



New Texas German history website for classroom use and community outreach



Screenshot of the prototype of the Texas German History timeline web site

While the TGDP continues to interview Texas German speakers across the state, it is also in the process of creating a series of educational materials for classroom use that will complement the oral history interviews in the on-line archive (<http://www.tgdp.org>). Our first project involves the development of a Texas German history timeline that can be accessed over the Internet. As of summer 2009, our prototype timeline is on-line. The prototype is at <http://fasttex->

dev.diaa.utexas.edu/german_timeline/index.html. Users can study a timeline of events relevant to Texas German history and click on a year to read more information about a particular event, such as the founding of Fredericksburg. For each historical event (or specific people or organizations) there are source materials in digital format, such as images, newspaper reports, diary entries, letters, minutes of meetings, etc. For our prototype web page we have

scanned over 60 images from the archives of St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Austin. Once these images are uploaded to the web page users can click on the founding year of the church and access these images to learn more about the church. In the fall 2009 semester, we are testing the prototype of this website in the class "The Texas-German Experience" at UT Austin. In 2010, we plan to expand its content and to develop specific exercises that will help students learn more about Texas German history, culture, and heritage. We will also develop specific exercises for K-12 education. If you have any old pictures, newspapers, letters, diaries, etc. relevant to Texas German history, please contact the TGDP at texasgermandialect@gmail.com or at (512) 279-2462. We would like to make copies of your documents, digitize them, and

ask you for permission to use them for the Texas German history website. Storing your documents with us will allow future generations to access them for free over the internet.

TGDP MILESTONES 2009

- ◆ The book *The Life and Death of Texas German* was published in March 2009.
- ◆ In 2009, members of the TGDP presented five lectures on Texas German.
- ◆ During 2009, the Texas German Endowment received more than \$7,000 in donations. See inside for more details about the endowment.
- ◆ The TGDP added thirty new interviews with Texas German speakers to its on-line archive in 2009.

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Dissertation analyzes Texas Alsatian in Medina County

Karen Roesch defended her dissertation "Texas Alsatian: Henri Castro's Legacy" at the University of Texas on September 24, 2009. A long-time member of the TGDP, Karen became interested in Texas Alsatian in the spring 2007 semester, when she took a graduate class at UT on "Language Contact and Language Death in Texas" with Hans Boas. After conducting a few interviews in Castroville, Karen decided to write her dissertation on Texas Alsatian. Two and a half years and more than forty interviews later, Karen's dissertation

represents the first in-depth study of Texas Alsatian as spoken in Medina County. Texas Alsatian is distinct from other Texas German dialects in its vocabulary, sound system, and grammar. Besides studying the structure of this unique dialect, which was transported to Texas from the Rhine Valley in the early 1840s, Karen's dissertation also investigates extra-linguistic factors, such as ethnic identity, language loyalty, and language maintenance. Like the other dialects of Texas German spoken across central (Continued on p. 4)

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TGDP serves as a model for other heritage preservation projects



Hans Boas conducts an interview with a Texas German speaker in her kitchen

In 2001, the Texas German dialect Project (TGDP) was founded by Hans Boas at the University of Texas to document and archive interviews with some of the remaining Texas German speakers. What started out as a small collection of oral history interviews has grown substantially over the past eight years. So far, Hans and his students have interviewed more than 300 Texas German speakers across the state.

During the first year, the recordings were kept in Hans'

Texas German Dialect Archive. Between 2002-2005, Hans received funding from the Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services at UT as well as Texas Humanities to create this on-line archive. The main idea was to create a permanent home for the Texas German interviews so that they could still be accessed hundreds of years

later to tell the story of German immigration and life in Texas.

Together with his students, Hans transcribed and translated the recordings and stored them on a server at UT. At the same time, three computer science students worked for more than a year to create a file management system that helped TGDP members with storing interviews and the accompanying metadata on the server. These students also created the public website that allows users to access the recordings, together with their transcriptions and translations.

