

D'HANIS au TEXAS

NIEDERENTZEN

OBERENTZEN



HISTORY OF TWINNING

*Le Comité de Jumelage de
Niederentzen-Oberentzen-D'Hanis
souhaite une bonne lecture.*

Amitiés d'ALSACE

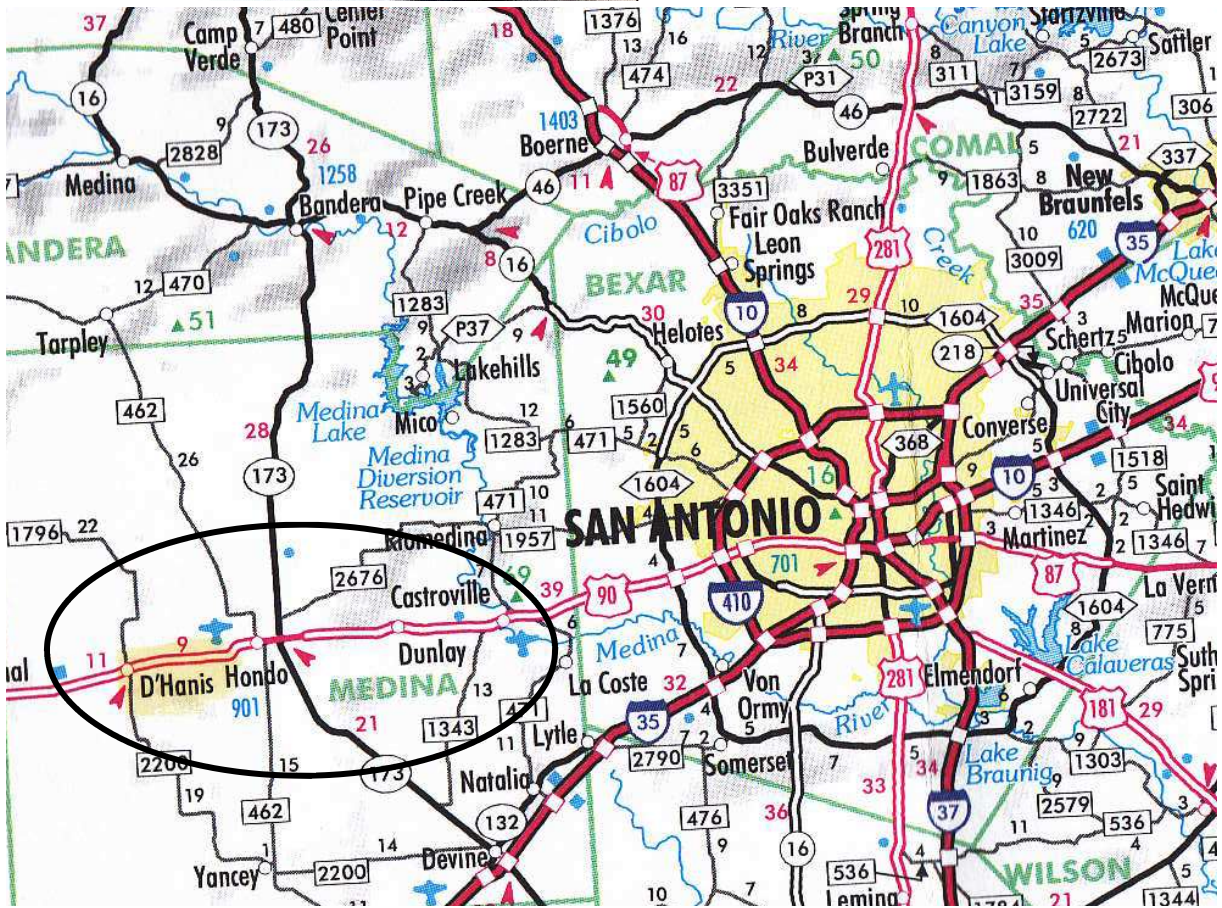
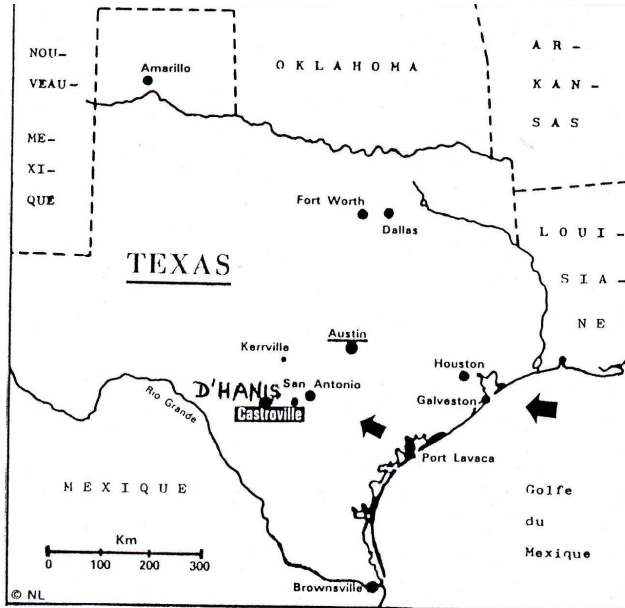
*Le Président Christian WERTHE,
Marie-Jeanne FINGER, Joseph BURGER
et tous les membres du Comité*

Le Président

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jullé', is written over two horizontal lines that serve as a signature line.

1 CONTENTS

1	CONTENTS	p 3
2	MAP OF TEXAS AND THE D'HANIS REGION	p 4
3	TEXAS	p 5
	Photos : 1970 1 st visit B. Zinsmeyer, Finger house Niederentzen	p 6
4	BERNARD ZINSMEYER'S FIRST VISIT	p 7
	Photos : 1972 Arrival at Houston and Castroville	p 8
5	THE FIRST TRIP TO THE USA OF THE FINGER FAMILY	p 9
	Photos : 1975 Eguisheim, Oberentzen, Arbre Vert Restaurant Niederentzen	p 10
6	THE TWINNING	p 11
	Photos : 1978 Niederentzen, 1980 Texan group	p 12
	Photos : 2008 Niederentzen, 2009 Hondo	p 14
	The First Twinning Agreements signed in 1978	p 16
7	WHY THESE WAVES OF EMIGRATIONS?	p 17
8	WHAT ATTRACTED THEM TOWARDS THE USA?	p 19
9	CASTRO	p 20
10	HOW DID THEY REACH THE USA?	p 21
	Port of Galveston, 2009 Castroville	p 22
11	CASTROVILLE	p 23
	Photos : The churches of Saint-Louis of Castroville	p 24
	1892 The Indians, 2009 Cemetery : Old D'Hanis	p 26
12	D'HANIS	p 27
	Photos : D'Hanis yesterday and today	p 28
	Photos : The Churches of D'Hanis	p 32
13	THE BRICKS AND TILES COMPANY OF D'HANIS	p 35
	Photos : The D'Hanis brick factory, 1913 Old tractor	p 36
	Photos : San Antonio Museum	p 38
14	TEXAS SEEN BY A MISSIONARY: ABBE E. DOMENECH	p 39
15	CASTROVILLE SEEN BY THE ABBE DOMENECH	p 40
16	D'HANIS, SEEN BY THE ABBE DOMENECH	p 41
17	FIRST SETTLERS REGISTERED AT D'HANIS IN 1847 AND 1850	p 42
18	LIST OF EMIGRANTS FROM NIEDERENTZEN AND OBERENTZEN	p 43
	Photos of Finger	p 46
19	THE VISITS OF MELVIN FINGER	p 47
20	ALSATIAN AND TEXAN IMPRESSIONS	p 48
	LETTER OF AN EMIGRANT OF OBERENTZEN in 1902,	p 49
	ORIGINAL VERSION OF THIS LETTER	p 50
23	THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF FAMILIES OF EMIGRANTS	p 51
24	ROOTS GARDEN, STEINBACH HOUSE	p 52
	Photos: Oberentzen 1978 and Niederentzen 2008	p 53
	Photos: Niederentzen 1975, Oberentzen 1978	p 54
	Group photos in 1997 and 2009 in D'Hanis	p 55
	Memory stone in Niederentzen 1988 and Visit of Castroville 2009	p 56
	Photos: Texas Rangers, fig trees in D'Hanis, painting given at 2009	p 57
	Twinning agreement signed in Niederentzen-Oberentzen in 2008	p 58
	Proclamation in Hondo in 2009	p 59
25	BIBLIOGRAPHY	p 60



3 TEXAS

This southern US state of an area of 692,408 km² (a quarter bigger than France, second largest surface after Alaska), has a population of around 28 million inhabitants (second most populous state after California). The capital is Austin, with the main cities being: Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Fort Worth.

Texas is a transition zone between the plains of the eastern United States and the western mountains of the United States. The relief is organized in longitudinal orientation levels, the highest altitudes can be found the west: it is here that the highest point of Texas, the Guadalupe Peak is (2,667 m).

Pineda, a Spanish, discovered in 1519 this country occupied by Indians: Karankawas, Comanches, Apaches, ...

The first town: San Antonio dates back to 1730. At the beginning of the XIXth century, Texas was inhabited by 3,500 Spanish settlers and Indians. Texas was part of the Spanish vice-kingdom until 1821 where it became a state of the Federal Republic of Mexico despite the presence of 30,000 American settlers.

The Americans began to take an interest in Texas after the sale of Louisiana to the states of the Union in 1803.

Moses Austin obtained a concession from the Spanish authorities in order to establish a colony in 1820. His son confirmed the concession and by 1,825 the first 300 families settled.

Then Mexico passed a new colonial law and the struggles began.

In early 1836, the Texan volunteers took San Antonio, which was taken over by the Mexicans on February 23rd.

On March 2nd, a convention declared the independence of Texas which was incorporated in the United States, (origin of the one star Texan flag).

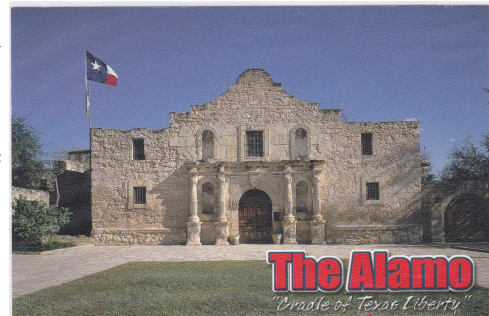
On March 6th, the Texan refugees in Fort Alamo were slaughtered by Mexicans. Davy Crockett was killed.

On March 19th, a troop of 400 Texans was massacred near Goliad.

The Texans beat the Mexicans in San Jacinto on the 21st April 1836.

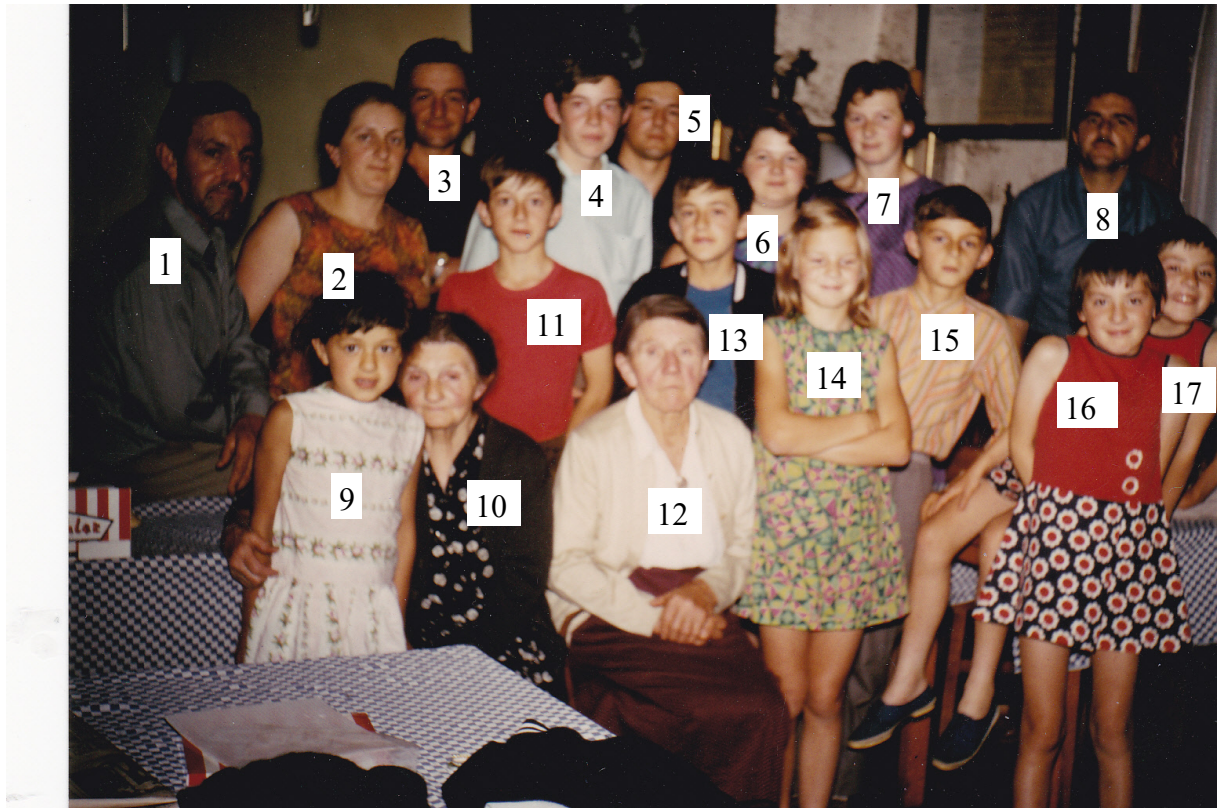
In 1846, the battle of Buena Vista won by the United States over Mexico allowed Texas to have its current borders, confirmed by the Treaty of Guadalupe in 1848.

