THE TEXAS GERMAN OF LEE AND FAYETTE COUNTIES

The subject of this investigation is the German spoken in central Texas in the towns of Giddings and LaGrange and the many small communities between the two. This area, located in Lee and Fayette Counties about sixty miles east of Austin, was one of the focal points of German immigration in Texas in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the oldest German settlements in Texas (dating back to 1823)—Bastrop, Industry, Cat Spring, Shelby, and Frelsburg—are all located in this general area. The region has always retained its German character, as even many place-names testify, e.g., Loebau, Weimar, Warda, Oldenburg, Manheim, etc. And many an English name, such as those mentioned above and Winchester, Northrup, Lexington, Lincoln, etc., cloaks an almost purely German community.

Of particular interest are the Wendish-Germans, who settled in and about the community of Serbin. The Wends (also called Sorbs) are a Slavic people who, by-passed by the German colonization of the east in the middle ages, form even to the present day the only appreciable non-Germanic block in Germany. Many emigrated from Germany in the last century to preserve their Lutheran religion and their archaic Slavic mother tongue—Wendish. The 558 Wends who sailed for Texas in 1854 made up the largest group emigration of this people. The Serbin community which they founded was to remain the only Wendish colony in the United States, and the only other such colonies in the world are in Australia. Many more Wends came to the Serbin area in the years to follow and a number of daughter communities (Fedor, Warda, etc.) were formed.

Although the Wends had left Germany to avoid the pressure of Germanization, they were happy to have German neighbors.
in the strange new land. The old grudges were soon forgotten, although there were some disputes between those who preferred the Wendish language and those who preferred German. Marriages between Wendish and non-Wendish Germans became common. And thus Wendish began to be crowded out by German; indeed, every consideration was in favor of German: the superiority of numbers, the fact that German was the official language of the Missouri-Synod Lutheran Church, with which the Wends affiliated themselves, etc. And, after all, they all were Germans as well as Wends, they spoke German as well as Wendish, and it was only natural that they should ally themselves with their German surroundings. In Germany the Germans had seemed like foreigners, here they were brothers in a land much more foreign than Germany had been. In Germany there had been some 200,000 Wends, here there were only a few thousand. The Germanization which had been staved off for centuries in Germany was practically complete after some seventy years in Texas, for by 1920 only a minority still preferred to speak Wendish. After 1900 a new generation of Wendish children had grown up in an atmosphere so German that German became their real mother tongue. Now there are probably only a score or so of older people who still use Wendish actively.

The Germans and Wendish-Germans of this area are farmers, whose ties among themselves, based principally on religion and language, are strong, while contact with outsiders is avoided. They founded their own communities, the nucleus of which was a church and parochial school. The average person was brought into the world by a German mid-wife or doctor, went to a German school, in which all his playmates were German, and was confirmed, married, and buried in German—each testified to by the appropriate German Schein or Stein. The voters’ meetings and other activities of the church were quite naturally also con-
ducted in German. The local German newspapers were the *Giddings Wendisch-Deutsches Volksblatt*, the *La Grange Deutsche Zeitung*, and others.5

The use of English began to gain the upper hand only about fifteen years ago. These fifteen years have been a rather rapid transitional period. Attendance at English church services is beginning to outnumber that at the German services, and English has become the official language of the voters' meetings and other types of public gatherings. The schools have gone so far as to drop even the German reading classes. Anyone who has had to learn German "the hard way" will understand what a rare birthright is thus being neglected. Interestingly enough, the Wendish-Germans, who came to America to preserve their Slavic mother tongue, are the last stronghold of the German language in this area. In Serbin, for instance, the voters' meetings are still held in German.

