

A STUDY OF GERMAN-TEXAN CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH SACRED  
ARCHITECTURE

by

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(Under the Direction of Mark Reinberger)

ABSTRACT

This is an analysis of how an immigrant cultural group expresses its cultural identity through sacred architecture. Sacred architecture has the ability to transcend its purely religious role and reflects the attributes of an individual cultural group. Immigrant cultural identity illustrates the process of acculturation once immigration occurs. The duality of what is retained from a group's previous homeland and what is assimilated from a new environment manifests in the physical attributes of cultural identity such as architecture. This research focuses on the German speaking immigrants of Texas whose cultural migration to Texas began in the early 1830s and whose cultural identity remains today through their sacred architecture.

INDEX WORDS: Sacred Architecture, Architecture, Vernacular Architecture, Cultural Identity, Immigrant Cultural Identity, Immigration, Germany, Texas, German-Texan, Adelsverein, Painted Churches

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B.S., The University of Texas at Arlington, 2009

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2015

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated in loving memory to my dear grandmother Leona Tischler Leach.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my family and friends for their love and support during this long process. I especially want to thank my mother for her words of wisdom and encouragement. I also wish to thank my major professor Mark Reinberger and the members of my thesis committee: Scott Nesbit, Sungkyung Lee, and Carl Hoveland for generously offering their time, support, and guidance in the preparation and review of this document.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
LIST OF MAPS .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
2 DEFINING CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ACCULTURATION .....	4
3 IMPETUS FOR GERMAN IMMIGRATION TO TEXAS .....	10
4 HISTORY OF GERMAN IMMIGRATION .....	21
Early History of German Immigration before the Texas Revolution .....	24
Friedrich Ernst and the First German Settlement .....	25
Establishment of the <i>Adelsverein</i> and the First Colonial Settlement .....	27
Herr Meusebach, Fredericksburg, and Advancement into the Texas Hill Country .....	31
End of the <i>Adelsverein</i> .....	33
German Immigration and Settlement between 1848 and 1860 .....	34
Immigration of Germans after the Civil War .....	38
Concluding a Century of German Immigration to Texas .....	39
5 CASE STUDIES .....	40
Case Study 1: St. Mary's Catholic Church, Fredericksburg, Texas .....	40
History .....	41

Architectural Description.....	45
Architectural Significance .....	60
Conclusion .....	71
Case Study 2: St. Mary's Catholic Church, Praha, Texas .....	72
History.....	73
Architectural Description.....	73
Architectural Significance .....	98
Conclusion .....	105
Case Study 3: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas.....	107
History.....	109
Architectural Description.....	110
Architectural Significance .....	131
Conclusion .....	142
6 CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS .....	143
REFERENCES .....	149

## LIST OF MAPS

	Page
Map 1: “Map of the German Confederation” .....	14
Map 2: “German Settlement in Texas” .....	23
Map 3: “Stephen F. Austin’s Area of Colonization” .....	26
Map 4: “Boundaries of the Fischer-Miller Grant” .....	30
Map 5: “German Settlement between 1848 and 1860” .....	35
Map 6: “Northern German States with the <i>Feldsteinkirchen</i> Building Tradition” .....	66
Map 7: “Proximity of Painted Churches within a 50 Mile Radius” .....	104

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: “ <i>Vereinkirche</i> , Fredericksburg, Texas” .....	42
Figure 2: “The First Church, 1848” .....	42
Figure 3: “The Second Church, 1863” .....	44
Figure 4: “The <i>Marienkirche</i> , Fredericksburg, Texas” .....	46
Figure 5: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , South Elevation” .....	48
Figure 6: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , Entrance Door” .....	50
Figure 7: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , Steeple Detail” .....	50
Figure 8: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , South Elevation View of Cross Transept” .....	51
Figure 9: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , East Elevation” .....	53
Figure 10: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , West Elevation” .....	53
Figure 11: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , North Elevation” .....	55
Figure 12: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , Interior” .....	56
Figure 13: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , Interior Detail” .....	56
Figure 14: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , Pulpit” .....	58
Figure 15: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , Balcony” .....	59
Figure 16: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , Pillar” .....	59
Figure 17: “ <i>Feldsteinkirche</i> Lüsse, Brandenburg, 13th century” .....	63
Figure 18: “ <i>Feldsteinkirche</i> Mörz, Brandenburg, 12 <sup>th</sup> Century” .....	63
Figure 19: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , Masonry Detail” .....	65
Figure 20: “New St. Mary’s Catholic Church” .....	69

Figure 21: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , 1906 Window Alterations” .....	70
Figure 22: “ <i>Marienkirche</i> , 1906 New Entrance” .....	70
Figure 23: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Praha, Texas” .....	74
Figure 24: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, South Elevation” .....	76
Figure 25: “St. Mary’s, Entrance Door” .....	78
Figure 26: “St. Mary’s, Ornamentation” .....	78
Figure 27: “St. Mary’s, South Elevation Detail” .....	80
Figure 28: “St. Mary’s, Steeple” .....	80
Figure 29: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, East Elevation” .....	81
Figure 30: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, East Elevation Window and Buttress” .....	83
Figure 31: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Fleche” .....	83
Figure 32: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, West Elevation” .....	84
Figure 33: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, North Elevation” .....	84
Figure 34: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Interior” .....	87
Figure 35: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Floor” .....	88
Figure 36: “St. Mary’s, Columns” .....	88
Figure 37: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Apse” .....	89
Figure 38: “St. Mary’s, Reredos” .....	89
Figure 39: “St. Mary’s, Rinceau” .....	91
Figure 40: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Organ and Balcony” .....	91
Figure 41: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Ceiling” .....	92
Figure 42: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Ceiling Detail” .....	94
Figure 43: “St. Mary’s, Garden of Eden” .....	95

Figure 44: “St. Mary’s, Ceiling of Apse” .....	95
Figure 45: “St. Mary’s, Lighting” .....	97
Figure 46: “St. Mary’s, Pipe Organ” .....	97
Figure 47: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Two Cathedrals” .....	100
Figure 48: “St. Vitus Cathedral, Prague, Czech Republic” .....	100
Figure 49: “St. Wenceslas Cathedral, Olomouc, Czech Republic” .....	100
Figure 50: “Techniques: Free Hand, Stenciling, Infill, Graining, Marbling, & Trompe l’oeil” ..	102
Figure 51: “Painted Churches of Texas: (top from left to right) St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Nativity of Mary, Blessed Virgin Catholic Church (bottom from left to right) Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church” .....	106
Figure 52: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas” .....	111
Figure 53: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Mortis and Tenon Joints.....	113
Figure 54: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, West Elevation” .....	113
Figure 55: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Entrance Door” .....	115
Figure 56: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Entranceway Stained Glass” .....	116
Figure 57: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Steeple” .....	116
Figure 58: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, South Elevation” .....	118
Figure 59: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, South Elevation Stained Glass” .....	118
Figure 60: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, North Elevation” .....	119
Figure 61: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, East Elevation” .....	119
Figure 62: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, East Elevation Stained Glass” .....	121
Figure 63: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Interior” .....	121
Figure 64: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Flooring” .....	123

Figure 65: “St. Paul, Columns” .....	123
Figure 66: “St. Paul, Column” .....	124
Figure 67: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Interior Balconies” .....	124
Figure 68: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Detail of Balcony” .....	126
Figure 69: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ceiling” .....	127
Figure 70: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ceiling Ornamentation” .....	127
Figure 71: “St. Paul, Altar” .....	128
Figure 72: “St. Paul, Pulpit” .....	128
Figure 73: “St. Paul, Pipe Organ” .....	130
Figure 74: “St. Paul, 1996 Bell” .....	130
Figure 75: “(from left to right) Malschwitz, Klitten, and Wiegersdorf Wendish Church” .....	133
Figure 76: “(from left to right) St. Paul, Malschwitz, and Wiegersdorf Pulpits” .....	135
Figure 77: “Evangelical Church of Malschwitz, Double Balconies” .....	135
Figure 78: “Kotitz Church, Germany” .....	137
Figure 79: “Kotitz Church, Interior in the Nineteenth Century (left) and 2006 (right)” .....	138
Figure 80: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Examples of Stenciling and Marbling” .....	141

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines how an immigrant cultural group expresses their cultural identity through sacred architecture. Beyond symbolizing religious identity, sacred architecture can transcend its religious role and reflect the attributes of an individual culture. Immigrant cultural identity is uniquely positioned to reflect these qualities through architecture. This research focuses on the German speaking immigrants of Texas whose cultural migration to Texas began in the early 1830s and whose cultural identity remains today by means of their sacred architecture.

The findings of this research challenges the predominating myth of the West and the Hollywood misinterpretation of the idealized Anglo-American Texas and examines the multi-ethnic mosaic of Western/European settlement. Since the handovers between the eras of Spanish and French Colonial authority, administration under the dominion of Mexico, period of rebellion and self –governance as the autonomous Texas Republic, and its final mergence with the Union, the region has been a bastion of ethnic diversity. The exclusive cultural influence of the Anglo-American settler has been falsely perpetuated. Among those ethnicities often overlooked, the Germanic ethnicities of Texas, as a cultural identity, have been lost in the years of assimilation.

The German-Texans have been chosen for this study because of the unique qualities of their migration and assimilation and because of the uncommon quality of their vernacular architecture. The German-Texans reflect the dual nature of immigrant cultural identity. Immigrant cultural identity both retains the attributes of a homeland left behind and assimilates the attributes of a new environment. While the term cultural identity has a wide and complex definition, for the

purposes of this study the term is narrowed to define specific cultural markers. As a method of analysis, an architectural analysis is central to the interpretation of these cultural markers. Henceforth, the term cultural identity references those cultural markers which are reflected in both architecture and building traditions. An examination of sacred architecture has been chosen as a representative example of cultural identity because of its symbolic and physical presence within a community. Sacred architecture is also representative of a group rather than the individual. Rather than focusing on the effects of immigration to the individual, this study represents the coalescence of various Germanic ethnic groups into the larger immigrant cultural group known as the German-Texans.

The literature about German immigration to Texas is comprehensive in its chronological scope but it lacks a thorough examination of the German-Texan cultural identity which reflects a diversity of Germanic ethnicities. In the context of this thesis, “German Emigration” encompasses not only Germans but also nationalities in Europe historically governed by or associated with the German monarchies and those Germanic nationalities which took part in the immigration to Texas.

The methodology of this study includes reviews of the literature and studies previously undertaken in this field, which considers the recorded diaries and journals, art, and architecture of individual immigrants, and documentation and analysis of several sites. Chapter Two examines the concepts of cultural identity and acculturation. Chapter Three investigates the impetus for German emigration to Texas, which establishes their motivations for migration and documents their society of origin providing a viewpoint of comparison after immigration occurs. Chapter Four will present a chronological history of the German speaking people of Texas and their evolution of settlement, which will establish a historical context for this research. Chapter Five is a study of the building traditions of vernacular church architecture conducted through the

investigation of three specific case studies found in the areas of German settlement within Texas. Chapter Six is the final chapter and summates the conclusions presented through this thesis founded on the argument that immigrant cultural groups express their cultural identity through sacred architecture.

## CHAPTER 2

### DEFINING CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ACCULTURATION

In order to examine immigrant cultural identity, the concepts of cultural identity and cultural transitions through immigration must be defined. The study of immigrants and immigration encompasses many disciplines including anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology. Out of these varying fields, many perspectives have been advanced with several common concepts emerging. Two such concepts in this area of study are acculturation and cultural identity.

The concept of cultural identity refers to a complex set of beliefs and attitudes that people have about themselves in relation to their cultural group membership, usually coming to the forefront when people are in contact with another cultures rather than when they live entirely within a single culture.<sup>1</sup> To further refine the concept of cultural identity, the terms culture, identity, and cultural heritage are defined. Culture is learned and passed through generations and includes the beliefs and value system of a society which binds people together into a community.<sup>2</sup> The term identity is defined as the totality of one's perception of self or how we as individuals view ourselves as unique from others.<sup>3</sup> The product of cultural identity is known as cultural heritage and includes the works of artists, architects, musicians, writers, and scientists including works which are both tangible and intangible.

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<sup>1</sup> J.W. Berry, "A Psychology of Immigration," *Journal of Social Issues* 57 (2001): 620.

<sup>2</sup> Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A. Becker, "Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity," *World Psychiatry* 4, no. 1 (2005): 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

While immigrating to America did not entail the relinquishment of one's cultural identity, cultural identity is influenced by various factors both during and after the migration process. Migration defines the process of going from one country, region, or place of residence to settle in another either semi-permanently or permanently.<sup>4</sup> To understand immigrant cultural identity the migrant must be specifically defined by three factors of voluntariness, mobility, and permanence as well as by the context of their migration. Migrants are classified based on whether their contact with the host society is deemed voluntary. They are classified as immigrants when the change in their location results in contact voluntarily, whereas refugees and indigenous peoples experience contact involuntarily.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, immigrants and refugees have the mobility to migrate to a new location while contact is brought to indigenous peoples in examples of colonization. Among those who have migrated, immigrants are relatively permanently settled while others are in a temporary situation in the examples of asylum seekers and guest workers.<sup>6</sup> Lastly, the context of their migration is defined by their society of origin. While the migration motivations for an individual may vary, their society of origin will provide societal motivations and impetuses for immigration; for Texas Germans these motivations are expanded upon in Chapter Three. The examination of an immigrant's society of origin and their cultural characteristics establishes a point of comparison with their society of settlement.<sup>7</sup>

These factors greatly affect the cultural identities of those that have migrated once contact is established within their society of settlement, and other immigrants of both similar and disparate

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<sup>4</sup> Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A. Becker, "Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity," *World Psychiatry* 4, no. 1 (2005):18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>6</sup> John W. Berry, "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation," *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 46, no. 1 (1997): 8.

<sup>7</sup> John W. Berry, "Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29 (2005): 702.

cultures.<sup>8</sup> As immigrants drift between two different worlds, “individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture,” experience a cultural transition called acculturation.<sup>9</sup> Acculturation has been researched since the 1930s growing out of the concern for the effects of European domination of indigenous peoples with a focus on Australia, New Zealand, and the United States as immigrant nations.<sup>10</sup> This study’s approach to immigrant cultural identity draws on John Berry’s model of acculturation and four-fold model of acculturation strategies. Berry is a professor emeritus of Psychology at Queen’s University at Kingston and is an establishing figure in the field of acculturation psychology.

Acculturation is the process in which contact between two cultural groups results in numerous cultural changes in both groups.<sup>11</sup> In the case of the German-Texans, the catalyst of the acculturation process is immigration. For the purposes of this study the acculturation process uses the monistic view which states that while both the host society and immigrants will experience change, the greatest change will primarily occur among the immigrant society.<sup>12</sup> Acculturation is rooted in two basic aspects of intercultural contact that have been described by anthropologists and sociologists: the degree of actual contact and the resultant participation of each group with the other, and the degree of cultural maintenance manifested by each group.<sup>13</sup> These two factors constructs the duality of immigrant cultural identity and the duality found in German-Texan cultural identity.

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<sup>8</sup> Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A. Becker, “Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity,” *World Psychiatry* 4, no. 1 (2005): 22.

<sup>9</sup> Paul N. Lakey, “Acculturation: a Review of the Literature,” *Intercultural Communications Studies* 7, no. 2 (2003): 104.

<sup>10</sup> John W. Berry, “Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29 (2005): 700.

<sup>11</sup> J.W. Berry, “A Psychology of Immigration,” *Journal of Social Issues* 57 (2001): 616.

<sup>12</sup> Paul N. Lakey, “Acculturation: a Review of the Literature,” *Intercultural Communications Studies* 7, no. 2 (2003): 105.

<sup>13</sup> J.W. Berry, “A Psychology of Immigration,” *Journal of Social Issues* 57 (2001): 617.

What changes to cultural identity do immigrants and their descendants' experience during the process of acculturation? These changes are determined by the strategies used to cope with intercultural contact. Based on Berry's model, these strategies include assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. The assimilation strategy is the process by which a non-dominant group, such as immigrants, sheds their cultural heritage and become absorbed into the dominant society.<sup>14</sup> The contrasting alternative strategy is separation, in which individuals place a value on retaining their original culture and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with other.<sup>15</sup> When there is an interest in both maintaining one's heritage culture while in daily interactions with other groups and at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network, integration is a strategy.<sup>16</sup> Marginalization rejects both cultural maintenance and interaction with other groups.

This study focuses on the acculturation strategies of assimilation, separation, and integration which provides a framework in which to analyze German-Texan cultural identity. These strategies have been employed over an extended period of time and several generations because the process of acculturation continues for as long as there are culturally different groups in contact.<sup>17</sup>

Inevitably, migration involves the loss of the familiar, including language, attitudes, values, social structures and support network, all of which are the intangible attributes of a group's cultural identity.<sup>18</sup> This study focuses on the tangible attributes of cultural identity of German speaking immigrants, specifically the building traditions of their sacred architecture.

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<sup>14</sup> John W. Berry, "Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29 (2005): 705.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 699.

<sup>18</sup> Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A. Becker, "Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity," *World Psychiatry* 4, no. 1 (2005): 19.

Sacred architecture was chosen as the focus because it is both a physical and symbolic place. Sacred architecture's dual nature is both as a place in which the defining activity of faith occurs and at the same time a vital part of a community's historical and cultural legacy is present.<sup>19</sup> A sacred place or sacred architecture must be understood in a multitude of ways: a space for formalized, repetitive and symbolic performances, a space of magnitude in terms of questioning the significance of being human, and a space where sacred symbols are continually negotiated.<sup>20</sup> Because of the significance of sacred architecture, German-Texan cultural identity is analyzed through the examination of individual case studies of German-Texan sacred architecture.

The churches selected as case studies include St. Mary's Catholic Church of Fredericksburg (1863), St. Mary's Church of the Assumption of Praha (1895), and St. Paul Lutheran Church of Serbin (1870). These churches were selected because they illustrate the diversity found within the German-Texan cultural identity. First, these churches represent ethnic groups found in varying regions, respectively Northern Germany, Southern Germany, and the current day Czech Republic. Secondly, they represent differing religious backgrounds of the Lutheran and Catholic faith, which establishes a point of comparison based on cultural identity rather than religious practices. Lastly, all three churches represent differing areas of Germanic settlement and immigration within the state. These three churches have varying years of construction, which articulates the acculturation process over several decades. None of the case studies are the first churches built by each congregation, a factor that puts distance between the initial times of migration and allows for cross cultural contact. As second, third, and fourth

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<sup>19</sup> Coomans, Thomas, *Loci Sacri: Understanding Sacred Places* (Leuven Univeristy Press, 2012), 27.

<sup>20</sup> Tsivolas, Theodosios, *Law and Religious Cultural Heritage in Europe* (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2014), 8.

manifestations of the congregations building traditions, their cultural identity is well immersed in the acculturation process and should reflect the effects of acculturation in their sacred architecture.

## CHAPTER 3

### IMPETUS FOR GERMAN IMMIGRATION TO TEXAS

What compelled these people to leave their homeland? What compelled them to leave Germany in search for new home in Texas? Understanding their motivations to migrate provides a snapshot of their society of origin, within a certain place and time, which is important to analyzing the acculturation process. These answers are complex in nature but fall into three distinct categories: economic, political, and social. Along with these separate reasons are two different categories of German people which immigrated, mostly the lower classes such as the peasantry and a small number of intellectual elite. Their shared migration experience to Texas defines one wave of German immigration in the overall movement of German ethnicity to the United States.

The impetus for German immigration is derived from both the conference publications, compiled by Theodore Gish and Richard Spuler, and the research of Eda Sagarra. *Eagle in the New World: German Immigration to Texas and America* is a conference publication which discusses German emigration from the homeland to settlements within the Texas Hill Country. The papers in the book were presented at a symposium held at the University of Houston in September of 1983. This research exhibits the social context and the changing political landscape within the German speaking regions of Europe which became a catalyst for emigration. Eda Sagarra's book *A Social History of Germany: 1648-1914* reveals the social history of Germany during the time period of German immigration to Texas. The book is a chronological history of German identity, an analysis of the social structure found within Germany, and their interactions with one another.

Sagarra is a professor at the University of Dublin whose research focuses on modern German literature and social history. Sagarra's research on German social structure is important in revealing the motivations of certain class groups within Germany to emigrate and why they choose Texas to immigrate to.

From a general perspective, the context of nineteenth century German migration reflects a period of massive transformation across Europe and North America, a change to a newly industrialized culture which accumulates wealth in centralized areas of economic and political power. While industrialization did create accumulations of wealth the capitalist class alone reaped the profits of industry.<sup>21</sup> Industrialization in Germany left many people poor and made a few immensely rich. These new centers of wealth create a growing urban landscape attracting a populace that migrates from the rural countryside to the cities creating a new culture based on large factory cities and a wage labor force. Secondly, technological innovations ushered in new systems of mass communication and transportation of goods and people. Steam navigation and rail systems improved transportation from seaports in Germany to landing places in America.<sup>22</sup> Ocean steamers replaced sailing vessels introducing liners with fixed routes and timetables allowing immigrants to cross the Atlantic in less time and with greater comfort.<sup>23</sup>

During this era Europe and Germany were also experiencing upward trends in population. Overpopulation stretched the services of the state which inversely created unsatisfactory social conditions for the German people.<sup>24</sup> While the population was expanding, political power bases were shifting, and economic systems were transforming, the traditional class structure of Europe

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<sup>21</sup> Bieseke, Rudolph. *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1931), 4.

<sup>22</sup> Gish, Theodore, Richard Spuler. *Eagle in the New World: German Immigration to Texas and America* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 8.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Bieseke, Rudolph. *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1931), 4.

remained static and harbored growing tensions. With the implementation of industrialization, mass communication generated a plethora of ideas and ideals that questioned the current state of nineteenth century society and asked questions about the direction of the future. Clashing ideological views elicited a particular response which was a, “wrenching, a baffling, and often a terrifying experience in western history, but one which in German society struck a special sensitivity.”<sup>25</sup> Philosophically, Germans of this period questioned the identity of what it meant to be German. Economic, cultural, and social conformity were at odds with this new idea of the German ‘*Volk*’. This concept is important because it defines what the German people chose to bring as a cultural identity to their new home in Texas.

But what was the political context internally and externally that prevented Germans from finding contentment within their homeland? First and foremost, the German speaking people were fragmented into more than three hundred separate territories within the sprawling Holy Roman Empire, held together not by the political state of nationhood but by German culture – its law, its language, and its folklore.<sup>26</sup> The desire for political unification and cultural self-definition increased in response to the Napoleonic Wars which drew European powers into a twenty-three yearlong conflict, from 1792 to 1815, against the armies of France. The Napoleonic invasions forced the Germans to endure the occupation of their lands and the pillaging of their cultural treasures by victorious French troops.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars solidified the creation of the German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund*,) which was enacted on June 8, 1815 by the Congress of Vienna. The German Confederation united the two major powers of

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<sup>25</sup> Gish, Theodore, Richard Spuler. *Eagle in the New World: German Immigration to Texas and America* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 8.

<sup>26</sup> Marsha Morton, “German Romanticism: The Search for A Quiet Place,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): 9.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia and was comprised of thirty-nine sovereign states. The boundaries of the German Confederation would encompass all or parts of the modern day countries of Germany, Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and Northern Italy (Map 1). The 1830s borders of the German Confederation illustrates how the German immigrants of Texas come not only from within the current boundaries of modern day Germany but also the various regions of central Europe with German speaking people. They share a common cultural identity unified by the German language, which is why this specific group of immigrants in Texas will be defined as 'German Speaking.'

While the Congress of Vienna created the German Confederation, the reality of the situation was not one of a happily unified political nation composed of thirty-nine individual states. Contrary to the whole idea of one unified region of German lands, the dominant states of Prussia and Austria were constantly at odds with each other over who had the inherent right to rule. The German Confederation upheld the social norms of Old World Europe through the subjugation of the lower classes under an oppressive political system, and the aristocratic nobles of the German states were at constant odds with each other. Their alliance was only a means to keep France in check and create stability throughout Europe. From these tensions came an outburst of nationalist movements on both sides that would culminate in uprisings and alternative political ideas of socialism and communism. Romantic influence within the region would create an avenue for nationalism based on the preservation of language, folklore, self-determination, and cultural identity.

Internally, the political system was strained by the stratified social classes within the German Confederation. The aristocracy of the German States dictated control of the army and

Map 1: "Map of the German Confederation"



navy, the bureaucracy, the royal court, governmental policies, the judiciary, taxation, police authority, and church affairs. A stagnant political system during this time period would, however, be affected by the change in demographics and the economy. Before the influx of industrialization, the German states had an agrarian based society in which land owners play a crucial role in the political system. The land owners of the German states were the German nobles whose power allowed them to exert absolute control over the peasantry working the fields. All external alliances and internal politics were handled through the aristocratic hierarchy, while the lower classes were typically barred from political activities or decisions.

The disparity in this social caste is egregiously exemplified in the military structure. Military service was forced upon the people of lower rank, such as the peasant class, through either conscription or lack of any other financial options. Within the German speaking armies of Europe, conscription and voluntary enlistment came from the lower classes which generated the rank and file, while the upper class served in the highest offices of military rank. The tensions around this policy were further stressed by the long, drawn-out years of the Napoleonic Wars. To maintain the expensive military establishment and to meet the heavy war debt, the government forced high tax burdens on the German people.<sup>28</sup> These circumstances created great tension in the political system because of the vast disparity in personal freedom. The peasant class become discontent with the forced conscription, high taxes, and the arrogant behavior of the privileged class of nobles who had made them suffer.<sup>29</sup> German immigrants of the lower class, could no longer cope with the demands and regulations made on them by this type of political system.

