



# THE TEXAS GERMAN TIMES

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## Premiere of All Güt Things: The Texas German Story



*All Güt Things: The Texas German Story* started in 2014 as a five-minute short film by Chase Honaker. Since then, Honaker and his team have expanded the film into a 35 minute documentary film about German immigration to Texas, the Texas German experience, and the rise and fall of the Texas German dialect. The documentary has been screened throughout Texas, including test

screenings in Arlington, Houston, Dallas, Austin, and Stonewall. It premiered at the Hill Country Film Festival in Fredericksburg in April and played at the Rockport Film Festival in October and at the University of Würzburg (Germany) in July. The film was awarded Best Short Documentary and Best of Festival at the Tribute Film Festival in Abilene, best Texas Short Film at the inaugural

ElderHall Texas Independent Film Festival in Blanco, and Best Local Film at the Billy the Kid Film Festival in Hico, Texas. The film has also been submitted to SXSW in Austin. Due to its success, the team behind *All Güt Things* has decided to continue to develop the film into a feature length version. As part of their efforts to raise funds to help accomplish this, the *All Güt Things* team has made their merchandise available on Etsy (store: WorkshedCreative). A digital download of the film is included with purchases over \$30. To watch the film, visit <https://vimeo.com/313558411> (password: Texasgerman).

## *African American Texas German speakers*

It was both unexpected and peculiar when our interviewers learned during a 2015 TGDP field trip that there used to be black German speakers throughout central Texas. Texas Germans related stories about German-speaking African Americans in Lee County, Fayette County, and Austin County. Some of the speakers passed away only recently.

UT Austin graduate David Huenlich has set out to investigate these accounts of African American German speakers: why did they acquire German in an increasingly English-speaking environment? Were the reasons mainly economic or were there other factors? How did Germans relate to racial segregation? Research on baseball in rural Texas, for example, points

to amicable dealings between Germans and African Americans in the era of Jim Crow. A German enthusiast recalls: "It'd be ten or twelve of us maybe, normally half of them black and half white... But that didn't make any difference. We'd have us a ball game" (Vaught 2013, *The Farmers Game*, p.68). **cont on p. 5**

### TGDP MILESTONES 2018–2019

- ◆ The TGDP has interviewed 68 new speakers since December 2018.
- ◆ TGDP members presented outreach talks at the LBJ State Park and Historic Site in Stonewall, the Annual Convention of the Texas German Society in March 2019 and the 2019 Annual conference of the German-Texas Heritage Society in Temple (September 2019).
- ◆ TGDP members presented academic talks at workshops and conferences in Bloomington (IN), Madison (WI), Iowa City (IA), Berlin (Germany), and Seoul (South Korea).
- ◆ For a list of recent TGDP publications, see p. 5.

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### Update: The Texas Polish Dialect Project (TPDP)

It has been a year since the announcement of the founding of the Texas Polish Dialect Project (TPDP). In early 2017, the TPDP's founders, Agnieszka Makles and John Benjamin, began meeting about Texas Polish and decided to learn more about the community and the language. Following initial research, they discovered that there was much more work to do to learn about and preserve the language and thus proposed a project modeled on the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP) and the Texas Czech Legacy Project. After receiving support from Hans

Boas and the TGDP, they began to interview as many speakers of Texas Polish as they could as quickly as possible. Many very enthusiastic people have expressed their interest and readiness in participating in the TPDP. To date, the TPDP has recorded interviews with 27 speakers from Cestohowa, Panna Maria, Pawelekville, Kennedy, and San Antonio. The TPDP thus consists of approximately 15 hours of vocabulary and stories from Texas Polish speakers along with an additional 10 hours of biographical background to better understand the wider community.

