



TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VIII, NO. 3, DIME BOX, TX., APRIL-JUNE, 1987

SOUVENIR NEWSLETTER

THIS ISSUE OF THE TWHS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS A SOUVENIR ISSUE IN OBSERVANCE OF THE GROUNDBREAKING FOR THE NEW WENDISH MUSEUM WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE SUNDAY, MAY 17, 1987, AS PART OF THE REGULAR QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE TWHS.

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF OUR FRIEND, LOUISE PETER, GRAND-DAUGHTER OF THE GREAT LEADER OF THE WENDISH IMMIGRATION OF 1854 THE REV. JAN KILIAN, THE NEW WENDISH MUSEUM WILL STAND AS A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE CONTRIBUTION THE WENDS OF TEXAS HAVE MADE TO TEXAS HISTORY.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND THE MAY 17 MEETING, GROUND-BREAKING AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, STARTING AT 2:00 P.M. AT THE ST. PAUL LUTHERAN, SERBIN, AUDITORIUM.

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

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OFFICERS OF THE TWHS are:

La Verne Gersch (Mrs. Walter)

President; Bill Dube, Vice-

President; Vivian Taylor,

Secretary; Kenneth Weiser,

Treasurer

Evelyn Kasper, Museum Di-

rector; Daphne Garrett

Museum Research Associate

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ANNUAL DUES are just \$10.00

per person per year. Mail

your dues to TWHS, P.O. Box

311, Giddings, Tx. 78942

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THE WENDISH MUSEUM IN SERBIN

is open every Sunday after-

noon from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Plan a visit to the Museum

soon. Bring your friends.

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ANYONE interested in the Wendish heritage of the Wends of Texas is invited to submit articles for the Newsletter.

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THINK WENDISH!

A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE MUSEUM BOARD FOR THEIR WORK!

GIVE THEM A PAT ON THE BACK. ATTEND THE GROUND-BREAKING!

It's surprising how many people who are of Wendish descent think they are German because "my folks talked German."

MUSEUM VISITED BY SAN ANTONIO BAPTISTS

Two bus-loads of San Antonio Baptists visited the Wendish Museum recently. Their leader said twenty people were turned down on the waiting list.

The group enjoyed visiting the Museum and the Church; they sang hymns with gusto in the historic edifice.

A large group of Wendish volunteers helped accommodate the group. Some helped at the Museum, others at the church, while another group prepared and served a Wendish meal of Sausage and sauerkraut, red beets, home-made noodles and bread...Coffee Cake and Coffee were also served at the Museum...Our thanks to Holy Cross Warda for the use of their hall for the meal, and to St. Paul's Church for the church visit.

If you know of any group which might be interested in touring "Wendenland" at Serbin, please contact the President, La Verne Gersch.

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ORCHIDS to all of the many VOLUNTEERS who help keep the Museum in operation week after week.

GROUND-BREAKING, MAY 17.

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

Rev. Kilian had just received a call from the Wendish colony in Australia. And he wanted to know whether he should go or stay. In this paper Rev. Kilian explains his finances. He says that it is now a good year or more since they all left Germany, and the time when the salary of \$700.00 per year was to begin. He explains that he was not getting that \$700.00, in fact he was getting so little that he was running into debt every day. And he did not want to make any more debts than he could pay in the end. He says he cannot go on that way.

Rev. Kilian says in this paper which he read to the colony, that he realizes very well that they all have their troubles. They all have to build houses and try to make a living. But all this does not help him in his own troubles. For this reason he put his situation squarely up to the colony. Can you give me any kind of guarantee that I can live here with you? I do not want to leave you. I want to stay with you. But I must have some way of living. I am now living as one of the very poor among you. Thus the article he read to them goes on. We can plainly see from this letter that the whole colony was in a very bad way. The ideas they had entertained about supporting their pastor, when they called him to lead the colony, had to undergo great changes.

Exactly what arrangements Rev. Kilian and the colony made with each other, I do not know, for the papers say nothing about that. But they must have made some agreement which satisfied them all, for Rev. Kilian stayed with the colony in Texas, as we all know, and did not go to Australia. But this is plain: If it had not been that God wanted His word to be taught in its truth and purity also in the post oak woods of Texas, the whole colony would have been compelled to disband and everyone try to go somewhere where he could make enough to live with his little family. I am sure that those Wends never forgot the hardships of that first year in Texas. [To be continued.]

