FAITH, *FRAUEN*, AND THE FORMATION OF AN ETHNIC IDENTITY:

GERMAN LUTHERAN WOMEN IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL TEXAS, 1831-1890

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PREFACE

The complete version of this dissertation owes much to the efforts of my dissertation committee. Dr. Gregg Cantrell, my advisor, helped me to craft the following chapters and to clarify my thoughts that could stray within minutes from German sweet pretzels to the importance of nineteenth-century immigrant women working in the fields. Dr. Todd Kerstetter has my gratitude for all his advice not only on the project before you, but also on other academic matters, for which he was always willing to make time despite his own busy schedule. Another great help who had her door open any time I needed to talk was Dr. Jodi Campbell. She was more than gracious with her time and knowledge. Dr. Rebecca Sharpless, too, welcomed me and any questions I had related or unrelated to academe.

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Finally, but most importantly, I thank my husband Jay Knarr. Without him I definately would not have finished this project. He provided priceless suggestions, tirelessly read drafts, gave much needed suggestions, and, when needed, pulled me through through the writing process. I was able to tackle many an archive because of his help, and his organizational skills kept my disordered mind at bay, most of the time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One
Introduction

The typical image of a German woman in the nineteenth century is centered around *kinder, kirche, und küche* (children, church, and kitchen) as scholars and genealogists traditionally defined immigrant women's lives in the United States through these three lenses. For example, the 1937 Lutheran church history of Kyle, Texas asserts "the Kaiser and Hitler have it right—*kinder, kurche, und kirche*." Though idiosyncratic to the politics of its time, the church history represents popular opinion regarding German women in the United States; few scholarly studies have challenged these gender roles. As a result, the lives of these women remain unclear and their part in the transplanting of their families is obscured. Moreover, the many German women's memoirs do little to challenge the traditional historiography, at least from a casual reading, as they relate numerous anecdotes and details of domestic life.[1]

Using letters, church records, and oral histories, this study illustrates the activities and beliefs of German Lutheran women immigrants in Central and South Texas between 1831 and 1890. It argues that the *frauen's* (women's) Lutheran faith motivated them to establish their families as well their conservative traditions and their institutions in frontier Texas where they had more social freedom than those in more populated areas of the United States. I look at Lutheran women immigrants who came to Texas between 1831 and 1890 to illustrate how religion helped this specific group of German immigrants adapt to and deal with the immigration process.

Specifically, four themes run through the work. First, the women's Lutheran faith informed how they acted and re-acted to their new home. Second, ethnicity influenced how the

[1] Minnie Knispel, *Establishment and Development of the Kyle German Community* (n.p.: 1937), 15, Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

women maintained their German traditions and understanding of culture and society. Third, gender greatly shaped these immigrants' experiences as they brought their own notions of their place in society and the family. Fourth, Texas offered a unique setting for these women that differentiated them from other German and immigrant groups in the United States. These women, after all, were Lutheran German women in Texas.

First, one of the important factors to my research is religion, specifically Lutheranism. Their faith shaped these German girls' and women's lives in Germany. Similarly, women attended Sunday services, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and funerals in towns and cities throughout the Hill Country and South Texas. Moreover, their understanding of the world, which their Lutheran faith shaped, determined how they viewed their responsibilities within the family, church, and community. When they emigrated from their homeland, they looked to their faith to continue structuring their lives. As the women read the Bible to their children, had their children baptized, organized marriages for young couples, and prepared bodies for burial, they recreated their religious customs in Texas. These Lutheran traditions helped the women to survive the settlement process as they re-constructed something familiar in an unfamiliar land. Likewise, I assert that the women's faith and focus on re-creating Lutheran institutions and beliefs in Texas lessened the dislocation of immigration.[2]

[2] Immigrant historians have debated the mentality of immigrants and their reaction to settling in the United States particularly since Oscar Handlin's book *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1951), which examined the immigrants' physiological factors of dislocation and trauma as the host society rejected them. By the 1960s historians began challenging this view of immigration as alienation. Frank Thistlethwaite in "Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" *XI Congrés International des Science Historiques*, rapport 5 (Uppsala, 1960): 32-60, later called for scholars to treat the emigration experience as a complete process examining the motivational factors in Europe and examining the change from one "social identity to another" (37). The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a rise in chain migration and community studies that further explored the immigrants' negotiation and adaption of their imported culture with that of the surrounding society. For example, John Bodnar's *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) shows that immigrants banded together in schools, churches, workplaces, and home to defend against the unfamiliar capitalistic economy. See, also, Walter Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987).

The majority of German immigrants to Texas were Lutheran; however, many Catholics settled in Texas as well as a smaller number of Mennonites and Jews. For example, the prominent Landa family from New Braunfels was Jewish. Moreover, after the 1848 revolutions, many *Freidenkers* (freethinkers) arrived in Texas where they held to practicing no religion at all. Still, the Lutherans founded their own communities built around their churches. They established synods as overarching institutions to oversee the local churches; Lutherans preserved their denominational beliefs by keeping separate from other faiths. German Catholics, too, kept to their parishes, but they often would integrate into Mexican-established congregations. In contrast, Lutheran Germans had to create their Lutheran institutions and adapt former traditions with what they found in frontier Texas. For most women, their faith remained an ever-present comfort to them during the trials of the immigration process, and they relied on their Lutheran understanding of the world to rebuild their lives in Texas. Thus, studies must take into account the variety of denominational faiths since those beliefs often shaped people's worldviews. For that reason, I examine Lutheran tenants and how they shaped and guided these women's lives while faith also comforted the immigrants during the process of immigration.[3]

Although I find that the German Lutheran women in Texas helped to establish the church within the immigrant community, most scholarly examinations do not emphasize the efforts of these immigrant women. National studies of the Lutheran Church have only recently observed the participation of women in those institutions. L. DeAnne Lagerquist's *From Our Mother's Arms* is a synthesis study of women in the Lutheran church and how their roles changed from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, though she does focus on the Midwestern regions of the

[3] Kathleen Neils Conzen, "German-Catholic Communalism and the American Civil War: Exploring the Dilemmas of Transatlantic Political Integration," in *Bridging the Atlantic: Europe and the United States in Modern Times*, ed. Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 119-144; Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1816* (Baltimore, Massachusetts: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

United States. The historiography of the Lutheran church in Texas, however, lacks even generalized monographs that study Lutheran women's assistance in establishing the church. To find a description of the Lutheran women in Texas, one must look to local twentieth-century church histories and records, which women often wrote and tell of women's religious involvement. These works highlight women's overlooked role in the church and its success in Texas. One scholarly exception is Lauren Ann Kattner's article on German girls in New Braunfels' Lutheran churches. She shows how in Texas the years following a girl's confirmation reflected that religious phase in Germany, marking a girl's passage into adulthood. As a short study, Kattner looks only at girls in one town without taking into account larger social and cultural implications. Baptism, confirmation, marriage, church socials, and other community gatherings reinforced communal and ethnic ties. Women supported these events and often ensured their success by supplying the venue, food, and drink while religious tradition shaped the lives of Protestant Germans.[4]

Conservative evangelical religion offered women a means to protect themselves from changing social roles. Patricia S. Martin's Ph.D dissertation "Hidden Work: Baptist Women in Texas, 1880-1920" looks at how Baptist women relied on their faith and religiously-affiliated organizations with other church women to resist women's changing social roles at the turn of the

[4] L. DeAnne Lagerquist's *From our Mother's Arms: a History of Women in the American Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), which is an impressive general study of women's roles in the Lutheran Church from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. Lagerquist also presents an impressive study of Norwegian-American women in *In America the Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Women* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991) provides a detailed look at Lutheran Norwegian-American women from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth century concludes that their religious involvement assisted in their acculturation into American social and moral understandings. Although the dominant Lutheran leaders excluded the women from official leadership positions, women's greater involvement in female groups and participation in Lutheran colleges they learned dominant American gendered activities such as needlework, cooking, and other domestic activities. Lauren Ann Kattner "Growing Up Female in New Braunfels: Cultural and Social Adaption in a German-Texas Town" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 9, no. 2 (1990): 49-72; L. DeAnne Lagerquist's *From our Mother's Arms: a History of Women in the American Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987) is an impressive general study of women's roles in the Lutheran Church from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries.

century. Although some women used religion to preserve their conservative notions of gender roles, Elizabeth Hayes Turner finds in the more urban setting of Galveston, Texas that women formed benevolent groups to help the poor, but, although other women's clubs prepared the women for political activism, that evangelical women's church organizations did not necessarily lead women into the Progressive movement in Galveston. Still, little has been done to examine the impact of religion on immigrant groups residing in Texas.[5]

Second, I use ethnicity to examine these German Lutheran women in Texas. Their German heritage influenced all that these women did and all they saw in Texas. They judged the food, clothes, weather, and culture based on what they knew from their homeland. The *frauen* contrasted themselves, their families, and other Germans with other ethnicities in Texas. They critiqued Anglo-American cuisine and culture while also noting the attitudes of Native Americans. During the mid-nineteenth century, in Central and Southern Texas, Tejanos, Native Americans, African Americans, and Anglo-Americans lived in close proximity to many Germans. The *frauen*, for the most part, entered the region with few preconceived prejudices towards these groups. The Lutheran women attentively sought the advice of Mexicans and Native Americans and, on occasion, friendships with them. From these negotiated relationships, the German women learned medical cures, herbal use, crop techniques, and other sources of natural information. Certainly, the Germans and the other ethnic groups in Texas did not possess an ideal relationship as moments of tension and misunderstandings did arise. Nevertheless, the

[5] Patricia S. Martin, "Hidden Work: Baptist Women in Texas, 1880-1920" Ph.D diss., Rice University, 1982; Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

German women, through these interactions, became vital intermediaries between their people and those they moved amongst.[6]

For the most part, studies of Germans in Texas do not examine the roles or everyday experiences of German women in Texas. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale, Donna Reeves-Marquardt and Ingeborg McCoy wrote articles on German women and their ability to maintain cultural attributes, such as pianos, books, and artworks, findings that generally support the traditional interpretations of *kinder, kirche, und küche*. Reeves-Marquardt and McCoy also analyze German women's writings from a rhetorical and theoretical perspective. Reeves-Marquardt and McCoy tentatively assert that these women did not always fit into the common stereotypes of frontier women, though the authors argue more research is needed to fully explore the women's lives. Terry Jordan's *German Seed in Texas Soil* examines German farming in Texas but mentions women only in passing. As Jordan describes the German farming systems in Texas, he places women and girls within the family productive unit. Other studies describing German immigrants and their settlements in Texas focus on men or discuss family and society in general terms that do not describe women or girls with any specificity. Even Rudolph Biesele's seminal and detailed *The History of German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* does not reference women's contributions or responsibilities during the immigration process.[7]

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[6] Sonya Salamon's thesis in *Prairie Patrimony* claims that inheritance patterns as well as females as accepted field workers bolstered the importance of nuclear families for German immigrants in rural Illinois. Germans maintained their ties to the family as they needed physical and monetary support of the land and their relatives who cultivated the land. Sonya Salamon, *Prairie Patrimony: Family, Farming, and Community in the Midwest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

[7] Crystal Sasse Ragsdale, "The German Women in Frontier Texas," in *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium*, ed. Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 144-156; Donna Reeves-Marquardt and Ingeborg Ruberg McCoy, "Tales of Grandmothers: Women as Purveyors of German-Texas Culture," in *Eagle in the New World German Immigration to Texas and America*, ed. Theodore Gish and Richard Spuler (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 201-220; Rudolph Biesele, *The History of German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, Texas: Press of Von Boekmann-Jones Co., 1930). Other important works that discuss German immigrants in Texas but do not refer to German women include Glen E. Lich, *The German Texans* (San Antonio: Institute of Texan Cultures, 1981); Irene Marschall King, *John O. Meusebach: German Colonizer in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967); Walter

Third, gender provides a telling factor with which to examine the lives of these Lutheran women immigrants. Being female directly impacted how this group interpreted their new surroundings, how they dealt with the immigration process, and how they began to acclimate in Texas. Women had distinct experiences in their new home as they learned to deliver children, raise offspring, and serve their families in an often harsh environment. Despite the trials and tribulations these women were influential in establishing homes based upon Lutheran precepts of family and perpetuating notions of how Lutheran women should act. I discovered that these women at times left their homes and traditional women's roles to recreate their German livelihood and work patterns. Such findings differ from those of Linda Schelbitski Pickle who asserts that Midwestern German women maintained self-identity and their ethnicity by remaining in their home and ethnic community, which lessened their contact with the outside world. In Texas, the *frauen* generally went out to meet other groups in order to establish their traditional notions of woman's work as they knew from their Lutheran heritage.[8]

Struve, *Germans and Texans: Commerce, migration, and culture in the days of the Lone-Star Republic* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996). For general studies discussing German immigration to the United States see Eugen von Philippovich, ed. *Auswanderung und Auswanderungs-politk in Deutschland* (Leipzig: Dunker & Humbolt, 1892); Wilhelm Mönckmeier *Die deutsche uberseeische Auswanderung: Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Wanderungsgeschichte* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1912); Albert Bernhardt Faust *The German Element in the United States, with Special Reference to Its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence*, 2 vol. (1909; reprinted by the Steuben Society of America, 1927); Marcus Lee Hanson, "The History of American Immigration as a Field for Research" *American Historical Review* 32 (1926-7): 500-518.

[8] Carol Coburn, in *Life at Four Corners: Religion, Gender, and Education in a German-Lutheran Community, 1868-1945* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1992), studies Block, Kansas, a community composed of ¾ Germans who were members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Emphasizing education, Coburn determines that religious conservatism, population homogeneity, and rural isolationism helped that community maintain their ethnicity for nearly 80 years (1868-1945). Third generation women's domestic work in American homes and the World Wars challenged such ethnic continuity and cohesiveness. Jon Gjerde argues that for Midwest Germans women working on the land represented a divergence from American culture, where contemporary white society held that women were kept inside the home out of love and patriarchal concern. Gjerde shows that immigrants responded to those criticizing women's labor by claiming that the German way of tending farms and raising children produced well-behaved citizens. Adherence to traditional Protestant and often Lutheran dogmas supported the strong family ties. The women in Texas, I have found, corroborate this argument. Jon Gjerde. "Prescriptions and Perceptions of Labor and Family among Ethnic Group in the Nineteenth-Century American Middle West" in *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Persspective* eds. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter Kamphoefner (Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004) and Jon Gjerde, "Peasants to Bourgeoisie: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway to the Upper Midwest." Ph.D dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1982; Linda Schelbitzki Pickle, concentrates on

Many women's histories of the nineteenth century have focused on eastern reformers while frontier studies look largely at Anglo women. Middle-class northeastern women organized to help prostitutes and the poor as they spread their Christian morals and social ideals. Historians have also focused on Anglo-American women in studies of those in the Western United States. For example, Julie Roy Jeffreys shows how Anglo women brought their conservative ideas of women's roles with them and their families as they moved farther away from the Atlantic. Yet, some scholars examine the relationship of those already settled in the West with the oncoming Anglos. For example, Sarah Deutsch's *No Separate Refuge* points to the importance of Hispanic women as they preserved their communities, families, and institutions against a changing economic, social, and cultural environment.[9]

Fourth, not only are religion, ethnicity, and gender important as defining characteristics for the women and for this study, but Texas also becomes a factor that further separates these women from German immigrants settling in other regions. Many Germans during the nineteenth century migrated to more isolated areas of the United States and Latin America. Those settling in the Midwestern sections of the United States remained relatively independent from the dominant society, but they had much interaction with Anglo-Americans. In Brazil, the Southern Cone's largest concentration of German settlers along the Brazilian-Uruguayan border succeeded

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how German women's attitudes in the Midwest maintained cultural awareness in rural regions of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Women supported cultural continuation through endogamy and maintaining religious beliefs while solidifying family structure by preserving money and land for future generations and caring for their children while expecting the children to care for them in old age. Linda Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contented among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

[9] Barbara Berg, *The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, the Woman and the City, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of True Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: "Civilizing" the West?, 1840-1880*, rev.ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, Gender, on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

in establishing communities and towns that were generally segregated from other Brazilians. These settlements remained mostly isolated and relatively small until World War I anti-German sentiment called for the ethnic towns to assimilate while World War II-era laws necessitated it. The Germans who immigrated to Texas found they very often lived in rural regions. However, they had contact with Native Americans, Hispanics, Anglo-Americans, and African Americans. Thus, Germans had greater opportunity to establish their communities and churches within a rural Texas setting, though they had several other ethnicities with which to interact.[10]

Texas offered frontier conditions that very often required Lutheran to women assume roles that they would not normally have taken in Germany or other parts of the United States or Latin America. The frontier offered even fewer social rules and regulations than the middle-sections of the United States. Lutheran women then had the freedom to aid the church through material and monetary donations while providing advice and physical shelter to pastors. Such activities were not necessary in Germany where most of the churches were centuries old. The fact that Texas had few if any established churches during the early part of the nineteenth century left a religious vacuum that Lutheran women could help fill without overcoming or challenging already-existing denominational presence. Texas's lack of social rules and relatively open land allowed the women the ability to act and to react to other ethnicities while re-forming their own conservative religious institutions, notions of family, and German traditions.

Major Texas myths of cowboys, cattle, and great men dominate traditional Texas historiography, especially for the nineteenth century, and have left women's and immigrant history lacking until the last few decades of the twentieth century. Such emphasis on great men and masculine activities has led to a lack of major studies on women in Texas. As a result, as

[10] Frederick C. Luebke, "Patterns of German Settlement in the United States and Brazil, 1830-1930," in *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration*, ed. Frederick C. Luebke (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 93-96.

Sandra Myres has pointed out in regards to women in the West, those works discussing Texas women portray them as helpmates, tragic heroines, and exploited or fallen women. Likewise, many have viewed the frontier as a liberating territory for women who escaped restrictive social understandings of gender and domesticity. As the social history of the 1970s eventually encouraged Texas historians to examine the roles of women, some scholars looked to the immigrants' experiences. Barbara J. Rozek's *Come to Texas* illustrates how Texans have propagated their state and attracted many settlers there. In such works, women appear as a tangential part of the narrative or as passive actors. Moreover, studies of women as well as traditionally ignored or underemphasized groups have complicated and enriched Texas historiography.[11]

This dissertation, however, illustrates how, in a new land and confronted by others of different religions, languages, and customs, the *frauen* certainly held onto their own traditions and culture. Therefore, community remains very important for these women and their families. The community included geographic dimensions of local neighborhoods in urban areas or farms

[11] Necah S. Furman, "Texas Woman vs. the Texas Myth" in *The Texas Heritage*, ed. Ben Proctor and Archie McDonald (St. Louis, Missouri: Forum, 1980); Sandra L. Myres, Westering *Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982); Ann Paton Malon in, *Women on the Texas Frontier: A Cross Cultural Perspective* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1983), shows that because of the lingering burdens of domesticity, Anglo-American women had difficulty settling in frontier Texas, and the first-generation of women who settled in Texas had a more strenuous experience than later their descendants. Mark Carroll, *Homesteads Ungovernable: Families, Sex, Race, and Law in Frontier Texas, 1823-1860* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001) examines the social and legal impact deriving from the relationships between Anglo, Mexicans, Tejanos, Native Americans, and African Americans, and argues that Anglo women gained some autonomy once Texas became independent of Mexico. In contrast, Evelyn Carrington's *Women in Early Texas* (Austin, Texas: Jenkins, 1975) and Francis Edward Abernethy, ed., *Legendary Ladies of Texas* (Dallas, Texas: E-Heart Press, 1981) presents more traditional studies of women in Texas by representing archetypes of popular or virtuous Texas women. Barbara J. Rozek, *Come to Texas: Enticing Immigrants, 1865-1915* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2003). For example of great man and western mythology of Texas historiography, see Eugene C. Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin: Founder of Texas* (Dallas, Texas: Cokesbury Press, 1925) and Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1935). More recent works have tried to debunk the idea of a masculine Texas exceptionalism and include the experiences and contributions of non-Anglo settlers to Texas history. For example see, David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983) and Arnoldo De León, *The Tejano Community, 1836-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982) as well as De León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo-American Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983). On the role of Hispanic women in their community and families see, Mario T. García, "The Chicana in American History: The Mexican Women of El Paso, 1880-1920: A Case Study," *Pacific Historical Review* 49 (May 1980): 315-337.

in rural regions so long as those living in the area were German Lutheran. Community for these women also included the communion among those of analogous backgrounds and beliefs. Still, the women did not remain in their own German enclaves; they sold goods to others while socializing and assisting non-Germans. By forming homes and churches on Lutheran ideas, these women perpetuated German identity, which helped them to adapt to Texas and to those living around them.

The following chapters look at the women's lives from Germany to Texas illustrating how the *frauen's* Lutheran-based outlook shaped their response to the immigration process and ultimately helped them establish their families while forming ideas of what it meant to be a German-Texan Lutheran. The second chapter provides an overview of how the girls and women lived in the Fatherland by showing religious, economic, and social conditions in Germany. Additionally, that chapter outlines the major reasons for immigration and why many families selected Texas as their final destination. Although many of the women may not have had a deciding vote in their families' decision to leave, they were important to their loved ones' survival from the time they boarded ships in Europe until they permanently settled in Texas. The third chapter studies the trials of the immigration process in the first year. During those first twelve months the immigrants came to terms with the consequences of their decision to leave Germany.

The next three chapters examine the three main themes—home, church, and community—in the Lutheran women's lives, and how they re-created and re-defined their traditions. Chapter four dissects the home as girls and women attempted to fulfill Lutheran expectations. Girls learned to work often within a less socially restrictive environment, wives persevered in being their husbands' helpmates in the field despite criticism from Anglo-Americans, mothers strove to teach their children how to thrive in Texas while maintaining ties

to Germany, and older women offered assistance. Chapter five shows how the *frauen* helped to found the Lutheran Church in Texas. These women often took on non-traditional activities to establish churches in areas where, if any denominational presence existed, people tended to be Methodist or Baptist. Chapter six explores their activities outside the home and church. Lutheran women dealt with non-Germans as they provided services to Germans and non-Germans, they worked as teachers and maids, and they observed and interacted with Anglo-Americans, Hispanics, African Americans, and Native Americans.

As the women established their homes and intermingled with non-Germans, they also concerned themselves with the perpetuation of their ethnicity in Texas. The final chapter examines memory, specifically how these immigrant Lutheran women reacted to a growing population encroaching upon their once rural homesteads and into their ethnic neighborhoods. The *Grossmütter* (grandmothers) believed that railroads, World War I, and Americanization seemingly threatened the memory of their German heritage. These women looked back on all they had sacrificed to establish their homes, faith, and traditions; they did not want their children to forget their German language, Lutheran faith, and family customs. First-generation German-Texans similarly recorded their memories of German immigrants and re-affirmed German Lutheran traits that created productive citizens during a period of anti-immigration.

Researching the lives of these women often proved difficult, and led me to rely on a variety of sources. The women's letters offered a glimpse into how they viewed Texas and their relationships with those left in Germany. However, they did not have extra money to spend on paper, ink, and postage while they had difficulty finding the time to write letters during a day filled with work from early morning to late evening. Consequently, letters do not tell the entire picture for all of the Lutheran women immigrants. So I used other types of historical records. church histories, community histories, family records, and oral histories were vital to

reconstructing these women's lives and experiences. Additionally, the women's own memories that they recorded in their elderly years proved indispensable, though one has to be aware that time and contemporary social issues often colored the women's memories.

These Lutheran women immigrants to Texas represent only a sub-section of the thousands of Germans who arrived in Texas during the nineteenth century. Yet their stories illuminate the world in which they lived and struggled to re-create their conservative notions of family and religion. Born and raised with the Lutheran ethos of gendered roles and expectations, these *frauen* daily strove to care for their families and to aid their neighbors. The women's actions, born of necessity and duty, ensured the acclimation of their families to American society. Their religious background and deep-held beliefs shaped and guided these women through their lives, and their Lutheran-based ideas of family and women's work often appears in their memories as they told a younger generation how faith and certain moral principles turned a hardy stock of Germans into successful German-Texans.

Chapter Two
Geh mit ins Texas[1]

Late in 1847, upon her arrival in Texas, Frederike Dauch Romberg entered the home of two recent immigrants from the northern German state of Mecklenburg, Adolph and Luise Fuchs, a German couple who had immigrated to Texas just a few years earlier. Exhausted from the trip overseas, Frederike gladly accepted the generous hospitality of Luise Fuchs. The trip had been long but the distance from Frederike's life in Mecklenburg to Cat Spring, Texas seemed even further.

Frederike was born in 1812, the granddaughter of a Lutheran pastor and daughter of a merchant. She was energetic and all who met her acknowledged her intelligence, which she had exhibited while helping her mother Dorothea manage the family business in Alt-Buckow after her father's death. As a teenager working for her mother, Frederike met Johannes Romberg, four years her senior. The adolescents became fast friends, and Frederike read to him on numerous evenings. Nevertheless, both their young age and lack of money prevented marriage. Thus, at the age of 14, Frederike became a governess, a job that suited her spirit and intelligence, especially as she was given the responsibility of instructing her young charges. Johannes, while away working as an apprentice to a merchant, sent her love notes. For these affectionate tokens, Frederike's pupils, who were often near her age and taller than the slight young woman, teased her endlessly. Frederike took the good-natured taunting in stride and even handled needed mediation between quarreling students' parents because her work provided money she needed to wed her beloved.[2]

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[1] "Go with us to Texas" was a phrase German immigrants used to invite their family and neighbors to join them in their journey to Texas.

[2] Annie Romberg, ed. *History of the Romberg Family* (Belton, Texas: Peter Hansborough Bell Press, 1960), 4-7.

Finally, in 1833, after eight years, Johannes and Frederike married. They moved to Boizenburg, where they lived for several years as Johannes became a respected merchant and Frederike bore and tended their five children. In contrast to his loving home life, his work left Johannes unhappy, and so he and Frederike decided to emigrate with their children. En route to Texas, Frederike's practical nature and experience in managing accounts helped her to manage the family's food stores and goods.[3]

Upon arriving in Texas, though, Frederike ensured that ties to Germany remained strong. She and her mother sent letters to each other detailing their own lives and those of their family. Frederike proudly wrote to Dorothea that the Romberg children were growing quickly and excelling at their studies. Very importantly, too, Dorothea managed to preserve relations with her young grandchildren. She sent them letters with candy, clothes, flower seeds, dried fruit, and jewelry.[4]

Frederike epitomized many other German women who immigrated to Texas from 1831 to 1890. She grew up with a strong faith fostered by her grandfather and great-grandfather, both pastors. Her Lutheran beliefs sustained her through the trials of immigration and helped her to acclimate to Texas. She and her husband wanted a successful life that they believed unattainable in Germany due to limited job opportunities. In this case, Johannes was unhappy with his occupation and wished to find another. He and Frederike thought Texas offered more chances to do so. In contrast, most Germans left for better jobs or farms because economic hardship in Germany, because industrialization undermined cottage industries. Furthermore, Frederike immigrated in a family unit. The majority of women similarly departed with relatives, usually their husbands or parents, but occasionally with brothers and extended family. Finally, the

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[3] Ibid., 8-11.

[4] Frieda H. Fuchs, "Mothers of the Nineteenth Century," 3X272, Geisecke (Walter Christian) Family Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter CAH); Ottilie Fuchs Goeth, *Was Grossmutter Erzaehlt* (San Antonio: Passing Show Print Co., 1915), 69.

Rombergs, like so many other families who came in the 1840s, immigrated with a contract from the *Adelsverein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas* (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants, hereafter *Adelsverein*), an immigration company that brought around 7,000 Germans to Texas.

Even so, every immigrant had her own unique story, and Frederike's life did not completely mirror those of other Germans. Her mother was relatively well-off, and neither she nor her mother farmed. A good number of Germans who left for Texas worked the land, owned land, and had limited education. Frederike's father and mother were merchants, and although her father prevented her from attending university, she had access to some education at home through reading and discussing academic subjects with her brothers who attended school.

Frederike, though, knew that life often demanded dedication and hard work, and she undertook the required tasks once in Texas. Like other German women, Frederike dedicated herself to helping her family. Tending to children, husband, and household dominated a woman's daily duties. All *frauen* were familiar with hard work in Germany, and few expected that life would be different in Texas. Like so many other German immigrants of her time, Frederike departed from her home to find a better, not necessarily easier, life. Their experiences in Germany helped the thousands of women and men who immigrated establish their new lives in Texas.

Women in Germany

An examination of life in Germany helps to explain how women like Frederike dealt with leaving their homes and moving to Texas. In Germany, religion and work characterized common women's lives. The social structure in German states was stratified with most of the population living in rural regions and working on farms. The majority of farmers were

subsistent, and manorial laws and traditions shaped the lives of many Germans in Northern regions. As a result, the majority of German men and women worked their entire lives in agriculture. However, burgeoning cities did attract some young men and women to work in nascent industries. The small, but discernable middle class also created non-farming jobs when they hired maids and houseboys. Nevertheless, most Germans remained on the land where their grandparents and great-grandparents had lived and worked.[5]

While agricultural activities dominated Germans' earthly labors, religious tradition, too, shaped the lives of individuals. Lutheranism was the main German denomination; it influenced much of the people's lives as this state-supported body influenced laws regarding marriage and work. Nevertheless, as in most conservative denominations of that period, women had little or no authority in church doctrine or decisions. Men composed the clergy and councils while giving the deaconesses the right to tend to the sick, elderly, and infirm, all actions that the church and society considered feminine.[6]

Moreover, the Lutheran church and philosophers viewed women as spiritual and emotive. Social notions emerging in the nineteenth century, which emphasized *frauen* as closer to their emotions, fit well with the piety of Lutheran and other Protestant sects. Being more emotional also meant that one was closer to nature, to oneself, and to God. Men remained too logical and unemotional to find this kind of spiritual enlightenment. Yet, these seemingly positive social and biological notions did not always work in favor of women. Pastors and clergy might allow pious

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[5] David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 30-39; Robert Lee Stockman, *North Germany to North America: Nineteenth Century Migration, A Brief History of Emigration from Northern Germany, concerning those People who Came to Settle in North America in the Nineteenth Century, emphasizing Rural Persons who Came to the Midwestern United States, New York, and Texas* (Alto, Michigan: PlattsDutsch Press, 2003), 40-53, 78-80.

[6] Michael B. McDuffey, *Small-Town Protestantism in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Living Lost Faith* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 27-29.

women to write and pray in public, but the same characteristics that made them devout also made them irrational beings that men needed to observe and control.[7]

The clergy and philosophers held that women had less formal authority than men, but history shows that women maintained their religious commitment despite their limited role in the church. In rural towns and in many of the growing German cities, women consistently attended Sunday services and special services, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. These sacred occasions symbolized a person's maturation in both the church and the community. Those life markers held particular import for Germans as mortality rates were high and life expectancy often short. Women, particularly in the German countryside, viewed life as fragile and looked to their faith to provide continuity and hope.[8]

Besides religion, work shaped a German woman's life. Many German men and women upon arriving in Texas claimed that they had to work harder than they had in their homeland. That statement holds true for many, but women in Germany did know hard labor. In a land where at least half of the population depended on agriculture, both men and women spent long days working their farms. Commonly, work days lasted fourteen to sixteen hours, leaving little time for rest or even sleep. As such, education and socializing played small roles in the lives of poorer farmers. Hard work was the lot of young and old alike. From an early age, children tended to gardens and less strenuous tasks. A person continued to work until death, as the aged often looked after their grandchildren and performed tasks closer to the home.[9]

Although European social thinkers split family responsibilities into domestic and public spheres, necessity dictated that rural and even emerging middle-class women worked where their families needed them, most especially on farms where the home represented the unit of

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[7] Linda Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contented among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 30-32; McDuffey, 30.

[8] Blackbourn, 134-135; McDuffy, 28.

[9] Stockman, 140-143.

production. In such agricultural and home-based economies, families performed separate duties based on gender, but such a distinction did not tie one to a particular area of the farm as men and women could work out in the fields doing different tasks. Both sexes played a variety of roles necessary for the family's survival.[10]

In contrast to their vital part in production, rural women in Germany held very little legal or political power. Laws gave women no rights over property, alloting all such power to their closest male relative. Moreover, until 1900 the law allowed men to use physical force to control their wives. Middle-class women had the possibility of acquiring money, but they could not purchase property. These women also had the chance to associate with knowledgeable men through parties and social dinners, though they themselves had only limited educational opportunities. In contrast, lower-class women had even less chance of saving money or going to school. Their important role in their family's production did not transfer into any economic freedoms or legal rights.[11]

Regardless of the social theories and philosophies underlying them, women served fundamental roles within their families. Beyond cleaning the home, German *frauen* executed activities vital to their families' economic and physical well-being. Women cared for livestock and, by extension, oversaw production of cheese and butter. Once a week, they kneaded dough and prepared it for baking. Although males actually placed the bread in the communal ovens, women retrieved the final product and prepared it from there. Women also did the delicate task of making sausage. Even if sausage production may not look complicated, it took an expert and experienced woman to insure that the covering did not become too thick or thin and that the maker pinned the links in just the right places to keep the meat well preserved. In each of these

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[10] Pickle, 24-26.
[11] Eda Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany, 1648-1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977), 408-415.

processes, the women had traditions to help pass the time and keep them focused on their chores. For example, *Grossmütter* (grandmothers) taught girls songs to sing so they maintained the correct churning tempo for smooth butter.[12]

In Germany, lower and middle-class women often played a part in family finances as well. They could sell their surplus butter, cheese, or eggs for money, adding needed extra cash to the family's income. Many also had the chance to market their needlework and other types of handiworks to neighbors or to those living on the landed estates. Additionally, the women dictated what food the family ate. If their wants exceeded what the family produced, they would have to purchase goods they needed, purchases that accounted for one of the greatest family expenses. This economic factor led society to value thrifty wives who managed a household without bankrupting the family. The ability to conserve food and to know what food products served the family the longest became a prized trait of any woman, garnering praise and recognition from her village.[13]

Women's work changed with age, and the early teen years when a girl was confirmed represented an important learning period. From a young age, German girls helped their mothers with household chores while looking after younger siblings and assisting adults in the fields. When a girl reached adolescence and the age of confirmation, her family often sent her to work as a *madg* (maid). Other girls also remained on their family's farm as labor or helped others in the community. Germans wanted enough children to provide a family work force, but unnecessary children only burdened the family group. Some families sent daughters to work as maids for the landed elite or, as many opted after 1848, to go to cities and work for the middle class. Certain regions in northern and central Germany had large estates where the young girls

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[12] Stockman, 150-154.
[13] Pickle, 35; McDuffey, 38.

worked for year-by-year contracts. This work remained important for the developing women as they prepared meals, planted and harvested, and tended to farm animals. They spent any spare time spinning because every woman had to make a required amount of linen during the year to satisfy the landlord's demands. Still the masters and mistresses gave them some of the profit and at times let them keep any extra output. The time spent as a *madg* marked adolescent culture; the young women were not fully grown but were gaining the experience that would help them when they married.[14]

Most Lutherans considered marriage sacred, but it often proved elusive for the lower classes. Germans usually married in their early twenties, but that event depended on the girl's financial status as much as the man's ability to provide a home. For example, did she have to work on the land, fulfill a maid's contract, or possess a dowry or other offering? In regions such as Mecklenburg in the mid-nineteenth century, the law connected the right to marry with the right of domicile (the requirement that a man must have property before he could marry), and intended couples had to seek the duke's permission before marrying. Similar restrictions marked a number of German regions. Thus, the rate of official marriages declined markedly while the number of illegitimate births rose. The legal obstacles did not change the symbolic importance of being a wife; if anything the laws made such attainment all the more special.[15]

Once a woman married, she obtained her own home with its accompanying responsibilities. Older family members expected a wife to provide children and to be the helpmate to her husband. Along with reproductive duties, women helped their husbands in the fields. Women in rural German society fit into one of three social positions with specific duties. First, wives of the manorial lords managed their household, which included maids, men-servants,

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[14] Monika Blaschke, "No Way but Out: German Women in Mecklenburg," in *Peasant Maids, City Women: From the European Countryside to Urban America,* ed. Christine Harzig (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 35-37.

[15] Pickle, 31; Stockman, 214-215.

and tenants. Second, women married to yeoman farmers with their own land or wives married to tenant farmers only worked in one household. Still, these women oversaw planting and the shearing and slaughtering of animals. Other duties included daily chores of spinning, tending to fowl, caring for children, and looking after the family's food stores. Working for her family took great energy and time as she had to tend the livestock, make food, plant and harvest in the fields, and attend to other domestic duties. Third, wives of day laborers worked on the manorial lands while also tending to their families' farm. Thus, these women had double work loads that often required them to work eighteen hours because they had the chores similar to those of a yeoman farmers' wives in addition to working for the manorial mistress.[16]

With all the demands on them, *frauen* managed to create bonds with other women and to have some limited authority over their own lives. Women gathered in groups to spin yarn to sell for profit or to make thread for their families' clothes. As German women were too busy to merely socialize, these spinning gatherings facilitated the exchange of local gossip and opportunity for friendship while the women worked. Thus, wives and daughters eagerly accepted any offer of fellowship. These meetings further provided the means of courtship for single women. Traditionally men visited and talked with the women as they sat at their spinning wheels. Such a scene let the young couples socialize while in an environment relatively free from encroaching supervision.[17]

Middle-class women in Germany had different experiences from their more rural or poorer counterparts. These women did not have the hard labor demands placed upon them, though society too expected them, especially before 1850, to supply their family with clothes and

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[16] Blaschke, 42-43.

[17] Jean H. Quataert, "Teamwork in Saxon Homeweaving Families in the Nineteenth Century: A Preliminary Investigation into the Issue of Gender Work Roles," in *German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social and Literary History*, ed. Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres and Mary Jo Maynes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 3-6.

to care for children and home. Not until the 1848 revolutions did the majority of middle-class German men look to acquire luxuries, such as maids who relieved their wives from menial chores. Women did not have ready access to advanced education and relied on learned relatives to instruct them. Even so, middle-class women had more spare time than farm women to read, learn music, and enjoy other social graces. The ability to keep more educated company provided many of these women with an intellectual atmosphere.[18]

Emigration

By 1830, life in Germany did not present an easy lot for the majority of men or women, and emigration appealed to many. People leaving their homes and relatives for an unfamiliar land had very complex reasons for so doing, and any attempt to define these reasons requires generalizations. First, lack of inheritable property in some areas caused many to look for a home with available farm land, a factor heightened by a growing population. Poor potato harvests in the mid-1840s and early 1850s left many impoverished and seeking more plentiful, fertile land. Second, the decline in cottage industries hurt a number of families economically. Many then either left for larger German towns or cities to find work or sought a livelihood in the United States, along the Brazilian-Uruguayan border, and even other European locations. Third, remnants of manorial laws and regulations restricted most farmers from owning their own land, and in many areas impartible inheritance prevented younger sons from obtaining any land at all. Such limitations denied farmers the ability to find other jobs, thus keeping them in the state of

[18] Ute Gerhard, *Verhaltnisse und Verhinderungen: Frauenarbeit, Familie, und Rechte der Frauen im 19. Jahundert*, 2ed. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), 46-49; Pickle, 27-8; Sager, 215.

servitude. Fourth, liberals and political dissidents fled the German states, either fearing government persecution or simply wishing to find a freer society.[19]

While political, economic, and agricultural reasons help explain generally why people came to the United States, records rarely show who in the family wanted to go and who did not. Most particularly, sources do not illustrate how many women took part in that discourse. Two memories, though, give insight into two very opposite opinions. Louise Ernst Stöhrs remembered that her "husband made the decision to emigrate to America" in 1829. In her recollection she had no role in that life changing decision. After the family lived in New York City for a few years, a local businessman offered Frederick Ernst some prime land in the northern part of that city; Louise "advised [her] husband to take this offer, he did not accept [her] advice." Ernst instead took his family out West where they eventually settled in Texas. In contrast, at least one woman was passionate about emigrating. Rosa von Roeder demanded that Robert Justice Kleberg, her suitor, agree to leave for Texas with her and her family before she consented to marry him. Kleberg agreed and the couple wed the day before the two families boarded a ship for New Orleans and then booked passage to Brazoria, the nearest port in Texas. Rosa remembered how she and Justice never once regretted their decision.[20]

Similar to Kleberg and Stöhr, the majority of women came to Texas as a part of a nuclear family unit, either as mother or daughter. Nevertheless, there were numerous exceptions. The lives of most German women leaving for Texas probably fit somewhere between the experiences

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[19] Terry Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 39-41; Walter Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: From Germany To Missouri* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 14-19; Frederick C. Luebke, *Germans in Brazil: A Comparative History of Cultural Conflict During World War I* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 7-11; Leo Schelbert, "Emigration from Imperial Germany Overseas, 1971-1914: Contours, Contexts, Experiences" in *Imperial Germany*, ed. Volker Dürr, Kathy Harms, Peter Hayes (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 112-117.

[20] Louis Ernst Stöhr, *"Der erste deutsche Frau in Texas,"* in *Der Deutsche Pionier: Monatschrift fü Erinnerungen aus dem beutschen Pioner-Leben in den Vereinigten Staaten* 8 no. 12 (December 1884): 13-14; Rosa von Roeder Kleberg, " *Erinnerungen*," in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 19-20.

of Louise and Rosa. Many were young or newlywed, similar to Rosa, but the norm seems to be married with children. There are several instances of single women immigrating. These women, though, generally joined family members already settled in Texas or came to Texas to work. Women in their thirties and forties were not uncommon either. Henrietta Roensch Schlect came with her husband when she was forty years old. The older the woman, the harder the physical trials became; yet the more mature often arrived with more money saved, greater knowledge of life, or proven trade skills. Some women traveled with other women. For example, Caroline Fasterling Arhens from Harsum, Hanover, arrived in Texas in 1846 with a sister and their widowed mother, Hedwig. Maren Esschels Smidt Hander from Schleswig took her two young children to Texas after her husband's 1853 death. After landing in Indianola, Hander took two mule-drawn wagons to New Braunfels, where she reunited with two daughters already living with their husbands. Hander's story appears more typical for a woman—married, widowed or single—in that she went to Texas to meet family already in that area.[21]

However, not all departures were as peaceful as Hander's emigration. When Johanne Frederich Ernst left Oldenburg in September of 1829 with his wife Louise and their seven children, their departure caused the Duke of Oldenburg to suspect that Ernst had embezzled money from the Oldenburg post office, where Ernst clerked. The family successfully fled Europe after a rather harrowing escape that took them through Bremen and Münster before they finally disembarked from Le Harve, France, and arrived in New York. There, Frederick and Louise ran a boarding house. Louise remembered that her husband had planned to move to Missouri in 1831, but after the family landed at New Orleans en route to St. Louis, tales of

[21] Clara Matthai, Introduction to *Meine Ausflug nach Texas* by Freidrich Schlect (Bellville, Texas: Bellville *Wochenblatt*, 1930), 11; Esther L. Mueller, "Henry Kordzik, Mrs. Henry Kordzik" *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, compiled by Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 99; Ethel Hander Greue, "The Hander Family: Texas Pioneers," 2K261, Ethel Hander Geue Papers, CAH.

Stephen F. Austin's colony, west of present-day Houston, enticed him to take his family to Texas.[22]

Historians recognize the Ernsts as the first German family to settle in Texas, and Frederich's letters to a friend in Oldenburg soon brought other families. Personal accounts of Texas and experiences there encouraged a great number of Germans to leave their homes and venture to a new land. People tend to believe the descriptions and promises of acquaintances or people from their hometown more than they would the tales of outside persons or organizations. As a result, immigrant letters to those in Germany most likely account for the strongest pull of others towards Texas. Frederich's letters to a friend in Oldenburg, which that friend then published in a newspaper, brought Austin's colony and the possibility of emigrating to find land and new opportunities to the minds of Oldenburghers and eventually to those in the surrounding German regions of Holstein and Westphalia. Though not responsible for massive immigration, Ernst probably encouraged the settlement of approximately twenty German families in Industry, Cat Spring, and Cummins Creek in Austin's colony.[23]

These early Germans settled in close proximity to others from the Fatherland. Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber, daughter of Frederick Ernst, remembered how many Oldenburgers and Muensterlanders came to Cat Sping in 1834 because of her father's letters that a friend published in a local newspaper. Certainly encouragement from a fellow countryman helped push many to leave for Texas; after all, farming in a new land surrounded by familiar neighbors appealed to many.[24]

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[22] Stöhr, "Die erste deutsche Frau in Texas,"13; Rudolph Leopold Biesele, "The First German Settlement in Texas" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 34 (April 1931): 334-335.

[23] Stöhr, "*Erinnerungen*," in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 2; Rudolph Leoplod Biesele, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin: Press of Von Boekmann-Jones Co., 1930), 42-45.

[24] Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber, "*Erinnerungen*," in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 12.

Although letters such as Ernst's writings to Germany catalyzed emigration throughout the decades of immigration, and published books kept Texas present in people's minds, immigration societies accounted for the largest number of Germans to Texas before the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865). Germans in the Fatherland established several immigration companies in the 1830s. *Giessener Auswanderungesgesellschaft* (Giessen Emigration Society), founded in 1833, sought to assure that German traditions and language continued in the new Missouri colony while establishing a free society in the United States. This group wished to transplant fully German culture and customs in this new settlement. Although many doubted the success of a German colony maintaining total German ethnicity so far from the Fatherland, the *Giessener* society settled on sending immigrants to Missouri.[25]

Social unrest in 1830s Germany often proved another impetus for many of the immigrants to go blindly to a new state across the seas and settle in general proximity to one another. The revolutions of 1833 left many liberals, who had called for *ein Adelsvereinigtes deutsches Vaterland* (a united Germany), disenchanted. Their failed political dreams pushed many Germans to seek a new land more promising in freedoms and opportunity. Only a small portion of these people came to Texas, but the majority, known as *Dreizigers*, who did come congregated around the Germans in Cat Spring especially but also in Industry and the land surrounding these settlements. The population of these areas remained highly German to the end of the nineteenth century.[26]

A large influx of immigrants came in the mid and late1840s under the direction of twenty-one German noblemen. In 1842, these men organized the *Adelsverein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas* (*Adelsverein*). This group of men hoped to relocate a large

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[25] Biesele, *History of German Settlements*, 18; Gustave Koerner, *Das deutsche Element in den Adelsvereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika, 1818-1848* (Cincinatti, 1880), 300.

[26] Biesele, *History of German Settlements*, 15-16.

number of Germans from the lower classes. The *Adelsverein* sent Joseph of Boos-Waldeck and Count Victor August of Leinigen-Westerburg-Alt-Leinigen to Texas to find a suitable land on which to settle the immigrants. Sam Houston, president of the Republic of Texas, offered the men a grant of Indian land west of the town of Austin. Boos-Waldeck and his counterpart declined the offer; instead, Boos-Waldeck purchased land in present-day Fayette County. There he established Nassau farm, named in honor of one of the *Adelsverein's* patrons, the Duke of Nassau, an area that did attract many of the arriving settlers. Count Victor then returned to Germany.[27]

In 1843, the noblemen looked again to purchase a large tract of land in Texas. To fund this undertaking, the men formed the *Adelsverein* into a joint-stock company in 1843 with a capital of *f*200,000, but they soon found themselves in competition with a French colonization effort. Henri Castro, who had attempted for several years to found a French colony in Texas, recruited Germans, particularly German Catholics from Alsace. After falling out of favor with the French government, Castro worked harder to get Germans to settle in his colony. Castro and Prince Carl Solms Braunfels, whom the *Adelsverein* sent to Texas in 1844, searched for land around San Antonio. Castro believed that Prince Carl attempted to block his colonization efforts, but soon the noblemen informed the Prince to negotiate with Henry Fischer and Burchard Miller to organize the purchase of their land grant.[28]

With a legal land grant, the *Adelsverein* noblemen began organizing German immigration. As chain migration guided the settlement of many Germans in the 1830s, the trend continued on an even greater level for those coming under the *Adelsverein's* protection. That

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[27] Biesele, *History of German Settlements*, 67-68; Moritz Tilling, *History of the German Element in Texas from 1820-1850* (Houston: Rein and Sons, 1913), 19, 34-5.

[28] The *Adelsverein* originally bought land from Alexander Bourgeois d'Orvanne but found his grant had expired. Thus, the *Adelsverein* instructed Prince Carl to negotiate rights for the Fischer-Miller grant. Bobby D. Weaver, *Castro's Colony: Empresario Development in Texas, 1842-1865* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1985), 41-48.

society drew a majority of Germans from the states in which the nobles themselves lived. As a result, large numbers came from Hanover, Nassau, Electoral Hesse, Württemburg, Prussia, Saxony, Baden, Brunswick, and Mecklenburg. The immigrants then tended to settle in regions inhabited by people from their own states. For example, Ernst Jordan and his wife Wilhelmine Uflaker left Wehrstedt, Hanover, with eighty-six people who had lived within a twelve-mile radius of each other and within ten miles from Wehrstedt. Included in that number were Jordan's half-sister Hannchen, her husband, and their daughter.[29]

To accomplish the *Adelsverein* goal of settling Germans in Texas, its charter provided for cheap sea transportation to any Germans who signed a contract with the organization and proved they could pay the travel costs. Immigrants, upon arrival in Texas, met agents who supplied immigrant transportation to their destination. The contract gave single men 160 acres and families 320 acres. For the survival of the immigrants, the noblemen built houses and provided farm supplies, including cheap seeds and grains. Any settlement that had one hundred or more families also received 640 acres at its center for "church buildings and to cover the expense of public worships." Moreover, the *Adelsverein* provided a common church "where all religious denominations can hold their services at a set time." The society also established a tuition-free school where boys and girls could attend language classes in both German and English as well as other academic subjects. The *Adelsverein* also provided free medical care. Obviously, the religious, mental, and physical well-being of the immigrants remained a high priority for the Germans.[30]

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[29] Terry Jordan terms this area of migration "a north-south oriented belt in central western Germany." Jordan, "The Patterns of Origins of the *Adelsverein* German Colonists" *Texana* 6, no. 3 (Fall 1968): 246-7; Gilbert Jordan and Terry G Jordan, *Ernst and Lisette Jordan: German Pioneers in Texas, a Family History and Genealogy Including a Register of Descendants, Published to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of their Births, 1971-1972* (Austin: Von Beckmann-Jones Company, 1971), 9.

