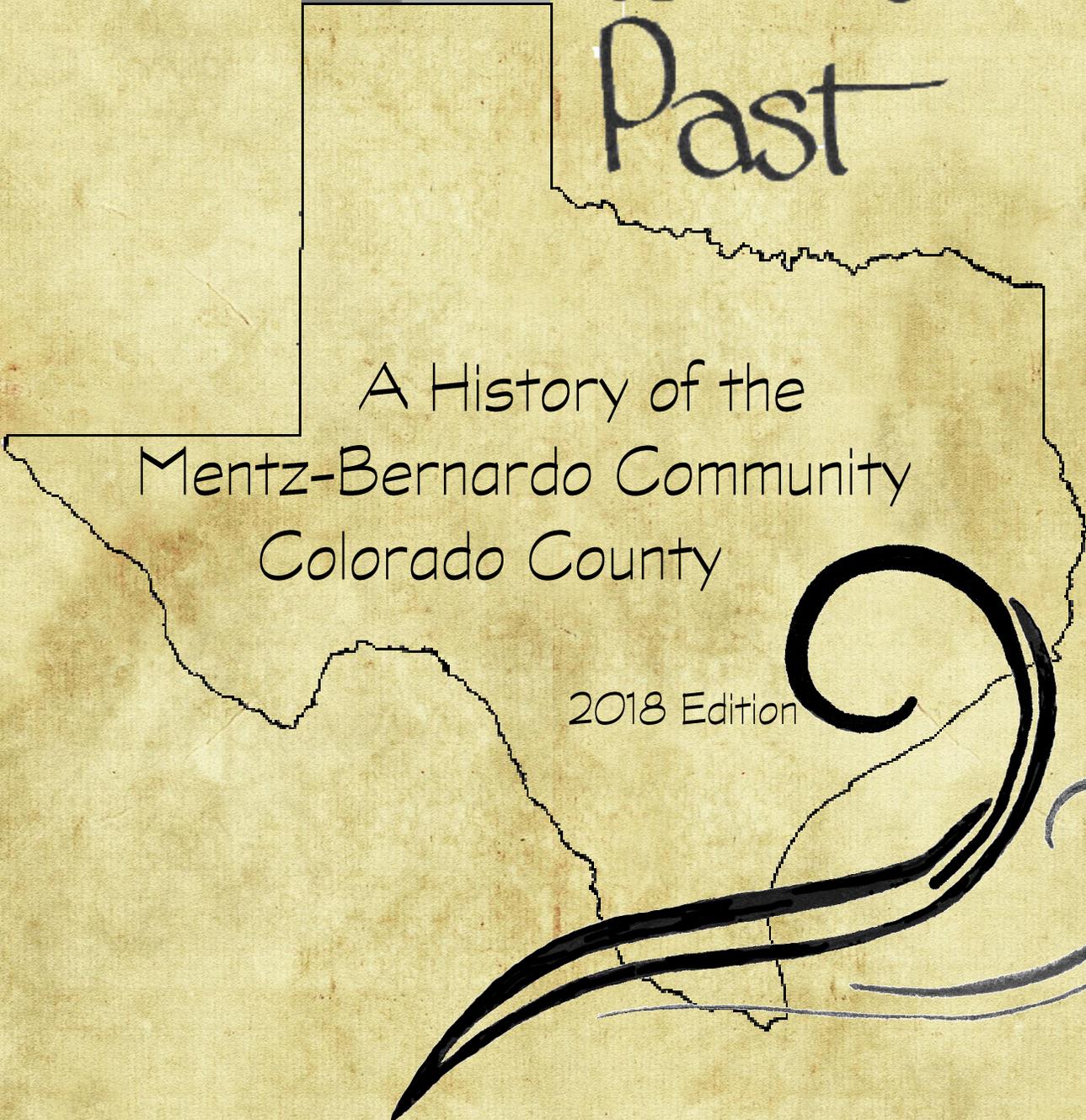
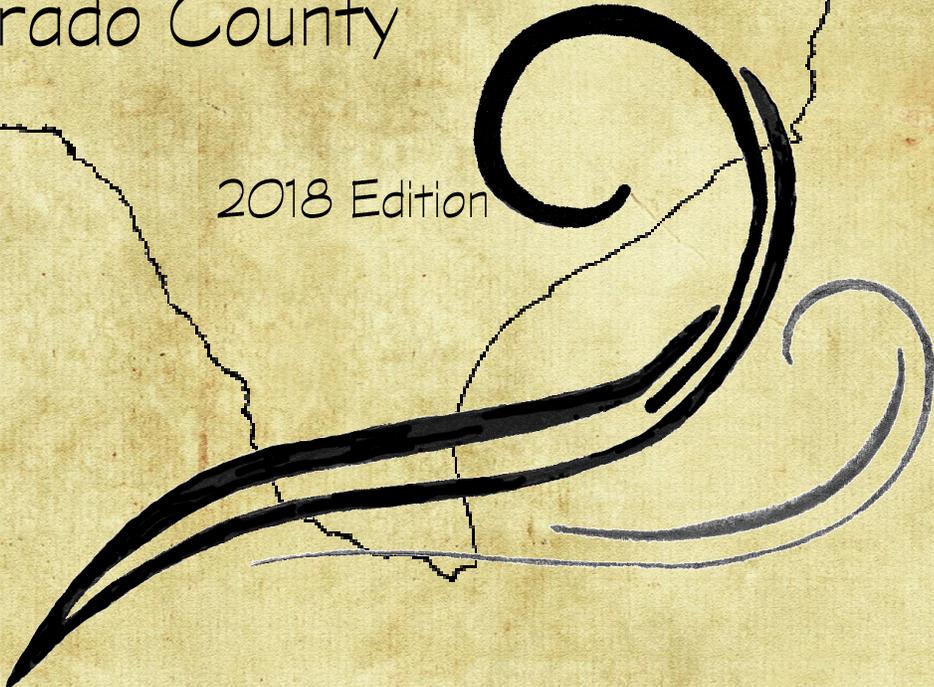


# Pilgrimage to the Past

An outline map of Colorado County, Texas, is centered on the page. The map shows the county's irregular shape, including its northern, eastern, and southern boundaries. The text is overlaid on the map.

A History of the  
Mentz-Bernardo Community  
Colorado County

2018 Edition

A large, decorative flourish in black ink is located in the lower right quadrant of the page. It consists of a thick, curved line that starts near the bottom left and sweeps upwards and to the right, ending in a small, elegant scroll. A thinner, lighter blue line follows a similar path below the main flourish.

ARLISS TREYBIG

# Pilgrimage to the Past

The History of the Mentz-Bernardo  
Community

(Colorado County, Texas)

Including Miscellaneous References,  
Photographs, & Stories of People & Places

2018 Edition

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## PREFACE

The original booklet, *Pilgrimage to the Past*, was compiled for the dedication of the Official Texas Historical Marker for the Mentz-Bernardo Community on August 14, 1982.

This version of the history of the Mentz-Bernardo Community includes some material not found in the original one. Research never ends, and new sources are always being discovered.

The best quality images available have been used, so in some cases different and/or additional photos have been included in this version as compared to the 1982 original and subsequent versions.

*Arliss Treybig, Researcher/Compiler*

*Lisa Lukefahr, Digital Content*

*February 2018*

## INTRODUCTION

In order to help a younger person to appreciate what he or she has now, we often tell him or her about the difficulties of the "old days." Sometimes we even exaggerate a bit in order to make a stronger impression. We often base our picture of the past on movies, TV, or adventure stories. We may think how thrilling everything was and how great it must have been to have lived in the early days. Generally, these images are only of the exciting times and not of the day-by-day struggles of the individuals and families

To understand the hardships of pioneers in Texas in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, we need to consider the life they left. The large central European area we now think of as Germany consisted of villages, towns, and cities that were hundreds of years old. Some families had lived in the same area for generations; perhaps they had never traveled more than ten miles from their home. Most of the towns and cities had public buildings of some kind, schools, churches, and shops. The larger cities also had universities, theaters, and factories; there was rail travel in some areas. Many of the people were very educated and cultured-speaking and reading several languages, playing musical instruments, and enjoying the theater.

There were many reasons why people emigrated - but basically for personal freedom and a new and better life for themselves and their children. Even though their society was an old, developed one, it had many problems. So, hearing and reading that Texas was a great, golden land, they left the life they had known and understood for generations, traveled to a sea port, and boarded a sailing ship. The trips to Texas usually lasted two to three months, or more, depending on the weather. A hundred or more people, perhaps a third of them children, spent most of the time in the steerage of the ship; some were seasick the entire time. Some died and were buried at sea.

Galveston was not incorporated until 1839 and Indianola (Karlshaven) was not founded until 1844, so early ships bringing immigrants to Texas usually landed first at New Orleans. From there the immigrants boarded another ship for

Brazoria or Velasco, or they may have traveled up the Buffalo Bayou to the small settlement of Harrisburg (which later developed into present day Houston). They then sailed up the Brazos or traveled by ox-cart from Harrisburg to the Austin Colony area - a distance of about fifty miles. San Felipe (near Sealy), was the center of Austin's Colony and was then at the edge of civilization. In later years ships landed at Galveston and Indianola; from those ports the immigrants traveled inland.

The European immigrants had left an old, settled society and found themselves on a frontier still inhabited by Native Americans, buffalo, and other wild animals. There were few roads, almost no bridges, great distances between inhabited areas, and few population centers. If they traveled during a rainy season, they were slowed down for days or weeks by muddy trails and swollen rivers. In the winter time, the immigrants were often surprised and hampered by the "northers." Because of the great distances between settlements, they had to take with them the goods, food, and implements they needed for survival.

These pioneers had to secure and clear land, build shelters, hunt for meat, and use native plants until they could obtain seed to plant. Some of the settlers were trained in professions other than farming so they did not have the skills needed for this kind of survival. They did not know how to build a log house or make any of the items they needed; some had never done any manual labor. Since many of the immigrants had come from a different climate in Europe, the clothing they had brought with them was not suitable for the hot, humid summers and generally mild winters. Cloth was expensive, if available, and many women did not know how to spin and weave. If shoes wore out, the people went without shoes or wore moccasins. One family in the early 30's lived in a straw and moss hut for three years, afraid to light the fire inside for fear the hut would burn. They held umbrellas over their heads at night when it rained; the animals ate the moss and straw. Some early log houses had no ceilings or floors. Even the emigrant farmers had to adjust to different kinds of farming methods and different kinds of crops. Their home in Germany may have been several generations old so that they had never built a house of any kind themselves, much less a log cabin.

There were few if any mills for making flour; corn bread became the daily bread stuff. In Germany corn had been considered food for the livestock. In Texas some of the earliest German settlers ate dry corn bread three times a day for months - cooked in an iron skillet over an open fire. Black coffee completed the meal; there were few cows for milk, cream, and butter.

Doctors and medicine were scarce also. Accidents, illnesses, and epidemics took many lives. A close study of names and dates on tombstones or a reading of the church burial records tells of several deaths in the same family only days apart. In one family three sons died in five days. In another family the father, mother, and a daughter died in a two-month period.

Some settlers had just begun to become adjusted when the Texas Revolution began. They left everything to flee before the invading Mexican army and the marauding Indians. When they returned months later, they found most of their possessions burned or destroyed. They had to start all over again with less than they had before. In 1846 the United States entered into a war with Mexico; the wagons and teams that were to be used to carry immigrants to new homes were used by the United States army. As a result, immigrants were stranded at Indianola; many died.

The settlers had left a Germany that was divided into many kingdoms, duchies, and principalities. Many had left Germany to escape wars and military conscription to serve the ruling king, prince, or duke. In fact, when the second group of Büdesheimers made plans to join their family members and friends in Texas, Mayor St. George had to write again to the Grand Ducal Hessian County Council as the son of George Joseph Braden had been called to service. In order for the son to travel with the family, the Council had to grant permission. "We do not presume he wants to evade service in his fatherland." Permission was granted although the message didn't make it to the 2nd company of the Grand-Ducal Hessian 4th Infantry Regiment the first time. The company captain was looking for the son. Evidently, the letters were finally received.

When the War Between the States broke out in 1861, some settlers had been in Texas for twenty years or more. Some settlers were citizens of the United

States and did not share the cultural heritage of their southern born neighbors. In 1850 more than one third of the county's free white residents were born in Germany. They had pledged loyalty to the United States government when they became citizens and feared separation from the federal government. However, they had also helped to settle Texas and considered themselves loyal to their state. In the February 12, 1861, election in the Dunlavy precinct which included Mentz and Bernardo, the vote was 41 against and 10 for.<sup>1</sup> However, Texas as a state had voted in favor of secession from the Union. Many of the men fought for the South. Others made their ways to the North and fought for the Union. Still others were able to maintain some kind of neutrality.

The State of Texas encouraged counties and communities to organize troop units for their protection. Some men eligible for military service joined the Alleyton and New Mainz German Home Guard which was part of the Texas State Troops, 22nd Brigade. Some of the men later joined a regular company – whether for the small stipend, adventure, something to do between planting and harvesting, or because they were coerced!

There are also tales of men who dressed as women and were seen working with the women and children in the fields as the sheriff's men rode by. My great grandfather evidently hid in the woods during the day. He left a trail of sticks so my great grandmother could take lunch to him. One day he was home when the sheriff's men rode by. He jumped in the horse trough – probably one made from a big log – and lay low until the danger passed.

Some men worked as teamsters moving cotton to the valley or Mexico. Bernardo was a dumping station for cotton on that route. Others attempted to find refuge in Mexico on the way to the North. Dr. Herman Nagel and his son

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<sup>1</sup> The book An Early History of Fayette County by Weyand and Wade (published 1936) references, on pages 244 & 245, an article taken from Eagle Lake Headlight, "Frontier Times," IX. No. 4, 157-8.

Saturday, February 23, 1861 was an exciting day in the history of our neighboring Colorado County. It was the election day to decide the question of Secession.

Dunlavy precinct (the present precincts of Mentz and Bernardo) voted as follows:

For Secession	10
Against Secession	41

Charles were successful and later settled in St. Louis. They had lived in the Bernardo area where Charles was born and later moved to Millheim in Austin County. Charles graduated from St. Louis Law School. He became active in public affairs and politics and served in the Missouri House of Representatives. In March 1909 President Taft appointed him Secretary of Commerce and Labor, the first native-born Texan to become a member of a president's cabinet (Bernardo's Claim to Fame). In 1934 Nagel wrote *A Boy's Civil War Story*, an account of his boyhood in Texas. The first chapter describes the Bernardo area – landscape, animals, etc.

During the nine years of the Reconstruction Period following the war, the ancestors had to accept the hardships that were common to all. Many German immigrants apparently blamed white slaveholders for the disaster of secession and accepted Congressional Reconstruction as necessary and deserved. The county had escaped invasion during the war; it was not occupied by a defending or invading army. This area was also somewhat isolated. Perhaps circumstances were not quite so bad since their livelihood did not depend on slave labor. The German role during the period promised to be vital. The German dominated precincts (Frelsburg and Mentz-Bernardo) had influence through their votes in certain elections.<sup>2</sup>

In 1872 near the end of the Reconstruction period, free public schools were established in Mentz and Bernardo. County funding provided for four and ½ months. Since there were not many lay teachers who could afford to work only for that short period of time, Catholic nuns were allowed to teach in those areas that were predominately Catholic. However, they could not teach religion during the free school period. The buildings were owned by the parish. The nuns could also combine their incomes which allowed for extended school time of ten months. The parents paid \$1.00 or 50 cents per child for the additional months. The average enrollment for many years was about 70 in both Mentz and Bernardo; the last years the number was about half.

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<sup>2</sup> From Volume 5, No. 1 – Nesbitt Library Journal

More non-Catholics were moving into the area. Families were moving to other areas. Many moved to Wharton County, near El Campo where I live. The railroad was coming through. There was rich farmland. With more general prosperity and more lay teachers, the Catholic schools were closed. St. Joseph School in Bernardo merged with Mentz in 1912. The Mentz school closed in 1916. The Bernardo school building became the county school and then part of the Columbus ISD. The school closed when bussing was available.

There was another school in the area, Bachelor Hill, where the Zimmerscheidt Road meets the road to Bernardo. It began by 1879 with forty students. My mother and her siblings attended that school since it was closer to their home off Zimmerscheidt Road near that road merge.

Zoar Lutheran Church was organized in 1904, and it was also in the Bachelor Hill area. The services were in English on even Sundays and in German on odd Sundays. A cemetery was also established with the first burial in 1908. The church closed in 1948 with members moving to Cat Spring, Frelsburg, or Columbus. The cemetery has continued to be used for burials. Like everything else it goes by several names: Zoar Lutheran Cemetery, Zion Lutheran Cemetery, and Bachelor Hill Cemetery.

By the time that America entered World War I, our ancestors had been here for at least sixty years – two or more generations. Although they may have spoken German in their homes and community, they were American citizens. Some served in public office in the community and the county. One of my uncles and other men from the area served in France. During World War II, the fact that some still spoke German was helpful when men served in Germany.

In addition to German names there are also French, Irish, Czech, Anglo, and Hispanic names on the stones in the cemetery and in the parish directory. Many families have moved away, or the original name has been lost through marriage of the women in the families. Some descendants have never heard of Mentz or have no connection with German names.

The settlers had left a civilized world and had come to a frontier. They had left a life with wars and military duty and lived through more wars. They faced

daily challenges that were entirely new to them. To our benefit, however, they had courage and determination or, at least, a need for survival. They built homes, schools, and churches. They organized bands and social clubs. They acquired land, raised cattle, and developed prosperous farms. They remained loyal to their new home, and we now enjoy the great, golden land that they had sought.

These reflections are based on writings of others who lived in the general area of Colorado County, the Texas Coast and the Texas Hill Country during the period in which some of our ancestors settled in the Mentz-Bernardo vicinity. Some of you may have heard the same kinds of stories from your parents or grandparents. Since stories like these appear in many sources, I am afraid they are not exaggerations.

**PART I**  
**COLORADO COUNTY, TEXAS**



## BACKGROUND

Rivers, creeks, and springs supply water for crops and animals as well as for personal use. Sometimes they also supply food and a means for navigation. Therefore, throughout history, man has settled near these waterways. The post oak prairies and bottom lands between the Colorado and Brazos rivers lured settlers to Texas from the time of the Austin Colony.<sup>3</sup> "The first settlers, who came to be known as the 'Old Three Hundred,' selected the best lands along the Brazos, Colorado, and Bernard rivers, from present Navasota, Brenham, and La Grange to the coast."<sup>4</sup>

The section of the level region lying between the San Jacinto and Guadalupe rivers, including the lower parts of the Brazos, San Bernard, Colorado, and La Baca rivers, extends into the interior about eighty miles from the coast, in a northerly direction. This beautiful and very valuable portion of Texas as far as the La Baca, is embraced in Austin's Colony. The land is sufficiently elevated to drain easily and rapidly after heavy rains. It is entirely clear of all marsh, lakes, and overflow. The supply of pure water is sufficiently abundant in the rivers and creeks, while excellent water for domestic purposes may be obtained from wells, at a moderate depth, in every part of this territory.

The alluvial bottom lands of the Brazos, San Bernard, and Colorado are from three to twenty miles in width. They are heavily timbered with live oak, with red, black, and other species of oak, with cedar, pecan, elm, hackberry, mulberry, and all the other varieties of forest trees and undergrowth common in the rich alluvions of the Mississippi.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the early settlers of Texas were Germans who emigrated for a variety of reasons. Many of these immigrants found their ways to the land between the

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<sup>3</sup> Terry Jordan, German Seed in Texas Soil, pp. 22-24; Institute of Texas Cultures, The German Texans, not numbered; National Genealogical Inquirer (Vol. 3, No.4) p. 220; Lonn Taylor, Texas Germans-A Bibliography, not numbered; Lonn Taylor and David Warren, Texas Furniture, p.-30

<sup>4</sup> Carlos E. Castenada, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, Vol. VI, p. 195

<sup>5</sup> Mattie Austin Hatcher, Letters of an Early American Traveller, pp. 126-127

Colorado and Brazos rivers which include the present counties of Austin, Colorado, Fayette, and Washington.<sup>6</sup> Early settlers traveled the Brazos to Austin's Colony.<sup>7</sup> Later travelers came by way of Galveston and Houston, traveling on the bayou. From that point ox team and horseback were the method of transportation.<sup>8</sup> As part of a later organized immigration effort, others may have traveled from Galveston to Indianola and then inland<sup>9</sup>

By the end of the 1830's, three small German settlements formed a triangle around this area: Industry, Frelsburg, and Cat Spring as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Friedrich Ernst settled near Mill Creek in present Austin County in 1831; his letters to friends encouraged others to follow him.<sup>10</sup> Robert Kleberg, Ludwig von Roeder, and others settled in the Cat Spring (a spring on the Bernard River) area of Austin County during 1832-34.<sup>11</sup> Germans were located in Washington County by 1836; Frelsburg in Colorado County was established about 1837<sup>12</sup>. The individuals who settled this area had come on their own.

Some of the families which came first were Braden, Burtschell, Frey, and Wendel. These families came from the village of Büdesheim near Bingen on the Rhine River. An early settler from the same village was Frederick Zimmerscheit who had settled near Frelsburg in the early 1830's. His daughter had remained in Germany

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Shook, "German Migration to Texas," Texana (Vol. x, No. 3, 1972) p. 230; Lonny Taylor and David B. Warren, pp. 30-33; Taylor, Texas Germans, not numbered; Jordan, pp. 41, 52-54; John Williams, "The German Experience," Lower Colorado River Review (2nd. Qtr., 1978) p. 14; Otto Tetzlaff, The Emigrant to Texas, p. 58; Institute of Texas Cultures, not numbered; Glen Lich and Dona Reeves, German Culture in Texas, Chronology, not numbered, p.204; The Texas Almanac for 1859, "Colorado County," pp. 170-171

<sup>7</sup> Hatcher, p. 176

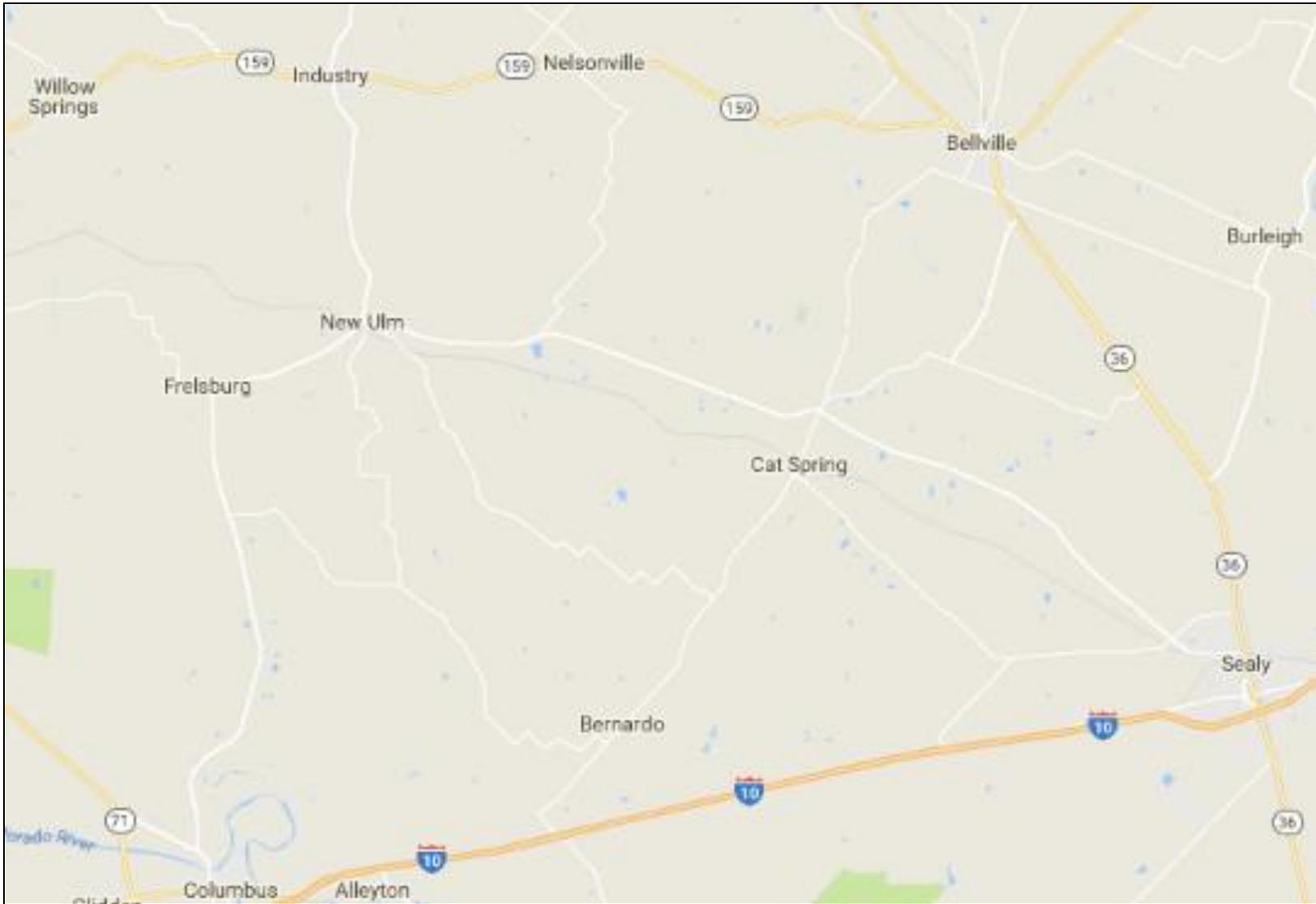
<sup>8</sup> Charles Nagel, A Boy's Civil War Story, p. 72; Otilie Goeth, Memoirs of a Texas Pioneer Grandmother, p. 19

<sup>9</sup> Chester W. and Ethel H. Geue, A New Land Beckoned, pp. 6-7; Ethel H. Geue, New Homes in a New Land, p. 15

<sup>10</sup> Shook, p. 230; Francis E. Abernathy, "A Look at Texas-German Folklore," German Culture in Texas, p. 204; Gilbert Benjamin, Germans in Texas, pp. 16-17

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin, pp. 16-17; Geue, New Homes in a New Land, p. 3; Abernathy, p. 204

<sup>12</sup> Geue, New Homes, p. 3; Rudolph Biesele, The History of German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861, p. 51; Shook, p. 242; Abernathy, p. 204



**Figure 1** Google Maps. (2018). General Area of Austin and Colorado Counties Retrieved from URL

until 1844 so perhaps these settlers had prior knowledge of the settlements in this area or perhaps some of the Germans who had settled in Galveston and Houston told them about the area.