Texas sided with the southerners during the American Civil War (1861-1865).



It was during these troubled times that our settlers arrived in Texas.

Currently Texas is rich in its oil, natural gas, bituminous coal, lignite, various minerals, agricultural products and a much diversified industry.



First visit from Bernard Zinsmeyer on 1970

1 Édouard Finger, 2 M.Jeanne Finger, 3 Léon Finger, 4 André Kauffmann, 5 Émile Finger, 6 Madeleine Finger, 7 Marie-Odile Finger, 8 André Finger, 9 M.Josée Finger, 10 la maman M.Rose Finger, 11 Paul Finger, 12 la tante Emma Finger, 13 Bernard Finger, 14 Martine Finger, 15 Jean-Michel Finger, 16 et 17 Myrian et Christine Finger



This house located next to Niederentzen's Town Hall is filled with history. It belonged to Auguste Bartholdi's parents, the sculptor who conceived the statue of Liberty. Many members of the Finger family were born in this house. This is, at the restaurant «GreenTree» where the story of the twinning started and where Bernard Zinsmeyer met the landlady M.Jeanne and where many Texans stayed.

4 BERNARD ZINSMEYER'S FIRST VISIT

In July 1970, Bernard Zinsmeyer, a 45-year-old single man, came to look for his ancestors. He had not taken for granted what Bertha Bowen, his cousin, had told him. She said she had gone to Oberentzen about ten years before and she had asked a woman she met on the street if she knew anybody called Finger in this village. The answer was no.

Bernard Zinsmeyer had then come to Europe to attend the Passion Play in Oberammergau, in Bavaria and had promised to pass through the Alsatian village of Oberentzen, where his Finger grandmother originated from.

He arrived in Oberentzen and asked if there was someone with the name FINGER.

“Yes” answered Eugène Gutleben, the butcher, who was standing in front of his door. “Look further at the restaurant: A l’Arbre Vert”.

A few moments later, Bernard Zinsmeyer pushed the restaurant door and found himself in front of the owner, Marie-Jeanne Finger.

“I’m coming from Texas, do you have any relatives there?”. “Yes of course” answered Marie-Jeanne.

Marie-Jeanne made her husband Edouard, her aunt, Edouard’s sister and their mother come right away. Everyone brought photos.

While showing a photo of the couple Alfred Zinsmeyer and Anna Finger, their visitor exclaimed “These are my grandparents”. On another photo, he did not hesitate to declare that it was his aunt Marie.

Bernard Zinsmeyer only wanted to go through Oberentzen but he stayed there for the night remembering all the memories he had heard about throughout the evening

“It is absolutely necessary that you come to D'Hanis and upon my return we will contribute to offer you the flight”, he had promised the same evening.

Unfortunately he could not realize this wish because, in January 1972, a sudden illness took his life.

These reunions made Edward Finger dream. He remembered that when he was five or six years old, his grandmother spoke to him about his uncle in America.

She said that a man with the name Hutzler, originally from Niederentzen had come back from America just before the first world war, that he wandered like a ghost in the village and said that the first settlers from Oberentzen and Niederentzen had made their way to Texas. He visited several families, conveyed a few messages to some, photos to others or only the greetings from their cousins and family in Texas.



Bernard Finger and Bernard Zinsmeyer in 1970



1972 : Welcome of Marie-Jeanne and Édouard by the FINGER families at Houston airport.

- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Bertha Bowen, | 2 William Rothe, | 3 Charles Finger, | 4 Kay Finger, |
| 5 Edouard Finger | 6 Josie Finger, | 7 Marie-Jeanne Finger, | 8 Henri-Martin Finger |
| 9 Melvin Finger | | | |



1972 : First visit in Castroville, on the 1st Sunday following Easter, Édouard, a Texan woman and Marie-Jeanne .

5 THE FIRST TRIP TO THE USA OF THE FINGER FAMILY

Marie-Jeanne recounts :

“In 1972, it was our first flight to the USA following an invitation from the FINGER families in Texas.

About fifty FINGER members had contributed and had instructed one of theirs, who worked at the World Bank of Geneva, to give us the ticket that allowed us to fly with Air France to Houston.”

“I remember the welcome in Houston by the descendants of the first FINGER who had left with his 4 year old son who had a total of 10 children: 8 boys and 2 girls. There was a representative coming from each of the ten families and a big poster “Welcome to Texas”.

Then we left towards San Antonio in big Chevrolets. One stop to cover the 500 kilometers.

We slept in San Antonio before reaching Castroville on Sunday morning. There was a big party (It was the first Sunday after Easter). The same night we left towards D’Hanis where a big hedge of honor made up of the descendants of the Finger families awaited us. During this first evening, I even had to sing "Gentille Alouette" for their greatest pleasure.

The next Sunday after the mass, a large crowd surrounded us.

Everyone wanted to know if I knew an ancestor of their family and what their origin was. As for me, I did not always understand the surnames pronounced in the American way ... Thus, I asked them to write down their names, and when I returned, I started doing a lot of research.

We stayed in Texas for about four weeks and each night we had to accept a new invitation and party. Fortunately, for Edouard and me, our stomachs were still strong ... "



Melvin Finger

Anne Finger

First evening in D’Hanis singing « Gentille alouette »



May 1975 : Eguisheim Léon Beyer, Former Mayor of Eguisheim,
 Father Stuebben,
 Charles Suehs, Former Mayor of Castroville,
 Laurence Tschirhart (in the background).



May 1975
 « A l'Arbre Vert », at Marie-Jeanne
 1 Father Larry Stuebben,
 2 Father Roy Rihn
 3 Charles Sauter from Wittelsheim
 4 The journalist Baschung

May 1975 : Oberentzen

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Texane | 2 Annelise Finger | 3 Texan | 4 Father Laary Stuebben |
| 5 Texane | 6 Émile Finger | 7 Roy Rihra | 8 Barbara Tondre |
| 9 Joseph Gutleben | 10 Édouard Finger | 11 Marie-Jeanne Finger | 12 André Finger |

6 THE TWINNING

After 1972, Father Larry Stuebben, priest of Castroville had asked his parishioners their origin. They answered in a chorus "Alsace-Lorraine" for further precision.

The details of their origin appeared in the records of the parishes of Castroville and D'Hanis, which no one consulted because they were written in German.

It was Marie-Jeane Finger started them on genealogical research.

Father Stuebben thought it was unusual that they do not know their origin. This priest and Barbara Tondre decided to organize a trip.

They wrote to the Consulate of Strasbourg for more information.

The Consulate was looking for a volunteer town or village to make a twinning agreement. The mayor of Thann, Mr. Schiehle declined the invitation. As their arrival was scheduled for May 1975, the Mayor of Eguisheim agreed to get involved in this agreement. About thirty people travelled to Alsace. At that time, three FINGER descendants lived in Niederentzen.

They were: David Zinsmeyer (brother of Bernard) and his aunts Alice and Cora, born Finger.

The twinning committee was created at the beginning of 1978 by Lucien Bilger, Mayor of Niederentzen. At the time, this committee had 17 members of which 9 were from Oberentzen and 8 from Niederentzen

Through the Consulate General of the United States of Strasbourg, the Committee had been informed of the Texans' arrival to set up a twinning ceremony to be held on the 14th July 1978. The committee had met on several occasions to refine the program and make the stay of Texans as pleasant as possible for both communes.

The first official visit of the Texans to Niederentzen and Oberentzen was held from the 11th to the 15th July 1978.

Thanks to a smooth organization, this first visit was a success and the committee was congratulated by the officials of the department including the deputy perfect of Guebwiller Mr. Debus, the senator Mr. Goetschy, president of the General Council of Haut-Rhin and the Consul General of the United States in Strasbourg, Mr. Kenneth A. Kurze..

Alsations visit in Texas in 1979

It was in January 1979 that a public information meeting was held in the Huentz Hall in Oberentzen.

The purpose of this meeting was to launch the idea of a trip to the USA and especially to D'Hanis. After various meetings, the trip was organized and the visit was scheduled from the 7th to 17th April 1979. This trip that reunited residents from the two villages allowed them to visit New Orleans, Houston with NASA's Space Center, San Antonio, Castroville and of course D'Hanis, where the twinning agreement took place.



1978 Niederentzen

- 1 Gilbert Hadey
- 2 Jurlen Finger
- 3 Bertha Bowen
- 4 Olivier Reinhart
- 5 Joseph Gutleben,
Mayor of Oberentzen
- 6 Mr Debus the Sous-Préfet
- 7 and Mrs
- 8 Lucien Bilger,
Mayor of Niederentzen



1978 Niederentzen

Jack Finger, Lucien Bilger,
Joseph Gutleben

In the foreground: Lucien Bilger, Jack Finger,
Joseph Gutleben

In the background : President of the Conseil Général :
Henri Goetschy, the Sous Préfet : Debus,
the USA Consul at Strasbourg : Kenneth A Kurze



1980 Niederentzen, with an important group of Texans.

Further visits ...

On the 4th July 1980, 37 Americans visited the region. The reception took place in the school yard in Niederentzen. The committee had organized a grand ball on the 5th July and the following day, the visitors and some of the inhabitants of the two villages went to Notre Dame du Thierhurst to take part in a religious service.

Then the Texans set off to visit the capital.

Another visit, that of 20th to the 24th June 1982 with a group of Americans travelling across Europe.

In 1985, the D'Hanis square was inaugurated in Niederentzen and in 1988 a small monument was offered by the Texans (photo p.57).

On this occasion, 27 Texans traveled for the tenth anniversary of the twinning. The program consisted of a visit to Colmar on the 13th July, the festivities on the 14th July and the departure of the hosts on the 15th July.

It was in April 1989 that a group of travelers from the two communes traveled to New York, then to Canada, to the Niagara Falls, Washington, San Antonio and D'Hanis where the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the twinning took place on Easter day.

For the 150th anniversary of the founding of the city of D'Hanis, the committee had suggested to organize a new trip at the invitation of the chair of the committee "Sesquicentennial Committee Olivier Reinhart". Eventually this official trip was not organized, a gift was given to the American friends through the Finger family who went to Texas with friends. It was a group made out of 13 participants coming from Niederentzen and Oberentzen of those present at the 150th anniversary celebrations of the founding of D'Hanis which took place on the 11th and the 12th October 1997.

On Saturday, October 11th, after the huge barbecue, the municipality inaugurated a commemorative plaque in front of houses classified as historical monuments dating from the time of the founding of the village. At the foot of the plaque, a tube containing the names of the present personalities and small items was sealed in the ground. The Alsatians submitted the program of their trip and the list of participants. This tube will be opened in 50 years after this visit of 1997. At the general assembly of the association "Castro Colonies Heritage", Marie-Jeanne Finger was named honorary member. Marie-Jeanne had given to the association: parish registers and the history of the school and bells of the parish of Niederentzen.