[30] *The Emigrant to Texas: A Handbook and Guide for those who want to colonize (settle) in Texas with special consideration for those who join the Mainzer Antwerp Society, with a colored map and the new constitution*

Immigration Literature

The *Adelsverein* contributed to the influx of Germans into Texas, but propaganda about that area proved effective in attracting many immigrants. The group of noblemen commissioned a few of the monographs, and visitors to Texas wrote many, but they all tended to accentuate four themes. First, the open land in Texas symbolized opportunity. In 1834, Detluf Dunst reprinted Frederick Ernst's letters in his book *Reise Nach Texas nebst Nachrichten von diesem Land* (*Journey through Texas with News from that Land*). This work reflected Ernst's positive review of all the open land, cheap supplies, and freedoms in Texas. Charles Sealsfield's 1841 work, *Das Kajutenbuch, oder Schilderungen aus dem Leben in Texas* (*The Cabin Book, or Descriptions from Life in Texas*), recounted a German's adventurous experiences in Texas, including some negative social aspects such as slavery and harassment from the Indians. Throughout his book, Sealsfield illustrates how all the empty prairie and space provided ample freedom for Germans to make a life for themselves. In both Dunst and Sealsfield's tales of Texas, any person with initiative had the ability to start fresh and live a successful life. These types of descriptions no doubt attracted the small landholding peasants who composed much of the immigration before 1860.[31]

As a second theme, authors emphasized the problem of overpopulation in Germany, an issue which left many social theorists fearing possible popular conflict. Gottfried Duden in 1829 claimed that too many people with too few resources threatened the security of German states. He proposed emigration to Missouri to resolve the problem before rebellion and anarchy erupted. Ferdinand von Herff reflected similar ideas but recommended resettlement in Texas, wishing the German government to support emigration before bloodshed occurred. Kuno Damian Freiherrn

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of Texas (Bremen: C Schuenemann's Publishing House, 1846), 63, 67; Chester William Geue and Ethel Hander Geue, *A New Land Beckoned*: *German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847* (Waco: Texan Press, 1966), 4-7.

[31] Detluf Dunst, *Reise nach Texas nebst Nachrichten von diesem Land* (Bremen: Gedruckt bei C.W. Wiehe, 1834); Charles Sealsfield, *Das Kajutenbuch, oder Schilderungen aus dem Leben in Texas* (Berlin, 1841).

von Schuetz, an official for the *Adelsverein*, wrote of the hope that Texas represented for Germans suffering from lack of economic advancement. As such, Texas' vast land provided opportunity for farmers and poorer Germans while also helping to ease social tension in the Fatherland.[32]

Third, these propaganda works, such as *Emigrant to Texas*, showed how the Texas climate was ideal for human settlement and agriculture. In other words, Texas' healthy environment remained a prime selling point for the writers. They praised the mild winters and even remarked on the year-long temperatures that allowed for good growing seasons. For example, the anonymous author of *Emigrant to Texas* tells how all garden plants grow exceptionally well, even more so than in Germany. Freidrich Schlect's *Meine Ausflug nach Texas*, which he wrote while traveling through Texas in 1848, reflected similar admiration for Texas and the possiblitly of Germans establishing successful farms in that land. These works rarely mention the summer heat, instead painting an idealized picture of the immigrant's ability to succeed in agriculture in Texas.[33]

Fourth, the open land promised opportunity for those willing to work hard taming it to give themselves and their offspring a more stable future. The romantic urge to develop the land appears very prominently in these works. Ferdinand von Herff tells of the farmer who can "struggle against the frontier" to tame the prairie and forests. The German, then, brought order to a disordered world by clearing land, building homes, and establishing farms. Nature thus

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[32] Gottfried Duden, *Bericht ueber eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nordamerika's und einen mehrjaehrigen Aufenthalt am Missouiri* (Bonn, 1829), 1-12; Ferdinand von Herff, *Die geregelte Auswanderung des deutschen Proletariats mit besonderer Beziehung auf Texas. Zugleich ein Zeitfaben fur deutsche Auswanderer von Dr. von Herff, Mitglieb der Darmstadter Nicherlaffung am Llano und bei Neubraunfels* (Frankfurt: Franz Varrentrapp Berlag, 1850), 10-15; Kuno Damian Freiherrn von Schuetz, *Texas. Rathgeber fuer Auswandere nach diesem Lande* (Wiesbaden, 1847), 135-142.

[33] *Emigrant to Texas*, 38-41; von Schuetz, 110-115; Freidrich Schlect, *Meine Ausflug nach Texas* (Bellville, Texas: Bellville *Wochenblatt*, 1930, 83-89. Schlect returned to Germany after traveling through Texas. He was so taken with the state that he gathered his wife and two daughters and imgrated to Texas where they settled on a farm in Bellville.

pulled many an immigrant to Texas. Adolph Fuchs, a Lutheran pastor, moved his family from Mecklenburg to Cat Spring in 1846. Fuchs left to find freedom of mind and to work the land on his own. Although more of an intellectual by nature than a laborer, Fuchs with the great help of his family succeeded in establishing a farm and growing fruit trees. Their love of nature and willingness to see God's handiwork in every natural phenomenon helped the family to endure all the hardships.[34]

How did travel literature and colonizing organizations impact German women? Several of the monographs do not specifically mention women, but they also spent little time focusing on males. This non-gendered language emphasized the positive aspects of Texas for all prospective immigrants. The number of German women who actually read the propaganda remains uncertain. Still, looking at how selected works do discuss women in the emigration process does reveal some understanding of their place in German thought.

By mentioning women, immigrant propaganda pointed to their importance in the settlement process. Writers saw women's work as a vital factor in an immigrant families' survival. The author of *Emigrant to Texas* urged Germans to have "well tilled gardens" to supply food for the family and surplus food to sell. Settlers from the United States failed to take advantage of the favorable Texas climate and soil, but the author urged German wives to concentrate on such an undertaking. The author encouraged women to bring seeds along with them from Germany so they may plant as soon as possible. Just as important, a farm wife should also make cow milking a priority for she could use the milk to make cheese, a rare commodity that held the possibility of bringing extra cash to the family. The author did not mention butter

[34] Goeth, 44, 48.

making, but if the letters of German immigrant women are any indication they made butter as well as cheese, as they had done in Germany, and sold it to neighbors and at town markets.[35]

Writers even used marriage as an enticing factor for women to leave their homes. *Emigrant to Texas*, an advice-filled book, portrays Texas as a land with many men and few ladies to balance the numbers. Moreover, because of the unbalanced gender ratio, "wealth and beauty are less prerequisites." Ladies who did not possess such an attractive appearance or considerable dowries had hope of finding spouses in Texas. Moreover, Texas offered freedom to wed for those couples unable to marry because of the right of habitation.[36]

Matrimony represented an important relationship because it promoted the possibility of children whom the immigrant family could use as a labor source. Some, like Emma Altgelt, viewed the institution of marriage negatively, but for many Germans it offered a practical institution ensuring that immigrants did not use another institution, chattel slavery. The *Adelsverein* noblemen and many other Germans disliked slavery and wanted none of their ex-compatriots in Texas or elsewhere to own slaves or support slavery. Von Herff described in detail that a family willing to work could cultivate cotton profitably. He dismissed the American Southern argument that slaves played an indispensable part in farm production. Immigration literature showed the evils of slavery, but if Germans were to farm successfully without it, families needed another means of labor. Large families seemed an ideal solution, and marriage obviously was a prerequisite.[37]

Finally, Texas also offered possibilities for those women looking for job opportunities. A woman working as a *madg*, either on a farm or in a person's home, could find better work and

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[35] *The Emigrant to Texas*, 40-41; Wolfgang Helbich, Walter Kamphoefner, and Ulrike Sommer, ed., *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 4-6.

[36] Duden, 25-27; *The Emigrant to Texas*, 42-45; Schlect, 78-79; von Schuetz, 12-14.

[37] *Emigrant to Texas*, 36; von Herff, 23.

often better pay in Texas, or so the propaganda stated. Von Herff, who planned the removal of the excess proletariat in Germany before it became discontented and revolted, encouraged all workers to look to Texas for jobs. Similarly, *Emigrant to Texas* reflected the prospect of a maid to find work in the homes of city dwellers.[38]

Arrival in Texas

The ever-growing number of Germans attracted to Texas in the 1840s by immigrant literature and immigrant companies often landed in difficult circumstances. Immigrants, who came by the thousands, quickly burdened the *Adelsverein's* resources. Soon after gaining the Fischer-Miller land, Prince Carl faced the arrival of a boat filled with immigrants. He led them across the Guadalupe River in 1845 to the site he named New Braunfels, which by the end of the year touted 150 houses. Despite his early successes, Prince Carl returned to Braunfels to wed his beloved Sophie and never returned to Texas again. Responsibility for German immigration then fell to Baron Johanne (John) von Meusebach, who had to meet 4,000 new Germans with $24,000 to help them through the winter and to pay for food, travel, and the construction of homes. Meusebach knew the funds were insufficient to subsidize transportation to the Fischer-Miller grant, yet he did not want to leave the new immigrants in Indianola where disease ran rampant. So, he surveyed a tract of land about eighty miles northwest of New Braunfels to provide a home for the immigrants already in Indianola and also to serve as a settlement between New Braunfels and the Fischer-Miller Land grant. The town would also allow the trade of supplies and help defend against Indian attack. That spring, Meusebach led several groups of immigrants and founded a second settlement at Fredericksburg. The Germans, as Meusebach foresaw, faced great challenges, because they had to fend for themselves. By 1848, the *Adelsverein* went

[38] *Emigrant to Texas*, 84-85; von Herff, 7-10.

completely bankrupt, but it had brought around 7,000 immigrants to Texas and witnessed the founding of several German towns and communities.[39]

These Germans coming in the mid- to late-1840s settled farther west than the earlier settlements around Austin. They arrived in Indianola and headed southwest to the Fischer-Miller grant, though most did not make that destination because of its distance from Indianola and Galveston. Germans took wagon trains to New Braunfels in Comal County, San Antonio in Bexar County, Sisterdale in Kendall County, and Fredericksburg in Gillespie County with a few staying close in DeWitt County or traveling farther north to Llano County. Like the 1830 immigrants, these Germans tended to establish and maintain their own ethnic enclaves. They settled by neighbors of German descent, and only a few intermingled with their Anglo-American neighbors. Even in San Antonio, an already growing city at this point, Germans seemed to prefer the zones populated with other Germans.[40]

Although the *Adelsverein* failed, Germans continued to arrive in Texas in the 1840s and into the 1850s. These people settled on the outskirts of already established German areas. Gillespie County, for example, started to fill with Germans outside of Fredericksburg and in small settlements like Grape Creek and Cherry Springs. Nassau, Prussia, Württemburg, and Brunswic accounted for many of the immigrants while people from Hesse Darmstadt, Mecklenburg, and Hanover also joined the new world. Such settlements continued to spread into other regions of Texas during the 1860s.[41]

German immigration continued on a sizable scale, in fact, until around 1890. The outbreak of the U.S. Civil War in the 1860s halted most immigrant arrivals because few wished

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[39] Biesele, *History of German Settlements*, 139-145; Geue and Geue, 15-18; Irene M. King, *John O. Meusebach: German Colonizer in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 73-75, 88-90.

[40] Judith Borg-Sobré, *San Antonio on Parade: Six Historic Festivals* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2003), 20-22, 50-56.

[41] 7th Census of the United States Census,1850, Population schedules of Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Medina, Washington, Roll M432; Jordan, *German Seed*, 41-43.

to leave for a land at war, and travel through the Union blockade proved unenticing. But just as war in the United States proved a hindrance for immigration, after the conflict another war proved a great impetus for emigration. The Austria-Prussian War of 1866 left many mothers wishing to keep their husbands and sons from fighting or serving their required military service. Likewise, the Franco-Prussian War from July 1870 to May 1871 and the other wars of German unification (1870-1871) heightened many Germans' consternation regarding their safety. Many of these immigrants derived from the large manorial regions of Mecklenburg, Saxony, and the eastern provinces of Prussia, but they also came from Anhalt, Waldeck, and Brunswic in greater numbers than in previous decades. In Texas, they settled in regions already established and inhabited by a considerable number of Germans, concentrating in Austin, Fayette, Washington, Bastrop, and Colorado Counties. These areas tended to have doctors, stores, water sources, and, very importantly, no large scale epidemic outbreak.[42]

Thus, immigration from 1865 to 1890 actually exceeded that of the *Adelsverein* era. Some estimate that 40,000 Germans arrived in Texas during those twenty-five years. New factors such as European wars and required German military service caused many to leave while economic hardship continued to encourage emigration. Like those who came in the 1830s to the 1850s, most were farmers. Many of these later immigrants settled in outlying regions and moved with the Texas-born Germans who went out west looking for more land. Counties such as Uvalde and Wilson, where few Germans had ventured up to then, became attractive to many new settlers.[43]

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[42] Blackbourn, 192-193; Chester William Geue and Ethel Hander Geue, *New Homes in a New Land: German Immigration to Texas, 1847-1861* (Baltimore: Clearfield Company, 1970), 35, 37.

[43] 8th Census of the United States, 1860, Population Schedule for Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Blanco, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Karnes, Lavaca, Lee, Medina, Travis, Washington Wilson, Roll M653; 9th Census of the United States, 1870, Population Schedule for Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Blanco, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Karnes, Lavaca, Lee, Medina, Travis, Uvalde, Washington Wilson, Roll M593; 10th Population schedule for the United States, 1880, Population Schedule for Austin, Bastrop, Bexar ,

Conclusion

Thousands of immigrants who came to Texas from 1831 until 1890 left their homes to find a new life. Their reasons remained complicated, but freedom for economic betterment, freedom from manorial laws, and freedom from agricultural hardship appear prominent reasons. Declining economic opportunities, worsened by poor agricultural production and prices, created discontent among the German people, particularly the rural population. Immigrant literature and immigrant societies that encouraged immigration to the United States attracted many. In the 1830s and 1840s, those monographs and particularly the *Adelsverein* started a trend of migration that kept Germans coming to Texas for the next several decades.

Texas became a land of hope for those wanting a fresh start or those hoping to preserve what they thought German industrialization and government policies were changing. So, in large numbers they huddled together aboard dank ships for an unfamiliar destination. Whether a woman wanted to emigrate or whether she simply went because of her duty to her family, she faced many personal challenges. These German women needed to discern the best means to support their families in Texas while also ensuring the continuation of their family beliefs and traditions. To do so, they relied heavily on their faith and ties back home to help them through the initial phase of settlement.

Blanco, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Karnes, Lavaca, Lee, Medina, Travis, Victoria, Washington, Wilson, Roll T773; 11th Census of the United States, 1890, Population Schedule for Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Blanco, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Karnes, Lavaca, Lee, Medina, Travis, Victoria, Washington Wilson, Roll T9; Jordan, *German Seed*, 47-50; Blackbourn, 112-113.

Chapter Three:
The First Year in Texas

The first year in Texas proved trying for both German men and women as they found themselves in a period of transition. Exemplifying so many of her nationality, Louise Schuetze Braubach's family left Anhalt in 1851 after Eduard Degener, who worked for various immigration companies, told her father and his brothers about Texas. To investigate Degener's assertions, a younger Schuetze brother and his wife left for Texas a year earlier and sent positive reports back to Germany. Burdened by a growing family living on a meager teacher's salary, Louise's parents decided to join their relatives in Texas.

Louise's story illustrates many of the issues with which German women and their families dealt upon arriving in Texas. She and her family left Bremen and landed in late fall 1851 in Galveston, where they camped on the beach until her father found a suitable boarding house. After two days in Galveston, they sailed to Indianola where they had "much better accommodations." The Schuetzes then took a wagon heading towards New Braunfels. While camped along the road, a norther blew through, and its strong winds and cold rain scared away one of the horses, thus making travel with several young children more difficult. The Schuetzes, then, returned to Indianola where they rented a room from a German family. Finally, when spring arrived, the family once again set out towards New Braunfels, but its plight did not ease over the next months. Baby Agnes died of brain inflammation and within a few weeks yellow fever and cholera spread throughout the town. As Louise and others living in New Braunfels dealt with the epidemic, more immigrants arrived. Louise's grandparents, great-aunt and uncle along with assorted aunts, uncles, and cousins joined her.[1]

[1] Louise Schuetze Braubach, Remembrances from Old Times, 766, Louise Braubach Papers, Sophienburg Museum and Archive, New Braunfels, TX (hereafter Sophienburg).

What the Schuetzes discovered did not mirror the scenes the immigrant literature had painted. Rather than finding suitable land, economic opportunity, and political stability many immigrants encountered a land rife with disease, insufficient resources to start their own farms, and political instability that left them living under four different flags in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Many immigrants spent their first year dealing with unforeseen environmental tribulations and consequences of new governmental rule.[2]

To adapt to these new circumstances, German women and men embraced various methods of community building. First, immigrants quickly sought to establish houses that would provide shelter as well as emotional comfort. In these new abodes families pursued chores and activities akin to those that they had done in Germany. Second, Germans looked for a livelihood, which was farming for many of the newcomers. No matter what type of economic or political environment in which immigrants found themselves, they realized their families must have food and some means of subsistence. Third, Germans wished to continue cultural traditions similar to those they had known in the Fatherland. Immigrants settled close to other Germans and formed societies for literature, singing, and shooting.

In building these new communities, German women of the Lutheran faith took assertive and protective role over their families during that first year. The *frauen* guarded their loved ones from the moral and cultural challenges of a foreign environment with different religions and ethnicities. Texas offered land and opportunity, but it also threatened to change immigrants' beliefs as they came into contact with Mexicans, Native Americans, and Anglo-Americans. In response, the women carefully nurtured particular values that guided newcomers through their

[2] Those four flags were: Mexico (1821-1836), the Republic of Texas (1836-1845), The United States (1846-1861, 1865-forward), and the Confederate States of America (1861-1865).

many challenges, particularly relying on Lutheran tradition and Pietistic thought, which gave women more moral authority.

Likewise, the women took on very public roles interacting with other peoples, such as Indians and whites while performing traditional tasks. Frontier life and the necessity of survival allowed women to take on these new roles that contrasted women's roles in Germany. The first year in Texas almost required that Lutheran women interact with people outside their homes, but dealing with issues beyond the normal gender roles continued for these *frauen* as the next chapters will show. When Germans first landed in Texas, Lutheran women looked after their families as they learned to negotiate and barter with those already living in Texas. They dealt with these non-familiar peoples so they could provide for their families. As such, women were then able to maintain familiar work patterns in a new environment.

Additionally, immigrant women fostered trans-Atlantic ties so relations could continue. Very importantly, mothers in Germany provided religious guidance and support for their daughters and granddaughters in Texas to help them fulfill their important, religiously-sanctioned duties as wives, mothers, and daughters. These immigrant women had never seen or experienced such contrasting land and peoples, yet immediately they started interpreting all that confronted them through their own religious heritage and gendered identities.

Voyage Across the Atlantic

Stepping onto the boat taking them to Texas marked a point of no return for the majority of German women as it did for other immigrants. The actual act of emigrating from Germany seemed intangible until the family finally boarded the vessel where they lived for the next four to six weeks. On these ships, the women began to transform into German-Texans. From 1831 to 1845, boats arriving in Texas carried Germans traveling with Russians, French, English, and

Irish. With the greater number of immigrants coming after the 1848 *Adelsverein* failure, Germans tended to fill the boats. Traveling with others from the Fatherland helped assuage some of the dislocation the immigrants felt at sea. Even so, all people traveling in the fifty-nine years of immigration faced the sea voyage as an intermediate period between their old and new lives.

The women and men began their journey not only to Texas but also to a new identity. Aboard the ship, women did not think of themselves as anything but German. Still their self-awareness became keener as they shared close quarters with people from different Germanic regions and even different nations. This only foreshadowed the greater ethnic awareness awaiting the women once they arrived in Texas and interacted with the Mexicans, Indians, and Anglo-Americans. All the foreign people, institutions, and cultures surrounding the *frauen* necessitated that they define their place in relation to this new environment, just as they had done on the Atlantic.[3]

Letters from the women detailing their trips do not recount how their self-identity evolved as they traveled from one German state to another nation. Instead, their writings focused on more practical issues. They told of loved ones' health, described fellow passengers, and provided information about the overland and overseas trip. However they might later negotiate and renegotiate their own culture and traditions, aboard the vessels the women did not discuss such topics principally as their new land had not yet confronted them with any challenges. Nevertheless, they recognized that their lives changed during that six week period, a span of time that provided ample opportunity to wonder what Texas offered.[4]

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[3] Although the *Adelsverein* failed, the thousands of Germans who the society brought to Texas catalyzed future immigration by sending letters back home. Also, those wishing to leave the Fatherland sought areas where Germans already lived, such as the Hill Country of Texas.

[4] Donna Gabaccia, *From the Other Side: Women, Gender, & Immigrant Life in the U.S., 1820-1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), xi, 3-5; Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, and Rudolph Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the USA" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, no. 1 (Fall 1992): 5-11.

During the decades after immigration, the women played active roles in creating their peoples' own ethnic identity, as they prepared for what they would face in Texas. For example, as the women traveled with their families, they began a process of negotiating with cultural aspects of their soon-to-be homeland. Luise Rüemker Fuchs, during her three-month long trip aboard the *Gerhard Hermann* in 1845-1846, made certain that she taught her children and other German youths among the passengers the English language. On this ship, the travelers faced the usual discomforts of seasickness, yet Luise realized that the children needed to have some basic understanding of the predominant Texas language despite how queasy their stomachs might feel. While not all women had the education or the means as this Lutheran pastor's wife, many noted how they read English books and papers to learn that language and to remember what they had already learned. Although the *frauen* expected their families to speak German at home, another language benefited them and they must undertake the learning as soon as they stepped off the boat.[5]

Moreover, women performed medical duties on the Atlantic as they cared for their loved ones. Johanna Wenzel Gottlob immigrated to Texas in 1854 with her husband, six children, and one granddaughter. They left Saxony on April 11, arriving in Galveston six weeks and four days later. Their experience mirrored that of most other Germans. The length of time and the confined spaces presented an appalling prospect for people seeking the wide open land of Texas. During the travels, women often had to cook for their families and nurse those who fell ill. Fevers did spread in the boats, but most ailments derived from sensitive stomachs unused to the ocean's rocking rhythm. Fuchs, Gottleb, and Emilie Braubach watched their children, ensuring they did not wander into trouble or succumb to disease, particularly from the lack of fresh food.

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[5] Helen Kellersberger, "Seeds of Freedom" 3B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter CAH); Ottilie Fuchs Goeth, *Was Grossmutter Erzaehlt* (San Antonio: Passing Show Print Co., 1915), 36-38.

Mothers stored dried fruits in their wooden chests and brought the delicacies out as both a treat for their youngsters and a preventative, already fulfilling their duty to the well-being of their family.[6]

Likewise, women dealt with birth and death while aboard the boats. The young Louise Braubach recalled that her voyage lasted six weeks as well, but she also recalled during that time one mother gave birth, and a man died. German women assisted mothers in labor while also keeping youngsters away from the birth bed, which they secluded by hanging blankets from the ceiling. For deaths, the women at times prepared bodies for burial at sea, but most often the ship captains controlled the ceremony. Death did not reserve itself for the older German passengers; Frederike Romberg had the unenviable position of watching one of her children die and be buried at sea. Similarly, Louise Bauch, who immigrated with her three daughters, lost one to a cholera epidemic on the ship. Immigrants realized that birth and death followed them as they took this momentous step to settle in a new land, especially as most did so without sufficient supplies in the first months, a factor that led to many immigrants' deaths.[7]

First Perceptions

Whether a woman had a voice in her family's decision to leave for Texas or the choice of where to settle, she still acted as protector for her family. As soon as the women arrived in Brazoria, Indianola, Galveston, or other ports along the Gulf of Mexico, they took in the new sights. Tired from the exhausting voyage and hindered by language barriers, women had to navigate through their new environments. German females took to guarding their family as

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[6] Goeth, 36; Kellersberger, "Seeds of Freedom," 3B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families, CAH.

[7] Louise Romberg Fuchs, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 68; Gertrude Franke, ed., *Wiederaenders* (San Antonio: Gertrude Franke, 1990), 7; Annie Romberg, ed., *History of the Romberg Family* (Belton, Texas: Peter Hansborough Bell Press, 1960), 5.

much as possible from all foreign mischievousness. For example, women suspected port agents because of the men's dubious behavior. Immigrant organizations and some government agencies promised to provide agents who would find newcomers temporary housing or passage; many of the agents swindled the immigrants out of money or took compensation for services they did not adequately provide. Women soon learned to watch the agents carefully. Soon immigrants even learned to watch warily the Americans whom the *Adelsverein* hired to guide those disembarking off the boats.[8]

As many German women discovered, finding a family's way to the Gulf coast presented a complicated proposition. Throughout the nineteenth century, but especially before the 1850s, immigrants learned that any promised means of transportation to the ports of Galveston, New Orleans, or Indianola proved dangerous. Rosa von Roeder Kleberg, who immigrated with her husband and brothers in 1834, landed first in New Orleans and then boarded a boat to Brazoria, but their vessel wrecked near Galveston Island and left them stranded until a passing ship took her husband and brother to Brazoria for help. Meanwhile, Rosa and her shipmates remained on the island for four weeks eating wild game, fish, and vegetation; nevertheless, Justus Kleberg found his wife in good spirits upon his return with a schooner. Rosa's family motto "*Hilf dir selbst, so hilfst dir Gott*" (God helps those who help themselves) had supported her through the journey and the crash just as it had for her entire life.[9]

When the immigrants finally stepped off the boats, they observed the marvels around them; the women especially noted all the new people and objects. Lina von Rosenberg wrote her friend August asking how "everything could change in such a short time?" Most of the German

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[8] Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Hannchen, March 29, 1850, Farm Nassau, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 119.

[9] Rosa Kleberg, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 20-22.

women echoed Lina's inquiry as the bustling Gulf Coast port towns seemed so different from their small German villages. Busy people filled the streets and the Germans witnessed scenes they had never before imagined. Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg remarked with amazement at all she saw in Galveston in 1849. Ladies drove themselves in small buggies hitched to small horses and wore beautiful black dresses and silk and lace hats. Besides noticing the social freedom of affluent women to move about unescorted, new gadgets also awed Amanda. For instance, the milk wagon that stopped in front of her hotel served milk to a cook through a spigot that filled the woman's carafe. When the container was full, the milkman collected his money and quickly went about his business. Amanda, amazed at the scene, wondered at the speed and the efficiency with which the milkman and the cook conducted their business.[10]

Nonetheless, once on land not all immigrants remained as well cared for as Amanda; most arrived poor and unable to afford even modest accommodations. Thus most were left without housing, although some lived off the charity of others until they left the port town. During the first thirty years of immigration especially, the women noticed the sorry state in which so many immigrants found themselves, a situation the immigrant literature did not always foresee. Such circumstances left the thousands of Germans stranded or simply waiting in port cities, which became festering sources for disease. Without clean water, sufficient food, or suitable shelter, the immigrants huddled in the open or under makeshift huts. Ottilie (Ottie) Fuchs Goeth, whose father had brought his family to Texas with an *Adelsverein* contract in 1846, heard reports of the fevers rampant among immigrants and so decided to use what money he had

[10] Lina von Rosenberg to August Scweinberger, April 2, 1850, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH; Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Reverend Theil, 9 December, 1849, Galveston, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 117.

to withdraw from the immigrant society and make his own arrangements for transportation inland.[11]

Although the Fuchs avoided lingering in the coastal towns, most women arriving from 1831 to 1890 dealt with provisional accommodations in those Texas port cities. Many found temporary housing bare but sufficient as they thanked God for whatever shelter protected them from the elements. Ida Kapp and her family rented a small house in Indianola containing only one moldy mattress, one large table, two chairs, and one dresser. Most rooms were unfurnished so Kapp coped with what her family possessed. Moreover, Kapp and her family shared cups and utensils as well as bedding and limited food.[12]

Factors beyond the immigrants' control accounted for the dismal circumstances in the ports during the period of immigration. First, typhoid, dysentery, and malaria caused most of the problems. The diseases alone killed more than a thousand immigrants in the summer of 1846. Second, the political and military situation further hindered already dire circumstances for the Germans. As the United States government commandeered most ox-carts to supply the Army during the Mexican War (1846-1848), teamster who still had their carts preferred to work for the government's higher wages. Germans, therefore, relied on scarce wagon trains to carry them away from the coast. Third, the lack of other types of transportation left approximately four thousand immigrants stranded at Indianola, susceptible to all the diseases their presence exacerbated. Not until 1870 did railroad construction allow immigrants to travel inland quicker.[13]

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[11] Goeth, 25.

[12] Ida Kapp to Ludwine, January 13, 1850, Comaltown, "Kapps Await Schooner 8 Days in Rented House in Indianola," *New Braunfels Herald Zeitung,* August 10, 1972.

[13] Goeth, 38-39; Rudolph Biesele, *The History of German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, Texas: Press of Von Boekmann-Jones Co., 1930), 210; Terry Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 55, 59.

The immigrants' experiences in port cities quickly gave way to the treacherous travel leading them to their new homes. Newcomers not arriving under the protection of the *Adelsverein* often had no land awaiting them, a fact necessitating families search for farmland or houses that suited their needs. Many Germans, especially after the 1840s, wished to live near family already settled on their own farms. This meant that the newly-arrived family took wagons from Galveston to Houston and then onto Cat Spring, where Germans had spread out in the surrounding countryside. Those landing in Indianola in the mid-1840s, generally with *Adelsverein* contracts, left for San Antonio, New Braunfels, or Fredericksburg. Such treacherous trips traversed rocky roads that damaged wagons or went over mud-slick paths that threatened to topple the wagon's cargo and human contents. Though those coming in the first decades of immigration confronted a more deserted and dangerous path, hazardous roads and long journeys faced immigrants arriving as late as the 1880s.[14]

Even with the perils, the open land appealed to many immigrants as the immigrant literature advertised, but the natural beauty also stimulated the Germans' spiritual senses. As they continued their journey northwards, immigrants traveled through a flowing and varied landscape that appealed to the romanticism of many women. Sparse and sporadic forests of oak and cedar greeted the German immigrants as they moved inland. The nascent town of New Braunfels offered fresh clear water from its surrounding streams. Those moving on northward to Fredericksburg saw intermittent growths of oak as they emerged from the Salado Valley, which had no constant flowing streams; only the riverbeds showed signs of the torrential rain. From the valley, the terrain rose gently and with bright green foliage of the Dasylirion plant speckling it and that contrasting sharply with the surrounding subdued grass that often appeared brown and dry because of the lack of consistent rain. The adjacent high plateau between the Guadalupe

[14] Jordan, 42, 46.

River and the Pedernales River contained limestone, a rock unfamiliar to most Germans. On the highest point between New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, the limestone appeared in both hard and soft forms, providing useful material for settlers who used it to construct homes and stores. The naturally exposed rocks also displayed fossil formations that appeared throughout the area between New Braunfels and San Saba.[15]

The environment through which these women traveled appeared astoundingly different from the homeland they left behind in many respects. The rolling hills amazed Ottie Goeth because they contrasted with her memories of Mecklenburg's flat, green landscape. As her family traveled to Cat Spring, Goeth stood on the banks of the Colorado watching the force of the river when it ran high. She marveled in "utter fascination," never having imagined anything like it in Germany. Her former home in Mecklenburg "knew neither hills nor high places" which made the "hills with the Shovel Mountain and the Packsaddle look like real mountains" to her and her family who still "referred to them as such." With all this natural phenomena and the "pecan trees, clear creeks, the many beautiful springs," Goeth remarked how the "magic of Texas was beginning to unfold before us."[16]

Those immigrants arriving before 1860 gravitated towards more rural places that Germans or whites populated, but where many Indians also roamed. New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, of course, were popular settlements, but the vast uninhabited areas attracted many who had come in search of land and freedom. Still, these regions did have several Native American tribes living nearby. The Tonkawa, who hunted and gathered along the Balcones Escarpment near Austin, were one of the first tribes in the region. Germans also encountered the

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[15] The limestone in this area is now quarried and to this day an active site. Roemer describes the fossils *Exogyra Texana* as the most prevalent type of fossil in the area. He also provides an interesting and detailed overview of the landscape, fauna, and rock formations throughout Texas. Ferdinand Roemer, *Texas with Particular Reference to German Immigration and the Physical Appearance of the Country* (San Antonio, Texas: Standard Printing Company, 1935), 135-143, 209-215, 220-230, 274-290.

[16] Goeth, 55.

Apache who moved into the region around 1600, and the Comanche, who first arrived in the 1750s. Each of these peoples lived near and interacted with the new German immigrants.[17]

The women described numerous encounters with the Indians that remained mostly amicable before 1848, after which the dislocations of war made natives less friendly. As Rosa Kleberg settled her family into their temporary residence in Harrisburg, an Indian carrying two large hams entered her home calling out "Swap, Swap." The intruder approached Rosa, threw the hams onto a table and then took several loaves of bread that were cooling on the table. That incident began Rosa's bartering relationships with the natives as she exchanged homemade clothes, pots and utensils, and baked goods for moccasins, animal skins, and hunted meat. Rosa learned to negotiate with the Indian inhabitants of Texas for the good of her family. However, not all incidents were so friendly. Women reported tales of Indians kidnapping and ransoming German settlers. They even told of some Native Americans who attacked immigrant wagon trains taking goods and, on a few occasions, killing the travelers. Indians harassed Germans journeying to their new homes only sporadically until the end of the Mexican War. Thereafter, the ever-encroaching settlers and fight for limited resources forced the Indians to become more hostile and German *frauen* often remarked on the change.[18]

The Germans traveling roads inland from the coast faced a greater threat than Indians: diseases. German women and their families journeyed into what Ottie Goeth called "endless

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[17] Donald Chipman provides a clear and rather succinct account of Native Americans in Texas. Although it avoids great detail, Chipman's overview addresses many of the major activities and characteristics of Indians living in the Hill Country before and during German settlement. Donald Chipman, *Spanish Texas: 1519-1821* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 80-81, 133-139, 161-163; Terry Jordan also gives a short description of German interaction with the Native American bands living around the German settlements. Jordan, 45, 116-117, 160; For more information on Indians in the Hill Country see see Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Politics in the Era of the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) and David LaVere, *The Texas Indians* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004). For more information regarding early German settlers and the Comanche see, Irene Marschall King, *John O. Meusebach: German Colonizer in Texas* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1967).

[18] Rosa Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (April 1898): 298.

prairies" where many died. Along the trails, graves with branch-made crosses grimly reminded passers-by of the immigrants' plight. Particularly during the first two decades of immigration, Germans contracted disease from other settlers, bad food and water, and mosquitoes, and they soon suffered from sickness. Stricken women with their husbands and children shivered from fever and huddled together under wagons or makeshift tents. Those feeble and ailing called for someone to bring water to quench their parched throats. Hermann Seele, an educator and editor who came to New Braunfels in May 1845, one month after the town's founding, described such terrors. While traveling to visit a friend, Seele came upon a camp of German immigrants too ill to finish the last few miles to New Braunfels. The cries of agony from families lying on the ground and under wagons filled his ears. He quickly did what he could to help the women pleading for someone to assist their children. A year later, the tragic end of many of those sick Germans confronted Seele again. On his way to spend Christmas with Pastor Louis and Maria Ervendberg at their orphanage on the outskirts of New Braunfels, he noticed "rows of mounds" wherein rested "the remains of immigrants who died" near the banks of the Comal "without having reached the Promised Land."[19]

Contrasting much of what the propaganda authors and even the immigrants themselves wrote about Texas' healthy climate, the searing heat promoted sickness. Rosa Kleberg remembered how fever characterized her first year. She and all her family fell to a fever, which left them weak and tired. During the epidemic, Rosa managed small chores around the house while her husband and father worked outside in shifts to prevent exhaustion. Immigrants riding in one of the inaugural wagon trains to Fredericksburg on May 8, 1846, carried dysentery, malaria, and cholera, sicknesses that had harmed so many in Indianola. Added to this, more

[19] Hermann Seele, *The Cypress and Other Writings of a German Pioneer in Texas*, trans. Edward C. Breitenkamp (Austin: University of Austin Press, 1979), 88-89, 95.

immigrants moved farther into the interior of Texas, carting disease with them. Contagions wrought New Braunfels and Fredericksburg while sporadically attacking isolated settlements for the next several years.[20]

Disease concerned the immigrants, but it did not constantly affect them; the quickly changing weather, though, surprised the women. The majority of women's letters to Germany comment surprisingly on the cold weather in Texas. Certainly, these Germans had experienced much colder weather before landing, but the ferocity and quickness of winter storms in Texas garnered interest. Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg wrote her daughter Hannchen that the previous day's temperature had been a warm seventy-three degrees, the next day turned out "ice cold." This type of unpredictable weather appeared in Elise Kuckuck Willrich's letter to her father and mother in Germany. She noted that many warm days marked her first February in Texas. However, a norther brought freezing temperatures within less than twenty four hours. Elise claimed, as did other women, that she had not prepared herself for climatic changes such as these.[21]

As much as temperature fluctuations and improper clothing affected many women, the state of their first houses often distressed them more. Immigrants had no promise of complete or sufficient housing when coming to Texas. As such, they often lived in structures with no floors, no glass for windows, and no doors. Many early immigrants built *Mexikaner Hausen*, a technique borrowed from Mexican neighbors. For these domiciles, the men dug a trench-like area with twenty-six post holes in which they then placed long tree logs upright. They then

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[20] Goeth, 38-39; Chester William Geue and Ethel Hander Geue, *New Homes in a New Land: German Immigration to Texas, 1847-1861* (Baltimore: Clearfield Company, 1970), 18-19.

[21] Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Hanchen, December 10, 1849, Galveston, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 118; Elise Kuckuck Willrich to George Ludwig Kuckcuck, April 18, 1848, Mt. Eliza, Texas, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 54.

attached grass and leaves for the roof. Women filled the gaps between the logs with twigs and leaves. Temporary houses such as these provided relatively comfortable protection from the elements, more so than the unfinished log houses in which some German women and their families lived. Architect and author Frederick Law Olmstead noted in the mid-1850s how a newly-arrived German family near New Braunfels lived in a long, narrow log cabin with a couch, which the woman of the house made after helping construct the structure. Yet the gaps between the logs allowed cold air and rain inside.[22]

Those who settled in more populated areas or rural-German settlements had an easier time of finding shelter. Some families rented temporary housing while others quickly constructed small one-room structures to house the entire family. The immigrants often relied on the aid of other settlers to build their provisional homes. As money afforded and time allowed, Germans added rooms to the original home. Louise Romberg Fuchs's family did just that after they arrived to Texas. After traveling from Galveston to San Bernard River in Austin County, the Fuchs lived in a two room, dog run house while the family focused its energy on establishing a successful farm. Fuchs and her siblings slept in the attic, which they climbed into from a high-back settee that their father made. Yet, those coming to already-inhabited settlements, especially after the late 1840s, found housing available. Albert and Luise Fuchs arrived in Cat Spring and purchased the vacant house once belonging to the von Roeders. Although bare, the accommodations offered an immediate home that allowed the family to concentrate on farming and other basic needs.[23]

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[22] Tejanos referred to the *Mexikaner Hausen* as *jacale*. Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey Through Texas, or A Saddle-trip on the Southwest Frontier* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1857), 189; Curt E. Schmidt, *Oma and Opa: German Texan Pioneers* (San Antonio, Texas: Acurate Litho & Printing Co., 1975), 28; Esther L. Mueller, "Log Cabins to Sunday Houses," in *Fredericksburg: A Glimpse of the Past From Logs to Sunday Houses*, ed. Ella Gold and Esther L. Mueller (Fredericksburg, Texas: *Vereins Kirche* Archives Committee, 1981), 10.

[23] Louise Romberg Fuchs, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 66-67; Goeth, 41, 43.

Daily Bread

Immigrant literature reflected more clearly the daily work of Lutheran German women once they arrived in Texas than it did the climate and traveling experiences. Those authors who accurately described the environment correctly outlined the type of duties on which immigrant women should focus. Even if a German woman did not read these monographs, her work closely imitated the advice of immigrant literature and the chores she had undertaken in Germany. In other words, women's activities reflected their religious and gendered notions of work imported from Central Europe.

The literature encouraged immigrant women to tend to cows and cultivate gardens, thus necessitating that a woman work outside the house. Indeed, Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg insisted her daughters, Lina and Libussa, milk the cows every day in addition to their chores of cooking bread and making coffee while she cleaned the house. Amanda bragged of her offspring's ability to lead the cows to and from pasture everyday. Libussa also learned a new activity: horse riding. She soon became an adept horsewoman riding to the neighboring farm to visit her friend, who also hailed from Germany. Although taking advantage of outdoor fun, the strenuous daily labor provided the family with food and at times extra money as the women sold their produce.[24]

These *frauen* assumed their duties often without a second thought because those chores reflected their gendered activities in Germany. Taking cows to pasture and milking them was as innate to German women as planting and hoeing in a garden. Even those affluent women settling in Texas accepted the importance of cows and gardens. Gustav Eisenlohr explained to family in Germany how Count Coreth farmed only three miles from his homestead near Comal

[24] Amanda von Rosenberg to Auguste, Nassau, Texas, August 24, 1850, 2Q396, Letters of the Rosenberg Family, CAH.

Creek. There the Coreths contented themselves as the Count ploughed and his wife, Agnes, milked the cows. Both husband and wife appeared happy and peaceful.[25]

These productive activities became a point of pride for the women as they told relatives how well they cared for their families in Texas. Just as work in their new home reflected their labor in Germany, the women expected to provide for the family. Their vital role in feeding and helping to sustain their husbands and offspring originated directly from religious tenets regarding women's work of helpmate and mother. Emilie Wagner boasted to her parents about her large number of fowl. Her first spring, she already had sixty chicks, hens, and roosters and she greatly enjoyed poultry breeding. Concerned her parents might think her exaggerating, Emilie promised that she indeed told the absolute truth and intended to get more fowl as the cocks roosted twice a year. Emilie continued to elaborate on plans for her garden, which she had yet to plant. For she first needed to fence out her prized chickens to keep them from eating her garden greens. She informed her parents that neighbors, Germans who lived in Texas already for several years, told her how to make a stake fence around her garden that left no room for the fowl to crawl through the wood. Also, the fence's height prevented chickens from flying over it; the one side of the fence had a gate through people could enter.[26]

These traditional tasks comforted the women during their first year in Texas as a variety of new people, cultures, and environments inundated them. Domestic tasks filled a woman's days in both Germany and in Texas; doing her jobs in Texas helped reassure her as doing recognizable tasks in an unfamiliar setting brought her familiarity. Numerous women remarked

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[25] Gustav Eisenlohr to Father, June 18, 1851, New Braunfels, June, 1850, 2D95, Gustav Wilhelm Eisenlohr Papers, CAH.

[26] Emilie Wagner to her parents, 22 April, 1850, De Witt County, 3H136, Wagner Schneider Correspondence, CAH; Ulrike Gleixner, "Spiritual Empowerment and the Demand of Marital Obedience: A Millenarian Woman and Her Journal" in *Gender in Transition: Discourse and Practice in German-Speaking Europe, 1750-1830*, ed. Ulrike Gleixner and Marion W. Gray (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 167-159; Eda Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany, 1648-1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1977), 410-411.

on how they labored long to churn butter, a scarce commodity in rural regions and even in towns before the 1850s. Butter and cornbread sustained the Texan diet but Germans had little palate for the latter. As such, immigrants yearned for butter to cover the taste and women spent much time creating the delicacy. People from both Germany and the United States praised the end product. Not so affable in return, German women constantly criticized American women's butter. They claimed the American butter was lumpy, thick, and bitter. Making butter well served to feed their families while it heightened the women's ethnic group identity further tying the female immigrants together in the first year of settlement.[27]

While rural work reflected the pictures drawn in the immigrant literature, so did the promises of jobs. Families from the Fatherland and those from America sought German women servants. From 1831 to 1850, families hired single German women just off the boat to work in their houses and on their farms. That trend continued and even increased from 1865 to 1890. Just as young men able to chop trees and to plow gained quick employment, so did women who proved themselves diligent in their duties and obedient to their mistresses. Certainly the majority of Germans willing to work found such occupation, especially in the cities. Moreover, as *Emigrant to Texas* asserted, many attentive maids even found wealthy husbands.[28]

Likewise, women found mates in Texas just as the propaganda asserted, whether they wished for such attentions or not. Just as the immigrant literature asserted the shortage of females in Texas, women too noted the excitement of men when they crossed paths with members of the fairer sex. For instance, Captain Daniel Murchison, an American-born agent

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[27] Ida Kapp to Ludwine, January 13, 1850, Comaltown, Kapp Vertical Files, Sophienburg; Elise Kuckuck Willrich to Georg Ludwig Kuckuck, April 18,1848, Mt. Elise, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 56-57; Olmstead, 186-187.

[28] *The Emigrant to Texas: A Handbook and Guide for those who want to colonize (settle) in Texas with special consideration for those, who join the Mainze Antwerp Society; with a colored map and the new constitution of Texas.* (Bremen: C Schuenemann's Publishing House, 1846), 84.

whom the *Adelsverein* hired to escort the first group of immigrants from Indianola to New Braunfels, daily walked past the Kapps' new homestead and often asked their neighbor, who spoke English, about the young Antonie Kapp. When the neighbor inquired if Murchison wished to court Kapp, he replied that he knew an American who could provide Kapp a comfortable and easy life. Despite Murchison's original declarations, a few days later, he proclaimed his love for Kapp, calling her the prettiest girl in Texas. In response, Ida Kapp, Antonie's mother, told relatives those American men who ridiculously follow German girls "no longer amused her."[29]

Just as Ida Kapp defended her Antonie against unwanted attentions, other mothers protected their families, particularly their daughters. That role was as natural to Lutheran women as milking cows. These women showed concern for daughters who they thought married too young or too quickly at the sight of decent man. Luise Fuchs worried for her twenty-four-year-old daughter Ottie, who became engaged to a man after a relatively short courtship. The elder Fuchs sat down with her daughter and asked outright if she wanted to postpone the nuptials until Ottie aged a bit more. *Frau* Fuchs held that all her daughters need not rush into such an important commitment or feel pressure to wed. Mothers did not want their daughters over-excited at the prospect of an abundance of willing young men asking for their hands in marriage. Thus, women like Kapp and Fuchs intervened on behalf of their families' moral stability by ensuring the daughters thought through their decisions before pledging themselves, thus preventing an ethical dilemma for girls bound in an unhappy vow.[30]

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[29] Ida Kapp to Ludwine, January 25, 1850, Comaltown, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 110.

[30] Louise Fuchs also protected her daughters against the advances of several young men whose family moved next to the Fuchs' land. One of the young men showed particular attentions to Ottie, so Louise wrote a gentle but firm note instructing the man to dispel any thoughts he might have about her daughter. Goeth, 60, 68.

Homesickness

Even as she guarded her family from the forwardness of men, thoughts of a distant homeland made many a woman yearn for family she would likely never see again. Immigrant literature failed to discuss such feelings but homesickness presented a real concern for immigrants. *Frauen* therefore provided their own solutions during the initial year of immigration. First, women emphasized a God-created greater plan. This notion prevented them falling awry of their religious faith in their vast new surroundings. Instead of complete dislocation, the German women saw their immigration as a part of a larger divine purpose. Second, the women concentrated on performing their religious-sanctioned roles as helpmates to their husbands or as obedient daughters to their parents. Thus religiously-accepted gendered roles helped assuage dislocation. Third, German females viewed themselves as members of a larger trans-Atlantic community that shared their moral interests and similar faith.

