
TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Newsletter

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From Wendish to German to English

A Journey in to Wendish Culture, History and Language

We are happy to announce a new exhibit in the Texas Wendish Heritage Museum! It is primarily an audio exhibit, utilizing a CD which gives an overview of our ancestors' transition from speaking Wendish to German and finally to English, and includes insights into the Wendish culture and history.

Music was an important part of the Wendish culture and the Chór Meja of Radibor, Germany – featured performers at the 2002 Wendish Fest – is featured prominently. The choir was recorded singing two hymns written by Jan Kilian as well as some folk songs. Other speakers or singers in Wendish are Rev. Jan Mahling, Rev. Elmer Hohle and his granddaughter, Audrey Woodson. You can also hear Jack Wiederhold playing hymns in both the traditional German and Wendish styles on the 1905 pipe organ at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin.

The German language is spoken by Rev. Paul Hartfield. A hymn sung and recorded during the German worship service at St. Paul's Church on Wendish Fest Sunday 2002 is also included. The CD, narrated by Rev. Karl Gronberg, also includes historical accounts or essays recorded by George Nielsen, Gertrud Mahling of Bautzen, Germany, David Zersen, Georgie Boyce, and Rev. Elmer Hohle.

This exhibit would not have been possible without generous donations from Marvin Schwausch, Vivian Taylor, Ralph Weiser and the TWHS. In order to create a high quality CD, Tim Ristow of Seventy Times Seven Media was hired to produce the CD. Tim made a very reasonable bid to develop, record, and edit the CD, and then graciously compromised further to meet our cost limit. This was a very involved project and required many hours of development, recording, and editing as well as the use of specialized equipment. We cannot thank Tim enough for sharing his expertise through his incredible efforts.

The CD is 71 minutes long and includes interesting stories as well as the Wendish and German speaking and singing. The CD insert includes explanations and written Wendish and German with English translations.

If you are not able to visit the museum to hear the entire CD, they are available through the gift shop or by mail at \$12.00 each or \$10.00 each if you purchase 5 or more. Shipping and postage is \$3.50 for the first CD and \$1.00 for each additional CD for shipping within the U.S.

George Boerger
Trilingual Language Display Exhibit Chairman

Within the Fold.....

In Memoriam

Rev. Reinhard Wuensche, born October 13, 1913, passed away on Thursday, March 20, 2003 in Huntsville, Texas following a long illness.

He was born near Thorndale, Texas to John A. and Julia Theiss Wuensche. He was baptized in 1913 at Thorndale, Texas and was confirmed June 5, 1927 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Bishop, Texas. He earned degrees from Concordia Academy in Austin, Texas in 1931, St. John's College in Winfield, Kansas in 1933, and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri in 1937. He also held a graduate degree in History from Texas A&I in Kingsville, Texas. He was ordained into ministry on July 4, 1943 at Kingsbury, Texas, where he served his first pastorate. Rev. Wuensche also served congregations in Three Rivers, Corpus Christi, Premont, Clifton, Elgin, Eola, and San Angelo, Texas. He married Margaret Elizabeth Nordmeyer in McAllen, Texas on August 20, 1939.

Rev. Wuensche is survived by his wife, two sons, Fred Wuensche and wife Judy of Houston and Rev. R.H. Wuensche, Jr. and wife Patsy of Huntsville, Texas, and one daughter, Judi Schroeder and husband Edgar of San Antonio, Texas. He is also survived by seven grandchildren, John, Steven, David and Karen Wuensche, Christine Schroeder, Tessa O'Sullivan, and Trina Millsap, and by five great-grandchildren.

Pastor Wuensche was a direct descendent of pioneering Wendish families who emigrated to Texas on the Ben Nevis in 1854. He had a passion for researching and documenting the history of Texas Wends. His interest in Texas history also led him to serve as Archivist for the Texas District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod for many years. He was also a member of the Concordia Historical Institute. He was a member of TWHs since at least 1977, the earliest year for which we have membership records.

Funeral services were held on March 22, 2003 at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas and

burial was at McDade Cemetery in McDade, Texas.

Other TWHs members who have passed away recently are:

Annie K. Bartholic, Austin, TX, member since 1980, passed away January 20, 2003.

Lorine Domaschk, Giddings, TX, member since 1988, passed away September 21, 2002.

Bernice Miller, Fayetteville, TX, member since 1996, passed away October 22, 2002.

Lloyd Schuhmann, Giddings, TX, member since 1995, passed away October 30, 2002.

Edwin Scharath, Spicewood, TX, member since 2001, passed away on January 29, 2003.

President's Message

Eunice Urban Dunk

HAPPY SPRING! What a beautiful display of God's handiwork as we enjoy the countless wild flowers throughout the countryside! Many visitors from near and far have been impressed with the scenery on the way to our museum. It gives them another reason to enjoy the visit. I was thrilled to host four couples visiting during one afternoon from Texas, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Be sure to stop in whenever you are in our area, and remind your friends, family, and neighbors to do the same.

Things are buzzing at our museum and we appreciate everyone's assistance with keeping things going! Thanks to the donors of time and goodies for the Walk-In Coffee, to the noodle ladies and the tour cooks, guides, and other helpers for their countless volunteer hours, and to the dedicated volunteer who comes out to work in our Wendish flower garden. We could not make it without everyone's help.

