DAD: American soldier, not people.

DAUGHTER: **Why did they do that?**

DAD: Why? Because Vinkovci is a place where the railroad goes on 6 different ways so it's crossways so then they kill that, is no connection with the-

DAUGHTER: **At this point was Yugoslavia allied with Germany?**

DAD: Not then. Half Yugoslavia was with Germany, half was under Germany, but not to be.

DAUGHTER: **Not with it.**

DAD: Occupied.

DAUGHTER: **Vinkovci was under-**

DAD: Was with Germany.

MOM: *This was war. I had to leave the house and go into the store.*

DAD: But they, every once in a while, they bomb and so on, and then the people, the Germans should move to Germany, move to Germany, and mom and the children, I send them to Orlich.

MOM: *First was the other things, I had to go every day in the store, till fell apart your office over there.*

DAUGHTER: **What do you mean “fell apart?”**

DAD: Well, around the war is Germany who go, run away, so no is no office.

MOM: *No office so there is nobody there.*

DAUGHTER: **You stay at home then.**

DAD: Sure.

MOM: *He came home again to run the store and I can stay home for a while and wash and do whatever..*

DAD: And then when every day, every other night, came the airplanes, it's danger for the children because ...

DAUGHTER: **How long were you a clerk approximately if this time is November?**

DAD: Not too long, couple of weeks. But that's was all collapsing, running down hill.

MOM: *Better we stayed at home. They had no windows, we had no doors, just was everything busted from the bombs.*

DAD: From the airplanes.

DAUGHTER: **This is November.**

DAD: A little bit before November, week before

DAUGHTER: **Wasn't it starting to get cold?**

DAD: Yes. It was cold.

MOM: *Every day he make the roof, finish the roof off, the roof on the ... and we keep all kinds of what you need, how do you say that...?*

DAD: The wheat and the barley and everything is on the-

DAUGHTER: **Up on the house.**

DAD: That is our storage, the farmer.

DAUGHTER: **Yeah, the farmer.**

MOM: *And the roofs are always down. The bombs, they break the-*

DAD: Then the bombs fall there, they shake, and the bricks can fall down the roof, the bricks you know.

MOM: *And every day they go on the roof, fix the roof, put other things over there.*

DAD: It was not broken.

MOM: *Fix something, again patch them up, and then the airplanes come and chi..chi..chi only, they have to run down and lay down. Dad put us to Orlich, me and the children.*

DAUGHTER: **That's another town. How far away?**

MOM: *Was a little town.*

DAUGHTER: **Where your sister lived?**

MOM: *No. Aunt Christy (Pfeifer) lived there.*

DAD: That was about 15, 20 kilometer but in other direction, not in city.

MOM: *Not too close to the city.*

DAUGHTER: **Okay. And Mom went there. By this time was your store gone or were you still running it?**

DAD: No, still running it. Me and Reini was running the store. When the bombs came, we just lay flat in the store down, we wait, and close the windows, the outside door.

MOM: *This was a wooden outside door..*

DAUGHTER: **How long did this go on? While you and Rien ran the store?**

DAD: -- not long.. And then the German people had to move out, then they came there in the town where mom is, by force, the German army or the German SS, by force take mom in the automobile and brought her to Vinkovci.

MOM: *Not in the auto, trucks. The trucks, the big trucks.*

DAD: They brought her to Vinkovci and shipped them to Germany, but not by free will, by force, they was watching them not to go run away.

MOM: *Yeah, we was watched, on every wagon was a..(soldier).*

DAUGHTER: **What happened to Aunt Christy? They didn't take her?**

DAD: No. They want to take her but they beg and they promised they will tomorrow morning go with horse and buggies.

MOM: *Like the other people went by themselves on horse and buggies.*

DAD: They let them stay, and they did again, they stay at home.

MOM: *Just then aunt Anna, her mother and father, and her sister, with her 4 children, Eva Brasenkovich, me, and Dad with our 6 children.*

DAD: Wait.... Mom and the children who were in Orlich, they went there, and then they came to Vinkovci, there they are station, not station, they stay in the train, and they go pick people from everywhere, more, and she want to go to our place to call me to go along with them, and did not let her, not at all.

MOM: *I ask the soldier what was watching the wagon, on every wagon is a soldier and they are up and down and they are watching the people. You are not allowed to go out, not for anything. No, you can go with, then when you have to go somewhere for your own, the soldier had to go with you, watch 'em, and the other watch the wagon. Then you cannot go anywhere alone.*

DAUGHTER: **But I know you got out somehow.**

MOM: *I went under the wagon.*

DAD: Under the train.

MOM: *Under the train, and I was waiting till on the other side was a town.*

DAD: The soldier does not stay here, he goes 3,400 yard that way, and if he turn your back..

DAUGHTER: **Explain the train to me again. How did you get out? You went under the train.**

DAD: The train stays there and so the soldier goes hundred to two hundred yard that way and that way, and when he go that way and he turned his back-

MOM: *No, that soldier was on my wagon, he know, I told him I will (escape) how you say it, I will run away, if they shoot at me, don't matter, I will run away, this will be this night. And he don't have to know. He know it, I told*

him I will do it. But they don't let me, nobody let me, I will do it. And he said, I'm very sorry and he was a very young person. He saw I cried and said I go, whatever happen, I left the children and I went down under the train and crawl on the other side and was waiting on the other side for just maybe 2 posts on the whole side, and I was waiting till he turns the back, not the face, and I crawled under those wires all through till in the cornfield. When I was in the cornfield, then was the end. Then I went in this row on the cornfield wherever I get now, night time.

DAD: And she get .. instead go east...she went west.. very far.

MOM: *Very far, very and so I had to go, go, go, finally I don't even know where I am, just finally I came in where houses were, houses, and get teeny little bit, not light, just-, so anyhow, I find the way home.*

DAUGHTER: **Did you ask directions?**

DAD: No. She found the road.

MOM: *The streets and finally I know where I am now, it just I am very far away. So I was wet till here, mornings dew, in the cornfield, and I came home, it was just starting daylight and they butchered pigs.*

DAUGHTER: **Who was home? Dad and Reini and Grandpa.**

MOM: *Yeah.*

DAD: Grandpa and Uncle John and his family.

MOM: *Uncle John and Anna.*

DAD: And Uncle John had butchered 2 pigs, I think 2.

MOM: *Yeah, and then when they saw-*

DAD: And they was already killed.

MOM: *What's this?, how come I home from Orlich? Why am I here now? And I told them what happened.*

DAD: And then, Uncle John, when he heard what's going on, then he put the horse and the wagon, and the children and he sped away to the village somewhere.

MOM: *Somewhere in the village to hide.*

DAD: Why? Because the German could pick him up. Left the pigs there, left the grandfather there, left everything there so-

MOM: *Then I told him we need bread, something to eat, we are hungry, nothing to eat. And I left the children with Rosie Paisel and with aunt Anna's father and mother, and then her sister and 4 children and our 5. So I told them then I don't go back alive, they should never take the children over the border, they should live in town somewhere in the corn, first was Reini, he's the oldest.*

DAD: Reini wasn't there.

MOM: *Oh, not Reini, Else the oldest, just let them down when the train start going and then she can pick up the little ones so was ever, and I don't come back, I don't know when I come back or whatsoever happen to me. So we made agreement so that they was kind of sorry. I said, I cannot stand anymore, I have to go. So I went. So Dad said, no, you are not going back. I said, I have to go, I promised, the children are there. And I promised this young soldier. I come back the regular way. I will not come through the field. I come just the regular way, just I want to go to my dad's house.*

DAD: And my dad say I should go along. So, what do I do? Take a wheelbarrow and put in a big sack, not a paper sack, but big sack, bread.

MOM: *Bread was not baked, dough was ready and was in the oven. We had to get it home, get bread later.*

DAD: Okay, what did I take?

MOM: *Just lard(?) and speche (bacon), shugee (ham). But what we killed a year before. A year old.*

MOM: *This was butchered a year before, dry stuff. dry bacon, dry sausage..., I need a pan, I need dishes, nobody has bought pan.*

DAD: The Bible, Jesus said, like when a scribe is learned to be a disciple, not the same but the same meaning, is like a wood house who brings to the table old and new. When the new came, he got old. So, not to brag but we had the, the butcher time is, but we had plenty bacon-

DAUGHTER: **From last year.**

DAD: -and ham and sausage.

MOM: *Dry sausage.*

DAD: Couple of 50 kilos, that's 100 lb. bag (you could put wheat in), filled up with stuff, not the one but two.

MOM: *So we had to carry, this was all from our house-*

DAD: Put in the wheelbarrow and beside that we had a small wagon like a regular wagon just that small, and filled up that, and we pulled that.

MOM: *And Reini, he start crying, he would not stay with dad for nothing, just he come.*

DAD: With his mom.

MOM: *With mom and filled up this wagon and then....*

DAUGHTER: **Why did Reini cry?**

DAD: He want to go with mom.

MOM: *Want to go with mom, don't stay with dad, and with Grandpa. And Elsie and all there they're all with me so he had to stay with dad and store keeping.*

DAD: But before that happen, one night came the American soldiers.

MOM: *This was not there before, after you came after. We stayed longer on this train. You came there.*

DAUGHTER: **Didn't the train move?**

MOM: *No, no, the train don't move and they don't bring the people together less and less and they want to fill up, there was over 1,000 people already on, just they want to fill it up, the wagons, and one night we had such a-*

DAUGHTER: **Bombing.**

MOM: *Then Dad say you should go. Then you came by yourself. Is so the third day-*

DAUGHTER: **What happened? You had bombings?**

MOM: *Bombing, and shelling, then we went all up on time in the wagons and Rosie....*

DAD: Yeah, but I want to say something yet. Before you went to Orlich, was a big bombing in Vinkovci, one day and then next day in the morning, but we were prepared, they said we should go in the basement but I said no, it is not good to go in the basement but we had a big straw pile, bigger than a house, I pulled out straw and make a hole to bury inside.

DAUGHTER: **A tunnel.**

DAD: And here you go in, is that small, you could crawl in, the other side you crawl out. In the middle is big hole and one day we was on the roof, fixing the roof, and came the Americans but flew low.

MOM: *With the shotguns. [i.e., shooting guns]*

DAD: We know, run down.

MOM: *The shotgun, they shot like this.*

DAD: Because right after the town close was the German canons.

DAUGHTER: **Like an artillery type thing.**

DAD: Artillery against, when they came high, they could not shot because they know they could not.

MOM: *So they come low.*

DAD: And in the night they came, evening, they look out, the alarm ring out (**wolf sound**)

DAUGHTER: **One of those kind.**

DAD: Yeah, but here is a light, big light.

MOM: *The whole town was light-*

DAD: That I know, they are make orientation. Oh, here one, here one..., now no more orientation, they know what, where they want to bomb. Run the children in the hole, and they all went in that hole, the children.

DAUGHTER: **Grandpa too?**

MOM: *No.*

DAD: Grandpa we did call, we just take the children, we call him but he was in the garden and he was almost lost. Not almost... he fell down there.

MOM: *He hold onto the tree, and all the air pressure.. this way or this way-, He was really scared. He was really scared, he could not stand up.*

DAD: And under the straw was nothing, it was quiet. The people said, I said, I defend, that is the best. Basement could fall, but straw could not, if the bomb fall on top, could not fall through because of that straw, but if is a fire, started burning, one side you could not-, other side out. And then next day, and the roof was very damaged, we was on the roof. Then we saw they came low, and we run down again, it was, they killed the artillery, and after that was mom where we was ...

DAUGHTER: **Then you were sent to Orlich.**

DAD: After that, yeah.

DAUGHTER: **Okay, now we're back to where mom got out of the train from Orlich.**

DAD: And she came back home and I took her there with food, whatever I could, and I get home.

MOM: *He went back to his father.*

DAUGHTER: **You can do that because they only want you.**

DAD: Only mom. But I am not registered.

MOM: *He's not in the pages. He's not there and I'm watched. When they saw me, how this lady get away? How she can go when there was mad. I said, I told you I will run away alive or not alive. I told this major even there in his place and he was so red. And he said, this your boy? I said, yes, this my boy. I told you I had a boy at home and I want him and I let my husband know and you don't want to listen. I would go with the soldier, I don't mind to have a soldier beside me. My husband is living in this town and he had a store and I had a son over there and they did not even listen to me.*

DAD: So I left Reini there and I went home. We brought bread.

DAUGHTER: **The next day.**

DAD: Brought bread the same day.