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<sup>28</sup> Biesele, Rudolph. *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1931), 7.

<sup>29</sup> Gish, Theodore, Richard Spuler. *Eagle in the New World: German Immigration to Texas and America* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 12.

The economy was controlled by the same group of aristocrats in charge of governing the German principalities of Prussia and Austria; therefore, it is somewhat difficult to separate the political system in Germany from the economic system. As industrialization set in, the economy of the German Confederation was transforming into a modernized agricultural and urban economic system. However, this was not a transition that happened overnight or easily. Nor was it a transition that empowered the peasant class. Upward mobility was hard if not impossible to acquire for the lower classes because of the growing density of population that left many peasants landless without hereditary tenure to farm. With the ongoing changes of industrialization to the economy, it would inevitably bring changes to the social landscape of the German states when pushed against a stagnant political system.

In no better place was this exemplified than in the sheer numbers of landless peasants created during the time of industrialization, a situation worsened by the tendency of the lower class to marry young and have large families with no hope of inheriting a plot of land on which to provide for a family.<sup>30</sup> Their only alternative was to join the army, as previously stated, or to move to newly forming urban areas in search of work. To keep the lower classes in line, acts were created by the aristocracy to regulate the employment of the landless peasant workforce and counteract their move to the industrialized cities: "...wages would be withheld until [their] period of contract was up; prosecution threatened those who left the land without their employer's permission."<sup>31</sup> These extreme measures made the lower classes no different than medieval serfs who were bound to the land. Contrasting with this outlook, America represented a country of unlimited progress, of the self-made man, and upward mobility. In the years between the Congress of Vienna and the mid-1850s, emigration was a favored solution for this young, restless workforce

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<sup>30</sup> Sagarra, Eda. *A Social History of Germany: 1648-1914* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1977), 346.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

burdened by the elements of overpopulation and regulation.<sup>32</sup> . This wave of German immigration to Texas was incited by the economic hardships burdened on the lower classes of German people.

For a small minority of immigrants, such as the intellectual elite, Romantic ideals influenced their motivations to immigrate to Texas. German Romanticism is an intellectual movement which grew in reaction to the Enlightenment, the stratification of the social classes, and the Industrial Revolution. Within the German Confederation, German Romanticism occurred from 1800 to 1840, coinciding with the influx of German immigrants to Texas. This period of intellectual thought and philosophy produced the Romantic ideals of social and political reform and cultural maintenance which are motivating factors of German immigration.

In Germany, Texas was quite popular as a wild land which offered an escape from the political and economic situation in Europe.<sup>33</sup> The Texas frontier lured some Germans due to fortuitous circumstances in timing: this coincides with the Texas War of Independence. There were Germans that participated in the Texas Revolution, including some that defended the Alamo and would later write about their experiences. The young Republic was portrayed as a new utopia in popular travel literature, and galvanized German adventurers lured by a romantic life on the frontier.<sup>34</sup> Prominent among the travel literature is Charles Sealsfield's, *The Cabin Book*. Charles Sealsfields was an assumed name for a young romantic rebel named Karl Anton Postl who escaped from a monastery and fled from Germany; he would go on to write about his adventures describing Texas as a "boundless see of green" or a Garden of Eden.<sup>35</sup> Along with Sealsfield's book, a large number of travel books, immigrant guides, poems, and songs began to circulate throughout the

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<sup>32</sup> Sagarra, Eda. *A Social History of Germany: 1648-1914* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1977), 346.

<sup>33</sup> Lich, Glen. *The German Texans* (San Antonio, TX: The University of Texas Institute of Texas Cultures at San Antonio, 1981), 2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 1.

German Confederation espousing the merits of Texas. Hoffman von Fallersleben, a Romantic poet and author of the German anthem “Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles” wrote a number of songs about Texas including the farewell lyrics to the song the “Star of Texas.”<sup>36</sup> These images of an idealized Texas inspired a restless population.

This restlessness grew out of the failures of uprisings in 1830 and 1848 to overthrow the current political structure. German Romanticism encouraged escapism from the modern realities within the German Confederation. These realities were increased population density, harsh living conditions of urban industrialization, economic hardships, and regulated freedoms. A leading woman writer in the Romantic Movement, Bettina von Arnim argued for social reform in Germany in her book, *Dies Buch gehört dem König*, 1843.<sup>37</sup> *The King's Book* is addressed directly to King, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and in it she expresses her concern for the poor, political persecution, and social conditions of her time which she blames on the state.<sup>38</sup> Bettina von Arnim would inspire the German-Texan settlement of Bettina and the fraternity of Bettina, of whom both are named after. The “Forty of Bettina” was a fraternity of free thinkers with chapters throughout Germany; they were a group of highly educated German immigrants that moved to Texas to create a community based on voluntary collectivism. The settlement of Bettina sought political and social reform that could not be achieved in the Fatherland.

Nationalism is strongly reflected in the political reality of the confederation during this period, this idea of nationhood originated from the desire of many Germans to undertake cultural maintenance. Philosopher and playwright Johann Gottfried Herder influenced German

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<sup>36</sup> Lich, Glen. *The German Texans* (San Antonio, TX: The University of Texas Institute of Texas Cultures at San Antonio, 1981), 4.

<sup>37</sup> Elke Frederiksen and Katherine R. Goodman, *Bettina Brentano-von Arnim: Gender and Politics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 19.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

Romanticism with the idea of identity and a sense of self based on shared history, language, and customs.<sup>39</sup> For German Romantics the cultural maintenance of the German ‘Volk’ and political oppression were at odds with one another. Many of the intellectual elite saw Texas during this time period as a new place to establish their cultural identity free from current political institutions. What better place to create a new Germany than on the unblemished landscape of the Texas frontier. They could not rebuild the idea of the German ‘Volk’ in Germany; therefore, they would create a socially just ‘Volk’ in a new land with their preserved language, folklore, and cultural identity. This migration motivation is exemplified in the original motivations of the Adelsverein Colony, “Texas was considered favorably for establishing a German state, in which German ways and customs would be observed, the German national characteristics preserved, and the desire for liberty and self-government realized.”<sup>40</sup>

While these reasons might only apply to a part of the immigrant population that would travel to Texas, they reflect the influences and political interests of some of the German elite. They were educated and cultured, many belonging to high rank in their own country, and possessed economic means. Despite the many advantages of the social elite, these people were seeking a greater purpose to establish their cultural identity in a new place free from political oppression and based on revolutionary new ideas of political philosophy.

The American experience provided all of the opportunities that Germany lacked. Immigrants were seeking a future that could not be realized within their own homeland. Texas became a place where they carried their cultural identity in the hopes that they might take root and thrive after escaping economic hardships and political turmoil. It was a place where an educated

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<sup>39</sup> Marsha Morton, “German Romanticism: The Search for A Quiet Place,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): 9.

<sup>40</sup> Biesele, Rudolph. *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1931), 20.

populace could bring to fruition ideas about new political thinking influenced by Romantic ideals. They carried a cultural identity of what it meant to be a German that connected the land they left behind with the new home they would create in Texas. The impetus of German immigration to Texas is complicated in nature but it connects together a common cultural identity that associated home with two worlds.

## CHAPTER 4

### HISTORY OF GERMAN IMMIGRATION

German immigration to Texas was part of a larger migration of Germans to the New World. After a colonial migration of Germans, mainly to Pennsylvania, the greatest period of German immigration spanned from 1815 to 1915 in which some seven million Germans left their homeland for America. Their impact on the cultural experiment that became the New World could be estimated by their assimilation into this new society by the time of the American Revolution by which, “there were approximately 225,000 people of German descent in America, equaling about 8 to 9 percent of the total population.”<sup>41</sup> German immigration to the United States occurred with such a force and continuity during the nineteenth century, that it could be asked whether American society would be more Anglo-Saxon or German.<sup>42</sup>

When estimating these numbers and defining the term ‘*German immigration*’ there is often no distinction made between Germans, Austrians, Bohemians, German-speaking Swiss, and immigrants from Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>43</sup> Within the larger context of North America, German immigration had been a factor since before the American Revolution. People from the Germanic regions of Europe had come as early as 1710 to New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland which was followed by those that settled in the Carolinas and Louisiana after 1735.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Gish, Theodore, Richard Spuler. *Eagle in the New World: German Immigration to Texas and America* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 4.

<sup>42</sup> Benjamin, Gibert Giddings. *The Germans in Texas: A Study in Immigration* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1910), 1.

<sup>43</sup> Gish, Theodore, Richard Spuler. *Eagle in the New World: German Immigration to Texas and America* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 4.

<sup>44</sup> Lich, Glen E. and Donna B. Reeves. *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest symposium* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 16.

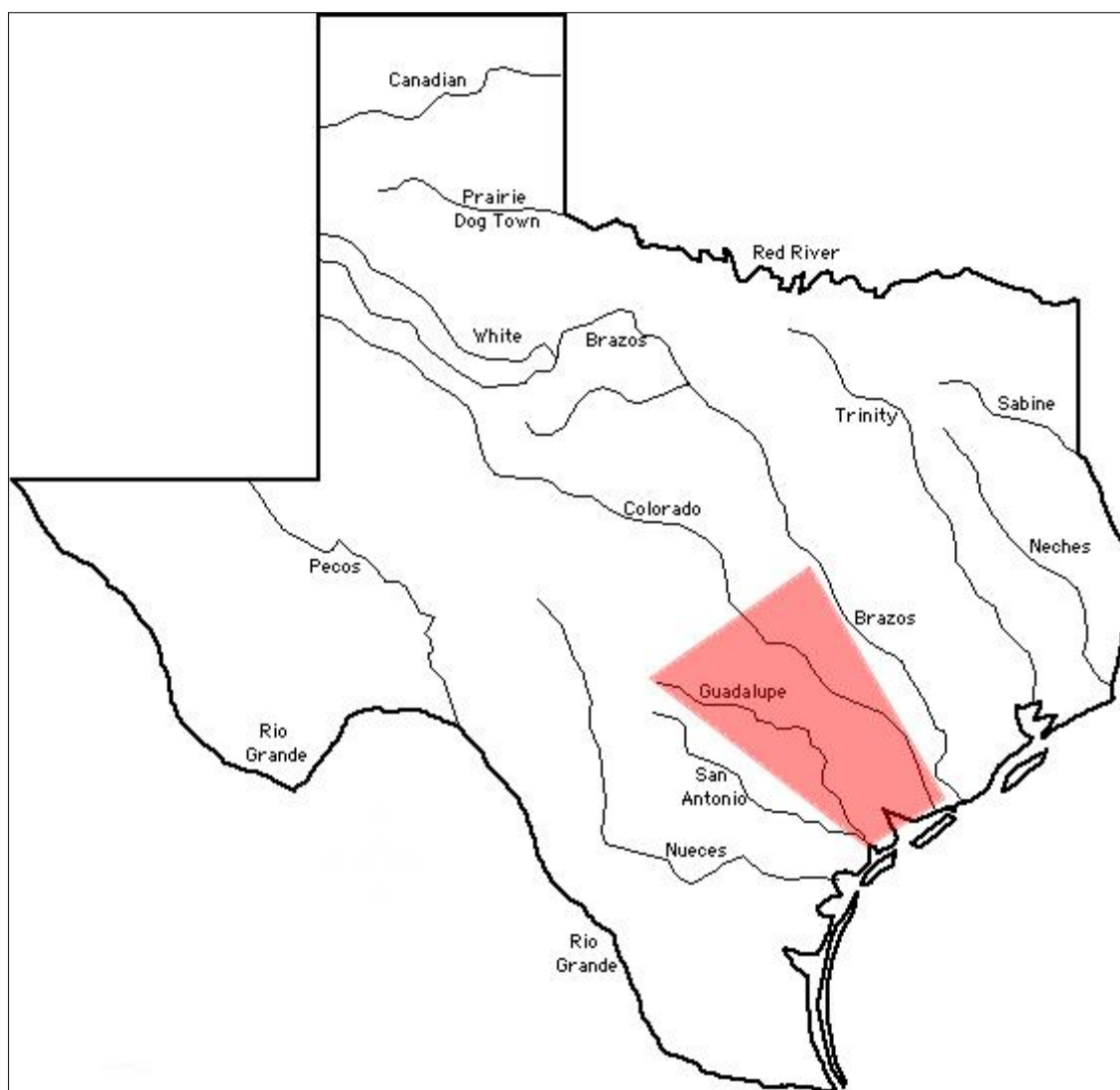
Settlement in Georgia included the Protestant Salzburgers who were expelled from their majority Catholic principality in Europe and offered a place of resettlement by King George II of England to his Georgia Colony in 1734. In the nineteenth century, hundreds of thousands of Germans founded cities and farming communities in the Midwest, entrenching German culture within that region. Other ethnic Germans, from the Volga Valley and the Black Sea in Russia, ensconced themselves within the Midwest as well. Even further to the west, German Swiss founded their communities in the wine industry of California due in part to the climate and fueled by the frenzy of the California Gold Rush. Through this migration to the New World, and America specifically, a significant part of this migration was directed toward Texas. Ethnic Germans, Austrians, Swiss, Tyrolians, Alsatians, Bohemians, Wends, and Poles settled between the Brazos and San Antonio Rivers (Map 2).<sup>45</sup> Colonization by German immigrants to Texas is part of an overall experience of many immigrant groups making a new home within the United States where they found the ability to re-cultivate and in some instances reinvigorate their own cultural identity.

The research for this chapter is extracted from the large body of literature produced by historians chronicling the history of German immigration to Texas. Included among this literature is the work of Gilbert Benjamin, Chester and Ethel Geue, and Glen Lich. Benjamin, a Fellow and Professor in History at Yale University, produced one of the earliest works that attempted to document German immigration to Texas. His book, *The Germans in Texas: A Study in Immigration* (1910) created a chronological overview of German immigration and settlement spanning the years between 1815 and the turn of the twentieth century. Chester Geue, partnering with his wife Ethel Geue, an author and genealogical researcher, pursued several writing projects documenting German and European immigration to Texas. Their work includes *A New Land*

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<sup>45</sup> Lich, Glen E. and Donna B. Reeves. *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest symposium* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 16.

Map 2: "German Settlement in Texas"



*Beckoned: German Immigration to Texas, 1815-1847*, which documents the history of the *Adelsverein*, an emigration company whose efforts created colonial settlements within Texas. The research of Glen Lich focuses on the folk traditions and literature of the Southwest with specific interest on German-American culture. Lich is a descendent of German immigrants and was born in Fredericksburg, a German colonial settlement founded in Texas by the *Adelsverein*. Glen Lich's contribution to the literature of German-Texan culture is through his book *The German Texans*. Lich, in conjunction with Donna B. Reeves, also published *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium*. This conference publication describes the creation of the *Adelsverein* and its financial and ideological purposes for German colonization.

#### Early History of German Immigration before the Texas Revolution

The German element within Texas society has made a marked impact on the state's culture from the early days of colonization through the present day. Often overlooked, and in most cases completely forgotten relative to the recognized cultural influences of Anglos, Hispanics, and African-Americans, the German speaking people of Texas are a prominent group to settle within this region. This importance should not be understated and is exemplified by the 1861 Ordinance of Secession, a statewide referendum vote that officially separated Texas from the United States, whose message was sent out in three languages: English, Spanish, and German. One would be hard pressed to fully explore the impact German immigrants have made on Texas. In the mid-1840s, they came in substantial numbers and wielded such influence that the political, economic, and social life of Texas was materially altered by 1850. They culturally dominated those areas of Texas in which they colonized as seen in the Texas counties of Austin, Colorado, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Kendall, Medina, Washington, and Victoria.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Geue, Chester W. and Ethel H. Geue. *A New Land Beckoned: German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847* (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1966), vii.

### Friedrich Ernst and the First German Settlement

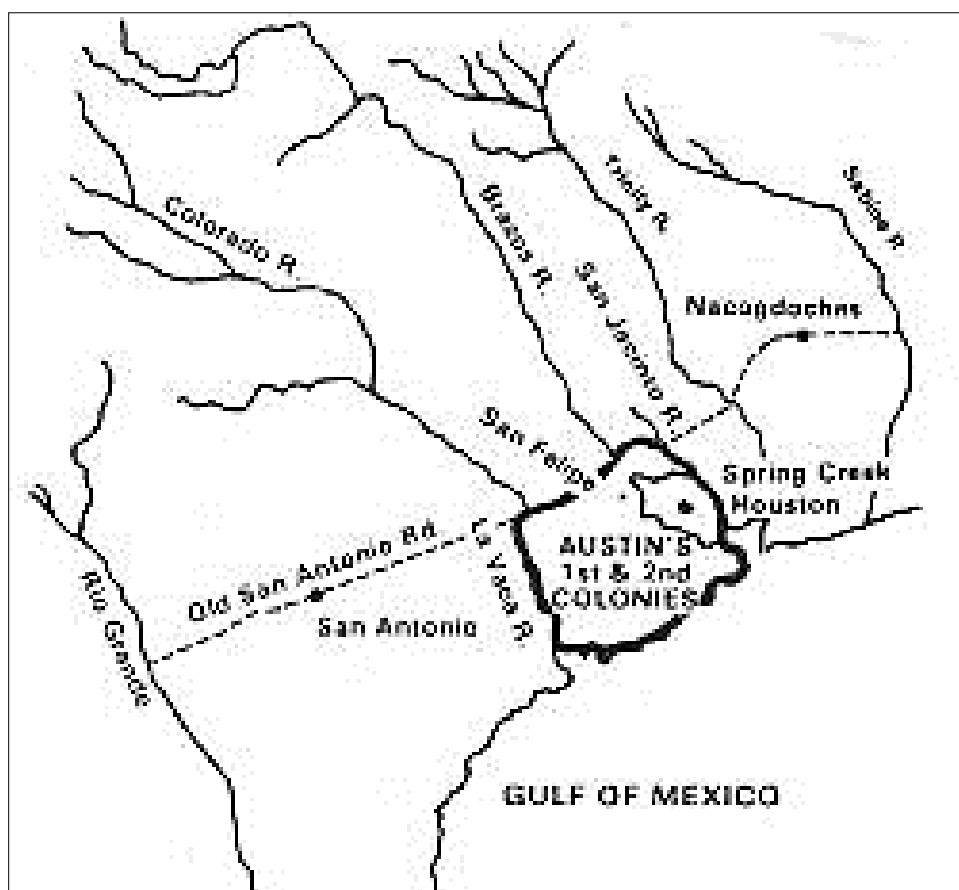
The name Friedrich Ernst has been enshrined in Texas lore as the first “true” German settler to establish a foothold in the territory, paving the way for future waves of Germanic migration. At the time of Ernst’s decision to move to Texas, the Mexican government was still in power. Ironically, Friedrich Ernst’s settlement occurred along the same time line as Stephen F. Austin’s colony which made up the first organized and approved influx of Anglo-American immigrants to Texas. The 1823 Imperial Colonization Law of Mexico allowed an empresario to receive a land grant within the Mexican province of Texas. The title of empresario was appointed by the governor and authorized them to distribute land to settlers in the name of the Mexican government. Austin’s colonization efforts would cover the land between the Brazos River and the Colorado River from the Gulf Coast and the Old San Antonio road (Map 3); it would also be these same areas where German settlers would establish new communities. The Germans are mentioned among the early Mexican empresarios to receive grants under the colonization law of Mexico.<sup>47</sup>

Ernst landed in Harrisburgh, Texas in April of 1831. It was through his descriptive letters back home to his former neighbors that the Texas frontier became known to many Germans. His letters formed a positive image of settlement and perpetuated the romantic notion of the American West. These communications portrayed Texas as a Garden of Eden to readers and influenced the movement of immigration. Ernst’s letters would be published in the local newspapers, which then circulated widely within Germany. The circulation of Ernst’s letters was a catalyst for immigrants to uproot from the Old World and move to the New. The memoir of Robert Justus Kleberg Sr. is a written record of Friedrich Ernst’s influence abroad:

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<sup>47</sup> Benjamin, Gibert Giddings. *The Germans in Texas: A Study in Immigration* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1910), 14.

Map 3: "Stephen F. Austin's Area of Colonization"



We had accidentally got hold of a letter written by a gentlemen, who had emigrated some time before us from the Duchy of Oldenburg and who lived near where now is Industry, Texas, Frederick Ernst by name. In this letter he had described Texas, then a province of Mexico, in very glowing colors, mentioning also, the advantages offered by the Mexican government, namely, a league and labor for every man with a family and one-half league for every single man. This caused us to change our first intentions to go to one of the Northern States and to choose Texas for our future home...my ideas and those of my party were formed by the above mentioned letter [by Friedrich Ernst]...<sup>48</sup>

The fledgling settlement that Ernst's created grew into a small German village, known today as Industry, Texas. This location would become a stopping point for German immigrants on their way from the Gulf coast to the location of future German settlements in the interior. During this same period of settlement, other German settlements would come into existence.

#### Establishment of the *Adelsverein* and the First Colonial Settlement

The largest German colonization project in Texas would commence in the years between 1844 and 1847. This mass emigration was instigated by the formation of the *Mainzer Verein* in 1842, or Society for the Protection of German Immigration to Texas.<sup>49</sup> The *Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwander in Texas*, known to Germans in Europe and Germans in Texas by its shorter name the *Adelsverein*, was organized on April 20, 1842 by five sovereign princes and sixteen nobles dissatisfied with the lack of internal reform in Germany. They assembled at Biebrich, Wiesbaden, Germany for the purpose of organizing a society to direct a massive transplantation of German farmers and artisans to the New World.<sup>50</sup> The *Adelsverein's* purpose was a consolidation of differing efforts to "assist and protect immigrants, to found German settlements in America, eliminate the dangerous potential for unrest and revolution, create new activity for members of the

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<sup>48</sup> Benjamin, Gibert Giddings. *The Germans in Texas: A Study in Immigration* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1910), 16.

<sup>49</sup> Geue, Chester W. and Ethel H. Geue. *A New Land Beckoned: German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847* (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1966), 3.

<sup>50</sup> Lich, Glen E. and Donna B. Reeves. *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest symposium* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 35.

nobility who had lost their sovereign rights in early nineteenth century political reforms, and most importantly manifest financial profits for the members of the society.”<sup>51</sup>

The society selected Prince Leiningen and Count Boos-Waldeck as emissaries representing it, and sent them to Texas in 1842 to buy land for the *Adelsverein* endeavor. They were to seek grants for an extensive German settlement. The land grant, known as the Bourgeois-Ducos grant, was purchased on July 3, 1842; it was negotiated to bring four hundred settlers within eighteen months.<sup>52</sup> In Germany interested immigrants were promised inexpensive transportation to America and then Texas, and from there they were promised wagons to transport them to predetermined settlement areas to be colonized and provided with shelter, grain, farming implements, and educational needs.<sup>53</sup> This large scale colonization created a huge financial burden on the society.

Dispatched by the society, Carl of Solms-Braunfels was made Commissioner-General and directed to oversee the implementation of the Bourgeois-Ducos Grant. He landed in Galveston on July 1, 1844. The Bourgeois-Ducos Grant would cause complications from the outset because it would unfortunately expire by the time Prince Solms-Braunfels arrived, “thus he was temporarily the executive head of a colonization company without an acre of land.”<sup>54</sup> With the failure of the Bourgeois-Ducos grant, the *Adelsverein* purchased a second land grant of 3,000,000 acres, known as the Fischer-Miller Grant lying between the Llano and Colorado Rivers in West Texas.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Lich, Glen E. and Donna B. Reeves. *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest symposium* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 18.

<sup>52</sup> Geue, Chester W. and Ethel H. Geue. *A New Land Beckoned: German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847* (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1966), 3.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Lich, Glen. *The German Texans* (San Antonio, TX: The University of Texas Institute of Texas Cultures at San Antonio, 1981), 24.