During the fall 2002 semester, Hans tested the prototype website in his class "The Structure of German" at UT. Student feedback helped the TGDP team with fine-tuning the design of the website as well as the

different options for accessing the recordings and related data. Two additional revisions in 2003 and 2004 helped the TGDP team finalize the on-line dialect archive. Since 2005, its layout and access options have remained the same, giving returning users to the archive the same experience. The only

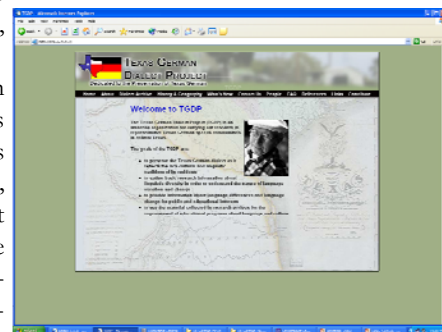
way in which the website has changed since is its content: we constantly add more interviews, update information about research findings, and provide new links relevant to Texas German language, culture, and history.

With the on-line archive in place, Hans and his students started researching Texas German language, culture, and history. Over the past years, TGDP members have given numerous presentations at meetings of historical preservation societies throughout Texas, as well as at academic conferences in the U.S., Australia, and Europe. The growing interest in the TGDP and its on-line archive also led to reports in local, national, and international newspapers and magazines. The success soon caught the interest of other researchers and organizations concerned with heritage preservation.

In 2007, John Tomeček, who is now a graduate student in the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies at UT, contacted Hans about archiving oral history recordings with speakers of Texas Czech. Interested in his Czech heritage, John had already recorded a fair amount of interviews with Texas Czech speakers and was looking for ways to store these recordings and to make them accessible to a wider audience. Hans helped John by giving him access to the infrastructure of the Texas German on-line archive, as well as its underlying interview procedures and file management system. Today, John is still using experience gained from the TGDP to help

him manage his Texas Czech recordings.

In 2008, Hans also consulted with two other language and culture projects at the University of Texas. Ra-



Home page of the Texas German archive

chel Showstack, a graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, is planning to create an archive of recordings with speakers of the many different Spanish dialects in Texas.

Lars Hinrichs, an assistant professor in the English Department at UT, investigates different varieties of English in Texas. Lars' project aims to find out what "Texas English" is with respect to different ages and ethnic groups, and how it is changing. Together with his students, Lars is currently conducting fieldwork among Austin-born speakers of Texas English. His website <http://www.texasenglish.org> contains lots of interesting information about English dialects in Texas.



Interview in New Braunfels

office and used for teaching purposes. However, it soon became apparent that people outside of Hans' classes wanted to listen to the recordings. To make the recordings available to a wider audience, Hans applied for funding to create the

Interview with a group of Texas German speakers in Doss





First book published on Texas German in more than 30 years

In March 2009, Hans Boas' new book *The Life and Death of Texas German* was published with Duke University Press. The 345-page book is the first substantial study of the Texas German dialect since the early 1970s.

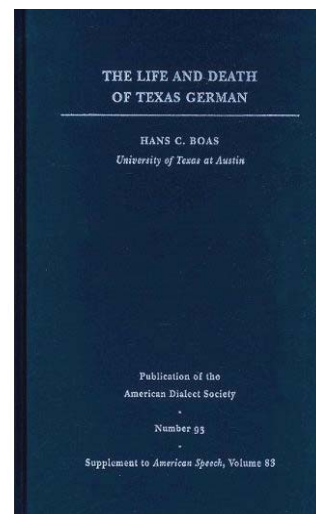
Hans' book is based on interviews with Texas German speakers from the New Braunfels area as well as other select Texas German communities. It presents the first major study of Texas German as spoken in the twenty-first century, focusing on its formation and the linguistic and cultural changes it has undergone. This New World dialect, formed more than 150 years ago in German communities in central Texas, is an unusual example of a formerly high-status dialect that declined for sociopolitical reasons in the early 20th century. An important case study for dialect research, Texas German is now critically endangered and will probably be extinct by 2050 because it is not being passed on to younger generations.

By comparing and contrasting present-day data with data from the German dialects brought to Texas since the 1840s, Hans' book offers an in-depth analysis of mutual interaction between the German-speaking

community and English-speaking Texans, long-term accommodation of Texas German speakers in this new community, and language hybridization on the Texas frontier. The volume also analyzes a number of structural changes in Texas German over the past century and examines sociolinguistic aspects of the Texas German community from its foundation to today, providing insight into the dynamics underlying new-dialect formation, diglossia, language shift, language maintenance, and language death.

