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German-Texan Attitudes toward the Civil War

Texans and others have long scrutinized the attitudes of German Texans toward the American Civil War and the issues, such as slavery and states' rights, which led up to it. Attitudes of those Germans who lived in Texas from the mid-1800s to 1865 deserve the most attention, but the recollections of these participants as influenced by subsequent developments and the views of later generations of Texas Germans both about the Civil War and its issues and about their ancestors' attitudes are also significant. Despite repeated discussions of the topic, scholars differ about these attitudes. They have typically examined German-Texan attitudes toward the war and conduct during it as part of their own partisan condemnation of or apology for specific actions; some have attacked the German-Texans as traitors to the South or lauded them as true patriots loyal to the Union or, conversely, praised them as having been, for the most part, good Southerners.

This lack of consensus is not surprising, since commentators have tended to focus on one period, often transferring the attitudes found during that period to the whole third quarter of the nineteenth century, and to concentrate on one of the several groups of German Texans, without taking the diversity within the German-Texan community fully into account. The most extensive investigations have been of the antebellum era, with special attention paid to German-Texan attitudes toward slavery and toward secession (Biesele, *History;* Hall; Jordan; Fornell; Buenger, *Secession*). The period of the war itself has also received a fair amount of attention, though much of the scholarship remains unpublished and inaccessible (Lafrentz; Andrews; Hall; Ellsworth; Heintzen; Jones; Tausch). The decade following the end of the war, the period of Reconstruction, is the least well studied, and deserves a thorough, independent treatment (the best general study of the period mentions the German Texans only in passing (Moneyhon; cf. also Heintzen; Jones; Tausch).

In addition to there being three distinct periods, each of which had a profound effect on subsequent perceptions, there are also geographical

and social factors in the composition of the German-Texan community which need to be considered. Especially strong and influential German-Texan communities flourished in Galveston and San Antonio before, during, and immediately after the Civil War. Since the war history of Galveston, which was briefly occupied by Union troops, was far different than that of any other Texas community, the activities and attitudes of its residents were atypical; San Antonio, however, though it had a strong pro-Union faction at the beginning of the war as did Galveston, quickly became a center for the Confederate war effort. The bulk of the German Texans of the period lived in smaller communities such as New Braunfels and Fredericksburg and/or on farms. Here one must differentiate between the older settlements in the "plantation" counties of eastern central Texas (e.g., Washington, Austin, Fayette, and DeWitt) and the frontier Hill Country counties of central (at the time, "west") Texas (e.g., Gillespie, Mason, Kendall), since slaveholders were an important economic and social factor in the former, whereas slaveholding was rare and economically impractical in the latter—and the incidence of both German and American abolitionist sentiment was far higher (Elliott; Jordan). In addition, the frontier counties felt dependent on federal troops to protect the settlers from Indian depredations; it has been repeatedly noted that these counties, whether or not they had appreciable German populations, resisted secession (Elliott; Smyrl; Buenger, *Secession*). However, the settlers in Comal County and its most prominent town, New Braunfels, though they had arrived at much the same time as the frontier settlers, both voted for secession and avidly volunteered for Confederate service (Tausch). An examination of evidence about attitudes reveals that the pattern a summary suggests is actually quite complex.[1]

In the middle of the 1850s an effort by German intellectuals to use a singing festival in San Antonio as a forum to mobilize the sentiments of German settlers in support of abolition not only failed to attract much support, but in fact awakened the "Grays" to voice their support of slavery and disdain for the "Greens" (Biesele, "Convention"; Sass, 89-92; Rippley, 51-54). Despite these vociferous attacks on the abolitionists, from that time onwards Anglo-American Texans tended to regard all German settlers as opposing slavery. In 1857 Frederick Law Olmsted published a report of his trip through Texas, in which he stressed the anti-slavery sentiments of the Germans and thus helped establish an abolitionist reputation for them in the North. The editor of the *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung,* Ferdinand Lindheimer, was one of the most outspoken opponents of the abolitionists, which scholars have quite properly considered an important reason for the somewhat anomalous attitudes of the settlers in New Braunfels (Buenger, "Lindheimer vs. Flake"). These settlers generally had arrived with and often had close familial ties to the settlers in the Hill Country, many of whom were opposed to slavery and subsequently to secession.

