

A historical map of Texas, likely from the mid-19th century, showing geographical features like the Rio Grande, Gulf of Mexico, and various settlements. Overlaid on the map is a large, stylized title in German, 'Hin nach Texas!', and a subtitle in English. The map also features a scale of miles and a latitude/longitude grid.

Hin nach Texas!

A history of German immigration to Texas and its lasting impacts

Margo Blevins and Luke Lindemann

Texas German Dialect Project

University of Texas at Austin

Department of Germanic Studies

Truer To Ourselves: Migration in America

Educator Summer Institute

July 15, 2026

The Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library

UT linguist strikes gold with Texas German Dialect Project

Languages, immigration patterns help native German make sense of state.

By DAVID UHLER
Express-News Staff Writer

UT Researchers Record Dying Dialect From Central Texans

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
STAFF WRITER

CRAWFORD — While some scientists uncover and study dinosaur bones, a research team from the University of Texas at Austin gathered voices from a German Church in Crawford.

Texas German dialect

CONTINUED FROM 1K

duced them — and they coined a whole new vocabulary largely unknown to the isolated German settlers in Texas.

"So while Germany built up its new vocabulary in Europe, the German Texans borrowed the needed terms from English and hundreds of English words slipped in easily by default."

Usually, the Texas German speakers pronounced their adopted English words with a German accent when they said *das Bossupper, der Cowboy, der Helicopter, die Napkin, der Six-shooter* and *der Taxcollector*.

German culture thrived in the hardscrabble Texas Hill Country. Almost the entire population of towns such as New Braunfels and Fredericksburg spoke *auf Deutsch*. Everyone studied in German, read German newspapers, listened to German music, attended German-language church services and sang in German-language choirs.

In San Antonio, so many prominent Germans lived along the San Antonio River near C.H. Guenther's flour mill in the 1880s that pundits dubbed the area "Sauerkraut Bend." The city passed an English-only law to prevent the German-speaking members of local government from holding meetings that many constituents couldn't translate.

Experts such as Boas talk about "domains" when they explain why some languages thrive while others die. As long as Central Texas remained relatively isolated — and Texas German remained the primary language used in the private and public domains of home, school, work and church — the language survived.

Then came World War I. In the United States, everything German became anathema, almost overnight, including the German language. A series of laws in 1917 and 1918 made

pay dirt.

Since that discovery, Boas has worked with a rotating team of students at UT to interview and record more than 80 mostly older Texans who still speak the German they learned

stand before I came here," Boas says. "And now, looking at all these immigration patterns from the Germans and the Czechs and the other Europeans coming in, the whole barbecuing and the sausage

that will allow him to take a sabbatical next year from his job in UT's Germanic Studies Department to write a book about his work.

Right now, however, much of the research and dozens of au-

"When time, a telemar laughin workin all I wa talk to

VICTORIA ADVOCATE, Wednesday, October 6, 2004
in dialects in Texas

our family histories, whether the language of our in grant ancestors or not, real that their language and how changed over the generatio also a part of our history as individuals in this constantly ch ing world.
This is true of all language cultures, in all countries wh there are descendants of im grants.
My parents just wanted m be as American as I could b

id not speak in the way German is spoken in Texas.
So far, 160 hours of interviews — about 100 interviews — have been conducted, requiring some 40 hours of work to do each inter- view, including travel, transcrip- tions and other tasks necessary to make the information useful. The project is being funded mostly by grants at about \$50,000 a year, with funding now being sought to continue the study.
Recording, transcribing, archiv-

her that set language even in the German con- an attempt is rd Texas Ger- s, completely lost. nian society on Boas did some



TEXAS GERMAN DIALECT PROJECT

Dedicated to the Preservation of Texas German

PRESERVING THE PAST



Photos by MANDY REARY/Herald-Zeitung

Clinton, left, and Doris Acker wait for Hunter Weilbacher to read the next English phase for them to translate into German. The Ackers participated in a University of Texas project to preserve the Texas German dialect.

Local couple records Texas German dialect as part of project



being regional in nature and once here additional were made in words and There was the use of the guage from the original German among the limit families and their descen with the usage discont each new generation. The language was use homes and communities the first and perhaps ses erations, only at home b

Project aims

A German songbook Diane and Bill Moltz's Both sing in a German-la choir.

singing "Ach du lieber tin."

"I don't know that," I matter-of-factly in a to suggests he's not ready i it, either.
Hosek sometimes wor her own Texas Germa might fade over time. Si larly spoke the langua her mother, but then he died.

"That's why I learned remembered it," Hosek "Now, I find a lot of peo tell me, 'That's all I spok but now I can't remembe Like Hosek, Clarence hopes memory and mus help keep the Texas German language and culture going, at least a little longer.

Scheel, 67, is one of a trio of hosts of a weekly audio program called "Musical Journey," a one-hour show that highlights the music of local, national and international German bands and vocal groups.

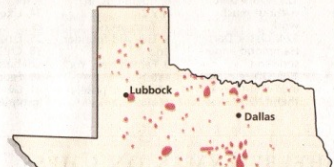
Until 2002, "Musical Journey" had enjoyed a 52-year run on KGNB-AM in New Braunfels. Then the station, which features sports and talk format



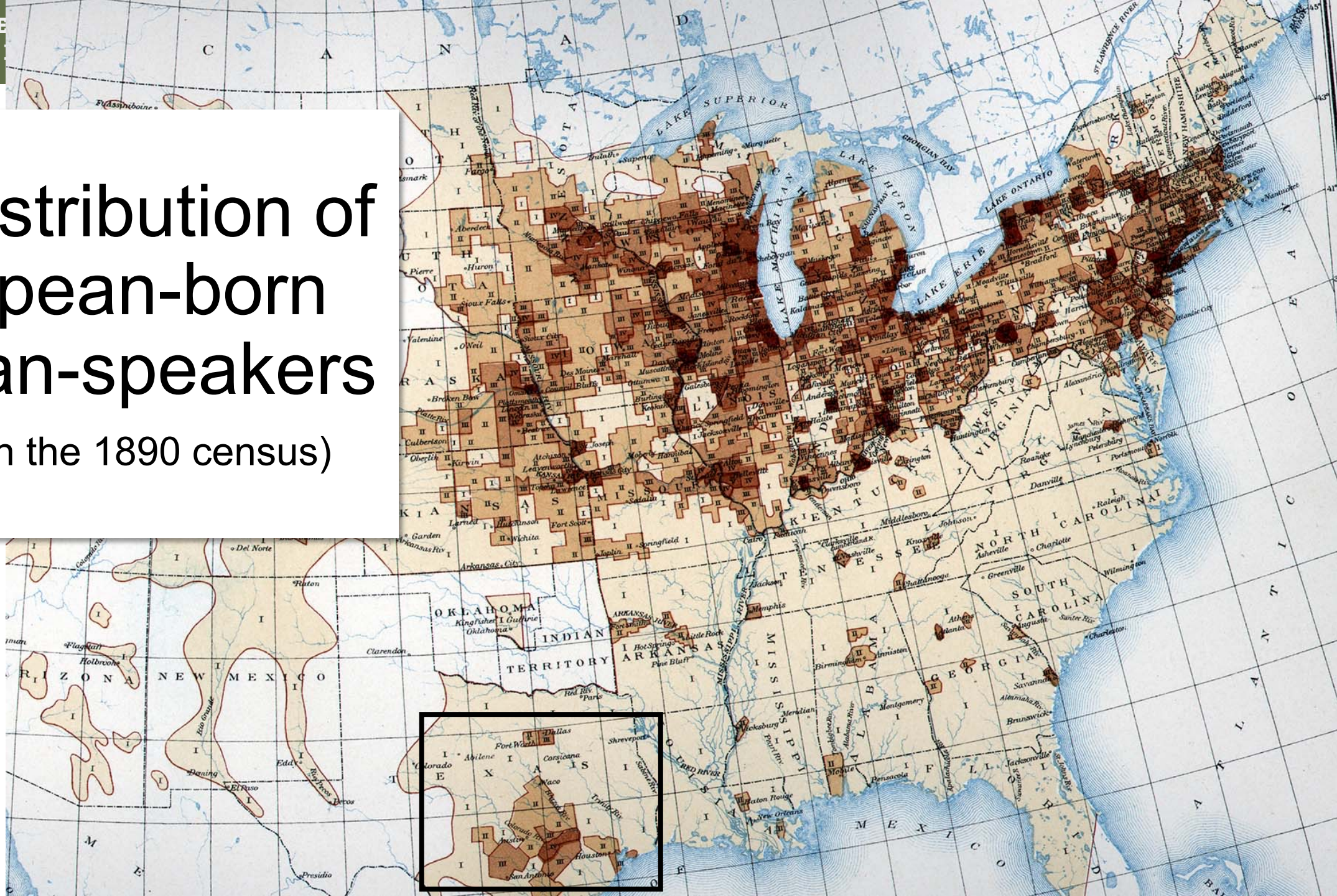
University of Texas linguistics researcher Hans Boas (left) interviews Diane Moltz at her home in New Braunfels.

"I thought, 'If I teach (my kids) German, who are they going to speak to?'"