Welcome members – renewing, new, returning – **you are making a difference!** You are a very important part of our Society and we hope that you can visit us soon – either in person or on the internet. Our web site is found under

Wendish/Concordia University, Austin, Texas, and we are one of the featured sites on TexasEscapes.com (look under towns/Serbin). Occasionally we are mentioned in a newspaper or magazine article so stay on the lookout! Above all, tell your family and friends about us – you never know when you will help another Wend discover his/her roots!

Ron Knippa and his group of San Antonio-area volunteers are making plans for the Wendish booth at the Folklife Festival in San Antonio in June. Please plan to visit Serbin on your way to San Antonio and, if you are interested in helping in any way, please call Ron at (210) 496-3105. The TWHS was formed by a small group of ladies who wanted to represent the Wendish culture at the San Antonio Festival (when it was first organized in the early 1970's) and we appreciate the hard work Ron and his group put into maintaining the tradition.

Plans for Wendish Fest 2003 are beginning to take shape and soon we will be preparing the volunteer list. If you have worked before, we hope that you will do so again. If you have not and would be willing to help, please let us know and we will be honored to include you. We need more workers each year to take care of the growing number of visitors. Rev. Harold W. Schroeter will be the featured speaker at the English and German Worship Services at St. Paul's Lutheran Church that morning. A German dance group and orchestra – Trachtentanzgruppe Zeissig and Blasorchester Konigswartha – will perform in the afternoon. Kornelia Thor will be back for her fourth visit to Wendish Fest to demonstrate the art of decorating those fabulous Wendish Easter eggs.

Do you want to publicize your family reunion in our newsletter? The deadlines for the last two issues for 2003 are July 14 and October 13. We will help you spread the word and, in some cases, we may reach some people who do not normally receive an invitation because they have never placed their name on your mailing list.

Come See Us!

Special Announcement!!!

Dr. George Nielsen has deposited two compact disks, one in German and one in English, containing 198 items, with the Texas Wendish Heritage Museum. Most of the entries are transcriptions and translations of Johann Kilian's letters. Other duplicate disks have been presented to Concordia University in Austin and Concordia Historical Institute in St. Louis, Missouri. In the future, copies will also be sent to the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, Germany and the Lutheran Archives in North Adelaide, Australia. The transcriptions and translations were made by Bill Biar, Mrs. Gertrud Mahling, Sigmund Musiat, William Nielsen, and George Nielsen. These materials are open for everyone and are intended to assist in the study of the Wends. Thank you George!

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 11	Museum CLOSED for Mother's Day
May 11	Loebau Picnic, Christ Lutheran Church, Loebau
May 18	General Membership Meeting, 2:00 p.m., Museum complex
May 18	Lincoln Picnic, Lincoln Community Hall
May 25	Serbin Picnic, St. Paul picnic grounds, Serbin
June 5-8	Folklife Festival, San Antonio
June 15	Museum CLOSED for Father's Day
June 15	Winchester Picnic, St. Michael's Park, Winchester
July 4	Museum CLOSED for Independence Day
July 14	Deadline for articles for the April newsletter

State of Texas Noodle Cook-Off to be held at the Lee County Fair

The 11th annual State of Texas Noodle Cook-Off will be held at Fireman's Park, west of Giddings, on May 17, 2003, at 2:00 p.m. Set-up will be from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., with noodle judging from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Evelyn Buchhorn of Austin, a TWHS member who has demonstrated the art of making hand-cut homemade noodles for many years at the Wendish Fest, will provide a demonstration from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. The awards ceremony will be at 3:00 p.m. after which the public will have an opportunity to taste the various entries.

The contest is open, without an entry fee, to any individual or team that makes homemade noodles. Two fair passes will be provided to all entrants pre-registered by May 13, 2003. Late registration will be accepted Saturday, May 17, 2003, from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Types of egg noodles eligible for judging are hand-cut homemade, machine-cut homemade, and wide or thin homemade.

Participants should bring a minimum of eight cups cooked noodles in broth for judging and public tasting. Covered tables and electrical outlets will be provided.

For additional information and entry forms, please call The First National Bank of Giddings, at 1-800-485-3787. Bob Mutschink, Janet Meuth or Mary Gutierrez will be happy to answer your questions.

General Membership Meeting

May 18, 2003, 2:00 PM

The next general membership meeting of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society will be held on Sunday, May 18, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. in the Peter Building at the Museum complex. Following a brief business meeting, George Boerger will present a program on Wendish culture and the decline of the Wendish language, as illustrated with our new museum exhibit, *From Wendish to German to English*. George oversaw the

development of the new CD and exhibit for our museum.

Folklife Festival to be held June 5 – 8 at the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio

This year's Folklife Festival is scheduled for June 5 – 8. Ron Knippa is busy scheduling volunteers and especially needs people who can demonstrate noodle-making and Wendish Easter egg decorating, and musical performers for the small stage in the booth area. If you would like to help, please call the Museum at 979-366-2441 or Ron at 210-496-3105.

Internet Surfing Opportunities!

If you would like to know more about Chór Meja, the group that performed at last year's Wendish Fest, be sure to visit their website at www.meja.de. The site can be viewed in Sorbische, German and English, and you can listen to a selection of their folk songs.

We received an announcement from the Sorbian Cultural Information about their new website at <http://www.sorben.com/ski/>. The site is available in 5 languages, including English, and is quite interesting.

TWHS Want Ads

If you have been searching for a great deal on a great lawnmower, we are here to help you! We are offering for sale a fine quality, gently used, low mileage Sears Craftsman lawnmower with grass catcher, purchased in 1999, at a price too good to pass up - \$99.00. If you are interested, please contact the Museum at 979-366-2441.



We Need Your Help!

