
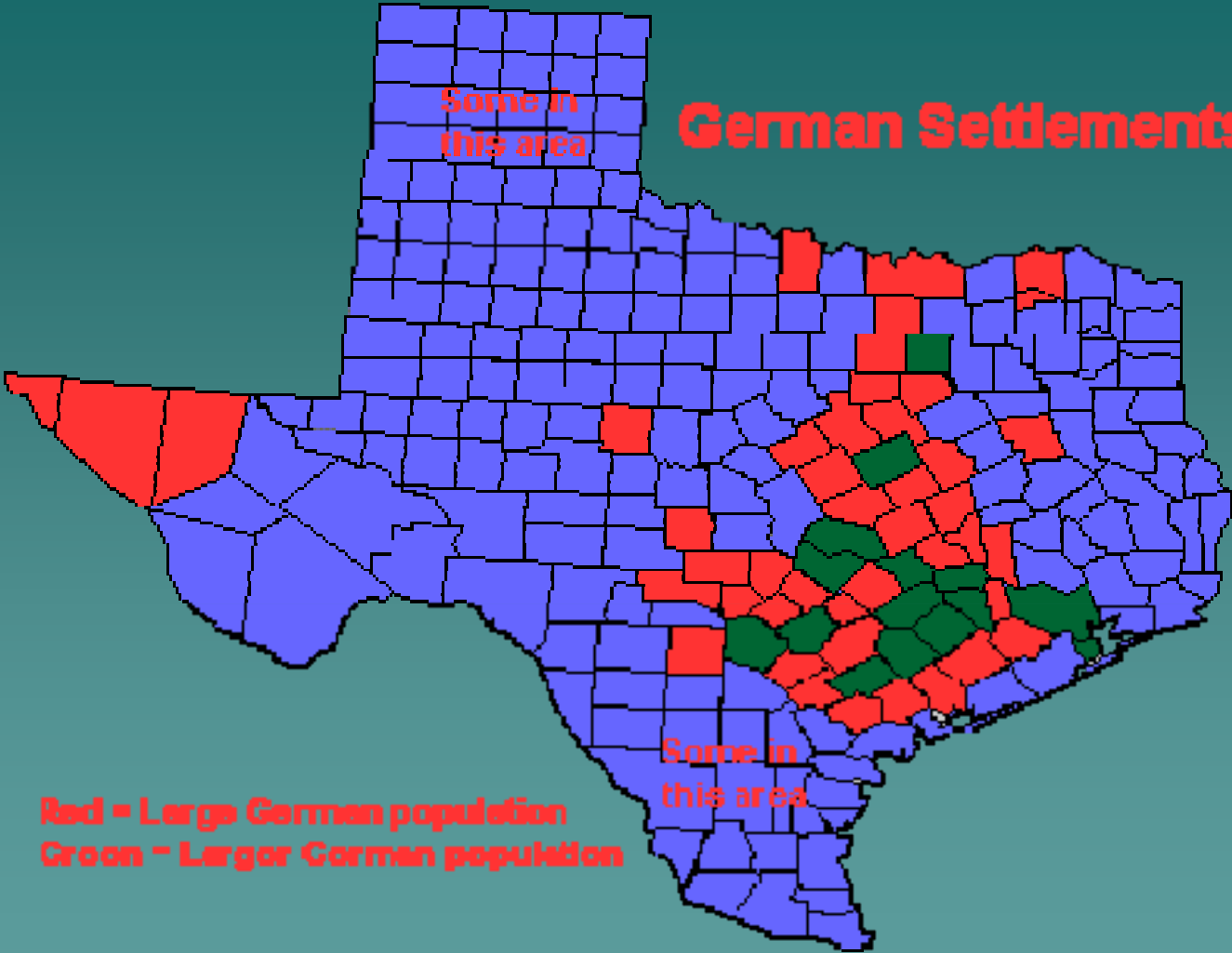


# Germans to Texas

Arriving at the ports of Harrisburg, Galveston, Matagorda, Indianola, they made their way inland to find what was then "Texas", uninhabited save for a few Anglos, Karankowas, Comanches

A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in shades of teal, located at the bottom right of the slide.