General accounts of the German Texans tend to treat them as being predominately Unionist and anti-slavery; however, most scholars specifically concerned with German Texans and the Civil War have looked

at Comal and Austin counties and stressed the prevalence of Confederate sympathies among the German Texans. The ideological bias of the investigators and the spirit of the times in which they wrote have flavored their views strongly; since most of those who write about German Texans and the Civil War are, in fact, German Texans, I frequently cite their comments verbatim, so that the extent to which their attitudes affect the substance of their remarks can be better appreciated.

For an investigation of sympathies subjective sources are quite useful. Letters, memoirs, and family traditions can provide an impression of German-Texan attitudes towards the Civil War, as can works of fiction. I emphasize two fictional narratives. The first of these, a *Novelle*, takes place for the most part in the Hill Country and concentrates on the early stages of the war; the second, a novel, takes place in Austin County, with an emphasis on the later stages of the war. This has influenced my decision to discuss the Hill Country, then "German" San Antonio, then "Confederate" New Braunfels which lies north of San Antonio between the Hill Country and the prairies and river bottoms of the plantation counties such as Austin County, and finally Austin County itself.

Initially the opposition to the Southern cause in the Hill Country was political and organized, and the response to it was to send Confederate troops to make arrests and to increase conscription. Duff's Partisan Rangers harried the Germans as well as the handful of non-German Unionists in the area, arresting members of the Union Loyal League, at least once bringing suspected Unionists to Fredericksburg and shooting them (*Pioneers* 2:47). When some sixty to seventy Union supporters tried to leave for Mexico, Duff's troops hunted them down and, at the Nueces Massacre, killed those who defended themselves, those who surrendered, and as many as they could find of those who tried to escape (Williams, 229-53; Ransleben, 78-126; Shook). Egon Tausch argues, on the other hand, that the Germans were generally good Confederates and supports his argument in part by observing:

> Activated during the height of the disorder in the western counties and lasting through the time of the "Nueces Massacre," the Military Court considered the cases of the prominent German and American Unionists of this period. During its existence, the Court tried seventeen Anglo-Americans for various degrees of disloyalty and found two-thirds of them guilty. Of the many Germans arrested by Duff's Rangers and others, only twelve were prosecuted, and of these, five, less than half, were found guilty, and one case was dismissed as having been "set on foot for malice." Almost all the defendants were from Gillespie County, and prominent Confederate Germans from that county served as witnesses for both the defense and the prosecution. (65; cf. Barr)

Though Tausch is probably correct that anti-Unionist actions harmed the Anglo-Americans more than the Germans, he ignores the tendency of Duff's men to take the law into their own hands, perhaps because they found it hard to get a conviction. In the later years of the war their place was taken by J. P. Waldrip's gang of vigilantes, who sought out,

plundered, and hanged Union sympathizers and anyone else worth robbing (Biggers, 66-79). It was, quite simply, dangerous to be a German in the Hill Country. Ottilie Goeth remarks in her memoirs:

> The so-called Fire Eaters of the South were almost worse than the Indians. Secretly they murdered anyone who was not for the South and who expressed this view too openly. Fanatically they looked upon their actions as heroic deeds. A few miles from Marble Falls, on the road to Johnson City, one can see a place where men favoring the North were killed and thrown into a cavern after a trial of sorts was held there. Many of the best men of this area lost their lives at this spot. . . . After the war, sacks full of human bones were removed from the so-called "devil's hole" [deadman's hole] to be ceremoniously buried in Burnet. (77; cf. Frantz, 195)

To be sure, the vigilance committees were responding to actual cases of harboring conscription dodgers and deserters. "Although he was a Union sympathizer, Julius Ransleben was forced into hauling food and other material from coastal ports to the Texas hinterlands for Confederate forces during the Civil War. These trips separated him from home for long intervals at times. In the meantime, Mrs. Ransleben was providing refuge for two of her family, her brother William Klier and a brother-in-law Julius Schlickum who had escaped the Nueces massacre" (*Pioneers* 1: 170; see the account of Schlickum's trial, as well as those of his close friends Philipp Braubach and Ferdinand W. Doebbler, in Barr, 71: 253-58 and 260-72, 73: 83-90). Becoming a teamster, as Ransleben had done, was a popular way to avoid fighting for a cause one rejected.

