

# Echoes...

## from the Archives

The Dietert Historical Archives (DHA), Patrick Heath Public Library

Banner Graphic - Kristy Watson - Polonyx Graphic Design

**P | PL**  
Patrick Heath  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

**The world at your command**

451 N. Main St.  
Boerne, TX 78006

830-249-3053

[www.boernelibrary.org](http://www.boernelibrary.org)

### In This Issue:

- ◇ **German Traditions**
- ◇ **A Kendalia Family**
- ◇ **Sisterdale Marker**
- ◇ **The Sisterdale Story**
- ◇ **Comfort Heritage**
- ◇ **Foundation**
- ◇ **Bergmann Family**
- ◇ **Celebration**
- ◇ **Magical History**
- ◇ **Tours**

**Dietert**  
**Historical**  
**Archives**  
Patrick Heath Public Library

## German Christmas Traditions

By Kathryn Adam-Hurst

**W**hen the Germans arrived in Texas they brought with them the well-established custom of putting up the Christmas tree. For several centuries Germans had been decorating their homes with evergreen trees and boughs. When the Germans settled in the Texas Hill Country they recognized that cedar would provide them with the evergreen decorations for the Christmas season. It worked well as a Christmas tree and as branches to decorate the fireplace mantle, doors and windows.

The traditional German Christmas was celebrated the evening of December 24. The tree was placed in a locked room in the house with only adults or older children decorating it; a tradition that continued in Kendall County. The tree was decorated with homemade ornaments of cut out decorated cookies in various shapes and sizes, foil, wooden ornaments, beads, and candy, with a small candle at the end of each branch. Children were not allowed in the room until after Father

Christmas had delivered the presents. On the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> the children were allowed to enter the room. Not being allowed to see the tree earlier created lots of excitement. Once everyone was gathered, the candles were lit. It was a beautiful sight!



Weeks before Christmas the women of the household would start baking cookies and other delicious delicacies. Many different kinds of cookies would be baked and stored for the Christmas season. One cookie that could be found in just about every home was the anise, or Springerle, cookie. The Christmas meal usually consisted of wild turkey, herring salad (for good luck), potatoes, sliced sausage or other smoked meats, cooked cheese and bread. Lebkuchen, or fruit bread, was also served.

Presents for the children usually consisted of oranges, apples, and candy and sometimes a small toy or a coin. The children especially liked the oranges. They were a special treat since they were not available year-round. Time has changed the Christmas traditions but not the spirit in which Christmas is celebrated here.

**Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!**

**Winter 2015-2016 — December-January-February**

# Kendalia Family History—The Traugotts: Kendall County Ranchers

By Donna Jonas

**M**artin Lux, Sr. was the son of Johann Hubert Lux, who immigrated to Texas from Germany in 1845. Johann Hubert Lux was one of the original 240 founding colonists of New Braunfels, Texas. Martin Lux, Sr. married Anna Acker, the daughter of Heinrich Acker. Martin and Anna lived and raised their family in what is now Kendalia, on a ranch between Kendalia and Highway 281 on FM 473. They are both buried in the St. Joseph's Catholic Church at Honey Creek, Texas. After their death, the ranch was owned and operated by their youngest son, Martin Lux, Jr., until 1994 when he died.



Emilie Annie Lux was born in 1890, one of ten children born to Martin Sr. and Annie Acker Lux. Emilie married Herman Traugott and had three children.

In her adult years, Emilie committed to paper her personal childhood memories — how their family lived and provided for themselves. The following story from Emilie was furnished by her grandson, Emil Friesenhahn, of Bulverde, Texas.

## Emilie's Story

My father's name was Martin Lux. His father's name was Herbert Lux. Herbert and his wife and daughter, Marie, came from Germany. They lived in San Antonio where their daughter died. After that they moved on a ranch four miles from New Braunfels, Texas. They had six more children, named Michael, Christina, Annie, Martin, Elizabeth, Peter and Charlie.

They walked four miles to church on Sunday. They hauled freight from Austin with a wagon driven by oxen.