# German Settlements



Some in this area

Red = Large German population  
Green = Larger German population

Some in this area

# The Germans of Austin County

- ◆ Austin County experienced three waves of settlement. First the Anglo-Americans of Austin's colony who settled on the fertile land around the Brazos, some of these early farmers wasted the land with poor farming practices and were left with once fertile soil that was no longer capable of cultivation. The Germans were the next large group to settle within Austin County. A few German immigrants came to Texas as early as 1821, but significant numbers did not begin to settle until 1830. These farmers were of a more economical mind and settled successfully on land the Anglos did not want.

## Established

◆ Cat Spring	1834
◆ Millheim	1845
◆ Bellville	1846
◆ New Ulm	1850
◆ Shelby	1850's
◆ Industry	1831
◆ Welcome	1852
◆ Nelsonville	1855
◆ Bleiberville	1880

# INDUSTRY, TEXAS - 1831

- ◆ was the first permanent German settlement in Texas. Its first residents were Johann Friedrich Ernst and his family, who had come from Germany, briefly resided in New York, and en route to Missouri learned about free land available in Texas. The Mexican government granted Ernst a league of land on April 16, 1831, and Charles Fordtran, who had accompanied the family to Texas, received a quarter of it as payment for surveying the entire tract. Ernst established his home on the eastern part of his league near the main road from San Felipe to Bastrop. "Ernst's Place" established a reputation as a resting place for immigrants and travelers. Ernst planted fruit trees and began to grow crops, including tobacco, which he made into cigars and sold in San Felipe, Houston, and Galveston. Early residents were described as very industrious, and the cigar industry is purported to be the source for the name of the town. Post Office dates to 1837

# Friedrich Ernst

- ◆ Johann Friedrich Ernst, the first German to bring his family to Texas, was born Christian Friedrich Dirks, son of Meine and Sybille (Grimms) Dirks, on June 18, 1796, at Burg (Castle) Gödens near the village of Neustadtgödens, just north of Oldenburg in Lower Saxony. In September 1829 Ernst, his wife, and their five surviving children fled Oldenburg; he was subsequently charged by the Duke of Oldenburg with embezzling a large amount of money from the post office. He and his family escaped by way of Bremen, Osnabrück, Münster, and Brussels and eventually sailed from Le Havre for New York, where they arrived in late 1829. In February 1832 Ernst wrote a long letter to a friend in Germany describing Texas in glowing language. This letter appears to have been circulated widely in Germany and to have encouraged others to immigrate.

- ◆ Friedrich Ernst, like many who followed, was ill-prepared for pioneering. He did not know how to build a cabin, hated guns and had brought none of the necessary equipment for clothing his family on the frontier. Still, he had an unbounded love for his new country, and he poured out his feelings in an eloquent letter to a friend in Oldenburg, urging him to come to Texas at once. This friend turned the letter over to a local newspaper, and it was widely published. Ernst's contagious enthusiasm spread through the German states, starting the first steady stream of German migration to Texas. Ernst assured fellow immigrants, "I have a stopping place on my estate for my countrymen until they have selected a league of land. Colonel Austin has recently promised to take care that German arrivals be settled immediately. The Ernst letter painted an irresistibly beautiful landscape, "with enchanting scenery and delightful climate similar to that of Italy, the most fruitful soil and republican government, with unbounded personal and political liberty, free from so many disadvantages and evils of old countries."

# Post Office in Friedrich Ernst Park





**Pilgrim's Rest Cemetery - In Industry go one block north of Hwy 159 on Hwy 109. Turn left and go to the Methodist Church. This cemetery is the second one behind the church.**



# BELLVILLE, TEXAS

- ◆ The town was named for Thomas B. Bell, one of Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred, who came to Texas in 1822 and built a residence in the Bellville vicinity in 1838. In 1846 voters decided to replace San Felipe as county seat with a new community near the geographic center of the county. The population, which reached 1,000 in the mid-1880s, was heavily German, and the town's schools provided instruction in both English and German.