Some of the families which came first were Braden, Burtschell, Frey, and Wendel. These families came from the village of Büdesheim near Bingen on the Rhine River. An early settler from the same village was Frederick Zimmerscheit who had settled near Frelsburg in the early 1830's. His daughter had remained in Germany until 1844 so perhaps these settlers had prior knowledge of the settlements in this area or perhaps some of the Germans who had settled in Galveston and Houston told them about the area.

However, in 1844 Germans began to immigrate to Texas as a result of an organized colonizing effort. In April, 1842, a group of German princes and noblemen (the number varies in different accounts from fourteen to twenty-five) met at Biebrich on the Rhine (near Mainz).<sup>13</sup> They organized the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas (Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas) later known simply as the Verein or the Mainzer Verein (Mainz Society).<sup>14</sup> Emigrants signed an emigration contract, paid the designated fee, and were promised certain conditions as settlers in Texas.<sup>15</sup>

In order to publicize their plans and encourage emigration, they appointed agents for various areas. The small village of Büdesheim had its own agent – George Joseph Epeneter. Included in the Archives of Koblenz are papers of the mayor of Büdesheim during this period. By November 21, 1845, a letter from Mayor St. George to the Grand-Ducal Hessian County Council of Bingen County stated that 67 citizens were prepared to immigrate to Texas. Included were single men, one single

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<sup>13</sup> Geue, New Homes, p. 12; Tetzlaff, p. 2; Institute of Texas Cultures; Benjamin, pp 1-33; Shook, p. 230-231; Glen E. Lich, "Goethe on the Guadalupe," German Culture in Texas, p. 35; Otto Tetzlaff, "A Guide for German Immigrants," Rice University Studies (Summer, 1977) p. 13

<sup>14</sup> Geue, New Homes, p. 12; Institute of Texas Cultures; Benjamin, pp. 31-33

<sup>15</sup> Geue, A New Land Beckoned, pp. 3-15

woman, couples, and families. There were forty children. The men were mainly farmers or those with farm related occupations – blacksmiths, coopers, and carpenters – as well as two vintners. St. George reassured the Council that...

- *They have disposed of their assets and, after paying their debts, they took with them sufficient cash to pay the head tax.*
- *According to my knowledge they did not leave behind any creditors whose demands had not been met.*
- *All emigrants have been provided with passes to Antwerp and with testimonials as to their character.*
- *The fact that a local organizer representative was given the agency is the reason why in such a short time so many decided to emigrate, while formerly only a few gave it any thought – even if the agent did not make any strenuous efforts in this direction.*

We might be somewhat skeptical of the last statement. Included on the list are two Braden brothers and a sister married to a Braden cousin. The mother of the Braden siblings was Anna Margaretha Epeneter – perhaps an aunt of the agent?

Prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, the group was in Antwerp and ready to sail. There is another letter to Mayor St. George in the Archives indicating that part of the group would be sailing on the *Andacia* with the majority sailing on the *Hamilton*. The two ships left in early December 1845 and arrived in late March/early April 1846. The emigrants left when Texas was a Republic and arrived when it was a state. There was more disturbing news for the exhausted immigrants. The Fall and Winter of 1845 and Spring of 1846 were especially difficult ones for the Society.

Immigrants had begun arriving in Texas in 1844; because of poor planning, inaccessibility of the land (in the Fisher-Miller -Grant), lack of transportation, and a number of other reasons, few of the settlers ever made it to their final destination (now west-central counties including Kimble, Llano, Mason, Menard,

San Saba, McCulloch, and Concho).<sup>16</sup> Therefore, many of the immigrants found their ways instead to areas already settled by others of their countrymen. Otilie Fuchs recalled,

"After we had landed [1846], it was found that reports concerning conditions for the emigrants sponsored by the Society were so discouraging that Father decided to drop out of the Society and continue the voyage on his own."<sup>17</sup>

The Fuchs family settled first in Cat Spring and like Adolf Fuchs, the other Büdesheimers had to make some difficult choices. They had signed a contract with the Society and were expecting the conditions promised when they paid to be part of the colony. Some stayed in Galveston and got jobs, some stayed at Indianola and still others followed Ludwig Wink inland into present day Colorado County, where he had family.

One Büdesheimer, Friedrich Zimmerscheidt, and his wife immigrated to Texas in the early 1830's and settled on a league of land a few miles from Frelsburg. Their daughter remained in Germany for schooling and later married. In 1844 the daughter, her husband Johann Leyendecker, and four children left Budesheim, boarded the ship with the other Budesheimers and joined her parents in Texas. Also in the group was Ludwig Wink. His mother was Antonetta Zimmerscheidt – possibly a sister of Friedrich. After deciding to leave the Society, he returned to the Cummings Creek area. Wink worked as a blacksmith for a year or so and then returned to German to marry.

Lucas Burttschell died a year after arrival in 1847. Frelsburg was given as the place of death. His family was a large one with five daughters and five sons. The oldest daughter does not appear in later records, so we do not know what happened to her. The oldest son Franz had signed his own contract with the

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<sup>16</sup> Geue, A New Land, pp. 3-15; Tetzlaff, The Emigrant to Texas, pp. 2-3; Jordan, pp. 41-47

<sup>17</sup> Goeth, p. 19

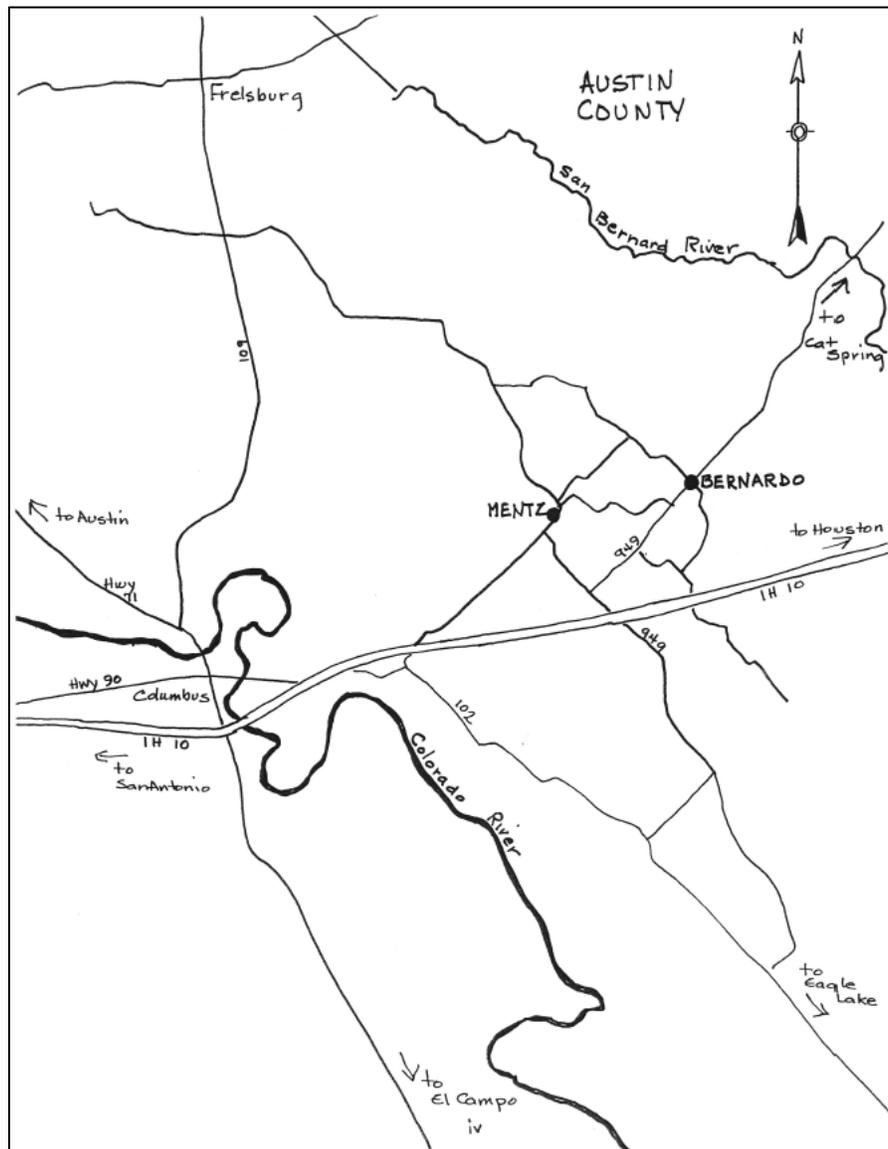
Adelsverein so he was also ready to settle. The other families were growing so they evidently began to look elsewhere for more land. A history of Joseph Burttschell found in *History of Southwest Texas, 1907*, includes information about his father Franz.

*Frank Burttschell was one of the pioneers of Colorado County. He took up a tract of wild land in the vicinity of Mentz and at once began the task of clearing and improving a homestead. There being no railways in that section of the state, all the surplus products of the little farm which he improved had to be marketed in Houston or Brownsville. The round-trip often took several weeks to accomplish. He made the journey with ox-teams, going heavily loaded and coming back with a large stock of goods for home use and for merchants of the town.*

Needless to say, life was hard. The settlers had to clear land, build some kind of house and other shelter, plant crops, and try to begin a new life in the Texas climate. However, by 1848 these first settlers must have been satisfied with their choices because more Braden siblings as well as the widowed mother Anna Margaretha Epeneter set sail for Texas (Braden, Frey, Lamby, Maerz and Wink). The Adelsverein's plans had ended with bankruptcy in 1847 so this group came on its own and arrived in Galveston on November 27, 1848. All of the family except for one daughter came to Texas although two of her sons must have emigrated later as they are also found in the Mentz records. A single daughter married Peter J. Wendel. The oldest son George Joseph and his family settled in San Antonio. The 1848 group also included a brother of Anton Braden as well as other Büdesheimers. There were 24 children in the group. It is not known whether the arrangements to join the first group were made before that group left four years earlier.

## BERNARDO

Several groups of settlers made their ways to the south bank of the San Bernard River (between Colorado and Brazos rivers) in Colorado County about 1845.<sup>18</sup> The settlement was located about ten miles west of Cat Spring.<sup>19</sup>



<sup>18</sup> Shook, p. 242

<sup>19</sup> Biesele, p. 55

## Figure 2 Mentz-Bernardo Location

There is a branch of the river in the Bernardo area which is called the Little Bernard or the German Branch.

"A few of the early settlers came to Texas as colonists of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas, but they preferred to remain in this section of the state where a good number of Germans had established themselves and where the frontier conditions were not as exacting as in the Fisher and Miller Grant."<sup>20</sup>

About twenty German Catholic families came to Texas during the period from 1846 to 1848 from Büdesheim (Buedesheim), Hesse Darmstadt; at least ten of these families came to the Mentz-Bernardo area. The settlement had nothing to do with their emigration contract; the immigrants chose the area on their own.

The settlement was first known as Bernardo Prairie for its location on prairie land on the San Bernard; later it was called Bernardo.<sup>21</sup> The area has also been called San Bernard and Bernardo Prairie. According to the history of the Cat Spring Agricultural Society to which many Mentz and Bernardo farmers belonged, another early name was the Braden Settlement. Adam Braden, Anton Braden, Sr., Anton Braden, Jr., and Andreas Braden were serious buyers of land in Colorado County beginning in 1870 and continuing through the 1880's. From an article in the November 6, 1876, issue of the Colorado County Citizen:

The Bernard is a fine settlement, the majority of the inhabitants being German numbering perhaps 500. There is a very good brass band, composed entirely of farmers and a singing society called "New Mines Singing Society."

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Handbook of Texas, Vol. I., p. 150

It was on the main road from Houston to towns and settlements inland.<sup>22</sup> As one writer describes it,

"... we lived on a small and rather secluded farm in Colorado County, Texas, at a point called Saint Bernardo (named after a river which was noted chiefly for an abundance of water when it was not needed and none at all when it was)."<sup>23</sup>

He also describes the Saint Bernardo with its "banks of clean white sand, set off by picturesque cottonwood trees."<sup>24</sup> Many animals inhabited the area: ducks, geese, catfish, bear, panthers, deer, squirrels, rabbits, coons, opossum, skunks, rattlesnakes, moccasins, copperheads, scorpions, tarantulas, razorback (pigs), turkeys, prairie chickens, partridge, blackbirds, swallows, mocking birds, "Kardinals," larks, owls, crows, hawks, buzzards, bats, doves, pigeons, and hummingbirds.<sup>25</sup>

The Bernard Prairie extending from the Brazos to the Colorado and from Catspring to Brazoria County was a ranch free for cattle and horses. Therefore, many settlers were cattle and horse raisers. Corn bread, bacon, molasses and coffee, occasional fish and venison, were the principal food of the pioneers. In 1856 the settlers had better vegetable gardens and orchards and more milk, butter, and cheese.<sup>26</sup>

"The various German settlements between the lower Brazos and Colorado rivers were little more than loose agglomerations of farms, with unpopulated areas between the various communities."<sup>27</sup> "We lived far apart [1855]; there was neither school nor church, and indeed, but little chance for communication or

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<sup>22</sup> Crystal Ragsdale, The Golden Free Land: p. 84, #14

<sup>23</sup> Nagel, p. 1

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-17

<sup>26</sup> Adalbert Regenbrecht, "The German Settlers of Millheim Before the Civil War," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XX (July 1916) No. 1, pp.29-30

<sup>27</sup> Jordan, pp. 94-95

association of any kind.<sup>28</sup> The homes of the time and area were those generally described as "dog-run" houses.

There was an old double log house reenforced with clay, and with-out windows. There was the usual passage between the two doors opening into the two rooms, if they may be so dignified.

The walls were made of clay and straw and gravel, probably of the adobe character, with porches, no doubt to protect the walls rather than the inmates from wind and weather. Perhaps two bed rooms and a common sitting and dining room, with a fireplace large enough to take the common hickory or oak logs, of which we had an abundance; and, finally, a board lean-to kitchen.

Later we used the house for storing corn on one side and as shelter for horses on the other.

From it [the house] opened out the customary cornfield, just beyond the very rare, but rather complete vegetable garden, all surrounded with the old-fashioned and picturesque zigzag rail fence, which has played so unique a part in the romance of our political history.

The well under the trees from which we drew our water supply looked cool and fresh in its natural setting.<sup>29</sup>

Bernardo had its own post office from 1875 to 1917. Postmasters and dates of service are as follows:<sup>30</sup>

#### Bernardo Prairie

Antone Braden Jr., January 7, 1875

Andrew McBride, August 13, 1888

Anton Braden Jr., June 17, 1889

Andrew McBride, March 8, 1890

Discontinued August 20, 1898, papers to Mentz

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<sup>28</sup> Nagel, p. 35

<sup>29</sup> Nagel, pp. 19-20; the same type of house and fence is described by Louise Romberg Fuchs in The Golden Free Land, pp. 66-67; the Romber family lived on the Austin County side of the Bernard River.

<sup>30</sup> Jim Wheat, Postmasters and Post Offices of Texas not numbered; Karl M. Conrad, Postmasters and Post Offices of the Tenth Congressional District of Texas, p. 68 (some dates vary in the two sources)

## Bernardo

Emilie Franz, December 13, 1898  
Shad T. Colley, September 13, 1900  
Herman Weigel, December 10, 1909  
Willie L. Reitz, August 29, 1912  
Louis Witte, April 26, 1913  
Eddy A. HERNESKE? Jr., October 29, 1915  
Discontinued January 31, 1917, moved to Cat Spring

The 1850, 1860, and 1870 censuses of Colorado County list many German family names in the Bernard Prairie area. The 1850 census shows no distinction between the various settlements; the designation "Colorado sub-division" is used throughout. In the later census records the post office or sub-division is indicated: Bernard Prairie, Frelsburg, Alleyton, Eagle Lake, etc. The sub-division varies for the same family even though it may not have moved because of the change of post office and/or justice precinct.<sup>31</sup>

Names appearing on the 1850 census include:

Berchhel (Burtschell)	Miller
Broad (Brod)	Norndorf (Neuendorff)
Braden	Nagel
Calden	Oker
Fichen	Ramsel
Frey	Rhode
Henneke	Spink
Hageman	Stole
Heinsohn	Walter
Himli (Himley)	Wisshuhn (Weishuhn)
Kuhn	Weigel
Meismer	Wink

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<sup>31</sup> Microfilm census records, Colorado County, Texas, 1850, 1860, 1870

Biesele, in his book The German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861, lists the following as living in the Bernardo area at the time of the 1860 census:<sup>32</sup>

A. Braden	Charles Benzung (Belsing?)
Robert Denisch (Dehnisch)	J.B. Neihus (Neihaus)
Anth. Geistmann	Franz Ordner
Wm. Goedke (Gaedeke)	F. Pesserchek
F. W. Hengst	Charles Reichard (Reichart)
Alex Himley	B. Schiller
H. E. Jordt	F. Schiller
Franz Kortzbue (Kotzebue)	Stephen Schimera
F. Kornsteiner (Kansteiner)	John Schaberda
Ludwig Litzmar [Litzmann?]	John Weigel
Jacob Marz (Merz) [Maerz?]	J. Wilburg

Charles Nagel, in his book A Boy's Civil War Story, mentions Himley, Litzman, and Reichart as neighbors.<sup>33</sup> The 1860 and 1870 censuses list other family names in addition to those on the 1850 census: Barton, Becker, Bertram, Dorea, Elberfelt, Foster, Franz, Frick, Grabow, Miekow, Stock, Tanhauser, Wendel.<sup>34</sup>

Many of the settlers from the Bernardo area are also named in the history or minutes of the Cat Spring Agricultural Society established in 1856. Early members included the following with the year of settlement in the area<sup>35</sup>:

Andreas Braden (Bernardo) 1848  
Georg. Brune (Bernardo) 1840  
Dittman (Bernardo) 1849  
Henry Dittmar (Cat Spring-Bernardo) 1851  
Adolf Fuchs (Cat-Spring-Bernardo) 1851  
Alexander Himley (Cat Spring-Bernardo) 1848  
Carl Johse (Cat Spring-Millheim-Bernardo) 1840's  
Franz Koy (Bernardo) 1853  
Kretzschmar (Bernardo area) 1857  
Herman Nagel (Cat Spring-Bernardo) 1847  
Arnold Prause (Bernardo) 1860

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<sup>32</sup> Biesele, p. 55

<sup>33</sup> Nagel, pp. 39

<sup>34</sup> Census, Colorado County, Texas, 1860, 1870

<sup>35</sup> Cat Spring Agricultural Society, Cat Spring Story, pp. 28-84

Reibenstein (Cat Spring-Bernardo) 1859  
Carl Reichardt (Bernard area) 1850  
John Salomon (Cat Spring-Bernardo) 1855  
Trenckmann (Cat Spring-Bernardo) 1853

Arthur L. Schuette taught in the Bernardo school (he uses the term San Bernard) from 1913-1915. He later taught at Bachelor Hill (in the Mentz area) and Cat Spring. He kept written records of his experience including the names of his pupils at each school. The following names appear on his record for the years at Bernardo: Bubak, Eckardt, Kansteiner, Kveton, Meissner, Prause, Reichardt, Reinhardt, Sens, Tipp, and Uhlig.<sup>36</sup>

### **Free Public Schools/St. Joseph's School, Bernardo**

While the Texas Constitution of 1845 and the 1854 school law provided for free, common schools, access to education was still sporadic, especially in small, rural areas.<sup>37</sup> The Sisters of Divine Providence aided in providing communities a solution to this challenge by establishing schools around the state, some of which are still in operation today.

In 1866, Mother St. Andrew Felin and Sister Alphonse Boegler left their commune in the north east of France at the request of Bishop Dubuis of Texas to establish schools in Texas.<sup>38</sup> They landed in Galveston on October 25. After some time with the Ursuline Sisters, resting and getting oriented to the language and Texas ways, they traveled to Austin, arriving on December 2. In early April of 1867 they opened their first parochial school in (Austin) Texas, St. Mary's School.

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<sup>36</sup> Hand written report by Arthur L. Schuette, formerly in possession of Mrs. Arthur L. Schuette, El Campo, Texas. After her death in 1982, the records were moved to the Colorado County Archives.

<sup>37</sup> Handbook of Texas Online, Max Berger and Lee Wilborn, "Education," accessed January 21, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/khe01>.

<sup>38</sup> Sisters of Divine Providence, Accessed January 21, 2018, <https://www.cdptexas.org/history/>

In 1868 the Bishop asked the Sisters to establish their Motherhouse in Castroville, Texas, an Alsatian immigrant town west of San Antonio.

Bernardo established a local Catholic school [St. Joseph's School] as early as 1872 that was merged with the Mentz Catholic school in 1911.<sup>39</sup> For a time, the school was staffed by the Sisters of Divine Providence.

The following information is taken from The History of the Sisters of Divine Providence, pages 163 to 166, and relates generally and specifically to the school at Bernardo.

In seventeen years (1886-1903) Mother Florence opened forty-seven schools. In accepting these schools, she asked that three requisites be fulfilled: permission of the bishop in whose diocese the school was situated (she also had to obtain her own bishop's permission to accept a school out of his diocese), a suitable dwelling place for the sisters, and a schoolhouse. A "suitable dwelling place" in that period did not mean what it connotes today. Country places were still very primitive; and almost every dwelling was a little frame structure which never could be heated properly in the winter. The sisters, as well as all the people of the place, burned wood, coal, or oil for cooking and heating; they used kerosene lamps; they pumped water from a well or drew it in buckets from cisterns, which were sometimes close to the house but frequently at a distance. There were no modern conveniences in these homes. The schoolhouse was a small building of one, sometimes two, rarely three or four rooms. Usually the crowded conditions compelled one sister to take her class to the porch or even to the yard under a shady tree.

The forty-seven schools can be grouped into three types: the parish school, the private school belonging to the Sisters of Divine Providence, and the free public school. Some schools were opened as one type, but in a year or

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<sup>39</sup> Handbook of Texas Online, Arliss Treybig, "Bernardo, TX," Accessed January 21, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hnb29>.

so they were changed to another; a few remained throughout the period as they had started.

Mother St. Andrew had opened sixteen free public schools previous to 1886, and Mother Florence continued her policy in counties where such schools were requested by the people, although, as she wrote Bishop Gallagher in May 1894, she preferred the parish school and only permitted the sisters to teach the free public school when the people were too poor to provide a parish school. These schools were, for the most part, in Medina, Columbus, and Fayette Counties, where the people of the vicinity were Catholic. Under the community system, the citizens conducted their schools, using the school money for salaries. The school building was not public property, and the children were not taught by lay teachers; but the building was owned by the parish or the sisters and the children were taught by the sisters.

To teach in these free schools, the sister had to take an examination given by the school board of the county where she was to teach. Moreover, the teachers in most of these counties had to know either German or Czech, sometimes both, since the beginners in school did not know English and since the parents wanted these languages taught in the schools so that their children could read and write their own language besides speaking it.

The sisters' free schools had terms of ten months instead of the four months of the regular public school. When the money allotted by the county was used up by the sisters, the people of the parish paid a tuition of a dollar or fifty cents per month per child, according to the contract made.

These so-called free schools resulted from a need of the times. In the 1870's and 1880's there were very few schoolteachers; moreover, not many lay people could have one profession for four months of the year and another for the next eight months. But religious women of a congregation placed all their earnings into a common fund from which each shared alike and lived from day to day a life of frugality. They could, therefore, teach children of those counties which did not provide an annual living wage. In the 1890's when people began to have more financial resources, more lay

teachers were available. Population shifts brought more non-Catholics into the areas. Many of these people objected to having sisters teach their children, fearing they would instruct them in the Catholic faith. From the beginnings of these free schools, the sisters never taught religion to non-Catholic children and never during the time allotted to the free school. Nevertheless, accusations were made.