MOM: *The same day, when the bread was done, you brought bread, a loaf of bread over there and we eat good.*

DAUGHTER: **Who did you feed, just your family?**

MOM: *Aunt Rosie's and aunt Anna's mother and father.*

DAUGHTER: **They were taking just the women and children to Germany?**

DAD: No, everybody but-

DAUGHTER: *But dad, why not you? But dad wasn't in Orlich. Mom was in Orlich. Oh, I see.*

MOM: *He don't know them, he was not on the list ... [interruption in recording] ... And Reini, then they left home, and then later he brought the bread. We was still here. Now this night we had a big-*

DAUGHTER: **Bombing. And dad wasn't with you.**

MOM: *No, he was with his dad [i.e., Grandpa Webel] and they had a very bad night, the same thing in this hole over there in the straw. I didn't tell him when Dad [i.e., Grandpa Webel] say in the morning, "Jakob, you pick your stuff and go to your wife and children now, maybe you don't find them ever. Go, and I'm very old, maybe one night, two nights come the same thing and I get killed and I'm old and I'm ready to die."*

DAUGHTER: **Was Aunt Rosie gone by this time?**

DAD: She was married. She was gone too.

MOM: *Long time. Grandfather's already old, 80, and then he sent him, Go. Then he came and bring still some stuff, still more bread and stuff and then he came there...*

DAD: Not only that, and I knew what in Germany is not, no rubber, no black pepper so I brought from our store black pepper, take it in a small package, black pepper and rubber band and different things, more small things what you could take it in the hand and so.

MOM: *He brought all kinds of things from the store then and then he came there.*

DAD: Even if you are ready to die, you are not ready, you're holding to life as long as you can.

MOM: *Then he was laying down, he was sick.*

DAUGHTER: **Dad was sick? When he got to you? When was he sick?**

MOM: *When him there and he decided really he goes along, whatever comes and leaves his father alone in this big house. Uncle John left. Everything is...*

DAUGHTER: **Why didn't Grandpa come along? He didn't want to? He thought he was too old?**

MOM: *Yeah, he don't want to come along. So dad came.*

DAD: It is not so easy. It is easier to die at home than to die on the road.

DAUGHTER: **Was that the last time you saw him [i.e., Grandpa Webel]?**

DAD: Yes.

MOM: *Yes, yes.*

DAUGHTER: **Do you know how he died then?**

MOM: *Oh, yeah, later Uncle John came home and Aunt Anna when he died. He was a couple more year.*

DAUGHTER: **He didn't die from the bombing.**

MOM: *No, no, no.*

DAD: No. And so we went to Germany.

MOM: *He do what he can. So he was living, the neighbor lady came over, take care of him and saw what he needed,*

DAD: That the night came the American soldier, American Air Force and bombed the city. That very bad, that very bad, that was maybe a week longer burning, all the railroad station and finally they moved..

MOM: *All the things and so many people was and so many houses was not even standing their house.. "What is mine? Where is the place?"*

DAUGHTER: *The train leave?*

DAD: It went away but not in the direction we want, it went over other direction but still over Hungary, over Vienna.

DAUGHTER: Did it eventually get to Germany?

DAD: Yes. Over Hungary and Czechoslovakia, came to – [a part of Germany] -- now is it Polish.

DAUGHTER: **Why did they want you to go there?**

DAD: Why? Because they knew, they saw the Communist will take over that part and they knew we German have lost so and so many people in that war, and we move on to build up the German nation again.

MOM: *So when we... when dad come...*

DAD: And beside that, they knew when the Communists came, they will kill the German all, men and women and whatsoever they did, so they want to save as much as they can.

DAUGHTER: **This is the Germans who were collecting their people . . .**

DAD: The German.

MOM: *We was in the wagon and dad laid down, and before we had to go over the border and you leave the Germany border, Hungary or whatever was Essig, dad wants to leave, he wants so bad to go-*

DAD: To jump out and go.

MOM: *-jump out-*

DAUGHTER: **And go back** [to Yugoslavia].

MOM: *-and leave all us and was so hard raining you cannot even see. And one man in the same wagon, he did this. He left the wife and the children there and went and run away back, stay in Yugoslavia. And dad wants to do the same thing just not by himself. He cannot leave his father alone and go with us, and go who knows where. So this was -*

DAUGHTER: **A hard decision.**

MOM: *-He wants to do it but I say don't do it. I said when one child start crying we are caught and we will go to big trouble. Must never, and then they take you and have you be still alone, so. And this what can happen with so many children. Raining hard, and now we will, in couple minutes we will go over the border, then it's the end. And I said, no, I don't even think you should do it. Let's go where the other people going, the thousands and thousands people are going. What's going to happen? We will see. Just maybe one night like last night I said that-*

DAD: Many nights even during the traveling the train.

MOM: *Many nights we had no machine.*

DAD: We, they came, the American, and bombs and killed the locomotive or the locomotive catch up and run away, let them, everyone stay-

MOM: *In the woods, we are in the woods by ourselves.*

DAD: We, our family, and the Pfeiffer family, all together.

MOM: *All on one pile; we all get killed. Not to see the other suffer...*

DAD: If we get killed, kill all, if it's here. And in those times, not only those times, but in that kind of time, you don't think that's mine bread. No, that's ours.

MOM: *-- and then I went begging...*

DAD: And you go, that is box car, like they call it, there's no toilet or no anything, no water, no nothing, and they just stop the train here, now you need water and you need toilet, you need something to eat, you get nothing. Then goes somebody down to... then the train go away and the child is down, cannot bring it up or your wife, stays down, happens many thing.

MOM: -- happen so many thing...

DAD: And Robert, he was-

DAUGHTER: **He was a baby then.**

DAD: He was a baby, yes. That was later, was second trip.

MOM: *This was later for second, the second it was, the second trip. This was not the first.*

DAD: Now we stop again somewhere, and here is, you see smoking, smoke.

MOM: *Smoke, smoking in the*

DAD: So Reini, 'Run over there with the baby'.

MOM: *Reini was scared to go, and Else too.. .*

DAD: So Reini, Else, go run over there, German soldier cooking for a transport. Go over there and beg something to eat.

MOM: *Coffee was everywhere.*

DAD: They give it to children.

They were afraid to go but then they'd be left behind.

MOM: *Yeah, they afraid. They was children.*

DAD: But they are going. Then Bring coffee or then bring whatever .

MOM: *Sometime I went. I, and Rosie Webel the post had to watch us. He said, you have to go back. I said, we are not going back. Over there in this wagon are 10 children, you never ask is there food and we go to the soldier kitchen and we will beg something, whatever is there. And he said, when the train goes, then he goes. He's not allowed to let us, he had to shoot or he had to report. We went anyhow. We don't listen to him and he was so scared.*

DAD: And in that boxcar was more people, not only we. When we came, when they came...

MOM: *When we came to this kitchen. They want to give us all kinds of things we cannot carry. We carried the loaf bread here or one over here, then we had a hot pan, bowl full kraut or whatever they cooked and brought around.*

DAD: If a man would go, maybe they would not give it, but a woman or children, they give it.

MOM: *... 6:00 we should come back, then they make supper, good coffee, we can have a nice strong coffee. And Anna's mother, she is very old, full of life, she can talk very good, and I was not scared to go with her. She was really encourage, she was an old person just she-*

DAD: She was not old then, but older.

MOM: *She was not old, just she was talkable, she can talk to anyone, very good, better than Anna, she, when we came back, she says, see, we got food but when we came in the wagon, you should see all the people, how mad they was. How can we do such a things, without gun, without.. , We don't went without you, we almost-*

DAD: You saw was given, could go, only you could go.

MOM: *You can go-*

DAD: But everybody eats, for long as you had food.

MOM: *We give them, too, to eat.*

DAUGHTER: **How many people, approximately, were in a boxcar, dad?**

MOM: *Ours was the last. We had not much in the*

DAUGHTER: **You were the last boxcar on the train.**

MOM: *No, no, no, the least in, they don't want more, we had so many children because we had lay the children.*

DAD: Who was else besides the Pfeiffer's?

MOM: *Pfeiffer, Brasenkovich . . . Guttwein. . .*

DAD: Nobody else.

MOM: *Nobody else.*

DAUGHTER: **Then how many people? You said 10 children.**

MOM: *She had 4 children the Guttwien's, and we had 6, and they had 4, this was 10, ours what we count, we never counted Guttwien's.*

DAD: Guttwein had 2.

MOM: *Four, four.*

DAUGHTER: **So you had 14 children.**

MOM: *Yes.*

DAUGHTER: **And how many adults?**

DAD: Five.

MOM: *Old Brasenkovich and...*

DAD: Yeah, we are 5.

MOM: *And there was just 1.*

DAD: There was 6.

MOM: *Her husband stayed*

DAUGHTER: **That's pretty good.**

MOM: *So was not too bad.*

DAUGHTER: **Did you have blankets or anything like that, dad? Did you take any of that stuff from the store?**

MOM: *No.*

DAUGHTER: **Nothing like that.**

MOM: *Yeah, you went ???*

DAD: Yes, not only blankets but our dunyas(?) too.

DAUGHTER: **Oh, the feather beds.**

MOM: *The feather pillows and feather beds. He went home and brought this.*

DAD: I am a salesman, I know to pack and very tight pack packed.

MOM: *A little bundle has a lots in. He had this, he got the strings all in the store, the good, new...*

DAUGHTER: **Yeah, the good, heavy twine.**

DAD: The twine, yeah. So I packed it, we had that our bedstuff. . .

MOM: *Bed stuff, when we was in this wagon, when it start moving, the train, nobody went, I would not have a dishrag or a rag, there was no rag for wiping our hands, whatever, they've got just their good clothes, that's all.*

They had in the middle night, are you going pee? The children ...

DAD: After we have eaten, then there is a locomotive, and then they are running with hot water, with steam, run there with pail and back and you have hot water. You open this and they get hot water, it's good for washing the dishes and for the face.

MOM: *Washing the children all the face-*

DAD: In the same dish.

MOM: *Yeah, well, we took it also out, not always you don't always washing inside.*

DAD: But you have to be-

DAUGHTER: **How many cars were you back from the locomotive, about?**

MOM: *About 50. Oh, yeah.*

DAD: But when you stopped, you would run there.

MOM: *Sure, when I need to wash diapers, I'd wash diapers and hang them out on the clippers, and put the things out and they would dry very quick (LAUGHTER)*

DAUGHTER: **Could you see through the boxcar? No, no, no, it was solid.**

MOM: *Solid.*

DAUGHTER: **Some of them used to be like cattle ones.**

DAD: No, was solid, but just the door was open.

DAUGHTER: **Moved. right?**

DAD: Yeah.

MOM: *That was locked, the one side was open, can roll it open or half can close it. So we put all kinds of things, make it like a cover, toilet where they go, like you cannot-*

DAUGHTER: **Private a little bit.**

MOM: *You cannot the old people, only little children or-*

DAD: In a corner, hang a curtain up and-

MOM: *Put a curtain up and open the door and -*

DAUGHTER: **Throw it out.**

MOM: *Yeah.*

DAUGHTER: **Hope nobody got hit-**

MOM: *Make a little bit private or something like this.*

DAUGHTER: **So approximately how long were you in this train?**

DAD: Maybe 2 weeks huh Mom?

MOM: *Long enough, long enough.*

DAUGHTER: **About 2 weeks.**

DAD: Many times nothing to eat for a day or two.

MOM: *Yeah, and once they had to-*

DAD: But we had that sausage in the-, you know, you are not allowed to open . Nobody is allowed to know, even not the children. Because when the children know it's here, they would ask, and if one person know beside you, then

everybody knows. So we just scarcely opened it, cut little bit off.

MOM: *Get something in your stomach, this was all we had, never filled up.*

DAD: Then we came there and unload from the train in Germany.

MOM: *Many days on this train, then the transport was, they say, now 4:00 we arrive over there in **Prague** or somewhere where we was, we will have a good meal, we can go there with our dish, we get good meal and all the people will be fed. Yeah, was not so! We don't arrive this night and this foods have to stay overnight and the next day this time almost, and when Dad brought this food in the wagon. I was not feeling food, this was stinky, I said, no, I would not eat this, stinks this food, And Dad told me: 'how you can say this before the children, this food stinks?' Now, we had finally something to give them and all they look at me. I will not eat, I will not eat. And he forced some dish, they have to eat, and I'm not hungry and the other said, I'm not hungry, And Dad start eating, okay. I cannot eat, rather I die. I cannot eat. This stink this food, you know, this was just couple hours, they threw up. They was so sick, all, the whole transport was sick from this food, they had them keep this food overnight in these big kettles for over thousand people.*

DAUGHTER: *There was over 1,000 on the train... .*

* * * * *

[TO BE CONTINUED, *D.v.*]

The next report (D.v.) resumes the chronicle of the Webel family exodus, from train rides to refugee life, eventually leading to a successful migration to America, with some of their future offspring, descended from young **Robert Webel** (who was just a baby when the Webel family left Yugoslavia for Germany), to eventually arrive on Earth as native Texans. That same **Robert Webel** (who emigrated from Yugoslavia, as a baby, with his family fleeing Communism) is the father of **Stephen Webel**, who is father (by his wife Erica) of brothers **Nate and Luke Webel**, the two native Texans mentioned on the first page of this report. (Thus Robert Webel, born in WWII, is the paternal grandfather of Nate, Luke, and their sisters.)