In March 1999, some forty US visitors under the leadership of Herbert Bilhartz, forming the "Texas All-State German Band", visited the region. The group that had arrived in Niederentzen on the 22nd June 1999 had been hosted in host families. The next day, the group had visited Albert Schweitzer's house in Gunsbach, and then the town of Kaysersberg, followed in the evening by a concert in Niederentzen's village hall. The group left their hosts on June 25th.



2008 Niederentzen Signing of the twinning pact
 Standing : Michel Sordi, Christian Werthe, Michel Habig,
 In the foreground : Jean Pierre Widmer, Louis Lutz, René Mathias



2009 Hondo
 1 Robert Hancock, (Mayor of Castroville) 2 Evelyne Barbutti
 3 Jim Barden, Juge Medina County, 4 Christian Werthe, President of the Committee
 5 Randy Brown, Sherif, 6 James W. Danner (Mayor of Hondo)
 7 Louis Lutz, President of the Committee CCHA

Continuation of meetings between D'Hanis and our two villages

It was not until 2005, that Texans were back at our two villages. A group passing through Ensisheim, had made a quick visit to Oberentzen and Niederentzen, invited by the new twinning committee chaired by Christian Werthe. Three years later, the 30th anniversary of the twinning was celebrated on the 28th July 2008. Forty citizens from the region of Castroville and D'Hanis had participated in the trip to Alsace and were hosted in families. After the religious service in Oberentzen, the festivities continued in Niederentzen in the presence of the elected officials and the residents. Gifts were exchanged between the two committee and the twinning agreement signed.

The following year, from the 13th to the 15th March 2009, about thirty people from the two villages and surrounding areas went to D'Hanis to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the twinning. The travelers stopped for three days at D'Hanis for the occasion, with a religious service, reception, accommodation in families, before heading back to discover the national parks of the American West, from Phoenix to San Francisco and going through Las Vegas. A trip to Texas was planned in August 2014, which did not materialize due to several cancellations.

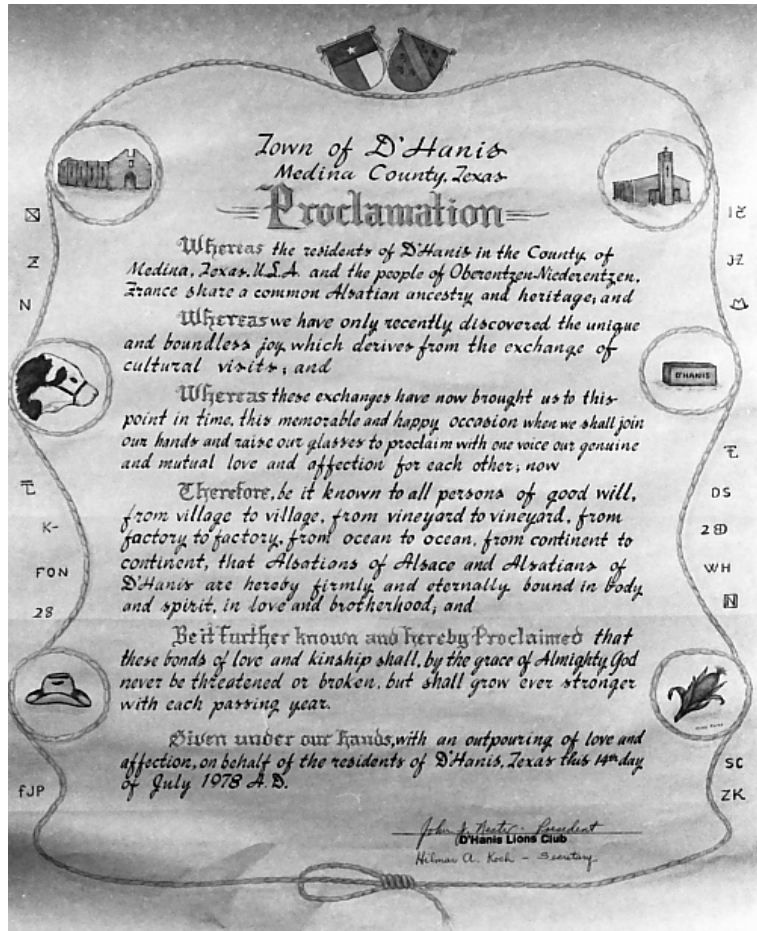
On the 26th July 2017, a group passing through Ober-Niederentzen was welcomed.

It should be noted that Marie-Jeanne Finger regularly hosts Texans from D'Hanis or Castroville.

It is the priority of the Niederentzen-Oberentzen-D'Hanis twinning association to keep alive the memory of Franco-American friendship and fraternity, and to let the history that brought together the two territories known, that of our two villages and the Texan region that welcomed Alsatian immigrants in the 1840s.



The paintings offered to the Texans which are exhibited in D'Hanis Church



Twinning proclamations signed in 1978



WHY THESE WAVES OF EMIGRATIONS ?

From the eighteenth century, appeared the first waves of emigration due to the severe winter of 1708-1709, the war of succession in Spain 1701-1713, and a large movement of Protestant emigration. Emigrants left Switzerland, Holland, the Palatinate and Alsace (in particular Protestants which were little appreciated in Alsace because of their religion).

During the nineteenth century, several waves of emigration are noticeable towards the United States.

From 1815 to 1870 more than 45,000 Alsatians went to the United States.

In 1817 there was a first wave from the Haut-Rhin, in the canton of Munster 175 passports were issued, in Neuf-Brisach 108, in Wintzenheim 93, in Ensisheim 77. Most of the requests were made in April and May.

Then a new wave can be noted between 1846 and 1847 and also between 1852 and 1854.

These are the cantons of Haut-Rhin that were most affected over the 1838-1857 period by order of importance: Kaysersberg, Sainte Marie aux Mines, Ribeauville, Colmar, Andolsheim, Guebwiller, Wintzenheim, Ensisheim.

With regard to the future inhabitants of Castroville and D'Hanis, the years between 1843 and 1847 saw the most important departures.

More than a thousand people were persuaded by the propaganda of Henry Castro.

One had to be brave and motivated to leave his village, sell his goods and go with his family to a completely unknown country.

There are several reasons for these migrations to new horizons depending on the period and region of departure.

They were mainly economic, demographic, social, religious and political causes.

- The poor, desperate, who have nothing else to lose who sell their goods to afford the trip to the United States.
- Those who own property, that hope will bring more return in the US.
- The thought of acquiring cheap land or getting it for free (as Castro promised).
- Alsace saw emigrants coming from Germany or Switzerland who went towards Le Havre and could thus take advantage of the network and the presence of emigration agents.
- 1816 was a year of rain, storms, hailstorms and floods. As a result, the year 1817 was a year of famine.

- For the Bas-Rhin, the forest code of 1827, which forbids the collection of deadwood in the forest, and particularly to look for fodder, encouraging some to find a better life elsewhere. Many villagers survived using the resources of the forest to raise a domestic animal.
- The years between 1828 and 1837 are also a period of uncertainty for the textile industry. In 1830 and 1831 there were more than 10,000 unemployed people in the Haut-Rhin.
- Under Napoleon I, many Amish, who refused the conscription they had previously been exempt from, decided to emigrate.
- Young people emigrated to avoid the recruitment law passed in 1851. The army recruits by drawing lots. Those who are drawn must serve for a period of 7 years.
- Many Protestants also refused to join the army.
- The waves of 1846-1848 and 1852-1854 correspond to a period of economic crisis and above all an agricultural crisis. In 1847, the scarcity of grain and potatoes, the price of wheat matched that of 1817.
- Very heavy taxes, increases in contributions, the price of rent, some price increases (5 francs per hectoliter of grain in July 1843), a poor grape harvest in the same year ...
- An increase in population, many large families with very little income.
- A significant part of the land belonged to the nobility who rented it to farmers or winemakers.
- Those who owned some land, had small and widely scattered plots, and they still had to divide them for inheritances and marriages.
- Even the smugglers could no longer find their "business" lucrative and some sought to exile themselves to rebuild "their trade".
- Many young men who wanted to marry a girl of a different religion, thought they would be able to marry more easily according to their wishes in the USA
- The wave that culminates in 1854 is rather due to the attraction that the United States has on Alsatians.
- At first, emigration by Le Havre is made easier by the fact that cotton boats are nearly empty on their way to the United States.
- In 1843, in Antwerp, there were many Alsatians, even without a passport, ready to embark ...

It is the hope of being able to cultivate one's own land which was probably one of the major causes of Alsatian emigration here.

A visible consequence in our villages:

Niederentzen, therefore went from 493 inhabitants to 399 inhabitants between 1841 and 1856, this loss of population was largely due to this emigration.

8 WHAT ATTRACTED THEM TOWARDS THE USA?

Many correct or false news went around ...

Letters and literatures concerning America stimulated curiosity...

Emigrants described with enthusiasm their new lives by sometimes distorting the truth.

Some extracts from letters that encourage you to leave:

"Here hard times are unknown ... the wages of the workers are high and the taxes for the government are minimal ... this country is large ... there is room for thousands of families ... immense resources make it possible to make a fortune in this Eldorado. "

Some who had succeeded, encouraged their friends to join them ...

This was found in a guide of the time: "A farmhand, fed, housed, laundered, can earn 40 to 60 francs a month, ... if he saves it, he can soon settle on his own, ... in the US, land and food are cheap and wages are high".

What can be said about the San Antonio area?

The climate is wonderful, the heat is not too strong, and diseases are extremely rare.

Regarding the region of Medina, in the concession obtained by Castro: "The land is perfectly watered, the grains grow beautifully. Cattle remain in pasture all year round.

This country is known for the hospitality of its inhabitants.

There are therefore only positive advantages for people who want to make a pleasant future and to make a fortune.

Castro promised every farmer wishing to settle will receive 320 acres free of charge (approximately 130 hectares) of land ownership.

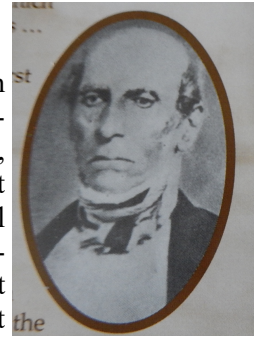
It must also be said that the American law allowed emigrants to quickly become American citizens.

No letter received speaks of problems encountered on site ... apart from the French authorities who issued numerous warnings and reservations about emigration projects. Jules de Cramayel, chargé d'affaires in Texas describes the facts in detail on the 4th September 4 1843 : " The fate of the unfortunate sent by Sieur Castro is worthy of pity. Many have already succumbed to the influence of the climate. Others come every day to beg the help of the legation to return to France, after exhausting the little means of supplies they had brought."

On the 3rd October 1843, the Mayor of Mulhouse, Charles Dollfus, is moved by the gimmicks of Castro's agents in a letter to the Prefect.

CASTRO

In 1836, Texas separates from Mexico and becomes an independent republic. In order to populate the country, the government uses the *impresarios* system to facilitate colonization. Henri Castro, who had obtained the American Nationality, signed a contract on the 15th February 1842. He is awarded a concession southwest of San Antonio de Bexar, in South Texas. In exchange, he is committed to install 600 families of settlers on the lands that have just been granted to him. These *impresarios* do not buy the land, they receive them for free. At the end of the contract if the land is not populated, the contract is cancelled; otherwise the settlers must surrender half of the land to the *impresario*.



Who is Castro? He is born in 1786 at Saint-Esprit in the Landes. He fights for Napoleon, emigrates to the USA where he obtained American citizenship in 1827.

On the 15th February 1842 a contract is signed in Austin between the General Samuel Austin, President of the Republic and Mr. H. Castro who is the concessioner of considerable land in the County of San Antonio de Bexar, starting at Laredo, crossing on the left bank of Rio-Frio, then along the Laredo to the point where the Rio-Frio and the waters of the Medina River separate.

This concession was made, in which Mr. Castro must colonize part of the lands that depend on it within the time and terms prescribed by the concession contract, which contract had an extension of two years that took the duration until February 15th 1847.