Establishing homes and watching over their family's spiritual well-being further burdened women who were already confronting diseases and physical dangers in Texas. For example, twenty-four year-old Katherine Voges Pape immigrated with her husband and four children in 1844. The young family arrived as original settlers to Fredericksburg. Already suffering from illness, the work of caring for the family left Katherine very despondent. Her sorry disposition concerned her fellow settlers so much that they immediately built her cabin, which was one of the *Adelsverein's* original structures in that new town. Ida Kapp similarly noted the unhappiness of Doctoress Mathilde von Herff who complained after her arrival in 1850 that Dr. Ferdinand von Herff had failed to inform her fully of the trials and tribulations one faced in Texas. Her husband dryly responded that "when one speaks in Germany of privations and hardships, one takes it to be a generalization and regards it as nothing; when, however, privations

and hardships come in specific cases they are unbearable," as his wife thought the situation in Texas.[31]

These privations and hardships especially reflected the lives of women as they often took on new roles along with tending their families. They arrived often in dire circumstances having to build a life for themselves and their families. As noted above, even those who arrived with money struggled to find land and establish homes and farms. Women from wealthier families often felt their duties particularly severe as they labored in the fields as well as caring for their houses, two tasks that they had not done in Germany. As such, these women from non-farming families had to negotiate with their new life in Texas. Elizabeth Wilhelmine Appenthern Holekamp, who planned to become a governess for the daughters of Ernst August, King of Hanover, instead opted to marry Frederick Holekamp in 1844 and leave for Texas that same year to settle on *Adelsverein* land. The couple moved first to New Braunfels, then to Fredericksburg, where Frederick helped survey the new town. They then left for Sisterdale. By 1862, now keeping their home in Comfort, Frederick died and left Elizabeth to raise their seven children. Elizabeth, who originally sought to reside at court but ended living in rural Texas, had to accept the change in her family life. Relying on her social and religious role as mother, Elizabeth concentrated on rearing her children. She had traveled so far relying on God's mercy and after her husband's death tended her family believing in God's plan for all of them.[32]

Faced with such danger and turmoil, a woman's traditional gender and religious responsibilities triumphed. She might complain and badger her husband about the harshness of

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[31] Esther L. Mueller, "Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Pape" in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, compiled by Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 158-159. Katharine and her husband Frederick were both born in Hanover-the former in Peine and the later in Gadenstedt. Ida Kapp to her sister Ludwine, January 15, 1850, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 108. I use the term Doctoress in the contemporary usage of calling a wife by her husband's title.

[32] Holekamp Family File, comp. by Norman J. Dietal, Holekamp Vertical Files, Sophienburg.

frontier life, but she performed her faith-bound role and did what her family needed. Elizabeth (Emma) Schneider Scherr exemplifies those characteristics. Emma and her new husband Frederich left Germany to avoid family objections regarding their marriage. Her married life pleased her but Emma quickly tired of continuous dangers and constant watch for Indians. The laborious work furthered her displeasure as her shoulders and arms ached daily from carrying water on shoulder yokes from the nearby Pedernales River so she could complete common household activities. Emma often asked Frederick if they might return to Berlin. Frederich demurred and promised his wife better days ahead. She stayed faithfully by her husband, raised their children as good Protestants, and helped tend to the farm and the house. Fourteen years later, Emma had fully settled into her community and enjoyed the companionship of her daughters and nearby neighbors. Emma even came to represent the moral and economic strength of her family. Nonetheless, Frederick never adjusted to the hard labor, and he relied heavily on Emma and his sons to run the farm. Frederick, longing for Germany, returned three times without his wife or his children. Meanwhile, Emma and the young Scherrs felt at home in Texas. *Frau* Scherr, in contrast to her weary husband, had overcome obstacles and performed her work out of necessity and moral duty. She relied on her religious vow to be a partner to her husband and mother to her children to give her the strength to tend the family. Those acts eventually made her content in Texas.[33]

Scherr, Pape, and Herff voiced their concern about establishing life in Texas, but most shouldered their apprehensions in silence. They may have had similar doubts in Germany, but the females did not leave record of such thoughts. German women's lives illustrated how they worked despite their own despair, relied on their faith to guide and support them as they focused

[33] Esther L. Mueller, "Mr. and Mrs. Frederick William Scherr" in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, compiled by Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 182-184; Gleixner, 169-170.

on preserving their families. Certainly some immigrants did not withstand the trials of immigrant life and returned to Europe. Still, the majority stayed. Both the women's traditional roles and their faith shaped their ability to overcome hard work, uncertain future, and physical perils. Life in Germany confronted many of the women, especially rural women, with difficult work throughout the year. Emma Scherr had known hard work in Germany, yet Texas presented her with the difficult task of settling in a foreign and harsh land. Moreover, Scherr and others like her had few familiar religious and social institutions to ease the trauma of immigration. Nevertheless, the women held firmly to their own beliefs and traditional activities. In this way the women had other tasks which took precedence over their own uneasiness; they provided much needed services for their families; very importantly, they maintained in an unfamiliar setting familiar religious and gender roles for themselves, their families, and their communities.[34]

Beyond looking to their own nuclear families for strength, German women also concentrated on securing bonds with other immigrants in the new land. Already-settled women supported immigrants during their first months of living in Texas. Women offered shelter and kindness expressed in a common language and entertained guests with familiar customs and courtesy. Just as Luise Fuchs offered her hospitality to Frederike Romberg soon after her arrival, numerous other German women provided company while giving what food they possessed and sharing what room they had. These relations provided great comfort for the travelers as they encountered people from the Fatherland who shared a faith and culture. Louise Ernst exemplifies another woman who offered help to newcomers. In the 1830s, Ernst and her husband ran a boarding house for immigrants. Germans in great need of respite from their journey referred to *Frau* Ernst's place as an oasis. Even Prince Carl Solm-Braunfels resided

[34] David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 296.

with the Ernsts during his journey through Texas. There Germans found familiar food and hospitality while they rested before continuing their trips. Thus, these women helped sustain the newcomers with German food and conversation.[35]

Ties that Bind

To ease their homesickness, women wrote letters to those back home detailing much about their lives in Texas. Their information particularly reflected the comfort and provisions of their family. No chore or hardship seemed too small to relate to mothers, fathers, siblings, and friends back in Germany. For example, Ida Kapp described that soon after immigrating she and her family slept in a half-finished room with only one pot for cooking, one pot for frying, and one pan for making cornbread. They ate on rough benches with the barest tin bowls and utensils. But Ida reassured loved ones in Germany that she and her family lived much better than other immigrants, and she made certain that she and her family ate sufficient, if not gourmet, food to keep their bodies functioning.[36]

The women also wrote about the trouble they had acquiring provisions for their families. Ida Kapp wrote to her sister "[n]aturally that which is the most difficult to import is the highest priced and that is (*lebensmittel*) food." Milk cost the most, and eggs cost twelve cents. Moreover, the farther one moved from Galveston, San Antonio, or Fredericksburg the more transportation costs inflated those prices. Wine interested many Germans in Texas, especially those from the southern grape regions of Germany. For example, Emilie Wagner thanked her parents for the large cask of wine that they had sent her, though she tragically informed them that much of the contents had not survived. A ship's crewmember packed the cargo box poorly and

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[35] Prince Carl Solm-Braunfel, *Voyage to North America, 1844-1845*, trans. Wolfram M. Von-Maszewski (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2000), 80; Goeth, 42, 68-69.

[36] Ida Kapp to Ludwine, January 25, 1850, Kapp Vertical Files, Sophienburg.

left the contents too loose to endure the bruising. To rectify subsequent mishaps, Emma told her parents to send goods directly to Galveston, or failing that, to send packages to New Orleans, but definitely not to New York as they had done. Packages endured more threats traveling over land or sea from New York to Texas and prized goods should not go by those routes.[37]

Houses and daily duties further occupied the women's letters back home. Emilie Wagner described to her parents in great measurement her house near Nassau Farm. Decorations inside the Wagner's house boasted a picture of Martin Luther, a gun, a clock, and a few ornate shelves with books. Outside, the structure stood 650 steps away from the von Roeder's house, and Emilie's prized garden laid merely thirty steps from the south side of the house so that she could access it easily. She, likewise, told of her weekly schedule that included washing, which she particularly disliked; Friday, Emile scrubbed the walls of her house, and on Saturday she scrubbed the house's floors until they shone.[38]

Frauen did more than simply describe how they took care of their families, they also asked for needed goods. During the first year of immigration, women requested and received from family in the Fatherland necessities that actually helped them establish their homes. For example, Pauline Giesecke wrote to her sister Auguste to send clothes, wooden spoons, and dried beans the next time she sent a letter to Texas. Women often told of the want for seeds and sturdy utensils or pots. The former they wished to have so they could grow familiar foods in Texas. The latter they desired because purchasing durable house ware in the frontier areas proved difficult and expensive.[39]

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[37] Ida Kapp to Ludwine, January 25, 1850, Comaltown, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 103-104.

[38] Emilie Wagner to her parents 22 April, 1851, 3H136, Wagner Schneider Correspondence, CAH.

[39] Pauline Giesecke to Auguste, 28 August, 1858, 3X271, Walter Christian Giesecke Family Papers, CAH.

As these letters show, women often arrived without necessary tools or material to care for their families. Specifically the women lacked the goods that their gendered roles required. For example, women wrote of their inability to make clothes for their loved ones. The majority of women described the lack of good thread and yarn, and what they found was poor in quality and costly in price. Those who did find purchasable thread had no decent cloth to sew. Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber recalled that when her family came to Texas in 1831 they had insufficient shoes, dresses, and shirts. They had not even the materials to make moccasins, to which some settlers resorted to protect their feet. Next only to cooking stoves, spinning wheels emerged as a prized possession in the women's letters. Spinning wheels provided the women with the ability to spin thread while also disconnecting them from the fluctuating market. Unless a woman's family sent her a wheel, such an acquisition came only after years of living in Texas because high costs prevented their purchase.[40]

When not asking for supplies, women described the types of outfits that they and their family wore in Texas. Calico, which Ida Kapp described "as coarse and comes in dull patterns," only cost fifteen to twenty cents, a price she found reasonable as clothes, in Texas, cost less than similar outfits in Germany. Nevertheless, she informed her sister that people mostly wear "loose overhanging *Oberroecke* (over garment), *vorn Rock und Taille* (skirt and waste)," or just "*Rock mit einer Jacke* (skirt with jacket)" so one needed not concern oneself with fancy cloth or dresses, simply the basic necessities. Elise Kuckuck Willrich asked her daughter, Ludwine, to send a long list of items that she needed in Texas and that Ludwine should bring if she and her husband decided to immigrate. With several types of yarn, thread, and crochet needles, Elise

[40] Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 12-13.

could mend and make her families' clothes. She also wanted all the flower bulbs Ludwine found in Germany as they were easily preserved on the boat.[41]

German Lutheran women in Texas also narrated the lives of others and how immigrants succeeded in fulfilling their duties. *Frauen*, in their first years in Texas, wrote of how some immigrants struggled to sustain their families. A tale told by a newly arrived woman displays both positive and negative aspects of gender roles and how one woman protected her right to marriage. Karoline Scheel Schneider Seibert immigrated with her family to Texas before 1857. She met and married Adam Joseph Scheider in New Braunfels, and they had eight children before Adam died after getting his arm caught in a thresher. His passing left Karoline to care for their children ranging in age from seventeen years to two months and to run the family farm. Karoline remained alone, until Eugene Seibert asked for her daughter's hand in marriage. The mother responded, "*Wenn du jemend heirats, heirats du mich,*" meaning that if anyone was to marry it was her. Accordingly, Seibert and Karoline wed on January 16, 1879. Letters included the heartbreak of the young girl and how she did not speak to her mother for many years hence. Another incident relates the tragedy of a young couple suffering from the trials of immigration. Emilie Wagner sadly informed her parents that the relationship of a young couple, married only for six months, ended with the husband murdering the wife. Apparently jealousy so wracked the husband that he convinced himself his wife intended to poison him so he beat her to the deed. As one grieved brother in Germany wrote to his sister and brother-in-law after his wife's death and the death of nephew who had suffocated in a well in St. Louis, Missouri, "sorrow can also reach you in America."[42]

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[41] Ibid, 105-106; Elise Kuckuck Willrich to Gretchen Keuffel, Fayette County, September 26, 1849-March 12, 1850, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 62-63.

[42] Albertine Stracke to sister, October 4, 1889, 0800 Johann Storch Papers, Sophienburg; Karoline Scheel Schneider to aunt, October 1879, Karoline Scheel Schneider to aunt, May, 1880, Bernhard Joseph Scheel Papers,

Even as life was an important subject, death consistently appears in letters providing vital information on the experiences of loved ones and an enduring faith in God. In 1889, Albertine Wiegen wrote to family in Texas of her son's death. Despite the mother's tending to the young boy night and day, "the dear God decided differently and took him into his care." The faith that God, who "loved [the boy] more," allowed Weigen to deal with the loss of her only child. Likewise, Franzisca Strache wrote her sister of Strache's son Ferdinand's passing, sadly recounting how he had died despite her constant attentions. Strache had only Elise, Ferdinand's daughter, left as her only close relative, and Strache thanked God for her. These women and their families faced sorrow coupled with the transition of immigration, yet they held to their faith as a stabilizing force.[43]

Death often catalyzed people to leave Germany and join family or friends in Texas. In 1869, Anton Vogel's wife "was called by God the almighty on July 15" and Anton wrote his sister and brother-in-law asking if he should join them. His "deep mourning" and "homesickness for his wife" kept him from planning clearly, but he promised to come if they thought he might do well despite having no wife and already being fifty-five years old. Hedwig Coreth told her brother Rudolph of a *Frau* Pauli's niece, an orphan, who had no one left in Germany. As a result, she left for Texas in 1867.[44]

More than anything else, letters exchanged between those in Texas and those in Germany provided vital information for people contemplating immigration. Studies by Walter Kamphoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, Ulrike Sommer, and Frederick Luebke show that those

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Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio, Texas (hereafter DRT); Emile Wagner to parents April 23, 1851, DeWitt County, 3H136, Wagner Schneider Correspondence, CAH; Anton Vogel to Caroline Loeffler, August 30, 1869, 0882, Loeffler Collection, Sophienburg.

[43] Albertine to Alma, Wiegen, 9 July, 1876, 0800, Johann Storch Papers, Sophienburg; Franzica to sister, March 21, 1886, 0800, Johann Storch Papers, Sophienburg.

[44] Anton Vogel to Caroline Loeffler, Oldenheim, August 30, 1869, 0882, Loefler Collection, Sophienburg; Hedwig Coreth to Rudolph, New Braunfels, 4 April, 1867, 3X159, Coreth Family Papers, CAH.

already settled afforded great impetus for emigration from Germany to certain areas. Regarding Texas, men penned most of these letters, which they filled with useful information mostly on four topics. First, they wrote of political issues. For example, Theodore Goldbeck warned possible immigrants that the United States government might split Texas into six states. Second, men discussed economic markets and the profitability of certain products. Letters told of Germans growing goods such as corn and cotton as well as raising cattle. Third, men mention environmental factors facing newcomers. Goldbeck described wildlife and insects that caused much consternation among many settlers. Goldbeck warned of snakes that were smaller than those known in Germany, but also more poisonous. One such lethal moccasin bit a young orphan at Pastor Ervendberg's orphanage and within three hours the child died. Fourth, men highlighted the growing Texas towns. For example, Goldbeck praised New Braunfels. It had a beer brewer, cabinet makers, and artisans as well as church services at Pastor Ervendberg's church every Sunday.[45]

Lutheran women in Texas wrote of about similar issues, yet their words addressed a woman's ability to serve and support her family. Their advice often held more weight with women back in Germany as their words spoke to a shared concept of work and responsibility. Antonette Otte inquired of *Frau* Sattler who lived in New Braunfels with her husband about moving to Texas. Otte's husband Heinrich and another man Herrmann Goellen wrote to Herr Sattler, wishing to know what he thought of Texas and about their immigrating there. The letter

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[45] Theodore Goldbeck to Prospective German Emigrants, 1849, New Braunfels, 2L280, Chabot (Frederick Charles) Papers, CAH; Auguste Ervendberg Wiegreffe, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 44-45; Walter Kamphoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, Ulrike Sommer in Introduction to *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home*, ed. Walter Kamphoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, Ulrike Sommer (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 27-30; Walter Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 70-105; Frederick Luebke, "Three Centuries of Germans in American," in *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 165-166.

was direct and conveyed these men's desire to farm and to practice their carpenter trades. *Frau* Sattler wrote a shorter letter, but she asked about issues directly related to women. She wanted to know of any specific tool she should bring or whether Texas had any good leather. Still, the letter hinted at the possibility, even the need, for another woman's input. Otte knew *Frau* Sattler to be a respectable woman who did well in Texas. As such, Otte desired to be near the Sattlers. Living close to one another facilitated women's relationships that were so important on both sides of the Atlantic and would allow *Frau* Sattler to divest her knowledge of frontier life to Otte. In return, she promised to bring a barrel of her best wine to Texas so their families could have a good time.[46]

Women's letters also provided practical information regarding the journey and settlement process, advice that better allowed women to tend to their families' needs after arriving. Amanda Meerscheidt wrote to her sister telling her what to bring when going to Texas with her husband and child. Immigrants needed shoes as people quickly wore them out, and they were an expensive item in Texas. Similarly, a spinning wheel proved its worth as it allowed easier thread production for everyday clothes. She also emphasized the need for sheep shears and onion seeds, which immigrants had difficulty finding. As for the sea voyage, Meerscheidt listed several types of food that one should take to avoid disease and to help with seasickness. As a side note, Meerscheidt censured American women for wasting time on fancywork instead of making needed clothes for their families and warned her relative of such a pitfall that could harm her family's well being.[47]

These Lutheran women also described life in Texas in honest terms, encouraging no false hopes for the people soon arriving. Amanda Meerscheidt wrote to her sister, who planned to

[46] Antonette Otte to Frau Sattler, St. Goarshausen, June 2, 1850, 0663, Wilhelm Sattler Papers, Sophienburg.

[47] Amanda Meerscheidt to sister, early 1851, 2Q395, The Letters of the von Roeders and Meerscheidt Families (1844-1897), comp. by Charles W. von Rosenberg, CAH; Garbaccia, 62-65.

come to Texas, encouraging her to always keep *Raederkuchen* (cookies) on hand should company arrive. A German woman could make the cookies with little difficulty even with no cooking stove. Moreover, sweets presented a pleasing present to one's company, and, in the lonely rural areas, women always accepted visitors. Meerscheidt had so few callers almost anyone's arrival broke the monotony of house and farm work. These types of suggestions appear frequently in women's letters to Germany and those in the Fatherland received them with great appreciation.[48]

Women persuaded relatives to immigrate so they could reconnect family divided by the Atlantic. Not discussing the issue of loneliness in Texas directly, Emma asked her uncle to join her and her family. Thus, she might have a beloved family member as a companion. More outright, *Frau* Erdmann asked her brothers repeatedly to move near her in Coupland, just northeast of Austin. She enticed them with tales of how children were more useful than in Germany since Texas did not mandate school attendance. As such, offspring spent many of their days in the field picking cotton. Moreover, *Frau* Erdmann described cotton as *baumvolle*, which in German means cotton tree. Needless to say, when *Frau* Erdmann's nieces and nephews joined her in Texas the short stalks of cotton much disappointed their expectations of tall trees sprouting cotton.[49]

Distance made women more concerned for the health of family and friends left behind. When a Lutheran German female married she cared for her own family, but when her parents became aged and needed help, providing for them fell to her. Those who immigrated without their parents paid particular attention then to asking after health, spirit, and mind of their parents.

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[48] Amanda Meerscheidt to sister, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices, Meerscheidt Letters, CAH; Kapp, 105, 108; Beckman to mother, September 1856, Mother to Beckman , Beckman Papers, DRT; Emma to uncle, 1 February 1881, New Braunfels, 0716, Conrad CC (Clemens) Papers, Sophienberg.

[49] Emma Wagner to her parents, DeWitt County, April 22, 1850, 3H136, Wagner Schneider, CAH; Jewel R. Johnson, "A City on a Hill: A Story of a Community, a Church, a People, 1970(?)" Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco Texas.

Even sympathy for elderly friends weighed on many an immigrant's mind as they asked for more information from those in Germany. For instance, Margretha Gerold explained to relatives in Texas how her husband's excessive drinking had ruined his health and left him unable to do any strenuous tasks without trembling and fainting. His condition left Margretha in charge of her house and caring for the household finances.[50]

Very importantly, mothers and grandmothers who remained in Germany provided a strong spiritual link to their daughters and granddaughters. *Grossmutter* Kurth living in Genthin, Germany offered particular religious proverbs for her son and each member of his family residing in Texas. The proverbs stressed humility and reminded them that Christ's splendor adorned them and they must live accordingly. Louise Romberg Fuchs told of how her grandmother unfailingly sent her notes filled with words of love and Biblical stories in addition to seeds and clothing.[51]

Even though separated by an ocean, this type of religious instruction provided the traditional relationship between older family members and the young. Moral instructions ensured that loved ones lived by certain family ethics. The offerings of seeds and clothing helped keep alive familiar patterns of eating and dress that the two parties had once shared and known together. The exchange of ideas and practical knowledge between generations of women made these sorts of connections imperative to continue family traditions. The trans-Atlantic communication supported the faith of the *frauen* in Texas as they still had the guidance of more mature women in Germany.

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[50] Margretha Gerhold to Valentin, 26 September, 1870, Kitzingen, 488, Isabel Ludwig Papers, Sophienburg.

[51] Wilhelmine Kurth to Uncle, Genthin, January 20, 1880, Johann Georg Storch Papers, Sophienburg; Louise Romberg Fuchs, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976),69, 70.

Similarly, news from their former home kept the women in touch with religious events and life events, such as confirmation, marriage, and religious festivals, occurring in Germany. George Pfeuffer wrote his sister Valentin that his eldest daughter kept house for him and that the Lutheran pastor had confirmed his younger children. George proudly told that his children were turning into adults, and he described how they had celebrated the sacred milestone. They had their likenesses taken in the usual manner, although money remained tight for the Pfeuffers. Weddings, too, emerged as a major point of mention in the letters traveling the Atlantic. Wilhelmine Schlameaus Schulze informed her brother and sister-in-law of her daughter Adolphina's marriage to Gustav Hellwig, a shoemaker in Altenplato. Also, church festivities in Germany comprised much information in the letters. Albertine Stracke wrote to her brother and sister residing in Texas that her daughter attended school and did very well, but the burden of being a single woman raising her children left Stracke too poor to pay for the Easter festivities, which meant so much to her children. Therefore, Stracke asked her siblings for money so that she may subsidize the holiday commemorating Christ's resurrection. Family and community information remained a much anticipated and needed link between those in Texas and those they left in Germany.[52]

Letters flowed both ways across the Atlantic; family in Germany answered the call for goods while displaying curiosity about how the women and the men found their lives in Texas. Adolph Schlameus' mother and sister inquired whether the pears and apples looked and tasted the same as in Germany, and they very happily reported that the weather seemed similar, including storms and hail. Women relatives in Germany supplied an important role for

[52] Albertine to brother and sister April 13, 1890, Wreigen, 0800, Johann Storch Papers, Sophienburg; George Pfeuffer to Valentin, March 27, 1863, Wilhelmina Schlameaus Schulze to J.G. Storch and wife [unknown], 1870, 0848, JG Storch Family Papers, Sophienburg; Margaretha Vogt to Ottilie, January 14, 1876, Margaretha Vogt Papers, Sophienburg; Margretha Gehold to Valentin, September 26, 1870, Kitzingen, 488, Isabel Ludwig Papers, Sophienburg.

immigrants as news traveled through them keeping immigrants up-to-date on local gossip, births, deaths, and marriages. Until her death, Pauline Giesecke's family in Germany sent her letters informing her of her father's re-marriage and births. The letters also told of those who planned to immigrate to Texas and all of Pauline's many nieces who worked as governesses. News such as this helped to ease the process of acclimation and affects of homesickness. But the practical goods that mothers and sisters sent aided the immigrants' success. Although women sent many letters to Germany, men also joined in asking for goods from home. Franz Kettner requested of his parents wine and a pretty wife. They sent only the wine. Though he asked his parents two more times for a mate, Franz finally found his own German immigrant spouse, Katharine Keller, in 1857.[53]

Germans in Texas exhibited great interest in describing Texas for friends and family back home. Hedwig Coreth again writing to her brother told him that a mutual friend Alice Nohl planned a return visit to Germany. As such she wanted to take souvenirs to show Germans what Texas had to offer. So she wished to collect "arrowheads, scalps, etc., or even a little Indian" to take with her. Certainly, playing on the adventurous description of Texas, Nohl hoped to create great intrigue. Other immigrants, even men, tried to portray the people and scenery of Texas. Prairie dogs in West Texas fascinated Ernst Kohlberg. In a letter to his parents, he described them as short haired animals much like squirrels except for the sounds they make that recall the

[53] Mother, Grandmother, Sister, and Aunt to Adolph Schlameus, no date, but most likely in the late 1850s, 0848, Adolph Schlameus Papers, Sopheinburg; Franz Kettner to Parents, "Letters of a German Pioneer in Texas" ed.Terry G. and Marlis Anderson Jordan, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (April 1966): 466, 469, 471; To view Pauline Giesecke's correspondence with her family see, 3X271, Giesecke (Walter Christian) Family Papers, CAH.

whining of dogs. He also wrote of Mexican *chili* peppers. Mexicans ate them raw, cooked with cheese, or with enchiladas, the latter Kohlberg claimed a good remedy for hangovers.[54]

However, gifts of a more personal and religious nature still provided many in Texas with the comforting family connection that they needed. Among the numerous items sent to Texas, Bibles, hymnals, and catechisms filled many trunks. These books, all in German and often with affectionate notes inscribed in the covers, linked those in Texas with their religious heritage and those who they left behind. This spiritual connection kept people close, even when the Atlantic Ocean separated them; even more importantly, that connection offered hope of an afterlife where all would once again be united.[55]

These types of personal offerings helped to assuage feelings of homesickness that certainly threatened to depress even the liveliest hearts at one point or another in the journey to Texas. For many, weariness accounted for thoughts wandering back to Germany. The tiring trip overseas, finding transportation, and establishing a home left many a daughter, wife, and sister melancholy especially around holidays or the birthdays of loved ones in Germany. Still, the majority of women persevered at first, no doubt, because necessity demanded they concentrate on the tasks at hand. As the days passed, the habit of work and responsibility helped them adjust to life in Texas. Ida Kapp gave good advice to her sister when she told how immigrants "get homesick here and are very unhappy" but "soon they are really contented." She continued to relate that she "was never in any wise affected with homesickness" as she "never believed the too exaggerated descriptions in books, always was aware of what [she] was undertaking."

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[54] Hedwig Coreth to Rudolph, June 5, 1868, New Braunfels, 3X159, Coreth Family Papers, CAH; Ernst Kohlberg to family, December 19, 1875, San Antonio, January 17, 1876, September 8, 1876, El Paso, 2Q396, Letters of Ernst Kohlberg, CAH.

[55] Family collections at the Sophienburg, CAH, DRT, and at the Texas Collection at Baylor contain numerous prayer books, catechisms, Bibles, and other religious objects that families carefully preserved as a familial and spiritual legacy.

Creating illusions and not preparing oneself threatened any settler's efforts. Thus Kapp and other German women intended to portray the reality of Texas as truthfully as possible.[56]

Conclusion

From 1831 to 1890, thousands of Germans settled in Texas, and daughters, wives, and mothers composed a large part of those numbers. Whether the women supported their families' decision to leave the Fatherland, that act changed much in their lives. During their first year in Texas, the women maintained familiarity and traditions to prevent total dislocation with their heritage. Thus, German women were active participants in the immigration process. From the moment a woman boarded a ship to when she helped establish her family's home, she protected her loved ones from spiritual, physical, and emotional harm. *Frauen* also wrote letters to family and friends advising them on immigration and what one needed to successfully establish a home in Texas. Writing of the immigrants stranded by the *Adelsverein*, Ferdinand von Herff stated that they "went to the school of experience" having to learn survival without the presence of their protection society. In a similar manner, the women too had to learn from experience while relying on faith and drawing upon their notions of work and life developed in Germany.[57]

Yet, these Lutheran women did not exist alone; they had bonds with other females in Germany and in Texas. Relationships between mothers and daughters and among more extended networks of kinfolk and friends represented an important means of maintaining ties with a world left behind and those who had moved away. Moreover, these relations gave the women the spiritual strength to do their duty for their families in Texas. The women in Germany provided a

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[56] Ida Kapp to Ludwine, January 25, 1850, Comaltown, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 108.

[57] Ferdinand von Herff, *Die geregelte Auswanderung des deutschen Proletariats mit besonderer Beziehung auf Texas. Zugleich ein Zeitfaben fur deutsche Auswanderer von Dr. von Herff, Mitglieb der Darmstadter Nicherlaffung am Llano und bei Neubraunfels* (Frankfurt: Franz Varrentrapp Berlag, 1850), 29.

legacy for their relatives in Texas; they reminded their loved ones of religious ideas and moral responsibility that a new environment must not shake. Women immigrants then had encouragement to establish those Lutheran and cultural beliefs in Texas as they adjusted to life in a new land.

Chapter Four:
Making a Home of their Own

After women began adjusting themselves to Texas's geographic idiosyncrasies, they embarked upon creating community in three distinct areas. First, women focused on their homes. There they sought to instill German traditions and Lutheran beliefs. Second, women aided the Lutheran church in Texas. Before the church had a presence, the women kept Lutheran doctrine alive by teaching their children; after pastors had organized churches, the women provided needed supplies for service; once the Germans had established their Lutheran congregations, *frauen* supported the churches with money and materials. Third, women worked in the public arena for non-family and non-church organizations. Thus they assumed new gender roles.

In each case, Lutheran piety and German understandings of the world informed the women's actions and ideas. *Frauen* derived their worldview from Luther's writings in his Small Catechism and his sermons. All these works recorded the sixteenth-century reformer's thoughts regarding women and marriage, a topic he reluctantly discussed. Lutheran pastors throughout the centuries echoed Luther's respect for family life, but also his conviction concerning woman's weaker nature.

Still, despite their being physically and spiritually weak, women were important in ordering society. In Germany, Lutheran women remained at home, raised children, and helped their husbands. Although women focused their efforts on the home, they sallied into the fields to labor where they provided much needed help. Women intended their activities outside the home to benefit the family unit. In nearly all they did, Lutheran *frauen* concentrated on their religious and family duties. When the women immigrated to Texas, they carried those same concerns with them.

In this respect, these German women differed from many of their American and Anglo-Texan counterparts. As Barbara Berg, Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Hayes Turner show, American women in the Northeast during the Jacksonian period left their homes to work under the auspices of benevolent societies in order to correct social wrongs such as prostitution, poverty, and slavery. These North American women worked within the sphere of domesticity to support public roles that often challenged society's relegation of them to the private. In Texas, women did not organize such benevolent groups until much later in the nineteenth century because cities grew slower and, as a consequence, so did social and class differences. Galveston proves an exception; that vibrant port city contained a thriving middle class that included Anglo-Americans, Germans, Jews, and African-Americans. Hence, the island population did witness women's charitable actions through religious organizations, though still later than their Eastern counterparts.[1]

German women in Texas were essentially conservative in their outlook. They sought to rebuild in Texas a society similar to the one that had evolved over the past three hundred years in Germany. Ironically, to do so these *frauen* at times took on public roles that a rigid and stratified society in Germany had previously prevented them from exercising. Thus, frontier life required these women to take on non-traditional responsibilities to preserve their religiously-shaped concept of German womanhood. To understand how these women went about building these conservative communities each of the follow three chapters will investigate their roles in these three areas—family, church, and relations in the communities at large.

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[1] Barbara Berg, *The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, the Woman and the City, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of True Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

This chapter will examine family life since Lutheran women dealt with domestic issues every day. From the moment they were born, German Lutheran women matured from daughters, to mothers, and to wives, and they could not escape these distinctions even if they wished for they did not have the option of becoming nuns. Unlike involvement in the church and interaction with the world outside of home and church, the discussion of which follows this chapter, a woman's responsibility to her family remained ever constant. Moreover, the majority of German women dealt directly with the land for their work and existence. Thus, this chapter will examine the women's relationship to their new environment.

Transplanting Tradition

In Germany, women understood concepts of gender roles derived from that nation's established agricultural system and clearly defined social roles. *Frauen* knew what actions and behaviors society deemed acceptable, and they expected to continue such behaviors in Texas. Lutheran women who immigrated anticipated managing their households as they had in the Fatherland. Lutheran women also expected to labor with their husbands on the farm, in the mill, or wherever their spouse worked. Moreover, girls expected to contribute to whatever their family needed, just as grandmothers foresaw caring for their grandchildren and helping young mothers in need. No matter their age, women believed that they would remain under the close protection of male relatives and work within the family unit.

Lutheran women sought to preserve their traditional roles after moving to Texas, but, as they tended to their domestic duties, they had to find new methods to support their family. The land was very important to these women because they worked on it, lived close to it, and extracted a living from it. Historians, exploring Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 assertion that the frontier represented the point between civilization and barbarism, most often interpret women

as bringing progress to frontier areas. Women moving to the West often proudly touted that role as they helped build houses, establish schools, and institute churches, in essence creating Eastern society and culture on the frontier. Lutheran women immigrants do not entirely fit that Anglo-American pattern. German *frauen* did not view or refer to themselves as "civilizers" for Texas or anywhere else as did many Anglo-American women emigrating west. German women certainly criticized their American counterparts, whom they viewed as lazy and unkempt, *frauen* rarely attempted to change the ways of other peoples. Rather, immigrant women wished to preserve the religion and traditions that they had known in their homeland.[2]

German wives in Texas rarely spoke of themselves as the agents of "civilization" on the frontier, but they did exhibit a desire to bring some of the social graces to the new land. Wealthier and more educated wives brought books, art, and musical instruments with them to Texas. But such women also knew that on the frontier such objects were luxurious, and they generally understood where their priorities lay. Rosa Kleberg, for instance, loved to play her piano and to read her family's books, but when all her family's prized possessions were lost during the 1836 refugee movement known as the Runaway Scrape, she continued to work beside her husband and labor to rebuild her household after the turmoil of the Texas Revolution. In other words, survival—and the performance of wifely duty—trumped other considerations.[3]

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[2] Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: "Civilizing" the West?, 1840-1880*, rev.ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 98, 117-120, 130.

[3] Rosa Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas" *Texas Historical Association Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (April 1898), 48. The Runaway Scrape describes the Texans flight from their homes in the wake of Antonio López de Santa Anna's advancing army in 1836. German women have traditionally been seen as the purveyors of German culture in Texas and other areas of migration. These studies, though, focus on culture of literature, art, and music. None of the works address how women's role with nature influenced the continuation of German traditions. See Crystal Sasse Ragsdale "The German Woman in Frontier Texas" in *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth; Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium*, ed. Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980): 144-156. Gilbert J. Jordan "German Cultural Heritage in the Hill Country" Ibid,. 176-188. For more information on theories of German women memoirs see, Dona Reeves-Marquardt and Ingeborg Ruberg McCoy "Tales of the Grandmothers: Women as Purveyors of German-Texan Culture" in *Eagle in the New World: German Immigration to Texas and America*, ed. Theodore Gish and Richard Spuller (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1986): 201-220.

After the women settled in Texas, frontier conditions often offered them new social roles. Texas provided the women a chance to perpetuate workpatterns that they had known in Germany while the new environment necessitated the women to do more labor intensive chores. In the rural areas, people's need to survive on the land altered traditional positions and expectations of women's labor. While in Germany, women helped plant and harvest crops. In Texas, the women also helped cultivate the crops, assumed greater strenuous activity, and performed more demanding outside tasks. Thus, as girls and women settled in this new land, they found an atmosphere free from the concrete definintions regarding women's work in Germany. Furthermore, the women had to discern the best use of their energy to make this new land fertile and productive. Young and old women who lived in sparsely-populated areas or in towns needed to explore their surroundings and to establish new social mores. First-generation immigrant women had some leeway in adapting important German values of gender and religion to the Texas setting.

The women's relationship with the Texas environment may have allowed for different kinds of labor, yet most German women did not wish to redefine their traditional role in the family, either as a child or as an adult. Lutheran immigrant women looked to maintain family relations as they had known them in Germany. Moreover, they usually sought to recreate their former means of making a living. But Texas differed from their homeland, and the women needed to acclimatize themselves to the new environment. In an effort to extract the greatest use from the land these *frauen* and their families had to implement new efficient and productive methods of organization. Since, for the most part, they were an agrarian-based group, they needed to find means of determining which crops to plant and how to best cultivate crops to meet their needs. They also needed to use the labor of all family members old enough to endure farm work. Reliance on child labor certainly helped increase food production, but the use of women's

labor further played an important role for the German families. More so than their Anglo-American counterparts, German women commonly worked alongside their male relatives in the fields in order to increase agricultural production. As German immigrants sought to best use their land, they created interdependence between their family and the land.[4]

In so doing, the women learned to accommodate the land. For the most part they did not want to dominate their new land. Though still attempting to manage their surroundings, they were willing to learn from their environment and discern the best and most effective means to provide for their families. These women established a relationship that allowed them more opportunities in Texas as families struggled to survive. The women expended a great amount of energy as they established their own methods of shaping and adapting to the natural conditions surrounding them in Texas. Each stage—girlhood, marriage, motherhood, and old age—provided the German women opportunity to re-define their notions of gendered work. Ultimately, the German women's new relationship with the land provided some freedom and liberties in their rural homes; the *frauen* focused their efforts on ensuring the survival of their families and also the continuation of their faith amidst varied and newly met peoples.

Töchter (Daughters)

Luther looked to children as a special gift from God, a present that one must nurture and protect. His philosophy elevated the child's place in his or her family. Common sixteenth-century beliefs about children held them as merely small humans who needed direction and discipline not lee-way and indulgence. Luther agreed that parents must instruct their offspring well; nevertheless, God had given parents their children as holy gifts that needed particular love

[4] Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva argue that an agrarian lifestyle and economic system enhanced the position of women in society. They also argue that an agrarian based colonization of the land depends on child labor, a settled lifestyle, and technological innovations for people to derive the greatest output from the land. Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (London: Zed Press, 1993), 215-242.

and care. *Kinder* had holy responsibilities as well. Luther urged children to obey their parents just as the Fourth Commandment instructed. That meant that a boy or girl did as his or her parents indicated. Moreover, children continued to work in whatever capacity benefited the family. Although Luther upheld the position of children in society, *Kinder* had little authority within the family hierarchy. German youths were loved, but not indulged.[5]

German girls shouldered many domestic duties as they helped their families settle in Texas. The large number of children in immigrant families necessitated that girls help their busy mothers as Lula Fuchs and Anna Emilie Conrad did by watching over their sisters and brothers. Additionally, in Texas, girls had many domestic responsibilities. One such chore reflected the activities of youths in Germany. Texas girls spent many hours spinning and weaving cotton thread, as girls had spun flax in Germany. However, Texas did offer different tasks than those performed by girls in Central Europe. For example, *töchter* helped make flour or other domestic necessities for their families, many of which they were not expected to make in Germany. Sometime girls actually ground the wheat and corn into a fine powder by hand while others carried the product to the mill and then brought it back home. Ernestine Weiss Faudie took the corn from her family's Brenham farm to the nearby mill, oversaw the production of the flour, and returned to use the flour for bread. Ottilie Fuchs Goeth worked with her mother and sisters in their Cat Spring home to make candles because they had no kerosene lamps. As did many other German girls, Goeth and her sister made lye soap for their family. This complex process took days and included collecting ashes in a wood hopper. Then Goeth added water that had to be at just the right boiling temperature, and, finally, she would add fat and let boil. When Goeth

[5] Martin Luther, "To the Councilmen of all cities in Germany that they establish and maintain Christian schools, 1524" in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jarislov Pelikkan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962) , 347-378.

had finished the lye soap, she had the pleasure of cleaning the log cabin, which was always spick and span."[6]

The girls' act of making soap and tending to household chores provided a valuable service to their mothers, and the youngsters even realized how much they eased their mother's work. When the time came for a *tochter* to marry or leave her family, she often expressed concern for her beloved *mutter*. Goeth burst into tears over the sadness of leaving her Luise, and she wondered how her beloved mother would handle the daily duties without Goeth's assistance. The presence of a younger sister, Adolphino, consoled Goeth because she knew that the younger daughter could take over her duties.[7]

In addition to helping to cook and to clean in the home, girls worked in the fields to plant and to harvest crops because German families depended on the work of all family members. Anna, who was the eldest Conrad girl, "worked from early morning to late at night" helping to cultivate the family's property. Anna recalled "many a day [she] plowed cotton and corn walking behind a hand plow drawn by a horse." The tasks were demanding and laborious but Anna, like her mother Pauline had done as a girl, undertook her duties without complaint. Anna and Pauline actively participated in "making hay, chopping and picking cotton and corn, milking cows, shocking wheat and oats." *Töchter* worked alongside their brothers and fathers in order for the family to grow enough crops to support their family.[8]

Often when neighbors and family needed assistance in plowing or harvesting, the girls helped out as well. German immigrants' communal work required the labor of all regardless of

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[6] Ernestine Weiss Faudie, Workers Progress Administration Interview, Roll 69.5.5, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland; Ottilie Fuchs Goeth, *Was Grossmutter Erzaehlt* (San Antonio: Passing Show Print Co., 1915), 15-16, 62-63; Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner, "I Think Back" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 172-4, 176; Nell Rogers, ed. *The Family of Ludwig Johan Conrad and Pauline (Wenzel) Conrad* (1967), 3.

[7] Goeth, 73.

[8] Rogers, 2, 4.

gender. Anna Conrad remembered that "[w]hen we were finished with our work, we would help our neighbors." Similarly, the three young Wiederaenders girls came to the aid of their grandparents and uncle when time came to harvest the peanut crop. The girls tried some of the peanuts, and were greatly pleased to find the product so tasty. However, the uncle, who was not inclined to the antics of the youth, warned the girls that the peanuts they had just eaten would make them sick and kill them. The young Wiederaenders left the field and did not finish harvesting the peanuts.[9]

Daughters' work on the farms helped ensure that their families survived, but the youths' labor also gave them self-confidence. German *töchter* showed great pride in their work. As Anna Conrad proudly remembered, she and her mother worked daily during the cotton season by hoeing and weeding around the plants. Annie Kellersberger Schnelle and her sister Julia stacked two thousand bundles of hay for their father. A neighbor walked by, and noting all that the girls had accomplished, exclaimed "don't tell me that the Kellersberger girls don't know how to work!" Schnelle proudly recorded the fact and asserted that she and her sister were widely known as hard workers. German daughters in Texas happily accepted the compliments regarding their work ability. What they did differentiated them from many other American girls, who were expected to work, but not to the extent of those of German heritage. Just as the girls were expected to do strenuous work of which they were proud, they also attended to chores demanding minute care and detail.[10]

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[9] Rogers, 3; Gertrude Franke, ed., *Wiederaenders* (San Antonio: Gertrude Franke, 1990), 39.

[10] German reliance on girls' labor also originated from their loathing of slave labor. Germans in the Hill Country particularly remained critical of slavery. Emigrating from Germany, where many considered the government to restricting and withholding the peoples' own freedoms, Germans in Texas remained sensitive on the subject of personal rights. Certainly individual opinions and views varied, but, in the Hill Country, German immigrants did not consider slave labor a viable choice. [Gottfreid Ottmers Reunion Committee], "The History of Gottfried Ottmers Family" Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio, Texas (hereafter DRT); Annie K. Schnelle, "Yesterdays" Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families-Adolph Fuchs, 2B32, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter CAH).

Girls most often took care of the chickens, a responsibilty generally under the care of women in Germany. The daughters' assistance in tending the fowl offered the girls practical domestic material as well as food. Because of the needed nimble fingers, *töchter* were often in charge of collecting feathers for pillows and quilts. Once arriving in Texas, the Germans learned to use feathers for comforters, mattresses, and pillows. Fluffing and airing out the bedding remained one of the women's daily duties that they did "religiously every morning, when the beds were made." Daughters also had to knead feather pillows by hand every morning to prevent the feathers from lumping together. Most often, feather pillows were used in the summer while cotton pillows were used during the winter. Furthermore, the girls helped to collect eggs for their family to eat and sell. Daughters also helped keep chickens and roosters in the yard around the German houses so the birds could eat emerging plants, snakes, and bugs, which saved German mothers time diverted away from other household duties. Such use and reuse of animals and their products illustrates the girls' acclimation on to use their environment.[11]

While some immigrant daughters learned to adapt to environmental and agricultural demands on the family farms, other girls went to work for non-family members, an act that reflected the actions of numerous young girls in Germany. Johanna Ernestine Hoppe lived with and worked for the Douais. Hoppe planted and harvested on the Douai's farm while also helping *Frau* Douai with the children, especially six month-old Marie who demanded much attention because of the hard boils on her neck and joints. Not only did German girls work on farms, many served as maids in towns or cities. Teenage girls in Germany also ventured into cities to

[11] Feather mattresses greatly improved sleep vis-à-vis straw mattresses that the families had upon first arriving in Texas. Roberta Posey Mueller, *Oma Tell me about Olden Times: in the Gruene Family: A Collection of grandmother's stories about Ernst Gruene, who immigrated to Texas from Germany in 1846, and whose family contributed to the development and growth of a unique Texas area* (New Braunfels, TX: Roberta Posey, 1996), 27-28; Schnelle, "Yesterdays," Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families-Adolph Fuchs, 2B32, CAH.

work as house servants, but girls in Texas left their families at an earlier age, sometimes as young as six. German parents in Texas who sent their daughters to work at such a tender age did so out of necessity. For instance, Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner left her family after her mother's death; her father could not properly care for all the children. Wagner lived with Sophie and Henry Langrabe in San Antonio and did as her mistress instructed her. Daily tasks included cooking, washing, and cleaning, and running errands for both Sophie and Henry. Moreover, during the summer the Langrabes sent Wagner to pick cotton for for farmers near Fredericksburg. All the money she earned she had to bring back to *Frau* Langrabe. Wagner, however, did have the opportunity to attend school, an opportunity she would not have had in her rural home. Not all servant girls came from the farm. For instance, Louise Klingelhoefer Wehmeyer lived in San Antonio and worked as a maid for an American family in the 1840s where she learned to speak English and to adapt American customs. Becasue her mother had died in Germany, Wehmeyer took on many added responsibilities to care for her younger sister Henrietta. Wehmeyer helped to feed her sister, teach her English, and show her how to sew. Regardless of circumstance, the girls still had to show respect and obedience to their mistresses just as they would a parental figure. Wagner continued to do as Longraper said despite the fact that she never offered Wagner a kind word and harshly demanded she do all her assigned tasks.[12]

Although work dominated a child's day in Texas, German children very often attended school when they had the opportunity. For instance, Wagner was able to go to school even though she worked in San Antonio; similarly, many other German youths attended school while working for their parents or other families. Schools, which will be discussed more in the next

[12] Dr. Adolph Douai, "Autobiography of Dr. Adolph Douai: Introducer of Frebels Kindergarten System in America" 2Q469, Papers of Adolph Douai, CAH; Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner, "I Think Back" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 169-171; Esther L. Mueller, "Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Wehmeyer" in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, comp. Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 229.

two chapters, were often connected to churches, especially in the first several decades after immigration. Still, many areas, particularly rural regions, did have academic institutions near enough for children to attend, although the schools often required annual payment for teachers and supplies. Despite distance and dues, most Germans wanted their children to attend school. A German *frau* explained to Frederick Law Olmstead that her fourteen-year-old boy spoke English so well because he had attended school in New Braunfels for two years, before the family required his presence on the farm. Still, she planned to send him to a boarding school the next year. Education was very important to her, and she wanted to see that her son did not suffer from the lack of intellectual training. As Olmstead left the obliging German family, he saw a group of girls with book satchels, braided hair, and neatly pressed dresses on their way to school. The group heartily greeted him with "*Guten Morgan*." Apparently, German girls, boys, and their families highly esteemed week-day studies.[13]

Texas was not a constant source of work or study for the girls. Indeed, the wide-open lands offered great amusements. Upon her family's arrival in Cat Spring in 1846, Ottie Fuchs Goeth viewed the rather barren, flat, and sparsely vegetated land with a longing "for our big garden at the parsonage, with its wonderful fruit trees and secluded arbors." Still, the Texas landscape provided hiding places and sources of endless amusement for the young children. Insects, birds, and wild animals further captured children's attention as they learned to chase and capture these unknown creatures.[14]

Besides having creeks and fields in which to frolic, Texas offered the girls more freedom from the gender restrictions that they had known in Germany. Traveling to the pastures or to nearby neighbors allowed the daughters to explore not only territory but people as well. Ten

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[13] Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey Through Texas, or A Saddle-trip on the Southwest Frontier* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1857), 189, 190.

[14] Goeth. 42- 41, 50.

year-old Libussa von Rosenberg learned to lasso her family's horses when they were out to pasture. She needed the skill, she argued, because her father and brothers were not always present when her younger sister wanted to go riding. Therefore, Libussa must know how to capture one of the steeds. Moreover, Libussa's sister Lina enjoyed greater social freedom than she would have had in Germany when she rode unattended on the horse her sister had saddled for her to visit German neighbors. Other German girls, like Ottie Goeth, socialized with Germans living nearby, but Lina traveled further, showing her independence.[15]

While girls found many amusements in Texas, freedom of action described few, if any, German children's lives. *Kinder* learned at an early age to obey their parents and look especially to their mothers for guidance. Ottie Goeth's youngsters relied on their mother to tell them the truth when their father and other relatives told them stories that seemed too extreme to be true. Moreover, when presented with new foods, the little Goeths trusted Ottie to tell them if they like the offerings or not. The children listened to their mother, they trusted in what she said, and they obeyed whatever she commanded.[16]

Likewise, *töchter* on farms learned how to be proper young women from their mothers, even as they worked outside in the fields. Pauline Conrad taught her daughter s to work behind a plow, and the mother also encouraged Anna and her sisters to maintain her feminine characteristics. The Conrad girls "wore big bonnets to keep [their] complexion." They also "made long gloves to keep their hands soft" as they worked with the heavy and roughhewn plows and hoes. Pauline wanted to ensure her daughters' field labor did not alter their appearance too much. Anna Conrad fulfilled German expectations of a girl's work while also

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[15] Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Auguste and Emma Fallier, May 25, 1850, 2Q395, Letters of the Rosenberg and Meersscheidt Families, CAH.