So, for now, this "chapter" rests with an appreciation that two native-Texan boys, **Nate Webel** (born in AD2007) and **Luke Webel** (born in AD2012), as well as their sisters, descend from German immigrant stock ("Volksdeutsche") who trace back one ancestral line to paternal grandfather's parents, **Jakob Webel and Katarina Schleicher**, whose early family life together included surviving WWII.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. James J. S. Johnson is a member of the **German-Texas Heritage Society**, and an occasional contributor to its Journal pages. A lover and teacher of Providential history and geography, Jim has taught at 4 different Christian colleges (LeTourneau University, Dallas Christian College, Concordia University Texas at Fort Worth, and ICR School of Biblical

Apologetics) in Texas, as well as aboard 9 different cruise ships. As a C.P.E.E. (*Certified Paternity Establishment Entity*, credentialed by the Texas Attorney General's Office), Jim maintains a strong interest in family history documentation. After studying under many teachers, at many schools, Jim happily acknowledges that his best teacher (under God) was Chaplain Robert (Bob) Webel.

Below (left) is a newspaper caption, dated 3-19-AD1951, with the “Volksdeutsche by the Dozen” Webel family, who immigrated to America. Also shown below (right) is Chaplain Robert Webel (who was 8 when his family came as refugees to America) with his wife, Marcia, residents of Florida. Chaplain Bob Webel provided information supplementing and clarifying his sister’s interview of their parents (titled *From Vinkovci to Medina*) quoted hereinabove.



Chaplain Robert (Bob) Webe <> JJSJ profjsj@verizon.net

The 4 earlier episodes, in this Webel family history series, are published as follows:

- (1) “Volksdeutsche by the Dozen, Part One: Jakob and Katarina Agreed to Marry Before They Ever Spoke to Each Other, A True Example of Love at First Sight...and First Sound”, *Journal of the German-Texan Heritage Society*, 35 (1):25-32 (spring 2013), quoting from Rosalie Webel Whiting’s *From Vinkovci to Medina* (unpublished Webel family history), supplemented by personal interviews with Chaplain Robert Webel (during August AD2012);
- (2) “Volksdeutsche by the Dozen, Part Two: Volksdeutsche in Croatia, before World War II: Jakob and Katarina Webel are Merchants in Marinci (Taking Care of Business and the Business of Life)”, *Journal of the German-Texan Heritage Society*, 36(3):154-170 (fall 2014);
- (3) “Volksdeutsche by the Dozen, Part Three: World War II Confronts Jakob and Katarina Webel (Swabians Face Nazi Invaders and Yugoslavia’s Break-up)”, *Journal of the German-Texan Heritage Society*, 37(2):98-113 (summer 2015); and
- (4) “Volksdeutsche by the Dozen, Part Four: Surviving in Yugoslavia, Then Fleeing for the First Time – Jakob & Katarina Webel Escape from Marinci to Vinkovci,” *Journal of the German-Texan Heritage Society*, 37(4):219-240 (winter 2015).

Shared Lutheran Ministry Group Travels to Germany in June, The Fayette County Record, July 8, 2016



On Monday, June 6 a group of Americans began their trek to Germany to visit places and times of Martin Luther. There were nineteen travelers: eight from the Shared Lutheran Ministry of Fayette County- Lee Ann Hartmann, Pastor Marcia Kifer, Annette Richards, Chip and Sheron Citzler, David and Mary Noak; five from Grace Lutheran Church in North Carolina; four friends from Texas, and a mother and daughter from Colorado and Arizona. The group had five online meet-

ings before meeting face-to-face in Berlin. The group dynamics went well and all became fast friends.

Pastor Marcia Kifer and Pastor Ben Kifer gave talks on history and theology while the group traveled from place to place by bus. Talks included several on Luther's life, Katie Luther, Philipp Melancthon, the Book of Concord, the 95 Theses and Luther, and the Jews and WWII.

On Tuesday, June 7, the group landed in Berlin, Germany, and took a tour bus to Leipzig where they stayed at the Marriott for the first six nights. They proceeded to walk to the Bach Museum and the Thomaskirche - a stunning church - where Bach is buried. The next stop was the

Stasi Museum, set mostly in 1989 recounting the protests that led to the fall of the police state in East Germany.

On Wednesday, June 8, they took a day trip to Dresden. An art historian led the tour through the Art Museum. Next they stopped at Frauenkirche which was destroyed in 1945 by Allied bombs. Two of the group had been there when the church was in rubble, but it has been rebuilt by the Lutheran Church; completion was in 2005. The Royal Treasury Museum of the Saxony Kings was next on the tour; it is set up in several rooms of the castle. They walked through the stunning Catholic Church and then had a lovely dinner on a Terrace overlooking the Elbe River.

On Thursday, June 9, they made a day trip to Meissen - paddle boat ride down the river to Meissen. They toured the Castle/Church and visited the Lutheran Church in town. Then they toured the exquisite Meissen Porcelain Factory and learned how this beautiful product is created and painted. The tour ended with an amazing assortment of desserts and coffee at their café.

On Friday, June 10, there was a day trip to Eisleben. The group began the Luther tour in the town where Luther was born and died - touring the houses and museums that tell those stories. They spent the afternoon in Mansfelder tasting wine at a small family-run winery. Bachfest started in Leipzig this day so the group enjoyed an outdoor concert in the square at 9 p.m.

On Saturday, June 11, there was another day trip, this time to Wittenberg where the group walked through the Luther House Museum and the Melancthon House Museum. The church where Luther preached is being renovated so the group only saw the door where he nailed the 95 theses. This particular weekend the town is decorated like a Renaissance Fair in honor of Luther and Katie's wedding. There are vendors, plenty of food, and a rollicking parade which included Martin and Katie Luther. Several of the group went back to the square in Leipzig to hear a jazzed-up Bach Concert that evening.

Sunday, June 12, started and ended with Holy Communion—First at the Nikolaikirche where they featured a Bach cantata during communion. Next the group moved to the monastery in Erfurt where Luther was a monk for ten years. The group toured the monastery and the quaint old part of the city. Dinner that night was spectacular in a medieval type restaurant where meats were served hanging on skewers. Evening communion service was just for the group; it took place in the monastery chapel where Luther himself walked, preached, and worshiped. Pastor Ben Kifer preached a moving sermon about no longer seeing dead people but seeing people alive in Christ. Communion was special and a highlight for strengthening group ties.

On Monday, June 13, the group took a day trip to Eisenach; the countryside was spectacular. They walked up to the Wartburg Castle where Luther spent ten months disguised as Junker Jorg when he translated the New Testament from Greek to German.

On Tuesday, June 14, they started touring Berlin, but stopped on the way for an audio tour at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. Pastor Marcia noted that it was moving to see the atrocities of hatred right on the heels of hate crime in America--mass murders in Orlando. The group ate lunch in Weimar - Germany that is.

On Wednesday June 15 the group set out walking in Berlin - in the rain. The guide was American and very knowledgeable so the group learned a great deal about the 1900s in Germany. Shopping and touring was on the agenda for the afternoon.

On Thursday, June 16, the final day, the group visited Pergamon Museum. Additionally they toured the breathtaking Lutheran Cathedral, and then enjoyed a relaxing boat tour down the Spree River. The group enjoyed their last evening dining a top drawer French Restaurant. It was a fitting way to say goodbye to Germany and fellow travelers.

Submitted by Rodney Koenig, Houston

Hofheinz's 'maverick' legacy lives on in Dome, family, politics, Houston Chronicle, July, 2016



They called him "The Judge" and he was the cigar-chomping larger-than-life politico and promoter audacious enough to believe he could bring Major League Baseball to Houston with the lure of a giant air-conditioned ballpark under a massive dome.

The legacy of the late Judge Roy Hofheinz, including the Astrodome, still casts a long shadow across southeast Texas. Before he became the man who bragged about his "Eighth Wonder of the World," he

was a boy wonder who became a lawyer at 19, one of the state's youngest legislators at 21, then Harris County judge at 24. His salesmanship and media savvy made him a self-made millionaire several times over before he became Houston's mayor at 40. Through it all, though, family came first.

As an only child, he became his family's breadwinner at 16 when his father, a truck driver, died in a wreck. After he married, he threw himself into the pursuits of his three children, whether it was music, academia or the great outdoors.

"He, of course, is remembered in Houston as the man who designed and created the Astrodome," said middle child, Fred Hofheinz, an attorney and also a former mayor of Houston. "I think you'll find that above everything else, he was a great father."

Now in his 70's, Fred Hofheinz remembers duck hunting at age 6 with his father. The elder Hofheinz had

given the boy a shotgun, and then handed him a lesson about not getting mud in the barrel.

"I love to hunt and fish, and my dad taught me everything about it," Fred Hofheinz said. "He knew every little creek and inlet along the Texas Gulf Coast. ... Everything we were interested in, he got interested in."

Fred's sister, Dene Hofheinz-Anton, a successful songwriter, agreed. "He was behind me 150 percent," she said. "We had a jukebox in every house, and I collected records like no one else so I could fill those jukeboxes."

Roy Hofheinz Jr., the judge's oldest child, is a former Rhodes scholar and a retired professor of Asian studies at Harvard University.

The elder Hofheinz was born in 1912 in Beaumont, but the family soon moved to Houston. He excelled at debate and was a yell-leader at San Jacinto High School.

In "The Grand Huckster," biographer Edgar Ray paints a picture of a young man always working an angle. As a high school student, he created player programs with local advertising that sold for a dime at football games. As a fledgling teenage promoter during Prohibition, he put on alcohol-free dances for Houston's youth



Houston Chronicle files
Roy Hofheinz, left, and his children, Dene, Roy Jr., and Fred, look over a model of Astroworld in 1967. The complex opened in 1968.

that went late into the night. He promoted the events by pasting concert posters on a Model T Ford.

In July 1928, the Democratic National Convention was held in Houston, and the 16-year-old recent high school graduate got himself hired as a temporary page for the New York delegation. There he met a 20-year-old Lyndon B. Johnson, who was already a fire-brand activist. The two became lifelong friends and political allies.

After the stock market crash, Hofheinz pursued a law degree, managing to persuade the Texas board of legal examiners to allow him to sit for the bar exam early, so he would work as a lawyer while finishing his schooling. He also pursued Irene "Dene" Cafcalas, a fellow law student.

They married in 1933, and the next year Hofheinz won a seat as a state representative.

As a legislator well-known for his extemporaneous speeches, he attracted the attention of students at the nearby University of Texas at Austin eager to try their hand at politics.

Among those was a young John Connally, who became a lifelong friend and Texas governor.

By 1937, when LBJ first won his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, Hofheinz had become county judge, overseeing the juvenile and "lunacy" courts and keeping tabs on the purse strings of the largest county in Texas.

"If I could prepare and deliver my speeches as well as Roy Hofheinz, I could be president of the United States," Johnson once said.

In 1944, he took a break from politics to pursue licenses from the Federal Communications Commission for radio stations and later a television station, and built the media empire that made him a millionaire. But he didn't stay out of politics for long. In 1952, at 40, he was elected Houston mayor and promptly started fighting with members of the City Council.

When four members refused to show up for a special meeting, he had them arrested. They, in turn, voted to impeach and censure him but could not remove him from office.

In one of perhaps his only political miscalculations, however, he lost his seat in 1955 in a special referendum.



Judge Roy Hofheinz stands in the 20-foot tall Presidential Suite at the Astrodome in 1968. The suite was near Hofheinz's own living quarters and had a rug bearing the presidential seal.

Even with that, however, his legacy endures: Houston still holds city elections in odd-numbered years because of that special election.

And then there was the Astrodome. Hofheinz became part of a syndicate of businessmen who wanted to bring Major League Baseball to Houston. He was the one who pushed for a massive, air-conditioned dome and used it as a lure to get a team franchise.

"I wanted to use it as our credit card," he once said.