Under this agreement, Mr. Castro is authorized to grant to any family that wishes to emigrate and settle on the ownership of six hundred and forty acres of land or one square mile, and to every single man of at least 17 years of age, half of this amount or three hundred and twenty acres, on the condition that the emigrants build a cabin on the land, keep a surrounding of at least fifteen acres of cultivated land for three years, and abstain from selling or giving strong liquors, weapons, ammunition to the Indians, at the risk of losing their rights to ownership.

The owner or the holder of the title as the owner has the right to retain for his own benefit half of the land granted as a compensation for the organization and expenses of colonization (but, it seems that, Mr. Castro did not benefit of it).

It was towards the end of the summer of 1843 that Alsace was affected by Castro's propaganda through posters at first. He quotes the head of the Catholic Church of Texas: Bishop Odin, in order to sound more official and serious.

He also states that each settler will receive 320 acres or 129 hectares. Each settler must deposit 100 francs as collateral that will be returned when he actually occupies his land.

During this time, the Alsatian authorities inform that they are against this emigration, given the various risks and difficulties encountered.

The first boat leaves on November 15th 1843. On the first three boats chartered by Castro, there was no Alsatian settler. There were two priests Louis Schneider of Aldorf and Jean-Pierre Ogé of Strasbourg. On the following boats leaving Antwerp: "Ocean" and "Jeannette-Marie", out of 52 families, there were 24 Alsatian families. It should be noted that the boats no longer left French ports because Castro feared retaliation from the French administration and some settlers were without passports.

When Castro returned to Texas in 1844, the settlers were stranded in San Antonio in great misery and were very hostile to him. The first settlers had been stranded there since the end of 1843 because of the war between Mexico and Texas. Moreover upon his return, Castro faces two *impresarios* who are hostile to him but he succeeds in acquiring the land coveted by his competitors.

Returning to France in 1846, Castro sought financial support and found the help of Belgian banker Guillaume D'Hanis. In total the operations led by Castro brought 2,134 settlers to Texas.

In 1850 Castro returned to settle in Castroville under the roof of the post office of the city. He was often absent. He died in 1865 at the age of 79 in Mexico from where he wanted to go to France.

10 HOW DID THEY REACH THE USA?

Among the steps to be taken, the passport application is the most difficult and urgent. This document was also required to circulate throughout France. Once the mayor had prepared the file containing a proof of discharge of debts, a certificate of good behavior and for young people, a certificate that they had not been drafted for the military service, all was transmitted to the prefect empowered to hand over the document. For a question of administrative heaviness or expensive passport, departing people took the risk leave without it. They then crossed the border to leave a German or Belgian port, some boarded illegally in Le Havre.

It was possible to go down the Rhine, which was then served by steamboats, some of which went as far as Rotterdam. To go to the port of Antwerp, you had to go to Cologne and continue by road or rail. Many letters and leaflets described the distress of people waiting for departure to one of the ports on the Atlantic.

The price of the passage was not regulated and varied from 100 to 180 francs covering the journey, as well as the purchase and packing of food.

The boats were two-masted sailboats, the smaller ones like the "Heinrich" weighing 322 tons and 35 meters long. They lacked elementary hygiene, such as air, light and space. The captain provided only drinking water, fire and lighting. There were only two restrooms per 100 passengers and the bunks stacked by four were only 45 cm wide.

The settlers did their washing and cooking on the deck or the steerage.

Leaving mostly from Strasbourg, Castro's first settlers from Alsace and Lorraine in 1843 took 4 days to reach Antwerp by steamer on the Rhine or by rail. The crossing of the Atlantic, sometimes with a stopover in New Orleans (Louisiana) lasted according to the ships and the wind 51 days (boat "Ocean", 1844), 61 days (boat "Ebro" 1842-1843) and 101 days ("John Key", 1843-1844) to Galveston. The emigrants changed boats there to go to Port Lavaca, where a few transatlantic ships arrived. From Port Lavaca, the settlers went on foot or in ox carriages to the city of San Antonio, 220 km away, traveling an additional 28 km before arriving in Castroville.

Not all the emigrants reached the promised land. There were deadly diseases and drownings on the boats. Thus in 1853, out of the 13,762 passengers who arrived in New York in November, with 28 ships flying different flags, during the crossing, 1,141 passengers were killed.

In Texas itself, the trials were numerous and sometimes cruel for the settlers. The first migrants sent by Castro were languishing on the outskirts of Galveston harbor, waiting to make their way to the so-called promised land. It was a life of misery in search of small jobs. Some tried their luck elsewhere, in Canada and even in South America.



Port of Galveston where settlers landed.



2009 : View of Castroville : Paris Street

11 CASTROVILLE

The first settlers who left Alsace for Texas were from the Thann Valley. Between 1842 and 1860, many people from Oberentzen and Niederentzen left. Nicolas HABY of Oberentzen was one of the first to leave, perhaps with his brother Joseph. He returned to the village twice to encourage other villagers to follow him. At his last visit in 1846, he took his entire family. He recruited his own father, his two sisters, as well as his brothers Georges, Jacob, Ambroise and André.

Henry Castro, the emissary of the Texas Consulate had authorization to host 500 settlers and promised to give 135 acres of land to each.

But what he did not say was that one had first clear to it ...

The first settlers left Le Havre, the next ones coming from the right or left bank of the Rhine, they were invited to go to Neufreystaedt (currently Freudenstadt), then taken to Antwerp.

The first Alsatian colonists embarked in 1843 and 1844 on the boats: Jean Key, Heinrich, Ocean and Jeannette-Marie.

They disembarked at Galveston, then they reached San Antonio then Castroville by cart. This journey of more than 300 km, which is tiring and dangerous could last several weeks (Landreise).

On September 1st 1844, a first convoy left from San Antonio and stopped in a loop of the Medina river where the settlers founded Castroville on September 12th 1844. Among them there were four families from Oberentzen.

At the end of November 1844, Castroville had 63 homes.

Here is the story of this settling from the journal of Henri Castro.

September 1st : day set for departure. At 4 o'clock in the morning, 20 carriages were lined up at various points in the city of San Antonio, loaded with luggage, agricultural tools and supplies. (Castro's opponents spread alarming rumors. He sent out messengers to deny them.) And worst of all, at 2pm a torrential rain fell on the town and discouraged a few more families. Castro decided to pay Mexicans to beef up his group).

September 2nd : Arrival at the Medina. I went with part of the group to look at the area to find the best place. Back around midnight.

September 3rd : We crossed the Medina using a ford opposite to what is today Castroville. Our camp is shaded by hickory (walnut family). The evening is cheerful.

September 4th : We built a shed to shelter our station. Arrival of deputy John James, who is in charge of supervising operations.

September 5th : A dispute broke out between the French and German settlers, I was able to settle the dispute amicably.

September 6th : Work is organized in a rational manner.

September 7th : Dr. Cupples and Mr. Charles de Montel leave for San Antonio in order to look for and escort Bishop Odin.

September 8th : A storm surprised us during the night and gave us a good shower. To calm my nerves, I drank two glasses of liquor and smoked a pipe, contrary to my habits ...

September 9th : Arrival of 3 new settlers. One of my horsemen reports to me that he has seen a group of fifty Comanches. Captain Hays is warned and we take precautions. Construction of a guardhouse.

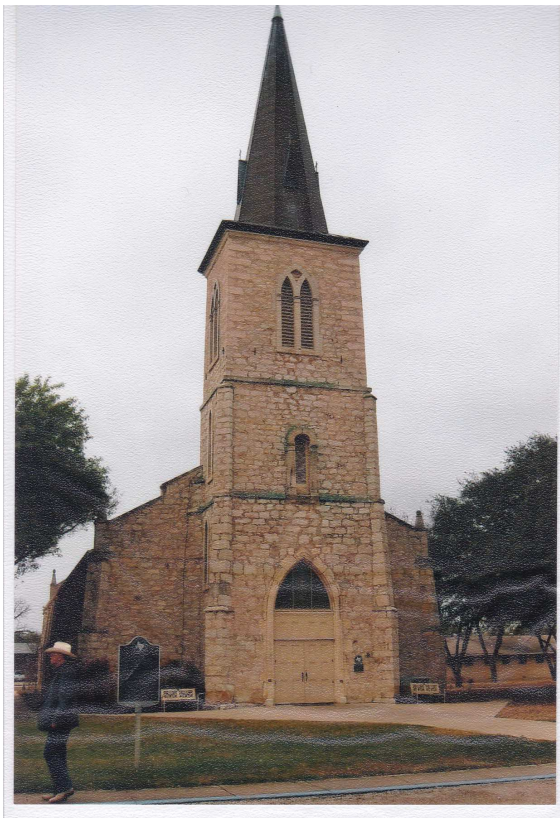
September 10th : Cut wood to build a shed that can temporarily shelter everyone. The game and fish abound around us. Arrival of the bishop and Captains Hays and Knight.

September 11th : Departure of the two captains. My table was set up on the banks of the Medina. Bishop Odin and the Reverend Oge are by my side. I do my best to please them. Among the innovations, a few bottles of a wine made from the grapes local grapes ripened on the banks of the Medina. Decent quality.

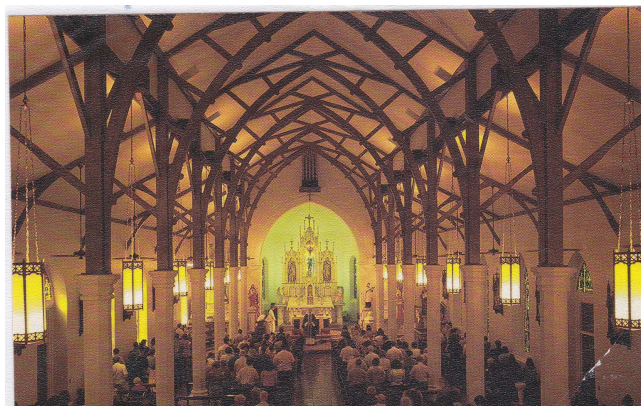
September 12th : Selection by County authorities and presided over by two judges of peace and one police officer. In the morning of the same day we went to the laying of the first stone of the church Saint-Louis, by the vicar accompanied by his vicar general and surrounded by all the small colony.

(It's without doubt on this 12th September 1844 that the name Castroville appeared for the first time.)

September 13th : Departure of Bishop Odin that I accompanied on part of the trip. The bishop gave me a certificate as proof that he had come at my invitation.



First Saint-Louis church,
dating back to 1844



Present church of Castroville : Saint-Louis 1868/1870

Evolution of Castroville.

The Sisters of Divine Providence had arrived at Castroville in 1868, because the priests could no longer provide instruction in a continuous manner. Mother St Andrew and Sister Agnès Wolf set up a school and a convent.

The city reached the peak of its expansion when in 1873 the convent of the congregation was built on land granted by H. Castro for the church.

After a few difficult years, the city and the surrounding area prospered until the arrival of the railway. The one connecting almost all the cities of the north and the east of the United States did not exist in Texas.

In 1880 the "Sunset Road" railway company, later "Southern Pacific", built a railway line west of San Antonio that was to pass through Castroville, siege of the county, provided however, that the administration paid a \$100,000 fee. To determine the route, they followed the topography but they also favored the cities which were ready to pay the price to be crossed. When the question arose, a controversy divided the progressive and the conservatives. The majority of the voters did not want to pay the price and the people of Castroville voted against the passage. Some argued that the railway would compete with their transport companies, others feared pollution, and others did not want to enrich Yankee monopolies.

One does not know what were also the influence of the powerful Puritan movements that were working against the introduction of railway networks (they said, for example, that in tunnels women were not safe from abuse, ...).

They were far from realizing all the consequences.

In 1886, there was the loss of the county seat in favor of Hondo.

In 1887, the sisters of Divine Providence moved to San Antonio ...

Personalities and businesses left the city. This decline persisted for many years.

Evolution of the population

At the end of November 1844, Castroville had 63 families.

In 1850: 366 inhabitants, 1860: 458 inhabitants, 1887: 731 inhabitants, 1890: 670 inhabitants, 1960: 1508 inhabitants, 80% of whom are Catholics and 20% Protestants, 2000: 2664 inhabitants, 2010: 3053 inhabitants.