The German spoken in this area is not a dialect but a modified High German—consequently differing radically from Pennsylvania German. It has never been investigated before. As a matter of fact, of the varied forms of Texas German, only that spoken in New Braunfels has been studied at all.6

The modifications are due to the influence (1) of the Upper Saxon dialect (*Obersächsisch*), since the Wends and many others came from the Upper Saxon region of eastern Germany, (2) of English, and (3), to a lesser degree, of Wendish. Each of these factors has affected the vocabulary and the pronunciation. The extent to which the three influences have tended to produce the same result is remarkable. An example from the pronunciation is the fact that *w* is spoken as in English, rather than as in German. One would at first assume this to be an Anglicism, and indeed, the English influence must have encouraged this pronunciation; however, since this deviation is a characteristic of UpS,7 it evidently was a part of the language before the emi-
The pronunciation used deviates only relatively slightly from the present accepted SG. Probably the most noticeable features are those already mentioned: the unrounding of the umlauted vowels, as in [ˈseːn] for schön and [ˈmiːde] for müde, and the substitution of [w] for [v], e.g., Wagen [ˈwaːɡn], gewesen [ˈɡəˈveːzn], Qual [ˈkwal]. The latter substitution often carries over into English, so that one often hears words like November and very
pronounced [noˈwembar] and [weri]. As was mentioned, Upper Saxon, English, and Wendish all encouraged this feature. Similarly, all three lack the umlauted vowels ö and ü.

Strangely enough, the sound [v] can be heard in the words Löwe [le:və], Käfer [ke:vər] and river [rivər], even in the case of speakers who otherwise use only [w] and who even have trouble with English v.

Long and short i are pronounced as in standard German, and are like long and short ü, because of the unrounding of the latter. Thus [biːne] means both ‘bee’ and ‘stage,’ and [fliːgn] means both ‘to fly’ and ‘to plow.’ I have noticed only one shortening of long i or ü—in the word bügeln, pronounced [bɪgln].

Due to its unrounding, ö coincides with e, both long and short, e.g., [kənən] serves for kennen and können. Other examples of ö are König [keːniç], Söhne [zeːne], böse [beːs], möchte [mɛçte], and Töchter [teçtər].

It is interesting to note that although the examples just cited show that some vowel distinctions (ö vs. e and ü vs. i) are lost when comparing this speech with SG, one distinction, that between long ä and ä, is generally upheld, while colloquial modern German has practically lost it. Thus spät and Mädchen are pronounced just as Siebs and Vietor would have us say them [speːt, meːtçən], in contrast to the prevalent colloquial pronunciation [speːt, meːtçən]. Other examples of [eː] contrasting with [eː] are gähnen [geːnən] as opposed to gegen [geːɡən], and zähe [tsɛːe] ‘tough’ as opposed to Zehe [tseːə] ‘toe.’

The clarity of the [eːː/ɛːː]—situation is, however, disturbed by the fact that in many words they both tend to become shortened to [e], e.g., Leben is often heard as [lebm], gegeben as [ɡə’ɡebm] and spätter as [spetər]. The resultant similar pronunciation of gegähnt ‘yawned’ and gegönnt ‘granted, given’ as [ɡə’ɡənt] has given rise to a saying which is quoted when a cat yawns, Die Katze hat
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gegähnt, was hat sie dich [i.e., dir] gegönnt? However, the [e:] which represents SG ö is never shortened to [e] (cf. König, Söhne, böse above).

Unaccented e is pronounced as in SG, e.g., lesen [leːzən], gegen [geːɡən], except that when final it is [e] or [e], as in eine gute Lehre [aɪnɛ ɡʊːte leːɐ]. Final er is sometimes pronounced [a], so that wärmer resembles wärma, and einer resembles eina.

Strangely enough, the sound [æ], as in English man, which is not found in SG, occurs with some speakers, to my knowledge in only three words, Müdel [maɛ(:)dl], bläken ‘to bleat’ [blaɛ(:)kn] and bläkig ‘whining’ [blaɛ(:)kiç]. Other speakers use [ɛ(:)] in these words.

In certain combinations irt or ür are often heard as ör, e.g., Gebirge [ɡaˈbœɐ̯zɡe], Gehirn [ɡaˈhœrn], and Knirps [knœrps], but in most words the pronunciation is [ir], e.g., wirt [wɪrt], Bürste [bœʁtʃe].