Like the Bourgeois-Ducos Grant, the Fischer-Miller grant became a debacle for the *Adelsverein* from the beginning. The terms of the Fischer-Miller Grant were to bring six hundred families or three hundred men over seventeen years of age to Texas; however, the *Adelsverein* did not negotiate the original land grant or its further revisions. The conditions stated that all the colonists must be free white settlers of a foreign country and they must settle within three years between the confluences of the Llano with the Colorado Rivers (Map 4).<sup>56</sup> This contract specifically proposed the settlement of one thousand German, Swiss, Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish families. The *Adelsverein* agreed to these conditions with Fischer, who travelled to Europe and met members of the society in person. During the negotiations between the *Adelsverein* and Mr. Fischer, he would fail to tell them about the disadvantages placed on the grant. The *Adelsverein* believed that after receiving the rights to the grant they would receive full purchase of the land. In reality the Fischer-Miller grant only provided land, "...for every one hundred families, and...for every one hundred single men," meaning that they had to reach contractual obligations with these high quotas of colonists before they even left Germany.<sup>57</sup>

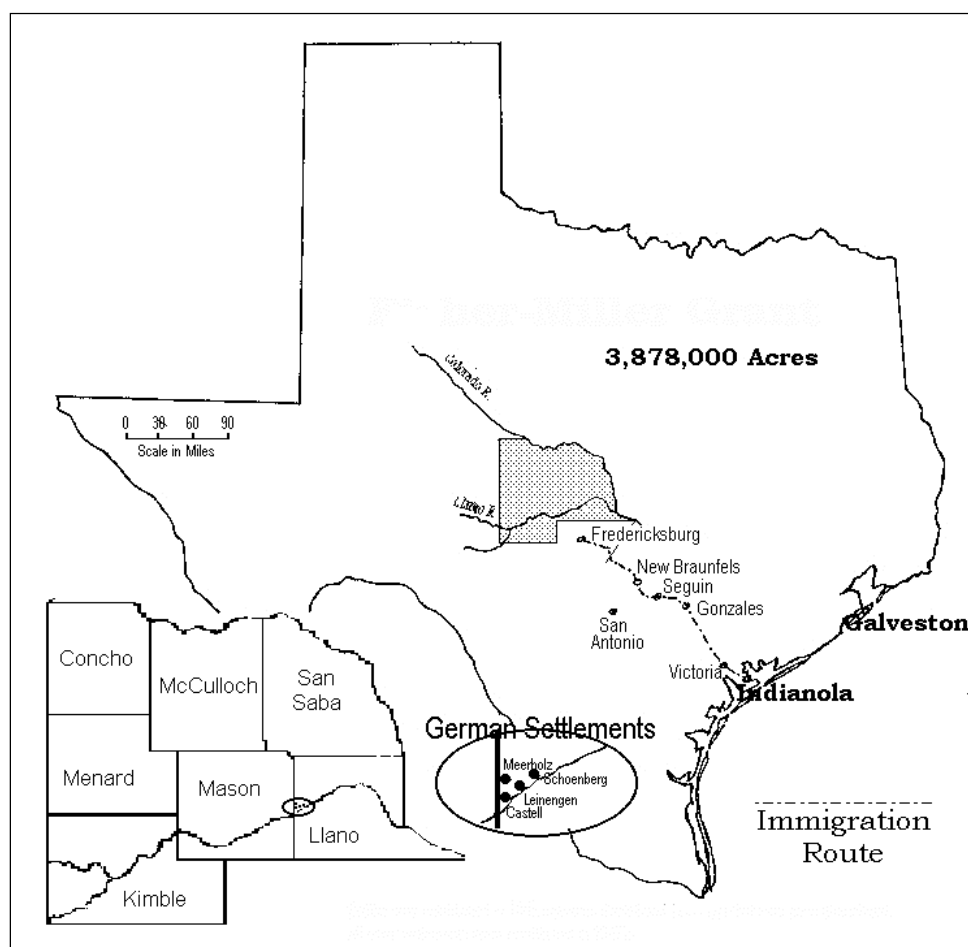
There would be no promised land until new colonists appeared, which was compounded by the restraint of having to recruit, prepare, make the transatlantic voyage, and continue onward with the overland crossing all within a window of eight months. Added to this original problem was the land's distance of three hundred miles from the coast and one hundred and fifty miles from any settlement such as Austin or San Antonio, which were the only cities where supplies could be bought. The land grant was also in an area held by hostile Native Americans known as the Comanche; therefore, no immigrant could proceed to the land granted to him until peace had been

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<sup>56</sup> Benjamin, Gibert Giddings. *The Germans in Texas: A Study in Immigration* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1910), 40.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Map 4: "Boundaries of the Fischer-Miller Grant"



made with the Comanche.<sup>58</sup> They also believed Henry Fischer when he advised the society that it would only take \$80,000 in capital to move six thousand families. Contrary to Fischer's claims, it eventually cost an estimated \$1,000,000 to finance the high volume of colonists needed to fulfill the land grant. All of these factors were great impediments, if not impossibilities, to overcome before the endeavor was even undertaken. This early investment by the *Adelsverein* exhibited the lack of leadership and financial ineptitude of the society despite their economic motivations and progressive social agenda. These were the challenges laid before Prince Solms-Braunfels, when the first *Adelsverein* immigrants arrived.

Prince Solms-Braunfels negotiated the purchase of lands on the Guadalupe River once the conditions of the Fisher-Miller grant were found to be adverse to the needs of the society. After purchasing land on the Guadalupe River, the newly christened town of New Braunfels became the first colonial German village established by the *Adelsverein*. Each settler was given a ten acre tract and a town lot. With this new establishment of permanent settlement, a German foothold had been accomplished by the leaders of the *Adelsverein*.

#### Herr Meusebach, Fredericksburg, and Advancement into the Texas Hill Country

Prince Solms-Braunfels returned to Germany after founding New Braunfels, spending only ten months in Texas altogether. During this period war broke out between the United States and Mexico which had implications on the travel arrangements of the colonists. After the Prince's departure, the *Adelsverein* appointed Baron Ottfried Hands von Meusebach to take over leadership. The population of the new immigrants was outgrowing the resources of New Braunfels; therefore, he sought a new location about eighty miles to the northwest of the Pendernales River, "it was

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<sup>58</sup> Geue, Chester W. and Ethel H. Geue. *A New Land Beckoned: German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847* (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1966), 5.

good land, well-watered and with ample timber to supply the needs of the colonists.”<sup>59</sup> This tract of land would become the second most prominent settlement of the *Adelsverein*, named Fredericksburg in honor of Prince Frederick of Prussia, a member of the society. This new settlement ushered in a second phase of colonization by the *Adelsverein*.

The founding of Fredericksburg occurred on May 8, 1846. The German colonists who established Fredericksburg were the first Europeans to advance into this previously unsettled region of the Texas Hill Country. After outgrowing the colony of New Braunfels, Fredericksburg was founded as the second colony of the *Adelsverein*. Beginning their journey from the Fatherland, each *Adelsverein* immigrant signed an immigration contract (*Einwanderungs Vertrag*) before boarding a ship at the port of embarkation, usually Bremen, Germany and Antwerp, Belgium. The first colonists sponsored by the *Adelsverein* were from the western and northwestern provinces of Germany and landed in Galveston, Texas in 1844. From Galveston they would arrive at Matagorda Bay, a landing place established by Prince Solms-Braunfels from which the new immigrants could be supplied and organized for their trip inland.<sup>60</sup> This new port of German entry would serve as a way station for weary immigrants after the long voyage before they were loaded on wagons and oxcarts and made their journey overland to Fredericksburg.

Besides creating this second prominent German settlement, Meusebach was essential to creating German expansion into the hill country and the early survival of the *Adelsverein*'s designs for successful German colonization. It was under Meusebach's influence that new counties began to organize around German settlements. By 1846, New Braunfels became the county seat of Comal County, while Fredericksburg became the county seat of Gillespie County in 1848. From

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<sup>59</sup> Geue, Chester W. and Ethel H. Geue. *A New Land Beckoned: German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847* (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1966), 11.

<sup>60</sup> Lich, Glen. *The German Texans* (San Antonio, TX: The University of Texas Institute of Texas Cultures at San Antonio, 1981), 46.

these newly formed counties, Meusebach would be elected to the Texas state senate. Until the Civil War he held a number of state appointments regulating head rights, surveys, immigration, public education, and state affairs.<sup>61</sup>

Baron Ottfried Hans von Meusebach is important to the history of German immigration to Texas beyond his leadership in the logistical matters of colonization; he was essential to the creation of the German-Texan identity. Meusebach is representative of this new German-Texas identity exemplified by his actions to take up, “the citizenship of Texas immediately upon his arrival (when he also relinquished his hereditary titles and changed his name), and [assisted] the swarm of newcomers into becoming citizens of their adopted land.”<sup>62</sup> He led by personal example despite his former life as a member of the German peerage. Baron Ottfried Hans von Meusebach stood by the conviction that “German knowledge at the side of American Freedom” would create a haven in the New World.

#### End of the *Adelsverein*

The *Adelsverein*'s colonization efforts in Texas came to a close in 1847 because the society went bankrupt. A more important event also occurred during this closing phase of the *Adelsverein*. Texas was annexed by the United States in 1845, admitting it into the Union as the 28<sup>th</sup> state, which created apathy among the German nobles that had established the society. They would no longer be able to realize their dream of creating a model, reformed German state in the New World. During the years of 1844-1847 the *Adelsverein* had brought 7,380 immigrants to the Republic of Texas and secured 1,735,200 acres of land for German settlers creating a sphere of influence in the decades to come. The *Adelsverein* legacy in Texas established the still prominent towns of

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<sup>61</sup> Lich, Glen. *The German Texans* (San Antonio, TX: The University of Texas Institute of Texas Cultures at San Antonio, 1981), 57.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 56.

New Braunfels and Fredericksburg. In the Hill Country of Texas, Germanic culture from the *Adelsverein* colonists has lingered into the twentieth century.<sup>63</sup> Despite this departure of influence by the *Adelsverein*, immigration to Texas by German speaking people continued, in fact, “the movement continued to gain impetus with each passing year, and only the Civil War brought it to a momentary standstill.”<sup>64</sup>

### German Immigration and Settlement between 1848 and 1860

German immigration between 1848 and 1860 is exemplified by two patterns of regional settlement: the western counties of Comal, Gillespie, Kendall, and Kerr and the eastern counties of Fayette and Lee (Map 5). This phase of immigration into Fayette and Lee Counties coincided with the arrival of several ethnic minorities from German-speaking Europe: Czechs, Wends, and Poles.<sup>65</sup> This immigration should be noted because the mingling between ethnic Germans and these minorities are blurred in distinction. While they usually created their own separate communities they were part of the larger Germanic influence upon Texas:

[The eastern] part of the state had been settled by Anglo-Americans a generation before the first German communities were organized. Fayetteville, for example, in eastern Fayette County had been founded around 1822 by several families from Stephen F. Austin’s original colony. As German farmers moved into this fertile area, they tended to buy up the land which had been settled by earlier Americans, while the Anglos, in turn moved on. In this manner Fayetteville evolved into an Anglo-American and German community. Later the Czechs or Bohemians began to arrive, they too bought land from the original Anglo- American farmers; so by the outbreak of the Civil War, Fayetteville had only a small Anglo element. Round Top, La Grange and Giddings underwent similar transitions. The population of Fayette County consequently shifted from Anglo-American to German and Czech while the population of Lee County went from Anglo-American to German and Wendish (Germanized Slavic nationality from Lusatia, a historic eastern European province governed by Prussia at the time the Wends left).<sup>66</sup>

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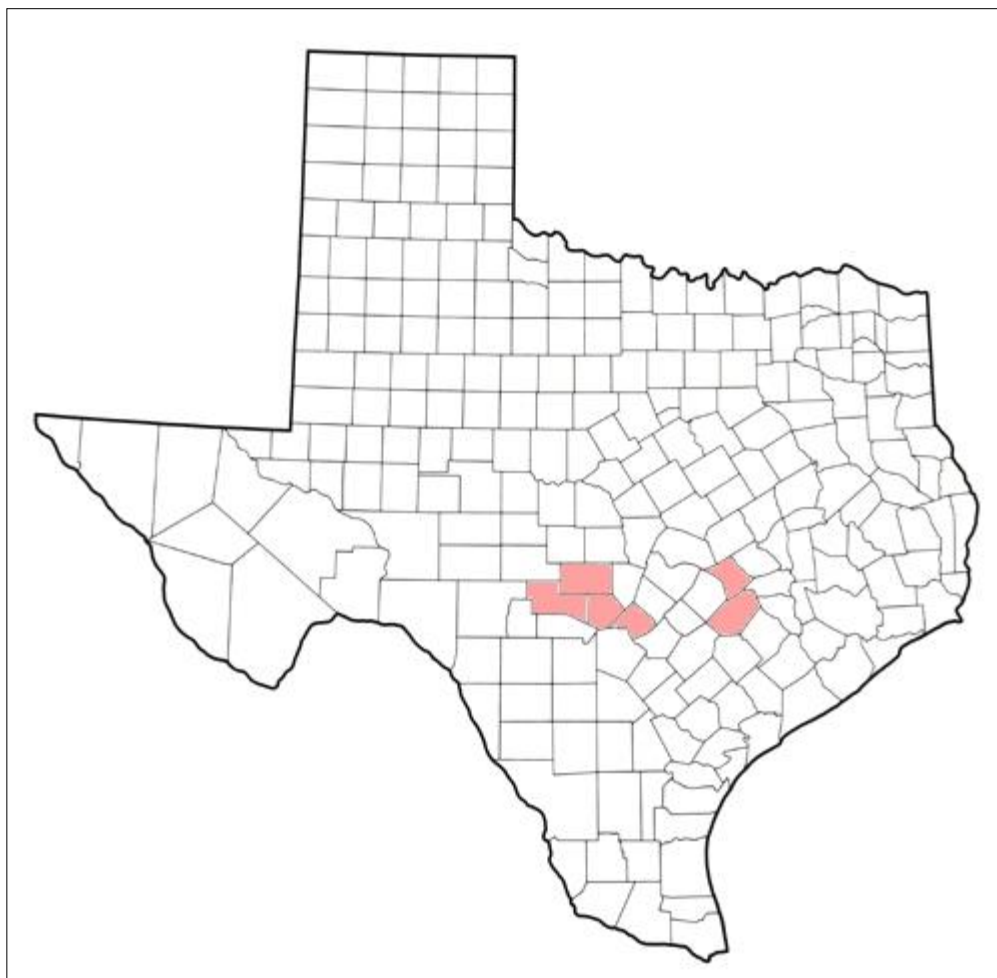
<sup>63</sup> Lich, Glen. *The German Texans* (San Antonio, TX: The University of Texas Institute of Texas Cultures at San Antonio, 1981), 22.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 68.

Map 5: "German Settlement between 1848 and 1860"



Immigrants from the regions of Bohemia and Moravia settled in central Texas during the 1850s as part of the larger movement of German immigration between 1848 and 1860. At the time of immigration to Texas the people of Bohemia and Moravia were under the rule of the Austrian Empire which was part of the larger political structure of the German Confederation. Praha is a town whose population is less than twenty-five people, according to recent census data, and whose church complex is surrounded by miles of open farmland. The church and Praha reside eighty miles southwest of Austin and one hundred and twenty miles west of Houston. The community of Praha was first occupied by Anglo settlers that initially called the town Mulberry, however, once the Bohemians moved into the area the name was changed to Praha after the European city of Prague. The first Bohemian settler was Mathias Novak who bought one hundred acres from the original Anglo settlers. It was within his home that the first Catholic masses were celebrated amongst the citizens of Praha, establishing the religious community on which the town centers.

The Wend history of immigration to Texas is similar to that of many Germans. They had grown weary of war and hoped to find better circumstances in America. They had no experience governing themselves politically, constituting a minority in East Germany, and sought this freedom in the New World.<sup>67</sup> Despite the early push back against Germanization, the Wends are tied to German culture through the conversion to Lutheranism during the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther's message brought Lutheranism to Germany and the Germanic regions of Europe in the sixteenth century. The Protestant Reformation greatly impacted the Wends of Lusatia resulting in ninety percent conversion of Wends into the Lutheran faith.<sup>68</sup> Lutheranism was accepted by the Wends based on the defining principle of allowing religious texts to be translated

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<sup>67</sup> Nielsen, George R., *In Search of a Home: Nineteenth-Century Wendish Immigration* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1989), 5.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

into a group's own vernacular. Lutheranism allowed the Wends to retain their language. The Lutheran view of Christianity also advocates for congregations to be self-governing and independent, subject only to the word of God. But within the Prussian Empire at the time of immigration individual congregations had very little say in their political and spiritual governance. Under Prussian rule church parishes and congregations were under the rule of the *Kultusministerium* which oversaw each congregation, assigning pastors to churches and schools. Pastors were essentially officers of the state.<sup>69</sup> The conversion to Lutheranism and pressure from the Prussian government were catalysts of German-Wend immigration for which they sought religious freedom in America.

In 1854, nearly six hundred German-Wends formed a new congregation and emigration society, headed by Pastor Johann Kilian. The goal of the newly formed congregation was to immigrate to Texas with the intention of establishing a new colony. Religious dissatisfaction within Prussia and the opportunity for land ownership in America were incentives for the German-Wend migration which transplanted their church to the Texas frontier. They sent to Texas and bought land in Lee County where they created the community of Serbin, translated to mean "Wend-Land." Serbin, Texas is the only Wendish colony ever founded in North America. Ironically, the Wends settled next to German-speaking neighbors. The original German-Wend colonists came from Kotitz, Klitten, and Wiegersdorf, Germany.

Since these areas had previously been settled, establishing a new German society in this region was less toilsome than those found in the original influx of German settlers. Commercial activity flourished, allowing the counties of Fayette and Lee to prosper and, "[acquire] a unique charm with the blending of rural traditions from the Old South and those of the European

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<sup>69</sup> Michael Buchhorn, ed. *A Collection of Histories of St. Paul Lutheran Church Serbin, Texas: In Commemoration of the Congregation's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* (2003): 70.

homeland.”<sup>70</sup> A cross cultural mix of people allowed Germans to both retain their cultural heritage through language and traditions, and inversely allowed them to apply social and political freedom enabling them to prosper on the American frontier.

### Immigration of Germans after the Civil War

With the start of the Civil War, German immigration to Texas entered a final phase. The war created a federal blockade of Confederate ports which effectively halted immigration to Texas.<sup>71</sup> After the Civil War, the momentum of migration to Texas changed. German settlers still arrived in large numbers, but instead of creating and expanding into new areas of settlement they started to create “folk-islands” in large cities.<sup>72</sup> German speaking populations infiltrated largely established cities such as Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas where enclaves of ‘German’ neighborhoods occurred. While the new German settlement islands appeared in the cosmopolitan areas of the state, immigration to the frontier picked up once again following the break-up of the big Texas ranches into small farm areas. The introduction of barbed wire to the Texas open plains created conflict about the title to grazing rights and eventually brought about the demise of the open range. This phase of immigration developed from the 1860s to the 1880s and was induced by the railroad companies. The railroads sold rights-of-way and state-grant lands to colonists while offering free transportation. German areas expanded as a result of this steady flow of settlers, and these spheres of influence expanded again as prospering second and third generation Germans bought out the more nomadic Anglos, who were still clutching to the wandering spirit of the western movement.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Lich, Glen. *The German Texans* (San Antonio, TX: The University of Texas Institute of Texas Cultures at San Antonio, 1981), 68.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>73</sup> Lich, Glen E. and Donna B. Reeves. *German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth: Essays from the 1978 Southwest symposium* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 206.

### Concluding a Century of German Immigration to Texas

After over a century of movement, the tide of German immigration has left a legacy of ethnic change that has assimilated and merged into the unique qualities that compose Texas culture. The most well-known areas of German settlement are the rural counties of south central Texas including Austin, Colorado, Comal, De Witt, Fayette, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Kendall, Medina, and Washington counties. These counties compose what is known as the ‘German belt.’ While the majority of German settlement is found in rural Texas, German immigrants did settle in the urban areas of San Antonio, Galveston, and Dallas forming urban enclaves. Germanic immigration within Texas followed a similar pattern of other migrating groups relying either on a dominant personality, or influential leader, to motivate a singular group or with letters sent back to the homeland to motivate friends and relatives to follow.<sup>74</sup> Texas migration was initiated by the idea of the “*mother colony*” as exemplified by Friedrich Ernst’s initial settlement of Industry and the colonial settlements of the *Adelsverein*. Newly arriving immigrants found reassurance among like-minded people and familiar cultural surroundings in these isolated islands of a “mini” Germany.

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<sup>74</sup> Jordan, Terry G. “A Century and a Half of Ethnic Change in Texas, 1836-1986,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (1986): 410.

## CHAPTER 5

### CASE STUDIES

What is the methodology for each case study? For each church a site visit was conducted which included photographic documentation and research of the surrounding area. Certain site visits included interviews with the current clergy or local residents with knowledge of the structure. Research of the current literature on each of the German ethnic groups was collected for the history and background portions of each case study. For each case study documentation of the architecture was recorded for both the interiors and exteriors of structure, and based on this architectural evidence each case study is compared to building traditions before immigration and after immigration.

#### Case Study 1: St. Mary's Catholic Church, Fredericksburg, Texas

Established under the colonization efforts of the *Adelsverein*, the town of Fredericksburg was settled by German immigrants moving into the area in 1846. Fredericksburg is one of the most prominent settlements of German immigration to Texas. Fredericksburg's prominence lies in its establishment as an early German colony and in its well preserved examples of German vernacular architecture. Fredericksburg is home to Old St. Mary's Catholic Church, also known as the *Marienkirche*. The *Marienkirche* is an example of Gothic Revival architecture that displays the vernacular building traditions of German-Texan cultural identity.

The research of this case study is derived largely from the 1934 Historic American Building Survey (HABS) and the Commemorative Volume for the 75<sup>th</sup> Year Jubilee of St. Mary's Parish. The 1934 HABS drawings provide a detailed overview of the construction of the

*Marienkirche*. The Commemorative Volume was produced in 1921 by Rev. H. Gerlach, a former pastor of St. Mary's Parish. The volume provides a short history of the parish from 1846 to 1921, along with illustrations and documentation of the building evolution of the *Marienkirche*.

### History

The town was laid out with similarities to German villages along the Rhine River, from which many of the colonists had come, with one long, wide Main Street. Along this main street the early structures of Fredericksburg were created with traditional German building techniques such as *fachwerk*. *Fachwerk* describes a building tradition created with a timber framework infilled with rocks, or rubble, and covered with plaster or whitewash. Examples of *fachwerk* construction are found throughout Fredericksburg in structures such as the *Vereinkirche*. The *Vereinkirche*, or "People's church" served as a non-denominational church and was the first public structure created in Fredericksburg in 1847 (Figure 1).

The initial wave of colonists were members of both the Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths. In the early years, each of these denominations held Sunday services either in private homes or in the *Vereinkirche*. The *Vereinkirche* allowed each denomination to rotate times of Sunday worship. The building is an octagonal structure capped by an octagonal cupola and nicknamed the coffee mill. The *Vereinkirche* served as a house of worship for the Catholic community in Fredericksburg until 1848 when St. Mary's Catholic Parish was established.

The first church of St. Mary's Catholic Parish was erected on a stone foundation and built from log construction with characteristics of *fachwerk* construction techniques (Figure 2). Many of the early structures in Fredericksburg are comprised of alternating logs with rows of limestone mortared into place.<sup>75</sup> Even after this first church was built, the congregation always had future

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<sup>75</sup> Hafertepe, Kenneth. *A Guide to the Historic Buildings of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County* (Everbett Printing Co., 2015), 4.



Figure 1: “*Vereinkirche*, Fredericksburg, Texas”



Figure 2: “The First Church, 1848”

plans to build a larger and more permanent structure out of stone. Therefore, the plans for Old St. Mary's Catholic Church, or the *Marienkirche*, were created in 1860 which emulate the vernacular churches of their homeland (Figure 3).

St. Mary's Parish started construction on Old St. Mary's Catholic Church in 1861 and it was consecrated in 1863. The pastor during this period of the parish's history was Father Peter Baunach; it was through his influence that the design of the church was created and constructed.<sup>76</sup> The parishioners used the same limestone and cypress they used for constructing their barns and homes, however, they fashioned these same materials into a high point of German-Texan vernacular sacred architecture.

By 1901, the congregation had outgrown Old St. Mary's Catholic Church, therefore, in 1905 the new St. Mary's Catholic Church was constructed next door. The churches reside side by side on the same parcel of land. To avoid confusion between buildings the older structure will henceforth be called the *Marienkirche*. The new church was designed by prominent San Antonio architect Leo M. J. Dielmann, who was a German immigrant himself. New St. Mary's is an example of the Gothic Revival style constructed from rusticated limestone ashlar with dressed limestone.<sup>77</sup> Its defining feature is a corner tower above the entrance. The Gothic detailing includes buttresses, lancet doors, trefoil and quatrefoil motifs, and pinnacle and parapet details on the tower. The interior of the church includes a sophisticated interior painting treatment. The earliest interior decorative painting exhibited simple geometric stenciling and banding. In 1936, the interior was redecorated by Dr. Oidtmann Studios, Inc., of New York.<sup>78</sup> The apse decoration

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<sup>76</sup> Gerlach, Rev. Dean H. "75<sup>th</sup> Year Jubilee of St. Mary's Parish of Fredericksburg, Texas," Vol. Commemorative (1995): 26.

<sup>77</sup> National Register of Historic Places, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Fredericksburg, Gillespie County, Texas, National Register #83003143.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.



Figure 3: "The Second Church, 1863"

Is the most elaborate depiction in the interior with two large murals and a central mural of “Christ in Majesty.”<sup>79</sup> The decorated interior is a characteristic of the Painted Churches of Texas, a building tradition of German speaking immigrants throughout the state in areas of German and Czech settlement. The Painted Churches of Texas are further expanded on in the next two case studies.

### Architectural Description

The *Marienkirche* resides in the central commercial district of downtown Fredericksburg. The church is situated at the crossing of S. Orange Street and W. San Antonio Street among the surrounding blocks of the commercial and historic district (Figure 4). The *Marienkirche* faces southwest among a complex of church related buildings and school which reside on the corner lots of the intersection. The Gothic Revival structure is composed of a Latin cruciform church plan that incorporates a polygonal apse. The main structure of the nave, transept, chancel, and apse are two stories high, while the bell tower rises five stories above the ground. The roof is comprised of intersecting gable roof lines and a bell tower that is crowned with a mansard roof creating a steeple. The short south elevation is divided into three vertical bays while the north façade of the polygonal apse is divided into five vertical bays. The longitudinal facades of the east and west elevations are divided into five vertical bays of buttressing and rubble stone. The church is constructed from rubble stone, ashlar limestone, soapstone, stained glass, and cypress wood. The *Marienkirche* represents the height of German-Texan vernacular architecture.

### Roof and Structural Framework

The construction of the church was undertaken by a variety craftsmen that came from within the community of Fredericksburg. The church’s cruciform design is constructed from a

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<sup>79</sup> National Register of Historic Places, St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Fredericksburg, Gillespie County, Texas, National Register #83003143.



