



# Texas Wendish Heritage Society

---

Route 2, Box 155 / Giddings, Texas 78942-9769

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 4, MAY, 1991

OPEN FROM 1:00 To 5:00 EVERY DAY EXCEPT SATURDAY & HOLIDAYS

PHONE 409/366-2441

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The past weekend was a very successful weekend for the Texas Wendish Heritage Society.

The Board of Directors met on Saturday and made several major decisions.

One decision was to have no business conducted at the quarterly membership meetings except for the November meeting. In November, the membership will elect officers or directors and any other business which the Board of Directors deems appropriate at that time.

At the other three quarterly meetings, a guest speaker will be invited to have a program. Other activities might be singing German songs, playing dominoes and discuss items that are located in the Museum.

Another suggestion made at the meeting was that each Society member write a history of himself or herself and donate that history to the Museum for historical purposes.

After the meeting Sunday, there was a hamburger appreciation supper for the Society to show its appreciation to the people who have served the Museum or Society in the past year. Persons who helped make this a success were Ruby Weiser, John Weiser, Jack Jones, Raymond & Mary Smith, Telford & Clara Zoch, and Hattie Mutschink.

With these volunteers, one hundred and ten persons were fed with a net cost of just a little over \$100.00. With the favorable comments that were received, you can expect this to be a yearly activity.

The Eyes of Texas did some filming at the Museum and this is scheduled to be shown on June 8th in Houston and over Channel 24 in Austin on June 15th. Those in other areas will need to check with the television station on which date it will be shown in that particular area.

One other major decision on Saturday was to have all of the committees placed in categories. This way committees will work in groups of responsibility rather than as individual groups.

Ken Weiser  
President

### UPCOMING EVENTS

June 14	Deadline for articles for the June newsletter
June 15 & 16	31st annual Schoppa family reunion - Wichita Falls facilities
June 16	Winchester Picnic - at the Winchester Picnic Grounds
June 16	11th annual Wuensche family reunion - Thorndale, TX
June 23	14th bi-annual Menzel reunion - Thorndale, TX
July 4	Museum will be closed - Independence Day
July 13	McDade Watermelon Parade at 2:00 p.m.
July 19	Deadline for articles for July newsletter
July 27	Gersch family reunion - at the Walter Gersch farm
July 28	Zoch family reunion - at the Sons of Herman Hall, Giddings, TX
August 1-4	Folklife Festival - at the Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio, TX
August 9	Deadline for articles for the August newsletter
August 18	Quarterly membership meeting at 2:00 p.m. at the Museum

### LILLIE MOERBE CALDWELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY by Georgie B. Boyce, Librarian

NEW ACCESSIONS: BARBARA HIELSCHER of Winchester donated Memories of By-Gone Days by Rosa Berry Cole and published by the Smithville Heritage Society. The Book is described as "a jotting down of things that Rosa Berry Cole learned and lived through in her lifetime" in Texas. DANIEL GERSCH of Winchester donated TOYS - Antique & Collectible by David Longest.

THANKS to HATTIE SCHAUTSCHICK for all her help in processing newspaper articles. We still need volunteers, please help.

### GROUP TOURS by Evelyn N. Kasper, Chairman

#### TOURS! TOURS! TOURS!

April was a bee-hive of activity at the Museum Complex. Thanks to the many members who helped cook, serve and act as docents while we hosted the following groups:

On April 9th we served 48 people from First National Bank at Clear Lake. In the afternoon 48 people from the Fayette County Extension Homemakers also toured the facilities.

On April 10th 42 people from the Point Counter Point Study Club of Houston were served.

On April 11th we hosted 48 people from the First National Bank of Houston.

On April 17th we served 45 folks from Messiah Lutheran AAL and their friends.

On April 18th there were about 40 in the group from North Freeway AARP Chapter 1094 for coffee cake and coffee, and a tour.

On April 24th we hosted the Houston Yacht Club - 45 members.

On April 27th we had a group of 14 from St. Matthew Lutheran Church and AAL at Westfield (Spring area). The Pastor and his confirmation class, with a few additional adults also came for a visit from Kingsland on this date.

With all of the rain this year, the wild flowers were just beautiful and everyone wanted to see them. Thank God for His gifts of beauty. We will attempt to have wild flower brochures and bluebonnet seeds in the gift shop by next spring!



