Schmidt

Rheinland-Pfalz und Texas

A group of Texans were among a crowd of approximately one-hundred persons who attended the opening of an exhibit entitled "Rheinland-Pfalz und Texas: Zwei Regionem im Kontakt (Rhineland-Palatinate and Texas: Two Regions in Contact) at 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, June 7, at the City Library in Mainz, Germany. A tour group of twenty-two persons from the Houston area were among the Texans present. Many of the individuals were descendants of the settlers of New Mainz (Mentz) in Colorado County. The settlers were from the village of Büdesheim, about fourteen miles from Mainz. Also present were Dr. Ted Gish of the German Department of the University of Houston and Arliss Treybig of El Campo.

The exhibit was part of a student exchange between the University of Mainz and the University of Houston. The program also included an exchange of faculty whereby Dr. Gish spent several months teaching a seminar at the University of Mainz. Dr. Hans Galinsky, professor emeritus of the Department of American Studies at the University of Mainz planned and organized the exhibit following his experiences in Houston in 1983 during the 300th anniversary of Germans in America. At that time he participated in a symposium at the University of Houston during which Mr. and Mrs. Walter Noser of Houston acquainted him with the New Mainz (Mentz) settlement.

Dr. Galinsky made requests for material for the exhibit to various private individuals, groups, agencies, universities, institutes, and archives in both Texas and Germany. The result was a range of information covering the emigration process itself from planning, organizing, publicizing, contracts, and transportation to the spread of the German culture throughout the state. The Mainzer Verein effort was prominent among those records and papers. Records relative to the Mentz, Millheim, and Neu-Wied, Texas, communities were also included. Several cases included material concerning the Leyendecker and Kneuper families. Members of the Leyendecker family were part of the tour; another member planned a later trip to the exhibit as part of a research tour.

The city of San Antonio and material about the German-Texan Heritage Society were also included in the part of the exhibit which showed the German influence throughout Texas, not only in the areas settled by emigrants from the Rhineland-Palatinate area. The spread of German culture through literature, music, and organizations was highlighted. Photographs, deeds, church and civil records, books in both English and German, maps, contracts, posters, pamphlets, and newspaper articles were just a few of the kinds of sources which were included in the twenty showcases and display posters.

During the opening program,remarks were made by Dr.Anton M. Keim, mayor of Mainz; Geesche Wellmer-Brennecke, director of the library; and the director of the program of American Studies of the University of Mainz. Dr. Keim and Frau Wellmer-Brennecke spoke in German; however, the professor also made remarks in English which acknowledged the attendance of the group from Texas. A special reception was held following the opening at the city hall in Mainz. Because of its significance as the center of the wine industry, the city has its own wine cellar and vintner. Members of the tour group and other guests were hosted to a wine tasting by the mayor.

The exhibit was scheduled for June 7 to September 7.

The tour group included Gisela Trojan, Otto and Nona Schmidt, Crockett and Dorothy Leyendecker, Bertha Mae Mattern, Margaret Litzman, and Florence Zajicek, of Columbus; R.A. and Betty Stevenson of Victoria; Virginia Fetters of Cuero; Eva Lee Smith and Don and Jeane Bitterly of Baytown; Al and Mary Lou Braden, Ruby Lee Lorenz, and Kathleen Eichelberger, all of Houston; Joseph Braden of Austin; A. J. Wendel of El Campo; and Vic and Mary Margaret Edwards of The Woodlands.

Submitted by Arliss Treybig, El Campo, Texas

Left: Dr. Hans Galinsky and unidentified Texan.
Right: Arliss Treybig at exhibit

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