My father, Martin, married Annie Acker. They had ten children. Phillip, Anna, Catherine "Kate", Charlie, Peter, Emilie, Oscar, Amanda, Ida, and Martin. They built a house out of logs close to a creek with running water. We had to get all our water out of the creek. Years later, another house was built, then later a well was drilled. First there was a hand pump for the well, and then later a windmill. We had to carry the water one-quarter mile for our home use.

The first fence was built out of brush. Later on, fences were built from rocks, and then out of cedar posts and later on out of barb wire. We raised corn, wheat, cotton, oats, sugar cane. Also, all fruits, and pecans, including plums, peaches and pears. We canned all fruits and also dried some peaches and cooked them later. We cooked all our own preserves. We raised our own vegetables and canned them. We usually canned 500 to 600 quarts of vegetables a year and had enough for all winter. We kept sweet potatoes in sand and used them for winter eating. We raised our own cattle and hogs and had horses to work the farm.



## The Traugotts, cont.

(cont. from page 3)



We butchered enough hogs and calves during the winter months that we had enough meat for summer months. Some meat we made in sausage, bacon, and ham. We smoked these in a small house built out of logs. We smoked it by burning coals for about three to four weeks. Then we put sausage in a 20-gallon crock and covered it with lard and it kept all summer. We put some bacon and ham away the same way. Some of the bacon and ham we put in a 50-gallon wooden barrel and covered it with salt, and then used it as we needed it. We ground our own corn meal out of corn we grew. Flour and coffee were about the only things we had to buy.

We sold our butter and eggs to the grocery store, which was seven miles away. We took it there once a week. We got about 10 cents a pound for butter and 8 cents to 12 cents a dozen for eggs. We made our butter. We had a crock that had a cover on with a wooden stick in the center. We had to plunge it (the stick) up and down until it was butter. Years later, we had a wooden churn that had a handle on that we turned round and round until we had butter.

Our cooking stoves were of iron and we burned wood in them and we also had iron pots to cook in. We had irons to heat on top of the stove to iron our clothes with. Our clothes were made out of cotton and wool. We made all our own clothes. My mother had no sewing machine at first and she had to sew all the clothes by hand. We chopped cedar trees down and made posts out of them and some we burned into coal. Then some of the posts and coal were taken to town to sell.

We made our own molasses out of sugar cane we grew. First the cane we cut by hand then taken home. Then the leaves were taken off and the seed. Then the cane was put in a press and the juice squeezed out of it. This press was driven by a mule that had to go around in circles. When they had about 40 gallons of juice, it was put in a big pan and it was set on top of a stove built out of rocks. There were posts and logs put under the pan to cook the molasses for about four to five hours. It was then ready to eat. The molasses was then put in crocks with lids on it and used.

The first combiner cut the oats and wheat and it fell flat to the ground on piles. Then they had to go and tie the bundles by hand. Later years, they made a combiner that tied the oats and wheat into bundles. The combiner was pulled by four mules. After the oats was cut, it was set in stacks of ten to twelve bundles each stack for it to dry. After about three weeks, someone that owned a thrashing machine would come and thrash the oats and wheat. There would be about twenty men to come and help. They had to get the feed out of the fields with wagons, pulled by mules. The thrashing machine was also run by mules going around in circles. The men had to pitch the feed on a conveyer and the machine would separate the seed from the straw. The feed was sacked by holding a sack to the pipe where the feed came out. Then the sack was sewed shut with twine. Loaded on a wagon and stacked in a barn. Some was used to feed cattle, etc., and the rest was taken to town and sold. Later on, they had thrashing machines with motors in about 1910.

We chopped weeds out of cotton, which was planted by a planter pulled by a mule. We picked the cotton and took it to a cotton gin and had the seed separated from the cotton. The cotton was put in a bale and sold. The feed was taken home and fed to the cattle...

**The story of the Traugotts to be continued in next issue.....**



# Celebrating the Sisterdale Marker

## Kendall County Historical Commission (KCHC) Unveils Sisterdale's Texas Historical Commission Marker

The Sisterdale Valley District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 and forty years later on September 12<sup>th</sup>, seventy guests and members of the KCHC gathered at the Sisterdale Dance Hall to celebrate a new cachet for the Sisterdale region. A Texas Historical Commission marker was unveiled honoring Sisterdale and the highly-educated German immigrant pioneer farmers who settled in the Guadalupe River Valley along the Pinta Trail. The unveiling ceremony highlighted elements of this unique enclave of pioneers who formed the first settlement in Kendall County. See page 5: *The Sisterdale Story*.