[16] Goeth, 134-135.

learning to care about her appearance, an issue her mother had not worried with when she was young.[17]

Töchter learned how to survive in Texas by obeying parents and preserving German agricultural and social methods, but so too did they learn American ways. Amanda von Rosenberg described her daughter Libussa as "a true Texan." Libussa loved to do housework, and she daily showed her adeptness at dealing with outdoor activities, such as subduing horses. Libussa was attaining new characteristics and talents that her mother had not possessed in Germany. Following the path of other German girls and women, Libussa worked in the fields, tended the garden, and kept a tidy house for her mother. All those characteristics marked organized and well-run German households that observers like Frederick Law Olmstead admired about German settlers. Still, Libussa had the opportunity to learn how to ride horses and exercise the freedom to visit neighbors unaccompanied by chaperones. Similar to other German girls, Libussa accomplished traditional tasks in a new environment; thus, the von Rosenbergs began a process of Americanization that would continue with future generations.[18]

Frauen (Wives)

After a girl married, she gained both great respect and responsibility among Germans in Texas, a position of prominence originating from Luther's understanding of the Christian home. Although he esteemed a husband as ruler and provider for his family, a wife provided the cornerstone of the domestic relationship. She was the "house-building" for her spouse, providing protection and shelter. According to Luther, God had intended such a nurturing role when he created Eve from Adam´s rib in the Garden of Eden. Although sin had destroyed that

[17] Nell Rogers, "*The Family of Ludwig Johan Conrad and Pauline (Wenzel) Conrad* (1967)", DRT.

[18] Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Auguste and Emma Fallier, May 25, 1850, 2Q395, Letters of the Rosenberg and Meersscheidt Families, CAH.

ideal partnership, Luther asserted that God had preserved the wife as a foundation for an orderly household. A wife who kept house well allowed her husband to concentrate on earthly matters. If, however, a wife were delinquent in her duties, her husband would have to concentrate on the household. Luther predicted the world "without womankind housekeeping, and everything that pertains to it would fall apart; and after it all worldly governance, cities, and order."[19]

Lutheran *frauen* in Texas fulfilled their roles as helpmate to their husbands to help their families survive after immigration in two main ways. First, the German wives transplanted notions of Lutheran marriage by supporting, if not always submitting, to their spouses' wishes. Proper wives reflected well the image and reputation of a family. Second, the women put the interests of their husband's and families over their own comfort most often by working in the fields and assuming heavier labor than they had generally done in the Fatherland. The *frauen* maintained such laborious activities despite social censure from surrounding Anglo-American society because the wives, whose faith informed their duties of their obligations to their husbands, valued work and economic advancement more than conforming to Anglo-defined gender roles.

German immigrants retained Luther's belief that a wife should be strong and hearty so she could withstand childbirth, manage a household, and provide assistance to her husband. Accordingly, Germans often praised women of hearty build while they remarked, often surprised, on the success of some delicate women who were able to survive in Texas. A telling example from the Wiederaenders family shows the prejudice of many German families. Edward Wiederaenders of Round Top wished to marry Marie Schueddemagen. His parents, however, objected because they thought Marie too "frail and dainty" to attend to chores and birthing. The

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[19] Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Tischreden*, 4 ed. (Weimer: H Böhlau, 1883), 166.

elder Wiederaenders wished their son to wed "a buxom maid of the soil" named Selma. Edward withstood his parents' disapproval and married his petite Marie; the couple had a happy marriage that produced three healthy girls.[20]

The presence of a wife in nineteenth-century Texas proved indispensible for most German immigrants. Men, many believed, could not establish farms or homes on their own. Indeed, men needed their mates to shoulder the burden of the immigration and settlement process. Gustave Eisenohr, whose wife had just died, told family that he must marry again because he needed someone to run the household and to look after him. Other German families echoed Eisenohr´s sentiments by encouraging single men and widowers to take a wife for their own good and for the good of the community.[21]

German settlers realized that for a man to be content and to succeed in Germany or in Texas he must have a faithful and industrious *Hausfrau*. The need for such a wife certainly held true in Texas where families started out with no home or means of income. Once settled, a wife took control of producing food and even making extra money for the family. For instance, the wife of Carl Douai, the editor and well-known abolitionist, helped to keep the family fed and supported. Her work supplemented the dollar a month salary Douai received for teaching school in New Braunfels. *Frau* Douai tended a garden that grew vegetables; she milked the cow and cared for the calf while feeding the chickens and collecting their eggs. As a result, *Frau* Douai could feed her family from her own work. The Douais did purchase meat, sugar, and spices, and some clothes that *Frau* Douai could not make herself. In all, those goods were the only products the Douais purchased.[22]

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[20] Franke, 39.

[21] Gustav Eisenohr to Father, August, 1853, New Braunfels, June, 1850, 2D95, Gustav Wilhelm Eisenohr Papers, CAH

[22] Dr. Adolph Douai, "Autobiography of Dr. Adolph Douai: Introducer of Frebels Kindergarten System in America" 2Q469, Douai Family Papers, CAH

Moreover, a respectable German wife not only looked after her husband and family's food intake, but also the welfare of the household. For example, Marie Wiederaenders knew that she must ensure the upkeep of her domicile. When her husband Edward spent time helping his neighbor rather than fixing a broken window at home, Marie shoved his pillow into the hole that allowed the "cold, drizzly norther into the house. When her husband asked, "*Marie, wo ist mein Kissen*?" (Marie, where is my pillow?), Marie calmly told him of her quick fix scheme and of his pillow's whereabouts. Edward fixed the window the next day. Although Edward's devotion to his neighbor's well-being was admirable, Marie made certain that balance was restored and her husband fulfilled his duty to her and their children.[23]

The need for a prudent and practical wife seemed even more important when compared to the women who did not fit the wifely mold. Unlike the ideal balance between help-mates, the marriage of Henrietta and William Doebbler was an unequal partnership built on fear and non-communication. Henrietta worked with her husband in the fields, as most Germans expected, but she did not submit to him or look after the household. She treated her own children and her step-children cruelly, often beating them and punishing them by withholding food. Whenever her husband intervened, she turned her wrath on him. Once, when her step-daughter Mathilda angered her, Henrietta told Mathilda to stay in the fields all day with no food. When William found Mathilda, she explained what had occurred. William then told his daughter to collect some eggs so he could cook them for dinner. While he was at the stove, Henrietta discovered them. She was outraged at his actions and threw the pan with the eggs out the door. Though William was greatly angered, he could do nothing to counter his wife's rage.[24]

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[23] Franke, 43.

[24] Wagner, "I Think Back" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 167-168.

The attitudes and actions of wives like Henrietta Doebbler reflected poorly on their husbands' reputations. After his inability to control Henrietta, William took Mathilda to a neighbor's house where they asked for, and received, food. Such a public act showed clearly that William could "not manage" his own wife. *Herr* Doebbler criticized his spouse by calling her "*alt Teufel*" (old devil) and condemned her housekeeping by calling her "*alt Pfeffer Schürze*" (old pepper apron), but, no matter what names he used, William could not control her. Thus, when the wife did not do her duty as partner and helper, the household itself ran afoul. German settlers could not have that, as, in Luther's doctrine, once the household crumbled so would world and government stability.[25]

Understandably, in light of the Doebbler's predicament, Germans noted and praised the wives who did ensure the security of their marriages and homes. Amanda von Rosenberg lauded *Frau* Roeder for her dedication to her husband and for all she had done to settle her family in Texas. Ottie Goeth admired Frederike Romberg who was the constant companion and true soul mate to Johannes Romberg. Annie Schnelle extolled Louise Romberg Fuchs for raising fourteen children, planting large gardens, and sewing all her men's clothes. Carl Douai asserted that because of all that his wife had done for him during their marriage she "should be remembered by all her descendants as well as myself."[26]

Productive *Hausfrauen* adapted traditional German outdoor labors to help their family survive in Texas, while the wives also introduced new foods into their households. Luise Fuchs had to acclimate herself to the plants that would successfully grow in the sandier soil and drier climate. Fuchs tended her trees devotedly and eventually they provided her with large quantities of figs. Antoinette Gruene similarly dedicated much time and effort to growing garden goods,

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[25] Ibid., 173.

[26] Amanda von Rosenberg to Auguste, Nassau, Texas, April, 1850, 2Q396, Letters of the Rosenberg Family, CAH.; Goeth, 69; "Yesterdays," 2B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families-Adolph Fuchs, CAH .

vegetables and fruits so her family could have edible treats. Her daughter remembered the tasty chopped lettuce sprinkled with bacon crumbs and covered with vinegar and bacon fat. Gruene's recipes used fruit, honey, milk, and cream, which were staples in Texas households more so than they had been in Germany. They also relied on bread; Antoinette's daughter Johanna remarked "many things were eaten on a piece of homemade bread that you would never think of these days." To offer their families sufficient nutrients and a varied palate, Fuchs, Gruene, and other Lutheran women struggled to manage their own plots of land. These women had to learn what the land could grow in order to extract food and sustenance for their family.[27]

While wives maintained a stable household as German society expected and Lutheran doctrine demanded, *frauen* assumed more demanding fieldwork than they had performed in their homeland. Lutheran wives in Germany certainly had undertaken strenuous tasks harvesting crops and shearing sheep, but once the women immigrated to Texas they drove cattle, pushed plows, and executed other arduous tasks. Early travel accounts noticed how German *frauen* worked with crops or at other masculine tasks. George Sweet, a geologist and federal observer journeying through Texas in 1870, commented that it was a "common thing among these people [Germans] to behold women toiling in the field." This statement followed Sweet's astonished description of a German woman and her son each "holding a plow drawn by six pair of cattle." Similarly, Louise Romberg Fuchs was fixing a fence on her family's farm. A man driving by on the adjacent road ran his wagon into a ditch because seeing a woman digging holes and hammering nails astonished him. Such narratives exemplify the work Lutheran wives did to support their families on the frontier.[28]

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[27] Mueller, 25, 27, 29.

[28] George H. Sweet, *Texas...or the Immigrants' Hand-Book to Texas* (New York: E. O'Keefe, 1871), 40-46; Schnelle, "Yesterdays," 2B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families-Adolph Fuchs, CAH.

German *frauen* who worked alongside their husbands did so because they were doing their religious duties to protect and serve their families, even though they acted in contrast to typical Anglo-American understandings of gender roles. Unlike his account of German wives, Sweet's description of Anglo farmers did not mention or remark on white women's fieldwork. American women did work alongside their male relatives, particularly after the post Civil-War agricultural depression worsened, few people commented on the women's actions. Moreover, an Anglo woman working outside the house was seen as an embarrassment for the family, especially the husband who was unable to support and provide for his family. Such men had their wives leave their domestic chores to do man's work. Thus, Anglo wives picking or hoeing in a field held stigma for white farmers and their families. Conversely, German *frauen* took pride in their work and the benefit their labors provided their families without conforming to the social constraints of Anglo communities.[29]

Assisting their husbands in the fields provided the wives the ability to explore the new land and preserve Lutheran gender roles. The women left the house to provide essential help in the field in order for their family to thrive; they ensured the survival of their children and other relatives. Furthermore, working on the land solidified their relation to their family and particularly their husbands. Joining the men out in the fields represented the women's position as help-mates and partners, traditional roles built upon from Old Testament Biblical examples of

[29] Ibid., 45. Terry Jordan also mentions women's filed activities that included plowing and even building fences. To his credit, Jordan does admit the importance of the women's activities. Terry Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 185. The German wives undertook energy consuming duties to support their families, but they also did so because they could in the sparsely-settled rural areas. With fewer social restraints and even need for the women to partake in the field cultivation, German women played a prominent role in working with their environment, even as such work contrasted Anglo-American social traditions.

Eve and Adam, Rachel and Abraham, and Ruth and Boaz. Both mother and father tended to the land which they had viewed as an opportunity to provide their children with an inheritance.[30]

Husbands and wives viewed land as an economic opportunity when they immigrated to Texas, yet that prospect included hard work. Although men maintained legal control and inheritance rights over the property, women bore a good deal of responsibility for the success of a family's prosperity. A Lutheran wife who aided her husband in planting and harvesting corn, wheat, and, especially, cotton proved her dexterity by undertaking great physical strain. *Hausfrauen* picked hundred of pounds of cotton alongside their husbands, but women were also expected to prepare the crop for weighing. *Frauen* undertook such labors willingly because they believed looking after their family was a woman's religious responsibility.[31]

Partnership with husbands certainly offered wives a chance to sustain their family, but in many cases women also tended to the fields because their spouses could not. Most often, especially in the early years of immigration, men supplemented their incomes by taking on other occupations, of which wagon hauling was very common. While the men were away, their wives oversaw the care of the land. Although older sons helped, the *Hausfrauen* had the bulk of the responsibility for the farm. For instance, a young Lutheran woman, Johanna Gotleb, with her husband and his family, came to Texas looking for this promised land of opportunity. Upon arriving, Johanna and her husband Carl set about establishing their own home. Since they were poor, Johanna and Carl agreed to a sharecropping contract with a local plantation owner near Nob Hill. The couple had a small plot of land to cultivate, a house to live in, and some farm animals to work. The animals, though, were in such sorry condition that Johanna burst into tears when she first saw them. As a part of the contract with the plantation owner, Carl worked every

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[30] Caroline Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 34-37.

[31] Emma Beckman to Onkle, Oct. 30, 1885, New Braunfels, 716, Conrad (CC) Clemens Papers, Sophienberg Museum and Archives, New Braunfels, Texas; Sonya Saloman, *Prairie Patrimony: Family, Farming, and Community in the Midwest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 50-69.

day except Sunday on tasks assigned by the owner. Meanwhile, Johanna plowed their land after having her husband fashion a plow. She took the responsibility of caring for the production of the cotton as well as their seven year old daughter Amalie Augusta, who assisted her mother in caring for the family's crops.[32]

To aid the production of the cotton, Johanna relied on techniques that she had learned as a child. In Germany, farmers saved manure from their animals to fertilize the fields, so Johanna gained permission to clean the plantation owner's pig stalls. Gathering the manure, she spread it over her own fields and oversaw a bounteous crop, for which she thanked God for providing for her family. As a result, the plantation owner was shocked by the fertility of the Gotleb farm, particularly since Carl was absent six days a week. Johanna had effectively relied on traditional German agricultural methods adapted to cotton cultivation to help her fulfill her duty as wife and to ensure the success of the family's farm.[33]

As the Gotleb example demonstrates, German wives adapted to their environmental surroundings and personal situations to successfully do their jobs. In extreme cases, they had to look after the farms because their husbands were dead. In these cases, women, particularly those who had young children, had full control of the property. Clara Resseman, who had immigrated in 1845, married William Feller and moved to a farm near Fredericksburg. In 1863, a gang of vigilantes kidnapped and killed William because he had criticized slavery and the "Nueces butchery," an infamous massacre of German unionists by Confederate soldiers. After the murder, Clara "and the children went ahead, worked hard, made and gathered a good crop." Like her young children who were raised without a father, Clara's mother had reared her after her husband died in 1846, a year after the family had arrived in Fredericksburg. Thus, Clara,

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[32] Franke, 2; Curt E. Schmidt, *Oma and Opa: German Texan Pioneers* (San Antonio, Texas: Acurate Litho & Printing Co., 1975), 25-7. Schmidt's grandmother told him that a person's wealth in Germany was judged by the manure pile beside one's house.

[33] Franke, 8-10; Schmidt, 16-18.

much like her mother, had to accustom herself to Texas and provide for her family by tending to the agricultural processes without the assistance of her husband.[34]

Gotleb, Feller, and other Lutheran wives adopted their way of life to the Texas environment by assuming new agricultural duties, yet technology did not impact the women. Overall, technology and industrial farming, owing to the prohibitive cost of transportation, did not affect most German farmers until the twentieth century. Without the aid of machines, men needed more help in the fields. For Germans, *frauen* supplied the necessary assistance. They did so, for the most part, because that is what women did in Germany. But the need for work immediately in Texas motivated many wives, even those unused to working at manual labor, to work beside their husbands. German wives took on different roles in the early decades of immigration witnessed a slow change in farm production. By the 1880s, railroads made sending produce and meat to market faster and easier, a fact that allowed many farmers to shift from subsistence to limited commercial farming. Still, German wives worked out in the fields, though the onset of technology, particularly the expansion of the railroads after 1890s, would eventually alter their activities in the oncoming decades.[35]

Although German wives explored and reshaped old gender roles while in the field, they continued to wield traditional religious-sanctioned authority over the home. Germany presented

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[34] Clara's husband William was taken away one evening by group of Anglo-American men posing as law officials. Late that same night Clara received word her husband and two other men, Mr. Blank and Mr. Kirchner were hung from a tree near the Feller farm. Clara's father died on a trip to Bastrop to pick up a load of corn, leaving Clara and her siblings "without the assistance and protection of a father." The Nueces Massacre that William Feller criticized was the conflict between several Germans who were leaving the state to avoid pledging loyalty to the Confederacy. A Confederate officer James M. Duff and his men followed the Germans, who had formed a Union Loyal League to protect their settlement from Indian attacks, suspecting them of treason against the Confederacy. Nineteen of the Germans were killed, nine wounded and of the thirty-three who escaped seven were later killed at the Rio Grande. Don Biggers, *German Pioneers in Texas: A Brief History of Their Hardships, Struggles and Achievements* (Fredericksburg, Texas: Press of the Fredericksburg Publishing Co., 1925), 57-66, 74; Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "Battle of the Nueces," http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/NN/qfn1.html; Stanley McGowen, "Battle or Massacre?: The Incident on the Nueces, April 10, 1862," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 104, no. 1 (July 2000): 65-69.

[35] Goeth, 42; Alwyn Barr, *Reconstruction to Reform: Texas Politics, 1876-1906* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 111.

a patriarchal society where the husband controlled the legal and public life of the family, but wives were to maintain and order the private life. Certainly women worked in the fields, yet they were also expected to ensure a respectable and smoothly functioning household. Such responsibilities did not change once the Germans settled in Texas. Indeed, the women, out of Lutheran-influenced family obligations, took on greater outdoor labors to support their loved ones despite possible censure from Anglo neighbors. Additionally, wives on the frontier represented a vital component to a successful homestead. Linna von Rosenberg, writing to her sister, told of how Hellmuth, her brother-in-law, had to return home after Easter Sunday celebration as his wife Hannchen needed to remain with her parents. Linna approved of this "so men can see for once how it is when there's no woman at home." Having wives who could successfully manage households and work alongside their husbands remained a paramount concern for German families and the immigrant community.[36]

Mütter (Mothers)

When a German woman married, she not only gained the position of wife, but generally the responsibility of motherhood soon followed. German couples most often had large families in Texas. In that new land, parents needed laborers, and, unlike Germany, there was sufficient land to offer their offspring when they reached adulthood. The role of mother took on great significance for Lutheran women. Mothers passed their religious and cultural traditions to their children, and, in doing so, they ensured the continuation of Lutheran beliefs and German ethnicity in a new land.

[36] Linna von Rosenberg to August Scweinberger, April 2, 1850, 2Q396, The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH.

Just as Texas offered economic and social freedoms as well as abundant land, it also brought the Germans into contact with new cultures and unfamiliar peoples. Native Americans, Tejanos, African Americans, and Anglo-Americans had different manners of speaking, working, and interacting with others. Moreover, many of the middle-class and educated immigrants left the cultured circles of Germany for the crudeness and isolation of Texas. All these factors challenged German ways; while men sought to preserve German culture by establishing and participating in discussion groups and various societies, mothers maintained the link to families' faith and culture. Amidst the unfamiliar land, German mothers tended not only to their families' land, but also to their families' ethnic survival.

Religious precedent charged mothers with looking after the children. Luther, in his emphasis on the family, regarded childrearing as one of the most important roles humans could assume. God ordained parents to teach their children of the world and Christ, in essence to produce pious and productive members of society. Mothers particularly bore the weight of this conviction because they remained closer to the children and spent more time every day instructing them than did their fathers. Women, Luther claimed, should gladly accept the pains of childbirth and the trials of childrearing. Indeed, he asserted that women who wore themselves out having children were happier than those women who did not have children. For raising moral and upright offspring, mothers had the most sacred of duties. Luther preached that mothers who took on the "burdens of the flesh," such as enduring pregnancy, waking with a scared child, and tending to that child, gained an eternal reward that women who chose an easier earthly existence without children did not merit.[37]

[37] Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe,* vol. 24 (Weimer: H Böhlau, 1883), 76-81.

German mothers did more than instruct their daughters and sons on how to survive in Texas; indeed, they also taught their children about German traditions. Annie Kellersberger Schnelle spent evenings during her childhood before her mother learning to read and write in German as well as learning traditional Lutheran songs. A child's inability to understand German concerned mothers who feared their children would be unable to understand Lutheran worship services as well as talk with older family members. To familiarize their offspring with formal-spoken German, women read before their children as did Schnelle's mother. In another example, Lula Fuchs cooked and served meals in her "simple house," yet every meal was seasoned with the "gay unfettered conversation" in high-German on such topics ranging from religion, to art, and to literature; Lula ensured that her children were present at and included in the discussions.[38]

For a *Mutter* wishing to instill German traditions in her children in Texas, holidays appear particularly prominent. During these special times, mothers particularly tried to recreate what they had known in Germany. Easter allowed families to come together with extended family and friends. Amanda von Rosenberg had all her children around for a large Easter dinner with some surrounding neighbors. They all enjoyed the fellowship and food; not even a violent storm that damaged von Rosenberg's porch dampened their spirit. Similarly, Christmas was also a very important season for the Germans, and mothers did their best to ensure their children had a good time despite the lack of resources or money. Luise Fuchs's first Christmas in Texas no doubt disappointed her because she could not provide all the Christmas festivities that she had provided for her family in Germany. Instead of the festive large fir tree decorated with fruits, candles, and other specialties that she had presented her children on Christmas Eves in Mecklenburg, Luise had only a few decorations and no large fir tree on which to hang them. Pastor Fuchs hung a cedar limb to the wall as there were only three cedar trees in the vicinity of

[38] Schnelle, "Yesterdays," 2B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families-Adolph Fuchs, CAH.

their Cat Spring house. Luise had her two oldest girls bake molasses cookies while she placed her home-made yellow candles around the tree limb. Despite the lack of fanfare, Luise ensured that her children did have some kind of Christmas tree and a celebration.[39]

Other mothers looked to making toys and food that reflected what they had known in Germany so their children would remember the Fatherland. In their European home, Adolph Schmidt's mother always baked little cakes and placed them outside his bedroom door as a Christmas morning surprise. *Frau* Schmidt placed the usual surprise outside her son's room on Christmas Eve. The next morning, in his excitement, Adolph ran out of his room and stepped in each cake. Still, other mothers spent much time in secret making toys for their children. German mothers dedicated hours to making dolls with corncob clothes for girls and wooden bats and paddles for the boys. Also, they attended to collecting fruit and nuts into bags that they would distribute when the children saw the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve.[40]

Luise Fuchs and other German mothers took their responsibility seriously and even sought to instruct girls in other households. Emily Krueger taught her own children as well as the young girls living around her family's farm the art of needle work and embroidery. Her husband Max commented that Emily's tutelage had "soon a marked improvement and progress could be perceived in the general appearance of the young women and their sphere of life." Emily also encouraged the girls to grow flower gardens in addition to their vegetable plots. The added flowers, along with the clothes "adorned with embroidery of choice material and harmonious colors," marked areas "progress" in Max's opinion. Fuchs and Krueger watched and

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[39] Goeth, 2; Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Hannchen, March 29, 1850, Farm Nassau, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 123, 127.

[40] Schmidt, 28-31.

cultivated the growth and preservation of culture in Texas, a land despite all its promises lacked the cultural elements that Germans had previously enjoyed.[41]

As German mothers saw to the betterment of the children and their environment, the women also looked to protecting their own children and any youth in need. For instance, Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner took in her step-brother Alfred in the middle of the night when his mother had turned him out of the house as punishment. Wagner fed Alfred and refused to return him when Henrietta Doebbler, the woman who had caused so much pain in Wagner's own childhood, appeared the next morning. Wagner would not and could turn away any child who was in need, and she would care for Alfred. Wagner explained her bravery as a sign of her own maturity. By that point, Wagner was married and had children of her own. She had authority and experience; no woman who had disavowed her sacred and proper duty as mother would challenge Wagner's actions.[42]

Besides seeing to cultural and spiritual instruction of *Kinder*, Lutheran mothers were to protect their children's physical well-being, even when the surrounding environment differed from what they had known in Germany. Mothers often guarded their children and family by influencing the physical and tangible aspects of their household environment. Although men usually constructed these structures, mothers ensured that their children had protection from the weather and insects. Mothers often lobbied for their husbands to place the houses by trees, when they were present, to provide shade and also to cut large windows into the walls to catch breezes

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[41] Goeth, 42; Max Amadeus Paulus Krueger, *The Life and Fortunes of a German Immigrant,* ed. Marilyn Mc Adams Sibley (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1976), 111-112. Krueger does not devote much space in his work to his wife or her duties. Mostly he focuses on his own activities and observations regarding Texas and its inhabitants. His inclusion of Emily's fancywork and flower gardens and how she helped to better the region by sharing her talents illustrates the importance of her work.

[42] Wagner, "I Think Back" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 183.

particularly on hot summer days. Mothers and fathers built houses from a combination of German and Texas techniques so the structures would best fit the Texas environment. [43]

Germans adapted the physical construction of their homes to Texas's environmental conditions while the mothers decorated their homes in response to what they had with them. Lutheran mothers played a vital role in the settling of their loved ones into the environment, and the women wanted to ensure some familiarity and comfort in Texas. Almost immediately upon arriving in Texas, mothers set about making their houses as pleasant as possible. This goal was not so simple because the women lived in rural areas with few if any luxuries or even stores nearby. Added to the numerous and time-consuming duties, these mothers drew upon their memories of Germany and melded them with their new surroundings. Mothers were seen as especially adept at making a home comfortable, a trait that men lacked as one example of a *Herr* Ploeger illustrates. Ploeger, who had immigrated before his sister and mother, tried to make their small log cabin more appealing to the eye so he pasted illustrated magazine pages to the walls. His effort was for naught; when the lady Ploegers entered the house, his sister fainted at the sight of the "pioneer place."[44]

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[43] Terry Jordan "German Folk Houses in the Texas Hill Country," in *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium*, ed., Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 103. Those German parents emigrating took familiar characteristics with them to Texas as they tended to construct two generalized types of houses. First, the Frankish farmsteads were composed of several structures—usually a barn, stables, and a two story house with a steeply pitched gable—constructed around a courtyard. Second, the Saxon style house was a single unit structure that held both humans and animals in a single story. The multilevel houses held animals and humans in different levels. Germans retained several characteristics of German houses, such as no fireplaces, and *fachwerch* construction. Jordan argues that folk houses "permit a posthumous look into the very heart of the immigrant." By studying the construction and typical patterns of German structures, he concludes that the Germans desired to assimilate into Anglo culture in Texas. Though he argues these houses would be out of place in Germany, he dismisses the blending of German and surrounding cultures as purely interested in becoming Anglicized. The majority of narratives regarding women during this period relate how they constantly attempted to make the houses as comfortable and pleasant as possible in the often rustic and rural surroundings. Olmstead also remarks on how the Germans are often interested in enlarging or expanding their original residences after they have become settled and ensured that their farms were established. Olmstead, 140.

[44] Kleberg, 172; Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber, "Life of German Pioneers of Early Texas" *Texas State Historical Association Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (January 1899): 229-231.

While German women provided their family with a home that protected those living within its walls, mothers often decorated similar to their houses in Germany. Wherever the immigrants settled and built their homes accounts always relate how the mothers immediately began to add "hundreds of conveniences" that made the structures, no matter how simple, "very agreeable to notice." Luise Fuchs with the help of her daughters and Rosa Kleberg added curtains, pillows, and other small necessities that made the bare wooden walls homier. Mothers living in towns often had more chance to purchase nice goods for their family. The Kreisle family home in Austin boasted busts of Goethe and Schiller, a glass case filled with stuffed birds, and a Hamlin reed organ. Moreover, placed prominently were the family Bibles overlooking all in the main room even when the mother was not there to watch the young Kreisles.[45]

Mothers also played a vital role in the managing of the landscape around the house. Living in rural areas, the families had to deal with snakes and other dangerous creatures coming near their children or other loved ones. Living in close contact with such dangers meant the women needed to ensure the safety of the home. One of the most common solutions remained the swept ground technique. Women constantly maintained the flat and unobstructed geography of the land immediately surrounding their homes. Contemporary photographs illustrate bare grounds with no grass, vegetation and few trees. No snake or predator could sneak up to the house without someone first noticing and taking measures to get rid of the threat. Swept grounds were a common feature of rural households in much of Texas and German women adopted this habit because of necessity. These women no doubt disliked the bareness they forced on a land

[45] Harold Mueller, "Ancestors, Descendants, and Related Families (Mayer, Mueller, Seidel, and Thomas)" 2B181, Kreisle Family Papers, CAH; Ottilie and her family arrived at Cat Springs and decided to settle in that region where several German families had already lived for as many as thirteen years. The von Roeders and Engelkings also lived there and offered much assistance and guidance to the newly arrived Fuchs family. The Fuchs moved into the deserted house of one of the von Roeders who had just died and left a farm that already had a house, and a few constructed. Ottie tells that the family had a pretty miserable existence at Cat Spring for the eight years they lived there, despite the great help the other families offered and in spite of the strong bonds established between the families. Goeth, 40-41.

many already considered rather bleak compared to the lush greenery of Germany. Yet the necessity of surviving in a new environment meant the women had to adapt to changed conditions.[46]

Mothers not only concentrated effort in creating a comfortable home, they also worked to produce gardens beside their homes. Very importantly**,** the mothers grew foods that they had once consumed in Germany. The Texas climate did contrast to that of the immigrant's home land, but German women soon discovered that there were enough similarities between the climes that some vegetation would thrive in both regions. Among the favorites remained leeks, parsley, mustard, and kohlrabi. Germans brought each of these plants from Germany, and most women were delighted that the vegetables grew in Texas. Pauline Conrad tended her family's garden just as many of her counterparts did in Texas. She made sure that there was enough cabbage grown every year to fill many barrels. After picking the cabbage, she would then pickle it and store in the barrels. The end product, sauerkraut, would later be brought out as a treat for the family. Her daughter Anna, though, did not consider this food much of a treat.[47]

In such activities, particularly out of doors, mothers relied on their children's aid. Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner relied on her children to help her cultivate her garden, milk cows, and to collect eggs. Furthermore, because her children were used to helping Wagner, they cooked meals and tended to chores of their own initiative. Thus, by instructing the children regarding chores, Wagner encouraged them to become helpful and prosperous youths. Similarly, Amanda von Rosenberg bragged how everyday her little Linna milked the cows and tended to the chickens.[48]

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[46] Goeth, 56-57. Rudolph Biesele, *The History of German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, Texas: Press of Von Boekmann-Jones Co., 1930), 45, 64-66.

[47] Rodgers, 5.

[48] Goeth, 42, 41, 50; Wagner, "I Think Back" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 187; Amanda Fallier von

To fully attend to their families, women had to adjust to living and working with the bare essentials for their domestic work. Bread, which remained an important staple in the diets of those in Germany as well as in Texas, required mothers spend entire days over the fire as they made a week's worth of bread and biscuits. Moreover, flour was often scarce because of the distance to the nearest store, so women often substituted corn. Although the Hill Country and South Texas had only a few mills in the mid-eighteenth century, eventually Germans would begin constructing their own mills, making flour and other ground goods an easier commodity to obtain. Certainly grinding their own corn and wheat illustrated the German's industriousness, but Olmstead remarks that the Germans were too cheap to pay for the transportation of flour from distant mills and as such mothers resorted to making their own products. They had to grind the kernels by hand, which was an exhausting, messy, and time consuming process.

In addition, cooking in Texas often proved burdensome for mothers as they lacked ingredients with which they were familiar as well as proper pans and stoves. Mothers learned how to use corn for making cornbread and corn flour; also, they used sweet potatoes as a common substitute for the German white potato, which many a child and adult missed during their first years in Texas. Having rustic kitchens and often improvised cooking tools made the Lutheran mothers' lives more difficult as they sought to care for their families. Ottie Goeth fondly remembers how happy her mother was when her father made a mortar that made the grinding process somewhat easier. Furthermore, most German houses had only one stove that provided heat for the house and offered the only heated cooking source. Mothers often dreaded working over the hot stoves, particularly during the winter. For instance, Lula Fuchs, working in a similar manner as had her mother after immigrating to Texas in the 1840s, labored over an

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Rosenberg to Auguste and Emma Fallier, May 25, 1850, 2Q395, Letters of the Rosenberg and Meersscheidt Families, CAH.

open fire with a heavy awkward metal skillet before she and her husband bought a cooking stove at the end of the century.[49]

As women discovered how to grow familiar foods and work the land, mothers trained their daughters to do the same. After arriving in Texas, Johan Gotleb had to ascertain how to harvest from the land while adapting to her new environment. As she worked on her family's farm, she made certain that her young daughter was with her. Although Gotleb needed her daughter's aid because Herr Gotleb was away, the mother wanted her child present so she could instruct the girl on the best farming methods brought from Germany. Additionally, for her family to survive in Texas, Pauline Conrad learned how to work on a farm and complete the tasks that demanded her participation. Conrad even passed these traits on to her children, in particular her girls. Anna grew up working and plowing on the farm. Although her mother had to adjust to new duties in Texas, Pauline Conrad imbued her girls, similar to numerous other Lutheran mothers, with the knowledge and ability to learn and live off the land.[50]

Eltern (Older Women)

Just as children obeyed, wives managed, and mothers instructed in tandem with Lutheran precepts of family, older women advised younger generations and provided an important link to German culture and Lutheran beliefs. Older women could either be grandmothers, aunts, or sisters. They could live with younger family members, or near them. Either way, German settlers looked to these women for advice and guidance. Particularly, younger women sought the knowledge of women who knew old-world ways but who had also raised children and who had dealt with the difficulties of living in Texas. Children also looked to the practical wisdom of

[49] Goeth, 46-47. Ottie admits her amazement at her mother's skill in cooking the bread evenly and successfully over the fire. Olmstead, 184.

[50] Franke, 5-6; Rodgers, 8-10.

these older women. These women told stories of Germany; they taught later generations how to cook, to work, and to pray as they had done in Germany. In other words, older women represented the "old" ways, but they still offered vital information on how to survive in Texas.

These mature women participated in the lives of their families and remained close to the family unit. Mothers often moved in with one of their children when they became widowed or could no longer stay by themselves. Very often, a daughter who had many duties and young children had a mother stay with her to help balance the workload and keep the family ordered. Unmarried sisters, especially those living in towns, often served siblings by moving in with brothers or sisters and aiding with childcare and housework. Many German households had grandmothers living with them; these elderly women offered support to the burdened women of the household.

The closeness of the women to the younger family facilitated their help to mothers and their instruction to the children. Louise Romberg Fuchs benefited from the wisdom of her grandmother. Fuchs was newly married, and the advice from a mature woman who lived nearby was helpful. Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner cherished the loving and gentle manner in which her *Grossmutter* Gruen encouraged her when she was busy with children and housework. When the elderly woman died, Wagner sadly prepared the body for burial because she was the only adult woman around. Wagner, as she washed and ironed the burial gown and cap before dressing her *Grossmutter*, felt deeply how much she would miss the older woman whom she loved. A woman's close relationships with another meant much to a *frauen*, especially for one who lived in rural areas with few other women around.[51]

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[51] Louise Romberg Fuchs, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *A Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 79; Wagner, "I Think Back" in *A Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 184.

Older women often played a vital role in keeping home and family together both financially and physically. For instance, Katharine Buff Blumberg, after her husband died, raised her children and managed the family's farm until her sons were old enough to work the fields. Katharine remained with her sons, and she managed the family's financial accounts. By that time, Ernst and Frederick had wives of their own. The three groups lived together in the small family house. Katherine also assisted her daughters-in-law when they were in labor. In all, Katharine helped birth twelve grandchildren. Living in such close quarters did not disturb the Blumberg family as they all lived "harmoniously" together. The matriarch imbued her grandchildren with an enduring faith in God, a faith that had given Katharine strength throughout her life. Katherine remained a very busy grandmother as she continued to care for her family until her death in 1869.[52]

When families did not live in such close proximity as the Blunbergs, grandmothers traveled great distances to aid and instruct their descendants. Ottie Goeth, who lived ten miles from her daughter's family, made the journey as often as she could. In 1885, ten miles could prove treacherous for an older woman because roads were rough and wagons were unwieldy. Nevertheless, Goeth attended her daughter after the births of her children, and Goeth regularly visited the grandchildren despite the amount of travel and her own housework. Goeth took great pride and pleasure in watching her grandchildren play. As she reveled in the laughter of little ones, Goeth reminded them of their religious heritage by telling them of their great-grandfather's sermons, taking them to church, and instructing them in what was right and what was wrong.[53]

In their role as transmitter of German culture and Lutheran faith, grandmothers took great care in helping mothers during their holiday preparations. For instance, Maria Wohlfahrt with

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[52] Pearl Elley Bethune, ed."Forward to the Past!" Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.
[53] Goeth, 110-113.

her daughter Bertha spent all year making gifts for the next generation of Wohlfahrts. The ladies made dolls, doll furniture, wagons, balls, and bats. Every Christmas Eve in San Antonio, the young Wohlfahrts eagerly awaited the trip to *Oma*'s house so they could see the Christmas tree lighted with candles and hung bags of candy, nuts, and cookies. Bertha always placed the treat bags within arms reach of the children. The *Kinder* loved the gifts and, particularly, the oranges, which were a Christmas treat only, hanging from the branches.[54]

Although Goeth and Wohlfahrt experiences typify the numerous accounts of loving grandmothers, some German women were not so eager to take a role of guide for younger generations**.** Marie Wiederaenders and her three young girls stayed with her husband's parents while he was away on business. The Wiederaenderses needed help harvesting their cotton, and Marie provided priceless assistance to her in-laws, who had previously questioned the slight woman's ability. While Marie picked the hundreds of pounds of cotton for her in-law, her children experienced a cold hospitality from their grandparents. *Grossmutter* Wiederaenders, not used to rambunctious young girls, forbade her granddaughters to follow as she attended to household chores. After youngsters had asked many times, *Grossmutter* did consent to let the girls watch her make several batches of tallow candles. As the youths observed the grandmother heat the tallow and then make molds and wicks, they admired her skills, especially when the all the candles looked identical in shape and form. The *Grossmutter* proudly displayed her craft before the girls, though she never spoke a word to them.[55]

Aunts and great-aunts supplied survival information as well. Bertha Wohlfahrt taught Hilda, her niece, the intricacies of knowing when the time was ripe to plant garden vegetables and flowers in Texas. In addition to showing how to cultivate food, Bertha showed the younger

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[54] Marian Louise Shumann Higgins Miller, "Stalwart Women: Cameos of some early German *Hausfrauen* in Texas," DRT.

[55] Franke, 39.

generation the best way to preserve and can the foods that the Wohlfahrt family had produced. As a result, the family enjoyed fruit and jams in the winter. Much to the consternation of many German youths, aunts and mothers also pickled cabbage so they could serve sauerkraut to children who were not so enthusiastic about the supposed treat. Moreover, older women spent much time with other domestic work, for which they usually had young girls accompany them. Among their work, they combed cotton with metal cotton combs to prevent it from becoming lumpy. They also weekly beat and hung bedding in the sun to clean it.[56]

Older women taught young girls the techniques of making delicate and fine handiworks, goods that aunts and grandmothers often had not had the time or money to make when they were young. At the family farm in Santa Clara, just a few miles south of New Braunfels, *Tante* Bertha Wohlfahrt taught her niece Hilda how to do fine needle-work. Bertha spent long hours demonstrating and explaining tatting, crocheting, and embroidery stitches. The aunt and niece spent many more delightful hours as Bertha watched her protégé practice what she had learned.[57]

Not only did the information from older women help younger women learn to cook and plant correctly in Texas's climate, it also helped the women acclimate to emerging standards of American womanhood. By 1890, when Bertha passed on her knowledge of managing a house and making finery, many German *frauen* had taken on characteristics of middle-class American women. Even German farmers prospered enough that their families could purchase nice furniture, cooking stoves, and decorative household items. Many of these new goods helped lighten the burden of women's work, leaving more time dedicated to make fine handiwork,

[56] Goeth, 59; Mueller, 28, 30; Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Auguste and Emma Fallier, July 7, 1850, 2Q395, Letters of the Rosenberg and Meersscheidt Families, CAH.

[57] Miller, "Stalwart Women: Cameos of Some Early German *Hausfrauen* in Texas" DRT.

whereas previous immigrants and poorer Germans had time only to make durable goods that were necessary.[58]

Conclusion

Maturing from daughters to wives to mothers to grandmothers was a complex process in the German Lutheran community, especially when that community lived outside of Central Europe. Germans maintained their sixteenth-century Lutheran notions of womanhood requiring that girls obey their parents, wives help their spouses, mothers train their children, and older women advise younger generations. Each nuclear and extended family brought those ideas with them from Germany to their homes in Texas. For the most part, especially in the first several decades of immigration, German Lutherans preserved those ideas. The need for family cooperation and work required women to adapt traditional roles to their new surroundings, but the girls and women sought to preserve what they or their parents had known in Germany.

Although the women continued Lutheran understandings of familial and feminine responsibility, Texas presented them with a new environment to which they had to adjust. Girls learned to travel about the towns and countryside without strict supervision. Young women also began to take greater pride in their field work because most Anglo-Americans were not used to young women doing such activities. Thus, they felt exceptional, a feeling they would not have had in Germany where girls worked in the fields. Wives still possessed a supportive role in the family; indeed, in frontier Texas, wives who worked beside their husbands, managed scarce household goods, and raised children played an even greater role in their families' survival. In a similar sense, mothers too gained prominence because they instructed their children on how to be

[58] For an example of German women as civilizers on the frontier see Crystall Sasse Ragsdale, "The German Woman in Frontier Texas" in *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium*, ed. Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 145-146.

good citizens, but to do so in an environment far removed from Germany and filled with various peoples with different beliefs. At the same time, the guidance of older women also helped to preserve German traditions and values.

Immigrants in Texas often found few obstacles to preserving their German Lutheran way of life because the Germans faced no solidly homogeneous populations that pressured conformity to the dominant culture. Germans in rural areas and even in the growing cities had some freedom to maintain their traditions. Moreover, on farms, the lack of industrialized agricultural techniques required that the girls and women continue working in the fields. Germans still expected the women to take responsibility for the moral upkeep of the house and for the education of children in moral rightness.

By the turn of twentieth century, German women's lives began to reflect those of American women. Girls still worked in the fields in rural regions to be sure, but even they were learning to do middle-class domestic work, such as crocheting and lacework. Young girls living in San Antonio and Austin continued to help with domestic chores, but they had more free time to browse at nearby millineries shops and to talk of gatherings and dances in English. Women continued to work in the fields and hold dominion over domestic issues, but by 1890 the majority of German settlements in the region had become more rigid and established in the accepted roles of women and men. The wives stilled played an important role in helping their husbands, and they showed little interest in the reform agitations of the turn of the century, for instance temperance and suffrage. As the German mothers taught their children German holiday traditions of the Fatherland, they also showed their offspring how to be proper by learning American dances and ways of dress. These characteristics, though still combined with traditional German ways, served promote assimilation into middle-class American society.

In essence, the home represented a fortress on the frontier where Germans maintained religious and gender ideas. Thus, the home was not merely a place of complete ethnic preservation. It represented a complex forum for adaption and acclimation. Yet, these girls and women negotiated with Texas and their environment to adapt what they knew with what was at hand. These *frauen*, after their families had settled in Texas, started working outside of the domestic world to help establish religious institutions that were important to them. Even so, the women attempted in those efforts to maintain their beliefs about religion and culture.

Chapter Five:
Cultivating Their Church

Much like their family roles, German women brought from Germany with certain religious responsibilities. In the Fatherland, women attended church weekly despite workloads and domestic duties. Besides going to religious services, mothers also ensured that their children accompanied them to Sunday services. The mothers and grandmothers were most often the attendees at religious services, particularly baptisms and confirmations. Although their presence was constant, women's participation remained focused on their position as daughters, wives, and mothers. They tended to children during services and ensured the youth became a part of the congregation. Through their gendered identities, the women would maintain the religious community in Texas as they had done in Germany.

German Lutheran women modified these traditional German roles because they had to adapt to the rural conditions they encountered in frontier Texas. These women and their families settled in a land with few churches established near their homes. This dearth of organized churches confronted most immigrants in the early period of immigration, but this fact remained true for those settling in frontier areas even into the 1890s. The small German settlements in rural Texas further hampered church organization. With the lack of churches came a lack of religious authority. The German Lutherans had no denominational body to create congregations or supply aid; thus, the nascent congregations needed the help of women. Lutheran pastors arrived in Texas with scant support for church buildings much less help in caring for themselves. The pastors often came alone and needed help in adjusting to Texas and in gathering the German settlers. Immigrant communities did create their own churches, but farming communities rarely had sufficient money to support their church and pastor. As churches prospered and Lutheran communities grew, the women continued to help and support

the church by remaining active in religious instruction for the young and by creating their own women's organization.

Specifically, German Lutheran women responded to the frontier needs by attending to four different areas. First, the women saw to the physical and mental welfare of the pastor who arrived to organize congregations. Second, women brought much desired aid to supply their pastors with the material goods, such as altar cloths and communion cups, required to hold services. Third, the mothers and grandmothers sustained Lutheran beliefs in Texas by ensuring that their descendants participated in services and confirmation. Fourth, they actively instructed the young on Lutheran beliefs, and the *frauen* organized their own associations to help support their churches. Similar to their domestic roles, these women relied on Lutheran understanding of the world to help them adapt their German traditions with the social and cultural environment in Texas.

Women and a Patriarchical Church

Before continuing on with a discussion of Lutheran German women in Texas, one must understand the religious role of women before immigration. During the Protestant Reformation, with its start in 1517 at the doors of Wittenberg's *Schlosskirche*, Martin Luther not only challenged the traditions of the Catholic Church, but also that institution's philosophy toward women. While popes and priests venerated the Virgin Mary, they tended to denigrate normal women who they viewed as the direct descendants of Eve, having inherited her weakness, sin, and disobedience. In contrast, Luther espoused the importance of common women in society not only for procreation but for the maintenance of social order. The reformer extolled what Catholics had considered mundane, such as giving birth to or cleaning a child. For Luther, family life and woman's work were glorious acts that God decreed. While Luther praised

women who undertook daily drudgeries and unpleasant tasks, he continued to reinforce the position of male authority in the church. He asserted that only men had the right to administer communion, baptize children, and preach in religious services. Women, children, and the uneducated lacked what he believed to be official sanction to perform these religious rituals. In support of such convictions, Luther often referenced I Corinthians 14:36, which declared women should stay silent in church. Moreover, Luther preached that no woman should have sovereignty over a man, illustrating his point with Biblical verses such as the claim of Genesis 3:16 that woman is subject to man. This legacy of men holding dominion over consecrated rites left women out of officially-sanctioned roles within the Lutheran church hierarchy, leaving sacred arenas under the men's purview.[1]

Throughout the centuries, the German Lutheran church adhered to the patriarchal systems, although in the nineteenth century some people highlighted women's spiritual role. With the turn of the nineteenth century, Pietism infused Protestantism. This movement emphasized emotions and feelings, traits that social philosophers and pastors claimed ruled women. Therefore, some religious leaders viewed women as naturally closer to spiritual enlightenment. This change in thinking provided women a little more influence in religious discussions, at least in more educated circles. For example, Friedrich Schleiermacher commended women's moral fortitude and character, though he simultaneously warned against women's liberation either in religious or political matters. Still, the Lutheran church did not allow women to be ordained as ministers or serving in other official church roles.[2]

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[1] Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church, 1539" in *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*, trans. and ed. Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Weisner-Hanks (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 75.

[2] David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 291-293; Ruth Dawson, "Lights Out! Lights Out!:Women and the Enlightenment," in *Gender in Transition: Discourse and Practice in German-Speaking Europe, 1750-1830*, ed. Ulrike Gleixner and Marion W. Gray (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 230-231; Thandeka, "Schleiermacher,

Besides Pietism, women were involved in the church through their dedicated participation. Even with their limited official involvement, German women attended church every Sunday, oftentimes more frequently than men. The *frauen* also participated in religious holidays, and they ensured their children attended these functions as well. Women formed unofficial groups that looked after the disadvantaged in the parish, for example widows, young mothers, the elderly, the sick, and other needy individuals. These charitable actions remained within the realm of acceptable religious activities for a proper Lutheran woman. Caring for the infirm or destitute conformed to Luther's belief that women should be caregivers, and their congregations acknowledged their deeds. The involvement of the *frauen* highlighted their importance in the day-to-day running of the church and has led some scholars to assert that the women began to feminize the Lutheran church through their efforts.[3]

Men's participation, for the most part, remained the same once they arrived in Texas. The Lutheran pastors on the frontier had the same training in Central European seminaries as did their counterparts who remained in Germany. Pastor Louis C. Ervendberg, the first recorded Lutheran pastor in Texas, preached at churches in Pomerania and Prussia before leaving for the United States. Additionally, leaders of the Pilgrims' Mission Institute of St. Chrischona near Basel, Switzerland supplied Texas with pastors until early in the twentieth century, and these men preached on similar religious topics and had similar religious views as the preachers whom the immigrants had known in their own German towns. The men in the early years of organizing a congregation did often have to undertake *Reiseprediger* (circuit preachers) routes, which they would not have done in Germany. Still, the men assumed traditional pastor duties once they

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Feminism, and Liberation Theologies: A Key," in *The Cambridge Companion to Frederick Schleiermacher*, ed. Jacqueline Mariňa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 103-127.