German-settled areas of Texas



The distribution of European-born German-speakers (based on the 1890 census)



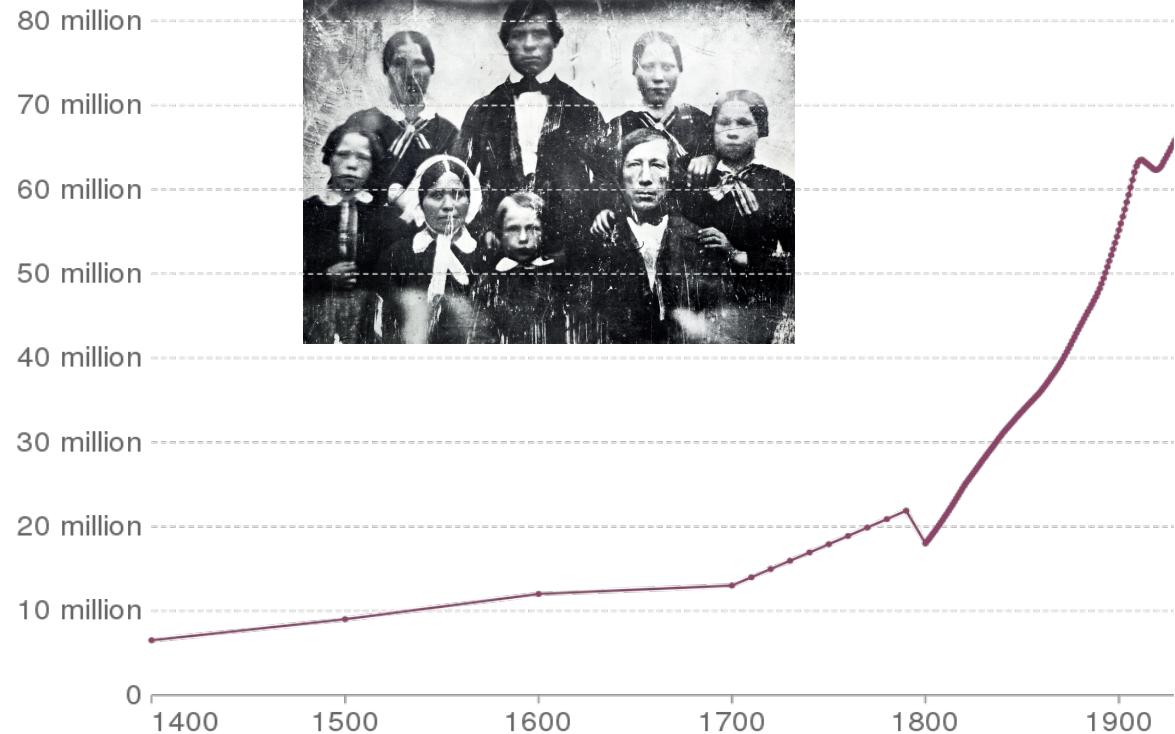


Why people left Germany



Population, 1400 to 2023

Historical estimates of population, combined with the projected population to 2100 based on the UN's medium variant scenario.

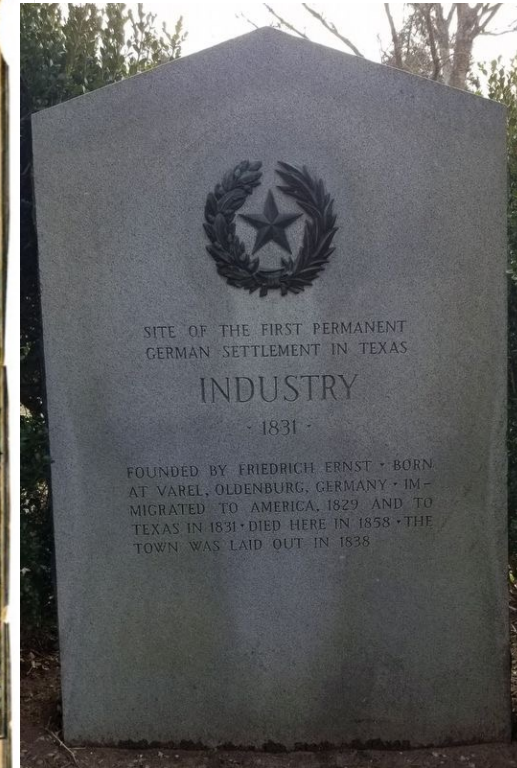
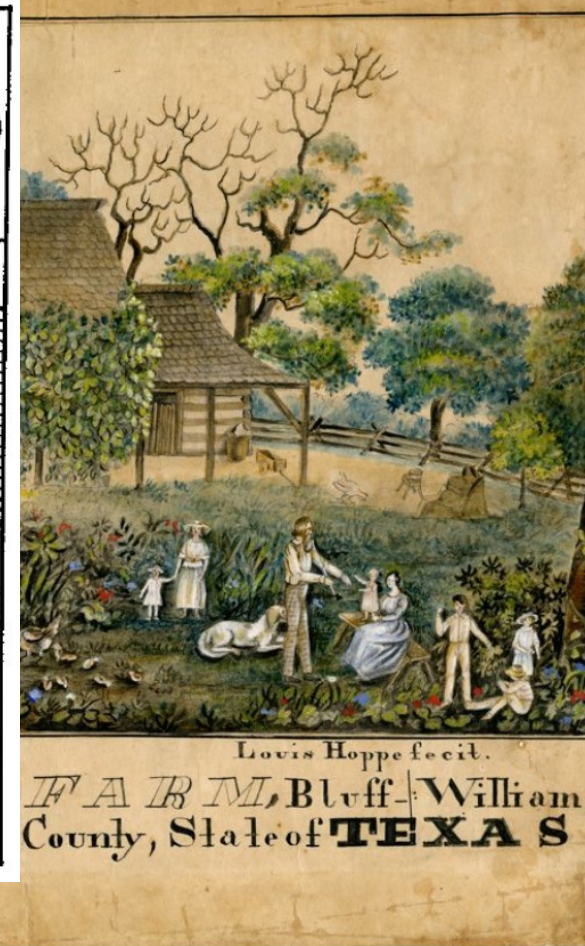
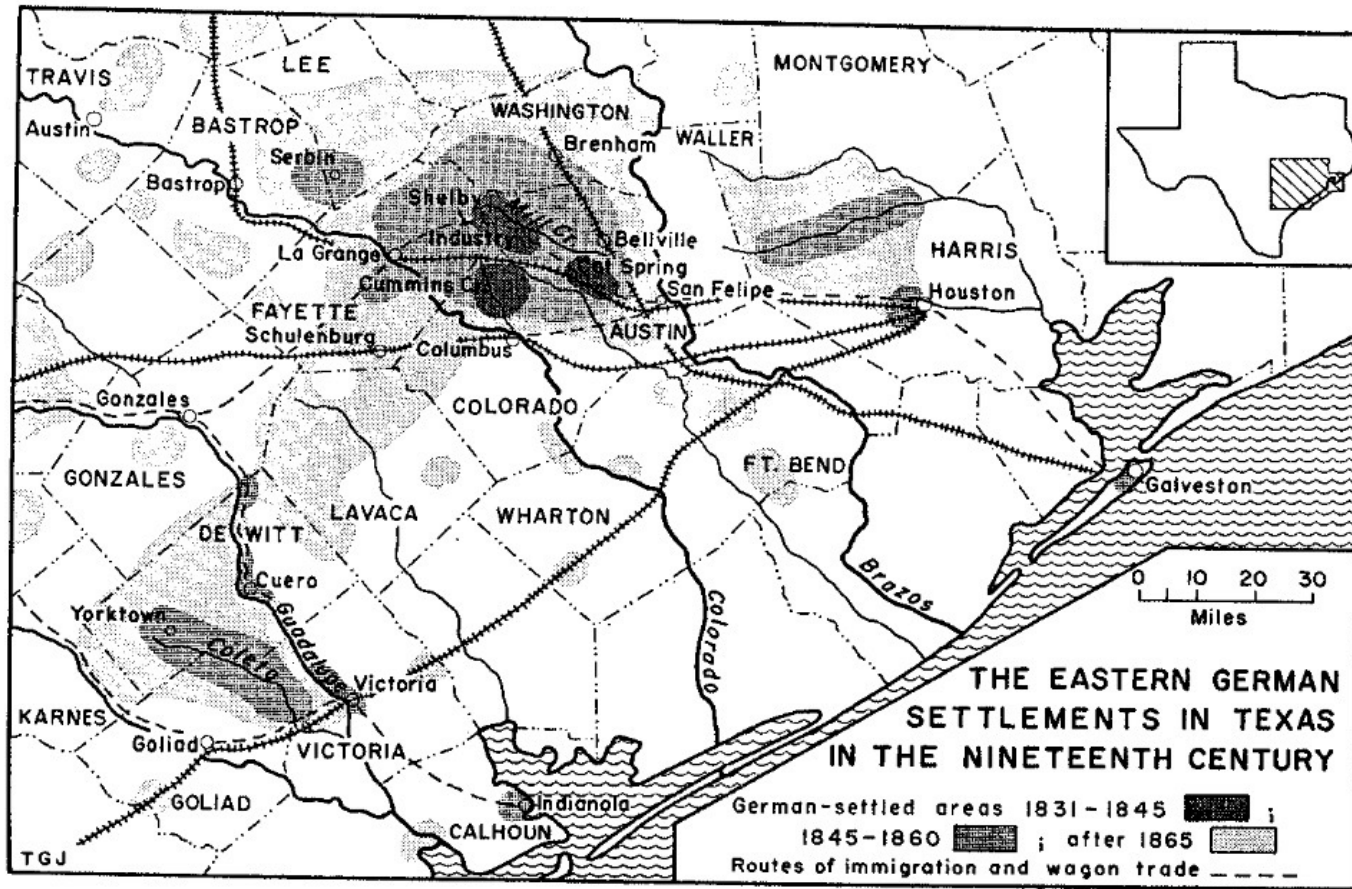


Source: Gapminder (v6), HYDE (v3.2), UN (2019)

Note: Historical country data is shown based on today's geographical borders.

