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Going *Deutsch*: Heritage Tourism and Identity in German Texas

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Going *Deutsch*: Heritage Tourism and Identity in German Texas

by

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Dedication

To the memory of

Terry G. Jordan

(1938-2003)

Scholar, teacher, mentor, friend, and proud German-Texan

Acknowledgements

Although these pages contain the results of “my” research, a dissertation is never the outcome of a sole individual’s efforts, but it is by necessity a collaborative undertaking. A project of this scope would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of many people who have contributed their time and talents in a variety of ways.

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Primarily qualitative research, relying heavily on interviews and surveys of event participants and local residents, revealed that German-themed festivals in Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, and Brenham, play an important role in the maintenance of ethnic identity for German Americans in central Texas. My research supports the contention that ethnicity is becoming largely symbolic and voluntary for many white Americans, who are increasingly identifying with a non-differentiated “Europeanness” than with specific national origin groups. Thus, significant numbers of non-German whites also participate in these events; however, Hispanics and African Americans are underrepresented among participants, relative to their representation in the region’s population. Hispanics were better represented than blacks among festival participants, and they reported fewer perceptions of possible ethnic or racial discrimination, suggesting the persistence of a black/white color line within the region. Despite a recent and sustained influx of Anglo and Hispanic residents into central Texas, the study communities continue to represent themselves as “German” places, perpetuating social myths of German predominance that emerged in the nineteenth century. Currently, there appears to be no widespread objection

to this image; however, with the continued growth of non-German populations, competition over the cultural capital afforded by tourism development may occur among residents. While each community has a history of German settlement, the degree to which German heritage is promoted is dependent upon the presence of ethnic signatures within its cultural landscape. Thus, Germanness is least emphasized in place promotion in Brenham, where Anglo settlement predated the arrival of Germans. German-themed events and tourism development have not encouraged significant alterations to the cultural landscapes of German Texas, especially compared to other North American communities that have undergone substantial “Bavarianization” to enhance their appeal to potential tourists. Further, I contend that the study communities each display several different symbolic, ephemeral place identities that reflect the largely symbolic and voluntary nature of the ethnic identities of their residents and visitors. Specific times and places have been set aside for the display of German heritage, which gives way to the promotion of other place identities at different times and places over the course of the year.

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Chapter One:

Introduction

On a sunny afternoon during the annual Oktoberfest in Fredericksburg, Texas, a musician takes the outdoor stage in the shade of a red and yellow tent. As he launches into an eclectic mix of German drinking songs, country and western ballads, Spanish-language *conjunto* melodies, and Beatles and Elvis Presley covers, the tent is quickly filled to standing-room-only capacity. Born in Bombay, Rajah Khan speaks and sings with a pronounced accent that reveals his South Asian roots. Because he lived in Europe for 15 years as a young man, Rajah Khan is fluent in German, but in his lederhosen t-shirt, Tyrolean-style felt hat, and khaki shorts he cuts a very different figure from the fair-skinned, more traditionally costumed Texans of German descent who predominate among the festival entertainers (Figure 1.1). Nevertheless, he is something of a Fredericksburg institution; he has appeared at Oktoberfest every year since its inception in 1980, and he also regularly performs in a local German restaurant. “We come to see Rajah every year,” gushes the woman across the table before excusing herself to buy several CDs to give to friends as holiday gifts. When she returns, she raises her plastic cup of beer and sways to the music, enthusiastically singing along with the lyrics to both the traditional German melodies and Rajah Khan’s compositions. The set wraps with a country-flavored original called “Texan by Choice,” detailing Rajah Khan’s journey from India to his adopted homeland of Texas, which then segues into a medley of patriotic anthems he calls his “thank-you” to America for embracing him as a citizen.



Figure 1.1: Born in Bombay, Rajah Khan has been a featured performer at Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest for each of its 25 years. His participation suggests that the notion of symbolic ethnicity could extend beyond the usually rigid boundaries of race within the festival context.

Rajah Khan embodies the purported spirit of Oktoberfest, Maifest, Wurstfest, and any number of other North American ethnic festivals: the notion that anyone, regardless of race or ancestry, can be “German” for a day. But is ethnicity meaningful when, at certain times in certain places, anyone can temporarily become “ethnic” just by consuming the right foods, listening to the right music, or wearing the right costume? The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the relationship between ethnic-themed tourism and the evolution of American ethnic and racial identities. From our historical vantage point just beyond the threshold of the twenty-first century, it has become all too obvious that tourism development has played a significant role in refashioning cultures, economies, and environments worldwide. While any number of tourism impacts in any number of locations would be appropriate and deserving subjects of geographical inquiry, I have chosen to explore one subset of the myriad connections between tourism, identity, and place and to investigate these phenomena within one specific region. In this dissertation, I will explore the bidirectional relationship between tourism development and contemporary ethnic identity. Building on existing scholarship, I will present evidence to support the assertions that tourism has become increasingly significant in the construction and maintenance of ethnic and racial identities in the United States and that ethnic difference is becoming more and more popular as a tourism commodity. Specifically, I will demonstrate how German-themed tourism helps to sustain the German identity of people and places in central Texas. I will reveal how tourism employs and perpetuates myths of German cultural dominance that have long persisted within the region. Finally, I will discuss how patterns of participation in German heritage festivals mirror—and perhaps extend—processes of racialization that date to nineteenth-century Texas. Taken together, these elements illustrate the social construction of ethnic and racial identities and highlight the critical role of place in this process.

Years of participation in a variety of ethnic tourism activities, both in Texas and beyond, have led me to a number of questions that provide the framework for this research. First and foremost, how is it that, in a state perhaps better known for its legacy of racial conflict than its long and complex history of ethnic diversity, non-white Texans openly participate in both the production and consumption of tourism based on a European heritage? Does the ability to participate in German-themed tourism activities extend equally to all non-white Texans? Is something other than ethnoracial identity the significant criterion influencing participation in these activities today?

I contend that German-themed tourism reflects, creates, and maintains symbolic ethnic identities. This largely voluntary and flexible form of ethnic identity is characteristic of later-generation European Americans (Alba 1990, Gans 1979, Waters 1990). As Werner Sollors (1989, xiv) explains, modern ethnicity is an “acquired sense of belonging that replaces visible, concrete communities whose kinship symbolism ethnicity may yet mobilize in order to appear more natural.” Thus, “Germanness” might be thought of as a collective identity based on putative common ancestry in Germany and the celebration of culturally constructed traditions that bind group members together and are believed to distinguish them from non-members. As I will discuss in detail in subsequent chapters, festivals have long played a central role in the creation, maintenance, and expression of German-American ethnic identity.

In this dissertation, I will demonstrate that the flexibility inherent in symbolic ethnic identity encourages broad participation by non-Germans in these events; however, I will argue that patterns of participation suggest that a black-white color line continues to circumscribe German Texas. An equally important focus of this dissertation is the effect of demographic change on representations and perceptions of the region’s German heritage. How is Germanness portrayed in communities that have become increasingly

ethnically and racially heterogeneous in recent years? How has the influx of large numbers of Anglo-Americans and Hispanics into central Texas affected the place promotion of tourism host communities? How does the marketing of German heritage affect attachment to place among increasingly multiethnic resident populations? These questions provide the framework of my research.

FINDING MY PLACE IN GERMAN TEXAS

I cannot claim to be a dispassionate observer of the phenomena under investigation. While conducting the research presented in these pages, I discovered that my own experience with ethnicity parallels that of increasing numbers of Americans. As a later-generation American of mixed European descent, I do not possess a strong sense of ethnic identity and, in fact, know very little about my ethnic roots. Despite—and perhaps because—ethnicity is peripheral to my everyday experience, I became interested in ethnic celebrations and attractions, including those focusing on groups that purportedly contribute to my lineage as well as those focusing on groups that I am quite certain do not. In this way, my own participation in ethnic tourism has exemplified the two primary motivations that underlie ethnic tourism: ethnic insiders pursue “ethnic reunion” with others of shared heritage (King 1994, 173), while ethnic outsiders are involved in an active search for exoticism (Van den Berghe 1994).

Whether participating as insiders or outsiders, tourists often seek experiences that will allow them to transcend the boundaries of everyday life. David Harvey (1990) observes that a preoccupation with the personal and collective roots of identity has emerged in recent decades, in response to the insecurity inherent in increasingly globalized, capitalistic economies and societies. Moreover, Dean MacCannell (1989) has described tourism as the search for “authentic” experiences to counter the “rootlessness”

of modern life. For internal tourists of ethnic culture, participation provides a sense of community and group solidarity:

Working through cultural productions [such as touristic activities] people can communicate emotions and complex meanings across class, group and generational lines... Strangers who have the same cultural grounding can come together in a cultural production, each knowing what to expect next, and feel a closeness or solidarity, even where no empirical closeness exists. Their relationship begins before they meet. (MacCannell 1989, 32)

Tourism therefore confers on members of the host ethnic group membership in an “imagined community” of countless others who share a common lineage (Anderson 1991). The work of Richard Alba (1990) has demonstrated that, among white Americans, ethnicity increasingly centers on identification with an undifferentiated “European” origin, rather than with specific national origin groups. Thus, many white Americans today can participate in tourism activities focusing on any European-American group and feel that they are celebrating “their” heritage. Furthermore, being ethnic has largely become an individual choice for whites, whether the choice is to simplify one’s background by downplaying some elements to the favor of others, to identify with a hybrid background, or to disregard ethnicity altogether (Alba 1990).

Herbert Gans (1979) advanced the idea of “symbolic ethnicity” to describe later-generation European-American ethnic identity. He argues that, because the cultural differences between European-American groups are fading, ethnicity is becoming increasingly peripheral to the lives of their members. As such, symbolic ethnicity entails “a love for and a pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behavior” (Gans 1979, 9). Thus, elements of an ethnic culture are transformed into symbols that are visible, that can be clearly understood by the majority of later-generation Americans, and that can be easily expressed and felt without interfering in

other aspects of life (Gans 1979). Put another way, “symbolic ethnicity is concerned with the symbols of ethnic cultures rather than with the cultures themselves” (Alba 1990, 306).

Ethnic identity for European Americans can be situationally specific, both in terms of whether or not to express an identity and in terms of which ethnic identity to invoke (Alba 1990, Okamura 1981). In short, the choice of an ethnic identity is not permanently fixed; it can be adjusted, changed, or denied in response to varying circumstances. Thus, we can reasonably expect that participants who claim some measure of German ancestry might feel “more German” within the context of German-themed tourism activities and therefore attach increased importance to their German heritage, at least temporarily.

The voluntary nature of white ethnic identity means that it is “dependent on deliberate actions of individuals to maintain activities and relationships that have an ethnic character” (Alba 1990, 20). Tourism is one such activity that is playing a critical role in shaping newly emergent forms of an ever-evolving white ethnicity. Steven Hoelscher (2000, 66) has argued that “travel has become the quintessential means by which ethnic heritage is aroused, maintained, and redoubled.” For example, Celeste Ray (2001) observed that Scottish-Americans in the southern U.S. regard visiting sites of early Scottish settlement in America to be the next best thing to visiting the homeland itself and an important way to sustain ethnic ties.

Voluntary ethnicity is, for the most part, regarded as a pleasurable phenomenon for those who can take advantage of it. It confers the advantages of a sense of belonging to a community and simultaneously serves as a marker of individuality and uniqueness, while making no claims or demands on individuals in return (Waters 1990). The downside of this situation is that the fluidity of ethnic identity normalizes whiteness: among whites, “race” is often viewed as a concept that applies to others, but not to

themselves (Jackson and Penrose 1993). The freedom to affiliate and disaffiliate oneself with a variety of ethnic options can desensitize white Americans to the largely involuntary nature of identities based on “race.” Although biologically based racial difference has been soundly refuted by modern science, race remains a potent cultural and social distinction in many parts of the world. Therefore, in contrast to the situation for many whites, members of “racial” groups often find themselves stuck at one level of identity because of the way they are perceived and labeled by others (Delaney 2002, Waters 1990, Waters 1999).

Prior to this research, I recognized the flexibility of my own ethnic identity and enjoyed the ability to merge into and out of groups at will in response to varying social contexts. For example, I can claim Irishness on St. Patrick’s Day, or Germanness at Oktoberfest, or just plain “Americanness” when it suits me (Figure 1.2). My encounters with individuals like Rajah Khan helped me to recognize, on an empirical and very personal level, the taken-for-grantedness of white ethnicity and the persistence of racial ascription on the basis of phenotypical traits. Owing to my professional activities and academic training, I consider myself somewhat knowledgeable regarding matters of ethnicity and race. Nevertheless, I found myself surprised and somewhat puzzled to see an Indian-American immigrant performing polkas at a German festival, despite the fact that his experience with “Germanness”—having lived in Germany, speaking the native language, and being married to a German national—is much more tangible and informed than my own, which is based solely on having a great-grandparent of German ancestry. I had never previously questioned my own participation or the participation of countless other white Texans—who may or may not have any notion of what it means to be “German”—in these activities. My recognition of this contradiction and my curiosity



Figure 1.2: The author celebrates Germanness at New Braunfels's Wurstfest, November 2005.

about the heightened role of place in creating, maintaining, and reshaping ethnic boundaries in modern society motivate and inform this research.

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

I employed an instrumental approach in conducting this research, intentionally selecting case studies that I felt would provide insight into an issue (specifically, the relationship between tourism development and ethnic identity). A collective case study approach that analyzes multiple study communities is necessary in order to isolate common effects and characteristics of ethnic tourism development from factors that are unique to a specific locality.¹ From the many Texas communities that promote German-themed tourist attractions and events, I selected three cases using a theoretical sampling strategy, in which study communities were chosen with the intention of illustrating the ethnic tourism process and its impacts in a variety of geographic and demographic contexts (Figure 1.3). My selection criteria included places that are well-known within the state as tourism attractions, places that annually host at least one German-themed festival, and places that are located within the historic “German Belt,” described in Chapter Two. I selected from the communities meeting these criteria by evaluating the shifting demographics of the “German Belt”—its western extension remains primarily white, while its southern and eastern portions abut the historically Hispanic- and black-influenced culture regions of the state. I selected what I regard as the best-known German community within each of these three subregions in order to highlight the relationships between racial and ethnic contexts and tourism development, settling on the cities of Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, and Brenham.

¹ A collective case study is defined as an instrumental study extended to include multiple cases in hopes of leading to better understanding about an even larger collection of cases (Stake 1998).

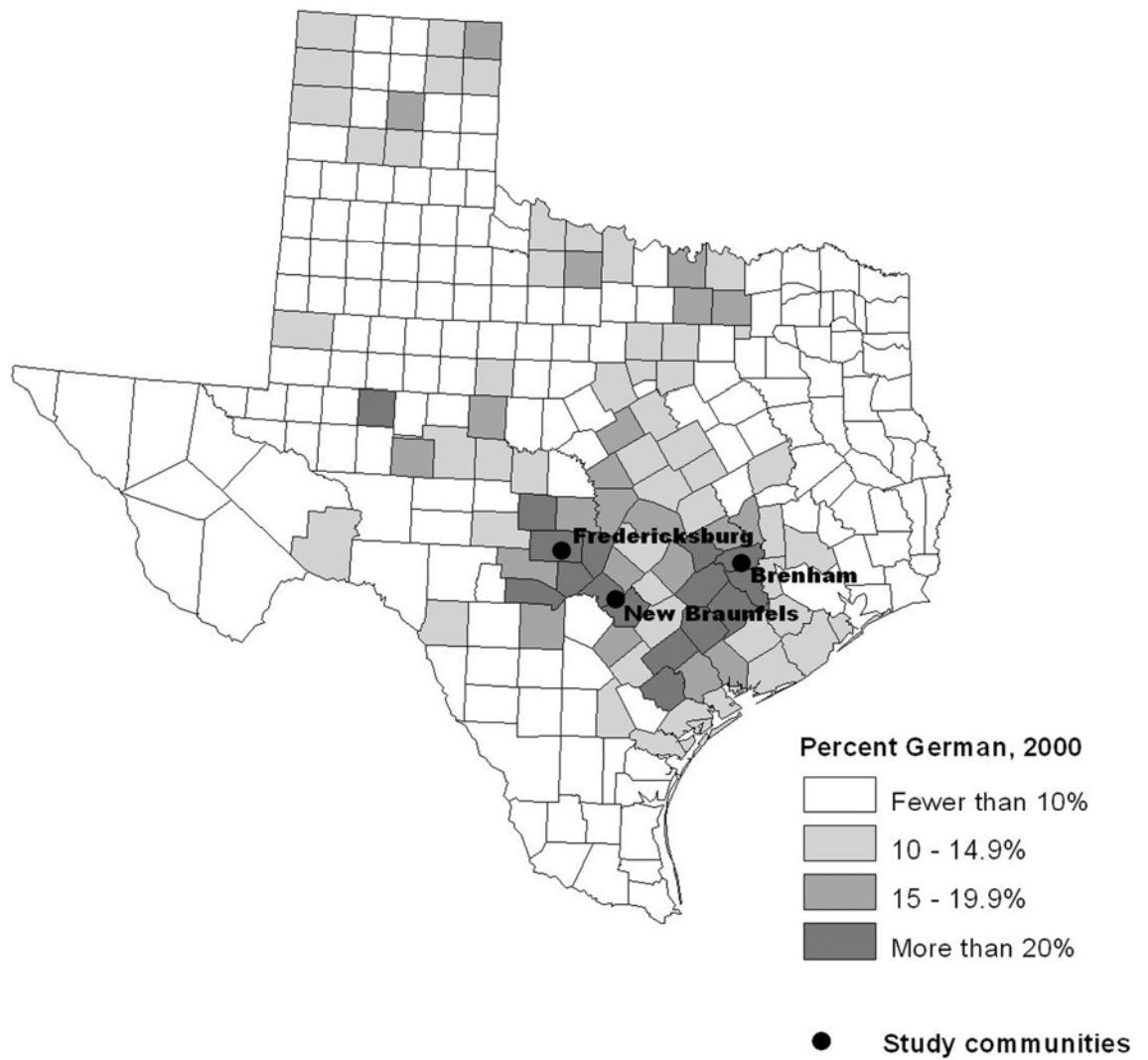


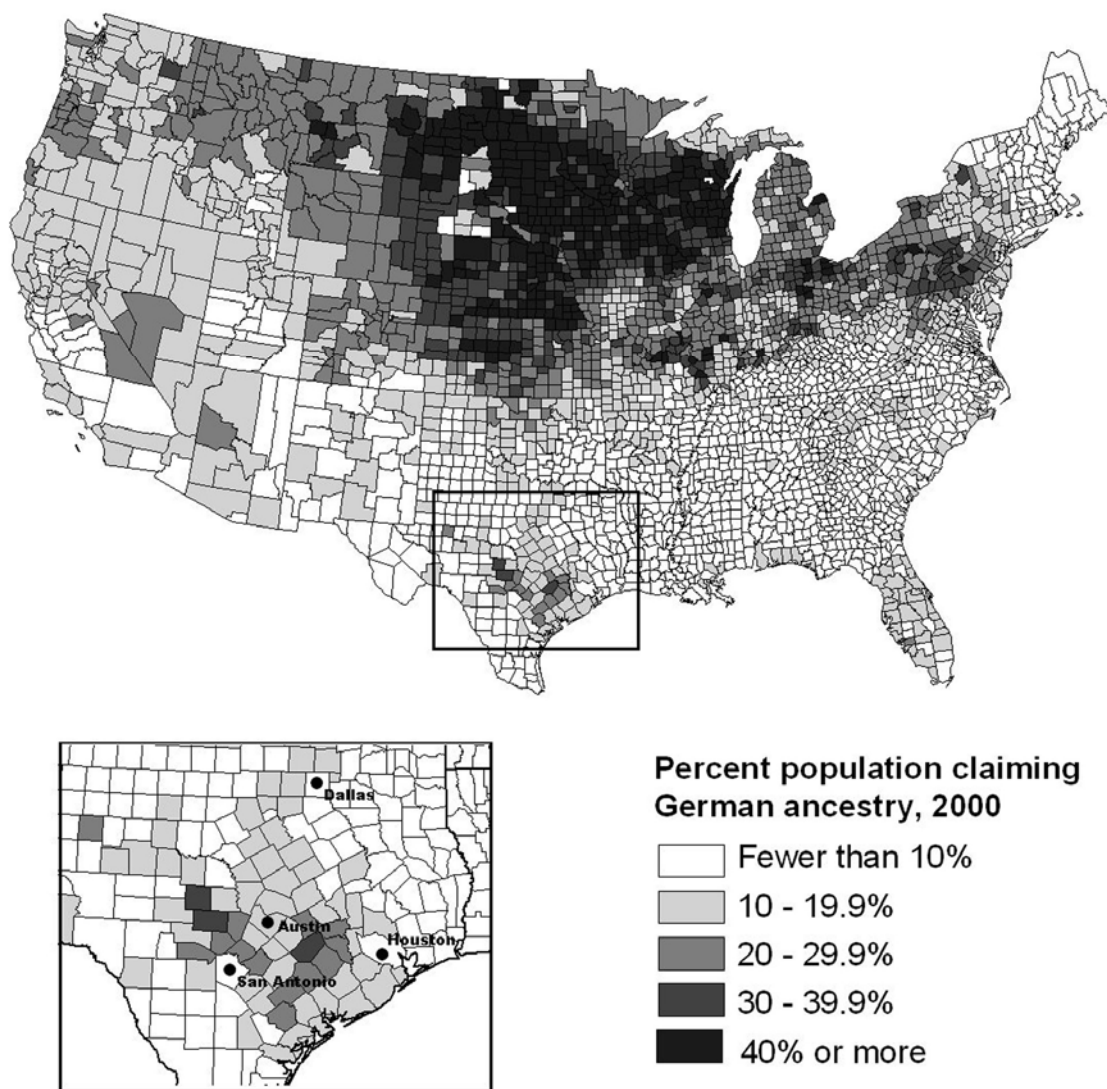
Figure 1.3: Locator map of study communities

I chose Germans from among the tremendous variety of ethnic groups represented in Texas's population and tourism activities because I believe that this group is particularly appropriate for research on ethnic tourism and its impacts. Germans were the largest group of European immigrants to settle in Texas during the nineteenth century, establishing a distinctive ethnic presence throughout the central portion of the state (Jordan 1966). Today, central Texas remains the most ethnically German part of the United States outside the northern core of German settlement (Figure 1.4).² The crucial distinction between this southern outlier and the German-American core is Texas's ethnic and racial diversity, which stands in marked contrast to the whiteness of much of the Midwest.³ Central Texas lies at the confluence of Anglo, Hispanic, European, and African-American migration streams.⁴ Despite the high visibility tourism development and promotion have afforded the state's German heritage, the German presence in Texas appears to be waning as the state's Anglo-American and Hispanic populations expand outward from their traditional regions of settlement.⁵ Although German ancestry continues to be the most frequently claimed ethnic or racial classification in most areas of central Texas (Figure 1.5), a number of counties within the traditional zone of German settlement have been subsumed by the expansion of a multiethnic, multiracial "shatter belt" that has existed since at least 1850 (Jordan 1986). I conducted a factor analysis of

² The two clusters of Texas counties distinguished by high proportions of Germans in their populations are consistent with the "German Hill Country" and "Central Texas" regions delineated by Donald Meinig in his classic work *Imperial Texas* (1969). They also coincide with the significant rural concentrations of Germans observed decades later by Wilbur Zelinsky in *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (1992), demonstrating the persistence and visibility of German Texas.

³ The 2000 Census revealed that all states lying completely north of the 37th parallel were "whiter" than the national average of 69.1% white, except for Alaska and the highly urbanized states of New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Illinois (Brewer and Suchan 2001).

⁴ Throughout the dissertation, I distinguish between the region of "Central Texas" (with a capital C) as defined by Meinig (1969) and "central Texas," a vernacular region that subsumes both Meinig's "Central Texas" and "German Hill Country" regions (Jordan 1978). The term "Anglo" is used to describe collectively those who claim British-derived ancestries, "American" ancestry, or undifferentiated "white" ethnicity.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

Figure 1.4: Distribution of the German-American population

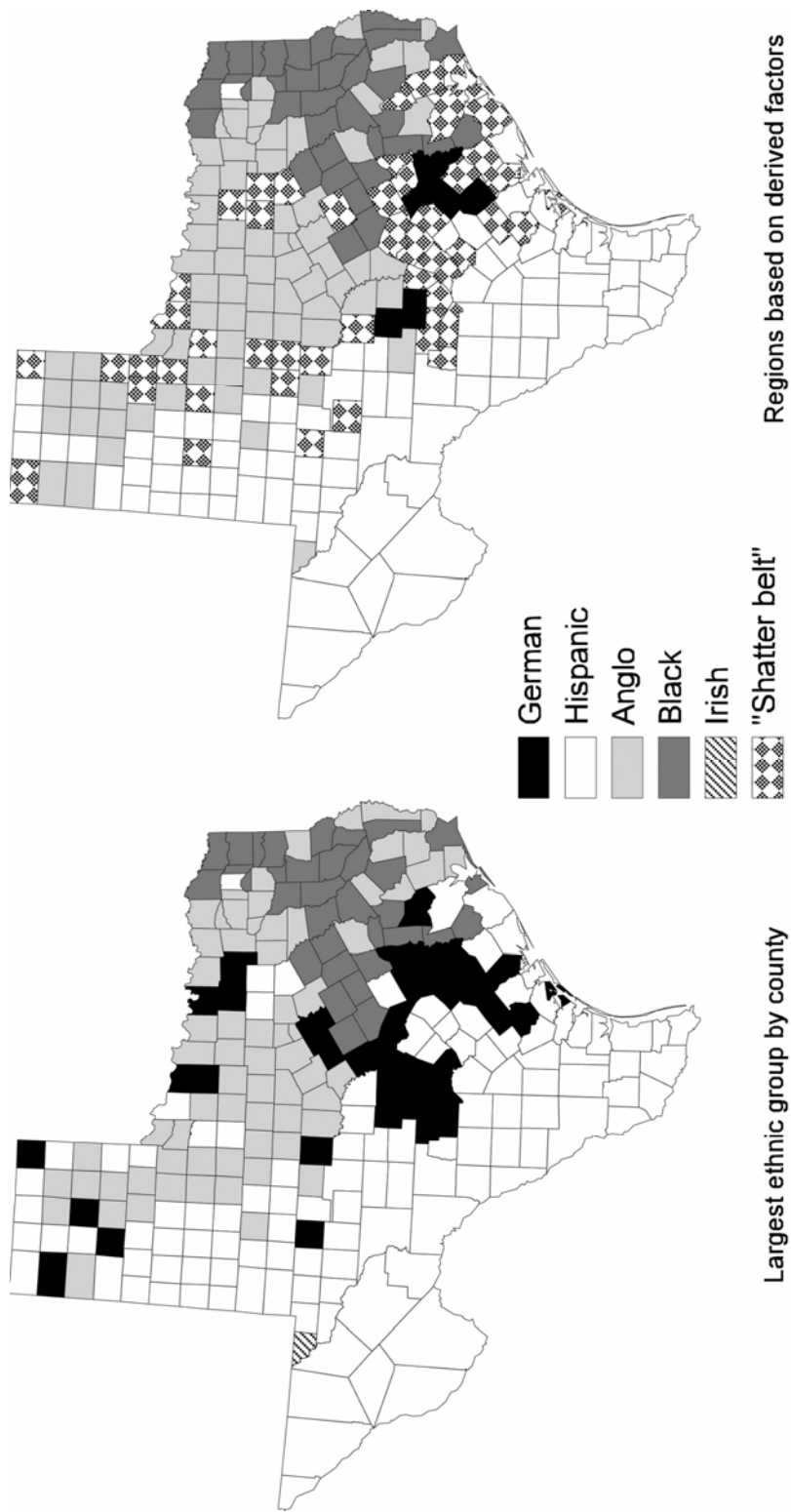


Figure 1.5: Comparison of largest ethnic group by county to regions based on derived factors

the ethnic and racial identifications of Texans in the 2000 Census and discovered that only seven of the state's 254 counties are distinguished from the others because of their significant German populations. As Figure 1.5 illustrates, these seven counties are clustered into a discontinuous region in the center of state, a region that includes the three communities selected as case studies for this research.

Located within the German Hill Country, the city of Fredericksburg is undoubtedly the state's best-known German-themed tourism attraction. According to the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce (2003), the city is continually ranked among the top 15 destinations in Texas. Evidencing tourism's importance to Fredericksburg's economy, 2002 sales tax receipts totaled \$2.7 million and hotel-motel tax receipts totaled nearly \$809,000 (Gillespie County Economic Development Commission 2003). It is important to note that Fredericksburg has a wide variety of tourist attractions and not all of them draw upon the city's ethnic heritage. However, the development of German-themed festivals and attractions played an important role in the initial development of the city's tourism industry (Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce 1996, Kammlah 1999 in Adams 1999). Furthermore, in a survey of tourists conducted in 2004, over one-fifth cited German heritage specifically when asked to state their main reason for visiting Fredericksburg (Core Research 2004). With an additional 28% of survey respondents indicating that the downtown historic district was their main reason for visiting, it is conceivable that various elements of the city's German heritage might be attracting as many as 50% of its visitors (Core Research 2004). In addition to its widespread recognition as a top ethnic tourism destination in the state, Fredericksburg is an essential case study for this research because its success has made it a model for many other Texas communities seeking to develop their own heritage tourism industries (Kammlah 1999 in Adams 1999).

While Fredericksburg remains entrenched within a region largely populated by Germans, the city of New Braunfels, another early focus of German settlement in Texas, is undergoing a significant demographic shift as it becomes increasingly tied to the expanding metropolis of San Antonio. Although Germans continue to be its single largest ethnic group (Figure 1.5), Comal County is located within the shatter belt of increasing ethnic complexity, rather than an area that is clearly defined by its strong German presence. As a result of the continued northward and eastward expansion of Texas' region of Hispanic dominance, persons of Hispanic origin today comprise just over one-third of New Braunfels' total population, while those claiming German ancestry account for less than one-quarter of its population (Appendix A). Nevertheless, New Braunfels continues to promote its German heritage as an important tourism attraction.

The third case study, Brenham, also demonstrates how ethnic tourism functions in a diverse, multi-ethnic context. As in the other study communities, Germans compose a significant element within Brenham's population, accounting for approximately one-quarter of the city's residents in 2000 (Appendix A). Furthermore, Brenham lies within the cluster of Texas counties that are distinguished from the others on the basis of their large German populations (Figure 1.5). However, German heritage is a less significant element within Brenham's complex of tourist attractions than it is in the other study communities. Here, the dominant theme in place promotion is its status as the "Birthplace of Texas," because the county was the site of several key events in Texas' struggle for independence from Mexico (Washington County Chamber of Commerce 2004). Another characteristic that distinguishes Brenham from the other study communities is its large African-American population, includes 23% of the city's residents. While Brenham is as "German" as New Braunfels and Fredericksburg in terms of its settlement history and the ethnic ancestry of its current population, the German theme is less prominent in its

tourism development. This situation makes Brenham a vital case study for exploring why German heritage tourism is downplayed in some communities but emphasized in others, particularly to assess whether visible ethnic and racial diversity among residents is a factor.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OVERVIEW OF METHODS

In seeking to understand the complex dynamics between tourism development and ethnic identity, I focus my research on two central questions. First, I explore the role of tourism in the creation and maintenance of contemporary German-American ethnic identity. I examine the significance of ethnic tourism to the preservation and re-creation of a sense of Germanness among tourism host communities, their residents, and their visitors. I also explore the participation patterns of both Germans and non-Germans in tourism-related activities vis-à-vis the phenomenon of “symbolic ethnicity” in order to gain insight into the meaning and significance of ethnic identity for Americans today (Alba 1990, Gans 1979, Waters 1990). This portion of my research helps to illuminate the mutually constitutive relationship between place and identity that has become an increasingly significant area of inquiry within cultural geography in recent years. Second, I evaluate the extent to which German-themed ethnic tourism perpetuates exclusion on the basis of ethnic and racial difference. Here I focus on determining who participates in this type of tourism and the extent to which participation is perceived as being open to residents and visitors of ancestries other than German, particularly to non-whites. Third, I investigate whether the study communities have adapted their place promotion and tourism development to accommodate and reflect their increasingly diverse resident populations and assess whether any conflicts have arisen regarding the content of place promotion. This component of the research sheds light on processes of racialization

within American society and discusses the extent to which some groups have been able to transgress the color line, at least temporarily, through their participation in festivals and other tourism-oriented activities. Finally, I explore how the cultural landscape impacts tourism development and how tourism development, in turn, shapes the fabric of place. I interrogate the concept of “placelessness” (Relph 1976) within the context of German Texas to reveal how communities negotiate among the physical transformations that often accompany tourism development and efforts to preserve local distinctiveness.

To understand multifaceted, mutable, and highly personal issues such as ethnic identity and perceptions of place, it is necessary to collect data directly from those involved in and affected by ethnic tourism development. Therefore, I employ a predominantly qualitative methodology in which surveys and interviews with tourism producers and consumers provide the foundation of the research. The goal of qualitative research is to “interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them,” stressing the socially constructed nature of reality, intimate relationships between the researcher and his or her subjects, and situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, 2). Thus, qualitative research facilitates more complex interpretations of feelings and behaviors than purely quantitative studies permit. Qualitative researchers also question the position of detachment and distance that is so highly prized in the “hard sciences,” assuming that the researcher cannot fully understand his or her subjects’ behavior without the empathy and sympathetic introspection derived from personal encounters (Patton 1990).