The book received a favorable review in *The Journal of the German Texas Heritage Society*. Kevin Mitchell concludes his review with the following words: "Boas' book has chapters that will interest Texana buffs, but many sections are geared toward academically rigorous analysis of the linguistic and socio-historical development of Texas German. Linguists will rejoice. More casual readers should have a grammar dictionary on hand."

From the table of contents: 1. Introduction 2. Sociohistorical Context 3. Dialect Contact and New-Dialect Formation 4. Developments in Texas German Phonology 5. Morphosyntactic Developments in



Hans Boas' new book on Texas German

Texas German 6. Language Death and Language Maintenance. 7. Conclusion.

The book costs \$20 and can be ordered through your local book store, directly from Duke University Press (1-800-651-0122), or online, for example at Amazon.com.

Texas German Endowment at the University of Texas raises over \$30,000



Historic Anhalt dance hall

Remember the Alamo! is a famous slogan in Texas and beyond. It is so powerful because it marks an important event in Texas history and because people have heard it so many times. But can you imagine anyone in two hundred years saying "Remember the Texas

Germans"? Probably not. Even today, most undergraduate students at UT have never heard of German immigration to Texas or of the many contributions by German immigrants to the arts, architecture, agriculture, music, food and drink, and infrastructure of Texas.

You may ask "why?" People today or in the future probably do not remember the Texas Germans because there is a dearth of information about their language, history, and culture. It is not taught in detail in Texas schools. Images, documents, and certain

historic buildings such as the dance hall in Anhalt or the Vereinskirche in Fredericksburg will certainly still exist in 200 years. But these buildings do not tell any stories. They do not provide first-hand information about German immigration to Texas, and how subsequent generations of Texas Germans helped shape the Lone Star State.

The Texas German Project at UT records these stories from Texas German speakers who heard them from their parents and grandparents. These oral histories, passed down from one generation to the next, are archived and preserved for as

long as UT exists. To ensure our continued operation, the Texas German Endowment at the University of Texas is looking to raise one million dollars. The interest from the endowment helps support the recording of oral history interviews as long as Texas German speakers remain. After that, funds will support student research on Texas German language, culture, and history.

2009 marked a special goal: we passed the \$30,000 mark. Please consider donating to the Texas German Endowment at the University of Texas to help us preserve this special part of Texas German heritage for future generations! (see also page 6)



New TGDP Member 2009: Michaela Bentz



Michaela Bentz

Michaela Bentz joined the TGDP in September 2009. She is pursuing an interdisciplinary doctorate in Germanic and General Linguistics at UT. Her dissertation working title is "Structural definitions of code-switching in German dialects in the Balkans". She is currently teaching German at UT and has done linguistic field work on Danube Swabian in Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, France, and Brazil. After graduating from the University of Heidelberg with an M.A. in German philology and Romance linguistics (where she also studied Slavic linguistics), she studied in Berlin and Munich. Beside Danube Swabian and Texas German, she is very interested in Cimbrian, and she has recently been working on this language as a research fellow at the University of Trento in Italy. She is interested in endangered languages and dialects in general, especially in Germanic varieties. Michaela loves having BBQs with her friends, listening to and singing gospel music and refereeing soccer games.

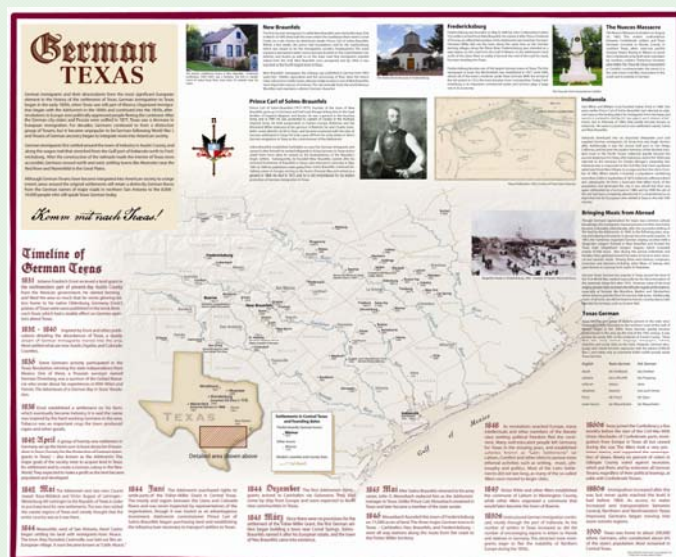


Karen Roesch helping out with the harvest in an Alsatian vineyard during a part of her fieldwork in the Rhine Valley in the fall of 2008.

