



wendish news

WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

NUMBER 68 MARCH 2022



Two pages from a 1561 Bible discovered in the Tarrington Lutheran Church Archives, Victoria (see page 7).

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Calendar of upcoming events

Given the current situation with coronavirus restrictions and the ongoing uncertainty, it is very difficult for us to plan ahead. Our events remain subject to conditions at the time. We will keep you informed.

Wendish Heritage Society Australia 35th Anniversary Luncheon and Country Tour to Ballarat, Victoria 12–14 March 2022

We thank our Tour Leader Betty Huf for organising the following itinerary for the Luncheon and Tour to Ballarat. Bookings are now closed. A full report of these events will be published in our next Newsletter.

This year our two annual events have been combined into the one weekend. Our **Anniversary Luncheon**, postponed from last year, will begin our weekend of activities on Saturday 12 March. It will be held at 12.00 pm in the Urban Lounge, **Robin Hood Hotel**, 33 Peel St North, Ballarat. Our Past Presidents will speak about their term in office.

Several thousand Germans were amongst the earliest settlers in Ballarat where many were initially miners before moving into other businesses and trades. The largest influx was during the gold rush of the 1850s with at least a dozen being involved in the Eureka uprising of 1853. Approximately 2000 people, many of them Germans, claimed to be Lutheran, resulting in the establishment of a Lutheran congregation in the mid-1850s.

This year, due to the rich diversity of heritage in Ballarat, the weekend program allows plenty of free time to pursue your own particular historical interests.

Our tour will commence after the Luncheon with a visit to the **German Lutheran section** of the **New Ballarat Cemetery**, where early German emigrants are buried, as well as some post-war residents, many from Latvia. Short stories of the lives of some of these people will be related. The rest of Saturday will be free time, but if you wish there is an opportunity to participate in a **Night Tour** of the **Ballarat Old Cemetery** from 9.00 to 10.30 pm. Bookings need to be made online at www.eerietours.com.au. Cost: \$22 concession, \$27.50 adult.

Worship at **St John's Lutheran Church** will occur at 10.00 am on Sunday morning, followed by a cuppa with parishioners afterwards. There is free time until 1.30pm when we are booked to attend the **Eureka Centre** for a self-guided tour to view the Eureka Stockade story and the original Eureka flag. Cost: \$3.60 Seniors, \$5.40 Adults for group of 10 (otherwise \$4 concession, \$6 Adults). Following

this there will be free time until 6.00 pm, when we will be gathering at **St. John's Hall** for an evening meal (\$15) to be followed by several PowerPoint presentations about the Wends and German history in Ballarat. These will commence at 7.30 pm, and locals have been invited.

On Monday morning a visit will be made to the **Old Ballarat Cemetery** to view the Eureka Miners' and Soldiers' graves. Possibly a trip to Smythesdale to view the Nieder-Weisel memorial will also occur on Monday.

Annual General Meeting, Saturday 23 April 2022

Our Society's AGM will be held at 1.30 pm, followed by afternoon tea. All are welcome. The venue is the meeting room at **St Aidan's, 12 Surrey St, Box Hill South, Victoria**.

Proxies will be accepted. Please appoint a proxy if you are unable to attend, to ensure that we have a quorum for this important meeting. Please see the proxy form enclosed in this Newsletter. We need 26 members, including proxies, for a quorum. Any member who is attending the meeting may be appointed as a proxy. Committee members may also be appointed as proxies eg. President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer or any of the Committee members listed in our Directory on page 12. Please post the proxy form to reach us by Friday 22 April.

Alternatively, you may email a message appointing a proxy to the address below. To appoint a proxy, please use the following wording:

"I,, being a paid member of the Wendish Heritage Society Aust. Inc., am unable to attend the AGM to be held on Saturday 23 April 2022. I appoint as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the meeting."

Please note that you **must sign** your message appointing a proxy. Please include an image of your signature.

Please RSVP to Glenys Wollermann (Secretary)

Telephone: (03) 9891 6652

Email: wensociety1@optusnet.com.au



Hochkirch 800th Anniversary and Oberammergau Passion Play Tour

This Tour has now been postponed to Easter 2023.

Contact: Betty Huf, Tel. (03) 5572 4959

Email: bettyhuf@outlook.com

170th Anniversary of the arrival of the Pribislaw

This event has been postponed indefinitely. It will be held when international travel restrictions are lifted and it is possible for Dirk Weissleder to travel from Germany.

Rentsch Reunion at Tarrington, Victoria

This Reunion has now been postponed indefinitely. Because family members reside in a number of

Australian States, the continuing difficulty regarding interstate travel has led to this decision. The family history book, *Rentsch family in Australia 1851–2020*, is still available for \$70.00, plus \$12.00 for postage.