Figure 4: “The *Marienkirche*, Fredericksburg, Texas”

foundation of limestone blocks and walls of rubble stone quarried from Comfort, Texas. The cypress wood for the *Marienkirche* was hauled from Bastrop, Texas and hand hewn. The roof's original construction included hand hewn rafters held together by mortis and tenon joinery. The roof was originally covered with hand cut cypress shingles nailed to wood lathing. Today the roof is covered with modern wood shingles. The flooring of the interior is covered with soapstone slabs brought from Willow City. The stone ornamentation was done exclusively by craftsman from Fredericksburg as a display of their devotion to faith and community.

### South Elevation

The south elevation of the *Marienkirche* is the entrance façade of the structure (Figure 5). The façade is composed from two elements, the south wall of the nave and the adjoining bell tower, which creates a symmetrical façade of three bays. The outer two bays of the entrance façade, are composed of the surface area of the south wall of the nave. The wall is created from rubble stone which makes up most of the construction material of the structure, which is two feet in thickness, rising two stories. The outer corners of the wall surface are flanked on either side by buttressing that is roughly two feet in width. The cut ashlar stone of the buttresses contrasts with the rubble stone of the wall surface.

On either side of the bell tower, the south wall of the nave also includes a narrow lancet arched window opening. The lancet arched window opening is a framework of tooled stone that mimics the shape of a lancet arch without the true construction of a lancet arch. The window is in-filled with clear glazing divided into three window sashes. Above the sashes the window glazing is cut into gothic ornamentation of two pointed arches and a rosette which rests beneath the span of the archway. The south wall of the nave is topped by a roofline created by the front facing gabled roof.



Figure 5: “*Marienkirche*, South Elevation”

The middle bay is occupied by the bell tower which is also composed of the rubble stone wall surface and flanked by two corner buttresses. The bell tower is divided into five sections from top to bottom by stringcourses of cut ashlar stone. These sections denote the floor levels within the bell tower. Within the bell tower, the entrance doorway is a punched opening created by a lancet arch (Figure 6). The lancet arch is constructed from dressed ashlar stone which shape the key stone, voussoirs, and imposts of the opening. Beneath the span of the lancet arch is a decorative wood panel and two doors. The decorative wood panel above the door is painted white with a Maltese cross, a variant of the Greek cross with arms narrowing towards the center. This creates an eight pointed cross representing the eight beatitudes. The Maltese cross was associated with the order of St. John during the crusades and appears as a German war decoration for bravery in the field.<sup>80</sup>

In the second floor of the bell tower, and above the doorway, an oculus window is created by a ring of cut ashlar stone and clear glazing. Moving further upward to the third floor, a lancet arched window is created from the same framework as those found on the south nave wall and is enclosed by a screen of wooden louvers. Found on the fourth floor, a second lancet arched opening, shorter in height, creates an open air interior which reveals the bells housed within the bell tower (Figure 7). The uppermost level of the bell tower is composed entirely of a mansard roof constructed from stone. The roof also includes a small lancet arched window created from a continuous framework of tooled stone, along with a decorative cross at the point of the arch. The tower is then crowned by a stone cross.

From the view of the south elevation the transept of the Latin cross plan of the *Marienkirche* is visible on either side of the south nave wall (Figure 8). The cross transept

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<sup>80</sup> Tim Healey, "The Symbolism of the Cross in Sacred and Secular Art," *Leonardo* 10, no. 4 (1977): 289-294.

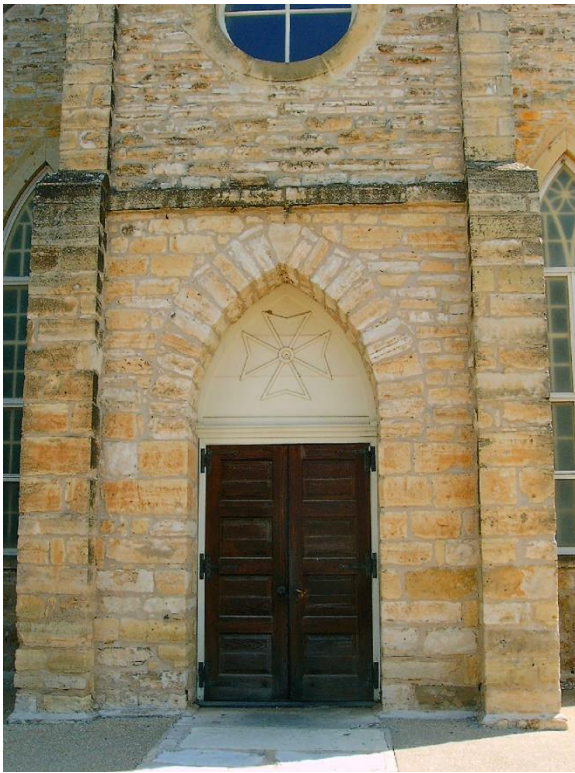


Figure 6: “*Marienkirche*, Entrance Door”



Figure 7: “*Marienkirche*, Steeple Detail”



Figure 8: “*Marienkirche*, South Elevation View of Cross Transept”

continues the same design of rubble stone wall and ashlar stone construction and includes a lancet arched doorway replicating the design of the entrance doorway. The south face of the gabled roof over the transept is also visible.

### East and West Elevations

The east and west elevations of the *Marienkirche* are composed of multiple architectural elements, including the bell tower, nave, transept, and chancel (Figure 9). The east elevation of the bell tower replicates the same design previously mentioned in the description of the south elevation, minus the entrance doorway and oculus. The main section of the east elevation divides the nave, transept, and chancel into five bays from left to right. The four bays consisting of the nave and chancel have the same features and are divided by buttressing and include a window opening. The wall of each bay is constructed from rubble stone and flanked on either side by an ashlar stone buttress rising the full height of the structure. Exactly like the windows of the south elevation, the east windows are composed of a tooled stone framework that mimics the shape of a lancet arch and the same pattern of clear glazing. The four bays are then topped with the east face of the gabled roof over the nave and chancel. The one bay consisting of the transept continues the orientation of the roof. The front facing gable over the transept extends the surface area of the wall in which an oculus window is created from a framework of tooled stone. Above the ridgeline of the front facing gable over the transept is a decorative stone cross. From the view of the east elevation, the rear of the church is visible showing where the chancel and polygonal apse connect. The gabled roof is covered in modern shingles.

The east and west elevations of the *Marienkirche* mirror one another. The west elevation continues the same rubble stone wall construction along with the features of ashlar stone buttresses, lancet arched windows and stained glass (Figure 10).



Figure 9: “*Marienkirche*, East Elevation”



Figure 10: “*Marienkirche*, West Elevation”

### North Elevation

The north facing elevation of the *Marienkirche* is comprised of the rear apse of the church (Figure 11). The polygonal apse is constructed from five walls which divide the structure symmetrically into five vertical bays. Each bay is composed of the same surface area of rubble stone wall which is flanked on either side by ashlar stone buttresses that rise the full height of the structure. The apse includes two lancet arched doorways framed by stone voussoirs. Beneath the span of each arched opening is one door and a decorative wood panel, painted white, which includes a Maltese cross. The center bay includes another oculus window, framed in cut stone, and in-filled with clear glazing divided into a rosette pattern. Covering the apse is a polygonal roof that intersects the gable end of the chancel and culminates in a decorative cross at its pinnacle. From this view of the north elevation, the rubble walls, stone buttressing, and north face of the gabled roof of the cross transept are also visible.

### Interior

The interior space of the *Marienkirche* is a study of restraint and stark simplicity contrasting with the roughhewn texture of the exterior (Figure 12). The interior manifests the Latin cross plan and includes a narthex, nave, transept, chancel, and apse. The ground floor is covered with square cut stone tiles of blue-gray soapstone. These tiles cover the entire floor surface of the nave and transept which incorporates a central aisle and two side aisles. The tiles continue into the floor surface of the chancel and apse which is raised slightly and divided from the rest of the interior area by a communion rail (Figure 13). Moving upward the double height interior walls are covered with a fine layer of plaster that creates a plain wall surface. Breaking up the stark quality of the wall surface are the recessed niches of the lancet arch door opening and twelve lancet arched windows. Originally made from cypress or cedar and clear glazing, the current windows



Figure 11: “*Marienkirche*, North Elevation”



Figure 12: “*Marienkirche*, Interior”



Figure 13: “*Marienkirche*, Interior Detail”

are a field of blue and white glass. The pulpit is located adjacently to the west wall. A small staircase leads to the low pulpit which rests on a columnar base and is enclosed with wood paneling painted white (Figure 14); the altar resides on the raised dais within the apse.

A second story balcony lies adjacent to the narthex above the south end of the nave. Stretching the full width of the nave, the balcony is held up by two hexagonal pillars and six pilasters (Figure 15). The structural supports of the balcony are exposed and reveal hand hewn beams and joists (Figure 16). A “U” shaped staircase leads to the second story balcony. The balcony structure abuts the south nave wall and deep niches of the window openings; the balcony structure never interrupts the stained glass windows. On the balcony level, a lancet arched opening leads to the bell tower and stairwell. The ceiling consists of a vault over the nave and cross transept which is covered in beaded boards. The current ceiling is painted white and includes modern recessed lighting.

### Furniture

The furniture within the *Marienkirche* is sparse and simple and includes both organ and pews. The organ has no pipes or architectural detailing that tie it into the architecture or aesthetic of the church. The eleven pews found within the interior are constructed from an unusual design in which the pews are treated as one piece. Both the left and right end of each pew are connected by a piece of wood that runs the length of the nave. Long wooden boards create a platform on which the individual pews are attached. The individual pews are varnished and have trefoil ornamentation. The only other ornamentation within the church includes the placards on the wall depicting the Stations of the Cross. The sparse use of furniture within the nave continues the overall aesthetic of the interior which is devoid of bright colors and ornamentation.



Figure 14: “*Marienkirche*, Pulpit”



Figure 15: “*Marienkirche*, Balcony”

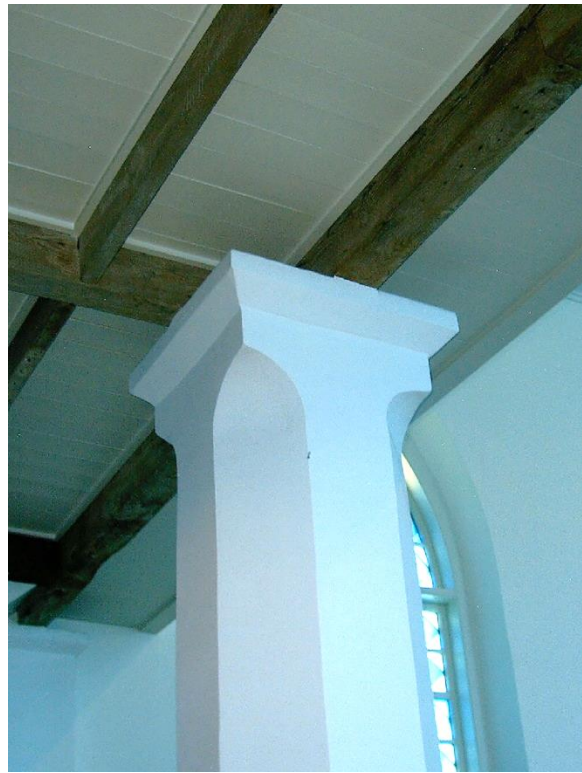


Figure 16: “*Marienkirche*, Pillar”

### Chronology and Building Evolution

The *Marienkirche* has undergone two major transformations over the years that include a rehabilitation and restoration. The most significant changes occurred in 1906 when the church was converted into a school. The present exterior and interior conditions result from a modern renovation and restoration of the original church interior during the 1970s.<sup>81</sup> The current restoration reinstated the original configuration of the windows and double height interior and restored the structure to its original purpose as a place of worship.

### Architectural Significance

The architectural significance of the *Marienkirche* lies in its representation as a rural vernacular church built by the German immigrants of Texas. The German-Texan cultural identity is expressed in the physical and symbolic presence of the *Marienkirche*. The *Marienkirche* expresses the duality found within the German-Texan identity. As an immigrant group, their cultural identity reflects both elements of retention and assimilation which is represented in their building traditions and styles. The *Marienkirche* combines both of these juxtaposing influences to create a sacred structure exhibiting the height of German-Texan vernacular architecture.

The *Marienkirche* exemplifies the retention of vernacular building traditions found within Germany through the incorporation of the Gothic style and stone building traditions. The *Marienkirche* is an attempt to recreate high style Gothic architecture prominent in Germanic Europe. The structure is not an attempt to recreate a specific building found in Germany, but rather a sacred space that is familiar to them in form and style. While limited in resources, the *Marienkirche* reflects a high level of sophistication for a rural vernacular sacred place. This sophistication is demonstrated in both the design of the structure and execution of its construction.

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<sup>81</sup> Maria Herrmann, "The Restoration of Historical Fredericksburg," *Rice University Studies* 63, no. 3 (1977) 127.

At the time of the *Marienkirche's* construction, Texas had an established Catholic community throughout the state. The Catholic community of Fredericksburg could have built the structure based on the Catholic building traditions familiar to the area, such as the Spanish Mission Style. However, the *Marienkirche* reflects no direct influences of either the Spanish or Anglo building traditions of their surrounding neighbors. The structure was designed by Father Peter Baunach, a German priest specifically brought to Fredericksburg to oversee the construction of the church. The Catholic Bishop of Galveston brought Father Baunach from a German Benedictine Monastery in Pennsylvania because he wanted a German to create a German Catholic Church.<sup>82</sup>

The design of the church commemorates Christian symbolism. Father Baunach insisted that the church have a Latin cross plan, stating, “it was the oldest shape for a Christian church building.”<sup>83</sup> Included in the design are five doors to commemorate the five wounds of Jesus and twelve windows to honor the twelve apostles. The church is also designed to reflect Gothic detailing as seen in the pointed arched windows and verticality of the structure. The *Marienkirche* is an interpretation of what Father Baunach believed was an appropriate form and style for a Christian church. Contrary to Father Baunach’s design principles, early Christian architecture usually took the form of the basilica plan rather than a Latin cross plan nor did it incorporate Gothic detailing. The Latin cross plan and Gothic style did not become prevalent in Christian architecture until a millennia after the establishment of Christianity. Father Baunach did not design the oldest form of a Christian church, but a form that was familiar to him. Lacking the skills of a professional architect, Baunach and the laborers constructing the *Marienkirche* managed to produce a modest recreation of a cruciform Catholic church reminiscent of those known to them in Germany.

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<sup>82</sup> Gerlach, Rev. Dean H. “75<sup>th</sup> Year Jubilee of St. Mary’s Parish of Fredericksburg, Texas,” Vol. Commemorative (1995): 23.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 26.

The *Marienkirche* also exemplifies the retention of stone building traditions found within Germany. Germany and Central Europe are well known for the many examples of high style Gothic architecture, however, there is a separate tradition of vernacular sacred architecture. This vernacular building tradition is known as *feldsteinkirchens* or field stone churches found in the rural areas of Northern Germany (Figure 17).<sup>84</sup> Many of the *feldsteinkirchens* compared to the *Marienkirche* originate from Brandenburg. A review of the *feldsteinkirchen* tradition draws from the research of Georg Dehio, and his five-volume *Handbook of German Art Monuments* (*Handbuch der deutschen Kunstdenkmäler*), which catalogs prominent architecture throughout Northern Germany.

Historically, the tradition developed in Northern Germany due to the lack of readily available quarry stone; in this area stone churches were constructed from glacier rubble stone. These village churches are usually simple in form and include careful execution of the rubble stone masonry. The rubble stones used to create these structures are composed of either granite, gneiss, or quartzite usually split in half during the construction process. Structurally, *feldsteinkirchens* have walls created by layers of rubble stone which gradually decrease in size as they rise from the foundation. The largest stones rest on the bottom layers, close to the ground, for foundation support. The roofs incorporate a simple gabled design of red tiles (Figure 18).<sup>85</sup> The design of the *feldsteinkirchens* have a rectangular plan placed on a longitudinal axis with the inclusion of a singular entrance tower. The architectural decoration is sparse with few ornamental stones. Later examples of *feldsteinkirchens* combined elements of brick and half timbering. This vernacular style occurs because of the limited access to quarried stone, because it allowed congregations to

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<sup>84</sup> Theo Engeser and Konstanze Stehr, "Lkr. Potsdam Mittelmark," *Mittelalterliche Dorfkirchen in Brandenburg*, 2004, [userpage.fu-berlin.de/~engeser/potsdam-mittelmark/index.html](http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~engeser/potsdam-mittelmark/index.html).

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.



Figure 17: “*Feldsteinkirche Lüsse*, Brandenburg, 13th century”



Figure 18: “*Feldsteinkirche Mörz*, Brandenburg, 12<sup>th</sup> Century”

construct them based on their own needs, and the construction process did not require the need of a highly skilled labor force or expensive building materials.

The *Marienkirche* reflects the vernacular building traditions of *feldsteinkirchens*. The *Marienkirche*'s defining feature is the rubble stone walls of the structure. The exterior stones of the walls are roughhewn, irregularly shaped, and left with heavy tooling (Figure 19). According to a 1934 HABS drawing, the interior of the two foot walls were infilled with limestone rubble that was merely split. Aesthetically and structurally, the walls of the *Marienkirche* mimic the walls of split glacier rubble stone. The limestone used to create the structure was quarried from the nearby settlement of Comfort, Texas, also a German enclave. The limestone quarry was a well-used source of building material for German immigrants in the area. What makes the *Marienkirche* unique is the fact that the stones used to construct the walls were not cut and shaped into uniform blocks. Structures contemporary to the *Marienkirche* and built by other German immigrants in the area, using the same source material, do not reflect the rubble stone building tradition. This vernacular building tradition of rubble stone masonry is deliberately expressed in the *Marienkirche*.

The *feldsteinkirchen* building tradition is found specifically in the northeastern areas of Germany in such states as Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony Anhalt, and Brandenburg (Map 6). Many of the German immigrants brought to Texas by the *Adelsverein* were from these regions of Northern Germany. The *feldsteinkirchen* building tradition would have been familiar to them and provided a solution for creating a permanent structure for St. Mary's Parish, which was limited in finances and skilled laborers. The construction of the *Marienkirche* was also undertaken during the hardships of the Civil War, which hindered the pace of building and created a shortage of necessary materials and craftsman; "there was frequently a lack of



Figure 19: “*Marienkirche*, Masonry Detail”

Map 6: “Northern German States with the *Feldsteinkirchen* Building Tradition”



wagons...those who hauled from afar had no wagons for bringing building materials.”<sup>86</sup> The immigrants of Fredericksburg were not limited to accessible quarried stone due to limitations of their environment but by the limitation of conditions at the time of construction. These conditions and their knowledge of the *feldsteinkirchen* building tradition, brought from a specific area from which the immigrants of Fredericksburg originated, culminated in the architectural expression of the *Marienkirche*.

The previous argument of this case study demonstrates the retention of German influences, however, the *Marienkirche* also demonstrates the effects of assimilation through the building evolution of the structure. The *Marienkirche* stands as a symbol of German-Texan cultural identity for descendants of German immigrants who have fully assimilated generations later. The symbolic nature of the *Marienkirche*, therefore, has turned the structure into a place of home coming.

German immigrants built the *Marienkirche* as a recreation of Germany establishing German building traditions and culture within one of the first areas of German settlement. The founding immigrants of Fredericksburg were a bridge between the old world and the new. For immigrant groups such as the Germans of Fredericksburg, assimilation into their new environment would eventually lead to the loss of language and traditions. Language and traditions are lost or greatly diluted within several generations after immigration. However, the built environment can stand as a time capsule unaffected by assimilation for generations after its construction.

For this case study the effects of assimilation do not focus on the influences of assimilation on the physical structure but how the *Marienkirche* stands as constant for immigrants that have culturally assimilated into American society. In 1901, the parish had outgrown the *Marienkirche* initiating the construction of the third manifestation of St. Mary’s Catholic Church with the

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<sup>86</sup> Gerlach, Rev. Dean H. “75<sup>th</sup> Year Jubilee of St. Mary’s Parish of Fredericksburg, Texas,” Vol. Commemorative (1995): 27.

construction of the new church beside the *Marienkirche* (Figure 20). The parish did not abandon the *Marienkirche*; both sacred structures stand in contrast to one another only several yards apart. The congregation moved into the new church in 1906, while the *Marienkirche* was converted into a school for St. Mary's Parish.<sup>87</sup> The double height interior was modified into a first and second story creating two large open spaces for classrooms. As the number of school children increased, partition walls were added to create individual classrooms in 1915. The most significant changes occurred in the alterations of the windows: the double height lancet arched windows were cut in half as a consequence of the interior alterations. The newly created second story became visible through the window openings. The windows were transformed from arches into two separate rectangular window openings with double hung sashes of clear glazing (Figure 21). Two exterior wooden stair cases were also added leading to new doorways on the new second story (Figure 22). The *Marienkirche* was not torn down or abandoned; it was rehabilitated to serve a new purpose.

Today, the structure has been restored to its original character and purpose, but why? The preservation of the *Marienkirche* reflects the symbolic nature of the structure as a place of homecoming. Despite the building evolution of the structure, its presence remains a constant in the Fredericksburg community through generations of assimilation. For those that assimilated into American culture, the *Marienkirche* is not a reminder of a homeland across the ocean but a symbolic representation of their German-Texan identity. For third and fourth generation descendants there is no direct connection to Germany beyond the traditions handed down to them from their parents and grandparents. Having lost the German language and many traditions, descendants moved away from their ethnic enclaves, such as Fredericksburg, once they were uninhibited by the barriers of language. For present day descendants of German immigrants, the

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<sup>87</sup> Gerlach, Rev. Dean H. "75<sup>th</sup> Year Jubilee of St. Mary's Parish of Fredericksburg, Texas," Vol. Commemorative (1995): 53.

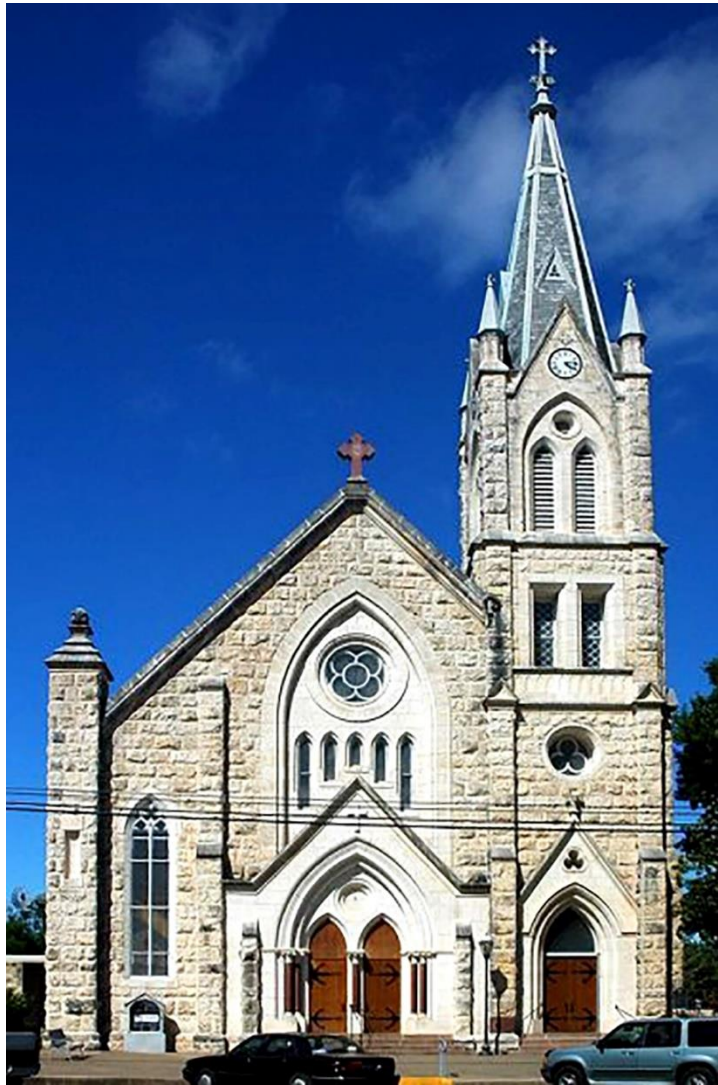


Figure 20: “New St. Mary’s Catholic Church”



Figure 21: “*Marienkirche*, 1906 Window Alterations”



Figure 22: “*Marienkirche*, 1906 New Entrance”

*Marienkirche* is the physical manifestation of their cultural identity when language and traditions are lost. In the mid-twentieth century, those broken connections to the immigrant past reflected in the rapid decay of the many structures throughout Fredericksburg, including the *Marienkirche*. This full assimilation into American society was the catalyst for the preservation of the *Marienkirche* in the 1970s. It was during this time period that Fredericksburg was experiencing a renewed interest in its own history. This interest in the German immigrant history of Fredericksburg reaffirmed the need to preserve the culture and led to the restoration of a number of old buildings, including the *Marienkirche*.<sup>88</sup> For Americans that self-identify as German-Texan, having lost all connections to an immigrant past through language, tradition, and the built environment of ethnic enclaves, the *Marienkirche* serves as a place of homecoming.

The building evolution of the *Marienkirche* reflects the evolution of assimilation into American society by an immigrant cultural group. The *Marienkirche* is both a tangible link to an immigrant past and inversely represents a homeland that many may never have the means or opportunity to visit. The *Marienkirche* serves as a symbol of cultural identity, whose preservation reflects the structures value as a place of homecoming for German-Texans.