Although it confers the advantage of collecting easily codable, quantifiable data, the standardization of surveys necessarily reduces the richness of the data that can be collected and may reflect the researcher’s a priori notions of what aspects of a phenomenon are significant (Babbie 2001). Thus, I designed my surveys to include as

many open-ended questions as possible to give the respondents greater freedom to identify the issues they regard as most important and to express their opinions and attitudes in their own words. I also incorporated additional quantitative and qualitative data into my analysis in an attempt to holistically address the issues under investigation. This mixed-methodology approach compensates for the shortcomings of different methods while strengthening the conclusions I have drawn.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The relationship between identity and place and the role of tourism in identity formation are receiving considerable attention of researchers in a variety of disciplines within the social sciences.⁶ This study contributes to the impressive and growing body of existing literature by employing a unique methodological approach and by drawing attention to a geographical context that has been largely overlooked by observers of ethnic tourism, but which promises to illuminate relationships central to this area of inquiry.

Methodology

The comparative approach of my research departs significantly from the approaches employed in previous analyses of ethnic tourism and its impacts. While most studies published to date have investigated a single host community in depth, I explore three cases that are united by similar settlement histories and by their promotion of German heritage as a tourism attraction. Analyzing multiple cases facilitates an

⁶ For example, Kay Anderson (1987) and Peter Jackson (1998, Jackson and Penrose 1993) have investigated the dialectical relationship between places and ethnic/racial identities, while geographers including Dan Arreola (1995), Steven Hoelscher (1998a, 1998b, and 2000), Steven Schnell (1998), Wilbur Zelinsky (2001), and Stephen Frenkel and Judy Walton (2000) have begun to explore issues of identity as they relate to American ethnic tourism specifically.

understanding of how local contexts influence and are, in turn, influenced by ethnic tourism development. It also permits the evaluation of ethnic tourism's role in the spatial standardization of host communities and in the preservation and cultivation of local difference. More importantly, each study community has been selected to represent a specific, distinctive ethnic and racial context, permitting exploration of the relationship between tourism and identity construction.

Despite the ubiquity of American places that have developed German-themed place images, it appears that only two such communities—Leavenworth, Washington and Kimberley, British Columbia—have been the subject of prior academic inquiry. Existing research chronicles transformations of Leavenworth's identity and image through tourism development as well as tourism's impacts on residents' attachment to place (Frenkel and Walton 2000, Sudderth 1997 and 2001). Other studies trace Kimberley's shift from an extraction-based economy to a tourism-based economy and the effects of this process (Koch 1998, Rockandel 2005). While these studies further our understanding of ethnic tourism development and its implications, the processes and impacts documented do not necessarily apply to many other German-American tourism destinations. Leavenworth and Kimberley are marketed on the basis of completely constructed Bavarian place images. As such, host communities that have a history of German settlement, and thus cannot be classified as mere ethnic "theme towns" (Engler 1993, 9), remain unexplored. Furthermore, in the case studies I have selected, German heritage is a single element within a diversified touristic image drawn from a variety of local cultural, ethnic, historical, and physical geographies. The impacts and perceptions of ethnic tourism development in such communities will differ significantly from those observed in theme towns. Thus, this research will supplement, complement, and extend existing geographical scholarship, rather than duplicating these efforts.

To explore these issues, I interpret the opinions and attitudes of people involved in or affected by the production and consumption of German-themed festivals. I obtained most of the data using two surveys: one distributed to festival participants and the other to residents of each study community. I supplemented this information through participant observation, interviews with tourism planners, content analysis of promotional materials, and landscape interpretation. A more detailed description of the surveys and supplemental data sources is provided in Appendix B.

Tourism and Ethnic Identity

Much of the significance of this research lies in the fact that trends in central Texas mirror those occurring at the national scale: according to the U.S. Census, from 1990-2000, the number of Americans claiming German ancestry declined by 23%, and the number who claimed German as their first ancestry shrank by 43% (Figure 1.6).⁷ Thus, the findings presented in this dissertation might prove generalizable to larger geographical units. Furthermore, I believe that tourism will play an increasingly important role in preserving, maintaining, recreating, and constructing German-American identities and images among residents, visitors, and places in central Texas as the region becomes more ethnically diverse and less “German.” In the pages that follow, I will describe how Germanness has been constructed at both the regional and national scales and discuss the role of tourism in continuing and extending this process.⁸ I will also contend that the construction of Germanness—and whiteness more broadly—inherently involves the construction of “non-German” and “non-white” identities and thus contributes to the racialization of other groups.

⁷ According to Census figures, the total population of the United States increased by 13% from 1990-2000.

⁸ A number of scholars, most notably Kathleen Neils Conzen (1985, 1989), have discussed the construction of German-American identities at the national scale. I will review this literature in Chapter Two.

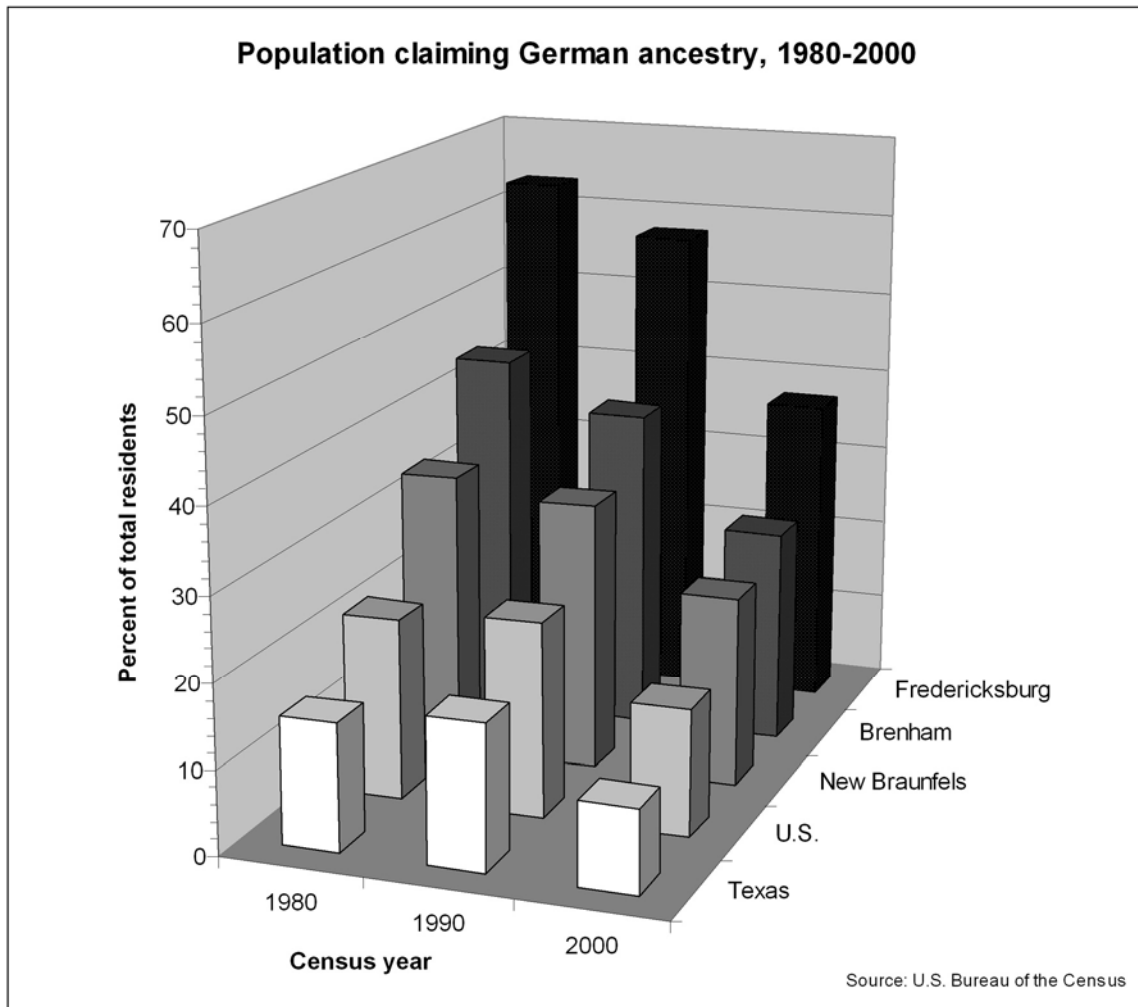


Figure 1.6: Trends in population claiming German ancestry

The observations and conclusions drawn from this research may thus prove generalizable to the nation as a whole as it experiences demographic changes similar to those occurring in Texas. Because Germans are still the largest European national origin group in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000), ethnic tourism focusing on Germans and their heritage is widespread. Oktoberfests and the like have become part of the mainstream of American popular culture, extending beyond events organized by German Americans themselves (Totten 1985, Tolzmann 2000) and thus clearly demonstrate the intersection between the evolution of increasingly symbolic ethnic identities and tourism development.

Tourism and the Marketing of Place Images

In recent decades, places have become more similar with the emergence of national and global cultures. At the same time, they have become more differentiated in response to market forces (Zukin 1991). While the rapid diffusion of mass-produced goods and services and the global dominance of multinational businesses have eroded some aspects of the uniqueness of places, many people who control spaces have consciously developed and promoted spatial differences in their efforts to attract capital (Harvey 1990). Globalization has thus provoked “place wars” in which places around the globe compete with one another for their economic survival (Kotler, Haider, and Rein 1993). With the production and consumption of services eclipsing the production and consumption of goods in postindustrial societies, tourism is becoming an increasingly important economic development strategy (Harvey 1990).

The place images that are developed, promoted, and disseminated as a result of tourism development are an important and emerging area of inquiry for cultural

geographers. The primary objective of place marketing is “to construct a new image of the place to replace either vague or negative images previously held by current or potential residents, investors and visitors” (Holcomb 1993, 133). Ernest Sternberg (1997, 955) describes how place images are constructed in response to the demands of the consumer market:

Like other products, tourism products must be carefully composed to provide to consumers (tourists) evocative images... [Tourism] enterprises have to appeal to the tourist’s fond desires and imaginative associations. To do so they have to draw on myths, histories and fantasies, either ones associated with the locality or others taken from the universal cultural domain.

Edward Relph (1976, 7) reminds us that “Place has a range of significances and identities that is as wide as the range of human consciousness of place.” However, it is possible for only a small component of the total place-product to be incorporated in place marketing (Ashworth and Voogd 1990). This situation is complicated by the fact that there may be several visions of local culture associated with different local subpopulations based on class, ethnicity, gender, race, sexuality, and other characteristics. Events or objects promoted for tourism may hold different meanings for various groups of residents, and these groups might disagree as to which objects and events are most worthy of celebration or display (Philo and Kearns 1993). The resulting place image may be problematic because it necessarily represents only one permutation of the myriad features, attractions, interpretations, and histories that may be combined to represent the host community. Furthermore, Chris Philo and Gerry Kearns (1993, 3) observe that “central to the activities subsumed under the heading of selling places is an often conscious and deliberate manipulation of culture in an effort to enhance the appeal and interest of places.” This manipulation of culture in the interest of attracting visitors can lead to tensions and conflict among residents.

The rise of place marketing and its associated impacts have led some critics to question whether tourism host communities function as spaces in which residents can live and express themselves or whether these places have merely become products to be sold to tourists (Shaw and Williams 1994). Some observers argue that as places are packaged for consumption, they “are not so much presented as foci of attachment and concern but as bundles of social and economic opportunity competing against one another” (Philo and Kearns 1993, 18). Differences within resident populations are suppressed as the more superficial differences between places are harnessed to create familiar, attractive images composed of a pleasant ensemble of cultural, historical, aesthetic, and environmental motifs that gloss over local controversy and conflict (Philo and Kearns 1993). Despite concerns about the epidemic spread of placelessness, Susan Fainstein and Dennis Judd (1999b, 16) argue that, in spite of their seeming similarity, tourism host communities are occupied by “real people leading their daily lives,” and thus they retain a subjectivity that cannot be wholly eliminated by the processes of commodification and consumption.

Heritage tourism provides a salient example of the implications of image promotion for the political and social realities of host communities because of its overtly political nature (Hall 1997b). As C. Michael Hall (1997b, 95) explains, heritage is “a flexible concept which indicates selective reinterpretations of the past.” Furthermore, it has been argued that “the nature and shaping of heritage is intimately related to the exercise of power, heritage being part of the process of defining criteria of social inclusion and—by extension—social exclusion” (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, 34). The version of history that is presented to tourists is not necessarily compatible with popular memory because, in many cases, it has been “selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those with the power to do so” (Hall 1997b, 95). The presentation of one-dimensional views of the past in heritage tourism promotion

“flattens” and suppresses contested views of history by providing a linear, conflict-free interpretation of past events (Hall 1997a, Hall 1997b). The long history of ethnic diversity that continues to evolve in central Texas provides an ideal environment in which to explore the politics of heritage tourism and whether place promotion fosters conflict or cooperation in communities whose social realities are more complex than what is presented for tourists’ consumption.

Tourism and Place Identity

Place marketing exemplifies the concept of flexible specialization within post-Fordist modes of production (Hall 1997a). Place marketing does not simply involve the promotion and advertising of places, but also involves the adaptation of the product (i.e., the place) to the market (i.e., tourists) (Holcomb 1993). The most obvious way in which places are transformed to create appealing place images is through the development of tourism attractions. To maintain their status as destinations, places are often remade to resemble their advertised images and their physical landscapes are consciously molded into environments that tourists will wish to inhabit (Fainstein and Judd 1999b). As a result, places may find themselves “caught in a tourist gaze from which they cannot readily escape” (Hall 1997b, 96).

One of the most commonly cited side effects of tourism development on places is the standardization of host communities, an ironic outcome considering that the success of tourism often relies on the illusion of “uniqueness” (Fainstein and Gladstone 1999). Sharon Zukin (1991, 13) attributes the overall weakening of local distinctiveness to the spread of national and global cultures, reduced transportation costs, and technological advancement, which equalize conditions of production and therefore make places themselves “more equal.” While host communities would seemingly benefit by

distinguishing themselves from other destinations, tourism planners and officials fear departing from formulas that have proven successful elsewhere (Fainstein and Judd 1999b). Places must be as generous as their competitors in providing incentives to attract investment and “they must adopt every new variation on a theme that comes along” in order to remain competitive in the struggle to attract visitors (Judd 1995, 178). Successful themes and landscapes are reproduced, resulting in a “serial monotony” in which tourism destinations are nearly identical in ambience (Harvey 1990, 295). Further, in their efforts to attract visitors, destinations tend to offer standardized accommodations and amenities (Philo and Kearns 1993). Therefore, “the practice of selling places may even generate sameness or blandness despite its appearance of bringing geographical difference into the fold of contemporary economic and political discourse” (Philo and Kearns 1993, 21).

Thus, some observers fear that, as host communities strive to satisfy the expectations of visitors, vernacular landscapes are being replaced by homogeneous, synthetic landscapes that reinforce popular cultural stereotypes (Relph 1976). However, others argue that tourism helps to protect communities and traditions that would otherwise vanish in the face of globalization by providing economic incentives for their preservation (Cohen 1988). In regard to American ethnic tourism specifically, Michael Conzen (1990, 246) concludes that it frequently encourages “strenuous efforts to ... [reinvent] the signs and symbols of that presence in communities where vestiges of ethnic identity are waning or have completely disappeared.” Conzen describes these touristic expressions of ethnicity as “ersatz,” implying that they are somehow inferior to more traditional ethnic inventions. Anthropologists, too, fear that commodification robs cultural products (such as places) of their meaning and significance for local people (Greenwood 1989). However, Erik Cohen (1988) argues that commodification may actually imbue cultural products (like places) with new meanings that add to, rather than

replace, older ones. He further points out that commodification usually occurs when a culture is already in decline due to outside factors unrelated to tourism development. Thus, in many cases, tourism development might be seen as facilitating the preservation of local identities that would otherwise vanish.

German-American communities provide a unique opportunity for evaluating the impacts of tourism development on place, particularly because Bavarian themes and symbols are overwhelmingly employed in marketing efforts. The “Bavarianization” phenomenon is interesting because migration to the United States from this province has historically been insignificant in comparison to immigration from other parts of Germany (Jordan 1966). Bavarianization thus embodies intriguing implications regarding tourism’s role in shaping the cultural landscape and in affecting perceptions of the “authenticity” of host communities.

As John Urry (1995) points out, the chance to encounter a distinctive landscape and to escape from everyday experience is central to the consumption of tourism destinations. The transformation of industrialized economies to a post-Fordist pattern has led to the replacement of mass production and mass consumption by more differentiated and flexible economic forms. In the post-Fordist economy, markets are dominant, requiring producers to be much more consumer-oriented. Consumers’ rejection of certain forms of mass tourism has fostered market segmentation, increasing the diversity of tourist attractions, sites, and experiences (Urry 1995). Thus, the tendency for tourism development to promote homogeneity among destinations is paradoxical, especially when one considers that the “ethnic exoticism” of a place is a potent lure for potential tourists (Van den Berghe and Keyes 1984, 343). In this dissertation, I will explore how German-themed tourism in central Texas balances the need to offer familiar, comfortable environments for visitors with efforts to emphasize the novelty of local place experiences.

OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

As the preceding discussion suggests, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of contemporary ethnic identities and their relationship to place. I begin my discussion by providing a brief history of German settlement in central Texas in Chapter Two. I also trace the development of German-American identity in the U.S. and in Texas, emphasizing the role of festive culture in its maintenance and reconstruction.

I examine the representation of “Germanness” in tourism marketing and its role relative to other central Texas tourism attractions in Chapter Three. I reveal that in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, where German heritage is highly visible in the landscape, Germanness provides an overarching framework within which other attractions are represented. While this practice is an important component of tourism marketing—MacCannell (1989, 48) posits that the “touristic value” of modern communities is greatly influenced by the way they organize diverse local attributes into “a stream of impressions”—it normalizes Germanness and significantly downplays the diversity of resident populations. In Brenham, where few traces of German heritage can be observed within the built environment, Germanness is de-emphasized in place marketing and tourism development strategies in favor of other, more tangible aspects of local heritage.

In Chapter Four, I present the results of surveys of participants in German-themed festivals. My findings suggest that these events play an important role in the maintenance of German-American ethnic identity among attendees. I demonstrate that patterns of participation in German-themed tourism support existing theories regarding the nature of contemporary white ethnicity and that they also reflect the persistence of a long-standing, biracial social dichotomy within the state.

Tourism's impacts on the fabric of the host communities are the subject of Chapter Five. Here, I evaluate the extent to which the study communities have been physically and symbolically transformed by tourism development. I point out that the majority of residents surveyed are generally supportive of the way in which their communities and local heritages are represented as tourism attractions. I further observe a disparity in attitudes toward tourism among residents and argue that this disagreement reflects class distinctions as much, if not more, than ethnic and racial differences within local populations. I then demonstrate how the cultural landscape of each city continues to reflect its unique local and regional contexts. I underscore the relationship between place identity and place image by illustrating how German heritage tourism in Brenham has been constrained by the city's lack of German material culture. I also demonstrate how tourism development in New Braunfels and Fredericksburg relies heavily on the cities' unique local landscapes and largely resists Bavarianization and other types of spatial standardization.

I conclude my analysis in Chapter Six by summarizing the mutually dependent relationships among tourism development, place identity, and ethnic identity. I argue that tourism development reflects and supports trends in the development of white ethnic identity as well as historical processes of racialization that have been taking place in Texas over the past 150 years. I propose that the evolution of touristic place identity is following a trajectory similar to that of white ethnic identity, with destinations embracing increasingly voluntary, ephemeral, and symbolic identities. Owing to the reciprocity between place and identity, this development could signal and even accelerate the further transformation of white ethnicity, which could in turn undermine the success of German heritage tourism in central Texas. I complete the dissertation by discussing this and other possible challenges that might confront German Texas in the decades to come.

Chapter Two:

***Deutschum* in Texas: The Invention and Evolution of German-Texan Ethnicity**

Although this number is but small comparatively speaking, German manners and German mind have more influence and are more respected [in Texas] than anywhere else in the United States.

— Friedrich Kapp 1855⁹

Notions of “German America” couldn’t be further from many people’s mental image of the nineteenth-century Texas frontier. And yet, in 1850 the proportion of Germans among the white population of Texas might have exceeded that in Wisconsin, a state more readily associated with German settlement in the minds of many Americans (Benjamin 1909).¹⁰ In the 1840s, sustained immigration from Europe fueled dreams of establishing an independent German republic in Texas. Even after the United States annexed the territory in 1845, separatists aspired to create a German-dominated state, to be called “West Texas,” until about 1870 (Knopp 2004). Although this goal was never realized, by 1887, Texas’s German population was exceeded in size only by its Anglo and black populations, and Germans outnumbered Hispanics three to one (Jordan 1986).

As the first European settlers in the central Texas borderlands, Germans successfully transplanted and propagated much of their Old World heritage in their strange new environment. Traveling throughout the state in the 1850s, *New York Times* journalist Frederick Law Olmstead (quoted in Benjamin 1909, 169) observed, “I never in

⁹ Reported in the *New York Tribune* (January 20, 1855) and quoted in Benjamin 1909, 111.

¹⁰ Estimates by Gilbert Benjamin (1909) place the proportion of Germans in Texas’s white population at approximately 20% in 1850. He estimated that Germans made up just one-sixth of Wisconsin’s white population at that time.

my life, except, perhaps, in awakening from a dream, met with such a sudden and complete transfer of associations...in short, we were in Germany.” Although it has faded somewhat in the century and a half since Olmstead’s journey, the German imprint on the cultural landscape remains visible in many parts of Texas. Some older Texans can recall a time when German was still spoken in the streets of Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, towns whose very names evoke their rich German heritage.

German Texas was forever changed in the mid-twentieth century. Advances in transportation and communication dissolved the geographical isolation that had nurtured the distinctive identity of many people and places. In the period from 1990 to 2000 alone, the number of Texans claiming German ancestry plummeted from nearly three million to just over two million. At the same time, the late twentieth century witnessed a “second renaissance” of German-American culture throughout the nation (Figure 2.1). In Texas, the number of German-themed festivals advertised in the state’s official Calendar of Events increased tenfold between 1962 and 2000. How can we account for this curious phenomenon and what can it tell us about the meaning of “Germanness” today? In this chapter, I will set the stage for an investigation of German-themed tourism development in central Texas and its implications for our understanding of contemporary ethnic identity. I will briefly outline the history of German settlement in Texas, focusing on the three communities that are the subject of this dissertation. I will also trace the rise, fall, and rebound of German-American ethnic identity to illuminate the larger context within which German-Texan identity is situated.



Figure 2.1: The *Spasshaus* on the Wurstfest grounds in New Braunfels displays memorabilia from over 40 years of celebrations.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GERMAN SETTLEMENT IN TEXAS

During the mid-1800s, Texas's reputation as a land of great economic opportunity was a powerful magnet for German emigrants who were displaced from their homeland by political upheaval, crop failures, the disruptive effects of industrialization, increasing land fragmentation, diminishing agricultural prices, mounting production costs, and rising taxes (Jordan 1966). The first Germans arrived in Texas during the 1830s, clustering in ethnic enclaves that formed a "broad, fragmented belt across the south central part of the state" (Jordan 2001a). This "German Belt" (Figure 2.2) expanded over time until it "stretched from Galveston and Houston on the east to Kerrville, Mason, and Hondo in the west; from the fertile, humid Coastal Plain to the semiarid Hill Country" (Jordan 2001a).

Johann Friedrich Ernst, born Friedrich Diercks, was the dominant personality who provided the initial impetus behind German immigration to Texas. Although he originally planned to develop settlements in Missouri, Ernst switched his focus to Texas after learning that large land grants were available to European colonists.¹¹ In 1831, he received more than 4,000 acres in present-day Austin County, a parcel of land that would form the "nucleus" of Texas's German Belt (Jordan 2001a). Through his "America letters"—some of which were reprinted in German books and newspapers—Ernst stimulated a process of chain migration that brought settlers to Texas from central and western Germany, notably the Kingdom of Hannover and the Duchy of Nassau (Jordan 1968, 2001a). Within a decade, German colonists had established several rural communities in the middle of the state. Some of the towns around Ernst's original land grant were settled exclusively by Germans. A few of these communities bear toponyms—such as New Ulm, Weimar, and Oldenburg—that reflect their founders' origins, while

¹¹ Aside from Missouri, Texas was the only southern state to receive a significant stream of German immigration during the nineteenth century, a fact that helped to culturally distinguish the state from other parts of the South (Jordan 1966).

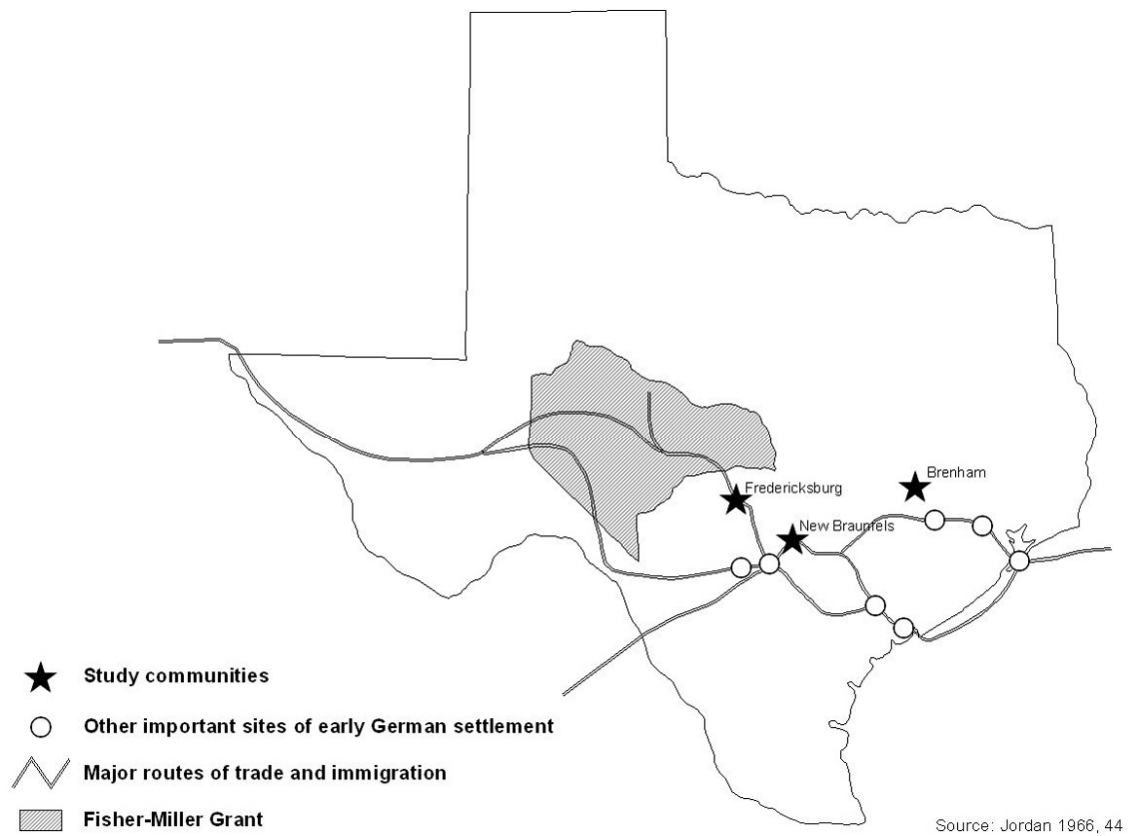


Figure 2.2: Important sites in the early history of German settlement in Texas

others received less ethnically distinctive monikers such as Industry, Cat Spring, and Rockhouse (Meinig 1969). In addition to these ethnic islands, the Germans also formed enclaves in areas that had already been settled by Anglo-Texans. Regardless of whether or not they were the first white occupants, the Germans eventually became dominant, both numerically and culturally, in many of the places where they settled (Jackson 2006).

As news of the emigration to Texas spread throughout Germany in the 1840s, a group of petty noblemen formed an organization known as the *Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer* in Texas, or *Adelsverein*, to establish German colonies in the state.¹² Combining their lust for personal wealth, prestige, and power with the nationalistic goal of alleviating overpopulation in their homeland, the *Adelsverein* brought more than 7,000 Germans to Texas from 1844 until 1847 (Jordan 2001a). Although the venture ultimately proved a financial failure for its sponsors, it contributed sizable German populations to the cities of Galveston, Houston, and San Antonio and resulted in the founding of the towns of Fredericksburg and New Braunfels in the Hill Country.

New Braunfels and Fredericksburg were established as major nodes in an archipelago of German communities that extended across central Texas. The *Adelsverein* had purchased a tract of land in western Texas, the Fisher-Miller Land Grant (Figure 2.2), which it originally intended to be the ultimate destination of the immigrants it sponsored. When the first group of German settlers arrived in Galveston in 1844, they realized that the grant was far too remote for immediate settlement and decided to establish a string of colonies stretching from the Gulf Coast to the Llano River (Jordan 1961). Founded in 1845 at a site selected by and named for Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, commissioner

¹² Translated as the “Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas,” this group was also known as the *Adelsverein*, *Mainzer Verein*, or German Emigration Company (Jordan 1966, 41). It has also been referred to as the *Texasverein* (Kattner 1991). In this dissertation, I use the term *Adelsverein*.

general of the *Adelsverein*, New Braunfels was the first of these settlements to be created (Greene 2001). On March 21, a wagon train of German immigrants followed the Guadalupe River to the site, and by summer's end the population of New Braunfels had grown to three or four hundred people under the leadership of John O. Meusebach (Greene 2001). Owing to the water power generated by Comal Springs and the settlement's location between Austin and San Antonio, New Braunfels rapidly became the commercial and manufacturing center for a growing agricultural area (Greene 2001).¹³ However, there was not enough land available to provide the 160- and 320-acre holdings the *Adelsverein* had promised the immigrants. Thus, in 1845, an expedition set out to find a second location suitable for settlement en route to the Fisher-Miller grant (Bieseke 1930).

In August of 1845, Meusebach and a surveying party selected a site 60 miles northwest of New Braunfels for the second colony. The area's abundant timber, water, and stone inspired Meusebach himself to purchase 10,000 acres (Kohout 2004). In the following year, 120 Germans from New Braunfels departed for the new location. Named for Prince Frederick of Prussia, another member of the *Adelsverein*, the town of Fredericksburg was laid out in the fashion of German villages of the Rhineland, with small houses lining one long, wide main street (Kohout 2004). Modest "Sunday houses" (see Figure 5.1), constructed first from timber and later from *fachwerk*, allowed the Germans to stay in town on the weekends to shop, attend church services, and participate in social functions (Jordan 2001b). During the rest of the week, the settlers lived on 10-acre farmsteads in the surrounding countryside (Kohout 2004).

The West Texas borderlands were sparsely settled prior to the Germans' arrival, populated only by a few nomadic bands of Native Americans including the Comanche,

¹³ It is estimated that New Braunfels had become the fourth-largest town in Texas by 1850 (Greene 2001).

Tonkawa, and Kiowa (Dietrich 2006, Jordan 1966, Kohout 2001). Thus, the Germans successfully transferred much of their European culture into the region. In his 1909 study of the Germans in Texas, Dr. Gilbert Benjamin (1909, 165) observed:

There is no district of the United States where the Germans have kept their racial characteristics to so great a degree as in the district lying west of the Colorado river [*sic*]...There you will see the German drinking his beer in small gardens. There you will hear the German as the common speech. You might imagine yourself in one of the little towns of Germany.

Because of their successful adaptation to the physical environment, geographical isolation, and limited natural resources to attract other settlers, the Germans retained a high degree of cultural distinctiveness, social cohesion, and local identity for several decades after colonization (Meinig 1969). As such, this western half of central Texas has come to be known as the “German Hill Country” among cultural geographers and in the vernacular of many Texans (Meinig 1969). The Germans left an indelible impression on the cultural landscape of the Hill Country, as evidenced by old rock and *fachwerk* houses, unique stone fences, large central market squares in the downtowns, and spacious town lots that can still be observed in many communities today (Jordan 1966).

Despite the bankruptcy of the *Adelsverein* in 1847 and the discovery that it had purchased only the rights to settle the Fisher-Miller Grant, not title to the land itself, German migration to Texas continued throughout the decade that followed. Although settlement did not penetrate into the westernmost lands that were its original target, the German Belt was reinforced as new immigrants joined existing German communities (Jordan 1966). Although the flow of immigrants was temporarily staunches by the Union blockade of Confederate ports, the German population of Texas continued to grow as a result of natural increase. After the Civil War, the influx of Germans resumed, with even greater numbers pouring into the state than had arrived during the antebellum era (Jordan

1966). These new arrivals were largely drawn to the eastern half of the German Belt. Most of the German population of Brenham arrived during this later phase of immigration, especially during the 1880s following the completion of the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway (Christian 2006, Dietrich 1990). The Brazos River roughly divided ethnically and economically diverse Central Texas from East Texas, which was the westernmost extension of the Plantation South. Thus, the Germans who settled in Brenham were transplanted into a biracial social and economic milieu in which skin color was the most important distinction among residents (Meinig 1969).

