



Texas Wendish Heritage Society

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

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 5, JUNE, 1991

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

PHONE 409/366-2441

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ron Stone of the Eyes of Texas did an outstanding job with presenting a message of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society and St. Paul Lutheran Church of Serbin to the people who view the Eyes of Texas in and throughout the State of Texas. We are getting many favorable comments pertaining to that particular program.

As a result of this program being shown on the Eyes of Texas, the Museum has experienced an increase in visitors visiting the Museum.

Rev. Wallace Schulze, Associate Lutheran Hour Speaker, had the worship service at St. Paul Lutheran Church Serbin on its homecoming, Picnic Sunday. Rev. Schulze emphasized his visit in Russia where they have found over 500 hundred worshipping Lutheran groups who have been worshipping together for some 70 years without an ordained minister. Listening to the many hardships that these people went thru, it is amazing that there are that many worshipping groups that have kept the faith and worship together.

When hearing of how people have to live in other parts of the world, we truly can be thankful that we still have freedom of religion and can worship in public as we know it today.

The Executive Board will meet on Saturday July 13th and one of the main subjects to be covered will be placing the committees in categories. The suggested format is placing all committees under six categories. Hopefully under this new format we can activate some of the inactive committees and expand services and projects in other areas.

Patty Bones, Chairman of the Texas Folklife Festival of San Antonio, has been diagnosed as having cancer of the bone marrow. Keep Patty in your prayers.

Joan Kannig, Co-Chairman of the Festival, will take over all responsibilities.

Ken Weiser
President

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 4	Museum will be closed - Independence Day.
July 13	McDade Watermelon Parade at 2:00 p.m.
July 19	Deadline for articles for the 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.
September 13	Deadline for articles for the September newsletter.
September 22	Third annual Wendish Fest - at the Museum Complex and the St. Paul, Serbin, Picnic grounds.

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

MAY ACCESSIONS: CAREY B. NEITSCH of Taylor donated the following: "The Carl Johann Oswald Neitsch Family" which contains, family history, charts, copies of documents and photos; the 100th Anniversary booklet of St. Paul Lutheran Church, The Grove, Texas; and the 100th Anniversary booklet of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Thorndale, Texas. DORIS G. LAAKE of Paige donated the "History of St. John Lutheran Church, Paige, Texas".

GROUP TOURS by Evelyn H. Kasper, Chairman

The Fayette County Chapter of the German Club visited the Museum on Wednesday, May 22nd, and 30 pupils and adults from Immanuel Lutheran School in Giddings visited on May 29th. The Serbin Homecoming Picnic on May 26th again brought many visitors to the Museum.

ARCHIVES by Daphne D. Garrett, Archivist

During recent years many donations have come into the Museum exceptionally dirty. No - we are not asking you to "launder" your money, but the Curator, Archivist, and Photograph Archivist would appreciate a little help with the artifacts.

Remember - we are volunteers and our time is limited. Also, the Museum staff has been suffering from bronchitis due to work with dusty, moldy, dirty collections.

Three simple steps can help:

1. Brush loose dirt off the objects except photographs.
2. Check for roaches and silver fish.
3. Place everything into a clean box.

CAUTION: Do not use any cleaning fluids!

We will finish cleaning and fumigate.

Your thoughtfulness is appreciated.

VISITORS

During the month of May we have had visitors from all parts of Texas and also from Oregon, Florida, Washington, Germany, Oklahoma, Illinois, Minnesota, and Colorado.

DOCENTS

Acting as docents during the month of May were: Jack and Marian Wiederhold, Ken Weiser, Alvin and Esther Schmidt, Viola Spacek, Georgie Boyce, Vivian Taylor, E. C. Knippa, Jr., Herbert and LaVerne Jalke, Erna Mersiovsky, Reinhold and Irene Teinert, Barbara Hielscher, and Victor and Dorothy Zoch.

MEMBERSHIP

New Members/Previous Members-Renewed

Thekla Grosa, Spreewitz, Germany	Silke Thiele, Bautzen, Germany
Maria-Beata v. Loeben, Wurzburg, Germany	Pastor Arno Bohm, Weigersdorf, Germany
Erhard Schillack, Weisswasser, Germany	Ekkehard Kockel, Hochkirch, Germany
Adelheid Urban, Bautzen, Germany	Pastor Manfred Hornich, Spreewitz, Germany
F. E. (Gene) Proff, Nederland, TX.	Dr. Paul Saettler, Bothell, WA.
Barbara Schneider, San Antonio, TX.	Charlene Foerster, Huntsville, TX
Harold Foerster, Huntsville, TX.	Bonnie Murr, McGregor, TX.
Ray Spitzenberger, E. Bernard, TX.	

PATRON

Barbara Schneider, San Antonio, TX.	Elinor Vlasak, Rosebud, TX.
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MEMORIALS

In Memory of	Donor	Amount
Mrs. Herbert (Ida) Kriegel	M/M Reinhold Teinert	

A \$400.00 donation was received from Doris B. Reagan.