Dedication Ceremony for the  
Sisterdale, Texas Historical Marker

Color Guard  
Sisterdale Volunteer Fire Department

U.S. National Anthem & Pledge of Allegiance

Acknowledgements & Recognitions

Host/Donor Remarks  
Wyatt Wright

Welcome  
Theda Sueltenfuss – Chair  
Kendall County Historical Commission

Texas Historical Commission

Presentation of Proclamation

Unveiling of the Marker  
Bill Whitworth,  
Life long Sisterdale resident

"Sisty's Creek"  
Paul Barwick

"Punishing the Indians"  
Bryden E. Moon Jr., Historian

Confederate Sisterdale Revolver  
Frank Graves, Historic Firearms Expert

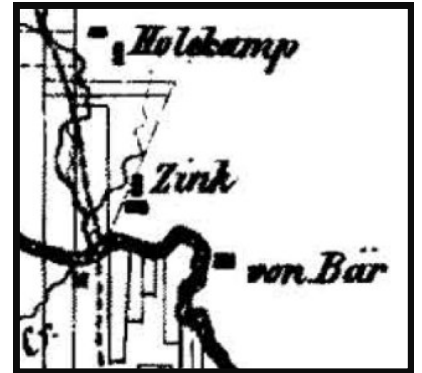
Closing Remarks

# The Sisterdale Story—Part I

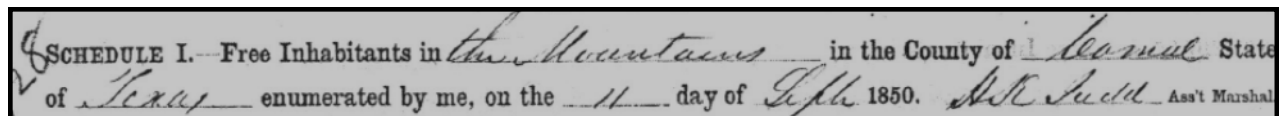
By Bryden Moon

## Kendall County's First Settlers: 165 Years ago, the Census of 1850

**P**roximity to the ancient Native-American pathway of the Pinta Trail at the crossing of the Guadalupe River, coupled with the area's natural beauty and plentiful water and wood resources, contributed to the origins of Sisterdale's status as one of the earliest settlements in the Texas Hill Country. Initially it was known simply as the locale of its first German settlers – first Nicholas Zink in 1847, then Ottmar von Behr and G. F. Holekamp. The area developed after Zink's arrival as more German immigrants, determined to carve out a new life, pioneered on adjacent acreage: the 1850 area census listed forty, including thirty-nine German immigrants. Among these German settlers were young dreamers and sophisticated professionals; longing for new freedoms and opportunity in this raw land; they took up farming. While the natural resources and beauty of the area drew its earliest settlers and the Pinta Trail enabled its early founding, Sisterdale's eclectic mix of German immigrant pioneers would ultimately become the draw. Their spirit, intelligence, and zest for life engendered fascination, respect and awe from all who visited this unique Latin Colony.



**Future Kendall County's pioneers: 1850 U. S. Census** On September 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of 1850, a census taker named H. K. Judd, rode out into the far untamed reaches between New Braunfels and Fredericksburg to gather data for the state of Texas' first official U. S. Survey. Not knowing what to expect in this wilderness, what he found was a collection of seven farms populated by German immigrants. Forty individuals were documented within this pocket of homesteaders. On the census document Mr. Judd described the region by penning "**the Mountains**", since in 1850, the hamlet had no official name. The registered residents constituted almost all of future Kendall County's first pioneers. A little over a year later, the formal name of this non-plotted community would emerge with the establishment of only the third Hill Country post office: it was called **Sisterdale**.