Long and short o and u are as in SG, e.g., wohl [woːl], voll [fol], Puter [puːtɐ], Butter [butər]. There is no tendency to shorten long o or u.

Long and short a are as in SG, of the lower, “darker” variety (as opposed to the high a of North German). As with [e:] and [e:], there is often a tendency to shorten long a, e.g., gesagt [ɡaˈzɑxt], Wagen [waɡn].

The diphthongs are as in SG, e.g., mein [maɪn], Haus [haus], Häuser [haʊzɐ].

The glottal stop is not used except in less common words, and so one ordinarily hears: erinnern [əˈrɪmnɐn], Verein [faɪˈram], beobachten [beoˈbɑːxtɐn], etc.

The r is trilled with the tip of the tongue. In combination with other apical consonants the r often tends to become d or t, e.g., fahren and Beeren in rapid speech are often pronounced [fadn] and [bedn], and Bart may be pronounced [bat]. A striking proof of the latter is in the saying (which is intentionally
humorous): Bist du satt? Putz dein Batt! Part of the reason for fadden and Batt is the tendency to shorten long a. Final r is often not trilled and sounds much like the American r. In younger speakers there is a tendency to avoid the rolled r altogether, substituting the American r for it.

At the beginning of a word the p of the combination pf is regularly dropped, and in medial and final position the f is dropped by less careful speakers; thus Pferd is always [fert], a homonym with fährt, Pfütze is [fitse], etc., and Topf, Töpfe are frequently heard as [top], [tepe].

The ach- and ich-sounds are distributed as in SG, except that the initial ich-sound, as in SG China [ci:na], does not occur, and this word is pronounced with a [k], as in the second-choice SG pronunciation. After consonants the ich-laut is pronounced farther back in the mouth than in SG (approaching [h]). After n, as in manche, the difference is very slight; after r it is more apparent, as in Kirche, Kirchhof [krrghof]; after l it even becomes [h] with some speakers, as in solche [zolhe].

Final ng [ŋ] is pronounced [ŋk], e.g., Klang [kläŋk], Ring [rŋk].

The combination rs plus consonant is pronounced [rs], e.g., erst [erst], Wurst [wurst], wirst [wirst], Vers [ferst]. Final rse is pronounced [r3s], e.g., Verse 'verses' and Ferse 'heel,' both pronounced [fer3s]. Otherwise s is pronounced in the standard way, e.g., sein [zam], weise [wæs], aus [aus].

The pronunciation of g corresponds largely to the “North German g.” Initially it is [g], e.g., Geist [garst], gegessen [go'geson], gackern [gakorn]. Finally and before consonants it is pronounced as if written ch, e.g., Tag [ta(:)x], sagt [za(:)xt], Berg [berç], König [ke:níc], Weg [we:ç], weg [weç]. Medial g before a vowel is pronounced [g], e.g., Vogel [fo:gl], Vögel [fe:gl], Wege [we:ge], except that the g of the suffix ig retains the ich-pronunciation with some speakers, e.g., Könige [ke:nígs], ein sonniger Tag.
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Thus g, ich-sound, and ach-sound often alternate in the same paradigm, as in fragen [fraːɡn], gefragt [ɡəfraː(ː)xt], er frägt [freːçt], and er frug [fruːx]. Other interesting groups are: Berg [berç], Berge [berge]; Krieg [kriːç], Kriege [kriːɡə]; König [keːnɪç], Könige [keːnɪge] or [keːnɪçə]; Vogel [foːɡə]; Vögel [feːɡə]; legen [leːɡə], er legt [leːçt], imperative leg [leːç] or lege [leːɡə].

The sound [ɾ] occurs in the combination rse, as mentioned, and in a few words of French origin, as in SG, e.g., Loge [loːɡə] ‘lodge,’ Courage [kuːˈraːɡə].

The other consonants are pronounced as in SG. In a few words one sometimes hears the UPS pronunciation ě for ei, e.g., herummeestern ‘to piddle around,’ Eechkatze (usually Eichkatze) ‘squirrel’; the exchange of d and r, e.g. treist for dreist ‘bold,’ Tocht for Docht ‘wick,’ dichtig for tüchtig ‘very (much), severely,’ Madratze for Matratze ‘mattress’; and b for p, e.g., Blatz for Platz ‘place.’