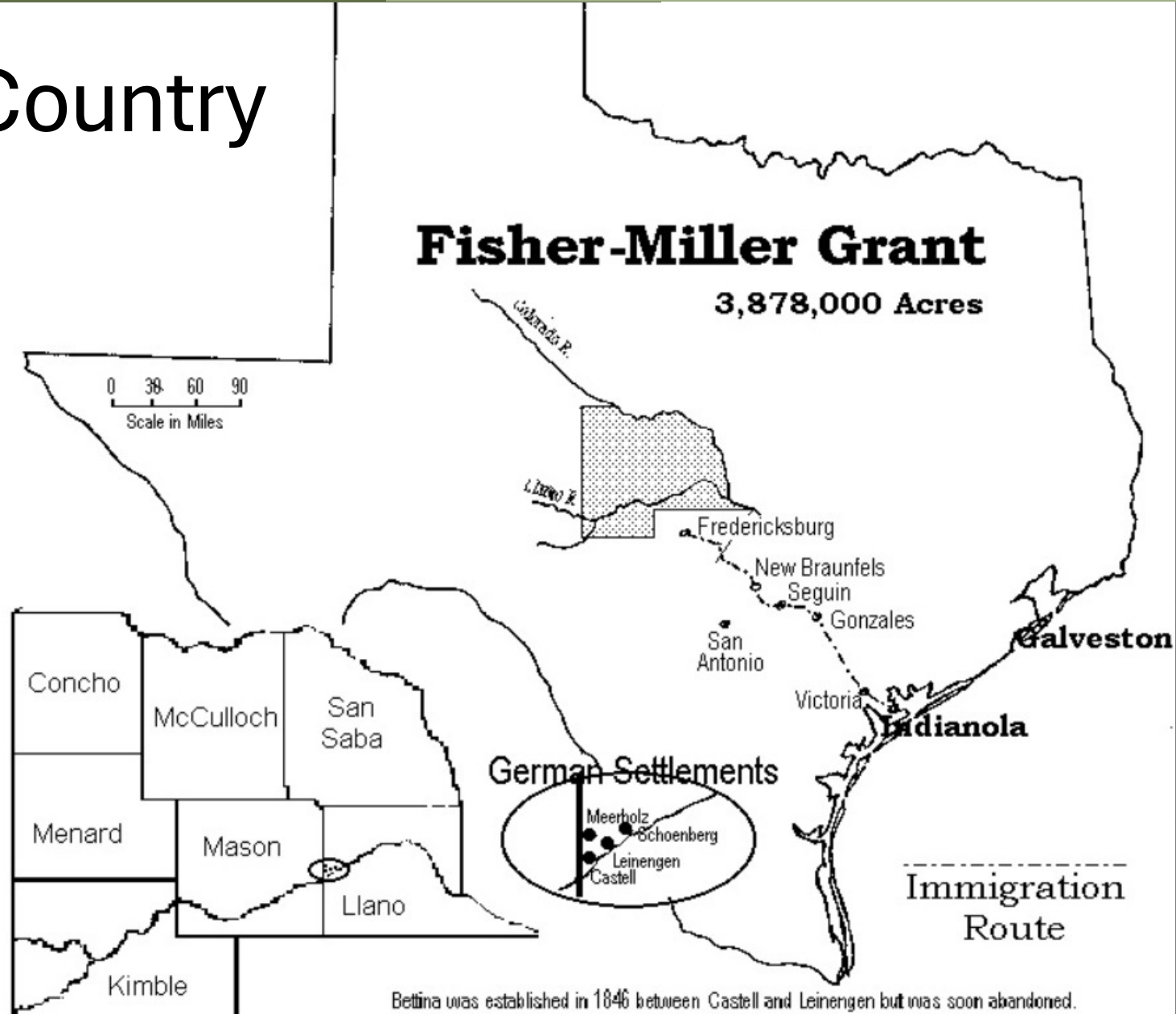


Why people wanted to come to Texas





Adelsverein & Hill Country



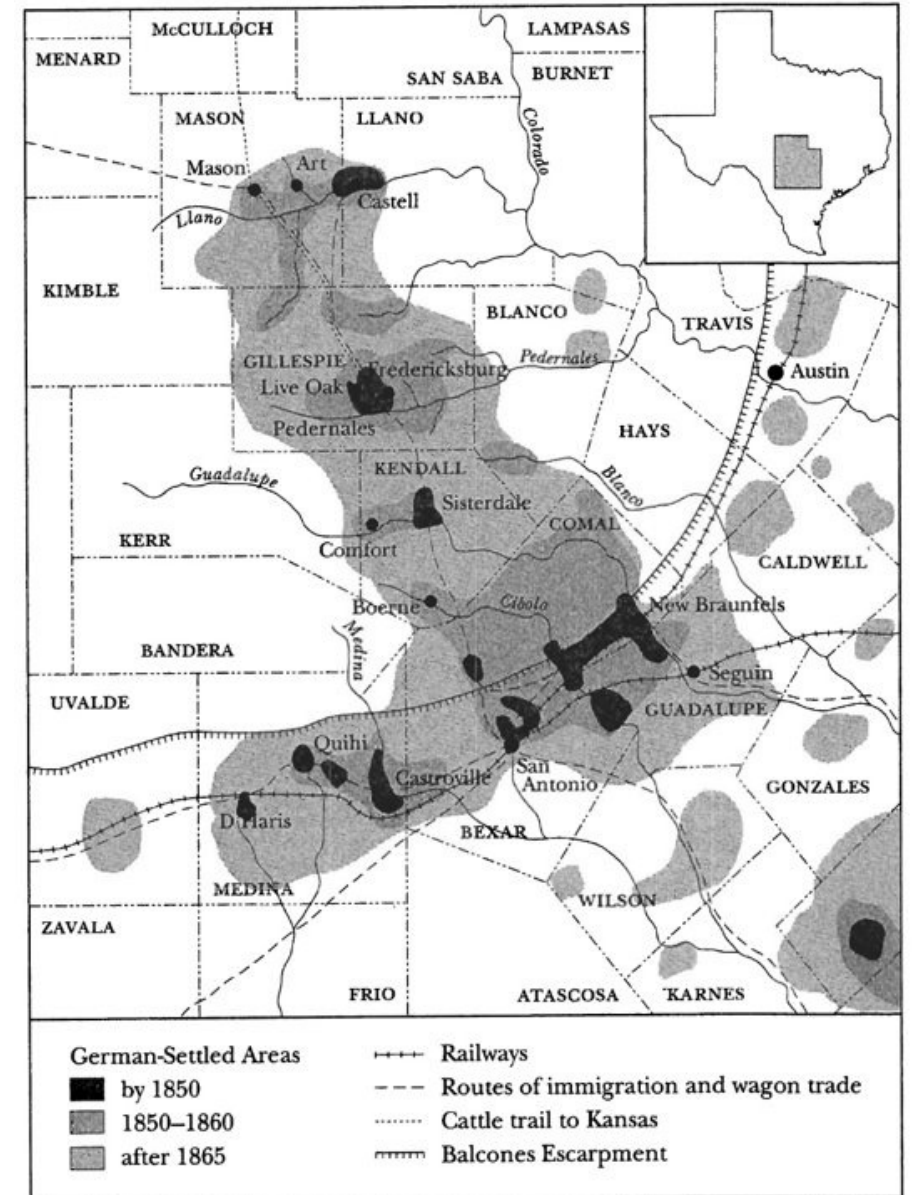
Bettina was established in 1846 between Castell and Leinengen but was soon abandoned. All other settlements were established in 1847.