As one group living in the most heterogeneous culture region of the state (Meinig 1969), the Germans did not shape the cultural landscape of Brenham to the same extent as in the Hill Country. The Germans dispersed among the existing Anglo-American population of eastern Texas, integrated into a well-established and viable rural economy, and readily adopted many Anglo traits, including construction methods, fencing styles, and farming techniques (Jordan 1966). However, the Germans retained many distinctive, non-material elements of their culture, including language, religion, and social customs (Meinig 1969); thus, the German influence was palpable, although it was not dominant. In Brenham, Germans published a newspaper (the *Texas Volksbote*) from 1873-1919, established a number of churches, and founded several schools, including the Mission Institute that was the forerunner of today's Blinn College (Christian 2006). In 1874, Brenham's German population hosted its first *Volksfest*, a community picnic to celebrate the arrival of spring. In 1874, the *Brenham Banner-Press* ran the following item to introduce and explain the origin of the festival:

The second day of May, our German friends and fellow citizens celebrate at the fairgrounds their ancient custom. The opening of the spring. The festival is of Teutonic origin, and in the course of time the other ancient nations of Europe followed their example, and celebrated also the awaking of nature from its liberal sleep. We Americans have in the fall of the year our Thanksgiving Day, why do

we not also celebrate the anticipation of an abundant harvest with some ceremonial gathering?

News reports from subsequent years indicate that the annual event attracted visitors from outside the community almost as soon as it was inaugurated (Dietrich 1990). With the event attracting upwards of 2000 participants by 1879, financial difficulties forced the Volksfest Association to turn the event over to the Brenham Fire Department in 1881, at which time it was rechristened “Maifest” (Dietrich 1990). In 1889, the *Brenham Daily-Banner* reported that the event had become much more American than German in character, a development that some in the community regretted while others applauded (Dietrich 1990). After a temporary suspension of the event in honor of those serving in World War II, the Maifest Association was organized in 1951 to resurrect and assume management of the event (Dietrich 1990 and 2006).¹⁴

The German population of Texas peaked in the 1890s, after which immigration from Germany to the U.S. began to dwindle.¹⁵ Nevertheless, German settlement continued to march westward across the state over the following three decades. Later-established communities were populated by second- and third-generation German Texans, many of whom had migrated from other parts of the German Belt (Jordan 2001a). Although the Great Depression stemmed the expansion of German settlement and many rural dwellers migrated to cities during the twentieth century, the boundaries of the German Belt have remained fairly stable since 1930. However, without the flow of new immigrants to help maintain and reinforce ethnic traditions, the “clear cultural identity” of European Texans began to erode after the 1920s (Meinig 1969, 85). The intrusion of

¹⁴ It is interesting to note here that the name of the festival has been Anglicized by most Brenham residents and is pronounced “MAY-fest,” as compared to the proper German pronunciation of “MY-fest.” The “Texanization” of imported place names is not unique to Brenham and can be observed throughout the state.

¹⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century, the population of Texas included as many as 40,000 Germans (Jordan 2001a).

Anglo Texan settlers into the previously isolated German Belt, rural depopulation, the anti-German sentiment of the early twentieth century, intermarriage, and modern transportation and communication technologies all took their toll on German-Texan culture (Jordan 2001a). In the 1950s, urban ethnic enclaves fragmented as later generations began to suburbanize, and German-language institutions such as the press and the schools declined, “signaling the end of an era” (Jordan 2001a).

THE MAKING, UN-MAKING, AND RE-MAKING OF GERMAN AMERICANS

While ethnic groups are often regarded as “communities of descent” by their members—designations based on purported common ancestral origins (Sollors 1986)—most contemporary scholars acknowledge that categories of ethnic difference are actually human constructions. The “invention of ethnicity” (Sollors 1989) is epitomized by the German-American experience. Prior to unification in 1871, there was no concept of Germany as a political or national entity. The Germans who immigrated to the United States were quite culturally diverse, united only by their common language. However, even before the onset of mass immigration from Europe, festive culture was drawing the German community together while setting it apart from other American ethnic groups. Many Germans had come to the United States in hopes of a better life and thus eagerly embraced their adopted homeland and its customs. Festive culture provided a bridge between two worlds—Germans could be American in their everyday interactions while remaining German in their leisure time (Conzen 1989). Festivals encouraged German Americans to develop a distinct ethnic identity and provided temporary relief from the struggles of adapting to new cultural and physical environments (Bungert 2003).

In addition to festivals and other ethnic celebrations, a number of historical, political, social, and economic factors also contributed to the development of notions of

shared “German” identity. For example, in the early phases of settlement, German Texans tended to think of themselves in terms of their regional origins, claiming identities as Hessians, Westphalians, or Nassauers (Jordan 1968). However, in Texas as in other parts of the United States, minority status within an alien, Anglo-dominated culture fostered the cohesion of German Texans into a self-conscious “ethnic” population (Jordan 1968).

Non-Germans contributed to the development of German-American identity by mistakenly regarding Germans and German culture as generally uniform. Native-born Americans perceived Germans as a discrete ethnic group on the basis of their shared language, ignoring or failing to recognize their linguistic, religious, social, and political distinctions and diverse provincial origins (Luebke 1983). In describing “ethnicization”—the process by which an ethnic group develops a social identity—Jörg Echternkamp (1991) explains that the emergence of ethnic identity stems from self-ascription, the belief in commonly held cultural attitudes and traits, as well as ascription by others. In the case of German Americans, the acceptance of an externally imposed, vague, “nationally” based grouping was a unifying factor within a foreign and often antagonistic American environment. The German language press, voluntary associations, cultural symbols and public performance, benevolent societies, churches, and schools all contributed to the creation of an ethnic community directly, by fostering contact among German Americans, and indirectly, by reinforcing an image of solidarity and unity in the eyes of the larger American society.

The myth of German unity was also promoted—often deliberately—from within the German-American community. As documented by Lauren Ann Kattner (1991), early German-Anglo relations in the city of New Braunfels demonstrate this process. Despite the fact that the city’s original colonists came from 85 different places of origin, German Texans in New Braunfels and in other parts of the state associated the town with a

“Nassauer” image by the 1840s. This identity reflected the numerical supremacy of immigrants from the Duchy of Nassau and the community’s desire to associate itself with Duke Adolf von Nassau, a leader of the *Adelsverein*. In addition, Prince Carl’s recruitment efforts in Germany elided the fact that the town was dominated by settlers from a few specific source areas by overemphasizing the diversity among their origins. Like most settlers, he also denied the stratified socioeconomic hierarchy that was developing in Texas. The image of unity and equality that he perpetuated appealed to artisans and lower-middle class Germans seeking to escape the confines of traditional notions of status through emigration.

After the collapse of the *Adelsverein*, New Braunfels’s remaining ungranted town lots were sold to Anglo-Texans and French immigrants, altering the ethnic composition of the community. Later, settlers from the East Coast brought industrialization, commerce, and opportunities for advancement to the agrarian, frontier society. Nevertheless, German Texans largely downplayed the important role that migrants from New England played in the city’s development, adhering to myths of German supremacy and cohesion. Thus, despite the “internal reality of Anglo influence and friendship,” the local mythology presented a “more German than Anglo-American character to the outside world” (Kattner 1991, 176). This tendency continues today in place promotion, which largely overlooks New Braunfels’s numerically dominant Hispanic population and conveys a largely “German” place image. A similar process of myth-making took place in Fredericksburg, where upper-middle-class Yankees were the most influential non-German group within the city. With the perpetuation of social myths centering on German cultural and economic dominance, Fredericksburg’s image as a “German” community persists, despite the heterogeneity that has resulted from an influx of retirees and tourism development since the 1960s (Howard 1984 in Kattner 1991).

External influences on the development of German-American identity also took the form of rising nativism among the Anglo-American population. During the three major waves of German immigration to the United States that occurred between 1634 and the late nineteenth century, Germans were viewed in a mostly positive light by their fellow Americans. They were perceived as honest, hard-working, deeply religious, peaceful, and largely passive, favorable characteristics that were quite similar to those claimed by Anglo-Americans during the same period (Knobel 1980).¹⁶ However, unprecedented immigration in the late nineteenth century ushered in a period in which immigrants and their descendents were expected to “Americanize,” or conform to the dominant Anglo-American culture (Luebke 1983). The ethnocentric climate of the era encouraged ethnic identification among immigrants and natives alike; therefore, thinking in stereotypes and symbols was encouraged while tolerance and understanding between groups declined. The Germans promulgated biological notions of their “racial” difference in order to distinguish themselves from the Irish and other European immigrant groups that native-born Americans regarded as inferior and less able to assimilate to Anglo-American cultural norms (Jacobson 1998). The German Americans, encouraged in their ethnocentrism by their generally positive image among native-born Americans, touted Germans’ role in the building of the nation and flaunted their accomplishments as a means of balancing beliefs in Anglo-Saxon superiority and preeminence in world affairs (Conzen 1989, Luebke 1983). Instead of being satisfied with positioning themselves as contributors to America’s greatness, German leaders began to promote their culture as superior to the dominant Anglo-American culture. Their cultural chauvinism was often misinterpreted as political or nationalistic during this period of resurgent American

¹⁶ Knobel (1980) conducted a content analysis of 2500 references to German- and Irish-Americans in the literature of the mid-nineteenth century. His results demonstrated that the impressions of Germans conveyed therein were fairly complementary in tone, with over two-thirds of the references emphasizing favorable group characteristics that included moral, intellectual, and interrelational qualities and values.

nativism (Luebke 1983). German unification under Bismarck in 1871 increased the nativists' ire as Germans experienced an upsurge in ethnic self-confidence and a growing pride in the military and economic success of their fatherland (Totten 1985).

John Hawgood (1940) argues that nativism disrupted the Germans' assimilation as early as the 1850s, leading to the establishment of a "hyphenated" German-American identity that reflected the Germans' unwillingness to participate in an increasingly hostile American society. However, as Kathleen Neils Conzen's research (1981) demonstrates, other scholars view the nativist attack as both a symptom and a cause of assimilation and see the emergence of hyphenated ethnic identity as merely a temporary sidetracking of the inevitable disintegration of the German community. The diversity and size of the German settlements made them susceptible to long-term Americanization by fostering factionalism, increasing contacts between Germans and non-Germans, and weakening unified leadership (Conzen 1981).

As newer immigrants embodying the nationalistic spirit of the recently unified German homeland moved into leadership positions, efforts to preserve and promote German-American heritage intensified, further diminishing regionalism and encouraging the development of a "pan-German" identity that accorded with outsiders' perceptions of German unity (Berquist 1983). German-American immigrant organizations played a critical role in this process. The heterogeneity of newly arriving Germans, who possessed loyalties and cultural practices that reflected their provincial origins, posed a serious challenge to the solidarity sought by many German leaders (Berquist 1983). Thus, with a surge in immigration during the 1880s, the number of German-American organizations peaked. For example, Zane Miller (1984) noted that Germans in Cincinnati viewed the establishment of an institutional structure as a prerequisite to unification of the German community, which could then be mobilized to help preserve German culture. The

Taggellschaft (German Day Society) organized public celebrations of important German holidays, while the *Stadtverband* was more political in nature, campaigning for drinking rights, open Sundays, German language instruction, and nonrestrictive immigration laws (Miller 1984).

Heritage was fundamental to the mission of creating new forms of German identity. As Miller explains (1984, 17):

For them, the past was neither a potential alternative to the present or future nor the source of the culture (way of life) of a group. Instead, for them the past was the seedbed of a germ and a source of inspiration (see what we have achieved) for the emergence and nurture of something new and different within a larger society.

When trying to secure the support of such a diverse group in the absence of consensus as to what “German” culture entailed, organizational leaders frequently appealed to the “lowest common denominator,” resulting in the “exaltation of a sort of homogenized German culture”:

Celebration, singing societies and beer were the few things that nearly all Germans could relate to, and it is not surprising that these played a major role in attempts to mold a German unity in the 1890s (Berquist 1983, 3-4 and 10).

Kathleen Neils Conzen (1989, 48) goes as far as to argue that German-American ethnicity “was festive culture”:

Their shared need for celebration and the *communitas* it generated brought German-Americans together, the forms of celebration that they adopted helped them to conceptualize their commonality in ethnic terms, and in defense of their festive culture they entered as a group into American public life.

The “German Day” celebrations held in many cities during the 1890s demonstrate the pivotal role of festivals in negotiating German-American identity. German Day served not only as an important symbol and focal point of the German community, but also as a conduit for projecting this newfound group identity to non-Germans. To ensure

the permanent annual observance of the event, various German organizations joined together for the first time to create German Day Societies, culminating in the establishment of the National German-American Alliance on German Day, October 6, 1901 (Tolzmann 1983). The event became a popular folk festival that was celebrated by a cross-section of German Americans and attracted many non-German participants as well (Tolzmann 1983). The broad popularity of German Day celebrations and other festivals provided a forum in which German Americans could manipulate their image both internally and externally. For example, at events such as Carnival, American patriotic themes were employed to demonstrate the Germans' loyalty to their adopted homeland, German themes were intertwined with American themes in order to develop a "joint German-American cultural identity," and parodies were staged that targeted ethnic minorities, including the Germans themselves, in order to reinforce the notion that the Germans were not outsiders to, but a part of, American society (Bungert 2003, 334).

Festivals also provided opportunities for German Americans to manipulate popular stereotypes of their culture. They demonstrated their compatibility with the larger American culture and its values by emphasizing the themes of "family, nature, high culture, and harmless jollity" in their events (Conzen 1989, 71). As the German Americans acculturated, the festivals became somewhat less ethnic in content; however, they continued to satisfy the Germans' need for fellowship with their countrymen while fostering their acceptance into American society (Bungert 2003).

In his description of the "traits" of the German Americans, Albert Faust (1909, 378) posited the German "joy of living" as a "corrective of too stern and austere a view of life." He attributed their attention to "those things that make life more beautiful and joyous" over material comforts to the German tradition of idealism. While lauded by those within the ethnic community, the Germans' merrymaking contributed to their

negative perception by outsiders. The Germans seemed to celebrate every possible occasion, and their beer drinking and dancing were considered offensive to many (Luebke 1983). As Steven Hoelscher et al. note (1997, 383), the peculiarities of their social customs contributed to the stereotype of Germans as “beer-drinking oafs who preferred to mingle with their own kind.” Despite their overall willingness to adapt to their new cultural milieu, the Germans’ social customs clashed with a number of prevailing American cultural norms. With the rise of Prohibition and the persistence of Sabbatarianism, the German image was somewhat tarnished by the centrality of wine and beer consumption to many of their social activities and by their custom of fraternizing on Sundays (Conzen 1989). Furthermore, their pervasive use of music, banners, costumes, and other symbols, which were intended to heighten the experience of celebration and to demonstrate Germany’s aesthetic contributions to American culture, smacked of foreign nationalism in an era of increasing nativism. This perception became especially widespread after German unification boosted the Germans’ self-confidence and increased their ethnic pride (Conzen 1989, Totten 1985).

Ironically, festivals and other activities of the various German-American economic and cultural organizations helped to foster the process of Americanization, despite efforts to maintain the group’s distinctiveness. While such performances helped to build ethnic identity by transferring German cultural memory into German-American cultural memory, the inclusion of the general public undermined the events’ contribution to a sense of ethnic community. In developing social bonds with outsiders, German Americans sacrificed opportunities to increase intra-group cohesion (Bungert 2003). However, Reingard Doerries (1978) has pointed out that festivals encouraged the Germanization of American culture as well as the Americanization of German culture. The popular consumption of German-American culture contributed to the dwindling of

the temperance movement, the formation of self-help aid societies at the national scale, and the relaxation of laws that prohibited social activities on Sundays (Doerries 1978). Although the German Americans successfully transplanted a number of elements of German high culture and festive culture into American culture, they ultimately proved to be victims of their own success. As American life became somewhat Germanized, particularly in terms of its festive culture, it became less and less necessary for German Americans to remain within the confines of their own ethnic group to satisfy their social needs (Conzen 1989).

Despite the generally positive influence of festive culture on Americans' perceptions of the German Americans, their image darkened at the dawn of the twentieth century. Because Germany and the United States influenced many of the same geopolitical arenas, characterizations of Germans as militaristic, power-hungry, and imperialistic became more and more common (Jarausch 1985). The wave of burgeoning anti-German sentiment crested with the outbreak of World War I. Immigrants and their descendants were naturally sympathetic to the German cause, owing to their emotional bonds with their country of origin, bonds that were often based on memories of an unchanging, mythic homeland—"the Germany of their dreams" (Lange 1985, 234). Because the leaders of ethnic organizations were outspoken in their partisanship and because of their "cultural loyalty" to Germany, German Americans began to be suspected of disloyalty to the United States (Sonntag 1994, 657).

Most Germans had immigrated with the intention of becoming fully American and leaving behind a life in Europe that had become too difficult or stifling. Owing to their acceptance of most aspects of American society, they had already become "Americans" long before 1914, and yet, as Doerries (1978, 59) has observed, "no other ethnic group, with the exception of the Japanese-Americans in World War II, has had its

loyalty collectively and individually questioned by what can only be explained in terms of national hysteria.” This climate of distrust fostered bans on German language, music, and publications; German books were burned; foods, places, and people were renamed to avoid German references; and, in extreme cases, violence and vandalism were directed at German Americans (Luebke 1983). Missouri Governor Frederick Gardner threatened pro-Germans with the firing squad if they dared enter the state (Richardson 1995). Anti-German sentiment in areas of East Texas was so strong that the Ku Klux Klan instigated violence against German Americans for several years after the outbreak of World War I (Conner 1993) (Figure 2.3). In one instance, the KKK threatened a Brenham merchant with tarring and feathering for staunchly continuing to conduct business in the German language. While this individual ultimately evaded the KKK’s reprisals, others were not so fortunate (Conner 1993). In 1917, the Texas legislature even created the Texas State Council of Defense “to purge all traces of German culture from their state” (Sonntag 1994, 658).

With the rapid and deliberate excision of German influences from American life, the previously slow and steady integration of the Germans into the American mainstream rapidly accelerated, especially with the abandonment of the German language (Ripley 1985). German Americans began to actively suppress their ethnic culture in the midst of widespread anti-German hysteria. World War I also had less noticeable effects on the status of German Americans. Because of increased public attention toward England and France, Anglo-American ethnic bonds were emphasized. The decreased attention directed toward Germany contributed to the creation of a static, immutable image of German Americans in the collective consciousness of Americans (Totten 1985). Furthermore, without a strong sense of pride in the homeland, German-American “nationalism” had no

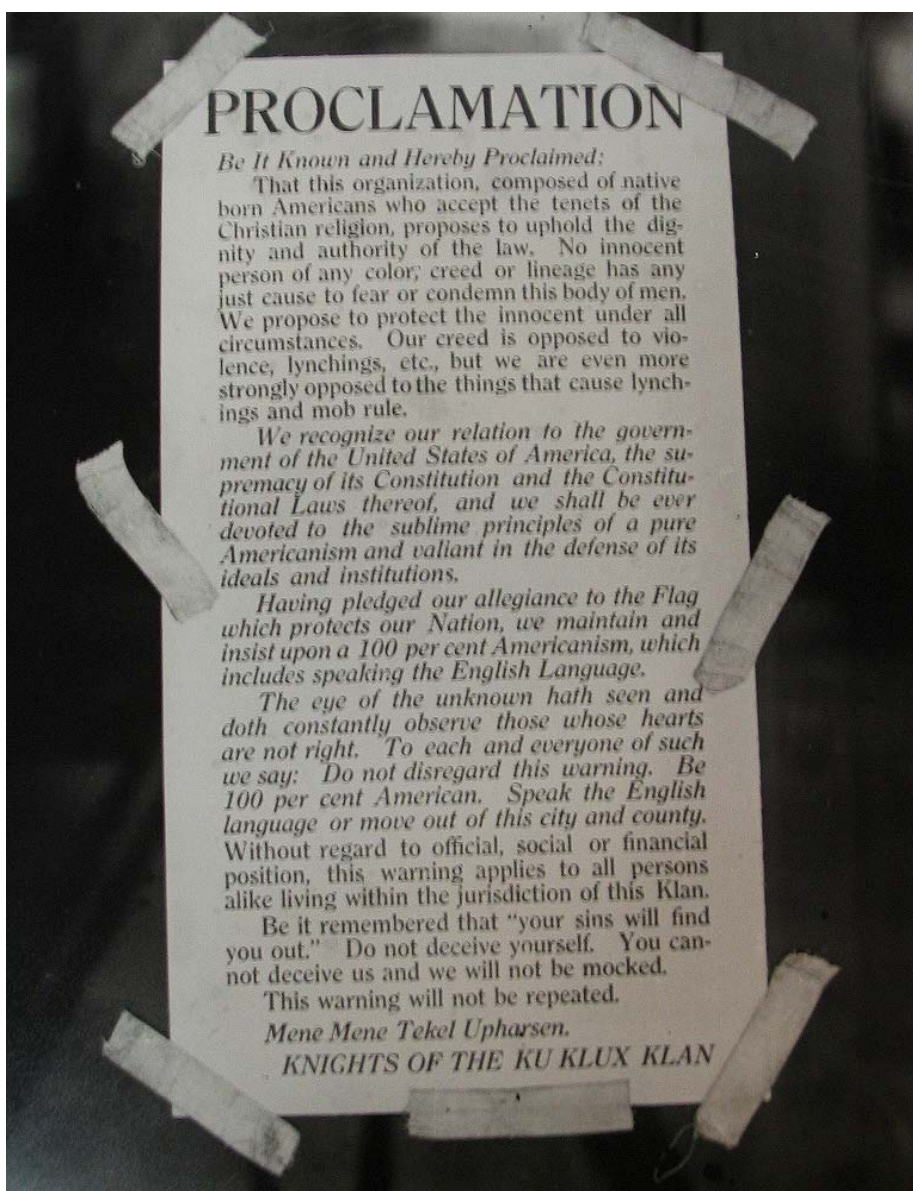


Figure 2.3: In 1921, the Ku Klux Klan issued a proclamation insisting upon "100 per cent Americanism, which includes the speaking of the English Language" in the German-settled areas of Texas. The proclamation, on display at the Brenham Heritage Museum, was posted on the door of the Ebenezer Lutheran Church in the community of Berlin (Neinast 2004). Acts of violence toward the German residents of Brenham during the years that followed resulted in the out-migration of a number of citizens and local businesses before the Klan disbanded in response to public pressure in 1924 (Hasskarl 2003).

basis. Germany's defeat in 1918 "shattered the nationalistic faith" of German Americans, who retreated from assertive displays of ethnic hubris (Yox 2001, 189).

By World War II, much of the explicitly anti-German activity had abated, but associations with Nazism largely eclipsed the previously favorable image of German Americans in popular perception (Totten 1985). The result of their vilification during the world wars was the adoption of a strategy of low-key, subdued ethnicity among German Americans (Tolzmann 2000). However, the post-war period (1945-1960) saw Germany transformed from an evil empire to a valued ally in the public eye (Jarausch 1985). The United States' participation in the occupation of Germany brought American soldiers into direct contact with the former enemy, into marriages with German women, into German homes and hospitality, and into the realization that the German people themselves were not the monsters portrayed in American propaganda efforts (Lange 1985). Furthermore, the Truman administration's assertion that Europe could not recover without its "industrial heart" shifted the tone of foreign policy from an emphasis on German "collective guilt" to reconstruction under the aegis of the United States (Jarausch 1985). The image of Germany was thus "feminized," and the war-ravaged nation was viewed as dependent upon American protection and guidance (Boehling 1999). The Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948 was a turning point in restoring friendly German-American relations as it united the countries against a common enemy in the Cold War with the Soviet Union (Jarausch 1985). The German "Economic Miracle" of the 1950s and 1960s "restored American faith in free enterprise...and representative government on the continent" (Jarausch 1985, 155), and the burgeoning German economic self-sufficiency ushered in a new era of German-American relations characterized by "equivalence" over "dependence" (Jarausch 1985, 157).

As a result of these developments, German-American culture began to re-emerge in the 1950s as the conscious rejection of German-American ethnicity came to an end. Although ethnic organizations and the German-language press would never fully recover, the remaining clubs and newspapers aggressively promoted positive images of Germany and awareness of German heritage, as evidenced by the reinstatement of German Day celebrations across the country (Tolzmann 2000). By the 1960s, a number of additional factors contributed to the resurrection of German-American pride and culture: a substantial postwar immigration of German-speaking people; German Americans' persistence as the largest ethnic element in the U.S.; improved German-American diplomatic relations; and the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower, an American of German descent, to the presidency (Tolzmann 2000).

Furthermore, the 1970s were characterized by the "ethnic heritage revival," which sparked a renewed interest in genealogy, an appreciation of diversity, and the recognition of the pluralistic nature of American society (Totten 1985). The version of pluralism championed in the ethnic revival fundamentally differed from the one that dominated the 1920s and 1930s. This later incarnation focused on the idea of individual pluralism. Racial, social, political, and economic factors were seen as influences on, rather than determinants of, the behavior of individuals, and cultures and communities were increasingly regarded as socially constructed, voluntary associations (Miller 1984). Thus, the purpose of ethnic identity was viewed more as the individual's pursuit of self-fulfillment than the preservation of the group (Miller 1984). Contemporary participation in German-American festivals suggests that this emphasis on the individual's experience of ethnicity continues to prevail.

THE “SECOND RENAISSANCE” OF GERMAN-AMERICAN AND GERMAN-TEXAN CULTURES

Just as the tide of politically fueled negative sentiment toward the Germans has shifted in recent decades, so too has the perception of German-American festive culture. German-themed celebrations have again been embraced by the American public. As early as the 1950s, the German concept of *Gemütlichkeit*, “of merrymaking as balance for hard work,” had caught on throughout urban and rural America, with Oktoberfest celebrations entering the mainstream of American culture and even extending beyond events organized by German Americans themselves (Totten 1985). By the 1980s, friendly diplomatic relations, foreign investment, and waning public interest in German affairs—relative to the public fascination with Hitler’s regime—had “de-emotionalized” the German image in the minds of most Americans (Jarausch 1985, 157).¹⁷ David Lowenthal (1998, 4) traces our “modern preoccupation with heritage” to this same decade. Thus, it comes as no surprise that an efflorescence of German heritage celebrations and commemorations has accompanied the restoration of positive images of Germans and their culture over the past quarter-century. This “second renaissance” (Tolzmann 2000, 353)—the first nationwide expression of German identity and pride since World War I—boosted the ethnic self-identification of many German Americans (Trommler and McVeigh 1985). The result has been an explosion of resuscitated festive culture that Don Heinrich Tolzmann (2000) has dubbed the “Oktoberfest phenomenon.” With more German Americans tracing their ethnic roots and seeking communion with others of shared ancestry, the newest generation of German heritage festivals has spawned a

¹⁷ Monaco (1986) argues that, during the period from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s, the image of Germans was still inextricably linked with images of the Third Reich in both the entertainment and informational media. He notes that the association of this ethnic stereotype with a specific historical era and collective experience is unique among the creation of national, ethnic, and racial images. Monaco attributes the process to a “semantic blurring” of the terms “German” and “Nazi” that is fostered by historians’ tendency to depict Nazism as the “end product of patterns in *German* thought, *German* culture, and *German* society” [author’s emphasis] (Monaco 1986, 408).

number of popular and profitable tourism attractions. The widespread popularity of these displays among Germans and non-Germans alike reflects the acceptance of German Americans into contemporary American society. One cannot overlook the symbolic significance of the 1987 presidential proclamation making October 6 an annual national celebration of German-American heritage. The designation of “German Day” stands as a salient symbol of how far the image of German Americans has come since its nadir during the world wars.

This newfound appreciation for German culture is overlain upon a foundation of older stereotypes that have not completely shed their negative connotations, resulting in a “fundamentally ambivalent” image of Germans among the American public (Jarausch 1985, 146). “Germanness” simultaneously evokes images of Nazism, the Berlin Wall, and the world wars with images of Biergartens, romantic landscapes, and quaint Alpine villages. The promotion of the latter set of associations in tourism development reflects German Americans’ desire to distance themselves and their culture from unflattering depictions while building upon the broad commercial appeal of benign symbols that connote revelry, nostalgia, and celebration. As a result, German Americans whose ethnic culture was suppressed during the first half of the twentieth century are overwhelmingly presented with a specific interpretation of their ancestral culture when participating in ethnic festivals and tourism. German-themed events and attractions thus contribute to and reflect the continued self-conscious construction of German-American identity, as I will discuss in the chapters that follow.

Mirroring national trends, German culture declined in central Texas during the mid-twentieth century, but tourism and festivals have helped sustain some time-honored German customs and create new German-themed traditions in Brenham, Fredericksburg, and New Braunfels. For example, Brenham’s Maifest celebrated its 116th anniversary in

2006. While the modern incarnation of the Maifest includes precious little content that reflects its German roots, the event's name and history remind residents and participants of the German influence on community heritage, which is all but invisible within the cultural landscape today.¹⁸ In 2003, Governor Rick Perry proclaimed May 10 and 11 to be "Maifest Days in Texas" with the following statement:

I commend the Brenham Maifest Association for your many good works and contributions to young Texans. Moreover, I applaud Texans of German descent for keeping their proud heritage rich and alive for the generations of Texans to come. At this time, I encourage all Texans to join in the festivities and to embrace our rich tapestry of cultures, symbolic of the diversity and strength of the Lone Star State. Maifest Days strengthen the ties that bind and contribute to the spirit that makes Texas great. (Perry 2003, reproduced in Maifest Association 2003)

Maifest has traditionally been a locally oriented celebration, drawing a limited number of participants who lack ties to Brenham. In contrast, New Braunfels's Wurstfest and Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest were consciously developed with an eye toward stimulating local tourism, and they welcome significant numbers of visitors today. Regardless of their overtly commercial aims, these two events have contributed to the promotion and preservation of German-Texan culture. In 1961, New Braunfels added the Wurstfest to a growing list of area attractions, having already established itself as a successful tourism destination based on its numerous parks and water recreation opportunities. Dr. Ed Grist, a local veterinarian and the city's meat inspector, proposed the idea of a festival to honor the 19 local sausage makers who commercially produced

¹⁸ While little of the modern Maifest's content reflects its German heritage, it continues to be promoted as a "German" event. For example, posters for the 2004 Maifest, whose theme was "An American Salute," included the following text:

Come and take part in the fun and festivities of the 114th Annual Maifest. This exciting German Celebration has become a memorable part of Brenham's heritage. Join us at Fireman's Park and be a part of this on-going tradition.

The schedule of events included in the 2004 program invited participants to enjoy "homemade" sausage and kraut and German beer despite the fact that these items were not actually offered by the participating vendors, who sold only domestic beer and traditional American carnival fare.

over 300,000 pounds of sausage each year (Wurstfest Association 2005). Suzanne Herbelin, Executive Director of the Wurstfest Association, explained that the event has always been intended as a way to attract visitors:

[Wurstfest's] main purpose is to promote the local economy through tourism. That's why it was organized: to bring people here, to New Braunfels, to spend their money at a time of the year when people weren't coming to New Braunfels...The Chamber of Commerce saw it as an opportunity to market a product that was produced locally in abundance and celebrate that and hopefully bring visitors. And so, together, the businesses were part of a German heritage, the Chamber of Commerce saw it as a way to promote the economy, and that's how it really got started.

The first one-day "Sausage Festival" attracted 2000 participants who witnessed sausage-making demonstrations and enjoyed performances by German bands and local singing clubs (Wurstfest Association 2006). In 1963, the event was expanded into a week-long celebration and was renamed "Wurst Week." As attendance and publicity for the event grew, the festival moved to its present location, the Wurstfest grounds at Landa Park, in 1967 and drew 40,000 people. Attendance peaked in 1979, when 165,000 participants consumed 42 tons (!) of sausage (Wurstfest Association 2006). Touted as "one of the mainstays of the entire [New Braunfels] tourism industry" and "one of the key attractions within the nation" (Wurstfest Association 2005), Wurstfest currently draws more than 100,000 participants and provides a boost to the local economy of \$6-\$7 million per year (Herbelin 2005). The Wurstfest Association is a not-for-profit organization that has funded nearly \$2 million in various community projects since its inception: as Herbelin (2005) explained, "We've tried to focus on things that will continue to bring people here to New Braunfels, but at the same time, we've done things that benefit the citizens of the community of New Braunfels as well."

Like Wurstfest, Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest combines the spirit of community philanthropy with the celebration of German heritage. The Pedernales Creative Arts

Alliance (PCAA) was formed in 1979 to help develop and promote the arts in Fredericksburg. The group regards its activities as a continuation of the mission of the Fredericksburg Casino Society, which was organized in 1886 to help support the fine arts and “the intellectual stimulation of its members” (Pedernales Creative Arts Alliance 2000). The PCAA sponsored the first Oktoberfest (then spelled with a “c” rather than a “k”) in 1981 to raise money for scholarships, art programs, and community projects and to provide local clubs and organizations with fundraising opportunities. Oktoberfest currently attracts approximately 15,000 participants each year and is one of a number of annual festivals that contribute to the city’s thriving tourism industry (Farquhar-Garner 2005). Perhaps equally important is the event’s role in reinforcing Fredericksburg’s image as a “German” place. The Oktoberfest website (PCAA 2006) provides the following description:

Oktoberfest is a colorful, festive celebration of Fredericksburg, Texas' German heritage. Oktoberfest has become an annual tradition around the world. Oktoberfest is a community event of family entertainment featuring two stages and two tents with continuous oompah music, art & crafts, polka and waltz contests, Children's fun area—Kinder Park, a German Bier Tent, and Oktoberfest Vineyard area, plus delicious food and drink ... all weekend long!

