



The Texas German Dialect Project heads west—to Wall, TX



Members of the TGDP with Ms. Lucille Schwertner and Mr. Louis Fohn outside the church in Wall, TX, October 2013.

In May 2013, Hans Boas received one of his favorite kinds of emails: “You’re studying Texas German? We have people here who speak that!” Most of these referrals come to us by word of mouth; this time, however, it was one of our 2013 media appearances – NPR’s All Things Considered – that had informed a gentleman in Wall, TX, of the existence of the

project. He told Hans that he thought he could gather up to 25 speakers for the TGDP. In a field where researchers are lucky to get 3 interviews in the same location – and with the TGDP averaging between 10 to 15 interviews per year – 25 speakers was equivalent to hitting the jackpot! Hans said yes instantly, and immediately began preparations to travel to Wall for a weekend of interviews in

the fall.

In addition to the prospect of so many new speakers, we were excited to travel to Wall, a small farming town just outside of San Angelo, for a second reason: we had never found speakers of Texas German so far to the west. As most readers of this newsletter know, the majority of German settlements in Texas are within a 100-150 mile range of Austin, in addition to smaller pockets of Texas German speakers north of the Dallas area. That Germans had settled as far west as San Angelo was unknown to the project until then, and we were excited to add this knowledge of Texas German settlements in the west to the larger picture of German culture and language in Texas.

With the possibility of so many speakers, it was a team of 7 researchers – Hans, Ryan, Margo, Collin, Katrin, Matthias, and Katie – that traveled to Wall during the first weekend of October 2013. Our inter-

views began bright and early on Saturday morning in the children’s Sunday school building of the St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Wall. At the request of Louis Fohn, the gentleman who had called Hans earlier in the summer, the church had

(continued on p. 2)

TGDP MILESTONES 2012-2013

- ◆ TGDP members present academic talks on TX German in Leiden, Austin, Erfurt, Frankfurt, Slubice, and Reykjavik.
- ◆ The TGDP is featured in media spotlights on the BBC, NPR, and Texas Monthly. They are all accessible through TGDP.org. Look them up!
- ◆ New speakers discovered in Marion, TX and Wall, TX, bringing our total number of speakers to more than 430.

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Luke Lindemann: Language decline in Texas and Nepal

During our interviews with Texas German speakers, a number of common themes emerge. Many speakers tell us that German was spoken everywhere when they were children: in church, at home, and among neighbors. Most report that they spoke only German until entering primary school, but their schoolteachers spoke to them only in Eng-

lish. Many were forbidden from speaking German on school grounds, and some even recall harsh punishments for speaking German in school.

During WWII, German culture carried an intense stigma in Texas. Since then, German has ceased to be the primary language of church and business in German communities, and the number of speakers

has steadily declined. Many of our respondents chose not to raise their children in German, to spare them the language’s stigma and to give them what they thought would be better opportunities in life.

This story of language decline in the face of larger cultural forces is not a story unique to Texas German. I was surprised by

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TGDP interviews unprecedented number of speakers in Wall — cont'd from pg. 1



Ms. Geraldine Halfmann, right, with Katrin Fuchs, left, of the TGDP, in Wall, TX. Ms. Halfmann was one of 20 new speakers interviewed by the TGDP that weekend.

very kindly given the TGDP access to six separate rooms where we conducted the interviews. The interviewing process, depending on times, consisted of two to three interviews, totalling between about an hour to an hour and a half. In the first interview, the researchers read a list of English words such as “milk,” “head” or “hairbrush,” phrases such as “two cows” or “the red ants that sting,” and sentences such as “Get that skunk off my front porch” or “It is too dry this year.” Each speaker, if they could, translated the word, phrase or sentence into Texas German. This translation task aims to compare how different Texas German speakers across the state pronounce the same words, phrases, and sentences, which helps the TGDP understand how Texas German has developed over the past 150 years in different areas across Texas.