This is the ambiance of August Siemering's tale, "A Wasted Life."[2] Though Siemering asserts twice that he has based his work on actual people and events (4, 64), its melodramatic incidents and sentimental plot mark it as a typical newspaper *Novelle* of the time. Clearly we have to take Siemering's protestations that the main characters and events are historical with a grain of salt, but the political opinions and the background actions of the tale are in all probability authentic reflections of local history; the unnamed valley is certainly Sisterdale. It is interesting that a major character, Jackson, an American planter and a dedicated, though humane slaveholder, who at one point contemplates escaping to Mexico with his slaves, is an outspoken supporter of the Union. The son of another American planter, Richard Bradley, on the other hand, represents the stereotypical dissolute and cruel slaveholder who supports the Confederacy.

Siemering shifts the motivation for the explicit misdeeds of the Confederate troops to personal revenge, rather than ideology. His depiction of the Germans' opposition to secession and to slavery suggests that such opposition was complete among the Hill Country Germans. When he established *Die Freie Presse für Texas* as a Republican paper in 1865, as Tausch observes, "the first few issues of his paper set about revising the role the Germans had played during the war, announcing that they had formed a solid Unionist phalanx, except for a few that were 'weak or corrupt,' or 'misinformed'" (72).

Siemering may have considered such avowed supporters of the Confederacy as Charles Nimitz, the enrolling officer for Gillespie County, to be acting to shelter Unionist sympathizers, as they doubtless did to a degree by forming home guard units, for which there was a demonstrable need in the face of increased Indian depredations—Siemering himself was for a time a lieutenant in such a unit.[3] But he also knew German Texans such as Ernst Altgelt, the surveyor of Comfort, and his wife Emma, who were outspoken in their pro-Confederate and pro-slavery sentiments, although, to be sure, as Guido Ransleben points out, Altgelt left his smokehouse door unlatched so that Unionist fugitives could take refuge there. When he testified in military court he mentioned arguing the Southern cause while visiting Sisterdale, and his testimony can be believed (Altgelt, 27-30; Ransleben, 125-26; Barr, 73: 254-55). However, though opinions such as theirs were not the only ones even in Sisterdale, the two figures of Dr. Freiberg and the professor are probably drawn from life and do seem to provide two opinions Siemering heard expressed.

These two figures clearly correspond to the type of forty-eighters by which Sisterdale was founded.[4] Dr. Freiberg argues, in the autumn of 1861, that the more than three to one superiority in population of the North will insure its victory, and that the Germans should let the Americans carry out their *Kulturkampf* and look forward to a future free Texas (47). The professor, however, foresees conscription of the Germans and the ultimate destruction of a South destroyed in the ruins of its own corrupt institutions, having battled in vain against its enemies, namely the entire civilized world (48). Siemering then has Dr. Freiberg flee to Mexico and the professor remain behind and help those who could not leave cope with the situation (93-94). The formation of the Union Loyal League is briefly described, but in the midst of this discussion of German actions an authorial remark about the reaction of the Southern planters to the situation in 1862 shifts the emphasis briefly: "the conscription and confiscation laws were onerous to the haughty planter; it was not part of the plan promulgated by the demagogues and fire eaters the previous year that he should sacrifice his sons, his Negroes, and his draft animals for his country" (59—my translation). The figure of the slaveholder Jackson lends balance to this authorial condemnation of the planter, but in reality the most prominent non-German Unionists in the area were not planters.[5]

The atrocities that Siemering's tale essentially trivializes are too well documented to be ignored; in light of them it is quite natural that subsequent generations of Hill Country Germans have thought of their ancestors, for the most part, as active or passive opponents of the Confederacy. Charles W. Ramsdell cites a district clerk's declaration that Blanco County could not be termed lawless, since the grand jury indictments for murder in the three years after the war were by "loyal" juries for the killing of seven "bushwhackers" during the war (191).[6] Ramsdell (whose account of Reconstruction in Texas scourges the Republicans for fomenting lawlessness and exonerates the Southerners who tried to turn back the clock) apparently fails to recognize that lines were being drawn that have persisted to this day.

Toward the end of Siemering's tale San Antonio is portrayed in a manner that suggests it was a Unionist stronghold, or at least a city with many Union sympathizers, and his portrayal is doubtless generally accurate. Ferdinand Peter Herff, a grandson of one of the most distinguished forty-eighters, also portrays it as such in his family memoir.