Other Oktoberfest promotional materials further suggest the centrality of German heritage in Fredericksburg:

Always held the first weekend in October, Oktoberfest is the perfect complement to Fredericksburg’s German heritage. It is common to say that Fredericksburg celebrates its heritage every day. It is no exaggeration to say that Oktoberfest is one of the greatest celebrations of all! (PCAA 2000)

As the preceding descriptions indicate, contemporary German-themed festivals extend historical processes in the development of German-American and German-Texan identities. Place promotion continues to perpetuate myths of German dominance, often

emphasizing the German-influenced elements of community history while largely neglecting the contributions of other resident ethnic groups. Today, the myth of Germanness is invoked more to create coherent, marketable place images than to help invent and sustain ethnic identity. Nevertheless, heritage tourism does appear to foster participants' identification as German Americans. In doing so, these activities are complicit in the construction of German-American identity as well as the construction of other ethnic and racial identities, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three:

German Heritage Festivals and Ethnic Identity

*“Once you pay your money and walk through the gate,
you're German, if only for the day.”*

In 1969, Fredrik Barth famously remarked that the essence of ethnicity lies in the establishment of a group boundary, not in the “cultural stuff that it encloses” (Barth 1969, 15). In our current era of globalization, the “cultural stuff” can often appear “largely interchangeable” (Sollors 1996, xxiii) from one group to the next. With the proliferation of festive environments where anyone can be “ethnic” for the day, ethnicity appears to have become largely devoid of content.

Where cultural distinctions have blurred and traditional, geographically bounded communities have dispersed, ethnic groups are likely to reassert their identities symbolically (Cohen 1993). Herbert Gans (1979) advanced the idea of “symbolic ethnicity” to describe later-generation European-American ethnic identity. He argues that, as the differences between white ethnic groups fade, ethnicity is becoming increasingly peripheral to the lives of their members. As such, a symbolic ethnicity is emerging that entails “a love for and a pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behavior” (Gans 1979, 9). Thus, elements of ethnic culture are transformed into visible symbols. These symbols are easily recognized and clearly understood by the majority of later-generation Americans, and they can be expressed and felt without interfering in other aspects of life (Gans 1979). Put another way, “symbolic ethnicity is concerned with the symbols of ethnic cultures rather than with the cultures themselves” (Alba 1990, 306).

Contemporary ethnic tourism reflects, and perhaps further encourages, the development of symbolic ethnic identities. Some scholars have taken exception to the practice of marketing ethnic heritages and ethnic places as tourism attractions. For example, Dean MacCannell (1984, 388) has argued: “When an ethnic group begins to sell itself, or is forced to sell itself, as an ethnic attraction, it ceases to evolve naturally.” A number of critics further contend that the commodification of previously “authentic” cultures through tourism development divests ethnicity of its meaning. Sociologist Robert Wood (1998, 219) summarizes these points of view, stating: “Touristic ethnicity, in other words, has been assumed to be phony ethnicity.” However, scholars such as architectural historian Dell Upton (1996, 4) note that the consumption of ethnic commodities may be inherent to newly emergent forms of ethnicity:

...ethnicity [is] a synthesis of imposed and adopted characteristics that is forged through contact and conflict. It is a role played for the benefit of others. Ethnicity is a creolized identity and a highly volatile one. The commodification of heritage is an important part of the synthetic process of ethnic definition. Objects—buildings, dress, foods—are called on to prove that volatile and contingent social identities are stable and intrinsic personal ones...

John Urry (1994) has further observed that people’s social identities are increasingly formed not through their work but through their recreational activities and their consumption of goods, services, and symbols. Carl Bankston and Jacques Henry (2000, 403) articulate how this process is manifested in the consumption of ethnicity:

Perceptions of historical tradition provide the substantive imagery of ethnicity, but this imagery must be reshaped into contemporary forms. To fit into a consumer economy, ethnicity must become a commodity.

Like ethnicity itself, places are consumed in ethnic tourism, and this practice is significant in the development of contemporary individual and group identities. Geographer Steven Hoelscher (2000, 79) asserts:

Ethnicity today for white Americans is all about representation and tourism... As ever more white ethnics live apart from the geographic locations that gave rise to their group's identity, ethnic tourism will gain in importance. The concrete images of the ethnic community rely on icons of the small town or inner-city ethnic enclave; visiting them assures one that white ethnicity has some grounding, some sense of authenticity.

Domestic ethnic tourism is likely to assume even greater importance for contemporary "white ethnics" who lack specific geographical referents in their ancestral homeland. For example, Celeste Ray (2001) observed that, for Scottish-Americans in the southern United States, visiting sites of early ethnic settlement in America was the next best thing to visiting the homeland itself. The same is likely true for members of other largely assimilated European-American groups (particularly German Americans) who may not know precisely where in Europe their forebears originated due to historical and geographical distance from their ancestral origins.

In light of these observations, we should avoid the temptation to dismiss ethnic tourism and other examples of ethnic commodification as merely inauthentic, contrived, or inferior expressions of identity. Anthropologist David Brown (1996, 29) notes: "The evidence suggests that beneath the surface of the consumerism and the commoditization associated with tourism are structures which themselves constitute a form of opposition to those processes." Upton (1996, 5) further observes that "invented traditions reveal the process by which ethnic groups form themselves by *choosing* to commodify their identities and to attach to them equally conscious material signs [author's emphasis]." Wood (1998, 225) argues that tourism "both elicits and makes particularly visible processes of cultural representation and construction"; it reveals the "plasticity" and mutability of ethnicity and its potential utility as a resource in the competition for scarce economic resources and cultural capital. Thus, the cultural inventions engendered by

tourism development provide fertile territory in which to explore the processes, meanings, and outcomes of ethnic identity formation

The study of ethnic tourism can also illuminate processes of identity formation among ethnic outsiders and between ethnic insiders and ethnic outsiders. Over the past several decades, many inwardly directed celebrations of group heritage have turned outward, reflecting Americans' burgeoning interest in "ethnicity," broadly defined and not restricted to the particular customs of one's own ancestry group(s) (Zelinsky 2001). Today, the condition of "being ethnic" is widely considered a defining trait of the larger American national community, thus creating a sense of shared heritage, community, and experience among Americans of disparate ancestral origins.¹⁹ For example, Steven Schnell's (2003) research in Lindsborg, Kansas, suggests that Swedishness is increasingly regarded as the town's shared heritage, not the exclusive domain of a specific ancestral subgroup. He attributes this shift in the meaning of ethnicity to residents' desire to revive historical and community bonds that have eroded in the face of modernization. He writes:

Ethnicity per se is not what people are after when they choose to wear Swedish outfits. The specific trappings of Swedishness, in fact, are almost incidental. Rather, citizens are searching for a sense of connectedness to the past and to the community that such expressions offer, a connectedness that seems to many to be lacking in the United States. (Schnell 2003, 24)

In a climate in which ethnicity is regarded as increasingly voluntary and symbolic, tourism development can impact which identities are asserted by people and places as well as which symbols are used to indicate group membership and designate group culture (Wood 1998). Lida Dutkova-Cope (2003, 655) has documented how German

¹⁹ Werner Sollors (1996, xi) describes this phenomenon as follows: "[I]n America, ethnicity can be conceived as deviation *and* as norm, as characteristic of minorities and typical of the country" [author's emphasis].

Texans who live in Czech-dominated towns and enjoy doing “things Czech” have achieved acceptance into the Czech “cultural community.” She argues that the commodification of Czech identity in tourism development preserves the towns’ ethnic image and nurtures a sense of belonging that extends to Czechs and non-Czechs alike. Bankston and Henry’s studies of Cajun ethnicity further demonstrate tourism’s contribution to the creation of communal identities that unite ethnic insiders and outsiders. They conclude that:

Vicarious ethnicity may actually be the key to much of contemporary resurgent ethnicity. Commodified ethnicity can provide a sense of being connected to a meaningful past (albeit a somewhat weaker sense) to out-group members as well as in-group members. (Bankston and Henry 2000, 403)

Theories of consumption further suggest that consumers can develop identities based on their shared relations to certain products, as opposed to common social, cultural or linguistic traits or interpersonal relationships (Gruffudd et al. 1999, Bankston and Henry 2000). By extension, participants in ethnic tourism might thus develop a sense of belonging to a community of consumers of ethnic culture. Finally, A. Fuat Firat (1995, 18) has gone so far as to argue that ethnic groups that avoid commodification risk petrification and obsolescence: “Cultures that cannot succeed in translating some of their qualities into spectacles or commodities seem to vanish only to become museum items.”

Despite the fluidity and consumer orientation of ethnic tourism and other modern manifestations of ethnic identity, ethnicity has not necessarily lost its meaning and significance. As Werner Sollors (1996, xviii) has argued, “The fact of ethnicity...does not lie in its content, but in the importance that individuals ascribe to it.” Furthermore, Gans (1979) observed that the homogenization of subcultures has imparted even greater importance to ethnicity as a means by which Americans demonstrate their individual and group distinctiveness. For example, Marjorie Esman’s (1982, 1984) research illustrates

how the emergence of Cajun festivals—a fairly recent, tourism-oriented twist on nineteenth century traditions and early twentieth-century agricultural festivals—exemplify how modern ethnic groups culturally adapt to fulfill changing needs. Despite the sometimes divisive differences within the contemporary Cajun population, festivals provide an overarching, although tenuous, sense of unity and ethnic self-consciousness among people who are no longer linked by language, geographical propinquity, or ethnic institutions.

In this chapter, I contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding the nature of touristic ethnicity by exploring the relationship between German-themed festivals and ethnic identity in central Texas. As I demonstrated in Chapter Two, German-themed events are not recent innovations, and they have served the same basic functions throughout the past 150 years. They help to maintain a sense of shared German heritage and ethnicity among group members, they portray German-American culture as part of the mainstream of American society, and they actively embrace benign cultural symbols. Here, I present the results of a survey of participants in contemporary German heritage festivals, focusing on two major issues. First, I examine the role of festive culture in the maintenance of ethnic identity. I argue that participation in the events I observed bolsters the ethnic identity of attendees who claim German ancestry. I also discuss how my findings support the notion that ethnic identity has become largely symbolic for white Americans. Second, I assess the flexibility and inclusiveness of touristic ethnicity within the festival context. By comparing the participation patterns and perceptions of festival attendees, I observe how ethnicity and race impact the penetrability of the boundaries of Germanness. Despite German-American festivals' openness to and encouragement of participation by outsiders, in representing a specific ethnic culture they nevertheless reinforce ethnic boundaries. The events' content delineates what and who is German as

well as what and who is not German. As I will discuss in this chapter, sociologists have traced the evolution of white ethnicity from an initial preoccupation with specific national origins toward a more inclusive membership in a largely undifferentiated “European-American” group (Alba 1990, Waters 1990). Thus, we can expect that the margins of Germanness are quite permeable for other whites, but perhaps less so for non-whites. In his research on ethnic tourism in New Glarus, Wisconsin, Steven Hoelscher (2000, 70-71) noted that “the broadening of ethnic boundaries to include people who have no Swiss connection has yet to reach beyond the extremely rigid walls of whiteness.” The following discussion will help to determine where the boundaries of vicarious German ethnicity are drawn in the more ethnically and racially diverse geographic context of central Texas.

FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION AND THE MAINTENANCE OF GERMAN-AMERICAN IDENTITY

The festivals I studied appear to be important vehicles for the maintenance of ethnic identity among their German-American participants.²⁰ At Maifest, Wurstfest, and Oktoberfest combined, 633 festival attendees responded to a short questionnaire (Appendix C), of whom more than one-third reported at least partial German ancestry. While these respondents do not necessarily represent a statistically random sample of festival-goers, their responses do suggest the approximate proportion of attendees who consider themselves German to some degree. These German-identified participants might be regarded as internal tourists in search of “ethnic reunion” (King 1994, 173) with others

²⁰ In this chapter, I explore the role of German-themed festivals in helping to maintain and recreate ethnic identity among participants. I restrict my analysis here to the data collected in my survey of festival attendees. Of course, many of the respondents to my residents’ survey (the subject of Chapter Five) reported having attended their community’s main German festival at one time or another. However, I do not discuss their responses here in order to ensure comparability of results.

of shared ancestry.²¹ Marjorie Esman (1984, 454) concluded that such “internal tourists” tend to be later-generation Americans who take part in ethnic-themed events to renew their sense of identity in the absence of “actual cultural distinctiveness.”

Table 3.1: Germans’ responses to survey item “How important is your ethnic ancestry to you?”

Answer choice ^a	Maifest (%) N=18	Oktoberfest (%) N=60	Wurstfest (%) N=83	All festivals (%) N=161
Very important	16.7	28.3	30.1	28.0
Somewhat important	61.1	55.0	48.2	51.6
Not important	5.5	15.0	13.3	13.7
Neutral/don’t know	11.1	1.7	8.4	4.3

^a An additional 3% of all respondents chose “other” for this item.

Of the 633 attendees surveyed, 161 later returned a more detailed survey sent to them via postal mail or email (Appendix D).²² Nearly half of these respondents claimed at least partial German ancestry. The German survey respondents as a group reported that their ethnic ancestry plays a significant role in their lives, with 28% describing it as “very important,” 52% describing it as “somewhat important,” and only 4% describing it as “unimportant” (Table 3.1). The results are remarkably consistent across the three festivals, with the most notable difference being slightly lower proportion of Maifest participants who described their ethnic identity as “very important” and slightly higher

²¹ For the purposes of this study, any mention of German ancestry earned the respondent the designation of “German,” whether reported alone or in combination with other ancestries. The factors that influence whether and to what degree a person will claim an ethnic identity may present themselves in response to varying social situations, different geographical contexts, or the whims of the individual (Okamura 1981, Zelinsky 2001). Thus, I classified respondents based on the belief that even those participants with mixed ethnic backgrounds are likely to find themselves feeling temporarily “more German” within the context of the festival.

²² A detailed discussion of the survey methodology is provided in Appendix B.

proportion that described it as “somewhat important” as compared to respondents who attended the other two events. However, the relatively small number of Maifest attendees who responded to the survey calls into question the significance of this difference.

Table 3.2: Germans’ responses to survey item “How has attending [this festival] influenced your interest in your own ethnic ancestry?”

Degree of interest	Maifest (%) N=18	Oktoberfest (%) N=58	Wurstfest (%) N=82	All festivals (%) N=161
Much more	11.1	25.9	18.3	19.9
Somewhat more	11.1	36.2	24.4	26.7
Neutral/ Don’t know	72.2	37.9	57.3	52.8
Somewhat less	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Much less	5.6 ^a	0.0	0.0	0.6

^a Figure represents a single respondent.

Many respondents further reported that attendance at the festivals has positively influenced their interest in their ethnic heritage (Table 3.2). Nearly half of all German respondents reported that they were more interested in their ethnic background since attending festival, with one-fifth of all respondents indicating they were “much more interested.” Oktoberfest participants most frequently reported they had become more interested in their ethnic heritage after participating in the festival, followed by Wurstfest participants and Maifest participants. These differences might be attributable to differences among the festivals themselves. Wurstfest is the most commercial of the events; thus participants are probably more likely to attend as a recreational activity than to experience ethnic reunion. Maifest is the least German in content; therefore, it is not surprising that it had the least impact on participants’ interest in their German ethnic identity.

In each study community, approximately one-third of those who reported their interest did not increase explained that they were already quite interested in their heritage prior to attending the festival. These respondents frequently described the events as an opportunity to celebrate, rather than to learn about, German heritage. A respondent from San Antonio, who described her ethnic ancestry as “not important” but nevertheless has attended Oktoberfest for each of the past four years, explained:

Going to Oktoberfest hasn't increased my interest in my German heritage. I've always been interested, and it was really nice to go to an event to see and experience German-based events.

Like many of these respondents, a visitor from Austin, who described her German ancestry as “very important,” cited her family as her main source of information about and interest in her ethnic heritage:

Wurstfest didn't influence me as much as my family. My father and uncle have gone to great lengths to make sure each and every one of us have [*sic*] our entire family tree. There are many things I know about my family that I'm sure many people have no idea about their own families. Wurstfest is only a celebration of my heritage.

First-hand experience with German culture through travel or residency abroad also emerged as a common influence on respondents' interest in ethnicity. A local resident who attended Wurstfest replied:

I have a lot of interest in my Rumanian/German ancestry and have visited Germany many times. Wurstfest did little to improve on my experience, but I did enjoy the music.

In a response to another question later in the survey, this respondent added: “It provides good entertainment, but I don't think it teaches much about the culture.” These and other comments suggest that festival attendance enhances some participants' interest and

knowledge, while many others come to the events primarily to enjoy the festive atmosphere, feeling that they already possess an adequate knowledge of and appreciation for German heritage. In only one case did a respondent indicate that attending the festival diminished her interest in her German ancestry, and her comments seemed to indicate dissatisfaction with Maifest's emphasis on its Coronation pageant (discussed in more detail in Chapter Five), rather than aspects of the event that pertain to German heritage. She stated, "[I am much less interested] because Maifest has absolutely nothing to do with ancestry of any kind other than the royalty of previous Maifests."

I also asked survey respondents about their participation in ethnic activities in order to gain insight into the relative importance of tourism in the maintenance of German-American identity. As Table 3.3 demonstrates, more than half of all German survey participants indicated that they and their families attend festivals or special events to learn about or celebrate their ethnic ancestry. One could reasonably expect a large proportion of respondents to report that they participate in ethnic festivals because they were recruited at German-themed events. However, this finding might also reflect the central role of ethnic celebration in German culture (discussed in Chapter Two), both in Germany and in the United States. As compared to non-German respondents, Germans were nearly 75% more likely to report that they participate in festivals to celebrate or learn about their personal ethnic heritage.

Table 3.3: Responses to survey item “In what activities does your family participate to learn about or celebrate your ethnic ancestry?”

Answer choice	Germans (%) N=161	Non-Germans (%) N=150
Preparing/eating ethnic foods	59.0	46.3
Attending festivals or special events	53.4	31.3
Researching family history/genealogy	52.2	37.4
Travel to ethnically important places outside the U.S.	34.8	23.8
Speaking/learning language	31.1	24.5
Celebrating ethnic holidays/religious observances	30.4	25.9
Travel to ethnically important places within the U.S.	26.7	20.4
None	15.5	33.3
Membership in ethnic organizations or clubs	11.8	6.1
Performing or visual arts (crafts, folk dancing, music)	8.7	13.6
Other (please specify)	3.7	3.4

The data that follow in Table 3.4 reflect an interesting variation among participants in terms of their intention in attending the events: it seems that some people come to celebrate their heritage purposefully, while others come for less specifically “ethnic” reasons. For example, 84% of German respondents reported that they had attended the festival for the purpose of having fun, while only about 15% reported that they attended in order to learn about German heritage and culture—nearly the same proportions as non-Germans who cited these motivations. Because a relatively small

proportion of German respondents stated that they came to the festivals specifically to learn more about their heritage, it is important not to overstate the perceived significance of ethnic festivals to the maintenance of German identity among participants. In fact, fewer than two percent of German respondents cited attendance at ethnic events as their sole ethnic activity.²³ Nevertheless, festivals might contribute to participants' sense of ethnic identity by providing opportunities for them to partake in some of the other activities they frequently reported as ways that they engage with their German roots. Most importantly, festivals provide ample opportunity for the eating of ethnic foods, the ethnic activity reported by the largest proportion of German respondents, as illustrated in Table 3.3. The large majority (88%) of German survey participants reported that they attended the festival, at least in part, with the intention of consuming German food and drinks. Virtually all of the German respondents (96%) reported that they ate or drank at the event, and over half stated that food and drink were what they liked best about the festival. Additionally, festivals can serve as destinations for “travel to ethnically important places within the U.S.”—an activity reported by more than a quarter of German respondents—further underscoring the importance of tourism to ethnic identity construction and maintenance. Finally, festivals provide opportunities for the use of the German language and venues for performing and visual arts that reflect ethnic traditions (activities reported by 31% and 9% of German respondents, respectively). In sum, these events provide a context for the expression of German-American identity that many Americans no longer encounter in their daily lives.

²³ Only three German respondents (1.9%) reported attending ethnic festivals as their only ethnic activity.

Table 3.4: Responses to survey item “Why did you attend [this festival] this year?”

Answer choice	Germans (%) N=161	Non-Germans (%) N=167
To eat/drink	87.6	82.4
To hear music/to dance	85.7	73.3
Just to have fun	83.9	75.2
To enjoy a family-friendly outing	59.6	47.9
To reunite with friends/family living in area	40.4	29.7
To see/hear cultural performances	39.8	36.4
To show pride in community's history/heritage	33.5	15.8
To see/buy visual arts and crafts	29.8	25.5
To shop	29.2	21.8
To learn about German heritage and culture	14.9	14.5
Other (please specify)	14.3	20.0

As ethnicity takes on an ever more peripheral role in the quotidian activities of white Americans, many participants recognize that festive or touristic ethnic activities assist them in sustaining ethnic connections. As one Wurstfest participant from Houston observed:

Sometimes after you have been in another country for so long and live your life you forget about concentrating on your ethnicity and every once in a while you need to be reminded of your culture and heritage.

When asked to identify the festivals' main purpose, over half of the survey respondents—including nearly equal numbers of German and non-German attendees—indicated that it is to celebrate, promote, or preserve German heritage. As in their responses to other survey items, many German participants stressed the importance of festivals for maintaining ancestral ties. One respondent reported that she has traveled to Fredericksburg from Louisiana for the past seven years to renew connections to her family heritage:

I am of German descent, and this is really the only opportunity that I have to connect with my family culture. This applies to my husband as well. There are so few things left in the world that can be considered “good, clean, fun” for the whole family. As hokey as that may sound that is important to me. I just want to go somewhere where I can enjoy good music, good food, and fun with my husband and not have to worry about my safety, expensive prices, and things such as that. I can go to Fredericksburg and RELAX and unwind—I look forward to this every year and I don't know what I'd do without it.

An Austin woman who has attended Wurstfest nearly every year since 1970 explained: “My father is German... and now I can appreciate his—I should say ‘our’—heritage even more.” Those newer to the events also echoed these sentiments. A tourist from Orange (on the Texas Gulf Coast) indicated that her three years of attending Oktoberfest had made her “much more interested” in her family's German roots:

There are so many customs that you can learn about. It makes you feel closer to your ancestors. I understand my grandparents more.

While these and other comments reflect the role of festivals in sustaining individuals' ethnic identities, other responses also highlighted the festivals' role in perpetuating group identity. A resident of the Houston metro area, who has family ties in New Braunfels and has attended Wurstfest ten times over nearly twenty years, eloquently

conveyed his impression of the importance of the event to both individual German Americans and the larger ethnic group:

For the individual participant, the main purpose must be a celebration of cultural heritage. My grandparents recalled a time when many neighbors spoke German at home; English was used at school or work, or to interact with outsiders. They said that the world wars and anti-German sentiment seemed to suppress overt displays of German-American pride. Later liberalizations of American society probably allowed celebrations of ethnicity to become more acceptable. I believe that the main purpose of Wurstfest for the average celebrant is to “touch base” with a part of their family heritage. The main purpose of Wurstfest for me individually is to celebrate a cultural heritage. I love the music. I enjoy the opportunity to take my teenage and pre-teen children to a beer hall for community fun and dancing.

Another young adult, who grew up in New Braunfels but now lives in Austin, further described the importance of Wurstfest in sustaining local identity, juxtaposing the community’s unique identity with the “placelessness” (Relph 1976) and cultural homogenization that characterizes many contemporary American landscapes:

The German influence in New Braunfels is decreasing every year. In the 1960s (my grandparents say) if you lived in New Braunfels and did not speak German you were still viewed somewhat as an outsider. Today that is definitely not the case, and Wurstfest helps to honor the German heritage and traditions that were present during the founding of the city of New Braunfels. I am German, and both sides of my family have lived in New Braunfels for over 150 years. It is great fun to continue to participate in activities that are fun and culturally empowering, giving depth to the mostly Americanized, fast food society that exists in our normal lives.

Anthony Cohen (1993, 69) has observed that people “become aware of their culture when they stand at its boundaries.” In support of this claim, one-fourth of survey respondents who did not report German ancestry indicated that participation in German heritage events had stimulated their interest in their own ethnic backgrounds. This effect was particularly prevalent among those who indicated uncertain or mixed ancestry. For

example, a young man from Austin attending his fourth consecutive Wurstfest commented:

Having been adopted at birth, I have had no real way of knowing my ethnic ancestry. Attending ethnically oriented events such as Wurstfest does, however, increase my desire to know.

A middle-aged respondent from San Antonio also reported that the event had piqued his curiosity about his unknown ethnic ancestry:

While we were visiting at Wurstfest, someone asked me about my ancestry. I'm asked this frequently and don't know the answer. I decided that it was time for me to research it.

Those who lacked information about their ethnic origins were not the only non-German respondents to report greater interest in their genealogy after attending a German festival. Typical explanations included "I am half German and half Italian. Because of Wurstfest, I am now very interested in my Italian ancestry" and "Seeing so many people attending to reflect on their German heritage [at Wurstfest] makes me feel like reflecting on my Hispanic heritage." A final trend apparent in the responses is that many participants who reported mixed ancestry felt that their lack of a strongly defined ethnic identity precluded significant interest in or attachment to German heritage. One such participant at Oktoberfest reported: "I have a German ancestry but many others as well. It's such a wide range so it is sometimes difficult to stay interested."

The above evidence supports the contention that ethnic festivals and other touristic activities play a significant role in the maintenance of ethnic identity. I argue that it also suggests that German-American ethnicity identity is largely symbolic for many adherents (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). Closer examination of survey participants' stated motivations for attending the festivals supports this conclusion. Two trends are apparent that suggest a certain superficiality within German-American respondents' ethnic



Figure 3.1: Costumes provide a means by which participants of all ethnicities can easily take on a more German identity during the festivals. At Wurstfest, popular hat themes focus on beer and chickens (the latter referencing the ever-popular “Chicken Dance”).



Figure 3.2: “A Night in Old Fredericksburg,” a summer event that incorporates Fredericksburg’s German heritage into its theme, allows visitors the opportunity to “be German for a day” and to capture the experience by snapping a souvenir photo of their “visit to Germany.”

identification: 1) the frequency with which certain motivations were or were not selected from a list of options and 2) the similarities between the data sets obtained from German and non-German participants.

As the results displayed in Table 3.4 above demonstrate, the motivations most often selected by German survey respondents were the consumption of German food and listening to German music, activities that are highly evocative of “German” heritage and demand little from the participant in return. Further illustrating the prevalence of largely symbolic activities was the third most popular answer choice, “just to have fun,” selected by 84% of German respondents. Interestingly, two items were chosen much less frequently than I had expected: “To show pride in community’s history/heritage” and “To learn about German heritage and culture” were chosen by only 34% and 15% of German respondents respectively.

These data support the argument that the sort of ethnic identification encouraged by these festivals is a symbolic attachment; respondents appear to be more interested in highly visible, easily consumed elements of ethnic culture than activities that require more active engagement and might yield greater insight into the meaning of German-American heritage. As Waters (1990) and Alba (1990) have observed, attention to the more symbolic aspects of ethnic culture reflects the diminished impact of ethnic identity on the everyday experience of many white Americans. Furthermore, in regard to the German-American experience specifically, festive culture has long provided the common basis for a communal ethnic identity among a highly diverse membership (Conzen 1989), and German Americans today are perhaps even more heterogeneous than their predecessors who came to this country during the nineteenth century. The data in Table 3.4 also indicate that German-American respondents have a slightly stronger interest than non-Germans in attending the festivals to partake in German food, music, souvenirs, and

cultural performances, raw materials from which symbolic German-American identities can be constructed.

Fun and festivity's dominance over more culturally oriented activities in attracting German Americans to these festivals might reflect a sophisticated understanding on the part of some participants regarding the contrivance and constructedness that often underlie touristic representations of ethnic heritage. When responding that Wurstfest had somewhat increased his interest in his ethnic background, an Austin resident who claimed partial German ancestry added:

I would love to know more about my own history, but there seems little opportunity to do so. Wurstfest seems to be a nice McDonald's drive-through version of getting to know more about German culture. Isn't that the way we like it in America? The Cliff Notes version and now! Right now!

This response, among others, suggests that the largely constructed, entertainment-oriented atmosphere of a festival is perhaps not seen as the ideal place to gain a deeper knowledge of German culture. Furthermore, event organizers deliberately emphasize the more festive aspects of Germanness over others. Suzanne Herbelin (2005), Executive Director of Wurstfest and a former New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce employee, stated:

For us here, we really focus on the food and music. The other events, like the museums, do a lot of activities that have to do with the cultural aspects. Most of their business is of course year-round, and that's what they're doing, promoting our past. So I'm not really sure that there are new great ideas very often. It sort of is what it is.

Debbie Farquhar-Garner (2005), who manages Oktoberfest, described a similar strategy:

When they hired me as manager, I felt it extremely important to keep the German emphasis, with color, through banners and decorations, through visuals...the music and food. You know, the touchy-feely stuff.

The results of the festival participant survey thus suggest that Maifest, Wurstfest, and Oktoberfest contribute to the maintenance of ethnic identity among their German-American participants and, to a lesser extent, among participants who report mixed or non-German backgrounds. I further contend there is ample evidence to suggest that the ethnic identities that are evolving in central Texas reflect the notion of symbolic ethnicity proposed by Gans (1979) and further developed by scholars such as Waters (1990) and Alba (1990). However, these conclusions raise further questions regarding the degree of flexibility within touristic expressions of Germanness: as ethnicity becomes increasingly symbolic and voluntary among many Americans, just who can play German for a day?

GERMAN FOR A DAY? THE BOUNDARIES OF SYMBOLIC ETHNICITY

Sociologists have observed that the distinctions among various European national origin groups are becoming less important as membership in an undifferentiated “European-American” group becomes the more salient component of white ethnic identity:

The different European ancestries are not seen as the basis for important social divisions; instead, they create the potential for social bonds having an ethnic character, founded on the perception of similar experiences of immigration and social mobility (Alba 1990, 312).

The implication for tourism is that participation in the ethnic traditions of other European-American groups is becoming increasingly appealing to many white Americans. Alba’s observation is reflected in the results of my data collection at German heritage festivals in central Texas.

In reviewing the data presented in Table 3.5, it is apparent that German heritage events have a broad appeal to white participants, including those who claim ancestries other than German. In addition to the 34% of survey volunteers who claimed German

ancestry, another 48% reported membership in one or more other European-American groups or reported their ancestry as simply “white” or “Caucasian” without indicating a specific national origin group. Several among the latter group of respondents used racial epithets to describe themselves, such as “honky,” “redneck,” “Arkansas hillbilly,” or “poor white trash.” The use of these terms was playful, but it demonstrates the “costless” role race plays in the lives of many white Americans (Waters 1990). Conversely, no non-white respondents used derogatory terms to describe their ethnic background. The nearly 30% of white respondents who identified themselves racially, rather than referring to specific national origin groups, corroborate Alba’s (1990) assertion that discrete ethnicities are diminishing in importance for many whites. It also suggests the persistence, and perhaps entrenchment, of racial boundaries in American society; the salient distinction seems to be “white” versus “non-white.” An additional 4% of respondents did not specify their ethnic ancestry or reported that they did not know their ethnic background, while a few respondents simply chose not to provide this information for personal reasons. Interestingly, I observed a number of instances in which white respondents who did not know their specific national origin group simply chose to leave this answer blank, supporting Ishmael Reed’s assertion that “in the United States, ethnicity is interchangeable with being black” (Reed et al. 1989, 226) In other words, whiteness seems to be the norm against which ethnic difference is measured.

Table 3.5: Ethnic backgrounds claimed by festival participants

Ancestry group	Participants (%) N=633
German (alone or in combination with other ancestries)	34.4
White, unspecified ancestry	28.3
White, non-German ancestry specified ^a	19.7
Hispanic	9.0
Unspecified or unknown	3.9
Other ^b	3.6
Black/African American	0.9

^a The most common responses in this category included Irish, English, Scottish, and Scotch-Irish.

^b Category includes Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and other designations that each accounted for less than 1% of all respondents.

The large proportion of non-German whites participating in German heritage festivals is not surprising. As Alba (1990, 85) has pointed out, ethnic activities, such as food and language, “foster a solidarity that transcends ethnic confines and is based on mutual appreciation of ethnic heritage, a recognition of the shared experience of being the descendants of ethnics whatever their specific origins may be.” Ethnic festivals provide ample opportunities for such symbolic activities, and they seem to be especially important to participants who lack a well-defined ethnic identity of their own. The response of a participant who attended Wurstfest while visiting from California summed up the views of festival-goers who have too much ethnicity to be ethnic:

My family is kind of “cultural orphans.” We don't seem to know [our ethnic background] (“Heinz 57,” Mom always said). It would be fun to heartily identify with one specific group; on the other hand, we're pretty open to being a part of (and appreciating) whatever group is celebrating.

A first-time participant in Oktoberfest, who is white, but otherwise has “no idea” what her ancestry is, demonstrated the festivals’ appeal even to those without any sense of personal ethnic identity: “I have no clear family history; perhaps that is why I so enjoy exploring towns with definite ethnic identity.” Further suggesting the collapsing of white ethnic groups into a pan-European identity, a few non-German respondents explained their interest in German heritage festivals by citing similarities between aspects of German culture and markers of their own ancestry groups. A first-time attendee from Austin said of Oktoberfest:

I have Belgian and Polish ancestry. Both of these cultures enjoy the same type of food, dance, and beer...I have always felt a kinship with Oktoberfest celebrations.

A local resident attending Wurstfest for the twenty-fourth time explained her interest in the event by stating:

I'm Czech and have grown up with much the same cultural background (food, beer, music, dance).