It worked, and the league awarded the Houston Colt 45's franchise in 1960. Hofheinz and colleagues considered renaming the team the Stars and their new stadium the "Stardome." Instead, they settled on the Astros, and the Astrodome became the anchor of what would become a massive entertainment complex that included Astroworld and four hotels.

More than his mansions, money and political legacy, it was the Astrodome that defined Hofheinz. At the grand opening in 1965 - during the first Major League Baseball game ever played indoors - he sat with his family and then President Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson.

He built his office and a three-story apartment behind the massive scoreboard in right field. It was a flashy compound, featuring a putting green, a shooting gallery and a private terrace overlooking the playing field.

A stroke in 1970, at 58, paralyzed the left side of his body, and he spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair. In 1975, Hofheinz sold his share of the Astrodome empire. He died in 1982 at age 70.

Chronicle columnist John Wilson offered his assessment of Hofheinz's impact in a 1979 column. "What the public as a whole never realized about Hofheinz was that he was not really a part of the Houston establishment," he wrote, "but was essentially a maverick to it."

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Submitted by Rodney Koenig, Houston

Jacob Bickler and the Bickler Academy,

German Life, June/July 2016, by Barbara Selig and Mary Selig



Educator Jacob Bickler was born in (Bad) Sobernheim in the Palatinate on 10 November 1849 to Peter and Karherine Bickler nee Schoffling. When Jacob was 14 he moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to join his father, a saloon keeper, and his stepmother, who were already living in the United States. After graduating from high school Bickler at-

tended the University of Wisconsin, where he graduated in 1870 with a B.A. in Pedagogics. He earned his M.A. in 1871. After graduation he served as a principal in the La Crosse, Wisconsin public Schools before moving to Austin, Texas in 1872 to join his uncle as a teacher.

In 1873 Bickler changed jobs, going to work as an assistant draftsman and calculator in the General Land Office of Texas. There he met Martha Lungkwitz, the daughter of Karl Friedrich Hermann Lungkwitz, a Prussian immigrant and watercolor artist. Martha held the distinction of being the first woman to be employed by the state of Texas as a civil servant. On 24 January 1874 she and Bickler were married. They eventually had nine children, eight of whom survived infancy. Their home on 502 West 14th Street in Austin where the Bicklers raised their children is now an Historic Texas Landmark.

Although working in the Land Office was personally rewarding, Bickler's professional passion was teaching, and he returned to the classroom. In 1877 Bickler founded the Texas German and English Academy, a private school for boys, which he ran for ten years. Next the family moved to Galveston, where Bickler served as superintendent of the public school system. In 1892, the Bicklers returned to Austin, where Jacob founded the co-ed Bickler Academy, which he ran until his death.

Bickler was known as an excellent teacher who inspired his students, many of whom grew up to become community leaders in Austin. For pupils from out of town, the Bicklers provided accommodations in their own home. The curriculum in Bickler's schools emphasized foreign language learning, the liberal arts and music. Bickler was also an active member of the National Teachers Association and the Texas State Teachers Association, of which he was president in 1887. In 1891, Bickler proposed the creation of a chair of pedagogy at the University of Texas in Austin, a position which later led to the establishment of the School of Education. Bickler also conducted training courses for teachers during the summer, in addition to teaching at the University of Texas in Austin.

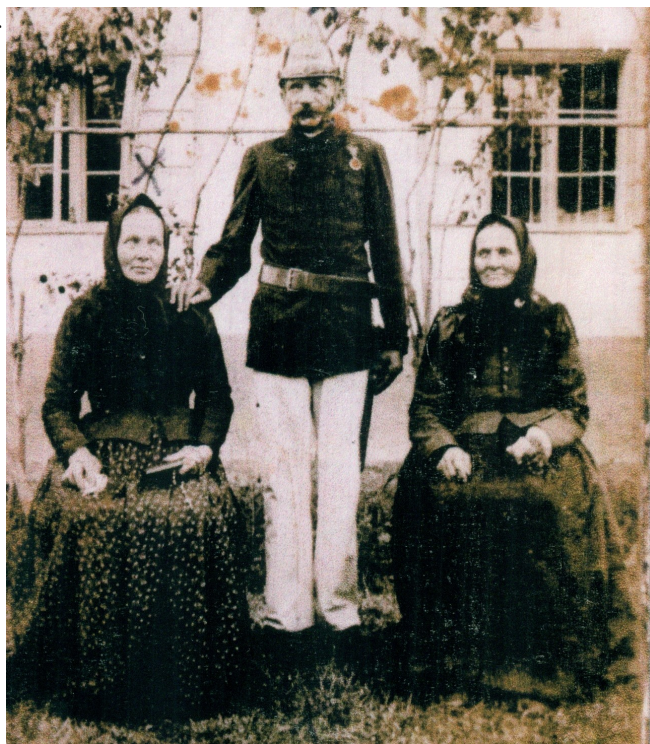
Bickler passed away on 30 April 1902 and is buried in Austin. His grave is marked with an obelisk, paid for by former pupils, and an inscription which reads, "He lifted us further from the dust and gave us a wider view."

Submitted by Eddie Wolsch, Seymour

The Smesny Family A Czech Family with German Roots

By Daniel R. Bode

The Smesny Family originates from the village of Kostelec u Stipia in the Czech land of Moravia. Smesny Family legend states that the patriarch of the Smesny Family was a deserter of the Prussian military. He fled from the German kingdom of Prussia to escape the military authorities, and settled in the Czech land of Moravia, which at that time was under Austrian domination. The family's German name was **Turin**. The name was changed to Smesny, which in Czech means "comical" or "comedian". He married a local Moravian girl, and thus the Czech lineage of the Smesny Family begins. One of the children born to this couple was a son, **Anton**. Anton Smesny was born March 25, 1853, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. In 1879, Anton married a young lady by the name of **Aloisie Dudik**. They were married in the Panna Maria Catholic Church in the nearby village of Stipske, as there was not a Catholic Church in Kostelec. Aloisie Dudik was born in Kostelec u Stipia on December 6, 1860. Ten children would be born to this couple; seven of which would live to maturity. Anton Smesny was a fireman in Kostelec. The family story goes that one evening Anton went to a local tavern with some of his co-workers and drank a few rounds of *pivo*, the Czech word for beer. As he was on his way home, Anton slipped on the ice, fell to the ground, and lost consciousness. Anton Smesny died of pneumonia on October 26, 1905, at the age of 52.



Anton Smesny and his wife, Aloisie Dudik Smesny—the lady on the right is believed to be Aloisie Smesny's mother

By that time, two of Anton and Aloisie Smesny's daughters had already left Moravia and settled in Texas. The story goes that John Pavlicek of Frydek, Texas, had written the Smesny Family that he needed the girls to help him on his farm. The oldest Smesny daughter, Filomena, and the youngest daughter, Frantiska, left their family in 1900 to go to Texas. In 1909, the oldest Smesny son, Frank, left Moravia to join his sisters in Texas. In 1912, Aloisie made the decision to take the rest of her family to Texas. She had her sons, Teodor, Joe V., and Ludvik, as well as her middle daughter, Aloisie, and Aloisie's husband, Josef Hradil, and their two children, Hermina and Joe, with her in Kostelec. In a journal written by Josef Hradil, he wrote that the Smesny and Hradil Families bid farewell to their neighbors and kindred in Kostelec on the morning of March 31, 1912, and traveled by wagon to the railway station of Zlin where they boarded a passenger train to Otrokovice. At Otrokovice, they boarded a train which would take them to the north. On April 1, Josef Hradil wrote they went through a medical inspection at Ratibou, and the health officials held Teodor Smesny back because he showed signs of "trachoma". Teodor returned to Kostelec, but he joined his family in Texas a year and a half later. On April 3, Josef Hradil wrote that they arrived in Bremen, Germany, where they again went through medical inspections. Josef Hradil wrote what a beautiful city Bremen was. On the morning of April 4, the family traveled by train to the Bremen harbor where they boarded the steamship, **SS Hanover**. At half past noon, the siren of the steamship sounded and the steamship started to move slowly, thus began the family's voyage to America.

Josef Hradil wrote in his journal of the crowded and often unsanitary living conditions on the steamship, as well as the poor quality of the food. Many of the passengers lived off of food supplies they brought with them. Seasickness was also a problem for the weaker one, especially during times of bad weather. Josef Hradil wrote in his journal that on April 12, at 8 a.m., the steamship, **SS Hanover**, received a telegraphic message to avoid one certain path since there was a big danger due to large icebergs, so the ship turned to the left. On the morning of April 13, a large iceberg could be seen from the steamship, and Josef Hradil wrote that it was so large that it looked like a castle floating on the water. Josef also recorded that the **SS Hanover** had received a message of help from the **RMS Titanic** as that ship was sinking; however, the **Hanover** was too far away to reach the **Titanic** in time. On April 17, the **Hanover** approached the harbor of Philadelphia. More medical inspections followed after the steamship docked at Philadelphia, but the passengers stayed on board ship. The **Hanover** remained in Philadelphia's harbor until April 20, when it set sail for Galveston.

The **Hanover** docked at the port of Galveston on April 26, 1912. The family stayed on board ship one more night. On the morning of April 27, more medical examinations came. Afterward, the passengers gathered their possessions

and passed through customs. Josef Hradil wrote that the family was met with a carriage by his three brothers-in-law, Frank Smesny, Alois Peska, and Peter Jalowy. The family went to a hotel that belonged to Frantisek Kuizanovskz, a country-man, where they had lunch and a toast to their reunion. Family lore states that while the Smesny Family were at their meal, many of their possessions were stolen off the carriage that a stranger volunteered to watch. One of the possessions stolen was the Family Bible. It was said that Aloisie Smesny wrote down family information in the Bible on the ocean voyage over such as the names of her parents and other information that would be important for future generations. Friends loaned the family some money and a few material possessions to help them out. At 5 p.m., the family boarded a train in Galveston, and at 10 p.m., the family arrived in Sealy where they were welcomed by Smesny daughters, Frances Peska and Filomena Jalowy. The Smesny and Hradil Families lived with the Peska Family in Frydek, Texas, for a brief time until they found their own home.

The mother, Aloisie Smesny, made her home with her daughter and son-in-law, Aloisie and Josef Hradil. The Hradil Family moved to Beasley in Fort Bend County. Aloisie would live less than two years in her new homeland. Determined to pay her friends back for their kindness after many of her possessions had been stolen, Aloisie Smesny went to work as a field hand. Not being conditioned to the hot, humid climate of the Texas Gulf Coast, Aloisie suffered a heat stroke which left her an invalid, and she would later pass away as a result of the stroke. Aloisie Dudik Smesny died in Beasley, Fort Bend Co., Texas, on March 25, 1914, at the age of 53 years. Aloisie was buried in the Sealy Catholic Cemetery in Sealy, Austin Co., Texas (this cemetery is known today as the Immaculate Conception Cemetery).