A \$70.00 donation from Walter, Laverne, and David Gersch. Insurance on the Museum and grounds allowed the money for the removal of two trees blown down during the recent bad weather in the area. The Gerschs' donated the money to the Museum.

MATCHING GIFTS

The following matching gifts were received:

\$125.00 from the Exxon Corporation.

\$27.85 from Gerland's Food Fair Stores.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINAR

May 3rd, Daphne Garrett, Archivist, and Georgie Boyce, Librarian/Assistant Archivist, attended a continuing education seminar on "Holdings Maintenance for Archives and Special Collections" co-sponsored by The Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and the University of Texas at Austin. Speaker for the seminar was Karen Garlick the Senior Conservator in the document conservation branch of the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D. C.

IN A WENDISH COUNTRY

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

With the beginning of autumn, people began to stack their firewood in high piles in the farm yards; houses with less solid walls were literally built-in with a coat of logs, the stable with a coat of dry leaves; while the former were used to keep the fires going, the latter served as litter for the animals. With the coming of spring, both house and stable had shed their winter coats.

Within, during winter-time, activities of various kinds called for gatherings when evening fell. Among those activities no longer practised was "driving feathers" (separating the down from the quill). The Wends are great lovers not only of flowers, but also of animals, and they were particularly skilled in the breeding of goats and geese. Every farm possessed a numerous herd of geese, which fed all summer long on the meadows behind the farm, and with the approaching evening the musical shouts of "Beela, Beela, Beela" (Bila = white = goose) kept echoing through the village. Now, in winter, the feathers of these birds were prepared for feather beds.

The living rooms of the farm houses were large, low-ceilinged, wood-panelled places, always situated in a corner of the house with two sides of two or three little windows each. The walls at ground-floor level being very thick (they were usually built from solid granite boulders), the windows, between their inner and outer wings (the latter opening to the outside) left ample space for voluminous flower pots which - as far as I recall were always in full blossom, even in winter. The corner opposite the windows was occupied by a huge tiled stove with a bench round it, and with two openings with brass doors, one above the other. They were both used for cooking: the one immediately above the fire to get the meals done, the one on top to keep them warm. A built-in urn with a tap provided warm water all day long. On top of the stove there was a drying rack for clothes. With this simple kind of central heating going all the time, the houses had to be aired in summer mornings while the air was still cool. During day-time the thick walls kept the heat out, but with the necessity of keeping a fire going practically all day, these rooms were always fairly warm. In winter time they were cozy places to sit. Very often a bench ran along the walls, with a huge square table in the corner between the windows, where most of the house work was done. Children very often did their home work kneeling on the bench, using the wide window-sill for a desk. There was always a lot of cats about, one of the favourite animals of the Wends, figuring in many a Wendish nursery rhyme.

With Christmas approaching, new activities began. Under the influence of the Moravian Brothers, who had their main settlement Herrnhut in the immediate neighborhood, the Moravian Christmas Star appeared in every house with the first day of Advent season. This star is built on the basis of a Tetrahedron (so we were taught at school), and it has sixteen quadrangular and eight triangular points, of a length of over a yard each. In my childhood the farm people made this complicated affair themselves; nowadays you can buy it in the shops. It has become very popular, the illumination being no longer a problem (which it was in pre-electricity days). After getting the great stars ready for Advent time, decoration for the Christmas tree had to be put in order. Stars made of straw, and of white, folded, finely-cut paper, threaded on a piece of cotton, together with dark-red apples, were the traditional decoration. About a week before Christmas Day, another great baking feast started, again with group-meeting at the baker's huge table, and carts carrying home the tasty load moved in a halo of sweet and tempting smells. The season's cake has achieved world-wide fame under the name of "Dresdner Stollen". What made the Wends such masters in all kinds of baking is, most likely, the neighbourhood and close relationship to the people of Bohemia.

Christmas among the Wends was - unlike in the rest of Germany - not celebrated on the eve of the 24th of December, but on the morning of the 25th. On Christmas Eve, however, everybody went to church, carrying with them a candle which we planted on the bench in front of us. The service with the old songs went on under the light of literally hundreds of candles. This pretty and pertinent custom I have not found anywhere else.

In remembrance of the old date of Christmas, which is now the 6th of January, the twelve

days between were spent as holidays: no work was done on the farms but what was absolutely necessary; some people literally lived on cakes in these days. From Christmas Night onwards, the fruit trees carried a stone on the lowest fork of their branches, or sometimes a bundle of straw; all the animals got fresh litter and some special treat with their feed. After New Year, there was usually snow and the sledges came out, and at the end of January we were already looking forward to spring.

TO BE CONTINUED.,.....