As in colloquial SG, words are often syncopated to make for more rapid speech, e.g., wohnen becomes wohn, verheiratet becomes verheirat, schadet becomes schatt, mehrere becomes mehre. Often this is done unconsciously, the speaker intending to say the full form. Linking vowels are omitted whenever possible, as in du arbeitst (for arbeitest), die hübschste (for hübscheste), etc.

Passing now from pronunciation to vocabulary, it should be remarked that, while the number of English words used is large, still the German vocabulary of these people is astonishingly rich and colorful, and all the more to be admired when one remembers that the language of many of the homes fifty years ago was Wendish rather than German.

There are various categories of English words adopted; some, like der Belt, der Phone, der Store [stoːr], die Road [roːt], die Yard [jat], die Car, have been Germanized only to the extent of occasional modifications of pronunciation plus the assumption
of German gender. Surprisingly enough, the gender is quite stable, although the reason why a certain word has a certain gender may be hard to find. The English words adopted and the genders attached to them seem to agree to a great extent with those adopted by other German groups. It is natural that such words as die Roach, die Mosquito, der Airplane, plenty, sure, and all right should have been taken up, but in other cases, e.g., der Basket, der Belt, der Bucket, etc., one wonders why the German word is not used. Although der Korb has been replaced by der Basket, the German idiomatic meaning of ‘refusal’ has survived, transferred to the English word, e.g., sie hat ihn ein Basket gegeben, ‘she refused him.’ Besides such “hybrid idioms,” there are, of course, also “hybrid compounds,” e.g., das Butcher-messer, der Pecanbaum, Zwei-bit [tswaɪˈbit] ‘two bits.’

Other English words have been Germanized further, some to the extent that a German plural has been formed, as in die Fencen [fɛnsn], die Boxen [bɒksn]. English verbs can be so easily adapted to the German system that no English verb is used without the proper ending, even in such a completely English utterance as er hat seine Mind gechangt. While this phrase would ordinarily be rendered very correctly by er hat sich’s überlegt, the Anglicized version is frequently heard and illustrates the flexibility of German and the ease with which the speaker can interpolate phrases which at the moment come to him in English. Some English loan-verbs which are integral parts of the everyday vocabulary are drisseln ‘drizzle,’ mufen ‘move,’ schmoken ‘smoke,’ sich behaven ‘behave,’ ringen ‘ring,’ and resseln ‘wrestle.’ Each loan-word has a history of its own, often connected with a German word no longer used in its original meaning. The last two words illustrate this; if ringen still meant ‘wrestle,’ it would hardly be used for the ringing of the telephone, but since resseln is used for ‘wrestle,’ ringen is freed to mean ‘ring.’ Some other interesting Germanized forms are der
Mutt [mat] ‘mud’ and muttig [matɪç] ‘muddy,’ der Paster [pastor] ‘pasture,’ die Quiltte [kwɪltə] ‘quilt,’ der Botten [botn] ‘bottom-land,’ and die Muschmelone [ˈmʊʃməloːne] ‘mushmelon’ (the local English for ‘muskmelon’). Okra is used ordinarily in the plural, which is impossible in English, as in die Okris [oːkrɪz] sind reif. Similarly cotton is felt to be plural, e.g., die Kotten [kɔtn] sind schön geraten, from which a singular, die Kotte, has been formed, meaning a single stalk or boll of cotton.

Other loan-words deserving special mention are der Steak [ʃteːk], because it means not ‘steak’ but ‘ground meat,’ and die Galerie [ˈgaːləri] ‘porch,’ because in both SG and English this meaning is obsolete. Even stranger is der Sinkkop [ʃʃʊk-kap] with a German plural Sinkköpfe [ʃʃʊk-kəфе], meaning ‘metal drinking cup’; perhaps it comes from ‘sink-cup,’ which is a compound I do not know in English.

