



TWHS News

Newsletter of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society

Volume XXI, Number 2

April 2008

Remembering Barbara Pampell Hielscher

April 8, 1938 - April 11, 2008



Barbara Hielscher (pictured above, on the right), TWHS Executive Director, passed away on April 11, 2008. She was hired as the first secretary for the Society and Museum in 1987, a position that later became Executive Director and which she held until her death. Barbara was passionate about preserving the Wendish heritage and sharing it with others. The photo above, which includes Barbara's sister, Mary Watts (left) and cousin Josie Ellis (center), was taken in the courtyard garden at the museum after they had spent the day searching through the genealogy records in the library at the museum.

Barbara Pampell Hielscher was part of our organization from almost the very beginning, and touched countless lives through her work. She will be greatly missed. In honor of Barbara, we are sharing some memories of her from family and long-time friends.

Barbara Pampell was born in Winchester, Texas at the home of Shorty and Esther Pampell on April 8, 1938. Four years later, she was joined by a baby sister, Mary Pampell. She attended St. Michael's Lutheran School in Winchester, and high school in nearby La Grange.

Following high school graduation, Barbara married Carroll "Pete" Hielscher, who was also from Winchester. Pete and Barbara lived first in Houston, then Chicago, Illinois, returning to Houston a few years later. During those years, 3 children were born - Jerry, Patti and Scott.

Even though they had moved away from Winchester, they often returned for visits. Finally, in 1980, they made their final move, returning to Winchester permanently.

Barbara had deep roots in Winchester and a great interest in her Wendish heritage. Her return to Winchester gave her the opportunity to become actively involved in the Wendish Museum in its early, formative years. That involvement eventually turned into a job as the first museum secretary, and then later as Executive Director, a position which she held until her death. The job was a good fit for Barbara because she loved Wendish Easter eggs, Germany, and noodles (which she always cooked for her grandchildren).

Barbara's other loves in life were her grandchildren (Jerry, Heather, Ashley and Chuck, who also loved her dearly), the Texas coast (especially Rockport because she had family there), and cooking shows on television. Two of her grandchildren, Ashley and Chuck, spent many nights watching her favorite cooking shows, and granddaughter Heather gave her the ultimate gift by taking her to see Emeril Lagasse at a book signing for one of his cookbooks.

But so far we've only talked about what Barbara loved. We also have "loves" about Barbara we would like to share.

Mary: My sister and I were very close. I will never forget the last three days of her life, which we spent together. I also loved our morning telephone chats and still expect the phone to ring. Barbara always convinced me to go along with her to the Table Top Conventions in Houston to promote the Wendish Museum, and she recently talked me into serving on the Texas Wendish Heritage Society Board of Directors. I will always be thankful to God for the special times we spent together.

Heather: I loved taking Granny to Kenny Chesney's concert. I will never forget the look on her face when he walked onto the stage. Nothing will ever replace our Sunday lunches - they were the best. Granny had answers for all of my questions and that is what I will miss the most. I enjoyed helping Granny at the museum, folding newsletters and working at Wendish Fest. She loved everyone she worked with and I know she will be missed.

Jerry: I loved my Granny for always being there for me to talk to. She was the best cook in the whole world and always managed to send me back to Houston with enough food for an entire week. Nothing will ever replace our summer trips to Rockport.

Ashley: I loved her homemade hamburgers and dill pickles. Granny was the only person who could make them so juicy and good.

Chuck: I loved spending time just talking to Granny about whatever came to mind. She would listen to me, which was important.

I believe Pastor Boyce said it best at Barbara's funeral when he compared her to one of those hard-shelled candy Easter eggs - hard on the outside but soft on the inside.

It seems only fitting that a Wend be compared to an Easter egg.

The family of Barbara Hielscher

We each have our own special memories of Barbara. Barbara and I met in the fall of 1987 at St. Paul Lutheran Church. We were altos singing in the "Wendish Choir" for the November 29, 1987, dedication of the Louise Peter Building at the museum complex. Through the years we laughed about our mispronunciation of the Wendish language, did not know what we were singing, and what a hard time we gave Jack Wiederhold, the choir director.

That summer Barbara had been hired as part-time secretary (two days a week) for the museum, and in January 1988 was appointed Administrative Assistant and Gift Shop Manager. Daphne Garrett was the Archivist-Librarian, and needed help with the photographs. Barbara recommended me for the position, which led to another great learning experience for both of us. We were so excited when we finally moved "offices" from the dark cubbyhole in the St.

Paul Building to the new Peter Building in October 1988.

Barbara and I took an adult computer night course in Giddings when the museum purchased their first computer. We were both scared we would hit the wrong key and ruin the computer, yet another good laugh throughout the years. My husband described us as "two monkeys with a hand grenade." After that, we had to learn to operate the fax machine and other computer programs. We always had a great time learning and sharing all the many different experiences and challenges the organization presented to us.