> In the city [San Antonio] itself a curious pot pourri of national and ethnic groups, composed of relatively few property owners, created an environment in which sympathy for the Confederacy was noticeably absent. . . . The majority of Dr. Herff's counterparts, German immigrants and their descendants, stood with him in passive or active opposition to the Southern cause. Some demurred to the exigencies of survival in a hostile climate by attempting to carry out their lives in a normal way, maintaining at the same time an attitude of neutrality. Many did what seemed to be the most expedient thing. They openly endorsed the Confederate movement while privately remaining loyal to the federal government. (55-56)

Herff notes that his other grandfather, Frederick Kalteyer, was an avid supporter of slavery, but despite their differences, Kalteyer and Dr. Herff remained good friends (60-62). Anthony M. Dignowitz, who had fled to the North and petitioned Congress to send German troops to Texas, where he was sure they would be aided by the Germans in Texas in overthrowing the Confederate government, was quite comfortable upon his return to San Antonio after the war (Tausch, 59). On the other hand, John Henry Brown notes that J. A. Bonnet, a German who had immigrated in 1845 and who had enlisted in the Confederate Army in 1861, "returned to San Antonio in 1868 . . . [and] states that he found it 'uphill business' to get employment, and was virtually ostracized because of his having been a 'rebel' soldier" (616-17). Charles Nagel, who was given refuge in San Antonio for a time when his father and he were trying to escape to Mexico, recounts that a younger son of Edward Degener told him "how the boys played war in the open streets" and remarks that "San Antonio must have been fairly divided in opinion for a long period just as the State of Texas was." While the two boys were chatting, their fathers were discussing the Nueces Massacre, in which two of Degener's sons had been killed, almost a year and a half earlier, and Nagel remembers seeing "in the next room the mother in black, lying on a bed, utterly crushed by the tragedy" (249; for an account of Degener's trial for sedition, see Barr, 73: 247-68).[7]

The letters of the Coreth family, now available in a careful edition with commentary, give a vivid picture of the complexities of the New Braunfels "Confederate" stance (Goyne). The two most prominent correspondents are Rudolph, who enlisted in the Confederate Army in October 1861, and his father, Ernst, Count Coreth zu Coredo, an Austrian who had migrated with his family to New Braunfels in 1846. Rudolph enlisted, as did two of his brothers (both of whom fell ill and died while serving), and seems at first to have done so from a sense of obligation to help defend his southern home; his enthusiasm for the Confederate cause tends to wax and wane with the situation. A close companion who shared many of his war experiences, Adolph Mün-

zenberger, finally got himself detailed to war work in San Antonio and fled to Mexico before the war was over, something Rudolph may have also contemplated doing (242)—Mexico was an ever-present potential refuge for those opposed to or tired of the war, and not just for German Texans, though these might have had less reluctance to leave the lands where English was spoken.[8] In general, however, Rudolph definitely hoped for, and in the early stages expected, a speedy victory for the South. His father's attitude was more ambivalent, but he, too, seems to have originally accepted secession and supported the Confederacy. As late as 27 November 1864, when he well knew the war was lost, Ernst Coreth was pleased that another son, "the only one of several boys who had grown a year older during the last year," the others having stayed seventeen, reported for enlistment: "I hate falsehood, and I am glad that he too considers it unworthy of us" (151). The letters of both men become more and more devoted to relating a general breakdown of enthusiasm and with this doubtless provide an accurate picture of the times.

Desertion, absence without leave, and draft evasion were conistent problems mentioned in the Coreth letters, and not just among the Germans. Draft evasion, which was not the problem in Comal County it was elsewhere, was not unknown there. According to one account, a New Braunfelser had the duty of watching "the San Antonio road for the approach of soldiers sent out to round up slackers," and to warn the Germans staying at his father's house. "Whenever some one hove into sight who might have been a conscription officer, the men fled up the ravine and hid in the dense brush and among the boulders" (Andrews, 36). Thus not even "Confederate" New Braunfels supported the Southern cause unanimously.