**1850 Census Names** Sisterdale was not a plotted community, but a series of large farms, and sprinkled among the farms on the census are 16 non-family surnames, individuals who are resident for the opportunity for work or are connected by association in the old country. They are variously listed as **farmer, laborer, cabinet maker, wagon maker, wagoner** and even an **artist**. Mr. Judd apparently didn't take the time to have them write their names or couldn't read what was written or pronounced...many names of the familiar were misspelled...for example Zink was written **Schnick** and Beseler as **Bazlar**. (These errors make it harder to accurately spell, much less identify our lesser known pioneers.)

**Dwelling 269:** Ottmar Behr (35), Louisa (27), Bertha (8), Anna (7), Alfred (1), Frances Brandt (42), Anton Roth (24), Rudolph Gur (24), Frances Hadenbrock (43).

**Dwelling 270:** Louis Donop (28), Caroline (24).

**Dwelling 271:** Julius Conrad (24), Adolph Nueber (30).

**Dwelling 272:** Nicholas Zink (38), Eliza (26), Christopher Stockens (54), Frederick Aschemann (26), Fritz Goodman (16), William Dunhurd (16), Cathanna Goodman (17).

**Dwelling 273:** Charles Beseler (36), Augusta (32), Charles Phillip\* (12), Ernst (10).

**Dwelling 274:** Ernst Kapp (42), Ida (42), Antoni (15), Alfred (13), Julia (10), Hedwig (6), Wolfgang (4), Conrad Bruns (19), Anton Loehr (15).

**Dwelling 275:** Julius Dresel (33), Joann (17), Emile (31), Rudolph (19), Conrad Mohr (23), August Pieper (25), Pablo Diaz (12).

**(The Sisterdale Story continued...How Sisterdale Evolved next edition.)**

## Update from the Comfort Heritage Foundation: A Visit to a Sisterdale Homestead

### Comfort Heritage Foundation Visits Dr. Ernst Kapp's Sisterdale Homestead

**H**erman Lungkwitz's 1853 drawings masterfully anchored the splendor of the Kapp family compound on a hillock above the East Sister Creek which included facilities for hydrotherapy. Dr. Ernst Kapp and his family came to Texas in 1849 and were captured on the 1850 Comal County census. Dr. Kapp evolved as a key member of early Sisterdale's leadership. Yet since many historical Hill Country homes are in disrepair or lost forever, it is understandable that expectations were muted before the Comfort Heritage Foundation's (CHF) field trip to the original Kapp homestead on July, 13th.



After wending through the entrance to this Sisterdale stalwart's original compound, what the caravanning entourage viewed was startling. To the amazement and delight of CHF members and their guests (including the Kendall County Historical Commission), what they viewed took them back 160 years; it appeared that time had stood still. Many current structures matched the 162-year-old image, right down to the four-post porch and dual-fireplace chimneys.

After a short presentation and before a tour of the facility, several of the CHF members (and guests) were recognized as descendants of Dr. Kapp (below left). Additionally, descendants of George Frederick Holekamp, who actually lived on Kapp's land prior to his sale to Kapp in the 1849/1850 window, were also part of the CHF membership & guest tour (below right).



The Comfort Heritage Foundation, housed in the old Comfort State Bank building at 640 High Street, is open to the public two days a week: Tuesdays from 9:00 - Noon for archival research and historical queries and Saturdays from 10:00 - 12:00 and 1:00 - 3:00 for museum exhibits and research. Leave messages at 830-995-2641. Open by appointment if needed. Comfort's unique history is not to be missed.

**Photo Credit: Brenda Seidensticker**



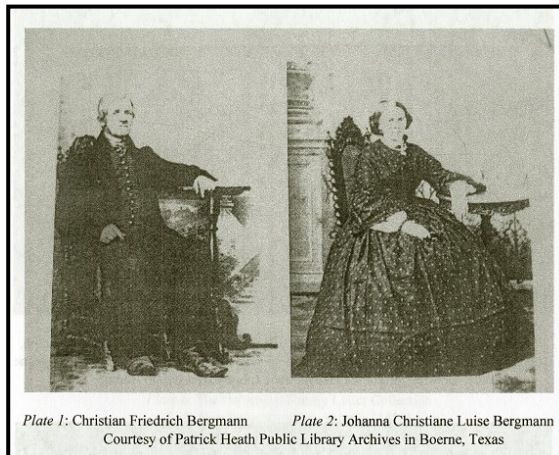
## Bergmann Family Donates Treasured Family Letters To Dietert Historical Archives

