

# The Pagel Family Times

Volume 12

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## THE STEP-MOTHER ANNA ZORN FRITSCHÉ PAGEL



*Johanna (Anna) Zorn Fritsche Pagel*

When our ancestor, Gottfried Pagel, took Johanna Fritsche as his second wife in 1855, he gained a helpmate and his children gained a new mother. His oldest son, Friedrich Wilhelm, was already twenty-one, but his ninth and youngest child, Julius, was not quite two years old. It's likely that Johanna was the only mother Julius would remember.

Johanna Zorn was born in Saxony on February 10, 1810, the daughter of Georg and Maria Zorn. Her birthplace was Friederichsdorf, sometimes shortened to Friedersdorf, near Bautzen and Lohsa, in the County of Floyerswerda in the Kingdom of Saxony. She was probably more commonly known as "Anna," since numerous records list her that way.

Anna was already twenty-nine years old when her daughter, Magdalena, was born in Friederichsdorf on August 11, 1839. According to an old letter from the pastor of the Evangelical church at Lohsa, Magdalena was an illegitimate child. The date is still unknown to us, but Anna married Johann Fritsche and family tradition says that Magdalena was

### 2007 PAGEL FAMILY REUNION

11 A.M. on Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, at the Shelby American Legion Hall  
Hosted by the Kermit Pagel Family

Please return the enclosed r.s.v.p. form for the catered BBQ lunch with a check by July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Homemade desserts will be welcomed and please consider bringing something for our silent auction!

We'll have a scanner on hand if you'd like to share your old photos.

The Shelby American Legion Hall is located at the intersection of FM 1457 and Krebs Road, which is 3.7 miles north of FM 159.

If you would like to visit the Pagel Cemetery, it is on Darden Loop off FM 159 just west of Willow Springs.

For more information, contact Carol Pagel at 979-865-9865 or e-mail [clpagel7@yahoo.com](mailto:clpagel7@yahoo.com).

his daughter. Johann was a year younger than Anna, having been born on February 18, 1811.

In 1854 the 43-year-old Johann Fritsche secured passage to Texas for himself, his wife, and their fifteen-year-old daughter. Ship records describe him as a butcher and cottage owner and his travel document denotes that he had brown hair and eyes, a dark beard, a blunt nose and pointed chin.

The Fritsches were Wends, a name used alternately with "Sorbs" for the Slavic population of Lusatia. A loosely defined region about fifty miles southeast

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### IN REMEMBRANCE

This issue of *The Pagel Family Times* is dedicated to the memory of those who passed away since the last newsletter:

Melva Mills DuBose  
Edwin Boothe Haynes, Jr.  
Bernice (Betty) George Ladewig

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of Berlin, Lusatia was the home of both German and Slavic people and, at the time, encompassed parts of both Prussia and Saxony. The Wendish had their own language, but struggled to keep their cultural identity and their Lutheran religion was being merged with more liberal Calvinist doctrine. Johann, Anna, and Magdalena joined a group of nearly six hundred other Wends who left Lusatia, looking for economic opportunity and planning to establish a church in Texas pure to their beliefs.

The group left Hamburg in two small ships and crossed the North Sea to Hull, England. From Hull they went by train to Liverpool where they waited about two weeks for a large sailing ship, *the Ben Nevis*, to be readied. While there, a cholera epidemic broke out and fourteen Wends died before they left Liverpool. About twenty more died before *the Ben Nevis* reached Queenstown, Ireland. There the people and their belongings were transferred to another ship, while *the Ben Nevis* was washed and fumigated. Approximately thirty more people died of cholera in Queenstown, including Johann Fritsche who died on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

On October 22, 1854 the Wends again boarded *the Ben Nevis* and sailed for Galveston, the ship encountering one fierce storm and several smaller ones along the way. They finally arrived in Galveston on December 15<sup>th</sup>, but they had lost eighteen more during the crossing. Seventy-eight of the Wends had died during the migration, including four of the five babies born en route.

The new immigrants took a steamer to Houston where most stayed only a short time, being without shelter. Throughout December and January, they



*Anna Pagel is seated in this photo taken with the Albrecht family ca 1900.*

trekked inland in small groups to the German-Wendish settlements around New Ulm and Industry.

Most of the Wends soon moved on to settle Serbin in Lee County, but Anna found a local man who needed a mate just as badly as she did. Austin County Justice of the Peace Constantine Stocks presided over the marriage of "Mistress" Fritsche to Gottfried Pagel in Industry on April 15, 1855. The marriage was recorded in the Fayette County courthouse.

Gottfried's oldest daughter, Wilhelmine, married Friedrich Fischer the following year, but the rest of the Pagels farmed their 192 acres in Fayette County until 1858. On January 31<sup>st</sup> of that year, Anna's daughter Magdalena married her stepbrother, Friedrich "Wilhelm", Gottfried's oldest son. The newlyweds stayed behind, while Gottfried, Anna, and his unmarried children moved to a larger farm in Lavaca County.

By the time Gottfried died in 1873, all his children had married, with the

exception of the two youngest, Ernst and Julius. Gottfried's will specified that Wilhelm care for the woman who was both his stepmother and mother-in-law, so 63-year-old Anna was moved back to Fayette County. Wilhelm Pagel died just two months after his father, consequently Anna helped Magdalena raise her six children, who ranged in age from 15 to 2.

Magdalena was just 47 when she, too, passed away prematurely in July 1886. Anna Pagel lived the remainder of her long life in her daughter's house, with her granddaughter Emma Albrecht's family. According to census records, Anna never learned to speak or read and write English. She died on February 6, 1904, just four days short of her ninety-fourth birthday, and was buried at the Pagel Cemetery at Willow Springs. An obelisk inscribed in German marks her grave.

*Much of the information for this article came from materials at the Texas Wendish Heritage Museum at Serbin.*

This issue of *The Pagel Family Times* was edited by Rox Ann Albrecht Johnson, secretary/historian of the Pagel Family Reunion, who takes full responsibility for its content. Comments and questions may be directed to her at 11105 Scotland Well Drive, Austin, TX 78750, (512) 250-8424, roxannjohnson@sbcglobal.net. Please notify us of family births, deaths, and marriages.

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## CAUSE OF DEATH

Friedrich "Wilhelm" Pagel, Gottfried's oldest son, died in 1873 when he was only 39 years old. We had been unable to discover the cause of his untimely death until last year's reunion when Doris Anderson divulged that Wilhelm died after falling off a roof.

Doris's grandmother, Mathilda Zapp Pagel, who was Wilhelm's daughter-in-law, related this story to Doris many years ago.

Our cousin, Clay Maeckel, has generously provided space on his server to the Pagel Family Reunion for our web site. The site includes many old photos, our family history and family tree, old Pagel homes, cemeteries, reunion information and photographs from recent reunions.

Check it out to see what's new!

[www.pagelfamily.org](http://www.pagelfamily.org)