One example is the case of the school at Bernardo Prairie, Colorado County. An accusation was made against the county judge for allowing the sisters to teach since they were reported to be teaching religion. A story was told about a particular incident to prove the point and printed in the German paper. In the next issue the county judge refuted it saying that he knew the man who had concocted the story and he had learned that no such incident had occurred. He stated, moreover, that on several occasions people had complained to him that the sisters were teaching religion in the free schools. As soon as the accusations were made, he had them carefully examined and never had he found them true. He even went further: he brought the accusers back to his office asking where they got their information since he could not find the accusations true. Invariably, each one stated, "I heard that the sisters were teaching nothing but religion; I forgot who said it."

In 1911, the school [St. Joseph's School] was annexed to Mentz; the latter becoming a Local House.

Photos from Old Bernardo



Figure 3 Bernardo 1910 Photo: Charles A. Hennecke



Figure 4 Bernardo Feast - JULY 1914 Photo: Charles A. Hennecke  
Grandchild: Katherine Burttschell Hennecke

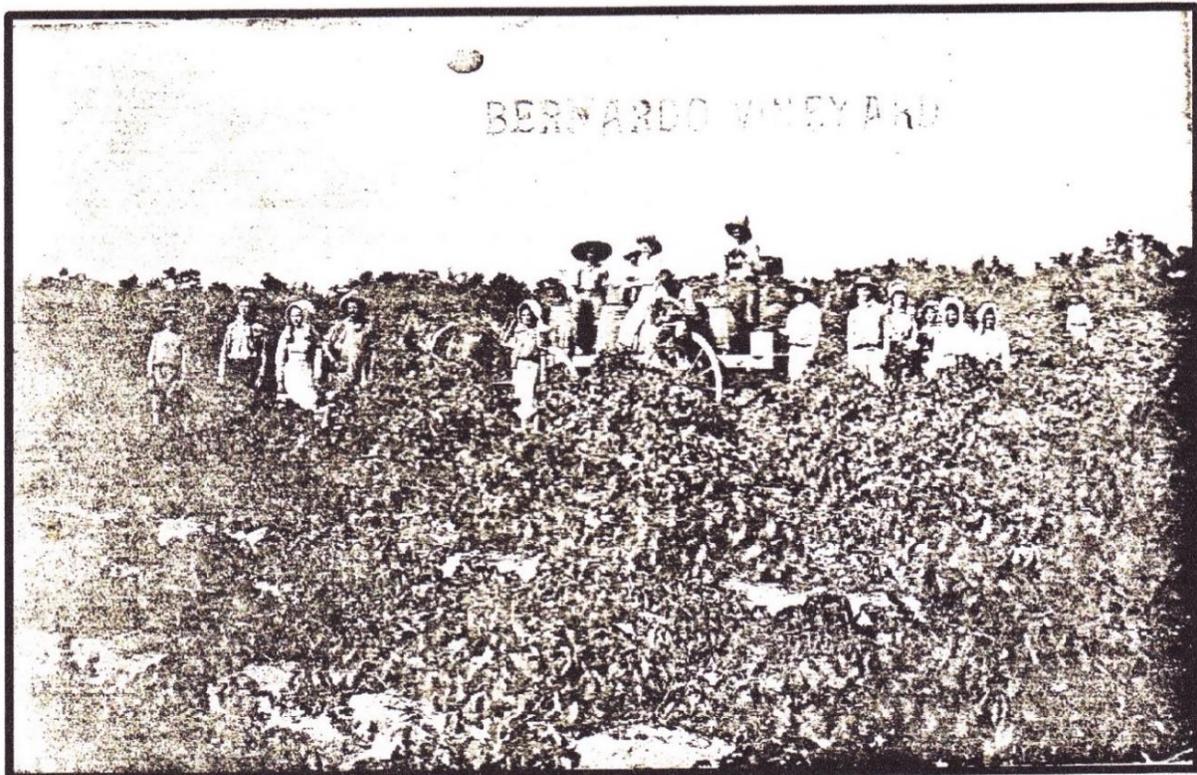


Figure 5 Bernardo Vineyard - Postcard from 1912

## MENTZ

Mentz is a rural community in Colorado County which was settled by German immigrants who named the settlement for their former homeland in Germany.<sup>40</sup> It was evidently first named Neu or New Mainz as this name appears on some of the tombstones in the St. Roch Catholic cemetery and on some church records. Many of the settlers came to Texas under the auspices of the Mainzer Verein (Mainz Society).<sup>41</sup> At least two groups of these settlers came from the village of Büdesheim (now Bingen-Büdesheim) near Bingen on the Rhine.<sup>42</sup> Bingen is about fifteen miles west of Mainz (also called Mentz).<sup>43</sup> At the time of emigration, Büdesheim was in the grand-duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt.<sup>44</sup> It is now in Rhineland Palatinate.<sup>45</sup>

Frank Burtschell had immigrated to Texas in 1846 with his parents, brothers, and sisters. As one of the pioneers of Colorado County,

"...he took up a tract of wild land in the vicinity of Mentz, and at once began the task of clearing and improving a homestead. ...he suffered the hardships and privations of life in a new country.... There being no railways in this section of the state, all of the surplus products of the little farm which he improved had to be marketed in Houston or Brownsville, the round trip often taking several weeks to accomplish. He made the journey with ox-teams, going heavily loaded, and coming back with a large stock of goods for home use, and also for the merchants of the town. A man of industry and perseverance, he was exceedingly prosperous ...."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Handbook of Texas, Vol. II., p. 174

<sup>41</sup> Emigration records of Lucas Burtschell and others; Geue, A New Land, passenger lists

<sup>42</sup> Passenger lists from Archives of Koblenz, Germany; passenger lists in Verein Collection, University of Texas; correspondence with Diocese of Mainz; correspondence with Catholic priest of Bingen-Büdesheim; current map of area. The following sailed from Büdesheim in 1845: C. Deutsch, J. Frey, P. Frey, P. J. Frey, C. Rothemer, J. Rothemer, J. Schmitt, III, Lud. Wink, P.J. Wendel, L. Burtschell, Ant. Braden, Ad. Braden, J.B. Braden. These sailed in 1848: G. P. Wink, Jean Wink, P. Frey, A. Schmitt, G. J. Braden, A. Lamby, R. Poth, And. Braden, P. Maerz, L. Wink.

<sup>43</sup> New-Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica, p. 964

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Current map of Germany

<sup>46</sup> Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas, Vol. II, pp. 366-367

Many of these early settlers were of the Roman Catholic faith. Some of their early records have been located in the Catholic church of Bingen-Büdesheim and in the records of the Diocese of Mainz, Germany.<sup>47</sup> Early Texas church records for the Catholic families in the Mentz, Bernard, and Cat Spring areas are located in the Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Frelsburg, Colorado County, which dates back to 1836.<sup>48</sup> A small log church had been constructed and services were held by a visiting missionary priest, Father J. A. Jacob, until 1847.<sup>49</sup> The parish was established in 1847 under the guidance of Father Jacob. Father T. Anstalt succeeded him the following year.<sup>50</sup> In February 1854, Father Victor Gury was appointed to take charge and he remained until April 1887.<sup>51</sup> Father Gury also filled the office of Vicar-General of the Galveston Diocese, with Father Peter Tarrillian assisting him in his many and various duties.<sup>52</sup> The names of Father Jacobs, Father Joseph Anstalt (Anstaett), Father Gury, and Father Tarrillian (Tarrillion) appear on the records of those Bernardo area settlers.<sup>53</sup>

As early as 1850 (some records are dated 1847) the Very Reverend Victor Gury and Father Charles Tarrillion came through the woods on horseback from Frelsburg to tend to the spiritual needs of the settlers of Mentz.<sup>54</sup> Holy Mass was first said in private homes, but the people, ever mindful of their spiritual needs, built a small church which was completed in 1858.<sup>55</sup> Families in the vicinity of Cat Spring were also involved in the formation of the church. One family history includes the following paragraph:

They [Franz Glueck family] settled and farmed in Austin County, about one half mile north of what is now the site of the old town of Cat Spring, Texas. Shortly after they came [1853] they were instrumental in starting the first

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<sup>47</sup> Correspondence with Diocese of Mainz and Catholic priest in Bingen-Büdesheim

<sup>48</sup> Copies of selected pages from church book of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Frelsburg, Colorado County, Texas; original in Catholic Archives, Austin, Texas; copies in Colorado County Archives, Courthouse, Columbus, Texas, and in possession of Mrs. James Hopkins, Garwood, Texas

<sup>49</sup> Diocese of Galveston, Centennial Book, Sts. Peter and Paul, Frelsburg, not numbered

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Copies of Frelsburg church books

<sup>54</sup> Diocese of Galveston, Centennial Book, St. Roche, Mentz, not numbered

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

Catholic Church in their community, by holding services in their home. The church building was later erected at Mentz Settlement, near Alleyton, Texas.<sup>56</sup>

The same history also mentions that one daughter of the Franz Glueck family, Pauline, and her husband Andreas Braden, Jr., "helped to build the first St. Rochus Church at Mentz and were charter members there."<sup>57</sup>

Mentz had its own post office when a post office, begun as San Bernard in 1853, was changed to New Mainz in 1860. That post office was discontinued in 1866, and one was later established as Mentz in 1889. Joseph Burttschell was postmaster beginning January 17, 1889; the post office was discontinued and moved to Alleyton December 29, 1896.<sup>58</sup> Anton Burttschell was postmaster beginning December 4, 1897.<sup>59</sup> The post office was discontinued January 15, 1913 and moved to Alleyton.<sup>60</sup> The post office was in a store owned by Anton Burttschell which was near the church.<sup>61</sup>

Some of the students living in the Mentz-Bernardo area attended school at Bachelor Hill (between Mentz and New Ulm). Names of students of Arthur L. Schuette from 1915-17 and 1918-1921 were Berger, Braden, Brod, Buechernan, Dunlevy, Grabow, Hennecke, Hill, Iselt, Kuhn, Meyer, Ritter, Schmidt, Sharnberger, Streicher, and Williams.<sup>62</sup>

By the 1850 census there were other German families in the area: Brod, Hennecke, Kuhn, Meismer, Neuendorff, Weigel and Weishuhn. Twenty years

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<sup>56</sup> David Smalley, Glueck Family Record, p. 6

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Wheat, not numbered; Conrad, p. 69

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Personal recollection of Mrs. W. P. Treybig (Pauline Hennecke) who grew up in the Mentz-Bernardo area, presently living in El Campo, Texas

<sup>62</sup> Schuette

later other families were Becker, Denisch, Foster, Geistmann, Grabow, Iselt, Jakel, Jordt, Kansteiner, Kotzebue, Litzmann, Miekow, Reitz, Ritter, Rolf, Schmidt, Stock, Tannhauser, Watz, and Wicke. Although most of the names were German; Polish, Czech, Irish, and English names appear in records as well.

Many descendants of the original settlers still live in the Bernardo-Mentz area, some on or near the land of their forefathers. Farming and cattle raising are still the main businesses of the German-Texans. The German language can still be heard in some conversations.

### **St. Roch Church**

Being primarily Catholic, these families were first ministered to by the priests of Frelsburg, the first Catholic priests in the area. The priests traveled on horseback through the woods to baptize and marry - and sometimes bury. Among the first records in the Frelsburg church books in 1847 are baptisms of children from some of these Mentz families; one of the first marriages in 1847 was that of Jacob Brod and Josephine Burtschell.

By 1857 the Mentz settlement had grown enough that there was a need for its own church building. For \$1.00 Frank Burtschell deeded land to the Bishop of Galveston for a church, school, and rectory. The first church stood where the cemetery is now according to the cornerstone in front of the church. By 1867 a larger church was needed. The parishioners built a stone church -- mostly by hand. They hauled sand-stone by ox-wagon for days from Pin Oak Creek bottom. This creek east of Cummings Creek is located on the Zimmerscheit League on the Charles Leyendecker, Sr. land. Crockett Leyendecker recalls that his grandfather told him about the building of the church.

The stone church burned in 1940; the present church was built in 1941. Families from settlements east of the area, such as Cat Spring, were also involved in the founding and developing of this parish.

The settlers had named their community for their homeland; they also named their church with the homeland in mind. Near Bingen, Germany, to the south-east, is the Rochusberg on which stands the celebrated chapel of St. Roch.<sup>63</sup> The Mentz church is also named St. Roch (also called St. Rochus and St. Roche's). St. Roch, Confessor, was a citizen of Montpellier in France in the 14th century. He devoted his life to the service of the plague-stricken. He was a pilgrim who labored for the sick, especially in Italy. St. Roch, whose feast day is August 16, is invoked as a protector against pestilence. The Latin form of his name is Rochus.<sup>64</sup>

In 1857 Franz Burtschell, one of the early settlers from Büdesheim, deeded to R.R. Bishop John M. Odin, Roman Catholic Bishop of Galveston, a parcel of land containing 4 3/4 acres.<sup>65</sup> For this land Burtschell received one dollar. The condition: "that the tract of land is to be used for the purpose of erecting a church thereon as also with the privilege of erecting a parsonage & school buildings on the same for the use and benefit of the Ronan Catholic community residing in the Bernard settlements in said county [Colorado County]."<sup>66</sup> The tract was part of the Frank Burtschell homestead tract. In 1858 the first church was built in the area where the cemetery is now located, according to the cornerstone of the current building, shown in Figure 6.

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<sup>63</sup> New-Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica, p. 964

<sup>64</sup> Benedictine Monks, The Book of Saints, p. 611; Rev. Alban Butler, Lives of the Saints, p. 937

<sup>65</sup> Deed, Franz Burtschell to John M. Odin, Colorado County, Deed Book J, #1234, 22 July, 1857

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

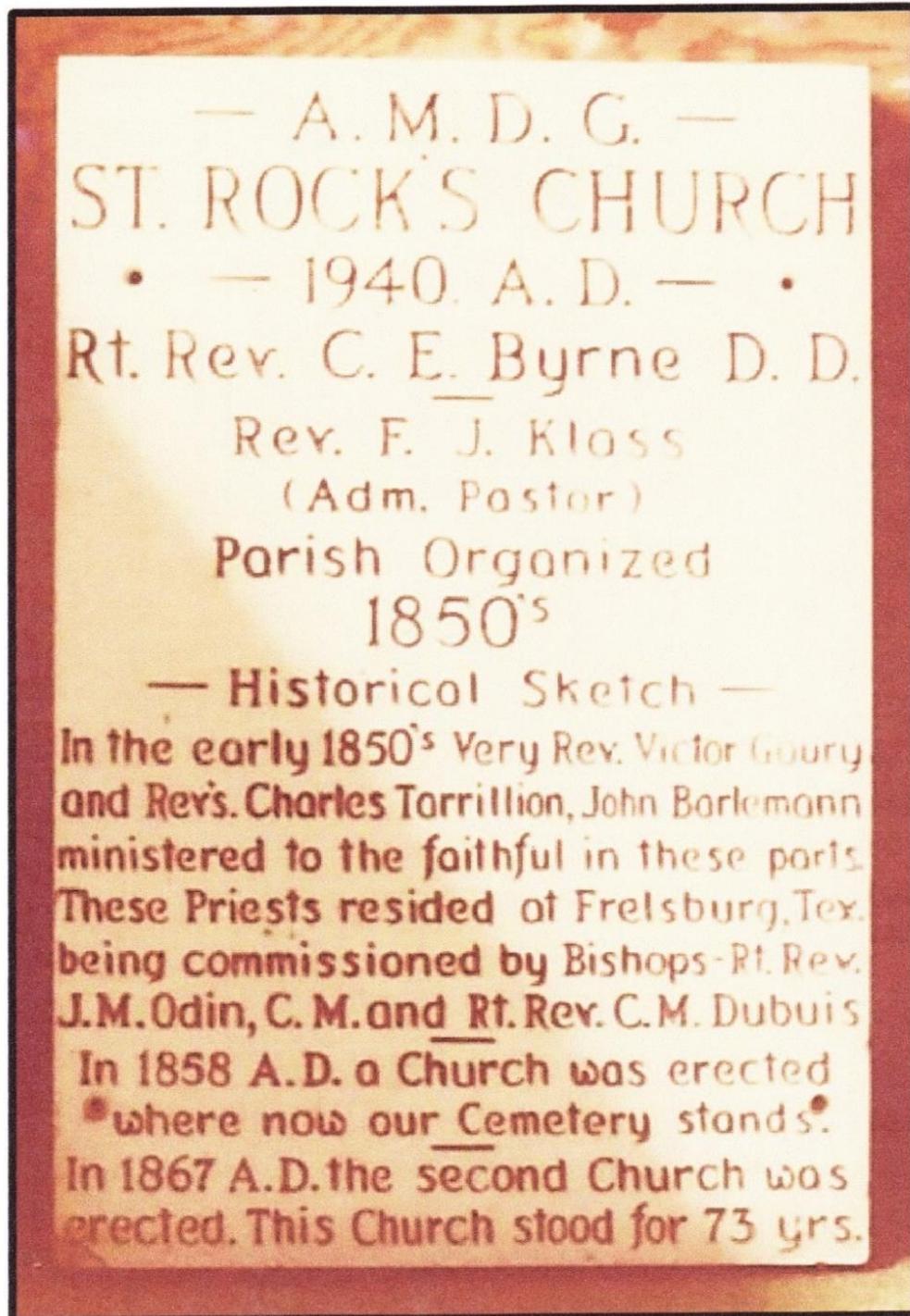


Figure 6 Cornerstone of Current Church Building

The Catholic community of Mentz grew so rapidly that in 1867 plans were under way to build a larger church.<sup>67</sup> The people themselves built most of the church, giving of their spare time and hauling stone on wagons drawn by oxen.<sup>68</sup> They hauled sandstone by ox-wagon for days from Pin Oak Creek bottom. This creek east of Cummings Creek is located on the Zimmerscheit League on the Charles Leyendecker, Sr. land.

The report of Claude M. Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston, to Archbishop Odin on January 2, 1866, refers to this new church.<sup>69</sup>

At New-Mentz in Colorado County I blessed the cornerstone of a new stone building to be seventy-six by forty feet. The people had collected one hundred and fifty dollars in cash.

When the stone church, shown in Figure 7, was completed in 1871, the parish received its first resident pastor, Father John Weimer.<sup>70</sup> The parish prospered until the stone church was destroyed by fire in 1940.<sup>71</sup> The present church was built in 1941 under the leadership of Father Francis Klass.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Diocese of Galveston, St. Roche

<sup>68</sup> ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Sister M. Generosa Callahan, C.D.P., The History of the Sisters of Divine Providence, p. 6

<sup>70</sup> Diocese of Galveston, St. Roche

<sup>71</sup> ibid.

<sup>72</sup> ibid.



**Figure 7 St. Roch Stone Church Completed 1871, Destroyed by Fire 1940**

Ap. J.

New Mainz March 12<sup>th</sup>  
A. D. 1872.

Illustrissimo ac Reverendissimo  
Claudio Mariae Dubuis .D.D.  
Episcopo Galvestonensi.

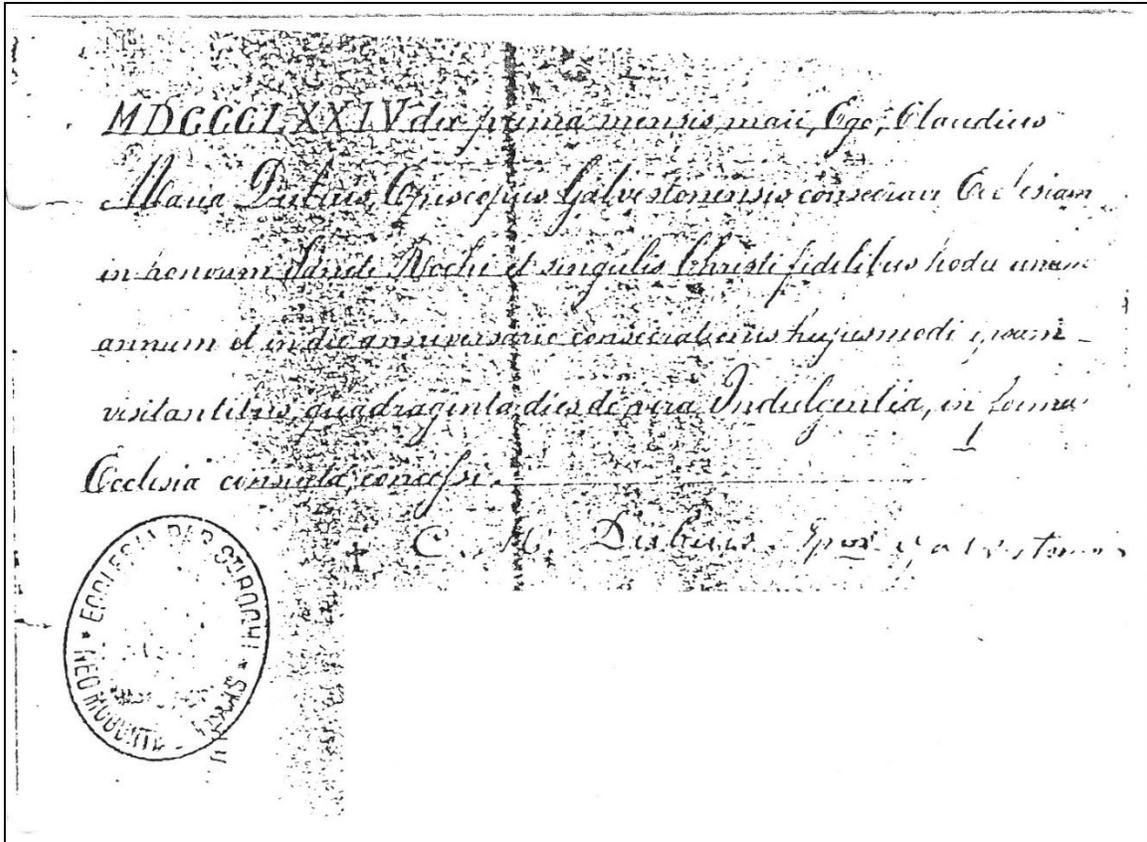
Rev<sup>dis</sup> Joannes Weimer, Pastor Ecclesiae  
nec<sup>te</sup> Rochi in loco, vulgo dicto New Mainz  
Bernarde, ab Excellentia tua facultatem  
fit. erigendi in supra dicta Ecclesia Stationes  
et<sup>ae</sup> viae Crucis cum indulgentiis a S<sup>ta</sup> Sede  
nec<sup>te</sup> pio exercitio concessis

+ C. M. Dubuis Ep<sup>us</sup>  
Galvestonensis

Rev. John Weimer, pastor of the Church of St. Roch located at New Mainz and Bernarde, his Excellency gives to you the faculties to erect in said church the Stations of the Cross with the usual indulgences attached.

C. M. Dubuis  
Bishop of Galveston

Figure 8 1872 Letter from Bishop Dubuis



On the first day of May, 1874, I, Claude Mary Dubuis, bishop of Galveston, consecrated the church in honor of St. Roch and today I grant to the Faithful people of Christ who visit this church on the anniversary day of this consecration, an indulgence of 40 days in the customary form of the Church.