After the translation task, the “open-ended” interview began

in German, and each speaker conversed with the TGDP members about various topics, such as where their ancestors came from and how they got to Texas, what it was like growing up in the Hill Country in the old days, ranching and farming practices, the history of the area, recipes, songs, etc. These

conversations - which serve as oral history interviews - are especially valuable, because they capture the unique Texas German history, culture, and heritage through the eyes of Texas German speakers themselves. By listening to these interviews, future generations will be able to understand and appreciate the many contributions to Texas made by German immigrants and their descendants.

If the team had time, they ran a third interview: a biographical questionnaire that also seeks to capture language use and language attitudes over time. In addition to gathering biographical data on each speaker - where and when they were born, where they grew up, etc. - this interview also focused on questions about where, when and how frequently the speaker used Texas German as children, adults, and in their current lives. By inquiring along these lines, the TGDP is able to develop a

detailed account of how the use of Texas German has changed over the past 75 years. One of the findings so far has been that the use of Texas German has drastically declined in public places such as stores, schools, and churches, while it has remained somewhat stable within families, in particular between spouses and siblings. The TGDP also often finds that many Texas German speakers spoke only German as young children - until they entered school, where speaking German was often forbidden. Other questions involve whether people would like to see Texas German be preserved, taught in the schools, featured on the radio and/or TV, and also asks speakers how strongly they identify with Texas German culture and whether they are proud of it.

While the first day saw the TGDP researchers interviewing in pairs - two TGDP members for each Texas German speaker - by the second day, they needed all six rooms that had been given to them. Louis Fohn was true to his word in how many Texas German speakers he knew in the community; and by the end of the weekend, the TGDP had gained 20 new speakers - an unprecedented amount of speakers for one weekend of interviewing! We very much appreciate the help and support of Louis, his wife Loretta, his brother Gerald, Daryl and Jeanie Schniers, and the St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Wall.



Hans Boas, left, with Louis Fohn, who set up the weekend of Wall interviews.



Texas German and “language death”

During the past year, there have been several reports about Texas German that feature the Texas German Dialect Project. The BBC broadcast a report on the TGDP, entitled “German dialect in Texas is one of a kind, and dying out.” NPR had an interview on All Things Considered entitled “Remembering the Long Lost Germans of Texas.” The July issue of Texas Monthly included a piece entitled “Auf Wiedersehen to a Dialect.” These are all excellent pieces that we encourage you to look up. If you look at the titles of these articles, you may notice some similarities. All of them allude to the likelihood that Texas German will cease to be spoken within the next thirty years. We frequently use the term “dialect death” or “language death” when we talk about Texas German and the Texas German Dialect Project.

We might refer to the diminishing use and eventual disuse of a language as “language death” for a few different reasons. In the context of academic language study, it is a useful analogy to describe language shift over time. There are currently thousands of languages in the world, and by some estimates, more than half of them will cease to be spoken within the next fifty years. For language activists who wish to revive a dialect for cultural or social reasons, the death analogy is a poignant metaphor that helps rally people's spirits to a cause. It is a powerful concept. However, the term can be problematic. A dialect is not a person, and there remain thousands of speakers of Texas German in Texas today. The titles of Texas Monthly's “Auf Wiedersehen to a Dialect” and NPR's “Remembering the Long Lost Germans of Texas”



John Kasper, TX German featured on the BBC segment

suggest at first glance that this is already ancient history. Such titles may raise eyebrows among the many people who still speak the language, and the many more who identify themselves as German-Americans. The fact that we continue to interview speakers from around Texas for the Texas German Dialect Project shows that, regardless of its future forecast, Texas German is still a living language

(though its use is somewhat reduced today).

More importantly, a language is a tool for its speakers, and the fate of a language is ultimately in their hands. The speakers of Texas German may be willing to accept the loss of their language in everyday life. It is sad to see the language go; the influence of German language and culture on Texas is deep and undeniable.