Continued from p. 1:

Texas, Texas Alsatian is critically endangered. Because it has not been systematically passed on to younger generations since the 1940s, Texas Alsatian will go extinct within the next 30-40 years. Karen's dissertation is unique because it is the first in-depth analysis of this endangered new-world dialect. In addition, she has contributed significantly to documenting the Alsatian heritage for future generations by depositing the recordings of her interviews with more than 30 Texas Alsatian speakers with the Texas German Archive. These interviews can be accessed over the Internet at <http://www.tgdp.org>.

Before starting graduate school in Germanic Studies at UT Austin, Karen held a Masters in Curriculum and Teaching from Michigan State University. She has taught German, French, English, and Japanese in Australia, Germany, and Japan, as well as in New York and Texas. She is a native Texan and became interested in the various Texas German dialects several years ago through her high school German teacher from the German community of Doss, northwest of Fredericksburg.



German Texas map, available exclusively from the TGDP for \$40.00 including shipping and handling. See included order form for details.

Featured: Texas German Map

Show your Texas German pride and contribute to the Texas German Endowment at the University of Texas at Austin by purchasing one of our high-quality prints of the history of German immigration into Texas!

Donated for fundraising purposes by mapmaker and German American Justin Cozart, this **beautiful 34"x28" map** includes a chronology of the history of Texas Germans dating back to 1831, when Johann Friedrich Ernst first fell in love with the wide-open country and wrote a book about it, *Reise nach Texas*. It also explains key concepts in German immigration, such as the role of the *Adelsverein*, an organization that was instrumental in the settling of Texas, the founding of Texas German towns, basic differences between Texas and Standard German, the popularity of German music, and more.



TGDP Featured Alum 2009: Mohamed Fakhreddine



Mohamed graduated from UT in May 2005.

It started as just another job, but it soon became more than that. As a UT Computer Science undergrad, Mohamed Fak-

hreddine had been working various odd jobs around campus, from creating PowerPoint presentations to ushering guests at UT's performance halls, when he found the ad for a PHP and SQL developer, posted by Hans Boas at the Germanic Studies Department. Mohamed had just recently learned about these technologies and saw it as a good opportunity to test his skill at applying them.

When Hans first described his vision, Mohamed was excited because he also saw the great potential of the project: a secure web-based tool that saved Hans's students time and increased efficiency by completely digitizing their

workflow, eliminating paperwork and allowing them to work from home. Over the next few months, the project took form as the two worked closely together, and Mohamed found that Hans had an energetic sense of optimism that was fun to work with on a daily basis. He also enjoyed meeting with Hans's students whenever possible and hearing about their work – studying and preserving spoken German in Texas – and how the new web tool had improved their work lives.

After graduating in 2005, Mohamed developed software full-time for FactSet, a financial services company in Connecticut, and he now works for Pervasive Software, a data integra-

tion company in Austin. He took his first job in Connecticut to experience the east coast and a different lifestyle; what brought him back to Austin was the city's laid-back, comfortable atmosphere. In August 2009, Mohamed enrolled in the graduate program in Computer Science at UT.

It has been four years, but Mohamed has not forgotten the opportunity Hans gave him, and will always remember it as a highlight of his young career. Hans and Mohamed have remained good friends, and if you come by Rudy's in northwest Austin at lunchtime on a weekday, you might just see them there...

Texas German lab moves to Burdine Hall

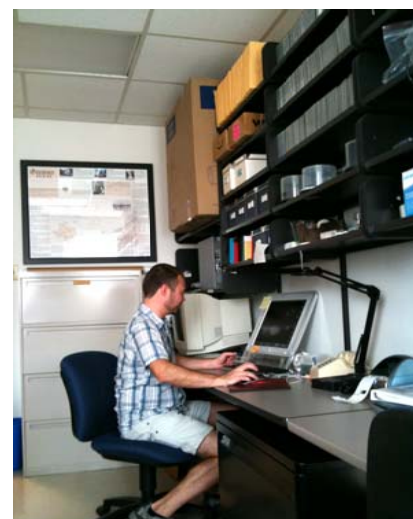
In December 2008, the TGDP, along with the Department of Germanic Studies, moved its lab from E.P. Schoch Hall to Burdine Hall, north of the Main Building on the UT campus. E.P. Schoch was home to the department for 18 years, from 1990 till the end of 2008. The extensive moving operation, which required many faculty members to do some spring-cleaning, took place during winter break in order to disrupt classes as little as possible. Louise Swanepoel and Erin Covert led the charge by organizing and packing all of the belongings of the TGDP. Many in the department consider the new location, shared with the Departments of American Studies, Religious Studies, and Sociology, to be an improvement. Certainly, for