C. M. Dubuis  
Bishop of Galveston

**Figure 9 1874 Letter from Bishop Dubuis**

Early records of the parish include the following priests' names: Rev. James Dum, 1888; Rev. A. Heuchemer, 1889; Rev. C. Preis, 1890-91; Rev. Simon Spinneweber, 1892-94; Rev. C. Freker, 1895-96; and Rev. Simon Spinneweber, 1897-99.<sup>73</sup> The church report for 1875-76? was signed by John Weimer; the church is identified as New Mainz, St. Roche.<sup>74</sup> There were seventy-one families of 375 members.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Sister M. Dolores Kasner, O.P., Archivist, Catholic Archives, Austin, Texas, summary report from St. Roch records

<sup>74</sup> Copy, 1875-76? parish report, St. Roch Church, Galveston Diocese Archives

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

In 1884 the church is identified as St. Rochus Church I, Bernardo, Colorado Co., Tex; there is no signature.<sup>76</sup> Part of the report accounts for 368 bushels of corn for the horse which had been given by the congregation from 1876-1884.<sup>77</sup>

Rev. Geo. Berberich was pastor in 1911 and 1915.<sup>78</sup> His 1911 report identifies the church as St. Roche's (Mentz), Cat Springs, Texas.<sup>79</sup> In 1915 the heading was St. Roch Church, Mentz, Texas.<sup>80</sup> In 1911 the congregation numbered ninety-three families with 369 members.<sup>81</sup> There was also a St. Rochus society with forty-five members and an Altar Society with forty-three members.<sup>82</sup> Catechism was taught at both Mentz and Bernardo each week.<sup>83</sup> The congregation numbered 291 communicants in 1915.<sup>84</sup> St. Rochus Society had forty-three members, and the Altar Society had thirty-five members.<sup>85</sup>

The first baptism record in the books of the St. Roch Church is dated 26 Feb. 1860. The baptism is that of Peter Mertz, son of Jacob Mertz and Caroline Schittn?. The first marriage listed is that of Max Kuh (Kuhn?) and Rosina Vink (Wink?). It was performed by (Rev. Peter) Tarrillion on 28 May 1860. The first death record is that of Johannes Brod. The date is not clear; it appears to be 21 May 1861.<sup>86</sup>

The following families were named in parish records 1860-63:<sup>87</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. John Braden  
Mr. and Mrs. Anton Brod  
Mr. and Mrs. Franz Burtschell

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<sup>76</sup> Copy, 1884 St. Roch Church report, Catholic Archives

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Copies, 1911 and 1915 church reports, Galveston Archives

<sup>79</sup> 1911 church report

<sup>80</sup> 1915 church report

<sup>81</sup> 1911 church report

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> 1915 church report

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> St. Roch Church books, Father Bernard Snock, Frydek, Texas; copies of first page of baptism, marriage, and death

<sup>87</sup> Sister M. Dolores Kasner

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Jakel  
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Mertz  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Stock

The names of Adam Braden, Anton Braden, Jr., and Jacob Brod appear as witnesses to the erection of the crossway of the church with its indulgences according to the rites of the Roman Rituale on May 18, 1872, by John Weimer.<sup>88</sup> The parish location is given as New Mainz, Bernarde, Colorado County, Texas. The notation "St. Rochus (commonly called Bernard)" is included.<sup>89</sup>

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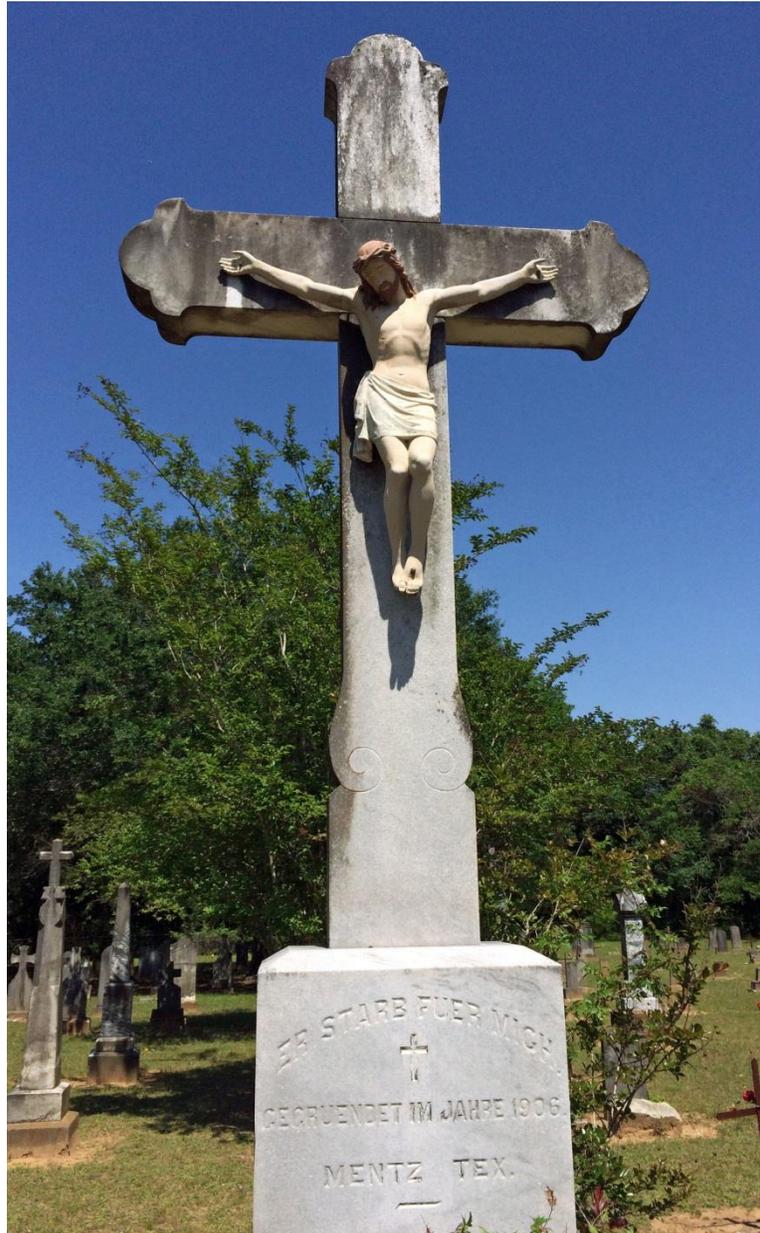
<sup>88</sup> St. Roch Church Book I. The term "crossway" refers to the Way of the Cross.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

The large crucifix statue in the cemetery includes a list of fifteen names with the inscription:

Er Starb Fuer Mich Gegrundet in Jahre 1906

Translated: He died for me Founded in Year 1906<sup>90</sup>



**Figure 10 Crucifix in Mentz Cemetery**

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<sup>90</sup> Personal visit to cemetery to copy names; photograph

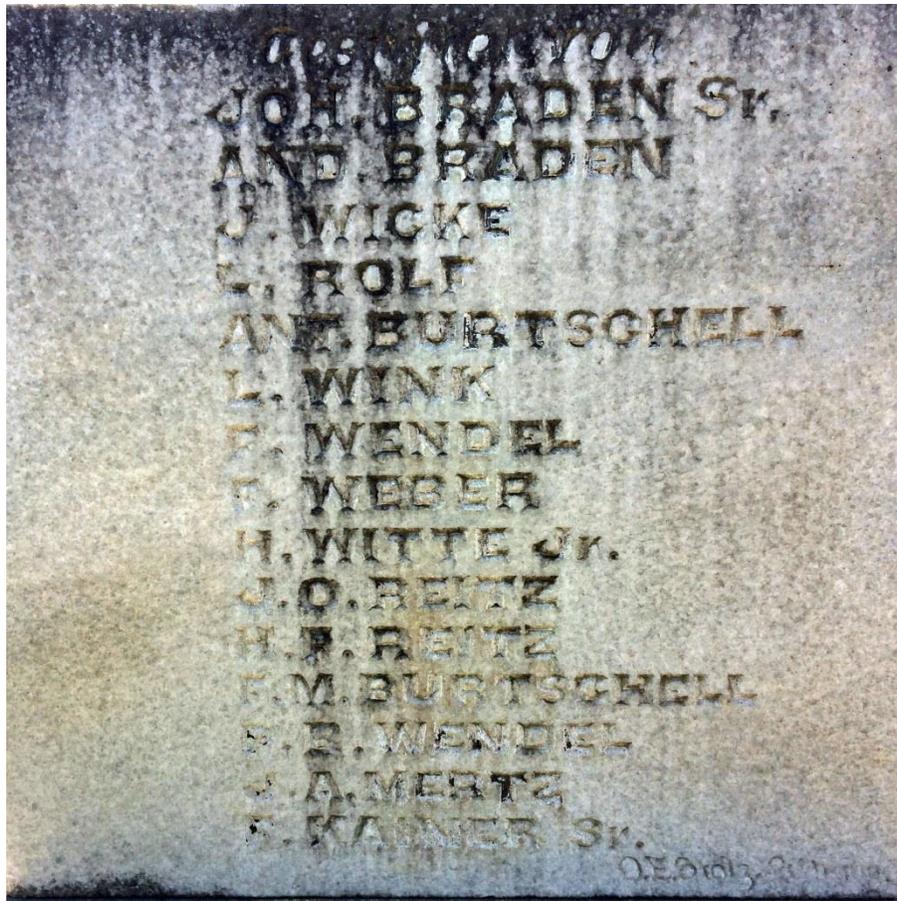


Figure 11 List of Names on Rear of Statue

Joh. Braden Sr.	H. Witte Jr.
And. Braden	J. O. Reitz
J. Wicke	H. F. Reitz
L. Rolf	F. M. Burtschell
Ant. Burtschell	P. B. Wendel
L. Wink	J. A. Mertz
F. Wendel	F. Kainer Sr.
F. Weber	



**Figure 12 St.Roch Cemetery**  
**Iron fence was erected in 1906. It was donated to the scrap metal collection during World War II.**

The Nesbitt Memorial Library in Columbus sponsored the 2018 Rural Historic Cemeteries Tour, detailed in the following article published by the *Colorado County Citizen*.

## A tale of two cemeteries



Posted: Wednesday, April 25, 2018 1:33 pm

Story and Pictures by Vince Leibowitz  
[vince@coloradocountycitizen.com](mailto:vince@coloradocountycitizen.com)

based off research by Marilyn Wade; Rhanda Simmons, Allin Mitchell, and William H. Harrison, Sr., and Arliss Treybig.

### Gethsemane statue

This statue of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane greets visitors to St. Roch Catholic Cemetery in Mentz.

They are only miles apart, but feel as though they are worlds apart. But, both have the same purpose: burial of the community's dead.

The St. Roch Catholic Cemetery in Mentz and the Alleyton Cemetery could not be more different—in layout, in alignment of the graves, and in the styles of the

headstones, and in the manner in which they were established and the communities they served when founded.

Alleyton Cemetery features several gated family plots—two covered entirely in concrete instead of grass—and, except for one large obelisk and a couple of hand-

made headstones dating from the 1960s, headstones that are low to the ground, with mainly smooth lines and rounded tops. Too, most of its early inhabitants came from eastern states like West Virginia; some were ex-Confederates. The arrangement of the graves, while purposeful, has a free-form, almost haphazard feel.



Citizen | Vince Leibowitz

**Man who donated land for cemetery, church buried at St. Roch**

Arliss Treybig shows participants in the cemetery tour the graveside of Franz Burttschell, who donated the land for the church and cemetery at St. Roch.

Down the road at St. Roch Catholic Cemetery, the earliest part of the cemetery is filled with tall obelisks, neatly in rows on either side of a long pathway, in such a way that one can easily tell where some of the earliest, now unmarked, graves lay. Unlike its counterpart, which has one large live oak as its centerpiece, St. Roch cemetery has many trees, and statuary separate and apart from its gravestones.

These two cemeteries were featured in last Thursday's 2018 Rural Historic Cemeteries Tour sponsored by Columbus' Nesbitt Memorial Library.

**ALLEYTON CEMETERY**

ALLEYTON—Although Alleyton got its start when Rawson Alley came to Texas as part of Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300," in 1822, it wasn't



Citizen | Vince Leibowitz

**Alleyton Cemetery**

Marilyn B. Wade talks about Alleyton Cemetery and her ancestors, who are buried in the Everett family plot.

until much later that the town saw its first burial.

The town was an important railroad town during the Civil War because it was the terminus for the southernmost railroad in Texas and thus the beginning of the so-called Cotton Road, where cotton was transported to Mexico to avoid the blockade of Texas ports by American forces.

Although the first written evidence of the Alleyton Cemetery doesn't show up until around this time—an 1860 plat of the town showed two lots dedicated for a graveyard—the first actual burial in the cemetery

was T.S.M. Robinson, born in Arkansas, who died in Texas in 1852 at the age of 22.

### **Everett Family**

Alleyton experienced a yellow fever epidemic in 1867, and many of its victims were buried in the cemetery. Several members of the Everett family of Alleyton were among the 103 people stricken with the condition. About 45 people died.

The family of Henry Clay Everett, a captain for the Confederate States of America army, lost a number of family members including his wife, Catherine Webb Everett.

Everett, who spent time as a prisoner of war in Ohio during the Civil War, moved to Texas with his friend Lawrence LeTulle, both of who originated from a part of Virginia that became West Virginia due to alignment with the United States during the Civil War.

Both Everett and LeTulle married sisters in Virginia before moving to Texas; after

they moved to Texas, both of their wives died, and the two married another set of sisters. Everett and his second wife Harriet Melvina Lackey are buried in Alleyton Cemetery.

### **Dallas Stoudenmire**

Among other prominent burials in Alleyton cemetery is lawman Dallas Stoudenmire, infamous for his part in the April 14, 1881 El Paso gunfight known as "Four Dead in Five Seconds."

Born in Alabama in 1845, Stoudenmire arrived in Columbus about 1867 after serving in Confederate Army during the Civil War. After arriving in Columbus, he killed several men before becoming a second sergeant

in the Texas Rangers in January, 1874. He arrived in El Paso in April 1881, and was appointed town marshal, a post he held during the infamous gunfight.

Stoudenmire wasn't killed during the El Paso gunfight, although he was shot. He married Isabella Sherrington in Columbus in 1882, but quickly returned to El Paso, where he began feuding with everyone from local politicians and the press to the Texas Rangers. The so-called Stoudenmire-Manning Feud was so severe it resulted in a written peace treaty published in the *El Paso Herald*. Nevertheless, Stoudenmire was killed by brothers James and Doc Manning on September 18, 1882. His body was shipped



**Grave of Dallas Stoudenmire**

back to Columbus, and he was buried in Alleyton.

Although the exact location of his grave in Alleyton Cemetery isn't really known, in recent decades a new headstone was erected for Stoudenmire, and it is surrounded by a small fence near the entrance to the cemetery.

### **The Dittman family**

Among the most prominent markers in the Alleyton Cemetery is the tall obelisk over the gravesite of C.A. Dittman, born in November, 1831 in Germany, and centered in the Dittman family plot.



Citizen | Vince Leibowitz

### **Dittman plot at Alleyton Cemetery**

Randa Simmons, who is a granddaughter of Charles A. Dittman, whose grave marker is in the foreground, talks to Tracey Wegenhoft about her ancestors in the Dittman plot at Alleyton Cemetery.

When C.A. Dittman wanted to avoid compulsory military service in the German Army, he escaped the Prussian Purge by dressing as a woman and stowing away on a ship headed for Brazil, where he landed in 1848. Two years later, he headed to California as part of the California Gold Rush. After gaining over \$50,000 from the sale of his mining claim and some gold he had accumulated, he attempted to return to Germany. However, the German Consul advised him he would be arrested, forced to perform his military service, and likely have his money seized if he returned. Instead, he headed for Old Indianola, an early

German settlement near Colorado County. He came to Colorado County after 1856, and moved to the Alleyton area in 1859.

During the Civil War, Dittman attempted to enlist in the Confederate Army, but was rejected due to health issues, and was told he could best continue to serve the CSA through continuing his trade with Mexico as a result of his multiple business interests in the area.

Charles Dittman became a naturalized American citizen in 1867.

In 1892, he returned to Germany in hopes of seeing improved health. His health didn't improve, and he returned to Alleyton in 1893. He died the same year, and is buried at Alleyton Cemetery.

The remainder of Dittman's gold brought from California was surrendered to the U.S. Government in 1932-33, when the government ordered all gold to be rendered to the government.

## ST. ROCH CATHOLIC CEMETERY

MENTZ—St. Roch Cemetery lies just beyond St. Roch Catholic Church in the tiny northeast Colorado Community of Mentz.

Settled by Germans who initially came to America with Adelsverin, also known as the Mainzer Verein, the Texas-Verein, and the German Emigration Company.

Officially known as the Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas, or the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas, the Mentz area was settled shortly before the society for protection essentially went bankrupt.

In 1857, the land upon which the church and cemetery sit today was deeded to the Bishop of Galveston by Franz Burttschell, who is buried in the cemetery today.

The first burial in the cemetery was in 1860, when German John Brod died and was buried at St. Roch. Brod's grave is designated with a marker recognizing him as an

early pioneer of the Republic of Texas.

The burials in the oldest section of St. Roch are arranged in a different fashion than many cemeteries, because people were buried in rows as they died. Husbands, in most instances, aren't next to wives, but rather are next to whomever died before and after.

There are a few exceptions in the early part of the cemetery, however. One father and two members of his family died within quick succession of each other

during a period of several months, and are thus buried side by side. A trio of young siblings who died in one of many epidemics to sweep the area are also buried side by side, due to them passing away in succession.

Although there are a number of unmarked graves in the very earliest section of the cemetery, there are also graves marked with early metal or iron crosses, most of which bear no names today. One of the more rare types of marker in the cemetery is a manufactured, metal crucifix marker, which designates a grave from the early 1900s.



Citizen | Vince Leibowitz

### **Metal cross at St. Roch Cemetery, Mentz**

Although most iron crosses marking graves at St. Roch Cemetery are homemade and without names, this rare machine tooled, early 20<sup>th</sup> Century metal cross marks the grave of Jozeph Pyka, and is very ornate.



Citizen | Vince Leibowitz

### A headstone

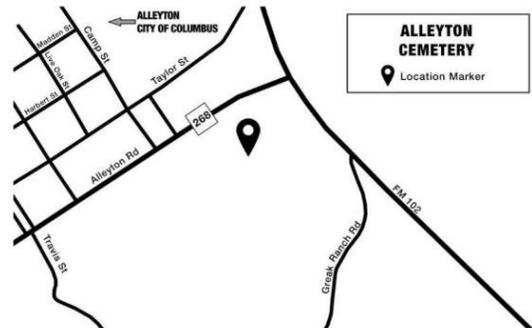
An ornate headstone at St. Roch Catholic Cemetery in Mentz.

The cemetery also features ornate sculpture and monuments independent of the graves, including a large crucifix in the middle of the cemetery, which was erected in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a sculpture of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, erected in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

St. Roch Cemetery is also the burial site of Rev. Leonard Kaszynski, a Polish priest who came to Colorado County and died in 1958

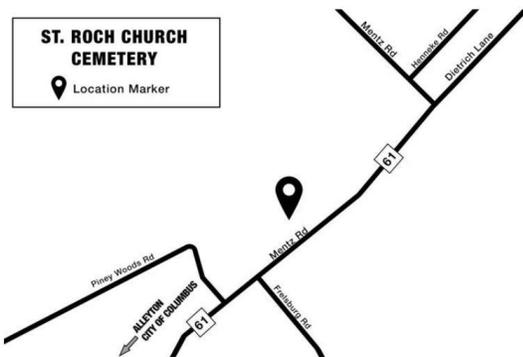
### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

**Alleyton Cemetery:** Because of the cemetery’s mowing schedule, open-toed shoes are not recommended in this cemetery. The **Dallas Stoudenmire** grave site is just past the main gates of the cemetery, surrounded by a fence with the initials, DS on the fence. Look just past the Stoudenmire monument and you will see a tall obelisk. This is the **Dittman** family plot. Just past the Dittman family plot is the **Everett** family plot. You can identify the Everett family plot because it is the only other plot aside from the Dittman plot that is fully covered in concrete. Park just inside the cemetery’s main gates.



Citizen | Matthew Hellman

Location map of Alleyton Cemetery



Citizen | Matthew Hellman

Location map of St. Roch Catholic Cemetery

**St. Roch Cemetery:** The oldest gravesites are in the far rear of the cemetery, near the treeline. Unique markers include the gravestone of Anton Burttschell, whose family was involved in the infamous Stafford-Townsend feud. His cash-register shaped stone will be on your right, about two graves in, on a row approximately three-fourths of the distance from the front of the cemetery to the rear, if you are walking toward the back (oldest part) of the cemetery). The oldest grave in the cemetery is in the far left rear of the cemetery (if you are facing the back fence line) and is marked with a contemporary stone. The church is an active congregation, so try not to make visits coincide with church mass times due to parking concerns.

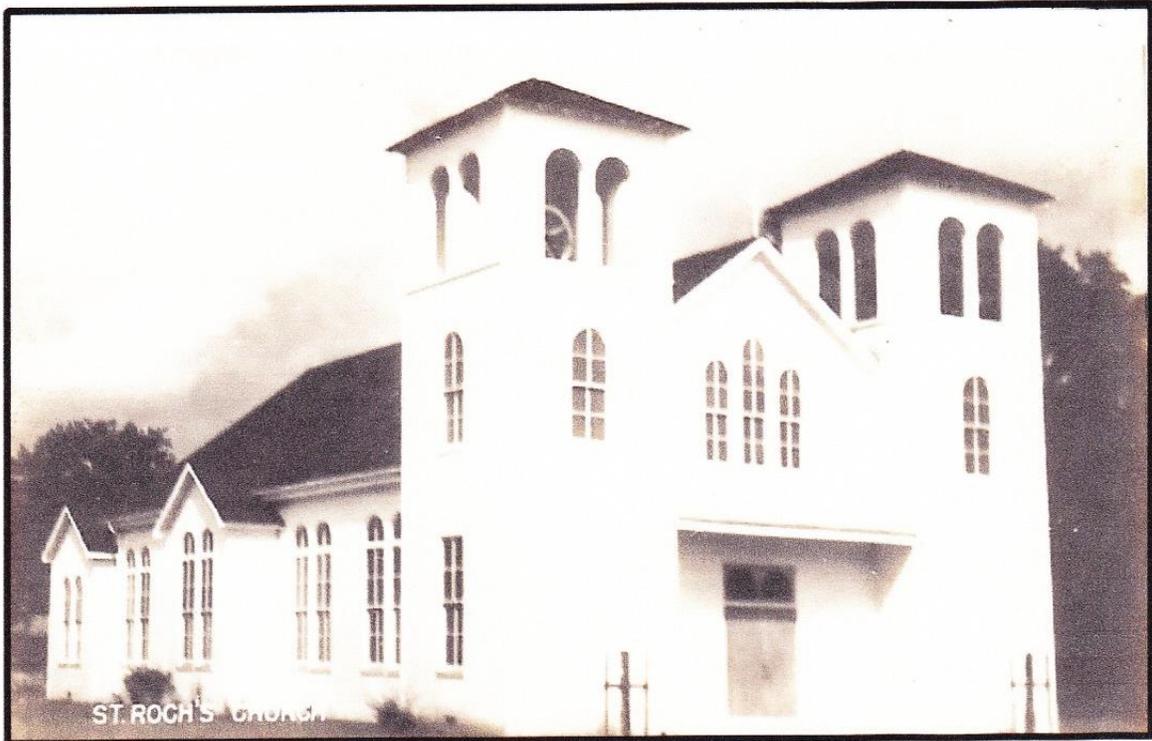


Figure 13 St. Roch Catholic Church



Figure 14 Present Day Church Photo: <https://saintrochparish.org/>



Figure 15 Altar, St. Roch Catholic Church



Figure 16 Current Altar

Photo: The Catholic Diocese of Victoria in Texas

## Annual Church Meetings

According to an article in the October 3, 1985, issue of the Columbus paper, the parish celebrations began over 130 years ago (1855) in honor of the patron, St. Roch.<sup>91</sup> These early celebrations were held on his holy day or feast day, August 16.<sup>92</sup> The tradition of this early feast has evolved into St. Roch's annual Mentz Picnic, held now primarily to raise needed funds to operate the small parish.

The May 11, 1882, issue of the Colorado Citizen included an article about another event to raise money for the parish.

The raffle that took place on Sunday last, at Saint Rochus Church, near the Bernard, for the benefit of the Church, was quite an interesting affair. Quite a number of the citizens from the surrounding country were present, and a few from this place. The raffling lasted for several hours and created some enthusiasm. A great many articles were raffled and a majority of the gentlemen who were so fortunate as to win, were charitable enough to present them back to Church. Mr. Wagenfuhr won the first prize, and so disposed of it. The curiosity of the day - especially to those who had never seen anything of the kind before, were the three huge bells, which hung in the tower of the Church. They were purchased last fall at a cost of \$2100. They weigh 4500 pounds; and when all ring at once make a very pleasant sound and can be heard at a distance of several miles.

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<sup>91</sup> Since Franz Burttschell sold the land for the church in 1857 and the first church was built in 1858, these celebrations evidently began during the time that Mass was said in the homes. The priests from Frelsburg came through the woods on horseback to minister to the families.

<sup>92</sup> The settlers from Büdesheim by Bingen on the Rhine were continuing the tradition to honor St. Rochus whose intercession the people of Bingen implored in 1666 to save them from the plague.



Figure 17 1912 Postcard, Annual Church Meeting, Mentz

<h2 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">159th ANNUAL MENTZ PICNIC</h2> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">Come Enjoy Our New Parish Hall!</p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">St. Roch Catholic Church – Mentz, Texas <i>Join us for the Sacrifice of the Mass at 10:30 a.m.</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6<sup>TH</sup></p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">BBQ BEEF, PORK &amp; SAUSAGE <i>Served Buffet Style</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">Adults \$18.00 ♦ Kids Under Twelve \$5.00 ♦ Serving 11am - 2pm</p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">DRIVE-THRU LINE      HAMBURGERS at 3:00PM</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: 0.8em;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>AUCTION</b> 1:00 p.m.</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>MUSIC</b> by Charles &amp; The Fabulous 4 Plenty of Kids Activities</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>SILENT AUCTION</b> 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. <b>BINGO</b> 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>RAFFLE</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<b>AUCTION</b> 1:00 p.m.	<b>MUSIC</b> by Charles & The Fabulous 4 Plenty of Kids Activities	<b>SILENT AUCTION</b> 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. <b>BINGO</b> 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	<b>RAFFLE</b>			<h2 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">163rd ANNUAL MENTZ PICNIC</h2> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">St. Roch Catholic Church – Mentz, Texas <i>Join us for the Sacrifice of the Mass at 10:15 a.m.</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup></p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">BBQ BEEF, PORK &amp; SAUSAGE <i>Served Buffet Style</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">Adults \$10.00 ♦ Kids 10 &amp; under \$5.00 ♦ Serving at 11:00 am</p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">DRIVE-THRU LINE      HAMBURGERS AT 3:00PM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">GIFT CARD WALK • COUNTRY STORE • DESSERT WALK</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: 0.8em;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>AUCTION</b> 1:00 p.m.</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>MUSIC BY:</b> <b>THE LOST CAUSE BAND</b> Plenty of Kids Activities</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>SILENT AUCTION</b> 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. <b>BINGO</b> 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>RAFFLE</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<b>AUCTION</b> 1:00 p.m.	<b>MUSIC BY:</b> <b>THE LOST CAUSE BAND</b> Plenty of Kids Activities	<b>SILENT AUCTION</b> 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. <b>BINGO</b> 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.	<b>RAFFLE</b>		
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<b>RAFFLE</b>													

Figure 18 Annual Mentz Picnic  
2013 – First in the new hall; 2017 – Still going strong

## Schools in Mentz

From 1872 to 1916 the Sisters of Divine Providence staffed a Catholic school at Mentz. The building which had housed the school was used for years as the beer building at picnics (it is now being restored at the Mentzwood site).

