

Archives  
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ROCKNE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

# The Pioneer

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January 2005



*By  
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*The Pioneer  
Online  
By Webmaster  
Thomas Hilbig*

[sites.rootsweb.com/~txrha](http://sites.rootsweb.com/~txrha)

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**RHA  
Annual Meeting and Fundraiser  
Sunday, February 13, 2005  
Holtman (Sacred Heart Parish) Hall  
Rockne, Texas**

**1:00 PM - Annual Meeting, Silent Auction & Raffle  
followed by  
Spaghetti Luncheon, Ice Tea & Beer  
(Good Will Offering)  
Live Auction with Mike Hilbig**

**Want to help but can't attend?  
Send in your raffle tickets today, and/or Membership/Donation.  
Bring Donations for Live and Silent Auctions to the Hall  
by noon on the 13th or drop them off at the Museum any Saturday.**

## RHA Ownership

Attendance is greater each year because your pride is showing - pride in the accomplishments at Hilbig Park. What other small community has done so much to preserve history? And let's not forget our neighbors. Some of the earliest artifacts

in the Goertz cabin came from Watterson. The latest acquisition is the **Lee** smoke house and we want to assure our neighbors that their history is included in the Rockne Museum. Hilbig Park is a tribute to each and everyone in Bastrop County. And it belongs to **YOU**. Without your continued financial support, RHA could not grow nor maintain and support the needs of the organization.

Minnie Bartsch, Treasurer, will give a complete financial report for the year 2004 at the annual meeting and future goals will be discussed. There is a real need for a multipurpose building to store items not on display, to have space to work on projects and to house supplies.

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### **\$25,000.00 Grant**

**Beau White**, Bluebonnet Electric Coop Community Representative presented a grant from The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) in the amount of \$25,000 to RHA on November 20, 2004. The grant is matching funds for the reconstruction of the historic Lehman log cabin. We are sincerely grateful for the outstanding support from LCRA and Bluebonnet Electric Coop. RHA also takes this opportunity to thank **Charlie Nelson** for his efforts in soliciting the grant, **Timmy Tucker** who will restore the cabin at cost and **Daniel Lehman**, project manager.

The **Lehman Family** arrived in the Rockne area in 1846 and **John T. Lehman** built the historic cabin around 1860. **John T. Lehman** donated the land where the present-day Sacred Heart Church and cemetery is located. The Lehman home will be completed and dedicated as another history preservation project of RHA.

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### **Live Auction with Mike Hilbig**

**James and Gail Wilhelm** will donate a U.S. Flag flown over the Capitol in Washington on **January 6th** to commemorate the arrival of pioneers to Rockne and String Prairie on that day in 1856. The families of Philip Goertz, and John Wolf, John Hartman, John Wilhelm, and the last of the Meuths, all arrived on the **January 6th 1856**.

They also will donate a Texas Flag flown over the Capitol in Austin on September 16th. Fifteen years ago on **September 16th** the Rockne Historical Association was formed.

**Marcia Driskill**, wife of board member Melvin Driskill, has hand sewn a beautiful pieced quilt that may be used as a wall hanging.

**Francis Goertz** is donating one of his coveted cedar chests to the live auction this year. Here's your chance to own one of these beauties.

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### More Kudos

**Amber and Allison Beck** assisted by their dad, **Stephen**, planted a wild plum tree at Hilbig Park for a **4H** project.

**Daniel Lehman** persevered in getting the fence moved at Hilbig Park to include the land donated by **George and Cindy Goertz** for the Lehman Cabin. **Eric Goertz**, along with his brothers **Jeffrey and Mark Randall** and their dad, **Mark Goertz** gave generously of their time and expertise.

**Valeria Wilhelm** donated a free standing black crucifix and a small iron holy water font. These items were gifts from her **Grandmother Sophie Meuth Rabel** and came from Germany. They were probably brought over by her great grandmother **Magdalena Wilhelm married to Andreas Meuth**. Andreas and Magdalena built the home with the chapel above it on Meuth Hill.

**Edward Pehl** donated an Old German Prayer Book; a gift from **Mary Henzen**. He and **Jerome Henzen** also set up some very fine antiques in the cabin that were used in the early 1900's to 1940 on the Willie Henzen and Pehl properties. They include a shelled-corn crusher, milk/cream separator complete with gaskets and a sheep shearer with handle gear drive all in working condition. **Ed** said he sheared sheep for Earl Callahan, Eddie Wilhelm and others for twenty-five cents a head.

**Pat and Debi Montgomery** donated a 12 foot Christmas tree in memory of Laurene Montgomery. If you haven't seen this beautiful tree, it will remain up till late January.