The family of Anton and Aloisie (Dudik) Smesny:

- I. **Frantiska Smesny** born May 23, 1880, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia, and she died in December of 1880.
- II. **Filomena Smesny** born April 1, 1882, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Filomena came to Texas in 1900 with her younger sister, Frantiska, at the urging of John Pavlicek. Their ship, the *SS Halle*, docked in Galveston on June 11, 1900. Filomena worked on the Pavlicek Farm to pay for her voyage to Texas. Filomena Smesny married a widower, **Peter Jalowy**, on Aug. 12, 1901, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Peter Jalowy was born March 16, 1864, in Velly Strillca, in German Poland (this area of Poland was taken by Prussia in the Polish Partitions of the 1790's between Prussia, Austria, and Russia). Peter was the son of **Simon Jalowy** and **Magdalena Sopa** (born 1833; died 1925). Peter Jalowy immigrated to the United States in 1879 with his mother and two younger brothers. Their ship docked in New York on May 29, 1879, and the family made their way to Texas. The 1880 federal census shows the Jalowy Family as living in Bernard, in Colorado County, Texas. Peter Jalowy married Rosalie Opzina on Nov. 3, 1886, in Colorado County. Rosalie was born Oct. 3, 1864. Peter and Rosalie had five children: Frances Jalowy Wendel (born Oct. 6, 1887; died March 18, 1961); Annie Jalowy Jonietz (born Oct. 3, 1890; died Aug. 6, 1977); Joseph Peter Jalowy (born March 3, 1893; died Dec. 27, 1966); John Jacob Jalowy (born Aug. 17, 1895; died Dec. 3, 1971); and Mary Rose Jalowy Groves (born Jan. 29, 1898; died April 6, 1959). Peter's first wife, Rosalie Opzina Jalowy died in Mentz, Colorado County, Texas, on Nov. 15, 1899, at the age of 35 years. Rosalie was buried in the St. Rochs Catholic Cemetery in Mentz. Peter and Rosalie were married 13 years. The 1900 census shows Peter Jalowy and his children as living in Precinct 6 of Colorado County. Peter is shown as a widower, and Rosalie's sister, Jane Opzina, is shown as living in the household, apparently caring for the children. After Peter Jalowy's marriage to Filomena in 1901, they had seven children together. The Jalowys lived their married life in the Colorado County communities of Mentz and Bernard, and later in the Fort Bend County community of Orchard. Peter Jalowy became a naturalized U.S. citizen on Nov. 20, 1935, in Houston. Peter Jalowy was hospitalized in Rosenberg, Texas, where he died April 26, 1939, at the age of 75 years. Peter and Filomena were married 37 years at the time of his death. Filomena Smesny Jalowy died in a nursing home in El Campo, Wharton County, Texas, on January 30, 1964, at the age of 81 years. Peter and Filomena Jalowy are buried in the Guardian Angel Cemetery in Wallis, Austin County, Texas. The children of Peter and Filomena:

1. **Karl "Charlie" Jalowy** born Sept. 9, 1903, in Mentz, Colorado Co., Texas. Charlie married **Magdalena "Lena" Stavinoha** in 1929. Lena was born March 3, 1907, Wallis, Austin Co., Texas; she was the daughter of **Frank Stavinoha** and **Adela Vlaclovsky**. Charlie and Lena Jalowy had two children: **Charles Steven** (born 1931; died 2008) and **Beatrice Marie** (born 1934). Charlie Jalowy died in February of 1969, at the age of 65. Lena Stavinoha Jalowy died in Richmond, Texas, on June 17, 1982, at the age of 75. Charlie and Lena Jalowy are buried in the Guardian Angel Cemetery in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas.
2. **Elizabeth Marie "Lizzie" Jalowy** born Aug. 22, 1905, in Mentz, Colorado Co., Texas. Lizzie had two children born out of wedlock: **Lillian Elizabeth Jalowy** (born 1922; died 2014) and **Oscar Lee Jalowy** (born 1927; died 2001). Lizzie married **John William Sliva** on July 30, 1929, in Sealy, Texas. John Sliva was born January 9, 1902, in Austin County, Texas; he was the son of **Ludvik Sliva, Sr.**, and **Anna Drozd**. John and Lizzie Sliva had two sons: **John Dennis** (born 1944) and **Lawrence John** (born 1945). John W. Sliva died in Sealy, Texas, on September 9, 1945, at the age of 43 years, shortly before the birth of his second son. John Sliva is buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Austin Co., Texas.

After his death, Lizzie married John's brother **Louis Sliva, Jr.** on Nov. 29, 1948, in Sealy. Louis was born April 3, 1906, in Rexville, Austin Co., Texas, and he died in Sealy, Texas, on June 9, 1958, at the age of 52 years. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Jalowy Sliva died in Rosenberg, Texas, on Sept. 14, 1991, at the age of 86 years.

3. **Ludmilla Jalowy** born Feb. 4, 1908, in Mentz, Colorado Co., Texas, and she died Feb. 12, 1908, in Mentz. Ludmilla is buried in the St. Rochs Catholic Cemetery in Mentz, Colorado County, Texas.
 4. **Sophie Louise Jalowy** born August 13, 1909, in Mentz, Colorado Co., Texas. Sophie married **Joseph Colley Ellett**. Joe was born Sept. 10, 1900. Joe and Sophie Ellett had no children. Sophie Jalowy Ellett died in San Angelo, Texas, on January 5, 1989, at the age of 79 years. Joe Ellett died in San Angelo on April 4, 1996, at the age of 95 years. Joe and Sophie Ellett are buried in the Lawnhaven Memorial Gardens in San Angelo, Tom Green Co., Texas.
 5. **Louis Peter Jalowy** born Nov. 11, 1912, in Mentz, Colorado Co., Texas. Louis married **Adela Stavinoha**. Adela was born October 29, 1912, in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas; she was the daughter of **Frank Stavinoha** and **Adela Vlachlovsky**. Louis and Adela had two sons: **Louis Peter, Jr.** (born 1934) and **Jerry John** (born 1936; died 1973). Adella Stavinoha Jalowy died in East Bernard, Texas, on March 15, 1995, at the age of 82 years. Louis Jalowy, Sr. died in Wharton, Texas, on August 21, 2006, at the age of 93 years. Louis and Adela Jalowy are buried in the Guardian Angel Cemetery in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas.
 6. **William Anton Jalowy** born January 15, 1921, in Orchard, Fort Bend Co., Texas. Willie married **Helen Agnes Knesek** on January 26, 1942, in Wallis, Texas. Helen was born January 1, 1922, in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas; she was the daughter of **Rudolph Knesek** and **Cecelia Lidiak**. Willie and Helen Jalowy had two children: **William Richard** (born 1946) and **Barbara Jean** (born 1948). Helen Knesek Jalowy died in Wharton, Texas, on January 10, 1990, at the age of 68 years. Willie Jalowy died in Wharton, Texas, on June 27, 2004, at the age of 83 years. Willie and Helen Jalowy are buried in the Guardian Angel Cemetery in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas.
 7. **Victor Jalowy** born January 30, 1922, in Orchard, Fort Bend Co., Texas, and he died in a drowning accident on June 27, 1946, at the age of 24. Victor never married. Victor Jalowy is buried in the Guardian Angel Cemetery in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas.
- III. **Aloisie "Louise" Smesny** born February 4, 1884, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Louise did not come to Texas with her sisters, Filomena and Frantiska, in 1900 because she was needed at home by her mother. Louise married **Josef Hradil** in Nov. 17, 1906, in Stipske, Moravia. Josef Hradil was born April 9, 1882, in Huclovice, Moravia. Josef and Louise Hradil's first two children were born in Kostelec u Stipia. In 1912, the Hradils came to Texas with Louise's mother and brothers, Joe and Ludvik. Their ship, **SS Hanover**, docked in Galveston on April 26, 1912. The Hradils lived in Frydek, in Austin County before moving to Beasley in Fort Bend County, where they lived 10 years. From there, the Hradils moved to Sealy where Josef Hradil operated a shoe and watch repair shop. Josef Hradil became a naturalized U.S. citizen on June 12, 1926, in Bellville, Texas. Josef Hradil died in Sealy, Texas, on June 4, 1943, at the age of 61 years. Josef and Louise Hradil were married 36 years at the time of Josef's death. Aloisie Hradil became a naturalized U.S. citizen on Aug. 1, 1958, in Houston. Aloisie "Louise" Smesny Hradil died in Sealy, Texas, on February 15, 1984, at the age of 100 years. Josef and Aloisie Hradil are buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Austin Co., Texas. The Hradils were the parents of four children:
1. **Hermina "Minnie" Hradil** born February 13, 1908, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Minnie married **Charles Louis "Charlie" Zaruba** on June 18, 1928, in Sealy, Texas. Charlie Zaruba was born Aug. 22, 1904, in Sealy. Charlie and Minnie Zaruba had six children: **Lawrence** (born 1929); **Florence Louise** (born 1932; died 2016); **Franklin Charles** (born 1942); **Charlene Ann** (born 1944); **Sylvia Marie** (born 1945; died 2013) and **Virginia Ann** (born 1947). Charlie Zaruba died in Sealy, Texas, on August 9, 1968, at the age of 63. Hermina "Minnie" Hradil Zaruba died in Wharton, Texas, on July 30, 1993, at the age of 85. Charlie and Minnie Zaruba are buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Texas.
 2. **Josef Louis "Joe" Hradil** born August 2, 1909, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Joe Hradil married **Ellie Clara Malich** on October 22, 1933, in Sealy, Texas. Ellie was born Nov. 25, 1913; she was the daughter of **Fritz** and **Freda Malich**. Joe and Ellie Hradil were the parents of one daughter, **Jo Marie** (born 1944; died 2011). Joe Hradil died in Rosenberg, Texas, on May 31, 1989, at the age of 79 years. Ellie Malich Hradil died in Rosenberg on January 24, 1991, at the age of 77 years. Joe and Ellie Hradil are buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Texas.
 3. **Herbert Frank Hradil** born January 1, 1913, in Beasley, Fort Bend Co., Texas. Herbert married **Mary Ann Hajovsky** on July 3, 1937, in Sealy, Texas. Mary Ann was born May 16, 1919, in East gate, Liberty Co., Texas; the daughter of **Rudolph Hajovsky** and **Mary Hluchanek**. Herbert and Mary Hradil had one son, **Harold Herbert** (born 1940). Herbert F. Hradil died in Sealy, Texas, on January 8, 1994, at the age of 81 years. Mary Hajovsky Hradil died November 6, 2011, at the age of 92 years.

Herbert and Mary Hradil are buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Texas.

4. **Raymond Richard Hradil** born September 24, 1914, in Beasley, Fort Bend Co., Texas. Raymond married **Georgia Elenora Hajovsky** on September 17, 1934 in Sealy, Texas. Georgia was born February 12, 1916, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas; she was the daughter of **Rudolph Hajovsky** and **Mary Hluchanek**. Raymond and Georgia Hradil were the parents of one son, **Raymond James** (born 1935; died 1996). Raymond Hradil died December 22, 1983, in Sealy, Texas, at the age of 69 years. Georgia Hajovsky Hradil died October 14, 1991, in Bellville, Texas, at the age of 75 years. Raymond and Georgia Hradil are buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Texas.

IV. **Frantiska “Frances” Smesny Frantiska “Frances” Smesny** born April 10, 1886, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Frances came to Texas with her older sister, Filomena, in 1900. Their ship, the *SS Halle*, docked in Galveston on June 11, 1900. Frances worked on the John Pavlicek farm in Frydek, Texas, to pay for her voyage. Frances Smesny married **Alois Cyril Peska** on January 24, 1904, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Alois Peska was born in Pohorelice, Moravia, on Feb. 3, 1878. Alois immigrated to Texas in 1902; his ship, the *SS Frankfort*, docked in Galveston on January 13, 1902. The Peskas lived the first years of their marriage in Frydek and Mixville, in Austin County, before moving to Eastgate, in Liberty County. From Eastgate, the Peskas moved to Houston, and from there, they moved to Crosby, Texas, where they settled. The Peskas were the parents of 10 children; eight of which lived to maturity. Alois Peska became a naturalized U.S. citizen on Oct. 17, 1941, in Houston. Alois Peska died at his home in Crosby, Texas, on April 20, 1963, at the age of 85 years. Alois and Frances Peska were married 59 years at the time of Alois’s death. Frantiska “Frances” Smesny Peska died in Houston, Texas, on November 5, 1978, at the age of 93 years. Alois and Frances Peska are buried in the Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery in Crosby, Texas. The family of Alois and Frances Peska:

1. **Louis Frank Peska** born October 26, 1904, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Louis Peska operated an auto repair garage in Crosby. Louis never married. Louis Peska died in the Dayton Memorial Hospital in Dayton, Texas, on March 11, 1972, at the age of 67 years. Louis Peska is buried in the Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery in Crosby, Texas.
2. **Frank Peska** born about 1906 in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Frank died at a young age, and it is believed he is buried in an unmarked grave in the St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in Frydek, Texas.
3. **Marie Louise Peska** was born August 11, 1909, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Marie married **Clarence Elbert Cotton**. Clarence was born September 18, 1913. Clarence and Marie Cotton were the parents of one son, **Clarence Fredrick “Ricky”** (born 1954; died 1981). Marie Peska Cotton died in Baytown, Texas, on May 23, 1980, at the age of 70 years. Clarence E. Cotton died July 22, 2003, at the age of 89 years. Clarence and Marie Cotton are buried in the Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery in Crosby, Texas.
4. **Joseph Louis “Joe” Peska** born September 9, 1911, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Joe Peska married **Viola Caroline Goeke** on January 17, 1942, in Austin Co., Texas. Viola was born November 26, 1919, in Kenney, Austin Co., Texas. Joe and Viola Peska were the parents of three daughters: **Shirley Dean** (born 1942); **Jo Anne** (born 1946) and **Alice Faye** (born 1947). Joe Peska died in Houston, Texas, on July 3, 1980, at the age of 68 years. Viola Goeke Peska died in Houston on Sept. 25, 2009, at the age of 89 years. Joe and Viola Peska are buried in the Brookside Memorial Park in Houston, Texas.
5. **Annie Peska** born about 1913 in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Annie died at a young age, and it is believed she is buried in an unmarked grave in the St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in Frydek, Texas.
6. **Stazie Irene Peska** born April 17, 1915, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Stazie married **Arnold Albert Shimek** on August 5, 1936, in Liberty County, Texas. Arnold Shimek was born Nov. 18, 1914. Arnold and Stazie Shimek were the parents of four sons: **Ronnie Lee** (born 1949); **Albert Ray** (born 1950); **Danny Louis** (born 1952) and **Arnold Joe** (born 1954). Arnold Shimek died March 6, 1995, at the age of 80 years. Stazie Peska Shimek died January 10, 2004, at the age of 88 years. Arnold and Stazie Shimek are buried in the Magnolia Park Cemetery in Dayton, Texas.
7. **John Vince Peska** born June 24, 1917, in Mixville, Austin Co., Texas. John married **Olga Maria Rastelli** on Dec. 6, 1945 in Rome, Italy. Olga was born March 4, 1924, in San Clemente, Provincia Di Rimini, Emilia-Romagna, Italy. Olga immigrated to the United States in 1946. John and Olga Peska were the parents of four children: **Johnny Fred** (born 1946; died 1992); **Jimnie Ray** (born 1951); **Joyce Marie** (born 1953; died 2012) and **Julie Ann** (born 1955). John Peska died in Houston, Texas, on December 9, 1974, at the age of 57 years. After John’s death, Olga married Thomas Huffman in 1983. Olga Peska Huffman died Nov. 23, 2015, at the age of 91 years. Olga was buried beside John Peska in the Sterling-White Cemetery in Highlands, Texas.