The perceived similarities between German and other central European culture groups are so strong in the minds of some respondents that they seem to be more or less interchangeable. Supporting this statement, at least one respondent, an Anglo-American from Dallas, mistook Oktoberfest for a Czech-themed event and came away from the event still clinging to this impression:

I enjoyed the history and architecture. The idea that Czech people settled in Fredericksburg and used their building skills with native materials made for an interesting reflection of their aesthetic sensibilities. That and the food, beer, and ethnic music made for a festive atmosphere

One is left to wonder just what sort of “history” this respondent encountered during the event, but his perception might have been unduly shaped by comparisons to his wife’s

Czech family traditions. Although this response represents an extreme case, a number of other respondents mentioned the incorporation of Czech, Polish, and other central European elements into the festivals.²⁴

My interview with Patrick Otis (2004), a long-time resident of Brenham and frequent Maifest participant, further supports the argument that contemporary white ethnicity transcends the boundaries of specific ancestry groups. Otis, who describes his ancestry as “Heinz 57” with a possible “Teuton in the woodpile back there somewhere,” explained that his appreciation of traditional German music has encouraged his participation in Maifest and has stimulated his interest in learning about other aspects of German culture:

[W]e were sitting there this year, and it was early, it was Saturday afternoon, and...a few people were dancing. Sherry and I had talked about it before, and how I think it's a shame those guys are up there playing their hearts out and there are two couples out there dancing. And so I told her how if Maifest keeps it up, we ought to at least learn how to waltz or polka or something.

There is also evidence for the expression of symbolic ethnicity on the production side of German-themed events. Christine Totten (1985) has observed that Oktoberfests and similar German-themed events in the United States have become part of mainstream American popular culture. “Oktoberfest” is frequently used as a theme for other types of fall events and is completely removed from its ethnic context, as in the “Barktoberfest,” “a festival for dogs and their owners” that was held in Fort Worth in 2004 and 2005 (Fort Woof Dog Park 2006). Furthermore, German-themed events today are frequently organized and produced by, or with significant input from, non-Germans (Totten 1985). As I discussed in Chapter Two, the evolution of German festivals in central Texas reflects

²⁴ Among all survey respondents, 2.5% cited something related to Czech culture when asked what they liked best about the festival they attended. This figure represents one Maifest participant and four Oktoberfest participants. No Wurstfest participants explicitly mentioned anything related to Czech culture in their responses, probably because of the greater use of easily recognized German symbols at this event.

these trends toward the popularization and de-ethnicization of German heritage celebrations. While Maifest grew into its present form from an event originally organized by Germans in Brenham in the late 1800s, both Oktoberfest and Wurstfest were developed to help stimulate local tourism and generate revenue for community groups. Today, all three events are planned and executed by residents from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, not just those of German descent. For example, Suzanne Herbelin, Executive Director of Wurstfest, estimates that fewer than 50% of the Wurstfest Association's members are of German ancestry. All of the organization's "Omas" and "Opas" are required to wear German costumes while on the Wurstfest grounds (Figure 3.3), and new members participate in an "orientation and *Gemütlichkeit* training" in which they learn a few of the trappings of German culture, such as how to waltz and polka and how to speak a few simple German phrases: "Nothing intense, very tongue-in-cheek" (Herbelin 2005). Herbelin, who herself claims Irish and Czech ancestry, explained, "It's like we say, 'For a little while, everyone can be a little German.'" The venue for the event, the Wursthalle, displays the family crests of members of the organization, and these increasingly include Spanish surnames (Figure 3.4). Furthermore, the performer who "put Wurstfest on the map" was not of German ancestry himself: "Lawrence Welk Show" accordionist Myron Floren, who headlined the event from the late 1960s until the early 2000s, was Norwegian (Herbelin 2005).

My findings suggest that participation in German heritage festivals in central Texas does indeed reflect an emerging sense of shared European roots among white Americans. However, it is important to note that participation in these events by non-German whites is most likely unnoticed and unquestioned due to the fact that most white Americans can "pass" as German due to their shared phenotypical traits. This situation may not be the case for the state's largest ethnic group, Hispanics, or for African



Figure 3.3: A Wurstfest “Opa” personalizes his regulation costume with a tongue-in-cheek reference to the festival’s more commercial aspects.



Figure 3.4: The Martinez family crest is one of several displayed in New Braunfels's Wursthalle, demonstrating the growing involvement of Hispanic residents in the Wurstfest Association. Their affiliation with Spain, rather than Mexico, raises questions about whether this family is "Europeanizing" its ancestry in order to claim the "pan-European" ethnic identity that is developing among many white Americans.

Americans. The relatively low percentages of blacks (less than 1%) and Hispanics (9%) among the festival attendees surveyed are striking, as these figures suggest a serious underrepresentation of these groups in comparison to their proportion of the region's population. For example, while Hispanics represent only 9% of Brenham's population, they compose 17% of Fredericksburg's population and 35% of New Braunfels's population (Appendix A). African Americans were even more poorly represented in their participation in these festivals. While African Americans account for 1% or less of the total population in New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, they represent nearly one-quarter of Brenham's population. However, only two African Americans were among the 75 people surveyed at Maifest.²⁵

Perhaps more significantly, 72% of all survey respondents were out-of-town visitors, ranging from a low of 67% at Wurstfest up to 83% at Oktoberfest (see Appendix F). For all three study communities, major tourist source areas include the Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan areas; these cities are at least 20-30% Hispanic, with San Antonio housing a majority Hispanic population. Although the enrollment of African Americans at all three festivals together accounted for less than 1% of the survey volunteers, the black population of major tourism markets significantly exceeds this percentage: African Americans account for 6% of the population in San Antonio, 8% in Austin, 14% in Dallas-Fort Worth, and 17% in Houston.

Alba (1990, 312) has noted that a "perception of similar experiences of immigration and social mobility" provides a common grounding on which whites might base a sense of shared European-American identity. The festivals I attended reflect this process by portraying German heritage within a national context through prominent displays of American symbols alongside German symbols (see Figures 4.8 and 4.11).

²⁵ I did not see any other African Americans participating in the Maifest itself, although I did notice that a significant proportion of the people watching the Maifest parade earlier in the day were black.

However, the perception that the German experience is somehow typical of the experience of all American ethnic groups glosses over the very real distinctions between the largely voluntary migrations in most white Americans' family histories and the oftentimes forced migrations that brought many Americans of color and their ancestors to North America. The relatively low rates of Hispanic and black participation in German-themed events suggest that this Eurocentric interpretation of American immigration history does not provide a unifying cultural experience for non-whites. Nevertheless, some survey responses revealed a perception that the boundaries of ethnicity become permeable within the context of the festival. For example, respondents noted that "Once you pay your money and walk through the gate—you're German, if only for the day" and "The [Oktoberfests] we attended welcome everyone; I feel we can all be 'German' for this festival." Another respondent explained that German festivals did not influence his interest in ethnic identity because "We are all part German."

These and other statements reflect the normalization of German and white ethnic identities in central Texas; as Audrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake (2000) note, notions of whiteness are not necessarily explicitly racist, but they may simply ignore or deny indications of racism, such as the low turnout of racial minorities at the festivals. For example, when asked about his ethnic identity, a Wurstfest participant of uncertain ancestry commented:

I really don't know my ethnic background. I believe that as Americans we ALL share every ethnic background.

While the above sentiment seems well-intentioned, it underscores the normalization of whiteness by suggesting that every American can claim every ancestry, when, in reality, non-whites are frequently classified by others on the basis of their phenotypical traits, and

perceptions of mixed-race Americans' identities still frequently reflect the logic of the "one-drop rule."

As in the German festivals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, emphasis on the larger national and state contexts—as in the display of flags, patriotic color schemes, and text and slogans that reference places—conveys the message that these events are not only about being German, but about being American and Texan as well. The participants themselves enhance the multicultural atmosphere through their personal attire, which often communicates the wearers' affiliation with other national origin groups (e.g., sales of buttons that proclaim "I'm Irish," "I'm Mexican," or "I'm Indian" along with those that read "I'm German") or which demonstrates connections to the German-American community that are not necessarily based on lineage (e.g., a button reading, "Pray for me, my husband is German") (Figure 3.5). The festivals' conflation of the German-American experience with the larger "American" experience may reinforce the assumption among white participants that all Americans' migration histories are similar. As one Oktoberfest participant, a Fredericksburg resident of partial German ancestry, stated:

The Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg tells the story of the early German pioneers to this area; essentially, that is the American story—leave the old country and take the risk of a new start in a wild country. This is the same thing all of our ancestors did, right up to the present. Tran and Ten, who own the Chinese Restaurant in town, came here from Vietnam in the mid '70s.

However, some white participants recognized that German-themed events might not appeal to non-whites in the same way that they appeal to European Americans. Patrick Otis (2004) explained:

Well, [Maifest] is open to everybody. There's no one to check lineage at the gate. But, you know, mainly, just because of the origin of it, it's mainly a white event.



Figure 3.5: She was born in Mexico; he was born in Germany. But the Mayers of New Braunfels agree that Wurstfest is *wunderbar*. While his buttons proclaim his “insider” status (“Proud to be German-American” and “You’re doggone right—*Ich bin Deutsch!*”), hers demonstrate her affiliation with German culture through friend and family relationships (“Pray for me, my husband is German” and “Some of my best friends are German”).

And you see some—I don't know what you're calling them these days—black people out there, but not a lot. They've got Juneteenth, and you don't see a lot of white people at Juneteenth, you know. They have a big parade there in Brenham. But it's not that you couldn't go if you wanted to. The year they had the Cajun band and the salsa band [at Maifest], there were a bunch of Latinos out there dancing and having a good time. They brought their families...Now I don't know what you'd do to encourage black people to come.

Wilbur Zelinsky (2001) has discussed how pan-ethnic classifications, such as the emerging Euro-American culture group, follow “racial” lines, further reinforcing the hypothesis that the most important ethnic boundaries in American society might be those that separate whites from non-whites. The survey results suggest that the lower attendance rate among non-whites is not necessarily linked to perceptions of overt discouragement of their participation; however, they do demonstrate less confidence among non-German respondents regarding the inclusiveness of the festivals.²⁶ Both German and non-German participants generally agreed that participation in the events is open to all, regardless of ethnic or racial background, but non-German survey respondents' degree of agreement was weaker, with 57% of non-Germans strongly agreeing versus 73% of Germans (Table 3.6).²⁷ Overall, the responses received from non-whites were quite similar to those of non-German whites.

²⁶ This content of this chapter is limited to data obtained from those who were already participating in German-themed festivals and, as such, probably felt welcome to a certain degree even before attending the events. It is not possible to determine how many potential attendees chose not to participate owing to concerns about discrimination or discomfort with the ethnic context of the events based on these surveys or my empirical observations.

²⁷ However, disagreement that participation in the festival was open to members of all racial and ethnic groups was slightly more prevalent among Germans (4%) than non-Germans (2%).

Table 3.6: Cumulative responses to survey item “Anyone is welcome to participate in [this festival], regardless of his or her ethnic ancestry or race”

Level of agreement	Germans (%) N=161	Non-German whites (%) N=103	Non-whites (%) N=29
Strongly agree	73.3	56.3	51.6
Agree	19.3	34.0	35.5
Neutral/Don't know	3.7	7.8	9.7
Disagree	3.1	1.0	0.0
Strongly disagree	0.6	1.0	3.2 ^a

^a This figure represents a single respondent who was specifically concerned about the lack of representation in the Maifest’s Coronation pageant, which has become increasingly separate from the event’s German-themed activities.

Table 3.7 demonstrates that perceptions among participants vary from festival to festival in interesting ways. For example, all groups of Maifest attendees were less likely to agree that participation in open to members of all ethnic groups. I attribute these responses to the fact that Maifest participants exhibited the least visible diversity, despite the fact that Brenham has long housed a sizable black population and its Hispanic population has grown significantly in recent decades. Furthermore, I expect that the domination of the Coronation pageant within the Maifest activities also plays an important role in shaping perceptions of Brenham’s ethnic composition, because the Maifest “royalty” have traditionally represented wealthy, established, white families. While responses were fairly consistent across all ethnic groups among Oktoberfest participants, Germans attending Wurstfest displayed a much greater degree of agreement than non-German whites and non-whites. Again, these results probably reflect the events’ local contexts:

Table 3.7: Responses to survey item “Anyone is welcome to participate in [this festival], regardless of his or her ethnic ancestry or race,” by event and ethnicity

Level of agreement	Maifest (%)			Oktoberfest (%)			Wurstfest (%)		
	German N=18	Other white N=8	Non- white N=4	German N=59	Other white N=43	Non- white N=10	German N=83	Other white N=72	Non- white N=17
Strongly agree	55.6	12.5 ^a	0.0	71.2	62.8	70.0	79.5	44.1	52.9
Agree	22.2	50.0	50.0	25.4	25.6	30.0	14.5	45.6	35.3
Neutral/ don't know	5.6 ^a	25.0	25.0 ^a	1.7 ^a	11.6	0.0	3.6	8.8	11.8
Disagree	11.1	0.0	0.0	1.7 ^a	0.0	0.0	2.4	4.4	0.0
Strongly disagree	5.6 ^a	12.5 ^a	25.0 ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0

^a Figure represents a single respondent.

Fredericksburg's population is dominantly white, while Hispanics, Germans, and other whites are more or less equally represented in New Braunfels's population. Thus, the lack of visible diversity among participants might be seen as somewhat more unusual at Wurstfest than at Oktoberfest.

When asked to explain their perceptions of the inclusiveness of the festivals, respondents reflecting a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds commented on the small proportions of visible minorities participating, but they generally did not attribute this relative homogeneity to an overtly unwelcoming atmosphere. A young man from Austin, who claimed "Black Irish and Spanish" ancestry, described his experience at Oktoberfest as follows:

I saw many people, such as myself, that seemed to feel comfortable and welcome at the event. I did not, however, see many minorities and I am unsure as to whether this is because they did not feel welcome, or whether they did not wish to participate, or whether there are not huge populations of minorities within the local community.

A young Mexican woman from San Antonio who attended Maifest shared his views:

I saw different ethnicities participating in the festival. I would have wanted to see more Hispanics and African-Americans, but I understand that it's voluntary participation. If it isn't voluntary participation I would like to see minorities in the Maifest festivities more.

A young Mexican from San Antonio expressed more certainty when describing the climate at Oktoberfest:

There is no racism. No one asks where you're from or what your nationality is. Everyone is just getting along and having fun no matter who you are and where you come from.

A number of survey responses cited the multicultural food and entertainment options offered during the festivals (a reflection of the more inclusive "Texan" context in

which Germanness is frequently represented) as evidence of the events' openness to hosting participants from other ethnic groups. A self-described "Scotch-Irish Arkansas hillbilly" from New Braunfels said of Wurstfest:

I saw diversity in the attendees. A ticket was a ticket, regardless of who held it. There was tremendous diversity in the food and enough in the activities that anyone should feel comfortable.

A white Oktoberfest attendee visiting from rural East Texas commented:

The Mexican population seemed to be represented, especially in the food, in proportion to the general population.

While the quotes presented above suggest that touristic forms of ethnicity are somewhat flexible, it also raises important questions about the persistence of the color line within American society. As the boundaries of ethnic identity become increasingly permeable for white Americans, they appear to remain fairly rigid for Americans of color. As Mary Waters (1990, 156) writes:

The social and political consequences of being Asian or Hispanic or black are not symbolic for the most part, or voluntary. They are real and hurtful. So for all the ways I have shown that ethnicity does not matter for white Americans, I could show how it does still matter very much for non-whites.

People who assert symbolic ethnicities often take for granted the ease with which they can slip into and out of their ethnic roles at will (Waters 1990). Although people of color may also develop multiple ways of defining themselves, they will often be defined by others on the basis of only one aspect of their identity. In the United States, race is the "master status" that eclipses all others (Waters 1999, 8). Thus, the lower rates of participation in German-themed tourism activities among Hispanics and African Americans in Texas might reflect the fact that, even if they choose to "play German" for

a day or if they claim partial German ancestry, they may nevertheless be regarded as non-German by others:

Certain ancestries take precedence over others in the societal rules on descent and ancestry reckoning. If one believes one is part English and part German and identifies as German, one is not in danger of being accused of trying to “pass” as non-English and of being “redefined” English...But if one were part African and part German, one’s self-identification as German would be highly suspect and probably not accepted if one “looked” black according to the prevailing social norms. (Waters 1990, 18-19)

The participation patterns may also reflect the constraints race continues to exert on socioeconomic mobility within the U.S. Most participants who responded to the survey are solidly within the upper and middle classes.²⁸ At all of the festivals I attended, race-based class divisions were evident. For example, I noticed that the custodial and maintenance staffs at each event were composed exclusively of Hispanics or African Americans. Furthermore, one German survey respondent reported dismay at a comment made during a past Wurstfest, when featured musician Jimmy Sturr called on the crowd to “thank the Mexicans for keeping the bathrooms so clean.” Nevertheless, few event participants surveyed, regardless of their ethnicity or race, reported concerns regarding the possible exclusion of potential participants. Only a few incidents of overt or perceived discrimination were reported, and they were raised more frequently by Germans (4% of respondents) than non-Germans (2% of respondents).

While rates of participation in German-themed tourism in central Texas are generally lower among non-whites than among whites, Hispanics’ reported rates of participation are more similar to those of Germans and other whites than to those of other visible minority groups. Among survey respondents who attended Oktoberfest or Wurstfest, the proportion of repeat attendees and the average times attended among

²⁸ Eighty-four percent of survey respondents reported an annual household income greater than \$30,000 per year. The most commonly reported income bracket was \$50,000-\$75,000 per year.

Hispanics were similar to those of some categories of white participants. In fact, Hispanics had a higher mean attendance rate and a lower proportion of first-time visitors at Oktoberfest than any other group, including Germans. These patterns were not seen in Brenham, where Hispanic participation falls somewhere between that of whites and that of other non-white groups. Hispanics' lower rates of participation in Brenham are likely due to its smaller local Hispanic population and its greater distance from the predominantly Hispanic areas of the state.

The above findings suggest that the ethnic boundary between Germans and Hispanics may be more permeable than the boundary between Germans and other "racial" groups. In Chapter Six, I will explore how the patterns of festival participation reflect historical trends in race relations within the state. Further, there are clear connections between the Hispanic and German cultures in Texas that may encourage greater Hispanic participation, such as the traditions of beer and sausage making, the use of the accordion in both polka and *conjunto* music, and, in some cases, the Catholic religion. Perhaps the most troubling implication of the differences in festival participation is the suggestion that the color line has shifted so as to further distance black Americans from the mainstream: perhaps the boundary lies not between "white" and "non-white" but between "black" and "not black." Both Jacobson (1998) and Waters (1999) have observed that members of some phenotypically distinctive "racial" groups have attempted to "whiten" their status by portraying themselves as "not black," and this process has been documented among Hispanics in central Texas as well (Foley 1999), as I will discuss in Chapter Six.

CONCLUSION

German-themed events continue a long tradition of German-American festive culture. Like their predecessors, today's festivals continue to promote ethnic identification among German-American participants, to represent Germanness within the context of Americanness, and to emphasize the colorful, sociable aspects of German heritage. The growing popularity of ethnic tourism in general and the patterns of participation observed at festivals in German Texas both support the contention that ethnicity is an increasingly symbolic and voluntary affiliation for many white Americans. Participation in these festivals helps attendees construct their own ethnic identities, regardless of their ethnic affiliation; non-German participants can learn something about who they are through their encounters with what they are not, just as their hosts' Germanness is reinforced through their interactions with non-Germans. This study further suggests that, in a multicultural context such as that of central Texas, festivals temporarily encourage participants to infiltrate the boundaries of Germanness and become "German for a day."

Although the festivals intend to encourage broad participation and ostensibly promote ethnic understanding, they do not appear to raise some white participants' awareness of the relative ease with which they are able to negotiate among a variety of ethnic roles, of the differences between their groups' historical and contemporary experiences and the experiences of Americans of color, and of the constructedness of their own ethnic and racial identities. However, the increasing visible ethnic diversity among tourism producers and consumers in central Texas might influence participants' notions about racial and ethnic boundaries. In New Braunfels, I have observed a number of Hispanic "Opas" and "Omas" in the regulation Wurstfest attire, welcoming visitors in the German language and polka-ing around the dance floor. Once I glimpsed an African-

American woman in a traditional German costume. Although I never saw her again, one of my students at Texas State had the chance to visit with this lifelong New Braunfels resident. When asked about her costume, she explained that she loves coming to Wurstfest and embracing the spirit of the festival. She thought it would be even more fun to dress up, so she got herself a dirndl (Spangler 2004). While these non-white festival-goers are not “passing” in the traditional sense of making their audiences believe they are of German lineage, the festival context purportedly ignores the fact that they are not German by birth; they have been invited to be German for the day. The question remains as to whether these ephemerally liminal spaces will impact larger and more permanent geographies by blurring the boundaries of ethnicity and race or whether they are simply manifestations of Americans’ continued preoccupation with defining difference. In Chapter Four I will continue to explore these issues by examining the place images that are employed in ethnic tourism marketing and the representation of Germanness in promotional materials.

Chapter Four:

Ethnic Representation and Perception in German Texas

“...I do not think Germans in the 1800s went about life drinking beer, eating sausage, and yodeling in kilts all the time.”

As the quote referenced above—from a participant in New Braunfels’s 2004 Wurstfest—suggests, tourism marketers are faced with a unique challenge when “selling” places. Because places are “complex packages of goods, services and experiences,” they not only can be sold in different ways; they are “consumed in many different ways” as well (Ward and Gold 1994, 9). Despite their best efforts to communicate specific messages about a place, tourism officials may find that visitors read and interpret those messages in unintended and unimaginable ways because they bring with them their own stereotypes and preconceptions about the people and places they encounter. After attending a festival or browsing through promotional materials depicting German Texas, a visitor just might take away the message that locals spend their time “drinking beer, eating sausage, and yodeling in kilts.” In addition to complicating the marketer’s task, such misconceptions also can impact residents, who might neither agree with nor appreciate the ways in which they and their communities are perceived by tourists.

Although ethnic heritage represents just one thread within the fabric of a place, it is increasingly the focus of tourism development strategies. As Robert Wood has observed (1998, 230), ethnicity is “broadly integrated” in “‘postmodern’ trends of cultural theming, simulation, and consumption.” Today, “ethnic” designates something as being “interesting to see, promote, and experience locally and afar” (Wood 1998, 230); thus, ethnic difference and ethnic distinctiveness are valuable and highly marketable

qualities of place. The rising popularity of ethnic festivals, along with ethnic tourism more broadly, reflects a consumer society that prizes instantaneity and disposability (Harvey 1990). Participants can enjoy the immediate gratification of immersing themselves in an “ethnic” experience and then seamlessly return to their ordinary lives. Touristic ethnicity is perhaps the ultimate manifestation of the development of symbolic forms of ethnicity discussed in Chapter Three. Ethnic tourism temporarily confers the experience of belonging to a place-based community, but demands very little of the consumer in return.

With the transition to dominantly postindustrial economies that began in the 1970s, a number of communities and regions have seen their traditional economic bases erode, taking with them an important component of their place identities (Ward and Gold 1994, 8). At the same time, as spatial barriers have become less and less important in our global society, people have become more and more attuned to the unique qualities of individual places. Local uniqueness can be harnessed and promoted to make places more attractive to highly mobile capital (Harvey 1990). Thus, in their struggle to restructure and readjust to new economic and technological circumstances, many places have turned to tourism as a development strategy, entering into direct competition with countless other places to attract tourist dollars. Despite readily observable trends toward spatial standardization, increased competition simultaneously encourages the diversification of space as places are restructured and repackaged to meet the demands of an ever more fragmented consumer market (Harvey 1990).

Place promotion has been defined as “the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to a target audience” (Ward and Gold 1994, 2). In this process, places and cultures are often treated as commodities, things to be advertised and sold just like any other product. The goal of modern advertising is no longer to educate potential consumers about the specific

attractions and features of a place, but to manipulate their desires and tastes through the production of images. As such, advertising's focus has shifted to the production of signs and symbols, rather than the production of commodities (Harvey 1990). These symbols are formed by assembling fragmentary place elements into an image (Ward and Gold 1994). In other words, place images are created by the interaction of multiple texts "which combine to produce a particular tourist text, albeit one whose meanings are shifting, unstable, and contested" (Urry 1994, 238). Thus, a single place can be marketed to a variety of different place consumers simultaneously (Ward and Gold 1994). Indeed, John Urry (1995) has observed that uniform, historical interpretations of place are yielding to more varied, postmodern, vernacular, and regional interpretations. Exemplifying this trend, ethnic and heritage tourism host communities are increasingly adopting an "inclusivist approach" to place promotion, in which "all heritages are at least accepted and perhaps even actively cultivated across a spectrum" (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, 98). In addition to providing opportunities for "product line differentiation," the inclusive approach allows greater economic participation within the community and may foster improved relations between dominant groups and minorities who had previously been marginalized (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000). Nevertheless, it is impossible to promote all of the various elements within a given place, so decision makers will eventually be confronted with the dilemma of deciding which traits to market and how those chosen traits will be balanced in tourism promotion efforts (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000). In this process, there is potential for conflict among groups, with resistance and factionalism most commonly occurring in cases where the initial impetus to develop tourism comes from outside the local community (Huang and Stewart 1996).

In developing place images based on local cultures, there is not only the question of which heritage(s) to promote, but how the heritage(s) will be represented. Don Mitchell (1992) asserts that because representations of place are abstracted from the material world, their meaning and ideological value can be manipulated. In particular, the social struggles that constructed the landscape may be erased or downplayed in tourism promotion: in tourism, “there is a politics of representation” (Mitchell 1992, 199). For communities embarking on heritage-based tourism, an important element in the transformation of places into saleable commodities is the creation of a version of history that is not only marketable to tourists but is also a “consensus” history, which residents can accept despite its “particular and partial historical visions” of their community (Mitchell 1992, 203). This process is often referred to as mythmaking (e.g., Mitchell 1992, Selwyn 1996). In mythmaking:

What individuals and groups perceive as heritage replaces what outsiders may regard as “fact” or “history” and becomes memory. When we choose to remember a selected past in a similar way, we celebrate our unity and experience *communitas*, but in doing so we also celebrate what divides us from all those with other memories or perhaps a different memory of the same selected past. (Ray 2003, 3)

In some cases, tourism myths have been consciously developed in order to attract tourists. For example, “theme towns” began to emerge in North America as communities based on primary industries navigated the shift toward postindustrial economies during the 1960s (Frenkel and Walton 2001). Towns that embrace ethnic theming usually base their chosen theme on a resident population; however, heritage can also be completely invented, as in the cases of Leavenworth, Washington; Helen, Georgia; and Kimberley, British Columbia. These communities fell upon hard times with the decline of their extraction-based economies following World War II, and each refashioned itself in the

image of a Bavarian village in hopes of developing a tourism-based economy (Frenkel and Walton 2001, Koch 1998, Roadside Georgia 2006, Rockandel 2005). The “themes” were selected arbitrarily, for none of these communities claimed a sizable German population or visible signs of a German heritage. For example, in Leavenworth, community leaders’ decision to pursue Bavarianization was based on the compatibility of the physical setting with popularly held place images of southern Germany, coupled with planners’ desire to emulate the success of other communities—notably New Glarus “Swiss-consin”; “Danish” Solvang, California; and “Bavarian” Frankenmuth, Michigan—that had developed profitable Old World and Alpine themes (Frenkel and Walton 2001). In Stephen Frenkel and Judy Walton’s (2001) estimation, Leavenworth essentially became a theme park. Theming the town was successful and relatively easy because the motifs employed were completely unconnected to the local community; there was no history to sanitize and no pre-existing culture to commodify.

Despite the prominence of these and many other examples, it should not be assumed that mythmaking is merely a commercial enterprise. While myths are indeed frequently constructed in the process of tourism development, they can just as frequently be invoked in other contexts. For example, Lauren Ann Kattner’s (1991) research on nineteenth-century New Braunfels illustrates how social myths evolved that emphasized the nonpartisanship of German leaders toward non-German residents, a supposed lack of prejudice against African Americans, and purported German-American industriousness. By focusing on the community’s German heritage, the significant role Anglos played in the city’s development and the ethnic heterogeneity of its residents were—and continue to be—largely overlooked. Further, it should be noted that myths are not necessarily constructed with the intent to create a false impression of a place. Celeste Ray (2003, 2) notes:

In the process of mythmaking, adherents do not necessarily set out to create falsehoods. In the anthropological sense, a myth is a combination of facts, images, and symbols that people selectively negotiate to create a desirable public memory, or a justification for a worldview.

Tom Selwyn (1996, 3) articulates a useful and elegant way to think about this process: in mythmaking, ideas of community and social order are typically “overcommunicated” while fractures and displacements within the society are often concealed or “undercommunicated.”

The creation of tourist myths is constrained to some degree by the physical and historical “realities” of places themselves. Yi-Fu Tuan (1990, 204) has observed:

Boosterism aims to create a favorable image and has little respect for complex truth. But to be effective the image must have some grounding in fact. A strong trait is made to stand for the whole personality.

Even in theme towns, there must then be some agreement between the place image that is presented and the elements that compose the actual place. In Leavenworth, physical geography provided a foundation upon which the Alpine theme could be developed, even though the cultural landscape had to be thoroughly modified to conform to the Bavarian image that tourism planners wanted to project.

Theme towns represent an extreme within a continuum of approaches that range from the total fabrication of landscapes to very minor enhancements to existing landscapes. It is more often the case that place marketing draws upon the pre-existing elements of a place, although these elements may be packaged and presented in new ways. “Place-products” can be defined according to a “varied, if necessarily incomplete inventory of facilities, services or locations within the place” and/or “the set of attributes or qualities relating to the place as a whole perceived by either producers or consumers” (Ashworth and Voogd 1994, 6).

To some extent, place image (how the place is promoted) must accord with place identity (a place's real or perceived physical attributes and people's attitudes toward it) for tourism promotion to be successful. If place image and place identity do not conform, tourists' expectations will not match their experiences and they will be dissatisfied. Furthermore, if an image is promoted that widely diverges from what the place "is" in the perception of residents, the local population may become dissatisfied with how "their" place is represented and may also find themselves having to reshape "their" place in order to meet external demands and expectations. Thus, in selecting place images, tourism planners must strike a careful balance: they must choose the right elements in the right combinations to create an attractive, marketable image; they must ensure that the image fits the place, often making modifications to one or both in the process; they must address the demands of competing groups who wish to be represented in tourism promotion and to share in its benefits; and they must create an image that is simultaneously saleable to consumers and at least somewhat acceptable to residents.

In this chapter, I explore these tensions as they have been negotiated in Brenham, New Braunfels, and Fredericksburg, examining the creation of place images and their impacts from a variety of perspectives. I begin by analyzing promotional materials to determine the role that German heritage plays in central Texas place-products and to observe how Germanness is represented and communicated to potential visitors. I also assess the extent to which the region's increasing ethnic diversity has been incorporated into the communities' place images. I then discuss how touristic images of German Texas reflect trends in the evolution of white ethnicity.

After exploring the messages that are being sent to potential tourists, I turn my attention to how these messages are being received. I present survey data that demonstrate how both residents' and visitors' perceptions of place are affected by their

participation in ethnic heritage events. I also argue that, in contrast to trends toward the standardization of texts, motifs, and symbols in place marketing, central Texas's distinctive regional heritage permeates its place images. In addition to exoticizing familiar symbols of German heritage, the attention to local, regional, and national contexts in place promotion broadens the base of potential consumers. Finally, I demonstrate how ethnic difference is framed within the context of the German-themed festivals.

REPRESENTATION IN THE PROMOTION OF GERMAN PLACE

To understand the effects of tourism on perceptions of the ethnic identity of a place, it is necessary to interrogate the messages each study community sends through its tourism marketing and promotional efforts. My focus is on recent marketing materials, specifically each community's printed 2004 visitor guide and its official Chamber of Commerce website. In my analysis, I examine three ways in which information is communicated to potential visitors: 1) textual references to various ethnic groups, heritages, or attractions within the communities; 2) visual references to ethnic groups, heritages, or attractions; and 3) photographic images of visitors and residents.²⁹ I also interviewed tourism planners in each community to learn more about how they have integrated German heritage into their place marketing efforts.

Fredericksburg: "German Heritage. Texan Hospitality."

Of the three study communities, Fredericksburg is the most "German," both in terms of its ethnic composition and in terms of the touristic image its promoters present.³⁰

²⁹ In analyzing the photos of people included in the brochures, it was not possible to ascertain with complete confidence the ethnic backgrounds of the subjects. Thus, I approached this task from the perspective of how I, as a potential place consumer, immediately perceived and interpreted these images.

³⁰ Thirty-seven percent of the population claimed at least partial German ancestry in the 2000 Census.

Fredericksburg's 2004 tourism brochure contains 70 photographic images, 20% of which (14 images) explicitly referred to the city's German heritage or attractions. Only three images (4%) contained visual references to "American" culture, and all of these were related to the city's National Museum of the Pacific War, which honors local hero Admiral Chester Nimitz and the veterans of World War II. The brochure contained five images (7% of the total) of "Texan" culture, broadly defined.³¹ No other ethnic groups or cultures appear to be portrayed in the photographs.