Contact Ruth Walter: ruth.walter43@gmail.com,

Mobile 0435 211 606 or

Monica Rentsch: rentschdescendants2020@gmail.com,

Mobile 0438 735 239.

Hundrack Family History

The Hundrack Family Booklet is still a work in progress and a date of publication is yet to be finalized.

If you would like to be kept informed on the progress of this project, please contact:

Julie Ballinger: rj7bal@westvic.com.au

Mobile 0448 376 522 or

June Winter: Mobile 0438 661 313

A tribute to Dr Gerald Stone, 1932–2021

We thank Rob Wuchatsch for the following tribute:

Dr Gerald Stone, FBA and Emeritus Fellow of Hertford College, died in Oxford on 11 September 2021 after a short illness, aged 89.

A graduate of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies of the University of London, Dr Stone taught Slavonic languages and comparative Slavonic philology at the Universities of Nottingham (1966–71) and Cambridge (1971–72). From 1972–99 he was a Fellow of Hertford College at Oxford where he lectured in non-Russian Slavonic languages. In 1992 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy (FBA) for Linguistics and Philology of Central and Eastern Europe including Russia.

Dr Stone's books included *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia* (1972); *Upper Sorbian-English Dictionary* (2002); and *Slav Outposts in Central European History: The Wends, Sorbs and Kashubs* (2016).

I purchased my copy of *The Smallest Slavonic Nation* in 1982 and it proved an invaluable reference. Along with George Nielsen's 1977 book *In Search of a Home*, it was one of the few books then published



in English on the history and culture of the Wends or Sorbs. I later corresponded with Gerry and met him at Hertford College in 1999. Over the next 20 years, he very generously translated Wendish letters and other research material for Australian and US researchers, the only native English speaking scholar able to translate from 19th Century Upper Sorbian or Wendish Gothic script into English. Before Gerry's assistance, research material had to be translated into German, then to English by another translator.

Gerry was a friend of Australian-born theoretical physicist Professor Richard Dalitz (1925–2006), a Wendish descendant born in Dimboola, Victoria. During the 1980s Professor Dalitz, from All Souls College Oxford, provided Gerry with autobiographical notes about his childhood and life in Australia and extracts from these will appear in a future edition of this Newsletter.

In 2012 my late wife Gaye and I enjoyed a long lunch with Gerry and his wife Vera at their home in Oxford. Gerry told me he had no Slavic ancestry but had been encouraged to study Russian as a student during the late 1940s. Later, he became interested in the Wendish language, for which English speaking Wendish descendants and researchers around the world have much to be grateful for.

ROB WUCHATSCH



Research

Rentsch Family in Australia 1851–2020

In May 2021 Ruth Walter (nee Rentsch) gave a presentation to the Wend/Sorb Society of S.A. on the collating and publishing of the Rentsch family history book. Ruth is the great, great granddaughter of the original settlers, Johann and Maria Rentsch. We thank Ruth for the following article:



Johann and Maria Rentsch were Wendish immigrants who sailed from Saxony in 1851, together with their four teenage children. Initially they arrived in Adelaide, and in 1852 they trekked with seven other families to the Western District of Victoria. Their descendants still have a strong presence there.

In 2016 a decision was made to compile a book on this family in Australia. A Rentsch Descendants Committee was assembled and despite the usual delays, and the unusual interruptions of the pandemic, the book was finally published in 2021.

One or two representatives from each of the four family lines were co-opted and really, without any further analysis, we went ahead with the model used by other books we were familiar with, what I call the Linear Family History.

Such family books have become very popular over the past four to five decades and, despite descendants escalating in numbers, we used a similar format. You start with the person, couple or family who immigrated and work your way through their settlement until the present day.

Data and stories are collected, where possible, on the succeeding generations, photos are sought and the memories of older living descendants are like gold.

So what is needed to make the inclusive family history book attractive and saleable? Descendants do like to see their names and data in print, and family photos. The older the photos, the more interest is generated. Wedding photos give a great review of the changes in fashions, and quite rare in the Rentsch book is a photo of the wedding of Johann and Maria Rentsch's daughter, Anna in 1856. Anna is wearing the embroidered Wendish ribbons over her silk blouse, and although not totally clear, her headdress appears to be a Wendish styled cap.

Initially most people look at their own sections and then move onto the stories and histories of their wider ancestry. Research often uncovers surprising information and one query about Johann Rentsch was his signature of an X on a land deal document

in 1871. Was he illiterate? This was unlikely as he'd been mayor of his village in Saxony, and education was considered very important by the immigrants, both the Wendish and German people. Then Betty Huf located an article in the *Hamilton Spectator* dated November 1868 which gave the explanation:

“Yesterday afternoon a serious accident happened to an old man named Rentsch ...it seems he was run over by a wagon the wheel passing over one of his arms, and inflicted



Top: Wedding photo of Anna Rentsch and Wilhelm Petschel, 1856; Bottom: Johann and Maria Rentsch, early 1870s.



such injuries that it is thought more than likely that the limb will have to be amputated. Rentsch is a veteran whose years have reached “three score years and ten”, and it is therefore doubtful if he will recover the shock his system has sustained.”