**Laurene Montgomery** died at the age of 72 on August 8, 1998. She was not a native of the Rockne Community but her enthusiasm, spirit and involvement in RHA brought a new perspective to the importance of this organization. She appreciated Rockne's rich heritage and enjoyed being a part of it and served as a Board Member until her death.

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## Texas German Convention

The Annual Meeting, on **March 12, 2005**, of German-Texan Heritage Society (GTHS) and Texas German Society (TGS) will be held at **Holtman Hall**, (Sacred Heart Parish) **Rockne, TX**.

This will be a wonderful opportunity for RHA to host members of both German Societies and show hospitality and pride in our own organization and community. **Donald C. Goertz, Ph.D.** and **Rev. Bernard C. Goertz** will be among the distinguished speakers. It is a great opportunity to learn more about our heritage and also to be entertained by the New Braunfels Gemischterchor Harmonie. RHA will set up booths to sell our own books and souvenirs and offer guided tours at 4:00 p.m. when the meeting is over. **For more information and a registration form, log on to the RHA Web site or call us.** Registration for Saturday only, including lunch, is only \$15 but must be postmarked by March 2nd.

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## Old News

The Stained glass windows were installed in the Museum on November 7th and the blessing ceremony took place at the Christmas Open House on December 4th. The Grant was presented on November 20th. There has been lots of activity at Hilbig Park and it has certainly been a good year.

During the blessing Msgr. Alois Goertz asked, "How did the windows get here, was it magic." I'm sure I don't always cover every story for the three different mediums that I write - news paper articles, the website and of course the Pioneer so please do let me know when I forget.

Shortly after the dedication of the Museum it was apparent that something needed to be done about the windows. The bright light and sun could damage precious artifacts. I went to several businesses and sometimes just left a telephone message. One of my messages caught the owner's attention because I said I was with the Rockne Historical Association. Laura Duckworth worked part time at Cathedral Stained Glass Studio and her mother, Jane Hellinger was born in Rockne.

Jan and Ted Weiser gave the job to Laura and she worked on it every spare minute that she had. She is a teacher so she dedicated her summer toward the project. It became a personal mission of love.

The day Laura and Bernard Probst installed the windows was a day of joy and happiness among everyone participating. However the blessing and Dedication was certainly a beautiful climax. Msgr. Goertz recapped the progress made over the past 15 years. Father Bernard talked about history and Father Kris (pastor of Sacred Heart) smiled delightfully adding his significant presence and blessing.

The beautiful Christmas decorations, Santa and Mrs. Claus, elf Michael and the celebratory foods made for a joyous occasion.

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### **Rockne Historical Marker**

The marker that was erected by the Rockne Community and the Notre Dame Clubs of Texas in 1988 was broken some time ago. The repair is unattractive and Father Bernard Goertz offered to pay for a new marker with some changes in the wording. The original and revised versions are below. If you have any objections to the revised wording please make your opinions known in writing and submit to RHA. They will be forwarded to the committee. If there is no opposition the announcement will be made at the general meeting on February 13th that the procedure to replace the old marker with the new version will continue.

#### **ROCKNE (ORIGINAL)**

ROCKNE BEGAN AS A SMALL FARMING COMMUNITY. PHILIP GOERTZ (1825-1900), CONSIDERED TO BE THE FIRST GERMAN CATHOLIC SETTLER OF THE AREA, ARRIVED FROM GERMANY IN 1856 AND PURCHASED LAND ALONG WALNUT CREEK. HE WAS SOON JOINED BY MORE GERMAN CATHOLIC IMMIGRANTS WHO ESTABLISHED FAMILY FARMS.

THE FIRST CHURCH BUILT BY THE SETTLERS, ASCENSION OF CHRIST CHURCH, WAS ERRECTED ON WALNUT CREEK IN 1876 BUT WAS DESTROYED BY AN ARSONIST'S FIRE IN 1891. A NEW STRUCTURE WAS COMPLETED IN 1892 AND NAMED SACRED HEART CHURCH.

ROCKNE HAS BEEN KNOWN BY SEVERAL NAMES, FIRST CALLED WALNUT CREEK BECAUSE OF ITS PROXIMITY TO THE STREAM, IT WAS KNOWN AS LEHMANVILLE WHEN THE LEHMAN POST OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1900, AND AS HILBIGVILLE AFTER WILLIAM HILBIG OPENED A STORE HERE.

IN 1931 THE CHILDREN OF SACRED HEART SCHOOL WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PERMANENTLY NAME THEIR TOWN. A VOTE WAS TAKEN, WITH THE CHILDREN ELECTING TO NAME THE COMMUNITY ROCKNE IN HONOR OF KNUTE ROCKNE, THE FAMOUS NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL PLAYER AND HEAD COACH WHO HAD DIED IN A PLANE CRASH IN 1931,

ROCKNE CONTINUES TO BE A RURAL COMMUNITY, WITH SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH AT ITS CENTER.