### Conclusion

The architectural significance of the *Marienkirche* lies in its interpretation of sacred architecture as built by colonizing German immigrants. As a sacred structure built by an immigrant cultural group, the *Marienkirche* reflects both elements of retention and assimilation in its creation and preservation. St. Mary's Parish retains vernacular building traditions found in Germany as exhibited in the construction of the *Marienkirche* implementing the *feldsteinkirchen* building tradition in the creation of their sacred architecture. Demonstrating the effects of assimilation, the

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<sup>88</sup> Maria Herrmann, "The Restoration of Historical Fredericksburg," *Rice University Studies* 63, no. 3 (1977): 121.

*Marienkirche* is a symbol of German-Texan cultural identity for descendants of German immigrants who have fully assimilated into American society and serving as a place of homecoming. The *Marienkirche* is a representation of the German-Texan cultural identity as expressed through sacred architecture.

#### Case Study 2: St. Mary's Catholic Church of the Assumption, Praha, Texas

The town of Praha and its inhabitants are important to the history of the German speaking people in Texas, because they provide a place of homecoming to Texans that identify with German-Texan culture. The physical manifestation of this place of homecoming is the structure of St. Mary's Catholic Church of the Assumption. The Bohemians and Moravians contribute to the German-Texan cultural identity through the symbolism found in their sacred architecture, and the development of a new building tradition.

The regions of Bohemia and Moravia have a shared history. Bohemians are a group of people that are part of the former Kingdom of Bohemia. The historic region of Bohemia today is part of the political states of the Czech Republic, Germany, and Poland. Moravia was annexed by the Kingdom of Bohemia during the Middle Ages. These regions were historically part of the larger Germanic states of the Holy Roman Empire. Because of this connection with the Holy Roman Empire and intermingling of ethnic Germans in the regions of Bohemia and Moravia, both regions have undergone centuries of '*Germanization*.' In the context of immigration a clear division cannot separate ethnic Germans from the Bohemians and Moravians. The cultural identity of the immigrants that established Praha is complex due to the political transitions of their homeland over the centuries. The complexity of this cultural influence and shared identity is reflected in the later conflicts of the twentieth century. The Bohemians and Moravians share many of the same customs and traditions of ethnic Germans along with the ability to speak the German

language. This shared identity in the Old World is the foundation on which their German-Texan identity is created in the New World.

### History

St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is located in Fayette County in the ghost town of Praha, Texas. The first three Catholic churches in Praha were built of wood in 1865, 1866, and 1876. Needing a more permanent structure, the congregation initiated the construction of a new church in 1895.<sup>89</sup> As the fourth structure built on this site, St. Mary's Church of the Assumption was designed by architect Otto Kramer whose work is found in San Antonio, New York, Chicago and St. Louis; he is credited with building San Antonio's City Hall. The church interior is covered with painted decorations and murals created by Swiss painter Gottfried Flurry, which reflects the German-Texan tradition of painting church interiors with bright and intricate ornamentation. St. Mary's is part of a larger collection of churches known as the Painted Churches of Texas; it is also the oldest example of this tradition. As a case study, St. Mary's Church of the Assumption uses symbolic representations of building traditions and decorative interior painting to mimic churches found in the homeland. Since the church's founding, St. Mary's Church of the Assumption has played a major role in the cultural identity of the German-Texan community by creating a place of homecoming for the original generation of immigrants and for modern day self-identifying German-Texans.

### Architectural Description

St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is surrounded by a complex of church related buildings and structures including a large community cemetery to the north, a gathering hall to the south, and small dedication chapels placed sporadically throughout the site (Figure 23). The

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<sup>89</sup> Lotto, Frank. *Fayette County, Her History and Her People* (Schulenburg, TX: Published by the author, 1902), 405.



Figure 23: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Praha, Texas”

church is the focal point of the complex and stands as a detached structure whose entrance façade faces the south. St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is composed of a rectangular nave and polygonal apse which reflect a traditional basilica plan. The main structure of the church is three stories high, while the bell tower rises five stories above the ground. The roof is front gabled in orientation and the bell tower culminates into a steeply sloped octagonal spire with a corresponding smaller flèche. The short side exterior of the south façade is divided into three vertical bays, while the polygonal north façade is divided into five vertical divisions. The longitudinal facades of the east and west elevations are divided into five vertical bays contrasting the masonry stone work against smooth plaster. The church is constructed from rusticated sandstone ashlar, stucco, stained glass, copper, and wood. St. Mary's Church of the Assumption represents the Gothic Revival style of architecture as it was interpreted in rural nineteenth century Texas by Bohemian immigrants.

#### Roof and Structural Framework

The structural framework of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is composed of both masonry and wood. The foundation and walls of the church are made from sandstone cut into rusticated ashlar blocks. These blocks are then covered with a coarse layer of stucco on every wall, with the exception of the front façade. The roof is constructed with hand hewn beams and mortis and tenon joinery. The current roof of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is covered with pressed sheet metal, while the roofing over the steeple and fleche is made from copper.

#### South Elevation

The south elevation of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is the entrance façade of the structure (Figure 24). The symmetrically arranged south façade is divided in two parts: the wall of the structure and the steeple. Moving from top to bottom the wall is divided into two sections consisting of the surface area of the wall from the ground floor to the square of the roof and the



Figure 24: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, South Elevation”

surface area of the wall within the gable from square to the ridgeline of the roof. The area of the wall from the ground floor to the square is vertically divided into three bays by buttresses on the façade. The wall is made from rusticated sandstone ashlar shaped into rectangular blocks, finished with a rough texture, and placed in the pattern of a running masonry bond. The entire front façade is left unstuccoed in contrast to the other exterior elevations of St. Mary's. The lower section of the façade has simple gothic ornamentation exhibited in the doors, windows, and statuary. The door is a punched in opening that serves as the threshold space between the exterior and interior (Figure 25). The space is framed by a tall, narrow lancet arch that includes an articulated keystone and imposts. The lancet arch encloses two wood doors and a stained glass window. The wooden doors run the full height of one story and are overlaid with carved paneling resembling tracery. The ornamentation on the paneling is contrasted with the use of white and yellow ochre paint. The hardware of the doorway uses only one oversized rim latch door handle made of brass. The stained glass over the doorway depicts three medallions of stylized foliage in colors of yellow, red, and blue with a border of purple and green (Figure 26). Above the keystone of the lancet arched doorway is a painted bust of Jesus enclosed by a circular framework of smooth finished masonry. On the façade are also two narrow lancet arched windows on either side of the doorway. The window openings reach the height of the square and are filled with stained glass. The lancet arches, like the doorway, incorporate articulated keystones and imposts along with rusticated window sills. The stained glass is a field of squares with stylized floral motifs in pastel shades of pink and green surrounded by a border of pink, green, and gold. In the middle of the stained glass is a medallion of religious symbolism that is different in each window throughout the structure.

The second part of the southern façade is the surface area of the wall within the gable defined from the string course, which runs horizontally across the façade, to the ridgeline of the



Figure 25: "St. Mary's, Entrance Door"



Figure 26: "St. Mary's, Ornamentation"

roof (Figure 27). The string course across the façade is delineated by a row of smooth cut sandstone ashlar blocks. Above the string course is a continuation of the rusticated sandstone ashlar blocks that cover the surface area of the southern exterior. Between the buttressing, an oculus is placed above the doorway and bust of Jesus. The circular window is created by a border of voussoir stones and keystones of smooth finished masonry. Above the oculus of stained glass is a belt course of smooth stone projecting from the surface of the wall. These elements of contrasting stone finishes and stained glass are the only ornamental features on this area of the façade.

Above the masonry wall and over the front entrance is a square steeple with an octagonal spire rising above the steep, gabled roof (Figure 28). The steeple rises two stories higher than the gabled roof. Its wall surface is covered with stucco that is interrupted by coursing and windows. Around the four sides, a continuous cornice with small decorative brackets denotes the two floors of the steeple. Resting above this cornice line are two identical ventilation windows which are lancet arched window openings with louvers. In the center of the steeple a steep gablet juts above the windows and into the roof. The gablet and roof line are decorated with a second and smaller cornice of decorative brackets. The gothic steeple is then capped with a tall octagonal spire, made of copper, and crowned with the cross.

#### East and West Elevations

The east and west facing elevations of the St. Mary's Church of the Assumption are the longitudinal sides of the structure (Figure 29). Both exhibit a combination of sandstone ashlar stone and stucco. At the bottom of the structure, an ashlar stone base rises three bands above the ground revealing the foundation of the church. These stones are roughly dressed in a continuation of the aesthetic of the entrance/south façade and also include two dedication stones, the older

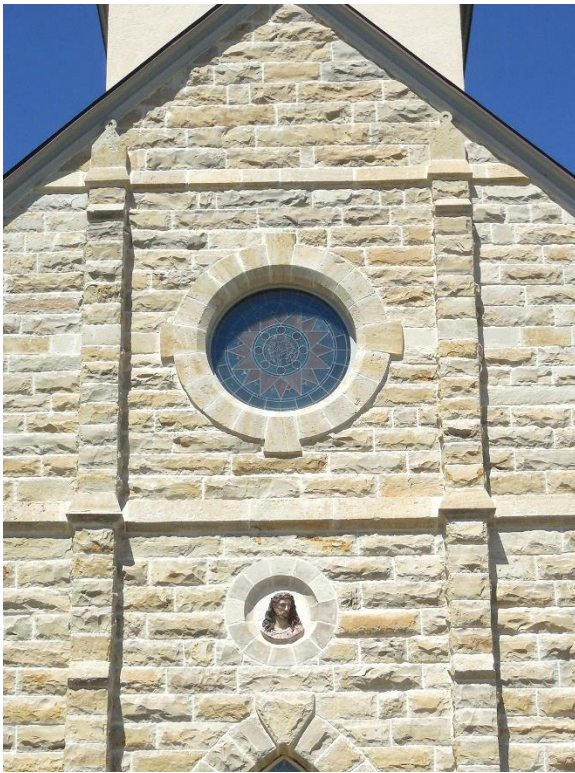


Figure 27: "St. Mary's, South Elevation Detail"



Figure 28: "St. Mary's, Steeple"



Figure 29: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, East Elevation”

carved in sandstone and the younger carved in pink granite. The façade is divided vertically into five bays by rusticated sandstone buttresses that rise the full height of the structure. Between the buttresses are surface areas of coarse stucco and an opening. The façade is symmetrically laid out with a doorway in the center and two windows on either side.

The opening of the doorway is created by a lancet arch that is emphasized by the exposed stone imposts, voussoirs, and keystone that contrast with the coarse plaster. The lancet arch covers two wood doors and a stained glass window. Replicating the front doors, the wooden doors rise the full height of a story and are overlaid with carved paneling of tracery and other ornamentation contrasted with the use of yellow ochre paint. The hardware of the doorway uses an oversized rim latch door handle made of brass. The stained glass over the doors incorporates a medallion design. The four identical windows are full height lancet arched openings with exposed imposts, voussoirs, and keystone (Figure 30). They also include window sills of exposed stone. The glazing of the windows is once again stained glass and maintains the same design of the entrance façade. Above the surface area of the two story wall, the gabled roof can be seen with the steeple to the south and much smaller octagonal spire or flèche to the north (Figure 31). From this east facing view, the rear of the church is visible in the form of a polygonal apse. The west elevation mirrors the east elevation retaining the same architectural elements of rusticated buttresses, lancet arched stained glass windows and lancet arched doorway (Figure 32). Above the rusticated wall surface the gabled roof is covered in brown tinted pressed tin.

### North Elevation

St. Mary's north façade is the rear of the structure (Figure 33). The façade maintains the width of the overall structure but is composed of multiple walls that create a polygonal apse. The apse is composed of five walls that divided the exterior wall into five vertical bays. The apse is



Figure 30: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, East Elevation Window and Buttress”



Figure 31: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Fleche”



Figure 32: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, West Elevation”



Figure 33: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, North Elevation”

symmetrical with the center bay double the width of the four other bays creating a pattern from left to right of: A, A, B, A, A. The five bays are divided by buttresses that rise the full two story height of the structure. The buttresses are a combination of exposed rusticated sandstone and sandstone covered with coarse stucco exposing a triangular capstone. Like the side elevations, the buttresses frame a surface area of plaster with an opening.

For the north facing elevation it is easier to describe the façade from left to right in terms of its architectural elements rather than from the bottom upward. Moving from left to right: rusticated buttress, doorway, rusticated buttress, window, stuccoed buttress, window, window, stuccoed buttress, window, rusticated buttress, doorway, ending with a rusticated buttress. This creates a pattern along the north façade of: A, B, A, C, D, C, C, D, C, A, B, A. A concrete staircase and banister of four risers leads to two entrance doorways. The two doorways are smaller in comparison to the previous entrances mentioned and are composed of only one wooden door, but they still maintain the same coloring and design. The stained glass over the two doorways include the same medallion motif as the other doorways. All of the windows of the northern façade are full height lancet arched openings with the continued design of exposed stone imposts, voussoirs, keystone, and sill.

Covering the apse and resting above the wall is a polygonal roof that intersects the gable end of the nave. The juncture of these points allows for the opening of a ventilation window to the attic or airspace above the interior ceiling. From the north elevation, the flèche is in view at the meeting point of the converging roof lines. The flèche is a four sided wooden tower with four ventilation windows on each side. The window openings are lancet arches and are the only ornamentation. The flèche is then topped with an octagonal spire roof made of copper that is capped by small cross. The flèche is a gothic detail not found on most churches within this region.

## Interior

St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is adorned with an unusual and sophisticated combination of decorative folk painting that dominates the interior architectural design of the church (Figure 34). Beginning with the form and plan, St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is built in accordance with Catholic tradition. The ground floor is laid out in a basilica plan and includes a traditional narthex, nave, side aisles, vestry, sacristy, and apse. The narthex serves as the threshold space from the exterior into the interior while also serving as the transitional space from the entrance to the sanctity of the nave. This transition is emphasized with the use of modern glass doors that lead into the nave. Covering the floor of the narthex is turquoise and white tile granite laid out in a checkerboard pattern (Figure 35). This pattern continues into the nave, only deviating into a small circular design before the altar of the church. The nave is composed of a central aisle flanked by rows of pews with corresponding side aisles. The space is interrupted by ten octagonal columns exhibiting faux white marbling with metallic gold specks (Figure 36). The columns have a square base, rising the height of the pews, while the slender octagonal columns rise the double height of the interior. The columns culminate into an eight sided Doric capitals painted gold on which the ceiling rests. The walls of the nave have corresponding engaged columns that line the interior. The walls are also interrupted with deep arched openings for the stained glass windows.

The main aisle of the nave leads to the rear polygonal apse of the church, where the main altar sits (Figure 37). Behind the altar a reredos displays gilding, niches, gothic pinnacles with crockets, and statuary. On either side of the main altar are secondary altars each displaying the same skilled carpentry of gold ornamentation and religious statuary (Figure 38). The vestry and sacristy are small spaces tucked behind the two side altars whose partition walls reach only a one story height. The walls of the vestry and sacristy are painted white and decorated in maroon with



Figure 34: "St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, Interior"

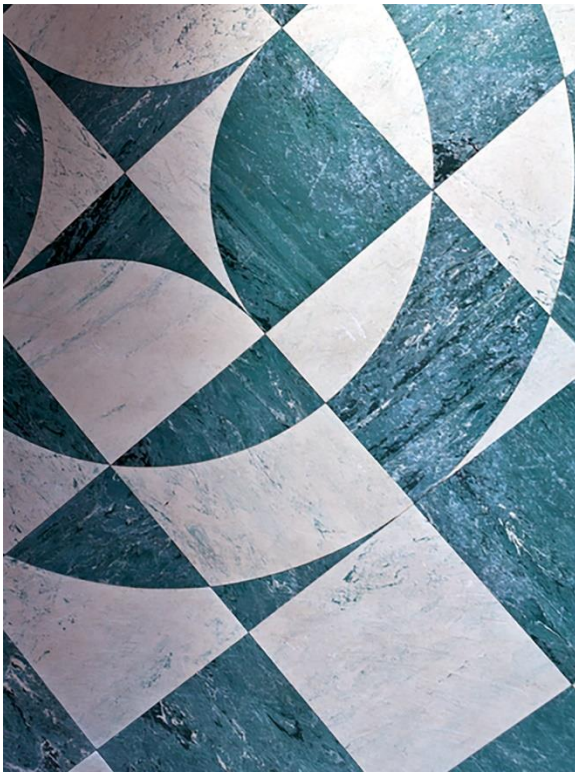


Figure 35: "St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, Floor"

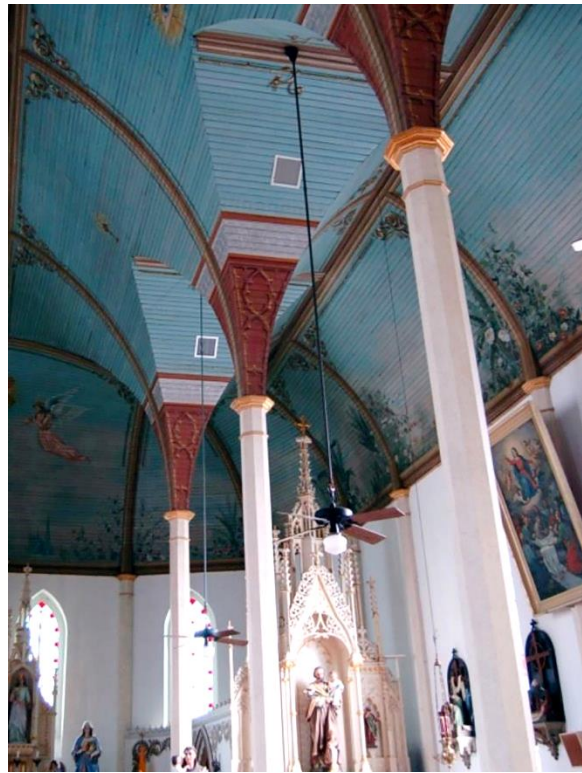


Figure 36: "St. Mary's, Columns"



Figure 37: "St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, Apse"



Figure 38: "St. Mary's, Reredos"

a gray festoon pattern of stenciled rinceau and a woodwork cresting along the topmost edge (Figure 39). The vestry and sacristy both have one entrance doorway with an opening in the shape of a lancet arch.

Moving to the second level of the church, a balcony resides above the entrance narthex housing a pipe organ (Figure 40). The balcony has a closed railing of wood paneling painted white while the curved section of the balcony implements white wood paneling and stained balusters. Above the second story balcony, the ceiling stretches over the space mimicking the gothic interiors of medieval Europe. Springing from the octagonal columns, the ceiling is constructed of a wood framework of vaults and pointed arches. The ribbed vaulting is sheathed in beaded board and painted in a combination of decorative folk painting and sophisticated optical illusions. The framework of ribbed vaulting creates three vaulted bays over the interior space: the left side aisle, the nave, and the right side aisle. The three rib vaults, running the length of the aisles and nave, are created by the use of a wooden transverse arch. However, the transverse arch of the interior is an illusion of the carpentry that does not carry the weight of the ceiling (Figure 41). The carpentry of the interior ceiling is an imitation of the gothic vaults made of stone. Therefore, this is not a true quadripartite rib vault that includes projecting transverse ribs, tiercerons, longitudinal ridge ribs, and diagonal ribs. The transverse ribs and longitudinal ridge ribs of the vaulting are painted illusions while the tiercerons and diagonal ribs are omitted altogether.

The design of the painted ceiling is a combination of creating the optical illusion of ribbed vaulting and to simulate the sky of heaven. The painting of the ceiling displays a combination of freehand work, stencil application, infilling, and trompe l'oeil ornamentation. The optical illusion, or trompe l'oeil, is produced by the painted bands extending from the tops of the columns and



Figure 39: “St. Mary’s, Rinceau”

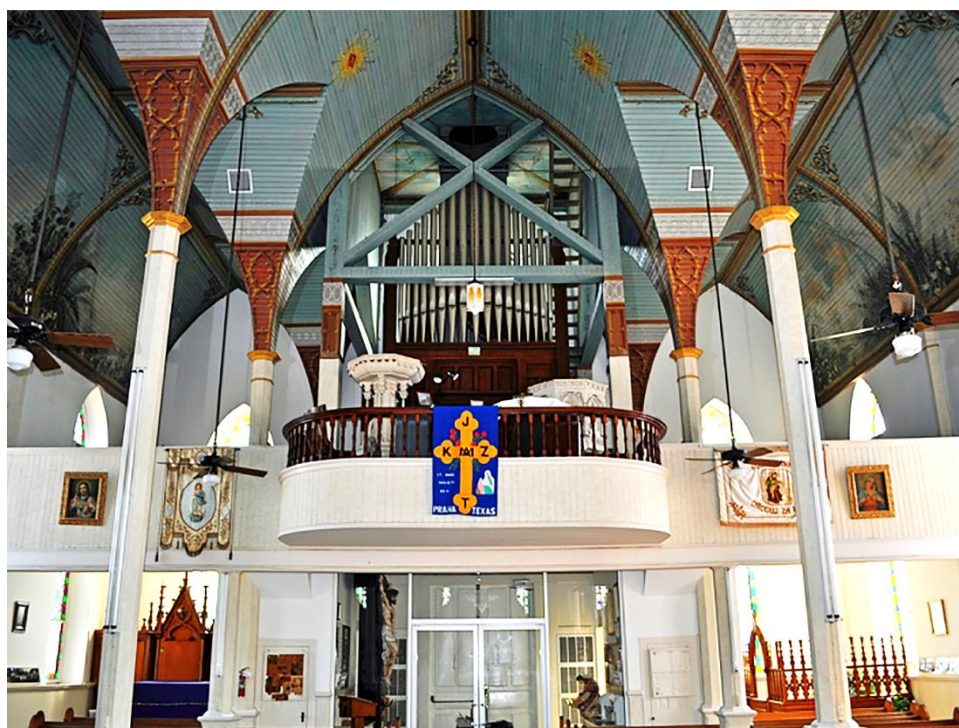


Figure 40: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Organ and Balcony”

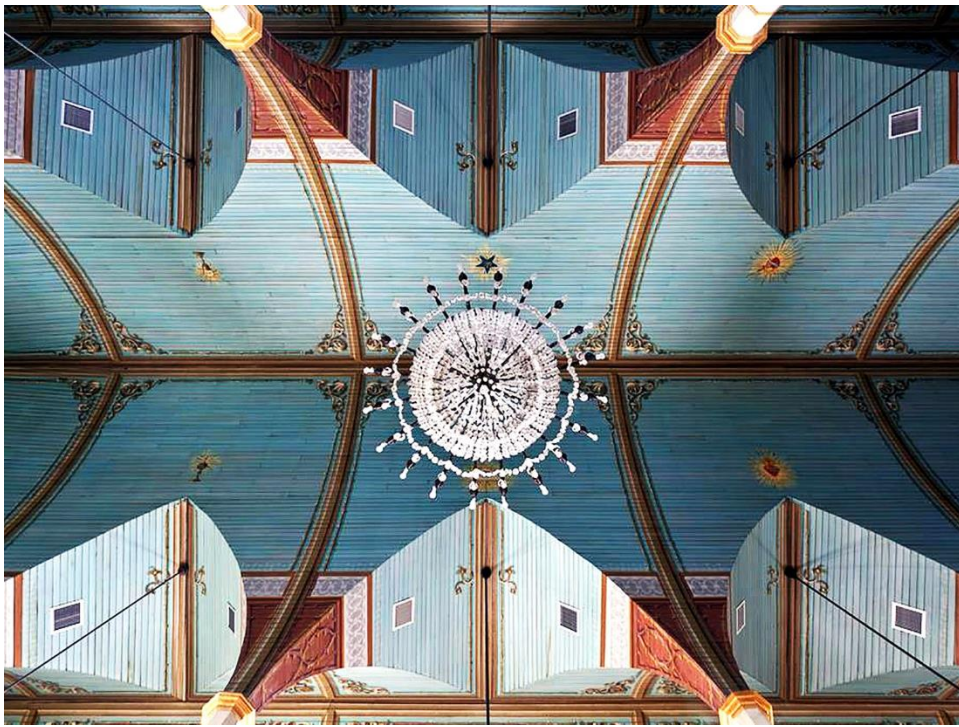


Figure 41: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Ceiling”

pilasters up to the vaults (Figure 42). The painted bands are accompanied by decorative corners of stenciled rinceau and festooning. When viewed up close the ornamentation shows three dimensional depth while painted on a two dimensional surface. Between each “ribbed” panel, the surface area of the ceiling is painted a light turquoise blue. Visually this allows the congregation to view the ceiling as a literal interpretation of heaven above. Beyond the blue sky of heaven, the panels are also decorated with a religious motif. At the apex of each transverse arch over the nave, a religious motif such as the all Seeing Eye, star, heart, and chalice is centered on a radiating yellow sunburst. The panels of both side aisles display free hand work incorporating the “heavenly” blue sky into a view of paradise or the Garden of Eden. There is a profusion of clouds and plant life that spills over the cornice separating the ceiling from the plaster wall below. Different flora and fauna are depicted in hues of green and blue with blossoms in shades of pink, white, and yellow. The artist only allows the tops of the foliage to be seen giving the illusion that paradise is just behind the plaster wall (Figure 43). The view of paradise is carried over to the paneled vaulting of the apse. On the back wall of the apse, the ceiling depicts three winged angels each clothed in robes of pink, pale blue, and ochre (Figure 44). The angels carry the Crown of Heaven in a traditional lamentation pose surrounding the large Latin cross. Below these angels at the base of the mural are two small churches painted below. The display of decorative painting in the interior exhibits the development of a building tradition found within the sacred architecture of German-Texan churches.