The Texas Polish Dialect Project (TPDP) continues to conduct research in representative Texas Polish speech communities. The main goal of the TPDP is to preserve the Texas Polish dialect as a record of the rich cultural and linguistic traditions of its residents and to allow anyone interested, especially community members and researchers access to a repository of the dialect. Members of the TPDP thus carry out interviews with speakers of Texas Polish. The TPDP is currently in the process of digitizing and storing

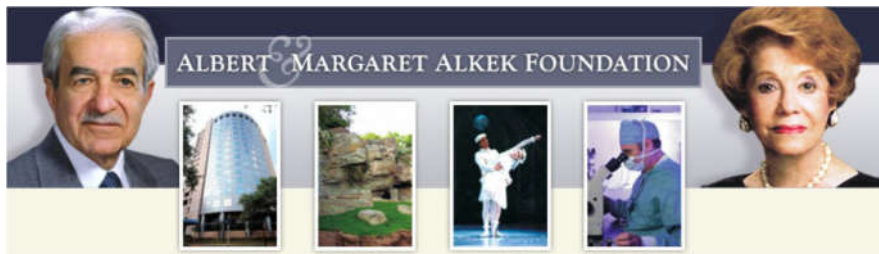
these interviews in the Texas Polish Dialect Archive (TPDA) online, which will soon be available. The TPDA will allow users to listen to these interviews and hear examples of this rich language. Future interviews conducted will then be added to the TPDA. Please look out for the web address, coming soon!

#### Polish Texans

Immigrants from Poland, specifically from Upper Silesia near Opole, first arrived in Texas in the mid 19th century and became the first permanent Polish settlers in the **cont on p. 3**

### Alkek Foundation makes a generous donation to support TGDP graduate research assistant

One of the most important tasks of the TGDP is to find and interview people across the Lone Star State who can still speak Texas German. Organizing and conducting these interviews requires a lot of time and is typically handled by a graduate research assistant (GRA) from the Department of Germanic Studies at UT Austin. Over the past five years, various graduate students have filled that role, some of which you have read about in this newsletter: Ryan Dux, David Huenlich, Alexander Lorenz, and currently Margo Blevins. Sometimes the GRA conducts interviews by him-/



herself, while at other times the GRA takes a group of undergraduate and/or graduate students along to help out with interviews, which can take up to an entire day. The GRA then also oversees the editing, transcription, and translation of the interviews by other students working for the TGDP and is crucial to a number of other important TGDP tasks and activities, including the following: publishing the yearly TGDP newsletter, organizing the TX German

outreach workshop in January, presenting talks at meetings of German heritage organizations across Texas, and presenting talks at academic conferences. In other words: the GRA is crucial to the on-going success of the TGDP. However, finding sufficient funding to support a GRA year-by-year is no easy task. In the spring of this year, we learned that the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation would sup-

port the Texas German Dialect Project with funding for a year-long Graduate Research Assistant position during the 2019-2020 academic year. This generous funding has allowed the TGDP to hire Margo Blevins, who is currently writing her dissertation in the Department of Germanic Studies, to continue recording more of the remaining speakers of Texas German and to archive these recordings in the Texas German Dialect Archive. We are extremely grateful for the generous support by the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation.



## TPDP Update, cont.

### cont. from p. 2

United States. They followed Father Leopold Moczygemba, born in 1824 in the Silesian village of Pluźnica, who arrived in 1852 to provide missionary service to German settlers in New Braunfels. The first 150 settlers set sail in October 1854 and reached Galveston on December 3. Via Indianola, they headed to San Antonio to meet Father Moczygemba, arriving on December 21. The majority traveled with him and founded what is today Pan-



**Father Leopold Moczygemba**

na Maria, Texas, on an uncultivated plateau in Karnes County. It was the first Polish settlement in America. Further communities followed including Cestohowa, Kosciusko, Pawelkville, Falls City, and St. Hedwig, the last of which became the second largest. These villages later became organized around the Catholic Diocese of San Antonio, founded in 1874. After the first arrivals, immigration from Poland continued



**The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Cestohowa, TX**

in ebbs and flows, and in 1867, the founding of New Waverly in Walker County signaled the beginning of the East Texas Polish communities of the Diocese of Galveston.