# Turnvereins/Singing societies

- ◆ Millheim Verein Harmonie Hall



- ◆ Cat Spring Turnverein



- ◆ Bellville Turnverein



# Singing Societies

- ◆ Sealy - Lux and Peschel Lanes, Sealy's German immigrants were famous for their love of music. A group of men, some of them Sealy's pioneer settlers, had formed a singing society, called Liedertafel
- ◆ Welcome Maennerchor building moved to 109 between Industry and Welcome



# The Germans of Fayette County

- ◆ Frelsburg - 1837      Round Top - 1840
  - ◆ Fayetteville - 1834-35      Warrenton - 1847
  - ◆ LaGrange – 1819-26-31      Winedale - 1870
- 
- ◆ Most of the early settlers were from the Old South, but the Austin Colony also included a few German immigrants. In 1832 Joseph Biegel received title to a league in the area and developed the first German community in the county, Biegel Settlement. In the 1840s many more German immigrants settled in Fayette County. The Adelsverein purchased a league in 1843 and established a plantation called Nassau Farm, near what is now Winedale.

# Adelsverein

- ◆ The Adelsverein, also known as the Mainzer Verein, the Texas-Verein, and the German Emigration Company, was officially named the Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas). Provisionally organized on April 20, 1842, by twenty-one German noblemen at Biebrich on the Rhine, near Mainz, the society represents a significant effort to establish a new Germany on Texas soil by means of an organized mass emigration.

# Nassau Plantation/Farm

- ◆ In May 1842 the association sent two of its members, counts Joseph of Boos-Waldeck and Victor August of Leiningen-Westerburg-Alt-Leiningenq to Texas to investigate the country firsthand and purchase a tract of land for the settlement of immigrants. In January 1843 Boos-Waldeck purchased a league of land (4,428 acres) in what is now Fayette County, near Industry, as the base for future colonization, and named it Nassau Farm, in honor of Duke Adolf of Nassau, the patron of the society.

- ◆ A working plantation was developed and named for Duke Adolph of Nassau, protector of the society. Boos-Waldeck purchased slaves and supplies in New Orleans, Galveston, and Houston. The slaves constructed a blacksmith shop, smokehouse, hay barn, stables, kitchen, quarters for themselves, and a house for the overseer. Fields were cultivated and planted at various times in corn, cotton, sugarcane, potatoes, and tobacco. Cattle and hogs were raised for the use of the plantation and for sale. A high oak-covered hill one-quarter mile from the farm was selected as the site for the manor house. For practical and economic reasons the German carpenters built in the regional style. The two-story log house with dogtrot had porches on both sides, stone fireplaces at each gable end, and glass panes in four downstairs windows. In May 1845 the German geologist Ferdinand von Roemer reported that the house was "one of the best constructed and most comfortable" he had seen in Texas, that 420 acres were fenced and under cultivation, and that the farm had nineteen slaves, one family of whom worked as house servants.



# A Boondoogle?

- ◆ Nassau Farm had been considered as a possible base for newly arrived immigrants and some permanent settlement, but the society sent the settlers to New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, and other locations instead. The farm was used only as a pleasure retreat for the officers and as a hideaway from their creditors. Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, commissioner general, and his successor, John O. Meusebach, spent many days at Nassau and wrote long reports to Germany. The effort to operate a working farm was not entirely successful, due to inexperience and mismanagement by the various directors. Through a complex series of conveyances the debt-ridden society sold the league, the farm with all its improvements, buildings, equipment, and twenty-five slaves, and the manor house with personal possessions to Otto von Roeder

# Nassau Plantation's Fate

- ◆ Roeder began selling off parcels of the league in 1850; the first sale was to Peter Carl Johann von Rosenberg, who purchased 800 undeveloped acres and the manor house. Further legal complications developed when the Bexar District Court ordered the sheriff of Fayette County to sell the league to the highest bidder in order to satisfy creditors of the society. On May 3, 1853, the league was sold for four cents an acre to James A. Chandler, who filed suit against Roeder, Rosenberg, and Hamilton Ledbetter in United States district court for title and possession. The decision for the defendant was appealed by the plaintiff in error to the United States Supreme Court, but the case was returned to the District Court in 1861. Finally, in June 1868, Chandler recovered judgment against Roeder and possession of lands held by Roeder and others who had purchased acreage from him after the filing of the suit.
- ◆ Currently, the league is divided into privately owned farms and ranches. A state historical marker has been placed at the intersection of County Road 279 and Farm Road 1457, 2 ½ miles east of Round Top and a half mile from the site of the manor house.

