



DANIEL LEMKE

My interest in Daniel Heinrich Lemke was first aroused when I attended an organ recital during the Barossa Vintage Festival seven years ago. The recital took place in the Gruenberg Lutheran Church at Moculta on an organ built by Daniel Lemke in 1871.

I was drawn to Gruenberg because it was the locality where my great-grandparents and their children settled on their arrival in Australia aboard the barque *Sophie* on 21st October 1858 from Posen, Prussia. During my family history research I discovered a link as my grandfather and his sisters attended the Gruenberg School where Daniel Lemke was a teacher.

Further research caused me to find out more about my ancestors, which included my grandmother, Beate Luise nee Fladrich, a Prussian Wend from the Cottbus region of Lower Lusatia in Brandenburg. This new information led me to join the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia.



Grave site before restoration

The name of Daniel Lemke remained in my memory. He was a man of many talents who endured great hardship. To supplement his low salary, which consisted of 1½ bags of flour per quarter and 6 pence (5 cents) per student per week,

Daniel built magnificent

pipe organs by lamplight at night. It is reported that he built 13 organs whilst he was a teacher.

The Wend/Sorb Society bus trip on 2nd May 2009 included a brilliant recital on the Gruenberg organ by Margaret Klemm. This finally convinced me to seek out the last resting place of Daniel Lemke.

I sought assistance through the Wend/Sorb Society and made contact with Merv Adam, a Lemke descendant, and was given permission to do some restoration work on Daniel's grave site, which is located at the St Paul's Lutheran Church at Sandleton on the Murray Flats.

This abandoned church and cemetery is now listed as a historic site, thanks to the work of Reg Munchenberg and the Truro and District Community Association Inc. There is a plaque at the entrance displaying the history of the church and recognising Daniel Heinrich Lemke's achievements.

The grave site is now completely restored under a project by the Wend/Sorb Society to recognise a great pioneer and his work, which can be heard every Sunday in the Gruenberg Lutheran Church.



Grave site after restoration

Brian Hennig

President's Report to 2009 AGM

It is wonderful to have a reliable committee to lead our Society. This year I again valued the input of our office-bearers. Our Secretary, Pauline Burger, continues to be a reliable, careful and enthusiastic member and I appreciate her support. We were pleased to have John Longmire take on the important job of Treasurer this year and he has carried out this role with his keen attention to detail.

Our bus trip to the Barossa in May was successfully organised by committee members Ruth and Eric Fiebig. They prepared a very full day and it was once again enjoyed by an enthusiastic busload. Where will they lead us next year?

Leon and Karen Doecke gave us a fascinating account of their trip to the Doecke homeland in the village of Neckern in Saxony. His photos were very beautiful and professionally presented, and Karen's loaf of bread, baked from the recipe she collected at Doecke's flour mill there, was delicious.

Today we will see a film taken by the Sorabian Film Studio about the Modra family in Australia. Thanks to Dennis Jenke for putting an English soundtrack onto it.

Our work in preparing a Wendish Heritage Trail in SA has continued slowly this year, but I am more concerned that we prepare it carefully and get it right, rather than rush in and later regret it.

Ruth Walter has handled the book sales diligently and I am pleased to have her assistance in this area. Our book sales continue to inform people of their Wendish heritage, and new members really appreciate this.

The newsletter is also an important means of keeping contact with our members, especially those who cannot attend any functions we organise. Interesting articles are always appreciated, so don't hesitate to send them in. Thanks go again to Chris Longmire for her help in laying out the newsletter again.

And let's not forget the reliable job done by Rona McDonnell in organising our afternoon teas at our meetings and providing suppers at committee meetings. Thank you Rona.

Lyall Kupke

ELECTIONS:

The following office-bearers were elected at the AGM:

President: Lyall Kupke

Vice-President: Eric Fiebig

Secretary: Pauline Burger

Assistant Secretary: Ruth Walter

Treasurer: John Longmire

Extra committee members: Marie Brazier, Ruth Fiebig, Brian Hennig, Dennis Jenke, June Jenke, Michael McDonnell, Rona McDonnell.

Bev Hall was appointed an Honorary member of the committee.

Wendish Family History books for USA

During 2009 I embarked on a project to collect Australian family history publications of Wendish origin that families were prepared to donate to the Texas Wendish Heritage Society in Serbin, Texas, USA.

We had an overwhelming response, and my wife and I took 22 books to the USA. I formally presented those books to Charles Dube, President of the Society, at their annual Wendish Fest in September 2009.

The Society was extremely grateful to receive them to add to the 12 Australian family history books that families had already donated to them over the years.

