



Texas Wendish Heritage Society

NEWSLETTER

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NALĚĆO - Der Frühling - SPRING, 1984

One of the musical treasures I brought home from Wendenland is a beautiful recording of the Oratorio, "NALĚĆO" composed by Korla August Kocor (1822-1904) to the classical words by Handrij Zejler dating back to 1847.

Hardly a week passes that I don't listen to at least a small portion of the two-sided recording, made in the German Democratic Republic. The spirit of the music, the soul-stirring choral renditions, and the lively orchestrations, together with the well chosen solo voices, make for a rich reflection of life in the land of the Wends.

It was 130 years ago this Spring that the clouds of unrest swirled in the lives of those who made the 1854 Immigration to Texas. The time was ripe for action and there was no stopping the movement. A Call was extended to the Rev. Jan Kilian in March, 1854, to become the spiritual leader of the proposed immigrant congregation. By May Kilian was led by God to accept the challenge. A busy summer of preparation followed and by September, 1854, the 588 Wends were ready for their now historic and unique of immigrations ever known in the annals of Texas and American history.

I would love to sponsor a Concert in honor of the 130th Anniversary of the Wendish Immigration. It would consist simply in the playing of the above musical, "Naleco." Anyone interested in hearing such a Concert, possibly at the Wendish Museum in Scrbin, contact the editor.

John J. Socha, Editor

ORCHIDS to the PETER FOUNDATION. See info about their grant of \$20,000 to the IWHS and their Challenge to the members to raise another \$10,000. JJS

TWHS OFFICE FOR 1984

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Membership Dues are \$10.00 per person, per year, and may be
sent to Treasurer: TWHS, P.O. Box 311, Giddings, Tx. 78942.

1 all NEWSLETTER materials.
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The NEWSLETTER of the Texas
Wendish Heritage Society,
headquartered at the Wend-
ish Museum in Serbin, Texas
is published Quarterly.

WRITE TO US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.
Keep the Wendish spirit alive.
Write out the facts about your
immediate family. Give full
names, birthdates, baptismal,
marriage, and
other correct dates. Jot down
any special information about
your family...Then go back to
your parents and their family
facts - your brothers and sis-
ters. Before long you'll be a
full-grown geneologist...Start
right now! Supply the Wendish
Museum with copies of informa-
tion about your family.

The Texas Wendish Heritage
Society is a non-profit or-
ganization and in no way
discriminates in matters
of race, religion, or eth-
nic background.

Financial contributions to
the Texas Wendish Heritage
Society are tax-deductible.

"Prostwa" - "Prayer" by Rev.
Jan Kilian, a piece of sheet
music, is now available at the
Wendish Museum for just 25
cents. Words and Music are in-
cluded.

WHO ARE THE WENDS? DO YOU
KNOW? GET ALL THE INFO YOU
CAN. TELL ABOUT THE WENDS
TO YOUR CHURCH GROUP, your
Civic, Social, or other
Club. When your Group needs
a Program, arrange for a
Volunteer worker from the
TWHS to be the speaker.

THINK WENDISH!

THE WENDS AND THE REFORMATION

by the Rev. Robert Koenig ¹⁴⁸
(Continuation from Vol. V, No 2)

During the five centuries preceding the Reformation the political power in Lusatia changed hands at least six times. About the year 1000 it was Poland, in 1032, the German state of Meissen and Brandenburg, in 1136, Bohemia. For about 200 years it was held alternately by Bohemia and one or another German principedom. Finally in 1329 Bohemia gained complete control only to lose it to Hungary in the 15th Century. By the time Luther was born, Bohemia was once more in control of upper Lusatia, the area from which most of the Serbin immigrants came, but Brandenburg (later known as Prussia) had gained control of Lower Lusatia, the area around Cottbus.

I believe we can vaguely understand what this kind of "off-war" would do to the attitude of the people living in the area, especially if none of these various conquerors seemed to be interested in them as people with a unique culture and language. And throughout this entire period German nobles grabbed this or that choice piece of real estate and settled on it. Thus the chief population centers became Germanized while the people who spoke Wendish were crowded into areas that no one saw fit to grab because just weren't that valuable.

All this time the language of the church in Lusatia was Latin, except that for one period of time under Bohemian rule the Czech language was used occasionally.

It was not until Luther's introduction of the idea that the vernacular, that is, the language of the common people, should be the language of religion, that the Wends really had the opportunity to learn what the Christian religion in general, and the salvation by grace through faith in particular was all about. It would seem to follow that Lower Lusatia, being under the rule of Brandenburg, or Prussia, would have been the portion of the Land of the Wends that was first influenced by the Reformation. And this seems to be borne out by Arthur Repp in an article he wrote for the Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church, in which he mentions that the first book of Lutheran origin to appear in the Wendish language was a hymnal and Catechism, all in one volume, by Albin Moller --and it was in Low Wendish, the language of the northern, or Prussian portion. It appeared in 1574, twenty-eight years after Luther's death. This may help explain why so little is known about the Wends during Luther's lifetime, especially if it is true--and the implication seems to be th-

it is true. But this may also have been one of the first times, if not the very first, that anyone ever attempted to write anything in the Wendish language. And if it was true, as I suspect, that Albin Moller may have been the first person to attempt to fit the Wendish language to alphabetical characters, it would also have to follow that some time elapsed before there were enough readers of that language to make any significant impact on the people of the country. (Part III will follow in Vol. V, No. 4)

"MARY SAT SPINNING: Mrs. Linda Mercer of Houston, called our attention to this number, a Wendish Folk Melody, on the 1984 Concert Season Program of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn. It is included in their Recording now available.

GOOD NEWS: Peter Foundation gives \$20,000 to the TWHS. This will be followed by similar grants for the next two years. The Peter Foundation has given the TWHS members a reasonable challenge. Note: "The Peter Foundation now challenges the Wendish Heritage Society to match this \$20,000 grant with \$10,000 from members, friends, and other Foundations. This is not a condition or requirement, but our directors will look favorably on a request for additional funding if you meet the challenge."

Here's hoping every member of the TWHS will accept that challenge and will participate in activities upcoming to meet the challenge.

TED LAMMERT, former TWHS Pres., received this word from the Texas Historical Commission about the plans for a new Museum Building: "The Tex. Hist. Comm. Museum Services Dept. is pleased to recommend that you should proceed with the plans as provided to us with the above mentioned modification."

We appreciate the interest and know how of Clayton Kramer of Wichita Falls with the Grant from the Peter Foundation and about historical, geneological, museum and restoration projects. His wide background of experience is invaluable!

DAPHNE GARRETT of Houston and Garbin Area, has been very busy with numerous projects about which you'll want to be hearing. Her VOLKSBLATT Exhibit for the Wendish Museum promises to be a superb attraction. The Museum is open Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m. Plan to visit soon.