Adelsverein & Hill Country

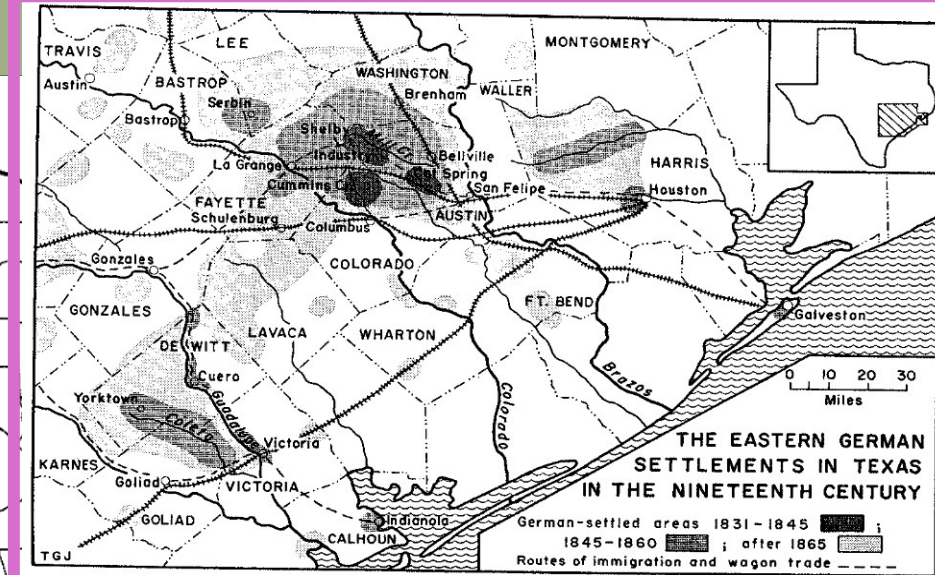
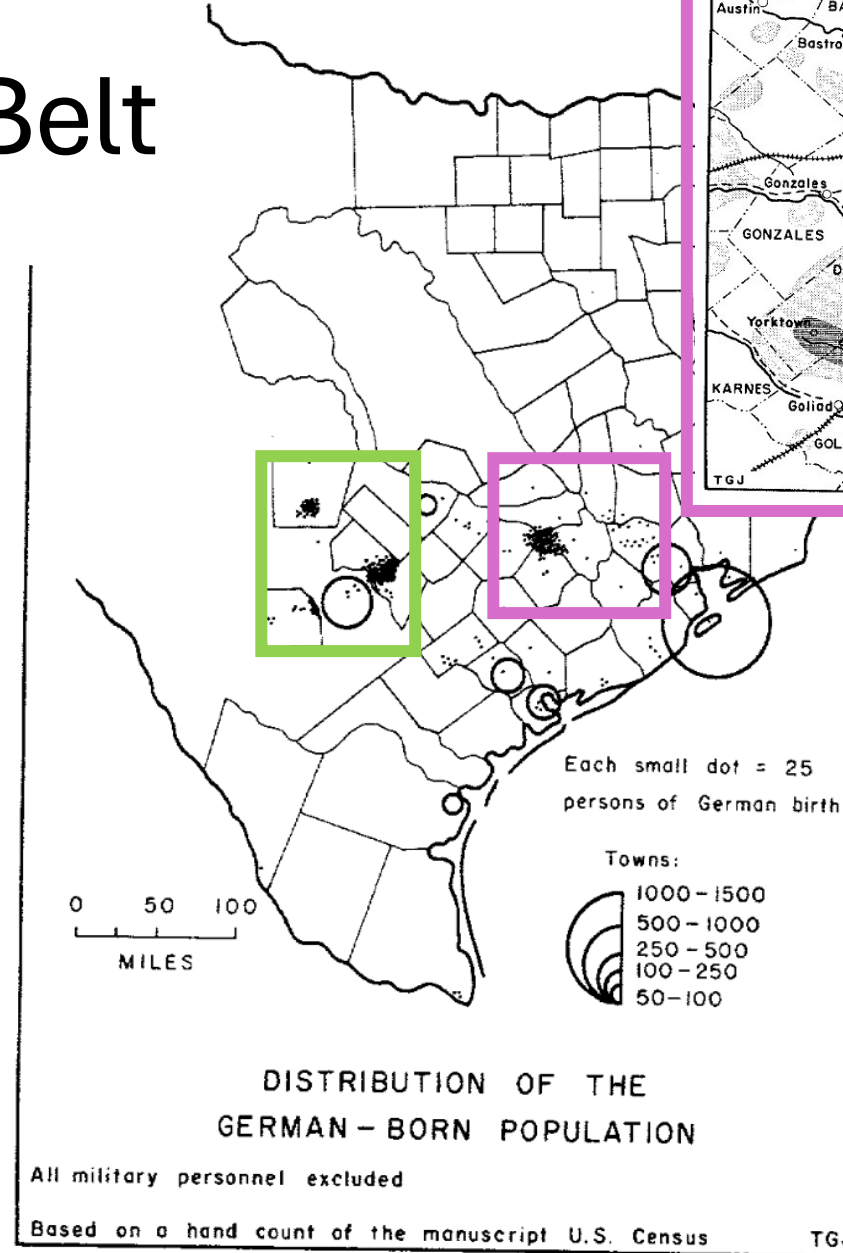
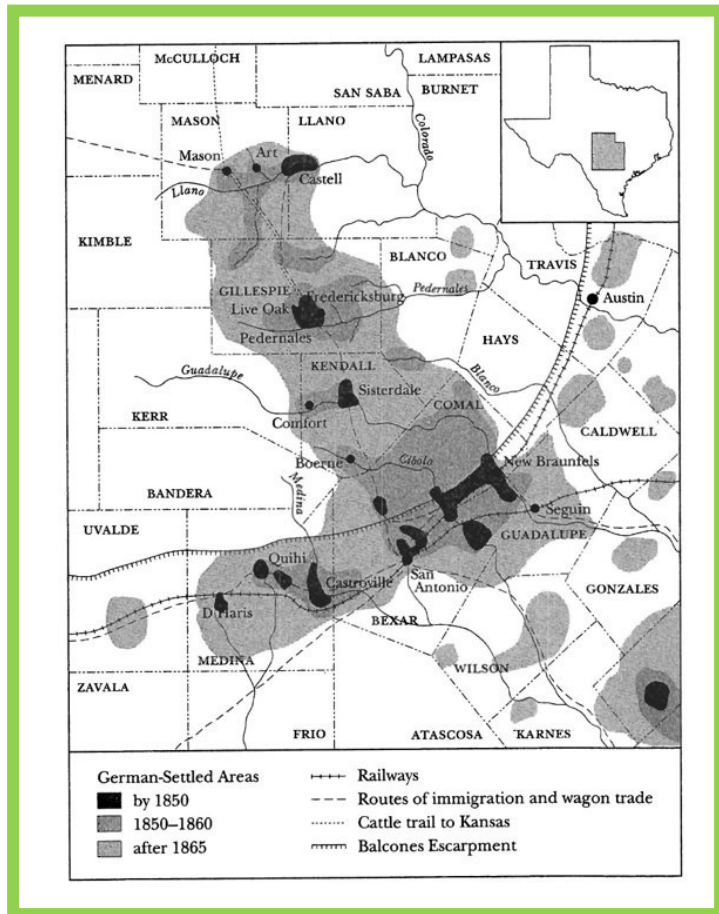


Enchanted Rock near Fredericksburg
by Hermann Lungkwitz (1864)



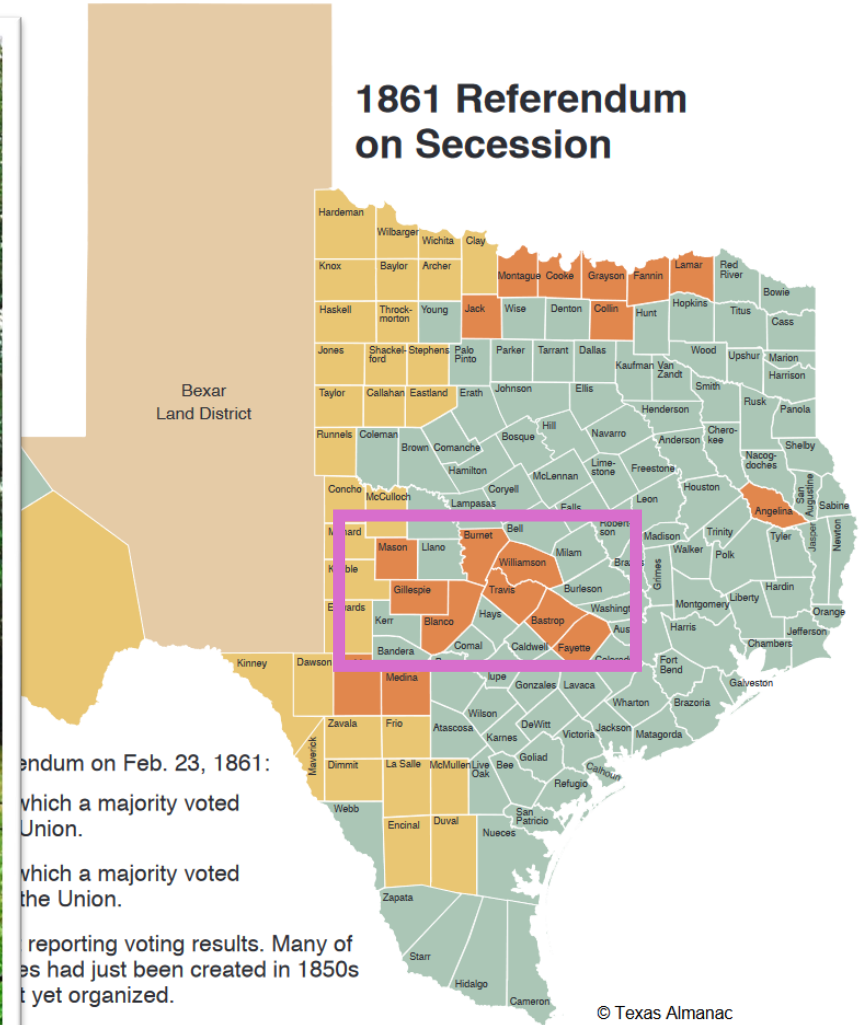
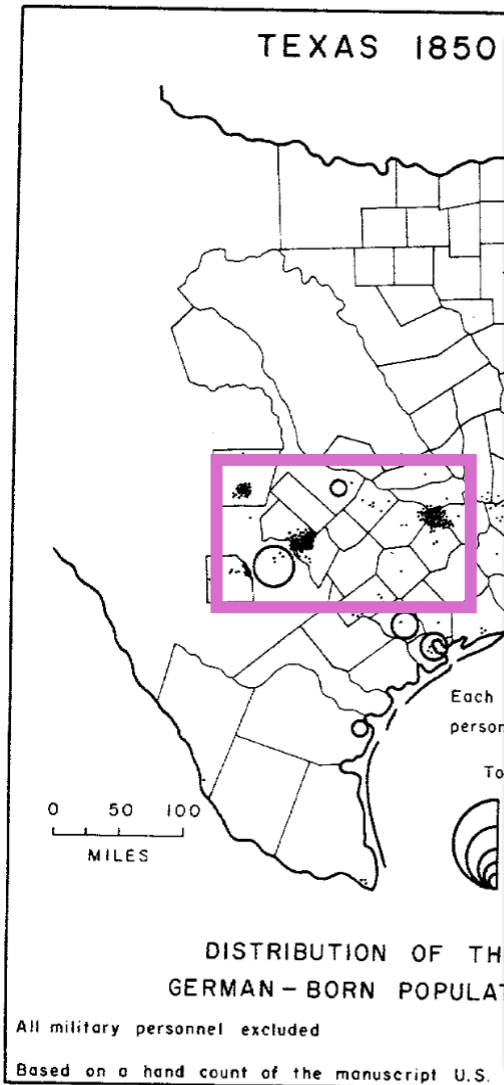


Texas German Belt





Germans in Texas during the Civil War





Post Civil War Immigration





Post Civil War Immigration





1887 Census

- 129,610 Germans in Texas
- Third largest group (6.5%)
 - Behind “Americans” (most likely white, Anglo-Americans) (65%) and African- Americans (20%)

(Foster 2002: xlv, Jordan 1982: 404)



GERMAN FORBIDDEN.

