

TEXAS ~~W~~endish HERITAGE SOCIETY

Volume I, No. 1

Serbin, Texas

Oct.-Dec., 1979

WITAME WAS! - WE WELCOME YOU!

WELCOME TO VOLUME I, No. 1 of the Quarterly NEWS LETTER of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society.

Through the medium of the NEWSLETTER we hope the members of the Society will come in closer touch with each other and with the activities and spirit of the "Wends of Texas." This in turn, we hope, will encourage meaningful communication, research, interaction, and preservation of the beautiful culture, customs, traditions, spirituality, language, literature, history and genealogies, etc. of the "Wends of Texas."

These are the slavic Upper Lusatian Sorbs (Wenden), who came to Texas, USA from Germany in 1854 under the powerful and dynamic leadership of the Rev. Jan Kilian.

All readers and Society members, young and old, but especially the young, are encouraged to study and research the "Wends." Please submit your questions and findings to the NEWSLETTER or the Texas Wendish Heritage Society, soon to be headquartered in the Museum of the Society at Serbin, Texas, six miles south of Giddings in Lee County.

The Museum is the former schoolhouse of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, Serbin, Texas, and is now re-located on the extreme north side of the St. Paul Church cemetery. The schoolhouse, built in 1915, was moved from its location just north of the church on August 8, 1979. Now that the building is at its permanent location it is expected the Heritage Society will move quickly to open it to the public.

John J. Socha

ACCORDING TO MOST RELIABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE WENDISH IMMIGRATION 125 YEARS AGO, THE BEN NEVIS arrived in Galveston Harbor on December 14, 1854. The Wends touched dry land Dec. 16 after inspection was completed.

The NEWSPAPER of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society, with headquarters at the Wendish museum in Serbin, Texas, is published quarterly.

Editor: John J. Socha
Contributors: Officers and members of the Society and anyone interested in helping to preserve the Wendish (Sorbian, Upper Lusatian) heritage.

The Texas Wendish Heritage Society is a non-profit organization and in no way discriminates in matters of race, religion, or ethnic background.

Financial contributions to the Texas Wendish Heritage Society are tax-deductible.

Dues are \$5.00 per person per year and may be sent to the Treasurer: Laverne Gersch, Box 311, Giddings, Texas, 78942.

The President is Evelyn Kasper, Box 68, Warda, Texas, 78960.

Send articles, news, etc. to the Editor: 3617 Norton Drive, Ft. Worth, Texas, 78118. Phone: 817-284-0388.

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LAMMERTS VISIT LUSATIA

Ted Lammert, Society V.P., and former president and his children, Bekki, former secretary, and Ronnie, compiler of WHO ARE THE WENDS? visited old Wendenland during the month of August. They will have a report for our readers in January.

WENDISH COOK BOOKS AVAILABLE

One of the most distinctive cookbooks you'll ever find is the cookbook published by the Texas Wendish Heritage Society.

You may obtain a copy by contacting Mrs. Emma Wuensche, (Mrs. Harry E. J. Wuensche) at Mc Dade, Texas 78650.

Send \$4.50 along with your order. This covers cost of the cookbook and handling charges.

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125th ANNIVERSARY OF ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH OBSERVED JUNE 24, 1979

The 125th Anniversary of the founding of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas, and the immigration of the Upper Lusatian Wends to Texas in the fall of 1854, was observed by St. Paul congregation on June 24, 1979. The Rev. Paul W. Hartfield is the present pastor, and Mr. Elton Heintze, is the principal and a teacher of the School.

Following the morning worship services a full-scale barbecue welcomed about two thousand visitors from far and near to the historic site, where the Wends settled on the Delaplain Survey in 1855.

A tri-lingual service was held at 3:00 p.m. with a large, over-flow crowd that filled both the church and the new school-auditorium next to the church. Closed circuit T-V brought the service to the worshippers in the auditorium.

Speakers were Texas District President, Rev. Glen O'Shoney, English; Rev. Arthur Arndt, German, and Rev. Theodore Schmidt, Wendish. Liturgists were the Rev. Paul Hartfield, Rev. Herbert Driessner, and Rev. Alfred Prellop. Teacher Elton Heintze served as organist. Sandra Lehmann was the trumpeteer and teacher Dan Engler directed the St. Paul Children's and Youth Choirs. A Wendish choir made up of members of the Heritage Society from surrounding churches, sang: "Ach, Wostan Pschi Nasz s Hnadu," Abide O Dearest Jesus!

One of the highlights of the day were the exhibits and sales of souvenir items by the Society members in the new schoolhouse. Most of those in attendance at the historic celebration enjoyed the exhibits and sales. Most of the rare exhibit items will be in the Museum.

The celebration ended at night with an interesting multi-media presentation in the auditorium featuring artifacts, photos, historical information, and singing.

St. Paul congregation members are commended for their well planned and executed activities.

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WENDISH HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL TREASURES AVAILABLE

A 24-PAGE BOOKLET, COMPILED BY THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR, JOHN J. SOCHA, FEATURES 10 WENDISH HYMNS WHICH WERE FAVORITES OF THE TEXAS WENDS, AND NUMEROUS ITEMS IN BOTH WENDISH AND ENGLISH LIKE THE LORD'S PRAYER, CREED, 23RD PSALM, ETC. IT IS AVAILABLE FROM THE TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY FOR \$2.00 PLUS 50 CENTS FOR POSTAGE AND HANDLING.

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TEXAS FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

Once again, August 2-5, 1979, the Wendish Booth was a big attraction at the Folklife Festival, sponsored by the Institute of Texas Cultures. A report will be forthcoming in a future issue of the NEWSLETTER.

PROFILE † WEND.....ALBERT NIERTSCHIN

Albert Miertschin, a Wend, was for many years a printer of the Giddings Deutsches Volksblatt, published by Andrew Proske, which printed many stories in Wendish and published numerous items not only in German but also in Wendish.

He is the son of Ernst Miertschin and his wife, Anna Fritsche. He is a cousin to Carl Miertschin, a staunch member of the Society and a frequent singer of Wendish songs at various gatherings. Carl's father was John Miertschin; his mother was Marie Fritsche, sister to Albert's mother.

During the Atlantic Ocean voyage 125 years ago the couple who were lost at sea, according to Albert, were his and Carl's great grandfather and great grandmother.

Albert recalls how he used to take his grandmother to worship services at St. Paul, Serbin. To this day he is deeply impressed by the reverence and sincere love with which the worshipers greeted each other at church. The people bowed to each other, he recalls, and the women, dressed in big, black bonnets, bowed before the church door as they entered. Latecomers would sing the hymns from memory as they entered. This, Albert recalls further, continued as long as there were Wendish services at St. Paul congregation. Rev. Herman Schmidt, grandfather of Emilie Schmidt of Zion, Ft. Worth, and Mrs. Eva Schmidt Zoch of Houston, both Lutheran School teachers, was the last Wendish-speaking pastor of St. Paul's.

We dedicate this first issue of the NEWSLETTER to ALBERT MIERTSCHIN, who, because of birth and employment, was able to help preserve the Wendish Heritage. JJS.

WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED THIS FIRST ISSUE AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO ENLARGING ITS PAGES IN FUTURE EDITIONS WITH THE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR READERS. The future shape of the NEWSLETTER will depend on the interest displayed by the readers, so please start sending materials to the Editor. Thank you.