For a period of time, there were Catholic schools at both Mentz and Bernardo. The history of the schools is found in the archives of the Sisters of Divine Providence who staffed both schools as well as in the church reports.<sup>93</sup>

In 1872, Reverend Father Gury, missionary of the district, in which Bernardo or Mentz is located, applied for Sisters to teach a parochial school at Bernardo, now called Mentz. With the sanction of Right Reverend Claude M. Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston, Reverend Mother St. Andrew sent two Sisters from the Mother House then located at Castroville, Texas, to open school, October 1872 [at St. Roch's, Mentz, Texas].

This was one of the oldest schools of the Sisters of Divine Providence, but owing to the moving of many of the settlers, the school had a poor attendance.

The school was under the direction of the parish priest, and the property and building was owned by the parish. It was closed in June 1916, on account of the small Catholic population.

Bernardo Prairie, Texas is a German settlement four miles from Mentz, Texas. As early as 1872, Sisters were sent there to teach by Mother St. Andrew, Superior General of the Sisters of Divine Providence. Sister Mary Paul Keller was the foundress of this school.

In 1911, the school [St. Joseph's School] was annexed to Mentz; the latter becoming a Local House.

Since the church was located at some distance from the school and the Catholic population was small, Rt. Rev. Nicholas A. Gallagher, Bishop of Galveston, advised Reverend Mother Florence to recall the Sisters from

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<sup>93</sup> Archives, Sisters of Divine Providence; Archives, Galveston Diocese, church report; Catholic Archives, Austin, summary and church report

Bernardo Prairie, for they were deprived of daily Mass and Holy Communion. They were recalled in the spring of 1912.

The number of students at St. Roch's School averaged about seventy from the opening until about 1907. From that date until it closed, the school had an average of thirty pupils.<sup>94</sup> St. Joseph's School had about the same number of students (seventy) until 1906. Until its closing in 1912, it averaged about forty.<sup>95</sup> According to the parish report for 1884, the "new Schoolhouse in the prairie 3 miles from Church" was built at a cost of \$350.00 and paid by the congregation from private collections.<sup>96</sup> The lumber for "a new Schoolhouse on the church ground 24' x 40' ten feet gallery" cost \$300.00 of which \$200.00 was paid by the sisters of Divine Providence.<sup>97</sup> The number of sisters stationed at Mentz varied from three to four in the early years with two sisters in charge 1899-1916.<sup>98</sup> St. Joseph's had three sisters during four school terms; the other years two sisters were stationed at Bernardo.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> 1884 parish report, Catholic Archives, Austin

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Archives, Sisters of Divine Providence

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

## Photos from Mentz



**Figure 19 Picnic Gathering of Old Friends and Neighbors at Mentz, ca. 1913**

*Back row (men standing):* John Brod, Herman Meyer, Jacob Braden, Adam Ritter, August Schuette holding grandchild, Willie? Meyer, Edwin Dunlavy, Jacob Hennecke

*Next row (men standing):* Leander Brod, Arthur Schuette, ?, Charles Hennecke, Charles Bock, Otto Luedecke, Lewis Iselt, Gerhard Brod

*Middle row (women standing):* Mrs. Herman Meyer, Elizabeth Braden, Elizabeth Brod, Eva Becker, Mrs. Schuette, Mary Hem1ecke, Mrs. Louisa Bock, Emma Dunlavy, Annie Ritter, Hattie Luedecke, Addie Brod, Mrs. Lewis Iselt, child Oscar Brod

*Fourth row (women seated):* Ella Ritter, Hattie Meyer, Maida Boch, Ernestine Brooks, Gertrude Hennecke, Clara Iselt, Hattie Brod, Hilda Meyer, Katie Braden

*Front row (children):* Herbert Meyer (boy in white shirt), Nonna Meyer (girl in white), Manuel Brod (far left), Alan Brod, Herbert Braden, Simon Brod, Homer Meyer, Raymond hennecke, Adela Iselt, Martha Brod, Leona Ritter, Jocelyn Hennecke, Laura Iselt, Elsa Ise1t, Pauline Hennecke, Edna Dunlavy, Hilda Brod, Lee Dunlavy, Alfred islet, Reinhard Brod (in white shirt), Emanuel Hennecke



**Figure 20 Mentz Band At Christmas Time?**  
Front row, second from right - Paul George Braden

According to Lois Neuendorff Didner, the owner of the photograph, the band was also called the Burttschell Band. Lois is a descendant of Peter Nelson and Katherine Burttschell. Her grandfather was Anton Nelson.

" I assume the man on the far right is my father (John Neuendorff, husband of Henrietta "Hattie" Nelson). I know he played the drums. First row, fourth from left is Willie Nelson. Back row - second from left is Jake Nelson. The picture was taken in the old church in Mentz. I guess there was a lot of musical talent in the Burttschell family."



**Figure 21 Mentz (Burttschell?) Band**

Numbered members identified as: 1) Anton ?, 2) Wiliam Kotzebue, 3) Jake Nelson, 4) Willie Nelson  
(Jake & Willie Nelson are Burttschell descendants)



**Figure 22 A Group of Young People at Mentz Hall (with Mentz Band)**

*Back row:* ?, Arthur Meyer, Paul Braden, Louisa Frey, ?, Katie Frey, Anton Frey, Sophia Branchard? , Peter Frey, Annie Braden, ?

*Second row (standing):* ?, Lu Ella Burttschell, ?, ?, ?, ?, Otto Reitz , ?, Rochus Braden

*Third row (seated):* Annie Reitz, Willie Reitz, ?, ?, ?, Eva Becker

*Front row (seated):* Leander Burttschell , ?, Annie Watz, Hattie Maerz, Dora Braden, ?, Lillie Burttschell



**Figure 23 Family of Joe and Elizabeth (Maerz) Braden**

Felix and Hilda (Braden) Brod, Oscar and Dora (Braden) Braden, Joe and Elizabeth (Maerz) Braden, Willie and Tecla (Braden) Nelson, Leo and Leona (Braden) Polock, Leo and Emma (Braden) Brod

## OTHER REFERENCES TO BERNARDO-MENTZ

### **Braden Settlement**

The term "Braden Settlement" is found in the two centennial publications (1956) of the Cat Spring Agricultural Society: Century of Agricultural Progress (the minutes of the organization) and The Cat Spring Story (a history of the area and some of its people). The minutes include the names of proposed and accepted members. Among these are four listed as being from the Braden Settlement: Mr. Liermann (1867), Mr. Dore (1870), Heinrich Moeller (1870), and Pedecke (1873). Clarification of the term "Braden Settlement" is found in a sentence (page 141) from The Cat Spring Story.

Many bois d'arc or Osage orange hedge fences were raised here, and remnants can be found here and there, especially near Bernardo or the Braden settlement as it was known in the early days.

### **Cat Spring Agricultural Society**

The Society, organized in 1856, was composed of men from the general Cat Spring area who joined together for mutual benefit. Many of the men were educated in many fields other than agriculture so they shared what knowledge and experience as well as plants, seeds, etc. they had. This sharing is indicated by the following sentence from page 9 of the printed minutes.

At least one member in each of the three communities: Cat Spring, Millheim and Bernardo shall then have the responsibility to grow more seed for the members residing in these communities.

## Kretzschmar/Prause/Nagel

The Cat Spring Story includes biographies of some of the families from the Cat Spring-Millheim-Bernardo area. Several of these biographies include comments about the area which give an insight into the early times.

Gustav Emil Kretzschmar was born in the Bernard area in 1857; he had one sister and seven brothers. Their parents had chosen this area when they came from the old country because wild game and fish were plentiful. They had timber that was so necessary to build log houses and zig-zag fences made of rails. One of the members of the family reports that turkeys were shot out of the trees so fat they popped open as they fell to the ground. Mr. Kretzschmar hauled freight between Houston and Bernardo.(page 57)

Arnold Prause II came as a child with his father and mother to American from Wallenburg Schlesien, Germany. He settled in the Bernardo community in 1860. He had a cotton gin which was operated with oxen for power and later with mules until steam power came into use.(page 67)

Carl Nagel, son of Dr. Herman Nagel was born in 1849 on his father's farm in Bernardo. After his parents moved to Millheim, he began his education under E.G. Maetze. At the age of fourteen his father, siding with the Union's cause, took Carl to Mexico and finally settled in St. Louis, Missouri. Nagel rose in political power and was appointed as Secretary of Commerce and Labor during President Taft's administration.

(page 65)

Other publications include references to early Colorado County settlers. The New Encyclopedia of Texas, published in 1936 during the Texas Centennial, includes several such references.

Jake Maerz, a son of Pete Maerz who came to Texas from Germany in the early part of the nineteenth century, was a landowner, planter, and freighter of Colorado County. He operated many teams of oxen and hauled

cotton and other commodities from Colorado to Matagorda County and also Mexico.

John Reitz and his wife, Tillie Burtschell Reitz, were both native Texans and members of pioneer families of Colorado County. Both the Reitz and Burtschell families engaged in cattle, horse, mule, and sheep businesses since early days.

Ed Braden (wife-Mary Doree Braden) was a pioneer gin builder and operated plants at various times at Bernardo and Alleyton.

### **Area Roads**

Roads in the Bernardo area named for area settlers include Dittmar Road, Liermann Road, Reitz-Quinn Road, Reichardt Lane, Schmoeller-Sens Road, Kveton Road, and Nelson Lane. Dietrich Lane, Hennecke Road, A. Braden Road, and Brod Road are some of the roads in the Mentz area for early settlers.

### **Cotton Business**

The book An Early History of Fayette County by Weyand and Wade (published 1936) references on page 259 under the chapter "Cotton Trade Between Fayette County and Mexico During the (Civil) War."

Fayette County teamsters hauled to Mexico not only cotton raised in the county but also cotton raised in East Texas and Louisiana. Cotton raised in those sections was not hauled directly to Mexico, but it was dumped at certain convenient places from where it was relayed to its destination. These dumping stations were Alleyton, Bernard, and Columbus in Colorado County....

## PEOPLE OF MENTZ-BERNARDO

### Portrait of a Descendant – John Henneke

Mr. John Henneke, who will be ninety in April 1982, has lived on the same location (about ten miles from Columbus near IH 10) in the Bernardo area for most of his life. The son of Henry Henneke, Jr. and Mary Maerz (married in 1882) he was born in Moulton in 1892. In the fall of that year, the family moved back to the Bernardo area where they lived on the "Kuhn rent place" before moving to the present location. After his marriage in November 1921, to Lottie Runge from the Industry/New Ulm area, the young couple moved in with his parents and lived with them for about four years. They then moved to a house nearby where they lived for another four years or so. After that time the parents and the young couple exchanged homes; John and Lottie have lived on the same location, but not in the same house, ever since. After Henry died, the mother lived with the couple until she died about 1945.

John Henneke's paternal grandparents were Heinrich Henneke and Hedwig Miller. Heinrich was the son of Joseph Henneke (or Hennecke) and Anna Maria Midike (Midige) who came to Texas from Oldenburg? about 1846. Two of Heinrich's brothers and at least two of his sisters had come to Texas in December of 1834 and settled in the present Colorado/Austin County area. Heinrich and Hedwig married April 2, 1850; J. Anstaett, priest of Frelsburg performed the ceremony. John did not know his grandfather Heinrich Henneke very well; he does remember his grandfather coming to see them on a two-wheel cart pulled by a horse. The grandmother Hedwig Miller was the daughter of Edmund Miller and Wilhelmina Spiess.

John Henneke's maternal grandparents were Jacob Maerz and Carolina Schittn?. Jacob emigrated with his parents, Peter Maerz and Katharina Birot, from Büdesheim (near Bingen on the Rhine) in 1848.

Mr. Henneke attended the Catholic school at Bernardo; he had only nuns for teachers. He attended through the sixth grade; he quit school after making his Holy Communion at the age of twelve. He remembers that they prayed before school, at noon, and after school. The sisters gave instructions as to behavior on the road to and from school and to treatment of people they met on the way. On Friday afternoon the parents of one of the students attending the Bernardo school would pick up the sisters and take them to Mentz. On Sunday afternoon the same parents would take them back to Bernardo. The parents would alternate this duty. The school had two rooms; the nuns had a house nearby. The school was remodeled after the Catholic school closed; it then became the public school. Part of the building was moved to another location.

Mr. Henneke worked around home during the week. On Sundays he would go fishing or catch gophers. When he was older, he went to dances at Mentz and later at Bernardo. When he was seventeen, Mentz had a dance hall; dances were held once a month. A hall was built later at Bernardo, and dances were held once a month there. He met his wife at a dance; she was the only girl he ever dated.

The family went by horse and buggy to church at Mentz. Mr. Henneke does not remember when Mass started, but they usually returned home after 12:00 noon.

Many people rode horses to church so that after church there was "a bunch of riders going." He also remembers that the children sat in front of the church with the nuns; they stayed in church until the adults left. Shown a picture of a band inside the decorated church,<sup>100</sup> Mr. Henneke remarked that the Burtschell family had a band which played in church for the funeral of band members. A similar picture in the possession of Tillie Gloger of Columbus indicated that the picture was taken on Christmas Day in the church. A notation on the back indicated that it was the Burtschell band.

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<sup>100</sup> Figure 18, picture in possession of Lois Didner

Although nearly ninety, Mr. Henneke appears to be about fifteen years younger. He is still active-driving to church, to town, and to the auction. He is up-to-date on current affairs and has strong opinions about the government, the law, etc. He remembers who married whom-when and where-dates of births, marriages, and deaths. He has lived by the rules and examples of his parents and the nuns who taught him, and he feels secure in his life. He doesn't smoke and has never indulged deeply in alcohol; he takes no medicine. His home is a short drive from IH 10; since he has lived on or near the same spot most of his nearly ninety years, he has seen the development from rough road to highway 90 to an interstate highway. At one time he drove his cattle across the road in the morning and again in the afternoon where now large trucks travel. In spite of the way civilization has changed his view across the land where he raised corn and cotton, he and his wife still speak German to each other.

When asked what he remembers about "old timers" and the "old days," he said that "there was no money to make," and "everyone lived mighty close." He recalled a Mr. Miekow who always said, "I don't have enough to throw away, but I got enough to do me." He remembers Adolph Wendel who, for some reason, was called "Plow-Handle" Wendel - the nickname being in German, of course. He also remembers his daddy who tried to cross a flooded creek with two mules and a hack. One of the mules was shorter than the other, and the water went across the shorter mule and the hack; however, they all made it across. Once he gets started, Mr Henneke has many interesting and humorous stories to tell.

Mr. Henneke does not remember hearing anything about the days in Europe or the reasons why his ancestors came to Texas and the Bernardo-Mentz area. As a descendant of these early settlers, however, he represents the strength and determination that helped them to settle and develop the area so that their descendants could have a better life.

Visit and interview October 2, 1981  
by Lois Didner and Arliss Treybig

Mr. Henneke died on February 13, 1990.

## Reminiscences of Isabel Weigel Woodruff

**Note:** Isabel Woodruff, who grew up in the Bernardo/Mentz area, is the daughter of Herman C. and Lena Frey Weigel. Her grandparents were Conrad and Theresa Seifert Weigel and John and Eva Frey. Isabel Woodruff and her husband Bill live in Houston. These reminiscences are taken from letters of March, 1982.

I was born at Mentz in what later became the Eddie Blanchard place, not far from the church. I have only one recollection about myself while we lived there. I remember being wrapped in a quilt and carried by my father over to the Howes while a Gulf storm raged during the night. The Howes lived on the road across the creek from the cemetery. Mr. Howe was crippled; his wife crocheted a lot and did quite a bit of neighborhood visiting. Their only child, a son, died young. I think they were Lutheran.

Next, I remember living in Bernardo on "Main Street." I must have been three or four then. My father had the Post Office which was a small building to the right of the main house. I would scribble letters to Santa Claus which my mother would fish out of the letter box and confiscate. The small building to the left of our house was a doctor's office. Dr. Colley, who had married one of the Strieder girls - the oldest, Annie, I think it was - practiced medicine out of that building.

When I ran across the name Witte (in the history), I thought about Louis Witte who had the general store at the cross roads. I believe the Willie Reitzes operated the store after Louis Witte. I certainly recall the McBrides who lived cater-cornered across the street from the store. Mrs. McBride had a millinery shop. My mother took me to buy a hat, and I cried all the way home because the hat didn't have long ribbon streamers. Mr. McBride was a cripple, too as I recall.

While we lived in Bernardo, the Frank Millers lived across the street from us. Their daughter Reetha - everyone always called her "Reedy" - was the same age as I was. We remained close friends until she passed away so suddenly several years ago.

I never attended Bernardo school because we moved to a house close to where the Kotzebues lived. Adam Brod and his family lived around the corner from our farm. We moved a lot; next we moved to Mentz. I did most of my growing up in the two-story Watz house and farm. I started school while we lived there. I had the sisters for one year - dear sweet Sister Serena and Sister Augusta who dominated her and the children. Sister Serena taught me to read and write German. I can not write it any more, and I can read German only if it's written in English letters. The first year after the sisters left, we had a teacher named Miss Edythe Wooldridge. She came from Montana. I also had Miss Aurelia Burtschell and Miss Margaret Trojan-now Litzmann.

I heard my parents speak of some of the priests mentioned in the history- Father Gury, Father Spinneweber, and Father Weimer. I think they talked more about Father Klein; I believe he baptized me. Then there was Father Duda, Father Berberich, and there was another Father Berberich, a relative, who had the church at Frelsburg. He died, and I still have a picture of him in his casket.

Willie and Addie Braden had the Mentz store. I grew up with their daughters Alice, Lavine, Mildred and Willie Lee. The Bradens also had the dance hall. I remember that a number of people spent the night in that hall once while a Gulf storm raged outside.

I read the name Buechmann in the history. Natalie Buechmann and I were good friends. Her mother and Mrs. Howe were sisters. The Buechmanns lived near Frelsburg.

There was a lot of picnicking in those days. We also gathered at someone's house on Sunday afternoons and took pictures and talked. Many of the pictures include the Ford roadsters of that era. There were dances and play parties. The dances were held at the halls in Mentz and Bernardo. The parties were in someone's house where a birthday was celebrated.

We had a model T Ford which I learned to drive. My mother did not trust my driving one bit, but she needed something from Mr. Louis Wink's grocery store in Alleyton, so, if I promised to drive real slow, she would go. All went well until a thunder shower came up while we were on our way back home. She was even more afraid of bad weather than of my driving so she said I could speed up a little. We made it home okay.

## Conrad Weigel

"He was quite a character. He spent his last years between our house and some of his other children who lived at Gillett in Karnes County - namely Paul and Ella Weigel, Andrew and Mary Weigel, and Willie and Annie Weigel Frels. Emma Schoellmann of Nada was also a daughter. He was almost blind in his last years - and lonely. Let company come, and he'd regale them with his stories about his younger days when he'd make trips to Matamoros, Mexico, with loads of cotton on wagons drawn by oxen. My mother would groan and throw up her hands - 'there we go again.' He had a large family but many were wiped out by an outbreak of yellow fever which must have been prevalent at that time."

- Isabel Weigel Woodruff, granddaughter of Conrad Weigel



**Figure 24** Conrad Weigel, Gillet, Texas, on his 94th birthday  
(cause of white spot on face not known)

## THE COLORADO COUNTY CITIZEN

Friday, August 4, 1922

(copy furnished by Isabel Weigel Woodruff)

### CONRAD WEIGEL DIES IN KARNES COUNTY AND IS BURIED AT MENTZ

Conrad Weigel, 94 year old pioneer of Mentz, died at the home of his son in Karnes county on July 25 and his body was shipped here and buried at the Mentz Catholic cemetery on July 26 in the presence of a large crowd of his friends and relatives. Rev. Duda officiated at the burial service.

The news of Mr. Weigel's death was received at Mentz on July 25 and the news of the death of one of the communities old pioneer citizens made the entire community sad. He died at the home of his son, Andrew Weigel at Gillett, Karnes County, where he had resided for the past four or five years.

Conrad Weigel was born in Bavaria, Germany on Feb. 18, 1828. When five years old he left that country with his parents and settled in New York, where they lived until he was 10 years old. In 1838 he came, with his parents to Texas and settled at Frelsburg, where they lived for a number of years. From the time he was 16 to his twenty-fourth year he was a hostler and cowboy. Sometime later he married Miss Frances Wink and moved to Mentz. To this union were born nine children, of which four are living. One has been missing for more than 26 years. The living children are Andrew Weigel, Mrs. Wm. Freis of Gillett, Mrs. Anton Nelson and Mrs. Conrad Hennecke of Bernardo. The missing child is A. D. Weigel.

After the death of his first wife he later married Miss Thresia Seifert. To this union eight children were born, of which only three are living. These are Herman Weigel of Mentz, Paul Weigel of Choate and Mrs. Frank Schoellman of Nada. His second wife had been dead fifteen years at the time of his death.

Conrad Weigel lived in Mentz almost all his life and was loved by everyone who knew him. He was a good honest and straight-forward citizen. He was a Confederate veteran and was drawing a small pension at the time of his death. He was true to his country and to his church. He was a poor man but was always ready to help where help was needed. Just ten days before his death, Mr. Weigel's fifth generation was born.

At the time of his death Mr. Weigel was 94 years, 5 months and 6 days old. Relatives and friends from a distance who attended the funeral were Mr. and Mrs. P.A. Weigel and daughter, Lorena of Choate, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Frels and son Herbert and Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Weigel and daughter Lucile of Gillett and Frank Schoellmann of Nada, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Brandes and little daughter and Mr. and Mrs. John Rolf and children of Jones Creek, and Mr. and Mrs. Louis Shuetta and children of New Ulm.

(Choate is a small community in Karnes Co. near Kenedy).

## **Marie Braden Meyer Whitely, MENTZ, TEXAS MEMORIES**

Cousin Arliss asked me to recall my memories of Mentz. I am probably one of the last to remember anything from the long ago period. As I recall there was a general store and dance hall owned by the Willie Braden family. Down the road was St. Roch's church. When the church had their annual 'Feast' it was held at the dance hall grounds. The day included a dance, music by a local orchestra. I remember many dances with music by Baca' and Jody Braden's bands. Families brought their young children and let them run until they got tired and then put them down on pallets to sleep until the music quit.

There was a school by the church So far as I know nuns taught there. Later a lay teacher took over my cousins Elmer, Reuben and Myrtle Braden and our cousin, Elvera Wendel went there. They must have walked, rode a horse or taken by buggy. Also Willeen, Gladys and Howard Meyer and the Schindler children were students there. Willeen recalled how they would pick dewberries in the spring along the way for their lunch. Also Henry Lee Grabow who lived across the road from the Meyers attended. At this time roads were so bad that we didn't get very far from home and did not learn to know everyone in the community really well. All of the above mentioned Mentz students became fine productive citizens. Mentz teachers of that time must have done a good job.

As I remember the church was a rather dismal looking building. Its one outstanding feature was a beautiful gold hanging sacristy lamp. It also had a pump pipe organ that had to be manually pumped to play. As I remember Addie Miekow was the organist. After she left my aunt Dora Braden took over. My dad was always a choir member. Church was putting on Sunday best, going early and often. Some of the farmers never made it inside the church-they stayed outside to visit. One day we saw a column of black smoke and it turned out to be the church on fire. It was a total loss. I often wonder if the sacristy lamp fell and started the fire. For a longtime while the church we have today was being built

mass was in the rectory next door. Some years ago the old school building was moved down the road to the Mentzwood subdivision.

Dad and his brother, Oscar, owned a small acreage behind the Mentz store with no access. To get there we had to cross other's property. We went there to get our pine Christmas tree. Years later when both brothers were gone mom and Aunt Dora Braden sold the property.

One memory I have is Aunt Jocelyn and Grandma Hennecke's fine Model T car. I loved to ride in it and so it I begged my way on Sundays to go home with them. On the way I remember passing by the beautiful wild phlox growing on the roadside and passing by the house Aunt Pauline and Uncle Bill lived in and where they lost a baby, Corrine.

There is one house still standing on the road to Mentz - the Kansteiner house, painted white and I always admired it. The school closed when a new two room school was built at Bernardo. Esther Meyer and Bernice Becica taught there. As they drove there they picked up kids walking. I guess my outstanding memory would be bad roads. Thankfully that has been remedied.

Marie Braden Meyer Whiteley, (1925-2015)

Written April 2011

## Josephine Brod

### OBITUARY OF MRS. JOSEPHINE BROD-January 27, 1918

Mrs. Josephine Brod, one of the oldest and most highly respected ladies in the entire county, died here (Columbus) last Sunday afternoon. She had been ailing for several months, and was confined to her bed for about three weeks preceding her death.

