



# Texas Wendish Heritage Society and Museum - Serbin, Texas

ROUTE 2, BOX 155, GIDDINGS, TEXAS 78942-9769

(409) 366-2441

OPEN SUNDAY THRU FRIDAY 1:00 TO 5:00 P.M. & SATURDAYS BETWEEN  
EASTER & LABOR DAY 1:00 TO 5:00 P.M. CLOSED HOLIDAYS

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VIII

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AUGUST, 1995

SEVENTH ANNUAL

WENDISH FEST

SEPTEMBER 24th!

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Keep this date in mind when you are marking your calendars because we will need everyone's help at the Wendish Fest again. We are planning a full day with special services at St. Paul Lutheran Church with the Rev. Otto Brillinger as speaker. Pastor Brillinger is a retired, Volunteer Missionary of Hamilton, Texas. He also served as an instructor for a three week Seminar in Kazakhstan (formerly part of the Soviet Union). Pastor Brillinger was a LCMS parish pastor for 30 years and served congregations in Indiana, Michigan, Ontario, and at Westfield, Lincoln and Copperas Cove, Texas. He and His wife Millie feel it is a great privilege to work in this global ministry.

We are planning a special recognition of WWII Veterans on the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, under the direction of Kovanda's Czech Band, who will again be furnishing top notch entertainment. We urge all veterans to attend.

Beverly Gotzky of Australia will share information on the Australian Wends with us and is planning to bring her authentic Wendish costume from the Weigersdorf and Klitten area.

In addition to attractions we have had in the past, we plan to have an old fashion molasses mill on display. The stone ground corn meal was quite a hit last year and we plan to have it again this year.

Another first for the Wendish Fest is the State of Texas Noodle Cook-off (sponsored by the First National Bank of Giddings, Texas). Please see enclosed brochure for rules and further information. This was part of the Giddings Geburstag celebration in the past. We will again have the coffee cake bake-off and this year the winning entries will be sold by silent auction at the Craft Booth. Rules for the bake-off appear elsewhere in the newsletter. These are just a few of the special features this year.

If you have not helped in the past and would like to get in on the fun, please sign the form below and return it to the Museum immediately. Leroy Steglich does an outstanding job ordering all the food, but it takes a lot of people to cook and serve it, as well as working in the other areas.

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I WOULD LIKE TO WORK AT THE WENDISH FEST ON SEPTEMBER 24th! (STATE  
IN WHAT CAPACITY AND SIGN:

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- September 2** Last Saturday Museum will be open until Spring of 1996
- September 8-10** German Texan Heritage Society annual meeting at the Victoria Holiday Inn in Victoria, Texas
- September 24** Seventh Annual Wendish Fest at the Museum Complex and the St. Paul, Serbin picnic grounds
- October 16** Deadline for articles for the October newsletter
- October 17** Walk-In coffee/bake sale, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., at Eleanor's cottage behind the Fletcher Home in Giddings, Texas
- November 19** General membership meeting at the Museum at 2:00 p.m. with election of officers. Anyone wishing to be nominated, or to nominate someone, please notify the Museum office at 409/366-2441. No name may be presented without written consent of the candidate

## BAKE SALE

The bake sale held June 23 in front of La Grange State bank cleared approximately \$300. This includes the sale of 40 pounds of noodles.

## DOCENTS

Acting as docents during the month of July were: Herbert and Laverne Falke, Rev. and Georgie Boyce, Della Mullens, Arnold and Evelyn Kasper, Leroy and Elinor Steglich, Ludwig and Edna Groeschel, Laverne and Walter Gersch, John and Anna Schmidt, Bea Tschatschula, Henry and Emily Zoch, Herbert and Hattie Schautschick, Lorine Domel, Ruth Lindner, Barbara Hielscher, and George Boerger.

## VISITORS

During July we had visitors from all parts of Texas and the following: Arizona, Louisiana, Maryland, Washington, Korea, Germany, Ohio, California, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Michigan, South Carolina, Australia, and Nebraska.