#### **ROCKNE (REVISED)**

ROCKNE IS A GERMAN COMMUNITY THAT TRACES ITS ROOTS BACK TO 1846. ON NOVEMBER 9, 1846 THE FAMILY OF DANIEL AND MORITZ LEHMAN ARRIVED AT INDIANOLA, TEXAS FROM SCHLESIE (SILESIA) IN PRUSSIA AND SETTLED ALONG THE BANKS OF WALNUT CREEK. NINE DAYS LATER ON NOVEMBER 18, 1846 ANDREAS AND FRANZ MEUTH FROM WÜRZBURG, GERMANY ARRIVED AT GALVESTON AND SETTLED ON THE BANKS OF SANDY CREEK. TEN YEARS LATER IN 1856 GEORGE MEUTH JOINED HIS BROTHERS AT MEUTH HILL ON

SANDY CREEK AND MAKING THE JOURNEY WITH HIM FROM WÜRGES WERE JOHN WILHELM, JOHN WOLF, JOHN HARTMAN, AND PHILIP GOERTZ. THEY ESTABLISHED FARMS ALONG WALNUT CREEK.

IN 1876 THE SETTLERS ON WALNUT CREEK BUILT THE FIRST CATHOLIC CHURCH ON LAND DONATED BY MITCHELL WOLF AND PHILIP GOERTZ. IT WAS DESTROYED BY ARSONISTS IN 1891. IN 1892 THE PRESENT SACRED HEART CHURCH AND CEMETERY WERE ESTABLISHED ON LAND DONATED BY JOHN T. LEHMAN.

ROCKNE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN KNOWN BY SEVERAL NAMES. IT WAS FIRST CALLED WALNUT CREEK; THEN BECAME LEHMAN WHEN THE LEHMAN STORE BECAME THE POSTOFFICE IN 1900 WITH MARTIN LEHMAN AS POSTMASTER. IN 1922 THE TOWN WAS RENAMED HILBIGVILLE WHEN WILLIAM HILBIG AND SONS OPENED THEIR GENERAL STORE IN THE VILLAGE. IN 1931 THE CHILDREN OF SACRED HEART SCHOOL RENAMED THE TOWN IN HONOR OF KNUTE ROCKNE, COACH OF NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY WHO HAD DIED IN A PLANE CRASH EARLIER THAT YEAR.

ROCKNE CONTINUES AS A RURAL COMMUNITY WITH SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH AS ITS CENTER.

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### Christmas in February

Christmas is over but the decorations will be up for awhile. Please stop by to see the Christmas Village in the Goertz Cabin. **Esther Seidel** spent 90 hours building it and she would like to share her collection with everyone. She has over 80 lighted pieces, a train and a Santa circling over the village.

Esther volunteered to be **curator** of the Philip Goertz log cabin along with **Adeline Fast** as her assistant. Esther said, "I just love that home. I sit on the swing and enjoy it so much." I know the feeling and it really makes me happy to know the cabin and the yard will have tender loving care.

New docent volunteers for the Museum on the second Saturdays are **Eva Friske, Glyn Rose Goertz** and **Gloria Hoffman. Joy Goertz and Clara White** volunteered to join curator **Minnie Bartsch** as assistants on the first Saturdays.

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### Tour to Europe by Fr. Bernard

We are planning to fly out on 23 Sept 2005 to Berlin, arriving on Saturday morning and spending the weekend in and around Berlin. Don Goertz plans to join us there and be our guide since he spent a couple years in Berlin getting his Ph.D. During the week we will proceed southward into the Schlesien (Silesia) area. Objective will be to work our way to Wü<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>rges for the weekend and then on to Munich with a side trip to Dachau. Our last night in Germany, we will plan to have a reserved table at the OKTOBERFEST in Munich and the following morning, (Oct 4th) we will fly back to

Texas from Munich. None of this is fixed in concrete yet but these are preliminary plans.

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*Remember, if you have Email and can check the RHA Website there is so much more coverage on line. We'd like to hear from you too.*

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### **RHA Directors**

Marian H. Nelson, President  
Gerri Martinez, Vice-president  
Minnie L. Bartsch, Treasurer  
Rev. Bernard Goertz, Chaplain  
Bryan Goertz, Attorney  
Gloria Hoffman, Docent  
Clara White, Docent  
Letitia Wilhelm, Docent  
Melvin Driskill  
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### **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the **Rockne Historical Association (RHA)**, a non profit **organization**, is to gather, document, develop, encourage, preserve, promote, publish and protect the history of Rockne and the surrounding communities in Bastrop County, Texas.