Mrs. Brod was the widow of the late Jacob Brod Sr.<sup>101</sup>, she was born in Germany January 20, 1827, and was ninety one years and one week old at the time of her death. She was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lucas Burttschell and came to the United States with her parents in 1844. They settled at Frelsburg and lived there several years, later moving to the Bernard or Mentz section where they lived for many years. In 1847 she was united in marriage with Jacob Brod, Sr. Of the marriage there were born nine children, seven sons and two daughters, all of whom preceded her in death except four sons, Jacob Brod, Jr., of Cameron, Frank Brod of San Antonio, Anton Brod of Sunnyside, and Charle Brod of Waco. She had 59 grandchildren, 138 great grand children, and 10 great-great grandchildren. Her husband died in 1906, after fifty nine years of married life. Every year for many years prior to the death of her husband they celebrated their marriage, their golden wedding in 1897 having been one of the greatest similar events ever celebrated in this section of the State. About two years after her husband's death she moved to Columbus and made her home with her grand daughter, Mrs. Louise Trojan, where she spent the remaining years of her remarkable life.

Mrs. Brod was born at a little place in Germany called Bingen on the Rhine, a place made famous in literature by the celebrated poem entitled "Bingen on the Rhine," a touching story of a soldier's death in Algiers and of the message he

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<sup>101</sup> Jacob Brod served in the Confederate Army, State Troops, 22nd Brigade unattached, C.S.A. He served under Capt. J. F. Baker. Rolls dated Jan. 30, 1863 & Feb. 28, 1863.

asked his comrade to take to his mother, sister and sweetheart at "Bingen on the Rhine."

Like most of the substantial families of that section of Germany, Mrs. Brod's family required her to learn a trade. Her trade was that of cigar maker, and in her late years she enjoyed telling of the early experiences in Texas when the people suffered many hardships and those that prospered most were the ones who worked the hardest. She was a great cigar maker, being able, it is said, to make about five hundred cigars by hand a day. They built up quite a cigar trade in this section and made their first money in that way. The first wagon they bought after coming to this country was hand made, made in this county at a cost of \$150.00 and was paid for by money she earned as a cigar maker. Among other experiences related by her was that when she came to this country she brought with her a water yoke like those used in the old country. They had no water on the place at Frelsburg, so she used that water yoke to carry water from a spring a few miles away.

Mrs. Brod possessed great vitality physically, and mentally, and was a remarkable woman. She was a splendid business woman, highly intelligent, of a fine character, kind and generous, and was greatly loved by those who knew her. She was a member of the Mentz Catholic Church and was buried at Mentz Tuesday morning Rev. Father George Barberich conducting the services. The funeral was attended by numerous relatives and hundreds of devoted friends from various sections of the State.

(material provided by great granddaughter, Rosalee Brod Meyer)

## MENTZ-BERNARDO HISTORICAL MARKER

Dedication August 14, 1982



**Figure 25 Mentz-Bernardo Community Historical Marker Unveiling (left to right) Mary Elizabeth Hopkins, Chair., Colorado County Historical Commission, John Henneke, oldest citizen, Jerome Wicke, County Commissioner**

## MARKER INSCRIPTION

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### **MENTZ-BERNARDO COMMUNITY**

AS EARLY AS THE 1830s GERMAN IMMIGRANTS HAD BEGUN TO SETTLE IN THE GENERAL VICINITY OF CAT SPRING. THEY WERE SOON JOINED BY OTHERS WHO PREFERRED THIS REGION TO THE VARIOUS SITES THAT HAD BEEN DESIGNATED FOR FORMAL COLONIZATION EFFORTS. WITH THE AREA'S CONTINUED GROWTH, THE SETTLEMENTS OF BERNARDO (4 MI.E) AND MENTZ DEVELOPED AS EARLY FOCAL POINTS OF THE SURROUNDING AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY.

THE GERMAN SETTLERS WHO FOUNDED MENTZ NAMED THE PIONEER COMMUNITY FOR AN AREA OF THEIR HOMELAND. PREDOMINATELY ROMAN CATHOLIC, THEY ESTABLISHED ST. ROCH PARISH BY 1858 UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRIESTS FROM FRELSBURG, THE CHURCH DEVELOPED AS THE RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CENTER OF THE AREA.

BERNARDO WAS BEGUN ABOUT 1845 ON AN IMPORTANT EARLY ROUTE FROM HOUSTON TO INLAND SETTLEMENTS. BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION ON THE PRAIRIE LAND OF THE SAN BENARD RIVER, THE RURAL COMMUNITY WAS FIRST KNOWN AS BERNARDO PRAIRIE.

ONCE IDENTIFIED BY SEPARATE SCHOOLS AND POST OFFICES, THE TWO SETTLEMENTS NOW SHARE A COMMON LIFESTYLE AND HERITAGE, WHICH REFLECT THE CONTINUED INFLUENCE OF THE -EARLY GERMAN SETTLERS. THEIR DESCENDANTS STILL LIVE IN THE MENTZ-BERNARDO COMMUNITY

(1982)

## MARKER DONORS AND MEMORIALS

### DONATED BY

### IN MEMORY OF/INHONOR OF

Rosa Lee(Wendel)Bourque

P.J. and Tillie (Gadeke) Wendel

Barbara (Engbrock) Boyer, Gertrude (Engbrock) Pausewang, William Charles Engbrock, Marie (Engbrock) Shak, Paul Fred Engbrock, John James Engbrock, Andrew George Engbrock, Eugene Louis Engbrock, Joseph Adolph Engbrock

Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt)Braden  
William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock  
Charles Antone and Mary Rosia (Burt) Engbrock

Frank Braden Family

Andreas Braden Sr. Family  
Frank Glueck Sr. Family

Mrs. Hubert Braden Sr.

Hubert Braden, Sr.

Joe and Frances Braden Family

Joe and Frances (Belsung) Braden

Reinhard Brod

Reinhard Brod Family

Gladys (Engbrock) and John D. Clark, Betty Joe (Clark) Mayer, Sue (Clark) McNamee, Carrin Jon (Clark) Katz

Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden  
William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock  
Elo and Alma Rosena (Harfst) Engbrock

Myrtle (Burttschell) Coddou

Adam and Mary (Theuman) Burttschell

Mamie B.(Engbrock) Davis

Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden  
William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock  
Frederick "Fritz" and Annie (Schneider)Engbrock

L. R. Dees

Mr. and Mrs. A. S. Didner

John Neuendorff Family  
Anton Nelson Family

Mr. and Mrs. Willie Dusek

John and Margaret (Brod) Maerz

Anthony and Rowena (Heinsohn) Engbrock

William John and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock  
Anton and Josephine (Braden) Burttschell  
William Jacob and Mary (Burttschell) Engbrock

Edwin and Catherine Engbrock, Edwin Harville Engbrock, and Elizabeth Plummer

Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden  
William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock  
Edward Peter and Lelia (Clayton) Engbrock  
Russell Kent Engbrock  
Virginia Proven Engbrock  
Mary Catherine (Engbrock) Plummer

Glenn Harold Engbrock, Michael Engbrock, David Engbrock, Marcia (Engbrock) Shaw, Debbie (Engbrock) Eddlemon, and Susan Engbrock

Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden  
William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock  
Elo and Alma Rosena (Harfst) Engbrock

Jerome and Erma Lou "Luckie" (McGaughy) Engbrock	William John and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Anton and Josephine (Braden) Burttschell William Jacob and Mary (Burttschell) Engbrock
Herman C. Feist Family	Tillie (Braden) Feist
Ernestine (Burttschell) Foyles	Adam and Mary (Theuman) Burttschell
Mr. and Mrs. Carlos Froebel	Jessie Neuendorff Family
Meryl (Engbrock) Fuchs, Karl W. Fuchs, Viki (Fuchs) Cornelius	Elo and Alma Rosena (Harfst) Engbrock William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock
Jocelyn A. (Hennecke) Harbich	Jacob and Mary (Braden) Hennecke Eugene Harbich
Don Heizer and Ida A. (Ordener) Heizer, Robert J. Heizer	Frederick "Fritz" and Annie (Schneider) Engbrock
Lena (Peikert) Hennecke	Emmanuel Hennecke
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hennecke, Jr. David Hennecke, Travis Hennecke	Raymond W. Hennecke, Sr.
Annie Belle (Engbrock) Herrmann, Joyce (Herrmann) Schmitt, Shirley (Herrmann) von Platen, Carl Herrmann	Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Elo and Anna Elizabeth (Braden) Engbrock John B. and Elizabeth (Witte) Braden Anton and Margarita (Braden) Braden
Alice (Braden) Hill	Joseph and Elizabeth (Maerz) Braden C. J. Fritsch Leona (Braden) Polocheck
Daryl Hill	George Class
Delois and E. F. Hodge	Awald and Martha (Brod) Miller
Elizabeth (Wendel) Drapela Holden, Charles Drapela, Doris Ann (Drapela) Ellis, David Wendel Drapela, Mary Beth (Drapela) Moschella	Elizabeth (Wendel) Drapela Holden William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Peter J. and Barbara (Braden) Wendel Adolph and Emrna (Engbrock) Wendel Children and Grandchildren
Joseph H. and Lorinda (Braden) Horn	Alouis Louis and Mary (Ernst) Braden
Lavine LuElla (Engbrock) Jaeckle	William John and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Anton and Josephine (Braden) Burttschell William Jacob and Mary (Burttschell) Engbrock
Mrs. Edith (Reinhard) Johns	Mrs. Julie (Braden) Reinhard
Virgie R. Johnson	Arleene (Wendel) Rioux Winstead
Elmer R. Kainer Estate Billie (Smith) Kainer	Elmer R. Kainer

Lindsey M. Kainer, Rita (Kainer) Yackel, Sue (Kainer) Perry, and Linda (Kainer) Graham	Frank and Mary (Reitz) Kainer Judith (Kainer) Stiles
Lucian and Evelyn (Frels) Kainer and family	Louis and Selma (Engbrock) Kainer Raymond Kainer
Milton and Regina (Rolf) Kainer and family	Louis and Selma (Engbrock) Kainer Raymond Kainer Leopold and Josephine (Hanselman) Rolf Conrad and Margaret (Weigel) Henneke
Mr. and Mrs. Victor F. Kainer and family	Louis and Selma (Engbrock) Kainer Raymond Kainer
Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred F. Kainer and family	Louis and Selma (Engbrock) Kainer Raymond Kainer
Mrs. Hilda (Brod) Kansteiner	Edgar Kansteiner Family
Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Koehl	John Neuendorff Family Anton Nelson Family
Emmett and Illian (Kaiser) Kveton	John and Eva Frey Family
Mr. and Mrs. Emmet Lehr	Albert and Eva (Braden) Streicher
Patricia (Rioux) Lemley	Arleene (Wendel) Rioux
Margaret T. Litzmann	Francis and Sophia (Brod) Doree Mrs. Louisa (Doree) Trojan Freeman
Anna (Braden) McShane	Frank and Anna (Schobel) Braden
Bertha Mae Mattern	Charles and Katherine (Brod) Wendel Peter Jacob Wendel and Jacob Brod Families Frank X. and Bertha (Meismer) Wendel
Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Mayfield	Josephine (Gluek) Smalley
Jane (Engbrock) Kuhn Meuser	Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Frederick "Fritz" and Annie (Schnieder) Engbrock
Rosalee (Brod) Meyer	Anton and Josephine (Braden) Burttschell Jacob and Josephine (Burttschell) Brod
Louise (Burttschell) Moon	Adam and Mary (Theuman) Burttschell
Willie Mae (Engbrock) Morawietz	William John and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Anton and Josephine (Braden) Burttschell William Jacob and Mary (Burttschell) Engbrock
Vivian (Engbrock) and Orval E. Nanny, Lynda Kay (Nanny) Beal, Cynthia Gayle (Nanny) Hajek	Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Elo and Anna Elizabeth (Braden) Engbrock

Milton and Betty Jean Nelson and family	Willie and Tecla (Braden) Nelson
William L. Neuendorff	Family of William Neuendorff
Garnett (Pickett) Noser	Wilhelmina (Silkenbaumer Neuendorff) Burttschell
Garnett (Pickett) Noser	Ignatz and Bertha (Neuendorff) Stock
Ella (Engbrock) Ordener, Louis Engbrock, Walter Engbrock	Andreas and Catherine (Schnitt) Braden William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Frederick "Fritz" and Annie (Schnieder) Engbrock
Regina (Wendel) Petschka, Raymond Petschka, Lorraine (Petschka) Baker, Gloria (Petschka) Daughtry	Regina and Florian Petschka Adolph and Emma (Engbrock) Wendel
Helen Z. Porter	Hattie (Wendel) Zimmermann Joe Zimmermann Adolph and Emma (Engbrock) Wendel Peter and Barbara (Braden) Wendel William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Andreas and Catherine (Schnitt) Braden
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Reinhard	Andrew Braden Family
Carl and Marie (Wendel) Roecker	William Wendel
Lloyd Romberger and Jane T. (Ordener) Weber Romberger	Frederick "Fritz" and Annie (Schnieder) Engbrock
Ruth (Nohavitza) Schafer, Dorothy (Nohavitza) Kubala, Jarrel Nohavitza, Rita Jean (Nohavitza) Kresta, Donald Nohavitza, Kathryn (Nohavitza) Sellers	John and Katherine (Wendel) Nohavitza Adolph and Emma (Engbrock) Wendel
Josephine (Engbrock) Schulz	William John and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Anton and Josephine (Braden) Burttschell William Jacob and Mary (Burttschell) Engbrock
Mr. and Mrs. George Sebesta	Baldwin Hill
Mr. and Mrs. George Sebesta	Anton Neuendorff Oscar A. Braden Herman Ray Braden
Mr. and Mrs. T. Van Stigall (Gracie Reitz)	John and Ophelia (Burttschell) Reitz William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Anton H. and Cecelia (Engbrock) Reitz
Marie Pauline (Hennecke) Treybig, William James Treybig, Arliss Annette Treybig, Ina Katherine (Treybig) Johnson	Lucas and Elizabeth (Laux) Burttschell Family Andreas and Catherine (Schnitt) Braden Family Joseph and Anna Maria (Midige) Hennecke Family Frank and Ludwina (Koy) Glueck Family William Paul Treybig Corinne Mae Treybig

Gisela Trojan

Mrs. Louisa (Doree) Trojan Freeman

Mrs. Mrytle (Braden) Vogelsang

Leo and Lula (Brod) Braden

Ruth, Leon, Wayne, Peggy, Larry and Ryan Walla

Awald and Martha (Brod) Miller

Edna (Matzke) Watz, Ed and Rita (Watz) Strnadel and family, Floyd and Margaret (Frels) Watz and family, John Vernon and Faustine (Brignac) Watz and family, Mahlon and Isabel (Watz) Johnson and family

John Watz  
Edna (Matzke) Watz  
Conrad Watz  
Mary (Wendel) Watz Bertrand  
Henry and Sophia (Engbrock) Matzke

Olen Weishuhn

Jesse and Katy (Braden) Weishuhn

A. J. Wendel

Andrew and Viola (Frels) Wendel  
Adolph and Emma (Engbrock) Wendel

Mrs. Clementine Wendel

Adolph Wendel Family  
Theobald Fellmann Family

Leo Wendel Family

Leo Wendel  
Adolph and Emma (Engbrock) Wendel  
Peter Jacob and Barbara (Braden) Wendel  
William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock  
Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden

Mr. and Mrs. Jerome C. Wicke

Charles Wicke Family

Isabell and Bill Woodruff

Herman and Lena (Frey) Weigel

Barabara Lee (Wauson) York

Robert Carl and Margarita (Braden) Dehnisch

## ADDENDUM

DONATED BY	IN MEMORY OF/IN HONOR OF
Ella (Engbrock) Ordener Jane T. (Ordener) Weber Romberger and Lloyd Romberger Patricia T. (Weber) Mills Thelma J. (Weber) Murphy Ida A.(Ordener) Heizer and Don Heizer Robert Heizer	Andreas and Catherine (Schmitt) Braden William and Barbara (Braden) Engbrock Frederick "Fritz" and Annie (Schneider) Engbrock Karl and Lillian (Engbrock) Andres Leonard and Mary (Evans) Engbrock Edmond Engbrock Arthur Engbrock
Walter and Rachel (Vevos) Engbrock	(same as above)
Mamie (Engbrock) Powell Davis Ernestine (Powell) Ervin and Jim Ervin Lynn Davis	(same as above)
Louis Engbrock	(same as above)
Jane (Engbrock) Kuhn Muesuer and Joseph Muesuer Delbert Kuhn Donald Kuhn Aline (Kuhn) Swartzwood Darline Kuhn	(same as above)
Harvey and Willie Mae Braden	Felix and Ida (Feist) Braden
Addie (Miekow) Byrne	John and Mary (Burttschell) Miekow
Mrs. Mary M. Rucker	William and Mary(Schuette)Miekow John Miekow, Jr.
David and Elvera (Willrodt) Kahlich	Louise (Burttschell) Willrodt
A. J. and Beatrice Hill	George Class
Mrs. John Mattern	Charles and Katherine (Brod) Wendel Frank X and Bertha(Meismer) Wendel
Margaret Litzrann	Francis and Sophia (Brod) Doree
Elizabeth (Wendel) Drapela Holden	Elizabeth (Wendel) Drapela Holden

**DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS**  
**(Received after August 8)**

**DONATED BY**

**IN MEMORY OF/IN HONOR OF**

Mr. and Mrs. A. S. Didner

Rev. A. W. Didner  
Katherine (Burttschell Nelson) Hennecke  
Anton and Augusta (Stock) Neuendorff  
Conrad and Frances (Wink) Weigel  
Geo. Paul and Anna Marie (Braden) Wink

Mr. Wilber Watz

Mr. A. G. Miller

Vivian (Engbrock) Nanny

Mr. and Mrs. I. A. Smahlik

Henry Becker

Mrs. Louis Dehmer

Peter Dehmer and family

Ruby Nelson and Wilma Copeland

Mr. and Mrs. Allan Hilton

Steven Staff

Mr. and Mrs. John Murray

Robert Engbrock (William Engbrock Family)

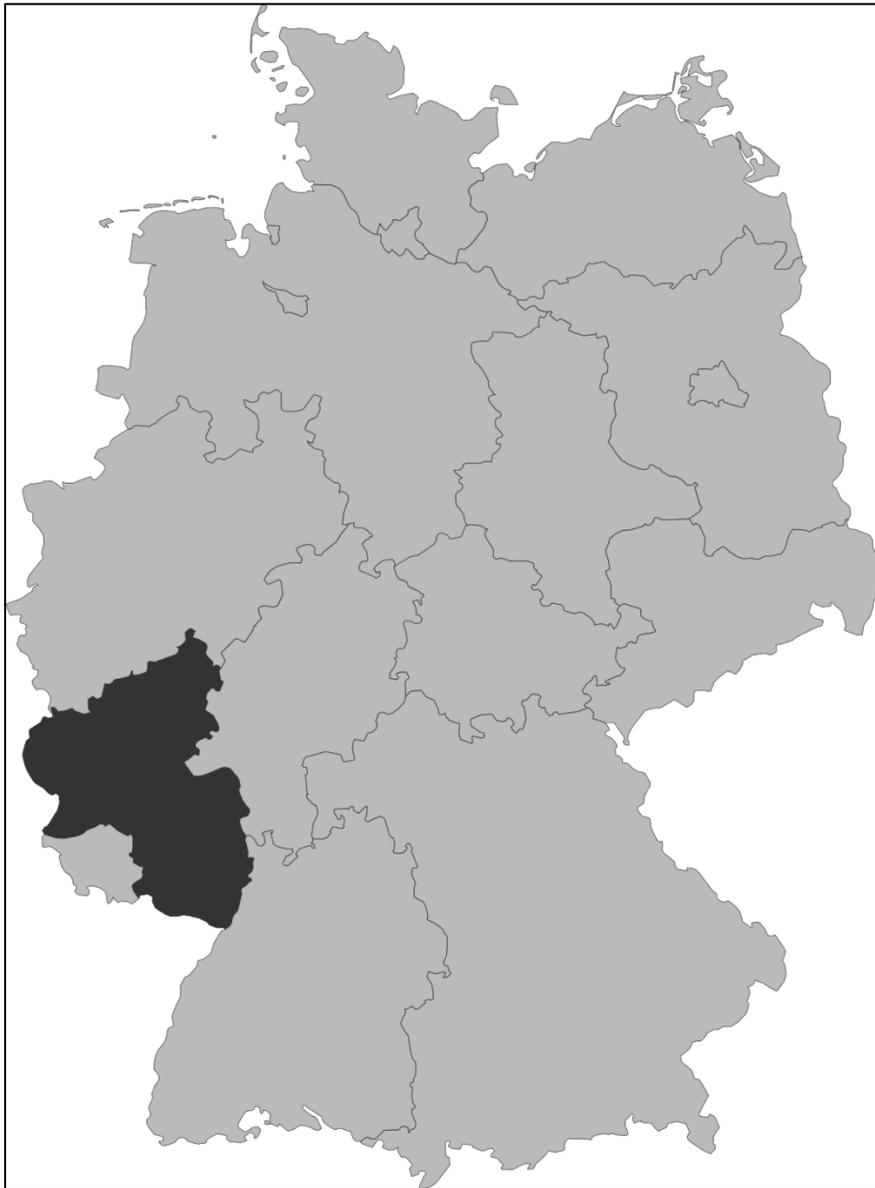
Mr. and Mrs. Erwin Reinhard

Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Drymalla

John and Mary (Wendel) Drymalla  
Alex and Minnie (Neuendorff) Jones, Sr.  
Sam and Dora (Jones) Marsalia

**PART II**

**HESSE-DARMSTADT (NOW RHINELAND PALATINATE)**



## BACKGROUND

Bingen, Büdesheim and Mainz are all located in the present-day state of Rhineland Palatinate.

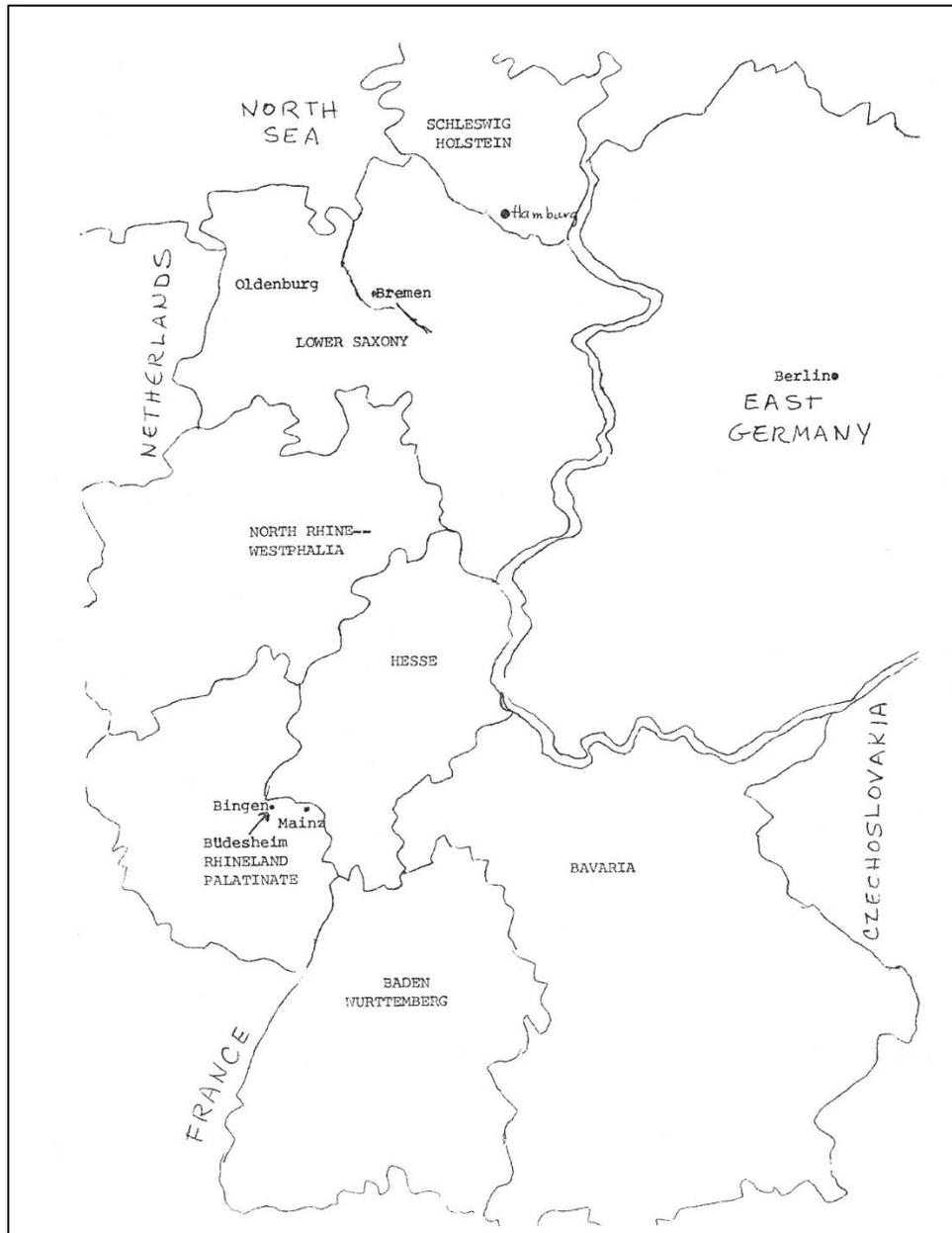


Figure 26 Map of West Germany, Prior to Unification



## MAINZ

Mainz, or Mentz, the largest town in the grandduchy of Hesse-Darmstadt, one of the strongest fortresses in Germany, and formerly the seat of an archbishop and elector, is situated on a rising ground on the left bank of the Rhine, nearly opposite the influx of the Main (river).