[3] Blackbourn uses the term feminization of the Lutheran church to describe how women's participation in weekly church services and holiday celebration left the visible church represented by females. Blackbourn, 19, 296.

formed congregations. They preached to their audience, they baptized children, they confirmed adolescents, and distributed communion to parishioners.[4]

Texas decidedly influenced women's involvement with the Lutheran church because their participation remained vital to the establishment of churches and Lutheran beliefs in frontier Texas. First, the women provided shelter for both pastors and room for services, which they did not need to do in Germany since Lutheran churches already had parsonages and sanctuaries. Second, after the congregation constructed its church, women supplied the objects and accoutrements needed for worship. Third, often surrounded by those of other denominations, the *frauen* perpetuated Lutheran beliefs and traditions as they attended services and ensured their children participated in religious rites. Fourth, German women founded their own groups to more effectively support and assist their local churches and their Synod. Although their acts did not change doctrinal understandings nor did their physical labors construct large buildings, these Lutheran women made possible the church's survival in nineteenth-century Texas.

Seeing to the Pastor's Needs

German Lutheran women living in Texas provided vital services that helped their pastors and their communities establish churches in a frontier area where Lutheran institutions did not exist. Before the 1840s, no established Lutheran presence existed in Texas as other prominent American denominations, such as the Methodists and Baptists, dominated. When German immigrants arrived in Texas before 1846, they entered an environment where denominations

[4] Auguste Ervendberg Wiegreffe, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 41; Russell Alan Vardell, "Striving to Gather the Scattered: The Texas-Louisiana Synod and its Predecessor Bodies, 1851-1987" (Ph.D diss., University of Houston, 1992), 3. These St. Chrischona men helped form the first Texas Synod in 1851. Rudolph Biesele, *The History of German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, Texas: Press of Von Boekmann-Jones Co., 1930), 14-15, 52; H.C. Ziehe, *A Centennial Story of the Lutheran Church in Texas* (Seguin, Texas: South Texas Printing Company, 1951), 22-27.

worshiped in unfamiliar manners. Thus, the nurturing role of the women who tended to Lutheran beliefs in the absence of Lutheran leaders or an established denominational presence gains importance and highlights the fact that women assumed some new activities in Texas to establish the Lutheran Church and to maintain traditional beliefs. When pastors eventually arrived, the *frauen* cared for them by providing shelter and food during their long journeys on the circuit routes. Very importantly, the women offered their homes, which ensured that the pastors had a place to sleep and their neighbors had a place to worship. In addition, the women provided vital advice about surviving in Texas to those who had newly arrived.[5]

In the beginning of their ministry, pastors often had little money, and they rarely had an income to support themselves while trying to establish churches. One such pastor, in 1845, asked a neighboring German if he could work on the man's ranch. The pastor needed some form of salary as he tried to organize a congregation. Similarly, Pastors Christian Oefinger, John Conrad Roehm, and Wilhelm T. Strobel walked through soaking rain and slept in the cold as they traveled the lonely path from La Grange to New Braunfels. They finally arrived at Pastor Theolbald Kleis's parsonage in Hortontown where Kleis had a single-room house that he shared with a sick calf. Kleis had room for one of the exhausted travelers; the other two found welcoming homes with the neighbors. Philip Frederick Zizelmann, while making his way to San Antonio, had to pawn a pocket watch and sell some of his clothes to subsidize his travels and to help his fellow pastors. In such sorry conditions, the men no doubt thanked God nightly for the shelter, food, and aid that the Lutheran women and their families supplied.[6]

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[5] Harold Mueller, "Matthew Kreisle: Ancestors, Descendants, and Related Families (Mayer, Mueller, Seidel, Thomas) Kreisle Family Papers," 2L280, Kreisle Family Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter CAH).

[6] Kleis had been circuit preacher in the areas between Neighborsville and Hortontown from 1850 to 1852 and he oversaw the establishment of a congregation in Hortontown in 1852. Pastor M. Fuchs, "History of St. Martin Church, New Braunfels, Texas, St. Martin's Evangelical Church," 447, Sophienburg Museum and Archives, New Braunfels, Texas (hereafter Sophienberg); Zeihe, 29-30.

For Lutheran *frauen*, providing a pastor a place to stay was rarely an inconvenience because religion held such important and personal meaning for them. The lack of Lutheran churches throughout the 1840s and 1850s heightened the women's willingness to accommodate any newly-arrived pastors. This hospitality was particularly important for Lutheran pastors who received little pay and very often received remuneration in kind as congregations paid with produce and meat. In addition, even if those serving in rural areas had extra money, they had no hotels where they could rent rooms. As a result, kindly women welcomed religious men to stay with their families, which added extra work to the wives' daily routines. Many of their houses were small and often only one room, yet for tired men even a bed of hay in a barn gave necessary rest. Some pastors were more fortunate as affluent members of the community allowed them residence. After a difficult beginning, John Conrad Roehm, one of the six St. Chrischona pastors, found an accepting family in Ross Prairie. The lady of the house, whose name the church records do not mention, housed him, fed him, and hosted lively conversation in the evening in between his travels between the congregations in Cat Sping, Ross Prairie, San Bernardo, Columbus, Alleyton, New Bremen, and New Ulm.[7]

Likewise, the women's German food invigorated many exhausted religious men by reminding them of meals that they had eaten back home. For example, Zizelmann fell ill not long after arriving in San Antonio. Destitute and unfamiliar with the city, the pastor's mission might have ended badly except for the advice of a doctor who provided particular attention to Zizelmann. The doctor told the patient to rest and, very importantly, to eat *Frau* Sandleben's cucumber salad. Sandleben's cooking and care did bring health and vitality quickly back to

[7] Max Heinrich, *History of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas: Including the Most Important Items from the Reports and Resolutions of the Seventy-fifth Annual Convention of the Synod in Session at Fredericksburg, Texas, May 3-8, 1927* (Waverly, Iowa: Wartburg Publishing House, 1927), 13-14.

Zizelmann. After resting with the *frau* and her family and filling his stomach with traditional German food, Zizelmann fully recovered.[8]

Women readily gave shelter to the pastors because they were so excited that Texas finally had Lutheran leaders and traditional Lutheran services. With so few places of worship, immigrants traveled long distances to their churches. Lutherans eagerly attended Lutheran services because they looked forward to socializing with other immigrants who spoke their same language, and hearing traditional Lutheran sermons in German comforted those feeling homesick for their old congregations. Since Lutheran pastors were scarce on the frontier, some women resolved to attend other denominations, although they rarely trusted all that the American ministers said during their sermons. One German *Grossmutter* (grandmother) conceded to her grandson that Americans did "know stories from the Bible better than some Germans," but after every English service she attended she went directly to her German Bible to make sure that the preacher's "story was the same as Martin Luther told it." Understandably, the arrival of reliable German or European Lutheran pastors pleased many an immigrant.[9]

Similarly, Pastor Roehm's experiences further illustrates a real problem for these early pastors, and his story explains why finding cooperative *frauen* relieved religious men. Originally, Roehm went to organize a congregation in LaGrange, Texas, but the few families in the area refused to undertake the construction of a church; they argued that they were too poor to subsidize such a project. The pastor then left LaGrange and traveled to a nearby settlement of German intellectual refugees from the 1848 revolution. Roehm, though did not find a very accepting community. Only one woman appeared for his first Sunday service, and she withdrew

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[8] Max Heinrich, *History of First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas, 1851-1926* (Chicago, IL: Wartburg Publishing House, 1926), 12.

[9] Harold Mueller, "Matthew Kreisle (1831-1882): Ancestors, Descendants, and Related Families (Mayer, Mueller, Seidel, and Thomas)," 2B181, Kreisle Family Papers, CAH; Curt E.Schmidt, *Oma & Opa: German-Texan Pioneers* (San Antonio: Accurate Litho & Printing Co., 1975), 40.

once she realized she was the only settler to attend. Added to this aggravation, the family with whom Roehm stayed could no longer afford to keep him, and Roehm was too poor to pay for his lodgings. The community decided then to rotate Roehm from place to place leaving him at the mercy of the lady of the house. One day, Roehm found himself in the presence of a woman whose own family and chores burdened her greatly. Realizing that he only encumbered her further, Roehm thus decided to spend the evening fasting so as not to make her dinner duties harder. This particular community's women illustrated that not all Germans were as able as others to host the religious leaders. Thus, the important cooperation of women in the establishment of other congregations did not exist in all areas.[10]

Women in cities also helped pastors by providing shelter and food. Although places like San Antonio benefited from a larger population with neighbors living nearer each other than those on the frontier, Lutheran women still tended to the new pastors. For instance, Zizelmann planned to establish a Lutheran church in San Antonio in 1857. For the first several months in San Antonio, he lived with a German-born baker who, while selling his wares on the streets, met the pastor. The baker and his wife took in Zizelmann and gave him shelter; the lady of the house prepared food for Zizelmann and helped him find his way about. With the aid of this friendly family, Zizelmann held the first church service in German before fifteen people, including several "inquisitive" blacks. Although he had a dubious start, Zizelmann with the faithful help of a German woman gathered greater numbers throughout the years.[11]

Rural regions generally had fewer resources for pastor and congregation, but the frontier also offered greater opportunity for women to have a say. While Pastor John Roehm relaxed in

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[10] Heinrich, 10-12. Several groups of German intellectual refugees organize five farming communities. The immigrants often spoke Latin, and, as a result, other Germans and Anglos called the communities Latin Settlements. Biesele, 56-57.

[11] Ziehe, 16; August L. Wolff, "Story of Saint John Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas," DRT.

the grass, *Frau* Sarah Ebner joined in the pastor and her husband's mulling over possible topics for sermons and possible hymn selections. Additionally, Rosa Kleberg insisted that her children be baptized despite the fact that there was no regular pastor attending her community. Since having that sacrament was so important to Kleberg, she convinced Pastor Ervendberg to journey to her house and to perform the rite for all of her children. Thus she ensured that her own family and her community had the services of a pastor.[12]

A soon as a pastor arrived in a locality, women pledged their support to the establishment of a Lutheran church. Pastor John Trinklein on visiting *Frau* Raedle "was bombarded, not with broomstick—but with hundred and one half questions about her old home community." She asked questions, promised to help the Pastor in any way necessary, and gave him fifty cents as a starting donation. Raedle assured Trinklein of her attendance every Sunday. True to her word, she showed up that very next Sunday to the overflowing services held in *Frau* Ebner's house. Similarly, in 1855, *Frau* Hoffman assisted Pastor John George Ebinger, from St. Chrischona, as he prepared to found Ebenezer Lutheran in Berlin, Texas. Ebenezer Lutheran was the first Lutheran church in Washington County, and Hoffmann was instrumental in its beginning as she gave money and time while she also encouraged others to attend.[13]

The Lutheran women offered more than just physical shelter to the pastors; they shared knowledge gained through experience. Having lived in Texas longer than most of the pastors, the women knew how to react to the Texas environment, and they were willing to share what they knew with the pastors. Women suggested cures for Texas's bugs along with sustenance and

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[12] Rosa Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas" *Texas Historical Association Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (April 1898): 299; Harold E. Fehler, *Hundredth Anniversary of St. John Lutheran Church in New Ulm, Texas*, (New Ulm, Texas: St. John Lutheran Church, 1968), 5-6; Heinrich, 10-13.

[13] Dorothy Kuehl, "*Freidans au: A Centennial History of Trinity Lutheran Church, Riesel, Texas, 1883-1983* (1983)," 28; Ebenezer Lutheran Church, *Ebenezer Lutheran Church: 125 Anniversary*, *Berlin, TX* (1976), CAH; Arthur Grusendorg, "A Century of Education in Washington County Texas," (Ph.D diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1938), 50-59.

shelter. For example, John Trinklein found *Frau* Ebner's advice particularly helpful during his stay with her and her family in Reisel. Ebner housed Trinklein for several weeks in the winter of 1883 as he traveled to nearby farmers seeing if any settlers had an interest in establishing a Lutheran church in the area. On his first day, Trinklein visited ten families who all pledged their attendance when he held services that coming Sunday. One evening after his travels while the Pastor reposed on the lush green grass in the Ebners' front lawn, the lady of the house warned him that the "red bugs" surely would attack him. Trinklein, unfamiliar with that threat and comfortable where he lay, lingered awhile discussing topics for his first sermon in the nascent congregation that lacked any sort of official building. That night, however, broke the peace of his stay. He awoke with miserable itching and burning all over his body, moaning as he tried to determine the culprit. Ebner, hearing the pastor's misery, knocked on his door and with a soothing voice offered him some butter, which she claimed always cured the irritation of red bugs, and the pastor should use as much as he needed. Trinklein accepted and after he spread a generous helping over his body the discomfort almost immediately stopped.[14]

Moreover, pastor's wives provided vital services for their husbands and for the success of Lutheran churches. These wives maintained the families' households while the pastors were attending to their circuit routes or dealing with the issues of one town's congregation. Henriette Blumberg Elley, born in Prussia, was intent on marrying a pastor, and on 31 January, 1847 in Germany she wed Pastor Gustav Elly. They immigrated to Texas; Henriette traveled to the frontier with Gustav and kept house and raised their children while he traveled to his many religious communities. *Frau* Basse raised eight children in very rural circumstances. The Basses had a farm that struggled for most of Pastor Basse's life and he received little in salary for

[14] Dorothy Kuehl, "*Freidans au: A Centennial History of Trinity Lutheran Church, Riesel, Texas, 1883-1983* (1983)," Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas (hereafter TC), 13-15.

those early years. Likewise, *Frau* Marie Evendberg kept her own family as well as sixty German orphans whose parents had died in the epidemics of the late 1840s. Other women married to religious leaders found similar challenges as Lutheran pastors' wives. Marie Ervendberg similarly helped her husband in his ministry by tending to the women of the congregation, and she arranged her living room when her husband held services in their home. Moreover, Marie fostered lively religious conversation within her home. Even with her heavy domestic duties, she often invited educated, Lutheran guests to her home so they could discuss religious teachings and ideas around her children and the orphans she tended. Hermann Seele constantly visited and he loathed missing an evening with the Ervendbergs as Marie disliked any disruptions to her planned socials. Additionally, pastors' wives in rural areas also provided great help as they cared for the congregation while the pastor was away. Roehm married Louise Bandle of New Braunfels and in 1855 settled in Frelsburg to establish a church. Roehm continued to attend surrounding communities leaving Louise to watch over the hearth and church. When her husband was away, *Frau* Roehm managed the children and congregation. She also taught any confirmation or school classes that might be in session during her husband's absence.[15]

Looking after the Physical Church

As Lutheran women had looked after the pastor's body and spirit, they provided for the churches' physical and practical needs. Earthly Churches represented the body of Christ and the women looked after its basic needs as they did for their own families and their pastors. While

[15] "Early History of Schumansville, TX, Guadalupe County," 18-24, TC; Esther L. Mueller, "Pastor and Mrs. Henry S.W. Basse" in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, comp. Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 6; Herman Seele, "Marie Ervendberg" *Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung*, January 12, 1888; Hermann Seele, "Wednesday, December 24th, 1845," and "Sunday, December 28th, 1845" *The Diary of Hermann Seele & Seele's Sketches from Texas: Pioneer, Civic, and Cultural Leader, German-Texan Writer*, trans., Theodore Gish (Austin, Texas: German-Texan Heritage Society, 1995), 342-344.

the church covered and protected its members, just as the husbands and fathers did for their loved ones, women served the congregation in the same vein as they did their spouses, children, and parents. German women wished for church services to reflect as closely as possible those they had known in Germany. Since congregations often started out poor, they could not purchase religious symbols and objects, such as crosses and altars. Also, *frauen* realized that services needed candles, communion cups, and other articles of service. Moreover, congregations needed land on which to build holy buildings and bury their dead. Thus the women donated or sold land for the Lutheran church in a way they could not have in Germany where the church was already established, and German women had less opportunity to own land.

Before a community built a church, it needed first to make the gathering of the faithful official. Most rural settlements had *Reiseprediger* attend their religious needs every few months, but, when the Germans felt such routine insufficient to meet their needs, they assembled to discuss the creation of a congregation. One example shows that the Germans living in Cypress Creek held lay church services in homes since the first settlers had arrived in 1848. By 1853, the community gathered and the Lutherans agreed upon a constitution that included a statement of faith, a vow that Martin Luther's teachings would guide their actions, and a description of the church's by-laws. The newly organized members of the congregation then built their first church, a structure where children attended school during the weekdays. At the beginning of this process, congregations also called a pastor. Many times they invited the circuit rider who had attended them. In some instances, the pastor agreed to less money than he had expected as salary. A few occasions show that pastors declined such offers either because they wished to serve all the communities in their area or because they thought the asking community too small

to support an organized church. Yet, many pastors did accept, and, when they did the community, with constitution and new pastor, held regular Sunday services.[16]

Although not allowed positions of authority or even a vote in church matters, Lutheran women visibly supported their churches during this period of development. *Frau* Amelie Mann, a widowed farmer from Prussia, and her two grown daughters, Elizabeth and Christine, told Pastor Roehm that they eagerly awaited his church, and they promised to attend every week. The three women also pledged to aid his ministry wherever he might need them. Similarly, Mariann Meyer and her brother Adolph, who settled in the area later named Meyersville after their family, wished to have a pastor and to establish a Lutheran church. As more Germans arrived in 1849 and 1850, the Meyers and others decided to build a church. But a Methodist circuit rider was the only religious leader who had ministered to the community despite the Meyers' call for a pastor. Unwilling to organize as a Methodist congregation, these particular immigrants led by Mariann and Adolph successfully called Christoph Adam Sager, a young St. Chrischona pastor, to serve their community.[17]

Besides pledging support, women signed the church constitutions, which both differentiated them from their German counterparts who would not have been allowed to sign such documents and illustrated their early involvement in Texas Lutheranism. Wilhelmina Barth and Anna Gombert signed St. John's Lutheran Church in San Antonio's constitution in December 1857. Likewise, founders of Pastor Ervendberg's First Evangelical Church in New Braunfels included ten single women as signers of its constitution. Eight were in their twenties while one was seventeen and another was thirty-four. Married women at times also lent their signatures to constitutions. For instance, Elizabeth Holekamp along with her husband Frederick

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[16] "First Protestant Church, New Braunfels," 448, Edna Mergle Papers, Sophienberg.
[17] "St John Evangelical Church, Meyersville, Texas," 10, DRT.

were charter members of Pastor Evendberg's church in New Braunfels. Elizabeth actively served this nascent congregation by preparing food and helping attend children during services while caring for her own young family.[18]

When communities agreed to construct church buildings, women appear prominently in the early undertakings as they proffered tangible help. German *frauen* gave what they possessed toward helping their churches' finances and toward providing church property. *Frau* Anna Gambert loaned St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in San Antonio twenty-five dollars and renewed that loan on April 1, 1861 to see the church through difficult financial times. New congregations needed land for the buildings, but they also required a reserved and sacred land for burial. In 1883, *Frau* Weidner Winters donated three acres of land to St. Martin Church in New Braunfels. That church organized in 1854 had undergone renovations in 1880. In an effort to help the growing church, Winters wanted the congregation to have a cemetery so it could bury its dead in a timely and respectable manner. Moreover, St. Martin members, with their own cemetery, would not have to share burial plots with Baptist and Methodist settlers.[19]

In contrast, some of the Lutheran women sold instead of donating land for the construction of a church. Elizabeth Luedthke, in one such instance, sold nine acres to Centennial Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Brenham for twenty dollars and a sixty-dollar note. Another woman, *Frau* Stone in Reisel refused to sell Pastor Roehm four of her two thousand two hundred acres of land so he could build the church. Stone's land sold for five dollars an acre in 1883, but she wished to hold her property to sell at a higher rate. Pastor Roehm noted in his memoirs that

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[18] Committie of First Protestant Church New Braunfels, "*Namen der Bründer der Gemeinde in 1845*," Sophienburg; Everett Anthony Fey, *New Braunfels: The First Founders*, vol. 1, *The History* (Austin, Texas: Eakins Press, 1994), 114-118; "Story of St. John Lutheran, San Antonio," 15; Norman J. Dietel, "Frederick (Fritz) George Holekamp," Holekamp Vertical Files, Sohienburg.

[19] Pastor M. Fuchs, "History of St. Martin Church, New Braunfels, Texas," 447, St. Martin's Evangelical Church," Sophienburg; St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2L2880, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Records, CAH; 10th Census of the United States Census, 1880, Population schedules of McClennen, Roll T773.

Stone did indeed obtain the better rate that she desired when she sold the land at twenty-five dollars and eventually one hundred dollars an acre to German immigrants.[20]

When the first Lutheran congregations began constructing their churches, the structures were typically bare edifices that provided space for worship but most often lacked ceremonial accoutrements. Even the *Adelsverein* town of Fredericksburg did not have separate denominational places of worship until the 1850s. The congregations of Zion Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, established in 1852 under direction of Pastor Zizelmann, chose not to hold services in the *Verein Kirche* and, instead, held its services in a bare, vacant limestone house. Some congregations were not as fortunate as that of Zion Lutheran, which at least had Sunday worship in a completed structure. San Antonio's St. John's Lutheran Church only laid the cornerstone of its first church building in 1860, three years after the congregation organized. However, the Civil War and resulting shortages of men and supplies halted complete construction until 1876. Throughout the period of immigration and beyond, Lutherans continued to hold services in makeshift structures until they could build permanent churches.[21]

In rural areas in Texas, Lutheran women had greater public involvement in religious matters than they had possessed in Germany, especially before the synod organization of 1851. German communities fortunate enough to have a church did not possess much money or even

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[20] Kuehl, 30.

[21] Ervendburg and the settlers in New Braunfels had land reserved for churches as well. For examples of communities that did not build their churches until around or after 1890. In 1890, Brenham's Lutherans organized an official congregation, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, and completed their first church building in 1891. Sue Watkins Grasty and Martin Ost, *Our God is Marching On: A Centenial history of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Round Rock, Texas* (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckman-Jones, 1966), 10-15; St John Lutheran Church, *Denkschrift verfasst zur Gedachtniss, Feier der vor 50 Jahren geschehenen Grundung der Deutschen Evangelisch Lutherischen St. Johannes-Gemeinde in San Antonio, Texas* (San Antonio, Texas: N. Tengg, 1907); Dick Mgebroff, *History of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Brenham, Texas, 1880* (Brenham. Texas: St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1950). Brenham's 1891 church was destroyed in the 1900 hurricane that devastated Galveston; Johannes Mgebroff, *Geshichte der ersten deutschen evangelisch lutherischen Synode, Texas* (Chicago, Illinois: Wartburg Publication House, 1902), 43-45; Zion Lutheran Church, *Diamanteres Jubilaeum, 1852-1927, der Evangelisch Lutherischen Zions Germeinde Fredericksburg, Texas* (Fredericksburg, Texas: Press of Fredericksburg Publication Company, 1927), 27.

traditional church symbols. Poor treasuries prevented congregations from purchasing such items while slow and expensive transportation hindered the importing of goods from Germany. As such, these meager structures for worship possessed none of the accoutrements of established religious institutions in Central Europe. When the floors consisted of dirt and the windows usually had no glass panes, the interior lacked holy objects, such as stained glass, crosses, and banners; the women noticed this deficiency and very often tried to correct it.[22]

Nascent congregations needed assistance, especially since they often had little money to fund further building or additions. Louis Ervendberg's German Protestant church in New Braunfels tallied a mere thirteen dollars and ninety-three cents through donations in 1845 and 1846. The church's expenses for those two years reached thirty-two dollars and five cents, leaving the congregation in debt. The next year, the treasury increased as the arrival of more German immigrants brought more donations. For that year, Ervendberg collected ninety-two dollars and forty-five cents with nineteen dollars and thirty-seven cents left after expenses for religious undertakings. The First Protestant Church of New Braunfels benefited from a growing population that supported church efforts.[23]

Rural settlements often fared worse as their congregations lacked surplus cash as farmers before the 1870s kept their families fed and clothed, but they rarely had any money left over. As a result, rural pastors worked for less money than their urban counterparts. Moreover, farmers paid their pastors with food, which allowed families to compensate pastors without spending money. Providing the pastor with food gave him food that he did not have time to grow. The offering of food also helped the Lutheran pastors' wives because they were so often busy with

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[22] Trinity Evangelical Church Committee, "Trinity Evangelical," 669, DRT.

[23] "First Protestant Church, New Braunfels," Edna Mergle Papers, 448, Sophienburg; Oscar Haas, *The First Protestant Church: A History and a People, 1845-1955* (New Braunfels, Texas: Zeitung, 1955), 8.

congregational and family matters that they had little time remaining to cultivate more than a small garden.[24]

After the 1870s farming as a livelihood became a bit easier as railroads and new machinery eventually helped Germans harvest for profit instead of subsistence. For instance, New Ulm's St. John's Lutheran Church had a congregation wealthy enough to purchase a two-hundred dollar and twenty-five cents organ. By 1892 a developing railroad entered into New Ulm, but laid its tracks away from the old New Ulm town site where St. John's sanctuary stood. However, a land developer reserved an area of the new town alongside the tracks for churches. Thus the congregation moved to a newer church that they helped construct with their own fuller pockets.[25]

Likewise, as farmers made more money they could offer more to their church. That fact along with the growing number of immigrants made the churches' growth possible both structurally and monetarily. Still, women provided necessary items for worship during this period. What they offered facilitate religious ceremony while also providing visual symbolism for the churches. For example, *Frau* Schoenberg gave a picture of Martin Luther to hang in the sanctuary in honor of the reformer.[26]

No matter the year, pastors serving developing churches needed help collecting the sacred items necessary for Lutheran services, and women lent great aid in that process. The altar as the focal point of the church and sacred place for the congregation caught the German women's attention. From that part of the church, pastors held communion, gave blessings, and said prayers. The sanctuary of a newly organized or poor congregation possessed no such fine

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[24] Esther L. Mueller, "Log Cabins to Sunday Houses" in *Fredericksburg: A Glimpse of the Past From Logs to Sunday Houses*, ed., Ella Gold and Esther L. Mueller (Fredericksburg, Texas: *Vereins Kirche* Archives Committee, 1981), 12.

[25] "St John Evangelical Church, Meyersville, Texas," 11, DRT.

[26] Gertrude Franke, ed., *A Goodly Heritage: The Story of Carl Siegismund Bauer and his Descendants* (San Antonio, Texas: Alamo Press, 1975), 26.

marble or stone alter with an elaborate altar cloth covering it, much less the silver chalice and other parts of the communion service. *Frauen* almost immediately provided those types of traditional objects, as best they could. In 1868, *Frau* Charlotte Pille of New Ulm's St. John's Lutheran Church made an altar cloth by hand. Pille used the velvet from one of her coats to make the length of the cloth, and, from another coat, she took gold braiding as an edging for the covering. Pille's cloth remained on the church's alter until 1881 when the congregation purchased a new one for $21.50 when the church had a larger congregation and enough money.[27]

Similar to the importance of an altar cloth, the pulpit represented the pastors' authority in front of the congregation; the Lutheran *frauen* wanted their religious leaders to posses such symbolic power. Catharine Baumbach, Emma Beller, and Dorothea Wilkens collected money from their neighbors and raised enough to acquire a new pulpit and altar for St. John's Lutheran in San Antonio. Without denominational sanction, these women worked together publically to collect funds for much needed church objects. In a patriarchal denomination, women still assembled to serve their church, and their duties crossed age lines. When the women of St. John's gathered to purchase a pulpit and altar, Baumbach was 42, Beller was 24, and Wilkens was 76. These three women represented three generations of German Lutheran women who recognized the need for religious rituals and ceremony to bolster church authority and liken the new Texas churches with those in Germany. Thus, by raising money, Baumbach, Beller, and Wilkens highlighted church authority.[28]

Although going beyond what they would have done in Germany, Lutheran women in Texas who participated in religious life by offering their homes as places of rest or raising funds

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[27] 8th Census of the United States, 1860, Population Schedule for Austin County, Roll M653; 9th Census of the United States, 1870, Population Schedule for Austin County, Roll M593; 10th Census of the United States, 1880, Population Schedule for Austin County, Roll T773; Fehler, 7.

[28] 9th Census of the United States, 1870, Population Schedule for Bexar County, Roll M593; 10th Census of the United States, 1880, Population Schedule for Bexar County, Roll T773; 11th Census of the United States, 1890, Population Schedule for Bexar County, Roll T9; Wolff, "St. John Lutheran, San Antonio," 34.

for church needs did so within their accepted gendered roles. Certainly men of the major Lutheran Synods in Texas—the Texas Synod, Missouri Synod, General Council—objected to women making decisions, or taking part in official governing issues. Such protest derived directly from the doctrine of Martin Luther who argued women were too frail spiritually, mentally, and physically to lead the church. Luther pointed to Eve's original sin in the Garden of Eden as proof; after all, the devil was wise enough to tempt her when Adam was not around to defy the serpent's sophistry. Unlike Eve, Adam would have defeated the serpent by using God's own command that no one should eat from the tree of knowledge. Although this argument describes women as gullible and impressionable, Luther did not release women from church participation. Rather, he asserted that women serve the church through domestic labors done under the guidance of men.[29]

Similarly, Lutheran women in Texas who helped establish their churches worked within, instead of against, Luther's dictate. Those who cleaned churches, sewed goods for church use, or offered hand-made objects fulfilled their duties. The *frauen* of New Ulm's St. John's and San Antonio's St. John's, just as numerous other women for other churches, mirrored the New Testament sisters Mary and Martha who worked for Christ. One cooked and cleaned while the other listened to Christ's teachings. Lutheran women in Texas embodied both women as they cared for the sanctuaries so they would have the ability to listen to preachers talking of Christ. Moreover, women accomplished this dual role through their own ideas of women's work, traditions to which they themselves adhered on the frontier.

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[29] Martin Luther, "Sermons on Genesis, 1527" in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jarislov Pelikkan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 77-78. The Texas Synod joined with the General Council until 1894 when they split over theological issues. Then the majority of synods joined the Synod of Iowa and Other States , which instigated a break with St. Chrischona. Congregations upset by the break of this 45 year relationship formed the Old German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas that lasted until 1914. Heinrich, 20-25; Vardell, 20-22; Ziehe, 58-80. The Texas Synod was established in 1851, the Missouri Synod was founded in 1855, and the General Council was organized in 1868.

Maintaining the Faith

As the *frauen* used their gendered roles to take more active part in the Lutheran church in Texas, the women confronted the presence of the Catholic Church and other denominations that, though never omnipresent throughout Texas, still had a noticeable presence in many areas. From the earliest period Germans met many Catholics and saw Catholic institutions. After 1867, when immigrants arrived in Galveston, they saw St. Mary's Orphanage Asylum. When the immigrants traveled inland, they saw the five eighteenth-century San Antonio mission chapels. Although these structures were not the impressive missionary complex of a century earlier, some of the chapels continued to hold masses for San Antonio Catholics, and they continued to represent the religious stronghold of the nearby Hispanic communities. Wherever the Germans went in Mexican-influenced south and central Texas, they were likely to encounter Catholics. Despite the two denominations' bitter historical relationship, Catholicism and Lutheranism appeared closer in worship and mien than the other denominations that the immigrants witnessed in later years.[30]

Catholics often garnered interest from German women. Early immigrants exhibited wonder at the Catholic churches in places such as San Antonio while many German Catholics joined Catholic churches and some even supported the Church's missionary efforts. German Lutherans, however, observed the Catholics and their traditions while often creating friendships with them. For instance, in 1836, Frederick and Louise Ernst allowed Münsterlanders to deposit their holy relics in the Ernsts' house while the families escaped the advancing Mexican army during the Texas Revolution. When the Ernsts returned they found that army had not damaged

[30] James T. Moore, *Through Blood and Fire: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836-1900* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 20-22.

the Ernst's homestead as it had surrounding homes. Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber claimed that the crosses the Münsterlanders planted in her family's yard prevented a Catholic army ransacking a place decorated with holy relics.[31]

Catholics were not the only faithful people that the immigrants encountered. German Lutherans who came after 1836 witnessed denominations that they had previously not encountered in Central Europe. Generally, denominations in the American West lacked the rigid denominational hierarchy that had previously sustained division between those with religious training and those who sat in the pews. In the wake of the Second Great Awakening, denominations became more individualistic and emotive. Methodist preachers held camp meetings where they encouraged lay people to pray and tell of personal experiences. Baptists and Presbyterians shared this emotionalism as both called their members to attend camp meetings and share their testimonies in front of those gathered. Such personal encouragement attracted people who had long felt disconnected from the ritualistic and authoritarian faith of their parents. These feelings, which the American settlers brought with them as they moved westward, took even greater hold on the frontier where the traditional denominational authority held little influence. In New Braunfels, Pastor Ervendberg commented to Hermann Seele on the lack of church tradition and ritual in Texas. The Lutheran pastor asserted that "Methodism with its arousal of emotions is fitting for Americans since they are lacking in religious education." Lutherans, in contrast, have no need for such shows as they possessed "dogma and church structure" that provided order and precluded emotional outbursts.[32]

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[31] Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber, "Life of German Pioneers in Early Texas" *Texas Historical Association Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (January 1899): 231.

[32] Hermann Seele, "Sunday June, 8th, 1845," *The Diary of Hermann Seele & Seele's Sketches from Texas: Pioneer, Civic, and Cultural Leader, German-Texan Writer*, trans., Theodore Gish (Austin, Texas: German-Texan Heritage Society, 1995), 271; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 199-200.

Anglo-American Methodist, Baptist, or Presbyterian women exercised greater public roles in religious meetings than did women in traditional American denominations. Although women in mainstream denominations had few religious rights just as they had few legal and social rights, women in many churches that the Second Great Awakening influenced gained some voice. Many Americans believed, similar to Germans, that emotions controlled a woman's actions. For American women, this understanding of women and their emotions allowed them to become active in religious meetings and charity groups. In urban areas they formed benevolent societies to help the poor and prostitutes. Women in rustic places participated in camp meetings and held prayer meetings.[33]

Lutheran women's understanding of religion differed from that of the members of more evangelical American dominations surrounding them in Texas. Contrasting the outward expression of religious joy and thankfulness, German Lutherans stressed inner emotional reactions to their faith. On the whole, Germans disapproved of the emotionalism of the Baptists and Methodists. Rosa Kleberg remembered going to one camp meeting; she never visited another. For most Germans, these outdoor worship gatherings were too loud and full of clapping and singing in fervent manners not appropriate for holy services. Gustave Eisenhor admired a large pecan tree instead of listening to the goings-on during the one camp meeting he attended. The magnificent growth with its encompassing limbs led Eisenhor to wonder at "nature so sublimely beautiful" compared to "man so singularly deranged." This disapproval of such emotional exhibitions insulted more than just German Lutherans as one Norwegian Lutheran,

[33] Barbara Berg, *The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, the Woman and the City, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 28-36; Quakers and some other Utopian communities of the eighteenth century had visible and powerful women, but the more traditional Protestant religions excluded females from any form of authority.

Elise Waerenskold, critically told family how these groups intended to take heaven by a "storm of clapping."[34]

Therefore, Lutheran women sought to preserve their faith amidst those whom they viewed as less orthodox. Upon settling in Texas the *frauen* intended to keep their faith true to what they had known in Germany. Religion played a central role for these women and after the trial of immigration, faith helped accommodate them to their new lives. As a result, they continued their role as spiritual guides of the family to ensure that the other denominations did not taint their families' moral wellbeing. To do so, German women encouraged offspring to participate in Lutheran ceremonies and services, particularly the two sacraments of baptism and communion. They also kept a critical eye on those of different faiths and even on Lutherans not of German descent.

To help preserve their faith and ethnic identity, Lutheran women sought to reaffirm the congregational community through festivities. The ladies living in isolated settlements looked forward to gatherings which most often came because of religious reasons. Baptisms, marriages, confirmation, and harvests supplied the most common reasons for celebrations. Urban women gathered for similar occasions, but they had more opportunity as they were closer or had access to easier travel than their rural counterparts. German Lutheran women could more easily gather for religious study or tea since they lived in neighborhoods with other Germans.

Similarly, women did more than simply attend festivals and celebrations at churches, they instigated congregational gatherings. Coupland Lutheran women in 1866 held socials in the church yard. They welcomed all in the congregation and offered a selection of home-made treats. Consequently, women hosting festivals and fellowships reinforced the church as the

[34] Gustave Eisenhor to his brother, 19 March 1852, New Braunfels, 2D95, Gustave Eisenhor Papers, CAH; Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas,", 300; Elise Waerenskjold to T.A. Gjestvang, July 25, 1852, Four Mile Prairie, in *Lady With a Pen: Elise Waerenskjold in Texas in Texas*, ed. C.A. Clausen (St. Paul: North Central Publishing Company, 1961), 38-40.

center of their communities. The ladies of the church held numerous gatherings every year and provided a chance for neighbors to talk outside of Sunday service. Furthermore, viewing the church as the community center also reinforced the church as a forum for ethnic preservation where Germans met with other immigrant Lutherans. This preserved cultural identity as well since a close congregation maintained language, beliefs, and customs.[35]

Pastors' wives further encouraged ethnic continuity by opening their houses to those in need of a rest. *Frau* Dangers invited the Fuchs family to stay with her family in 1859. Fredericksburg hosted one of the German singing festivals so popular amongst the immigrants, and Adolph Fuchs greatly anticipated the event. He, his three youngest sons, and his two daughters, Adolphine and Ottilie, traveled from their home north of Marble Falls on the Colorado River. Dangers kept the Fuchs for the entirety of the festival that lasted three days. During that time, she oversaw the children and joined in the theological discussions of her husband and Adolph, both men of the cloth.[36]

As well as hosting religious socials, the Lutheran women particularly looked to observe religious life markers for their children and community. Women strove to ensure that the religious community celebrated and marked life events, such as baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death, as they had in Germany. Baptism and confirmation represented vital and public acts of faith. By emphasizing these traditions, the *frauen* reaffirmed the importance of religious participation for their children and the German community.

Baptism signified an important marker as a child symbolically entered into God's kingdom, and *frauen* kept it central to a child's life. Besides fulfilling their religious role as mothers to tend their offspring's spiritual health, women participated in baptism to serve their

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[35] Franke, 28-32; Virginia Roth Pochmann, *Some Early Texas Families: Roquemore, Lacy, Fouts, Pochmann, Burrows, and one hundred and fifty related familes* (Madison, Wisconsin: R.F. Pochmann, 1960), 24-27.

[36] Goeth, 63-65.

community. Overall, young babies had two godmothers as well as two godfathers present at their baptisms. In rural communities the numbers might be fewer, but one godmother stood present at the sacrament. When parents selected a woman as their child's godmother, they bestowed a sacred honor on the one they chose. Traditionally, the godmother helped the godchild's mother and father by educating that young person on Lutheran doctrine and making sure that the child was baptized and confirmed. Godparents alongside the parents and family taught children to be Lutheran and responsible women or men.[37]

Although baptism presented an important step for German Lutherans, parents often had to postpone the act because a pastor was not always present. Most mothers showed much concern for children not baptized. Amanda Karoline von Rosenberg Meerscheidt agreed with her mother that baptism represented a sacred act. Even though Meerscheidt's child was not baptized because they had no pastor, she promised her mother that the child would not become "a heathen" and would be baptized and confirmed. Before 1850, the lack of pastors meant that children waited until a *Reiseprediger* arrived or the community successfully called a pastor. Even in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, rural Germans often had no full time pastor to administer the sacrament. Waiting for baptism concerned many women because Lutherans believe that pastors should baptize infants, and not, as was the Baptists practice, older children. Pastor Klindworth of Immanuel Lutheran Church baptized six girls in 1872. Of those six, two were aged three and one was aged eight. The records list the other three as one year or younger, the normal baptismal time for a Lutheran baby.[38]

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[37] Millie Jacob and Ruth Egg, comp., "Record of St. John Lutheran Church , Meyersville: Church chronicle, congregational reports from 1850-1977," DRT; St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, San Antonio, 2L280, St. John Lutheran Church Papers, CAH.

[38] John Killian, "Baptismal records of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas, 1854-1883," TC; Amanda Karoline von Rosenberg Meerscheidt to mother, November 1851, La Grange, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH.

Similarly, Fredericksburgers brought their babies to Lutheran pastors for baptism. F. W. Basse preformed sacraments in the *Verein Kirche* from 1847 to 1849 when Burchard Dangers took over and served the community until his death from pneumonia in 1869. In Dangers' first year as pastor he baptized four boys and one girl ranging in age from ten days to four months old. Present at these ceremonies were the mothers and fathers as well as the godparents who participated in this symbolic act that allowed the child entrance into the church. By 1862, Dangers had baptized some fifty-six Lutheran babies.[39]

Lutheran women participated in and encouraged the rite for the salvation of their youth. Since the families did not always have a church close by or a pastor serving their community, the women's insistence on getting their children and the communities' children baptized became a prime instigator for the act. *Frauen* monitored German parents and their young. This kind of activity complemented their gender role as spiritual guide to the family and community. Similarly, women cherished baptismal certificates as keepsakes of that child's first symbolic religious rite.[40]

Lutheran women in Texas also emphasized the importance of confirmation, which symbolized the youths' maturation into adulthood and marked their memberships in the church. Lutheran adolescents entered catechism classes around the age of thirteen or fourteen and stayed in the classes for approximately two years. Children met once a week, usually on Sundays, but during high harvest seasons they sometimes changed schedules and made up for missed classes in the late fall. Pastors most often taught the children, both boys and girls, but when pastors were absent or on their circuit routes, pastors' wives instructed the youth. Subjects included studying the Bible as well as memorizing Luther's Small Catechism and other important

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[39] Records of the *Verein Kirche* Baptisms 1849.

[40] Confirmation Certificate of *Frau* Gevatterinn, April 1852, 0318 Oversized Box, Adolph Zinran Papers, Sophienburg.

doctrinal writings. At the end of the two year period, the pastor then examined the hopeful confirmands in front of gathered parents, family, and neighbors inside the church sanctuary. Each child had to answer questions regarding the Lutheran texts that they had studied over the previous years. Young girls and boys who answered the questions correctly received a blessing from the pastor and were then allowed to take communion for the first time. After that they qualified for membership in the church, thus marking a step toward religious maturity and adulthood.

Although women would not gain a full voice in church matters, they consistently comprised many of the confirmands at Lutheran churches. At St. John's Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Pastor Zizelmann confirmed ten adolescents in 1857. Five girls ranging from thirteen to sixteen years-old and five boys ranging from fourteen to nineteen years-old composed the class. Girls remained prominent members in religious classes and took advantage of their ability to do so. Moreover, the young daughters learned Lutheran doctrine that guided and informed their understanding of religion and their place in that world. This kept the youth in line with traditional German beliefs, which appeared important for those families living in urban areas with Tejanos and Anglos surrounding them.[41]

Families living in predominantly German towns sent their children to catechism classes regularly. New Braunfels's First Evangelical Church from 1862 to 1890 confirmed 488 boys and 534 girls. In all but eight years of these years, girls outnumbered boys demonstrating that girls participated in this religious rite as much as boys and that the church did not restrict girls

[41] Wolff, "Story of St. John Lutheran Church , San Antonio," DRT.

from attending. In 1888 and 1889, there were an equal number of both genders. Thus, girls in Texas passed into young adulthood after this act similar to girls in Germany.[42]

Rural families, likewise, had their children attend confirmation classes even though that often meant the children would not be able to work as much on the family farm or even attend week-day school. Gustave Eisenhor remarked that most of the confirmands in New Braunfels' First Evangelical Church in 1852 could not even read and only barely could decipher the catechism. Still, they had attended catechism classes faithfully and listened to all the pastor had to say regarding Lutheran doctrine and beliefs as they prepared for their oral exams. Numbers in rural communities showed many boys and girls attending catechism instruction. For example, the pastor of St. John's in Meyersville confirmed twelve boys and six girls in 1871. From 1870s onward, girls equaled if not surpassed in numbers or ability their male counterparts. Still, the children bore the greatest burden of duty. The records of St. John's in Meyersville records that girls admitted to the pastor that they had to stay up late to read Luther's Small Catechism because their day was too full of household chores. The girls still eagerly attended each session.[43]

Even though baptism and confirmation occurred in churches, weddings and funerals were often held in homes. In Germany, marriages and funerals usually had both a church and a domestic component as part of the ceremonies would be held in a sanctuary with the participants moving to a person's home afterwards. In Texas, women in rural areas tended to host the

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[42] The eight years when boys outnumbered girls were 1864, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1882, and 1885. The church records do not show confirmands for the following seven years: 1873, 1874, 1875, 1877, 1880, 1881, 1883. "First Evangelical Church Confirmation Records," Oscar Haas, "Sources for First Evangelical Church of New Braunfels, Church History," 2N404, CAH; Lauren Ann Katner, "Growing up Female in New Braunfels" Social and Cultural Adaption in a German –Texas Town" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 49-50.

[43] Gustave Eisenhor to his brother, 19 March 1852, New Braunfels, 2D95, Eisenhor Papers, CAH; St. John's records offer interesting historical accounts because after every confirmation class, the preacher prayed for political and natural interests. He prayed for those "suffering from the bloody battles" in Germany and for Mexicans recovering from earthquakes the previous year, although this rural community was isolated from much international information. Jacob and Egg, "Record of St. John Lutheran Church, Meyersville: Church chronicle, congregational reports from 1850-1977," DRT.

Lutheran weddings and funerals since churches were far away. Moreover, many couples wished to marry in a family member's home. Although Germans often chose to have weddings and funerals in Lutheran churches when such institutions were nearby, when necessity required a secular setting, these events maintained a sense of sacredness because of the recited Lutheran prayers, hymns, and blessings. Still, *frauen* did not lead the services but they provided the space for these religious gatherings in Texas. Living on the frontier with few established churches nearby, the women were more involved with hosting the entire wedding or funeral whereas in Germany women generally provided refreshments for receptions occurring after the ceremonies.[44]

Lutheran families viewed weddings as a joyous union that God gave to the couple and community; thus, ceremonies were marked with religious ritual. Pastors blessed the new couples and led the event, which often occurred in the home of the couple's family or friends. The Romberg family hosted three ceremonies in their log cabin for Frederike Romberg's two sisters and her daughter. Eight years later after the Rombergs had moved to another home, their daughter Louise Romberg wed Wilhelm Fuchs. Adolph Fuchs, Wilhelm's father and a Lutheran pastor, married the young couple. In his wedding sermon, Fuchs counseled Louise and Wilhelm to protect the new family they created with their union. A strong marriage based on an abiding faith in God would protect them and preserve them in hard times. Similarly, Hermann Seele officiated the marriage of Friederike Moeschen and Christoph Riebeling. Friederike's father gave the two lovers consent during his birthday party, and Seele performed the act for the eager young couple. Although, not a trained minister but a justice of the peace, Seele with the help of *Frau* Moeschen saw to the sacredness of the ceremony. Moeschen improvised an altar, and

[44] Goeth, 73-74, 105-109.

Seele instructed members of the *Sangerverein* (singing society) to end the ceremony with *Das ist der Tag des Herrn* (This is the Lord's day), a favorite Sunday tune.[45]

Likewise, Lutherans maintained religious traditions during funerals even though many were held in homes. Seele again came to the aid of the aforementioned *Frau* Moeschen after the death of her husband from mysterious circumstances. She asked Seele to call the pastor, to order the coffin, and to reserve the carriage that would take the body to the cemetery. Also, she wanted, at her husband's request when he was alive, to have the *Sangerverein* present. The choir serenaded her husband with Lutheran hymns just as it had during her daughter and son-in-law's marriage. The wife of the deceased worked hard to ensure religious leaders did correct sacred acts outside of the church.[46]

Organizing the Faithful

Lutheran women participated in church religious rites and helped to decorate sanctuaries; they also formed their own church-recognized Lutheran organizations. Lutheran churches continued their conservative stance preventing women from becoming preachers, but the *frauen* did have the opportunity to serve their church in more public roles. First, though women did not instruct men, the *frauen* taught children in churches. Second, these women began to offer help to the Synod and its schools. Unlike the women's individual efforts to provide altar cloths and purchase pulpits for their newly-organized and local congregations, *frauen* eventually formed actual organizations under which they additionally served the state synod.

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[45] Louise Romberg Fuchs, "*Erinnerungen*" (1927) 71, 79, CAH; Hermann Seele, Hermann Seele, *The Cypress and Other Writings of a German Pioneer in Texas*, trans. Edward C. Breitenkamp (Austin: University of Austin Press, 1979), 123-124.

[46] *Frau* Moeschen and her son-in-law Christoph murdered *Herr* Moeschen with the aid of Friederike. Friederike confessed to Seele and other New Braunfels citizens that her father's verbal abuse of her, her mother, and her husband led them to finally to murder. Seele, 127-128.

The immigrants established German-Lutheran Sunday Schools as soon as they established their churches. The majority of church constitutions called for Sunday school classes for adults and children. The adults discussed Biblical passages and sermons, while teachers taught children prayers and Bible verses. In towns with large enough churches, these meetings were held inside while rural congregations often held classes outside, especially for the young.