Well into the 20th-century, the Silesians maintained strongly knit communities. The Polish language, a strong part of this closeness, was used in many churches; in schools—the first, St. Joseph School in Panna Maria, was founded in 1866—and in a newspaper, *Nowiny Texaskie* (Texas News), published from 1913–1920 in San Antonio. Today, the Polish language in Texas is disappearing. With the advent of World War I, social discrimination toward the immigrants and their use of the language from nativist groups increased. The Great Depression led many from the communities to

disperse around the state and country seeking other opportunities. The language was also taught less in schools. Whatever the reasons, the rapid process of Americanization intensified after World War II and continues to this day. Yet many of these communities still exist. Each year all over Texas descendants of these immigrants meet to celebrate their heritage, especially during the holidays. Given this enduring spirit, now is the time to discover and learn about this fascinating part of Texas cultural and linguistic history.

#### *The TPDP's Founders*

Agnieszka Makles (maklesag@msu.edu) is an MA student in the Master's in Foreign Language Teaching program at Michigan State University. Agnieszka is also a Polish instructor, currently teaching through

Hansa One. While in the Slavic Department at UT Austin from 2016–19, she met many Polish speakers and members of the Texas Silesian community who expressed interest in a project preserving the language and was inspired by the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP) to start the TPDP. Agnieszka is originally from Silesia near Częstochowa and feels strongly tied to Texas Silesians as they share a common homeland.

John Benjamin (john.benjamin@westpoint.edu) is Assistant Professor of German in the Department of Foreign Languages at the United States Military Academy West Point. While receiving his PhD in the Department of Germanic Studies at UT Austin, he worked with Hans Boas on the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP) and became interested in Texas immigrant dialects. He speaks Polish and often visits his family in Silesia.

#### *Contact*

We encourage anyone interested in the project, especially those who speak or know anyone who speaks Polish here in Texas, to contact Agnieszka or John at maklesag@msu.edu or john.benjamin@westpoint.edu. And please look out for the web address for the Texas Polish Dialect Archive (TPDA), coming soon!



### Resources at the Texas German Dialect Project

The Texas German Dialect Project is home to a number of collections. The **Texas German Dialect Archive (TGDA)**, our largest collection, contains more than 1000 hours of audio from interviews with over 700 Texas German speakers from 46 counties. Audio and transcripts for many of these interviews are available online, with more being uploaded monthly. Within the TGDA, there are two smaller collections: the Susan Guion collection and Karen Roesch's Texas Alsatian collection. The **Susan Guion collection** contains interviews of ~18 Texas German speakers from the 1990s which

formed the basis for her 1996 article *The death of Texas German in Gillespie County*. **Karen Roesch's Texas Alsatian collection** contains interviews of ~35 Texas Alsatians interviewed around 2008 for Roesch's dissertation *Texas Alsatian: Henri Castro's legacy*. Other collections at the TGDP include: **Glenn Gilbert's Texas German collection from the 1960s**. These collection includes recordings, maps, and a set of over 100 mailed Texas German questionnaires. The recordings provide the basis for Gilbert's 1963 dissertation on German spoken in Kendall and Gillespie counties, as well as his 1972 *Linguistic Atlas of*

*Texas German*. Approx. an hour of **Fred Eikel's Texas German recordings** from the first half of the 20th century (the exact date of recording is unknown). **Glenn Gilbert's recordings of Texas Czech, Kansas German, and Oklahoma German from the 1960s**. This is a set of approx. two dozen recordings including translations and free conversation. **John Benjamin and Agnieszka Makles's Texas German Polish Project**. A collection of 27 interviews of Texas Polish speakers, collected in 2017 and 2018. **Ryan Dux's Wisconsin Low German collection**. A collection of approx. 20

interviews of Pomeranian Low German speakers from central Wisconsin. **Marion Huffine's Pennsylvania German collection**. A collection of interviews with Pennsylvania German speakers, both in Pennsylvania German and in English, including biographical information, transcriptions, and linguistic analysis for each speaker. This collection contains approx. 400 hours of recordings. Several sets of **historical Texas German family letters and pictures** (over 1,000 pictures and documents).