Mainz, one of the oldest cities in Germany, was originally a Celtic settlement. Its strategic importance was early recognized by the Romans, and in 13 B.C. Drusus, the son-in-law of Augustus, erected a fortified camp (castrum) there, to which a smaller castellum (the modern Castel) on the opposite bank was afterward added. The Celtic name became Latinized as Maguntiacum or Moguntiacum, and a town, Maguntia, gradually arose, which became the capital of Germania Superior. In the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) Mainz was occupied by the Swedes and the French. In 1792 it enthusiastically welcomed the principles of the French Revolution, and opened its gates to the Republican troops under General Custine. It was recaptured in the following year, but was ceded to France by the peace of Campo Formio in 1797. In 1814 it was restored to Germany and handed over to the grand-duchy of Hesse, remaining, however, a fortress of the German Confederation, garrisoned in common by Prussian, Austrian, and Hessian troops. Since 1871 it has been a fortress of the German Empire. Population (1889) 65,000.

New-Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica

published 1899-page 4050



**Figure 28 View of Old Mainz**

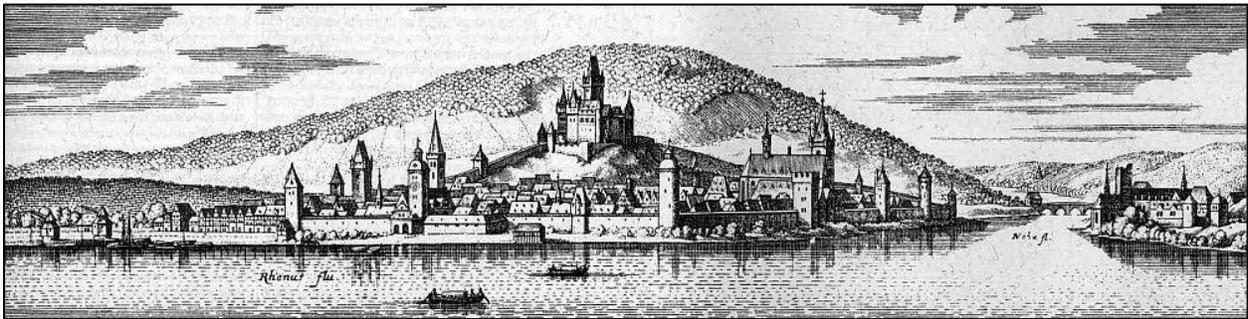
## **BINGEN**

Bingen, ancient Bingium, or Vincum, town, West Germany, state of Hesse, is situated on the left bank of the Rhine at its confluence with the Nahe; 17 miles west of Mainz. Noteworthy buildings are the 15th century parish church; the castle of Klopp, in the site of an ancient Roman fortress; the Rochus-Kapelle, a chapel on the brow of the Rochusberg, a high hill back of Bingen, in which the festival of St. Rochus is celebrated; and the Drusus Bridge, with its seven arches, built about 13 B.C. In the middle of the river opposite Bingen is the celebrated

Mouse Tower where, according to legend, the cruel Bishop Hatto of Mainz was devoured by mice (969). On the opposite side of the river, a little above Bingen, is the ruined castle of Ehrenfels, erected about 1210. There are manufactures of tobacco, wine, starch, and leather, and trade in wine and grain. In the Middle Ages Bingen was a free town but later passed to the Elector of Mainz. It was often captured in the Thirty Years' War and in 1689 was almost entirely destroyed by the French.

Population (1946) 16,550.

The American Peoples Encyclopedia



**Figure 29 Bingen – excerpt from Topographia Hassiae from Matthäus Merian the Younger, 1655**

## MOUSE TOWER

Mouse Tower (in German Der Mauseturm), is a tower on a small island on the Rhine River, Bingen, Germany. A famous legend tells about the tower and the cruel Bishop Hatto of Bingen who built it. According to the legend, the bishop fled there to escape a horde of mice. The mice came to avenge the deaths of peasants whom the cruel bishop had burned alive. The horde of mice attacked the tower and devoured the wicked tyrant. Experts have identified several

historical characters with this story, including two Archbishop Hattos of Mainz. In reality, Mauseturm appears to be a corruption of mautturm, meaning tall tower. The tower was probably built in the 1200's as a place for collecting tolls from boats on the Rhine.



**Figure 30 The Mouse Tower with Ehrenfels Castle on the background**

Photo: Arcalino / Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=24829570>

## **ROCHUSBERG/ST. ROCH'S CHAPEL**

**Editor's note:** The following information is compiled from a variety of sources: the priest of Bingen-Büdesheim; the archivist of the diocese of Mainz; and the Archives of Koblenz, Germany. The material itself is in a variety of forms: booklets, books, newspaper articles, emigration records, and other records. The

material being in the German language, several people aided in the translation and/or transcription: Julia Penn of Austin, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Guenther of Austin, Mrs. Elise Theinert of San Antonio, Mrs. Alma Corsan of Wharton, and Elizabeth Didner and Helen Didner of Westphalia.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Rochusberg is a long hill up the Rhine from Bingen. Earlier the hill was called The Hesselberg, also called "Hissel," then in 1482, "Hesel." Since the mountain once was covered with hazelnut bushes it is assumed that the name Hessel comes from Hasel-Hesel-Hissel. At one time it was also called Eisenberg (Iron Mountain). The present name (Rochusberg) became fixed only after 1666 when the church (of St. Roch) was built.

Before the church of St. Roch was built, there had been a Bethlehem's Chapel (or church) supposedly on the same spot-from the time of the crusades, 11th to 12th centuries. The church was named Bethlehem because that had been the goal of the crusaders. That the church really did exist is evidenced by a proclamation from 1417 which mentions it. It is not known when it was built. The Archbishop of Mainz took over the Bethlehem Church and all its goods after the Brotherhood of St. Martin in Bingen had their church burn down in 1390.

The church of St. Roch was built to honor the saint and implore his aid to stop a plague of 1666. In the first nine months of that year, 1300 people in Bingen were said to have died of the plague. Bodies had to be laid unceremoniously criss-cross of one another in mass graves; whole families and clans died out, and houses and streets went to wrack and ruin. Baron von Dehren had heard that by honoring St. Rochus in this way the pestilence in Germany and Italy had been stopped. So the mayor of Bingen made the pledge, and the people agreed to this use of resources so they set to building the church. By the time the church was finished, the plague died out. The church was dedicated in 1677. The thankful people

promised always to hold a procession on the 16th of August in honor of Rochus to the Rochus church, and they have kept this promise since that time.

In 1738 the people acquired a carved wooden statue of Rochus which they carry in the procession. The Rochus Brotherhood, founded in 1754 and consisting of male citizens of the town, look after the church. The Brotherhood existed into this century.

In 1689 France's Louis XIV had Bingen burned. The church remained standing but was stripped bare even of the church bells. The church was destroyed except for its walls in 1795 when the French General Custine fought with Austrians over Mainz. Until 1802 the pilgrimage was to the ruins. From 1802 to 1813 the pilgrimage was to the Bingen city church. After 1814 when the conquering French went back home and Bingen was again German, the people decided to rebuild the church. Everyone helped, and the church was ready for the August 16, 1814, procession. Everyone was delighted because for eleven years they had not been able to conduct the pilgrimage properly.

On July 11, 1889, lightning started a fire. Only the precious things inside the church were saved; the church burned down to the foundations. The foundations were used as much as possible in building the new church. The third Rochus church was finished May 18, 1891, so it could be consecrated on August 17. The big bell is dedicated to Mary, Christ's helper; the second one to St. Roch; the third to Hildegard; the last to St. Rupert and his holy mother Berta.

Clippings from the newspaper in Bingen (1981) tell of the recent pilgrimage of thousands to the outdoor altar of the Rochus Church to celebrate the eucharist in memory of the saint of the plague. This pilgrimage is still made annually because of the solemn oath made by the mayor of Bingen in 1666. Much in the celebration has changed, but the procession has not. People carry St. Roch's statue, and numbers of Christians from Bingen and elsewhere follow. The pilgrimage celebration is complete with many booths and good food. Especially prized is Bratwurst wrapped in grape leaves.

The 1981 sermon by Bishop Kampe described the horrors of the plague and life circumstances then. Of Bingen's approximately 3000 inhabitants, approximately 1300 died. The church at that time organized help and care for the sick and promised everyone hope and relief.

The southwest end of the long Rochus hill is called the Scharlachkopf (scarlet head) on the slopes of which the famous Scharlachberger (scarlet mountain) grape grows. This point affords a magnificent view of the Rhine valley and the Nahe valley as well as of the Hessian Palatinate.

A booklet about the St. Roch's Chapel contains a reproduction of an oil painting of the saint. The writer Goethe gave the money for the painting so the painter put the young Goethe's face on St. Rochus. The painting illustrates Rochus giving away all his worldly goods as he leaves his palace to go on a crusade.



**Figure 31 Rochus Chapel above the town of Bingen**

Photo: Manfred Heyde, November 2008, Wikimedia Commons

## BÜDESHEIM

The Büdesheim Coat of Arms is shown in Figure 30.



### Description

The coat of arms is divided. In the upper half in blue, the half figure of Saint Stephanus in front view with a palm branch in the right hand. The left hand is holding stones. In the lower golden half is a green wavy band slanting to the right with a red lily on each side.

### Origin

Since the Middle Ages until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the village belonged to the bishopric of St. Stephan in Mainz. As part of the City of Bingen,

Figure 32 Budesheim Coat of Arms

the village can no longer officially display its coat of arms, but unofficially it can make full use of the coat of arms. It is fashioned after the official Court Seals which are preserved in the State Archives of Darmstadt (plaster copies in the Archives of Mainz). An older, late Gothic, court seal shows on a star-studded background a kneeling and praying St. Stephan, beneath that a shield with a

slanting stream to the right and two lilies. The inscription reads, “S Iudicii villae Buedeszheim.” The more recent baroque court seal with the inscription, “Sigillum iudicii villae Buedesheimensis” shows the above described coat of arms. Saint Stephanus points to the Bishopric of St. Stephan as sovereign authority. The two lilies are symbols of the two Budesheimer church patrons, Saint Aureus and Saint Justina, who were martyred to death by drowning in the city of Mainz. The wavy band symbolizes the water in which the two guiltless saints (lilies) drowned. There is no historical documentation for the color scheme.

**Note:** The latest date which the original material contains is 1865; the term Prussian is also used. One must assume therefore, that the current statistics mentioned refer to the late 19th century (before 1918).

\* \* \* \* \*

The population at the time the article was written was 2782. There were 1028 inhabitants in 1815; of these 2,672 were Catholic; 75, Protestant; and 35, Jewish. Budesheim had its own mayor. The city facilities were under the jurisdiction of the tax collector’s office.

There is much business, particularly in wine. There is a post office with telegraph and telephone, and an electric train is to be built to Bingen. Land is divided into farmland, vineyards, fields, forest, and homesteads. There are several mills.

The town was first mentioned in 1074 by the name of Buodenesheim, then Budensheim (1154), Budinsheim (1181), Buetensheim (1184), Butinsheim (1190), and Buthinheim (1222). It was usually then referred to as Budesheim bei Bingen or am Eysenberg (the iron mountain) to distinguish it from Erbes-Budesheim which is near Alzey.

In 983 sovereignty over Budesheim seems to have accrued to the Archbishopric of Mainz when Kaiser Otto II gave Bingen and its surrounding area to Archbishop

Wiligis. However, in the 13th century, the St. Stephan's monastery (or seminary) at Mainz laid claim to sovereignty of Büdesheim. Subsequently, there was much contention over the administrative governorship, and it was back and forth to the 18th century between Archbishopric of Mainz and St. Stephan's monastery. (note: St. Stephan is the patron saint of Mainz).

Mention was made of a church in Büdesheim first in 1184. Proof of its incorporation appears in 1213 and 1313; it was probably already incorporated in 1154. The parish, which was dedicated to Saints Aureus and Justina, was situated in the Archbishopric of Mainz.

Büdesheim was originally a walled town in the Middle Ages. It would not have held back the enemy so in wartime the people of Büdesheim took refuge behind the walls of Bingen and agreed to help protect Bingen. They built a Büdesheim tower, the fifth one of the city walls, and kept four men there on watch. This agreement was renewed in 1552.

Alte Rathaus is the old city hall built in 1539. There was some kind of "law house" already in 1441 in Büdesheim built under an oak tree. It may have been under the present city hall. The bells in its little towers are dated 1774 and 1754 (poured in Mainz and Frankfurt).

There is a castle near the church which was first mentioned in 1290. In the 17th and 18th centuries Winecke castle belonged to the family Frey von Dehren. Nothing remains of the fortification (castle), but the area where it stood is still referred to as "die Burg," "the castle," or "the fort."

Scharlachberg is a vineyard on the border of Bingen; it was well known before 1248. Only the Riesling grape could be planted. If the people planted another grape, theirs would no longer be first class.

Roman glass and clay containers have been found in the area and are in the museum in Mainz. There are early cemeteries, hills that were mass graves, and some burial urns have been found.



**Figure 33 Aerial photograph of Büdesheim, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany**

Photo: Fritz Geller-Grimm, June 2007 Wikimedia Commons

## Old Büdesheim Families

**Note:** This material is extracted from The History of Büdesheim-"Family Histories--The Last Senior Magistrates of Büdesheim." Only those sections containing names of families which emmigrated to Texas are included.

\* \* \* \* \*

Even long before the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and into the 19th century the following families were living in Büdesheim: Auth, Barck, Engelhardt, Hademer, Heusenstamm, Hornblaser, Lautz(Laux)<sup>102</sup> and Vogt.

In 1643 the Wendel<sup>103</sup> family appears for the first time as heirs of Adam Wendel and in 1716 as Caspar Wendele. From there on were always several families of this name. Furthermore, during the time before the Thirty Years War the Schmitt (Schmidt)<sup>104</sup>, Klein and Mueller families are mentioned. It is possible that the Schmitt and Mueller families now living in Büdesheim are descendants of these-- however that is difficult to prove.

Already in 1662, the first members of the Braden<sup>99</sup> family are mentioned. They were Balthasar and Gabriel. Also listed in 1667 is Hupert Braden who was Mayor in 1674 and church elder in 1685. One of the descendants was Paul Braden, born circa 1698. From 1731 to 1755 he was Court Clerk and Tax Collector. From 1755 to 1768 (his death) he was Senior Magistrate. His nephew Georg Paul Braden held the office of Mayor from 1814 to 1825. Also during the time of the Stephan Foundation various Bradens held the office of mayor, which, however, at that time did not have the importance it had under Georg Paul Braden.

The Braden family is believed to have come from England and spelled their name Braddon (pronounced Braedden). We also find the spelling of Braddon in the Büdesheimer church record of 1736.

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<sup>102</sup> Family name of Mrs. Lucas Burtschell (Laux)

<sup>103</sup> Families by this name immigrated to Texas from Büdesheim

<sup>104</sup> Family name of Mrs. Andreas Braden, Sr. (Schmitt)

At the same time as the Braden family appear the ancestors of the following families: Bruec, Hirschenkraemer (Hirschen-Craehmer), Kunz (Cuntz), Rau and Walter (Walther)<sup>99</sup> and in the 1670's: Bartholomae, Buedenbender, Blum, Hees, Pertgen (Pfertgen), Schueler<sup>99</sup>, Stumm and Zoell. A little later but still before 1700: Damm, Frey<sup>99</sup>, and Hensel (Haensel).

After 1700 to the end of the 18th century the following families arrived: Bender, Berger<sup>99</sup>, Brustmann, Conrad, Decker, Dore, Ebersmann, Gerothwohl, Gord, Gross, Gruenewald, Illy, Kastel, Kau, Kraus (Krauss), May Mayer(Meyer)<sup>99</sup>, Motz, Nachtigall, Rifsel, Roesch<sup>99</sup>, Rudolf, Schild, Schilz, Schneider<sup>99</sup>, Schober, Schoenemann, Sommer<sup>99</sup>, Sirebel, Trable, Trunk, Uehlein, Werner, Wink<sup>99</sup>, and Zimmerschitt<sup>99</sup>.

### **Braden and Adelseck Families of Büdesheim**

**Note:** This material is extracted from The History of Büdesheim - "Family Histories -- The Last Senior Magistrates of Büdesheim" and a more recent newspaper article, "Adelseck is the Oldest Name." The Adelseck family is included since there is the possibility that one woman from this family married into the Braden family.

With the encouragement for settlements after the Thirty Years War (1618 – 1648), the Braden family arrived from England. They spelled their name Braddon (pronounced Braedden/Bray-d'n). The spelling of Braddon is also found in the Büdesheimer church record of 1736. Already in 1662, the first members of the Braden family are mentioned. They were Balthasar and Gabriel. Also listed in 1667 is Hupert Braden who was Mayor in 1674 and church elder in 1685. One of the descendants was Paul Braden, born circa 1698. From 1731 to 1755 he was Court Clerk and Tax Collector. From 1755 to 1768 (his death) he was Senior Magistrate. His grandson Georg Paul Braden held the office of Mayor from 1814 to 1825. Also during the time of the Stephan Foundation various Bradens held

the office of Mayor, which, however, at that time did not have the importance it had under Georg Paul Braden. Eduard Braden was the last mayor of Büdesheim. There is a Braden Street in Büdesheim.

The oldest family still living today in Büdesheim is the Adelseck family which definitely has been residing in Büdesheim for over 500 years without interruption. Peter Adelseck appears already in 1440 in the Büdesheim records. Later, in 1464 Hen and Cuntz Adelseck are mentioned. After this numerous Adelsecks appear in a continuous line, such as in 1530 there were four, in 1550 five, and in 1559 seven families.

Several Adelsecks disappeared from Büdesheim during the Thirty Years War. In 1632 Nikolaus Adelseck had his daughter Elizabeth baptised in Bingen, and in 1640 Caspar Adelseck did likewise with his daughter Margareta. Presumably, both had taken temporary refuge at Bingen. However, in 1643 and in 1649, both are listed again as inhabitants of Büdesheim. Also Hans Wigand Adelseck was temporarily absent during the Thirty Years War. Mathias Adelseck, born at Büdesheim was recognized as a citizen of Bingen in 1694, also, in 1720, his son Peter who was born in Bingen. Both were coopers.

From 1716 to 1724 Wendel Adelseck was Junior Magistrate. From 1724 to 1745 and from 1750 to 1755 Johann George Adelseck held the office of Senior Magistrate. Previously he was for many years a court clerk. Furthermore, members of the Adelseck family were represented in the lists of mayors and church elders. In 1814 Master Tailor Johann George Adelseck was active as a Russian interpreter.

The name Adelseck, already in the 17th century, was spelled the same way as now. Before that one could find the name spelled "Adolseck" and in the copy of a

document as "Adolfseck." Presumably, the first Büdesheimer Adelseck was a member of the Men of the Lords of Hohenfels. He probably was originally from Adolfseck in the Taunus mountains. Thus, the family name "von Adolfseck" was derived from the place name Adolfseck. Considering its origin, the name has to be written and pronounced Adels-eck and not Adel-seck, as has occurred.

### **Other Büdesheimer families with descendants believed or known to have come to Texas with dates of their origins in Büdesheim**

Long before the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and into the 19th century the Lautz (Laux) family is mentioned. In 1643 the Wendel family appears for the first time as heirs of Adam Wendel and in 1716 as Caspar Wendel. From there on were always several families of this name. During the time before the Thirty Years War the Schmitt (Schmidt) was mentioned.

At the same time as the Braden family appear the ancestors of the following family: Walter (Walther) and in the 1670's: Schueler. A little later but still before 1700: Frey. After 1700 to the end of the 18th century the following families arrived: Roesch, Sommer, Wink, and Zimmerschitt.

## Büdesheim Emigration Records

The following pages contain various kinds of emigration records obtained from Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz (State Archives of Koblenz, Germany). Some of these records are general lists; one record is a personal letter; one record is an official correspondence. Several records are written to or from St. George, mayor of Büdesheim; these records indicate the significance of the mayor's office. Several of the records also indicate that government "red tape" is nothing new.

\* \* \* \* \*

Büdesheim  
November 21, 1845

Nr. D.D. 1113

Reference: The Emigrations.

To:

The Grand-Ducal Hessian County Council of Bingen County

REPORT

of the Grand-Ducal Hessian Mayor at Büdesheim

Nr. K  
Referring to the order  
of November 8, 1845

In compliance with the above quoted high order I have the honor to report respectfully that from March 1, 1844 to this day, the following persons respectively families have emigrated from this community to Texas. Their return is not to be expected.

Nr.	Namen der Ausgewanderten	Familien Stand	Anzahl der Koepfe letzterer	Vermoege n
1	Peter Jakob Wendel	ledig	---	300
2	Johann Frey	"	---	300
3	Jakob Rothemer	verh.	Frau, keine Kinder	200
4	Kaspar Rothemer	"	Schwaegerin und 5 kinder	2500
5	Ferdinand Sommer	"	Frau u. 5 Kinder	600
6	Lukas Burtschell	"	Frau u. 10 Kinder	1000
7	Adam Roesch	"	Frau u. 3 Kinder	400
8	Heinrich Walter III	"	Frau u. 2 Kinder	600
9	Johann Frey	ledig	---	100
10	Johann Schmitt III	Verh."	Frau u. 5 Kinder	600
11	Anton Braden II	"	Frau u. 2 Kinder	600
12	Phil. Joseph Frey	"	Frau u. 3 Kinder	5000
13	Kaspar Schueler	"	Frau u. 5 Kinder	600
14	Adam Braden	"	Frau, keine Kinder	400
15	Johann Bapt. Braden	"	---	300
16	Jakob Weckert	"	---	<u>100</u>
				13,600.

- I      5 ledige maennliche      Das Ergebnis ist also  
         1 ledige weiblich      wie neben angefuehrt 13,600.--.  
         11 verheiratete Maenner  
         10 Frauen  
         40 Kinder  
         67
- II     They have disposed of their assets and, after paying their debts, they took with them above amounts in cash, including the still to be paid head tax.
- III    According to my knowledge they did not leave behind any creditors whose demands had not been met.
- IV    All (emigrants) have been provided with passes to Antwerp and with testimonials as to their character.
- V.    The fact that a local (organizer) representative was given the agency is the reason why in such a short time so many decided to emigrate, while formerly only a few gave it any thought--even if the agent did not make any strenuous efforts in this direction.

