



# Texas Wendish Heritage Society

NEWSLETTER

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VOL. IX, No. 2, DIME BOX, TEXAS, JANUARY - MARCH, 1988

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SPREEWITZ WENDS TO CELEBRATE 300 TH ANNIVERSARY

(See letter translated by Reinhold Teinert)

CELEBRATIONS PLANNED FOR AUGUST 15-21

Tour may be planned if enough show interest

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GERHARD SIMMANK SENDS NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

FROM FRANKFURT AM MAIN

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HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S, SERBIN, CONTINUED

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FIRST TWHS MEETING IN 1988, FEBRUARY 21

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ELWOOD DOMASCHK, JR., PRESIDENT

LEROY STEGLICH, VICE-PRESIDENT

VIVIAN TAYLOR, SECRETARY

REINHOLD TEINERT, TREASURER

JOHN J. SOCHA, EDITOR

MAKE THINGS GREAT IN 88!!!

LETTER FROM PASTOR MANSFRED HORNICH, Spreewitz, Germany  
(Translated by Reinhold Teinert of Austin, Texas)

Now that we have your address we want to greet you heartily from the homeland of your forefathers and also tell you of our Evangelical congregation's celebration, here in Spreewitz, that you surely would be interested in.

On the 16th of August in 1688 a plain (fachwerk) church was dedicated under the pastorate of Pastor Johann Klien. Yes, it is this church where your forefathers of the Lausitz emigration, once worshiped, were baptized, confirmed and may have been married there, perhaps that before they left they came to worship here once more to ask God's protection on their trip to a new country. This church still stands today even though it sustained heavy damage during World War II. In the coming of 1988 we want to celebrate its 300th anniversary from the 15th to the 21st of August with a whole week of celebration. Plans have been made, and we wish that when we tell the history of our congregation we would have the story of our forefathers new beginnin in America (Serbin). Would you please help us with that. There must have been some books written about those emigrants. We know that accurate records were kept (Kilian's) During that time 71 people left our small congregation: 45 people were from the small village of Spreewitz, 13 from ZERRE, 8 from NEUSTADT, and 10 from BURGHAMMER. We are happy to know that those who left did write letters that were received here and that there were some people who visited here in Spreewitz lately. I believe it was as joyful an occasion for you as it was for those visited. In your search for information on your families from our records we can only go back to 1751, for in that year a fire destroyed our church record books.

I have an idea that you would like to know something about our situation here in Spreewitz, and that is what I want to do now. What remained after the emigration? The church has a new tower; the small and big Spree, the Pine Forest, the sandy Mt. Boden, Easter Egg Decorating, very few sorbish clothes, the Sorbish language, spoken only by the older people. The small village life has changed. The need for the brown coal from the mine has changed the life of the people and the surrounding area. The church attendance varies between 20 and 30 members. We would be happy to receive an answer from you and we greet you heartily from Spreewitz. Spreewitz 28 August 1987.



PART VII. Continuation of the History of St. Paul's  
Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas, by the late  
Rev. W. H. Bewie (An unpublished Manuscript.)

Now it happened in 1817 that the then king of Prussia issued an order that all Lutheran and all Reformed Churches should introduce and use the new book of forms (Agende) which he had had drawn up. This book was so written that the doctrines as to which the Lutheran church and the Reformed church differed, were so presented that it made no difference who used the book. The difference between the two churches for instance as to the Lord's Supper, as to the person of our Savior etc., were blurred in such a way that as a confession or doctrine they were useless.

Of course a great cry arose. Many pastors would not use the book, many churches refused to have their pastor use it for communion for baptism, etc. But those that did not want to use it were either forced, or their churches were closed and in some instances their pastors were thrown into jail just as though they were common criminals. That was the way of the Unite Kirche.

What now? People and pastors talked this over and finally decided that the only thing they could do was to leave the state church. So it came to the point where there was a little group or a handful here, another there, that had left the State church. In order to be served, they would call on some pastor who had also left the State church. On one Sunday he served this little handful on the next Sunday some other little handful. But then the question arose how about all those groups that receive so little service. Many of them tried to solve the question by getting together for an hour and reading the book of sermons. Gradually it came to the point where they did not stop at reading the sermon, but someone would get up and conduct a devotion. They would sing and pray and then some one would explain a text, etc.

Now there is nothing inherently wrong in this, provided the respective person could really expound the text and be a real teacher. But it was not long before these persons who came to be known as Stundisten, because they originally met for an hour, noticed that not all the people in the various groups that had left the State church, took part in those Stunden. And so the Stundisten felt that they were really better Christians, than those that did not attend the Stunden. They began to feel, at least

many of them, that they were the real church.

Among those Prussians and Saxons that followed Kilian with the colony of Wends, there were a few, not many, who in Germany had also attended the Stunden. Of course, when they arrived in Bastrop County, they did not need any such religious exercises, for they all belonged to Rev. Kilian and attended divine services every Sunday and every holiday, for the old Wends certainly had their holidays. And for several years there was no trouble.

But after a few years a German Methodist church was begun in a settlement several miles west of Serbin. The Methodists had prayer meetings, etc. And of course, some of the Wends began to attend those services. They wanted to see what this was really like. And then those that had been Stundisten in Germany began to think that they ought to have something on this order." (To be continued in Part VIII.)

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LETTER FROM GERHARD SIMMANK, Frankfurt am Main, Germany  
January 1, 1988, Dear Mr. Socha, Dear Friends, Thank you for your continued support during 1987. May you have a happy, healthy New Year, and everything you could wish for in a peaceful 1988.

I write in German: Aus meinem umfangreichen Familienarchiv gebe ich gegen Rückporto und Unkosten gern Auskunft über folgende name: Simmank, Symmank, Symank, Simmang, Kurio, Miertschin, Mlickan, Dude, Hantusch, Buttner, Hennesdorf, Krawc. Rabowsky, Michalk, Endter, Paulick, Ritter, Dutschke, Lieber, Miessner, Kruschwitz, Zieschang-Kschishan u.a Namen. Interessenten wollen sich wenden an:

Mr. Gerhard Simmank, Ziegelhuettenweg 84,  
P.O.Box 700949, 6 Frankfurt am Main 70,  
Federal Republic of Germany (West)

WITAJCZ k Nam - Welcome!

Sincerely yours,

Gerhard Simmank

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COOKBOOK BECOMES COLLECTORS' ITEM. The Original Wendish Cookbook is now a Collector's Item. Buy up any that are still available....Emma Wuensche, Cookbook Chairman, has announced that the NEW Cookbook will be ready by early spring.