



# Texas Wendish Heritage Society

NEWSLETTER

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Giddings, Texas

April - May - June

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Greetings and Best Wishes to members of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society all over the world:

Interest in the activities of our TWHS is at a high level. The Wends of Texas, by Anna Blasig has been reprinted and sales are brisk. More and more people are becoming acquainted with the Wends of Texas and are identifying with it. It is heartening to see that many who once thought they were Germans are now recognizing that in reality they are Slavic people with a German geography. The Wendish Cook Book continues to be a popular item. More and more newspaper specialty writers and free-lance magazine writers are becoming interested in the "hot" stories the Wends of Texas can provide. The line of communications between Wendenland and the States is broadening.

We welcome correspondence from members and interested readers wherever they live. Kindly send your communications to the editor so that at the most convenient time he will be able to use them in future issues of the NEWSLETTER.

Editor: John J. Socha

CHRIST IS ARISEN!

Chryst je z rowa stanył  
A ze wšej martry cahnył;  
So z teho mamy zadować,  
A Chrystus chce nas trostowac,  
Kyrie eleis.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT . . . . Theodore Lammert

Many families preserve food in glass jars and then eat it as needed. If you leave food in jars and don't use it, it will be of no benefit to you and may eventually have to be thrown away.

The same is true of our Wendish folklore. We want to preserve it so it is usable to our future generations. By no means do we want to embalm this history.

Much of the history of the Wends of Texas is found in minutes and church records of the congregations founded by the Wends. The original copies of these records should be preserved in safe places such as church fireproof vaults, bank "safety boxes" or recognized archives.

The original copies should not be used for research but copies should be made for research purposes. "Zeroxing" is a very reasonable means of making such copies. Hopefully some day we will have facilities at the Museum to have all of the church records on microfilm. This is the only way to permanently protect our records. Check where your church records are and if they are properly preserved.

In addition to the church records we should also preserve family records that give information about the life of our forefathers. Often you want to keep the original but make a copy available to the Museum.

A cassette recorder can be used to record oral histories. If some member of your family can recall events of interest to the Wends, record that information on a cassette. Older people who have such knowledge are becoming fewer and fewer all the time." TED LAMMERT

*Mr. Lammert gives us much good food for thought. It cannot be stressed too strongly; collect all the information you can about the Wends. Save old newspaper stories which shed light on family histories. And above all, gather as much information as possible about your own family. Do it now. Don't put it off. And after you collect the information, send a copy to the Wendish Museum at Serbin. JJS*

YOUR EDITOR IS INTERESTED IN COLLECTING WENDISH RECIPES. If you have one not in our Cook Book, share it with us.



DID YOU KNOW? That the bell brought to America in 1854 aboard the Ben Nevis was installed at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin in 1869.

That it was used until 1915;

That it was given to Lutheran Concordia College in Austin, when that school was founded in 1926;

That it stood in Kilian Hall until 1958, when the Senior Class of Concordia provided a concrete pedestal for it at the entrance to Birkmann Chapel;

That the bell made by Fr. Gruhl in Kleinwelke in 1854; and That the inscription on the bell says:

GOTTES WORT UND LUTHERS LEHR' VERGEHET NUN UND NIMMERMEHR!

John J. Socha

SERBIN CHILDREN LEARN  
HOW TO COLOR EGGS.

A story in the Giddings Times/News, April 8, '82 tells about an Easter Egg Contest sponsored by the Texas Wendish Heritage Society for the pupils of St. Paul Lutheran School at Serbin.

On March 23 Daphne Garrett, Evelyn Kasper, and Alice Noack, TWHS members from Warda, demonstrated the art of egg coloring with wax.

Forty students entered the Contest with eggs which were judged by Society members Beatrice Tschatschula, Laura Zoch, and Lillian Wieder. Cash prizes were given to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each of four age divisions. The eggs will remain on display at the Wendish Museum in Serbin until June 1.

POSTSCRIPT...Jack Rittenhouse

See Volume II, No. 4, 1981; In response to that story, Paul Freier, Rt. 1, Port Lavaca, Tx. 77979, writes: "About Jack Rittenhouse" mentions an unknown writer from Victoria, Tx. He is Mr. Joe Petty of 1704 Park Ave., Victoria, Tx. 77901. Mr. Petty once operated the largest book store in Houston until retirement, located near Rice Hotel. One of his clerks was a Ziechang girl from whom he learned about the Wends". Signed: Paul Freier.

(I once had a friend named Maragret Zieschang from Taylor or Thorndale in my choir at St. Paul Luth., Austin, back in 1944-1950. John J. Socha.)

EASTER HOPE

John 14:19: "Pschetoż ja szym żywy, a wy budzecie też żywy."  
"Because I live you shall live also."

Geneological report . . . . .: PETER SYMMANK

BORN OCTOBER 27, 1854

We received an interesting letter from RUBY SYMMANK - Simank CAIN of Elgin, Texas. She states, "In reading the book, The Wends of Texas, by Anne Blasig, I would like to mention that where it states 'five children were born on ship and only two survived,' it mentions the names of two survivors. This is in error. My grandfather also survived. Please check the original ship's register under FAMILY # 73. My grandfather was Peter Symmank, born October 27, 1854."

"My grandfather, Peter Symmank, married Ernestine Melde, a Wend. My mother was Bertha Noak (later the spelling changed to Noack) before she married my father John Bernard Symmank (name later changed to Simank). My mother's mother was Maria Rackel (both of her parents were Wends), so I am about as much WENDISH as one can get. AND I LOVE IT!"

Our thanks to Ruby Symmank-Simank Cain for this enlightening letter. We commend her for her love of her Wendish heritage. Sometime in the future maybe we'll be able to present more of her interesting family tree.

Also, we would encourage others to write to us about any phase of their Wendish heritage. By the exchange of ideas in the NEWSLETTER we hope more of the Wendish heritage will be preserved.

#### SEVENTEEN PERSONS TO VISIT WENDENLAND

May 3, your editor will serve as tour guide for seventeen tourists who will visit Wendenland. We plan to spend the Mother's Day Week-end, May 7-8-9 in and around Bautzen. Included in our group will be four Habels from Corsicana. Mr. Paul Habel Sr's great grandfather was born in Bautzen. Louise Peter, grand-daughter of Rev. Jan Kilian, leader of the Wends to Texas, now living in Wichita Falls, and her neice, Bernice Noack Mills, are also making the trip. Others are Evelyn Kasper, Gloria Mae Gersch, The Reinhold Teinerts Mary and Elsie Socha, the Jordans, Gary Jordan, and another friend from Winchester. We plan to leave Frankfurt Friday, May 14. Another trip will be planned to Wendenland so please contact your Editor if you are at all interested. JJS