Men most often held these classes in the early congregations, a fact that supports Lutheran tradition restricting women from becoming religious leaders; even so, a few exceptional women teachers existed. Pastor Ervendberg supported the patriarchal church tradition by selecting Hermann Seele as the New Braunfels school teacher during the week, and, for the latter part of the 1840s, on Sunday he took over teaching the children their Bible lessons. In smaller communities, pastors often took over the Sunday class duties even with a plethora of *frauen* in the neighborhood. However, some women did teach despite the overall tendency to have men in charge of classes. Women who taught came from respected town families or were married to the pastor. For instance, *Frau* Lieb, wife of Salem Lutheran Church's pastor, started teaching classes in 1872 to assist Herr H.F. Winkelmann. Congregants sent their children to the school for an annual donation of six dollars.[47]

Nonetheless, German men left much of the responsibility of instructing youths to women. Since a woman's duty was to *kinder und kirche*, she had experience and knowledge not only on how to serve but how best to handle the young. For example, mothers taught children about the Bible in their homes before the arrival of pastors and the establishment of churches. Thus, teaching the pre-adolescent and pre-confirmation age children was consistent with the women's domestic roles. In New Braunfels by the 1850s, *frauen* held Sunday school in the First

[47] Salem Lutheran Church, *Salem Lutheran Church, Tomball, Texas, 1852-1952: One Hundred Years of God's Grace* (Tomball, Texas: Richards Printing, 1952), 5-9.

Evangelical Church before regular services began. Each woman took her pupils to a particular part of the sanctuary where she listened as each intently recited a *Somtag-schul Spriech* (Sunday school speeches) that they had learned since the previous Sunday. Women teachers also instructed the young Lutherans on morality and honesty by teaching parables and reading from the Bible.[48]

Frauen found some authority in the church by teaching in Sunday schools, but weekday schools, held in churches, remained under men's control. With the absence of a comprehensive public schools system in Texas, teachers in German communities taught classes in conjunction with Sunday Schools and churches. On August 11, 1845, Hermann Seele opened the German-English School under the direction of Pastor Ervendberg, and Seele held classes under the same cluster of oak trees where the Lutheran church congregated every Sunday. Likewise, Fredericksburg's first week-day classes were held in the *Verein Kirche*. Likewise, Pastor Zizelmann taught German students for one year while he was pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in San Antonio. Other German settlements similarly conducted school in the church making double use of the space, benches, and bells. The Church bells served either to call people to worship or children to study. Only after a church had existed for several years could the treasury support building a separate structure for students.[49]

Although many Germans felt more comfortable with traditional male teachers instructing their children, some women did have the opportunity to teach in religious-affiliated schools. For most communities, men appeared the more appealing choices to instruct the children because the

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[48] Oscar Haas, "Sources for First Evangelical Church of New Braunfels, Church History," 2N404, CAH

[49] In 1839, at the behest of President Mirabeau Lamar, Texas Congress passes a bill planning for primary to secondary levels leaving control to each county. This planned failed and the 1845 Texas constitution created free schools supported by no less that 1/10 of the state budget. Although the state constitutions of 1866 and 1869 called for similar state supported schools, a thorough and broad public education system did not exist by the end of the century. Frederick Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1925), 30, 45-50; Biesele, 126; Ziehe, 52-52; For a history of education in Texas see, *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Education," http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/EE/khe1.html.

schools remained so closely connected to the churches. Moreover, men often had more training in sciences and other subjects than did German women. Still, despite the patriarchal traditions and their educational limits, a few women did teach in German schools. For example, two women taught in Lutheran schools in Houston. In acts symbolizing the close connection between churches and schools, both women eventually married pastors.[50]

Certainly those women who did teach in Sunday schools or weekday schools influenced their students, but Lutheran *frauen* had their greatest authority in church matters after they formed groups known as *frauervereinen*. Known after the 1920s as Ladies Aid Societies, these early *frauervereinen* mirrored the organizations of churches in that they had presidents, treasurers, secretaries, and other officers who guided the members' work; the difference was that women held all those offices in a *frauerverein*. Because of opposition from men and isolation of many rural settlers, German Lutheran women formed these groups sparingly in the mid-to late-nineteenth century. Galveston had one of the first Texas *frauervereinen*, which the ladies had established by 1858.[51]

Even so, most congregations did not have similar groups until the late 1880s, after which the numbers continued to grow well into the new century. Two main factors explain this trend. First, many Lutheran pastors were reluctant to give women positions that challenged doctrinal understanding of their role within the church. Second, women themselves remained hesitant to organize. These women often thought they should continue to serve their church by doing the same tasks without official recognition, especially in the face of religious leaders' displeasure. Yet, women continued to meet to discuss church needs, and eventually many petitioned pastors for official recognition of their service. The members of *frauervereinen* raised money for their

[50] The women were Margaret Bohmert who married Casper Braun in 1851 and Justine Sophia Dreier who married Christoph Adam Sager in 1853. Ziehe, 35, 336.

[51] Turner, 14-18.

churches by selling baked goods or handmade clothes and hosting socials or pot-luck dinners. Many sold extra butter or cheese with the proceeds going to their fundraising effort. The women met at the parsonage or a woman's home for devotion while they made whatever item, such as food or clothes, they intended to sell. Creating these types of goods corresponded with women's accepted roles. Moreover, men oversaw the meetings. Although not present for the entire event, pastors opened and closed the gatherings. Still, women took on untraditional roles. They said prayers, read the Bible and sermons, and led theological discussions.[52]

Frauervereinen represent very important female organizations that reflected the spirit of women's early contributions. As *Frauen* Catharine Baumbach, Emma Beller, and Dorothea Wilkens had collected money for St. John's pulpit and altar, women continued to donate money and purchase goods for their church. This spirit of Martha's service, as some termed it at the time, reflected women's thriftiness and servant heart that led them to offer what they could for their local congregation. The women from St. John's Evangelical Church in San Antonio also provided shutters and blinds for the sanctuary at a cost of eighty dollars in 1872. In that same year, *Frauen* Beller, Luirgsweiler, Kirchuer, Jeke, and Zoller raised fifty dollars from free will offerings to purchase and paint pews. By the end of the decade, the *frauerverein* had subsidized the erection of a platform in the church, and they secured an organ for the sanctuary.[53]

After forming a *frauerverein*, the women received recognition from the Lutheran leaders, something that had not occurred previously. For instance, H.C. Ziehe notes that in 1896 Pastor O. Hartmann reported to the Lutheran Synod that the library at Brenham's college was in dire need as it had few books and it had no cabinets for the monographs and geological and

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[52] Bethlehem Lutheran Church, "*A Brief History of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, William Penn (Route 2, Brenham) Washington County, Texas* (1960)," TC; Johnson, "A City on a Hill," TC; Dorothy Kuehl, "*Freidans au: A Centennial History of Trinity Lutheran Church, Riesel, Texas, 1883-1983* (1983), 35.

[53] St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, San Antonio, 2L280, St. John's Lutheran Church Papers, CAH.

zoological exhibits. Hartmann implored the Synod pastors to inform the *Frauervereinen* of this need. The record does not indicate what became of Hartmann's supplication, but his words acknowledge the work of the Lutheran women in helping to sustain the church's work.[54]

Although Hartmann and others certainly recognized the women's support, the Lutheran church did not sanction official female organizations until the last decades of the nineteenth century. Lutheran leaders working with patriarchal hierarchy and traditions did not want to provide women their own areas of official authority. In 1887, the most influential Lutheran Synod in Texas at that time, the General Council of the Synod of Iowa and Other States, considered two points on women's work. First, it called for all congregations to organize *frauervereinen*. Second, it requested that district synods create standing male committees to oversee those societies and report on their contributions. The records show that the General Council members dropped the point. By so glibly ending further discussion, the convention placed the issue of synodically sanctioned women's organizations behind other major issues that Lutherans faced in that year. Among other matters discussed at the meeting, Lutheran disagreements amongst synods, which had led to the affiliation with the Synod of Iowa and Other States as well as the hardships of establishing the Lutheran college at Brenham took much of the men's time and filled the meeting's minute books. However, excluding women from areas where they could help, such as money raising for the college, implies that pastors were reluctant to give women autonomy, especially when other issues dominated their time and prevented them from observing the ladies.[55]

Nevertheless, women did form their own local groups before official recognition from the synod. Individual pastors called for *frauervereinen* in their churches, and women volunteered to

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[54] Ziehe, 324.
[55] Ibid.,, 323-324.

join the association. Pastor Krebs of Coupland invited all the women of the congregation to the parsonage to discuss the creation of a ladies study and service group. Eighteen women answered Krebs, and, on May 11, 1885, they formed the *frauerverein*. Those ladies immediately gathered money for the church by selling baked goods and handmade clothes. The Coupland *hausfrauen* reflected numerous other Lutheran women who formed their own associations. Even without Synod support, these women and their pastors realized congregational need for such an aid group. As the Lutheran women had in the past, they rose to serve their churches.[56]

Most *frauerverein* groups followed the one in New Braunfels. In 1891, under the leadership of Pastor Knus, the women formed what would become the oldest continuous organization of the German Protestant Church in New Braunfels. Over the next four years, their contributions included three hundred dollars for the clearing of stones after the new church was built, altar and pulpit covers as well as a drinking fountain in 1893, four hundred dollars for the renovation of the sanctuary and parsonage, and fencing and walkways for the church. Finally, the *frauen* donated fifty dollars to pay off the church debt. Their offerings of relatively large sums of money ranged from furnishing the church to aiding the congregation at large, through debt liquidation or water to quench thirsts.[57]

The official creation of *frauervereinen* recognized publically the service women had already provided for their congregations. Since pastors first came to the German settlers, Lutheran women provided the necessities for service and the maintenance of the church. Their momentary contributions gave them some authority as they decided which causes to fund. For instance, women looked after church decorations and appropriate service items, such as providing chalices and instruments for music. Those issues were important for the women

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[56] Johnson, "A City on a Hill," TC.

[57] Oscar Haas, "Sources for First Evangelical Church of New Braunfels, Church History," 2N404, CAH.

congregants, and their offerings ensured that their congregations possessed the means to worship like those attending Lutheran churches in Germany. *Frauen* continued their offerings from the 1840s onward. Their support ensured the success of the church which reinforced their ethnicity. These immigrant Lutheran churches still spoke and wrote in German, a fact that limited their interaction with English speaking Texas. Moreover, as they women's aid focused on their local church and their Synods, the women rarely aided those outside of the German-Lutheran community. Thus, the women's religious work helped to maintain German traditions in Texas while also undergirding their limited church roles.[58]

Conclusion

By the end of the 1890s, women had demonstrated their usefulness in the religious life of South and Central German Lutheran congregations. For example, they had nurtured the church during a period when the rural male settlers could not fully support a church. The *frauen* supplied food and shelter for the pastors, and after churches were organized the women gave altar cloths and decorations for the burgeoning congregations' sanctuaries. Additionally, by instructing the young on Lutheran beliefs, the mothers ensured that their religious ideas brought from Germany would continue on the Texas frontier. As churches expanded, the women's work also grew to meet the new needs. *Frauen* organized their own women's societies to help their local churches, but these organizations looked to aid the larger religious synods. As the history of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in New Bielau states, "[o]ne thing that the church learned early in its history is that women were an integral part of the life of the church." The

[58] Using Coupland Lutheran as one representative example for Texas congregations shows that widowed women first voted in 1920. Moreover, the church elders in 1934 allowed single women to become members, but only in 1948 could women attend congregational meetings. Lagerquist shows how Norwegian *kvindeforening*, an equivalent to the *frauerverein*, wielded limited authority in their offerings to the church. L. DeAne Lagerquist, *In America the Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Women* (New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc.,1991), 136-140; Turner, 86.

women had nurtured their nascent local congregations and "as the church grew so did the work that women accomplished" as they organized to better attend their churches' needs.[59]

German Texas Lutheran women adapted their religious understanding of women's church involvement that they had known in Germany to frontier Texas. The *frauen* continued to attend church and to ensure that their children participated in church functions just as they had in the Fatherland. But these women took on more public roles in the church as they taught children in Sunday school and, at times, when the pastors' wives took over pastoral duties while their husbands were away on their circuit routes. The lack of pastors and official church structures allowed women to advice pastors on how to survive in Texas, but in Germany the women would have had few such opportunities to counsel their religious leaders. Despite the new roles that German Lutheran women assumed because of frontier conditions, they strove to reconstruct the conservative denominational traditions prevalent in the Fatherland. The *frauen's* Lutheran-influenced understanding of their gender roles impacted their whole life from their place in the home, to their role in the church, and even their interaction with those outside of their community.

[59] Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, "Trinity Evangelical Lutherans Church, New Bielau, 1920" DRT.

Chapter Six:
Engaging the Community

While establishing their homes and their churches in Texas, Lutheran women lived and worked within both their local German communities and the larger non-German population. From the first years of immigration, some Lutheran women ventured beyond their homes to interact with their German neighbors and others outside of their immigrant community. They often did so to help their family survive settling in Texas. For example, many *frauen* looked for markets for their homemade goods or learned to barter with Native Americans. Those in urban areas often bought and sold goods from Anglo-Americans and those of Mexican descent. German women working for and socializing with those outside of their family became more common as the decades passed and the Texas population grew. By the 1850s, women were obtaining their own jobs as teachers and shop owners while others pursued educational opportunities. Moreover, the immigrants arriving in the 1870s to the late 1880s settled in areas populated with more Anglo-Americans than had Germans before them. The Texas frontier offered, and at times necessitated, that these German Lutheran women assume new roles. For the most part, these women acted as they would not have been able to or in ways that would not have been available to them in Germany.

Still, the women maintained German ways as their interactions with those of non-Germanic descent became more common. Historians have argued that men assimilated quicker because they dealt with the surrounding society in business while women remained at home, able to preserve their ethnicity—language, dress, culture—without the influence or pressures of outsiders to assimilate. The home, as shown in chapter three, presented a complex forum for adaption. Even so, not all German women stayed home all the time. The Lutheran women's meetings with those not of German heritage at home or in the community did not result in

immediate Americanization. Instead, the women very often held onto their Lutheran ideas of faith and gender as they socialized and worked with those surrounding them. The women maintained their Lutheran-based understanding of the world and their place in it even outside of the domestic and sacred realms.[1]

Community interaction facilitated the women's adaption to Texas, and those encounters helped familiarize the *frauen* with American society. German Lutheran women dealt with those living in Texas in three main ways. First, many, especially in rural areas, provided *gratis* services such as midwifery and homeopathic care for their neighbors. Second, they entered the market, either by selling their homemade goods and agricultural produce or working as maids and teachers principally in urban areas. Third, they socialized with African Americans, Tejanos, Native Americans, and Anglo-Americans by attending town gatherings and celebrations, which aided the women's acclimation with other cultures.

Providing Services

In rural areas particularly, German Lutheran women learned to adapt old traditions of healing to help fellow Germans and non-German settlers survive the harshness of frontier Texas. To do so, the women relied on their understanding of folk medicines that they brought from Germany. However, they had to alter some traditional cures to include what ingredients they could find on the Texas soil. Many German women attended to the community in their role as *Hebammes* (midwives), a long-honored responsibility for Lutheran women. After arriving in Texas these women encountered women healers from different cultures, and these other women influenced how the *Hebammes* and the German communities viewed their cures and the

[1] Linda Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contented among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 131-134.

midwives' reputation. These Lutheran *frauen* preserved their role as healers in the frontier conditions of Texas, but they did have to negotiate with and to mold traditional cures to what their new environment offered.

In Germany, many women and men participated in folklore and healing practices to ward off evil spirits or to help an ailing person or animal. For instance, a German *Wurmsegen* would lay three sticks of any kind in a triangle shape on any livestock that suffered from worms. The *Wurmsegen* then invoked the name of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit while repeating other prayers that would cure the sick beast. Similarly, Germans could call upon a gifted man or woman to pray over someone whom a demon or evil spirit possessed. The Germans rarely questioned whether the healer was a man or a woman. The healer's ability to do the job was the important factor. However, when healers took apprentices they could only take one from the opposite sex because tradition held that knowledge could only be exchanged between a woman and a man or a man and a woman.[2]

When German women arrived in Texas they saw great expanses and open vistas, but they soon discovered that disease filled their new homeland. German Lutheran women and their families lived in an often-threatening land where sickness threatened the immigrants trying to reach their new homes. Ferdinand von Roemer, scientist, botanist, and early immigrant to Texas, described the sorry conditions of immigrants stranded in Indianola, where numerous Germans fell ill to epidemic disease. German women described similar outbreaks upon landing in Texas, and they detail how so many died or fell ill traveling to the interior and even after they had settled in their new homes. Roemer warned immigrants against the warm Texas climate that tended to produce various forms of sicknesses. He contended that a person could only be safe

[2] Gilbert J. Jordan, "German Cultural Heritage in the Hill Country of Texas" in *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth; Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium*, ed. Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 187.

from such illnesses when the colder months of winter arrived. The intervening warm months witnessed a great spread of disease. Yet, Frederick Law Olmstead, on his trip through Texas in the mid-1800s, commented on a positive side of the Texas climate. While traveling, he encountered a German woman with a "bouncing baby, seven days old, weighing, she said, three times as much as babies at home."[3]

Even after living in frontier Texas for several years, Lutheran women faced much illness and physical tribulations because of the many epidemics and insufficient number of physicians to tend all the settlers. Ottilie Fuchs Goeth's sister Lulu von Roeder died of such a sickness at the age of seventeen, and Rosa Kleberg remembered how, during most springs, she and her family were too ill to work. The lack of physicians further threatened immigrants in need of medical care. Most settlers did not have doctors nearby, and many could not wait for family to ride to the nearest town and return with a physician. As a result, settlers looked to someone closer. Even in cities, expectant mothers still relied on the advice and help of midwives to deliver their children, and mothers often returned to the midwives when their children were sick.[4]

German Lutherans relied on their faith for strength and on homeopathic cures in order to save themselves from the dire fate of other Texans. Male immigrants such as Ernst Kapp have received some attention from historians for their identification of and experimentation with herbs used to cure diseases. Likewise, Lutheran women joined in this investigation even though

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[3] Ferdinand von Roemer, *Texas with Particular Reference to German Immigration and the Physical Appearance of the Country* (San Antonio, Texas: Standard Printing Company, 1935), 130-133; Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey through Texas: A Saddletrip on the Southwestern Frontier* (New York, NY: Dix, Edwards, & CO., 1860), 191.

[4] Roemer, 140-141; Ottilie Fuchs Goeth, *Was Grossmutter Erzaehlt* (San Antonio: Passing Show Print Co., 1915), 51; Rosa Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas" *Texas Historical Association Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (April 1898), 301-301.

scholars have not studied their efforts. Viewed naturally as caretakers and nurturers, these women practiced forms of folk healing and childcare.[5]

Women maintained their traditional roles as healers, but they learned to use cures they could find in Texas and in so doing often stumbled across strange and unusual concoctions. Antoinette Gruene claimed that she and other women trying to find cures on the frontier "had to make do with the medicines that did the trick." For many families, readily-available honey provided a cure. The mothers who collected the honey from fresh bee hives relied on it to cure coughs as well as sweeten their cooking. When Gruene had to treat her husband Ernst who had developed nose cancer, she asked the advice of a German townswoman. Gruene took the woman's recommendation and mixed a salve consisting of the marrow from four calves' feet mixed with sugar, rosin, and beeswax cooked together and thoroughly blended. Ernst never suffered from his ailment again because Gruene's remedy took away the cancer, and also half of his nose. Other women used tobacco juice or freshly chewed tobacco to heal insect bites, while they also advised those suffering from rheumatism to keep a potato in their pocket until it dried; if the potato rotted the cure did not work. Asafetida remained one of the women's tried and true remedies for disease. Women recommended people hang bags of this foul-smelling plant around their neck. This particular preventative most often worked because few people could stand the stench. With fewer people interacting, disease had less of a chance of infecting the person. Though they were not expected to cure the great epidemics of Texas, these women did actively participate in the healing of their families.[6]

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[5] Hans-Martin Sass, "Man and His Environment: Ernst Kapp's Pioneering Experience and His Philosophy of Technology and Environment" in *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth; Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium*, ed. Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 82-99.

[6] Roberta Posey Mueller, *Oma Tell me about Olden Times: in the Gruene Family: A Collection of grandmother's stories about Ernst Gruene, who immigrated to Texas from Germany in 1846, and whose family contributed to the development and growth of a unique Texas area* (New Braunfels, TX: Roberta Posey, 1996), 31-

While the Lutheran women actively tended the health of loved ones, they were critical of some cures. For example, Amanda Karoline von Roseneberg Meerscheidt informed her mother-in-law that their "Homeopathic Apothecary did wonders [for her sickness the previous night], we always cure ourselves; it always helps." Men, too, found healing powers in Texas' natural resources. Adolph Fuchs claimed he could cure ailments with water from his well. Amanda wrote of Fuchs' claims with great skepticism. She did not believe that his water had such potent power. Although this particular water cure appeared suspicious, women did look to nature for aid from physical ailments. For example, an immigrant couple's young daughter was born small and ill. Upon the advisement of older German women they gave the little girl milk from a *burro* as part of a daily diet. As a result she did much better, and all in the neighborhood found her very cute.[7]

The health of their men remained important to these Lutheran women, and they noted any applied cures with curiosity. Hedwig Coreth worried about her father-in-law's well-being as he had physical strains and exertions heightened by a sore foot that would not heal. She noted carefully to her brother-in-law in Germany that Ernst was under Rudolph Wipprecht's nature cure, which entailed "omitting fluids, mainly water—wine is allowed—the desire to eat is much reduced too." All Ernst was allowed to consume were aged dried rolls and some boiled rice, with absolutely no soup. As a result, he lost eleven of his one-hundred pounds in spite of the "recovery days," selected days when he could eat and drink as he pleased.[8]

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32. The author contends that the salve makes a good treatment for any skin puncture. The family used the remedy to heal skin knees, thorn punctures, among other uses for generations. Jordan, "German Cultural Heritage," 186.

[7] Amanda Karoline von Rosenberg Meerscheidt to mother-in-law, La Grange, Texas, May 29, 1850. 3P456, Ancestral Voices: Letters of the Rosenberg and Meersscheidt Families, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter CAH); Amanda Karoline von Rosenberg Meerscheidt to Charlotte Richter, November 1850 to January 1850. CAH; Ernst Kohlberg to his mother, 3 November, 1849, 2Q396, Letters of Ernst Kohlberg, CAH.

[8] Hedwig Coreth to Rudolph, 5 June 1848, 3X159, Coreth Family Papers, CAH.

Conversely, Lutheran women in their roles as healers continued to tend the needy in Texas through their socially accepted authority as midwives. Settling in rural communities with few neighbors within close distance and even fewer doctors present, expectant German women relied on other women to help in the birthing process. These *Hebammes*, though, practiced more than childbirth. They very often relied on *Handauflegen* (laying of hands) to help mothers in need and others suffering from a variety of ailments. German women used this practice for generations in Germany, and they continued to perform *Handauflegen* once they settled in Texas. For the most part, these women were older and single, usually widows, but some were married; they all shared life experiences. They had children of their own and knew the pains and procedures of childbirth. Additionally, these older women had nursed their own children through illnesses. Thus, they had experience and knew about cures and remedies to help the patient.[9]

Hebammes and other German women maintained *Handauflegen* into the twentieth century as a healing power based on Christ's own tradition. These Lutheran women in Texas relied on the laying of hands to ease physical pain; they used the technique to ease immigrants' fears and concerns about the immigration process and to ease longing for those left behind in Germany. *Hebammes* also relied on *Handauflegen* to protect those who faced danger. The act of massaging with the hands derived directly from the Biblical healing processes copied after Christ's examples throughout the Gospels of the New Testament. Just as Christ laid hands on

[9] *Handauflegen* is still practiced by many Germans into the twenty-first century. Catherine M. Prelinger, "The Nineteenth-Century Deaconessate in Germany: The Efficacy of a Family Model," in *German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social and Literary History*, ed. Ruth Ellen B. Joeres and Mary Jo Maynes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 217-219.

the crippled woman in Luke 13:15 and on the leprotic man in Matthew 8:3, these German women in Texas looked to heal as their savoir had healed.[10]

Although Texas *Hebammes* remained respected members of their communities, the women did not gain the autonomy and political influence of their counterparts in Germany. There, midwifery had existed for centuries and remained a socially and religiously sanctioned occupation for women; church and government officials did attempt by the 1700s to restrict the women's work especially when dealing with illegitimate births and abortions, but the *Hebammes* did maintain their own authority within the community. In Texas, immigrant women worked their trade, often without the civic parole that women in Germany had faced since the sixteenth century. However, professionalization of the medical profession did challenge the official role of these women on both sides of the Atlantic. Still, midwives in both lands carried powerful religious symbolism since they attended to births.[11]

Lutheran women in Texas depended on the *Hebammes* to heal pain and to guide new mothers on the frontier. Immigrant women knew that they would come upon expectant women in need of help. Although the *frauen* might not have foreseen the hardships they would face in Texas, they realized women would need to assist each other in womanly matters. Caroline Louise Sack von Roeder even took obstetric classes before emigration in preparation for any issues her daughter or daughter-in-law, Rosa Kleberg von Roeder, would face in Texas. Von Roeder's foresight proved helpful as she successfully oversaw the birth of Rosa's first child. For those young immigrant parents not so fortunate to have a close relative versed in the ways of childbirth, they often needed the assistance of midwives or experienced mothers. Louise Ernst

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[10] Curt E. Schmidt, *Oma and Opa: German Texas Pioneers* (San Antonio, Texas: Accurate Litho & Printing Co., 1975): 13-1; Mary Lindemann, "Professionals? Sisters? Rivals? Midwives in Braunschweig, 1750-1800" in *The Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe*, ed. Hilary Marland (New York: Routledge, 1993), 178-179, 186.

[11] Merry E. Wiesner, "The Midwives of South Germany and the Public/Private Dichotomy" in *The Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe*, ed. Hilary Marland (New York: Routledge, 1993), 84-87.

Stöhr came to the aid of her neighbors who lived five miles away. One of the children was very ill, and the young parents relied on Stöhr's experience. Stöhr stayed all night tending to the child and caught a few minutes of sleep on a deer skin rug laid on the floor near the patient's bed. The presence of women such as von Roeder and Stöhr seemed a Godsend to the immigrants who worried over ill offspring.[12]

Nonetheless, the *Hebammes* were concerned that their work might be associated with the acts of Mexican *brujas*. Germans, Tejanos, and Anglo-Americans in South and Central Texas, knew about *brujas* who held evil reputations as witches; they hurt instead of healed. Understandably, German women did not want people to associate their *Handauflegen* and other remedies with the *brujera* sorcery. To dispel such relations, German women and men compared the activities of the *Hebammes* with Christ. Both laid hands on the sick and healed them. The importance of healing and of holiness remained paramount in differentiating the *Hebammes* with the *brujas*. Nevertheless German women were more willing to be compared to Mexican healers such as the *curanderas,* a healer in Mexican culture. Like the *Hebammes*, the *curanderas* cured instead of harming the patient just as Christ healed. They certainly were no *brujas*. The German and Mexican healers could expel worms from cattle, mend festering sores on humans, and exorcize evil spirits. Yet German Lutheran women did not challenge traditional church authority because they healed in secular realms outside of the church. Thus, these women lived within their communities accepted social mores and provided a needed service without challenging religious or social traditions.[13]

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[12] Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas" 300-301; Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber, "*Erinnerrungen,"* in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 12-13.

[13] For information on witchcraft and the role of women in colonial Mexico see, Ruth Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft, Colonialism, and Women's Powers: Views from the Mexican Inquisition" *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America* ed. Asunción Lavrin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 180-199.

Similarly, the Lutheran women in Texas looked suspiciously upon the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, though they shared common ideas regarding their healing methods. Lyman Wright had led several hundred Mormons to Texas after Wright refused to accept Brigham Young as the new leader of the LDS community. In 1846, Wright petitioned Baron Johann von Meusebach for permission to live near the Germans in Fredericksburg, believing that he and his followers would find tolerance with the immigrant community. Wright established a grist mill, and the two groups lived amicably for many years, even as they helped with the construction of near-by Fort Martin Scott. Still, some Germans did not fully agree with the Mormon religion. Pastor Adolph Fuchs, a Lutheran pastor who immigrated with his family in 1845, worried that his daughter Ulrike lived too close to the Mormons. The pastor did not like the manner in which Wright and the other men made their women depend on them. He believed that such behavior "undermined the well-being of the family."[14]

The role of the *Hebammes* not only reflected Mexican cultural traditions, but the actions of the German women were similar to those of the Mormon women living near the Fredericksburg community. Although the Mormons and the German settlers may not have socialized much, the two did have similar ideas about women's healing power. Mormon midwives had a similar tradition of laying of hands to heal the sick. Similar to Lutheran women in Texas, Mormon women in Utah and in Texas lived in communities often separated geographically from doctors and medical care. Additionally, like Lutheran *Hebammes*, Mormon women held relatively high status in their religious community because of their ability to lay hands. However, by the turn of the twentieth century, the Mormon Church council began to

[14] Goeth, 58-60. Micheal van Wagenen, *The Texas Republic and the Mormon Kingdom of God* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 95-99.

limit the role and authority of women healers by declaring that men had sole power heal or lay hands. Since the *Handauflegen* for Germans remained a relatively unofficial and unsanctioned act, those women and even men who preformed it did not face as much criticism as did Mormons. Still, as professional physicians grew in number and began attending rural communities, many Germans often relied on their care instead of going to the local *Hebammes* or folk healers.[15]

German women learned to adapt their traditional position as community healers in frontier Texas. These women relied on their own Lutheran understanding of women as caretakers to undergird their actions in the new land. The women continued to provide aid to new mothers and to sick children. Additionally, the women incorporated new items such as herbs and plants that they found in Texas. They also brought German traditions to Texas by using faith healing and concoctions to cure animals and humans. After hearing of Mexican *brujas* and meeting Mormon midwives in Texas, Lutheran *Hebammes* and healers worked to ensure their religious traditions continued and that they maintained their reputation of healing in the way that Christ had.

Entering the Market

In addition to these *gratis* services, German Lutheran women also offered their labor and goods for a price. Many German women sold the agricultural produce and other goods that they cultivated because they wanted to provide their families with money, a commodity that few settlers had on the frontier. Additionally, Lutheran women began to work in service positions.

[15] C. Stanley Banks, "The Mormon Migration in Texas" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 49 (October 1945), 233, 238-239; Esther L. Mueller, "Lyman Wright" in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, comp. Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 233-234; Chris Rigby Arrington, "Pioneer Midwives" in *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah*, ed. Claudia L. Bushman (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997), 45, 49-51.

Many lived in more populated areas so they could take on jobs such as maids and milliners to help themselves and their families economically. Others expanded upon the Lutheran woman's role as religious educator by teaching children in schools not officially connected to a church. Through all of these activities, the women became more involved with the Anglo-American economy and with non-Germanic ways; therefore, the women were learning to adapt to American society through their work outside their domestic sphere and church activities.

Lutheran women proudly undertook the work needed to gather and to sell their agricultural goods. Frederick Law Olmstead told the story of one particular German lady who milked her family's cows daily and then made butter, which she served for breakfast with bread, eggs, and *pfannekuchen*. The woman also sold butter for profit. Olmstead and his fellow traveler remarked on the lady's sweet yellow butter and the German related her recipe, which required her to mix refined sugar during the churning process. She proudly announced she received "fifty cent [*sic*] a pound for our butter in San Antone! yes fifty cents." But she quickly added that she and her family "liked to eat good butter, too." Antoinette Gruene concentrated her attention on gathering and selling the eggs from her geese. Every Saturday, Gruene walked the six miles from her rural home to New Braunfels in order to sell her goods. Anna Conrad recounted how her mother "enjoyed nothing better than to put on her bonnet to feed the sheep, to water the chickens, and to see whether all was well in the barnyard." Enduring the daily chore of herding and milking cows and then extracting cream for butter, these *frauen* dealt with their surroundings and succeeded in providing their loved ones with tasty treats while supplementing their families' incomes. Gruene like so many other women not only had to tend and to collect their goods but they also had to work to sell those products. Traversing the distances to the nearest market added to the women's daily work load that still included looking after children and husbands, but their travels alos gave them a chance to socialize. Pauline Conrad spent much

of her time working with the cows and poultry to provide eggs, milk, and butter that her large family ate. As she had more children and was very often pregnant, she could not continue working in the fields with her daughters and husband. So Conrad focused her efforts on collecting and making produce that she could sell. She walked to neighbors' houses to sell eggs and milk. New immigrants particularly appreciated Conrad's goods because they either had no laying hens or milk cows. Anglo-American settlers also bought her eggs and butter because they too lacked hens and because they appreciated her tasty butter.[16]

Farm women's willingness to collect and make produce so they could sell to neighbors and in nearby towns helped them acclimate into their new society. First the women entered, if ever so slightly, the market economy. They had to interact with their customers, many of whom were Anglo-American. Consequently, they learned English, if only enough for the short and repetitive conversations necessary to sell their butter, eggs, and milk. The women, moreoever, linked themselves to a world beyond their homes and churches. Such connections paved the way for the women's future economic and educational engagements with American society. Second, the women depended on their own work as they had not done in Germany. The opportunity to make and sell their products to an accepting market facilitated the German women's reliance on tasks they only did in Texas. As a result, frontier life created new activities that offered the women tangible rewards.

In more settled areas, Lutheran women immigrants actually sold material and stylistic objects that they made themselves. Several German women living in the towns took jobs as milliners, selling hats and gloves to the women of New Braunfels and San Antonio. Many German women who had the money and time loved to shop at such stores. Ernst Coreth

[16] Olmstead, 186-187; Gruene, 25; Nell Rogers, ed. *The Family of Ludwig Johan Conrad and Pauline (Wenzel) Conrad* (1967), 7.

described to his son how *Frau* Wipprecht brought three hats for his mother and sisters. The hats had flowers and vines covering them, which was the current American style. As women sold and bought clothes they adopted American dress and fashion.[17]

Towns provided young girls and women the means to become acquainted with American society and culture. Most German girls had the time, if not the money, to look at milliners and dress shops as well as looking in the candy store windows. Some girls even had the money to purchase goods. Living in the San Antonio, Louise Kleberg informed her father, away on a business trip, that she had gone dress shopping and then continued to describe the weather, which she thought warm, but pleasant. Young Kleberg had the spare time to shop because she did not have to worry about farm chores or other duties. Accordingly, Kleberg and other young girls in urban areas had greater opportunity to intermingle with those outside of their German community. They attended shops that were not necessarily run by immigrants, and the girls had the chance to purchase clothes that were similar to those American children wore.[18]

If they were not wealthy enough to buy goods in shops, German girls worked as maids in cities and towns, where they proved to be in high demand because of their work ethic. German immigrants often commented on the lack of decent help in Texas because German girls were difficult to find, and the Anglo-American maids proved too lazy and incompetent. Because of the high demand, German maids often made a decent salary. Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg observed that "German girls are scarcely to be had here and then only at five dollars a month."

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[17] Ernst Coreth to Rudolph Coreth, February 17, 1867, New Braunfels, 3X159, Coreth Family Papers, CAH.

[18] Louise Kleberg to Father, 14 January, 1885, 2J49, Kleberg Family Papers, CAH; Auguste to Pauline Gieseke, September 6-November, 1856, 3X271,Walter Christian Gieseke Family Papers, CAH.

Paying the girls that much was worth the expense; the German maids had "a certain amount of education [and] they are always treated as part of the family."[19]

These Lutheran girls who worked for Anglo-American families or who lived in urban populations were exposed to other languages and cultural forms. Young maids living in American homes learned English so they could speak with their mistresses and be able to attend the duties that the women assigned. With this interaction, German girls learned—though they did not necessarily adopt—American language, dress, and customs. Although many German girls retained their own ethnic culture, this exposure to American ways facilitated future cultural interactions between the two groups. In other words, finding employment provided many girls with the ability to interact with Anglo-American society.

Formal schools provided another means to acclimate German girls and women to Anglo-American society. Learning the domestic arts did not solely come from employers; German girls also learned how to knit, to cook, and to manage households from school teachers. Immigrant families living in San Antonio, New Braunfels, and Fredericksburg, becoming both physically and financially settled, had the economic opportunity to let their children attend schools. Moreover, prosperous and educated families wanted their daughters to be cultured and refined, even in frontier Texas. Although mothers made their daughters read and fathers sang classical songs with their *kinder*, they wanted more educational opportunities for their children. As such, the immigrants began to establish schools for their young. These establishments were open to both genders and were intended to provide German boys and girls with a well-rounded education. In these schools, women taught the domestic arts to girl students, thus teaching them

[19] Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Auguste Fallier, April 19, 1850, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH.

how to effectively manage a household. Lutheran women in schools trained girls in how to become the ideal thrifty German wife.[20]

The Ervendberg's *Waisenfarm* in New Braunfels exemplifies many of the immigrant education institutions and their expectations for girls and boys. Marie Ervendberg ensured that the orphan girls who lived with her at *Waisenfarm* knew how to cook, to sew, and to tend to farm and domestic duties. Marie remained constant in her dedication to teaching young girls. Her husband obtained state legislation in 1850 incorporating the *Waisenfarm* into the West Texas University. Louis Ervendberg hoped that through this university he could train the orphan boys and newly-recruited pupils on how to grow various types of plants in Texas. The Lutheran pastor wished to disseminate his vast interest in agriculture. Marie insisted that the girls also be included so that she could continue instructing them in the household arts. As she taught them to sew cloth, to cook meals, to clean house, and to milk cows, Marie instilled the behavior expected of proper German Lutheran women in the girls.[21]

However the Ervendbergs might have hoped for the success of training youths in agrarian and domestic duties, the venture failed. Louis could not attract many tuition-paying students because New Braunfels had its own free public school. Additionally, the townspeople of New Braunfels grew ever-suspicious of the pastor because he lived outside of town and focused more on his botanical experiments than congregational matters. Citizens of New Braunfels believed he was neglecting his religious duty. Such religious negligence seemed justified when rumors spread that Louis was having an affair with Franzisca Lange, one of the *Waisenfarm* orphans. By 1855, Louis had fled New Braunfels with two of his sons and Franzisca for Mexico. Marie,

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[20] Ibid., 105-106; Elise Kuckuck Willrich to Gretchen Keuffel, Fayette County, September 26, 1849-March 12, 1850, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 62-63

[21] Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber, "Life of German Pioneers in Early Texas" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (April 1898): 3; Rudolph Biesele, *The History of German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, Texas: Press of Von Boekmann-Jones Co., 1930), 134.

who returned to Texas a few years later, dedicated her work to helping instruct girls on how to work alongside their future husbands and how to raise their children. Louis Ervendberg did not keep his responsibility to his wife and family. In contrast, Marie relied on her faith and her understanding of good Lutheran stewardship to help future generations.[22]

Frauen had a history of teaching in secular and religious settings as chapter four discussed, but they most often dealt with their own ethnic community, such as Marie Ervendberg's instructing the German orphans. In 1885, Susanna Zenner Larson taught German to the students of her husband's Cave Creek School. A few years later, Susanna's daughter Annie joined her to teach the children music. Still, some women did have the opportunity to have non-German students. Amalie Hander, born of a family who had immigrated to New Braunfels in the 1850s when she was ten years old, returned to Europe to study music. She then moved to San Antonio, where she taught music, and there she remained a single teacher for the rest of her career.[23]

German immigrants also established German-English schools to instruct their young in liberal arts and sciences. In 1858, members of the Casino Club in San Antonio organized the German-English School with construction on the first building begun in November of 1859. This school was co-educational, though boys and girls were taught in separate rooms. The curriculum consisted of both German and English language classes. Subjects included the lives of great men, ancient civilizations, the Middle Ages to the Reformation, and the history of

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[22] In 1855, Maria confronted Louis about the relationship, and he agreed to move with his wife and children to Chicago to be near her family. Maria left with their daughters, and Louis promised to meet them after he finalized his business at *Waisenfarm*. Instead, he left with his sons and Franzisca. They moved to several places in Mexico finally settling in Pachuca just north of Mexico City. There he experimented with plants just as he had done in New Braunfels. Samuel Wood Geiser, *Naturalists on the Frontier* (Dallas, Texas: University Press in Dallas, 1948), 122-123, 124-125.

[23] Ella A. Gold, "James Larson," in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, comp. Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 114; Ethel Hander Geue, 2K261, Hander Family Papers, CAH.

modern England, the United States, and Germany. The German-English School also consisted of higher and lower classes, where the pupils were instructed based on age and achievement. The program to celebrate the final examination schedules most often included children reciting poems in German. The academic year lasted eleven months and left students with little free time. As a result, most of the students hailed from urban families, whose lives were not defined by agriculture seasons, or from families who had enough money to spare for room, education, and board in San Antonio while sparing the work of that child. Some who attended school did not live in the in San Antonio had the burden of travel. Bertha Nimitz had a four-day trip from her Fredericksburg home at the Nimitz Hotel to the San Antonio German-English School.[24]

Women taught young girls how to be respectable women and mothers at many German-English schools from those schools' beginnings. In 1859, the San Antonio German-English School board added a part-time woman teacher for the domestic classes, which became a part of a girl's school hours. Every girl had to take one of these classes in which she learned to sew and to crochet as well as to make lace and other fineries. Such abilities marked a graduate from the German-English School as refined and lady-like. Although girls still participated in history, language, literature, and some mathematics classes, the emphasis on the feminine instruction in handicrafts grew. Still, since the girls came from relatively well-off immigrant families, they could spend time learning the art of socialization and refined manners whereas their rural contemporaries could focus only on necessary daily chores.[25]

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[24] German-English School Records, Collection 890, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio, Texas (Hereafter DRT).

[25] German-English School, Plans for Scholastic Curriculum, Collection 890, DRT. In the late 1850s the German-English School in San Antonio hired *Frau* Ruggenbarh as the school's language teacher. The German-English School remained open until 1896; Ella A. Gold, "Mrs. Bertha Nimitz Nauwald" in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, comp. Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 144-145.

Austin had a similar institution, but it was dedicated solely to women's education. In the state capital, Natalie von Schenck and Alice Nohl established the German-American Ladies College in 1873. Nohl taught Spanish and drawing, von Schenck taught literature and history, while von Schenck's sister Antoinette immigrated to teach music and vocals. Mary Schlichter instructed the young women on French, music, and natural history. Jacob Bickler was the only male member of the faculty, and he held classes in ancient languages and mathematics. Students could obtain either a diploma after a four year classical course or a four year scientific course. An intended graduate also had to prove her ability to speak and to write fluently in both German and English.[26]

To establish their reliability and repute, von Schenck and Nohl sent out a bulletin to prospective parents outlining their fees and, very importantly, their institution's respectable reputation. Von Schenck and Nohl also had a boarding house where students could stay for three hundred dollars *per annum*. To help assuage any parental doubts regarding a daughter being away from home and under someone else's care, von Schenck and Nohl provided references in their bulletin. The list of names included men from the leading families of Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, Houston, Seguin, Galveston, and San Antonio, including Julius Berends who was president of the San Antonio German-English School. Most families felt safer sending their daughters away from home if they had someone to watch over and supervise the girls' activities and visitors.[27]

Some women instructors had the opportunity to deal with people outside their German community and teach topics besides their own ethnic heritage. Women teachers at these schools had German and some Tejano and Anglo-American students in their classes. These German

[26] German-American Ladies College Records, 71-0248, Galveston and Texas History Center, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas (hereafter GHTC); Mary Starr Barkley, *History of Travis County and Austin, 1839-1899* (Waco, Texas: Texian Press, 1963), 172.

[27] German-American Ladies College Bulletin, 71-0248, GHTC.

women teachers learned how to interact and to connect with those with dissimilar languages, dress, and culture. Moreover, the women taught "new" subjects to their students. For instance, they held classes for English language and United States history. This curriculum provided both the women teachers and girl students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with issues not directly related to their immigrant community. Also, many students and instructors focused on women's work, such as how to host dinners, make lace, and play music. All of these abilities reflected the activities of middle-class Anglo-American women. Through their education, German women and girls learned how to become well-rounded, proper women on the Texas frontier.[28]

Using these skills, girl students and women teachers were able to acquaint themselves with and to adapt to other cultures. The girls were able to learn the activities of middle-class American women. Certainly wealthy young girls in Germany also concentrated on making such fineries, which marked them as part of an elite social class. In Texas, urban immigrant families wanted similar achievements for their daughters. Additionally, unlike European girls, the students in Texas learned about United States history and they learned to communicate in English. Although they still learned German and European history, these young people acquired the ability to negotiate with American society. Furthermore, the girls learned how to become proper young ladies, as defined by both German and Anglo-American standards. This ethnic and social education also occurred when the children were young and their identities not fully formed. Thus, they were more adaptable and open when presented with other ways and traditions.[29]

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[28] German-English School Records, Collection 890, DRT; German-American Ladies College Records, 71-0248, GHTC.

[29] Lagerquist similarly finds that educational institutions provided a link between the cultures of Norwegian immigrants and Americans. She studies secondary education at Norwegian Lutheran schools such as St. Olaf and Ladies' Lutheran Seminary from the turn of the century to 1920. L. DeAne Lagerquist, *In America the*

Meeting non-Germans

As German Lutheran women increasingly engaged American society through selling goods and services, they also met people of different backgrounds and culture more so than they had in the 1830s. Proximity facilitated the interaction of the *frauen* with the Anglo-American and Tejano women as well as African-Americans, a race mostly unfamiliar to the Germans upon arriving in Texas. The women from the 1840s onward lived nearer Anglo-Americans and Tejanos. Those Germans who took residence in San Antonio soon became the second largest ethnic group ranked after Mexicans; both groups thus had a good deal of interaction. Marriage patterns also altered as Germans lived closer to those of different national origin. Such intimate intermingling further facilitated the interaction and acclimation of German Lutheran women. The Lutheran women also had complex dealings with Native Americans that ranged from trading goods to sharing religious traditions. Even the large German communities of New Braunfels and Fredericksburg had some American citizens living amongst the European immigrants. Populations certainly grew as time passed; Americans ventured into the rural areas to establish homesteads often near German farmers.

African Americans, particularly slaves, elicited much attention from the women, but Lutheran women, for the most part, did not understand slavery as an institution. The *frauen* remarked that the enslaved were cared for by their masters and noted how each servant had food, clothes, and housing provided. Since the women had not encountered slavery before, they likened what they saw with what they knew: tenant farming. Some women even believed that the enslaved blacks had a better life than the peasant workers that they remembered from their home states. Other women reflected such thoughts as they viewed America's "peculiar

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Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Women (New York: Carlson Publishing, Inc.,1991), 154-5,194-195.

institution" as more benevolent and liberal than the laws restricting farmers in many parts of Germany.[30]

Many Lutheran *frauen* frowned at the thought of owning another human being and likened the "peculiar institution" to political and social issues that they themselves knew. Although historical geographer Terry Jordan argues that German immigrants remained, for the most part, indifferent to chattel slavery many Lutheran women immigrants disapproved of the institution. Some women equated physical bondage with bondage to sin. Louise Heuser Wueste, a German painter who immigrated in 1850s, was appalled at the sorry sight of the poor enslaved souls she saw when she landed in Galveston. Caroline Luise von Roeder helplessly observed an Anglo-American wager his slaves in a game of cards; his enslaved property stood in the hallway watching the man gamble with their lives. Others saw similarities between their families' position in Germany and the restricted livelihoods of the enslaved. Ottie Fuchs Goeth happily witnessed the emancipation of a slave woman who lived on the farm next to the Goeths. She also noted that Southerners had to learn to do work they had previously demanded of slaves. Goeth complimented many of them on their success, but she also alluded to the fact that German women and men had been doing similar types of manual labors since they had settled in Texas.[31]

Despite the opposition of some to slavery, many a German woman and her family owned slaves. Lina von Rosenberg explained to a sister and to her girlhood friend that she no longer had to milk the cows because "the Negress has to do it." Yet, Lina bemoaned the fact that the

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[30] Goeth, 79, 212-213; Ellise Kuckuc Willrich to Georg Ludwig Kuckuch, April 18, 1848, Mt. Eliza, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 54-55.