What was the situation like in the "plantation" counties? Nagel's vivid account of life in Austin County in the early years of the war is told from the perspective of a young boy who apparently only imperfectly understood what was going on (206-55). For instance, though he stresses the fact that his father, a physician, was an outspoken Union sympathizer who could withstand attacks from Southerners in the first two years of the war because his services were needed, he fails to understand the relevance of the family's subscription to the *New Yorker Criminal-Zeitung und Belletristisches Journal,* an abolitionist periodical edited by a forty-eighter, a German intellectual (Wittke, 221), about which he remarks "[i]t must have had much that did not pertain to crime or it would not have been admitted into our home" (92). In a broad retrospective accounting, Nagel states, at times surely guided more by wishful thinking than by certain knowledge, that

> our misison was to find security and comfort and freedom. Even the attitude of the German immigrants to the institution of slavery was not given any particular attention then. . . . All would probably have gone well . . . but for the controversy about slavery and union, which became more and more keen, and at last penetrated even our remote haven of peace. Sentiment and opinion were well divided; and until the issue pressed for decision, the German element, although it could not escape

> attention and criticism, found satisfaction and protection in the fact that its sentiments had powerful and aggressive champions in some of the popular leaders of Texas. But after the decision was made, that picture was changed. . . . On both great issues the German element was completely committed to the unpopular side. . . . In our section fealty to the State determined the course of the young men of German ancestry. . . . We did our duty; but we did it regretfully. Our heart was on the other side. (234-35)

Nagel, of course, did not "do his duty," but rather left the state, and no one can fault him for that. He must have known, however, that his generalization that all Germans opposed slavery and secession was false, just as his implication that all Germans were obedient to civil authority, to the "State," was not universally true.

Adalbert Regenbrecht recalls, and his account can be considered typical for Austin County, that the "Germans of Millheim were Democrats, but, as the Democratic Party in the Southern States was for slavery, many Germans did not join said party." When a vote was cast whether or not Texas should secede from the Union, "[n]inety-nine votes were cast against secession, eight for secession at the Millheim-Catspring [sic] box." He adds that "[m]any Union men of our neighborhood enlisted in the Confederate Army because they believed it to be their duty" (30). Many of the Germans in Austin County had come to Texas early and were in greater sympathy with the Southerners than were the Germans of the Hill Country. Nevertheless, as Regenbrecht's account reminds us, there was no unanimity about the matter (see also Trenckmann, *Austin County,* 18-19; von Roeder, 76, 119-22, 156-57, 201, 205-06, 258-59). As long as the conscription laws allowed numerous exemptions, the settlers accepted them. To an extent, they seemed to have used the home guard, as did the Hill Country Germans, as a way to avoid being conscripted into regular army units. Only when the laws were made more rigorous did they rebel. In the fall of 1862 conscription efforts were increased, and in January 1863 a rebellion broke out in the plantation counties, largely, though not exclusively, supported by the Europeans (Germans and Czechs), that was not quelled until martial law was declared (Elliott, 470-75; Smyrl, 133-35; Hall, 93-100). C. W. Schmidt, though he was not an eyewitness, having been born in 1869, probably reports sentiments and actions among the Austin County Germans accurately when he writes that

> The whole county was in a tumult and starvation seemed inevitable to the settlers and their scantily clad and poorly fed families. Some of the settlers shouldered their guns and marched off in defense of their beloved South, while others were employed by the government in Houston, and still others went out hiding to escape the conscript chasers and then returning to their families after nightfall and helping them till the soil by the light of the moon, in hopes of making a crop to sustain them. . . . Conscript chasers were the most despised individuals in the state. These scouts . . . spent much of their time hunting for those out hiding to escape service in the army. They would sometimes visit the farmhouses and turn everything topsy-turvey. On one occasion, the

> scouts accosted mother and her little brood in an effort to obtaining [sic] information as to the whereabouts of her husband and neighbors. Mother calmly answered, speaking in German: "In den Krieg," meaning . . . [gone to] war whereupon the scouts requested she repeat the words which she had said, and she did putting stress and emphasis upon the word "Krieg." "Do you mean to say they are hiding in the creek?" asked the one nearest her. She nodded in the affirmative. "Thank you." shouted the scouts, galloping away towards the creek in search of men they never found. (22-23)

This, then, is the situation in Austin County to which William Andreas Trenckmann refers in his serialized novel, *The Latin Farmers on Possum Creek*. Possum Creek is apparently Millheim, Trenckmann's home town, though there are a few anomalies: For example, according to Nagel, who lived during the early years of the war in Millheim, the most prominent American in the neighborhood was Sam Swearingen, who was a rabid Unionist (45-46, 214-15)—no such figure appears in Trenckmann's novel, which suggests we should take care not to consider it an exact reflection of historical events. To be sure, the author makes no such claim, in contrast to Siemering. The novel clearly reflects a local historian's notions, some forty years after the fact, about what people's attitudes were during the Civil War; the author had been a young boy some five to ten years old during the time he portrays.