ANNUAL  
MEETING



# The 11th Annual Wuensche Family Reunion June 16, 1991 Firemans Hall Thorndale Tx. Hall will be open at 9:00 AM

honor your father and relatives too,  
with fun and visits and great bar-b-que  
Thanks to generous people  
for making this go.  
The cost will amaze you, it is so low.  
With donated postage, food and labor  
You can bring your family and  
even your neighbor.  
**SEE YOU THERE!!**

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

From 11:30 to 12:00 there will be a  
short devotional program with music  
and group singing. After this the  
Business Meeting will be held so we  
can have everyone present. The meal  
of brisket and sausage with all the  
sides will be served. There will  
be plenty of time for visits to follow.  
The cost will only be \$2.00 for every-  
one over 12. (This is because of all  
the donations) Beans will be fixed  
by the Gilbert Helde family, Potato  
salad by The Becker family, noodles  
by those working in the kitchen, and  
slaw by Freddie Wuensche and family.  
The Bar-b-Que will be cooked by Roy  
Wuensche and Charles Wuensche. We  
do ask that everyone else bring a  
dessert!!

## 1991 CHAIRPERSONS

Bobby Wuensche Dr. Tom Parker  
Rt. 2, Box 215 Rt. 1, Box 1847  
Taylor, TX 76574 Georgetown, TX 78626  
(512)352-3013 (512)352-3013

## Father's Day

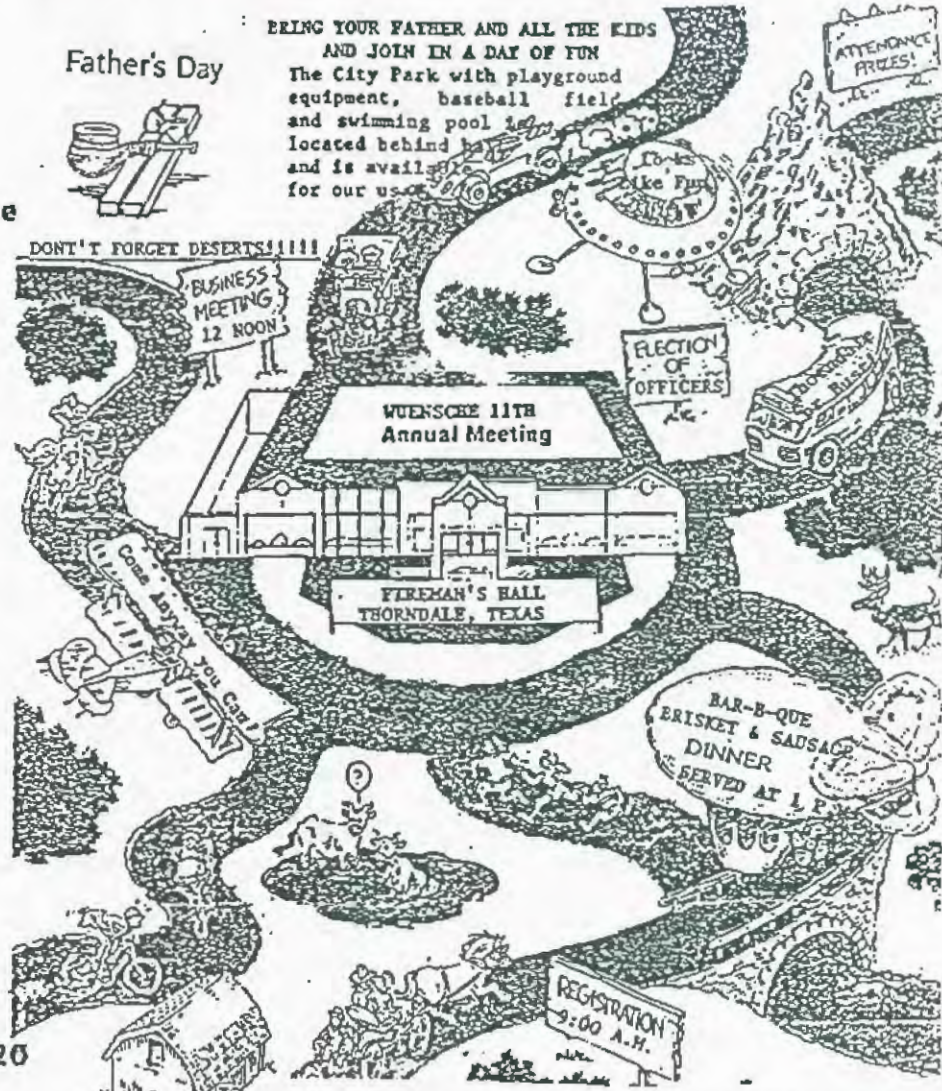


BRING YOUR FATHER AND ALL THE KIDS  
AND JOIN IN A DAY OF FUN

The City Park with playground  
equipment, baseball field  
and swimming pool is  
located behind  
and is available  
for our use.