A few days later there was another article in the paper about this serious accident:

“On Wednesday morning the limb was successfully amputated, a few inches below the shoulder joint, by the resident Surgeon Dr Wyly, assisted by Doctors Govett and Jenkins: the patient, who was placed under the influence of chloroform, bearing the operation well, and he is likely to recover and regain his usual health.”

Johann Rentsch lived another 10 years, but it is obvious now in the only photo we have of Johann and Maria, that his right arm is missing.

While the collecting of data, photos, interviewing descendants and researching documents is the exciting part, collating all the information is hard work. Trying to be accurate, without too many mistakes

slipping through the net, is the part that produces a great deal of anxiety.

However an even greater anxiety came at the end when our Family Tree Maker program was out of sync with the Publisher’s program. Although the Publisher assured us this was most unusual, many of the 5,000 plus names had to be individually checked.

That was the disappointing part when the final copy still had errors and omissions. However, while not a lot of consolation, I’m told nearly all family books require a later ‘errata’ supplement.

A “Gathering” for the Rentsch Family descendants has been planned and cancelled several times due to the pandemic, but watch this space – miracles do happen.

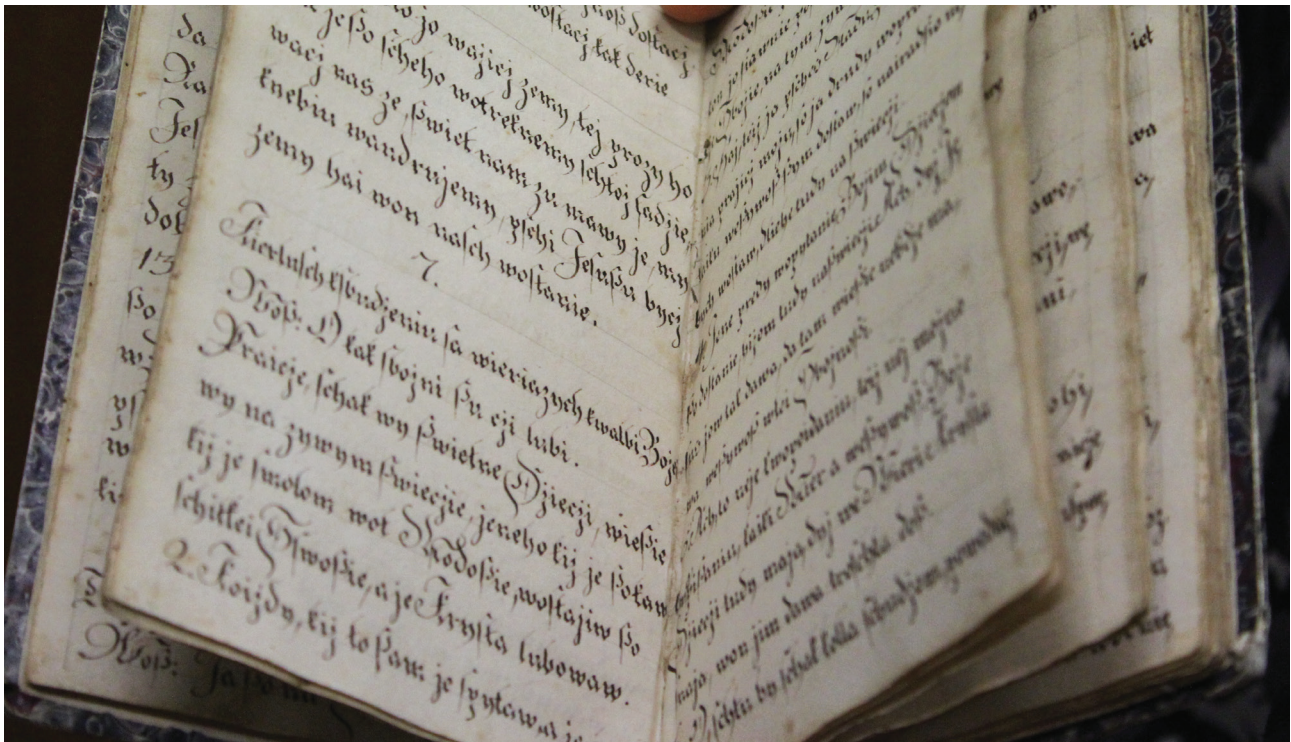
For further information, contact:

Ruth Walter (mobile) 0435 211 606, or

Monica Rentsch (mobile) 0438 735 239; email:

rentschdescendants2020@gmail.com

RUTH WALTER (EDITOR)



Handwritten Wendish Book at Lutheran Archives

Gertrud Mahling enquired about the photo (pictured above) of the handwritten Wendish book that was published on p.12 of our last Newsletter (*Wendish News* September 2021).