Several projects have been proposed by the TWHS Board to improve the museum and to further preserve and tell the story of the Wends. The projects far exceed our normal volume of activity; however, over the last two years we have been building momentum, and opportunities have arisen to potentially accomplish even more. The projects will of course require extra work and additional funding. We have made significant progress in recruiting volunteer workers, but we need help in paying for these projects and are looking for contributions. The projects proposed are as follows:

- Renovate and repair the St. Paul Building and Peter Building in the museum complex. The St. Paul Building, which housed St. Paul Lutheran School from 1915 to 1979, served as our second exhibit building and now houses the home life and country store exhibits. The building is in need of wall insulation, interior paint, and new lighting. The current florescent lights are detrimental to delicate exhibits. The Peter Building, which has a leaky roof, needs a new roof and replacement ceiling tiles. We have a good chance of obtaining some small grants from various sources, but only if we contribute 50 percent, or \$7,500, of the \$15,000 cost.

- Dudelsack exhibit. The Chór Meja donated a dudelsack (Wendish bagpipe) to the museum, which we will exhibit and maybe one day actually play on occasion. We want to purchase a plexiglass case to display the dudelsack with a costumed manikin. The cost of this exhibit is approximately \$1,500 – \$2,000.

- Computerized archives. Our archives consist of a wide variety of artifacts, but we lack the ability to do a quick search or listing of the items for interested parties. Over the years, Daphne Garrett, our late archivist, painstakingly classified all the donations, and now it is time to take these records to the next level and to put them on computer in a database so the records can be accessible (with proper supervision). Development of the database and the actual data entry will be done by volunteers. What we need is a heavy-duty

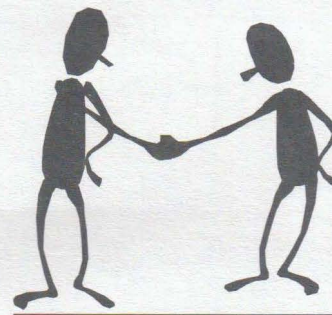
computer with dual hard drives, scanner, and automatic backup capability. This project will cost \$2,549.

- Exhibit commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Wends' immigration to Texas. Rachel Hildebrandt, a Wendish descendant who holds a master's degree in historical preservation from the University of Georgia, is developing a proposal for such an exhibit. The exhibit will be designed to be mobil. She plans to apply for grants to cover the cost of the exhibit, but it is possible the TWHS will need to provide some seed money.

- Funding of *Dear Opa...A Wendish Adventure*, a children's book written by Tina Symm. The story is a fictional account of a young boy's journey from the Lausitz to Texas in 1854, as seen through letters written to his grandfather. This is a wonderful book which fills a niche we are missing. However, by its nature, the audience will be small and the number of books to be printed is too small for an efficient run, which will increase the cost of the book. If we could raise \$300 to help with the printing cost, this project would be possible.

- Statue of Mato Kosyk at Concordia University, Austin. Mato Kosyk is the great poet of Lower Wendish who lived in the United States, but not among other Wends. Since he was unable to use his native language in his day-to-day activities, he wrote poetry in Lower Wendish and sent it back to Germany. Kosyk lived from 1853 to 1940. This sculpture, which will cost \$1,000, will commemorate his life and artistic contributions.

If any of these projects interest you, please contact the museum Tuesday through Friday from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. at 979-366-2441 or leave a message, or you can send an e-mail to wendish@bluebon.net.



Report from the Tours Committee

Evelyn Kasper, Chairperson

It has been a busy Spring 2003 tour season. So far this year we have hosted 10 tour groups from all over the state. Upcoming tours are scheduled for April 24, May 3, August 20 and October 16.

Thank you to Doris Mitschke, Renate Fichte, Telford Zoch, Irene Boriack, Hattie Schautschick, Eunice Dunk, Sandra Matthijetz, Barbara Hielscher, Margo Latimer, Jeanette Huelsebush, and J.B. Gersch for serving as tour docents.

Report from the Noodle Committee

Hattie Schautschick, Chairperson

Thus far for 2003, the Noodle Ladies have made over 1,000 pounds of noodles. During one recent noodle-making session, a new record was set by making 204 pounds in one day. To break that down into relatable terms, it takes 55 dozen eggs and 187.5 pounds of flour to make 204 pounds of noodles. Thanks to Laverne Gersch's chickens for supplying all those eggs!

Presentation to the Texas German Society, Spring Branch Chapter

On March 24, Luise Green gave a presentation on the Wends to about 60 members of the Spring Branch Chapter of the Texas German Society, which meets in the Life Center at Trinity Lutheran Church on Klein Church Road. Thank you Luise!

Report from the Library

Luise Green, Chairperson

It has been a long time since we included a list of books donated to or purchased by the TWHS Library, so we are pleased to report that the following books have been added to the library and archives (donor names are included as known):

The following books are in German:

