



# Texas Wendish Heritage Society

LETTER

1984

Volume V, No, 2 Giddings, Texas, USA Jan.-Feb, March, 1984

HAPPY NEW YEAR - 1984

"PROSTWA" - "PRAYER"

by Jan Kilian, 1846

1. Ow wola lubosce, stan, ty sy nade mnu!  
Ja chcu, stoz jeno chces; we tebi wotpocnu,  
we tebi jeno mam ja zboznosc tu a t-in.
2. Ow slowo ziwjenja, so we mni zakorjen,  
mje zahor a mi swec, zo dzelam, hdyz je dzen!  
Mi pomha twoja moc, zo prendu pre wsu noc.
3. Ow ruka swernosce, mje stajnje dzerz a wjedz,  
w cimz chodzu njecistym, to ty mje wsitko slec,  
mje rjenje wupys tu na wecnu hoscinu.

From SPEWNIK, Volume II, Budysin, 1975

Ludowe nakladnistwo Domowina; Spewnik za 9. a 10.  
letnik serbskich-polytechniskich wysich sulow  
a 9. do 12. letnik rozserjeneju serbskeju wyseju  
sulow

This beautiful prayer was set to music to a melody  
by Jan Kilian by Rudolf Jenc (1950)

1854 - 1984

This being the 130th Anniversary of the Wendish  
Immigration from Lusatia, Germany to Galveston,  
Texas and from there to what is the center of the  
Wends of Texas and the Texas Wendish Heritage Society  
in Serbin, Lee County, Texas, a celebration is in on

The NEWSLETTER of the Texas  
Wendish Heritage Society, head-  
quartered at the Wendish Museum  
in Serbin, Texas, is published  
quarterly.

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Membership Dues: \$10.00 per per-  
son, per year, and may be sent  
to TREASURER: TWHS,  
P.O.Box 311, Giddings, Texas,  
78942

all NEWSLETTER materials  
to John J. Socha,  
P.O.Box 180  
Giddings, Texas 78942

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The Texas Wendish Heritage  
Society is a non-profit or-  
ganization and in no way dis-  
criminate in matters of race  
religion, or ethnic background.

cial contributions to  
Texas Wendish Heritage  
Society are tax-deductible.

With this issue we send our  
best wishes to all of our  
friends and members in Wend-  
enland.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT THE  
TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY.  
URGE THEM TO JOIN.

WRITE TO US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.  
KEEP THE WENDISH SPIRIT ALIVE.

EDDIE AND MARY BUSH of Hun-  
tingdon, Tenn sent Christ-  
mas Greetings, She writes;  
"I'm very interested in the  
"Wends/" As I am a descendant  
of them thru the POLNICK'S.  
Father August Sr. and Sons  
Andrew and August Jr. were  
my (family). My grandmother  
was OLCA POLNICK, daughter  
of Andrew."

The Bush's stopped in to vi-  
sit with us in Giddings last  
summer. Since then they moved  
from Michigan to Tennessee

Anyone desiring to write to  
Mary Bush about the Polnick  
family, her address is:  
Eddie and Mary Bush  
792 Lexington St.,  
Huntingdon, Tenn, 38344

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#### WENDISH MUSEUM NOTES

Co-ordinator, Evelyn N. Kasper

Evelyn and her helpers con-  
tinue to do a most commenda-  
ble job of operating the Mu-  
seum under part-time, vol-  
unteer conditions. The Museum  
is a center of great interest  
to many who are seeking more  
and more information about the  
Wends of Texas. - We hope to  
hear from the KOAL FAMILY.  
Evelyn transcribed a letter  
which was given to the Museum  
I liked the statement: "Unsere  
Muttersprache is nicht Deutsch  
sondern Wendish." - (Our  
mother tongue is not German,  
but Wendish.jjs

THE WENDS AND THE REFORMATION  
by the Rev. Robert Koenig  
Assistant Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Giddings, Texas