House Committee on Education Fav- ors Poage Resolution.

Austin, Texas, Mar. 5.—The house committee on education voted to re-
port favorably the Poage resolution
against the teaching of German in
the public schools and other public
institutions of the State during the
continuance of the war.

An amendment was added request-
ing the governor to submit the propo-

La Grange Journal (La Grange, Texas), March 7, 1918





Continued decline

- ~159,000 Texas German speakers in 1940
(Kloss 1977, as cited by Schwartzkopff 1987: 78)
- c. 1950s — People stop passing on German to their children

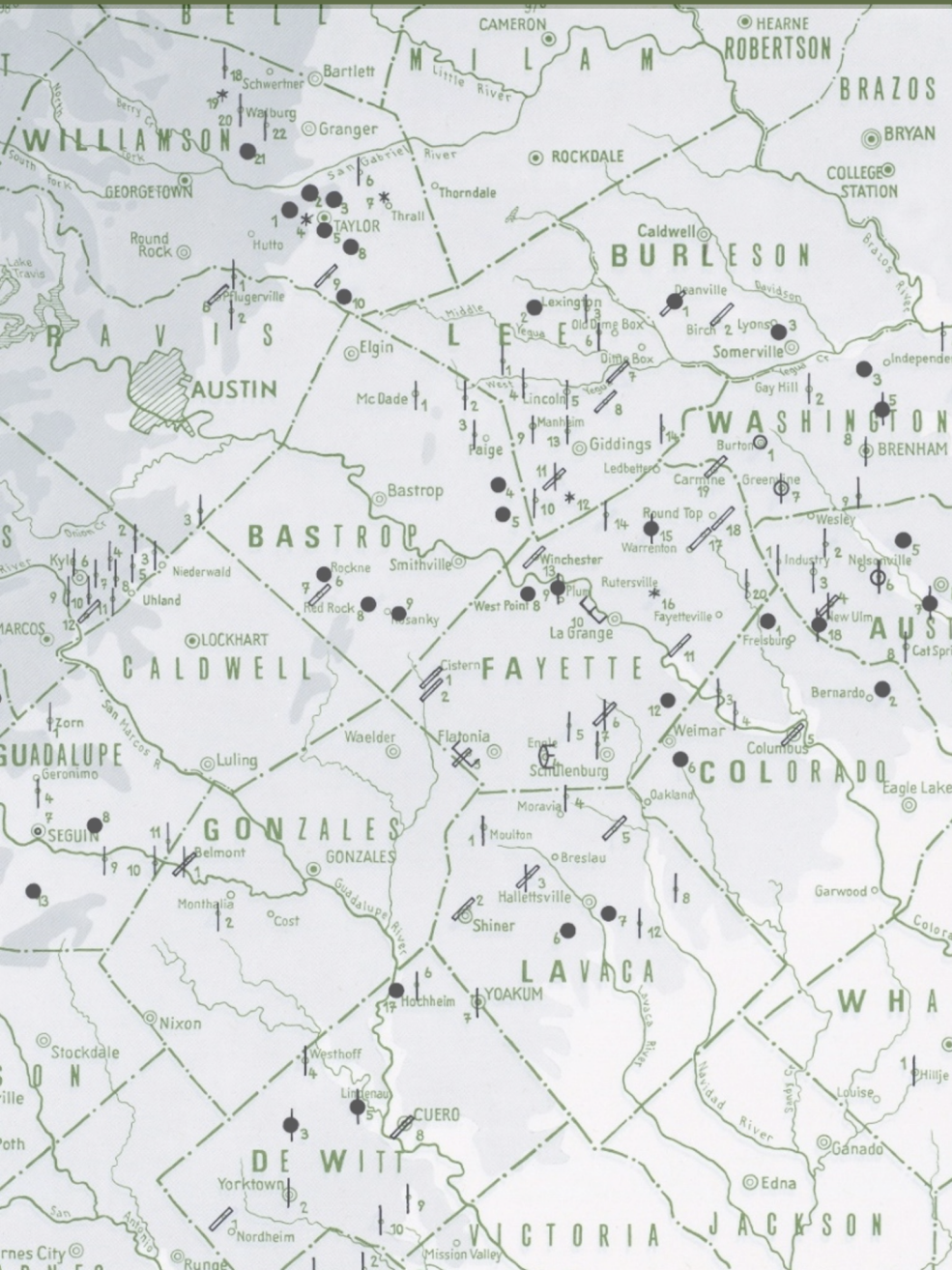


Admiral Chester W. Nimitz,
Commander-in-Chief,
US Pacific Fleet, Japan



What is Texas German?

“Texas German” is an umbrella term for varieties of heritage German that are spoken in Texas to this day





Areas of Origin of the German Settlers in Texas
(1871 borders; based on T. Jordan 2004, 32)



Where they came from (1830 – WWI)



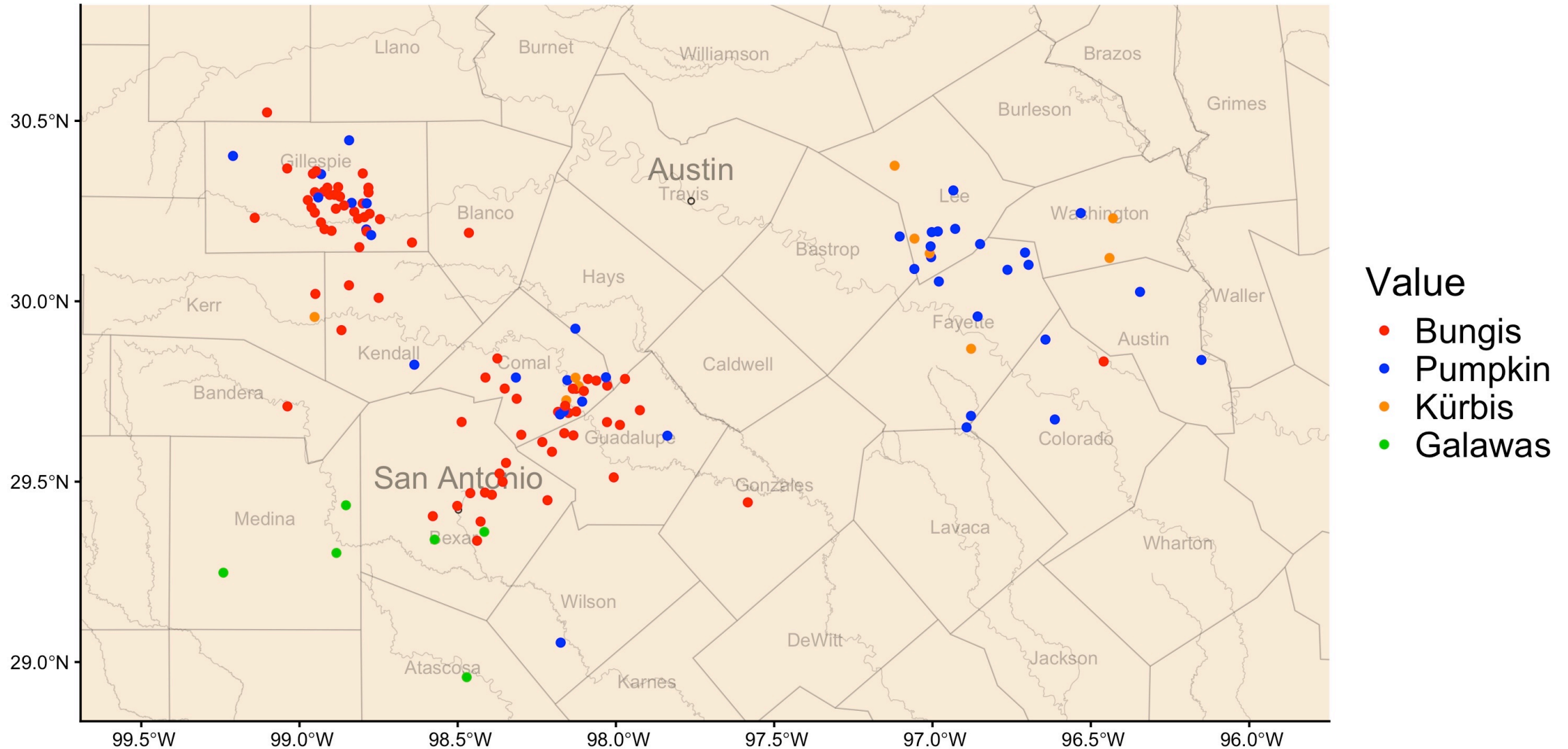
Some examples of Texas German

English	Standard German	Texas German
fence	<i>Zaun</i>	Fence
door	<i>Tür</i>	Tier, Dier
squirrel	<i>Eichhörnchen</i>	Eichkatze
airplane	<i>Flugzeug</i>	Luftschiff
to move away	<i>umziehen</i>	wegmoven, fortmoven, ziehen



Translations of the English word 'Pumpkin'