The photo was taken when our Tour group visited the Lutheran Archives in May 2021. Gertrud had never seen this particular book before. Betty Huf assisted Gertrud to find out more information on this book, by contacting Lyall Kupke.

Lyall reported: “I arranged for the Lutheran Archives to scan the book for Gertrud and it has been sent. They are delighted to see it. They say it is a collection of hymns and songs. Gertrud’s daughter is studying it in detail. She works at the Sorbian Institute.”



Towk / Thowk Family History

We thank John Noack for the following research report:

Alexandra Frew, a descendant of the pioneering Wends Martin and Anna **Towk / Thowk**, recently inquired about information relating to her Towk family. She indicated that she had been reading the interesting information on our website and that she had seen the mention of her Towk family. She would therefore like to become involved in the Wendish Heritage Society and to engage in further Towk research.

I indicated that our Family History Library at 12 Surrey Street in Box Hill South contains many resources, including published family histories, area studies and both George Nielsen's book, *In Search of a Home* and his *Research Notes* for the book. I recalled that, when our Library was located at Ivanhoe, some Towk descendants visited during a "Research Sunday", in order to identify the name and date of the ship which transported the Towk family from Europe to Australia. They indicated that they had studied various ships' passenger lists in South Australia and in New South Wales.

When we examined our Victorian Lists, at first the surname "Towk" did not appear. However, when variations of this surname were searched, Martin & Anna were included in the Melbourne - bound 1859 ship *P.C. Kinch* under the surname "Thowk". This was certainly an exciting discovery for these Towk descendants.

As Brandenburg Emigrants, their earlier Application Form indicates that Martin Thowk was a "Bauerngutsbesitzer" or an owner of a small holding of land. His wife's maiden name was **Pipke** and his youngest children, being unborn in 1859, were not included on this Application Form. However, the name "Louise", aged 4, is included with Christiane, also aged 4.

P.C. Kinch, which weighed 347 tons and carried 155 passengers in its steerage, eventually departed from Hamburg on 12 July 1859. It transported as passengers 133-140, Martin Thowk aged 41, a Landmann or Farmer from Jaenschwalde, Prussia, his Frau or wife Anna aged 33 and their six children, (1) Martin, aged 12, (2) Maria 8, (3) Anna 7, (4) Louise 4, (5) Christian 2 and (6) baby Lise (Elisabeth). This Passenger List names the 5th child as masculine "Christian" but the Application Form for Emigration includes the feminine name "Christiane".

Also on board were Hans **Lehmann**, a farmer, his wife Anna and their seven children from Heinersbruch; Martin **Falk**, a farmer from Hausen, Württemberg, his wife Elizabeth and their four children; Frau Lene **Luebcke** from Lauenburg and her

three children and also over 100 stone-masons mainly from Denmark, together with their contracts with the Cornish and Bruce Construction Company, to build the railway line from Melbourne to Sandhurst or Bendigo.

It is reported that these stone-masons complained when they arrived and found that their prescribed working and payment conditions were below those which were in force in Victoria in 1859. Of interest is that the cargo of the *P.C. Kinch* included cases of matches, candles, wine and 20,000 bricks, as well as a parcel of books for the Melbourne Pastor Matthias **Goethe**.

George R. Nielsen's research during the 1970s established that Martin Towk was born in 1819 and was a Bauer (builder) at Burg and at Jaenschwalde. In 1845, he married Anna **Pipkorn** or **Pipke**, who was born on 16 Nov 1825 at Drehnow, near Cottbus. Their children born in Jaenschwalde in Lower Lusatia were Martin, in 1848; Maria in 1850; Anna in 1851 and (3) Elizabeth in 1851. Nielsen in his Notes does not include the names "Louise" and "Christiane". Those born in Australia after 1859 were Wilhelmina Auguste on 23 Nov 1860 at Hochkirch in Victoria; Emilie Bertha on 8 Dec 1862 at Hamilton; Pauline on 5 Feb 1865 at Hochkirch and Emilie, who died as a baby in 1870.

The daughters of this family later married and changed their Towk surname. (1) Maria in 1866 married Karl **Herrmann**; (2) Anna in 1872 married Julius **Hahnel**; (3) Elizabeth in 1877 married Carl **Petering**; (4) Christiane in 1877 married Paul **Tepper** (5) Wilhelmina in 1878 married John **Schulz**; (6) Emilie Bertha in 1879 married Christian **Nowotna**; (7) Louisa in 1884 married Frederick **Uthmeyer** and (8) Pauline in 1885 married Wilhelm **Brockman**.