DON'T FORGET DESERTS!!!!

BUSINESS  
MEETING  
12 NOON



Friends of the family are welcome and  
encouraged to come, so plan to meet  
someone you haven't seen in a long  
time—"the more the merrier." We  
always have plenty of food and drink  
so just "COME ON DOWN"!

Please check our invitation list when  
you register and make corrections and  
additions as necessary (including  
checking your correct family name)  
for next year's list.

**REMEMBER YOU'LL NEVER HAVE AS MUCH  
FUN FOR ONLY \$2.00!!!!**

BRING DESERTS, ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT &  
FAMILY AND FRIENDS!





Greetings:

This letter is to remind you that the fourteenth bi-annual Menzel Reunion will be held on Sunday, June 23, 1991, at the Fireman's Recreation Hall in Thorndale, located at 801 San Gabriel Rd.

Please pass this information along to all members of your family so that we can make this a truly special day. A catered meal of Turkey and Dressing with trimmings will be served. However, dessert is not included, therefore, we are asking that anyone who desires bring a dessert. Prices for the meal will be as follows:

Adults	\$5.00	
Children	\$3.50	(ages 10 & under)

Registration for the reunion starts at 10:00 a.m., with a short devotion followed by the meal at 12:00 noon. A business meeting will be conducted following the meal. Please bring dominoes, cards or games and enjoy an afternoon of family fellowship.

Also, thanks to Charles Woelfel and his son, Jason, a new updated family tree is being prepared and orders are being taken for a complete computer printout version for a cost of about \$2.--. If you are interested in purchasing a copy please note at the end of this letter so we can have your copy available at the reunion. If you fail to order one to be picked up at the reunion, you may still order one at a cost of about \$4.00 and it will be mailed to you. (The extra fee is for mailing cost.) Also if you would like to have a copy and cannot attend the reunion, please note that and enclose \$4.00 for each copy and we will be happy to send you one. The family tree has grown considerably over the years and consists of approximately 1,000 descendants. Please note any changes that may have occurred in your family with dates, births, deaths, marriages, etc. for updating.

Church Services -- St. Paul (Thorndale)

9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Bible Class  
10:00 a.m. Church Service

Officers for this reunion are : Kenneth Menzel, President:  
David Waiser, Vice-President: Marjorie Menzel, Secretary:  
Jacquelyn Kelm, Treasurer.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Menzel  
P.O. Box 231  
Thorndale, Tx 76577

YESTERFEST  
by Carolyn Bohot, Chairman

ONE SMALL SHOWER DAMPENED OUR NOODLES, BUT WE HAD A GOOD TIME!!

Gloria Mae Gersch, Irma Gersch, Reinhold and Irene Teinert, and Annie Bartholic helped Barbara Hielscher and me in our booth at this year's Yesterfest in Bastrop. After one small shower, we removed our hastily tossed covers and began selling more noodles than before! Irma's "creatures" attracted a lot of attention, and Gloria Mae deserves a medal for making noodles all day! As usual there were lots of questions and comments-- "My mother used to make noodles ... " or "How do you cut them so thin?"

Many thanks to everyone who helped us make the day successful. Without having Barbara to bring the stove and all the other things we needed, we'd never have been able to operate. Special thanks to her, and to her husband Carroll, and son Jerry who helped her load the truck.

VISITORS

During April we have had visitors from: Washington, Germany, Florida, Michigan, Israel, Oklahoma, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, California, Oregon, and Illinois. There were also visitors from all over Texas.