DID YOU KNOW? The Ben Nevis, on which the Wendish Immigrants sailed, was consigned to Messrs. Pilkington & Wilson of Liverpool...that it was of 1420 tons register, and 3000 tons burden, and had capacity for carrying 650 passengers...She was 180 feet long, with 38½ feet breadth of beam. This, according to The London Illustrated News, 9/4/1852.

DAPHNE GARRETT PUBLISHES EGG COLORING BOOK

Daphne Garrett, Archivist for the Wendish Museum has published a book entitled, The Art of Decorating Wendish Easter Eggs. The book is available at the Wendish Museum or by mail order. To order by mail: GARRETT HISTORICAL RESEARCH, P.O.Box 35, Warda, Texas 78960; or call: 409/242-3822 or 713/468-7516. Cost is \$4.95, plus \$1.00 Postage and Handling and .30 cent tax; total: \$6.25

We congratulate Mrs. Garrett for her success in publishing this work. She is a great asset to the Texas Wendish Heritage Society. Her research ability is tremendous. We hope others will do Wendish research and will publish works. JJS, Editor.

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SWEDISH SCHOLAR TO VISIT WENDISH MUSEUM IN JUNE

SVEN GUSTAFSON, PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RUSSIAN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN STUDIES AT THE UNIV. OF MINNESOTA, WILL BE VISITING SERBIN AND THE WENDISH HERITAGE MUSEUM, ETC. DURING THE LAST WEEK IN JUNE. HIS VISIT HERE WILL BE ONE OF EIGHT STOPS IN THE UNITED STATES... OUR FRIEND, ROBERT ZWAHR, MADE CONTACT WITH US FOR PROF. GUSTAFSON.

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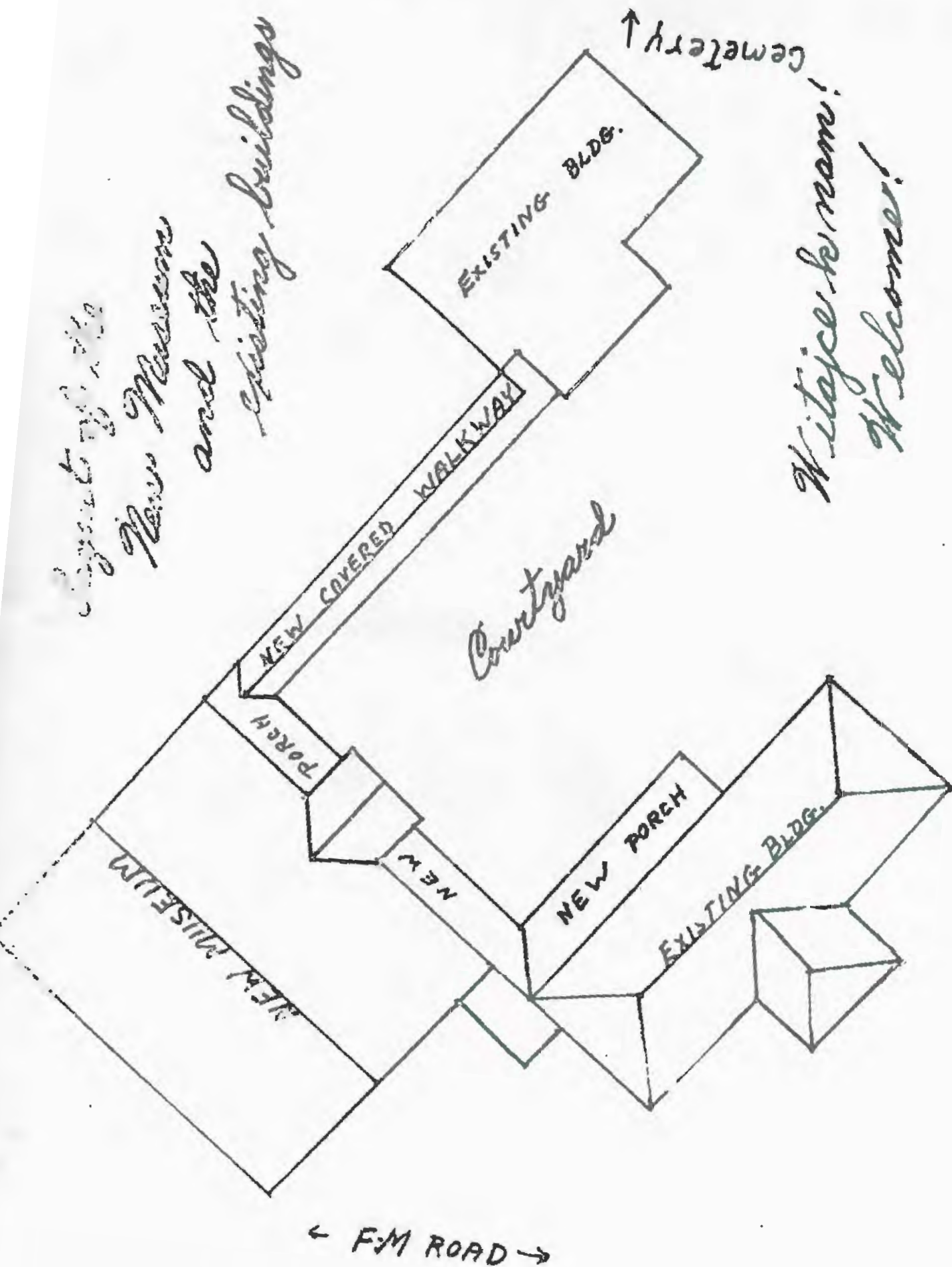
NURENBERG MUTSCHINK CONTACTS GIDDINGS MUTSCHINK