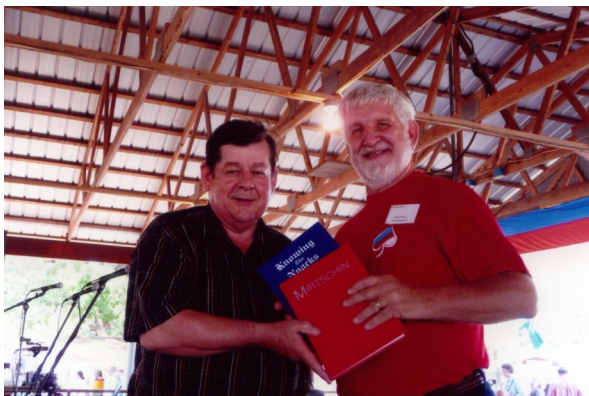
I have been a member of their Society since 1977 and have visited their museum on many occasions. I believe that their library has the largest resource of Wendish literature in the English speaking world and our books have added to this very impressive collection.

I believe that about 50 Australian family histories of Wendish families have been published and I am enquiring whether any readers or their families may have a spare copy of the following family history books that they would be prepared to donate to this library. I appreciate that many of these books have been out of print for many years.

If so, please mail it to my address (Branson Road, Greenock, SA 5360), and I will arrange for the books to be delivered to Texas. Each donation will be officially acknowledged by their Museum Director.

The family history books I am seeking are:
Albert, Budarick, Doecke, Domaschenz, Gormann, Greschke, Kruger, Lieschke, Lokan, Nagorcka, Rentsch, Sallmann, Starick, Wenke and Zeugofsg.

Geoff Saegenschnitter



Geoff and Charles Dube

Iowa Wends

For years we have known of the Texas Wends, who emigrated from Saxon and Prussian Lusatia in the 1850s. However, now another American Wendish group has emerged - this time in the state of Iowa.

Most of the Iowa Wendish families came from the single village of Drachhausen in Lower Lusatia. The first family (Stempel) came in 1847, and over the years more families joined them. By 1925 over 200 Wends from Drachhausen had moved to Iowa.

Some of the Iowa families are Bohrisch, Bubner, Gullick, Hannusch, Janke, Ksachammer, Mehlich, Mehlow, Muschick, Noak, Schimlick, Schlodder, Schmellick, Urban, Weichert, and Woito.

(It is interesting that a significant number of Australian Wends came from the nearby villages of Turnow, Preilack, Tauer and Jänschwalde.)

Over the last 15 years the Iowa Wendish Heritage Study Group has conducted two Wenden Fests, three trips to Drachhausen, and research into the Drachhausen church records. They have published an Iowa Wendish cookbook, and we now have a copy of this in our society's book collection at the Lutheran Archives. They are also working on a book about the Iowa Wends.

Cathy Petersen is the co-ordinator of this group.

You can find their website at www.european-roots.com/Wendish_Research_Iowa_wends_Start.htm

Another related website is www.wendish.net/iwhs.htm

In Search of Pötschke

In the previous newsletter (July 2009) I had written about documents from Bautzen dated August 1851 regarding my ancestor Johann Rentsch, who had applied to the military authorities for permission to sponsor the young 20 year old tailor, Johann Traugott Pötschke, to travel with him and his family to Australia.

Since writing that article I have found evidence that Pötschke was granted permission from the military authorities to travel to Australia, and that he had travelled with the Rentsch family on the *Helene* that arrived in Adelaide on 24th December 1851. However, there is no indication that he disembarked in Adelaide and his name does not appear on any lists in South Australia.

So what happened to young Pötschke?

A common factor in tracing immigrants is the variable spelling of names, and in the case of this young man there are at least three versions at the time of his migration.

1. The Bautzen documents from 1851 give his surname as Pötschke.
2. The shipping list for the *Helene* records him as “Pitzschke, Johann, tailor from Kuppritz, Saxony”.
3. In his book *In Search of a Home*, Nielsen spells his name as Poschke.

And now I’ve found a fourth version. After googling his name I located a direct descendant of this young tailor. Neil, who spells his surname Poetschke, lives in New South Wales and is beginning to research his family history.

In my correspondence with Neil Poetschke I found that he is curious about young Johann’s move from Adelaide to New South Wales. He wonders whether the gold rushes may explain it. However, he’s come across a number of death notices for the name Potschke soon after Johann’s arrival and thinks he may have already had some family here, and that their immigration predated Johann’s. This may explain Johann Rentsch’s payment of Johann’s travel: that is, it could have been an advance on behalf of an older Potschke relative already living in Australia.

The details Neil has of Johann Potschke are that he married Frederica Sipple (another Wend) in Tamworth in 1864 and died in 1894. The surname Sipple, incidentally, is not in Nielsen’s list of Wends in Australia.