## MEMORIAL

In Memory of:	Donor	Amount
Kilian W. Fehr	Gertrude Birkman	\$25.00
Reinhold A. Hempel & Frieda Mathias Hempel	Lynette (Hempel) Pittsford & W. H. Pittsford, Jr.	\$25.00

A donation of \$100.00, to the endowment fund, was received from the Paul & Pauline (Lehmann) Teinert family reunion.

A \$15.00 donation for the library was received from Mr. and Mrs. Howard Winters.

A \$50.00 donation for the library was received from Mr. Eugene Hemmann.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **New Members**

Donald W. Boriack, Houston, TX      Mrs. Edwin R. Gruetzner, Huffman, TX  
Calvin Hahn, Cedar Creek, TX      John Knippa, Ph.D., Long Beach, CA  
Ewald Hempel, La Grange/Warda, TX

### **Patron Members**

John Knippa, Ph.D., Long Beach, Ca

### **Life Members**

Ewald Hempel, La Grange/Warda, TX

### **TOURS**

by Evelyn N. Kasper, Co-Ordinator

On May 1st a group of 27 students and teachers from St. Paul Lutheran school in Austin toured the Museum and Church.

On May 3rd Lakeside Country Club Woman's Group of 23 from Houston enjoyed a luncheon and tour of the Museum and Church.

20 members of Linwood Acres Garden Club from Rockdale had coffee cake and coffee on May 10th followed by a luncheon. After the luncheon the Club had their meeting with installation of officers, then toured the Museum and church.

On May 16th a luncheon was served to 15 people from Waco followed by a tour.

On May 29th Myra McIlvaine brought 42 people from Cedar Park for a luncheon and tour.

On June 6th a group of 25 people with the Austin County E. H. Club, Cultural Arts Group, toured the Museum and Church.

On June 10th Janice Droemer made arrangements for the Hulda and Martin Wagner Family Reunion group to tour the Museum and Church.

On June 17th Clarence Mutcher brought a group of 20 Mutcher family members from Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, and Texas to tour the Museum and Church.

## **WENDISH FEST COFFEE CAKE BAKE-OFF RULES**

There is no entry fee. A 5 inch square is used for judging and the remainder will be sold at the silent auction. Entries have to be in the sweets stand on the picnic grounds by 10:30. There are 3 divisions. Kaese Kuchen and Streusel Kuchen need to be at least 10 X 13 (cookie sheet size). The "special" division has to be a full recipe and yeast raised. It can be baked in angel food or bundt cake pans and can include cinnamon rolls, or fruit or nut toppings.

First, second, and third place trophies will be awarded in each division and all other entries will receive a participant ribbon.

## ST. PAUL PLAYS HOST TO GERMAN VISITORS

Thirty-five visitors from Klitten, Germany arrived in Texas on July 6 and were hosted by their daughter church, St. Paul of Serbin. Twenty-four of these visitors were part of the brass choir of St. John Lutheran Church of Klitten. They led the St. Paul congregation in two worship services, on July 9 and again on July 16. Following the July 9 service, the group gave a folk concert under the shade trees in front of the school. Following the July 16 service the brass choir led a memorial service at the grave of their first pastor and the first pastor of St. Paul-Serbin, Rev. John Kilian.

St. John Lutheran Church of Klitten was organized in 1843 by a group of Lutheran Christians who did not want to become part of the state protestant church in Germany. They wanted to continue their Lutheran beliefs. By 1854 the Wendish immigration to Texas had begun in order to allow those who chose to leave to escape religious and economic persecution.

The brass choir was the first large group from this congregation to visit Texas since the lifting of the Iron Curtain. Travel to a western country had been forbidden to any East German citizen.

Upon their arrival in Serbin, the Wendish Heritage Society treated the group to a supper of delicious cold cuts, chicken salad, ham salad, koch kaese, and Blue Bell ice cream with peaches. The visitors then left the Museum to stay with local Lutheran families in Serbin, Lincoln, and Warda.