The action begins in the late autumn of 1864; the Southern cause has lost its appeal for all but the most devoted. Trenckmann presents two families headed by patriarchs with opposing views who have agreed to remain friends, Sartorius and Lüttenhoff. The latter is first seen scouring a newspaper to see whether his son, who enlisted in the Confederate Army despite his father's express prohibition, has fallen in the siege of Richmond. He remarks to himself:

> every sensible person must know that the last prospect of victory has vanished for a Confederacy torn into three pieces. And yet they fight on, further hecatombs are sacrificed, and the poor country is being sucked dry, because the slave barons in their stubborn blindness do not want to give in. And now even Kuno is supposed to enlist and perhaps sacrifice his young life to the accursed cause. I have spent the night worrying whether it was right to take his oath, as he requested, on the American flag he found hidden in my desk, that he not fight against the Union. But surely I have done the right thing and maybe even saved his life. (12/25/07—my translation here and subsequently)

However, Kuno's father, Sartorius, "since he had lived much longer in Texas, had come to the conviction that slavery was a necessary institution for the South and he had voted with but a few of the other German citizens of Possum Creek for secession although he must have long since told himself that the South had little chance for success in a battle with the superior force of the North" (12/25/07). Although he knows nothing of the oath, he is somewhat disturbed that Lüttenhoff, his son's teacher, has been filling Kuno's mind with anti-Confederate thoughts. We have already learned from a conversation between Lüttenhoff's young daughter, Hedwig, and Kuno that the latter plans to escape to the bush

rather than let himself be conscripted; Hedwig had remonstrated, "My father means well, I'm sure, but he's an old man and has other reasons than you do to hate the Confederacy. But you've grown up here, and I think every real man should fight for his homeland. . . . Even if the South must lose, I can't conceive of your hiding when others go to war and shed their blood for their country" (12/25/07). The first episode of the novel, then, sets the stage for a tale of divided loyalties, and our expectations are not disappointed, though the question becomes more tangled than we might have thought.

Before anything remarkable happens another pair of opposites is introduced: Großenberg, a fiery supporter of secession, and Dr. Winzig, an idealistic abolitionist; the two are inseparable friends. The four men, Sartorius, Lüttenhoff, Großenberg, and Winzig, sit down with some squabbling about divergent ideals to a game of whist, but the game is soon interrupted by the discovery that Kuno had played a practical joke on Hedwig, sending her on a wild goose chase, and now she is obviously lost and being subjected to the full force of a norther. Kuno then, after he and she experience some hair-raising adventures, rescues her, in the process meeting a German adventurer, a dying man, living in a hide-away deep in the forest, who urges him not to desert his country, no matter how much he may condemn secession: "Our homeland may have a bad government, or that may be our opinion, but it still remains our homeland nonetheless. It is better to join our fellow countrymen in a wrongful battle than to become a man without a country as I have done" (1/23/08).

Kuno decides to enlist rather than dodge the draft, which pleases his father but alienates his teacher, Lüttenhoff, who views his decision as a breach of promise. Rather than follow the vagaries of a complicated plot, I will just mention an interlude and its consequences: A draft dodger who was hiding in the bush, Joseph Herwisch, is hunted down and pressed into service by conscript chasers when he comes to the deathbed of his daughter (after the war we meet Herwisch again and discover that he is driven out of his mind by hate and suspicion). His seizure at his daughter's deathbed occasions a conspiracy among many of the Germans to attack the American conscript chasers, a conspiracy that Lüttenhoff has to use all his powers of persuasion to stave off.[9]

The further war-time adventures of Kuno, who serves in the Louisiana campaign, bring us no more than half way through the novel, and though much of what follows is devoted to Kuno's wooing and winning Hedwig Lüttenhoff and, what is far more difficult, being reconciled to her father, a significant portion of the novel protrays the social upheavals in the aftermath of the war.