DOCENTS

Thank you! to all of the following for volunteering to act as docents during the month of April: Herbert and Hattie Schautschick, Evelyn Kasper, Ken Weiser, Bessie Mertink, Otto Becker, Ruth Lindner, Lorine Domel, Barbara Hielscher, Elinor Steglich, Georgie Boyce, Flora Kunze, Laverne Gersch, Esther Buscha, Reinhold and Irene Teinert, Gloria Mae Gersch, Esther Pampell, Jack and Marian Wiederhold, August and Laura Zoch, Viola Spacek, Dora Spitzenberger, Heather Hielscher, Billie Jo Murphy, Luke Mertink, and Mrs. Elsie Socha.

MEMBERSHIP

New Members/Previous Members-Renewed

Shawn Storey, Carrollton, TX.

Galen Miller, Houston, TX.

Student

Shawn Storey, Carrollton, TX.

Patron

John A. Grosse, Lyons, Australia

Weldon Mersiovsky, Georgetown, TX.

\*\*\*\*\*

CTMA QUARTERLY MEETING-WORKSHOP

On April 27th, Georgie Boyce attended the quarterly meeting of the Central Texas Museum Association and the workshop, "Preserving and Exhibiting Archival Materials", held at the Coryell County Museum in Gatesville. The workshop was lead by Lynn Bell, Exhibit Coordinator of the Barker Texas History Center in Austin. The members had a special guided tour of the restored Coryell County Courthouse.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Reinhold Teinert reported that Dr. Richard Dinda, who is on the faculty of Concordia College, has recorded The Wendish Texans by Sylvia Ann Grider. The recording is in the library for the blind in Austin.



## SIMANK FAMILY REUNION

La Grange and Fayetteville, Texas

April 26, 27, 28 - 1991

The descendants of Herman Ernst Simank and Fredericka Bartling Simank (family number 70 on the Ben Nevis Ship Register) gathered together for their 5th family reunion.

The Northpointe Executive Suites Motel was the headquarters for the group in La Grange. On Friday the 26th the early arrivals met for the evening meal at the La Cabana Restaurant in La Grange.

On Saturday morning the family caravanned to Fayetteville and took County Road 260 east of Fayetteville to the site of the Simank family farm home. The two story white farm house is still standing. We were privileged to get to go inside the home to see for ourselves where our parents, grand parents, and great grandparents had lived. It was interesting to compare stories that our forebearers had told of their time when they lived in the house.

Arrangements had been made to visit the "Two Creeks Ranch" across Cummins Creek from the Simank home. Our Aunt Alma Simank Fordtran and her husband Tom had owned that farm, and Bill Fordtran and Irene Fordtran McDaniel were part of our reunion group. These two had been born and brought up on the farm, so it was homecoming for them. We saw some very beautiful horses! A horse named "Hansel" was trained at "Two Creeks" and ran in the Kentucky Derby on Saturday May 4th.

Keller's Restaurant in Fayetteville served our group a delicious barbecue lunch. Our reunion meeting was held in the banquet room at the restaurant. 40 people were in attendance at the reunion. Our next reunion is to be held in Washington State in August of 1993.

On Sunday morning several of our group attended the morning church services at St. Paul's church in Serbin. After the church services Barbara Hielscher was very kind to open the Wendish Heritage Museum for our family.. It was a privilege to visit Serbin and to see the fine museum that so many people have worked hard to provide for all of us.

Several "Simanks" made this reunion their first one - we were grateful to see the new faces and look forward to seeing more of our family at future reunions.

W. L. "Bill" Simank 1991 reunion reporter



## IN A WENDISH COUNTRY

This is the third of a series of parts from an article written by Dr. Maria-Beate v. Loeben, an instructor of English at Wurzburg university.

The last day of April was celebrated with "Burning the Witches": a life-sized doll was made of straw, clad in old rags and given an old broom (households in those days used nothing but genuine home-made brooms made of twigs); the doll was then carried to an open space outside the village (where in summer the annual fair was held), it was burnt after dark on a huge pile of logs. On Saint John's Day in June, there was another bon-fire; and when it had burnt down the young men and boys began to jump across it; he who first dared to jump was, of course, very much hailed, especially by the admiring girls. A young man who jumped the fire carrying a girl was considered engaged to her, but a girl who was unfaithful to her lover ran the risk of falling into the flames. There were, of course, corresponding tales to confirm this.