the TGDP, the move has yielded a lab it can call its own, separate from other departmental lab space. Although the lab is a bit smaller than the old one in E.P. Schoch, it has two windows and more storage space.

The new lab is located on the third floor of Burdine Hall and holds all of the recordings of interviews with Texas German speakers as well as the accompanying documentation and forms. It also holds a substantial collection of recordings of German dialects from the 1950s, together with detailed information about each of the speakers. Students and research assistants use the lab's four computer workstations for processing the interviews, transcribing and translating them, uploading them to the on-line

archive, and for conducting linguistic analysis. Since August 2009, the lab has seen more activity because of the new Texas German Timeline project (see page 1). Throughout 2009 and 2010, members of the TGDP are scanning historic documents such as images, letters, newspaper articles, diaries, etc. so they can be accessed by students in digital format for in-class assignments and homework. The digitized documents are being used for the first time by students in Hans Boas' undergraduate class "The Texas-German Experience", which he is teaching at the University of Texas during the Fall 2009 semester.

Students in this class will also collect historical documents for



Hunter Weilbacher in the new lab

class assignments and will use the TGDP lab to scan and upload them to the new Texas History timeline web site (see page 1 for more information) so that others may access them over the Internet.

TEXAS GERMAN DIALECT PROJECT (TGDP)

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Plans for 2010

- The TGDP will test the first version of the Texas German history website and use it in an undergraduate class "The Texas-German Experience" at UT Austin.
- TGDP members will continue interviewing Texas German speakers throughout the state. We plan on extending our fieldwork sites to Harris County and the Corpus Christi area.
- Members of the TGDP will continue their fund raising efforts for the Texas German Endowment at UT.

Ways to give: How to contribute to the Texas German Endowment

Mildred Schulze of Freyburg with Hans Boas
after an interview session in 2004



Since 2001, the TGDP has conducted interviews with more than 320 speakers of Texas German throughout the Lone Star State, totaling more than 680 hours of recordings.

However, the project currently has a list of over 350 Texas Germans waiting to be interviewed. Because many of the current and potential Texas German informants are in their 80s and 90s, this means that valuable interviews could be lost in case they passed away before they were interviewed. The process of adding entries to the Dialect Archive is extremely time intensive. Per hour of interview added to the archive, an estimated 50 hours of work are necessary for setting up the interview, traveling to the interview site, recording the interview, and then digitizing, editing, analyzing, transcribing, translating, and archiving the interview material.

During the past eight years the project has received funding from various sources both inside and outside the University, totaling \$200,000 so far. After years of

funding by different sources, the TGDP has been unable to receive further external grants for the past two years, drastically reducing the TGDP's ability to record and archive interviews.

To maintain its operations, the TGDP requires an estimated budget of about \$50,000 annually. Since both state and federal funding agencies have cut down funding for the humanities over the past four years, the TGDP has not been able to secure funding from these sources. In the summer of 2011, the project will reach an interruption in recording and processing interviews. For these reasons the sole option to guarantee continuity of the TGDP lies in the establishment

of a Texas German Endowment to ensure its permanent maintenance.

The Texas German Dialect Endowment is seeking donations from individuals, businesses, and organizations. The tax-deductible donations are deposited into an account at The University of Texas at Austin which generates interest each year. This interest will support the recordings and research

activities of the TGDP for the next 30-40 years. After that, the interest generated by the endowment will be used for scholarships for students who are interested in researching Texas German culture, history, and language at the university. All donations are tax-deductible. Those who wish to contribute to the endowment can make checks out to "Texas German Endowment—UT Austin" and send them to Hans Boas, and receipts will be sent out within two weeks. If you are interested in making a donation to the endowment or have questions about the endowment, please contact Dr. Boas at (512) 796-3046.