We were "Museum Buddies" and shared many laughs, "ups and downs" and a few tears the past twenty plus years. I know that The Society and Museum will go on and we will miss this Executive Director, but what I will truly miss are the phone calls and the interaction with my friend Barbara.

Georgie Boyce

Annie Krause and Richard Lehmann were married in October 1949. That was my first association with Barbara Pampell. Barbara's sister (Mary Esther Pampell) and my sister (Mary Ann Zoch) served as flower girls in the wedding. At the wedding rehearsal, I can remember thinking that Barbara was one of the bossiest girls I had ever met. She took over and told everyone what to do.

Many years and miles later, as I was visiting with Barbara's parents one day (they were neighbors across the road), they happened to mention that Barbara was interested in finding a part-time job in the area because she was growing tired of the daily commute to another city. I was serving as president of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society at that time, and we were in the midst of finding ways to move the organization forward, including hiring someone as museum

secretary. I contacted Barbara to see if she would be interested in the position, because I felt that anyone who could be so bossy as a young girl surely had the gumption to handle all the ups and downs of establishing herself in a new job with a growing organization run by a large number of volunteers. After considering a few applicants, we did indeed hire Barbara.

We set up shop in the St. Paul Building with a used typewriter purchased from Evelyn Kasper. A few years later, we built the Peter Building and with Barbara's help the organization continued to grow and develop to the museum complex we have today.

Barbara, everyone you came in contact with throughout the years will miss you.

Laverne Gersch

The last week of Barbara's life was one she thoroughly enjoyed. Her family took her out for dinner Monday evening to celebrate her 70th birthday and on Tuesday, she brought to the museum the remainder of her beautiful birthday cake her daughter-in-law (Judy) baked for her. The "noodle crew" enjoyed it for dessert after we ate lunch together. Barbara was also very surprised and thrilled that her friends from Germany called to wish her a happy birthday.

On Wednesday, her sister Mary and cousin Josie Ellis spent the day at the museum researching Pampell family genealogy and took her out for another birthday dinner that evening.

On Thursday, the three ladies spent the day together again and granddaughter, Ashley, spent

the night with her. Barbara helped with a tour at the museum on Friday and since Mary and Josie were still in the area, they joined her for lunch. Following the tour, Barbara and Sandra Matthijetz joined me and Hattie Schautschick in the Kilian Building for some coffee before we all left for home. What a wonderful week!

A sad message was received from Barbara's family a little after 8:00 pm on Friday. It was a shock for all of us - but what a blessing for Barbara! God took her home without a long time of suffering or sickness, and it was exactly the way she wanted to go to her final home.

Evelyn Kasper

In Memoriam

Sylvia Wukasch of Grimsby, Ontario, Canada, member since 2006, died January 12, 2008.

Barbara Pampell Hielscher of Winchester, TX, member since 1985, died April 11, 2008.

Frieda Hildegard (Schulze) Wendland, TWHs Charter Member, passed away peacefully on January 28, 2008 at the age of 95 years. Frieda was born September 3, 1912 in Loebau, Texas.

Frieda loved the Lord. She was constantly singing hymns, mostly in German, well into her 90's. Many times when the family would go to see her in her declining years her only communication was through singing. Frieda taught Sunday school for 27 years at Trinity Lutheran in Fedor, Texas, which is eight miles north of Manheim in north central Lee County.

Frieda was an amazing cook, well known for her Wendish noodles, coffee cake, fried chicken,

pies, cookies, and jellies. She had a large garden in which she grew lots of vegetables. One of her greatest joys was sharing the vegetables from her garden with her many friends and neighbors.

In 1971, she became one of five charter members of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society in Serbin. When Mark and I traveled to Germany this past fall and visited the "fatherland" we saw a picture of Frieda and the other four members in the National Sorbian Museum in Bautzen, Germany. That was a very proud moment.

Amy Wendlandt

Memorials and Gifts

In memory of Barbara Hielscher:

Raymond and Sandra Matthijetz
Doris Mitschke and Jarrene Mitschke
Charles and Jan Slack
Carolyn Bohot
Rev. Robert and Georgie Boyce
Arnold and Evelyn Kasper
Sidonia and Joel Meador
Gloria Gersch and Irma Gersch
Tommy and Kelly Franke
Leland and Doris Miller
D.G. and Pearl Symmank

Frank and Vivian Taylor
George and Eunice Dunk
Mildred Kilian
Mr. and Mrs. E.L. Toppel
Margo Latimer
Mr. and Mrs. Weldon Markert, for Landscape Fund
Evelyn Buchhorn
Laverne Nitsche Falke
Lukas Bakery in La Grange, TX
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Wilson

In memory of Richard P. Weaver, Sr.:

Dr. and Mrs. Rudy Zoch

In memory of Frieda Wendlandt:

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Michalk

In memory of Margaret Ruse:

Mr. and Mrs. Barney Canion, Jr.