[31] Goeth, 79; Armin Elmendorf, "A Texan Remembers: a bit of biography and some incidents in the history of the Elmendorf and Staffel families of San Antonio, Texas, as recorded for his grandchildren," 5, Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco Texas (Hereafter TC); Caroline Luis Roeder to her sister, March 24, 1835, Wildcat Springs, in Emilie Ohlendorff von Roeder, "Life Story of Emilie von Roeder: Compiled Letters and memories" (1943), 17-19, CAH; Jordan notes that traditional understanding of Germans as virulent abolitionists is false because the immigrants were more concerned with their own farms and daily work. Few were knowledgeable about or aware of political controversies regarding slavery. Terry Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 193-195.

young woman did a worse job than when she herself milked the cows. Because of her unhappiness with the young woman's job performance, Lina and her husband sold her a month later. Additionally, Herr von Roeder left a thirty-seven year old woman and two young girls as part of his property listed in his will. Some of the Germans who owned slaves were not completely comfortable with idea of owning another human being and having the ability to beat their enslaved property. For instance, Elise Kuckuck Willrich claimed that "Germans don't know how to handle negroes—are too good to them." Americans informed Willrich that "black people are often in need of whipping[s]." Willrich and her husband, though they owned a man and a woman, could "neither of them stand for that [beating]."[32]

Lutheran women and their families who owned slaves tended to live in close proximity to Anglo-American neighbors who had slaves. Those in San Antonio, with its large Mexican and Tejano population, or the Hill country, with the high rate of German immigrants, rarely traded in human flesh. Some such as Adolph Douai were outspoken opponents of slavery, so much so that even the New Braunfelsers encouraged him to leave because of all the negative attention he attracted. Yet, a woman and her family's willingness to own slaves was generally related to the socially-accepted behaviors of the area in which they lived. In other words, those not living near Anglo-American slaveholders were not influenced by their social peers. In these cases,

[32] Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Auguste Scweinberger, April 2, 1850, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH; Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Auguste Fallier, April 19, 1850, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH; Amanda Fallier von Roseberg to Auguste and Emma Fallier, May 25 1850, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH; Ellise Kuckuc Willrich to Georg Ludwig Kuckuch, April 18, 1848, Mt. Eliza, in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 54-55. Germans did own slaves, though, not to the extent of their southern neighbors. Emma Altgelt, a Catholic immigrant, illustrates an German woman whose family owned slaves and she was outspoken in many racist arguments regarding the use of African-American workers. Emma Altgelt, *Beobachtungen un erinnerungen* (New Braunfels, Texas: Druck der Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung, 1930), 30-37.

proximity to the dominant culture appears a strong factor in determining whether the immigrants adopted slavery or not.[33]

After the Civil War, German farmers offered jobs to the freedmen. Ernst Coreth told his brother Rudolph of a freedman who plowed Coreth's fields. Ernst called the man "*ein recht braver Mensch*" (a brave man). Hedwig Coreth echoed similar feelings to her brother-in-law telling him how the black man, "whom she liked very much, plows; Joseph drives the oxen, and your father and the ladies pick up the potatoes." Ottie Fuchs Goeth also hired the emancipated woman who had worked on a neighbor's farm, and Goeth was much pleased with that woman and her work.[34]

Native Americans also proved a group that intrigued the German women. Auguste Ervendberg Wiegreffe witnessed many Indians who visited her father at *Waissenfarm*. These Comanches and Germans were friendly because of Baron Johann von Meusebach's 1847 treaty, and they came to exchange goods and ideas with Pastor Ervendberg. Wiegreffe recalled how many in the community wanted to show their goodwill towards the Indians by hosting a big dinner "in the good old German way." Women of the town pooled what food, utensils, and service items to produce a "real feast." Despite the provisions of forks and spoons, the Indians ate with their fingers, which Wiegreffe remembered were incredibly dirty. Such a spectacle was

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[33] Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 215-217. The argument regarding the degree of German opposition to the 'peculiar institution' has been argued by several scholars. One of the more thorough examinations is Terry Jordan who shows that Germans in the eastern cotton belt of Texas owned slaves, though their lack of capital and their small farms prevented them from acquiring a large number of enslaved people. German immigrants in the southern and central counties owned few in any slaves and some from San Antonio and New Braunfels actively voiced their abolitionist sentiments. Jordan, *German Seed*, 106-111, 181-185.

[34] Ernst Coreth to Rudolph Coreth, August 3, 1867, New Braunfels, 3X159, Coreth Family Papers, CAH; Hewig Coreth to Rudolph Coreth, January 6, 1868, New Braunfels, 3X159, Coreth Family Papers, CAH; Goeth, 79.

so unlike normal German meals and festivals that it appalled the *hausfrauen*. The women did not offer any such dinners again.[35]

Even so, German children soon learned to interact with Native Americans. Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner saw Comanche Indians coming to the town square next to the *Vereins Kirche* in Fredericksburg every week to trade such goods as pecans and beads for tobacco and salt. Some of the Comanche dropped beads around the church, and Wagner and other children collected them after the service so they could make necklaces and rings. Auguste Ervendberg Wiegreffe recalled how groups of Indians lingered around her parent's house watching them do their chores. She remembered how she feared them. One day Pastor Ervendberg told her to get water from the well, but she was too frightened to pass some Indians sitting on a porch bench. Ervendberg, unmoved by his daughter's tears and aware that the Indians meant no harm, made her go. As a whimpering Auguste passed the group, an Indian reached out to grab her. The girl screamed, and the "Indians thought it a great joke."[36]

Although the children remembered tales of good-natured exchange between the Indians and the German immigrants, the peaceful interactions did not always prove the norm. Comanche Indians often drove off Louise Ernst Stöhr's family's horses and cattle in the early 1830s. Native Americans had more freedom during the Texas Revolution as Mexicans and Texans had less time to defend against or take revenge on roving Indians. Although the 1847 treaty between the Comanche and von Meusebach settled relations and helped to stop attacks, Native Americans began harassing settlers in the late 1850s through the 1880s. Ottie Fuchs Goeth was with her children on the banks of a nearby creek in Blanco County when a group of Indians killed Eliza

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[35] Sarah S. McKellar, "Interview with Auguste Ervendberg Wiegreffe" September 8, 1935, *San Antonio Express*.

[36] Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner, "I Think Back" *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 161; Sarah S. McKellar, "Interview with Auguste Ervendberg Wiegreffe" September 8, 1935, *San Antonio Express*.

Felps and her husband Thomas. Eliza had gone to fish in the creek, and her husband had followed her only to have the roaming bands attack them. That following night, Indians stole three horses that were pastured outside the Goeth's home. The day after that, the same group of Native Americans stole more horses and captured an American boy. Soldiers at Fort Mason did recover the boy and the horses. As close as all the violence had been to Ottie Fuchs Goeth, she asserted that such activities rarely occurred in her area.[37]

Still, women took charge in defending their family when circumstances required their action. For example, in the early 1860s, Adolphine (Ino) Fuchs went alone on horseback to visit her sister-in-law, and encountered Indians on the journey. Ino heard the calls of Native Americans, and, in an attempt to protect herself, she began singing in a loud voice. She also sang in different voices and tones so the Indians would think she had companions. Ino's song echoed through the hills and prevented any encounter between the young woman and her voyeurs. Similarly, a few years later, Ulrike Fuchs Matern, while with her children on the family farm near Fredericksburg, saw Indians coming upon her house. Suspecting foul play, Matern dressed in her husband's clothes and put his hat low over her face. She then stood in the doorway holding a shotgun threateningly. The Native Americans left having only shot one of the Materns' horses in the flank.[38]

Throughout the nineteenth century, German immigrants and Native Americans had some violent meetings, but some Indians showed signs of adapting German ways. Many a *frauen* bartered with Indians for foods and goods that neither party could obtain on their own. Rosa Kleberg learned early how to trade handmade items for food. Katherine Voges Pape also traded

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[37] Louise Ernst Stöhr, *Der erste deutsche Frau in Texas*, in *Der Deutsche Pionier: Monatschrift fü Erinnerungen aus dem beutschen Pioner-Leben in den Vereinigten Staaten* , 8 no. 12 (December 1884), 13-15; Goeth, 92-94.

[38] Louis Romberg Fuchs, "*Erinninung*" (1927), CAH; Helen Kellersberger, "Seeds of Freedom" 3B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families-Adolph Fuchs, CAH; Pearl Bethune, ed. "Forward to the Past!," TC.

flowers, vegetables and fruits with the Indians for wild honey and venison. The Native Americans often visited her so they could look at her bounteous and beautiful garden filled with growing greens and flowers, all planted from seeds she had brought from Germany. Pape relied on wild Texas offerings while Indians learned to rely on German produce.[39]

In addition to food, Germans and Indians came together over faith. Theodore and Maria Sprecht ran a store on Fredericksburg's Main Street. Their business became a trading post for Comanche who wished to barter their goods with the then struggling colonists. Maria took charge of the store when her husband was frequently away on business. One day Santanna, a Comanche chief and frequent visitor to the Sprechts, asked if his pregnant wife could stay with Maria until he returned the next day; Maria acquiesced. That night she attended Santanna's wife, who gave birth to a son. When Santanna returned, he took his new son and Maria to a creek. There, he baptized his son in the cold water after which he dribbled some of the water over Marie's breast and pointed to heaven. He had pronounced Marie Sprecht the godmother of his son. Santanna and Maria represent the bridge built linking the different cultures in Texas.[40]

Despite the connections made between some immigrants and Native Americans, particularly before 1860, some German women did not have much affinity for the Indians. *Frauen* learned and used derogatory the term "redskin." Louise Ernst Stohr used this term in her 1890s interview. Previous letters from German women do not utilize such descriptive language. As time went on and relations intensified, Germans learned to distrust the Native Americans. The immigrants, no longer dependant on Indian aid as they had been in the first years of

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[39] Esther L. Mueller, "Mr and Mrs Frederick Paper," in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, comp. Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 158-159.

[40] Esther L. Mueller, "Theodore Sprecht," in *Pioneers in God's Hills: A History of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, People and Events*, comp. Gillespie County Historical Society (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1960), 192-193.

settlement and aware of violent tales of Indian atrocities, rarely had open dialogue and interaction with their once friendly allies.

In rural areas, some Germans also ventured outside of their ethnic group to find spouses. Intermarriage tended to be more common between German men and Anglo women, although Anglo men sometimes voiced their intentions of gaining a German wife. Additionally, Catholics often found non-German mates and religion can account for the frequency of such events. Many of the marriages occurred between German Catholic and French Catholic settlers; newlyweds may have had different languages and cultures, but they shared a common faith. Moreover, settlement patterns help to explain the higher number of rural intermarriages between the Germans and French. The high incidents of marriage between Germans and French happened in the areas on which Henri Castro focused his immigration efforts. Therefore, the marriages culminated from both regional proximity and denomiational similarity.[41]

In urban settings, such as San Antonio, Germans lived closer to Mexicans, which did lead to some telling love stories. Germans lived in ethnic neighborhoods in western and southern San

[41] German immigrants often are renowned for their ability to marry within their own ethnic groups. The men and women in Texas appear to support that claim, for the most part. Mothers carefully watched their daughters' suitors, and were much more pleased when then men or their families hailed from the Fatherland. Emilie Ohlendorff's grandmother urged her to accept the proposal of Hermann von Roeder. The older woman told her granddaughter that "*Ick neihme ne; hei ist ein Herr 'von'; Hei hat en Platz; hei kann ne Frau ernehrem*" (I would take him; he is a mister with a 'von'; he has a place; he can support a wife). Grandmother Ohlendorff highlighted the importanct characteristics for a girl's possible beau. Ideally, that man must have a home and be able to support his wife. The grandmother, however, was not so enthusiastic about von Roeder when she discovered that he had not yet paid all he owed on his farm, and Emilie would have to work to help her husband establish their home. When grandmother Ohlendorff discovered that von Roeder was not so well off as she first imagined, she asserted to her family, "*Ick bin man froh dat Ick er nist tau e segged hebbe*" (I'm only glad that I did not try to encourage her.") Emilie Ohlendorff von Roeder, "Life Story of Emilie von Roeder: Compiled Letters and memories" (1943), 29, CAH. Until the turn of the twentieth century, most Germans did find spouses among other German immigrant families. 7th Census of the United States Census,1850, Population schedules of Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Medina, Washington, Roll M432; 8th Census of the United States, 1860, Population Schedule for Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Blanco, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Karnes, Lavaca, Lee, Medina, Travis, Washington Wilson, Roll M653; 9th Census of the United States, 1870, Population Schedule for Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Blanco, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Lavaca, Lee, Medina, Travis, Uvalde, Washington, Roll M593; 10th Population schedule for the United States, 1880, Population Schedule for Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Blanco, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Lavaca, Lee, Medina, Travis, Victoria, Washington, Roll T773; 11th Census of the United States, 1890, Population Schedule for Austin, Bastrop, Bexar , Blanco, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Hays, Lavaca, Lee, Medina, Travis, Victoria, Washington, Roll T9.

Antonio, which helped to preserve identity as immigrants lived next to, bought goods from, socialized with, and attended church with those of a common background. However, they often ventured beyond the German community for business. These interactions encouraged romances beyond a German's own ethnic group. Most common, Germans who hailed from more prosperous families who owned their own busineses socialized with Mexicans of similar wealth and status. Generally, when Germans and Mexicans married, the couple had their children baptized into the Lutheran church.[42]

Two marriages between German men and Mexican women exemplify the trends. Maximilian Neuendorff fell for the beautiful and vivacious Maria Antonio Menchaca. On January 8, 1857, Neuendorff sent Maria's father Antonio a well-written note in Spanish asking for his daughter's hand in marriage. Señor Menchaca consented, and the couple married on April 15 of that year. A few years later, Ferdinand Herff began courting Zuline Lacoste, of a prominent Mexican family. To Señor Lacosta, Herff sent letters in broken Spanish and signed his name Fernando. The letters arranged meetings between Herff and Señor Lacoste and Zuline. For instance, when going riding with Señor Lacosta, Herff pleaded that Zuline also join them so he could have the pleasure of her presence. The two married on April 15, 1875. Zuline Herff became an active member of the German community. Just as Ferdinand learned Spanish, Zuline learned to live amongst the German community, and soon she made herself an active member. In 1896, The *Deutsche Texanische Bundes Sangerfest* (German-Texas Singing Group Festival) presented a concert for Zuline because of her valuable assistance and generous aid for that group.

[42] Frederick C. Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio: Geneologies of the Early Latin, Anlgo-American, and German Families with Occasional Biographies, Each Group Being Prefaced with a Brief Historical Sketch and Illustrations* (San Antonio, Texas: Artes Graficas, 1937), 387.

Both Ferdinand and Zuline were willing to combine and adapt their cultures for the benefit of their relationship.[43]

In contrast to the burgeoning love stories in San Antonio, not so friendly relations existed between German and Anglo-American women. *Frauen* particularly in the first decades of immigration criticized Anglo women's housekeeping and cooking. Frederick Law Olmstead, while staying with a German family, recorded that the lady of the house accused American women of being too lazy to make good butter. The *hausfrau* spent long hours churning her butter to the right texture and adding sugar for a sweet flavor; she accused American women of not being dedicated enough to create a similar product. Olmstead heartily agreed, which added another critique to his dour assessment of American attitudes toward work. In contrast, Olmstead viewed German men and women in Texas as hardworking and industrious.[44]

German women's understanding of family and work often led them to criticize Anglo-American women. Amanda Karoline von Rosenberg commented that "American women are not praised here" because "as a rule they are untidy and lazy." She continued, "even American men are not fond of them." Perhaps not as harsh, Louise Romberg Fuchs noted that "Americans were good, kind people, but they had little culture." When her family first settled in Black Jack Springs in Fayette County, Louise and her mother Friederike visited neighboring American women. During the visit, the Romberg's watched as "the women sat before the fireplace,

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[43] Maximilian Neuendorff to Antonio Mechaca, January 8, 1857, San Antonio, 905, Neuendorff Family Papers, DRT; Ferdinand (signed Fernando) Herff to Senor Lacosta, September, 1869, San Antonio, Herff-Duerler Family Papers, DRT; Ferdinand Herff to Zuline, March 26, 1875, Herff-Duerler Family Papers, DRT; *Deutsche Texanische Bundes Sangerfest* invitation to Zuline Herff, May 8, 1896, Herff-Duerler Family Papers, DRT; Chabot, 388. Chabot refers to Zuline as Suleme.

[44] Olmstead, 185.

smoked corncob pipes, and spat into the fire." The women's actions did not encourage Louise and Friederike to make further acquaintance with their non-German neighbors.[45]

Because of the German *frauen*'s critique of American women, the immigrants generally preferred the companionship of their German neighbors. For instance, von Rosenberg greatly missed her friends in Germany. After arriving in Texas, few girls visited her, leaving her to feel the absence of old confidants even more. She did meet a young German woman, *Frau* Jenski, whose husband was in the process of constructing a homestead near the von Rosenbergs. Since her arrival in Texas in 1846, Jenski had married and had a child two years prior to meeting von Rosenberg. Jenski lived under a large tree with a tent to cover her bed. She had a fire in one corner so she could cook. Von Rosenberg commented, as one who was living in the comfort of a home with her family, that the make-shift home "looked idyllic." Von Rosenberg often visited Jenski while her husband was away. Jenski and von Rosenberg's friendship also benefited Amanda in that Herr Jenski encouraged Arthur Meerscheidt to immigrate to Texas. Von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt would marry a few years later.[46]

On a less personal basis, German women interacted with those surrounding them be they black, Tejano, Native American, or Anglo-American through public events. Places such as New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, and San Antonio hosted public festivals and parades in the nineteenth century. Particular organizations, or *vereins* in the German cases, often arranged these gatherings. Many focused on German ideas and culture. However, that focus changed over time in larger urban areas. Over time new American themes were incorporated, though often with German cultural attributes.

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[45] Amanda Karoline von Rosenberg to August Scweinberger, April 2, 1850, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH; Louise Romberg Fuchs, *Erinnerungen*, (1927), 34, CAH.

[46] Amanda Karoline von Rosenberg to August Scweinberger, April 2, 1850, 2Q395, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenberg and Meerscheidt Families, CAH.

German immigrants often held large ethnic gatherings, where women played hostess. Ottie Fuchs Goeth described the *Sangerfest* in 1859, which was her first singing festival. The prospect of hearing German classical music and choirs serenading the gathered crowds greatly excited the young woman. Moreover, she was very happy to meet and to visit with other German women. Fredericksburg *frauen* offered rooms to the incoming crowds. The women further introduced their friends and acquaintances to other Germans.[47]

For immigrants in New Braunfels, women eversaw the *Kindermaskenball,* an event that represented German traditions being enacted in a new world setting. Although some immigrants remembered earlier *kindermaskenball* parades, the *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung* first noted the procession in June of 1857 when Hermann Seele organized the event. Every year thereafter, German mothers dressed their children who were under eleven years of age in costumes. Most mothers had hand-made the oufits that their offspring would wear in the parade through New Braunfels. Mothers, aunts, and grandmothers carefully preserved the costumes in large trunks, many of which they had brought with them on their journey from Germany, until the day of the parade. Preparation often took the entire year as the women carefully sewed the outfits when they were not occupied with necessary daily duties. On the day of the parade, after the young had walked the designated route, their mothers had snacks and cold drinks awaiting them and their friends so that the festivities could continue.[48]

In San Antonio, Germans, Tejanos, and Americans saw many parades that often held importance for the ethnic identity of that city. Mexicans had their *Dieciséis de Septiembre* and

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[47] Goeth, 63-65.

[48] "*Kindermaskenball*" June 26, 1857; *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung*; Crystal Sasse Ragsdale, "The German Woman in Frontier Texas," in *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth; Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium*, ed. Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 155; Rosemarie Leissner Gregory and Myra Lee Adams Goff, *Kindermaskenball: Past and Present, 150 Years of Heritage* (Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, 1993), 1-5. New Braunfels citizens still continue the *Kindermaskenball* annually with added community festivities.

African-Americans held their own Juneteenth parades. By 1880, Germans felt the growing pressure of a burgeoning population and their own success. San Antonio Germans had business contacts with Tejanos and Anglo-Americans. The immigrants lived generally closer to other ethnic groups as the city expanded and people moved into the traditional German sections of the city. Moreover, the growth of San Antonio itself, with its modern trolley tracks and telegraph and electrical lines brought modernization and change. As a result, the German community led by the various *vereins* organized their own three-day *Volkfest* parade to begin on October 6, 1880. The day was particularly important since it marked the beer festival season that Germans fondly celebrated, and that particular day was the anniversary of the founding of the first German settlement in the United States at Germantown, Pennsylvania. Themes, though, centered on American and Texas history, including a float entitled "First German Settler on Texas Soil" that had live trees, a log cabin, and a bearded settler carefully placed on a wagon. The parade traveled through the paved Houston and Commerce Streets and Alamo Plaza while maneuvering underneath the electrical trolley lines. Plays, games, refreshments, and speeches also marked the festival. The length and fanfare of the parades proved too costly for the *veriens*; from 1885 to 1889 German in San Antonio did not hold separate parades. However, in 1890 the community decided to revive *Volkfest* parade, but without the expensive multi-day festivities.[49]

German women did not partake in the actual organizing of the German parades in the five-year *Volkfest* or in the other San Antonio parades, but they were actively involved in the gatherings. These floats often included allegorical representations from both sides of the Atlantic. A post-1871 unified Germany led to many depictions of Germania, while Liberty and Columbia often represented the United States. German women played the parts of these

[49] "German *Volkfest* Parade,"*San Antonio Express*, September 1, 1869; "Obituary of Max Lindner." *San Antonio Expresss*, February 26, 1901; "*Volkfest*," San Antonio Express, April 11, 1882; "German *Volkfest,*" *San Antonio Light*, July 9, 1883; Judith Berg-Sobré, *San Antonio on Parade: Six Historic Festivals* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2003), 111-112.

symbolic figures while young men played the roles of Rhine maidens who walked around the floats. Moreover, other women helped provide the float designs. Bertha Staffel dedicatedly scoured magazines and cut out pictures that she thought would be good for a float. She had large scrapbooks holding the possible decorations. Bertha reveled in all of San Antonio's urban festivities. She particularly liked the Christmas fireworks because the shimmering lights reminded her of all the candles on Christmas trees in Germany and of congregations holding candles during Lutheran services.[50]

German involvement in Fourth of July celebrations also offered them a chance of observing American customs. Ottie Fuchs Goeth remembered that in 1846 she and her family attended the Austin County celebration. Although few settlers lived in Austin County, those there gathered to roast meat near present-day Bellville. Americans—slave-holders and yeoman farmers—and the few Germans in the area assembled for a pleasant dinner. In 1855, the Fuchses again joined Americans in the Fourth festivities, but this time in Marble Falls. The family rafted down the river, and Ottie remarked on the "good future" facing Texas because it was a part of the United States and Mexico no longer threatened its security. Her optimism could not foresee the imminent political troubles that would threaten national unity.[51]

Goeth's memories regarding the Fourth of July holidays mark a turning point for many German immigrants, particularly those who had lived in Texas for many years. She and her family had participated in such activities almost since they had established their home in Texas, even though Americans' eating habits and social graces often appalled Goeth and her family. Yet by the United States's centennial anniversary in 1876, the German immigrants appeared very involved. Goeth's husband Carl traveled to Philadelphia to attend the celebration while Goeth

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[50] "*Volkfest* Parade" October 10, 1891, *San Antonio Light*; Armin Elmindorf, "A Texan Remembers: A bit of biography and some incidents in the history of the Elmendorf and Staffel families of San Antonio, Texas, as recorded her his grandchildren," DRT.

[51] Goeth, 49-50, 54-55.

remained at home with their children. Since Carl was away, Goeth had time for "quiet contemplation" and was able to jot down her thoughts regarding the July 4th celebrations. Goeth stated that "in the South, unfortunately, the Centennial is not generally observed." Only Germans "mark the occasion with festivity" because the "former slaveholders are still too much filled with resentment." Indeed, many Germans felt themselves more a part of the Union and America than did Southern-born Anglo-Americans.[52]

Conclusion

German Lutheran women faced challenges in Texas as they met many different types of people soon after arriving in Texas, and they undertook greater interaction with those people in order to help their families survive on the frontier. The women learned to continue their traditional roles as healers in their new land so they could help their family and neighbors survive. The *frauen* also learned to sell the goods they either made by hand or collected to support themselves and their loved ones better. Moreover, women took on new roles such as teaching at schools. As the women worked and socialized, they encountered Anglo-Americans, Native American, Tejanos, and blacks with whom they created personal and business relationships; some even married outside of their own ethnic community.

As the German women began to interact with others outside their home and church, they began to deal with new and secular issues. Lutheran women's interaction outside of their homes and churches offered them economic and educational opportunities that did not directly relate to their domestic or to their religious roles. They taught at non-religious schools, worked in businesses, and attended secular national celebrations. As a consequence, the German women came more in contact with Americans and become familiar with American society. However,

[52] Ibid., 96-99.

the women maintained their own ethnic identity amidst their Anglo-American neighbors. Still, the changing ethnic landscape did concern many German Lutheran women who wished to perpetuate their religious and social traditions.

Chapter Seven
Ethnicity and Memory

As German Lutheran women in Texas established social and religious institutions similar to what they had known in Germany, they also interacted with non-Germans in the Lone Star State. Many *frauen* worried that their families' association with Anglo-Americans, African Americans, and Tejanos would bring about a loss of ethnicity. After all, by the 1890s, German immigration to Texas had slowed to a trickle; thus, new immigrants no longer renewed the ethnic communities in Texas with German social and cultural traditions. As time went by and immigrant descendants acclimated to American society, German women and their descendants felt the urge to memorialize what the original immigrants had accomplished in the nineteenth century.

To do so, many German women recorded their memories of immigrant life in Texas as they grew older. These women sometimes jotted down their life stories in their spare time, as did Ottilie Fuchs Goeth. Other women told stories of their childhoods and youth to their children and grandchildren, who sat attentively around the women. The offspring patiently transcribed the *Grossmütter's* (grandmothers's) German words and some even translated the narratives into English. Finally, a few of the German grandmothers told their tales to interviewers who were not related to the immigrants.

However a German *Grossmutter* expressed her experiences, she invoked long-ago times and people long dead for specific purposes. Most importantly, these women wanted to connect their descendants with the past. Their heritage—family, religion, and ethnicity—grew increasingly important for these Texas grandmothers as they aged. Therefore, the women's Lutheran-based values led them to focus on family and their earthly responsibility to their neighbors. After all, these women had struggled during the decades after immigration to

establish homes, churches, and communities that reflected their religious beliefs, and they felt compelled to pass those beliefs and traditions to their offspring.

Taking a closer look at these women's writings after 1885 provides a deeper understanding of what they thought it meant to be German in Texas and eventually German-Texans. This chapter splits the immigrant women and their writings into two groups. The first set of writings appeared during the last decades of the nineteenth century and into the first decade of the twentieth century, and they demonstrate the significance of family, sacrifice, community, and femininity. The second group of grandmothers' memories span from the 1920s to the 1940s, and they emphasize Americanization, progress, community, and family. To offer a contrast to the *Grossmütter*, the chapter lastly examines writings of first-generation Germans who wrote concurrently with the grandmothers of the 1920s to the 1940s to show how first-generation German-Texans viewed their heritage as adaptive, filled with forgotten traditions, marked by maternal responsibility, and characterized by romanticized portraits of their German-ness.

First Group of *Grossmütter*

The first group of German Lutheran women writers, those writing between 1885 and 1915, stressed what they believed were essential Lutheran-based qualities for their descendants living in Texas—family, sacrifice, community, and femininity. Ultimately, the first group of grandmothers hoped to guide future generations on what it meant to be a person of German heritage living in Texas. As they instructed descendants on family history by recounting the lives and struggles of loved ones, they covered four main themes. First, the women began their narratives by recounting the struggles and trials immigrant families faced on their journey to and settlement in Texas. Second, grandmothers detailed their daily duties, particularly their domestic

chores, and the sacrifices they made for their loved ones' survival on the frontier. Third, the *Grossmütter* emphasized the cultural connection between those living in Texas with those in Germany. Fourth, the authors' outlined how they thought a good Lutheran woman should act in Texas, especially as their daughters and granddaughters acclimated to American society.[1]

The writers of this first period reacted to aspects of American culture that they believed encroached upon their German ethnic traditions. These women saw their children and grandchildren going to American colleges, adopting American occupations, and taking American spouses. Offspring, who often had no personal memories of Germany, interacted more and more with Anglo-American society. Even Germans who remained on farms lived in closer proximity to non-German people at the turn of the century. By 1890, immigration had slowed to a trickle because fewer Germans left a newly-unified, politically-stable, and economically-successful Germany for Texas. As a result, Texans did not have the infusion of newcomers bringing German customs and ways. In other words, German communities in Texas were not refreshed with the Germanic culture as newcoming Germans had done for immigrant culture earlier in the century. Moreover, the growth of railroads from the 1880s onward allowed Germans and Americans to travel farther from their parents' homesteads, thus moving away from the ethnic centers and closer to American neighbors.[2]

Just as the railroads removed their descendants, it also connected once disparate German-Texan settlements to the larger world. Austin and San Antonio were connected to the ports of Lavaca and Houston in the 1870s, which allowed the Germans living in those areas to profit from more efficient trade. By the 1880s, rail lines had expanded to San Antonio, Austin, and

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[1] For an examination a Margarete Lenk, a Lutheran pastor's wife in Missouri, and her books that describe the importance of religion, community, and culture to German immigrants see, Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau, "New Home in the New World: Margarete Lenk and the German Immigrant Experience," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (Fall 2004), 167-168.

[2] Terry Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 54-59.

New Braunfels with trunk lines reaching to the smaller German communities in South and Central Texas. Even the ethnically-German town of New Braunfels benefited from rail lines because of trade and tourism. The International and Great Northern Railway brought people from San Antonio to New Braunfels' Landa Pasture on weekends. The tourists brought money to New Braunfels' economy, but they also threatened to weaken the ethnic identity of that town. Fredericksburgers, who still spoke German in their homes and at their businesses until well into the twentieth century, witnessed the iron horse much later. The first railroad car of the San Antonio, Fredericksburg, and Northern Railroad pulled into their town in 1914. Such modernization encouraged more visitors to come to Fredericksburg's shops and county fairs, which had attracted visitors since 1889. Thus, these rail lines brought better trade, quicker travel, and paying tourists, but they also facilitated confrontation between German and Anglo-American cultures. Ottie Fuchs Goeth asserted that "[t]ransportation has become speedier; the world, once so large, is growing smaller."[3]

In reaction to those changes, these immigrant Lutheran grandmothers intentionally set about recording their memories of the German immigrants' experiences and Lutheran values for descendants who were slowly becoming Americanized. To show their grandchildren the importance of their ancestors' experiences, German women often recorded the hardships that they and their families faced during the trip to Texas. For instance, the women each detailed the trials of sea travel in the mid-nineteenth century. Ottie Fuchs Goeth spoke of the wooden crate

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[3] Goeth, 138; Charles P. Zlatkovich, *Texas Railroads: A Record of Construction and Abandonment* (Austin: Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas at Austin and Texas State Historical Association, 1981), 29-36, 109-111, 124, 129; Landa Pasture was bought by the Landa family who were a prominent German-Jewish family in New Braunfels. Jay Gould, on the advice of his daughter Helen who visited the Landa's Pasture, built a trunk line from the International and Great Northern to profit from the tourists traveling to the park resort. In 1898, the area was renamed Landa Park. Harry Landa, *As I Remember* (San Antonio: Carleton Printing Company, 1945), 40-46; Don Biggers, *German Pioneers in Texas: A Brief History of Their Hardships, Struggles and Achievements* (Fredericksburg, Texas: Press of the Fredericksburg Publishing Co., 1925), 136-137, 142. Prince Carl wanted to build a railroad from Carlshafen to German settlements, but the plan never developed. Thus, Germans remained localized until the 1870s. The lack of such transportation was one reason why Germans did not move into western or northern Texas in greater numbers. Biesele, 112, 210.

that carried her family on the six-week trip to Texas. Rosa Kleberg told her grandson of the many days she and her traveling companions had to cope on a relatively deserted Galveston Island because their ship had wrecked on its way to Brazoria. Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber and her mother Louise Ernst Stöhr wrote of the treacherous conditions they faced while traveling inland to the land on which they would build their new home. Wind, rain, and deprivation characterized the mother's and daughter's lives on the frontier.[4]

These trials highlighted all that the Lutheran *Grossmütter* endured for their loved ones' well-being and allowed them to emphasize the importance of family. Certainly the women faced physiological pain as well as physical burdens but they did not discuss their homesickness for Germany or their longing for friends and family except for an occasional mention of people left in the Fatherland. Instead, they focused on how important the family relations were to their survival. Kleberg fondly described how she and her sisters-in-law banded together to sew for extra money while her male relatives worked to raise crops. Above all, these memoirs asserted that immigrants made such sacrifices for their families' future good. Lutheran *Grossmütter* knew that and they wanted to make certain that descendants knew of the settlers' troubles and personal rewards.[5]

After the *Grossmütter* discussed the process of settlement, they described all their domestic duties, which they portrayed as past of their Lutheran responsibilities. Ottie Fuchs Goeth detailed her usual morning schedule that began by making a breakfast of bacon, eggs, and

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[4] Ottilie Fuchs Goeth, *Was Grossmutter Erzaehlt* (San Antonio: Passing Show Print Co., 1915), 36-40; Rosa Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas" *Texas Historical Association Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (April 1898), 297-298; Louis Ernst Stöhr, "Reminiscences," in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 1-2; Caroline Ernst von Roeder von Hinueber, "Life of German Pioneers of Early Texas." *Texas State Historical Association Quarterly* 2 no. 3 (January 1899), 227-228.

[5] Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas," 298; Stöhr, "Reminisces," in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 3; Dona Reeves-Marquardt and Ingeborg Ruberg McCoy, "Tales of Grandmothers: Women Purveyors of German-Texan Culture" in *Eagle in the New World: German Immigration to Texas and America* eds. Theodore Gish and Richard Spuler (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 216-218.

coffee of which she often had to make more to satisfy her family's appetite. After breakfast, Goeth made lunches for her husband and other workers going to herd their sheep. With only a few moments to eat her own breakfast, Goeth had to clean the dishes, churn butter, and then wash the laundry. Children most often interrupted the duties with injuries or issues needing a mother's attention. While relating her busy work days, Goeth warned her grandchildren against idealizing about the lives of their ancestors. Those "who grew up in the city tend to imagine life on a ranch as either more romantic, or more monotonous than it actually [was]." Life instead presented "new tasks and additional responsibilities, so that one [was] never really finished" and she observed one "needs an abundance of humor in order to remain well balanced."[6]

Interestingly enough, despite the emphasis on hard work in Texas, the women rarely elaborated on their fieldwork. Goeth, one of the few grandmothers who talked of such labor, recounted how her mother Luise Fuchs adjusted to menial and laborious domestic tasks and how other *frauen* learned to plow fields and build fences. Each German woman accustomed herself to working on the land and learned how best to derive what her family needed from it. Shaped by their experiences with frontier conditions, they did not want their descendents to forget or ignore the importance of the land and how the immigrants managed to establish their own culture amidst a challenging and changing environment. The *Grossmütter* had become strong as they endured their work and learned how to support their families, but supporting family—not field labor—was their legacy.[7]

Since the women of this first group wrote mainly for their children and grandchildren, their families knew that the women had labored hard in the fields and house. Firsthand knowledge or tales from parents certainly had informed the descendants about immigrants' lives.

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[6] Goeth, 91-92.
[7] Ibid., 183-184; Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences," 298.

The Lutheran grandmothers did not need to dwell on that fact, which they themselves took for granted as a means to support their loved ones. Instead, the Lutheran women emphasized the importance of family and the home.

While depicting their domestic duties, the *Grossmütter* compared the trials that they experienced with the relative ease of their daughters' and granddaughters' lives. Goeth challenged her descendants to think of how difficult her life was in the nineteenth century the next time they complained of having too little time to study or to perform some task. She explained how "tedious and consuming life was in those earlier days as compared to the present." Kleberg had to sew jackets and clothes for her brothers and after marriage for her husband and children. Kitchen work took much of her time as she ground corn before starting the day-long process of baking the dough over an open fire. Moreover, she and other immigrant women had to make candles because they did not acquire kerosene lamps until after the Civil War. Goeth highlighted the differences between immigrant life and the life of their German-Texan descendants so they understood the struggle and hardships of the German Lutheran *Grossmütter* who tended to their family duties in frontier Texas.[8]

The *Grossmütter* emphasized sacrifice so that those living in turn-of-the-century Texas realized how families had struggled and bonded together so their descendants would have a better life. Goeth and others feared their children and grandchildren would forget the way life and work had been for the immigrants. The women realized that Texas was changing from the sparsely populated land they had entered decades earlier as those living in towns, villages, and rural regions began to have an "easier" way of life. No longer did girls have to help their mothers grind flour or corn for bread. In towns, people could more easily obtain bread, butter, eggs, and vegetables from nearby stores. Or, for those who still remained on farms,

[8] Goeth, 61-63

technology—plows, garden tools, and other advancements—slowly altered their labor, making it relatively easier. Having the confidence that family members had worked on and survived from the land further provided succeeding generations the confidence and knowledge they needed to work the farm.[9]

Besides the availability of foods and tools, the *Grossmütter* concerned themselves with how material possessions altered attitudes. For example, at an 1884 wedding, Goeth noted how the utensils traditionally given to a new couple had changed from the pewter ones she received at her 1859 wedding to the polished silver set the new bride accepted. Immigrants just settling in nineteenth-century Texas could not have afforded such a present. Rosa Kleberg told her grandson that she sold her fine linen table cloths that she had brought from Germany. Her family needed the money, and elegant household decorations or goods mattered little when loved ones were hungry or cold. Similarly, those reading her words, especially those Germans whose families had become prosperous in Texas, should realize that happiness came from a healthy family and not from nice goods either bought in Germany or in turn-of-the-century Texas cities.[10]

Kleberg and the other women wanted to make certain that their children retained ethnic and religious traditions even though they might be obtaining an American way of life. Goeth touched on an important and sensitive topic for immigrant parents. She noted that her children had "attained a higher standard of living than [she and her husband Carl] could offer them." The Goeth children, like so many other children from German communities, left the farm to attend

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[9] The passing down of recipes, remedies, and other learned goods illustrates that the next generations had learned from the struggles of their mothers and fathers. Many of the descendents would argue that life was still difficult and laborious, but the immigrants contended that their struggle with the land was indeed more strenuous and demanding. As settlement patterns became more structured, women's colonization and interaction with the land also became more restricted and dominated by social norms and expectations. Reeves-Marquardt and McCoy, 220-221.

[1010] Kleberg, "Early Experiences in Texas. II,"170.

college or, once they were married, they left to live in more urbanize areas. Many Germans and their descendants did remain on farms and ranches, but the number who left homesteads for city houses concerned many a *Grossmutter*. After all, most Germans left Europe so they could provide their children land on which they could work and raise their families. Once settled in Texas, many offspring found occupations other than farming. Still the German women, through their memoires, emphasized the importance of providing children a better future.[1112]

Grossmütter encouraged German and European culture such as books and music that linked them and their descendants to the Fatherland. Goeth fondly recalled the classic German works that her family had carried with them during immigration. She and her siblings often read these works on their farms. The Klebergs also brought many monographs to Texas, though they were destroyed during the Texas Revolution. The women also emphasized the singing and music that their families and communities enjoyed during respites from work. Each author related how German and European songs filled their evenings and helped many to overcome their longings for Germany as the immigrants recreated some cultural semblance of Germany in their frontier homes.[13]

Their emphasis on reading and singing also helped the women to form a distinct ethnic identity from their Anglo-American neighbors. These first grandmother writers generally described Anglo women in positive terms. When they did venture criticism in their narratives, the Lutheran *Grossmütter* pointed to the lack of culture among the Americans. These frontierswomen were acclaimed to be friendly and generous with food and time, but never did the American women discuss the writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe or the music of

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[11] Goeth, 86, 111-112.

[12] Stöhr, "Reminisces," in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 3; Hinueber, 12; Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences, II," 172.

[13] Goeth, 50, 208, 211; Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences,"302.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Instead, the Anglo-Americans had their own interests and forms of culture of which the German immigrants did not partake. Thus, the Lutheran women underscored for their descendants the conspicuous differences between German-Texans and Anglo-Americans.[14]

Still, remembering books and music from their former homeland touched on a sentimental and sad note for the German women who tried to make their old homeland familiar to those born in Texas. Younger generations' lack of knowledge or interest in Germany caused part of the *Grossmütter's* sorrow. Already by 1879, Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg lamented to her cousin that the children "do not want to know much about the cold home place of their mother." Those born in Texas called von Rosenberg's birthplace of "Eckitten a youthful fantasy" when she tried to regale them with stories of her childhood. Although the women continued to speak of the German culture and people that they had known before emigration, memories of the old times became bittersweet. Goeth wistfully reminisced about the parsonage in the village of Koelzow where her father had preached for ten years, and where she and her siblings had played amongst the garden and its large trees. She was so excited that her "heart simply overflowed with joy" at the thought of being able to return to her first home though many of her childhood acquaintances were dead. One of Goeth's greatest pleasure was the ability to return to the Fatherland with her husband and her youngest son.[15]

Goeth's visit shows the technological progress that had occurred since 1845, but also illustrates how she viewed Texas as her home. The trip to Germany was much better than her trip to Texas in 1845. The Goeths enjoyed the comfortable cabins of the steamliner, and they enjoyed food prepared well by a trained chef. Upon arriving in Germany, Goeth met several of

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[14] Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas. II," 173.

[15] Amanda Fallier von Rosenberg to Charlotte von Holtey, July 15, 1879, La Grange, Ancestral Voices: The Letters of the von Rosenbergs and Meerscheidt Families, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter CAH); Goeth, 113.

her cousins and other relatives who had their own estates, some of which were very large. Goeth happily noted their success. Growing German cities, especially Berlin, further awed the Texas grandmother and her family as they promenaded down the *Unter den Linden* towards the Brandenburg Gate. The happy trio eagerly explored the *Tiergarten*, climbed the *Siegessäule* (Victory Column) to get a birds-eye-view of the city, and wandered for hours in the *Zoologischer Garten Berlin* (Berlin Zoological Garden). After leaving Berlin, Goeth records her fascination with the beauty of the Rhine, where her husband spent much of his youth until emigrating from there to Texas when he was seventeen years old. Despite Goeth's admiration for Germany, she constantly referred to relatives in Texas. A cholera outbreak in Hamburg delayed the Goeths' departure, and the family again had to wait once nearing shore in New York because of quarantine regulations. Finally, but not soon enough for Goeth's liking, the family resumed its journey towards Texas where her feeling was "similar to that of a refugee upon spending his first night within the shelter of his family after having escaped the enemy."[16]

Lutheran *Grossmütter*, similar to Goeth, had fond memories of Germany, but they most often remembered Texas as the healthier climate and more equitable society. By 1867, Hedwig Coreth described Germany as filled with midgets, beggars, and crippled children, while "in Texas [she] did not think we saw a single crippled child." Additionally, to Coreth, the European air seemed much more ill than the fresh winds and the open plains of Texas. Socially, the women seemed to like the freedoms in Texas compared to Germany's rigid social hierarchy. Louise Ernst Stöhr and her daughter Caroline recalled when Prince Carl lodged at the Ernst's hotel in the early 1840s. His arrogance impressed both mother and daughter little. Similarly,

[16] Goeth., 113-118.

Rosa Kleberg remembered the Prince as a "conceited fool" who would not sit at the dinner table with other German immigrants.[17]

The comparison between their old and new homes illustrated the *Grossmütter*'s understanding of who they were and how they saw themselves developing into German-Texans. Although many still had fond memories of Germany and, like Ottie Fuchs Goeth, were proud that they had German blood in their veins, the women did not view themselves as fully German, nor did they see themselves as completely Texans or American. Indeed, they closely held onto their German heritage—faith, family, language, and music—but they also accepted the fact that they had loyalties to Texas. Goeth claimed that she was the most content in Texas because on that land she had raised her children and in that soil she had buried loved ones.[18]

The grandmothers' focus on family pointed to the importance of Lutheran faith in their lives. Goeth contributed the strength of her faith to her father's loving and constant teachings while she described the religious songs that she and her family sang. Additionally, Kleberg talks of having her children baptized, and she survived much of the miseries and strife involved with immigration because of her enduring faith in God and his plan for her. Other *Grossmütter* reflected this innate belief in a loving God who would watch over these women as they lived in Texas.[19]

Yet these women did not describe the establishment of the Lutheran church in Texas; instead, they emphasized women's conservative roles in the family and community. Indeed, the immigrant grandmothers refrained from any real discussion of the church as an institution, and their silence on the matter seemingly points to their interest in the personal side of religion.

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[17] Hinueber, 15-16; Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences in Texas. II," 172; Hedwig Coreth to Rudolph Coreth, January 31, 1867, Düsseldorf, 3X159, Coreth Family Papers, CAH.

[18] Goeth, 154-155, 188, 194.

[19] Adolph Fuchs did instill ideas of religion free from government interference, but he himself showed concern over non-traditional Christian faiths such as the Mormons who lived in Texas. Goeth, 215.

Kleberg and Goeth wrote of having children baptized and of attending church services; they did not discuss doctrinal issues, which would have little influence on their faith, which carried them through their daily chores. Additionally, Goeth spoke of "modern women" becoming "dedicated to other interests" such as "club life and wanting to participate in political affairs." In contrast, many German grandmothers had dedicated themselves to the success of what Goeth called the "quieter life of home." These women writers wanted their children and grandchildren to recognize the constant presence of God and faith in their lives as the women, influenced by their Lutheran-based values, focused on the home. Their roles in the early Texas Lutheran church often took them outside the domestic sphere, so the women did not emphasize those activities. The women painted a picture of how faith had kept and continued to keep them strong in everyday trials. In other words, they encouraged their grandchildren to think of the "valuable things in life" that focused on their families.[20]

Ottie Fuchs Goeth related that at her golden wedding anniversary all family members spoke German, though they were all fluent in English; the use of German pleased Goeth because she hoped "that the grandchildren [would] continue" the use of German language, culture, and art as had their grandparents. Similarly, other *Grossmütter* wrote of the importance of family and heritage in hopes that their offspring remembered from where they came despite the Germans' increasing interaction with Anglo-Americans. The acclimation of their descendants to American society proved worrisome for the grandmothers. The women consistently mentioned the sacrifice they and their parents made in coming to Texas. Particularly, women's domestic chores were burdensome because of the rustic conditions, and frontier Texas demanded the women provide clothes and meals often from scratch. Yet the grandmothers emphasized how singing and reading linked those who lived in Texas with their German heritage. However, they

[20] Kleberg, "Some of My Early Experiences. II," 173; Goeth, 132-134.

noted that they endured all the travails and sacrifices for the sake of their loved ones who lived in Texas. For the most part, family remained the most important factor for these Lutheran women, and they wanted all their descendants to remember the past no matter how far they moved away from the immigrant farmsteads or neighborhoods.[21]

Second Group of *Grossmütter*

Although faith and family remained important for German Lutheran women who lived in Texas during the 1920s and 1930s, the women possessed a different view on ethnicity and immigration than did the grandmothers who wrote at the turn of the century. First, these women described their youths within the context of American history, particularly that of the American West. Second, these grandmothers emphasized the idea of progress in their communities by telling how such factors as medicine and travel were better in the twentieth century. Third, despite their interest in "modern" America, the women did lament the loss of community among neighbors and the lack of bonding among family members. Fourth, these authors highlighted the importance of the family unit, and in so doing, they placed German-Texas families in line with the expectations of inter-war conservative American society.

This second group of grandmothers was not necessarily as active as the first group in recording their thoughts, though these very elderly German-born Texans also confronted new challenges to their ethnicity, especially World War I and its attendant anti-German sentiment. German-Texans had ethnic strongholds, particularly Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, which survived from the first years of settlement through the un-American hysteria that threatened so many German groups in the United States. People in these German-Texan areas still held church services in German, had their own German-language newspapers, and spoke German in day-to-

[21] Goeth, 161.

day business. Certainly, from 1918 many Lutheran churches held token services in English, but official records, even those from the *frauervereinen*, remained in German. Even so, a century of German cultural presence in Texas made these *Grossmütter* much more confident that adopting some American ideas would not undermine their German ethnicity. Furthermore, the women believed that non-Germans were interested in their history because Works Progress Administration (WPA) representatives interviewed German immigrants in the early 1930s. The grandmothers conveying their memories in the twentieth century knew that their descendants had acclimated somewhat to American society while maintaining German culture. In other words, while the second group of *Grossmütter* emphasized some of the same topics—family, sacrifice, and work—their interpretations differed from those of the first group of grandmothers.[22]

In these narratives, several of which were WPA interviews and a newspaper interview, all conducted in English, the women maintained strong ties to their German heritage by including genealogy. Emilie Ohlendorff von Roeder provided a history of her great-grandparents and their families in Germany. Louise Romberg Fuchs recounted the lives of her family from her parents to children and their lives in Texas. Amalie Steward Christoff and Lucinda Permien Holze told their life stories to Effie Cowan of the WPA. Auguste Ervendberg Wiegreffe gave an interview to a reporter at the *San Antonio Express* newspaper. All of these women mentioned to whom they were related and which relatives had married into particular families. Wiegreffe even described particular clothes and other mementos that her mother left her. These seemingly mundane facts highlight the women's understanding of themselves, particularly amidst the uncertain atmosphere of the post-war period. Christoff, Holze, Wiegreffe and other German descendants continued to identify themselves by their relations to other people and by their

[22] Sonntag, 661-663; Walter Kamhoefner, "The Handwriting on the Wall: The Klan, Language Issues, and Prohibition in the German Settlements of Eastern Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 112, no. 1 (July 2008): 64-66.

ethnic heritage as well as prominent German immigrant families in Texas. Although the WPA interviewer was not familiar with the significance of the women's genealogy, many of the San Antonio *Express* readers would understand the importance of such connections.[23]

The women's audiences played a more important role in shaping the accounts of the second group of grandmothers than with the first group of women immigrant authors. Fuchs, Wagner, and von Roeder provided the most family-centered narratives that emphasized their domestic duties, their children, and their motherly roles. The WPA interviewees included family history, but they tended to describe larger historical occurrences or themes—the Indianola hurricanes of 1875 and 1886, immigrant painters and musicians, as well as a history of religious denominations in Fredericksburg—regarding the German immigrant community. Audience helped to explain such a divergence. Fuchs, Wagner, and von Roeder wrote or dictated their thoughts to family members who should have been familiar with the history of Texas and German immigrants. As such, these women focused on illustrating how the men and women succeeded, particularly when facing the trials of frontier Texas. The grandmothers who spoke to the WPA interviewer no doubt considered her unfamiliar with the general history of German immigrants to Texas.