Angela Mutschink, 26, of Nurenberg, Germany, daughter of Friedbert and Sonja Mutschink of Kleinseudelbach, Ober-Lausitz, wrote an interesting letter to Dorothy Mutschink Miller, daughter of Walter and Matilda (Schulz) Mutschink. Angela asked whether the folks here still write and talk Wendish (Sorbisch), and also whether German is written and spoken here... Says, "Mutschink is quite an uncommon name." ...Her family originated in East Germany at Groszpostwitz. Also says Bautzen still has a Wendish Theatre and High School. "Last ancestor, known to us, is Johann Mutschink, born August 3, 1834 in Groszpostwitz."

NOTE: Your editor invites any news you may have to share with the readers of the Wendish Newsletter. JJS.

REMEMBER: MAY 17, a great day in Serbin: Meeting at 2:00 p.m.; New Museum Ground-breaking, and Fellowship to follow. THINK WENDISH!

Signage for the
New Museum
and the
existing buildings



Witajcie kochani!
Welcome!

Picnic Grounds ↓

The Texas Wendish Heritage Society this past week accepted a gift of \$42,000 from the Peter Foundation. This gift and one for \$86,000 received two weeks ago completes the commitment of a \$130,000 grant made by the Peter Foundation to the T. W. H. S.

"This gift will be used to build a 50x60 square foot fire-resistant building," said T. W. H. S. president Laverne Gersch.