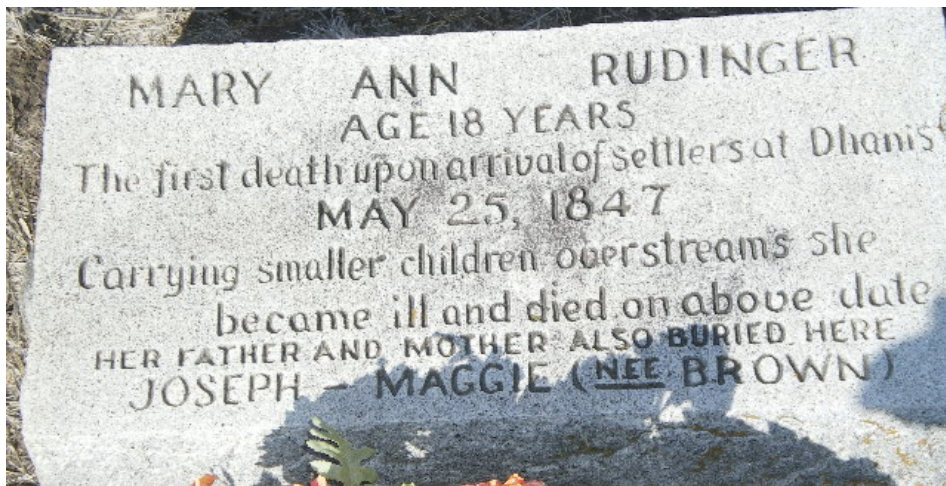
The community of Castroville kept its Alsatian identity for a long time, which is why even today a few inhabitants speak Alsatian.



*Ponca Indians
Camped near D'Hanis 1892*



St Dominic's Cemetery
of Old D'Hanis
2009



MARY ANN RUDINGER
AGE 18 YEARS
The first death upon arrival of settlers at Dhanis
MAY 25, 1847
Carrying smaller children over stream she
became ill and died on above date
HER FATHER AND MOTHER ALSO BURIED HERE
JOSEPH - MAGGIE (NEE BROWN)

12 D'HANIS

Birth of D'Hanis

During the winter of 1846-1847, a group of surveyors under the direction of renowned artist, Théodore Gentilz, came to measure the ground and divide lots for the families to come.

Jean Batot, a day laborer in Mittelwihr, obtained a passport for Texas in June 1846. He embarked with his family on August 1st aboard the 'Herratzes' which anchored at Galverston on December 10th. He had paid his journey to Castroville, where he stopped. He was allocated a building plot and a cultivable area of 8 hectares in D'Hanis. One day he took his supplies and tools, and brought Chris, his nine-year-old son. Leaving in Castroville the rest of his family, the two men walked 48km separating them from their land. Without a path, the father and the son followed the tracks left in the tall grass by the wagons of the surveyors. The earth was black, rich and covered with reeds. Jean and Chris built a shelter made of poles and logs intertwined under a thatched roof. The next village should have been situated on a high plateau, three kilometers east of Rio Seco and very close to a stream called "Parker's Creek". This 4th Castro foundation was to be called D'Hanis and was more than 40km from Castroville. Twenty-eight other families joined them soon after. Soon there were twenty cottages and cabins, all built identically. The interstices of the tree trunks, placed vertically, were filled with a mud mortar. The windows did not have any glass.

The roof covered with a brownish grass overhanging the walls on each side to project enough shade. The ridge and the gables were decorated with grasses, crosses and weathervanes.

In no time the first settlers saw the Comanche Indians with painted faces coming. They invaded their little colony and stole all the easily accessible food. As soon as they left, a messenger arrived, asking for help for a family on their way from Castroville, whose horses were exhausted, and in addition with a young girl who was seriously ill, in one of the carts. The people of D'Hanis sent help and the family arrived at midnight, at the place of their future home. At the same moment the girl succumbed to the disease.

The first funerals at D'Hanis took place on the spot where Mary Ann Rudinger's gravestone can be found, who died on May 25, 1847 and rests in St Dominic's cemetery. This cemetery was abandoned in 1893 following an epidemic of diphtheria.

Life was precarious and the supplies ran out quickly.

D'Hanis hier



D'Hanis today



Next to this assembly square of D'Hanis are the shops, the saloons and the railway..

Difficult beginnings

The beginnings of D'Hanis were difficult, its inhabitants lived cut off from everything. They had to endure all the hardships of border life: hunger, the depredations of wild animals, diseases such as cholera, lack of postal service, medical and sanitary assistance. The first two years were particularly difficult because of a devastating thunderstorm and because of the destruction of the harvests by the wild game. To survive, the inhabitants fed on wild herbs, game and rattlesnakes. There was a lot of game, but the settlers were not armed to shoot the partridges. Despite the obstacles, the settlers immediately started to build their home.

Each man had obtained, as planned, land and a lot in the village, while promising in writing to return to Castro half of the land received once settled in. In the end, some only managed to cultivate fifteen acres and build a house. These were the conditions that would later allow a settler to receive the title of ownership.

Building a house in the prairie was a serious problem. In the Seco valley a few kilometers from the village, the settlers cut the mesquite trees, common in the southeast of the U.S., they can reach 8m in height. The "Parkers" stream was used as a means of transport. The settlers built thatched cabins: walls of mesquite stakes, with dirt floors and thatched roofs. The charming French style houses built in D'Hanis stone were built only a few generations later.



San-Antonio museum

Fort Lincoln

As the animosity of the Indians grew, it became necessary to protect the colonists against their raids. For this purpose, a troop of soldiers called "Texas Rangers" came to camp from time to time in the vicinity.

On July 17th 1849, two companies of Texas Rangers soldiers named E and F, armed with rifles, settled on the banks of the Seco River, 3 miles from D'Hanis, on an elevation that allowed them to have a 360-degree view of the region. This place was called Fort Lincoln in memory of Captain George Lincoln, a former officer of Company E, who died in battle during the Buena Vista War.

The building of the fort was very fast, two constructions composed of tree trunks and simple shingle roofs for the officers, and for the troops basic buildings covered with straw; a hospital with a stone built hearth, a food store, an operations room with a stone floor and a simple roof, a water supply and a building made of poles for the cavalry. It all cost 2,000 dollars. There were about 90 to 120 men, 150 at most to track the Indians.



Indeed, this fort offered a first defense for the village of D'Hanis while protecting the commercial routes taken by the immigrants going to the west. This camp saved Old D'Hanis from famine. The Army bought grain and grass, provided weapons and ammunition, employed men for some jobs, or as scouts.

The fort was abandoned after three years in 1851. The Indian attacks did not completely cease until 1876. The inhabitants of Old D'Hanis began to settle on the sites near the abandoned camp. Stores were built and a school was created.

The diversity of languages was added to all these difficulties of settling in, which with the exception of Castroville was an obstacle to the social rapprochement of groups of migrants.

Situated on the forefront of the civilization, D'Hanis formed a rampart for the settlers established on its east.

Nevertheless, these pioneers survived thanks to a strong Alsatian spirit, an indomitable determination and an admirable faith.

The development of D'Hanis and its new settlement

The village had become an important coaching station with the opening of a public trail between San Antonio and the Mexican border. D'Hanis became a stage. There is an inn, a large corral to house the horses, various shops, saloons and a flour mill. All these trading houses did good business.

The construction of the railway in 1881 caused massive changes due to the fact that the station was built not in D'Hanis itself but 1.6km west of the village. The site of the station built in 1884 was meant to serve as a central point for the establishment of a new village and as a shopping center for the new D'Hanis. The station operated until 1962. It was the largest station in the region. Goods were unloaded, wagons loaded with wood supplied Utopia (30km from D'Hanis), the engines were refueling and a telegraph operating 24 hours was set up. Residents began to settle near the station called New D'Hanis.



Evolution of the population

In 1850, three years after its founding, according to the United States government census, the city of D'Hanis had 21 homes and a population of 84 people.

In 1930, there were 270 inhabitants and today there are more than 550.

Huge trains drawn by several locomotives cross D'Hanis daily.

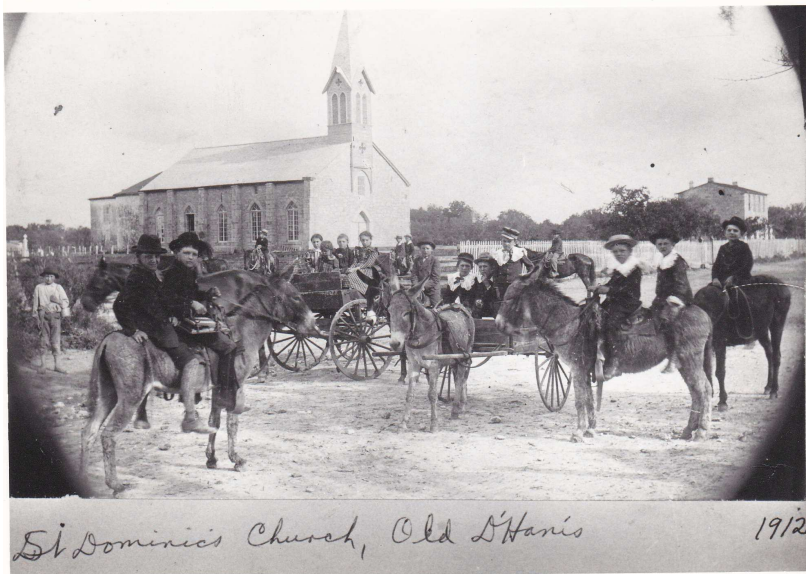
The city of D'Hanis today

Since then, with the development of agriculture and livestock farming, D'Hanis has become a business center well served by the US Highway 90 which also passes through Hondo and Castroville. The phone arrived at D'Hanis in 1910 and the bank of D'Hanis was founded in 1916. With the arrival of the automobile, garages also became important as the one of Alfred Zinsmeyer.

In 1955, piped water was installed and public lighting in 1957.

D'Hanis was flooded in 1894, 1915 and 1935.

This city is proud of its Alsatian roots, which is the reason it was twinned with Oberentzen and Niederentzen.



Saint-Dominic's Church in 1912 and present remains.



Holy Cross Church
Built in 1915 and re-built in 1965,
following a blaze in 1663.



Notre Dame de la Paix Church
1920-1951

Religious life

Most, if not all, families at D'Hanis were Catholic and one of their first concerns was to build a small simple church built of cypress posts in the center of their village. A priest from Castroville came from time to time to give religious services.

The first registers of baptisms, marriages and burials can be found in the archives of the St Louis parish of Castroville. The registers of the St Dominic parish began in 1853 when D'Hanis became a mission parish with as a priest the Reverend Dominique Mesens, o.m.c. He led the construction of a two-story stone church situated next to the cemetery of Old D'Hanis.

Among the priests serving the parish for the next fifteen years, we find in the registers, in addition to the name of Father Dominique Mesens who was chosen as patron of the church, the following names: Fathers Mueller, Barsenach, Echart, Grudiner, Gahr, and Peter Richards.

The first resident parish priest was Father L.J. Barbarin, who arrived in 1868 and began the construction of a new church by enlarging the old ones to the west. This new very spacious and of Gothic inspiration place of worship, was built in 1868-1869. It was abandoned in 1918. Its ruins are classified as a historical monument.

In the meantime, after the steady decline of Old D'Hanis, Father Maas built a new Holy Cross Church in New D'Hanis around the years 1914-1915. It was destroyed by a fire on May 25th 1963, it was rebuilt in 1965 and is the current church. This church was called Holy Cross in memory of a cross built by the first pioneers on the highest near hill.

In 1920, there was the construction of a church: Our Lady of Peace, rather frequented by Americans of Mexican origin. This church was demolished in 1951.

Also note that the Pecan nuts made the parish famous because they were planted on its grounds. The St. Croix Parish promotes and sells its production.

The school life

From the beginning, the inhabitants of D'Hanis took charge of their children's education. The priests and the faithful shared the task of teaching either in the homes of the community or in the first church. The 1850 census included one teacher and fourteen children aged 6 to 14 among the citizens.

In 1870, two nuns from the Convent Divine Providence of Castroville arrived to educate the children of D'Hanis for a few years.

In 1883 these same nuns returned to open a school near the St Dominic's parish. Then other schools were created, one in the Seco colony near Fort Lincoln and in 1901 a state public school in D'Hanis.

In 1908, at the instigation of Father Wirtz, St. Anthony Parish School (which closed down in 1950) replaced the St Dominic School.