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[23] Effie Cowan's interview with Amalie Steward Christoff, Workers Progress Administration Interview, Roll 69.5.5, File Number 240, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (hereafter WPA Interview); Effie Cowan's interview with Lucinda Permien Holze, Workers Progress Administration Interview, Roll 69.5.5, File Number 240, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (hereafter WPA Interview); Emilie Ohlendorff von Roeder, "Life Story of Emilie von Roeder, compiled letters and memories by Benno G. von Roeder when she was between eighty-five and eighty-nine years old" (1943), CAH; Auguste Ervendberg Wiegreffe, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 42; English had already crept into the lives of some Germans in Texas. Particularly Germans in urban areas, such as San Antonio and Austin, learned to speak more quickly and fluently than those immigrants on the farms. For example, Mathilde Violet Kleberg wrote, in English, to her cousin in Germany how she loved to ride horses and tend to her pet chickens, who were suffering from some sort of illness. Also, some parents worried over their children's inability to write letters to family in Germany. Louise Kleberg to Father, January 14, 1885, 2J49, Kleberg Family Papers, CAH; Louise Kleberg to Father, February 11, 1897, 2J49, Kleberg Family Papers, CAH.

The *Grossmütter* of the 1920s to the 1940s often portrayed their early lives as part of a distant and exciting past. Ernestine Weis Fuadie, Amalie Steward Christoffer, and Lucinda Permien Holze repeatedly asked their WPA interviewer if she remembered a particular characteristic about Indians or depredations on the frontier, such as Indians attacking travelers or roving bands robbing people as they drove their wagons across the country. Other women writing to their descendants played on similar tropes. They painted their childhoods amidst a picture of Indians who wandered the land while threatening animals and insects lurked around trees and bushes. Similarly, they affirmed what they thought was a part of the frontier mythology describing "un-civilized" Indians who ate with their fingers or had Johann Meusebach wash his red hair in the river to see if the color would come off.[24]

Additionally, when the women spoke or wrote of their childhoods, they often represented themselves as rugged and rough. Louise Romberg Fuchs told of all the fun she had playing with her brothers in the fields. She proudly boasted that she was the best tree climber amongst her siblings as "scarcely a tree was too high" for her. The *Grossmütter* also talked of riding horses with other children or on their own. The women remembered frolicking with boys in the fields and trying to catch fish and other water critters. Such free spirited fun reflected their memory of the frontier with its fewer social regulations than the urban twentieth century.[25]

As well as showing the frontier freedoms, this second set of grandmothers remembered an indefatigable spirit that characterized their life on the wild frontier. The *Grossmütter* recalled

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[24] Wiegreffe, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 44-45. Many discuss how they learned to negotiate with the Indians, trading goods as Kleberg learned soon after settling in Texas. Generally, these early memories recall the Comanche and other groups as very friendly or at least as peaceful acquaintances. Every one of the women mentioned accounts of Indian depredation, which was a fact to which many in their audience would be able to relate. Ottie Fuchs Goeth mentioned the havoc and terror Indians wreaked during the Civil War (1861-1865), but she dismissed those problems because most of her time in Texas did not involve Native American raids. Goeth, 92-92.

[25] Louise Romberg Fuchs, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 69.

the troubled times of the immigrants and their early years in Texas, but the passage of time often dulled the recollections. The grandmothers remembered that they and their families confronted a harsh environment as they established their homes with very few supplies. Yet, the memories seem to detail a constant procession toward progress. Ernestine Weiss Faudie asserted that despite the frontier troubles, such as disease and destitution, the settlers never lost faith in future. Even chores and hard work had the seemingly immediate outcome of harvested crops or cleaned houses. Fuchs recalled how she rode the family's work-horse Hans, and how she and her siblings thought the trips to the grist mill on Hans's wide back were fun even though they had to lug heavy sacks of corn.[26]

Although the grandmothers firmly situated their narratives within the history of the frontier, they generally did not discuss their relationships with other peoples. Fuchs says that Anglo-Americans were generous but uncultured. Otherwise, she and the other women included little other descriptions of Anglo women. Additionally, they rarely incorporated Mexicans and Tejanos in their histories except for brief mention of soldiers during the Texas Revolution. Moreover, the women only occasionally note the absence of slaves in their counties. The *Grossmütter* of the second group did not portray freedman as frequently as the first group. The German women wished to present their own understanding of family and the world. They did not dedicate effort to criticizing the American culture with which their descendants and even they had become so familiar.

Their memoirs placed the immigrants within the settling of the American frontier, a history that most Texans would know. Amalia Chrsitoffer talked of "the spirit of adventure [that] was there same as it is now in the air ships." She included Indians and desperados who

[26] Effie Cowan's interview with Ernestine Weiss Faudie, 3, Works Progress Administration Interview, Roll 69.5.5, File Number 240, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (hereafter WPA Interview); Fuchs, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 70-71.

attacked their wagon trains as they crossed Texas. Lucinda Holze spoke of the wagon trains that traveled closely together to help protect the occupants from robbers. The people who "march[ed] across the wilderness" of Texas relied on each other and their culture to "win their struggles against the hardships of the life of the pioneer." Using such familiar terminology as pioneers, Indians, and robbers in the setting of a once "untamed territory," these women showed how they and their parents faced the trials of frontier life to settle the land.[27]

As a means of further keeping the German immigrants in the historical memory, the women also mentioned memorials and statues dedicated to the first pioneers. Emilie von Roeder described Cat Spring's centennial celebration of its founding. There was a parade with floats, wagons, and men riding horses. The one float that she particularly remembered was one with cattails around a spring and a stuffed bobcat. From the float hung a banner that proclaimed "Where von Roeder killed the bobcat," which referenced Leopold von Roeder's killing of a crouched bobcat not long after the Germans had settled in the area. Although this depiction showed the actions of immigrants the act was not portrayed as particularly German.[28]

German women emphasized their part in helping to populate the frontier because that situated them and their families amongst America's early settlers while hopefully differentiating them from the German enemy during the First World War. By detailing what the immigrants had in common with other Anglo settlers, the women tried to allay fears of a subversive German colony in Texas. None of the women referred to the *Adelsverein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas* (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants, hereafter *Adelsverein*)

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[27] Holze, 6, WPA Interview.

[28] von Roeder, 24; Rudolph Biesele, *The History of German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, Texas: Press of Von Boekmann-Jones Co., 1930), 48. In the 1930s several parades, celebrations, and memorials were established in recognition of the German immigrant settlers. For example, see the German Pioneers Monument in Landa Park in New Braunfels. The bronze monument was erected in 1933, and it depicts a German father, mother, and child on top of a bronze pillar that has scenes describing the various stages of German settlement growth. W.M. Von-Maszewski, *Handbook and Registry of German-Texan Heritage* (Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, 1989), 13-8.

or other immigration companies' intention to establish a nineteenth-century German colony in Texas. Indeed, if the women mentioned motivations for coming to Texas, they stressed opportunity and land as the main reasons. Ernestine Faudie noted how the immigrants did not mind all the inconveniences of their small log cabin and of their hard work because they "were so happy to have all the land" that they "could cultivate and the stock which was so plentiful, so different from where we lived in Germany." Amalie Christoffer told her interviewer that the American "reality is better than the dream." She stated that America "has become [her] own country," though she added that she has not "forgotten the other country [Prussia] or the other friends and relatives." The immigrants and their families affirmed many of the American ideals as they sought to free themselves from the tyranny of German society and establish a better life for themselves and their loved ones in Texas. In other words, these *Grossmütter* and their families reflected the success of Americans without specifically conjuring reminders of their German ethnicity.[29]

Moreover, the grandmothers equated their families' successes with the acquisition of "modern" household goods and supplies. The majority of the women recalled the day when their mothers obtained a gas-fired cook stove. No longer did the *hausfrauen* have to labor over a large fireplace or to work outside with an open fire. Similarly, the addition of sewing machines attracted great attention from the women and decades later they still harkened back to what they knew as a glorious day. Very importantly, many mention when their fathers put glass panes in the windows and locks on the door. The women looked to these additions as protection against weather and assailants on the harsh frontier. These purchases of household goods represented

[29] Faudie, 3, WPA Interview; Christoffer, 1, WPA Interview.

progress for many of these women as their mothers' and their own housework became somewhat easier and less rustic, more like twentieth-century households.[30]

The *Grossmütter* also referred to the advancement of health care compared to their labors to care for their families in the nineteenth century. Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner told her granddaughter that she spent a full day and sometimes night cooking molasses for her children and for neighbors. Molasses served as both a sweetener for food and for medicinal purposes. Wagner swore that the substance prevented her and her family from falling ill. All her life she had been healthy, and she attributed that fact to the molasses. The women writers in this second group mention the use of natural cures such as molasses, but they did not discuss the use of cures or folk medicine brought over from Germany nor did they mention the healing of the *Hebammes*. The foods and cures that the Lutheran women mentioned did not differ greatly from the foods and cures of their nineteenth-century Anglo-American contemporaries.[31]

Besides health care developments, outward appearances became more stylish, which marked a divergence between those seen as rural settlers and those seen as twentieth-century Americans. Wiegreffe told her interviewer about a *Frau* Pauline Baetge who had dressed in fine clothes accessorized with gloves and fancy hats. In the 1850s, she and her husband built a spacious two story house near New Braunfels where *Frau* Baetge crocheted using her fragile silver spool holder that hung from a bracelet of filigree flowers. Although her neighbors admired her moral character, many of the poorer German immigrants could not fully understand Baetge's mannerisms. Wagner also explained how her sister Nellie hid her one hand, which she had

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[30] Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner, "I Think Back" *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 176; Faudie, 7, WPA Interview.

[31] Wagner, "I Think Back" *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976),181; Wiegreffe, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin, Texas: Landmark, 1976), 44.

injured as a child working at a sugar press. Immigrants did not react much to an injury that was not bleeding or causing debilitating pain. So a woman bandaged little Nellie's hand, and her broken bones healed side-by-side leaving her stunted fingers permanently fused together. Later in life, even after Nellie was married and had money, doctors could do nothing for her disfigured fingers. She covered her hand with a handkerchief so that no one witnessed her injury. Just as the nineteenth-century immigrant farmers could not understand Baetge's fine ways, Nellie was concerned twentieth-century Americans would not understand a nineteenth-century farm injury.[32]

The *Grossmütter* spoke of technical and health care advancements, but they also commented on the loss of community and aid that came when people no longer lived in the frontier. Wagner bluntly stated that "in those days people were different than they are now. They were nice and kind and didn't think of themselves all the time." She explained that when a mother needed a quilt all the neighborhood women went directly to her house after they milked the cows in the morning. They brought their children along and stayed until the evening milking. The women drank coffee and ate cakes while the youngsters played around their busy mothers; older girls tended to the food and drink. The women tended to remember all, not just German, settlers as helpful in part because they felt the lack of community in their twentieth century surroundings. No longer did Wagner or her neighbors call a quilting bee to mend torn bedcovers or to make new blankets. Instead, many went to the store and purchased a new quilt, or a woman could use more efficient quilting paraphernalia. No longer did a woman have to depend on the aid of her neighbors; nor did she benefit from the socializing.[33]

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[32] Wagner, "I Think Back" *Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 161.

[33] Ibid., 178-179.

As well as pointing to the divergent community experiences between immigrant settlers and their descendants, these 1920s to 1940s grandmothers mentioned the work that they had to do as children and the fun they had. Each of the women commented that they had numerous daily chores. Wagner related the burden of her work when she was away from her home or when she was under the care of her stepmother. However, after she married and was in charge of her own house, Wagner stressed that work was not so monotonous or laborious. Additionally, Fuchs noted how she memorized poems in the evening and during her free time so that she could recite them to herself while she was hoeing in the fields or picking cotton. Yet, the women did recall times when they had fun. Wiegreffe, her siblings, and the children from her parents' orphanage used to dress in capes and darken their faces before running up behind people and scaring them.[34]

The women underscored differences between immigrant and German-Texan families' responsibilities and how twentieth-century families had less opportunity to rely on each other. Wagner wondered at mothers' unwillingness to depend on their children, especially their daughters. She asserted that she delegated duties to her daughters and had them help her make jellies, molasses, and other food. Such assistance gave Wagner more time to make clothes, to knit blankets, and to tend the garden. But German-Texan mothers very often did not have a strenuous work day as had Wagner and her counterparts. Thus, Wagner compared her non-stop tasks compared to her daughters' lighter domestic demands, which left these "modern mothers" with less time to bond with their own children.[35]

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[34] Wiegreffe, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *A Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 44; Fuchs, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *A Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976),73.

[35] Wagner, "I Think Back" in *A Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976),182-183

The *Grossmütter* from this second group continued to emphasize the importance of family. All of the women included information about their children, their grandchildren, and where they lived, similar to the women writers of the first group. The authors thus show how their offspring had familiarized themselves with Anglo-American society and how they had succeeded outside the German community. Perhaps the women's inclusion of such information reacted to the anti-German sentiment and emphasis on Americanization. Despite efforts to make their family appear more like Americans, many of the women remarked how they were most content when they had their offspring surrounding them. Wagner claimed that she could "sometimes see [her] children all little and playing around" her. Those moments were "when [she] was the happiest." Wagner's words recall a similar statement of Ottie Goeth discussed above. Although the women may have altered their rhetoric a bit to emphasize the acclimation of their children to American society, the *Grossmütter* maintained the importance of family.[36]

Other than mentioning their children, thoughts of the *Grossmütter's* mothers seemed to consume the women's writings. Louise Romberg Fuchs told her grandniece that Friederike Romberg had taught her to sew and to knit when she was a girl. Wagner seemed much haunted by her scant memories of her mother who died when Wagner was very young. Still her mother's ability to maintain a household while sewing caps to help support the family left Wagner with fond memories that helped her when dealing with her step-mother and working as a maid for other families. The grandmothers noted how mothers also ensured their children's education by reading to their children and helping them learn to read. In this second group of German writers, the mothers passed on their knowledge of running an efficient household, though the *Grossmütter* did not include much information that is uniquely German. Instead, the women

[36] Ibid., 180.

remember their mothers' role in helping to educate and to domesticate their daughters, much as any other nineteenth-century frontier woman.[37]

By stressing the domestic roles, the German women further associated themselves with the conservative-American society of the 1920s and 1930s. In an effort to defend their family and their heritage from rampant xenophobia in Texas, the women showed that they stayed at home, they cooked and cleaned, and they raised their children, just as an Anglo-American woman would. In other words, they stressed the fact that they did not challenge traditional Anglo-American gender roles by working in the fields. Instead, the *kuchen* and *kinder* had been their focus and fulfillment. Some of the women probably thought that if they emphasized their ethnic uniqueness Anglo-Americans would suspect them of unpatriotic sentiment. Still, and more likely, the women associated themselves with American society. Certainly they maintained German beliefs and traditions, but they had lived in Texas for so many decades, and they interacted so often with American society, which they were more familiar with ways on this side of the Atlantic than those in Central Europe.

While family and domestic devotion appeared constant in the memoirs and interviews appearing in the 1920s to 1940s, the *Grossmütter* mentioned religion only rarely because they wished to deemphasize their dissimilarity with American society. In the post-war period, Anglo-Texans viewed not only German-speaking people suspiciously, but they were also concerned with Lutherans. The majority of Lutherans, particularly in South and Central Texas, were of German descent. Most of their religious meetings were held in German, though many congregations had a few English-language worship services. Still during and even after World War I, county councils of defense (CCD) under the direction of the Texas State Council of

[37] Fuchs, "*Erinnerrungen*" in *A Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 70; Wagner, "I Look Back" in *A Golden Free Land: Reminiscence and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, ed. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (Austin: Landmark, 1976), 159-160

Defense, established in 1917, investigated German-speaking churches. Representatives of the CCDs targeted many Lutheran pastors as well as their congregants encouraging them, at times by threat, to stop using the German language.[38]

With such a critical atmosphere prevailing, the women most likely did not see the wisdom in illustrating the development of Lutheranism in Texas. Although most Lutherans were not targeted individually, they had heard tales of physical abuse towards Lutheran pastors. Thus, the *Grossmütter* did not want to bring censure or criticism to their family or memories. Additionally, interviewers most often did not pursue questions regarding that German-based faith, perhaps not wanting to highlight a touchy subject.[39]

The grandmothers of the second group were aware of this pressure to adopt English so they used it to express the story of their lives. Using their second language to appease ethnocentric Americans, these *Grossmütter* told younger generations how they and their families had lived during the nineteenth century. Their stories emphasized the strength and courage of the immigrants as well as their ability to overcome the difficult circumstances of living in frontier Texas. They and their parents had played a part in settling the frontier, and their struggles very much matched what of other Americans had also accomplished. Despite the commonness of their lives, the women were certain to include the modernization of their lives

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[38] The Fayette county CCD was one of the more virulent of the county groups. Its members sent letters to the Lutheran pastor implying that the use of German in his sermons opened "the door wide to German propaganda, friction, disorder, and disloyalty." Fayette County Council of Defense to Trustees of Evangelical Lutheran Bethlehem Congregation, August 25, 1919, Kleberg Papers, CAH. The Victorian CCD further threatened the German community in a declaration stated Americans were "fighting Germany, German soldiers, German methods, and everything conceivably German and there is no compromise in us, and we have just begun to fight." Victoria County Council of Defense, "Sixty Years of Germany in Texas," Texas War Records Collection, CAH. Most CCDs, with the encouragement of the Council used persuasion instead of threats to Americanize German-Lutherans. Mark Sonntag, "Fighting Everything German in Texas, 1917-1919" *Historian* 56, no. 4 (1994), 667-8.

[39] Anti-German brigands abused several German Lutheran pastors in Texas. One pastor was beaten after he held a German-language religious service the same evening as a Liberty Bond Rally Even German Methodists ministers closely escaped a lynching after a crowd accused him of baptizing a baby in the name of the Kaiser. German-Texas citizens were also targeted. One Seguin farmer was painted yellow, the color of cowardly behavior, because he only spoke German. Another man in Giddings, Texas was killed and his wife beaten because they had not participated in a Liberty Bond drive. Giddings *Deutsches Volksblatt*, October 24, 1918; C. Douglas Duncan to Carl, November 7, 1918, Texas War Records Collection,, CAH; Sonntag, 668-669.

such as buying cook stoves and carriages. Their children after all were not so rural and backwards. Just as their parents before them and their descendants, the women looked to improve their families' livelihood. Even so, the women commented on the loss of fellowship and community as the German-Texans moved beyond the frontier life. Families and neighbors no longer banded together to help each other survive the harsh conditions, and, as a result, they lost some of their important qualities that had helped the immigrants thrive in Texas.

The First-Generation Descendants

While the second group of *Grossmütter* recounted their interpretations of their youth, the children and grandchildren of the women also recorded their memories of and experiences with their German heritage. These daughters, sons, and granddaughters were first-generation German-Texans, many had never traveled to Germany, but their families had raised them within the Lutheran faith and German traditions. Although these women and men viewed themselves as Texans, they were constantly reminded of their heritage. Living with the language, faith, and culture of Germany, colored how these women and men understood themselves and their place within their community.

Even so, they reacted to similar social and familial issues as the second group of grandmothers. Four main themes emerge from these writings. First, similar to the German grandmothers, the descendants witnessed pressure to adapt to American ways after the First World War; as such, the descendants wrote in English. Second, these German-Texans narrated social and family traditions. Third, they gave mothers and grandmothers vital responsibility for passing down important values related to family, religion, and work; as a result, the *Grossmütter* created a family of responsible citizens in the United States. Fourth, the descendants clearly

show their opinion regarding their German heritage, and, except for Clara Matthaei, the writers present rather romanticized portraits of the Germans and their communities.[40]

In many instances, the overwhelming use of English by the first-generation German-Texans represented a clear break from the grandmother writings. For the most part all of the descendants wrote their works in English; Clara Matthaei is the only notable exception. The prominence of English appears an important point for the German-Texas community as that language slowly became more common among younger generations. Although people still spoke German to family and at times while conducting business, the American language crept into family reunions and into family histories. Particularly, younger generations were becoming immersed in Anglo-American society by the 1920s and 1930s. So the writers relied on English to help keep the family memory alive for the younger members who may not be as able or as wiling to read documents in German.

Not only did writing in English encourage younger generations to read family histories, it also illustrated the German-Texans' American-ness. In the post-World War One anti-immigrant sentiment, Texans of German heritage did not want to rely on the language of their ancestors, especially when some Americans believed that no person could propagate German ideas or culture and be a loyal citizen of the United States. The Fatherland had too many subversive connotations, and German ethnicity often attracted censure from Anglo-Americans. Anti-German forces targeted writings in German during World War I. Many of the German-Texans noticed that their German-language newspapers were being criticized, and in 1917 Congress declared that all German papers must provide translations of any war-related articles, although

[40] The majority of the descendants' writings were intended for the authors' families. Children and grandchildren recorded stories they had heard from their grandmothers about the immigration process, and they penned their own personal memories of German tradition and culture. The descendants of the Lutheran grandmothers related tales of how the immigrants had survived and how they learned to thrive in Texas. However, Matthaei intended a wider audience for her novellas describing German-Texan communities. Also, Lenna Rummel's memories appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*.

most of the major German dailies and weeklies already had some English articles by the 1910s and 1920s. Thus, the majority of descendants wrote the history of their German ancestors in English. In other words, they provided an ethnic history of their family while posing the narratives in an American-friendly manner.[41]

In response to the often unaccommodating Americanization sentiment burgeoning after 1916, German-Texan descendants positively portrayed their ancestors. In reaction to the negative anti-German propaganda, the descendants portrayed the German immigrants as strong, courageous, and faithful. Edward Schwab memorialized his grandfather and grandmother as immigrants who "went to work eagerly and worked very hard" so much so that within a few years of their settling in Texas they had become very successful. Although the grandfather was a farmer, the same profession he had in Hessen, Germany, he and his wife learned quickly to acclimate to the Texas environment. Frieda Fuchs told of Luise Fuchs and how she created a nice home for her family despite her own fragile health and destitute surroundings. *Grossmutter* Fuchs showed true strength of spirit even if her health prevented her from doing too much. The grandmothers are also shown as courageous individuals who tended to their families in a harsh environment that included roaming Indians and threatening snakes. Yet it was the women's faith that preserved them in frontier Texas, and the women appear as prominent early settlers who helped settle the land and instill productive values in their children.[42]

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[41] The major German language newspapers in Texas were the *Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung* (established in 1852), the Fredericksburg *Wochenblatt* (established in 1888), the San Antonio *Freie Presse Für Texas* (established in 1865). By the 1920s, Fredericksburg also had English language papers, the Fredericksburg *Radio Post* (1922) and *Harper Herald* (1922). Not until the 1950s would most of the newspapers use English articles. Frederick C. Luebke, "The German-American Alliance in Nebraska, 1910-1917" *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 25-26; The Austin *Wochenblatt* asserted that it was the first German newspapers to acquiesce to the government's demand for English translations of war-related articles. Sonntag, 1-3.

[42] Frieda H. Fuchs, "Mothers of the Nineteenth Century, written for the Fuchs and Romberg Family Reunion," 3B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families—Adolph Fuchs, CAH.

Family memories also illustrated the passing down of family tradition and tales. Frieda Fuchs recalled how Luise Fuchs always had a toy box for whenever her grandchildren visited. She filled the container with "many toys of various size form and material" and "all who played with them surely remember this toy box." Fuchs also presented the box as a memory of a dearly loved great-grandmother for those who did not remember her.[43]

The descendant writers also showed that German pioneers remained alive in the memory of German descendants. People in 1930s New Braunfels asked Schwab about his great-grandfather who immigrated with his wife Elizabeth in 1850. The twentieth century German-Texans had heard tales about Valentine and Elizabeth Schwab burying their gold underneath rose bushes outside their home. After Edward moved into New Braunfels from his family farm, New Braunfelsers continually peppered him with questions wondering if the "golden Schwab" had really hidden his money over eighty years earlier.[44]

Besides keeping the memory of people alive, these writings focus on the home, which was an important place for the German-Texan families. Schwab sets his narrative in his family homes. His grandparents planted their rose garden to cover their buried money; they lived there until their deaths, and Edward and his family remained at the family home until the 1930s. The house symbolized the link between those family members who left the farm and those who stayed. With this common connecting factor, brothers, sisters, and children had a place to where they could return. The home also possessed signs of their parents and grandparents. Furniture, decorations, and even rose bushes assumed importance when tied to the memory of loved ones.[45]

With such a fondness for grandparents and parents, these descendant writers generally tended to idealize past family traditions and social rules. The grandchildren saw their

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[43] Ibid., 2.

[44] Edward Schwab, "The Golden Schwab," 454, Sophienburg Museum and Archives, New Braunfels, Texas. (hereafter the Sophienburg).

[45] Schwab, "The Golden Schwab," 2-4, Sophienburg.

grandmothers as loving and caring while they characterized their grandfathers as strong and protective. The way that these dearly loved people lived represented the "good old" ways when children were well-behaved and people looked after their neighbors. Lenna Rummel asserted in 1931 that with the loss of traveling by wagons much of the social etiquette and responsibility that had marked the immigrants' lives. No longer did families congregate on the wooden seats and flatbeds to attend social or religious gatherings. Sons did not have the opportunity to drive the oxen, which brought not only strength but also fortitude and pride. Rummel described the days of ox-cart driving when a son could court his sweetheart in such a wagon, showing off his skills with the oxen or gallantly saving his beloved should the wagon take a tumble because of hard dirt ruts. Rummel's words place the lives of her ancestors in a very separate time; the wagons were not used in Rummel's world nor were the strictly outlined rules for courtship and chaperones. Rummel painted a very ideal picture of traveling in cramped conditions on hard wooden seats across bumpy roads, asserting that the "modern youth" who travel so fast, "will probably never find the joy and happiness that those young men did in their rambling." Still, Rummel's romantic recollections of how her grandparents and parents had lived illustrate her respect for their traditions.[46]

Of all the family members, the mothers were the most important characters in most of the narratives. Mothers ensured that their German and family heritage was passed down through the generations. Frida Fuchs told how every evening Luis Fuchs and Friederike Romberg read German books to their children as they knitted or attended to some other duty. Reading European monographs helped familiarize the children with ideas from their parents' homeland and made certain the children knew how to read and speak German. The mothers, then, built a

[46] Walter Giesecke, "Reminiscences and Adventures of Walter Giesecke: As He Told Them to his Children and Grandchildren," 3X271, Giesecke (Walter Christian) Family Papers, CAH; Lenna Rummel, "The Lost Art of Ox Driving" (1931), 3X271, Giesecke (Walter Christian) Family Papers, CAH.

connection between what they had known in Germany with their children and grandchildren growing-up in Texas. Besides reading from classic works, the mothers and grandmothers willing told tales of how life used to be to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Many of the descendants eagerly listened as their grandmothers told of people past and described how they used to work and play.[47]

The grandmother's descendants additionally extolled the Lutheran women for their dedication to the family. Descendants praised their grandmothers and mothers for being such ideal companions to their husbands. Such partnerships, the offspring upheld, were particularly important on the frontier, where both husband and wife had to sacrifice and to work for their family. Additionally, they admired the women for surviving through the hard times as well as enjoying the good years. Moreover, the mothers looked after their husbands and their children's stomachs. They also clothed their families while they very often helped with the finances, either by managing the books or taking on jobs for income. All this, as the descendants recorded, the *Grossmütter* did without complaint.[48]

The most important of all the women's duties remained their ability to raise successful children. Nearly every descendant writing a family history in the 1920s and 1930s remarked upon how the German women raised "useful citizens." These *Grossmütter* saw to their children's education. Fuchs even claimed that the "pioneer mother saw more clearly that their husbands the importance of a good education." The women's emphasis on knowledge and training facilitated their descendants' ability to get professional jobs and successful careers away from the farm or immigrant community. Fuchs lists the numerous family members who became

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[47] Fuchs, "Mothers of the Nineteenth Century, written for the Fuchs and Romberg Family Reunion," 3B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families—Adolph Fuchs, CAH.

[48] Fuchs, "Mothers of the Nineteenth Century, written for the Fuchs and Romberg Family Reunion," 4, 3B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families—Adolph Fuchs, CAH.; Schwab, "The Golden Schwab," 3, Sophienburg.

"teachers, doctors, musicians, artists, and the important ranchmen and farmers, too." These women had nurtured families that had acclimated well in American society, and the descendants wished to honor that success. This commendation is all the more important compared to the Americans who criticized Germans for remaining loyal to Germany and undermining society.[49]

Fuchs touched on an important point for these descendant writers when she acknowledged the role of the "pioneer mother" in making her children and grandchildren good American citizens. The women instilled a love freedom in their families by explaining that the immigrants came to Texas to escape social and political oppression. Fuchs showed that the twentieth-century German-Texans held the family unit dear, a value that the German mothers had instilled in them. Indeed, Fuchs described her grandmothers as "lovers of freedom and of ideal home life." And the *Grossmütter* "saw that unlimited freedom can only be preserved for individuals as well as for nations in course of time and with growth of population if knowledge is possessed by the people." The grandmothers passed awareness of heritage, work, and family. As they did so they created a very useful citizenry who honored their efforts amidst the anti-German and Americanization hysteria of the 1910s and 1920s.[50]

These works presented German heritage and German-Texan society as successful and wholesome. The granddaughters and grandsons fondly remembered the family histories they had heard from their ancestors about early life in Texas. These German-Texans took pride in presenting their past for family members at family reunions and for their own children. This history held the key to their own success as they looked back and detailed how the immigrants struggled and overcame hardship of immigration. The descendant writings acknowledge that

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[49] Fuchs, "Mothers of the Nineteenth Century, written for the Fuchs and Romberg Family Reunion," 4, 3B32, Kellersberger Family Papers and Related Families—Adolph Fuchs, CAH.

[50] Ibid., 4.

their *Grossmütter* helped through their actions, words, and writings to preserve German culture on the Texas frontier.[51]

However, not all depictions of German life appeared so happy and content, as the writings of Clara Matthaei exemplify. Matthaei, a fairly typical second-generation German-Texan, was born in 1884 near Bellville in Austin County. In 1857, her maternal grandfather Friederich Schlecht had immigrated to Texas permanently with his wife and two daughters. Schlecht, who wrote and published his personal account of Texas, encouraged the young Matthaei to write narratives of her own life. And Matthaei had much to recount. Her father died when she was very young, and her mother remarried. Her mother never liked Texas, and eventually moved back to Germany with her new husband. She left Matthaei in the care of her unmarried aunt Anna who taught the young Clara to ride horses and to hunt animals. Her loving aunt also exposed Matthaei to classic German books, and oversaw her niece's education. Despite Matthaei's close relationship with Anna, the maturing girl spent much time alone, providing ample opportunity to form her own concepts as a first-generation German-Texan living in a German-Texas community.[52]

Although the details of Matthaei's life were not particularly exceptional compared with other contemporaries, the themes of her writings greatly contrasted those of other descendants' writings. In her teenage years, the absence of her mother left Matthaei emotionally troubled, and she wrote many poems expressing her confusion and distress. In 1913 she penned a novel, *Wer bin ich?* (Who am I?), which described the dysfunctional relationship between a mother and daughter as the young girl struggled against conforming to a German community's ideas of a girl's proper behavior. Also in 1913, attempting to free herself of similar social constraints that

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[51] Reeves-Marquardt and McCoy, 212, 216.

[52] William Trenckmann, "Frau Clara Reyes," *Das Wochenblatt* (Austin), November 16, 1934.

challenged her novel's characters, Matthaei married a Mexican man, Ascención Palacios, who immigrated to Texas to escape the revolutionary turmoil of his homeland. They newlyweds, who had shocked many Germans in the Bellville community, lived in the Schlecht farmstead. Clara and Ascención renovated the Schlecht farm, Ascención learned German, and they spent days reading German classics and singing songs from Mexico, Germany, and America. Such bliss did not last; after 1919 their marriage became troubled as Ascención's verbal abuse became intolerable and the family's economic strain further burdened Matthaei. The couple divorced not long after the end of World War I. Those in Bellville who had disproved of the marriage did not comfort or aid Matthaei in her emotional and financial struggles, leaving her only with the comfort of her three children and Aunt Anna. After a decade of alienation, Matthaei married Francisco Reyes, also a Mexican immigrant, who had helped Matthaei run her farm after her divorce. The Reyeses left Bellville, which had been Mathaei's home since she was born, in 1930 because of the German-Texas community's intolerance of Matthaei's marriage. The Reyeses settled in Aguascalientes, Mexico, where they lived in poverty, and Matthaei had to sell her typewriter to pay for her family's basic needs. Matthaei died on November 2, 1934 at the age of fifty.[53]

Matthaei's constant struggle against cultural norms and the lack of support from the German-Texan community appears particularly poignant in her two *novellas* written in the 1920s. In 1922-1923 she wrote *Bücher mit sieben Siegeln: eine Geschichte von Lebendigen und Toten aus meinen Tagebuchblättern* (*A Man So Quiet: A Story of Death and Resurrection, From the Leaves of My Diary*), and a year later she wrote the sequel, *Der Compadre (eine Fortsetzung) die Geschichte zweier Herzen aus meinen Tagebuchblättern* (*The Compadre, a Sequel The Story of Two Hearts, From the Leaves of My Diary*). Matthaei wrote these two semi-autobiographical

[53] William Trenckmann, "Frau Clara Reyes, *Das Wochenblatt* (Austin), November 16, 1934.

works under the pseudonym Walther Gray. However, unlike her earlier writings, Matthaei's life experiences and her own maturity infused these last two novels with meaningful social and cultural critiques of both German-Texan and Mexican traditions. Walther Gray, who narrates the two stories, meets an old friend Cassy Rothenberg Guzmán. Cassy, a mirror image of Matthaei's life, married Enrique Guzmán who had a German mother and a Mexican father. Her life with her husband often appeared unhappy, as the couple struggled on their farm in Del Monte, Texas. Eventually, Guzmán dies, and Cassy falls in love with, and marries Antonio Benavides after much misunderstanding, murder, and other mayhem.[54]

In her two novellas, Matthaei criticized many of the ethnic traditions and pride that people—German and Mexican—took in their heritage. Drawing on the prejudice she experienced among her neighbors and friends in Bellville, Matthaei created a small rural town of Brooksville settled with Tiegelmanns, Rothenbergs, and other German-Texan families. Those German-Texans, including Cassy's own family, disprove of her first and second marriages to Mexican men. Her parents will only consent to Cassy marrying Enrique if he adopted the German name of Heinrich Erfurt. Nevertheless, after Cassy moved to Del Monte, her brother never wrote to her and friends never sent her any news until Gray came to town. Walther Gray also found the "Mexican Enrique" more talkative and friendly than the "German Heinrich," who was taciturn and grim. Still, Matthai critiqued Mexican traditions as well. The plot of the second book revolves around Antonio's unwillingness to marry Cassy because he is her *compadre*. Since he is godfather to her daughter, he cannot break social more of the protectorate role and marry Cassy. As a result, he leaves Cassy at the hands of less scrupulous men, and only after Antonio finds out that the baptism was void does he return to rescue Cassy. As Selma

[54] Selma Metzenthin-Raunick, *Deutsche Schriften in Texas* (San Antonio, Texas: *Freie Presse fuer Texas*, 1934), 23-29; Selma Metzenthin-Raunick and Nolan Schulze, "The Tradgedy of Clara Matthaei," *Southwest Review* 21, no. 1 (October 1935), 63-65.

Metzenthin-Raunick and Nolan Schulze assert, Matthaei attacked the citizens of Brooksville's "formal, conscienceless piety, their dogmatic adherence to custom, their unquestioning acceptance of the status quo, their petty pride, [and] their inexorable racial prejudices."[55]

Although she does criticize tradition, Matthaei also highlights saving graces from each culture. The enduring love and concern between Cassy and Antonio overcomes the objection and ethnocentric attitudes of Cassy's family and friends. Cassy also depends on Mexican and German superstitions to give her power over her life, which seems terribly out-of-control for most of the two books. She uses magnetism to calm and to manage Enrique's emotional and jealous outbursts as well as to heal and protect Antonio and her daughter, Esperanza. Cassy also relies on German folk-healing methods of conjuring blood and fire to help heal her children and to ward off threats. As Cassy tells Walther, "living now between two races, as it were, gives me a bird's eye view of the subject" and allowed her to select the best of both worlds.[56]

Matthaei touches on many of the same themes as the other descendant writers. For one, they all discuss German-Texas communities. Schwab, Fuchs, and Rummel show that the sense of helpfulness and cohesion remained between those of German heritage. Matthaei, reflecting her own experiences, created a German-Texan community that refused to offer aid, as they would have in the past. A defined sense of ethnicity also appears in the descendants' writings. Moreover, most of the works fondly discuss and relate the teachings and stories that grandparents had told them about the nineteenth century. These authors proudly recounted the lives of their ancestors, which in some way reflected on their own lives because they were the useful offspring citizenry of the immigrants. Matthaei too portrayed a sense of ethnic identity among the Germans in her *novellas*. However, Schwab and Fuchs show the exceptionalism of

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[55] Metzenthin-Raunick and Schulze, 62.

[56] Clara Matthaei, *Bücher mit sieben Siegeln: eine Geschichte von Lebendigen und Toten aus meinen Tagebuchblättern* (Austin, Texas: Meisterwerke deutsche-texanischer Literatur, 1922; reprint, Manor, Texas: Bois d'Arc Press 1997), 8,

the German community while Matthaei's works point to the German-Texans prejudices. Although many, such as Schwab and Fuchs, found German-Texas culture close-knit and supportive, Matthaei experienced a stilted and non-adaptable community.

The grandchildren of the German immigrant *Grossmütter* lived in a world relatively acclimated to Anglo-American society, but they attempted to retain some semblance of their own ethnic identity. The descendants, whether idealizing or criticizing the German community, dealt with the consequences of having German heritage but being Texans. These writers held onto their ancestry and their experiences by retelling tales they had heard when they were young. Certainly the form changed, as most wrote in English, but the message often appeared the same as what German grandmothers had been saying for decades; families must look after their loved ones despite the hardships they faced. Even Matthaei appeared to consent as she criticized the German-Texas community for not maintaining compassion towards family and neighbors in need while not adapting to new circumstances.

Conclusion

After 1890, growing populations, modernization, and changing social notions seemed to challenge the German communities. German-born *Grossmütter* in Texas felt that the encroaching American settlers threatened their ethnic ways as American and Germans began living closer together in both rural and urban neighborhoods. Women knew that their descendants were taking American customs and characteristics as they received degrees from American universities and their occupations had them work closely with Americans. The expansion of railroads also brought Germans and Americans into closer contact. Even those who remained on the farms could more efficiently sell and buy goods from other regions as people from other towns traveled the rails and brought their own ideas and customs nearer the German

regions. Although German *Grossmütter* had struggled to create a home and community based upon Lutheran and German ideals, their family interacted with the surrounding culture and environment.

Thus, to prevent their children from forgetting what was important, the women wrote about their families, why they immigrated to Texas, and how they had survived. By World War I and amidst growing sentiment of Americanization, the narratives of German grandmothers appeared a part of frontier life histories. Still, the women eagerly told younger generations and even unfamiliar interviewers about their life experiences. In the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting conservative American society, these German grandmothers stressed how they were similar to other American settlers on the frontier. Finally, the grandmother's descendants also writing in the 1920s to the 1940s praised the women's ability to raise strong and successful children who became useful citizens in the United States. The descendants picked the family unit as an important factor in the survival of children and community. Only when German-Texans failed to support one another and ignored their Lutheran-based belief in community duty did the grandmother's descendants criticize their German ethnicity.

Grossmütter expressed to their descendants proper descriptions of German Lutheran women and men through their narratives, and their descendants echoed such themes in their writings. Men who tended to their farms and supported their family appeared as proper. Women who toiled in their domestic duties and tended the children were happy. The matriarchs gently censured anyone who did not do that, whether they were German or American. For these women and the younger generations of their families, working hard so their children could succeed remained a paramount focus. Starting with the first group of grandmothers in the nineteenth century, German women stressed a continuation of culture. The grandmothers and their descendants who wrote in the twentieth century showed that though American conservatism and

ethnocentricism seemed to assault the German language and ethnic traditions, German-Texans understood the importance of faith and family. The first group of German *Grossmütter* could appreciate this legacy.

Conclusion

As Frederick Jackson Turner famously observed, the 1890 United States Census concluded that the frontier had closed. Though historians have debated this assertion, it at least holds true for German Lutheran women in South and Central Texas. There, German immigration had slowed to a trickle by the last decade of the nineteenth century. After 1890, already-established German communities did not receive many new settlers who brought German culture as had the earlier German communities almost constantly since 1831. Moreover, German-Texans in 1890 lived closer to Anglo-American neighbors even in the ethnic enclaves of Fredericksburg and New Braunfels. Such settlement patterns encouraged Germans to assume and to accommodate American customs. Railroads and markets further acclimated German-Texans into American society; no longer were the majority of Germans isolated from people in cities. Finally, rail lines allowed for German-Texan farmers to move farther away from the Southern and Central Texas regions that had attracted so many of the original immigrants. These people moved west with their Anglo-American counterparts; the frontier moved west with them, taking with it the opportunity to create new and unique communities.

Nonetheless, between 1831 and 1890, German Lutheran women in Texas were able to create a distinctive culture where they took traditions founded in Germany and planted them in the Lone Star State. The Lutheran women who immigrated came from a very stratified and hierarchical society in Central Europe. Work defined the lives of German women and girls. Moreover, the domestic responsibilities of raising children and taking care of the home were added to the women's work in the fields with their husbands. Similarly, Lutheranism also influenced these women's lives. They were baptized, confirmed, married, and buried in church services as well as attending Sunday services and other holiday gatherings. Still, the women and their families faced economic and social hardships beginning with limited economic

advancement and revolutions in the early and mid-nineteenth century. This growing body of immigration literature describing Texas as a healthy climate with an abundance of land attracted many German families. With the 1842 organization of the *Adelsverein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas*, Germans set sail across the Atlantic and began a trend that continued until 1890, well after the *Adelsverein* went bankrupt.

When the thousands of German women and girls landed in Texas they faced a difficult first year adapting to their new life while maintaining ties to the Fatherland. Rampant disease and lack of accommodations often met these women after they landed at Brazoria, Indianola, and Galveston. The journey inland to their new homes proved treacherous and wearisome. Yet through letters these *frauen* maintained ties with those back in Germany. Those still in Europe sent clothes, seeds, and family mementos to help those who had emigrated. Furthermore, older women sent Bibles and Lutheran hymnals so their loved ones would remember their religious heritage in their new world. The women in Texas gladly accepted and eagerly anticipated receiving tokens from those they left behind as the *frauen* missed the support and guidance older women in the family and community provided. Letters offered a means to continue such relationships across the Atlantic. In return, *frauen* who settled in Texas sent their own advice back to Germany and those interested in moving to Texas so other women would come better prepared to deal with the harsh conditions of the first year.

After their initial twelve months in Texas, German women created traditional Lutheran homes though they did alter some of their activities to respond to frontier conditions. Girls remained obedient to their parents, and they continued to work on farms for their families. However, the young girls also found more social freedoms in Texas as they learned to ride horses and travel farther to visit friends or to take corn to the mill. Lutheran wives reinforced their role as helpmate to their husbands by taking up the burden of field work. Unlike the chores

they had done in Germany and unlike their American neighbors, wives did more strenuous activities, such as plowing fields and driving cattle, to ensure that they and their husbands survived. Mothers, too, took seriously their accepted religious role of training their children. These mothers did so by instilling German traditions in their offspring who lived in Texas. Older women relatives also continued Lutheran and social traditions in Texas. They helped wives and mothers with by caring for young children while helping provide traditional toys, food, and decorations for holidays. These older women played an important part in ensuring that youth born in Texas were familiar with the ways of the ancestors.

German women not only saw to the continuation of traditions in the home, they also worked to make the Lutheran Church successful in Texas. From the first years of immigration, the women provided space and seating in their homes for church services. Additionally, the women offered shelter, food, and advice to the newly-arrived pastors. As communities established Lutheran Churches, the women made altar cloths and gave communion ware so they and their neighbors could have a service somewhat similar to what they remembered in Germany. *Frauen* eventually organized their own official groups that raised money for church issues they considered important. For instance, they donated pulpits and pews while raising money to pay off church debt. These women in Texas took on more public roles than they would have been able to in Germany, where Lutheran Churches had been organized often for centuries. The necessities of frontier life offered *frauen* the opportunity to found their church. Yet, the women did not assume these new roles to change the church leaders' ideas of how women should act in church matters or to gain authority within the church. Instead, the women wanted to plant a conservative Lutheran church similar to what they had known in Germany in Texas.

Outside of their domestic and religious duties, Lutheran women also interacted with the surrounding communities and became more familiar with American society. The *frauen* used homeopathic and folk healing methods that they had learned in Germany to mend their own family as well as neighbors in need. The women particularly relied on their positions as *Hebammes* to heal and to protect those in danger. Still, they learned to adapt their traditional cures with what the Texas environment offered by using Texas herbs for example. Additionally, the women sold food and other products in both rural and urban settings to help their families. Many of these women entered the market as they would not have been able to in Germany because their homeland already had markets and means for farmers to sell produce. Immigrant women in towns and cities also had the opportunity to teach at secular schools. There, the women learned to communicate with non-Germans while teaching young girls proper Anglo-American behavior. Moreover, Lutheran women observed and socialized with Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, and Tejanos. As the population grew and time passed, Germans had increasing chances to mingle with other ethnicities at national celebrations and at work. Such interactions familiarized the women with Anglo-American fashions and the English language. Although the Lutheran immigrant women adapted their own culture to what they experienced in Texas, they still retained important German culture, language, and values.

Just as the women had greater contact with Americans, they realized that their descendants too were becoming more acclimated to American society. Some of the *Grossmütter* immigrants recorded their family history in an attempt to temper the loss of their families' German-ness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These women witnessed their children taking American occupations and living in cities away from the farm. Railroads and paved roads allowed for greater interaction among farmers and cities while also facilitating settlers move farther away from original settlement areas. To offset these changes, the

Grossmütter wrote of how their families struggled and sacrificed so they and their loved ones could survive in Texas. Family remained an important theme as the *Grossmütter* emphasized what they believed important. Additionally, first-generation German-Texans described Lutheran traditions and memories of their heritage. Prominent themes of family and caring for loved ones appear in their writings as these descendants show how German immigrants, who emphasized work and sacrifice, raised productive and useful Americans.

These German-born women's understanding of the world based on their Lutheran beliefs influenced their understanding of the world. Immigrant women to Texas arrived with preconceived notions of their place in their families, their community, and their world. All, from daughters to grandmothers, remained dedicated to ensuring the well-being of their loved ones, which upheld Luther's sermons and Lutheran ideology that women dedicate themselves to their husbands, their children, and their home. Those roles, taught to nearly every German Lutheran woman, assuaged the dislocation of immigration as the women focused on tending their families. In the new land, the women acted much as they had in the Fatherland, and their familial duties provided them something on which to concentrate. Thus, their Lutheran roles gave them a framework with which they could re-build their lives in Texas.

However much their faith guided them and their understanding of a woman's place, the Lutheran *frauen* were not simply automatons obeying their pastors or husbands. Indeed, the women acted, at times publically, to establish Lutheran Churches as they advised pastors on how to live in Texas and as they provided material goods for divine services. Moreover, the Lutheran women went forth into the community to sell agricultural produce or handmade goods so they could assist their families financially. They also learned to deal with other ethnicities living around them in Texas. Although the women had little or no concept of Tejano, African-American, and even Anglo-American culture before arriving, the *frauen* understood the need to

communicate with these people so they could sell their products and learn how to survive in the new land from those already living there.

Even though the German Lutheran women assumed new responsibilities in their religious community and in the public, they did so to recreate their conservative notions of family, work, and religion on the Texas frontier. Women immigrants helped form their churches and interacted with non-Germans so they could fulfill their traditional roles as daughters, wives, and mothers in their Lutheran families. Texas offered them more opportunity to support their churches and communities because family units as many settled in rural regions with little organized religious institutions or social groups. Still, the *frauen* ultimately wanted a church and society similar to what they had known in Germany. Unlike their Anglo-American counterparts in the northeast and urban areas of Texas who formed benevolent and women's associations during the nineteenth century, German *frauen* in Texas sought to perpetuate their conservative Lutheran outlook. For the most part, these women did not want political rights or religious authority. Indeed, they took advantage of the opportunities afforded in frontier Texas to actively and to publically take roles that would ensure the survival of their German Lutheran traditions.

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ABSTRACT

FAITH, *FRAUEN*, AND THE FORMATION OF AN ETHNIC IDENTITY:
GERMAN LUTHERAN WOMEN IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL TEXAS, 1831-1890

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This dissertation argues that German Lutheran women living in south and central Texas from 1831 to 1890 involved themselves in family, church, and community to reconstruct their conservative notions of society in a frontier setting. Going beyond the traditional interpretations of *kinder, kuche, und kirche*, I show that the women's Lutheran faith informed how they reacted to the immigration process. Frontier conditions allowed these *frauen* to assume more active and often public roles than they would have done in Germany. However, the women undertook these duties to establish conservative notions of family, church, and gender in their new land. Moreover, even as their faith helped assuage much of the dislocation of immigration for first-generation *frauen*, they emphasized Lutheran values to descendants whom the women feared were becoming Americanized. Ultimately, Lutheranism informed how these women constructed understandings of family and community while providing a template for what it meant to be a German-Texan.