At Whitsun stems of birch-trees were placed right and left of the doors. Thanksgiving Day was the next opportunity to make merry: the Wendish farmers, famous for their baking produced waggon-loads of cakes and the harvest helps were feasted on them. (another local feature was the preference for linseed-oil which was eaten with rolls - of which about ten different shapes were produced daily -, with potatoes, and for baking pancakes, sixteen of which - really - had to be given to each male farm hand for a meal, and dipped either in sweets, or in gravy. You could also stow them away in your pockets for a snack in-between meals.) Thanksgiving Day was not only celebrated in church with the usual decoration of the altar, but also with a dance, with a banquet, and with games. A wide loft was decorated with wild-hop shoots and autumn-flowers, in which the gardens abounded; the floor was strewn with rapeseed, and everybody danced to the music of a band of home-made instruments. I never had a single dancing-lesson in my life, I was taught it on our village dancing floor, and I was considered a very good dancer in my day.

The great event of the year, however, was "Kirmst" (Dedication Feast). For a week beforehand the village of Hochkirch - with its famous church where Frederick the Great of Prussia lost a battle (which did not happen very often to him) - smelled wonderfully of cakes, and you saw horse-drawn, four-wheeled carts standing in front of Kockel's bakershop, which were loaded with flat round cakes of all sorts, a yard and a half in diameter: on a layer of straw came a layer of cake and so on, until the cart was filled right up. A proper farm household used a hundred-weight of flour on these occasions, not to mention all the other ingredients. In Kockel's shop there was a room with a huge table, where six or eight women had enough space to make their cakes ready for the oven. Friends-arranged with the baker to be given the same date: to prepare their cakes together was one of the social highlights, of the year: it was, of course, also the local gossip-exchange, and an important social center anyway, the other two being the Church and the Inn.

Whoever could afford it gave their farm-hands new shoes or some other item of clothing on "Kirmst Day", and the children got their new outfit for winter. About this time people stopped walking barefoot and resorted to hand-knitted woolen stockings and clogs. Proper shoes were only worn when you went to church or to town.

Busy as the people were in general: if anyone died there was no excuse whatsoever for staying away from the funeral. All their sense of beauty, and all their skill with garlands and flowery bouquets was lavished in honour of the dead. The barn floor of his or her homestead was cleared, and the walls decorated with greenery and flowers up to the loft, even in winter-time, and amidst all this splendour stood the open coffin, and we all went to say farewell to the deceased. Then everybody began to sing a hymn, and then some of the men took up the coffin, and singing, we wound our way in procession up to the church and the churchyard - if the deceased had been well-to-do, accompanied by the trombones, or, if poor, by the choir-children in their black cassock.

TO BE CONTINUED-----



The 31st annual Michael Schoppa family reunion will be held June 15 and 16 at Lake Kickapoo at the Boys Club of Wichita Falls facilities. Campgrounds open at 1 p.m. on Saturday and close at 6 p.m. on Sunday. Music and dancing after supper on Saturday. Sunday morning at 10 a.m. devotion service and memorial rites. Gene Rummel of Garland and Dr. Roy Schoppa of Torrance, CA. will conduct the services. The descendants of Michael Schoppa include the family lines of Mary and Wilhelm Schur, Christian Schoppa, Magdalena and Christian Schulz, Traugott Schoppa, August Schoppa, Wilhelm Bernhard (Ben) Schoppa and Theresia and Traugott Zoch. For further information contact Mary Schulz Guggisberg, 4215 Maple St., Vernon, TX. 76384 or call 817/552-5737.

\*\*\*\*\*

Anyone having information on an upcoming family reunion, please send it to the Museum at Route 2, Box 155, Giddings, TX. 78942. Also, send any write-up following the event so that it can be included in our next newsletter.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### MUSEUM MUSINGS

Riders are needed on the Ben Nevis Float on July 13, for the McDade Watermelon Parade. The line up will be at 1:00 p.m. The parade starts at 2:00 p.m. Anyone interested in participating, please contact Mr. Herbert Falke at 409/542-2744 or call the Museum at 409/366-2441.

Anyone having information of upcoming parades and events please call Mr. Falke or the Museum.

Thank you, to Walter, Laverne, and David Gersch for removing the two trees that were blown down during our recent stormy weather. It took long hours and several trailer loads to remove the debris.



**Texas Wendish  
Heritage Society**

Route 2, Box 155 / Giddings, Texas 78942-9769

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Giddings, Texas  
Permit No. 14