Of course this raises more research questions about Wendish people migrating to Australia. Did the early Wendish immigrants travel independently or in family groups? What were their reasons for travel? For how long did they retain their Wendish identity? And many more questions.

Ruth Walter

News from the Wendish Heritage Society:

Our sister society in Melbourne.

Website: www.wendishheritage.org.au

Saturday 19th June - 1860 Hamburg Ships' 150th Anniversary Lunch

150th Anniversary Lunch to celebrate the arrival in Melbourne in 1860 of eleven ships from Hamburg carrying Wendish immigrants. The ships were the *Heinrich*, *Voorwarts*, *Madras*, *Peter Godeffroy*, *Australia*, *Dorothea*, *Magdalena*, *Cesar Godeffroy*, *Sophie*, *Amazone* and *Borea*.

Venue: German Club Tivoli, 291 Dandenong Rd, Windsor, starting at 12 noon.

Contact Glenys Wollermann (Tel 03 9891 6652; Email: g.wollermann@fhc.vic.edu.au)

For more details see website.

Coming Events

Saturday 1st May Bus Trip to Murray Lands

See separate sheet for details and booking form. ****Book EARLY!!

Sunday 13th June, 2pm Talk: Wendish Heritage Society

John Noack, the President of our sister society in Victoria, will talk about their activities, their library and their future.

****In Fullarton Lutheran Homes chapel (14 Frew St, Fullarton). NOTE the different venue!!

Sunday 29th August, 2pm Annual General Meeting, and talk

Geoff Saegenschnitter will talk about his visit to Texas during their annual Wendish Festival in September 2009 and his trip to Lusatia in December 2008.

At St Andrew's Lutheran Church Hall (22 Avenue Rd, Glynde).

News from the Friends of Peters Hill Church

The latest newsletter from the Friends of Peters Hills Church has arrived. There is an interesting article by Denise Frahn (nee Behn), who reminisces about the years she spent at the Peters Hill School in 1951-1955 just before it closed. The school building was destroyed in a fire in the mid-1960s. The Friends are now working on developing a bush garden on this site.

Membership of the Friends is open to anyone. Membership subscriptions of \$20 are now due and should be sent to Friends of Peters Hill Church Inc, c/- Mr Norm Schmidtke, 11 Charles St, Saddleworth SA 5413.

Record book from Serbin, Texas

When Geoff Saegenschnitter returned from Texas last year he brought back with him a book which lists the baptismal records of St Paul's Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas, for the years 1854-1883. This was the first Wendish settlement in Texas and they were served by Wendish Pastor Jan Kilian.

Although many of the names were not familiar to me, I found quite a number which do occur in Australia. It is possible that they are related to the families that migrated to Australia. Geoff found this to be the case in his family's history: one of his ancestors came to Australia, while his ancestor's brother went to America.

Here are the names I noticed: Bartsch, Bjar, Biele, Dube, Gersch, Handrick, Kappler, Krause, Lange, Lehmann, Lowke, Miertschin, Mikan, Noack (Nowak), Urban, Wenke, Wukasch, Zimmermann, Zwahr.

If you would like to look through this book, visit the Lutheran Archives at 27 Fourth St, Bowden, SA, where the Society stores its book collection.

Lyall Kupke

For Sale

Booklets from Germany - in English:

Customs and Traditions of the Sorbs in Lower Lusatia - \$1, plus postage

The Winter Season among the Sorbs - \$1, plus postage

Easter with the Sorbs - \$1, plus postage

Sorbian Customs and Traditions in the course of the year - \$1, plus postage

(Postage: \$1 for one book, \$3 for 2-6 books)

Also the best books about the Wends in Australia:

Burger, *The Coming of the Wends* - \$12, plus \$3 postage

Nielsen, *In Search of a Home* (second edition, hard cover) - \$40, plus \$10 postage

CDs:

From Wendish to German to English (A Journey into Wendish Culture, History & Language)

This marvellous CD has been produced by the Texas Wendish Heritage Society. It contains English narration, German and Wendish singing by a German choir performing at Texas in 2002, talks by noted Wendish (Sorbian) historians Dr George Nielsen and Gertrud Mahling (Trudla Malinkowa). George Nielsen talks about Wendish migration to Australia. *A real treat!*

Cost = \$30, plus \$3 postage

Contact Ruth Walter, 43 Clifton St, Prospect SA 5082, (tel. 08 8269 7168),

email: ruthwalter@optusnet.com.au

**** Note NEW contact person & new email address!

Please make cheques or money orders to Wend Sorb Society of South Australia.

We welcome any contributions to this newsletter. Please send them to the Editor at the address below.

This newsletter was published by the **Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia Inc.**

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