# Comal County

- ◆ New Braunfels – 1845
- ◆ Bergheim – 1845 - -Kneupper Chapel Bergheim - 2 mi. off SH46, 4.5 mi. SE of Bergheim. After German families began settling in this area in 1845, Catholic worship services were held in a private home and in a log chapel
- ◆ Canyon Lake – 1856 - Pantermuel House, 485 Bremer Rd. - Pioneer home of Heimrich Pantermuehl (1842 - 1921) and wife Pauline, German-born settlers of Comal County. Built about 1865, its use of limestone and native cedar is typical of small German farm cottages of this area.
- ◆ Spring Branch – 1860's
- ◆ Gruene – 1870's

# Comal County

- ◆ Some additional purchases of land proved to be unexercisable but the Adelsverein was successful in purchasing more land from the Fisher-Miller land grant - a tract of land between the Llano and Colorado rivers. The first immigrants disembarked in Texas in December 1844, near Carlshafen (later Indianola), the society's port of entry established by Prince Solms. Since no preparations had been made for settlement on the Fisher-Miller land grant, the immigrants were settled on two leagues of land at Comal Springs that Solms purchased on March 15, 1845, and named New Braunfels after his estate in Germany

# New Braunfels

- ◆ Permanent settlement of the county began in 1845, when Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels secured title to 1,265 acres of the Veramendi grant, including the Comal springs and river, for the Adelsverein. In succeeding years thousands of Germans and Americans were attracted to the rich farm and ranch land around New Braunfels

# Prince Solms of Braunfels

- ◆ Prince Karl von Solms-Braunfels was born on July 27, 1812 as Friedrich Wilhelm Karl Ludwig Georg Alfred Alexander, Prince of Solms, Lord of Braunfels, Grafenstein, Münzenberg, Wildenfels and Sonnenwalde at Neustrelitz, the youngest son of Prince Friedrich Wilhelm von Solms-Braunfels and Princess Friederike von Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Like many German royals he had an illustrious family tree and counted among his relatives Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Tsar Alexander I of Russia, King Leopold I of the Belgians and Prince Frederick of Prussia.



