



Texas Wendish Heritage Society

NEWSLETTER

Volume VIII, No. 2,

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GOOD NEWS

FROM

EDWIN G. KILIAN ESTATE

PRESIDENT MRS. WALTER GERSCH (LAVERNE) HAS INFORMED THE NEWSLETTER THAT THE WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY HAS RECEIVED A CHECK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,500 FROM THE ED KILIAN ESTATE AS OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1987.

THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL FROM ED KILIAN'S ESTATE FOR THE TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY TO \$42,500.00 ... A CHECK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$32,000.00 WAS RECEIVED BY THE SOCIETY IN NOVEMBER, 1986.

EDWIN G. KILIAN OF AUSTIN, TEXAS, WAS THE SON OF TEACHER G.A. KILIAN AND GRANDSON OF THE REV. JAN KILIAN.

PART III₄₇ Continuation of the History of St. Paul's
Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas, by the late
Rev. W. H. Bewie.

There is no document to the effect that Rev. Kilian accepted this call, but we all know that he did, for he came with the colony and all the way through acted as its pastor.

Since, to accept this call meant to emigrate with this group to Texas, the first thing Rev. Kilian had to do was to get the permission of the Prussian government to leave the country, together with his family, in order to go to America. He got this permission. The document in which the Prussian government granted him permission to leave is still in the archives. It is not typed as such documents are today, but written in a beautiful penmanship. Only the signature of the officer is illegible, as such signatures commonly are.

The document was issued under date of July 24th, 1854, and reads as follows: "The undersigned royal government of Prussia hereby certifies that the Rev. Johann Kilian has been granted a discharge to leave Prussia, in order to emigrate to America, together with his wife, nee Maria Groeschel and his minor son, Gerhard August. This discharge is effective only for the persons named, and has the effect that from the date when this discharge is issued, the persons mentioned will lose their Prussian citizenship."

So far the discharge. We note that the Prussian government is very exact. As soon as Rev. Kilian leaves Prussia, he loses his citizenship. And if he gets into trouble with anyone, he cannot call on the Prussian government for help and protection.

From a letter which Rev. Kilian wrote to Prof. Walther under date of Feb. 9th 1855, we learn that the colony left over Hamburg on Sept. 26th 1854, and went first to Liverpool. Here they took a double decker ship, named Ben Nevis, for America. The colony was composed of about 200 people from Saxony and about 400 from Prussia. I want to say here that all the way through it is just a little difficult at times, to find one's way through all the figures.

While the colony was changing from one ship to the other in England, the dreaded cholera broke out in the colony. From Liverpool they steered toward Cork in the Irish Channel, where they lost nearly seventy persons in four days.

Because of this they were quarantined at C for four weeks. But even after they were out on the broad ocean they lost a few more souls. A death aboard ship in those days was gruesome. The body was wrapped in sail cloth and then slowly slid down a board into the waters. On this trip many a husband lost his wife or a wife her husband, parents lost their children, children their parents.

Since the colony was going to Texas, the ship landed them at Galveston, which they reached on the 16th of December. They had been traveling for almost three months. At Galveston they had to pass through the immigration offices, etc. and then left for Houston.

From Galveston the party went on to Houston. Here they were received by Rev. Casper Braun, a Lutheran Minister of the Pittsburg Synod, originally. He saw to it that the colonists were taken care of as much as possible by his congregation, until they could move on. We shall meet Rev. Braun again in the course of this story. From Houston the colony then moved on to Bastrop Co. I should explain here that, though Serbin is now in Lee County, yet in those days it was in Bastrop County, for at the time there was as yet no Lee County. Lee county was formed by cutting off a piece of Bastrop, Fayette and Washington Co, and calling it Lee County. (Editor's note: Lee County was organized in 1874 and was actually made up of parts of the above named three counties and also Burleson County.)

Of the Wends that reached Houston, a number had to stay there for the time being, since they first had to earn money to be able to travel on. Just exactly when the main colony reached the post oaks of Bastrop Co, there is no record that I could discover. It must have been early in January of 1855.

We wonder, of course, how these newcomers fared in the post oak country. We get a fairly good idea of their financial situation from an address which Rev. Kilian read to the colony on the 14th of October 1855, just about ten months after they had arrived in their new home, in the deep of the woods. (To be continued.)

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WE URGE ALL MEMBERS TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE TWHS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, AT SERBIN. - Depending on the weather, the meeting will be held either at the Museum or at the St. Paul's Gyni.

The TWHS NEWSLETTER is published quarterly in the interest of promoting the aims and purposes of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society.

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Anyone interested in the Wendish heritage of the Wends of Texas, who came to Texas from Lusatia, East Germany in 1854, is invited to submit articles for the Newsletter.

OFFICERS OF THE TWHS

Mrs. Walter Gersch (La Verne), President; Leroy Steglich, vice president; Vivian Taylor, Secretary; Kenneth Weiser, Treasurer

ANNUAL DUES are just \$10 per person per year. Mail your dues to TWHS, P.O. Box 311, Giddings, Texas 78942

WENDISH MUSEUM IN SERBIN is open every Sunday afternoon from 1 to 5 o'clock. Evelyn Kasper is the Co-Ordinator. If you have not yet visited the MUSEUM, plan a trip soon!

THE AMERICAN SKETCH BOOK, published at Austin by Mrs. Bella French in 1878, recorded this in Volume IV, No. III, "During the same year that gave an existence to Evergreen, (just to the southeast of present-day Lincoln, Ed. Note) (The year was 1854, Ed. Note) a colony under the leadership of John Dubee and Carl Lehmann, settled and founded the town of Serbin, about eight miles south of Giddings. The colony was composed of about forty persons, (actually about fifty families, Ed. Note) and being joined by others soon built quite a village, and opened many farms, where, by thrift and industry, they have made themselves comfortable homes, with their churches and schools, characteristic of the foreign element in this section. Several leagues of land adjacent now contribute their productions to the purses of this colony."

The article then proceeds to give the history of the founding of Lexington, Texas by Capt. James Shaw about 1850.

A copy of The American Sketch Book is in the Barker Library on the campus of the U. of Texas at Austin, adjacent to the Lyndon B. Johnson Library.

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HELP! Send recipes for the new Cook Book to Emma Wuenesche, Mc Dade, Texas 78650.

Be a part of the Wendish legacy being handed down to fellow Texas. Send recipes!