Textual references to German culture and heritage increase the German presence throughout the brochure. Each section is prefaced by a German-language header—regardless of the section's content—infusing topics such as nature tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities with a distinct German flavor (Figure 4.1). The brochure reflects the Chamber of Commerce's marketing strategy, in which German heritage is used as the unifying framework for presenting a variety of tourism attractions. Convention and Visitors Bureau Director Ernie Loeffler (2006) explained:

We do have different marketing messages out there, particularly heritage, but almost everything we do at least has some mention about German heritage in the ad. But, we do promote the great outdoors. Now we're very heavily into promoting the Texas wine industry that's developing around us. But then, for example, when we're talking about the Texas wine industry we also talk about how the first Germans found wild grapes growing here and they started making wine almost immediately after they got to Fredericksburg. So, [we're] always tying back to that core message of a historic town in the heart of Texas. Through the years, as the town has grown and expanded, there are a lot of other messages we now send out in addition to and on top of that original message.

Including the headers, the text of the brochure includes 33 references to German heritage or culture, nearly double the number of references to Texan culture (17 total) and nearly

³¹ These photos included one image each of the "Wild West" and the state flower, the Texas bluebonnet. I included them in my count because both are commonly recognized symbols of Texana and are used widely in promotional literature throughout the state.

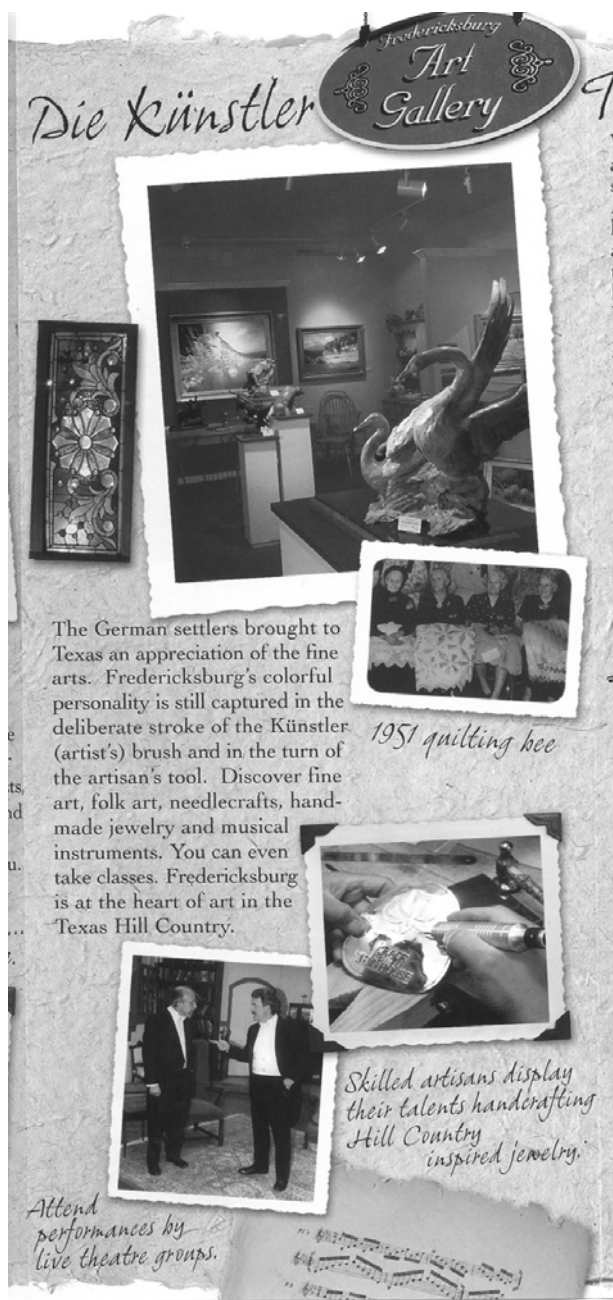


Figure 4.1: A panel from Fredericksburg's visitor brochure demonstrates how the German heritage is employed as a unifying theme in promoting the city's diverse attractions. Here, a German-influenced place image is communicated through linguistic cues as well as explicit references to German heritage within the text. (Reproduced with permission of the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce)

five times the number of references to national themes (seven total). While the emphasis on Texan culture is a nod to the 45% of Fredericksburg's population that is white but does not claim German ancestry, the brochure does not in anyway belie the growing number of Hispanic residents, who accounted for nearly one-fifth of the city's population in 2000. Additionally, none of the images of people used in the brochure—which portray both residents and visitors—appears to feature a single non-white subject. The strong emphasis on German and, to a lesser extent, Texan heritage is likely to leave the potential visitor with the impression that the community is more ethnically and racially homogeneous—specifically, more “German”—than current Census figures suggest (Appendix A).

The content of on-line resources reinforces the printed materials' focus on German and Texan cultures. Although the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce's website does not reference German heritage on its homepage in either visuals or text, German references are sprinkled throughout the lower-level pages. As in the brochure, there are no references to local cultures other than German or “Texan,” although one non-German ethnic event—the annual Native American Powwow—is mentioned. Interestingly, the German heritage does not enjoy the same prominence on the website that it does in the tourism brochure. There is no page devoted to explicitly German events and attractions. Rather, the German theme is woven into the site in subtler ways, such as pictures of vaguely German landscape features (Gothic church architecture and an unidentified log cabin) and the following excerpt from the text:

Fredericksburg, in the heart of the Texas Hill Country, is the perfect vacation destination, with something for all ages and interests. From grandfather (or “opa” if you want to speak like a native!) to the grandkids, everyone is going to have fun! (Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce 2003)

The website does not mention Fredericksburg's growing Mexican-American and Asian populations or other non-white ethnic groups, and the images all depict people who appear to be of European ancestry. Thus, the online information, like the printed materials, depicts the community in a way that makes its population appear monolithically white and predominantly German, despite recent demographic changes.

The key figures in Fredericksburg's tourism industry, Chamber of Commerce President Joe Kammlah and Convention and Visitors Bureau Director Ernie Loeffler, both claim deep German-Texan roots. Kammlah describes himself as a fifth-generation German Texan, while Loeffler explains that his ancestors arrived on the first ship sent to Texas from Germany. To them, Fredericksburg's German image is not just a marketing concept—it is *their* heritage. Nevertheless, during my interviews neither man seemed the least bit territorial about the community's image as a "German" place, and both expressed an interest in incorporating other ethnic heritages into Fredericksburg's tourism development and promotion. In fact, Kammlah (2006) believes that the city's tremendous success in tourism lies in its diversity:

We really are blessed in that we can really draw from all kinds of cultures, ethnic culture, the German. We can switch real easily—American, whatever. We're considered a very patriotic community; we have a big Fourth of July parade and we draw people for that. We have the German culture that draws the Americans and, of course, the Texas [culture]. Now we get a lot of Europeans, like the Germans—they don't want to go to Oktoberfest. They want to know about the Wild West, they want to ride horses, and do that.

Fredericksburg's German heritage is only one facet of a highly fragmented place-product. Kammlah (2006) jokingly explained, "As one of our CVB staff says, we have a dead admiral, a dead president, and a big rock." His comment refers to the museum dedicated to native son and Pacific War hero Admiral Chester Nimitz, the birthplace of Lyndon Baines Johnson, and Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, which features a huge

dome of pink granite that is one of the largest batholiths in North America. These attractions—along with abundant spring wildflowers, agrotourism focused on the area's famous peaches and a growing number of wineries, hunting, and ample shopping opportunities—draw a large and diverse stream of tourists year-round. In addition to further expanding its tourism offerings, broadening the scope of ethnic tourism would potentially raise awareness of other groups' contributions to the city's history. As Loeffler (2006) explained:

The bottom line is, if you look at the story of this area of Texas, it was Hispanic; it was Native American first. And we now have a powwow here, which we're really excited about, because the Native Americans' story was not really told all that well... And again, it's not trying to create something that didn't really exist because the family from Oklahoma—it's basically their family powwow, which they've expanded and now have kind of an inter-tribal powwow—they trace their roots [to the Fredericksburg area].

The Hispanics who live here, many of them have family roots here as long as the Germans, if not longer. It's not like they're new to the community, and we need to tell their story. All the land grants in this area that the Germans families have have Hispanic names on them from the original owners of the property... There's probably a need to better tell that story... there's probably a little more sensitivity now to say that "The Germans came in 1846, but what happened before that?"

While the comments above could be dismissed as mere lip service, newer marketing materials are indeed more inclusive and better reflect the community's historical and contemporary ethnic diversity. For example, visitors are encouraged to watch a DVD presentation about Fredericksburg and its attractions when they stop by the Visitor Center. The video prominently features the community's German heritage, notably the colorful and obviously German-themed Oktoberfest, but it evenly balances references to German heritage and attractions with attention to other community features. Its format is quite similar to the printed brochure (pictured in Figure 4.1), containing segments that address a variety of topics such as nature-based attractions, agriculture, and

military history. However, the German theme is not intertwined with non-ethnic elements as it is in the printed brochure, and the video's depiction of both heritage producers and consumers is less ethnically homogeneous. For example, the Native American Powwow receives roughly the same amount of coverage as Oktoberfest, and the Oktoberfest footage prominently features an African-American family enjoying the festivities.

Even with the support of local officials, there are significant constraints on the degree to which other ethnic heritages—especially Mexican heritage—could be incorporated into Fredericksburg's tourism marketing. First and foremost is the proximity of the city to the state's top tourist destination, San Antonio. Just an hour's drive from Fredericksburg, one prominent geographer has described San Antonio as the “Mexican-American cultural capital” of Texas (Arreola 1987). According to a survey published in *Texas Highways* magazine in 2001, the city is home to six of the top 12 tourist attractions in the state, and four of these draw upon the city's Mexican heritage: the Alamo, annual Fiesta parades, the Riverwalk, and the city itself. For tourists who want to experience the state's Mexican heritage, San Antonio is probably the most logical destination.

The second obstacle is the city's established reputation as a “German” place. Loeffler (2006), who also has 14 years' experience working for the San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau, noted:

When you get right down to marketing Fredericksburg, what people are looking for is the German influence, the German food, the German music, whatever. And of course layered on that now is the Texas music and all that. But if people are looking for a Hispanic experience, they're probably going to go to San Antonio or numerous other communities where that's the dominant cultural flavor you get today.

The German image is rooted in a wealth of visible evidence of the city's German history. There is little within the city's cultural landscape that reflects the influence of other

ethnic populations, making it difficult to develop other types of ethnic tourism, as Loeffler (2006) observed:

From a marketing perspective, you sell what is most dominant and what people are going to experience when they get there. Certainly we could say that there's a Hispanic population here, but on a typical day, you're not going to have a visitor experience that relates to Hispanic culture. You're going to have a visitor experience that relates to ranching and the Hill Country or to the early German heritage or German food.

In discussing her experience managing Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest over the past 10 years, Debbie Farquhar-Garner (2005) emphasized the need for content that will support an image, if that image is to be successful:

Anyone in the U.S.A. could have an Oktoberfest if they want to and it would probably work for them if they would pattern it after an all-German event. I'm afraid if they tried to introduce many stages with many kinds of music [at Oktoberfest] then, in my opinion, they are defeating themselves. In my marketing experience, I have found that the most appealing events to market are those that definitely are sure of what their identity is. If you continue to bring back Oktoberfest-type music, if you continue to bring back the Cajun Crawfish Festival with Cajun and zydeco music, you're going to build up that type of atmosphere. You're going to build up that type of reputation for consistency, and most people who like that will continue coming back... That's what I found works for us.

A final issue, one that is gaining more attention with Fredericksburg's soaring popularity as a tourism attraction, is that the city could fall victim to its own success. With an ever-expanding offering of attractions and experiences, competing place images could undermine the city's legibility to visitors. Furthermore, as tourism grows, larger numbers of visitors might compromise the small-town atmosphere that is highly valued by residents and visitors alike (a point I will return to in Chapter Five). Kammlah (2006) noted: "[One of my biggest fears is that] we grow to a point, even in the tourism industry, that we overshadow what got us here to begin with—we're just another town." Thus, despite recent efforts to tell other groups' stories, adherence to the German theme in

tourism development is not only a reflection of the Germans' dominant role in the community's history; it is a practical consideration as well.

New Braunfels: "Jump In"

As in Fredericksburg, references to New Braunfels's German heritage infuse many aspects of its tourism promotion. In a pattern very similar to that observed in its sister city, 15 of 65 images appearing in the printed 2004 visitor's guide (23%) reference some aspect of the city's German heritage. Only four pictures (6%) convey a sense of Texan heritage. Nothing in the images or text of the brochure appears to promote a sense of "Americanness," and no other ethnic cultures are depicted.

Once again, the juxtaposition of images in the text reinforces the German theme, even when distinctly non-German attractions are portrayed. For example, a section on the community's ample opportunities for water recreation includes a tiny image of a lederhosen-clad tuba player, and another section on nature tourism opportunities includes a picture of a Tyrolean-style felt hat amid its photo collage. Convention and Visitors Bureau Director Judy Young (2004) pointed out that use of German symbols within the brochure mirrors the way German heritage permeates New Braunfels:

For a lot of destinations, [ethnic tourism] is something that's a niche. For us, it infiltrates every image that you can think of. The number-one water park in the country is named Schlitterbahn. Now what are the chances of that? And so, the entire park is themed around German Old-World heritage—all the rides are named that way, all the accommodations are named that way...I mean, we spell house "h-a-u-s." It's part of our everyday life...You can't say even the city's name without going, "Huh?"

Reflecting their visibility within the cultural landscape, the text of the brochure includes seven references to German heritage, along with ten references to Texan heritage. However, only one reference is made to the city's large Mexican-American

population—specifically, a “Fiesta Mexicana” event held in May. The images of residents and visitors used in the brochure further obscure the increasing ethnic diversity of New Braunfels. Of 21 images of contemporary people, only one very small photo looks as if it *might* contain a single non-white subject. To a greater degree than in Fredericksburg, which is still dominantly white, New Braunfels’s emphasis on German and Texan culture is potentially misleading to visitors, as the city’s population is 35% Hispanic today.

As in Fredericksburg, the absence of Hispanic imagery in marketing materials reflects obstacles to developing tourism focusing on the city’s Mexican heritage. As Young (2004) explained, New Braunfels could readily accommodate more Mexican-themed activities:

As far as you were talking about the Spanish-German thing, I really think it’s very flexible in this town. They’re so similar in their celebratory manners, the cultures, that it’s not a stretch.

However, San Antonio’s dominance in Mexican-themed tourism in Texas precludes the successful development of similar attractions in New Braunfels:

We’re so close in proximity to San Antonio that there wouldn’t be enough base in New Braunfels to do what San Antonio does with Spanish heritage and cultural tourism. There’s just not the base. Maybe [we have] the population, but we don’t have Spanish missions; we just don’t have those things... There’s so much for the Spanish culture to participate in and do within such a close proximity to us that is on such a grander scale that anything that’s done locally is really kind of community- or church-based. I think that might be why there’s not this big outcry that [Hispanics] are being neglected. (Young 2004)

While the city’s German heritage provides the dominant ethnic motif in tourism marketing, it is not considered New Braunfels’s primary tourist attraction. That distinction is held by the ample water-based recreation activities available in the area. Young (2004) reported, “We’ve been a water-based destination since before Texas was a

state,” predicting that water “probably always will be” the city’s top attraction. In a shorter, less extensive brochure that was also distributed in 2004, the text and photos balance the themes of water recreation and German heritage more equally, perhaps with even slightly more attention focused on water. Furthermore, the home page of the City of New Braunfels’s official website features a scene of people recreating along the Comal River, although once one navigates beyond the home page German ambience and attractions are well-represented within a series of rotating images of the city’s features. In both print and electronic media, the two dominant images of New Braunfels—German heritage and river recreation—are also occasionally intertwined, as in an image of Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels wearing an inner tube that appeared on the cover of the 2004 “Official Guide to New Braunfels” and in the following text:

Jump into the heart of the Texas Hill Country and you'll find New Braunfels. Founded in 1845 by German settlers, our town is overflowing with old world heritage and small town charm. (New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce 2005)

In contrast to the lengthier brochure, in which German heritage bridges a variety of secondary themes, the dominant motif of the Chamber of Commerce website and the briefer brochure is water-based recreation, symbolized by the inner tube (or “toob” as it is usually spelled in central Texas). While exploring the website, I found no images that appeared to feature non-whites and no mention of the community’s large and growing Mexican-American population or its Mexican settlement history. However, the Chamber of Commerce does acknowledge the city’s Mexican roots and its current ethnic diversity in its Official Guide to New Braunfels (2004, 12):

Today the population of New Braunfels consists of predominately German and Hispanic cultures and many other nationalities creating a vibrant and progressive community. Many of the German and Hispanic families are fourth and fifth generation descendants of early settlers.

Field observation suggests that New Braunfels's image has become somewhat less German in recent years. For several years now, the marquee in front of the Chamber of Commerce office has read, "Welcome. Willkommen. Bienvenidos." The Chamber also recently redesigned the billboards that welcome drivers entering the city limits on Interstate 35. The previous billboard depicted a German-looking man clad in lederhosen and a cowboy hat under the slogan "Ya'll [*sic*] Kommen In!" (Figure 4.2b), while the current billboard presents a simple, abstract illustration that suggests a river and the slogan "Jump in" (Figure 4.2a). While Young contended that tourism marketing efforts are not deliberately backing away from the German image, she did explain that German heritage is playing a smaller role in place promotion overall, owing in large part to the rise of the internet. Many tourists now research potential destinations on-line before they travel; in New Braunfels, of 1.3 million inquiries received annually by the Chamber of Commerce, 76% are fulfilled electronically (Young 2004). Thus, traditional marketing materials do not need to provide as much cultural and historical background as they once did. As the cultural emphasis of marketing materials decreases and the Mexican-American population and its influence on New Braunfels's landscape grows, tourists may begin to "read" the tourist landscape differently. Places are not just "multisold," or marketed to different groups of consumers with different motivations; they are also "multiconsumed" and thus open to different interpretations (Ashworth and Voogd 1994, 10). Therefore, while New Braunfels's place image is not being deliberately manipulated to seem less "German" and more "Hispanic," this shift might nevertheless occur in the perceptions of tourists in years to come.



Figures 4.2a and b: New Braunfels's current welcome billboard on Interstate 35 (top) conveys a much less German place image for the city than the previous version (bottom). The newer billboard suggests how water recreation is a key theme in the city's promotional materials, along with German heritage.

Brenham: “Birthplace of Texas”

In a state where “Texan” is sometimes considered a nationality (see Figure 4.3), Washington County’s distinction as the “Birthplace of Texas” is a potent and highly marketable place image. The city of Washington-on-the-Brazos was the capital of the Republic of Texas and the site where the Texas Declaration of Independence was drafted and signed. Owing to the emphasis on Texan heritage in place marketing and the lack of German signatures in Brenham’s cultural landscape, German heritage plays a relatively minor role in the area’s place promotion.

Brenham’s 2004 visitor guide is dominated by references to Texan heritage and historic sites related to the Republic, in both its images and text. Former Chamber of Commerce director and long-time resident Bill Neinast (2004) explained:

See, this is the birthplace of Texas, and that probably has a stronger marketing value than the German heritage. Here is where it all started: the Declaration of Independence and the Stephen F. Austin colony. So that's easier. At least it's more meaningful to Texans and, I think, probably outside of Texas also. You can get German culture at Milwaukee, New Ulm [Minnesota], all these other places, but for Texas history it's San Antonio and San Jacinto and Washington County.

As such, not a single image within the 20-page guide explicitly conveys the city’s German heritage and culture, despite the fact that more than one-quarter of the local population claimed German ancestry in 2000 (Appendix A). Furthermore, this lengthy document mentions German heritage only three times within its text: buried on Page 6 is a brief mention of the Maifest, and ads for two bed and breakfast establishments refer to German heritage on pages 14 and 16.³² Setting Brenham further apart from the other

³²The 1990s saw a larger role for German heritage in the Maifest, owing to a concerted effort by citizens. It is interesting to note that the 1998 Visitor’s Guide, which was published during this brief renaissance of German heritage at Maifest, and the 2002 Visitor’s Guide featured a more substantial description of the event, including photos of dancers and musicians in German costume. It appears that the German origin of the festival is consciously being downplayed in more recent promotional materials as the event’s German content diminishes.

study communities is the somewhat greater visibility that is extended to the African-American heritage as compared to German heritage: the Geraldine Lawson Fortune Heritage House is mentioned on Page Two (including an illustration), and the city's annual Juneteenth celebration is advertised on Page Six.

Brenham's German heritage also plays a relatively minor role in other printed promotional materials. For example, the media kit provided by the Washington County Chamber of Commerce omits discussion of the German heritage altogether, although references to Texas history and culture abound. However, another Chamber publication, the 2003 "Picture Perfect" magazine, provides the following information:

German immigration began in Washington County in the 1840s and increased after the Civil War. The county is very proud of its German heritage and demonstrates it vividly at the annual Maifest celebration. (Washington County Chamber of Commerce 2003a, 19)

No other mention of the county's German heritage or population, in the publication's images or text, is present.

References to Germanness are virtually absent from on-line resources as well. The Chamber of Commerce's and City of Brenham's websites also do not display any images with explicitly German content, and the Chamber of Commerce's overview of the county's attractions contains no mention of German heritage. It states:

From a bigger and better Ice Cream Festival and Texas's oldest county fair to antique shows galore and everything in-between, there's much to see and do in Washington County, Texas! Comprised of the towns of Brenham, Burton, Chappell Hill and Independence, Washington County is a little more than an hour—yet a world away—from the big cities of Austin and Houston. Plan your next great escape here, the birthplace of Texas! (Washington County Chamber of Commerce 2003b)

However, a brief very reference to Brenham's German settlement history can be found on the city's website, on its "History of Brenham" page:

German immigration began in the county in the 1850's and increased after the Civil War. Most of the large farms were divided into smaller ones and settled by the German immigrants. (City of Brenham 2004)

Thus, despite a lengthy history of German settlement, one that has seen the numeric dominance of German Americans within the population until only recently (Jordan 1986), Brenham's tourism promotion is dominated by images of Anglo Texans and their culture. The less prominent role of German heritage in Brenham's place image is largely attributable to the lack of visible German influence within Brenham's cultural landscape, as I will discuss in Chapter Five. Thus, the situation in Brenham is the mirror image of what is happening in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels: rather than projecting an image that might distort perceptions by making the German population appear more dominant than it is, tourism marketing in Brenham is more likely to create the perception that its population is less German in composition.

TOURISM PROMOTION AND THE EVOLUTION OF WHITE ETHNICITY

In addition to messages that are explicitly and implicitly sent to potential visitors about the ethnic character and composition of host communities, tourism promotion in German Texas also inadvertently communicates a great deal of information about the current status of white ethnicity and related heritage tourism activities. First, the universal emphasis on "Texan" culture within the promotional materials—like the symbols displayed at German-themed events—reflects the existence of multiple scales of identity among Americans today. My previous field observation in several ethnic tourism host communities throughout the western half of the United States suggests that "Americanness" is a critical component of contemporary touristic ethnic identities. As in the nineteenth century—when festivals provided opportunities for German Americans to proclaim their allegiance to their new homeland as they paid respect to the traditions of

the old (Conzen 1989)—presenting Germanness within the context of an overarching “Americanness” (or “Texanness”) mitigates the perception of German ethnic identity as insular or unpatriotic (Herbelin 2005). Perhaps more importantly, it extends the appeal of heritage-based events and attractions beyond the boundaries of the German-American ethnic group.

As state tourism campaigns like to remind us, Texas is “a whole other country.” In the Lone Star State, Texas nationalism can seem as pervasive and deeply felt as American nationalism—if not more so (Figure 4.3). The prominence of hybridized German-Texan identity in place promotion in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels simultaneously reaches out to “external” tourists seeking an encounter with the exotic and “internal” tourists seeking fellowship with others of shared heritage. Joe Kammlah (2006) stated that the emphasis on Texanness in Fredericksburg’s tourism promotion was “probably unintentional,” but its value is unmistakable. “Texan” is highly marketable, but “Texan” plus “German” is even more marketable: “It’s two-for-one” (Kammlah 2006). Furthermore, the emphasis on regional distinctiveness distinguishes German heritage sites in Texas from those elsewhere, presenting them as unique alternatives to German-themed tourism destinations in other parts of the United States.

The use of signifiers of German culture in promotional materials underscores the symbolic nature of contemporary white ethnicity. The use of German imagery and language to promote attractions of a thoroughly non-ethnic character, as exemplified in the brochures from Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, supports the contention that ethnicity is becoming increasingly symbolic, “concerned with the symbols of ethnic cultures rather than with the cultures themselves” (Alba 1990, 306). Furthermore, the images used in these materials often depict a “Bavarianized” version of German culture, despite the fact that few German Texans’ roots extend to this region of Europe (Jordan



Figure 4.3: While the phenomenon is most definitely not confined to central Texas, Texan nationalism is proudly on display in Fredericksburg.

1966). The extent and implications of the Bavarianization process in central Texas will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

A final, somewhat troubling, set of issues raised in this analysis addresses the role of race in ethnic tourism development. Scholars like Wilbur Zelinsky (2001) and Mary Waters (1990) have expressed concern that contemporary celebrations of ethnicity are circumscribed by the color line. My analysis of promotional materials reveals that the people pictured in tourism marketing materials are almost exclusively white, although the cities' populations are becoming increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-racial. One could argue that an ethnically homogeneous place image is a necessary response to visitor expectations—when people visit a “German” place, they expect to see German-looking people. However, this place image, in turn, might reinforce the whiteness of German heritage tourism by causing non-white residents and potential visitors to feel that they are less welcome to participate in the development and enjoyment of tourism activities. Thus, the messages of ethnic homogeneity conveyed by the promotional materials might be a factor in the relatively low rates of participation in German festivals among Hispanic and black visitors that I discussed in Chapter Three.

FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION AND PERCEPTIONS OF GERMANNESS

Visitors' perceptions of the region's Germanness are shaped not only by the images and information presented in promotional materials, but by their tourism experiences as well. In discussing Wurstfest's potential role in shaping perceptions of New Braunfels, Judy Young (2004) stated:

They're our largest special event. They're probably the most recognizable German festival in the southern United States; they're in the top three in the country...It's a non-profit organization that greets 100,000 people in 10 days. How can they not have an impact when they greet three times the [local] population in 10 days?

At the same time, if the events and attractions encountered lack ethnic distinctiveness, participants could get the impression that the community is somewhat less “ethnic” than it actually is. In describing Brenham’s Maifest, Washington County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director John Holchin (2004) stated:

The concept of the celebration of the German heritage, to an extent, is there in name, but not so much in practice. You don’t have as much of an integration of the whole cultural side of the German heritage into the festival—you know, [there are] some bands and the music and things like that, but it’s not a total cultural kind of a thing that you’ll get elsewhere.

In this section, I will explore how German-themed tourism development affects perceptions of Germanness, and ethnic diversity more generally, among residents and festival participants. The data I present were collected using two different surveys. The first survey I will discuss (Appendix F) was distributed to a random sample of residents of each study community, and the second survey I will discuss (Appendix D) was distributed to participants in each community’s main German-themed festival (the same survey that I discussed in Chapter Three).

Impacts of Festival Attendance on Residents’ Perceptions of Ethnic Diversity

In an attempt to gauge the effect of German festivals on local perceptions of diversity, I asked residents to estimate the ethnic composition of their community’s population.³³ Table 4.1 provides the mean percentages reported by residents of each community, along with the estimate published in the 2000 Census for comparison.

³³ It is important to note the limitations of this data set. In each study community, from 15-20% of survey respondents skipped the question on the ethnic composition of the population altogether, with most of these participants stating that they did not know the answer. While this situation does detract from the applicability of these findings to the larger population, I feel the data nevertheless clearly demonstrate that there are differences in the perceived size of various ethnic groups within the study communities. Additionally, there were a number of instances in which a respondent’s estimates across the five categories did not total 100%, due to miscalculation or perhaps a misunderstanding of the question. Regardless, I feel these figures are useful in that they provide a sense of the respondents’ perceptions of the relative size of each ethnic or racial group.

Residents slightly overestimated the percentage of Germans within the populations of all three study communities, by 3.0% in Fredericksburg up to 7.6% in Brenham. In overestimating the proportion of Germans, residents underestimated the proportion of non-German whites. This tendency might be attributable to the fact that German cues, including the German-themed festivals, are present within the cultural landscape of each study community. New Braunfels and Fredericksburg feature numerous examples of architecture, business names, street names, toponyms, and other artifacts that reflect the cities' German heritage, despite the fact that German populations are on the decline. Even in Brenham, where Anglo settlement predated German settlement, one can observe occasional faint traces of the German influence.

Table 4.1: Residents' perceptions of host communities' ethnic composition

Data source	Germans (%)	Other whites (%)	Hispanics (%)	Blacks (%)	Others (%)	Total
Brenham	33.3	27.7	15.5	23.1	5.3	118
Germans	34.3	26.6	15.0	21.1	5.6	52
Non-Germans	32.5	28.6	15.8	24.7	5.1	66
<i>Census estimate</i>	<i>25.7</i>	<i>40.1</i>	<i>8.9</i>	<i>22.5</i>	<i>2.8</i>	
Fredericksburg	40.4	32.9	23.7	2.3	5.0	114
Germans	41.4	31.6	24.8	2.5	4.2	72
Non-Germans	38.5	35.0	21.8	1.9	6.1	42
<i>Census estimate</i>	<i>37.4</i>	<i>44.2</i>	<i>16.9</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>1.3</i>	
New Braunfels	28.0	29.1	37.7	4.8	6.7	119
Germans	28.0	28.5	38.9	5.2	8.2	62
Non-Germans	28.2	29.7	36.0	4.4	5.1	57
<i>Census estimate</i>	<i>22.8</i>	<i>42.6</i>	<i>34.6</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>2.0</i>	

When asked to specify the data on which they based their estimates, the majority of residents surveyed cited personal observation rather than consultation with any objective or authoritative source. A number of respondents explained that they were uncertain of their answers' accuracy because they could not distinguish Germans from other whites. As one white New Braunfels resident explained: "[I answered] based on people I see in public places. One cannot really state with any exactness who is what except possibly blacks." The emphasis on Germanness in place marketing might influence residents' perceptions of white resident populations as being more German in composition than they actually are.

The mean figures for the approximate percentages of Hispanics, blacks, and "other" groups reported by residents exceeded the values reported in the 2000 Census to varying degrees in each community. Many respondents expressed confidence in their ability to identify members of these subpopulations, as did one New Braunfels resident of German ancestry who has lived in the city for nearly 15 years: "This town is so small you can count the black and Oriental people." The most significant difference between the values reported by residents and the Census values can be seen in the estimates of the proportion of Hispanics within each community. I believe that overestimates of the size of local Hispanic populations can be attributed to the dramatic growth in the Mexican-American population in central Texas—as well as in the state and nation more broadly—over the past few decades. Residents can literally see the impact of this particular demographic shift in the population and in the landscape, while they might not as readily notice the influx of non-German whites, who are also moving into these areas in large numbers. These inflated figures may also reflect some residents' fears that non-whites are "taking over" their communities as the state's Hispanic culture region expands. For

example, a Fredericksburg respondent, who reported German ancestry but has only resided in the community for six years, commented:

“The Hispanic population is booming in Fredericksburg! They reproduce like rabbits! We Germans seem to be the dying breed.”

A German native of New Braunfels reported, “More and more Hispanics are taking over the German community with shouts of discrimination so everyone bows down to be politically right.” A lifelong resident of Brenham, also of German ancestry, noted, “[We are] getting overpopulated with Hispanics in the school district.” Thus, the higher-than-actual estimates might reflect concerns among the German community that their position of dominance within the communities is waning in response to recent demographic trends. As I noted in Chapter Three, festivals focusing on German heritage were developed in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels only after large numbers of non-Germans (both white and non-white) began to move into the communities. Festivals might thus gain importance as vehicles for the claiming of cultural capital by German Texans in years to come, particularly if the Hispanic and Anglo populations continue to grow relative to the German population.

The findings above suggest that the visibility of certain groups influences perceptions of the study communities’ ethnic compositions. One could hypothesize that the heightened visibility of German culture afforded by German-themed activities might therefore make the German population appear larger than it truly is. The data presented in Table 4.1 above seem to support this notion: German residents reported slightly higher percentages of Germans within their cities than did non-Germans, except in Fredericksburg where the two groups’ average figures were nearly equal. However, further analysis reveals that this distinction between the perceptions of Germans and non-Germans is not necessarily the result of the German respondents’ participation in heritage

festivals. Surprisingly, festival attendance had a negative impact on residents' estimates of the "Germanness" of each city's population overall (Table 4.2). Because only one respondent out of the entire survey pool cited a German festival as evidence used to inform his response, it is impossible to know with certainty why festival attendance would lower residents' estimates of the relative size of the German population. However, one might speculate that the festival setting could bring residents into contact with participants of varied ethnic backgrounds, whom they might not encounter in their everyday activities. Furthermore, the incorporation of other themes—including American, Texan, and Mexican—into the festivals might suggest to participants that the population is becoming more diverse and the German culture is becoming diluted. The overt commercialization of some displays of German heritage at these events might further give the impression that residents and other participants are merely playing at being German. Finally, it could be argued that people who attend the German festivals might have a greater interest in ethnicity than those who do not, and these respondents could simply be more attuned to the ethnic patterns within their communities. Whatever the underlying cause, these results refute the common-sense assumption that exposure to German heritage through festival participation would inflate residents' estimates of the relative size of the local German population.