Martin Junior, the son and eldest child of Martin and Anna Towk, married the widow Anna Louise **Presser**.

Martin Senior's date of death and biographical details about his many descendants still need to be researched from the Indexes of Births, Marriages and Deaths in our Library. Nielsen has indicated that Martin's wife Anne nee Pipke died on 31 Dec 1870 at Hamilton in Victoria,

Nielsen's Notes also include an Elizabeth (Lisa) Towk, who was born on 17 Sep 1834 at Jaenschwalde and who was the wife of Martin **Kotzur** and who died in 1900 at Henty in New South Wales.

George Nielsen also refers to the Towk family on pages 55 and 57 of his book, *In Search of a Home*. This family settled at Byaduk, where they were members of the Neukirch Lutheran Congregation. The book *Under the Southern Cross* by A. Brauer, indicates



on page 287 that Neukirch, along with Tabor and Willaura, belonged to the parish of Hochkirch.

When land in the Victoria's Mallee country was opened for settlement in the 1880s, the Towks moved north, where life was very difficult. The soil was sandier and more saline; the Mallee trees, which were part of the eucalyptus family, needed to be cleared by the use of large and heavy rollers and the removal of the Mallee stumps required back-breaking toil. The rainfall was below fifteen inches a year and the hot weather and dry winds during summer gave rise to much evaporation of the moisture in

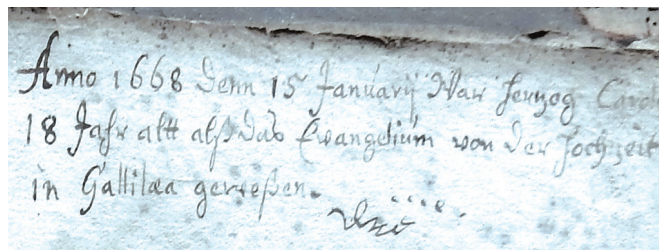
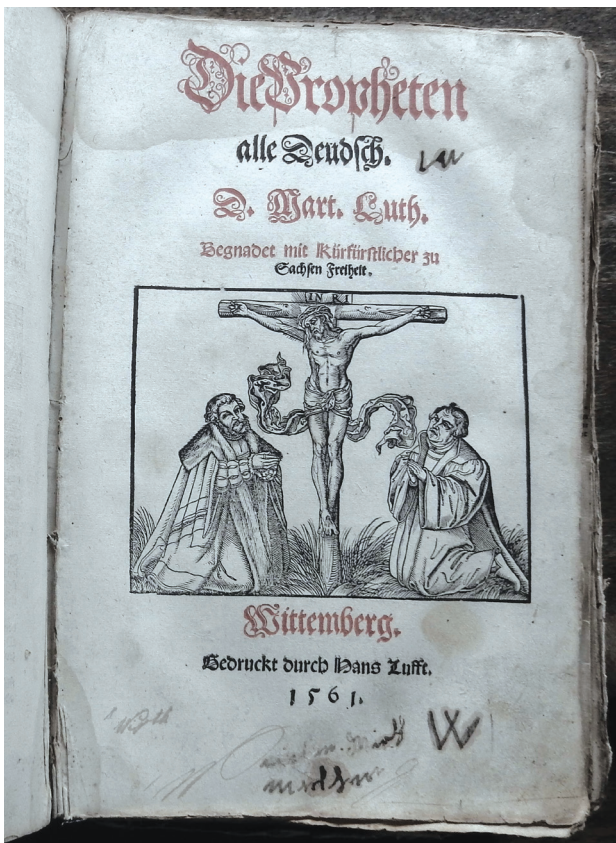
the soil. Their Mallee locations included Walpeup, Ouyen, Rainbow and Pella.

Towk descendants have therefore been mentioned in relation to Byaduk, Walpeup, Rainbow, Pella and Murtoa. The Towk researcher Alexandra Frew intends to visit our Library at suitable times, in order to conduct further family research. I indicated that, because I am a retiree, I am able to be the Library Guide and Consultant during such visits.

John Noack; email: johnnoack@yahoo.com.au;
(mob) 0479 012 526

Discovery of Bible dated 1561

While cataloguing the German language books in the Tarrington Lutheran Church Archives, Victoria, a 1561 Bible was discovered. There are several personal entries, made by various generations of people. The earliest is dated 1668.