# Braunfels Schloss







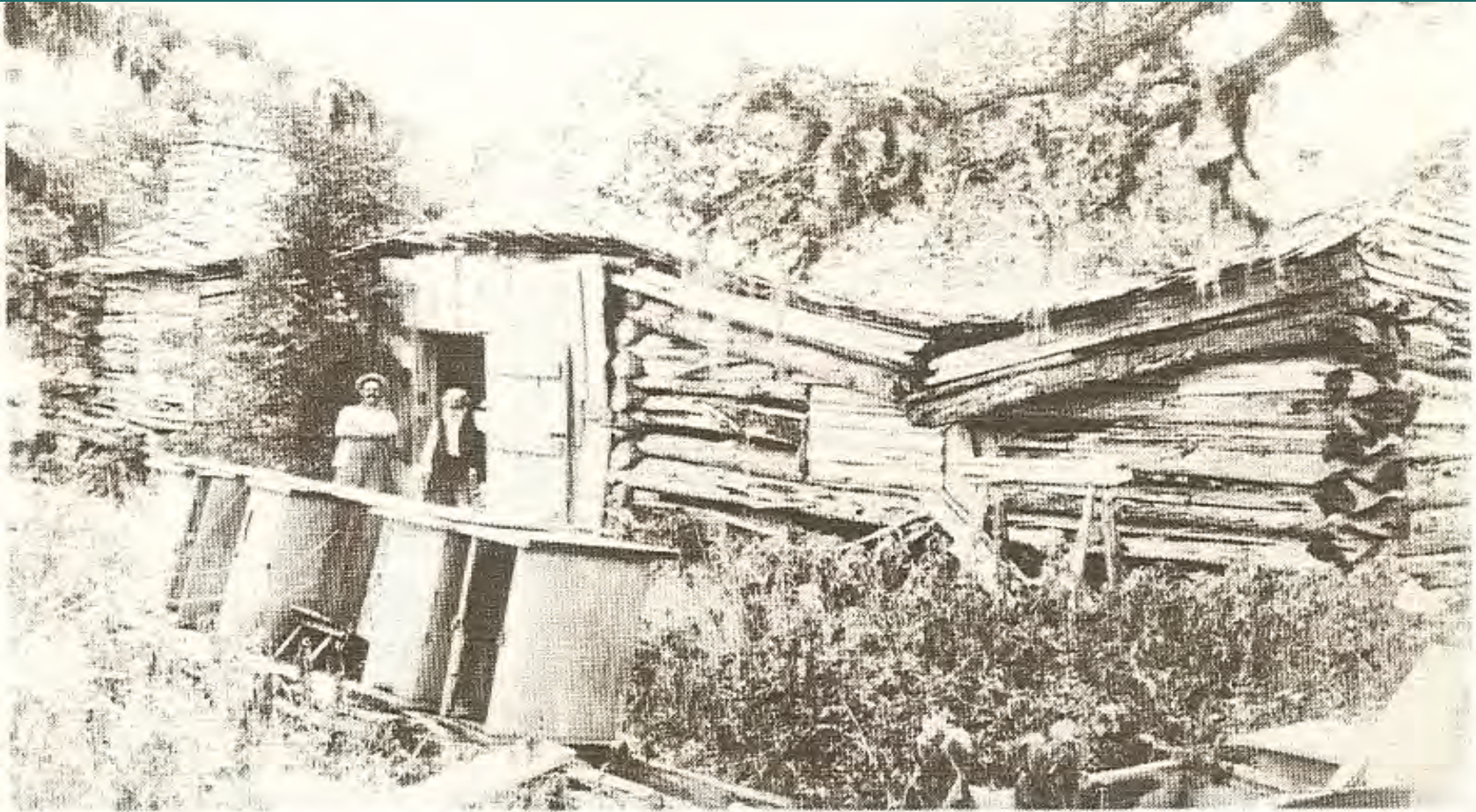
- ◆ 1844 Prince Karl was named commissioner-general of the Adelsverein, charged with leading the first effort of the society to send colonists to Texas. With two pieces of artillery and some fine silverware he went to London, met with the Queen, then sailed to the United States, traveled down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and finally to the Republic of Texas, reaching Galveston on July 1, 1844. Ever the romantic, he saw himself as a trailblazer for German civilization, the founder of a “new Fatherland on the other side of the ocean”. He wrote, “The eyes of all Germany, no, the eyes of all Europe are fixed on us and our undertaking: German princes, counts and noblemen...are bringing new crowns to old glory while at the same time insuring immeasurable riches for their children and grandchildren.” This was to be a very European and specifically German undertaking as the Prince was not terribly impressed with the Anglo-American population and wanted his colony sufficiently distant from their bad influence.
- ◆ He first bought land on Matagorda Bay to establish a port (modestly named Carlshafen -later known as Indianola and now a ghost town)

# Indianola from “The German Texans” by Glen Lich



# New Braunfels

- ◆ Was founded on March 21, 1845, when, under the auspices of the Adelsverein, Nicolaus Zink led a German immigrant wagontrain up the Guadalupe River to the ford of the San Antonio-Nacogdoches road. They made camp at a site on Comal Creek (now Dry Comal Creek) chosen by Prince Solms, the first commissioner general of the Adelsverein, and promptly organized to receive later arrivals. Zink platted preliminary town and farm lots and supervised construction of a primitive stockade, the Zinckenburg, to protect the immigrants against allegedly cannibalistic Indians. Leadership of the colony was handed over to John O. Meusebach. By summer the settlers numbered between 300 and 400.