In memory of Benjamin Wagner:

Margo Latimer

President's Message

In Memoriam – Barbara Hielscher, 1938 – 2008. She has indeed passed into memory, and my memories of her will always be bright and positive. Quite a character, she made my time at the Wendish Museum far more colorful than even the garden has done. Whether she was telling stories from her childhood or spinning up in one of her mock tirades about George Boerger, she added life and spice to all of my time around her. A faithful worker as Executive Director of the Museum since 1987, she and her friends with whom she spent her last afternoon at the Museum capture much of the essence of what our Wendish forebears left us as a spiritual and cultural inheritance. As Pastor Boyce remarked in his sermon at Barbara's funeral service, "She had a passion for the Society and the heritage it seeks to preserve." Her death was sudden and very unexpected. It was a somewhat stunned Board of Directors that met the very day after her death to begin sketching out the many, many tasks that Barbara performed at the Museum. Arriving at the Museum for the meeting, Vivian and I parked in front of the display that Sandra Matthijetz had put into the kiosk in front of the Museum for Easter. It read simply, "He is risen!" Against the backdrop of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Barbara's death is much, much more than a sorrowful event. It shines with the very hope we all have of our own resurrection and life eternal. Perhaps a more earthly, timely connection is the life of service Barbara shared with her Savior. The many acts of faith and service performed by Barbara and so many people like her bear strong witness to our mission here on earth. Barbara, however, has now finished that part of her calling. We will remember her and miss her. May she indeed "rest in peace."

A particular regret I have at Barbara's death is that I will now not have the opportunity to convince (that's what it would have required) and convince her to take the 12-day trip to Germany that the Society will help sponsor and that Pastor Bob and Georgie Boyce will lead in December. I am certain that she would have thoroughly enjoyed visiting some of the villages from which the Wends emigrated in 1854, wandering the streets of the Wendish city of Bautzen where buildings erected in the 1400's are still in use, exploring the Advent / Christmas markets that thrive in many locations, meeting people with whom we share much in the way of culture and history, seeing the magnificent (and recently restored) Frauenkirche in Dresden, as well as walking some of the paths and buildings where Luther himself lived. As passionate as Barbara was about the unique experiences and accomplishments of the Wends who settled in Lee County, she would have enjoyed and grown immensely from seeing these places firsthand and meeting the Wends who still live there. I liken it to the experience that my wife Vivian and I had with my mother and Uncle Herbert when we were able to spend several nights with the family who lived in the house my great-great-great grandfather Christopher Dube built in 1813 after Napoleon's army had burned the original. The immediate sense of being connected to people who so long ago shaped the faith and character of what became my family was nothing short of a spiritual experience. If you have any inclination to join us, please read the article about the trip on page 9 of this newsletter and the trip brochure included as an insert. If you have any questions at all about the trip, feel free to call Rev. Boyce or Luther Tours (see insert for contact information).

Chuck Dube, TWHS President

Museum Activities and Committee Reports

Visitors

During the months of January, February and March, the museum hosted visitors from Ohio, Connecticut, Washington, California, Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, and Missouri, and from the U.K., Germany, and Taiwan.

Thank You Museum Docents!

During the months of January, February and March, the following served as museum docents: Freddie Zoch, J.B. Gersch, Jr., Carolyn Bohot, Monroe Miertschin, Hattie Schautschick, Ruby Koslan, and Sandra Matthijetz.

Noodle Committee Report

Hattie Schautschick, Chair

Thus far for 2008, we have made 1,787 pounds of noodles. Helen Stogner has joined the Noodle Committee, and is proving to be a super addition to the group. Welcome Helen!

Tours

Evelyn Kasper, Chair

On February 8, a group of visitors from Germany were provided a tour of the museum and treated to coffee, homemade coffee cake, and mincemeat raisin bread.

In addition to luncheon tours on March 12 and March 26, luncheons were also served to: Hill Top Lakes group - April 11; Red Hat Society group - April 18; a group from Harlingen - April 24; Texas Instruments group - April 25; Houston Life Line group - May 21; and another group from Houston on June 13.

Seven museum tours were provided to groups including 1st Presbyterian (Kingwood, TX), AARP (Sharpstown), Zion Lutheran School (Walburg), City of Katy Senior Center, Genesis Lutheran Church (Buchanan Dam), and Cypress Bible Church (Cypress, Tx).

Minutes of the February 17, 2008 General Membership Meeting

The quarterly meeting of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society was called to order at 2:05 PM in the Kilian Building on Sunday, February 17, 2008, by Chuck Dube, President. There were 21 members in attendance.

Rev. Al Gallmeier presented the devotion based on Hebrews 27.

The minutes of the November 18, 2007 meeting were approved as presented in the February newsletter.