A number of German words have assumed different meanings under the influence of English, e.g., der Acker ‘acre,’ gleichen ‘to like,’ spenden [ʃ-] ‘to spend,’ and der Grad ‘grade.’

Many German words are pronounced or used differently from SG. A few examples are as follows: instead of das Alter ‘age,’ die Ältere is used, (e.g., er ist meine Ältere ‘he is my age’); jagden is used in the sense of ‘run, chase,’ but never in the sense of ‘hunt,’ for which jagden [ʃʃaxtn] (from die Jagd) is used; Patete [paːteːte] means ‘sweet potato’ (SG Batate); zeitlich replaces zeitig and früh as ‘early’; klatschen is used for klatschen ‘slap’; Fliegenklietsche for Fliegenklappe ‘flyswatter’; Krippe (‘crib’ in SG) for Scheune ‘barn’; verrankert is used both for verwachsen ‘overgrown with vines’ (cf. die Ranke) and for ‘disarranged’ in the phrase das Bett ist verrankert ‘the bed is messed up’; Koffer is used for Koffer ‘trunk’; Gescheeche for Vogelscheuche ‘scarecrow’; krimmen for jucken ‘itch’; Kusenk (pl. Kusenke) for Vetter ‘cousin’; der Rumplich or der Rumpricht for Knecht Ruprecht ‘Santa Claus’; panschen (‘to adulterate’ in SG) is ‘to spill’; nischt
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is 'nothing' (as opposed to nicht 'not'). Some odd verb forms are
därfen [dɛʁfɛn] for dürfen (ich därf, du därfst, etc.), er fräft [fʁɛçt] for
fragt, gewunken for gewinkt 'waved,' gebaden for gebadet,
egebeten for gebetet ‘prayed.’ For the past participle of heissen the
same speaker will say geheissen, geheissen, and sometimes even
gehissen. Oddly enough, a present tense geheissen is sometimes
used in the sense of ‘command,’ e.g., ich geheisse ihn, das zu tun.

Many of the odd words and forms can be traced to UpS
dialect forms. Of those already mentioned, zeitlich, klietschen,
Kuffer, Gescheeche, kinnten, nisch, därfen, frägt, and
gewunken are regular UpS usage.\(^{11}\) Others evidently derive from
this dialect, but have developed a change in form or meaning,
e.g., panschen ‘to spill’ undoubtedly stems from UpS panschen,
although the latter apparently does not mean precisely ‘to spill,’
but rather ‘to rain, get wet, splash’; and verrankert ‘disarranged’
is evidently a variation of UpS eingerankert and zerrankert of the
same meaning.\(^{12}\) Many more such UpS elements could be listed,
e.g., Aten for Atem, (ver-)bechten ‘to waste,’ dorte for dort, er-
machen for schaff en (werden wir’s ermachen? ‘werden wir es
schaffen?’), etc.\(^{13}\)

I have found only a few Wendish words used, and of these
only two are essential elements of every speaker’s vocabulary:
der Bobback [bɔbak] ‘boogie man,’ and der Braschka [braʃka]
‘Hochzeitsbitter, best man.’ The Wendish forms are bobak and
braška.\(^{14}\) Some people frequently use the Wendish word Piesack
instead of Bleistift;\(^{15}\) others again use a word Pesack meaning
‘Dummkopf.‘\(^{16}\) Besides Piesack and Pesack, the verb piesacken
is used meaning ‘to pester,’ but this is a German word.

Sometimes, though only rarely, the plurals deviate from SG,
e.g., Nöme is almost always used instead of Namen, Äpfel com-
petes with Äpfel, Lehrers and Lehrern with Lehrer, etc. The only
odd gender I have noticed is das Ast, which is frequently used
instead of der Ast (the plural is the standard Äste).
The most noticeable inflectional feature is the absence of the dative and genitive cases, for which the accusative serves. Thus only in the masculine singular do adjectives have an oblique case form, e.g., mit den Mann, wegen unsern Vater. Feminine, neuter, and plural forms have only one case, so we hear mit seine Frau, ausser ein Kind, von die Kinder. Similarly in the personal pronouns only the accusative is used: mit mich, ich folge sie, ich gebe es ihm, etc. As would be expected from this tendency towards caselessness, weak masculine nouns are usually unchanged in the singular, e.g., mit den Junge, er hat bange von ein Hase.