### Furniture

The interior furniture of St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption includes artwork, lighting, and the balcony pipe organ. The artwork includes both paintings and carpentry. As a Catholic church, the interior also includes carved depictions of the Stations of the Cross. Within the narthex

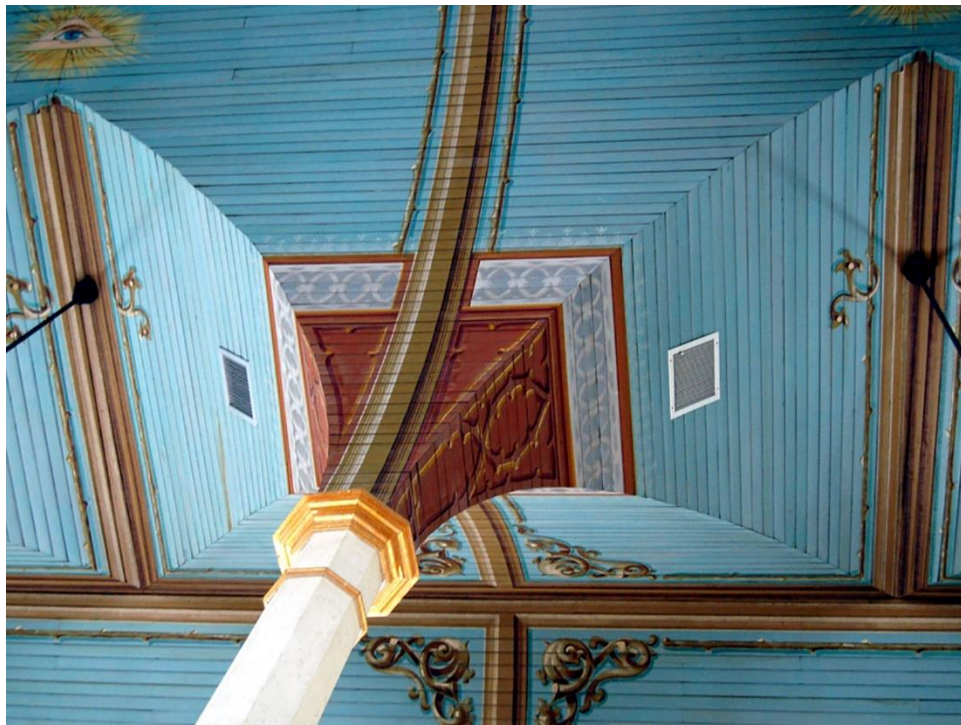


Figure 42: “St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, Ceiling Detail”



Figure 43: "St. Mary's, Garden of Eden"



Figure 44: "St. Mary's, Ceiling of Apse"

there is a statuary depiction of the body of Jesus and a confessional made of wood with ornamentation of tracery, cresting, and gothic pinnacles with crockets. Hanging from the ceiling, the lighting is a combination of modern amenities and old world elegance. The two side aisles incorporate six ceiling fan lights, to fight the Texas heat, while the nave has a crystal chandelier made from ropes of leaded glass and an outer ring of electrified candles (Figure 45).

The balcony pipe organ over the narthex is a floor to ceiling musical instrument whose stained wood and silver pipes stand out against the blue ceiling (Figure 46). The organ was made in 1892 by John Brown and the Brown Organ Company of Wilmington, Delaware. These elements of furniture are a combination of modern conveniences and a display of Catholic worship through art and music.

### Chronology and Building Evolution

Completed in 1895, St. Mary's Church of the Assumption has undergone very few changes during its life span. The interior decoration was painted soon after the building was constructed and retains its original appearance and integrity. The interior painting was done by Gottfried Flurry, a native of Solothurn, Switzerland. Flurry immigrated to the United States in 1881, at the age of 17, and painted scenery in New York theaters. While traveling with a minstrel show and painting its signs, he realized his craft could profit other churches in the area, moving permanently to San Antonio in 1891. In the early 1900s, Father Netardus, a former priest of the church, added his artistic signature by adding the rinceau decorations of the sacristy and vestry. The exterior of the church walls were stuccoed in 1930, leaving the sharply contrasting buttresses and window sills of exposed stone. As recently as 2011, the church exterior underwent a full restoration that included installing a new metal roof.



Figure 45: "St. Mary's, Lighting"

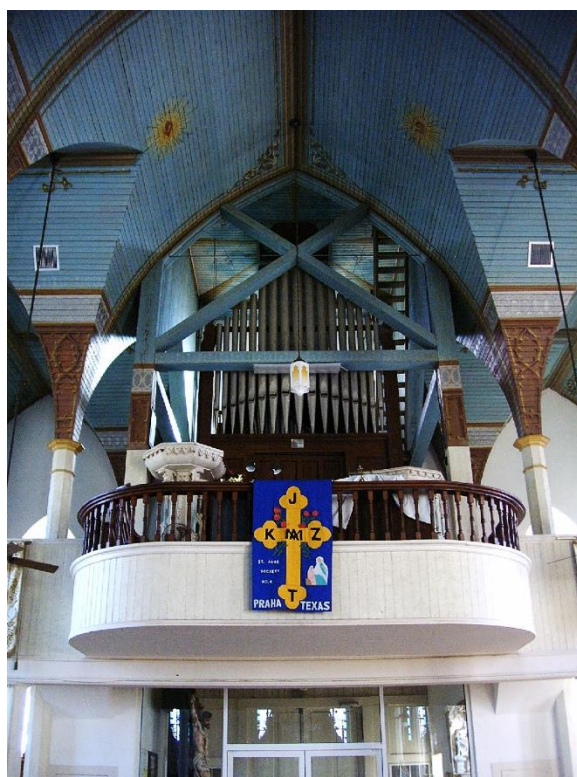


Figure 46: "St. Mary's, Pipe Organ"

### Architectural Significance

The architectural significance of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption lies in its representation of Gothic style architecture as interpreted by rural nineteenth century Bohemian immigrants. The creation of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption was the attempt of Bohemian immigrants to symbolically recreate the Gothic churches of Europe through the implementation of building traditions found in their homeland. Due to the limitations of their new environment, the Bohemians would inversely assimilate these building traditions creating a new tradition which would merge Germanic ethnic groups into the larger German-Texan cultural identity.

The construction of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption was the attempt to create a church worthy of their new Prague, for which the town of Praha is named, and befitting the largest Catholic community in the area. According to the National Register Nomination, St. Mary's Church of the Assumption was the largest Catholic Church in the region and the first Roman Catholic Church between San Antonio and Houston at the time of its completion. The Bohemians created a vernacular Gothic Church which strived to mimic the architecture of churches in their homeland.

Throughout the interior and exterior of St. Mary's, the church reflects the attributes of the gothic style. Among these attributes is the structure's masonry construction and design which includes arched window openings, buttresses, and interior ribbed vaulting. Other rare gothic characteristics include the oculi and flèche. The fleche is an almost non-existent architectural element when used in vernacular examples of sacred architecture in the American Southwest. However, it was important to the Bohemians to retain this element. The distinctive ribbed vaulting of the interior is constructed through the use of wood paneling. The wood vaulting mimics the intricate masonry of cathedral interiors. When creating the ceiling, the Bohemians pushed the

limitations of wood, as a material, due to the financial constraints of implementing masonry vaulting. Symbolically, this ceiling form is important to St. Mary's congregation as a spatial interior form that existed in their homeland. They undertook symbolically recreating building traditions found in gothic churches throughout Bohemia and Moravia.

Beyond the use of symbolic forms, the Bohemians also implement the use of representational imagery. Behind the central altar, the mural of the Lamenting Angels displays a direct connection to Bohemian cultural identity through the painted images of two cathedrals (Figure 47). These illustrations are images of two cathedrals which exist in the European homeland of the Bohemians. The church on the left is St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague (Figure 48) and the church on the right is St. Wenceslas Cathedral in Olomouc, Moravia (Figure 49). St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague, is known as the largest and most important church structure in the modern day Czech Republic. The cathedral is part of a large complex known as Prague Castle, which is the ancient seat of power for past Bohemian dukes, kings, and emperors. St. Vitus Cathedral is also the depository of the Bohemian crown jewels, including the crown of Saint Wenceslas. St. Wenceslas Cathedral is named after Saint Wenceslas I, Duke of Bohemia, who is the patron saint of the Bohemian people. The distinguishing element of St. Wenceslas Cathedral is the spire which dominates the skyline of Olomouc. The spire makes it one of the tallest structures in the Czech Republic. These two sacred structures are integral parts of the Bohemian cultural identity historically and visually; they are both structures which represent political and religious power. The Bohemian immigrants that colonized Texas could not replicate these sacred structures in Praha, therefore, they recreated them to the best of their ability in a place of reverence behind the main altar. The recreation of Prague is articulated throughout St. Mary's in both the expression of symbolic Gothic building traditions and the representational images of national identity.

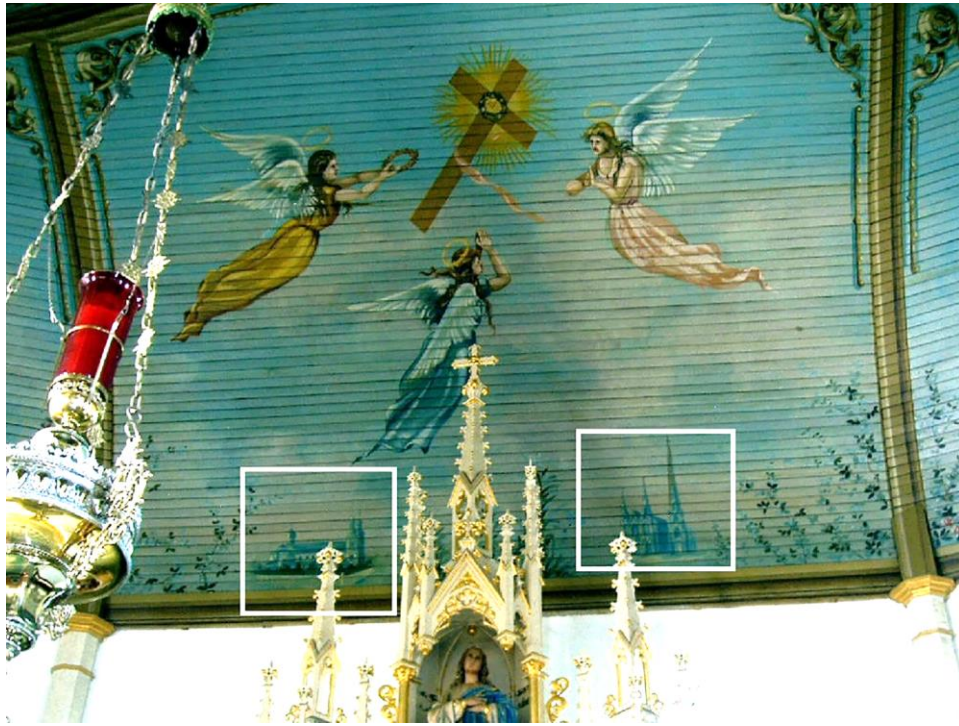


Figure 47: "St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, Two Cathedrals"



Figure 48: "St. Vitus Cathedral, Prague, Czech Republic"



Figure 49: "St. Wenceslas Cathedral, Olomouc, Czech Republic"

St. Mary's Church of the Assumption also serves as an example of cultural assimilation into the German-Texan cultural identity through its expression as a painted church. The decorative painting exhibited in the interior of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is a vernacular building tradition credited to a group of churches known in Texas as the Painted Churches. This building tradition exemplifies how a simple interior can be transformed into an elaborate interior beautifying the space. St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is one of fifteen churches nominated in 1983, to the National Register of Historic Places under the thematic nomination of the Painted Churches of Texas. The research of Buie Harwood, whose work surveys and inventories decorative painting in Texas, provides documentation for the artistic heritage of the Painted Churches of Texas and their Germanic influences. Harwood's book, *Decorative Texas: Decorative Painting in the Lone Star State from the 1850s to 1950s*, provides an overview of the varying styles, application techniques, and artists.<sup>90</sup>

The Painted Churches of Texas reflect a vernacular building tradition which ranges from sophisticated high style to folk art. While the artistic skill varies among the interiors of the Painted Churches the commonality of features displays the development of a sacred architecture building tradition within the German-Texan community. The common features among these structures, including St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, reflect the central European heritage of the worshippers and the artists which created them.<sup>91</sup> This tradition is characterized by decorative painting applications which implement stenciling, infill painting, free hand painting, graining, and marbling (Figure 50). These applications appear on walls, ceilings, and apse spandrels where they can be viewed by the congregation with subject matter either religious or decorative.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Harwood, Buie. *Decorating Texas: Decorative Painting in the Lone Star State from the 1850s to the 1950s* (Texas Christian University Press, 1993).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 2.

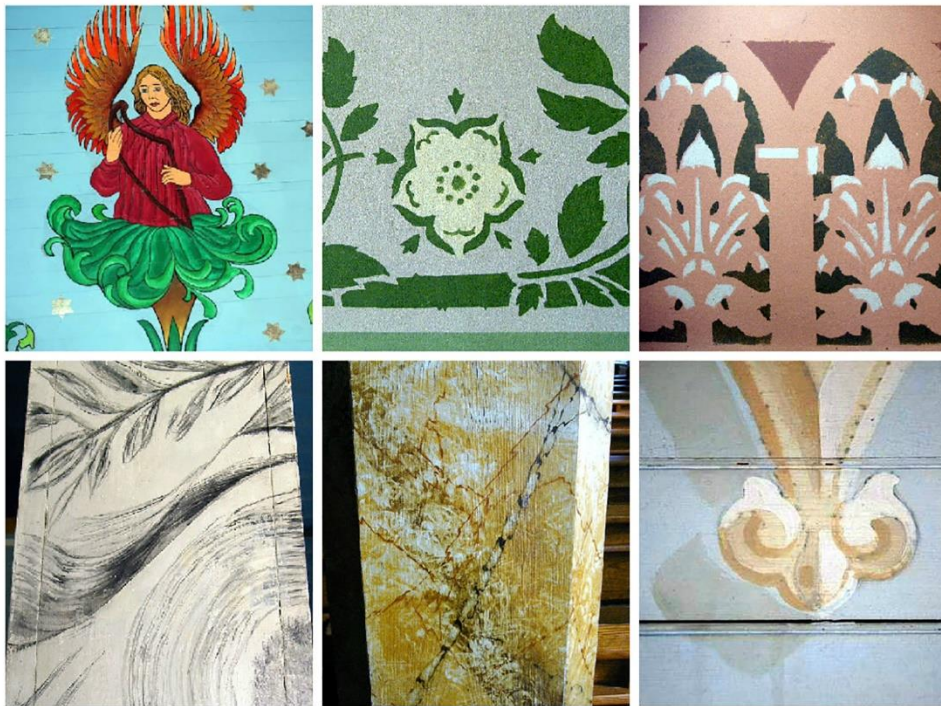
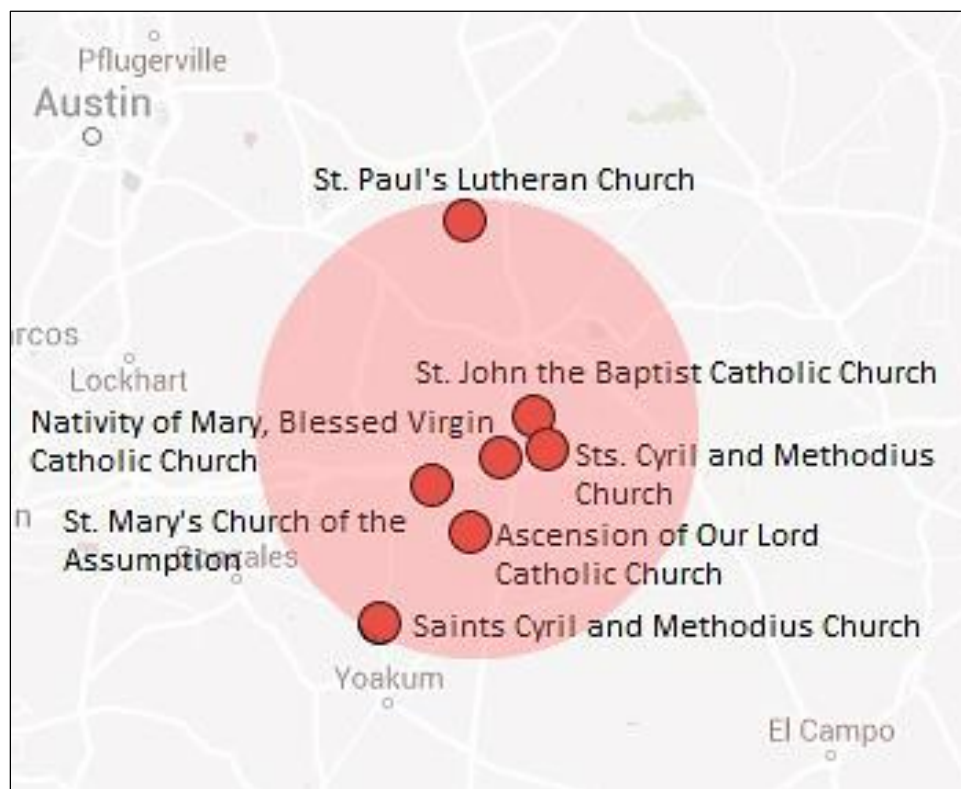


Figure 50: “Techniques: Free Hand, Stenciling, Infill, Graining, Marbling, & Trompe l'oeil”

The interior of St. Mary's exhibits numerous examples of this vernacular building tradition. The techniques implemented in the painted interior include freehand work, stencil application, infilling, and marbling. Notable examples include the freehand depiction of flora and fauna which creates a profusion of painted plant life alluding to the Garden of Eden. Secondly, individual Painted Churches reflect unique religious and cultural motifs that are meaningful to the congregations that created them. Religious and cultural motifs are found throughout the interior of St. Mary's in such examples as the three lamenting angels and the previously mentioned Czech cathedrals. Thirdly, the most sophisticated example of interior decoration is displayed in the *trompe l'oeil* effect produced on the ceiling, which gives the illusion of a vaulted cathedral. Limitations in building materials may have been a catalyst for the Bohemians to create these specific architectural features in paint, however, this limitation would be faced by other German speaking congregations throughout Texas trying to recreate gothic details and duplicate expensive materials. St. Mary's is one example of how the Painted Churches addressed such limitations, which inspired the collective creation of this new building tradition. St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is important to this new building tradition because it was one of the first churches to display this decorative interior tradition.

The construction of these churches spans the period between 1866 and 1930 and documents the history of Germanic settlement in the state. While decorative interior painting is a common technique used to beautify buildings, the elaborate and full surface designs found in the Painted Church tradition are found specifically in German speaking enclaves throughout Texas. These churches are located in small agricultural communities reflecting a central European heritage in town names such as Praha, Serbin, Moravia, Fredericksburg, and Shulenburg (Map 7). Within a fifty mile radius of Praha, seven other Painted Churches neighbor St. Mary's Church of the

Map 7: "Proximity of Painted Churches within a 50 Mile Radius"



Assumption including: St. John the Baptist Catholic Church; Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church; Nativity of Mary, Blessed Virgin Catholic Church; Ascension of Our Lord Catholic Church; Saints Cyril and Methodius Church; Nativity of Mary, Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Peace; and St. Paul Lutheran Church (Figure 51). Shared patterns of settlement and shared proximity are catalysts for the assimilation of this building tradition among differing Germanic ethnicities. The Painted Churches of Texas, as a group, represent the coalescence of the German, Bohemian, and Wend cultures into the unique German-Texan cultural identity. This German-Texan building tradition is defined by the proximity of the churches themselves, the similar applications of decorative painting, and the recurrence of the artists and architects who created them.

### Conclusion

The architectural significance of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption lies in its interpretation of sacred architecture as built by Bohemian immigrants. Through juxtaposing influences of cultural retention and cultural assimilation, the Bohemians and Moravians created St. Mary's Church of the Assumption as a symbolic expression of Gothic Building traditions which led to the development of the Painted Church tradition. The Painted Church tradition reflects how an immigrant group retains its cultural traditions through symbolic expression, however it also expresses how an immigrant group adapts building traditions to the materials available to them in their new environment. The Painted Churches provide tangible examples of cultural assimilation among differing German speaking ethnic groups into a larger German-Texan cultural identity. St. Mary's Church of the Assumption's classification as a Painted Church exemplifies the development of a wider pattern of a new and distinct German-Texan cultural identity. St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is a representation of German-Texan cultural identity as expressed through sacred architecture.

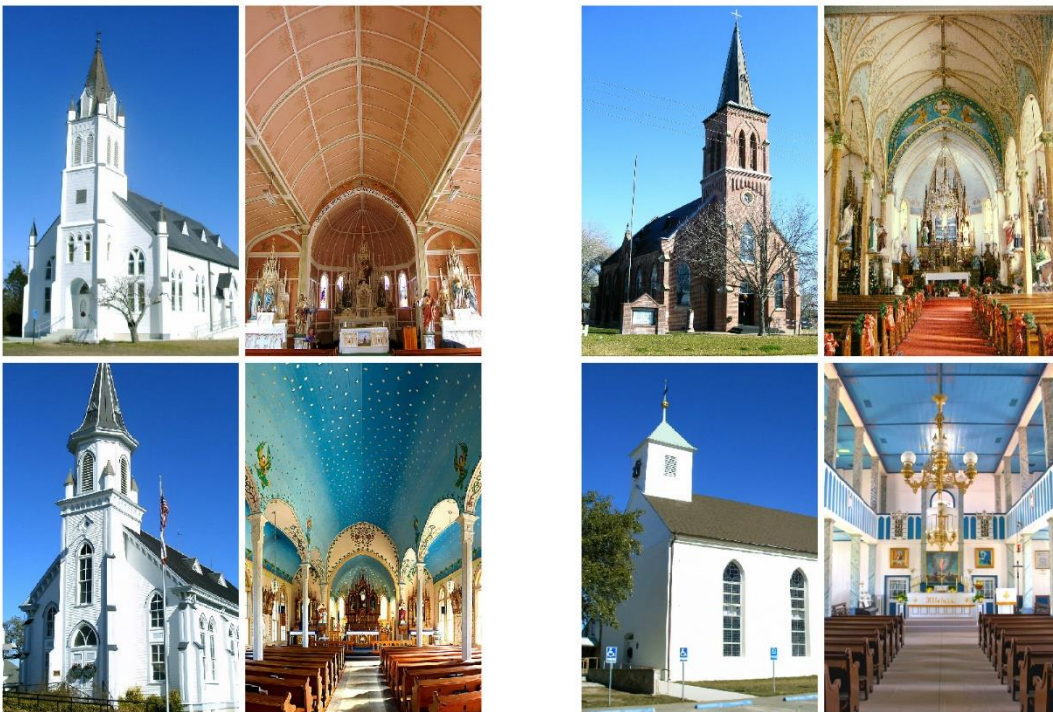


Figure 51: “Painted Churches of Texas: (top from left to right) St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Nativity of Mary, Blessed Virgin Catholic Church (bottom from left to right) Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church”

### Case Study 3: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas

The German-Wendish people, also called Sorbs, are a group of immigrants that made a new home in the state of Texas by establishing the small town of Serbin. For over a thousand years they have lived under varying foreign governments as a minority ethnic group in East Germany, never having attained an independent statehood during any period of their existence.<sup>93</sup> They are an ethnic group intertwined among both the German speaking people of Europe and the German speaking people of Texas. Having first lived by their German neighbors in Europe involuntarily, the Wends proceeded to live by their German neighbors in Texas voluntarily. This constant variable, of living side by side with their German neighbors, before and after migration provides an uncommon perspective of the effects on immigrant cultural identity. A direct comparison of these effects are exhibited in the building traditions of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

A direct history of St. Paul Lutheran Church is gathered from both a compilation of church documents and an interview with current pastor Rev. John Schmidt. This case study relies on the research of Anne Blasig and her contribution to the documentation of the German-Wendish community in Texas. Anne Blasig translated numerous stories and articles relating to the German Wendish people in Texas culminating in the book, *The Wends of Texas*.<sup>94</sup> First researched as a M.A. thesis in history for the University of Texas, *The Wends of Texas*, examines the German-Wends' European origins, causes of immigration, and settlement in Texas. Included in the research are several volumes of church documents which contain a collection of several histories of the church produced for various anniversaries and other celebrations of the congregation. The collection was prepared for the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation in 2004.

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<sup>93</sup> Nielsen, George R., *In Search of a Home: Nineteenth-Century Wendish Immigration* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1989), 5.

<sup>94</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998).

Among the collection are oral histories of past and present congregation members, letters and diary of founder Pastor Johann Kilian, and brief extracts of the church's evolution. The church evolution has been written and updated by every pastor of St. Paul since its founding. Other documentation found in the church records include a paper written by Pastor W.H. Bewie for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation in 1954, which chronicled the one hundred year evolution of the church structure.

The early history of the Wends in Germany dates back to the migrations following the fall of the Roman Empire. They are a Slavic population that settled in a region known as Lusatia, Germany during the fourth century. Lusatia is situated in the German states of Southern Brandenburg and Northern Saxony and concentrated in the modern cities of Bautzen and Cottbus.<sup>95</sup> The Wends were a cultural enclave from the ethnic Germans around them; they have their own language, history, and traditions. Over the centuries the Wendish people avoided assimilation efforts by the many German governments in charge of Lusatia. However, despite their efforts, they have undergone a natural process of integration into the majority. Thus the Wends who immigrated to Texas in the mid-nineteenth century were already greatly Germanized; most were bilingual, and German was considered the more "official" language, while Wendish was spoken in the home.<sup>96</sup> Though the Wends are Slavic in their native language and traditions, the Wends are German by nationality, "[Wendish] history can rarely if ever be understood in isolation from German history."<sup>97</sup> They became German-Texans through a shared cultural identity determined by immigration and environment.