George Boerger reported that memberships were doing very well. To-date there are 878 members with 100 of those being first-time members. The goal for 2008 is 990 members. He indicated that we had received a significant number of gift memberships. Copies of the "Financial Report: 2007 Actual and Projected 2008" were provided. Steve Hooper moved that the Financial Report be accepted as presented. Evelyn Kasper seconded. Motion carried.

Hattie Schautschick reported that 800 pounds of noodles had been made to-date in 2008.

Evelyn Kasper reported that tours with meals were provided on January 22 and February 14,

and others are scheduled for March 12, March 26 and April 25.

Eunice Dunk reported that we had received preliminary confirmation that a dance group from Germany would be coming for the 2008 Wendish Fest. It would be a small group but would also include a band.

Eunice Dunk reported that a grant application had been submitted to LCRA, and that an application would be submitted later in the summer for a grant from the Giddings Hotel/Motel Tax Fund.

Chuck Dube introduced Vivian Dube as chair of the Landscape Committee. Vivian reported that the bluebonnets are beginning to bloom in the courtyard and that Hattie Schautschick had rooted quite a few antique roses from her yard.

Hattie Schautschick reported that \$881.27 had been cleared from the Walk-in Coffee.

A motion was made to adjourn at 2:45 PM. Following the meeting, refreshments were served and a tour of the Peter Building was provided for attendees.

Respectfully submitted,
J. B. Gersch, Jr., Secretary

In and Around the Museum

While all of our museum artifacts have been donated by many family members, not all of the artifacts are housed inside the buildings. This spring we were given three rose bushes, which were grown from cuttings, passed down in families. Rose rustlers usually name their roses by where the plant was found growing. I have named these for each grandmother who was known to have grown them.

As you walk from the fountain in the museum garden toward the St. Paul building, the first rose is on the left, about midway, and was given to us by Ruth Doering. Ruth got it from Bea Tschatschula, who shared a back fence with Ruth in Giddings. Bea's sister would take a stem, cut it into three pieces, push the pieces into the ground and cover them with a quart jar until leaves formed.

When Ruth asked why a quart jar needed to be used, the sister answered, "Because I said so." It has been named "Grandma Knippa's Rose" because Bea's grandmother was Beatrice (Moerbe) Knippa. We are told that the rose came on the *Ben Nevis*. The rose has small clusters of tiny pink flowers and is known to climb and bloom easily all summer. Many of you probably have this rose because cuttings were often available at Knippa reunions.

The second rose is across the sidewalk on the right. Hazel Steglich of Grassyville gave us this plant, and it is known as the "Grandma Mose-

bach Rose." Ernestine Mosebach was born after her parents, Johann and Gertrude Sommer, migrated to Texas on the *Ben Nevis* with their infant sons. The Sommers settled in Waldeck, but Ernestine and William Mosebach made their homes in the Grassyville - Paige area. This rose, identified as Clotilde Soupert, is a fragrant white rose that tends to stay balled in humid weather.

The third rose is climbing on the arbor nearby. It blooms white all during the year. Vivian Taylor, who took it from her mother's garden in La Grange, gave it to us. Vivian's great grandmother was a Herbrig who married a Lehman, so it is the "Grandma Lehman Rose" and was also probably on the *Ben Nevis*.

After these plants are more established, we hope to offer cuttings or actual plants for sale at Wendish Fest.

Landscape News

While we are on the subject of the garden, now is the time to visit the museum garden to see all the plants in bloom before the hot days of summer are here. The daylilies are promising to show off in May. And, all the weeds have joined the parade of color. When you visit, feel free to pull up any of the weeds that you know will cause us bigger problems when they set seeds.

Vivian Dube, Librarian and
Landscape Committee chair

Important Dates

May 11	Mother's Day, museum closed	May 26	Memorial Day, museum closed
May 9-10	Lee County Sheriff Posse Rodeo, Giddings	June 13-15	Folklife Festival, Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio
May 16-17	Lee County Fair and State of Texas Noodle Cook-off, Fireman's Park, Giddings	June 14	TWHS bus tour to Folklife Festival, departing museum at 8:00 a.m.
May 18	General Membership Meeting, 2:00 p.m., Museum complex	June 15	Father's Day, museum closed
May 25	Serbin Homecoming Picnic, St. Paul Lutheran Church picnic grounds, Serbin	June 15	Winchester Picnic, St. Michael's Park, Winchester
		July 4	Fourth of July, Museum closed

Upcoming Events

Quarterly Membership Meeting Sunday, May 18, 2008, 2:00 p.m.

“Everything you have ever wanted to know about the TWHS museum but were afraid to ask: Part 2” is the program topic for the May 18 membership meeting. After a brief business meeting beginning at 2:00 pm in the Kilian Building, we will enjoy refreshments and then take an in-depth tour of the displays in the St. Paul Building.

Questions? Contact the museum at (979) 366-2441.