In the October-December 1990 issue, Charles Wukasch had a translation of a poem by Herta Wiśniewska, the first Wendish woman author. The following poem was also translated by Charles. The poem "Časnosć" ("Temporality"), which appeared in 1859, shows Herta's conviction that happiness cannot be fully achieved on earth, but only in Heaven.

Časnosć

Je zašlo stare lěto,
preč jeho časy su,
nam dało swoje myto,
nam dało swoju mzdu.

Ach, radosć nima byća
na zemi hrěšnej tu,
so jeje hwěžki swěća
we njebju, krasne su.

Haj, ćežke zemske brěmjo
jich wjele potuli,
pak syjachu to symjo
we wjetšej khroblosći.

A hlaj, jim zeskhadžachu
te kwětki najrjeńše,
pak kwětki wotewzachu
te wětry hōwrjace.

Temporality

Another year has passed,
And so its days are gone.
It's given us its worth;
It's given us our due.

And joy does not exist
On earth with all its sins.
But joy sends forth its stars.
Their beauty shines in Heaven.

The cares of earth are hard.
Their burden makes us weak,
For they have sown their seed,
And bitter is their taste.

And look - the flowers bloom!
How beautiful they are!
But then the thunderous winds
Destroy the lovely view.

Wšo zemske njewobsteji,
je smjertne, zachodne;
štož pak ma njejbo w sebi,
tón khroble dale dže.

Hač runje jeho noha
so často zabluđži,
dha tola prawa droha
so jemu njezhubi.

Wšak dobry pastyř wodži
joh' prawy, krasny puć;
štož na njeho so zložži,
tón da so k temu hnuć,

štož k Bohu Wótcej wodži,
kiž dđerži slubjenja.
Wón dobre do nas plodži,
nam nihdy nječeka.

A smy my dokonjeli
we prawdži zemski běh,
smy horka překrasnjeni
we drasći, jako sněh.

Tam měra dostanjemy
we jeho krasnosći,
haj z nim wšo přewinjemy
we jeho kralestwi.

And nothing earthly lasts.
It sickens and then dies.
But who has Heaven within,
He boldly will prevail.

But if his strength gives out,
And stumbling he then falls,
Then he will lose the path -
The path of right and truth.

But the good Shephard shows
To us the heavenly path.
And who submits Him
Will live in His embrace.

And search for God the Father.
His promise is our gain.
He brings to us great joy,
And will forsake us never.

And when our worldly course
Is finished and we die,
His glory shines on us -
All white, like heavenly snow.

And in our home above,
His beauty gives us peace.
And in His kingdom there,
The victory is now ours.

KASPER REUNION

About 100 descendants of the Matthis and Christianna Zimmermann Kasper family met at Holy Cross Picnic Grounds on Sunday, May 5th, for their annual reunion.

The meeting was opened with a devotional service led by the Rev. Robert Boyce. It being Pastor Boyce's 50th birthday, the group then sang Happy Birthday to him and presented him with a birthday cake made and decorated by Lana Swearingen.

Harold Kasper, Anton Lehmann and Tommy Swearingen cooked the sausage and side dishes and desserts were brought by family members. Ruth Schumann, Alice Meinke and Mabel Kasper served on the Kitchen Committee.

After the meal, President Paul Lehmann called the meeting to order. Betsy Kasper served as Vice-President and Lana Swearingen served as Secretary-Treasurer. New officers elected at the meeting are Lana Swearingen, President, Evelyn N. Kasper, Vice-President, and Norma Powell, Secretary-Treasurer. Harold Kasper will be in charge of the meat for next year's reunion, which will again be held at the Warda Picnic Grounds the first Sunday in May.

Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Voss of La Grange and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kasper of Warda announced the donation of a PA system for use at the Activity Center of Warda Picnic Grounds.

Joyce Weishuhn won the door prize - the plant which was placed in church in memory of the Kasper family members, and Sea Kasper won the children's prize. Hillary McCoy, six months old, of Pflugerville, was recognized as the youngest member present; Robert Pietsch, 84, of Warda, was the oldest member present; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Lehmann of La Grange, won the longest married category with 52 years, and Nelda Bell Neely and Ken Neely of Saudi Arabia, traveled the farthest.

OUR BRIGHT YOUNG WENDS!

Valedictorian for the 1991 Senior class at Giddings High School was Nathan Wiederhold. Nathan received several scholarships to public Colleges, and Universities for the highest ranking high school graduate in the Senior Class. He also received a scholarship from AAL, and the Texas Interscholastic League Foundation scholarship, The Houston Endowment. Nathan is the son of Jack and Marian Wiederhold, and the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Kasper.

Bronwyn Jane Griffith, daughter of Vivian and Frank Taylor, graduated from Texas A & M University on May 10. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Her minor was math.

Susie Medack, who attended Immanuel Lutheran School in Giddings, was named Athlete of the Year. Susie is the daughter of Roy and Ruth Medack, and the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Lehmann all of Giddings.



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