*Nikolas Zink's cabin at Sisterdale: the start of a Latin Colony*

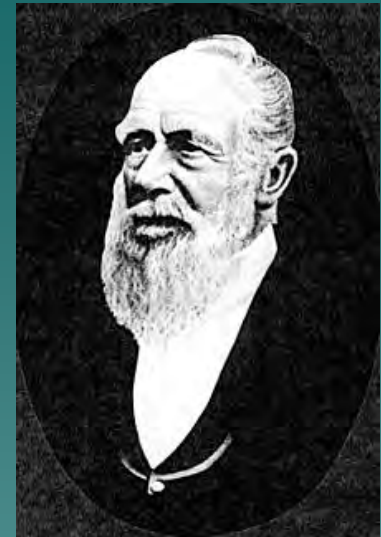
# Gillespie County

- ◆ **Fredericksburg - 1846**
- ◆ **Luckenbach – late 1840's, early 1850's**
- ◆ **Stonewall/Johnson City – 1860's, 1870's**

# John O. Meusebach - born Baron Otfried

Hans von Meusebach

- ◆ Meusebach sons were enrolled in to study geology and the natural sciences. During this period, grandfather Christian Carl von Meusebach in Vockstedt took the young men on outdoor excursions to share their common interest in botany. Otfried (John) enrolled in the University of Bonn in 1832, majoring in law, cameralism and finance. He transferred to the University of Halle where he studied natural science. On October 24, 1844, Meusebach wrote a letter to Count Castell to express his interest in moving to the Republic of Texas in order to pursue his love of geology, botany and horticulture. Count Castell replied to Meusebach's October 24 letter by stating that he could buy a share in the Verein for \$2,000 and have a chance at becoming Commissioner-General in Texas.
- ◆ As an adult, Meusebach stood 6 foot 2 inches tall with reddish-blond hair. Waco Indians near New Braunfels called him Ma-be-quo-si-to-mu, (Chief with the burning hair of the head). Penateka Comanche Chief Ketemoczy (Katemcy) named him El Sol Colorado (The Red Sun).



# Fredericksburg

- ◆ On May 8, 1845, John O. Meusebach, Solms's successor as general commissioner in Texas, arrived at Carlshafen (Indianola); in November he began making preparations for the arrival of 4,000 new immigrants. Fredericksburg, the society's second colony, was established by Meusebach in 1846 near the Pedernales River, where the year before he had bought over 11,000 acres of headright land. The first wagontrain of 120 settlers arrived from New Braunfels on May 8, 1846

- ◆ Each settler received one town lot and ten acres of farmland nearby. The town was laid out like the German villages along the Rhine, from which many of the colonists had come, with one long, wide main street roughly paralleling Town Creek. The earliest houses in Fredericksburg were built simply, of post oak logs stuck upright in the ground. These were soon replaced by *Fachwerk* houses, built of upright timbers with the spaces between filled with rocks and then plastered or whitewashed over.



**Breustedt House – 1370 Church Hill Drive,  
New Braunfels – fine example of  
German Colonial “Fachwerk”**



# Meusebach and the Comanches

- ◆ The Meusebach–Comanche Treaty was a treaty between the private citizens of the Fisher-Miller Land Grant, who were predominantly German in nationality, and the Penateka Comanche Tribe and negotiated by John Meusebach in 1847 in order to settle the area. The treaty was officially recognized by the United States government. Negotiations with Chief Ketemoczy were begun March 1-2, 1847 and successfully completed in the area of the lower San Saba River Basin, about twenty-five miles from the Colorado River – a historical marker identifies the site. It is the only treaty with the Indians that was honored by the United States.

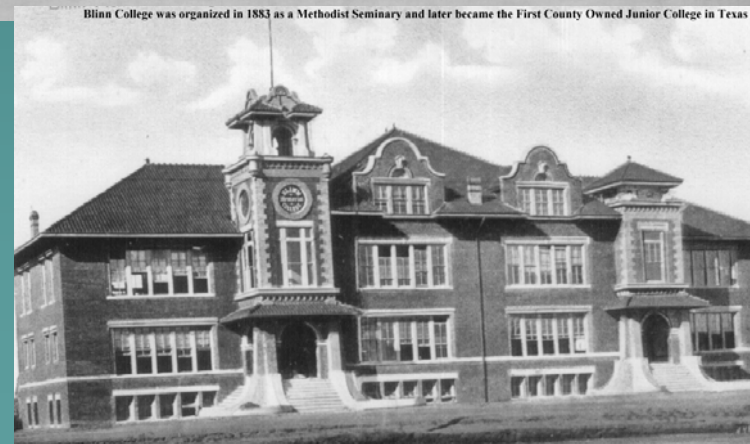
# Washington County

- ◆ Brenham – Hickory Grove until 1843
- ◆ Berlin Community – 1847
- ◆ Rehburg - 1847
- ◆ Latium – 1848
- ◆ Salem - 1856
- ◆ Greenvine - 1860
- ◆ Gay Hill – 1880

# Brenham

- ◆ Changed name in 1843 to honor Dr. Richard Fox Brenham, Republic of Texas hero.
- ◆ Post Office Established 1846
- ◆ From 1873 to 1919 the German-language *Texas Volksbote* was published in Brenham.