Table 4.2: Residents' estimates of the relative size of local German populations

Data source	Brenham (%)	Fredericksburg (%)	New Braunfels (%)
All respondents	33.1	40.4	28.1
Festival attendees	32.8	39.6	27.3
Never attended festival	34.2	45.3	40.0
German respondents	34.3	41.4	28.0
Festival attendees	33.4	40.1	27.9
Never attended festival	46.0	48.6	30.0
Non-German respondents	32.5	38.5	28.2
Festival attendees	30.1	40.8	26.7
Never attended festival	43.9	43.1	47.5
<i>Census estimate</i>	25.7	37.4	22.8

Generally, residents who had never attended their local German festival estimated a larger proportion of Germans within the population than their counterparts who had attended the festival. The correlation coefficients calculated for the datasets revealed differences between the responses of Germans and non-Germans. Although the effect of festival attendance on estimates of Germanness is consistently weak in all three communities, it varies in telling ways from place to place. For example, in Fredericksburg, prior festival attendance had a slightly negative correlation with perceptions of Germanness among both groups, but the effect was just barely stronger among Germans (-0.17 or 3% of the variance) than among non-Germans (-0.04 or virtually none of the variance). This slight difference could be attributed to reported concerns among some Germans regarding the decline in German population and culture as newcomers move to the area; the visible diversity of people participating in the festival could further fuel these concerns. Conversely, in New Braunfels one can see the nearly

opposite relationship: the effect of festival attendance on estimates of the size of the German population is virtually negligible among Germans (-0.03) and slightly positive among non-Germans (-0.36 or 13% of the variance).

The percentages of residents who had never attended their local German festival were quite low among the survey respondents in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels—16.1% and 8.5% respectively—so these results might be somewhat biased by the low number of respondents in this category. Nevertheless, the difference between the data sets collected from each city's residents might be related to differences in the visibility of non-German participants in each festival. In New Braunfels, Hispanic participation is increasing among both consumers and producers of the Wurstfest, and Mexican food and music are appearing among the festival offerings to a greater extent than at Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest. This more multicultural milieu may draw attention to the size and influence of the Mexican-American population within New Braunfels among non-German residents, who are likely to be newer to the community (with a median length of residency of 11 years among respondents) and thus less familiar with local history than German residents (who reported a median length of residency of 19 years).

The most significant and telling difference between the perceptions of Germans and non-Germans can be seen in Brenham, where festival attendance had a positive effect on estimates among non-Germans (0.30 or 9% of the variance) and a negative effect among Germans (-0.26 or 7% of the variance). While the variances are small, I believe the difference in the two groups' perceptions reflects the peripheral role of German heritage in Brenham's place identity. Because Brenham does not overtly promote its German heritage as a tourism attraction and because of the relative paucity of German signatures in the cultural landscape, Maifest is likely to play a more significant role in shaping perceptions of the local German presence than Wurstfest or Oktoberfest, both of

which take place in settings rich with evidence of German settlement. The display of German culture at Maifest, albeit superficial, might be many non-German residents' first exposure to this aspect of Brenham's history, thus leading them to a higher estimate of the relative size of the German population. Residents with German roots, on the other hand, might be expecting Maifest to be more German-oriented in its content, and the lack of German-themed offerings may lead them to lower estimates of the percentage of Germans within the community.

Impacts of Festival Attendance on Event Participants' Perceptions of Diversity

To further explore the effects of German-themed festivals on perceptions of ethnic diversity, I asked festival participants to estimate the percentage of Germans living in the community that hosted the event they attended (Table 4.3).³⁴ Those responding to the festival participants' survey included visitors as well as residents. Thus, the data presented in Table 4.3 data differ from the data I discussed previously, which were collected from a random sample of residents, irrespective of their festival participation.

The data suggest that festival participation has a greater impact on perceptions of Germanness among visitors than among residents, perhaps because the latter have a more intimate knowledge of the local population and cultural context. Among festival attendees as a group, the differential effects of festival participation on residents and visitors are fairly small. However, examining the data collected at each festival independently shows that the greatest difference between residents' and visitors' estimates is associated with Maifest, where visitors' mean estimate of the proportion of Germans within Brenham's population is 7.5% higher than residents' mean estimate. This result is not surprising because Maifest is the one of very few times of year when

³⁴ "Residents" includes all respondents who reported current or previous residence in the study community.

Brenham's German heritage is emphasized, so visitors who come to the community solely to attend Maifest are likely to leave with a distorted view of the city's ethnic composition.

Table 4.3: Festival attendees' mean estimates of the relative size of local German populations

Data source	Brenham (%)	Fredericksburg (%)	New Braunfels (%)
All festival attendees	46.0	48.3	39.9
Residents	44.2	49.9	37.8
Visitors	51.7	47.8	41.1
German attendees	44.1	48.8	40.6
Residents	38.0	39.0	39.8
Visitors	55.0	51.0	41.4
Non-German attendees	48.8	47.8	39.2
Residents	50.3	63.5	33.5
Visitors	35.0 ^a	44.4	40.9
<i>Census figure</i>	<i>25.7</i>	<i>37.4</i>	<i>22.8</i>

^a Figure represents a single response.

Visitors of German ancestry estimated larger percentages of Germans within the population of each host community than did German residents, again suggesting that the festival environment's attention to the German theme might positively impact perceptions of Germanness among those with less direct experience with the community. Interestingly, the opposite relationship can be observed among non-Germans: in Brenham and Fredericksburg, non-German residents as a group returned a significantly higher estimate of the German population than did non-German visitors, while the figures were very similar for both non-German groups in New Braunfels. I believe these findings are

linked to visitor expectations: tourists who come expecting a more Bavarian-style experience might not recognize the German-Texan symbols and themes on display in Fredericksburg and Brenham and thus might estimate a smaller local German population than residents, who are likely to be more familiar with the communities' settlement histories and can more easily recognize the locally rooted version of German culture that is on display. Wurstfest, being more commercialized than the other two events, is more likely to conform to visitor expectations, resulting in the similar perceptions of Germanness between residents and visitors.

REPRESENTATIONS OF GERMANNESS IN THE FESTIVAL CONTEXT

In marketing heritage as a tourism attraction, it is not only important for communities to decide which heritage(s) will be promoted, but how the chosen heritage(s) will be portrayed. The depiction of heritage by tourism producers and the interpretations of those portrayals by consumers are both conditioned by pre-existing stereotypes. John Gold (1994, 23) observes:

Once formed, stereotypes are an important category in environmental cognition. They are resistant to change and supply a rapid, if erroneous, way of coming to terms with environmental complexity, given that individual people or places are all assumed to have the same attributes as the group as a whole.

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the constructedness of German-American ethnic identity has been well documented (see Conzen 1989). Thus, the symbols employed in German-themed tourism development should not be taken for granted, but should be understood as a conscious, selective interpretation of heritage that is aimed at creating a coherent, appealing place image. Portrayals of German heritage must also address commonly held perceptions of what "Germanness" entails, either by educating tourists to modify their expectations or by catering to those perceptions.

Table 4.4: Attendees' agreement that "[This festival] accurately portrays German culture"

Data source	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral/ Don't know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total^a
Maifest	9.4	31.3	37.5	12.5	9.4	32
Germans	16.7	33.3	33.3	11.1	5.6	18
Non-Germans	0.0	28.6	42.9	14.3	14.3	14
Residents	9.1	18.1	45.5	13.6	13.6	22
Non-residents	10.0	60.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	10
Oktoberfest	12.7	44.1	33.9	9.3	0.0	118
Germans	15.3	52.5	22.0	10.2	0.0	59
Non-Germans	10.2	35.6	45.8	8.5	0.0	59
Residents	27.8	44.4	11.1	16.7	0.0	18
Non-residents	10.3	44.3	38.1	7.2	0.0	98
Wurstfest	12.0	45.2	31.3	9.6	1.8	166
Germans	10.8	53.0	24.1	9.6	2.4	83
Non-Germans	13.3	37.3	38.6	9.6	1.2	83
Residents	13.2	52.8	24.5	9.4	0.0	54
Non-residents	11.6	41.1	34.8	9.8	2.7	110

^a Columns might not total 100% as a few respondents skipped one or more questions. Percentages are based on the number of respondents answering all questions used to define each subcategory.

Locating the “Fest” in Maifest

I now turn my attention to attendees’ assessments of the accuracy of depictions of German culture in German-themed festivals. As Table 4.4 demonstrates, a plurality of survey respondents from each festival agreed or strongly agreed that German culture is accurately portrayed. Agreement was significantly higher among respondents who attended Oktoberfest or Wurstfest (57% of respondents at each festival agreed or strongly agreed) than among respondents who attended Maifest (41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed). One in four survey respondents reported that they think Maifest is not German enough, accounting for much of this disagreement.³⁵ My participant observation at the festival in 2004 revealed that only one of the half-dozen or more bands performing played German music (with a rock band headlining the event), no vendors offered German foods or crafts (although an entire booth was dedicated to Confederate flags and similar “southern”-themed items), and, perhaps most significantly, no German beer was for sale!

All of the respondents who felt the festival lacked sufficient German content were local residents, and they were evenly divided between those who claim German ancestry and those who do not. While only one out of 10 non-residents responding disagreed that German heritage is portrayed accurately at Maifest, 28% of Brenham residents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Residents are likely to know more about Brenham’s history of German settlement than visitors are, and thus they might have higher expectations as to the degree and manner in which the German heritage is represented. Today, little of the

³⁵ In comparison, only 1.2% of Wurstfest respondents and 6.8% of Oktoberfest respondents felt the festivals needed additional German-themed enhancements, and these comments most frequently referred to the need for additional German food items and activities that focus on German culture, as opposed to purely festive activities.

festival's content reflects its German origins. As former Chamber of Commerce Director Bill Neinast (2004) stated:

Now what bothers me about Maifest is that I think it's false advertising. The only thing German about it is the name, and sometimes they mispronounce that as "May-fest" [rather than "MY-fesht"].

Another local of German ancestry lamented, "Apart from the German music...how else would one be able to tell by visiting the grounds that the festival celebrates German culture?" In contrast, a visitor from a neighboring community assumed that German heritage must be accurately represented because of the festival's longevity:

Not being German I can only assume Maifest accurately portrayed German culture. Since it has been a long-time tradition we would suppose it would be accurate.

Much of the residents' disagreement appears to be related to the increasing emphasis on the Maifest "Coronation pageants" at the expense of the German-themed aspects of the event. The Coronations include the crowning of a "senior" king and queen, representing high-school-aged students, and a "junior" king and queen, representing younger children. All young people in the community are invited to participate in the pageant, and it appears that the majority do. Coronation has been a part of Maifest since its early years, but over time the pageant has become the focal point of the festival. For a number of years, the Maifest has been held each Mother's Day weekend. The Junior Coronation parade takes place on Friday afternoon and the junior pageant occurs that evening, while the Senior Coronation parade is scheduled for Saturday morning, with the senior pageant following on Saturday evening. The "Maifestival," the "German"-themed component of the Maifest, starts on Friday evening, resuming on Saturday morning after the senior parade and continuing until a few hours after the end of the Senior Coronation.

Because so many of Brenham's young people are involved, the Coronation pageants have evolved into huge spectacles that last upwards of three hours apiece. The children wear elaborate outfits and perform a variety of song and dance numbers that reflecting theme that the queen has selected. From all the evidence I have seen, it appears that not a single Coronation has employed a German theme in the 116-year history of Maifest, despite the ethnic origins of the festival. In addition to purchasing ornate costumes, the king's and queen's families sponsor a number of events leading up to the Coronation, making participation as Maifest royalty a costly proposition. One source told me that families have spent as much as \$6000 when their child was selected as a king or a queen. For many in Brenham, such an investment is simply unaffordable, so the royalty tend to come from wealthier families. While German ancestry is not a requirement for selection, a family's involvement in the community and their contributions to the Maifest Association are major considerations (Cummins 2004). Thus, the royalty are often the siblings, children, or grandchildren of previous royalty, as their families are most likely to be involved with Maifest.

Although most Brenham families can afford to have their children appear in the pageant, the overrepresentation of wealthy, long-established, white families among the Maifest royalty is objectionable to many residents, who would like participation in the pageant to be more equitable (Dietrich 2006). Others are dismayed by the increasingly peripheral role of German-themed activities during Maifest. Echoing the sentiments of a number of respondents, one lifelong German resident of Brenham—who has attended the Maifest Coronation or parade about ten times over the last 50 years but has never participated in the German-themed activities—summed up both sentiments, stating: “I doubt that Maifest is an accurate representation of German culture—it's more of a ‘who's who in Brenham.’” The competing ideas about the meaning of Maifest—regarded as a

celebration of German heritage on one hand and as a celebration of Brenham's youth on the other—have generated some tension within the community. Chamber of Commerce Director John Holchin (2004) explained:

Not that they're competing in an adversarial way, but you've got the Coronation and you've got the Maifest and the two are always sort of pulling for the community's attention and involvement. Inevitably, because of the involvement with the children, the Coronation, with its history and traditions, is always going to win. So, if you're trying to increase the appeal of the Maifest and the value of the Maifest, for locals as well as tourists, you have to do it in a way that doesn't detract from the Coronation. You'll lose if you do; the locals will support the Coronation. So one of the things that was talked about was: Is there a way to begin to move the Coronation more towards a German focus? Whereas the theme of it for the past few years has been a variety of things and there hasn't been a German focus to it ... That will, one, hopefully bring the locals more in touch with the Maifest roots, but it, two, may then give tourists a reason to go to the Coronation, whereas today they may not have that so much.

Long-time resident Bill Neinast is very active in learning about and celebrating his German ancestry. He and his wife Jeannine, both retired, spend much of the year traveling throughout North America to attend various German and Czech festivals. A career military man, Neinast was stationed in Bavaria following World War II. There he developed a strong affinity for the German culture, which he proudly displays in the architecture of the East Texas home he designed (Figure 4.4). As a former director of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, Neinast sees the current state of Maifest as a lost opportunity. Pointing out that Germans settled in Washington County a dozen years prior to their settlement of the Hill Country (which includes New Braunfels and Fredericksburg), he stated:

There is an unequalled basis for a true German festival in Brenham and Washington County, where the Lutheran church services and records were in German until World War I. It is very troublesome to me that such a heritage is subordinated or forgotten in favor of the aggrandizement of the families who may want to have a Maifest king or queen in their albums. Look at the organization of



Figure 4.4: Bill and Jeannine Neinast stand in front of their Burton, Texas, residence. The Neinasts designed their home to reflect the Bavarian culture they experienced while Bill was stationed in Germany.

the Maifest Association—over 90% [is] devoted to the coronation and parades only. (Neinast 2004)

For a brief period in the 1990s, Neinast belonged to a group of local residents who called themselves the “Wie Geht’s Club.” They actively promoted the area’s German culture, particularly in the Maifest (Figure 4.5). According to Neinast (2004), the organization was constantly struggling to enhance the German aspects of the event, but came up against a lack of funding and lack of interest on the part of the Maifest Association:

[Wie Geht’s Club organizer] Clarence Spies... told me repeatedly that they would tell him, “Look, the only thing we are interested in the Maifest is to make enough money so that we can have another one next year.” That was [the club’s] driving force when he was working with them, trying to get [Maifest] expanded to be larger and trying to get more money for entertainment. Then when Clarence died, no one else stepped forward to take over, and the Wie Geht’s Club dissolved, and [the Maifest] went back to nothing but country-western type music.

As I noted in Chapter Two, Maifest was regarded by observers and participants as rather Americanized even before the turn of the twentieth century. The lack of attention to German heritage in today’s Maifest celebrations has the potential to drain the event of any remaining ethnic content in the years to come. Such a development would have significant repercussions for some residents’ and visitors’ enjoyment of the event. Half of the respondents to my survey described Maifest as “somewhat worse” or “much worse” than other German-themed events they had attended, with this group evenly divided between Germans and non-Germans and between residents and visitors. Furthermore,



Figure 4.5: An advertisement by the “Wie Geht’s Club” from the 1998 Maifest program states its mission to preserve and promote Brenham’s German heritage. During a brief period in the 1990s, the club sponsored musicians from Germany and helped to advertise the festival, but it dissolved shortly after the death of its organizer, Clarence Spies. The group’s slogan, “Wie geht’s ya’ll,” [sic] was created to reflect the community’s German and Texan roots. (Neinast 2004)

when asked what could be done to improve the event, more than one-fifth of respondents suggested something related to increasing its German content.³⁶

With the demographics of the community changing to include more and more newcomers, many of whom are Mexican Americans or non-German whites, and with the aging of Brenham's German population, the future of Maifest's German-themed activities is uncertain. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, for many participants, ethnic festivals are a way to maintain ethnic identities. Thus, the decline of Maifest could, in turn, have a negative impact on German ethnic identity in central Texas, particularly among Brenham residents.

Commercialization and Selectivity in Representations of Germanness

While a deficiency in German content was a common critique of Maifest, such concerns were weaker among Oktoberfest and Wurstfest attendees. Only 6% of Wurstfest attendees and 19% of Oktoberfest attendees provided suggestions for improvement that addressed increasing the festivals' German content. While the proportion of Oktoberfest participants who mentioned additional German elements (19%) was only slightly lower than the proportion of Maifest participants who did (25%), the nature of the Oktoberfest recommendations was quite different, focusing on expanding the variety of existing offerings (like music, food, and activities) rather than adding elements that are altogether absent or otherwise deemed to be lacking. When evaluating the accuracy of depictions of German culture at the festivals, participants from all three festivals frequently mentioned the commercialization of the events and the selectivity of representations of German

³⁶ While a fairly large percentage of participants' suggestions for improving the other festivals in some way addressed increasing or enhancing German content—19.0% from Oktoberfest and 13.0% from Wurstfest—these suggestions did not appear to be associated with dissatisfaction with the events to the same extent as at Maifest. Whereas half of participants in Maifest rated it as worse than other German-themed events they had attended, only 20.4% of Oktoberfest attendees and 6.1% of Wurstfest attendees rated those festivals as worse than others.

culture and heritage as negative impacts. Because such assessments were common to all three events, I will use these themes to structure the discussion that follows, rather than analyzing participants' perceptions of each festival in turn.

Bavarianization in German Texas

In the construction of German-American heritage and landscapes, one can observe a widespread tendency to emphasize symbols of Bavaria and its distinctive regional culture, despite the fact that relatively few Germans who immigrated to the U.S. during the period of mass migration came from this part of Germany. As I discussed in Chapter Two, German Americans have self-consciously manipulated their image throughout their history by promoting positive aspects of their culture. The Bavarian stereotype personifies many of these elements—sociability, colorful festive culture, a love of food and drink, and jolly music and dancing—which taken together are frequently referred to as *Gemütlichkeit*.³⁷ Heiko Oberman (1985) argues that Americans have developed a perceptual paradigm that posits Germans as either industrious, humorless “Prussians” or fun-loving, quaint “Bavarians.” Thus, it is not surprising that the Bavarian image is dominant in tourism promotion. Additionally, many German Americans today have little conception of what it means to be “German.” A climate of distrust fostered the active suppression of German ethnicity in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century (Luebke 1983), resulting in an “Americanization” process in which many German Americans consciously abandoned their ethnic heritage (Tolzmann 2000). Today, historical distance from their ancestral homeland has left many seeking their

³⁷ The development of these Bavarian stereotypes has been traced to Germany's role in world politics in the twentieth century (Jarausch 1985, Lange 1985, Luebke 1983), interpretations of typically “German” character traits (Faust 1909, Luebke 1983, Totten 1985), depictions in historiography and popular media (Knobel 1980, Monaco 1986, Neuer and Thieme 2000), manipulations of images from within the German-American community (Berquist 1983), and festive culture (Tolzmann 1983).

German “roots” with no factual basis upon which to build an understanding of their heritage. They often do not know from which region their ancestors emigrated or what comprises “authentic” German culture because this information was lost as earlier generations assimilated. The symbols portrayed in popular culture and in festivals provide later-generation German Americans with raw materials from which they can construct an image of “Germanness.” Oftentimes, the perceived authenticity of displays of German culture is based on how well they conform to common stereotypes that conflate German culture with Bavarian culture.

Tourism planners in central Texas are very aware of the tendency toward Bavarianization, and they strive to represent German heritage in ways that avoid this totalization of German culture. Chamber of Commerce Director John Holchin (2004) observed:

...I don't know if a lot of festivals portray German heritage in an extremely accurate fashion because German heritage in and of itself is kind of a misnomer. I mean, there was no Germany up until the turn of the last century. It was a bunch of principalities each with very proud, dynamic [traditions]. You know, Bavarians did not think of themselves as Prussians. It's like you have a lot of diversity in terms of what is German heritage to begin with, and it does become a sort of caricature of oompah bands and things like that. Having said that, I think the German heritage here doesn't even go toward that caricaturization of the German heritage as much as you'll get at other festivals around the country necessarily.

Despite efforts to avoid it, a bit of Bavarianization has crept into portrayals of German-Texan heritage in central Texas. Chamber of Commerce President Joe Kammlah (2006) acknowledged that Oktoberfest was never a part of the German-Texan frontier experience that is central to the Fredericksburg's image. However, he feels the event is an acceptable concession to the expectations of visitors:

[Oktoberfest] is [Bavarian], but the other thing is that there are so many people who have never been to Germany or Oktoberfest and so they don't know any

different. The expectation is that if you're a German town, you ought to have Oktoberfest.

Tourism officials in Fredericksburg attempt to manage visitor expectations through promotional materials that describe and emphasize the community's "German-Texan" heritage. As CVB Director Ernie Loeffler (2006) explained:

One of the things that I have found, particularly with people coming from outside of Texas, is when they hear "Fredericksburg, a German town in the Hill Country" many times they have a perception of this little transplanted Bavaria. And what we try to do whenever we have the opportunity is to explain that no, that's really not the case. That what you find in Fredericksburg is really more of a frontier experience...Sometimes people are maybe a little disappointed because they walk down Main Street and they go, "Well, this doesn't really look like a Bavarian village." Well, no, because it's not...But, it's definitely German heritage in the sense of how the Germans adapted once they got here and that's really our story, rather than "Little Bavaria in Texas"...There really is a sense of trying to tell an accurate story and not just a "well, if that's what you want, that's what we'll give you" kind of thing.

Results from a recent study commissioned by the Fredericksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau suggest that these visitor-education efforts have been successful. Forty-two percent of respondents reported that the city's German heritage "exceeded their expectations," while only 6% reported that their expectations were not met; the rest indicated that their expectations were met or they had no opinion (Core Research 2004). Tourism officials in Fredericksburg, like those as in Brenham and New Braunfels, further reported that they rarely receive feedback suggesting that tourists were disappointed by the way in which German heritage is portrayed and celebrated in central Texas.

As Kammlah pointed out, an obvious, although temporary, exception to attempts to avoid Bavarianization occurs during the host communities' German-themed festivals. During these events, which are modeled after Munich's famous festival (but on a much smaller scale), lederhosen, dirndls, and oompah music are the rule. Thus, for a weekend (or 10

days, in New Braunfels's case), the host communities adopt a place image that is highly symbolic, evocative of Bavarian culture, and less rooted in the settlement history of central Texas than in depictions of "German" culture presented in the popular media. Thus, for a few days each year, the people and places of German Texas are decked out in a Bavarian-inspired style. For example, the "Omas" and "Opas" of the Wurstfest organization don regulation costumes—vests and felt hats for men and dirndl-style dresses for women—that evoke Bavarian culture and add to the festival's ambience (Figure 4.6). A few organizers of Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest have also begun to dress up for the festival, and the large majority of performers at both Hill Country festivals wear Alpine-style costumes. Even in Brenham, where German entertainment is limited and sporadic, some musicians and dancers appear in costume in the Maifest parade and at the Maifestival. To provide the finishing touches, the grounds of all three events are adorned with various combinations of advertisements for German beer; German flags with red, yellow, and black bunting to match; Bavarian flags and banners; Maipoles that tell the history of each community; and images of lederhosen- and dirndl-clad *Volk* (Figure 4.7).

While festively decorated public parks are the setting for Brenham's Maifest and Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest, Wurstfest's success has enabled organizers to construct a permanent, dedicated venue for the event. The Wursthalle and the Marktplatz are two sections of an imposing structure on the shady shore of the Comal River. In addition to performances and activities occurring in the indoor facilities, others take place in the open, in the Biergarten area, and in two outdoor tents. The Wurstfest complex provides an immersive experience that more closely resembles an idealized German landscape than the host city that lies just out of view. The exterior of the Marktplatz is constructed of pale yellow stucco with dark wood framing that resembles traditional German



Figure 4.6: “Omas” and Opas” participate in the “Biting of the Wurst” ceremony to kick off New Braunfels’s 2004 Wurstfest. Wurstfest Association members dress in Bavarian-style costume to identify themselves as festival hosts and to enhance the German ambience of the event.



Figure 4.7: Plywood cutouts of lederhosen-clad musicians and banners in the blue-and-white diamond pattern of the Bavarian flag enhance the Old World ambience of Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest.

fachwerk. The entrance is crowned with plywood cutouts of the Wurstfest crest (which includes symbols of Bavarian heritage including sausage, an accordion, a tuba, beer, and a pretzel—see Figure 4.10b) and a jolly fellow in Alpine lederhosen, clutching a string of sausages in one hand and a mug of beer in the other (Figure 4.8). Inside the Marktplatz, the food and souvenir vendors' booths have been built in the image of Alpine chalets, each complete with its own unique combination of symbolic elements including peaked, wood-shingled roofs; artificial balconies of wood or wrought iron; window boxes brimming with silk flowers; crests representing local families and German states; painted floral motifs; scrolled edging; blue-and-white diamonds that mimic the state flag of Bavaria; and signage in Gothic script (Figure 4.9). The individuality and attention to detail among the booths creates an ambience that resembles the streetscape of a quaint mountain village. The grounds and buildings are largely unused the rest of the year, and much of the complex is out of view of major thoroughfares. As such, the Wurstfest grounds do little to Bavarianize the otherwise largely unconstructed German-Texan landscape of New Braunfels. But for 10 days each fall, the setting provides participants with an experience that accords with many people's perceptions of what Germany and German culture are all about. "I felt like I was in Germany," gushed one New Braunfels resident in describing the 2004 festival. Another summed up the event by declaring, "If you are unable to attend Oktoberfest in Germany, Wurstfest is the next best thing."

Despite the use of Alpine imagery at German-themed festivals, Bavarianization was not a common concern among participants when asked to assess the accuracy of depictions of German culture at the events. There was no mention of this issue among Maifest participants, and only one Oktoberfest participant, a German-born tourist from Austin, discussed the phenomenon:



Figure 4.8: The Wurstfest complex provides an immersive experience for participants by providing a German-themed atmosphere inside and out. The red-white-and-blue streamers along the roof and the Texas flags seen here reflect the festival's emphasis on national and regional contexts



Figure 4.9: The careful attention to detail in the construction of the vendors' booths inside the Wurstfest Marktplatz contributes to an ambiance that some participants claim is the next best thing to being in Germany.

It reminds me of Germany, but in reality, we don't dress up in lederhosen anymore unless it is a special celebration and then it's only done in Bavaria and the southern part of Germany. The northern part does not dress up like that. Same thing with the music. It's much different.

Among Wurstfest participants, concerns about Bavarianization were not widespread; however, participants cited it as an example of an inaccuracy in representation more frequently than in the other two study communities. (The issue was raised by seven respondents, or 4.2% of the total.)

Comparing the assessments of each event's depiction of German culture suggests that perceptions of Bavarianization mirror the extent to which the festival setting has been constructed to evoke a German atmosphere. For example, although both festivals feature similar foods, music, and symbols, Oktoberfest's venue—the Marktplatz, a public square just off Main Street with historic buildings, including the iconic Vereins Kirche (Figure 6.2), in view from all sides—imparts a stronger sense of the local setting than the otherworldly, immersive environment of Wurstfest. Thus, the degree of constructedness of the festival setting might diminish rather than enhance the experience for some participants, raising important considerations for communities considering marketing their ethnic heritage as a tourism attraction.

As Bill Neinast (2004) pointed out, the German image that is portrayed in Texas—even by those who purportedly know better—is hardly an unadulterated depiction of the original settlers' culture:

Until 1875 [*sic*], there was no Germany. So you have the Bavarians: they're called the "Texans of Europe" because of their informality, their friendliness, and so forth. And they consider themselves Bavarian rather than German, like they say Texans consider themselves Texans rather than Americans. Then you have north Germany, up around Holland, where [there is] a completely different style of dress, different customs; you go to the Black Forest and yet a different type of dress... And each one of them has a little different culture: the food is a little

different in many cases, not all though. Sometimes I've gone out and given some talks to German groups who are not familiar with Germany, and a real German would immediately throw up because I wear a mix of uniforms, you might say. I wear lederhosen, which is from Bavaria; I wear the little Prince William cap from north Germany; a tie that is used, called the wedding dress, in central Germany around Frankfurt. So it's a hodgepodge. And you wouldn't find a true German dressing like that. They'd either dress as a north German or a Bavarian or someone from the Schwarzerwald [*sic*]. So you don't have that homogenization of just one country, one group of people. And that makes it a little harder. And that's why I say looking for what is the German heritage, what is the German culture... it's really hard to define. There are many German cultures.

Neinast's comments reveal that German-American heritage is not, nor does it purport to be, a historically accurate representation of a particular German or German-American subculture, but a mosaic of images pieced together from various times and places in Germany's and America's pasts. Perhaps more enlightening, his statement also reveals the role of memory in the evolution of heritage. While he spends a lot of time participating in heritage-based events and activities and he has lived and traveled in Germany, Neinast's relation of some of his vast knowledge of German-American culture reveals slight inaccuracies, reflecting how knowledge becomes increasingly fuzzy over time and space and contributes to the constant redefinition of "Germanness" from the inside as well as the outside.

Perceptions of commercialization and selectivity

Bavarianization is one outcome of the commercialization and selectivity inherent in the marketing of German-American culture. While specific concerns about Bavarianization were few, a sizable proportion of the survey respondents—18.1% of Wurstfest participants and 16.1% of Oktoberfest participants—cited the commercialization of the heritage or the selectivity of representation more generally

when providing examples of inaccurate representation.³⁸ These two foci of concern were often expressed in tandem, as the selectivity of representation was frequently viewed as a way to cater to participants' expectations. For example, a German from Austin disagreed that German culture is portrayed accurately at Wurstfest, explaining:

Wurstfest in some aspects portrays stereotypical elements of German culture—how we as Americans perceive it to be. I think Wurstfest is more about making money than it is about promoting German culture.

Despite his perception that the event is somewhat commercialized and based on stereotypes, it was not enough to prevent him from attending Wurstfest fifteen times in the past 20 years or from purchasing a pair of lederhosen at the 2004 festival. Many respondents, like one visitor of partial German ancestry who traveled to Wurstfest from the Dallas area, felt that the events do present an accurate picture of German culture as a whole, but they necessarily focus on its celebratory elements, rather than day-to-day activities:

I have been to Germany and people aren't constantly listening to polka music and drinking beer and eating pretzels on a daily basis. Their Oktoberfest, however, is a big celebration and includes drinking lots of beer, eating, and music. Since they are known for beer and polka music [these] become the focus of German celebrations because it is part of their culture. I think Wurstfest accurately portrays Germany's Oktoberfest but as far as daily life goes beer drinking and polka music are part of a generalization of Germans.

In addition, a few comments pointed to the omission of less palatable events in the history of the German state, such as anti-Semitism and the influence of the Cold War on East Germany, as examples of selectivity, while others observed that the festivals gloss over the more somber aspects of the history of Germans in America, recognizing that

³⁸ All concerns raised by Maifest participants referred to its lack of German-themed content, not the content itself, so Maifest will not be addressed in this section.

these elements would damper the festive atmosphere of the events and make them less appealing to participants. A Fredericksburger of German heritage observed:

I agree [that German culture is portrayed accurately], but I feel that Fredericksburg's version of the festivities is a bit modernized. The dress, music and foods are much the same, but there is more to German heritage than what can be displayed. When people tour the Vereins Kirche [home of the local Pioneer Museum], I think that that small museum portrays a deeper side of German culture and the hardships that Germans went through when they arrived in America. I feel that it is also important to include the war when learning of German culture because there were many lost families and hardships to go through. Things of that nature are not easily portrayed at a festival.

Other respondents felt the selectivity of representation went even further, exaggerating even the more festive elements of German culture to the point of caricature:

I seriously doubt that most Germans spend a lot of each day polka-dancing & eating bratwurst ... though they may be consuming a lot of beer! A festival like [Wurstfest] may actually be more of a parody of a culture, but [it is] done with much affection and joy.

Like the respondent above, a New Braunfels resident of mixed ethnic ancestry, many respondents referred to the focus on alcohol consumption at Oktoberfest and Wurstfest as an example of a “German” trait that has been selectively emphasized over other ethnic characteristics. The controversy surrounding the emphasis on beer and its consumption in German-themed festivals is the latest chapter in a debate begun in the nineteenth century, when the temperance movement pitted German Americans against teetotalers in communities throughout the United States (Conzen 1989). While some survey respondents regarded beer consumption as an inherently German cultural trait, others saw it as a potentially negative cultural stereotype that might reflect poorly on the host community. For example, one New Braunfels resident (who is, unsurprisingly, not of German ancestry) wrote: “Germans are alcoholics and that's what you will see at Wurstfest,” while another resident, who also claimed German ancestry, complained that

this depiction “makes the whole country [of Germany] look like big beer drinkers.” As I will discuss in the following chapter, many residents, especially in New Braunfels, are concerned that tourism development is portraying their communities as places for tourists to “party” because of the emphasis on beer consumption in a number of activities, not just German-themed events. Although the German settlers did introduce breweries and viticulture to central Texas, the focus on alcohol consumption at the festivals does not accord with the values of many conservative Protestants, who continue to compose the religious majority in many parts of the state that contribute tourists to central Texas and who are well represented in the populations of the study communities as well. Despite these concerns, images of beer are ubiquitous throughout the festival landscapes as many visitors and residents alike view it as an integral part of German heritage and celebration (Figures 4.10a and b).