TGDP Member Dr. Jim Kearney teaches UT course on European immigration in Texas

This semester, Dr. Jim Kearney, a member of the TGDP, is teaching an undergraduate course covering European immigration in Texas in the nineteenth century. This immigration occurred in two substantial waves: the first during the three decades preceding the Civil War; the second in the latter two decades of the nineteenth century. Many modern Texans remain unaware of how this process altered the demographics of Texas significantly, and also accelerated the economic and agricultural development of the republic and (later) state. The TGDP makes a course appearance, exemplifying the amazing survival of pockets of bilingualism throughout Texas, even after several genera-

tions. The course also highlights how the immigrant story intersected with larger themes of Texas history such as frontier, Native Americans, and slavery. Contrasting attitudes and values among as many different peoples led to conflict at times, especially during the Civil War, since many of the immigrants openly opposed secession and/or slavery. Roughly two-thirds of these European-Texan immigrants hailed from the present Central European countries of Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, and Alsace and Lorraine, the German-speaking provinces of France. Smaller numbers of immigrants came from Scandinavia, Poland, and Great Britain,

which at the time included Ireland. An even smaller contingent hailed from the Mediterranean European countries. Dr. Kearney's course focuses on those nationalities that provided a sufficient number of immigrants to establish and sustain recognizable communities in Texas where the mother languages and national customs persist(ed) for at least a generation. The course also examines the contrast between the two main areas of Central European immigration, namely the Hill Country counties of Comal, Gillespie, and Kendall and the South-Central counties of Austin, Colorado, Lavaca and Fayette.

Organized chronologically, the course covers the period from 1821 (the beginning of

Anglo-American colonization) until 1914 (the beginning of World War I) and addresses both the push—the causes for European emigration—and the pull—the attraction of Texas as a destination. Because of this emphasis, the course has been cross-listed as an upper division elective in American Studies, European Studies, and Germanic Studies. The goal is to further students' understanding of the cultural and social forces at play in the nineteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic, while also deepening their appreciation for the positive contributions of the many different European nationalities that have added strands to the rich and colorful tapestry of Texas.



Featured TGDP Alum: Luke Lindemann

Luke Lindemann was born in Austin, Texas, and lived there for most of his life. He worked for the Texas German Dialect Project from 2011 to 2013, although his experiences with the TGDP go back to 2005 when he was in high school. That year, he attended a lecture by Dr. Hans Boas about the TGDP, then still in its infancy, and he was fascinated by the discussion of a language that has been in the Lindemann family for six generations. He credits his academic interest in linguistics to this early exposure. He volunteered for the TGDP during the summers while he attended Pomona College in Claremont, CA. After graduating with his

linguistics degree in 2009, Luke spent a year teaching English in Nepal on a Fulbright grant. (Fun fact: he first went to Nepal in his senior year of college, after Katie Dutcher, new TGDP'er and Luke's good friend, visited Kathmandu and sent him pictures of the "Monkey Temple.") After moving back to Austin in 2011, he officially joined the TGDP team and worked for the project for two years. While with the TGDP, he conducted and transcribed interviews and maintained the Texas German database, and was an integral member of the TGDP team. (We have him to thank for much of the organization and bookkeeping of the project over the



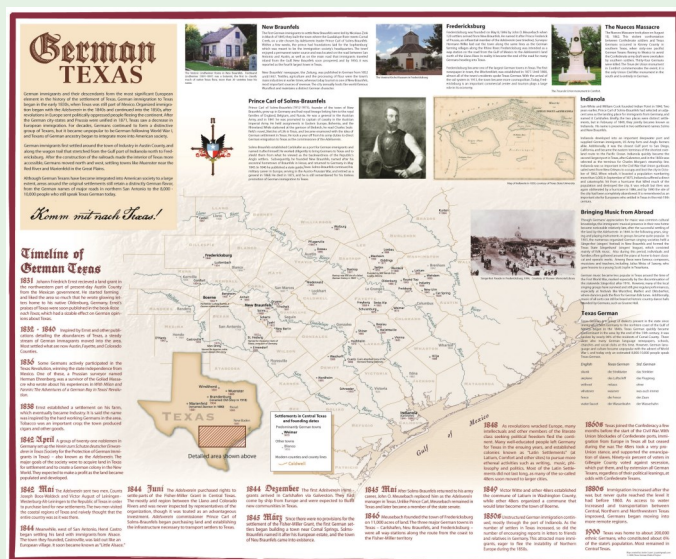
Luke Lindemann at Yale University, where he is now pursuing his Ph.D.

last few years.) He had a wonderful time working for the project and interacting with Texas German speakers from all over Central Texas.