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<sup>95</sup> Wukasz, Charles. *A Rock Against the Waves: A History of the Wends* (Austin, TX: Concordia University Press, 2008), xiv.

<sup>96</sup> Michael Buchhorn, ed. *A Collection of Histories of St. Paul Lutheran Church Serbin, Texas: In Commemoration of the Congregation's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* (2003): 23.

<sup>97</sup> Wukasz, Charles. *A Rock Against the Waves: A History of the Wends* (Austin, TX: Concordia University Press, 2008), 3.

The Wends are often unrecognized outside of Germany and the Hill Country of Texas. Overlooked as a separate cultural group, with the exception of linguists and ethnographers, the Wends make up a segment of the German-Texan population. What makes them complex to the German cultural identity is their history before and after immigration. In Germany the Wends are a cultural group with their own language and traditions. In Texas they are considered a cultural group that is part of the German speaking population of Texas and defined as German.

### History

The Wend colonists built their first temporary wooden church in 1859. After the Civil War, on April 22, 1866, the congregation proposed building a new church made of stone, having outgrown the original wood framed church. On January 27, 1867 two stone masons, Peter Fritsche and Johann Mertink, signed a contract to build the stone church known today as St. Paul Lutheran Church.<sup>98</sup> Work began immediately and the cornerstone was laid on March 4, 1867. With the new church completed in 1870, Reverend Kilian and the congregation officially named the new church the “First Wendish and German St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Unaltered Augsburg Confession, in Serbin, Lee County.”<sup>99</sup> Commonly known as St. Paul Lutheran Church today, the church is an example of simple Gothic Revival architecture, similar in design to churches built in Saxony during the nineteenth century.<sup>100</sup> The interior represents a tradition of decorative painting found in the Texas German community and is an example of the Painted Churches of Texas. St. Paul Lutheran Church is a manifestation of a congregation’s mission to maintain a cultural identity

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<sup>98</sup>Wukasch, Charles. *A Rock Against the Waves: A History of the Wends* (Austin, TX: Concordia University Press, 2008), 69.

<sup>99</sup> Michael Buchhorn, ed. *A Collection of Histories of St. Paul Lutheran Church Serbin, Texas: In Commemoration of the Congregation’s 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* (2003): 111.

<sup>100</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998), 69.

through sacred architecture by retaining the building traditions of their homeland juxtaposed with the inevitable assimilation to a new environment.

### Architectural Description

Located in Lee County, Texas, St. Paul Lutheran Church resides in the rural farm community known as Serbin (Figure 52). The small town of Serbin lies sixty miles east of the state capital of Austin and one hundred and twenty miles west of Houston. The site of St. Paul Lutheran Church encompasses an area of several acres with a complex of buildings and structures dedicated to the support of St. Paul's religious needs and the continuation of the Wendish community. These structures include St. Paul Lutheran School, the Texas Wendish Heritage Museum, historic Serbin Cemetery, and a house for the current pastor and his family. The church is a detached structure whose orientation and entrance faces west. The overall shape of the church is rectangular and incorporates a basilica floor plan. The building has a front gabled roof which rises three stories above the ground, while the steeple rises four stories above the ground. The short exteriors of the structure (the west and east elevations) have no vertical division and are clear of any ornamentation. The long exteriors of the structure (the north and south elevations) are divided into four vertical bays whose focal points are the contrast of the windows against the plain stucco exterior. The structural system of the church integrates stacked stone with mortis and tenon construction composed of materials such as red sandstone, stucco, pressed sheet metal, stained glass, and wood. The generalized description of the church reflects a vernacular Gothic style.

### Roof and Structural Framework

St. Paul Lutheran Church is seventy feet long by forty feet wide with an interior height of two stories.<sup>101</sup> The stone foundation was laid three feet wide and three feet in thickness. On this

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<sup>101</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998), 68.



Figure 52: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas”

stone foundation, the first twelve feet of wall height is two and a half feet thick and the remaining height of the wall tapers two feet in thickness and composed of red sandstone.<sup>102</sup> The red sandstone is arch stacked over the window openings to create Gothic arched windows. The stone walls are finished with coarse stucco on the exterior and a fine layer of plaster on the interior of the structure. Post oaks were hand hewn and used in the structural framework of the interior including the balcony and the roofing system; the wood beam framework was constructed with mortis and tenon joints (Figure 53).

The secondary structural materials of the post oak framework are the cedar beams, sawn by a local mill and by members of the Wendish community, and the inclusion of an interior tie rod system. The roof was originally covered in cedar shingles which have since been replaced with modern composition shingles. Much of the necessary construction material such as the stones, wood beams, and wood boards was sourced locally by the efforts of congregations members, most notably by Matthes Wukasch who owned the community sawmill.<sup>103</sup> The red sandstone was quarried in the nearby hills. Glass and putty for the windows were hauled from Houston, along with lime from Austin for the plaster.<sup>104</sup>

### West Elevation

The front entrance of the structure, the west elevation, is divided into three defined areas, from the bottom upward, the lower surface area of the wall, the attic to the roofline, and lastly the steeple (Figure 54). On the outside, the lower surface area of the wall delineates the interior ground floor from the second story. The red sandstone that makes up the thickness of the wall is covered on the exterior by a coarse layer of stucco creating a stark surface only disrupted by the front doors

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<sup>102</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998), 68.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.



Figure 53: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Mortis and Tenon Joints



Figure 54: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, West Elevation”

of the church. The entrance opening is composed of a shallow segmental archway that covers two wood doors and a small stained glass window (Figure 55). The painted white doors are modest in design and constructed with five panels. The hardware of the doorway uses only one oversized rim latch door handle made of brass. The stained glass over the doorway depicts Holy Communion: bible, a chalice, and plate of bread on a field of geometric pastel colors (Figure 56). This sliver of stained glass is the only window opening on the western façade. Above the doorway is a keystone with the inscription of “1867 SDG” marking the year of construction. The abbreviation SDG stands for *solī deo gloria* which translates to “glory to God alone”. This phrase represents one of the five solas or tenants of the Protestant Reformation. The only other decorative elements of the lower wall surface are four star shaped plates holding the interior tie rods that run the length of the church serving not only as a decorative element but as a functional element of the structural system. This placement on the façade delineates the placement of the second story floor and the third story attic floor.

The attic and roofline of the middle area of the west façade stand in contrast to the stucco finish of the lower part of the building. The fascia runs horizontally across the façade and demarks the cap ends of the roof rafters on the north and south elevations while also visually pronouncing the attic space of the structure. Originally covered in clapboard siding, the front facing gable is now covered in punched tin, painted white.

The steeple of the church rests on the western most ridgeline of the roof (Figure 57). The steeple is four sided and rises one story above the roof. The four sides of the steeple are covered in punched tin with each side having a louvered window opening for ventilation. The steeple is topped by a four-sided pyramidal roof covered in sheet metal painted a pastel green. The pinnacle



Figure 55: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Entrance Door”



Figure 56: "St. Paul Lutheran Church, Entranceway Stained Glass"

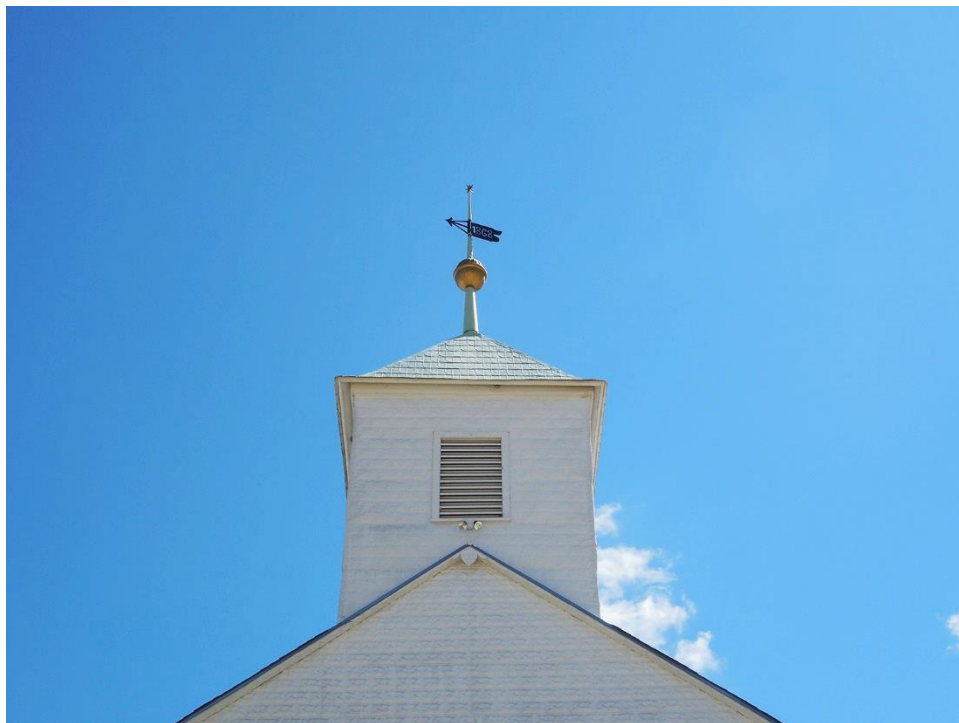


Figure 57: "St. Paul Lutheran Church, Steeple"

of the steeple and highest point of the structure is adorned with a star, weather vane, and golden ball. A short history of Serbin, written by Pastor Kilian, was placed inside the ball of the steeple.<sup>105</sup>

### South and North Elevations

The south and north facing elevations of St. Paul Lutheran Church are the long sides of the basilica plan (Figure 58). The stucco finish of these façades are broken into four bays articulated by a rhythm of windows that march along the exterior wall. The windows are punched openings into the thick walls of sandstone. The openings for the windows run the length of the ground story to the height of the second story roofline. The openings are shaped into pointed Gothic arches. The windows are each composed of twelve panes of glass divided into smaller pieces of stained glass in shades of pink, blue, gray, and lavender (Figure 59). The lower six panes of glass hold five by four pieces of stained glass while the upper six panes have four by four pieces of stained glass. Fitted into the pointed arch of the window is a quatrefoil or rosette motif of stained glass. The tall and narrow windows are the only adornment of color or ornamentation that interrupts the stark white façade. Above the façade of the two story wall, the southern face of the gabled roof can be seen along with the previously mentioned steeple. The north and south face of the gabled roof is covered in composite shingles replacing the original cedar shingles. Although not previously mentioned, the stained glass windows rise uninterrupted by the framing system of the first floor ceiling/second story flooring (Figure 60).

### East Elevation

The east façade of St. Paul Lutheran Church has the same dimensions as the west elevation and carries through the same stark characteristics (Figure 61). Like the west/entrance façade, the elevation can be divided into defined areas from the bottom up. These areas include the stuccoed

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<sup>105</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998), 69.



Figure 58: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, South Elevation”

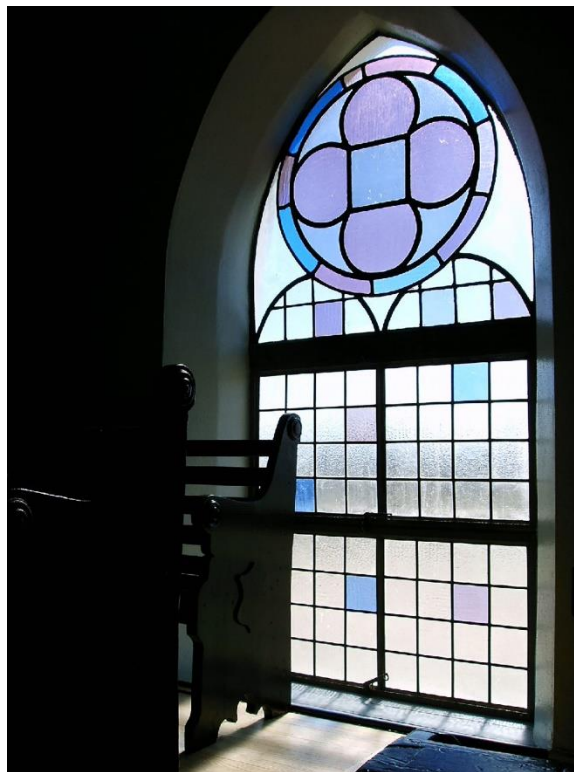


Figure 59: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, South Elevation Stained Glass”



Figure 60: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, North Elevation”



Figure 61: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, East Elevation”

surface of the two story wall and the attic space. The doorway of the east elevation is placed slightly off center to the left. Unlike the entrance doors, the doorway exiting behind the altar is only one door rather than two and of a smaller proportion. The wood door has three painted white panels and a turn knob handle. Above the doorway is a small rectangular window that is centered on the second story. The window opening is punched into the wall and holds stained glass composed of a field of geometric squares in shades of pink, blue, gray, and lavender. The central design of the stained glass is the Luther Rose or Luther's seal: a medallion overlaid by a stylized rose, heart, and cross composed of red, blue, and yellow glass (Figure 62). Above the window are the four star shaped plates that are used on the ends of the interior tie rods which run the length of the building. Their placement is on what would be the corners of the second story floor and attic floor.

The second area of the east elevation also includes the attic space. Defined on the exterior by the fascia running horizontally across the façade, this space is also visually marked on the exterior by the sheathing of the same punched tin covering of the west elevation and steeple. Centered under the ridgeline of the roof is a window opening whose frame is flush to the wall surface; it is rectangular in shape and serves as ventilation to the attic space. The east elevation of the structure continues the overall aesthetic quality of simplicity and limited ornamentation.

### Interior

The interior of St. Paul Lutheran Church contrasts with the stark simplicity of the exterior. Having passed through the entrance threshold, the interior of the church reveals a blue and white color scheme with accents of gold ornamentation (Figure 63). The interior is divided into two spaces: the ground floor and the second story balcony. Past the entrance vestibule the floor is laid out in accordance with a basilica plan. On the lower floor, a main aisle leads to the altar with rows

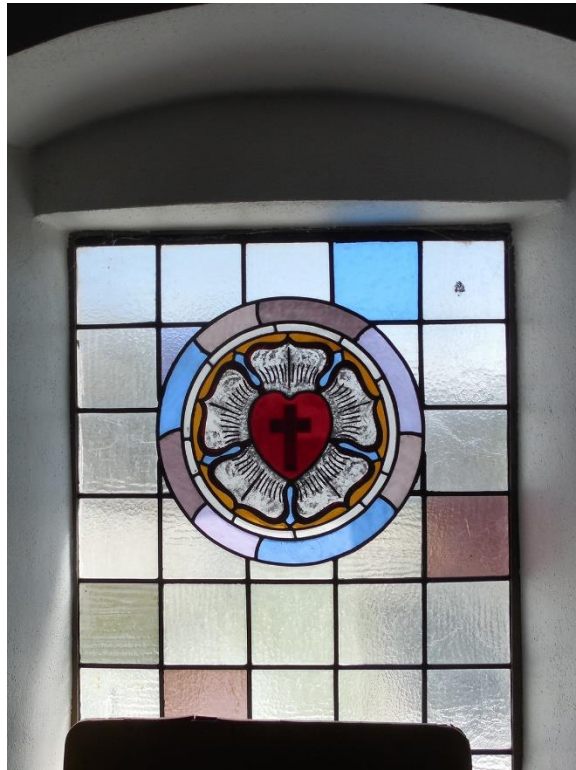


Figure 62: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, East Elevation Stained Glass”



Figure 63: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Interior”

of pews on either side which are then flanked by two outside aisles running parallel to the wall. The flooring surface is composed of rectangular cut flag stones (Figure 64). Large stones are used for the main aisle while small stones cover the rest of the floor surface. The walls of the interior are covered in a fine layer of plaster pierced by the gothic arched windows. The columns throughout the interior are painted to mimic marble (Figure 65). However, on closer inspection the veining of the marble displays images of foliage and vines, while wood trim creates “capitals” reminiscent of the Doric order (Figure 66). Gold stenciling is painted into the architrave or moldings resting above the marbleized columns. This stenciling displays a golden frieze of stylized foliage. The second story balcony is supported by these twelve square columns, ten of which extend to the full height of the interior ceiling supporting the weight of the attic space above.

Two wooden staircases rise on either side of the entrance vestibule. They run parallel to the west wall with open risers leading to the second story balcony. The balcony encircles the perimeter of the church interior and includes the minister’s pulpit and pipe organ (Figure 67). While the balcony encircles the interior wall, the framework never interrupts the height of the windows. The balcony abuts the wall and deep embrasures of the window openings without interrupting the stained glass rising the two-story height of the interior wall. Like the ground floor, the second story balcony also includes several rows of pews; however, these pews do not face the altar but are parallel to the main aisle and side aisles. The blue and white motif is carried through in the ornamentation of the balcony railing. The railing is a solid wood panel encircling the entire opening of the balcony overlaid with decorative woodwork imitating a trefoil cusped arch. The woodwork is contrasted by paint of “heavenly blue” and white.<sup>106</sup> On the lower paneling of the balcony housing the pipe organ is the scripture: “Herr erhebe Diech in Deiner Kraft so wollen wir

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<sup>106</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998), 69.



Figure 64: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Flooring”

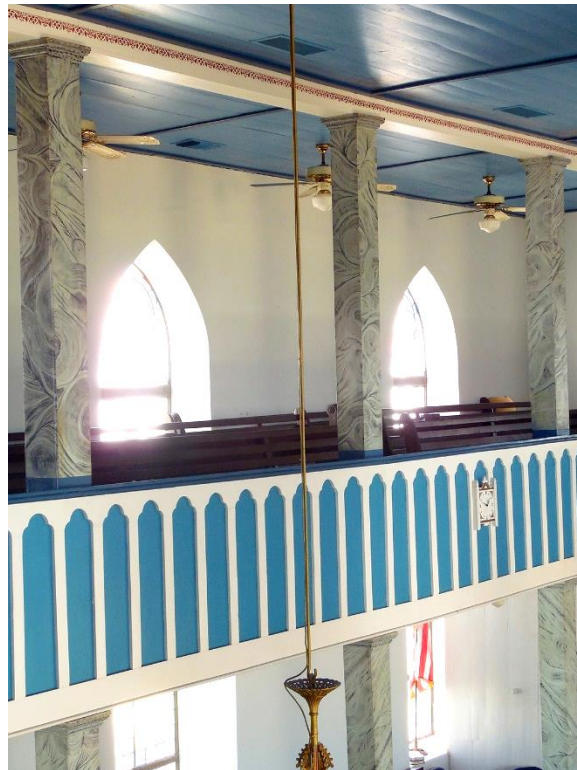


Figure 65: “St. Paul, Columns”



Figure 66: “St. Paul, Column”

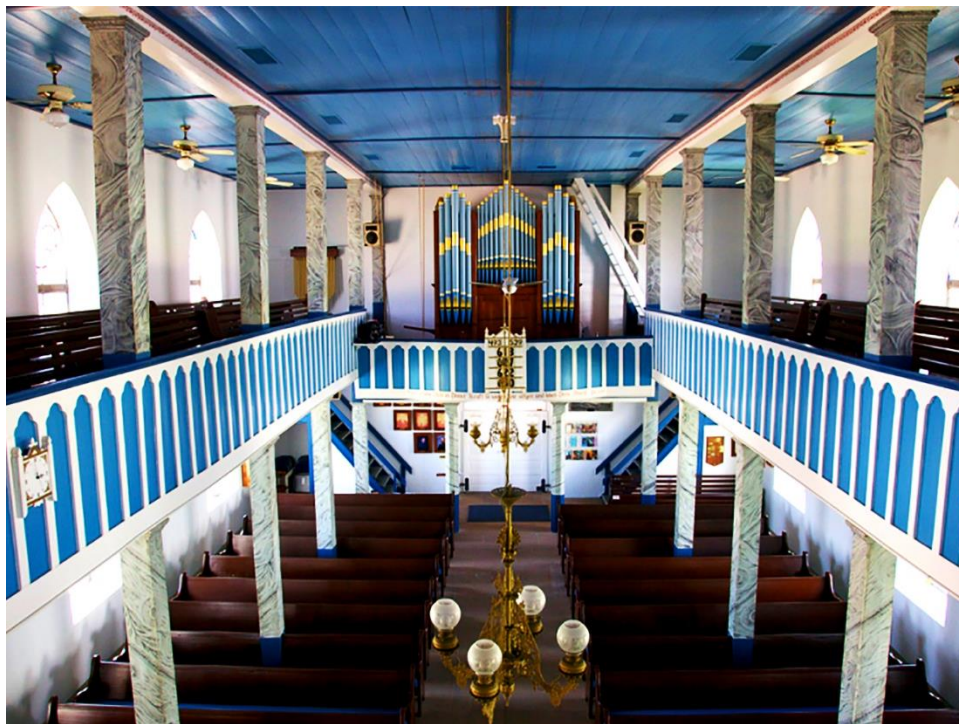


Figure 67: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Interior Balconies”

singer und loben Deine Macht” (Figure 68). This is from Psalm 21:13 translating into, “Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength we will sing and praise your might.”

The ceiling under the balcony and the ceiling over the entire interior space is divided into square panels and painted a “heavenly blue” (Figure 69). A darker tone of blue is painted on the trim pieces of the ceiling contrasting the detailing of the paneling. The four corners of these ceiling panels are decorated with two shades of gold stenciling that illustrate a stylized bouquet of roses and floral garlands (Figure 70).

The culminating architectural feature of the interior is the altar and pulpit. The central aisle of the ground floor leads to a raised platform on which a white paneled table, the altar, holds the vessels for religious services at St. Paul Lutheran Church (Figure 71). Blending into the altar is the raised pulpit from which the pastor gives his sermon. The pulpit lies behind the altar and reaches the height of the second story; it is integrated into the balcony (Figure 72). Two pilasters frame the pulpit and are topped with golden embellished Corinthian capitals. Encased by the pilasters, the pulpit itself is a small protruding balcony which is then framed by an arched partition over the pastor’s lectern. The round arch, once again painted “heavenly blue” incorporates a decorative keystone along with a white ornamental cornice. Crowning the partition are two urns and a golden cross. The pulpit is ornamented with white paneled woodwork and gold trim, and the all seeing-eye radiating outward with golden rays. The location of the pulpit to the congregation, centered and raised to the second story, is a characteristic of German-Wendish churches found in Lusatia.

### Furniture

Beyond the decorative architecture of the interior, the major pieces of furniture found within St. Paul Lutheran Church include the church pews, lighting, the balcony pipe organ, and



Figure 68: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Detail of Balcony”



Figure 69: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ceiling”



Figure 70: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ceiling Ornamentation”



Figure 71: "St. Paul, Altar"



Figure 72: "St. Paul, Pulpit"

steeple bells. The pews located on the ground floor were ordered and hauled from St. Louis, while the pews from the second story balcony were made by a local carpenter.<sup>107</sup> The two ornate chandeliers hanging over the aisle were adapted from burning kerosene and now have electric wiring. The Victorian chandeliers are designed with four arms of gilded scroll work and filigree topped with frosted glass. On the second story balcony, which lies over the vestibule of the entrance, a pipe organ fills the space from floor to ceiling (Figure 73). The pipe organ is a Phieffer pipe organ made in Austin and is one of only a handful of pipe organs still remaining and designed by this particular maker. The exposed pipes of the organ continue to incorporate the color scheme of the interior: blue, white, and gold.

Behind the Phieffer organ and to the right is a nondescript ladder that leads to the attic of the church. Once in this attic space a second, and steeper, ladder leads to the inside space of the steeple which houses the bells of St. Paul Church (Figure 74). Housed in the steeple are three bells to call parishioners to worship: a 1905 bell measuring 36 in diameter with the tone of “A natural,” a 1993 bell measuring 24 in diameter with the tone of “E natural,” and a 1996 bell measuring 28 in diameter with the tone “C sharp.” The 1905 bell is a replacement for the original bell brought with the colonists from Germany. The original bell now resides at Concordia Lutheran College in Austin, Texas. The replacement bell was purchased from E.W. Vanduzen Company in Cincinnati, Ohio and carries the German inscription, “God’s word and Luther’s doctrine pure, shall now and forevermore endure.”<sup>108</sup> The 1996 bell cast by the Verdin Company is inscribed with the English words of Psalm 118:24, “this is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

The three bell peal is used for every call to worship and upon the death of church members.

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<sup>107</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998), 69.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 70.