Simfon gieng hin genGasa/vnd sahe daselbs eine Hure vnd lag bey jr. Da ward den Gastern gesagt / Simfon ist bereit komen / Vnd sie vmbgaben in / vnd liessen auff in lauren die ganze nacht in der Stadthor / vnd waren die ganze nacht stille / vnd sprachen / Varr / morgen wenns liecht wird / wollen wir in erwürgen. Simfon aber lag bis zu mitternacht. Da stund er auff zu mitternacht / vnd ergreiff beide thür an der Stadthor / samp den beiden pfofen / vnd hnb sie aus mit den rigeln / vnd leget sie auff sein Schultern / vnd trug sie hinauff auff die höhe des berges für Debron.

Clockwise: 1. Front page of "The Prophets", printed by Hans Luft, Wittenberg, 1561. 2. Earliest handwritten inscription, dated 1668. 3. One of the woodcut illustrations. 4. The 1561 Bible, side view.

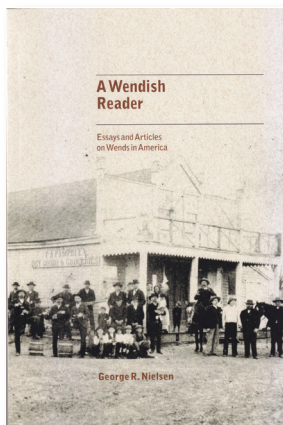


Library news

Funeral orders of service, including obituaries

Our last three issues of *Wendish News* included lists of funeral orders of service, including obituaries, which our Librarian, Janice Blackburn, has organized into folders. We sincerely thank the people who have donated copies of funeral orders of service to add to our records. Further contributions are very welcome. Please send them to our Society's postal address, as listed on the back page of this Newsletter.

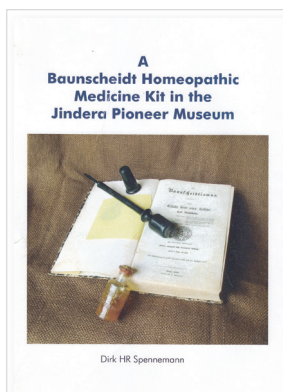
Recent acquisitions include:



A Wendish reader: essays and articles on Wends in America, by George R. Nielsen (published in 2021)

This recently published reader presents new and newly uncovered information on Wends in the United States, and incorporates that information into their known history. The essays are arranged in roughly chronological order so that the reader is able to follow the story of the Wendish settlement in the United States without prior knowledge of the topic.

We thank Jan Slack, President of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society, for sending us a complimentary copy of this book, “with Dr Nielsen’s gratitude in recognition of the help you have provided and the information you have shared with him”. Rob Wuchatsch found sale advertisements in an 1854 newspaper, placed by Wendish emigrants selling their property prior to their departure to their new home in Texas. Translations of some of these advertisements are included in Chapter 8: “What to Sell; What to Pack?”



A Baunscheidt homeopathic medicine kit in the Jindera Pioneer Museum by Dirk H.R. Spennemann

The Jindera Pioneer Museum in New South Wales contains a large collection of items that have been donated by families of both German and non-German extraction. The collection is comprised of tools, furniture, dress and apparel, musical instruments, books, porcelain, general household items and religious items.

Homeopathic medicine was popular during the nineteenth century. Included in the collection are three items which were introduced by the Germans and which were sold as a kit: (i) a medical instrument (“Lebenswecker”) with metal needles set in a wooden handle which was used to inflict small wounds on patients; (ii) a bottle of the oil that was rubbed into the wounds; and (iii) a manual on how to use the healing method to best effect. This homeopathic treatment was invented by Prussian citizen Carl Friedrich **Baunscheidt** (1809-1873).

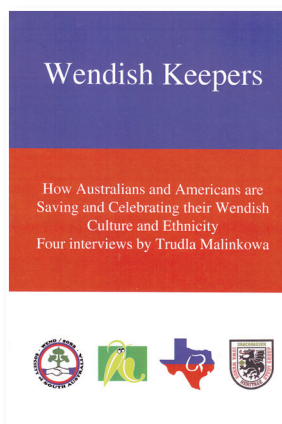
This study by Spennemann examines these three items, assesses their cultural significance and places them into historical context. We thank Betty Huf for donating this booklet to our Library.

PHOTOS OF COVERS: MICK AMPT

Our Library is open by appointment. Please contact the Secretary. See page 12 for contact details.



Books for sale

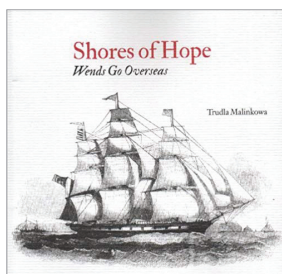


Wendish Keepers: how Australians and Americans are saving and celebrating their Wendish culture and ethnicity – four interviews by Trudla Malinkowa; edited and produced by Weldon Mersiovsky

This book, by Gertrud Mahling, features her interviews with the Presidents of the Wendish Societies around the world: Texas, Iowa, South Australia and Victoria. It has been published in the USA, in English. Ten copies have arrived. They are available for sale for \$35.00, plus postage.