While we miss him at the TGDP, we are happy that

Luke is now in his first year of the Ph.D. program in the linguistics department at Yale University. His primary focus is the languages of the Himalayas, though he is also working with a team on the first descriptive grammar of the Western Australian language Tjupan. In addition, he intends to continue work on Texas German with the help of data collected by the TGDP. He is having a lot of fun living in New Haven and exploring the Northeast, although he misses Texas and all of his friends and visits as often as possible.

Thank you for all your hard work, Luke. We will miss you here at the TGDP, and we wish you all the luck in the world!



The 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.



New TGDG Member 2013: Katie Dutcher

Katie Dutcher, our newest TGDG staff member, comes to us originally from California. As a teenager, the languages and linguistics of J.R.R. Tolkien first drew her to the field, and she now holds a double B.A. in Linguistics and Religious Studies from Pomona College.

She joins the TGDG with several years of linguistics research already under her belt. Her senior thesis research focused on the phonetics and

phonology of falling tones in Luganda, a Bantu language spoken in Uganda. While still an undergraduate, Katie spent a semester living and traveling in India, Nepal and Tibet. She used her time living in India to research the roles played by Tibetan, Hindi and English in the Tibetan exile community of Dharamsala, and the relationships among the three languages and their speakers. Her research was one of the

first investigations into the languages of the Tibetan exile community, and provided a valuable look into the dynamics of language change amidst cultural evolution.

After a few years in Northern California post-graduation, she moved to Austin in 2012 to pursue her dream of music. When she's not working for the TGDG, she can be found freelancing as a project manager, training to be a doula, and playing acoustic



New TGDG member Katie Dutcher, left, celebrates interviewing new speakers in Wall

indie folk music all throughout Austin.

TGDG alum reflects on similarities between Texas Germans and Nepalis — cont'd from page 1

how often I thought of the Texas German Dialect Project when I was working with schools in Nepal in 2010 and 2011. Nepal is a small Himalayan country sandwiched between India and China. Its population of almost 30 million speak over a hundred languages. Nepali is the national language, but I was teaching in an area where most of the students speak Tamang at home. They live in communities where Tamang is the language of business and worship. In fact, many students speak no Nepali until they begin primary school. In most schools they are forbidden from speaking Tamang on school grounds, and in some cases are fined or beaten for speaking their mother tongue in school. (Sound familiar?)

With Nepali given so much preference by the larger society, the number of Tamang speakers is sizable but on the decline. The Tamang are a large, historically repressed ethnic minority. The monarchy forbade the use of minori-

ty languages in official contexts and sought to discourage the practice of Tamang religion and culture. Recent government policies have made official discrimination illegal, but there is still a great deal of social and economic discrimination. Like German parents in Texas, many Tamang parents in Nepal choose to raise their children solely in Nepali in order to give them better opportunities.

The same forces which have led to the decline of German in Texas are present in Nepal today. Some organizations, however, are trying to reverse the decline. During my time in Nepal I volunteered with the Language Development Center, which provides textbooks for schools that want to teach in minority languages. Their intention is to debunk the idea that it is harmful to raise or teach children in a local language. They contend that a proper education should begin in a child's mother tongue and should



Luke Lindemann and the 10th grade class at Shree Udaya Kharka Secondary School in Nepal

ultimately teach fluency in three languages: a local language (Tamang), a national language (Nepali) and an international language (English). Every well-educated adult in the world should thus be able to speak three languages.

The United States has always been a multicultural society, yet Americans are notoriously monolingual. If we were to apply this same Three Language Rule in central Texas, what languages would we all

be speaking? Texas German speakers already have command of one local language (Texas German) and one national language (English). Some also speak an international language such as Spanish. There are many diverse communities in Texas, from the Vietnamese in Houston to the Alabama-Coushatta in Polk County; so if such a forward-thinking and internationally-minded policy were to be applied, there would be plenty of languages for us all to choose from.