Trenckmann's fictional account makes something vividly clear that the other accounts, even the memoirs, tend to obscure: the division of opinion about the war among the Germans, as among the Americans, cut through generations and even through individuals; it separated, but did not necessary alienate, friends.[10] Although, of course, the figures are imaginary—even where they may have been based on actual figures Trenckmann knew—the multiplicity of their motivations and the vary-

ing moral quality of their convictions are more convincingly portrayed than those of Siemering's artificial and essentially two-dimensional protagonists and antagonists. That may, of course, be due to a shift in literary models; Trenckmann was following a more realistic tradition. It may also be significant that he felt no necessity to justify his own role in the times he depicts (as Siemering apparently had) and only a slightly greater necessity to justify German Texans becoming Confederate soldiers, as his older brothers had done. In any case, Trenckmann's portrayal of slightly ridiculous but nevertheless honorable supporters of both the Union and the Confederacy among the Germans, of Confederate heroes and Confederate villains, of weak men and women and strong ones, is a significant and neglected historical document of the German Texans' understanding of their role in the Civil War.

All these accounts, of course, with the exception of the one in those of the Coreth letters I have mentioned, really reflect the aftermath of the Civil War as much as they do the war itself, since all of them are influenced by experiences subsequent to the war. This is most obviously the case in *The Latin Farmers on Possum Creek,* to be sure, where the plight of the Austin County residents immediately after the war is depicted directly and where the excesses of Reconstruction are sketched in from the rural perspective. However, the German Texans' attitudes toward the aftermath of the war remain to be chronicled; they appear to be even more complex than their views of the war itself.

In summary, the prevalent notions among historians about German-Texan attitudes toward the Civil War need correction. Almost no attention has been paid to how subsequent generations of German Texans have understood and interpreted their ancestors' role in and attitudes toward the Civil War; this sketch can only begin to correct that lack. The assumptions about Hill Country abolitionists/Unionists and plantation county secessionists are basically correct, but they fail to account for the great diversity of opinion within each region. Most of all, the historical accounts have failed to portray the internal divisions caused by the Civil War within the German-Texan community, within families, and even as a crisis of conscience within individuals.

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Notes

[1] For maps of the eastern and western counties, including settlement patterns before (and after) the Civil War, see Jordan, 41 and 46.

[2] Siemering's father-in-law, Louis Schuetze, was one of those murdered because of his Unionist sympathies, cf. Ragsdale, 186, n. 13 and 16. For more information on Siemering see Lich, "Goethe" 63-69, and Cade. Siemering's tale has been adapted in English, but the adaptation (Francis) distorts the plot so grotesquely that it gives a completely false picture of Siemering's ideas. For example, Jackson joins the Confederate army.

[3] Cf. *Pioneers* 1: 149; 2: 2; for a fuller picture of Nimitz, see Toepperwein, *Rebel:* this historical novel was clearly carefully researched and seems to be based in part on family traditions—Toepperwein was a descendant of Charles Henry Nimitz; Nimitz's testimony against Braubach (Barr, 71: 262-64) suggests that he was a ruthless enemy of the Unionists.

[4] Biesele, *History* 171-72; Lich, "Goethe" 51-69; Gustav Schleicher, one of the 'Forty' Lich describes so well, actively supported the Confederacy: Schott, 62-63; cf. Lich, "Goethe" 53-54.

[5] Several of the Unionists involved in the Nueces Massacre were not Germans (cf. Ransleben, Shook); J. R. Radcliff from Fredericksburg was a Northerner banished from the Confederacy as a "Black Republican" (Barr, 73: 272-77). A. J. Hamilton, a prominent Texan Unionist who was forced to hide out in the hills west of Austin and then flee to Mexico, may have been conspiring with the Germans (Lich, *Texas Germans* 97; Waller, 35-36); though he was neither a slaveholder nor a planter, Siemering certainly knew him well and may have used him as a partial model for Jackson.

[6] The word *bushwhacker* in current usage denotes "certain Confederate guerrillas in the Civil War" *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam 1961)—as used by Ramsdell's source, however, it apparently refers to the Germans hiding from the Confederates; that is the meaning of the term in the records Barr has published (73: 262).

[7] Nagel became a United States Senator from Missouri and served as Secretary of State and Commerce under President Taft.

[8] For a brief general account of the importance of Mexico for the Civil War see Crook, 155-84; McGuire describes the importance of Mexico as an escape route for German Texans, and also provides a vivid description of the lives of some Unionists in the Hill Country and San Antonio, 22-29.

[9] For a fuller summary of *The Latin Farmers* see Heinen, 35-36.

[10] For a brief note on the divided loyalties of Austin County residents Arnold Matthaei and his fiancée Clara Schlecht (who subsequently, under the pseudonym of Gertrud Hoff, became one of the most important German-Texan poets and was a close friend of Trenckmann) see Bartscht, 40-41.

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