- ◆ German Methodist Church – 1873
- ◆ Annual Maifest began 1881
- ◆ German Methodists established Mission Institute (now Blinn College) – 1883



# Berlin Community

- ◆ - Eben-Ezer Evangelical Lutheran Church. Spiritual center of the Berlin community, which was settled by Germans in 1847 - , The Rev. Johann Ebinger (1828-1908) of Harris County held earliest Lutheran service in Washington County. On July 1, 1855, he founded Eben-Ezer Church with William C. Bohne, F. H. Ehlert, F. F. Spreen and others as trustees. Ludwig C. Lehmann (1794-1855) donated 11 acre church site. Landowners gave post oak logs, renters gave labor for building first church, incorporating a parsonage. The early pastors taught school in that first church building.

# Rehburg

- ◆ It was founded by German immigrants in 1847 near Jerdelle and Old Rocky creeks and named for Rehburg, Hannover, the hometown of an early resident, Ludwig Heine. The Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische St. Paulus Gemeinde, later known as St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rehburg, Texas, was organized November 6, 1870.



# Latium

- ◆ It was one of five Latin colonies founded by German political refugees in Texas after 1848. Early German settlers included artist Rudolph Melchior, who decorated the Winedale Inn, and civil engineer Hermann R. von Bieberstein, later a prominent Texas surveyor





# Latin Colonies

- ◆ These German intellectuals, so-called freethinkers and "Latinists" (German "Freidenker" and "Lateiner"), founded these communities in order to devote themselves to German literature, philosophy, science, classical music, and the Latin language. These settlements, however, were not destined to survive for very long. The settlers were young adventurers or classically educated intellectuals, so-called "Latinists" or "Latin Ones" (German "Lateiner"), sometimes both, but by no means farmers.

# Salem

- ◆ Salem Lutheran Church. This church was organized in the Salem community on Nov. 22, 1858, by the Rev. Johann G. Ebinger and 17 charter members. Worship services were first held in a log cabin on land deeded by Wilhelm Bohne (.3 mi. SW). In 1913 the church moved to the present site. The second oldest German Lutheran congregation in Washington County, Salem Lutheran Church has led in the development of the area.

# Greenvine

- ◆ In 1860 J. Frank Kiefer, a German Baptist evangelist, conducted a revival in the new community, and the first German Baptist Church in Texas was organized there in 1861. By 1882 its population was 300, predominantly German with an Anglo minority. In 1884 Greenvine Lutherans organized Emmanuel Church. By 1890 the community's population had declined to 150. The community had the first five-and-dime store in its part of Texas

# Gay Hill

- ◆ St. Peter's Lutheran Church. This congregation was founded by German immigrants who came to the Gay Hill community in the 1880s - Gay Hill's population was 120 in 1890. By 1900 Germans were the dominant ethnic group

# Other German Communities

- ◆ San Antonio - Between 1853 and 1859 streets were laid out, including King William Street, the district's major thoroughfare, which is said to have been named by Ernst Hermann Altgelt in honor of Wilhelm I, King of Prussia.
- ◆ Houston – 1841 – first German Union established. German immigrants started arriving in Texas and Houston after the Revolutions of 1848 in the German states. Many were educated and arrived with capital to set up businesses or buy farms
- ◆ Dallas - By 1860 the population was 678, including ninety-seven African Americans as well as French, Belgians, Swiss, and Germans.
- ◆ 2010 census cites 50% of responders claim German ancestry.



**PHILIPP PETER STORK**

GEB.  
18 Nov. 1798

GEST.  
29 Sept. 1849

*Selig sind die Knechte  
die der Herr Gott Kömmen  
wachend findet*

Photo by Oliver F. Stork, 1974