2008 State of Texas Noodle Cook-Off

The Annual State of Texas Noodle Cook-Off, held in conjunction with the Lee County Fair, is scheduled for Saturday, May 17, 2008 at Fireman’s Park fairgrounds, Giddings, Texas. Competition is open to all Texas residents. Any individual or team that makes homemade noodles is eligible to enter and there is no entry fee.

Registration opens at 1:00 pm., and judging begins at 2:00. Award and tasting party will be at 3:30 pm. For further information, contact the Giddings Area Chamber of Commerce at (979) 542-3455 or www.giddingstx.com.

Serbin Homecoming Picnic

The 2008 Serbin Homecoming Picnic will be Sunday, May 25 on the picnic grounds of St. Paul Lutheran Church. It will be a fun day of worship, fellowship, and the best barbecue in town. Come early - before all the barbecue is sold! The Wendish Museum will also be open that day in case you need to stop by for a bag of noodles.

2008 Folklife Festival Bus Trip

We are working with the Round Top Roadrunners to plan a trip to the 2008 Folklife Festival. Dates for this year’s event, held on the grounds of UT’s Institute of Texan Cultures, are June 13-15. The bus trip will be Saturday, June 14, departing from the museum at 8:00 a.m. with a stop at the SAS Shoe Factory Outlet for a bit of shopping on the way to San Antonio. Estimated cost will be \$45 per person, which includes admission to the festival grounds (no meals included).

See insert for additional information and a registration form.

Wendish Fest Plant Sale

It is time once again to think about planting seeds, growing or dividing, and in general getting plants ready to sell in September for the Wendish Fest plant sale. The plants can be any sort of healthy species that will be of interest to our Wendish Fest visitors. Altha Garrett, plant sale coordinator, will be happy to give suggestions on what you can do to help in this endeavor. If you have plants to offer, or if you need help in identifying plants you may have, please contact Altha at (979) 242-3822. She will also welcome volunteers who want to help set up and sell plants at the Fest. Let’s make the plant sale a big success!

Wendish Fest 2008

Mark your calendars - September 28, 2008! Plans are well underway, with featured performance by members of the Königswartha Blaskapelle from Germany. For more information, contact the museum at 979-366-2441 or wendish@bluebon.net.

48th Annual Michael Schoppa Family Reunion June 20-22, 2008

Camp Graham Ball at Lake Kickapoo

Facilities include RV hookups, cabins with air conditioning and bunk beds, or bring your tent. The fun begins Friday, June 20 at 4:00 p.m. and ends Sunday, June 22 at 4:00 p.m.

Lots of eating, fellowship, bingo, swimming, fishing, Silent Auction (bring nice, new items for bidding), and more.

Questions? Contact Becky Brown (Beckymb4591@hotmail.com) or Amanda Hunsaker (dahunsaker@yahoo.com, 2311 93rd Place, Lubbock, TX 79423, or 806-745-2664).

57th Annual Ernst and Anna Dube Family Reunion
Sunday, June 8, 2008, 11:00 a.m.

VFW Hall, 1623 FM 141, Giddings, Texas

Barbecue lunch will be followed by a program and Silent Auction

Moonwalk for the kids

For more information contact Ron Lammert

210-695-5421

Remember: Dube is "Oak Tree" in Wendish

Wendish Heritage Tour
December 4-15, 2008

Sure! The weather may be a bit chilly in December, in Deutschland? However, if one dresses appropriately, including practical shoes, (I suggest something like you would hike in, with a "*cleated sole*", along with some mohair socks), the rest of your senses will be so taken with the ambiance of the places we will visit that it will not matter! Another matter of importance is to spend some time beforehand getting in shape to WALK. Whether it is up the steps at Wartburg Castle, on the "city tours", strolling in "wonderment" through the many Christmas Markets (each with it's own unique history and character), or as you actually walk in the steps of your Wendish ancestors, your cardiologist will be amazed at your improved stamina.

Yes, Georgie and I are the organizers of this tour, which had its inception at the behest of TWHS president, Chuck Dube. Since we had led a similar tour in December 2003, and have a good working relationship with Mr. Peter Zender, the owner of "Luther Tours" and "Christian Travel Services", we eagerly agreed to work out the details.

I hope that you will take the time to examine the details of this tour in the itinerary (brochure) included as an insert in this Newsletter. The overriding emphasis is to not only see the "Wendish Lands", but to experience the culture, both as it exists today and as it was in the past as preserved by our counterparts in the homeland. Chuck Dube has insisted from the beginning that we work toward renewing and increasing our bonds with *The Domowina*, (in Bautzen, Cottbus, and their other satellite locations). As you can see from the itinerary, these folks have been very gracious and eager to make our visit a productive and memorable one!

Along the way we will also celebrate in devotion and song the Holy Season of Advent! Hopefully that will include a worship service at the famous *Castle Church* in Wittenberg on Sunday morning, December 7th!