The genitive is replaced by such phrases as mein Vater sein Geburtstag, unsere Eltern ihre goldne Hochzeit, mit Otto seine Frau, jemand sein Esel. ‘Whose’ is wem [we:ms] or wen sein, e.g., wems Hut ist das? Genitive and dative forms are preserved in a few set phrases like abends, morgens, am (or an) Freitag. A dative pronoun may also be rarely used, as often as not in the wrong place, e.g., er hat ihr geschlagen.

The weak adjective ending in the plural is e, as in die alte Leute, except when the adjective is used as a noun, as in die Alten, die Deutschen, die alte Deutschen. In the neuter singular, unsers, eures, and ihres function as der-words, e.g., nach unsers Haus, von eures letzte Schwein.

Family names take the feminine ending -in when used with the feminine definite article, e.g., die Zochin means Frau Zoch, die Mitschkin means Frau Mitschke. The maiden name is indicated by the indefinite article and the suffix -s, e.g., sie ist eine Herbrichs ‘she is a Herbrich (girl).’

In the verb conjugations several noteworthy deviations occur: in the present indicative of strong verbs which have a change in the second and third person singular, the change is also made in the second person plural by many speakers, e.g., ich sehe, du siehst, er sieht, wir sehen, ihr sieht, sie sehen; similarly ihr wird,
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*ihr nimmt, ihr fährt*, etc. And whereas this vowel change occurs in SG in the *du*-imperative but not in the *ihr*-imperative, here the situation is usually reversed, so that the singular is *ess das* or *esse das*, *nehm(e) es*, *helf(e) mich*, and the plural is *issi das*, *nimmt es*, *hilft mich*.

With very few exceptions, the present perfect tense is used to the exclusion of the simple past. The pluperfect *war gewesen* is ordinarily used instead of *war*, as in *ich war das wohl gewesen* 'it was probably me.' This is evidently a combination of *ich war* and *ich bin gewesen*.

The polite form of address *Sie*, which is still very much alive, is used only as singular, the plural being *ihr*; thus to one non-familiar person *wie heissen Sie?*, to more than one *wie heisst ihr?*

The relative pronoun is basically *was*, e.g., *der Mann, was ich kenne*. The genitive is *wems*, e.g., *die Frau, wems Bruder ich kenne*. After prepositions the relative may be *was* or *die*, *das*, or *den*, e.g., *die Leute, mit die (or mit was) wir fahren*.

The verb *tun* is frequent as an auxiliary. In the present indicative simple statements such as *er fischt, sie arbeiten* are usually replaced by *er tut fischen, sie tun arbeiten*. In the imperative it is also often heard: *fängt immer an*, meaning 'go ahead and start,' may just as well be rendered *tut immer anfangen*. Also in the subjunctive *täte* competes with *wu~de*, so that one may say *wie würde das aussehen?* or *wie täte das aussehen?*

As is to be expected, the subjunctive is not used in indirect discourse; rather, the present perfect, present, or future indicative tenses denote previous, contemporary, or future action, resp., e.g., *er ist damals zu uns gekommen und hat gesagt, seine Frau ist krank*; and *er hat doch gesagt, er wird kommen* 'he said he would come.'

The passive is usually simplified to two forms: *wird* plus past participle for present or future action, and *ist* plus past participle for past action, e.g., *er wird nächste Woche beerdigt, er ist letzte*
Woche beerdigt. The latter type may be expanded with ge-
worden (not worden, as in SG), e.g., er ist letzte Woche beerdigt
worden.