The group, under the leadership of Gottfried Junker, gave concerts in San Antonio, Giddings, Austin, and Houston during their 14 day stay in Texas. They were hosted by Crown of Life in San Antonio, Immanuel in Giddings, Redeemer in Austin, and Trinity-Klein in Houston. Their pastor, Rev. Siegfried Matzke gave short devotions in the German language between the musical numbers. The group was extremely well received everywhere they went. They left Texas with tears in their eyes and a very warm spot in their heart for their new Texas friends.

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Thank you to Mrs. Linda Boerger for donating 12 half pints of jelly, 7 blackberry and 5 plum, to be sold in the gift shop.

Thank you to Anna Schmidt and Bessie Mertink for helping to get the handicraft items and books priced and packed for the Folklife Festival.

Thank you to John Schmidt for helping Ron and David Knippa load items needed at the Folklife Festival.  
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# LILLIE MOERBE CALDWELL LIBRARY

by Georgie B. Boyce



**NEW ARRIVAL!! NEW ARRIVAL!!** Our library has been honored to receive one of the earliest autographed copies of: **K BRJOHAM NADŽIJ (TO THE SHORES OF HOPE)** written by Trudia Malinkowa, one in the same, Gertrud Mahling, of Bautzen, Germany.

Many of you will recall Gertrud's visit to Texas in November of 1992, when she, representing the Sorbisches Institut e. V. of Bautzen, came to do research concerning the Wends who had immigrated to Texas. She interviewed many people in our area, with special interest in those who still spoke the Wendish language. She spent considerable time in our library, archives and museum. Hosted by Society members, she also visited other towns and cities in Central Texas where families of Wendish heritage reside.

Upon Gertrud's return to Germany, she selected her best slides from the 600 slides she had made in Texas and with audio-tape recordings, gave numerous presentations to various audiences in the "Old Country". Many of her articles were published in the following: **ROZHLAD** (cultural magazine), **POMHAJ BOH** (newspaper of the Lutheran Wends), **PŁOMJO** (magazine for children), and a five-part series in the Upper Lusatian Newspaper entitled "Serbin, Lee County, Texas".

At the time of Gertrud's visit she was a resident of the village of Groditz, where her husband was serving as Pastor of the village Lutheran church. She was working as a "free Sorbian publicist", in addition to her regular duties and wife and mother. As those of you who had the pleasure of meeting her will remember, she is an amazing young woman, fluent in both German and Wendish languages, as well as demonstrating a good command of the English language (which she had learned in school many years previous).

For most of us, the "bad-news" is that this new book is entirely in the Sorbisch-Wendish language, which leaves us looking at the pictures (many of which came from our own collection in our museum archives and other individuals), and speculating about what is being said. The proper nouns, such as, names and places, are recognizable. The book deals with, not only the Wends who immigrated to Texas, but also those who went to Australia, South America, South Africa, Canada and other parts of the United States.

Apparently, the people in the "Old Country" are truly interested in how things have turned out for those countrymen, and relatives, who chose to seek new frontiers, and to read and hear of the struggles and successes that ensued. As those of us who were privileged to attend the "Days of the Sorbisch Culture Festival" in 1994, are aware, these folks are very proud of their wandering kinsmen. They are especially pleased that we have made the effort to preserve and cherish this ethnic culture.

Gertrud and her family are now residing in Bautzen, where her husband is Pastor of the Evangelisch-Lutheran Church. Her tenure with the Institut was complete in June 1995, with the publication of this book. We will look forward to hearing of her future endeavors.

## BETHANY (BETHANIA) LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GREENS CREEK

Located in the Southeast corner of Lee County; approximately 6 miles Northeast of Warda, would have celebrated her 100th Anniversary on May 25, 1995. This congregation served that area from it's founding on May 25, 1895, until it closed June 30, 1963. At this year's Serbin Picnic, we had a display of various photographs and memorabilia from Bethany which seemed to stir a lot of memories for visitors to the Museum. (Did you know that in the mid-1940's Bethany had 19 members in the Walter League?).