I hope that YOU will be able to join us!
Pastor Bob Boyce

Financial Report: 2007 Actual & 2008 Projected

Financially, the Texas Wendish Heritage Society ran a surplus of \$378.66 in 2007 after running a surplus of \$401.39 in 2006.

We had favorability in the following areas:

- The Wendish Fest was favorable by \$2,573 versus the budget due to the Thrivent donation and Wendish Fest sponsors.
- Interest/investment income was \$1,777 more than expected due to higher rates.
- All other expenses were under budget by \$2,021 driven by lower utilities and insurance.

We had unfavorability in the following areas:

- Gift shop purchases exceeded the budget by \$1,449 as we increased inventory.
- The surplus would have been more favorable, but we spent \$5,000 out of the general fund on renovations to our museum buildings.

Special donations allowed us to perform some needed repair and renovation work. We took in \$14,000+ and spent \$16,000+ (including the \$5,000 from the general fund). Over \$1,500 was spent on landscaping projects to improve the courtyard in addition to the many hours of donated labor. We are also grateful for the

Giddings Hotel/Motel tax money which allowed us to replace and increase the number of billboards we now have on major highways approaching Giddings.

The endowment fund increased by \$26,325 in 2007, with \$14,810 coming from memberships in excess of \$15.00 and \$11,515 from gifts and memorials. The endowment fund balance is \$208,381.

In 2008, major renovations will be made to the exterior of the St. Paul Building, which will in-

clude enclosing the porches to provide much needed storage space.

The 2008 approved budget projects a balanced budget. Revenue will decrease by \$698 and cost of sales will decrease by \$502. Noodle sales should increase in 2008 due to higher sales price and steady volume. The price increase will offset the higher cost of eggs and flour. Total expenses will decrease by \$978. We are not budgeting to pay any of the renovation work out of the general fund in 2008.

George Boerger

Wendish Communities

Dr. George Nielsen, Special Features Editor

The October 2007 issue carried an article by Jan Slack on the Wendish presence in Knippa, Texas, and the following column is on Thorndale, another Wendish community. If you would like to write on a community and its ties to the Wends, please get in touch with me: Gnie857317@rap.midco.net or 1132 Enchantment Rd. Rapid City, SD 57701.

The Wends at Thorndale and Noack

The Wendish road to Thorndale first led to Hochkirch, or Noack, as it is called today. The distance separating the two communities is about 9 miles. On September 21, 1871, 7 years before Thorndale even existed, Peter Zieschang purchased 440 acres of land on Brushy Creek in southern Williamson County.

Zieschang was no stranger to world travel, and like George Boback [see October 2002 Newsletter] he had first migrated to Australia. In the 1850s Zieschang, with his wife and niece, had settled in Victoria in a Wendish and German community named Hochkirch, in honor of the town in Saxony. But a decade later, ill health led Zieschang to return to Germany with his family that by then included two Australian-born sons. The Old World, however, no longer suited him, so he again departed from Germany, except this time he decided on Texas. In November 1870 he, along with about 35 other Wends, landed at New Orleans. After touching base at Serbin he settled briefly at Fiskville, near present-day Pflugerville, and then bought the land on Brushy Creek and started the settlement he called Hochkirch. Wild cattle abounded along Brushy

Creek as well as on the grasslands to the north, so in addition to limited farming, he worked with cattle. In keeping with Texas tradition, he traveled to Georgetown, the county seat, and registered his PZ brand.

Distance from a Lutheran congregation precluded frequent church attendance, but Zieschang retained his ties to the Wendish community in Serbin, and from time to time he and his family traveled there for church services and for the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and baptism.

Thorndale came into existence in 1878 as a station stop on the International and Great Northern Railroad. Rockdale had been the end of track since 1874, and for 2 years there was no construction while railroad personnel secured funding and lands for the right of way. Once construction resumed westward toward Austin, any location about 12 miles down the track would become a new station. Thorndale's location was more a matter of speed of travel with horse-drawn wagons than a particular geographical feature. The initial site for Thorndale was in Williamson County, 3 miles west of its present location, but in 1880 Lewis Carothers moved his store eastward across the county line. No specific reason was given for the change to Milam County, but a possible reason was the absence of adequate water. The new location was a bit closer to Brushy Creek, but a good water supply was a perennial problem for Thorndale. Four years later, in 1884, the population was 130.

The next step in Wendish expansion that led from Hochkirch to Thorndale was made by two Polnick brothers [see October 2003 Newsletter]. The patriarch, August Polnick had been part of the 1853 migration and he provided shelter for the Kilian family when the *Ben Nevis* immigrants moved inland. Eventually the family settled near Fedor and that is where, in 1876, August died. His eldest son, Andreas, who had been an infant on the voyage to Texas, purchased land in Williamson County in 1880 north and east of Hochkirch in the direction of Thorndale. The next year the second son, C. August, who was born in Texas, purchased some of the land from Andreas and also acquired property in Thorndale. Previously, C. August had owned a store in Fedor and served as the postmaster. He sold his store to Fedor Soder, after whom the community was named, in 1882 and opened a new store in Thorndale.