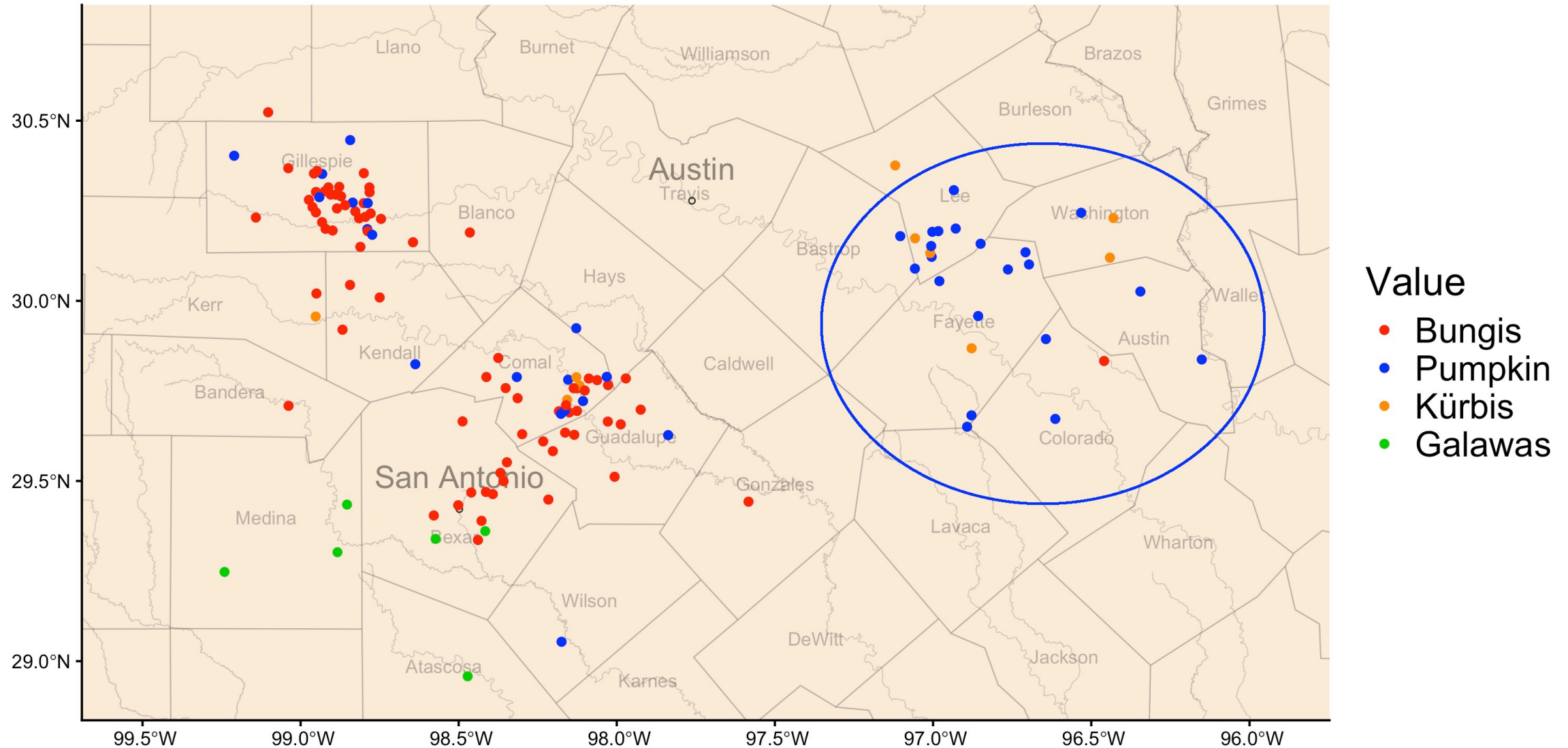
from the Texas German Dialect Archive





Translations of the English word 'Pumpkin'

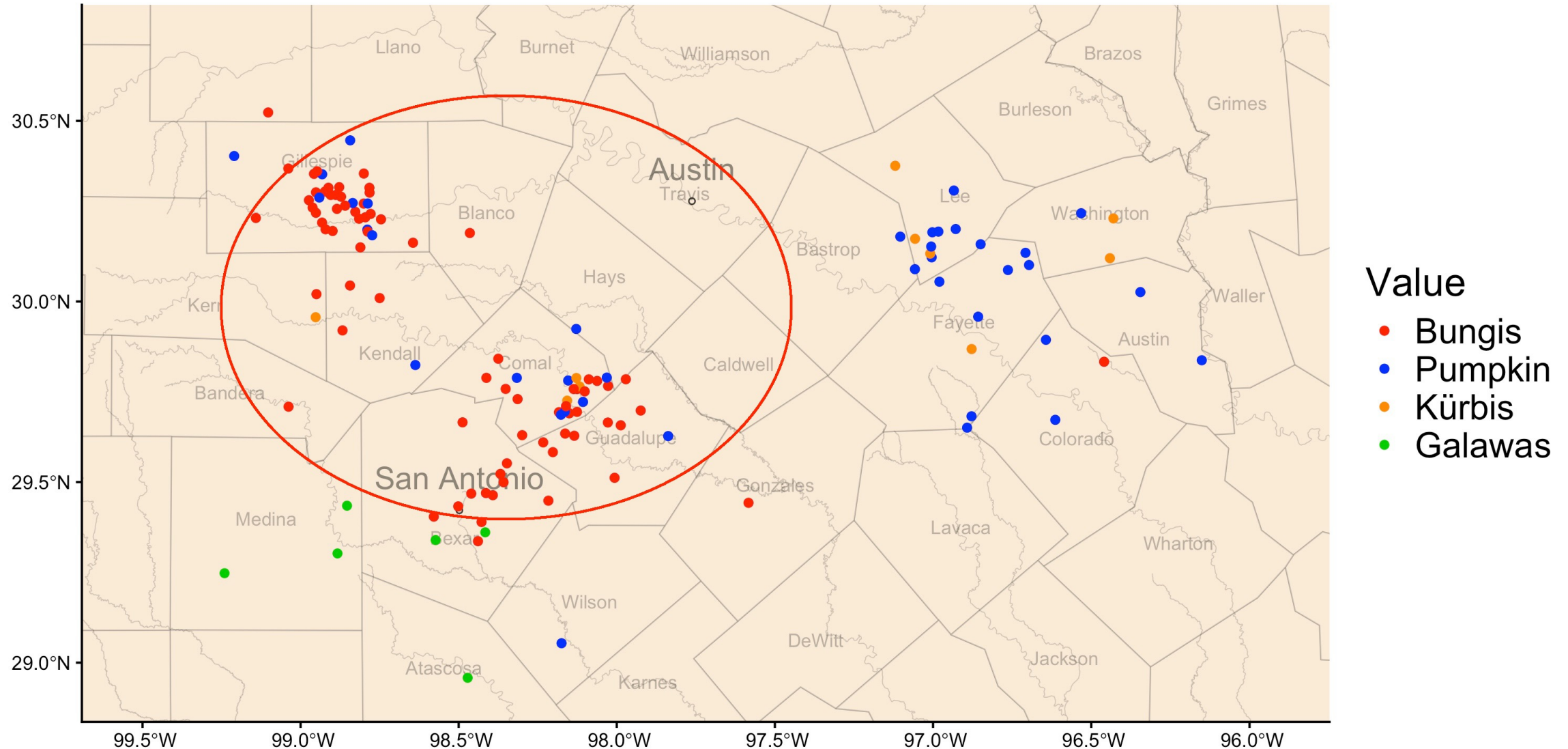
from the Texas German Dialect Archive





Translations of the English word 'Pumpkin'

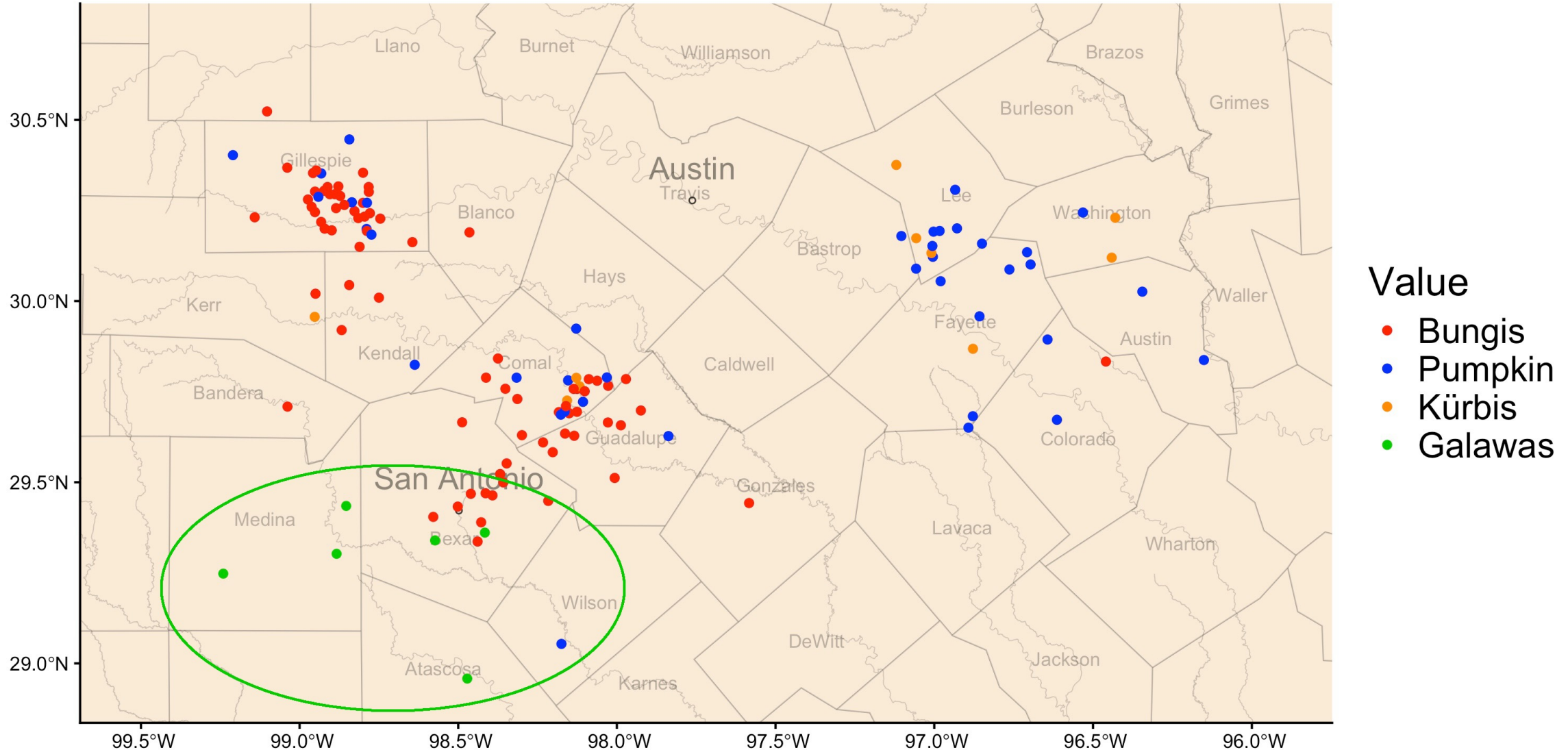
from the Texas German Dialect Archive





Translations of the English word 'Pumpkin'