What was it like for our settlers from Niederentzen and Oberentzen in D'Hanis?

Among the new inhabitants were Joseph Finger and John Zinsmeyer.

One of the pioneers was Joseph Finger, a farmer born on 05/05/1816 in Oberentzen. In 1846, he had left Alsace with his wife, Reine Zuercher born on 17/09/1818 and their son Joseph born on 17/06/1843 who was around 3 years old at the time of departure. The father died in D'Hanis on 28/08/1886 at the age of 70, almost 4 years after his wife who died on 11/02/1882, and his son died on 07/05/1917.

The latter, who had 10 children and 45 grandchildren, kept in touch with his family in the Haut-Rhin until the First World War.

The 1860 census indicates that Joseph Finger had a property of 1,000-acre on which he raised herds of cattle and sheep. In addition to his ranch, he had opened a grocery store.

13 THE BRICKS AND TILES COMPANY OF D'HANIS

In the 1880s, a builder, taking advantage of the good quality of yellow clay found on the banks of the Seco River, built brick kilns. His was called Charles Wallrath. This business still exists today.

Like other Europeans, Charles Wallrath came to Texas to look for land, a bit of a specific terrain. He was a builder and brick specialist from "The old world". He came to Texas, in the County of Medina, in search of clay to make good bricks.

He found what he was looking for on an embankment along the Seco River a good mile west of the new village of D'Hanis. In 1880, he bought around 90 acres to build his house by himself making bricks cooked in his own kiln. At first, he wanted to have two kilns to cook about 20,000 to 30,000 bricks. In addition to bricks, he wanted to sell sand and clay.

Wallrath used the clay from two extraction sites near to his house.

Here's his method: A pit of around 8 feet in diameter, 20 feet deep, dug 10 meters from the edge of this embankment. This was connected by a tunnel the bed of the stream.

He filled the pit by alternating layers of ore and mesquite wood (acacia species). The wood was lit and the fire spread from layer to layer. After cooling, the clay was extracted from the pit through the tunnel. Clay was used as a material which quickly strengthened the Wallrath bricks.

In 1902, a renowned contractor named Gus Birckner created a brick factory between Lockhart and Luling, called L & L Brick.Co.

Birckner invested approximately 15000 dollars in equipment from a Chicago plant. But from the first batch of bricks, he found that half was unusable.

The second batch was identical even when changing the kiln temperature. He sadly concluded that his raw material contained too much sand, which made the bricks too brittle.

A little later, he was asked to build a department store for Leinwebers in Hondo. To do this he had to use the white bricks of Mr. Wallrath which were known for their very good quality.



D'Hanis cobblestones



D'Hanis brick factory.



Tractor used in Texas in 1913, 36 CV (San-Antonio museum)

In his book, Birckner said that his carpenter, who liked to drink from time to time, was at D'Hanis to attend a ball. He there met Wallrath who told him about his brick making. In return, the carpenter told him about the installation of machinery not used at Luling.

The next morning, a Sunday, the carpenter reported his remarks to Birckner and they arranged for an interview with Wallrath. The following Sunday the two went by train to D'Hanis to meet him in the bar. They went to visit the Wallrath estate, its clay and its kilns. Birckner immediately recognized the superior quality of clay containing iron oxides. "Your white bricks will turn red if you heat them for 5 or 6 days". Wallrath, with his mesquite wood, only fired it for two days. In the evening the two men and Wallrath's son went to town for a meeting with Louis Carle and his brother Joe. They agreed to set up the business at D'Hanis and insisted on associating Leinwebers to whom they suggested abandoning the construction idea in Hondo. In 1906 a contract was signed between all the partners for the creation of this company.

In 1908, an order of 8 million bricks by the US Army for Houston was recorded.

One of the buildings built at D'Hanis with the local production was Holy Cross Church. During the 1963 fire, the bricks withstood the fire.



In the background, quarries for the brick factory raw material, in the foreground fig tree orchards.

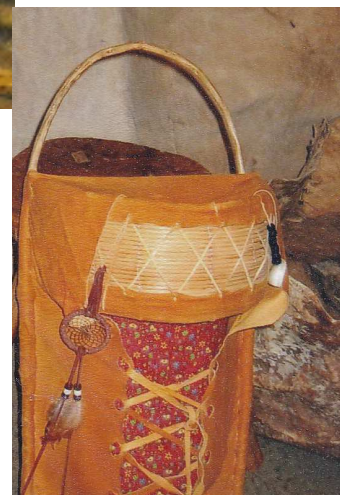
The Indian's division



Below
Indian baby carrier



View of
San Antonio Museum



14 TEXAS SEEN BY A MISSIONARY: ABBE E. DOMENECH

In 1845, Mr. Domenech attended a sermon in the Lyon region made by Bishop Odin. Our future priest left in 1846 on the sailing ship Elisabeth, went up Mississippi to New Orleans. After 2 years of studying, he left towards Galveston, and then on the 31st July 1848, he left towards Houston before he joined on a sage coach to San Antonio. Here are anecdotes and comments.

“Houston is a miserable little town made up of a line of about twenty shops and about a hundred wooden cabins scattered among cut-off tree trunks. It is populated by Methodists and especially by ants. The streets, the rooms, the floor, the walls and the ceiling are walked over in all directions by this battalion on the move. To escape their relentless recognitions, small vases full of water are placed under the feet of the beds and other furniture.

The stage coach is a cart, a kind of carriage drawn by four vigorous horses. We left at a fast pace. The bridge, six or seven feet wide, made of two pieces of wood and badly joined branches, was thrown between two mounds which encircled the Bufalo (a river). We passed it at full speed.

The first night was spent on a farm. The bed was a square made with branches and a blanket of wool thrown on it. The tips of the branches went into my ribs and kept me from sleeping. The next day, my coachman hums, shows me the honey-trees and plants that heal the bites of snakes. Suddenly, the horses stop, blow loudly, tremble, retreat and the shaft breaks. The driver goes down with his rifle. Immediately a mountain lion, three and a half feet long, jumps to the chest of the first horse. A shot goes off, it falls lifeless.

San Antonio serves as a warehouse for the goods of the United States. Its location near the Mexican border makes it very important. Every week, we see the arrival of long caravans of heavy carts, dragged by oxen, ordered by rich Mexican merchants who come to stock up on muslins, cottons of all kinds, soaps, sugar, flour and coffee.

In the attic of the mission, lived bats, spiders, mosquitoes, scorpions and insects of all kinds were living and roasting with me because the roof let in the rain and the sun. Part of the attic also served as storage for food supplies: onions, garlic and dried peppers. Under my window flowed a stream of clear water where women did their laundry and bathed publicly ... so I had to keep it closed all day.

Two months after my arrival in San Antonio, I was at the end of my physical and moral strength and I was thinking of returning to Galveston when the bishop arrived and offered to do my exams and after eight days I was ordained a priest.

They suggested I go to Castroville, where Father Dupuis lived. ”

15 CASTROVILLE SEEN BY THE ABEE DOMENECH

"Two days after my ordination, together with an Alsatian, I went to Castroville from San Antonio. It was a beautiful summer evening. My travelling companion drove a cart loaded with goods, dragged by oxen. I was studying the road. While leaving San Antonio we entered a three miles long chaparral. Mesquite and cacti formed the only vegetation of this shady place where murders were frequent. The landscape then became more rugged. Most of the hills are covered with a grass that is eighteen inches to two feet high, wild and domestic animals are very fond of them. Here and there are trees on which the blue birds fly, the cardinals and thousands of golden-throated starlings ...

I arrived at Castroville at one o'clock in the morning. The missionary's house (made of wood, bricks, stone sometimes with disjointed angles that let in lizards, tarantulas, snakes, rats, ants ...) was occupied by a family that had settled in it because it seemed unoccupied. They welcomed me by doing me the honors of this house that the tenants had taken. The next morning I ran to say mass in a cabin called: church. Nobody attended because none of them were aware of my arrival.

I continued my domiciliary visit, and took the room on the right, as the most inconvenient. The floor was made of beaten earth, dotted with small plants with white flowers, and occupied militarily by three big republics of ants that I undertook to destroy. Vain efforts! This heroic task exceeded the limits of my power; I devoted two years of fruitless labor to it. The bed was so bad that I left it and hung a hammock under the garden gallery. I suffered mostly from the detestable food. I had discovered in the attic a little pork and smoked bacon, with a supply of dried deer. These foods repelled me so much that I covered them with a mixture of pepper and vinegar that burned my mouth and prevented me from feeling the taste. I depended strongly on the wild salad, which I would pick in the mountains, at risk of being bitten by rattlesnakes or scalped by the Indians. The love of salad outweighed fear. As oil is very expensive in these countries, it was the milk that served as seasoning.

Castroville is an agglomeration of cabins of all kinds, separated by right-angled streets, bordered on the west by a river: Medina and at the east by wooded hills. I reopened the free school created by Father Dubuis. I taught them catechism, French, some English and German. "

16 D'HANIS, SEEN BY THE ABBE DOMENECH

“My first excursion was to the D'Hanis colony thirty-five miles west of Castroville. An Alsatian who had served in Africa, offered to take me on a wagon drawn by oxen. It was during winter, very short season but very harsh, especially due to the North wind which brings from Rocky Mountains, a penetrating and icy cold. We passed through two Alsatian colonies: Quihi which is 12 miles from Castroville and Vandenberg, 7 miles further.

From there to D'Hanis, the road passes through the middle of an even wilder land, very frequented by the Indians. In a large meadow, we see a natural path, traced by the frequent incursions of these tribes. At every moment we saw huge herds of deer. It is also in these solitudes that we meet the lion of Mexico. When we arrived at the Colony of D'Hanis, I was tired and amazed by the bumps, the continual change of scenes and thoughts. My companion made me sleep at his home. His cabin was, as in all the poorly populated parts of Mexico, a pile of poles placed together by upright beams or by ox-leather straps, with a thatched roof. He offered me a glass of whiskey, but the smell alone made me dizzy.

D'Hanis was, of our colonies, the most exposed to the Indians. In five weeks they had stayed there three times, forcing people to give them food, tobacco and gun powder.

Many wild beasts can be found around the colony. Once, during the mass, dogs were heard barking, it was a mountain lion followed by the dogs who had taken refuge on a tree, another time a wild boar entered the chapel while we were singing the vespers.

I had come to D'Hanis to baptize two children of an Alsatian colonist. Having at the time little knowledge German language, I wrote on a piece of paper the word taufen (baptize), not to be confused with kaufen (to buy) and verkaufen (to sell). Unfortunately I left the paper behind. The three words were mixed in my mind.

With faith to my lucky star, I asked the colonist, after the usual greetings, if he had two children to "verkaufen". Seeing the surprise and anger on his face, I asked him if he had two children to buy. I got a number of energetic insults that I did not understand. Finally, as I only had one word left, I told him gently: "If it's not to buy or sell, it's to be baptized." The man finally understood, seeing my face and my clothes that I could be the priest, he began laughing endlessly.

FIRST SETTLERS REGISTERED AT D'HANIS IN 1847 AND 1850 AND LOCALITIES OF ORIGIN OF THE CITIZENS OF CASTRO- VILLE

The first settlers registered in D'Hanis:

In 1847: Batot, Biell, Carr, Deckert, Echte, Finger, French, Grossenbacher, Hagemueller, Kaufmann, Ludwig, Marrell, Nehr, Ney, Riedemann, Rudinger, Schreiber, Schumacher, Strausser, Wipff, and Woelker, out of the 22 there was 16 Alsatians.

In 1850 there were 84 inhabitants and 21 dwellings in D'Hanis.

Here is the list of the heads of families: Joseph Finger, Leopold Zuercher, John Robert, Joseph Wipf, John Scheiber, Joseph Woelker, Anton Ludwig, Peter Weber, Martin Nester, Joseph Nehr, John Batot, Benedict Decker, John B. Zerr, Joseph Rudinger, Nicholas Ney, Joseph Ney, Francois Marrell, Elisabeth McWood, Phillip Schweizer, John Grossenbacher, and Léona Esser, (Hubert and Angeline Weynand lived with the Esser family).

Localities from which the first citizens of Castroville originated.