Contact Clay Kruger: Tel. (03) 8838 8737 or email wensociety1@optusnet.com.au or krugercly35@gmail.com

Please make cheques or money orders payable to “Wendish Heritage Soc. Aust. Inc.” or contact Clay for EFT payment details.

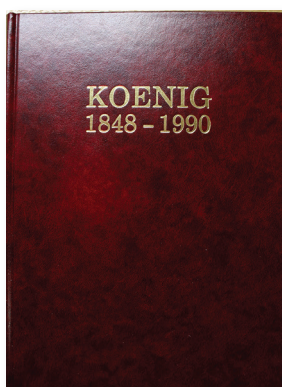


Shores of hope: Wends go overseas by Trudla Malinkowa

This is the English translation of the book *Ufer der Hoffnung* about Wendish/Sorbian migration to Australia and to Texas. It won the 2010 Concordia Historical Institute's Award.

Copies are available for \$40.00 plus postage.

Contact Clay Kruger.
See contact details above.

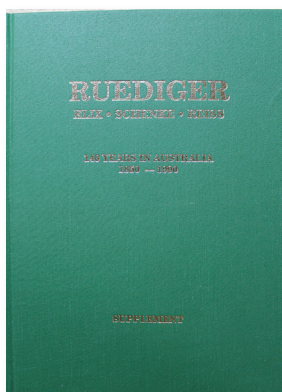


Koenig 1848–1990: Christian & Karl Koenig and their descendants in Australia

Copies are available for \$2.00 plus postage.

Related surnames: Lemm, Schmidt, Gladigau, Kroschel, Noske, Kroeker, Hundrack, Hartwich.

To purchase copies of the Koenig book, contact Glenys Wollermann (Secretary):
Tel. (03) 9891 6652; email g.wollermann@y7mail.com



Ruediger: 140 years in Australia 1850–1990, Christian and Anna Elisabeth Ruediger: an update on the family tree from 1975 to 1990

Copies are available for \$2.00 plus postage.

Related surnames: Elix, Schenke, Reiss.

To purchase copies of the Ruediger book, contact Glenys Wollermann (Secretary):
Tel. (03) 9891 6652; email g.wollermann@y7mail.com



Items from Other Societies' Journals

50th Anniversary Texas Wendish Heritage Society

The *Texas Wendish Heritage Society Newsletter* (Fall 2021) includes an article by Vivian Dube on plans to celebrate their Society's 50th Anniversary at Wendish Fest 2022.

The Society started in 1972, when five determined Wendish women founded the Wendish Culture Club, now known as the Texas Wendish Heritage Society. As part of their traditional costumes, the women made two-button "poke bonnets".

Vivian Dube states, "As we honour these five women... we encourage every woman to wear a bonnet...and the men to wear a straw farm hat ...to Wendish Fest 2022 – our Fiftieth Anniversary".

Journey to Niederlausitz

The *Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia Inc. Newsletter* (April 2021) features an article by Debra Burke on her journey in August 2019 to the homeland of her Wendish ancestors in Niederlausitz. Debra visited Babow, Papitz, Dissen (the birthplace of her 3x great grandfather Georg Proposch); Lübbenau, Lehde and Cottbus.

She states, "My four day stay in Niederlausitz was too short. Nevertheless, the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of my ancestors was a wonderful experience."

Four 19th Century German families

The *Friends of Westgarthtown Newsletter* (October 2021) features biographical information, including photos, of the Bindt and Hanuschke families of Wollert; the Günther family of Wollert and Epping; and the Nebel family of Westgarthtown, Epping, Richmond and Beechworth.

We congratulate Rob Wuchatsch on achieving the milestone of 25 years as Editor of the *Friends of Westgarthtown Newsletter*.

Franz Wilhelm August Gaulke (1862–1946)

The *Dimboola & District Historical Society Inc. Newsletter* (No. 277) includes this obituary that was published in the local newspaper, the Dimboola Banner, in December 1946:

The death has occurred of Mr Franz Wilhelm August Gaulke at his home in Church Street at the age of 84 years. Born at Pommern, Germany he came out to Australia in 1884 aged 22. The deceased took up farm-

ing at Antwerp in 1889. His wife who predeceased him in 1939 was formerly Miss Emilie Miatke, and they had 6 children. Mr Gaulke's largely attended funeral was conducted by Pastor Ed Starick at St Peter's Lutheran Church, Dimboola.