### 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 Hill 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. **Contact the TGDP for yours today!**

The German Texas map is available exclusively from the TGDP for \$40.00 (includes shipping and handling). See enclosed order form for details.



## *African American TX German speakers, cont.*

### **cont. from p. 1**

Other reasons for speaking German were simply family-related. Take the case of the Philipps family from Fredericksburg. Paul Phillips III, orthopedic surgeon in Fredericksburg, Gillespie County grew up hearing German and has some passive knowledge of the language. His sister Paula (now living in Baltimore) pursued formal studies in German for some time. But Paula and Paul's father and grandfather were both fluent German speakers as some of the old Fredericksburgians may still remember. Paul and Paula's cousin, Billy Fasselmann Fay, recounts using German at work and translating for some older Germans into the early nineties. The Phillips and the Fasselmann families track their heritage to both African and German roots and have been in Fredericksburg for four generations now. In recent years the descendants have renovated the historic black church on Main Street where



**Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
(a historically black church in Fredericksburg, Texas)**

African Americans used to congregate.

We want to learn more about African American German speakers, and we hope to record any remaining speakers. Readers who have knowledge of African American German speakers or Afro-German relations in Texas and want to contribute to this project are highly encouraged to contact David Huenlich at [david.huenlich@utexas.edu](mailto:david.huenlich@utexas.edu).

## *Collaboration with the Institute for the German Language in Mannheim, Germany*

One of the TGDP graduate students, Margo Blevins, was invited to give a presentation about her dissertation at the Institute for the German Language in Mannheim, Germany this past July. She was also part of a new initiative to invite international graduate students to the Institute for the German Lan-

guage's annual conference, in an effort to encourage and foster international collaboration. Blevins' dissertation works to propose a system to more easily and efficiently make comparisons across multiple mixed German varieties, such as Texas German and Russian German.

## *Featured TGDP alum: Sandra Schwalen*

Sandra Schwalen graduated from UT Austin in 2018 with a BA in international relations and global studies and German. Currently, she is working on getting a Master's of international affairs at Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. This year, she will complete a "professional year" at the German Federal Ministry of Defense as part of her Master's studies. She would like to thank the TGDP for the opportunity to use German in a professional manner and Dr. Boas for his continued support



**Sandra Schwalen**

throughout her academic career.

## *Recent TGDP publications*

- ◆ December 2018: Hans C. Boas co-edited a book with Steffen Hoeder (University of Kiel) entitled *Constructions in Contact* (with John Benjamins Publishing). It contains three papers on Texas German: *Towards a constructional analysis of the progressive aspect in Texas German* (Margo Blevins), *Texas German word order constructions in contact* (Ryan Dux), and *A constructional account of the modal particle 'ja' in Texas German* (Hans C. Boas)
- ◆ TGDP alumn Luke Lindemann published a paper "When Wurst comes to Wurscht: Variation and koine formation in Texas German" in the *Journal of Linguistic Geography* 7(1), 33-45 (April 2019)
- ◆ Pierce, Marc, Hans C. Boas, and Glenn Gilbert. 2018. When is a dissertation not a dissertation? On Eikel 1954. In: *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 53, 187-196.



**Margo Blevins  
at the Institute  
for German  
Language**

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AS REPORTED BY



### Plans for 2020

- ◆ Record more Texas German speakers.
- ◆ Continue work on comparative German speech islands archive and make it available to the public.
- ◆ Develop a concept for producing a museum exhibition on Texas German language, culture, and history.



## **We are still looking for Texas German speakers!**

Do you or does someone you know speak Texas German? We're always looking for more speakers to talk to, and we need your help!

Don't worry if you haven't spoken German in a while and feel a little rusty — we're just trying to preserve as much as we can while we can, and we're happy to come to you. You are also welcome to visit us on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin.

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Thank you for your help and support! We couldn't do it without you.