8. **Willie Mae Peska** born May 27, 1919, in Mixville, Austin Co., Texas. Willie Mae first married Otto Wetz on Dec. 16, 1939, in Alvin, Texas. This marriage ended in divorce. Willie Mae's second marriage was to a Mr. Cates. They also divorced. Willie Mae's third marriage was to **Lewis Edwin Jacobs** on Feb. 8, 1955. Lewis and Willie Mae Jacobs were the parents of one son, **Timothy Ray** (born 1957). Lewis and Willie Mae Jacobs divorced in 1976. In her later years, Willie Mae moved to the town of Other, in Franklin County, North Carolina, where her son was residing. Willie Mae Peska Jacobs died May 7, 2002, in Other, North Carolina, at the age of 82 years. Willie Mae's body was brought to Texas, and she was buried in the Oak Bluff Cemetery in Port Neches, Texas.
 9. **Mildred Marie Peska** born March 31, 1922, in Mixville, Austin Co., Texas. Mildred married **Hubert Lavoy Martin** on Jan. 26, 1943, in Houston, Texas. Hubert was born Feb. 12, 1920. Hubert and Mildred Martin were the parents of four children: **Barbara Ann** (born 1943); **Hubert Donald** (born 1945); **Larry James** (born 1949) and **Frances Marie** (born 1952). Hubert Martin died Nov. 15, 1992, at the age of 72 years. Mildred Peska Martin died Dec. 3, 2003, at the age of 81 years. Hubert and Mildred Martin are buried in the Sterling-White Chapel Cemetery in Highlands, Texas.
 10. **William Frank "Bill" Peska** born December 8, 1924, in Mixville, Austin Co., Texas. Bill married **Mary Elizabeth Michulka** on Aug. 9, 1947, in West Columbia, Texas. Mary was born Dec. 18, 1930. Bill and Mary Peska had four sons: **William Ray** (born 1952); **Bernard Wayne** (born 1954); **Robert Joe** (born 1956) and **Bryan Alan** (born 1964; died 2005). William F. "Bill" Peska died in Houston, Texas, on June 20, 2002, at the age of 77 years. Bill is buried in the Memorial Oaks Cemetery in Houston. Mary Michulka Peska resides in Houston.
- V. **Frank Smesny** born September 18, 1888, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Frank Smesny immigrated to Texas in 1909. His ship, the *SS Koln*, docked in Galveston on April 10, 1909. Frank joined his sisters, Filomena and Frantiska, in Austin County. Frank went to work as a farm laborer. Frank Smesny married **Pauline Zapalac** on April 29, 1913, in Frydek, Austin County, Texas. Pauline was born October 18, 1889, in Ellinger, Fayette County, Texas; she was the daughter of **Michal Zapalac** (born Sept. 7, 1866; died Feb. 27, 1943) and **Rosalie Zapalac** (born Nov. 26, 1869; died Oct. 9, 1943). Pauline's parents were married Nov. 3, 1885, in Fayette County, Texas. Frank and Pauline Smesny lived their married life in Frydek, Texas, where they farmed. After their retirement, they moved into Sealy. Pauline Zapalac Smesny died in Sealy, Texas, on November 5, 1964, at the age of 75 years. Frank and Pauline were married 51 years at the time of Pauline's death. Frank Smesny died in Sealy on July 14, 1965, at the age of 76 years. Frank and Pauline Smesny are buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Texas. Frank and Pauline Smesny were the parents of four children:
1. **Louise Smesny** born Nov. 29, 1914, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Louise married **Joe Konarik** on Oct. 24, 1933, in Frydek, Texas. Joe was born Feb. 24, 1908, in Frydek, Texas. Joe and Louise Konarik were the parents of two children: **Victor William** (born 1939; died 2001) and **Joan Marie** (born 1951). Louise Smesny Konarik died in Victoria, Texas, on March 11, 1982, at the age of 67 years. Joe Konarik died in Victoria on March 17, 1985, at the age of 77 years. Joe and Louise Konarik are buried in the Resurrection Catholic Cemetery in Victoria, Texas.
 2. **Frances Smesny** born Feb. 5, 1916, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Frances married **Willie Peter Novosad** on Jan. 21, 1936, in Frydek, Texas. Willie Novosad was born June 6, 1913, in Fayetteville, Texas; he was the son of **John Novosad** and **Rosie Konarik**. Willie and Frances Novosad had five children: **an infant daughter** (born and died in 1936); **Joe W.** (born 1937); **Alois Charlie** (born 1939); **Margaret Ann** (born 1941) and **David Franklin** (born 1952). Willie Novosad died in Sealy, Texas, on March 15, 1957, at the age of 43 years. He is buried in the St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Frydek. Several years later, Frances married **Rudolph "Rudy" Zalesak** on May 18, 1975, in Frydek, Texas. Rudy Zalesak was born Nov. 1, 1914, and he died May 2, 1994, at the age of 79 years. Rudy Zalesak is buried in the Guardian Angel Cemetery in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas. Frances Smesny Novosad Zalesak died Nov. 27, 2009, at the age of 93 years. Frances is buried in the St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Frydek, Texas.
 3. **Charles Anton Smesny** born March 2, 1919, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Charlie married **Sidney Marie Marek** on January 27, 1940, in Wallis, Texas. Sidney was born October 24, 1921, in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas. Charlie and Sidney Smesny had three children: **Melvin Charles** (born 1941); **Loretta Ann** (born 1942; died 2013) and **Charlene Marie** (born 1946; died 1977). Charlie Smesny died March 6, 1969, in Houston, Texas, at the age of 50 years. Charlie is buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Texas. Sidney Marek Smesny continues to reside in Houston.
 4. **Augustina Smesny** born March 12, 1921, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Augustina died March 17, 1921, at the age of five days. Augustina Smesny was buried March 19, 1921, in the St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Frydek, Texas.

- VI. Marie Smesny** born January 4, 1891, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Marie died in the diphtheria epidemic in 1895.
- VII. Anton Smesny** born August 20, 1893, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Anton died in the diphtheria epidemic in 1895.
- VIII. Teodor Smesny** born September 24, 1895, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Teodor was supposed to come to Texas with his widowed mother in 1912, but was held back by the health officials in Bremen, Germany, due to having the mumps. Teodor immigrated on the ship, *SS Breslau*. The ship docked in Galveston, Texas, on Sept. 11, 1913. Teodor made his way to Austin County, Texas, where he worked as a farm hand. Teodor said he only got to see his mother twice before her death in March of 1914. Teodor served in the U.S. Army during World War I. When Teodor first volunteered to join the army, he was rejected because of his limited English. Teodor insisted that even though his English was limited, he could still fight—so he prevailed. Teodor enlisted in the Army on July 24, 1918, and he was sent to the battlefields in Europe. Teodor married **Marie Cervenka** on May 20, 1920, in Rosenberg, Fort Bend Co., Texas. Marie said that Teodor's marriage proposal was like this: "He came to see me one day, and he said, 'I got nothing. You got nothing. Let's get married.'" Marie was born August 3, 1902, in Stare Hamry, Sleska Province in Moravia; the daughter of **Josef Cervenka** (born April 26, 1863; died Aug. 24, 1916) and **Helvika Milata** (born Sept. 5, 1874; died Oct. 7, 1920). Marie came to Texas with her parents and younger sister, Antonia, in 1911. Their ship, the *SS Koeln*, docked in Galveston on June 23, 1911. From there, the Cervenka Family made their way to Frydek, Texas, where Josef Cervenka had a brother, Frank Cervenka, living.

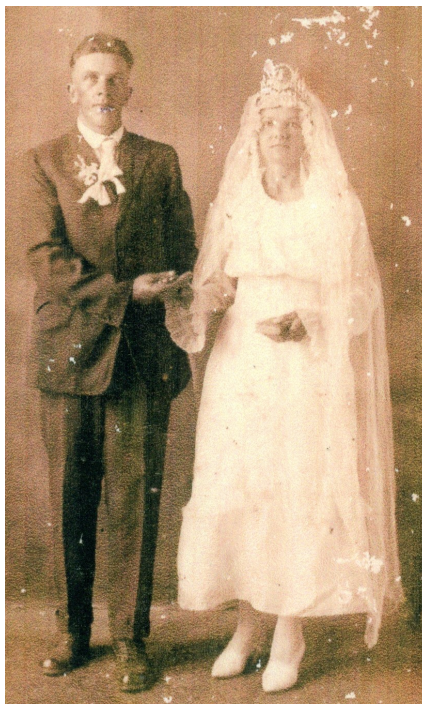


Smesny Siblings at a Family Reunion in 1952. From left: Ludvik Smesny, Frances Peska, Joe V. Smesny, Aloisie Hradil, Teodor Smesny, Filomena Jalowy, and Frank Smesny.

Smesny Siblings at a Family Reunion in the late 1950's. Sitting from left: Frances Peska, Aloisie Hradil, and Filomena Jalowy. Standing from left: Ludvik Smesny, Joe V. Smesny, Teodor Smesny, and Frank Smesny.



After their marriage, Teodor and Marie lived in Rosenberg, in Fort Bend County. Teodor Smesny became a naturalized U.S. citizen on Nov. 3, 1926, in Richmond, Texas. In 1927, they moved to the Eastgate Community in Liberty County, Texas, where Teodor's sister, Frances Smesny Peska, was living at the time. Teodor's brothers, Joe V. and Ludvik, also settled in Eastgate. Teodor and Marie Smesny became members of the St. Anne's Catholic Church in Eastgate. Teodor and Marie celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in May of 1970 at the St. Anne's Parish Hall. Teodor Smesny died in Dayton Memorial Hospital in Dayton, Texas, on June 14, 1977, at the age of 81 years. Teodor and Marie were married 57 years at the time of Teodor's death. Marie Cervenka Smesny died in Baycoast Medical Center in Baytown, Texas, on October 3, 1999, at the age of 97 years. Teodor and Marie Smesny are buried in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Liberty County, Texas. Teodor and Marie Smesny were the parents of eight children:



The wedding of Teodor Smesny and Marie Cervenka, May 20, 1920. They were married 57 years.