1. *Die Neue Heilwissenschaft* by Louis Kuhne (A new medical Science, from 1898)
2. *Der Herr Ist Mein Hirte* (prayerbook for children)
3. *Das Neue Testament* (the New Testament)
4. *Evangelismus Snger* (Evangelic hymnal)
5. *Eins ist Noth* (spiritual guidance)
6. *So Nimm Denn Meine Hnde* (spiritual guidance)
7. *Goethe's Gedichte* (Goethe's poems)
8. *Schiller's Werke 1. Band Gedichte* (Schiller's works. volume 1, poems)
9. *An Gottes Hand* (spiritual guidance) by Kthe Dorn
10. *Gott Sorget Fr Uns* (spiritual guidance)
11. *Ein Treuer Bruder* (a novel) by L. Haarbeck
12. *Erstes Deutsches Lesebuch fr Amerikanische Schulen* (first reader in German for American schools) by Thomas & Mattili
13. *Eulenspiegel und Mnchhausen* (tall stories and practical joke stories) by Peter Hagboldt
14. *Lesefibel* (first reader or primer)
15. *Vegetarisches Kochbuch* by Charlotta Schulz (vegetarian cookbook)
16. *Allerlei schne Sachen* (small booklet with illustrations and children's poems)
17. A booklet with old photographs from Wien/Vienna

From Klaus-Peter Jannasch the delightful children's book *Struwwelpeter*, by Heinrich Hoffmann, in Wendish. This book is already on our shelves in German and English.

From J.B. Gersch Jr.:

1. *Finding Your German Ancestors, a Beginners Guide* by Kevan M. Hansen (in English).
2. *In Search of Your German Roots* by Angus Baxter (in English)
3. *German Immigrants List of Passengers Bound from Bremen to New York, 1855 - 1862* compiled by Gary J. Zimmerman & Marion Wolfert (in English)
4. *German-American Names*, by George F. Jones (in English)

Two publications from the

Oberlausitz/Niederschlesien tourist office:

A. *History at First Hand*. Abbeys, churches, and ecclesiastical structures in the

Euroregion Neisse

B. *Principal Attractions in the Euroregion Neisse* (in English)

From Rev. Henry Wied:

1. *Imperial Castles Nuremberg* by Erich Bachmann (in English)
2. *Deutsches Museum* A visitor's guide, in English. This museum is located in München/Munich
3. *Castles on the Rhine* by M. J. Mehs. (in English)
4. *Farbild Wanderungen durch Brandenburg* (Pictures about the Brandenburg area) by Ziethen-Panorama Verlag (German, English, and French)
5. *Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Paintings* by Hermine van Guldener (in English)

From the Chór Meja from Bautzen:

1. *Serbja Doma w Sakskej/Zu Hause in Sachsen Die Sorben* by Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst, Pressestelle. This book tells about the Sorbs in Germany to the present, not a history book, but more about the concerns for their present situation (in German)
2. *Do dzeta sej spinaj ruce - Chor Meja w kole casow*. Written in Sorbian and appears to be a history of the choir

From Luise Green:

Cemetery Records of Washington County, Texas 1826 - 1960 by Judy and Nath Winfield, Jr.

From Frederick Weise (all are in German):

1. *Kirchengesangbuch für Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinden* (church hymnal for Lutheran congregations)
2. *Im Finsternen Thale* (a novel) by Ottokar Schupp.
3. *Fünfzig Erzählungen* (50 short stories) Herausgegeben von der Amerikanischen Tractat-Gesellschaft
4. *Die Beiden Elsässer* (a novel) by H. R. Wullschlägel
5. *Auf den Weg* (spiritual guidance) by C. W. Zorn
6. *Evangelisch-Lutherischer Gebets-Schatz* (A prayer book and hymnal given to Emil and Emilie Weise as a wedding present by Rev. L

Ernst from Lincoln TX.)

From Kenneth C. Wukasch:

Charlie's Confectionary – A Sweet Success Story, the story of Charles and Emma (Hannusch) Wukasch

Visitors

The Museum hosted approximately 603 visitors during October 2002 through March 2003 from Germany, British Colombia, Canada, and 16 different U.S. states, and from 97 cities and towns all over Texas.



Museum Docents

Thank you to the following volunteers for serving as museum docents during the period October 2002 through March 2003:

Carolyn Bohot, Lorine Domel, Freddie E. Zoch, Hattie Schautschick, Henry and Emily Zoch, Jan Slack, Eunice Dunk, Georgie Boyce, Ruby Koslan, Joyce Carlestone, George Boerger, J. B. Gersch, Jr., Evelyn Kasper, Mildred Kilian, and Janice Mitschke.

A new docent manual will be available in the near future, making the role of docent simpler and more effective. If you have not tried your hand at serving as a docent, we hope you will do so soon!

Volunteers give the time of their lives.



Gertrud Mahling, Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, Jan Nuk, Georgie Boyce, Lisa Jones
at the Domowina, 12/12/02

Photo courtesy Georgie Boyce

LC-MS President Visits Wendish Homeland

Georgie B. Boyce

Among the most moving and thrilling moments that I have experienced, directly related to my Wendish heritage, occurred in December 2002, when it was my good fortune, along with my daughter Lisa Jones, to again visit Germany, with a 'Luther Tours' group. This tour was hosted by Dr. Gerald B. "Jerry" Kieschnick and his wife Terry. For anyone who might not know, Dr. Kieschnick is President of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and his paternal great grandparents, Johann and Agnes Kieschnick, were among the immigrants aboard the *Ben Nevis* in 1854.

Dr. Kieschnick had visited Germany on several other occasions; however, he had never visited the Wendish homelands. At his insistence, this trip was tailored to include a one-day visit to Bautzen and the surrounding area. Of the 47 people on this tour, who hailed from all parts of the U.S., less than ten had any prior knowledge of The Wends. Dr. Kieschnick, Lisa, and I comprised

the total Wendish contingent. As we motored toward this portion of our tour, it was my privilege to tell the group, including our tour guide, about our Sorbisch/Wendish heritage.