The definite and indefinite article is frequently omitted, e.g.,
mit bissel Schmalz, mit paar Männer, auf Galerie ‘on the porch,’
in Küche [kiːçə], sie wollte Weile warten. ‘To town’ and ‘in
town’ are always rendered as nach Stadt and in Stadt, evi-
dently encouraged by the English phrases. The omissions may
represent simply a very understandable ellipsis, but one wonders
if the lack in Wendish of definite and indefinite articles is not at
least partially responsible.¹⁷

Practically all of these morphological and syntactical devia-
tions from SG are found in Germany in what might be called
“lower colloquial German.” The most unusual are the use of
unsers, eures, and ihres as der-words; the vowel change in the
ihr-form of the indicative and imperative (ihr nimmt; nimmt!);
and the omission of the article (sie wollte Weile bleiben).¹⁸

Comparison with the German of the New Braunfels area re-
veals primarily many vocabulary differences, e.g., the prattschen
knettschen, Flatsch, etc., which Eikel lists (p. 38) are unknown in
this area. Many English words adopted are similar, e.g., der
Botten, der Store, die Car, die Fence.¹⁹ The umlauted vowels are
similarly unrounded, and the dative and genitive cases are lost
here, too.²⁰ Some pronunciation differences are as follows: w is
[v]; rst is usually [rst]; g is sometimes [γ] or [j], e.g., Vogel,
[foːɡəl], Vogel [feːdəl], morgen [moːrˈnən]; final ng is [ŋ]; [s] and [z]
are often interchangeable, e.g., Strasse [ˈstraːsə] or [ˈstraːzə]; final
e is [ə] or lost, e.g., die Katz, die Füss.²¹ Besides differing in the
three unusual syntactic and morphological features given above,
the New Braunfelser frequently uses the type das Kind war
am Weinen ‘the child was crying,’ which is unknown in the
Lee-Fayette area (where this sentence could only mean ‘the
child was about to cry,’ as in SG).²²
In the foregoing an attempt has been made to give a general survey of Lee-Fayette German and to point out some of the many problems deserving further study. More exhaustive investigation of details may reveal that I have at times generalized in the wrong direction. Correction would, of course, be welcomed. In conclusion I would like to express my admiration for the fine German-American people of Lee and Fayette Counties and for the German they speak. Naturally, in order to describe their language, attention has been paid only to its differences from the best modern German usage, but these do not alter its basic character, whereby it is a remarkably good version of High German. To appreciate this fact, we should remember that similar agricultural areas in Germany frequently still use dialects which differ radically from High German.

JOSEPH B. WILSON

NOTES

1. Adapted from a paper presented on Nov. 2, 1956, before the German I section at the South-Central Modern Language Association’s meeting in New Orleans. The remarks made here are based on personal observations gathered over the past thirteen years, principally from people of the Winchester-Serbin area. I am especially indebted to my wife, the former Adele Herbrich, a native of Winchester.


4. There are only two books which treat the Wends of Texas: a scholarly work by George C. Engerrand, The So-called Wends of Germany and Their Colonies in Texas and Australia (University of Texas Bulletin No. 3417; Austin, 1934), and a more popular one by Anne Blasig, The Wends of Texas (San Antonio, 1954). The numerous histories of the German element in Texas and America, such as Tiling and Biese (mentioned above), ignore the Wends completely.

5. The Volksblatt was published in Wendish and German from 1899 to 1938, then only in German until its end in 1949 (according to a communication from the editor, Theo. Preusser); the Zeitung existed


7. The following abbreviations will be used: UpS: Upper Saxon; SG: Standard German. The w of the West Lusatian dialect is characterized as a bilabial spirant without rounding in Helmut Protze, *Das Westlausitzische und Ostmeissnische* (*Mitteldeutsche Studien XX; Halle*, 1957), pp. 5, 33.


9. The pronunciation of English words is as in the English of the area, unless noted.


15. Jakubaš lists *pisáč* ‘Griffel, Schieferstift, Schreibstift.’


18. Even these are not unique; for the first two types cf. Grimm’s dictionary under unser, euer, and nehmen. Trübner’s dictionary notes modest omissions of the definite article (under *der*).


20. *Ibid.*, pp. 28 f. and 48 ff. Evidently the dative and genitive cases and the umlauts are not quite as dead in New Braunfels as in this area.