Figure 73: "St. Paul, Pipe Organ"

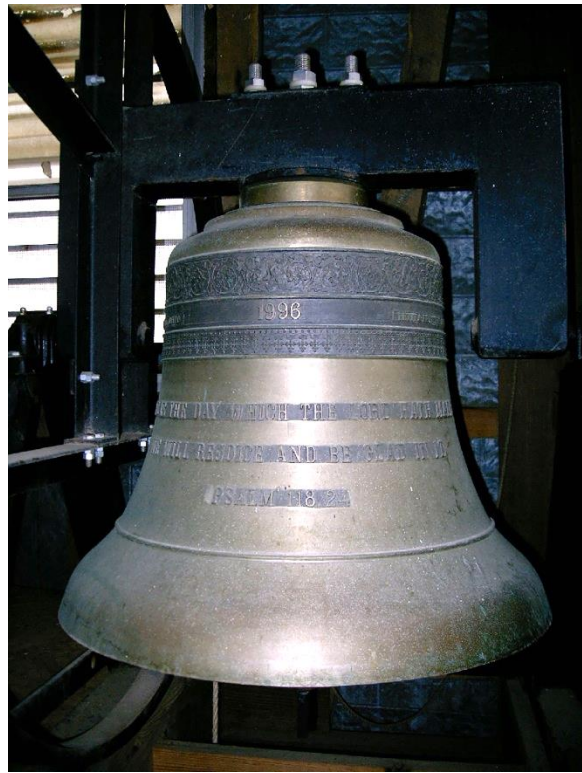


Figure 74: "St. Paul, 1996 Bell"

### Chronology and Building Evolution

The church has undergone several alterations to meet the changing needs of the congregation. In 1929, a concrete floor was poured over the original flagstone floor in preparation for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the structure. According to church records the tie rods were installed to give support to the red sandstone walls in 1930. An important event that occurred in 1932 almost destroyed the structure when it was struck by lightning and caught fire. Considerable damage was done to the balcony, organ, and tower. It explains why the upper areas of the church, the attic space and steeple, had their original wooden clapboard siding replaced by punched tin. Electric lights and a motor for the organ were installed in the 1940s. The windows have had several changes over the years starting in 1949 when the original stained glass windows were replaced with metal frames and frosted glass. These 1950s replacement windows were taken out in 1998 to reconstruct the design of the original stained glass windows. Ted Weiber of Cathedral Glass studios in Austin, Texas was engaged to produce the windows based on the original design. Completed in 2000 these are the windows seen today. In 1971, a complete restoration of the pipe organ was undertaken by Otto Hofmann, an organ building from Austin. During the 1990s major restoration projects were initiated including the implementation of air conditioning in 1991, 137 years after the structure was built. The American Restoration Company of Houston was recently hired and the preservation of St. Paul Lutheran Church is currently ongoing.

### Architectural Significance

The architectural significance of St. Paul Lutheran Church lies in its representation of German-Texan cultural identity as a rural vernacular church built by immigrant German-Wends. St. Paul Lutheran Church shows how immigrant cultural identity is affected by assimilation to new cultures and environmental conditions, and how inversely it retains the building traditions of a

homeland left behind. St. Paul Lutheran Church can be directly contrasted and compared through an examination of sacred architecture before and after immigration.

St. Paul Lutheran Church retains the tradition of sacred architecture found in Lusatia, the region from which the German-Wends originate. Churches from this region resemble the building style of St. Paul Lutheran Church in its construction, form, and design. A direct comparison can be made to specific churches found in Kotitz, Klitten, and Wiegersdorf, cities from which many of the settlers of Serbin immigrated from. St. Paul Lutheran Church represents the modest execution of an immigrant community to build their church as closely as possible to the Wendish churches found in Lusatia.

St. Paul Lutheran Church reflects the established building tradition found in the homeland of the German-Wends. Anat Geva, Ph. D., an associate professor at Texas A&M University's Department of Architecture whose research focuses on interdisciplinary studies in sacred architecture, historic preservation, and the history of building technology, provides research and documentation for this case study, in her comparison of St. Paul Lutheran Church to churches found in the Wendish region of Germany. Other German-Wendish churches which share the same design and features of St. Paul include the Evangelical Church of Malschwitz (Malschwitz Baruth Evangelische Kirche), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. John of Klitten (St. Johannes Lutherische Kirche), and the Holy Trinity Church of Old Lutherans of Wiegersdorf (St. Trinitas Kirche der Altlutheraner) (Figure 75). All three churches represent established German-Wend design traditions, on both the interior and exterior, which were brought to Texas.

Wendish churches share the same rectangular form and basilica plan with steeples that are square in form and lie over the vestibule. The steeples vary in placement and roof type, either pyramidal or a cupola, and are topped with a weathervane. Wendish churches are constructed with



Figure 75: “(from left to right) Malschwitz, Klitten, and Wiegersdorf Wendish Church”

thick masonry walls covered in plaster. The exterior decoration is void of ornamentation with the exception of a consistent row of arched windows incorporating a simple gothic style. These windows are always found on the longitudinal walls of the structure with recessed openings that are tall and narrow. Defining characteristics of Wendish churches are also found in the interior design of the pulpit, balconies, and ceiling. The pulpit usually incorporates a protruding balcony which is enclosed with a round arched opening (Figure 76). The round arched opening is created by a wood panel that is ornamented with a heavy entablature, decorative urns, and pilasters that bracket the pulpit from the ground floor to the second story balcony. This description corresponds to the pulpit found in St. Paul Lutheran Church. The second characteristic of Wendish churches found in Lusatia include interior balconies. These balconies encircle the interior walls leaving an open view to the ground floor below, with a railing composed of solid wood paneling instead of a balustrade. The Malschwitz Church has multiple sets of balconies (Figure 77). While the balconies are a unique feature of Wendish architecture, they also reflect a unique religious and social practice of the German-Wends. Traditionally, the men sat in the balconies while the women sat on the ground floor. This same practice of separating genders was also used by the congregation of St. Paul. Thirdly, the Wendish churches of Lusatia and St. Paul share the same ceiling design. The ceiling construction exhibits an air gap between the sloped rafters of the roof and the horizontal ceiling, a ceiling covered with paneling. Contrary to most gothic church interiors, the ceiling does not rise into the attic space with vaulting to emphasize verticality. The churches of Klitten, Weigersdorf, and Malschwitz illustrate a building tradition from which the German-Wends derive precedent to recreate the sacred architecture of their homeland in Texas.

Kotitz Church of Kotitz, Germany is directly connected to the history of the German-Wend community of Serbin, Texas, a connection rooted to both the history of St. Paul congregation and



Figure 76: “(from left to right) St. Paul, Malschwitz, and Wiegersdorf Pulpits”



Figure 77: “Evangelical Church of Malschwitz, Double Balconies”

Pastor Johann Kilian. Pastor Kilian's first ministry position was to serve Kotitz church as parish priest. St. Paul congregation was also composed of members that formerly worshipped at Kotitz Church before moving to Texas. Built two hundred years apart and on two different continents, St. Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin and Kotitz church in Germany provide a direct comparison of German-Wend sacred architecture.

Kotitz Church was built in 1670 and is constructed in the same fashion as St. Paul Lutheran Church (Figure 78). Both churches are constructed with thick sandstone walls whose thickness reaches two feet and have an exterior and interior covering of plaster. The windows are deeply inset niches within the wall structure with openings for tall arches. The floor of Kotitz Church, like St. Paul's original flooring, is made of flagstones. The roof construction of both structures includes an attic space between the wood ceiling and roof rafters.<sup>109</sup> A comparison of Kotitz Church and St. Paul's also finds similarities in the interior, best exemplified in the use of the balcony form. Today, Kotitz Church has a sole balcony over the entrance, but the original construction included a balcony that surrounded the church along three sides, which reflects the same balcony structure found in St. Paul Lutheran Church (Figure 79).

These similarities are no coincidence because St. Paul Lutheran Church was designed by Pastor Johann Kilian. The direct correlation between the two churches in design and building tradition is documented in church records written by Pastor Kilian. When immigrating to Texas, he carried with him a physical ideal of how a church should be created to serve the spiritual needs of his congregation. Pastor Kilian was able to provide a place that resembled the architecture of their homeland and a place where they could freely worship according to their own traditions.

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<sup>109</sup> Anat Geva and Jacob Morris, "Empirical Analyses of Immigrants' Churches Across Locations: Historic Wendish Churches in Germany, Texas, and South Australia." *Arris – The Journal of Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians*. v. 21 (2010): 50.

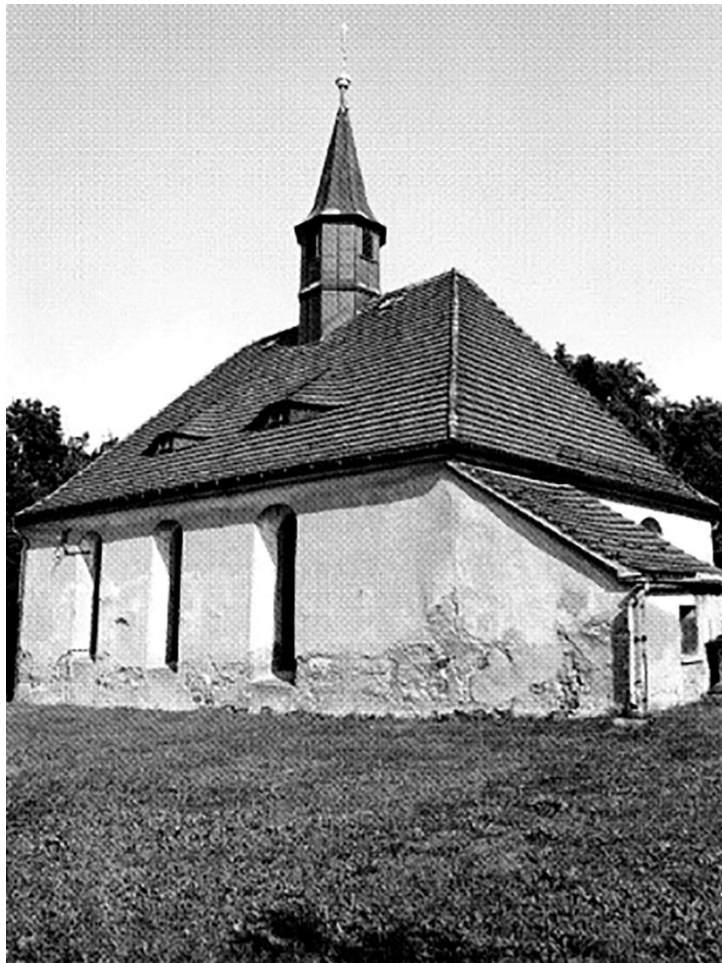


Figure 78: “Kotitz Church, Germany”

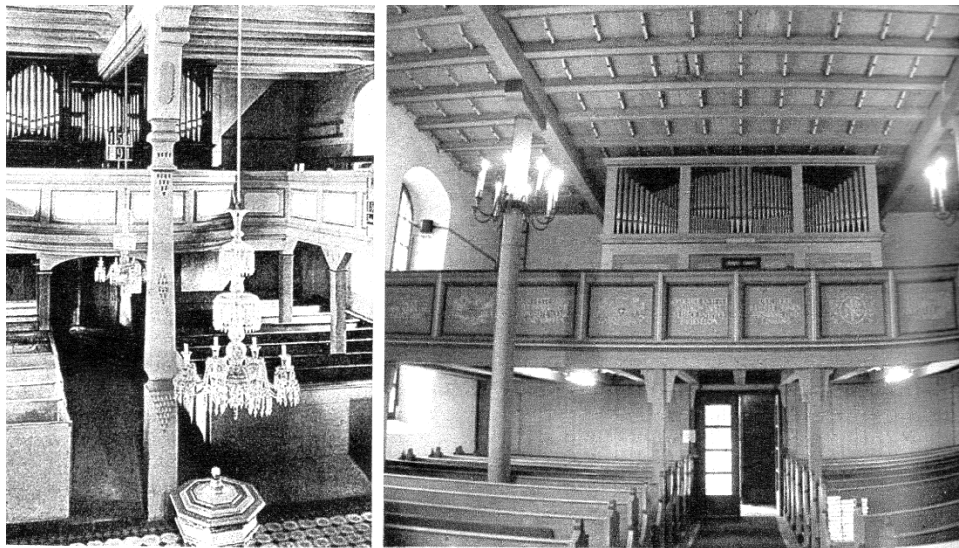


Figure 79: “Kotitz Church, Interior in the Nineteenth Century (left) and 2006 (right)”

The arguments of this case study reinforce how sacred architecture reflects a retention of German-Wend cultural identity, but as an immigrant group, cultural identity is also affected by assimilation. Once the German-Wends immigrated to Texas, assimilation was both inevitable and occurred naturally as they became part of the larger German-Texan identity. St. Paul Lutheran Church displays how the German-Wends assimilated into the larger German-Texan cultural identity through both an interior decorative tradition, known as the painted churches, and as a place of homecoming.

The German-Wends immigrated to Texas with other Germanic immigrants under Prussian rule. Arriving in Texas they intermingled with the state's strong German element established by the *Adelsverein* and became neighbors with the surrounding pockets of German speaking people. Ironically once an insular ethnic enclave within Germany, the German-Wends attached themselves to their central European neighbors within Texas. The German-Wends became part of the larger German-Texan cultural identity which was developing separately from the Anglo-American and Hispanic cultures previously established in the state.

While the German-Wends retained specific and unique building traditions, the Wends also assimilated their architecture to their new environment and to the decorative traditions of other churches near Serbin, Texas. St. Paul Lutheran Church reflects the larger German-Texan tradition of interior decoration. Following in the tradition of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, St. Paul is also classified as part of a group of structures known, colloquially, as the Painted Churches of Texas.

St. Paul reflects the same characteristics of the Painted Churches whose stark exteriors hide the colorful ornamentation of the interiors. The ornamentation of the interior of St. Paul is expressed in the "heavenly blue" painted ceiling, gold stenciling and infilling emphasizing

architectural features throughout the interior, with unique marbling on the columns (Figure 80). These techniques are indicative of the Painted Church style found throughout German enclaves in Texas. Like St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, more than ten of these painted churches are in close proximity to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin. Their proximity to one another cultivated a new building tradition unique to the German-Texan community.

While St. Paul Lutheran Church is formally recognized as a Painted Church, the structure's overall aesthetic contrasts with the other Painted Churches. St. Paul Lutheran Church executes a style of extreme simplicity on the exterior and interior. The exterior has no ornamental features such as buttressing and quoining, and it is deficient in expressing a hierarchy in the materiality of the facades. meanwhile the interior employs a flat ceiling, plain walls, and simple square columns. The decorative painting on the interior is restrained in both color scheme and representational ornamentation in comparison to other Painted Churches. The largest contrast within the interior is in the execution of the ceiling which is a defining feature of many of the Painted Churches and the two previous case studies. The other churches implement highly decorated vaulted ceilings. They have multiple color schemes, painting techniques, and in the case of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, optical illusions to elevate the architectural grandeur of the materials used to create them. The simplicity of St. Paul derives from Wendish cultural norms and economic disparity, and because of established building traditions previously stated.

The Wends never equaled the prosperity of their German neighbors, either in Germany or Texas, and upheld a characteristic carried over from Europe for frugality and self-denial.<sup>110</sup> This frugality is seen in the homes of Wendish immigrants which had few comforts, were unpainted, and furnishings included bare necessities, in fact some improved furnishings were called "German

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<sup>110</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998), 9.

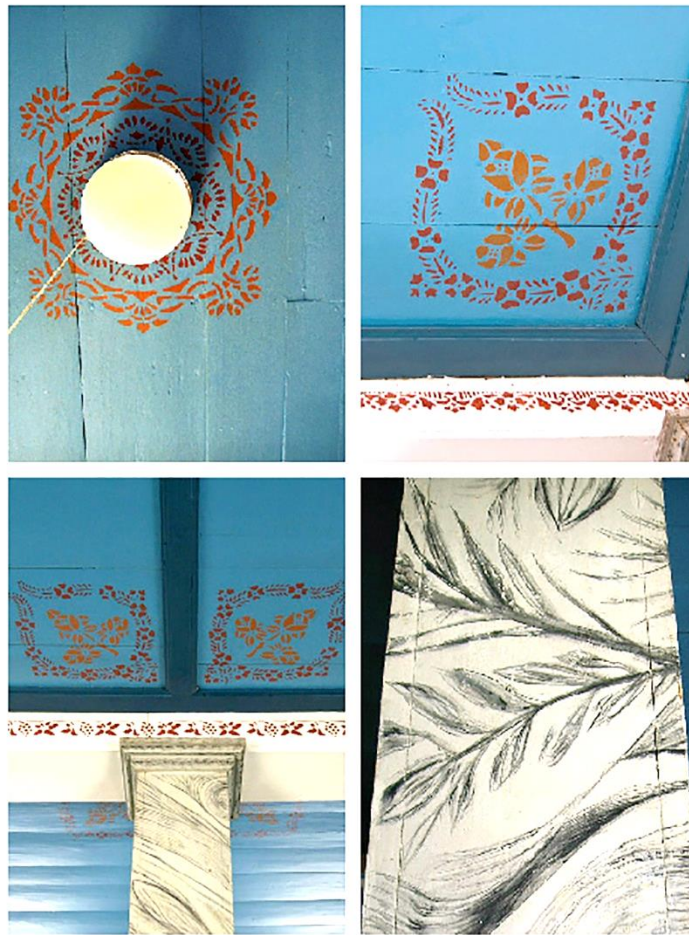


Figure 80: “St. Paul Lutheran Church, Examples of Stenciling and Marbling”

luxuries” by the Wends.<sup>111</sup> This restraint is clearly expressed in St. Paul Lutheran Church. However, these contrasts reinforce the assimilation of the Wends into the larger German speaking community. They could have chosen to leave their church completely unpainted like their homes. There is no European Wendish precedent of interior decorative painting traditions nor is there a need to emulate certain architectural features since the Wends were able to replicate much of their building traditions. Instead, the immigrants of Serbin incorporated this new painted church tradition into their sacred architecture which is not previously seen in the churches of their homeland.

### Conclusion

The architectural significance of St. Paul Lutheran Church lies in its interpretation of sacred architecture as built by immigrant German-Wends. The German-Wends, as an immigrant cultural group, expressed both the retention of old world building traditions and assimilation to new world conditions which manifest in the creation of St. Paul Lutheran Church. Architecturally the German-Wends based the design of St. Paul Lutheran Church on direct examples of Wendish churches in Lusatia, Germany. These building traditions were retained by both the congregation and clergy of St. Paul. What makes St. Paul significant to the German-Texan Cultural identity is its shared characteristics of the Painted Church tradition. St. Paul Lutheran Church is a representation of the German-Texan cultural identity as expressed through sacred architecture.

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<sup>111</sup> Blasig, Anne. *The Wends of Texas* (Austin, TX: Armstrong Printing, 1998), 49.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

#### Summary

This evolution of acculturation from German/Bohemian/German-Wend, to German-Texan, to American, is encapsulated in the presence of the *Marienkirche* of Fredericksburg, St. Mary's Catholic Church of the Assumption in Praha, and St. Paul Lutheran Church in Serbin. Further, German-Texan cultural identity was reinforced in the twentieth century by World War I and World War II. The conclusion of the acculturation process for the German-Texans lies not in the tangible presence of their sacred architecture, but in the intangible qualities of their sacred architecture. During World Wars I and II, the use of the German language was dropped completely for services in all three German-Texan churches because it was not permitted by the federal government. Speaking German during this period was seen as a threat to national security that could lead to imprisonment at internment camps for perceived German saboteurs. With the end of World War II, the use of the German language during services disappeared altogether and it was at this point in history that the descendants of the original immigrants could be considered fully assimilated into American society. It is because of this evolution of full assimilation as Americans that these churches now serve as a place of homecoming for German-Texan descendants.

Currently, German services are held at St. Paul Lutheran Church six times a year for holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Lent and Good Friday. Many descendants make pilgrimage to Serbin, Texas to experience a German service within the sacred space of St. Paul Lutheran Church. St. Mary's Church of the Assumption holds *Pražská Pout*, whose translation means

“homecoming,” every August 15 in celebration of the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; it is the only Roman Catholic church in the country said to have this custom.<sup>112</sup> In the early years of the acculturation process, this celebration played a major role in the social and cultural life of the immigrant community, but having fully assimilated in American society this homecoming celebration provides a social and cultural experience to descendants of German-Texans. This is highlighted by the fact that six thousand people attend this homecoming which is put on by less than one hundred parishioners of the church. For many of these descendants, experiencing these sacred places are what connects them to their ancestors, their fellow German-Texan descendants, and may be the only direct connection they will ever have to a homeland in Europe.

Today’s German-Texans make no distinction between Wend, Bohemian, or *Adelsverein* immigrants. They are considered one in the same. Before immigration the Germans, Bohemians, and Wends were separate ethnic groups under the rule of the German Confederation. After immigration these same groups gravitated towards each other because of their common language, background, and history creating a singular cultural identity known as German-Texan. German-Texan sacred architecture reflects how an immigrant cultural group expresses their cultural identity through sacred architecture.

St. Mary’s Catholic Church, or the Marienkirche, represents the efforts of one of the earliest and most prominent settlements of German immigrants and the preservation of German-Texan cultural heritage. Created from the *feldsteinkirchen* building tradition and gothic components, the Marienkirche expresses the sophistication of vernacular sacred architecture as created by German immigrants, which has come to symbolize the cultural identity of German-Texans. The building

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<sup>112</sup> National Register of Historic Places. St. Mary’s Catholic Church. Fredericksburg, Gillespie County, Texas. National Register #83003143.

evolution of the Marienkirche chronicles the assimilation of later generations becoming a catalyst for preservation and serving as a place of homecoming.

St. Mary's Church of the Assumption is a prominent structure in the legacy of the German-Texan cultural identity because of the efforts of the Bohemians to establish a central European capital in Texas. St. Mary's Church of the Assumption retains Bohemian cultural traditions through the recreation of gothic architectural design and national symbols. It derives its importance as both a place of homecoming and through the establishment of a new building tradition known as the Painted Churches of Texas.

St. Paul Lutheran Church exhibits the effects of acculturation through the sacred architecture of the German-Wends, a minority ethnic group immersed in German culture before and after immigration. German-Wends once held onto a distinct cultural identity separate from Germans, but having arrived in Texas their cultural identity merged with the German-Texan cultural identity. Their sacred architecture reflects both the retention of their own ethnic traditions and the adaptation of a newly established building tradition of interior decorative painting.

#### Creation of the Painted Church Tradition

A finding of this thesis is that the establishment of the Painted Church tradition illustrates the development of the German-Texan cultural identity through sacred architecture. While the artistic skills varies between the interiors of the Painted Churches, the commonality of features displays their assimilation into a new environment. Interior decorative painting came into fashion for these congregations because they were trying to recreate the features of churches they were accustomed to in central Europe. Many of the designs resemble those found along the Rhine River in Germany, as well as in Switzerland, Austria, and the Czech Republic.<sup>113</sup> The limitations of

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<sup>113</sup> Harwood, Buie. *Decorating Texas: Decorative Painting in the Lone Star State from the 1850s to the 1950s* (Texas Christian University Press, 1993): 45.

building materials found in Texas necessitated that congregations recreate specific architectural features in paint. Artistic features of decorative painting are replicated in many of the painted churches because they were painted by the same group of trained artists. These artist immigrated from Switzerland and Germany, who then created studios in San Antonio and advertised their services in German newspapers throughout the central Texas region. Similarities in artistic features are also found in painted churches due to shared patterns of settlement and proximity to one another. In the examples of St. Mary's Church of the Assumption and St. Paul Lutheran Church, the distance between Praha and Serbin, Texas is less than fifty miles. The Painted Church tradition represents the creation of a building tradition found only within the state of Texas and created by a coalesced cultural identity known as German-Texan.

#### Place of Homecoming

A unique characteristic of all three churches are their locations. Lying over an hour from the nearest major metropolitan area, each case study is located in a rural area of the state. Fredericksburg garners the largest population of the three case studies with a population of approximately 10,000 while the towns of Serbin and Praha average less than 50 residents. Serbin and Praha in particular are not easily accessible from either a major interstate or state highway. Despite these factors all three case studies are thriving and have undergone full restorations. Today, these small communities receive thousands of visitors during annual celebrations such as dedication anniversaries and religious holidays. The vast numbers of visitors to these churches expresses their value beyond the needs of religious worship. These structures serve as beacons for cultural pilgrimage because of their ability to create a sense of place oriented both to the past and the present. For the founding immigrants of each case study these churches were a recreation of what was left behind in Europe and whose architecture created a familiar sense of place in an

unfamiliar new homeland. For descendants of the original colonists and settlers, these sacred structures stand as a physical reminder of their heritage. These sacred structures are a place of homecoming for both current descendants and the immigrants that created them because they represent a tangible legacy of their German-Texan identity.

### Duality of Immigrant Identity

When analyzing these case studies old world traditions and new world adaptations can never be clearly separated because immigrant cultural identity reflects both. This duality creates a tension amongst these opposing elements which ultimately creates a unique and new identity. This identity is unique because it is created from a defined heritage of a specific time period during which people emigrated and the conditions of a specific new environment people immigrated to. Today, German immigrants are scattered across the globe bringing with them the language, traditions, and history of their homeland. Yet, German-Texans cannot be compared to modern day Germans. What stands between them are one hundred and fifty years of history and advancement. The influence of Germanic cultural identity ceased once they left Europe, therefore, the cultural heritage of German-Texans reflects nineteenth century Germany. The second element of this new identity is generated by the conditions of their new environment within the state of Texas. German immigrants in Texas are different from German immigrants found in Pennsylvania or those that have settled anywhere else in the world. German-Texans adapted their building traditions to the environmental conditions found in Texas and were influenced by other ethnic groups around them. This is exemplified in the different ethnicities of Germans, Bohemians, and Wends that compose the German-Texan identity. German-Texan identity is a blended identity of different ethnicities drawn together by a common Germanic bond and proximity within the state. This duality of cultural maintenance and cross cultural contact is forged in the sacred architecture of the German-

Texans, bound to a specific time and place. The German-Texan cultural identity is unique to its time frame of acculturation and environment conditions and because of these factors the sacred architecture analyzed in these case studies can be found nowhere else in the world.

These sacred structures stand as a permanent record of the decades of immigration to Texas from Europe. The physical structures are a snapshot of the time period in which they were built and capture the complexity of a cultural group that is caught between two worlds. What binds these sacred structures are the overall qualities of Central European influence, however, these structures reflect the larger coalescence of a cultural identity known as German-Texan. The duality found within German-Texan sacred architecture illustrates the complexity of immigrant cultural identity and the juxtaposition between what is retained from their past and what is assimilated from their present. German-Texan churches represent more than the invested reverence and resources to create a place of worship; they represent the ability of architectural design to attach memories, history and cultural identity through sacred architecture.

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