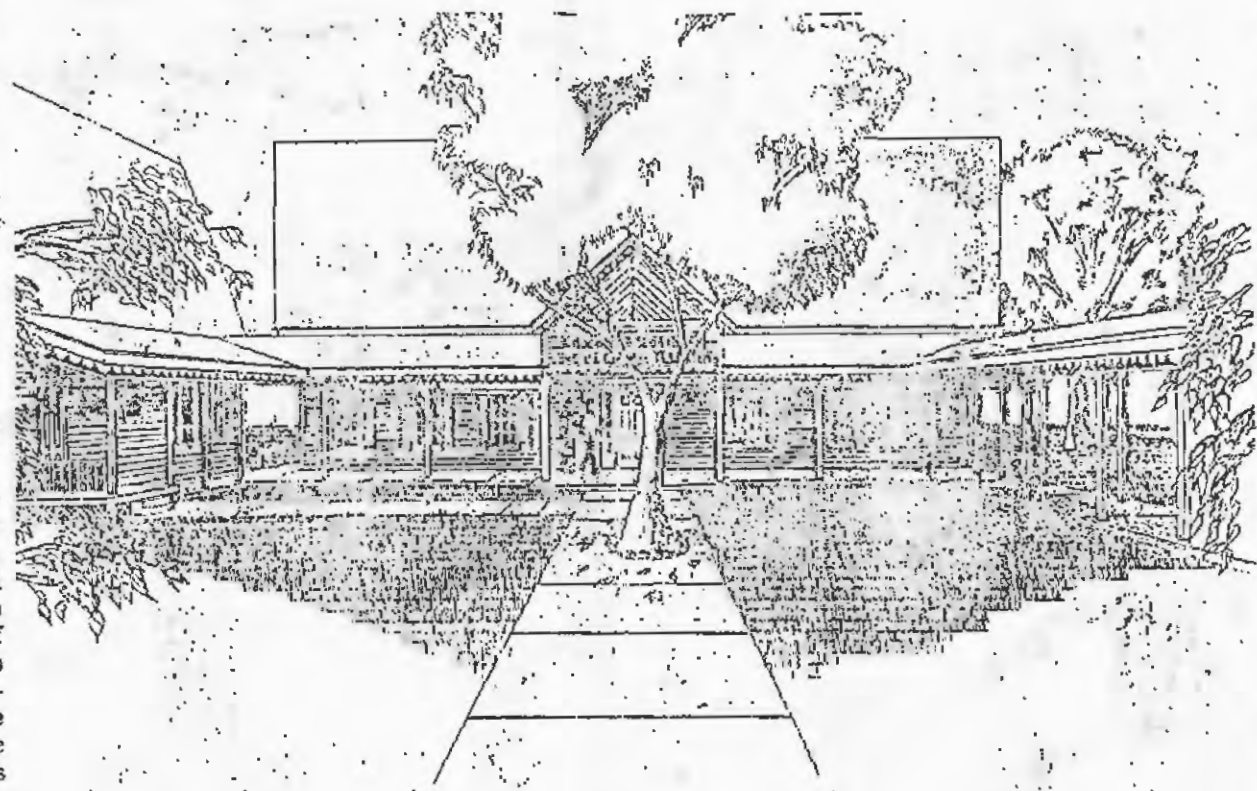
In 1979 St. Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin granted the T. W. H. S. a perpetual lease on an acre of land and presented the old school buildings to the organization for a museum and meeting room. The smaller building was restored and used as a museum while funds were being raised to restore the larger building which made up the original two classrooms of the school. When restoration was completed five years ago, the displays were moved to the larger building.

The museum preserves the story of the Wends, Slavic immigrants to Texas from Lusatia, an area comprising parts of Saxony and Prussia. Although a few families came in 1852-53, in December of 1854 a group of over 500 Wends arrived and founded a new homeland in Lee County. They were joined by many others during the 19th century, and the Wends formed sub-colonies in other parts of Texas.

One exhibit are relics from the old country, as well as household, farm and church artifacts used by Wends in Texas. Folk dress and Wendish Easter eggs are two of the colorful permanent exhibits.

The library specializes in the history and genealogy of the Wends; the archives preserves several hundred books in Wendish, German and English, as well as documents, manuscripts and photographs. The museum is operated by the Texas Wendish Heritage Society.

Wendish Heritage Society Receives \$130,000 Grant For New Building



NEW WENDISH MUSEUM

The new building will complete the three phase building program. When completed, there will be a three building complex connected by covered walkways with a courtyard in between to compliment the setting.

The new building will feature a 12x20 foot drop vault for the archives. Also in the new addition will be a library and workroom with the remainder used as a display space.

The new building, designed by Edward Mattingly, architect, will feature traditional Early Texas design to blend with the present buildings.

Louise Peter who established the Peter Foundation resides in Wichita Falls, but grew up in Winchester. Many Lee County residents will remember the Peter Company. Louise, along with her brothers Martin and Robert operated the business in Giddings. They bought turkeys from local farmers and processed them, packed them in iced down railcars and shipped turkeys all over Texas.

When the company received a large amount of turkeys at once they would blow a loud whistle and local people knew they needed help to process the birds. The business was a real boost to the cashflow of the local economy.

Louise is the last surviving grandchild of Rev. and Mrs. Johann Kilian. Rev. Kilian established a Lutheran congregation in Giddings, many, and he and a large group of Wends chartered the ship, the Ben Nevis and sailed to Texas, settling in the Serbin area.

Besides the generous gift to the Texas Wendish Heritage Society the foundation also gave a generous gift to Concordia Lutheran College in Austin.

President of the T. W. H. S. is Laverne Gersch of Giddings. Vice president is Leroy Steglich of Warda, treasurer Ken Weiser of Giddings and secretary Vivian Taylor of Weimar. Evelyn Kasper of Warda has served as museum coordinator since the museum opened in 1979.

Rev. Paul Hartfield is pastor at St. Paul's in Serbin and has been very instrumental in the progress made at the museum.