1. **Aloisie "Louise" Smesny** born March 28, 1921, in Rosenberg, Fort Bend Co., Texas, and she died February 7, 1922. Louise is buried in the Woodman of the World Cemetery in Rosenberg, Texas.
2. **Joseph Jerome "Joe J." Smesny** born March 8, 1923, in Rosenberg, Fort Bend Co., Texas. Joe J. married **Doris Natalie Stanfield** in 1947. Doris was born May 14, 1924; she was the daughter of **Edward Harold Stanfield** and **Maudie Leona Walker**. Joe and Doris Smesny had one daughter, **Johanna Lynn** (born 1953). Doris Stanfield Smesny died Dec. 28, 2004, in Baytown, Texas. Joe J. Smesny died in San Antonio, Texas, on August 18, 2014, at the age of 91. Joe J. and Doris Smesny are buried in the Sterling-White Chapel Cemetery in Highlands, Texas.
3. **Raymond Arnold Smesny** born December 12, 1925, in Rosenberg, Fort Bend Co., Texas. Raymond married **Georgia Ann Janek** on May 20, 1950. Georgia Ann was born Sept. 8, 1929, in Crosby, Texas; the daughter of **Robert Janek** and **Rose Haluska**. Raymond and Georgia Ann Smesny had three children: **Michael Raymond** (born 1953); an **infant daughter** (born & died Oct. 16, 1957); and **Steven Paul** (born 1962). Raymond Smesny died in Houston, Texas, on Feb. 3, 1999, at the age of 76 years. Georgia Ann Janek Smesny died at her home in Crosby, Texas, on Feb. 24, 2009, at the age of 79 years. Raymond and Georgia Ann Smesny are buried in the Sterling-White Chapel Cemetery in Highlands, Texas.
4. **Anton Charles Smesny** born January 2, 1928, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Anton married **Lestie Pearl Ballinger** on Nov. 15, 1958, in Liberty Co., Texas. Pearl was born Oct. 24, 1938; her parents were **John Henry Ballinger** and **Ila Pearl Dagle**. Anton and Pearl Smesny had three children: **Kenneth Ray "Kenny"** (born 1959); **Charles Anton "Chuck"** (born 1960); and **Karen Renee** (born 1965). Pearl Ballinger Smesny died in Liberty, Texas, on March 19, 2015, at the age of 76 years. Pearl is buried in the Magnolia Park Cemetery in Dayton, Texas. Anton Smesny resides in Dayton.
5. **Mary Hattie Smesny** born October 11, 1930, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Mary married **Darrell Page Wilkinson** on October 11, 1948. Darrell Wilkinson was born July 4, 1925. Darrell and Mary Wilkinson had two children: **Deborah Jean "Debbie"** (born 1951) and **David Wayne** (born 1956). Darrell Wilkinson died April 5, 1997, at the age of 71 years. Darrell is buried in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Texas. Mary Smesny Wilkinson resides today in a nursing home in Baytown, Texas.
6. **Elizabeth Louise "Betty" Smesny** born November 27, 1932, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Betty married **John Charles Fielder** on May 31, 1953. John Fielder was born May 1, 1933; he was the son of **R. R. Fielder** and **Era Wells**. Betty and John Charles Fielder had five children: **Beverly Ann** (born 1954); **Pamela Charlene** (born 1956; died 1978); **Era Marie** (born 1958); **John Charles, Jr. "Johnny"** (born 1960) and **Ronald Louis "Ronnie"** (born 1961). John Charles Fielder, Sr. died in Houston, Texas, on May 10, 1993, at the age of 60 years. Betty Smesny Fielder died in Houston on November 4, 1999, at the age of 67. Betty and John Charles Fielder are buried beside their daughter Pamela in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas.
7. **Georgia Jane Smesny** born August 26, 1935, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Georgia married **Van Herschel May** on Feb. 9, 1957. Van May was born June 16, 1931 in Crosby, Texas; he was the son of **Emory Willie May** and **Fannie May**. Van and Georgia May had two children: **Melinda Kay** (born 1959) and **Mark Allen** (born 1962). Van and Georgia Smesny May reside in Crosby, Texas.
8. **Robert Frank Smesny** born October 10, 1937, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Robert married **Melba Nadine Stasney** on May 12, 1962, in Crosby, Texas. Melba was born Oct. 14, 1941; she is the daughter of **Frank Walter Stasney** and **Vera Franta**. Robert and Melba Smesny had two children: **Aaron Robert** (born 1965) and **Vonda Veraleen** (born 1968). Robert and Melba Smesny reside in Crosby, Texas.



Good neighbors and friends, Teodor and Marie Cervenka Smesny with Henry and Elfriede Blankenstein Bode. Eastgate Community, Liberty County, Texas in the late 1940's

IX. Josef Vaclav “Joe V.” Smesny born June 28, 1899, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Joe V. came to Texas with his widowed mother. Their ship, the *SS Hanover*, docked in Galveston on April 26, 1912. After his mother’s death in 1914, Joe V. lived with his sister, Frances Smesny Peska and her family in Frydek. Joe V. Smesny married **Aloisie “Louise” Sodolak** on November 16, 1920, in Austin Co., Texas. Aloisie Sodolak was born September 1, 1900, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas; the daughter of **Stephan Sodolak** (born Oct. 20, 1875; died Dec. 31, 1917) and **Mary Zaruba** (born Sept. 8, 1876; died May 19, 1953). Aloisie’s parents were married Jan. 21, 1896, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Joe V. and Aloisie Smesny lived their brief marriage in Mixville, in Austin County. After a marriage of eight months, Aloisie Sodolak Smesny died in Mixville on July 4, 1921, at the age of 20 years. Aloisie was expecting a child at the time of her death. Aloisie was buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Texas. After Aloisie’s death, Joe V. and his brother, Ludvik, farmed together for two years.



The wedding of Joe V. Smesny and his first wife, Aloisie Sodolak. They were only married eight months when Aloisie died in July 1921.

Joe V. Smesny married **Mary Barbara Rachunek** on August 1, 1922, in Austin County, Texas. Mary was born in Havrice, Moravia, on March 10, 1893; she was the daughter of **Frank Rachunek** and **Frances Beran**. At the age of 18, Mary left her family in Moravia and came to Texas. Her ship, the *SS Brandenburg*, docked in Galveston on Dec. 10, 1911. Mary had a brother, Frank Rachunek, who later immigrated to Texas. Frank and his wife, Mary Mikel Rachunek, lived at Hungerford, in Wharton County, Texas. Frank Rachunek was born Oct. 12, 1894, in Havrice, Moravia, and he died July 3, 1981, in Wharton, Texas. Frank married Mary Mikel on April 23, 1923. Mary Mikel Rachunek died in Wharton, Texas, on Feb. 10, 1977. Mary Smesny and Frank Rachunek had two sisters, Frances Rachunek Hrabina and Katherine Rachunek Cermik; and five brothers, Vesley, Joseph, Cyril, Matthew, and Anton Rachunek, who remained in Moravia. Mary Rachunek Smesny became a naturalized U.S. citizen on December 14, 1961, in Houston. After their marriage, Joe V. and Mary Smesny lived in Frydek, in Austin County. Joe V. Smesny became a naturalized U.S. citizen on June 12, 1926, in Bellville, Texas. In 1927, Joe V. and Mary moved to the Eastgate Community in Liberty County. Joe V.’s sister, Frances Smesny Peska, was living in Eastgate at the time, and Joe V.’s brothers, Teodor and Ludvik also settled in Eastgate. Joe V. and Mary Smesny became members of St. Anne’s Catholic Church in Eastgate. Joe V. and Mary celebrated their 50th anniversary at the St. Anne’s Parish Hall in August 1972. A few months after their Golden Wedding Anniversary, Mary Rachunek Smesny died in the Dayton Memorial Hospital in Dayton, Texas, on January 15, 1973, at



Joe V. and Mary Rachunek Smesny at their home in Eastgate Community.

the age of 79 years. Joe V. Smesny died at his home in Eastgate, Texas, on April 28, 1981, at the age of 81 years. Joe V. and Mary Smesny are buried in the St. Anne’s Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Liberty County, Texas. Joe V. and Mary Rachunek Smesny were the parents of seven children:

- 1. Joseph Frank Paul “Joe F.” Smesny** born July 26, 1923, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Joe F. Smesny was christened at St. Mary’s Catholic Church of Frydek, and he was confirmed Sept. 10, 1933, at St. Anne’s Catholic Church of Eastgate. Joe F. Smesny married **Marveline Gabriella Bode** on Oct. 18, 1949, at St. Anne’s Catholic Church in Eastgate, Texas. Marveline was born July 29, 1932, in the Gerald Community in McLennan County, Texas; the daughter of **Henry Friedrich Daniel Bode** and **Elfriede Louise Blankenstein**. Joe F. and Marveline Smesny had six children: **Cynthia Ann** (born 1950); **Dolores Faye “Dolly”** (born 1953); **Joseph Henry** (born 1954); **Frank Marty** (born 1956); **Sheri Kaye** (born 1958) and **James Allen** (born 1959). Joe F. Smesny died in the Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas, on November 15, 2006, at the age of 83 years. Joe F. Smesny is



Wedding of Joe F. Smesny and Maveline Bode, Oct. 1949. From left: Henry and Elfriede (Blankenstein) Bode, Joe F. and Marveline Bode Smesny, Mary (Rachunek) and Joe V. Smesny. Standing is grandmother of bride, Anna (Haferkamp) Bode

- buried in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Marveline Bode Smesny is now a resident in a nursing facility in Humble, Texas.
2. **Jerome Albert "Jerry" Smesny** born December 27, 1924, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Jerry Smesny married **Josephine Elizabeth McMillen** on June 1, 1971, at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Liberty, Texas. Josephine was born Jan. 31, 1944; she was the daughter of **Dewey McMillen** and **Blanche Jannise**. Jerry and Josephine Smesny had three children: **Anne Marie** (born 1972); **Jerome Albert, Jr.** (born 1973) and **John Lawrence** (born 1974). Jerry A. Smesny died in Dayton, Texas, on April 13, 2010, at the age of 85 years. Jerry Smesny is buried in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Texas. Josephine McMillen Smesny resides in Dayton, Texas.
 3. **Louis Joseph Smesny** born April 16, 1927, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas. Louis J. Smesny married **Ora Maline Benton** on June 3, 1961, in Crosby, Texas. Maline was born Jan. 25, 1938; she was the daughter of **Leonard Benton** and **Ruby Scott**. Louis and Maline Smesny had four children: **Gary Louis** (born 1962); **Ron Allen** (born 1963); **Brenda Ann** (born 1965) and **Rebecca Lynn "Becky"** (born 1968). Louis J. Smesny died in Houston, Texas, on February 11, 1992, at the age of 64 years. Louis is buried in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate. Maline Benton Smesny resides in Dayton, Texas.
 4. **Emil Stephen Smesny** born January 25, 1929, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Emil Smesny married **Nancy Lee McWhirter** on Feb. 7, 1959, in Dayton, Texas. Nancy's parents were **Lafayette "Mack" McWhirter** and **Clara Nell Herring**. Emil and Nancy Smesny had three daughters: **Karen Ann** (born 1960); **Mary Nell** (born 1962) and **Sheryl Renee** (born 1968). Emil and Nancy Smesny now reside in San Antonio, Texas.
 5. **Lillian Frances Smesny** born June 9, 1931, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Lillian married **Albin Frank Kulak** on October 1, 1951, at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Eastgate, Texas. Albin Kulak was born Jan. 28, 1929, in Crosby, Texas; he was the son of **Frank Kulak** and **Lydia Marek**. Lillian and Albin Kulak had five children: **Dianne Katherine** (born 1952); **Janis Lynn** (born 1954); **Gail Anne** (born 1959); **Lori Danette** (born 1963) and **Alan Kent** (born 1965). Albin and Lillian Kulak reside in Crosby, Texas.
 6. **Eleanor Mary Smesny** born Feb. 1, 1934, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Eleanor married **Thomas James Leibham** on May 10, 1958, at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Eastgate, Texas. Thomas was born in Crosby, Texas, on April 16, 1935; he was the son of **Peter Leibham** and **Emily Mary Kubin**. Thomas and Eleanor Leibham had three children: **Donna Kay** (born 1959); **Thomas James, Jr. "Tommy"** (born 1961) and **Shelly Ann** (born 1966). Eleanor Smesny Leibham died in Crosby, Texas, on Feb. 22, 2015, at the age of 81 years. Eleanor is buried in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Texas. Thomas Leibham continues to reside in Crosby.
 7. **Molly Louise Smesny** born Nov. 27, 1935, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Molly married **Johnny Phillip Hanel** on June 23, 1956, at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Eastgate, Texas. Johnny Hanel was born at Cameron, Milam Co., Texas, on June 22, 1936; he was the son of **John S. Hanel** and **Frieda Hattie Zalesky**. Johnny and Molly Hanel had six children: **Constance Rene "Connie"** (born 1957; died 1960); **Rhonda Annette** (born 1959); **Johnny Phillip, Jr.** (born 1961); **Brian Joseph** (born 1964); **Carla Renee** (born 1970) and **Mark Edward** (born 1974). Molly Smesny Hanel died in Baytown, Texas, on July 23, 1994, at the age of 58 years. Molly is buried beside her daughter, Connie, in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Texas.
- X. **Ludvik Smesny** born March 16, 1902, in Kostelec u Stipia, Moravia. Ludvik came to Texas with his widowed mother. Their ship, the *SS Hanover*, docked in Galveston on April 26, 1912. After his mother's death in 1914, Ludvik lived with his sister, Aloisie Smesny Hradil and her family in Beasley. Ludvik also lived and farmed with his brother, Joe V., after the death of Joe V.'s first wife in 1921. Ludvik Smesny married **Frances Skarpa** on Nov. 9, 1926, in Wallis, Austin Co., Texas. Frances was born March 1, 1905, in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas; she was the daughter of **Josef Skarpa** (born Feb. 2, 1867; died June 9, 1942) and **Veronika Sodolak** (born in 1871; died May 3, 1917). After their marriage, Ludvik and Frances Smesny moved to the Eastgate Community in western Liberty County where Ludvik's sister, Frances Smesny Peska, was living at the time. Ludvik's brothers, Teodor and Joe V., also settled in Eastgate. Frances's widowed father, Josef Skarpa, and her brothers and one sister also moved to Eastgate. Ludvik and Frances Skarpa Smesny had five children born to them. Frances Skarpa Smesny was hospitalized in Liberty, Texas, where she died August 27, 1945, at the age of 40 years. Frances was expecting a child, and she died of complications from the pregnancy. Frances Smesny was buried August 29, 1945, in the St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery in Eastgate, Texas. Ludvik and Frances were married 18 years at the time of Frances's death. After being a widower for seven years, Ludvik Smesny married **Annie Rosa Hajdik** on October 25, 1952, in Sealy, Texas. Annie was born in Frydek, Austin Co., Texas, on September 3, 1907; she was the daughter of **Martin Hajdik** (born Dec. 31, 1865;