Niederentzen : Families Schneider, Mangold and Schmitt

Oberentzen : Michel Gsell, fisherman with his wife and 8 children, Jacob Haby, butcher with his wife and 3 children, Ahr families, Bendele, Haby Hutzler, Mann and Mérian

Baldersheim, Berrwiller, Bilsheim (Zinsmeister family) Bourbach-le-Haut, Bretten, Brunstatt, Burnaupt-le-Bas, Fellering, Friesen, Heiteren, Hirtzfelden, Hombourg, Masevaux, Mulhouse, Niedermorschwiller, Oltingue, Rouffach, Riedisheim, Rixheim (Zinsmeyer family), Sentheim, Soppe-le-Haut, Soppe-le-Bas, Soultz, Wattwiller, Wittelsheim, Zillisheim, Zimmersheim.

(List from the departmental archives of the Haut-Rhin and the Castroville parish registers)

LIST OF EMIGRANTS FROM NIEDERENTZEN AND OBERENTZEN THAT LEFT FOR TEXAS BETWEEN 1843 AND 1869 (left with a passport)

AHR Etienne, (pass. Sept. 1846), 25 years old, Oberentzen, blacksmith, marries in Texas to Anne-Marie BILHARTZ.

AHR Laurent, (pass. Nov. 1848), 20 years old, Oberentzen, blacksmith, marries in Texas Anne BISCHOFF born in Sentheim.

AHR Catherine, (pass. Sept. 1851), 31 years old, Oberentzen, marries Texas Antoine SCHNEIDER.

BENDELE Jean-Jacques I, (pass. Sept. 1846), 45 years old, Niederentzen, farmer, married to Catherine BURGER, 3 children (Marie-Agathe, 18 years old, Jacques II, 17 years old et André 12 years old). They travel on the "Duc de Brabant". Jacques II travels alone on the "Schanunga" (Nov. 1846). Jacques II, will marry Sibille HAAS of Speyer, in 1854. They have a child Marie-Agathe who will marry Nicolas HOFFMANN, and have 2 children in 1854. **BENDELE Joseph** (« Arcadia », April 1852), Niederentzen, day laborer, will marry Marie BRAUCH from Prussia.

BIRY Jacques, (pass. Sept 1846) 30 years old, Oberentzen, shoemaker, marries in Texas Marianne BILHARTZ. They will have 4 children (Jacques, Joseph, Jean and Auguste).

BIRY Benjamin, (pass. Sept. 1850), 28 years old, Oberentzen, farmer, leaves with his sister.

BIRY Thérèse, (pass. Sept 1856) 13 years old, Oberentzen.

BRIEDEN André, (pass. Sept 1846), 39 years old, Oberentzen, farmer, married to Elisabeth ZURCHER, 5 children, André II, 8 years old, Jacques, 6 years old, Joseph, 4 years old, Léopold, 1 year old, Jean-Baptiste, a few months old).

BRUCK Sébastien, (pass. Sept. 1846) 29 years old, Niederentzen, day laborer.

FILLINGER François-Antoine, (pass. Nov. 1855), Oberentzen, wheelwright.

FINGER Joseph I, (pass. Sept. 1846), 30 years old, Oberentzen, plowman, married to Régine ZURCHER, one child : Joseph II.

FRICKER Joseph, (pass. Sept. 1846) 45 years old, Niederentzen, day laborer, married, one child.

GARTEISER Jean-Baptiste, (pass. Sept. 1846), 46 years old, Niederentzen, coachman, married to Catherine ZURCHER, 4 children (Antoine-François, Jean-Baptiste, Agathe, Marie-Anne who died at sea), leaves with a brother and a sister.

GSELL Michel, (« Océan », April 1844), 44 years old, Oberentzen, farmer-fisherman, married to Catherine HABY, sister of Jacques I and François-Joseph II HABY, 8 children (Catherine, Blaise, Joseph and Marie Anne MEYER, Xavier, Anne-Marie, Thérèse and André GSELL).

GSELL Marie-Anne, (pass. Sept. 1851), 18 years old, Oberentzen, marries in Texas Michel GROFF, originally from Munwiller. In 1854, they had two children.

HABY Joseph, (« Heinrich », Nov. 1843), 23 years old, Oberentzen, farmer, married Catherine KEMPF in Texas.

HABY Nicolas, (« Heinrich », Nov. 1843), 22 years old, Oberentzen, farmer, married Thérèse BISCHOFF in Texas. He will return to Alsace to look for his family.

HABY Jacques, (« Océan », April 1844), 48 years old, Oberentzen, butcher-farmer, married to Marie-Marthe KEMPF, 3 children: Jacques 10 years old, Thérèse, 5 years old, Louis-Philippe 1 year old.

HABY François-Joseph, (« Duc de Brabant », Sept 1846), 53 years old, Oberentzen, farmer, married to Marie-Anne MEYER, 9 children of which one died at birth (Anne-Marie), among the remaining 8 we find Nicolas and Joseph, left in 1843, and Ambroise, 11 years old, Georges 16 years old, Marguerite 13 years old, Marie-Anne, 17 years old, Jacques III, 23 years old and André 20 years old who travel alone on the « Schanunga » Nov 1846. All the children of François-Joseph II and Anne-Marie MEYER will form couples with children.

HABY Laurent, (« pass. Sept. 1851), 29 years old, Oberentzen, married Françoise HUTZLER probably in Texas (before 1854).

HUTZLER Antoine, (pass. Sept. 1846), 41 years old, Niederentzen, farmer, married, 6 children.

HUTZLER Augustin, (pass. Sept. 1846), 38 years old, Oberentzen, day laborer, married, 3 children, left with his sister.

HUTZLER Michel, (pass. Sept. 1850), 19 years old, Oberentzen, mason, left with his sister.

HUTZLER Michel, (pass. Sept. 1852), 56 years old, Oberentzen, day laborer, married, 4 children.

KARLE André, (pass. Feb. 1852) 19 years old, Niederentzen, laborer.

KARLE François-Joseph, (pass. Nov. 1854), 48 years old, Niederentzen, laborer, married, 2 children.

KARM Georges, (pass. Sept. 1857) 31 years old, Oberentzen, day laborer, married to Agathe, children.

KARM François-Antoine, (pass. August 1853), 19 years old Oberentzen, day laborer.

KELLER André, (« Heinrich », Nov. 1843), 24 years old, Oberentzen, farmer, married Texas Catherine DREYER in Texas, they had 9 children together.

KELLER François, (pass. Sept. 1846), 20 years old, Niederentzen, day laborer, left with his sister.

KELLER Marianne, (« Schanunga», Nov. 1846), 21 years old, Oberentzen,

KEMPF Cécile, widow WIPFF, (pass. fév. 1850), 55 years old Niederentzen.

KEMPF Joseph, (pass. Feb. 1850), 28 years old, Niederentzen, merchant, married Anne Weber in Texas.

KEMPF Benjamin, (pass. Nov. 1850), 21 years old, Niederentzen, carpenter.

KEMPF Thérèse, (pass. Sept. 1855), 65 years old, Niederentzen, 2 girls : 38 years old et 14 years old.

KIENER Joseph, (pass. Sept. 1846), 44 years old, Niederentzen, farmer, married, 5 children.

MANN Barthélémy, (Castro. 1854), Oberentzen, married to Augusta TRAWALTER, 10 children in 1854.

MANN Jean-Louis, (pass. Sept. 1846), 19 years old, Oberentzen, shepherd, arrived on « Duc de Brabant » with members of the Haby family, will marry Madeleine BIRLE in Texas.

MANN François-Joseph, (pass. Nov. 1850), 20 years old, Oberentzen, shepherd, married Joséphine MEYER in Texas. They had 10 children.

MANN Louis, (pass. Feb. 1852), 31 years old, Oberentzen, day laborer, married to Madeleine AHR, 1 child.

MATHIAS JEAN-Michel, (pass. Sept. 1851) 30 years old, Oberentzen, plowman.

MAURER Dominique, (pass. Feb. 1852) 27 years old, Niederentzen, farmer, left with his sister.

MERIAN Jean, (pass. Nov. 1848), Oberentzen, mason, married Brigitte KOENIG in Texas, 2 children (Marie- Louise and Emilie).

MEYER Françoise, (pass. Sept. 1846), 22 years old, Oberentzen, maid.

MEYER Anne-Marie, (pass. Nov.1848), 22 years old, Oberentzen, maid.

MEYER Jacques, (pass. Sept. 1851), 67 years old, Oberentzen, mason.

MEYER Arbogast, (pass. Sept 1851), 22 years old, Oberentzen, mason.

RICH Jean-Baptiste, (pass. Sept. 1851), 18 years old, Oberentzen shoemaker.

RICHER Sébastien, (pass. Oct. 1848), 24 years old, Niederentzen, mason.

RITTMANN Jean, (pass. Sept. 1846), 46 years old, Oberentzen, plowman, married, 7 children

SCHMITT Jean-Michel, (pass. Sept. 1846), 21 years old, Oberentzen, day laborer.

SCHMITT Xavier, (pass. Sept. 1846), 35 years old, Oberentzen, carpenter, married, 3 children.

SCHMITT Antoine, (pass. Sept. 1850), 17 years old, Oberentzen.

SCHMITT Nicolas, (pass. Sept. 1851), 20 years old, Oberentzen, farmer.

SCHMITT François-Joseph, (pass. Sept. 1854), 20 years old, Oberentzen, plowman,

SCHMITT François-Joseph, (pass. Sept. 1855), 52 years old, Oberentzen, plowman, married, 2 children.

SCHNEIDER Antoine, (pass. Sept. 1851), 28 years old, Niederentzen, wheelwright, married Catherine AHR. Listed in Castroville in 1854 with one child.

SCHRIEBER Jean Martin, (« Norvégien », Dec. 1844), 42 years old, Niederentzen, married, 3 children.

SCHRIEBER Jean, (pass. Sept. 1846), 44 years old, Oberentzen, day laborer, married to Catherine RICH, 3 children (Jean 13 years old, Marie-Anne 10 years old, Catherine 8 years old).

SIENENHOR Rose, (pass. Sept. 1855), 24 years old, Niederentzen,

SPAEDY François-Joseph, (pass. March 1849), 39 years old, Niederentzen, farmer, married, 4 children.

TRAWALTER Joseph, (pass. Sept. 1846), 18 years old, Oberentzen, day laborer.

TRAWALTER Nicolas, (pass. Sept. 1848), 18 years old, Oberentzen, inn keeper.

TRAWALTER Marie-Agathe, widow, (pass. Nov. 1851), 46 years old, Oberentzen, day laborer, 7 children.

TRAWALTER Joseph, (pass. March 1851), 55 years old, Oberentzen, plowman, left with his family.

WIPFF François-Joseph, (pass. Sept. 1846), 26 years old, Niederentzen, miller, left with his sister Agathe and her brother Jean-Baptiste.

WIPFF Sébastien, (Schanunga, Sept. 1846), 18 years old, Niederentzen, shoemaker.

WIPFF Jean-Baptiste, (pass. Nov. 1848), 31 years old, Niederentzen, farmer, married, 2 children, left with a sister and two maids.

ZUMBIEHL Antoine, (pass. Nov 1857), 19 years old, Oberentzen, plowman.

ZURCHER Léopold, (pass. Sept. 1846), 25 years old, Oberentzen, plowman, left with his sister Régine and other members of his family.

ZURCHER Joseph, (pass. Sept. 1851), 25 years old, Oberentzen, plowman, married, 1 child.



Thom Finger et Melvin with Édouard and Marie-Jeanne.



Ground from the family garden in Niederentzen is spread on the Fingers tombs.

From left to right : Kay Finger, Marie Jeanne Finger, Marie-Thérèse Finger, Édouard Finger, Melvin Finger, Alice Finger, Joseph Zinsmeyer and his wife, Charles Finger and David Zinsmeyer, Bernard's brothers

19 THE VISITS OF MELVIN FINGER

Melvin Finger, who had lost his mother at a very young age, was often with his grandfather telling him how life was Alsace. When they were in the fields, his grandfather took out his little flask to drink and told his grandson: "I do the same as in Alsace and I hope that you will one time go visit my native country."

Melvin Finger first came to Niederentzen in 1976.

There was tap water in some places, but for some, like at Marie-Jeanne's, there was no hot tap water. The toilet was often in front of the trough.