Neither of the Polnicks was among the eight founding fathers of the Thorndale congregation although C. August lived in Thorndale until 1903. By 1910, C. August had moved to Coryell County and Andreas was in Bosque County. The Polnick name, however, still is visible, along with the date of 1912, on the façade of one of the buildings on Thorndale's Main Street.

While the railroad made Thorndale possible, it was the barbed wire fence that enabled Thorndale to grow. Barbed wire had been invented in 1874 in Illinois, and Texans began using it in 1877. The land around Thorndale, especially to the north and west, was largely prairie and barbed wire enabled the farmers to protect the fields from the cattle. With the railroad, barbed wire, and fertile prairie soil, commercial agriculture was possible, and Thorndale boomed. Cotton brought prosperity and, by 1923, Thorndale was home to five gins and a cotton seed oil mill.

Beginning in the mid-1880s other Wendish families making the move to Thorndale included such surnames as Michalk, Moerbe, Urban, Simank, Kieschnick, Felfe, Heinze, Wuensche, Biar, and Miertschin. Wends settled both in town and around the countryside. Most of the land purchases were made to the north and west of town. Because many of the settlers

were from Fedor and Trinity was the nearest church, the resident pastor, Gotthilf Birkmann, assumed religious responsibility for them and occasionally traveled the 35 miles by horse and buggy to Thorndale and Hochkirch to preach and administer the sacraments. From 1885 to 1891, Birkmann's visits became scheduled and he made his trips quarterly and on special occasions.

While Thorndale boomed, Hochkirch grew at a slower rate. Hochkirch was 2 miles south of the railroad, so it remained a small community. Some Wends, such as the Poldracks and the Noacks, had joined with local Germans and formed a Lutheran cluster at Hochkirch. Birkmann treated Thorndale and Hochkirch as a single parish and alternated the services between the two communities. In 1890, both became organized congregations and both built churches the next year. Carl Michalk donated 10 acres of land for the Thorndale church, and the members collected \$229.58 to construct a 24 ft x 36 ft building. In Hochkirch, Peter Zieschang donated the land for the church. The mission board called Pastor E. P. Gesterling to serve both congregations as well as Lutherans in Taylor and Austin. Two years later, in 1893 after Pastor Gesterling accepted a call to a different parish, Thorndale and Hochkirch became self-sustaining and called a new pastor. The second pastor, A. W. Kramer, served both congregations until 1896 when the parish divided and Hochkirch got its own resident pastor, C. A. Waech. The congregation, Christ Lutheran, currently served by Pastor James P. Kretzmann, maintains a membership of 150.

The membership of St. Paul's Lutheran in Thorndale grew to 208 in 1899, more than the little church building could hold, so in 1900 the congregation built a new 40 ft x 60 ft building and used the smaller building as a school. The new church included a steeple and a new bell weighing 1,000 pounds. The boom time for Thorndale took place at the turn of the century when the fertile prairie land was still inexpensive, and many more families from Lee County moved north. Pastor Birkmann wrote: "We poor Post Oak congregations couldn't measure up to anything like it. It was feared by some in places like Fedor, Lincoln, Manheim that their

congregations would be weakened to a precarious degree, or even pass quite out of existence." By 1911 the membership reached 654. In 1912, Thorndale gave up some of its Wends when some members moved to Bishop, but in the following years it grew in membership to exceed 800.

The photo at right identifies the church as the German church, and that is what it was. Although a few members of the congregation, such as Jacob Moerbe, had been part of the 1854 migration and some of the second generation knew some Wendish, German had become the language at church and at home. Also, those pastors who served the congregation preached in German and Germans were members of the congregation. The one non-Wendish founder of the congregation was Johann Winter, an Austrian. The Wendish heritage remained nevertheless, largely because of the predominance of members of Wendish descent. In the congregation, for example, Gerhard Biar, the *Vorsaenger* (cantor) instructed my father, the organist, on hymn tunes and ways the Wends liked to sing, even though the hymns were in German. And in the homes certain terms such as piwo (beer) and practices associated with weddings lingered, even if the origins were not always identified as Wendish.

By 1940, the second church building had become inadequate and in need of repairs, and only procrastination saved it. That summer a tornado resolved the question and blew the building from its foundation. The timing for building a new church could not have been more opportune because World War II began the next year and brought with it a scarcity of materials. So just as the tornado had ended the German church building, so the war sealed the fate of the German language. English already



had been added to special religious events, and as early as 1903 Pastor J. H. Tegeler traveled by train from Austin to deliver a series of sermons in English on Wednesday nights. English also became the language of instruction in the school, even though some German was taught and German was used in the study of the Catechism and the Bible. With the war, the congregation became predominately English with German as the secondary language. The current pastor is James K. Mann and the membership is around 800.