While the President of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod did receive an appropriate welcome at all of the places we visited, Dr. Kieschnick was truly embraced as 'family' in the Wendish homelands. This day began with fanfare at Trinity Lutheran Church (SELK), Weigersdorf, where Pastor Michael Voigt and congregation members greeted our bus. Among the other greeters were the familiar faces of Rev. Siegfried Matzke, Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Klitten, and Gertrud Mahling, author of *Uffer der Hoffnung* (book about the Wendish immigration to Texas). A brass quartette was playing hymns as we entered the church. After a brief service, we were treated to coffee, tea, Christmas stollen, and cookies at the parish hall. During this fellowship time Pastor Voigt spoke of the connection this church has with Texas and presented Dr. Kieschnick with copies of church records related to his ancestors. The original Church Record Books were also made available for our

group to examine. Gertrud Mahling, who is also editor of the Sorbisch church newspaper *Pomhaj Boh*, spoke about the immigration to Texas and gave Dr. Kieschnick copies of the newspaper. Prior to our departure, many members of our group walked the short distance to the church's cemetery to view the graves of Johann Kilian's three children who were buried there in 1850 and 1853.

Our next stop was Bautzen and the Wjelbik, the only Sorbische restaurant in Bautzen. Upon arrival, owner Veronica Mahling and daughter served the welcome, "Salz Brot" (salt bread). Our group enjoyed the popping noise the "Sorbisches Hochzeitsbier" (Wendish Wedding Beer) bottles made when they were opened. Later we were served a traditional Sorbische wedding meal that consisted of beef with horseradish gravy and potatoes. Following that delicious meal, we were greeted by Rev. Jan Mahling, who, in addition to being Pastor of St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Bautzen, is also Gertrud's husband.

We were invited to the Domowina for afternoon coffee and Christmas cookies where we were warmly greeted by the staff. After a speech about the history of the Sorbs in Germany, the President, Jan Nuk, had a special surprise for Dr. Kieschnick. They had been able to locate Martin and Hildegard Kieschnick from Malschowitz, a family who share the same last name. Although, Dr. Kieschnick quickly noted that Martin is also his father's first name, they were not able to establish for sure whether they are actually distant relatives.

The group had time to visit the Sorbian Culture Information Center, where some shopped for books and Wendish souvenirs. As we walked back to our bus, we had the opportunity to shop at a few of the booths at the Bautzen Christmas Market.

As we returned to Dresden, many of the group members told me that this was the most interesting and informative day of the tour, and that they were very impressed by the friendliness of the Sorbisch people.

Lee County German Society News

The Lee County German Society held their monthly meeting on April 3 in the Community Room of the First National Bank in Giddings. Twenty-four members and one guest attended the meeting presided by Irene Zingelmann. The group enjoyed singing German songs accompanied on the keyboard by Monroe Bieberstein. The program, presented by Luise Green (TWHs member), was on the topic of peat harvesting in Germany and how the product was used as fuel to heat their homes. Refreshments were provided by members having a birthday in April.

Thank you to everyone who donated desserts, cash, or worked in the German Society booth at the Junior Livestock Show.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 1st at the First National Bank Community Room beginning at 7:30 p.m. Guests and visitors are always welcome.

Serbin Picnic, St. Paul Picnic Grounds, May 25, 2003

Come meet your old friends and make new ones at the Annual Serbin Picnic, scheduled for Sunday, May 25, 2003 at the St. Paul Serbin Picnic Grounds on FM Road 2239. The day will begin with English worship service at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin at 8:30 a.m. Barbeque – beef, pork and chicken – sold by the pound will be available beginning at 9:00 a.m. until sold out. The St. Paul Ladies' Aid will sell all the trimmings such as potato salad, homemade bread, beans, coffee, noodles, and pastries of all kinds. The St. Paul Youth League will sell hamburgers at the hamburger stand. Various activities for adults and children are scheduled during the day, and Red Ravens from El Campo, Texas will entertain from 3:00 – 8:00 p.m. Mark your calendar and plan to attend this annual event that offers an opportunity for fun and fellowship!

The 1853 Immigrants

Dr. George Nielsen, Special Features Editor

If it had not been for the 1853 immigrant Wends, many of us would be Australians rather than Americans. Some Wends, such as Johann Zwahr and Andreas Urban, who had lived in the same general area of Lusatia and who held similar religious views as these 1853 migrants, had already sailed for Australia. The 1853 settlers decided to try Texas instead because the fares were cheaper and because they were hearing negative reports about the conditions in Australia. (For more about these reports see Thomas A. Darragh and Robert N. Wuchatsch, *From Hamburg to Hobsons Bay*). They found Texas suitable and sent five letters to family and friends in Europe. These letters were passed from person to person and from village to village and were instrumental in persuading the 1854 group to sail for Texas. One of these letters, written by Johann Kasper, survived because it was printed in the *Serbske Nowiny*, a Wendish newspaper.

We know the identity of these 1853 settlers because Johann Kilian, while still living at Weigersdorf and serving as pastor of the Old Lutheran parish, compiled the list. These were members of his parish and the final draft of his list was most likely sent to the Prussian officials. Our thanks go to Dr. Joe Wilson for transcribing and editing the list and for translating the Kasper letter that survived.