This is where Melvin was able to imagine living in his grandfather's day. This really impressed him. So much so that one morning, someone going to work at 4am, saw him alone, walking in the village crying because he could finally walk in the footsteps of his grandfather.

Melvin had returned several times to Alsace, and during one of his visits to Niederentzen, he asked for some soil from the family garden where his grandmother came from and which was also the birthplace of Marie-Jeanne. This house was sold by the Finger family in the early 1900s and at the auction it was acquired by Weiss, Marie-Jeanne's grandfather.

Melvin took this land to D'Hanis. He kept it precious until 1989, when Marie-Jeanne and Édouard arrived. He gently opened the package to spread soil on all the graves where the FINGERS were buried.



2009 Last stay in Texas
of Marie-Jeanne and Édouard



Joseph FINGER
Born on 05.05.1816 in Niederentzen,
died in D'Hanis on 28.08.1886.

20 ALSATIAN AND TEXAN IMPRESSIONS

ALSACE seen by the Texans

The inhabitants of the Medina county that made the trip to Europe say they have been struck by physiological, physical and gestural similarities and the concept of life. We laugh at the same things, we tell the same jokes and we get excited for the same reasons..

With regards to food, there are different opinions. Texans think that in Alsace only a few dishes are similar to theirs, although they share the same dishes based on potatoes and meat. "They do not know how to cook steaks". They enjoy sauerkraut with lots of sausages but they do not find in it the taste of coriander they are used to. What is important is the family cooking, but they find that we spend too much time around the table. In Alsace, there are too many official receptions during which white wine that we were not used to drink, was served. Some were also surprised to see young children speak Alsatian.

During the first trip, we were surprised that farming techniques were still behind: the tractors without air conditioning and the use of draft horses.

They were surprised that people would walk by without greeting each other and that they would not stay in front of the church after the mass (which they find little frequented) to talk as they do Castroville.

If we appreciate the flowering and the cleanliness of the villages, they are also surprised by the presence of walls and fences around the properties whereas in general in the USA, the separations are practically invisible.

The first group was surprised by the folklore (German band music), the village balls, the storks, the Alsatian costume, the Kugelhopf.

TEXAS seen by the Alsatians.

In 1975, Alsatians were surprised by more than one aspect of the Texan life: the safeguarding of the Alsatian, the large areas of arable land, the technology, the performances of the agricultural equipment's, the narrowness of the habitats compared to the dimensions of motorways.

The difference between other Texans is no longer marked: Chicken on the barbecue, thick steaks and cooked according to their desires.

The Louis Lutz barbecue at D'Hanis, which was about ten meters long, impressed many people during trips in 1997 and 2009.

21 LETTER OF AN EMIGRANT FROM OBERENTZEN

New Fountain, Texas

5th November 1902

Dear Cousin Joseph MEYER and friends in Oberentzen.

I hope that my letter finds you in good health. I must inform you that our dear Mother Franziska Schorobiny, born Meyer passed away on the 30th October of this year. She lived to be 79 years old. In our sorrow it was comforting to see how much our friends and neighbors appreciated her warm personality and they proved it with great respect for her. May she rest in peace in Heaven.

Earlier on October 23th 1902, Nicolas Haby, 81, died in Castroville. He was one of the first emigrants from Oberentzen to come with Castro. Death took our old emigrant who came 50 years ago and we are very sad about it.

Our father hopes to celebrate his 86th birthday next January. He is still in good health and good spirits and we could say "Who fears death, loses his life". He lives with his son-in-law John Hauser, a wealthy farmer who farms and raises livestock.

We send our regards to all our relatives in Oberentzen, another way to reach our "homeland" more easily, as the financial situation is not what it used to be. If my dream comes true, I would happily visit my family and see my beautiful Alsace, but it's a luxury I cannot afford, where would we find the money needed ? Nevertheless we remember you and send you as a souvenir in this envelope the portraits of our Father and Mother and ourselves.

I will conclude by saying that it is with great pleasure that we have received the letter so well written from your 10-year-old daughter, her pretty writing proves her good education.

Goodbye! We wish you good health, joy and prosperity, and it is always with great pleasure that we will hear from you.
Best memories to you and your family

Sincerely, your Cousins :
M. Schorobiny

23 THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF FAMILIES OF EMIGRANTS

Joseph KEMPF born in Niederentzen in 1822, had been a teacher before making the decision to go to America in 1850. He was fluent in French, English, German, Spanish and Latin. After a year spent in Castroville, then two years in San Antonio, he returned to Castroville to teach in a private school. He was elected county secretary, then justice of the peace in 1872, he was also founding member and president of the society Saint-Louis in 1875. In 1854 he married Marie-Anna Weber born in Mit-zach with whom he had 8 children, 4 girls (of whom 2 died very young) and 4 boys.

The TSCHIRHART (excerpts from the book Castroville, published in 1986)

In 1843, a 32-year-old Sundgauvian, Niclus Tschirhart, from Soppe-le-Haut, embarked alone on the "Norvégien" towards Texas. One hundred and forty years later, he has two thousand descendants...

In 1845 Niclus married **Catherine Meyer**, daughter of BLAS Joseph Meyer and Catherine Schott of Wittelsheim, in Castroville. In 1847, the couple took possession of a "town lot", a construction site, and 28 hectares of farmland that Henri Castro had given them as a wedding gift. A real couple of pioneers, brave and ... "fruitful". They gave life to eleven children, two girls and nine boys.

Niclus Tschirhart's elder, Edwart had three children. Ralf, a horse breeder is the third generation man.

Ralf Tschirhart is the prototype of the self-made man. He had a business school education.

He worked for a year as a farmer and a year as a bookkeeper. He owned a supermarket with his father for twenty years. Ralph founded a beer store in 1939 that served 7 counties. On the edge of Highway 90, he opened a liquor store. With two partners he started the only cinema of Castroville. When he retired in 1960, he and his wife started breeding and training horses and won many races in the USA.

Lawrence Tschirhart, married to a Hutzler girl, is recognizable by his large size and large, wide-brimmed farmer's hat. He lives on his land 50 km from Castroville. With his two sons he grows fodder plants on 1,260 ha. Thanks to a wheeled sprinkler, 400 m wide and computer controlled, he can schedule irrigation four days in advance.

Malvin Schirhart, (without t, lost during a transcript) was a pilot of the American presidential plane for 20 years under three presidents.

All of them spoke and promoted Alsatian.

24 ROOTS GARTEN AND THE STEINBACH HOUSE

CREATION OF THE ROOTS GARDEN

In the center of the Regional Park a Garden of Roots was created, a 100 meters long garden whose trees and facilities represent the map of Alsace. In 1997, 19 young apprentices, students in horticulture at the Agricultural High School of Rouffach, gathered around Professor Paul Dulin who planted 56 trees and shrubs, (species able to withstand the heat of Texas) in difficult conditions, under the rain, when it had not rained for more than 3 years.

The following year the development of areas and paths were made.



THE STEINBACH HOUSE - ALSATIAN MUSEUM

This house, built in 1664, belonged to the Steinbach family. It was dismantled in Wahlbach in the Sundgau in 1980, and rebuilt in 5 years in Castroville after being sent in 5 containers to Galveston. This project by Paul Dulin was concretized by the carpenters Batot, Wurtz, Deyber, the students of the agricultural Lycée, the support of Alsatian companies and the help of the city of Castroville which had provided tools and materials.

It was re-assembled, from 1998, according to ancient techniques (without nails). In 2000, the roof and the tiles offered by Alsatians were put in place. The project was completed in 2002 by local companies and Ensisheim volunteers. The furniture, the dishes, the household linen and the soft furnishings (all offered kindly from Alsace) permitted the interior decoration of the museum.





1978

Oberentzen



1978 Les Amis du Ried



2008

Niederentzen



2008

Niederentzen : D'Hanis

Visit of an American delegation in July for the 30th twinning Anniversary.



1975 In front of Niederentzen Church

- 1 Annelise Finger 2 Martine Finger 3 Betty Finger 4 Cora Finger 5 Edouard Finger
 6 Alice Finger 7 Joseph Gutleben 8 M. Jeanne Finger 9 Madeleine Finger 10 Christine Finger
 11 Myriam Finger 12 Jean Michel Finger 13 Odile Finger 14 Bernard Finger 15 André Finger
 16 Emile Finger 17 David Zinsmeyer 18 Xavier Jaegy 19 Charles Suehs 20 Father Larry Stuebben



Mai 1978 Niederentzen



October 1997
Koch Hôtel
D'Hanis

1 André Dillig	2 Paul Durr	3 Marlyse Dilling	4 Lucie Durr
5 Betty Bordmann	6 Marie-Jeanne Finger	7 Georges Bordmann	8 Marie-Antoinette Gross
9 François Gross	10 Monique Vetter	11 Edouard Finger	12 Jean Vetter



Were present in D'Hanis in 2009 :

Marie-Jeanne and Edouard Finger, Maryse and Christian Werthe, Gilbert Dinterich, Joseph Doll an M. Thérèse Beck, Léon Grundler, Genevière and Gérard Hebding, Monique and Charles Hégy, Huguette and Marc Lacour, Huguette and René Kornek, Gilberte and Patrick Bohrer, Sabine and Théo Meyer, Huguette and Bernard Rothenflue, Anne-Marie and Joseph Zumbiehl, Josée and Joseph Burger.

Holy Cross Church in D'Hanis



Texans who were presents on the inauguration day of the memory stone on July 14th, 1988 in Niederentzen :

Francis andt Bertha Bowen, Armine Frentess, Jack and Jurleen Finger, Vivian and Renae Zinsmeyer, Mickael, Sandra Finger eand children : Michelle, Mickael, Melissa, Matthew and Margaret, Nora Karrer Gibson, Neal Huckaby, Fred and Mary Lee Jungman, Joseph and Elaine Koch, Erna Kirk, Carolyn and Nicole Ney, Francess Robb, Carol Rogers, Joe W and Rosie Rothe, Tom and Marcie Rothe, Sandra Schlather, Charlotte Terry, Albert and Evelyn Weynand,



2009 : Visit of Castroville led by Louis Lutz



1845



Fig tree plantations in D’hanis, trees are cut short every year.



Christian Werthe hands over to Louis Lutz a painting offered by the Twinning Committee.

D’Hanis Church 2009

30 th anniversary of the twinning pact signed in 2008 in Ober-Niederentzen



30 th anniversary : Proclamation in Hondo in 2009

*Proclamation
City of Hondo
March 15, 2009*

WHEREAS, many of the communities in Medina County had their origin over one hundred sixty years ago with the arrival in the area of Henry Castro from France; and

WHEREAS, our county communities, including Hondo, have benefited throughout the many years since that arrival for the rich heritage of the Alsace area of France inhabited by people with strong family and spiritual values; and

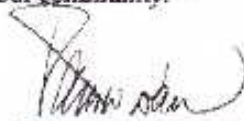
WHEREAS, Hondo's sister community of D'Hanis has developed a strong relationship with the Alsace cities of Niederentzen-Oberentzen the last year; and

WHEREAS, about thirty years ago citizens of D'Hanis visited these Alsace communities and strengthened and enhanced their twinning with these cities which has not only lasted but has grown during the thirty years; and

WHEREAS, the Alsatians from the visited cities have long desired to visit America and their relatives in D'Hanis and tour the Medina County towns that share their rich Alsatian culture; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Hondo wish to welcome our visitors from France and extend their best wishes for a pleasant and fruitful visit to the "God's Country" we all cherish and enjoy; so

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, James W. Danner, Sr., Mayor of the City of Hondo, with the authority vested in me do hereby declare this day, March 15, 2009, an "Alsatian Visitors Day" in Hondo, Texas, and request that all the citizens from our fine community join with me in welcoming our visitors from France and honoring them as "Honorary Citizens of Hondo" during their stay in our community.



*James W. Danner, Sr.
Mayor*

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This brochure was initiated by the Niederentzen-Oberentzen-D'Hanis Twinning Committee with the active participation of: Maryse and Christian Werthe, Françoise Heizmann, Marc Lacour, Nicole Frantz, René Mathias and especially Marie-Jeanne Finger, the living memory of this twinning adventure. She provided a large part of the documents and photos that made this book possible.

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Joseph Burger

Édition 2019