died March 12, 1966) and **Frances Sula** (born Jan. 29, 1870; died April 30, 1940). Annie's parents were married Jan. 5, 1897, in Fayette County, Texas. After their marriage, Ludvik and Annie Smesny lived on Ludvik's farm in Eastgate until 1963 when they sold the property and moved to Sealy, Texas. Ludvik Smesny died in Sealy, Texas, on January 14, 1989, at the age of 86 years. Ludvik and Annie were married 36 years at the time of Ludvik's death. Annie Hajdik Smesny died in Bellville, Texas, on October 30, 2000, at the age of 93 years. Ludvik and Annie Smesny are buried in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Sealy, Texas.

The five children of Ludvik and Frances Skarpa Smesny:

1. **Edwin Charles Smesny** born Sept. 1, 1927, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Edwin married **June Ann Stasney** on November 5, 1949, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Crosby, Texas. June was born April 13, 1933, in Crosby; she is the daughter of **Frank Walter Stasney** and **Vera Franta**. Edwin and June Smesny had three children: **Edwin Charles, Jr.** (born 1951); **Kathleen Ann** (born 1957) and **Charlene June** (born 1962). Edwin Smesny died in Baytown, Texas, on August 23, 2008, at the age of 80 years. Edwin is buried in the Sterling-White Chapel Cemetery in Highlands, Texas. June Smesny resides in Baytown, Texas.
2. **Henrietta Betty Smesny** born December 20, 1929, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Henrietta married **Jerome James Hlavaty** on July 29, 1950. Jerome Hlavaty was born Sept. 8, 1928, in Caldwell County, Texas. Jerome and Henrietta Hlavaty had seven children: **Carolyn Ann** (born 1951); **Patricia Jean** (born 1952; died 2007); **Jerome James, Jr.** (born 1955); **Lawrence Wayne** (born 1956; died 1980); **Jeanette Frances** (born 1958); **Donald Gene** (born 1959) and **Stephen John** (born 1961). Henrietta Smesny Hlavaty died December 26, 1995, in Victoria, Texas, at the age of 66 years. Jerome Hlavaty died in Ganado, Texas, on June 22, 2015, at the age of 86 years. Jerome and Henrietta Hlavaty are buried in the Memory Gardens of Edna Cemetery in Edna, Texas.
3. **Albert Louis Smesny** born November 4, 1931, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Albert married **Georgia Florence Baca** on June 11, 1956. Georgia was born Oct. 27, 1937; she was the daughter of **Ladislav Baca** and **Georgia Kubala**. Albert and Georgia Smesny had three children: **Susan Elaine** (born 1959); **Deborah Lynn "Debbie"** (born 1960; died 2010) and **Randall Joseph** (born 1963). Albert Smesny died in Houston, Texas, on July 23, 1997, at the age of 65 years. Albert is buried in the Sterling-White Chapel Cemetery in Highlands, Texas. Georgia Smesny resides in Katy, Texas.
4. **Max Charles Smesny** born September 4, 1933, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Max married **Georgia Lillian Pavlat** in 1954. Georgia was born in Holland, Bell County, Texas, on July 15, 1935; she was the daughter of **Cyril Pavlat** and **Lillian Kubala**. Max and Georgia Smesny had five sons: **Ronald Raymond** (born 1955); **Mark Anthony** (born 1956); **Michael Blaine** (born 1959); and twins, **Craig Paul and Gregory Alan** (born 1962). Max Smesny died in Midlothian, Texas, on Dec. 8, 2015, at the age of 82 years. Max is buried in the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery in Dallas, Texas. Georgia Pavlat Smesny continues to reside in Midlothian, Texas.
5. **Edith Frances Smesny** born September 2, 1937, in Eastgate, Liberty Co., Texas. Edith married **Thomas Jasek** on October 19, 1957. Thomas Jasek was born March 1, 1934, near Crosby, Texas; he was the son of **Edward Jasek** and **Emily Marek**. Edith and Thomas Jasek had three children: **Karen Frances** (born 1958); **Thomas Keith** (born 1959) and **Tracy Alan** (born 1960). Edith and Thomas Jasek reside today in Baytown, Texas.

Sources: Marie Cervenka Smesny, Joe F. Smesny, Eleanor Smesny Leibham, Emil Smesny, Georgia Smesny May, Georgia Baca Smesny, *A History of the Smesny Family* compiled by Eleanor Leibham for a Smesny Reunion in 1984. *A Journal of the Smesny and Hradil Families' voyage to America in 1912* as written by Josef Hradil.

Submitted by Daniel R. Bode—a nephew of Marveline Bode Smesny.

OPERATIONS

GTHS Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

1 May 2016

The regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors of the German Texan Heritage Society was held on 1 May 2016 in the German Free School headquarters of the Society with the President in the chair and the Secretary being present. Meeting Attendees: Michael Krause, Charles Locklin, Richard Gruetzner, Kristi Lee-Nordin, Connie Krause, Larry Deuser, Eddie Wolsch, Barbara Berthold, Janis Gonser with visitors Wing Evans and Chris Markley. President Krause called the meeting to order at 11:06 am and it was established that a quorum was present.

A discussion was held regarding the proposal to appoint Chris Markley to the Board. Larry Deuser then made a motion to appoint Chris Markley to the Board. The motion was seconded and was approved by voice vote.

The minutes of the previous Board meeting of 7 February 2016 and of the Executive Committee Meeting of 7 April 2016 were discussed. A motion was made by Connie Krause to amend the minutes with a word change in the paragraph regarding the meeting with THC, substituting the word “submit” in the sentence regarding names for the meeting and to include wording regarding the Board’s waiver of the notice required in Article 11.2 of the by-laws as provided for in Article 11.1 of the By-Laws in the section of the minutes regarding adoption of By-Laws changes. The motion was approved.

Treasurer’s Report – Larry Deuser presented an end of year 2015 financial report and discussed procedural changes in the manner of future reports since Jim Gudenrath has ceased acting as book keeper. Margie will now be providing quarterly reports to the Board. A financial report for the first quarter of 2016 was also presented and accepted. There was also a discussion of the issues regarding the use of a Wells Fargo merchant services account for credit card purchases versus the use of “Square.” Chris Markley agreed to talk with Rick Nordin about his use of Square in his business operations to see what the benefits might be if we used the service.

Reports –

German Free School: Charles Locklin provided updates on increased rental requests for the property, the Waller Creek initiative, and the Red River Cultural District meetings. There have been a number of improvements to our property, the bands are all booked for MaiFest and for Oktober Fest. Planning for MaiFest is well underway. Ray Seegern and his staff are working on supporting our events at no cost to us.

Annual Conference: Richard Gruetzner and the Activities Committee have proposed the annual conference be held on September 23 & 24 at the Texas Czech Heritage & Cultural Center in La Grange. This will provide cultural exchange between our organizations and if people desire to remain in the area the next day, they can also attend the Wendish Fest held in Serbin on September 25th at which there will be a German church service. A motion to approve the dates and location for the annual conference was made by Charles Locklin. The motion was seconded and approved.

Texas Historical Commission Meeting on 20 May: Connie Krause provided updates on the upcoming meeting in Waco with THC regarding their development of a German Trail brochure and web app. She also discussed the names of suggested meeting participants submitted.

Fundraising: No meeting to report. Janis Gonser also mentioned his having discussed various matters regarding our E-presence with Melanie.

Membership: Roughly 400 members have already renewed their membership for 2016 with about 200 that have not. Follow up calls are being made and some have reported that renewals are in the mail. Barbara Berthold discussed the idea of creating thematic programs about Texas Germans for German class teachers with Jim Kearney, Hans Boas, and Eddie Wolsch’s assistance.

Discussion was held on the matters relating to the Journal and the position of editor. It was noted that we did get reimbursed by the printer for the duplicate copies of the Journal that were shipped in error. Ideas relating to Journal content were discussed.

Administrative Planning and Actions –


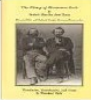

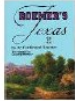





Charles Locklin led a discussion of the proposals for changes to the Advisory Board as it currently exists. The proposals might include changing the definition of the Advisory Board to one of an honorary type council focused on GTHS history and heritage values and the creation of a second council which would be comprised of individuals with special skills who could act as advisors or consultants to the GTHS in matters regarding such things as marketing, enhancement of educational services, publications, administration of the Society and property developments. The issue was referred to the Executive Committee for further development.

Schedule of next Board meeting – The next Board meeting is scheduled for 7 Aug 2016 (may change) at the German Free School.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Minutes approved by electronic vote 28 July 2016

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY THE GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Journal		ISSN 0730-3106, 4x per year, 8½ x 11, paperback. Since 1978. Each issue of this member publication contains over 100 pp of German-Texan genealogy, history and related info in English, with occasional German articles translated.	\$5 members \$6 non-GTHS members
Diary of Hermann Seele		ISBN 1-57168-238-4, 504 pp, 6 x 9, hardback. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Translated and edited by Theodore Gish. Gives a revealing and intimate picture of 19th century Texas. Includes Seele sketches from Texas.	\$27.50
A Sojourn in Texas, 1846-47		ISBN 1-57168-237-6, 400 pp, 6 x 9, hardback. Illustrations, maps, index. Edited by W.M. Von-Maszewski. A. Sörge's Texas Writings. This dual-language edition is filled with observations, advice, and warnings for those who chose to come to Texas.	\$35 signed by author, \$30
Roemer's Texas		ISBN 1-57168-043-2, 308 pp, 6 x 9, hardback. Bibliography, index. By Dr. Ferdinand Roemer, translated by Oswald Mueller. Long considered one of the best narrative accounts of life in early Texas.	\$35.00
GTHS German Immigrant Ancestors		ISBN 1-57168-240-6, 292 pp, 8½ x 11, paperback. Index and maps. Edited by Christa Prewitt. Genealogical records.	\$15.00
Handbook and Registry of German-Texan Heritage		ISBN 1-57168-239-2, 192 pp, 8½ x 11, paperback. Index. Edited by W.M. Maszewski. Contains information on early German-Texan businesses, churches, cemeteries, schools, etc. Currently out of Stock	\$22.95
History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861		ISBN 1-57168-236-8, 280 pp, 6 x 9, NEW edition, paperback. Maps, illustrations, appendix, index. By Rudolf Biesele. Covers the actual founding and history of many German settlements and towns in Texas prior to the American Civil War.	\$35.00
The Cabin Book		ISBN 0-89015-525-9, 296 pp, 6 x 9, hardback. Illustrations. By Charles Sealsfield. Sealsfield's hopes about America focused on Texas when he wrote this in 1841. This novel, in part about Texas life in the 1830s, became a best-seller.	\$20.00
Texas in 1848		ISBN 1-57168-242-2, 240 pp, 6 x 9, hardback. Bibliography, index. By Victor Bracht. Originally published in German in 1849, this book has been described as a "treasure of German-Texan history." Filled with early Texas observations.	\$30.00

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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, 7852 Skylake Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76179 or email to mjwhig@texasbb.com

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING MATERIALS TO THE JOURNAL?
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NEXT ISSUE

Summer, 2016

Fall, 2016

Winter 2016

Spring 2017

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

May 1, 2016

August 1, 2016

November 1, 2016

February 1, 2017

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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.

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