St. George

No. der Familie	Namen	Stand	Alter	Zeit der Auswanderg.
1	Zimmerschott, Friedrich Josephine (seine Frau) Josephine (Tochter)	Ackersmann	34	1830 " 1844
2	Schmitt, Johann III Maria (geb. Studer) Kinder: a) Elisabeth b) Theresia c) Joh. Baptist d) Heinrich e) Margaretha	Ackersmann		1845 " " 20 18 17 15 14 "
3	Braden, Anton II Margareth (geb. Braden) Kinder: a) Adam b) Johanna Marga			" " 3 1 "
4	Braden, Adam Elizabeth (geb. Wirzelhahn)			" "
5	Braden, Joh. Baptist (ledig, Sohn v. Georg Braden)			"
6	Wink, Paul Anna Maria (geb. Braden) Kinder: a) Franziska Marg. b) Adam Joseph c) Magdalena	Kieser		1848 11 9 8 1848 " "

	d) Johann	5	“
	e) Anna Mar.	2	“
7	Wink, Johann		1848
	Antonette (geb. Frey)		
	Kinder:		
	a) Anna Maria	10	
	b) Rosine	6	
8	c) Johann Peter Braden,	½	
	Grg. Joseph II		
	Barbara (geb. Nagel)		“
	Kinder:		
	a) Georg Joseph	21	“
	b) Eduard	19	
	c) Adam Joseph	17	
	d) Magdalena	11	
	e) Margarethe	8	
	f) Martin	6	
9	g) Anna Maria Lambi,	5	
	Adam		
	Margaretha (geb. Wink)		
10	Wink, Ludwig		
	Katharina (geb. Mayer)		
11	Poth, Richard		1848
	Maria Cressantia (geb. Braden)		“
	Kinder:		
	a) Elisabetha	8	“
	b) Jakob	5	“
	c) Anna Wink (Stieftochter)	18	“
12	Frey III Peter		1848
	Mar. Justine		“

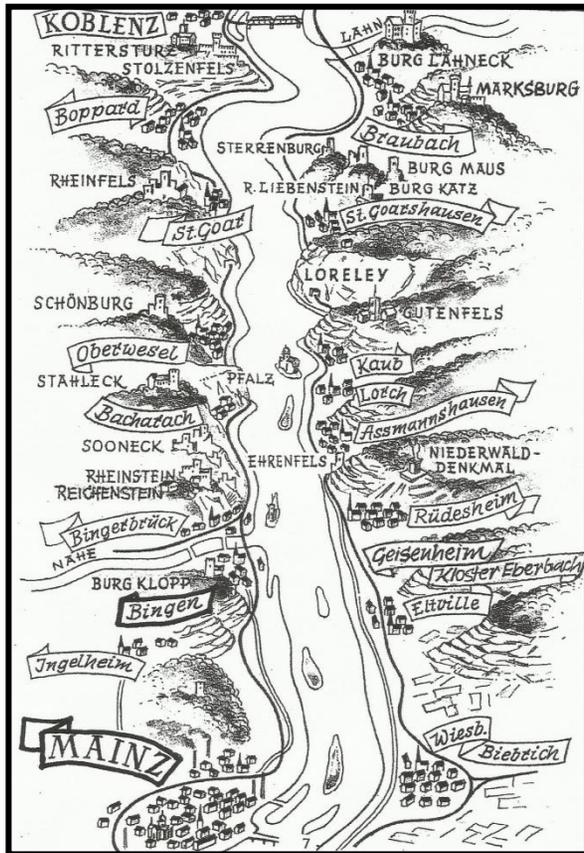
	(geb. Braden)		
	Kinder:		
	a) Magdalene	8	“
	b) Peter Jakob	6	“
	c) Marie Justine	1½	“
13	Bradens,		
	Andres		“
	Katharina		
	(geb. Schmitt)		“
	Kinder:		
	a) Anton	13	“
	b) Katharine	12	“
	c) Andreas	11	“
	d) Gertrude	9	“
	e) Eva	7	“
	f) Margarethe	4	“
	g) Anna Maria	2	“
	f) Barbara	3 Wochen	“
14	Maerz,		
	Peter <del>§</del>		1848
	Katharine		
	(geb. P_ Roth)		
	Kinder:		
	a) Anna Maria	16	
	b) Margaretha	14	
	c) Jakob	13	
	d) Ottilia	8	
	e) Elisabeth	5	
15	Roesch,		
	Adam		1845
	Anna Maria		
	(Geb. Frey)		
	Kinder:		
	a) Magdalena	13	
	b) Anna Maria	11	
	c) Joseph	2	
16	Sommer		
	Ferdinand		
	Katharine		
	(geb. Senft)		
	Kinder:		
	a) Elisabeth	13	

	Franz		7	
	Katharine		5	
	Anna Maria		3	
	Johann		1	
17	Walter, Heinrich III (or: Heinrich, Walter III) Magdalene (geb. Mueller) Kinder:			
	a) Johann		5	
	b) Georg		3	
18	Burtschell, Lukas Elisabeth (geb. Laux) Kinder:	Zimmermann		1845
	a) Magdalena		28	
	b) Katharina		26	
	c) Franz		24	
	d) Ottilia		22	
	e) Josephine		20	
	f) Anton		18	
	g) Joseph		14	
	h) Jakob		12	
	i) Sophia		9	
	k) Heinrich		6	
19	Bengel, Nikolaus Magdalene (geb. Wink) Kinder:			
	a) Elisabetha		15	
	b) Georg		13	
	c) Konrad		11	
	d) Richard		9	
	e) Katharin		5	
	f) Johanna		2	
20	Burtschell Franz (ledig)		21	1846
21	Brueck, Philipp (ledig)		21	1847

22	Brueck, Eva (ledig)		20	1848
23	Mueller, Franz (ledig)	Baecker	21	1843
24	Mueller, Anton (ledig)	Schuhmacher	20	1846
25	Schmitt, Adam (ledig)	Weingutsmann		1841
26	Schwoerbel, Paul	Ackersmann	50	1849
	Anna Maria (geb. Lunixenheimer)		47	
	Kinder:			
	a) Elisabeth		24	
	b) Margaretha		21	
	c) Heinrich		17	
	d) Anna		14	
	e) Lorenz		10	
	f) Ludwig		6	
27	Epenten, Georg Joseph	Gastwirt	51	1849
	Sohn: Eduard	Baecker		1849
28	Braden, Eduard (Sohn von Georg Joseph Braden I und Eva Braden geb. Laux)	Geometer I . Klasse		1849 (28.Juli)
29	Berger, Peter Joseph (ledig)	Tagloehner		Maerz 1851
30	Berger, Lorenz (ledig)	Kutscher		“ “
31	Mayer, Georg Jos. (ledig)	Winzer		“ “
32	Walter, Paul (ledig)	Schneider- geselle		“ “
32	Burtschell, Klara (ledig)			“ “
33	Mayer, Antoinette (ledig)			“ “

**PART III**  
**FROM MAINZ TO MENTZ**

## RHINE -- KOBLENZ to MAINZ



## EMIGRANTS from BÜDESHEIM

**1846** – Adam Braden, Anton Braden, John Braden, Lucas Burttschell, John Frey, P.J. Wendel, Ludwig Wink

**1848** – Andreas Braden, Peter Frey, Peter Maerz, G. P. Wink, Jean Wink, Louis Wink

\*\*\*\*\*

**Other early families** (by 1860) – Belzung, Benson, Brod, Dehnisch, Dunlavy, Franz, Gaul, Glueck, Hennecke, Jaeckle, Kansteiner, Kuhn, Meismer, Miekow, Neuendorff, Obenhaus, Prause, Stock, Waddill, Weishuhn, Weigel

### St. Roch Church

1857 – land to Bishop of Galveston

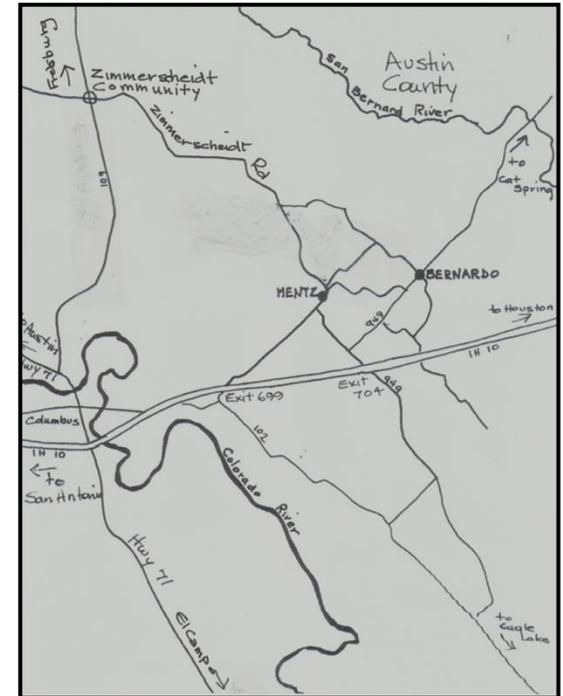
1858 – 1<sup>st</sup> church building

1860 – Church books begin

1872 – Stone church (burned 1940)

1941 – Current building (75 years old)

## MENTZ-BERNARDO AREA



**Post Offices** – San Bernard 1853–to N.Mainz

New Mainz 1860-1866

Bernardo Prairie 1875 – to Mentz

Mentz 1889-1896; 1897-1913

Bernardo 1898-1917

In 1983 “Old” Mainz learned about Neu Mainz, Texas. Professor Hans Galinsky, of the University of Mainz was in Texas for a symposium at the U of H during the Tricentennial of German Immigration to America. Someone who attended the meetings gave him a booklet that was prepared for the 1982 dedication of the Mentz-Bernardo historical marker. Professor Galinsky later contacted me about a planned exhibit at the Mainz City Library which would show the connection between that part of Germany and Texas. I sent him material and contacted others who were researching the Germany-Texas connection. He received a large amount of material to add to that which he had found locally and in other areas. A tour group including Leyendecker, Braden, Burttschell, and Wendel descendants attended the opening of the exhibit in June 1988.

Twenty years later in 2008, Hartmut Wagner, a young journalist from Mainz learned about Neu Mainz, Texas. I believe he had come across the collection of materials from the exhibit which are part of the permanent collection of the library. He contacted the Columbus Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber directed him to Bill Stein, director of the Nesbitt Memorial Library. Bill directed him to me. Again, I mailed and emailed material and encouraged Hartmut to come to Mentz for the annual church picnic on the first Sunday of October. Well, he didn’t want to wait that long – I don’t remember when our first exchange was – so, instead, he came for the third Sunday in July which is the Firemen’s Picnic.

The day after the picnic, Larry Uhlig drove him around to see other German settlements in the area – Cat Spring and Industry. We met with him the day before he planned to leave. He had some questions about what he had seen and learned. He definitely wanted to know how many people lived in Mentz. We told him that no one lived here because Fr. Flagg lived in Frelsburg. In spite of the fact that he had seen that the farms and houses were scattered around in a large area, his German mind wanted an accounting. Since Mentz is a voting precinct, I was able to give him the number of registered voters. We added for children and some non-registered voters.



Der Feuerwehrmann: Wenn es in Mentz brennt, steht Karen Brod trotz seiner 73 Jahre mit am Löschschauch. Als er mit sechs Jahren in die Schule kam, konnte er fast kein Englisch, denn seine Eltern sprachen nur Deutsch mit ihm. 2005 besuchte er mit einer Reisegruppe Rheinland-Pfalz, die Heimat seiner Vorfahren.



Der Baseballspieler: Preston Neuendorffs Herz schlägt für die Bernardo Bears, die in Mentz ihre Spiele austragen. Stolz trägt der 19-Jährige auf der Kappe das „B“ der Bären. 25 Mal im Jahr steht er für den Verein auf dem Platz, wie früher sein Vater und sein Großvater. Seine Vorfahren stammen aus Bingen am Rhein.



Der Daheim-Gebliebene: Helmut Gietz (85) wohnt in Bingen – denn sein Ur-Ur-großvater Franz Josef Burtischell blieb 1845 in der Heimat, als sein Bruder Lukas und andere Binger nach Texas auswanderten. Gietz kann kein Englisch, war nie in Mentz. Aber seine Frau Gerlinde (70) hat Kontakte dorthin. Foto: Braun



Der Richter: Francis Truchard (66) ging in Mentz in die Grundschule – heute ist er dort gewählter Amtsrichter. Seit 1962 beschäftigen ihn die Menschen aus Mentz und Umgebung immer wieder in dem Amt. Sein Ur-Ur-großvater, Andreas Braden, wanderte aus Bingen aus. Truchard hat aber nie Deutsch gelernt.



Die Historikerin: Arliss Treybig (73) sammelt alles über die Geschichte von Mentz und die Auswanderung aus Rheinland-Pfalz. Ihre Eltern, ihre Großeltern, ihre Ur-Großeltern und ihre Ur-Ur-Großeltern sind auf dem Mentzer Friedhof begraben. Ihre Geschichte erforscht die frühere Oberschullehrerin seit 30 Jahren.



Der Deutsch-Bewahrer: Larry Uhlig (69) ist im Raum Mentz eine Kirche St. Roch in Mentz. Die „sehr lebendige“ Gemeinde ist mit der Feuerwehr und dem Baseballverein die wichtigste Institution in dem Dorf. Viermal wöchentlich zelebriert der Geistliche die Messe, meist nehmen rund 100 Mentzer daran teil.



Der Pfarrer: Wayne Flagg (52) leitet seit 13 Jahren die katholische Kirche St. Roch in Mentz. Die „sehr lebendige“ Gemeinde ist mit der Feuerwehr und dem Baseballverein die wichtigste Institution in dem Dorf. Viermal wöchentlich zelebriert der Geistliche die Messe, meist nehmen rund 100 Mentzer daran teil.

# New Mainz: So leben die USA-Auswanderer heute

Familien aus Bingen gründeten das texanische Dorf vor rund 150 Jahren – Wenige Einwohner sprechen Deutsch – „Bürgermeister“ träumt von Partnerschaft mit Landeshauptstadt

New York oder New Orleans kennt jeder – aber New Mainz? Die meisten Rheinland-Pfälzer haben nie davon gehört. Das kleine Dorf in Texas, das heute Mentz heißt, haben Auswanderer aus Bingen am Rhein gegründet. Sie gingen fort und bauten in der Fremde ein Stück ihrer alten Heimat auf.

Aus Mentz in Texas berichtet unser Redakteur Hartmut Wagner

MENTZ/TEXAS. James Harbich (57) hat seinen Plastikteller ordentlich vollgeladen: Bratwürste, Hähnchenschenkel, Kartoffelsalat, Bohnen in Tomatensoße. Dazu trinkt der Texaner mit dem weißen Cowboyhut und dem ergrauten Bart becherweise Eistee. Die Feuerwehr in Harbichs Heimatdorf gibt heute ihr Grillfest – und Harbich lässt es sich richtig gut gehen. Dazu gehört auch, dass er am Morgen in der Kirche war, genauso wie die vielen Menschen an den Nachbarstischen.

Nach Texas mit zehn Kindern

Ein Grillfest jenseits des Atlantiks, mitten in Texas. Und doch ist Rheinland-Pfalz so nah. Harbichs Heimatdorf ist Mentz, früher hieß es Neu Mainz, später New Mainz. Harbichs Kirche heißt St. Roch Church, so wie die St. Rochus-Kapelle bei Bingen am Rhein. Harbichs Vorfahren, die Burtischells, stammen von dort. Seine Ur-Ur-Großeltern, Lukas und Elisabeth Burtischell, sind 1845 aus Bingen ausgewandert – mit ihren fünf Töchtern (Magdalena, Katharina, Ottilia, Josephine, Sophia) und ihren fünf Söhnen (Franz, Anton, Joseph, Jakob und Heinrich).

Die Reise in die Neue Welt forderte von der Familie größte Entbehrungen und eiserner Entschlossenheit: Freunde



Die zweitürmige Holzkirche im Ortszentrum von Mentz, das einst Neu Mainz hieß. Natürlich darf die US-Flagge nicht fehlen.



Neu Mainz – Der Grabstein von Elisabeth Burtischell, einer Ahnherrin der Auswanderer, zeigt den alten Namen von Mentz.



Es schmeckte beim Grillfest: „Bürgermeister“ James Harbich, den Söhnen Jacob (17) und Clayton (25) und Tochter Angela (20).



Das Grab der Binger Auswandererin Elisabeth Burtischell und drei Generationen ihrer direkten Nachfahren. Foto: Wagner

und Heimat verlassen, drei Monate Atlantiküberfahrt auf dem Segelschiff, wochenlangem Fußmarsch ins Innere von Texas. Die Familie musste sich durch das Gebiet feindlicher Indianer schlagen. 150 Kilometer weit, bei brütender Hitze. Und am Ziel wartete ein Stück wildes, menschenleeres Land. Hier gründeten die Burtischells und andere Auswanderer den Ort Neu Mainz.

Mentz ist ein Mysterium

„Das hier ist Mentz“, zeigt Harbich, während er Zucker in seinen Eistee rührt. „Hier die Kirche, dort der Friedhof und das Baseballfeld.“ Aber er weiß: Mentz ist ein Mysterium. Es ist in Karten verzeichnet, es kann im Internet mit „Google Earth“ angesteuert werden. Und: Ein grünes Schild am Highway weist den Weg Richtung Mentz. Doch wer die kilometerlange „Mentz-Straße“ entlangfährt, weiß nie, wann er Ziel ist. Es gibt einzelne Häuser am Rand dichter Eichen- und Kiefernwälder, aber es gibt kein Ortsschild, das sagt: Hier ist Mentz.

Die Mentzer sprechen auch nicht von ihrem Dorf, sondern von ihrer Gemeinschaft, die sie mit dem Nachbarort Bernardo bilden. Darum ist schwer zu sagen, wie viele Einwohner Mentz hat. „Die Zahl liegt irgendwo zwischen 100 und 400. Genau weiß das niemand“, sagt Harbich. Er muss es wissen, seine Freunde nennen ihn den „Bürgermeister von Mentz“.

Warum wurde Neu Mainz zu Mentz? Mentz ist für Amerikaner leichter auszusprechen“, erklärt die Mentz-Historikerin Arliss Treybig. „Jüngere Mentzer haben zudem den Bezug zu Mainz verloren. Und: Die US-Regierung forderte, dass sich die Deutschen anpassen – besonders vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg.“ Übrigens:

In den USA wurde Mainz zu Mentz, in Rheinland-Pfalz war es genau umgekehrt. In Urkunden aus dem Mittelalter wird Mainz meist als Mentze oder Mentzen bezeichnet“, sagt der Sprachforscher Rudolf Steffens von der Universität Mainz. „Der Name Mainz bürgerte sich erst später ein.“

Wenn die Mentzer feiern, dann grillen sie auf meterlangen Betongrills. „Die Feste an der Kirche waren immer das Größte für uns“, erinnert sich Harbich. „Als Kinder sammelten wir Pfandflaschen und tauschten sie gegen Eiscreme. Dann, als junge Wilde, stiegen wir den Mädels nach. Heute komme ich mit meiner Familie wegen der Bratwürste.“

Harbichs Teller ist leer, drei Becher Eistee ebenso. Zeit für große Pläne: „Wir bräuchten eine Art Städtepartnerschaft zwischen Mentz und Mainz.“ Der „Bürgermeister“ weiß: Nur wenige Mentzer haben je von Mainz gehört. Und in Mainz ist Mentz sogar völlig unbekannt, selbst in der Stadtverwaltung und dem Stadtarchiv. „Eine Partnerschaft könnte die Geschichte wieder lebendig machen“, schwärmt Harbich. „Wir Mentzer wären bereit.“



Nach Mentz? Hier lang. Aber ein Ortsschild gibt es nicht.

## Warum wanderten die Menschen aus?

Not in der Heimat – Neuanfang in der Fremde

Viele Menschen aus dem heutigen Rheinland-Pfalz kehrten ihrer Heimat im 19. Jahrhundert den Rücken – sie wanderten aus in die USA. Die Gründe sind vielfältig: Armut, Arbeitslosigkeit, politische Unzufriedenheit, Flucht vor dem Militärdienst. Im kleinen Ort Sessenroth im Westerwaldkreis war die Lage so prekär, dass 1853 fast alle Einwohner nach Milwaukee im Norden der USA auswanderten. An Sessenroth erinnert heute nur noch eine einsame Gedenktafel. Auch in Bingen war die Not groß. Zu den USA-Auswanderern, die

in Texas den Ort Neu Mainz (heute: Mentz) gründeten, gehörten Bauern, Zimmermänner und Schreiner. Meist waren es Einzelpersonen – es wanderten aber auch ganze Familien aus.

Von der Möglichkeit, die Heimat Richtung Nordamerika zu verlassen, erfuhr die Menschen aus Bingen früher Auswanderer und aus Zeitungen. Dennoch: Ohne Internet und ohne Fernsehen hatten sie nur eine sehr vage Vorstellung davon, was sie in der Fremde erwartete. Auswandern bedeutete Abenteuer – und großes Risiko.



So kamen die Auswanderer aus Bingen in die USA: mit dem Schiff nach Amsterdam, dann weiter über den Atlantik nach Galveston. Dann zu Fuß nach New Mainz – das heute Mentz heißt.

## Warum wurde Texas ihr neues Zuhause?

Mainzer Adelsverein half den Auswanderern

Die USA waren das beliebteste Ziel deutscher Auswanderer im 19. Jahrhundert. Das Land stand für Freiheit und Wohlstand – und es gab dort viel billige Ackerfläche, deren Kolonisierung von der Regierung in Washington gefördert wurde. Zwischen 1830 und 1880 nahmen knapp drei Millionen Deutsche die Schiffsreise über den Atlantik auf sich, um in den USA ein neues Leben zu beginnen.

Texas entwickelte sich zu einem Hauptziel der Auswanderer aus Bingen. Großen Anteil daran hatte der 1842 gegründete „Verein deut-

scher Fürsten und Edelleute zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas“, kurz „Mainzer Adelsverein“. Er versprach jedem verheirateten Auswanderer über 17 Jahre ein 0,6 Quadratkilometer großes Stück Land in Texas – das entspricht der 85-fachen Größe des Fußballfeldes im Stadion der TuS Koblenz.

Der Adelsverein soll knapp 5500 Auswanderer in die USA gebracht haben, darunter die Gründer von Mentz. Westlich von Mentz gründete der Verein die Stadt New Braunfels (heute: 48 000 Einwohner). 1861 löste sich der Verein auf.

<p>The fire fighter: when something burns in Mentz, Karen Brod will be there on the fire hose despite his 73 years. When he first went to school at six years of age he could hardly speak English because his parents only spoke German with him. In 2005 he visited the Rhineland, the home of his ancestors, together with a group.</p>	<p>The baseball player: Preston Neundorff's heart beats for the Bernardo Bears, who play their games in Mentz. The 19 year old wears his cap proudly with the B for Bears logo. 25 times a year he plays for his team at the same place where his father and grandfather also played. His ancestors come from Bingen am Rhein.</p>	<p>The stay behind: Helmut Gietz (85) lives in Bingen because his great great grandfather, Franz Josef Burtschell, remained in the homeland in 1845 when his brother Lukas and others from Bingen emigrated to Texas. Gietz cannot speak English and was never in Mentz. But his wife Gerlinde (70) stays in touch.</p>	<p>The judge: Francis Truchard (66) attended elementary school in Mentz-today he is the elected justice of the peace. He has been continuously reelected to his office since 1962. His great great grandfather, Andreas Braden, emigrated from Bingen. Truchard, however, has never learned German.</p>
<p>The historian: Arliss Treybig (73) collects everything about the history of Mentz and emigration from the Rhineland/Palatinate. Her parents, her great grandparents, her great great grandparents are all buried at the Mentz cemetery. The former high school teacher has been researching their stories for over 30 years.</p>	<p>The German conservator: Larry Uhlig is one of the few in the vicinity of Mentz who still speaks perfect German, or better said, perfect Texas- German. The cattle raiser says Television statt Fernseher, Car instead of Auto, Luftschiff instead of Flugzeug. Why? His German forebears only heard of these inventions after they were in Texas.</p>	<p>The priest: Wayne Flagg (52) has been leading St. Roch's Catholic Church in Mentz for 13 years. Along with the fire department and the baseball team, the "very lively" congregation is the most important institution in town. The priest celebrates mass four times a week where usually at least a hundred local citizens take part.</p>	

## New Mainz: This is how the USA emigrants live today

Families from Bingen founded the Texas town about 150 years ago-few of the inhabitants speak German-mayor dreams of a partnership with the capital [Mainz]

**Everybody knows New York or New Orleans-but New Mainz? The majority of the people from the Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz)<sup>105</sup> have never heard of it. The small town in Texas, which is today called Mentz, was founded by emigrants from Bingen on the Rhine. They went there and reconstructed in that faraway place a piece of their old homeland.**

\*Our editor, Hartmuth Wagner, reports from Mentz in Texas

MENTZ/TEXAS James Harbich has loaded up his plastic plate: sausage, chicken, potato salad and beans in a tomato sauce. To go along with it the Texan with the white cowboy hat and the graying beard drinks iced tea by the cupful. The fire department in Harbich's town is putting on a BBQ today and Harbich is making the most of it. It is also expected that he will be in church tomorrow, along with all the others on the neighboring tables.

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<sup>105</sup> The Rheinland-Pfalz is one of the sixteen states of the Federal Republic of Germany

### Off to Texas with ten children

A BBQ on the other side of the Atlantic in the middle of Texas. Yet the Rhineland is so close. Harbich's home town is Mentz, earlier called Neu Mainz, later New Mainz. Harbich's church is called St. Roch's church like the St. Rochus chapel at Bingen on the Rhine. Harbich's ancestors, the Burtschells, came from there. His great great grandparents, Lukas and Elisabeth Burtschell, emigrated from there in 1845-with their five daughters (Magdalena, Katharena, Ottila, Josephina, Sophia) and their five sons (Franz, Anton, Joseph, Jakob and Heinrich). The trip to the New World demanded of the family great sacrifices and an iron-clad resolve. Saying goodbye to friends and homeland, a three month passage across the Atlantic on a sail ship, a weeks long trek by foot into the interior of Texas, the family had to make its way through the territory of hostile Indians, a 150 kilometer long journey under scorching heat. And their goal: an empty, uninhabited piece of land. Here the Burtschells and other emigrants founded the locale Neu Mainz.

### Mentz is an Enigma

"This here is Mentz," points out Harbich while he stirs sugar into his tea. "Here the church, there the cemetery, and over there the baseball field." But he is aware that Mentz is an enigma. It is depicted on maps; you can even zoom in with Google Earth. And: a green highway sign points the way to Mentz. But whoever takes the kilometer long road to Mentz never knows when he has arrived. There are individual houses on the edge of oak and pine forests along the way, but there is no sign that says here is Mentz. The people of Mentz tend to speak more in terms of their community rather than the town, which includes the

neighboring locale of Bernardo. Therefore, it is difficult to say how many inhabitants Mentz actually has. "The count lies somewhere between 100 and 400. Exactly how many nobody knows for sure," says Harbich. He has to know: his friends refer to him as the mayor of Mentz.

Why was Neu Mainz changed to Mentz? "Mentz is easier to pronounce for Americans," explains the historian of Mentz, Arliss Treybig. "In addition, the young people of Mentz have lost the connection to Mainz. Moreover, the US government demanded that the Germans adapt--especially before the First World War. As an aside: while in the US Mainz was changed to Mentz, in the Rhineland it was just the opposite. "Documents from the Middle Ages usually designate Mainz as "Mentze" or "Mentzen," explains the linguistics researcher Rudolf Steffens from the University of Mainz. The name 'Mainz' only gained general acceptance later. "

When the citizens of Mentz celebrate, they do so on BBQ pits several meters long made of concrete blocks. "The festivals at the church were always the highpoint for us," reminisces Harbich. When we were kids we collected bottles that had a deposit and exchanged these for ice-cream. Then, as wild teenagers, we chased after the girls. Today, I come with my family because of the sausage."

Harbich's plate is empty, likewise three cups of tea. Time for big plans: "We need to have a kind of city partnership between Mentz and Mainz." The mayor knows: only a few of the citizens of Mentz have even heard of Mainz. And in Mainz Mentz is completely unknown, even to the city government and the city archives. "A partnership could bring history alive again," enthuses Harbich. "We would be ready for it!

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