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AS REPORTED BY



AND



Plans for 2014

- The TGDP will investigate German immigrants from Russia.
- TGDP researchers will continue our interviews with Texas German speakers throughout the state. We plan to extend our fieldwork sites to Colorado and Washington counties, areas of Wendish settlement.
- Members of the TGDP will continue their fund raising efforts for the Texas German Endowment at UT. The goal is to reach one million dollars.

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

Since 2001, the TGDP has conducted interviews with more than 430 speakers of Texas German throughout the Lone Star State, totaling more than 800 hours of recordings.

However, the project currently has a list of over 200 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.

From 2001-2008 the project 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



Hans Boas interviews Reno Koepp in New Braunfels (2002)

external grants for the past four years, drastically reducing the TGDP's ability to record and archive interviews.

To regain its former level of 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 five years, the TGDP has not been able to secure sufficient funding from these sources. Because of these circumstances, we currently do not have enough financial resources to interview all of the Texas German speakers waiting to be interviewed. For these reasons the sole option to guarantee continuity of the TGDP lies in the establishment of a Texas German En-

dowment 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.

Once there are no more speakers of Texas German to be recorded, 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 of Texas at Austin. 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.

Berman TEXAS

German immigrants and their descendants form the most significant European element in the history of the settlement of Texas. German immigration to Texas began in the early 1830s, when Texas was still part of Mexico. Organized immigration to Texas began in earnest in 1844, when the state of Texas was created. The revolutions in Europe sent politically oppressed people fleeing the continent. After the German city-states and Prussia were unified in 1871, Texas saw a decrease in European immigration. For decades, Germans continued to form a distinctive element in the state's population. The German community in Texas is the largest and Texas of German ancestry began to integrate more into American society.

German immigrants first settled around the town of industry in Austin County and along the wagon trail that stretched from the Gulf port of Indianola north to Fredericksburg. Germans moved north and west, settling towns like Maentester near the Red River and Marietta in the Great Plains.

Although German Texans have become integrated into American society to a large extent, areas around the original settlements still retain a distinctly German flavor. In the heart of the state, near San Antonio to the south and Austin to the north, 10,000 people who still speak Texas German today.

Komm mit nach Texas!

Timeline of German Texans

1831 Johann Friedrich Ernst received a land grant in the northwestern part of present-day Austin County from the Mexican government. He started farming in the area and named the town after his wife, Maria. He and his family lived there until 1834, when they moved to a place called "Ernst's" near the Red River. Ernst's place was one of the first German settlements in Texas. Ernst's place was one of the first German settlements in Texas.

1835 - 1840 Inspired by Ernst and other public figures, many German immigrants moved into the area. Most settled what are now Austin, Fayette, and Colorado Counties.

1836 Some Germans actively participated in the Texas Revolution, winning the state independence from Mexico. One of these, a Prussian surgeon named Friedrich von Eschscholtz, was a member of the Texas Revolution. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas.

1838 Ernst established a settlement on his farm which eventually became industry. It is said the name was inspired by the hard working Germans in the area. Tobacco was an important crop; the town produced cigars and pipes.

1842 April A group of twenty-one noblemen in Germany set up the Verein zum Schutz deutscher Emigranten in Texas - also known as the Adelsverein. The major goals of the society were to acquire land in Texas for settlement and to create a German colony in the New World. The society was one of the first German organizations to settle in Texas. The society was one of the first German organizations to settle in Texas.

1842 Juni The Adelsverein sent two men, Counts August von Bismarck and Wilhelm von Kottwitz, to Texas to purchase land for new settlements. The two men visited the coastal regions of Texas and newly thought that the entire country was as it was then.

1844 Meanwhile, west of San Antonio, Henri Castro began settling his land with immigrants from Alsace, France. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas.



New Braunfels

The first German immigrants to settle New Braunfels were led by Nikolaus Zerk, a Prussian nobleman. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas.

Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels

Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels (1812-1875), founder of the town of New Braunfels, grew up in Germany and had spent much of his life in the Prussian Army. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas.