from the Texas German Dialect Archive





Cultural Traditions



Lindemann store in Industry



Vereinskirche Church in Fredericksburg



Degen's Brewery in San Antonio



Cultural Traditions: Art



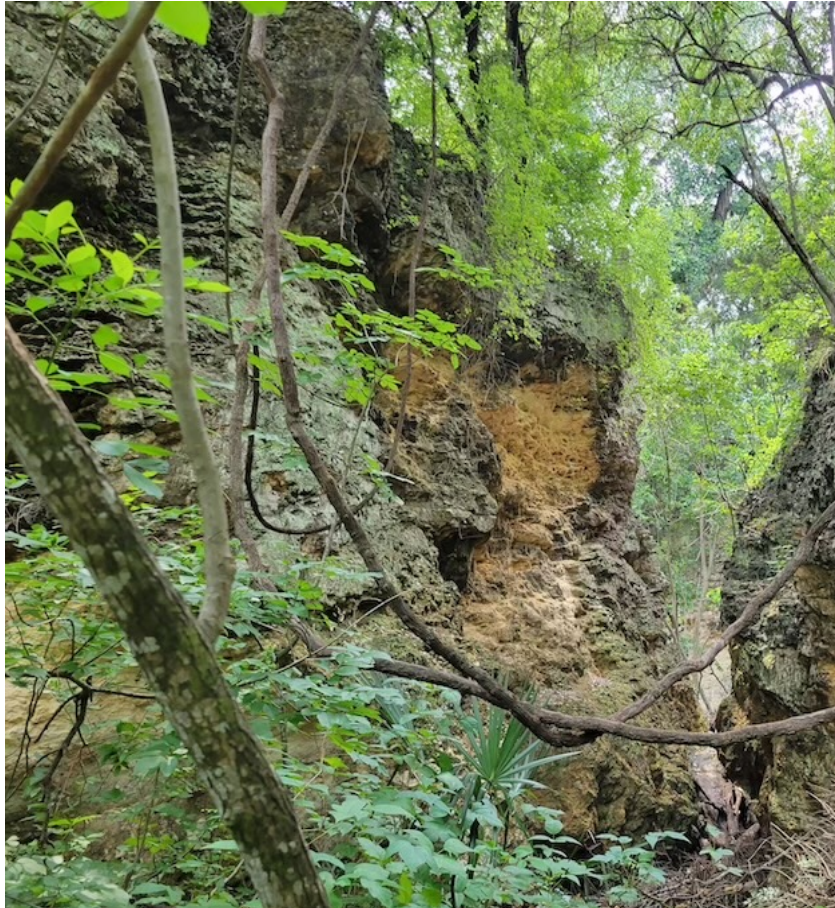


Cultural Traditions: Art





Cultural Traditions: Art

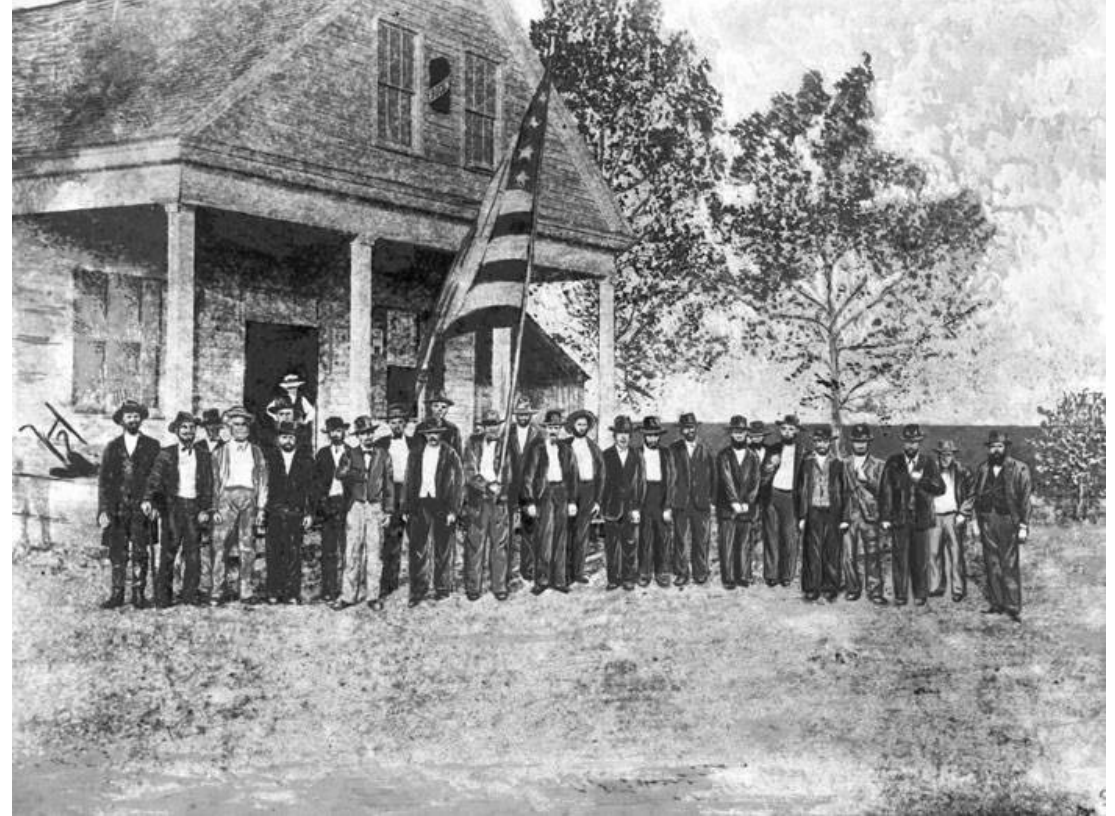




Cultural Traditions: Clubs and Societies



Bleibler Band



Cat Spring Agricultural Society



Cultural Traditions: Clubs and Societies





Cultural Traditions: Music





Cultural Traditions: Music





Cultural Traditions: Music





Cultural Traditions: Music





Cultural Echoes: Place names

- Some towns and communities in central Texas with German names:
 - Luckenbach, Boerne, Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, Gruene, New Ulm, Berlin, Schulenburg, Muenster, Brenham, Weimar, Nordheim, Freiheit, Westhoff, Lindenau, Hochheim, Freyburg, Zuehl, Kreutzberg, Niederwald, Uhland, Klein, Shiner, Loebau, Pflugerville



Cultural Echoes: Place names



- Koenig (König) = *King*
 - "*kay-nik*" vs. "*koh-nig*"



Cultural Echoes: Place names





Cultural Echoes: "Germanness"



Auslander Restaurant in Fredericksburg



Schlitterbahn Amusement Park in New Braunfels



Cultural Echoes: "Germanness"



New Braunfels Wurstfest



Cultural Echoes: "Germanness"





Types of data collected by the TGDG

- Oral history interviews (in Texas German)
- Translation tasks (based on Eikel 1954, Gilbert 1972, and Guion 1996)
- Biographical questionnaires





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Dialect Archive

tgdp.org/dialect-archive/

Texas German is a unique dialect of German that is spoken by the descendants of German immigrants who came to Texas beginning around 1830. Widely spoken across central Texas for almost 200 years, Texas German is in the process of dying out because it is not passed on to younger generations.

One of the main goals of the Texas German Dialect Project (TGD) is to preserve the rich heritage of Texas German as it reflects the different cultural traditions of its residents. To this end, members of the TGD conduct interviews with residents of representative Texas German speech communities. Portions of these interviews are digitized and subsequently stored for preservation in the Texas German Dialect Archive Online (TGDA Online).

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[Demo "Learning difficult things during the Great Depression", 2:04, 1-24-1-14-a.mp3](#)

ENTER ARCHIVE

For everyday users.

What's available:

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BROWSE TRANSCRIPTS

For those interested in conducting more in-depth linguistic research.



Dialect Archive

[Log in](#) to use the archive, or [sign up](#) for an account for free.