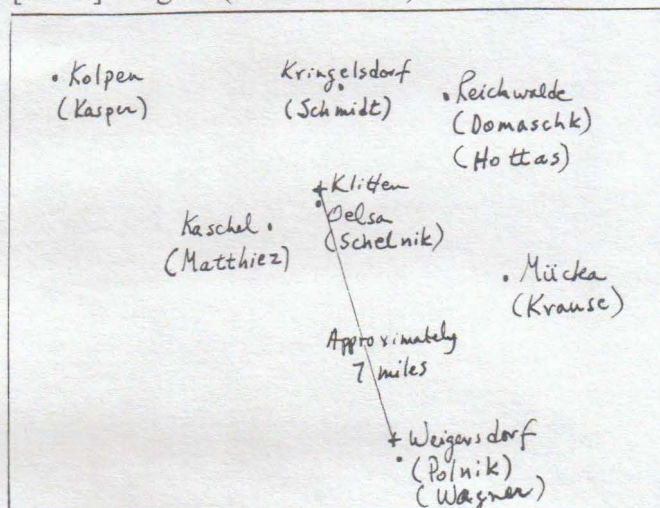
Wendish Migrants on the *Reform*, 1853:

1. Matthes Matthiez and Dorothea. Children: Andreas, Hanna, Maria, and Agnes. Others with the family: Maria Matthiez (unmarried sister), Johann Matthiez (unmarried brother) and Johann Schmidt (age 16).
2. George Schelnik and Maria. Others with the family: Hanna Hollass (Maria's mother), Hanna Hollas (sister), and Christoph Hollas.
3. Johann Casper [Kasper] and Hanna. Children: Magdalena, Johann, Hanna, and Traugott.
4. Hans Casper and Johanne Christiane.

5. Johann Domaschk (Thomaschke) and Hanna. Children: Christoph, Hanna. Others with the family: Johann Hattass.

6. Christoph Krause and Maria. Child: Johann.

7. August Polnik and Maria. Children: Johann, Andreas and August. Others with the family: [Anna] Wagner (Maria's sister).



Village of Origin for 1853 Migrants and Location of Old Lutheran Churches

Kasper Letter

New Ulm, Austin Co., Texas, Dec. 26, 1853

Dear Friend,

Since now, with God's help, we have arrived in America, we shall not delay giving to you and to all who remember us with love a report of our trip and our circumstances. -- We arrived in Bremen Aug. 31 and stayed there two days. On the third day, we were transported onto a ship [the *Reform*] on the Weser River. We put to sea on Sept. 4; there were 90 passengers on this two-masted ship. Our voyage was very good, because we mostly had a good breeze. But the 53rd day, Oct. 26th at 11 o'clock at night, our ship hit a rock off the island of Cuba; its front part hung on this rock, but the back part was thrown back and forth by the waves and water was running with great force into the ship. As a signal of the distress that we were in, a lantern was quickly hung up, and since we were near the island, it was soon noticed. We had to stay in fear and danger on the wrecked ship for about four hours, and we would have had time

enough to pull many things from the water, but nobody was thinking about saving possessions because no one knew if he would save his own life. At three o'clock in the morning, a small ship arrived which took us to land. Our possessions already were mostly in the water, and since the ship then soon sank, our possessions and trunks were all lost; only what we had on us and with us, such as clothes and bedcovers, were saved. -- The island of Cuba belongs to Spain and is mostly inhabited by Spanish people. When we got to shore, we couldn't communicate with anyone; we had to send for an interpreter five English miles away. We were taken to the town of Neuwied, [possibly Nuevitas] well cared for and richly bestowed with money and goods. After a three day stay, a steamer took us to the city of Havana, where we were very well received and given bountiful help by the German Society and the consul.

After three days, we were transported from Havana on a steamer to New Orleans and sent to the German society there. There too, they looked after us well and clothed us from head to foot. The next day we traveled to Galveston, also by steamer. On this occasion we also saw the famous Mississippi River. When we arrived at Galveston, each [adult] received six dollars from the consul and each child three dollars, which money the German Society in Havana had sent there.

In Galveston we stayed a day and a night and then traveled on Buffalo Bayou to Houston. In Houston we quickly found wagons and Mr. [F. G.] Seydler, the master mason from Bautzen, and from there we traveled overland to New Ulm, where we arrived after a week. There are two Bautzeners there as farmers, namely Mr. Seydler and Mr. [George] Helas. We two brothers are working for Mr. Helas; we get half a dollar a day and good meals (meat and coffee three times a day). Christiana Kasper is also working for Helas and getting at present four dollars a month. Hanna Kasper with the children is living with a neighbor and is fine; her oldest daughter Helena is working for the neighbor and gets a dollar and a half a month and meals.

If anybody wants to come there, we would advise them not to travel from Bremen but from Hamburg. Generally it is said that the Hamburg ships are better provided with food than the Bremen ones. We experienced that, too, because the food was bad and there was little water. Our shipwreck must be attributed to the lack of order or the lack of skill on the part of the captain. As far as this area here is concerned, we like it; the earnings are good and there is great freedom in all things, both secular and spiritual. Everyone may exercise his religion according to his own knowledge and conscience, nobody asks you about your religion. The only thing everyone asks is if you can work. There are even churches and schools here. We also advise anyone not to drag along a lot of things, because you can get everything here; especially axes and such are better here than in Germany. It would be good to bring along clothing. Also a person should not buy rifles unless they are very good. Here, everybody can go hunting, and rifles are both good and cheap. Whoever brings along a few hundred Talers, [the German equivalent of a dollar] can buy farms or real estate anywhere here, and whoever brings nothing along but his working hands can make his living.

Give our brother George our greetings, also our good friends and acquaintances.

Johann Kasper, Hans Kasper.

My address must be written in English. Mstr. Johann Kasper by Mstr. G. Helas, New-Ulm, Austin County, Texas.