(Editor's Note: In observance of Dr. Martin Luther's 500th Birthday Anniversary, Nov. 10, 1983, Rev. Robert Koenig was asked to present this Essay at the Nov. 13, 1983 meeting of the TWHS at Serbin. We present this Essay in its entirety for your enjoyment and enlightenment. There is much research yet to be done on this important subject. We would encourage scholars to continue submitting the fruits of their research to the TWHS NEWSLETTER. Our thanks to Rev. Koenig for his Essay. Each issue will present a meaningful segment of the Essay until it is given in its entirety. JJS)

In any attempt to trace the history of the Christian Church in the homeland of the Wends, known as Lusatia, we are faced with several difficulties. The first one is that Wendish, according to Nielsen, was not a written language until the Reformation Era, which accounts for the scarcity of historical materials available on the subject of the history of the Sorbs in medieval times. The writers of other languages did not choose to mention a great deal about the Wends, and wherever they did, it was usually a negative remark, an observation on their backwardness or lack of culture. Culturally speaking, the Wends were "late bloomers." They were not alone in this respect. The Low Germans also did very little writing in early times, and the explanation for this that I heard in German Literature classes was that eking out a living on the sandy soil of northern Germany was such a struggle that it left little time for the finer things in life such as writing. I'm sure that this explanation also applies to the Wends as we know very well that the only land they were permitted to keep as their own was the poorest soil in the region they held in the very early medieval times.

The second difficulty we face is that Lusatia, being so near the borders of Germany, Poland, and Bohemia, was often the victim of land grabs, and because of this, the Wends were generally speaking, unable to act as a unified people in any thing that involved decision making. As a result, the rights of the Wendish people to accept, or even so much as acquaint themselves with any particular religious teaching usually hinged on the question, "Who are our current rulers?"

"The Wends : : the Reformation," (continued from page three)

Also involved in the question of how the Wends eventually became Lutheran, was the fact, that, by and large, the Wends resisted Christianization until the Reformation Era. This may be contradicted by some, who will point to the fact that the Wends were assimilated into the Holy Roman Empire by the Christian emperor, Otto the Great, as far back as 963 A.D., and that Otto immediately sent Christian missionaries to them--surely by the time of Luther some five, six hundred years later, they would have been Christianized. However, the missionaries sent to them were at least as interested in collecting the tithes which the Holy Roman Empire entitled them to collect as they were in bringing the Gospel to them. Furthermore, these missionaries also attempted to force western European culture on the Wends, and neglected the promotion of Wendish culture, as, for instance, by encouraging the Wends to write their own language. These means did not win the hearts of the Wends but led them to think of the early Christian missionaries as being just so many more power gaining nobles, and that kind of people Lusatia already had more of than it needed. (To be continued in Vol. V, No. 3)

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COMING UP: An interesting story about the Family History of Peter August Noak and his wife, Wilhelmine (Nee Mitscherling) Noak, who came to America Dec. 12, 1870, from Gebhershof, Germany. It will be based on information compiled by Mrs. Esther Weigelt Black of Houston, Texas.

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DUBE ACQUAINTS BAYLOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABOUT THE WENDS

W. J. Dube III, son of the newly elected president of the TWHS, is Director of Student Financial Aid at Baylor U. in Waco. In early November he spoke to the Multicultural Education class at Baylor on the history and culture of the Wends. He is a member of the TWHS,...This was a first for Baylor - to learn from a Wend, about the Wends, according to Joyce L. Dube. She added: "Billy commented that many students had never heard of our ethnic group, so we were able to spread the news a little farther."

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GILDA: Martha Gilda, a friend of my sister, Mary Socha, in St. Louis, Mo., informs me that she owns a Wendish Prayer Book dating back to 1536. We hope this Prayer Book will be placed by her or her family at the Wendish Museum in Serbin. The date indicates it was from the Reformation Era about which Rev. Robert Koenig writes in his essay on page three.