[Open-Ended Interviews](#)

[Gilbert Interviews](#)

[Eikel Interviews](#)



Dialect Archive



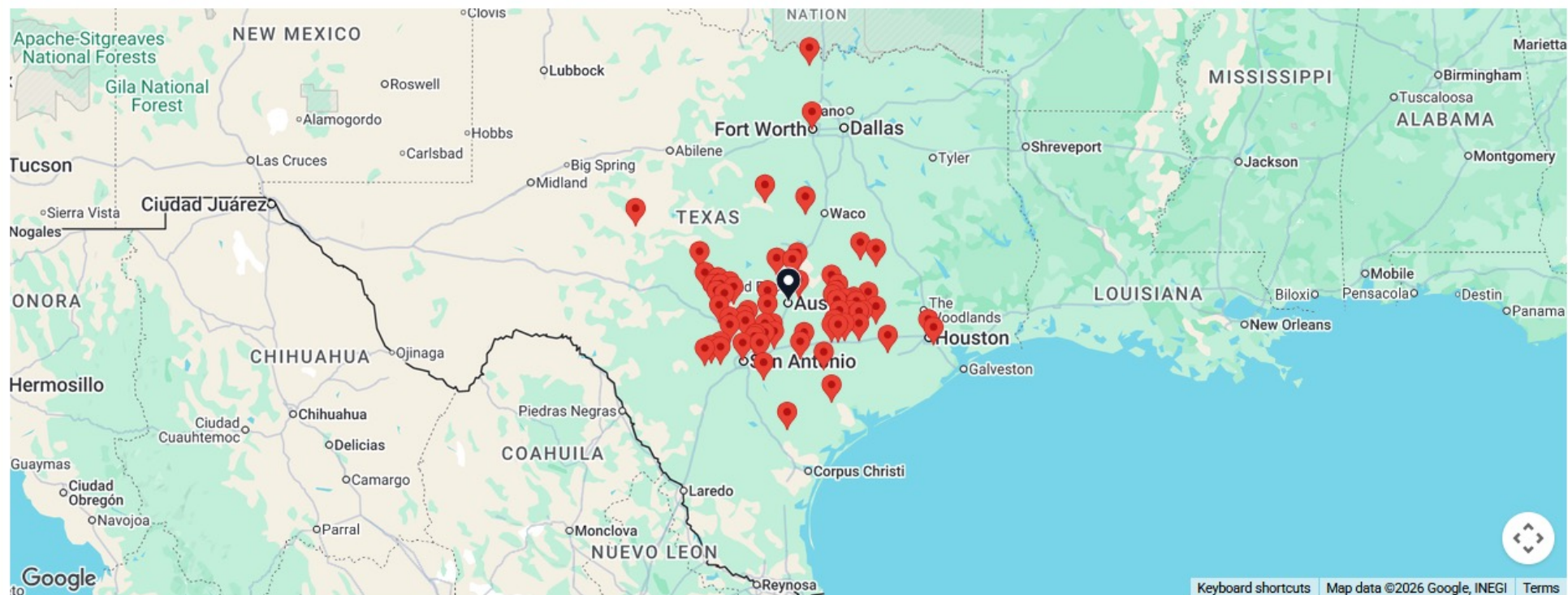
[Open-Ended Interviews](#)

[Gilbert Interviews](#)

[Eikel Interviews](#)



Pick a city on the map or from the list below.



Anhalt

Austin

Barbarosa

Bear Creek

Beeville

Bellville

Black Jack

Boerne

Brenham

Columbus

Comfort

Converse

Cost

Crawford

Dime Box

Doss

Dripping Springs

East Bernard

Freyburg

Georgetown

Giddings

Grapetown

Hamilton

Hondo

Houston

Kurten

La Grange

Muenster

New Braunfels

New Ulm

Northfield, Minnesota

Quihi

Rio Medina

Round Top

San Antonio

Schulenberg

Umland

Universal City

Victoria

Walburg

Waldeck

Wall

Warda

Weimer

Wimberly

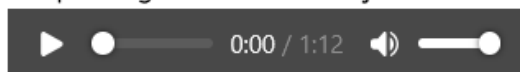


Austin



Click on the interview title to listen to the interview or follow along with the transcript.

▼ Speaking German at bank job



[\(view transcript\)](#)

00:01:12

62-377-1-2-a

[eaf audio](#)

[Report an audio problem](#)

► Visiting grandmother

00:01:59

62-377-1-6-a

[eaf audio](#)

► Meeting husband at a wedding

00:03:34

62-377-1-10-a

[eaf audio](#)

► Husband in WWII/language in weddings

00:01:39

62-377-1-11-a

[eaf audio](#)

► Children, grandchildren and German language

00:03:02

62-377-1-13-a

[eaf audio](#)

► Lots of (great-)grandkids

00:01:57

62-377-1-14-a

[eaf audio](#)

► Peach orchard and garden

00:01:17

62-377-1-17-a

[eaf audio](#)

► Making soap and sausage

00:02:51

62-377-1-18-a

[eaf audio](#)

► Family history, moving around Texas

00:03:35

62-381-1-1-a

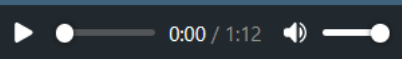
[eaf audio](#)

► German in church and prayers

00:02:07

62-381-1-3-a

[eaf audio](#)



Speaking German at bank job

1	TRANSCRIPTION_Interviewer_0062	COOL und, um, bei <i>Cool and, um, at</i>
2		bei, uh, bei der Bank, um, <i>at, uh, at the bank, um,</i>
3		haben Sie je Deutsch gesprochen? <i>have you ever German spoken?</i>
4	TRANSCRIPTION_Speaker_0377	JA, da war - hab ich mein Deutsch angehalten <i>Yes, there was - have I my German retained</i>
5		[but] da war so viele al - ältere Leute da die haben mit uns in die Bank <i>but there was so many ol - older people there that have with us in the bank</i>
6		mit - wir haben viel für die (???) - der Geld in unser Bank getan und die könnten kein <i>with - we have a-lot for the (???) - the money in our bank done and they could no</i>
7	TRANSCRIPTION_Interviewer_0062	MM-HM. <i>Mm-hm.</i>
8	TRANSCRIPTION_Speaker_0377	uh, Englisch sprechen oder und da musst ich immer Deutsch sprechen zusamm <i>uh, English speak or and there must I always German speak together</i>
9	TRANSCRIPTION_Interviewer_0062	MM-HM. <i>Mm-hm.</i>
10	TRANSCRIPTION_Speaker_0377	und da hab ich mein <i>and there have I my</i>
11		könnt, um, meine Deutsch angehalten zu das deutsche (???) <i>could, um, my German retained to the German (???)</i>
12	TRANSCRIPTION_Interviewer_0062	JA, ja. <i>Yes, yes.</i>
13		DAS das ist interessant, um, <i>That that is interesting, um,</i>



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Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP)

Corpus platform - Version 2.0 (November 2024)



Welcome to the corpus platform of the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP). This platform offers new ways of [browsing](#) and [querying](#) transcribed open-ended interviews with speakers of Texas German. You need a user account to access the browsing and query pages. If you do not have an account, you can [register](#) for free. A short [documentation](#) helps you get started with the platform functionality. To learn more about Texas German and the TGDP, you can [visit the TGDP homepage](#).

[Register](#)

• [Documentation](#)

• [TGDP homepage](#)



Browse by interview

Listen to and view audios and transcripts

The browsing page is the starting point for exploring the data. It lists all interview data available in the platform together with metadata on the speakers. You can filter by place or year of recording and by speakers and interviewers. Transcripts and their annotations can be viewed with synchronised audio playback and various functionality for closer inspection of transcripts.

[Browse by interview](#)

Yes? (laugh)			
0004	0004	ICH konnte kein Englisch sprechen wahr.	I could no English speak truly.
0005	0900	WO ich nach die Schule kam konnte ich kein W	When I to the school came could I no word English speak.
0006	0004	JA. ICH auch nicht. ICH auch nicht.	Yes. Me also not. Me also not.
0007	0164	WIRKLICH?	

Query

Do systematic searches on transcripts and annotation

The query page is the place for systematic searches on the data including transcribed and normalized forms, lemmas (base forms) and part-of-speech tags (word class categories). Queries are formulated in the widely used CQP languages. Results are displayed as Keywords-In-Context (KWIC). From each search result, you can go back to the wider transcript context and audio.

[Go to query page](#)

... bi - BEI mir nicht außer Texas gegangen . JA . JA ? laugh laugh SO ...
... dann wenn sie hier zu Texas kam , war nichts . UND ...
so viele ... rum ieberal in Texas . ABER die sind all ...
gespielt , laughs FÜR welche team ? FOR Texas State . SOUTHWEST Texas . WO
team ? FOR Texas State . SOUTHWEST Texas . WOW . JA und und ...
... die Sie kochen , die besonders Texas deutsch sind ? TE - fier ...
Texas deutsch sind ? TE - fier Texas deutsch ? OH I don ...
... sich als Texaner oder als Texas Deutsche oder als Amerikaner ...

Browse by section titles

Explore the corpus via topics in the section titles

You can use this page to view and filter transcripts according to section titles. This is an easy way to find interviews with specific topics (e.g. 'school' or 'church').

[Browse by section title](#)

Use words like 'school', 'Austin' or 'war' to filter for specific topics. Click on any section title to open the corresponding transcript.	
Texas	Filter Clear
171 of 4954 transcripts.	
1-1-1	1-1-1-12-a The history of Texas German
1-1-1	1-1-1-28-a Changes in Use of Texas German in Recent Decades
1-2-1	1-2-1-2-a Coming to Texas from Germany
1-4-1	1-4-1-11-a Texas German: Working in California
1-4-1	1-4-1-15-a Texas German in World War I

Use words like 'school', 'Austin' or 'war' to filter for specific topics. Click on any section title to open the corresponding transcript.

[Filter](#)[Clear](#)

16 of 5278 transcripts.

1-1-1

1-1-1-22-a [German Language within the Family](#)

1-35-1

1-35-1-20-a [German language use in Buda and in the family back then](#)

51-281-1

51-281-1-23-a [Language Changes and Musical Family](#)

7-311-1

7-311-1-11-a [Languages in the family](#)

7-328-1

7-328-1-2-a [Wendish family/language and speakers](#)

62-381-1

62-381-1-4-a [Family and language, ancestors](#)

63-386-2

63-386-2-5-a [Language with family](#)

115-417-1

115-417-1-3-a [Language use in family](#)

115-417-1-12-a [German language among family](#)

1-434-1

1-434-1-1-a [Use of language with family in childhood; Loss of German](#)

Sources

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