South Hamilton Lutheran Cemetery

The *Hamilton History Centre Newsletter* (March 2021) informs us that the project of transcribing records for the South Hamilton Lutheran Cemetery has been completed. An index is now available at the Centre.

Postal: PO Box 816, Hamilton, Vic. 3300

Tel.: (03) 5572 4933

Email: hamiltonhistory@anson.com.au

Website: hamiltonhistorycentre.org.au

Deciphering German handwriting

The *International Settlers Group Newsletter* (February 2022) includes a report by Michael Rumpff, who has set himself the challenge of learning to read the German script used in many historical records. He lists three books that are useful resources:

Deciphering handwriting in German documents: analyzing German, Latin and French in vital records in Germany, by Roger P. Minert

Decipher Germanic records: if I can, you can, by Edna M. Bentz

Tips and tricks of deciphering German handwriting, by Katherine Schober

A useful article titled *Difficulties reading German script? – FamilySearch* can be found online.

Zeuschner family

The *South Gippsland Genealogical Society Inc. Newsletter* (December 2021) features an excerpt from the publication *Pioneers and Descendants*, by Nancy Symons (nee Bruhn). The excerpt was originally taken from the handwritten memoirs of Nancy's grandfather, Frederick William Zeuschner, who was one of the pioneers of Stony Creek, South Gippsland, Victoria.

Frederick William (Will) Zeuschner was born in Tanunda, South Australia, in 1871. His parents were Friedrich Wilhelm Zeuschner and Pauline Ernestina Zeuschner (nee Stoessel). They had arrived in Adelaide, with two daughters, on the ship *Iserbrook*, in September 1865. They settled in Tanunda, South Australia, where three more children were born.

Around 1872, the Zeuschner family moved to St. Arnaud, Victoria. Friedrich Wilhelm worked as a miller for Mr G.W. Geyer at the Freiberg Flour



Mill. Two more sons were born in St Arnaud.

In the 1890s, Will Zeuschner and his two brothers bought 150 acres of land at Stony Creek, South Gippsland. They did the hard work of clearing part of the land, cutting the scrub and felling trees, using the timber to build fences and a house. They also cut scrub for a neighbor for 10 shillings an acre. In 1901

they sold the farm and moved back to St Arnaud.

Three of the four Zeuschner sisters made South Gippsland their home: Luthmilla (Millie) Dempsey; Marie Louise Uebergang and Adolphina (Fean) Zeuschner. One of the brothers, Adolf, returned to Stony Creek in 1919 and remained there for the rest of his life.

General News

Wendish Award

Congratulations to Gertrud and Jan Mahling (pictured below), who received a Wendish Award, called the Čišinski Prize, in October 2021. The Prize is named after the Sorbian poet Jakub Bart-Čišinski. The Award ceremony was held at the Wendish Museum in Bautzen. Many guests attended. Gertrud and Jan were delighted that their son travelled from New York to celebrate this occasion with them.



Award for Dr Lois Zweck

Congratulations to Dr Lois Zweck (pictured, left), who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to community history, in the Australia Day 2022 honours list.

Dr Zweck, who has a doctorate in German studies from the University of Adelaide, has conducted research spanning many areas, from genealogy and family history through to the histories of Germans in Australia and literary studies. She is a long-time Lutheran Archives volunteer researcher.

Her work includes transcribing and translating the Kurrentschrift (German Gothic) handwritten script which was used in many records of early Lutheran history in Australia.



Vale

Ruth Jensz

Ruth Jensz (nee Howlett) of Templestowe, Vic. passed away peacefully on 23 August 2021, at 80 years of age. We extend our sympathy to her husband David Jensz and family.

Kevin Matuschka

Kevin Matuschka of Horsham, Vic. passed away peacefully on 30 January 2022, at 84 years of age. We remember with gratitude Kevin's contribution to our Wimmera-Mallee Tour in March 2018. We extend our condolences to his wife Lyn and family.

Directory

Aims: The Wendish Heritage Society Australia Inc., researches and promotes the Wendish/Sorbian and Germanic heritage and family history in Australia.

Postal Address: P.O. Box 4050, Box Hill South, Victoria 3128

Meeting Room and Research Centre: St Aidan's Community Centre, 12 Surrey St, Box Hill South, Victoria. (Melway 61 C1)

Hours: By appointment. Please contact the Secretary.

Our Society Logo: The logo, an Australian gum leaf and a Lusatian linden leaf, represent the connection between the Wendish descendants in Australia and the Sorbs in Lusatia.

Membership & Newsletter Subscription: \$35 for single membership and \$40 for joint membership for one calendar year due at the start of each year. The form is included in our September Newsletter for the following year. Additional donations can also be made for the expanding work of the Society and we thank most sincerely those of you who have made such generous donations.

Publicity: We welcome any publicity which you can give about our Society and its planned events.

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