Krause Family

Christoph and Maria Krause migrated with their three-year-old son, Johann. After landing in Houston and meeting the earlier Wends, Christoph and Maria settled at Frelsburg. Johann died within a year and their second child, whom they also named Johann, also died at an early age. The five subsequent children, three girls and two boys, all reached adulthood. Sometime between the birth of the third child, Hannah, in 1857, and the birth of Matthäus in 1860, the family moved to

Serbin area, and made it their permanent home. Christoph died in 1869 as a result of a riding accident leaving a widow and children ranging in age from twelve to less than a year.

Later Hannah married George Schmidt; Matthäus married Magdalena Schurk; Maria married Matthes Bohot; Johann Hermann married Anna Maria Lehmann, and Agnes first married Ernst Bamsch and after his death, Johann Hohle, Jr. All were Wends and all died in Lee County, with the exception of Agnes who died in Houston.

Thanks to Weldon Mersiovsky for the information. See also his family history, *From Shipwreck to Settlement--Krause: a Wendish Heritage*. (1991)



Maria Michalk Krause about 1900

Johann Hottas (Hattas)

Johann, at the age of 25, traveled with the Domaschk family which originated from his home village of Reichwalde. The next year the Andreas Hottas family (# 18 on the *Ben Nevis* Passenger List) sailed on the *Ben Nevis* to join him. On January 6, 1856 Johann married Maria Schmidt [Kowar] at Serbin. Maria was the daughter of Mattheus Schmidt, another former resident of

Reichwalde, who had migrated with his family on the *Ben Nevis*. Two years later she died. On January 1, 1859, Johann married Magdalena (Lena) Kieschnick who had migrated on the *Ben Nevis*. The Johann Kieschnick family (# 8 on the *Ben Nevis* Passenger List) at that time lived in Brenham, and the wedding took place at Salem Lutheran Church where J. G. Ebinger was the pastor. The couple then returned to Serbin. Lena gave birth to seven daughters, five of whom survived. The couple continued to live in Serbin until their deaths at the turn of the century. One of these daughters, Maria Therese, married Andreas Biar. These are the grandparents of Bill Biar, whom we thank for the information and for all of his help in translating many German documents.

If anyone has information on the other families of the 1853 group, please correspond with me at 1132 Enchantment Road, Rapid City, SD 57701 or by email to GNie857317@aol.com.

Financial Report

George Boerger

Financially, the Texas Wendish Heritage Society had a successful year in 2002, closing the year with an operating surplus of \$4,163. Everything that could have gone correctly did so; Murphy's Law did not affect us during 2002 and we are very thankful! The operating surplus is due, in part, to (1) higher interest/investment income than expected, (2) a significant increase in membership, (3) several smaller items which, when added together, made a significant impact, (4) funds allocated to the archives were not spent, and (5) utility and telephone expenses were almost \$800 less than estimated.

The only significant unfavorable item was an increase of \$667 for health insurance.

The endowment fund increased by \$4,152 in 2002, with \$2,942 coming from memberships in excess of \$15.00 and \$1,210 from gifts and memorials. The endowment fund balance is \$117,481.

The 2003 approved budget projects a balanced budget. It is estimated that revenue will decrease by \$1,134 and cost of sales will increase by \$796. The major changes in revenue are the assumptions of lower tour revenue, Wendish Fest receipts, and interest income partially offset by an increase in membership dues and museum admission fees. The museum admission fee for non-members has been increased to \$2.00, and children under 14 will continue to receive free admission. The Noodle Committee also agreed to raise the price for a bag of noodles from \$3.00 to \$3.50, to cover the increased cost of ingredients.

If you wish to review a complete copy of the financial statements, please notify the museum.

Membership Report

George Boerger, Membership Chairperson

As of April 15, 2003, a new record of 592 members has been set, breaking last year's record of 561 members! We should exceed the goal of 600 members in the next few weeks. The record number of members is due to the excellent effort of many of our members to sign up new and former members. Thanks to everyone for their hard work and gift donations.

	Goal	Year-to-date	% of goal achieved
Membership renewals	488	466	95%
First-time members	100	99	99%
Former members rejoined	12	27	225%
Total	600	592	98%

to thank Carolyn's predecessor, Della Markert, whose efforts greatly improved our membership records and processes for maintaining those records.

April 2003 First-Time Members

Beverly Moerbe Boswell	San Antonio, TX
Ruth Moerbe Chandler	Woodlands, TX
Mary Ann Davenport	Eules, TX
Audrey Denkeler	Portland, TX
Betty Jean Ford	Nederland, TX
Alan Fritsche	Houston, TX
Sandy Fritsche	Houston, TX
Mitchell Koop	Beaumont, TX
Guy Latimer	Lexington, TX
Michaela Loomans	Dallas, TX
La Nell Mahler	Thousand Oaks, CA
Harold Miller	Giddings, TX
Kerstin Preuss	Komptendorf, Germany
Roberta Ricco	Chardon, OH
Francis Roeber	Paige, TX
Herb Roeber	Paige, TX
Loretta Moerbe Ronnenkamp	Houston, TX
Round Rock Public Library	Round Rock, TX
Stephen Scharath	Spicewood, TX
Dorothy Stolz	Navasota, TX
Christa Utzinger	Round Rock, TX
Jeffrey Utzinger	Round Rock, TX
Ruby Weiser	Giddings, TX
Melvin Winkler	Giddings, TX
Nelda D. Winkler	Giddings, TX
Grace Wolf	Shoreacres, TX
John. A. Wuensche IV	Kingsville, TX

I want to welcome Carolyn Bohot on board.