Fredericksburg

Fredericksburg was founded on May 1, 1846 by John C. Meschbach, a Prussian nobleman. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas. He was one of the first German immigrants to Texas.



Indianola

Sam White and William Cook founded Indian Point in 1846. Two years later, in 1848, they founded Indianola. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.



The Nueces Massacre

The Nueces Massacre took place on August 1, 1846. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.



Bringing Music from Abroad

German music became very popular in Texas around the time of the first World War. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.

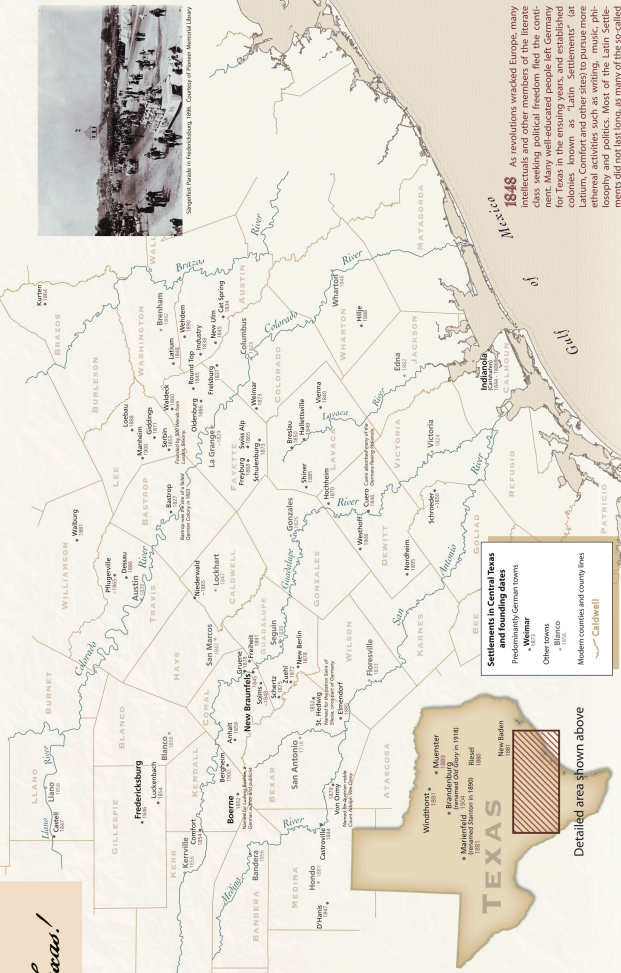
Texas German

German immigrants to Texas brought with them a rich cultural heritage. They were one of the first German settlements in Texas. They were one of the first German settlements in Texas.

1806 Texas joined the Confederacy a few months before the start of the Civil War. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.

1880s Immigration increased after the Civil War. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.

1900 Texas was home to about 200,000 German immigrants. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.



1844 Juni The Adelsverein purchased rights to a large tract of land in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.

1845 März Since there were no provisions for the immigrants, the Adelsverein began building a town near Comal Springs. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.

1844 Dezember The first Adelsverein immigrants arrived in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.

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1848 As revolutions wracked Europe, many intellectuals and other members of the literate middle class fled to Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas. It was one of the first German settlements in Texas.

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Support the Texas German Endowment at the University of Texas at Austin: Purchase a Texas German Map!

The Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP) is proud to offer a **beautiful 34x28" map** of German Texas for purchase (**see reverse for image**). Surrounding the map of Central Texas are several paragraphs about important Texas German people, places and events, and an extensive timeline of German Texas from 1844 to 1900. The maps cost **\$40.00 each, including shipping** in a 36" cardboard tube mailer via USPS.

Please fill out this order form completely and return with payment to:

Department of Germanic Studies
1 University Station C3300
Burdine 336
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712

All proceeds from this map benefit the Texas German Endowment. Delivery will take 2-3 weeks.

Billing information

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Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Name on Card _____

Shipping address: ☐ Same as above ☐ Alternative address - indicated below

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Signature x _____ **Date** _____

Further questions? Contact the TGDP at (512) 279-2462