Our sincere thanks to the following for providing the photos and other artifacts for the display: Eugene E. Hemmann of St. Charles, Illinois; Mrs. Leroy (Violet Wolf) Schulz of Giddings; Mrs. Lena Wagner of Giddings; Mrs. Albert (Esther) Buscha of Greens Creek; Allan Wolf of Greens Creek and Mrs. Edward (Evelyn Wolf) Steglich of Greens Creek.

This is just another of the noteworthy milestones that we feel duty bound to bring to everyone's attention. For those of you with family connections to Bethany, there is a copy of the Church Records in our library.

In future months, you may also be hearing of efforts to restore the first cemetery location at Bethany.

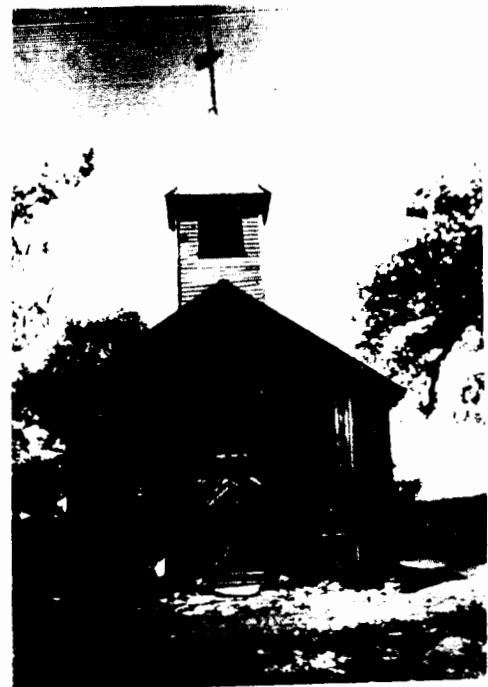


Photo taken in April, 1934 by Candidate Pastor Louis Otto Hemmann  
Photo courtesy of Eugene E. Hemmann



WALTHER LEAGUE 1940'S

L to R - Back: Elsie Seeman, Violet Wolf, Lillian Wagner, Hildegard Buscha, Bernice Lorenz, Leona Lorenz, Evelyn Wolf, Helen Moerbe & Ruby Fischer. Front: Eddie Wolf, Delbert Ahlhorn, Richard Wolf, Anton Lorenz, Eddie Lehmann, Alfred Lorenz, Gus Moerbe, Erwin Lorenz & Clifford Noack.  
Photo courtesy of Violet Schulz & Evelyn Steglich



WAGNER-FISCHER BAND  
Photo courtesy of Mrs. Lena Wagner



OX DRAWN WAGON WITH SCHOOL CHILDREN  
Photo courtesy of Lena Wagner & Evelyn Steglich

TELEPHONE (409) 830-9199

## DEADLINE SEP 15, 1995

] The address shown below is correct.

TELEPHONE (409) 830-9199

Biographical Notes: (You may attach newspaper clippings, copies of pages from books or a separate typed sheet if you prefer, but please tell us something about your family members for the sake of posterity.)

[illegible]

[ ] PLEASE SEND ME FAMILY GROUP SHEETS FOR MY OWN FAMILY, I WILL FILL IN THE BLANKS, MAKE CORRECTIONS AND RETURN TO YOU.

## HISTORY OF VOLKSBLATT NEARING COMPLETION

Daphne Garrett has nearly completed her 13 year project on the history of the *Giddings Deutsches Volksblatt*. If anyone has a Church program or personal items such as announcements, stationery, or business cards that were printed by the *Volksblatt* (1899-1949), or copies of the newspaper, she would very much like to study the item. The item could be printed in German, Wendish or English. Please contact her at P.O. Box 35, Warda, Tel: 409-242-3822, or at the Museum.

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## INFORMATION NEEDED FOR ARCHIVES

The Archivist, Daphne Garrett, would like to contact any descendant of Johann Schonig whose inscription and the date 1829 is hand written inside the cover of a Wendish Bible. More information is needed on the history of the Bible being brought to Texas.

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