Carolyn is doing all the detailed work: processing the memberships, depositing the dues, and mailing the membership cards. There is much more work involved in keeping the membership records current than most people realize, and I thank Carolyn for being willing to roll up her sleeves and provide such excellent assistance. I also want

April 2003 Sponsor Members

Carroll Dorsett	Adkins, TX
Joyce Peklemeyer	Brenham, TX
Harold Theiss	Houston, TX
Melvin Winkler	Giddings, TX
Nelda Winkler	Giddings, TX

April 2003 Patron Members

Helen Alexander	Sacramento, CA
Carol Grote Flores	Edinburg, TX
Herbert Foerster	Giddings, TX
Donald C. Hilsberg	Elizabeth, CO
Arnold Kreigel	Austin, TX
Weldon Mersiovsky	Georgetown, TX
Kathy Lee Miller	Ellinger, TX
Barbara Schimenz Peckham	Urbanon, IL
Christian Symmank	Dusseldorf, Germany
Elo Toll	Cedar Park, TX
Martha Toll	Cedar Park, TX
Doris Malke Zabel	St. Louis, MO

April 2003 Student Members

Ketrin Jones	Abilene, TX
Margaret Lovallo	Sacramento, CA
Jennifer Zoch	Fort Worth, TX

April 003 Century Members

Elwood Domaschk, Jr.	Houston, TX
Glenn Hobratschk	Pepper Pike, OH
Gerald Kieschnick	St. Louis, MO
Karen Koepke	Houston, TX
B.J. Scharath	Indian Springs, AL



Minutes of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society General Membership Meeting

The quarterly membership meeting of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society was called to order at 2:00 p.m. in the St. Paul Building on Sunday, February 16, 2003, by Eunice Dunk, President.

Reverend Michael Buchhorn provided the opening devotion, talking about *making plans*. As we plan for the 150th anniversary of the St. Paul Lutheran Church and the Wends' settlement in Texas we remember to be thankful for God's plan for our salvation.

There were 31 members and 1 visitor present. The visitor was Renata Hughes, President of the Lee County German Society.

The minutes of the November 2002 meeting were approved as presented in the January newsletter.

George Boerger presented the 2002 Actual and 2003 Projected Financial reports. A motion to approve the 2002 Actual and 2003 Projected Financial reports was seconded and approved unanimously.

George Boerger reported that the number of gift memberships has increased. The goal for 2003 is 100 first-time members; we currently have 89. Total membership for 2003 is 550 at present with a goal of 600 for the year.

In Hattie Schautschick's absence, Evelyn Kasper reported that 1,101 pounds of noodles have been made since January 1 of this year.

Eunice Dunk reported that attendance at the Walk-In coffee was down from 2002 but income of \$825 was close to that of 2002.

Evelyn Kasper reported 7 luncheon tours are currently scheduled: February 20, March 18, March 19, March 27, April 2, April 8, and April 24.

Evelyn Kasper reported that a Wendish dance group and orchestra from Germany will be the featured performers for Wendish Fest 2003. The group will be accompanied by the mayors of the cities of Zeissig and Hoyerswerda. Volunteers are

needed to provide housing for the approximate 39 visitors during their stay in Serbin.

Eunice Dunk reported that Barbara Hielscher is in St. David's Hospital in Austin and asked that we keep Barbara in our prayers.

Arnold and Evelyn Kasper were congratulated on their upcoming wedding anniversary on February 17.

Sandra Matthijetz was thanked for providing the special Valentine decorations for the meeting.

Upcoming events:

The Winedale Spring Arts and Crafts Festival will be held March 29 – 30.

The Folklife Festival will be held June 5 – 8. For information or to volunteer, call Ron Knippa.

Wendish Fest is scheduled from September 28.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Jack Wiederhold gave an interesting presentation about the dudelsack as well as a brief demonstration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Slack, Secretary

Knippa Reunion, June 14, 2003 **Lincoln, Texas**

11:00 a.m. Registration & silent auction

1:30 p.m. Meal

3:00 p.m. Devotion & meeting

Conclude silent auction

The Host Family will provide the meat, noodles, bread, coffee, tea, plates and eating utensils.

Guests are asked to bring a salad or vegetable and a dessert. A donation of \$5.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children 6-13 years of age is suggested.

For more information, please contact Steve Knippa at 311 Rancho Bueno Drive, Georgetown, Texas 78628 by May 15, 2003.

Please Note the Insert!!!!

An insert included in this newsletter announces the upcoming 150th Anniversary of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin. Plans to mark the occasion include events beginning in October 2003 and culminating in an All Saints Remembrance Worship Service on November 7, 2004. There is also an opportunity to order a commemorative ornament at a discounted price if ordered prior to June 30, 2003. A limited number of the ornaments will be produced, so be sure to submit your order before it is too late!



Serbin Picnic
St. Paul, Serbin, Picnic Grounds
Sunday, May 25, 2003
See you there!!!

Texas Wendish Heritage Society

Executive Director..... Barbara Hielscher
Officers..... Eunice Dunk, President
Sandra Matthijetz, Vice President
Jan Slack, Secretary
Laverne Gersch, Treasurer
Newsletter Editor-in-Chief..... Jan Slack

Please send Newsletter submissions to:
Newsletter Editor, 1011 CR 212, Giddings, Texas 78942-5940
Email wendish@bluebon.net or Fax (979) 366-2805

Texas Wendish Heritage Society and Museum

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