More than 35 history lovers and family members gathered recently at the Patrick Heath Public Library for the celebration of the return of treasured family letters from German to their place of origin, right here in Kendall County. The letters of Christian Friedrich Bergmann told the saga of many German immigrants to the new and wild country of Texas: *"Trembling and haltingly I take up my quill, wondering whether my letter will find you alive or not. I am sure you longed to receive a letter from me, because I promised to write you as soon as I would stand on again...I hoped you would find out that my family and I have reached the shore safe and sound."*

For more than 26 years, Bergmann wrote back to his family in Germany of the hardship and wonders of life in the New World. These letters were translated and published recently in a book, *"New World View: letters from a German Immigrant Family in Texas."* (This book is available at the Patrick Heath Public Library).

Family members read excerpts from the letters that day, sharing all sorts of news—personal glimpses of the coming Civil War to the well-known German stubborn streak in pursuit of a well-made wagon. There was laughter and wonderment at our collective ability to touch the past, even more than 150 years later.

The library and the City of Boerne offer deep gratitude to the entire Bergmann family for this rare gift, and a special thank you to amateur historian Bryden Moon for his gentle persistence in bringing the letters home and for leading a ceremony that paid great honor to the memory of Christian Friedrich Bergmann.



# Winter History Tours Focus on Buildings and Courthouses

**DECEMBER — QUICK DEADLINE DECEMBER 4**

**The Dienger Trading Company in Boerne (Joseph Dienger Building)  
Tuesday, December 8, 2015, 10:15 a.m., 210 North Main**



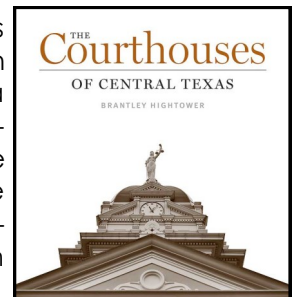
**The Joseph Dienger building** has anchored the corner of Blanco and Main Streets in Boerne for over 135 years. Designated as a Recorded Texas Landmark, this two-story limestone is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Come meet the owner of the newly remodeled Dienger Trading Company; get a personal tour of this Boerne icon and learn about its history. **We'll gather @ 210 North Main Street adjacent to Boerne's town plaza at 10:15 on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, and follow up with dutch treat lunch on site!** Please RSVP to Robin at 249-3053 or email [Stauber@boernelibrary.org](mailto:Stauber@boernelibrary.org) by **Friday, December 4.**

**JANUARY — Courthouses of Texas**

**Saturday, January 16, 2016 at 10 a.m.**

**Patrick Heath Public Library (partnered with Genealogy Society of Kendall County)**

According to Architect and Author Brantley Hightower, "The county courthouse has long held a central place on the Texas landscape—literally, as the center of the town in which it is located, and figuratively, as the symbol of governmental authority. As a county's most important public building, the courthouse makes an architectural statement about a community's prosperity and aspirations—or the lack of them." Join the Genealogy Society of Kendall County and the PHPL as we welcome Brantley to the library for a look at the courthouses of Central Texas — their history, legacy and architectural structures. Brantley's sketches will be hanging in the library's gallery all month long and he will have books available for sale and signing at this event.



**FEBRUARY— King William District, San Antonio**

**Tuesday, February 9, 9:45 a.m., 509 King William Street**

King William is the first designated historic district in Texas. The neighborhood traces its beginnings to the 1860s when several prominent families, many of them German, began building their homes near the San Antonio River and downtown. Join us for a self-guided walking tour and learn about its Kendall County connections. We'll meet at 509 King William Street (Steve's Homestead) @ 9:45, on Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. Admission fees and dutch treat lunch to follow. Call Robin at 249-3053 or email [Stauber@boernelibrary.org](mailto:Stauber@boernelibrary.org) by Thursday, February 4 to RSVP.