Thorndale was my home town from second through eighth grades. Three memories may be applicable. The first illustrates Thorndale's ties with Noack. On certain occasions such as mission festivals my father went to Noack to play the pipe organ and Mr. Biar led the singing. At that time Noack's pipe organ was operated with hand bellows and I went along to pump the handle to make it work. A second memory was the gusto with which the Thorndale congregation sang the chorals. The people enjoyed music and they liked tradition. And I remember the tornado in 1940. More than one person looked back and saw God's hand in that tornado. (Photo courtesy of Bill Biar.)

Membership Report

For the 4th year in a row, we have exceeded 900 members. Currently we have 910 members versus last year's record of 964 and a goal of 990. We already have 120 first-time members and 25 former members!

While we have members from 42 states, we recently added a member from the District of Columbia. Bryan Hart received a gift member-

ship from his grandfather Wilfred Schrader. Are there other grandparents who want to buy a membership for a grandchild?

A final notice has been mailed to those who have not renewed. If you have not renewed, this will be your final newsletter, so please renew. We don't want to lose you!

George Boerger, Membership Chair

First-time Members

M'linda Beck	Round Rock	Julia Nelson	Ore City
John Beck	Round Rock	M.A. Peckham	Urbana, IL
Terry Cherico	Rockdale	Florence Richter	Everman
Debra Ann Cunningham	Midland	Mary Ann Simmang	Lincoln
Barney Lee Fischer, Sr.	Perkinston, MS	Madison Stine	Porter
Chris Greiner	Bryan	Daniel Symmank	Dublin, CA
Bill Greschel	Reston, VA	David Symmank	Mt. Vernon, WA
Jennifer Harrod	Pine Bluff, AR	Ievgeniia Zasoba	San Jose, CA
Bryan Hart	Washington, DC	Dmitriy Zasoba	San Jose, CA
Tommy Mayhood	Dayton	Michael Wayne Zieschang	Austin
George Melde	Hamilton		

Student (\$7.50) Members

McKay Bloxham	Katy	Allison Hart Karisch	Austin
Amélie Boerger	Houston	Constance Dale Karisch	Spring
Amanda Domaschk	Austin	Margaret Lovallo	Sacramento, CA
Laura Domaschk	Dallas	Matthew Steglich Smith	Richardson
Guillermo Ehler Flores	Linn	Madison Stine	Porter
Ashley Hielscher	Austin	Jordan Watts	Katy
Charles Hielscher	Austin	Caitlin West	Abilene
Ketrin Jones	Abilene		

Patron (\$30) Members

Vera Deterling	Houston	Kenneth Mersiovsky	Houston
Delores Kasper Duval	Clifton	Vicky Pollock	Casper, WY
Carol Grote Flores	Linn	Kathy Preston	Pasadena
Shantelle Grace	Belton	Wilfred Schrader	Pensacola, FL
Jennifer Harrod	Pine Bluff, AR	Elo Toll	Cedar Park
Eugene Hemmann	St. Charles, IL	Doris Malke Zabel	St. Louis, MO
Donald C. Hilsberg	Elizabeth, CO	Eunice Malke Zimmerman	Glendale, MO
Murry Holditch	Greenville, TN		

Sponsor (\$50) Members

Carroll J. Dorsett	Adkins	Don Simmang	Lincoln
Bill Greschel	Reston, VA	Mary Ann Simmang	Lincoln
John Hingst	Kokomo, IN	Dr. Wilbert Sohns	Gatesville
Martin Glenn Hobratchk	Ranchos de Taos, NM	Peggy Symmank	Magnolia
Nancy Kent	Bellevue, WA	Dian Teinert	Houston
Rev. Alfred C. Prellop	Baton Rouge, LA	Rev. Richard Wukasch	Grimsby, ON, Canada
Patricia Synatschk Silva	Houston		

Century (\$100) Members

Linda Boerger	Wharton	Louis W. Jannasch, Jr.	La Marque
Weldon Boerger	Wharton	Dr. Gerald Kieschnick	St. Louis, MO
Barbara A. Jannasch	La Marque		

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Tuesday through Sunday except holidays.

President: Chuck Dube

Vice President: Eunice Dunk

Secretary: J.B. Gersch, Jr.

Treasurer: Evelyn Buchhorn

Membership rates (paid annually except for Life membership level):

\$25 for couples

\$7.50/person (students), \$15/person (regular membership), \$30/person (Patron), \$50/person (Sponsor), \$100/person (Century), \$250/person (Silver), or \$1,000/person (Life) payable as lump sum or 2 installments. Members receive the Annual Membership Directory, 4 quarterly newsletters, and free admission to the Museum.

Newsletter editor: Jan Slack

Special Features Editor: Dr. George Nielsen

Send newsletter submissions to Editor, TWHS News, at the above address.

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