As some of the preceding discussion demonstrates, selectivity and commercialization were not necessarily viewed as negative influences overall. Among Oktoberfest participants, 39% of those who mentioned these processes nevertheless agreed or strongly agreed that German culture was portrayed accurately at the festivals, along with 27% of Wurstfest participants. However, selectivity and commercialization were more frequently associated with negative perceptions of the accuracy of representation among Wurstfest participants, of whom 43% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the festival’s portrayal of German culture is accurate, compared to just 15.4% of Oktoberfest participants. The longevity, success, and growth of Wurstfest likely account for this difference in participants’ views. Wurstfest has evolved from a locally oriented event attracting a few thousand participants in the 1960s to bringing in over 100,000 participants annually and attracting national media attention in recent years (Herbelin 2004, Wurstfest Association 2006). Like the Pedernales Creative Arts Alliance,



Figures 4.10a and b: Oktoberfest's fiberglass beer stein and the Wurstfest crest each demonstrate the central role of beer as a symbol of German culture at the festivals.

which sponsors the Oktoberfest, the Wurstfest Association continues to operate as a not-for-profit organization composed of local residents. However, Wurstfest has attracted corporate sponsorship and a wide variety of vendors over the years, which might account for the more frequent references to its commercialization among attendees. When asked to specify the purpose of the event, only 5% of Oktoberfest participants (including equal proportions of Germans and non-Germans) cited fundraising, while 9% of non-Germans and 16% of Germans attending Wurstfest did. In some instances, the economic aspects of the event were described as beneficial overall, as in the following comments from a visitor from the Houston area:

I believe that its main purpose for the community is that of an extraordinary fundraising activity for local organizations and charities. A facility like the Wursthalle and its grounds [is] expensive to maintain and operate. It is also an enterprise that operates 10 days out of the year. The fees that I presume that the organizations pay for their booths must be huge to generate enough revenue to operate the facility for the year. For the individual organizations, the opportunity to raise funds seems unequaled—what a crowd. For the individual participant, the main purpose must be a celebration of cultural heritage.

However, other participants, such as the repeat visitor from Austin who bought the lederhosen whom I quoted previously, viewed commercialization in a more negative light:

[I] used to think it was to promote German heritage and culture, but based on crazy price hikes (especially beer, Jesus ... \$15 and \$21?), [I] think it is to make money for the Opas. I no longer believe Wurstfest is to promote German culture.

In a few cases, German residents saw the commercial aspects of the festival as discordant with their values. One New Braunfels local, who has lived in the community for most of her nearly 70 years, spoke German as her first language, and describes herself as very active in celebrating her German ancestry, explained:

The culture of New Braunfels can't be represented by what goes on at Wurstfest. The German culture that remains with the “*alt Neu Braunfelser*” is to be thrifty, hardworking, sharing, keeping the town and homes clean and neat. Caring about our community rather than the mighty dollar the Chamber of Commerce responds to.

Tourism often reflects local myths about people and places. However, this particular example demonstrates that the values perceived as embodied in the festival sometimes contradict local mythology about the meaning of Germanness, which could lead to conflicts over the nature of tourism development and its impacts. In Chapter Six, I will further discuss the role of myths and myth-making in German Texas's tourism by placing this and other examples of local lore into a broader historical context.

Authentically German-Texan: Representing hybridized ethnicities

Many festivals participants who responded to my survey are well aware of the constructedness and selectivity that underlies festive displays of German heritage. For example, one New Braunfels resident remarked of the depiction of Germanness on display at Wurstfest, “It is not *really* our culture anymore, but it is still our *perceived* culture [respondent's emphasis].” However, a large contingent of respondents feel the representation of Germanness at the events is accurate specifically because it accords with their perceptions of what “German culture” entails and because it replicates recognizable features that are commonly associated with Germany, despite the fact that they may or may not be appropriate in terms of local history.³⁹ Steven Hoelscher (2000, 76) has described this take on authenticity as “geographical verisimilitude,” the extent to

³⁹ My observation supports Hoelscher's contention (2000, 72) that, for many tourists to New Glarus, Wisconsin, a “vicarious resemblance” to Switzerland was sufficient to evoke notions of the community's Swissness, even among those with no direct experience with Switzerland itself.

which a tourism attraction duplicates the cultural landscape of the country of ethnic origin.

Responses that reflected the concept of geographical verisimilitude frequently referred back to the festival itself as evidence of its accuracy in depicting German heritage. Among respondents who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that German heritage was accurately portrayed at the festivals (including Maifest), nearly 30% defended their answers by citing aspects of the event they attended. For example, an Anglo visitor from Alabama who participated in the Oktoberfest stated, “[I’ve] never been to Germany—I see the descendants participating so some parts must be authentic.” A Mexican-American woman from Houston, whose husband is German, said of Wurstfest, “I don’t know much about the German culture, but the clothing, and the dancing, and the food is Germany,” while a white visitor argued that “People dress, dance, eat, and drink like the German culture, [so I] most definitely strongly agree [that German culture is accurately portrayed].” Such sentiments were also shared by locals, such as a Fredericksburg resident who strongly agreed stating, “Just go to one—[it has] beer, sausage, polka, and lederhosen.” These statements suggest that the use of readily identifiable symbols of ethnic culture significantly affects participants’ notions of authenticity. A few comments reflected the role of the media and popular depictions in setting these expectations of how German culture should be represented. A New Braunfels resident of mixed German and Hispanic ancestry explained his agreement that German culture is accurately portrayed by stating: “[I know this] because I’ve done my research and watched enough TV. I’ve gone to the local museum.”

Among the second group of participants—those who recognize that the version of German culture on display in central Texas is somewhat constructed—there appeared to be little disappointment or dissatisfaction with highly symbolic portrayals of local

German heritage. Their comments suggested an understanding of promoters' need to depict heritage in a way that is appealing and meets the desires and expectations of consumers. The following comments from a tourist from Austin who attended the Oktoberfest are representative of the responses received:

I think the planners use what's most interesting and popular and leave the rest behind in the interest in giving the attendees what they want. It's probably a sort of pop German culture from a historical perspective.

A second visitor from Austin described the portrayal of the German culture by comparing it to how some Germans, in turn, view American culture:

Having traveled in Germany, having become good friends with a German immigrant lady and [having] worked for a German company, I am not so sure that what we saw at New Braunfels is any more typical of what German culture really was than Germany's idea of our cowboy. It is a nice festival idea, but I do not think Germans in the 1800s went about life drinking beer, eating sausage, and yodeling in kilts all the time. Life was routine and difficult for them just as it was for us in America. Oktoberfest is a festival, not a reflection of how the population lived and acted day-to-day.

As these statements suggest, many among this group of respondents recognized that German-American culture is not static and continually evolves in response to changing historical contexts. Furthermore, some of these respondents recognized that the heritage on display also reflects its unique geographical context. A German-American from Fredericksburg observed:

I think we tend to make things "Tex-German" since it's impossible to have exact portrayals of modern Germany or of the Germany our ancestors left over 150 years ago.

Even those who did not themselves claim German ancestry recognized this process. A white, non-German resident of New Braunfels stated:

I think some parts of Wurstfest do resemble traditional German culture, but I think Wurstfest is just as much Texan/American as it is German. Not that this is bad.

Indeed, as I previously demonstrated, tourism planners in central Texas are careful to depict their communities not as German theme towns, but as locally rooted German-Texan places. This approach is carried over into the festival settings, albeit to varying degrees. During the past few years I have observed that the ticket stands and beer booths at the events have sometimes been decorated with red-white-and-blue streamers and American flags along with German symbols. When I asked about this practice, Oktoberfest manager Debbie Farquhar-Garner (2005) explained that such décor was not intended to specifically express American identity but was employed because “we are at war.” However, Fredericksburg’s Texan identity has been on display in more intentional ways; for example, banners greet revelers with a hearty “*Guten Tag*, y’all,” and I once saw a singer in a polka band put on a Willie Nelson wig (complete with red bandanna and a long, gray braid) to perform “On the Road Again.”

The few and rather subtle displays of American and Texan identities at Oktoberfest pale in comparison to the frequent and assertive displays at Wurstfest. The main outdoor music tent (“*Das Grosse Zelt*”) is completely decked out in an American color scheme of red, white, and blue, both inside and out. The focal point of the festival grounds, the enormous Wursthalle, features red, yellow, and black streamers dangling from one side of the dance hall’s roof, and red, white, and blue streamers hanging from the other side. The vendors’ booths in the Marktplatz, which are built to resemble Bavarian chalets, are nestled beneath rows of American and Texas flags (Figure 4.11). According to Suzanne Herbelin (2005), these symbols are deliberately intended to reflect New Braunfels’s larger geographical context:



Figure 4.11: Three identities are on display in the décor of Wurstfest: German, American, and Texan. With Mexican food and music offerings at the event increasing as well, Wurstfest increasingly reflects New Braunfels's geographical context and its multiethnic population.

We are a German-Texan festival. We sort of stand on our own. We want to promote the fact that New Braunfels is a German community, but we are the German Texas festival. Regardless of what we do, if we decorate heavily themed German, people will say, “This is America,” right? So we try to balance that. We don't want anyone to think that we're ignoring who we are, where we are, and what we are.

Although Mexican-American heritage is an important component of place identities throughout central Texas, it might seem somewhat out of place at a German-themed festival. As previously discussed, each of the study communities has a growing and increasingly visible Mexican-American population that is largely unrepresented in tourism promotion and marketing. However, during German-themed festivals the Mexican heritage and population of central Texas are often included in representations of German culture, suggesting a hybridization of German and Mexican ethnicities within the overarching framework of “Texan” culture.

Due to the relatively small size and recent arrival of the majority of Fredericksburg's and Brenham's Mexican-American populations, Mexican culture is scarcely visible in the Maifest and Oktoberfest, except in some food offerings. However, evidence of Mexican heritage abounds at Wurstfest. A number of members of the Wurstfest Association are Mexican-American, and their Spanish surnames appear on several of the crests that adorn the Wursthalle. Many concession stands offer a German-Tex-Mex culinary innovation, the “wurst taco,” which consists of a sausage wrapped in a flour tortilla. In addition to the nachos that have become standard concessions at any number of festivals and fairs throughout the U.S.—and, of course, the wurst tacos—Wurstfest vendors offer a veritable cornucopia of Tex-Mex foods, including more unusual offerings such as gorditas, tamales, Frito pie (chili served over corn chips and topped with cheese and onions), and brisket tacos. One can frequently hear Tejano and *conjunto* music in the various venues, and even bands from Germany sometimes perform

songs that represent this Mexican-German fusion. In response, the dance floors become crowded with an integrated group of young, salsa-dancing Latinas and elderly polka-dancing Germans.

Germans, Mexicans, and Anglo Texans have co-existed in central Texas since the earliest days of European-American settlement in the state, so the incorporation of Mexican culture into German-themed activities accurately reflects the multicultural identity of the host communities. Nevertheless, the appearance of Mexican symbols and cultural elements in German-themed events can diminish participants' perceptions of the festivals' authenticity. A Pacific Islander from Austin who attended Wurstfest strongly disagreed that the event accurately portrays German culture, commenting:

Oompah bands do not play Hispanic music in Germany. And they do not have Hispanic food at their fests. The Wurstfest has become a mixture of the two main cultures in New Braunfels: German and Hispanic.

In disagreeing that German-themed events accurately represent the community, one local resident complained, "Mexican food is more available! German food is hard to find in New Braunfels." Despite a few such comments, very few respondents overall voiced concerns that the German theme is being diluted by Mexican influences.

Although Mexican-American heritage is bleeding into German-themed activities in the region, the African-American history of the state is not at all reflected in these events. New Braunfels and Fredericksburg have traditionally had very small black populations, but Brenham has long had a sizable proportion of black residents. In relating the history of relations among Germans, Anglos, and African Americans in Brenham, Bill Neinast (2004) observed a social segregation between whites and blacks that continues in the community today:

There was a definite line that was not crossed. That line is still there. It's weakening, and I think it's a line that the blacks don't want to cross and to a

certain extent there is some resistance still within the white community, from the old-timers particularly.

In terms of festive activities in particular, Washington County Convention and Visitor's Bureau Director Donna Cummins (2004) observed that there is little crossover between those who attend Maifest and those who attend Brenham's annual Juneteenth celebration. Although she attributes this social segregation not to outright exclusion of each group by the other but to lack of interest, the situation does raise important implications for the role of festivals in maintaining boundaries between whites and blacks. While the examples cited above and in previous chapters demonstrate a certain fluidity of ethnic identity that allows Hispanics to participate in and to have their culture incorporated into German-themed events, it appears that this flexibility is not equally extended to African Americans. In Chapter Five, I will further support this contention by exploring how German-themed events influence and reflect relationships between the various ethnic groups living in each study community.

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be drawn about the myths that are projected through tourism promotion in central Texas. First, the place images that have been created perpetuate the notion that the region's population continues to be overwhelmingly German, despite the fact that German populations are declining and Anglo and Hispanic populations are growing. While some evidence suggests that tourism promotional efforts are beginning to accommodate this demographic shift, Germanness continues to be represented as the norm. An interesting exception can be found in Brenham, where an Anglo-Texan image predominates, undercommunicating the size of the local German community. Data suggest that participants in the region's German heritage festivals are

generally willing to accept these myths. Many festival attendees recognize that it is heritage, not history, that is on display. For the most part, they appear to tolerate the exaggerations and omissions that are part of the process of creating a touristic image, and the resulting images accord with and reflect contemporary symbolic ethnic identities.

Brenham's Maifest, which is today German in name only, may provide a glimpse into the future of ethnic tourism in central Texas. I believe the fundamental question facing the region's tourism development efforts will be: How can German heritage tourism be sustained in the face of declining German populations? Without the people who have given the place its ethnic character, will Fredericksburg and New Braunfels essentially become German-Texan theme towns? Even Brenham's designation as part of the "Birthplace of Texas" might not persist as an ever greater percentage of the area's residents trace their ancestry to the "enemy" rather than to the "heroes" of Texas independence.

Whatever the ultimate outcome, I anticipate that the touristic place images of central Texas will necessarily become more multiethnic and multiracial over time. Because of the reciprocal relationship between place image and place identity, the way in which the host communities are perceived by tourists and residents will be altered as other groups' presence transforms the cultural landscape. Marketing will thus have to find ways to adapt to these perceptions or risk sacrificing visitors' satisfaction and their ability to make sense of these places. I will further explore this fundamental link between tourism development and place identity in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five:

“This Is a *German* Place”: Ethnic Tourism and Local Identities

The architecture of Fredericksburg presents interesting parallels with the cultural history of Fredericksburg. Originally intensely Teutonic and distinctive, both the architecture and people of Fredericksburg have gradually been largely absorbed into mainline American culture, although they retain a certain individuality.

— Texas Historical Commission 2006

The preceding quote, which appears in the Texas Historical Commission’s Historic Sites Atlas, deftly summarizes the relationships between largely symbolic ethnic identities and increasingly symbolic places. Nicholas Entrikin (1991, 63) observes that the transformation of places in a globalizing world and the ease of mobility within contemporary society have compromised our sense of attachment to place because the meanings associated with specific locations are rapidly changing: “The weakening of the social and cultural glue that binds individuals to groups and groups to places has put a greater burden on the individual to construct meaning in the world.” Thus, place attachment has necessarily become a more conscious, active process (Schnell and Reese 2003). Increasingly, Americans are turning to tourism to provide the connections that help to sustain or create their sense of individual and group identities.

Of course, catching the tourist’s gaze can dramatically impact the cultural landscapes of host communities. As we have seen in previous chapters, many German Texans seek ethnic connections through participation in tourism and festive culture. These ties to fellow ethnics—whether they are German for a day or German for life—are mediated through participants’ encounters with and within German-themed places. But just as the tourists’ sense of identity is shaped by their contacts with places, places

themselves respond to their contact with tourists. In some cases, the effects of tourism can dramatically alter the identities of host communities as well as their residents.

As the economic and social importance of tourism grows, places are engaging in fiercer competition to earn visitors' attention and their disposable incomes. In the tourism development process, landscapes can be reshaped to meet the expectations and needs of potential tourists. Thus, place promotion might result in the "other-directedness" of landscapes (Jackson 1997). Other-directed places are created or recreated to benefit outsiders and may over time cease to reflect the identities of their inhabitants. Tourism destinations may also exhibit the effects of "placelessness," a spatial standardization and homogenization that is often associated with tourist-oriented landscapes. As Relph (1976, 93) elaborates, "placelessness" involves "the weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities of places...Such a trend marks a major shift in the geographical bases of existence from a deep association with places to rootlessness." Thus, if tourism erodes residents' connections to their place, it might encourage them to seek place-based attachments by engaging in tourism in other communities, stimulating the forces of placelessness anew and continuing a cycle in which each destination becomes more and more like the next.

Concerns about other-directedness and placelessness are particularly relevant to heritage-based tourism because heritage contributes not only to the identities of places but to their residents' identities as well. Thus, "the sense, or more usually senses, of place is both an input and an output of the process of heritage creation" (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, 4). As David Lowenthal (1998) observes, as heritage become more popular, it becomes more perishable. The creation of German-American identity, discussed in Chapter Two, demonstrates that those who create heritage often cater to the lowest common denominator in order to ensure the broadest appeal. As a result, "global

popularity homogenizes heritage...Display and tourism layer diverse legacies with common facades” (Lowenthal 1998, 5). In many German-American communities this tendency can clearly be seen in the Bavarianization process: to meet the expectations of tourists, places adopt familiar images, which may or may not accord with residents’ notions of the meaning of place.

However, like German-American ethnicity itself, the identities of places have become increasingly fluid in recent decades. The same processes that encourage places to become more similar can be used to harness and reinforce their differences. While a town’s ability to change its identity from one weekend to the next might be cited as evidence of placelessness, it might also be regarded as a process by which a place authentically adapts to new externalities. When Leavenworth’s residents don lederhosen and dirndls on Fridays, they are participating in the ultimate expression of symbolic ethnicity—they are paid to pretend to be someone or something else for a while, then they shed that identity at the end of the workday. We might view touristic identities as the “uniforms” of places as they set out to earn a living in increasingly postindustrial economies. Although impacted by their interactions with other people and places “on the job,” they remain just as unique and just as important underneath their festive attire.

Nevertheless, tourism can have very real impacts on the more tangible aspects of community life. Despite trends toward multiculturalism, heritages that are displayed to outsiders typically reflect the dominant ethnicities within a community (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000). Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000, 34) argue that heritage is “part of the process of defining criteria of social inclusion and—by extension—social exclusion.” While everyone is invited to be “German for the day,” non-German residents may find themselves feeling excluded from tourism’s social and economic benefits the other 364 days of the year.

In this chapter, I discuss how German-Texan communities have been physically and symbolically transformed by ethnic tourism development. I begin by analyzing residents' perceptions of tourism promotion to determine how well the place images communicated in tourism marketing accurately reflect their perceptions of their communities and of German heritage. Next, I explore the role of the cultural landscape in the process of place promotion. Brenham's opportunities for German-themed tourism development appear to be constrained by a lack of visible evidence of German settlement, while New Braunfels and Fredericksburg are resisting spatial standardization by emphasizing their unique regional culture. Finally, I assess the extent to which residents view tourism development as inclusive of and beneficial to all within the local community.

THE PLACE OF GERMANNESS IN TOURISM PROMOTION

I begin my analysis by exploring residents' attitudes toward place marketing. Despite the increasing ethnic and racial diversity of central Texas, few residents surveyed expressed concerns about the emphasis on German heritage in contemporary tourism development. For example, in New Braunfels, Hispanics now outnumber Germans, yet very few residents voiced objections to the German-oriented image conveyed in the city's marketing. As a group, more than half of the New Braunfels residents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the city is accurately portrayed to tourists, with fewer than 20% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Residents’ agreement with the statement “Tourism accurately portrays [this community] to visitors”

Data source	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral/ Don't know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total
Brenham	8.0	49.6	26.3	14.6	1.5	137
Germans	11.9	54.2	27.1	6.8	0.0	59
Non-German whites ^a	4.8	49.2	25.4	17.5	3.2	63
Non-whites	6.6 ^b	33.3	26.7	33.3	0.0	15
Fredericksburg	20.3	42.0	25.2	11.9	0.7 ^b	143
Germans	25.8	38.1	27.4	9.5	1.2 ^b	84
Non-German whites ^a	15.8	48.3	22.4	15.5	0.0	58
Non-whites	100.0 ^b					1
New Braunfels	11.9	41.3	27.3	15.4	4.2	144
Germans	16.2	38.2	25.0	16.2	4.4	68
Non-German whites ^a	7.8	42.2	29.7	15.6	4.7	63
Non-whites	8.3 ^b	58.3	25.0	8.3 ^b	0.0	13

^a Category includes residents who did not specify or did not know their ethnic ancestry

^b Figure represents a single respondent

Where disagreement did occur among residents of New Braunfels, it largely centered on issues other than the promotion of Germanness. Only three percent of all respondents explicitly stated that the town’s German heritage is overemphasized, including one long-time resident of “American” ancestry who argued: “Wurstfest is about

money; besides the true Germans died off years ago.” A German resident who arrived in the community more recently explained, “This is not a German town; it's a bedroom community for San Antonio!” Only a single respondent argued that other aspects of the community’s ethnic heritage should be highlighted, and this resident, who claimed German ancestry, felt that both the German and Mexican heritages should be given greater attention. This resident was not alone in thinking the German theme should be further developed; in fact, five percent of New Braunfels respondents made comments to that effect. As one non-German white who has lived in the city for over a decade stated: “Most tourists think of New Braunfels as a quaint German village—until they visit. That aspect is fading and should be revived.”

Only a few respondents discussed the role of heritage in the city’s image, and they were evenly split between those who thought the German theme deserved more attention and those who thought it deserved less. Many more respondents expressed concerns relating to other aspects of New Braunfels’s tourism economy, notably water-based recreation. Most of their comments reflected displeasure with tourists’ behavior and how it might reflect on locals, rather than anything inherent to the tourism development process itself. Summarizing these concerns, a lifelong resident of German ancestry stated:

We are not a bunch of drunks floating the river every day or partying the night away at Gruene Hall. It’s kinda weird; we can have kids and families enjoying the confines of Schlitterbahn while a few footsteps away there is a beer float in the Comal with girls flashing for beads and guys urinating in the back yards of the residents.

Another resident, who claimed Irish ancestry, felt that the perception of the town as a place for visitors to party is overshadowing its heritage:

Visitors see it as a place to flop, drink beer, and float. That’s not all of New Braunfels. There’s an amazing history here (and in surrounding areas) that has shaped its culture, but is largely unseen.

In Fredericksburg, survey respondents demonstrated even more widespread approval of the image of the town as depicted in tourism promotion. More than 60% of residents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that Fredericksburg is portrayed accurately, while just over 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed. As in New Braunfels, few concerns specifically addressed the role of Germanness in tourism promotion. Only four respondents (3.8%) suggested that German heritage is overemphasized, while two respondents (1.9%) stated that it is underemphasized. Among those who disagreed that Fredericksburg is accurately portrayed, a number pointed to selectivity in representing the community and the commercialization of the city's image. One common sentiment was that tourists get only a small and incomplete glimpse into the lives of local residents. A lifelong resident of Anglo ancestry explained:

I think that Fredericksburg needs to be portrayed as a town where people live, work, enjoy family and friends, and children go to school, not just a place to come and visit. I think we need to hold strong to our German roots, too!

Another resident, with deep German roots in the region, also commented on the selectivity evident in the city's image:

Tourism in Fredericksburg is selling an ideal of small-town America, and yet, Fredericksburg is really just one more rural community among hundreds throughout the country. It is largely a closed community, closed to new people, closed to new ideas, closed to anything or anyone who doesn't fit the preconceived stereotype that it has of itself. It also ignores the darker side of its history in presenting itself to tourists.

A number of other residents commented that because tourists are focused on activities such as shopping they will not see any part of Fredericksburg beyond the Main Street district. Nevertheless, it seems that most residents have resigned themselves to the fact that tourism is a large component of the city's identity—and economy—today. One respondent exclaimed: "Fredericksburg is tourism and tourism is Fredericksburg!" Yet,

for some residents who have lived in the community for most of their lives, the current focus on attracting visitors might be seen as a departure from the community's past. A German who has lived in the city for almost 50 years explained:

I used to feel that Fredericksburg was a quiet small town, but it has become a changing town, maybe for the better, maybe not. Tourism is not what I *remember*, but [it] may be what we *are*. [respondent's emphasis]

A German who has lived in the area for all of his 80-plus years lamented, "Fredericksburg is a tourist trap—the Fredericksburg I grew up in is no more." Although the focus on tourism may be a source of consternation for longer-established residents who have watched the community change over time, Fredericksburg's place promotion does not appear to engender widespread concern among the majority of residents.

Similar trends are evident in residents' perceptions of how Brenham is depicted in tourism. As in New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, a majority of residents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that Brenham is portrayed accurately in tourism marketing, while one-fifth disagreed or strongly disagreed. Only a couple of respondents felt that the role of the German heritage is exaggerated. However, the content of their comments suggests underlying racial and ethnic tensions that are obscured in the marketing of the community. A non-German white who has lived in Brenham for nearly five decades stated:

The German, Polish heritage is dying out with every generation. Brenham is getting overrun with illegals like everywhere else in Texas.

Conversely, another resident, who listed her ancestry as "*Puro Mexicano*" and who has also lived in Brenham nearly 50 years, opined "They harp on the German, Polish and Czech heritages—not enough of the other cultures that reside here." Despite these and a few similar comments, most respondents who were critical of Brenham's touristic image

referred to its ignorance of the economic disparity within the community, rather than its failure to address the city's diversity. For example, one resident of mixed Hispanic and European heritage explained:

[Brenham is] Portrayed as an idyllic small town rural destination, [but it] is quickly disintegrating into a bedroom commuter area with also a large population of low socioeconomic status residents.

Some comments seemed to combine references to ethnoracial and economic disparities. In disagreeing that the community's place image is accurate, one black resident stated: "Brenham can't show how they really feel. They don't want these flood people here." I presume that this comment refers to displaced persons who moved into East Texas from Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita and many of whom are lower-income African Americans.

The residents surveyed in each study community generally agreed that tourism marketing presents an accurate image of their communities. However, a closer look at the data in Table 5.1 reveals important differences among the perceptions of various ethnic subpopulations. In all three cities, nearly the same proportions of Germans and non-German whites agreed or strongly agreed that portrayals of the communities are accurate, although Germans' degree of agreement (as evidenced by a greater tendency to choose "strongly agree") was slightly stronger than non-Germans'. However, a significant and potentially important difference can be observed when comparing the perceptions of Brenham's non-white population to the perceptions of non-white respondents in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels. Although the numbers of non-white respondents who participated in the survey are small and thus not necessarily representative, one can observe an increased tendency to disagree among non-whites in Brenham as compared to those in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels. Along with the significantly lower rates of

participation in Maifest among blacks and Hispanics that I discussed in Chapter Three, these data suggest that participation in heritage tourism may indeed be circumscribed by a color line. I will further explore the implications of these findings in Chapter Six.

RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON THE SELLING OF GERMANNESS

To understand the effect of tourism marketing on host communities, it is helpful to consider residents' assessments of how the "host" ethnic group is portrayed to visitors. In Chapter Four, I presented participants' assessments of the representation of German culture in festivals. However, I also wanted to explore how local residents perceive the depictions of Germanness in tourism-related activities. Like visitors, residents are concerned about issues relating to the authenticity of touristic images and have an even greater stake in the outcomes of place promotion. While residents were included among the respondents to the survey of festival attendees, there are many locals who do not attend German-themed festivals. Thus, the data in Table 5.2 better reflect the views of the resident community as a whole than the data that were provided by residents who participated in the event participants' survey (Table 4.4). Only a small segment of residents surveyed (fewer than 15% in each study community) think that German culture is inaccurately portrayed in local tourism activities.

As I suspected, the responses received from the random sample of residents differed significantly from the responses received from residents who responded to the event participants' survey. Comparison of the data in Table 5.2 to the data in Table 4.4 reveals that in Fredericksburg only 53% of randomly sampled residents agreed or strongly agreed that German culture was accurately represented in German-themed activities as compared to 72% of residents who participated in the survey of festival attendees. In New Braunfels, 55% of randomly sampled residents agreed or strongly

agreed as compared to 66% of residents participating in Wurstfest. In Brenham, the opposite relationship was observed, with greater disagreement among festival goers (26%) than among randomly selected residents (15%). These figures further reflect the differences in the content and emphases of the various festivals, which I discussed in Chapter Four.

Table 5.2: Residents' agreement that "German-themed events and activities in [this community] accurately portray German culture"

Data source	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral/ Don't know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total
Brenham	6.6	21.3	57.4	11.8	2.9	136
Germans	11.9	18.6	57.6	10.2	1.7	59
Non-Germans	2.6	23.4	57.1	13.0	3.9	77
Fredericksburg	11.9	41.3	34.3	10.5	0.0	140
Germans	16.9	43.4	27.7	12.0	0.0	83
Non-Germans	5.3	40.4	45.6	8.8	0.0	57
New Braunfels	8.5	46.5	31.7	11.3	2.1	143
Germans	14.7	52.9	17.6	11.8	2.9	68
Non-Germans	4.0	40.0	44.0	10.7	1.3	75

More than half of all respondents from New Braunfels and Fredericksburg agreed that German culture is portrayed accurately, with slightly more Fredericksburg residents

indicating “strong agreement” than New Braunfels residents.⁴⁰ Within each city’s population, Germans and non-Germans disagreed or strongly disagreed in fairly equal proportions, while Germans were more likely to strongly agree and less likely to claim a neutral or uninformed position on the matter than non-Germans. The difference in responses between Germans and non-Germans is likely attributable to Germans’ longer term of residency within each community, as compared to non-Germans.⁴¹ In addition to the increased likelihood of being exposed to elements of German heritage, the longer tenure of German residents would be expected to advance their ability to distinguish between elements of culture that are endemic to the community and those traditions that have been developed more recently as a result of tourism development.

Many of the explanations provided by residents who disagreed that German culture is accurately portrayed in tourism reflect their understanding of the sacrifices in accuracy that are sometimes required to ensure visitor interest and satisfaction. Oftentimes, tourism marketing involves the simplification or sanitization of a community’s heritage in order to maximize its appeal to visitors. Approximately 16% of Fredericksburg residents and 18% of New Braunfels residents surveyed felt that Germanness or local history was represented in a selective or commercialized fashion. For example, one Fredericksburger, who was uncertain about the accuracy of touristic depictions of German culture, pointed to Oktoberfest’s focus on more festive cultural elements and the possible misrepresentation that might result: “I’ve never been to Germany, but I doubt they spend every weekend drinking beer to excess and doing the

⁴⁰ Because Germanness is largely overlooked in Brenham’s tourism efforts and because residents’ responses did not suggest strong feelings on this issue either way, I limit my discussion in this section to the data obtained from residents of New Braunfels and Fredericksburg.

⁴¹ In New Braunfels, the median length of residency reported by German respondents was 19.1 years, as compared to 11.0 years for non-Germans. In Fredericksburg the difference between the two groups is even more pronounced; the median length of residency reported by Germans was 22.2 years, compared to 8.4 years for non-Germans.

‘chicken’ dance.” A New Braunfels resident of German ancestry argued that events and attractions are all that remains of the city’s German heritage and thus overemphasize its role in the community: “Look, there is no ‘German culture’ here, outside the ‘German themed’ events!”

Only a handful of New Braunfels and Fredericksburg residents surveyed cited the incorporation of American and Texan themes cultures as examples of inaccuracies in representations of Germanness.⁴² This finding suggests that residents view the coexistence and hybridization of these elements in tourism activities as largely compatible with their own assessments of community identity. Only a few respondents indicated that the mixing of cultural elements results in an inauthentic depiction of German culture, and their responses were generally not derogatory, suggesting that tourism planners’ efforts to locate Germanness within broader historical and geographical contexts are acceptable to most residents. Furthermore, respondents appeared supportive of attempts to avoid the Bavarianization of their communities, and there was virtually no criticism of the few Alpine references that have crept into the landscape. Only a single respondent made any mention of Bavarianization when assessing the accuracy of representations of German heritage in the study communities: an elderly, 12-year resident of Fredericksburg who claims German ancestry agreed, but could not “strongly agree,” that German culture is accurately represented “because German culture is much more than ‘um pah pah’ and Alpine dress.”

THE TWILIGHT OF GERMAN EAST TEXAS?

While Hill Country residents displayed general approval of touristic depictions of local German heritage, Brenham residents were less likely to agree that German culture is

⁴² Comments about “Americanization” or the “Texanness” of the festivals were made by 5.4% Fredericksburg respondents, 4.8% of Brenham respondents, and 3.0% of New Braunfels respondents.

portrayed accurately in their community. The respondents' written comments suggest that the dwindling role of German heritage in the Maifest has a large influence on their assessments. The most frequent sentiment expressed by Brenham residents who were critical of the representation of Germanness in tourism was that the Maifest is not German enough, as claimed by nearly 16% of the survey respondents.⁴³ One Brenham resident explained, "While the Maifest is based originally on a German festival, it no longer has any German-related activity." Another replied, "The only three things in Maifest that are German-related anymore are the oompah music (Saturdays during day), sausage on a stick, and beer—big deal." Several residents attributed the lack of attention paid to German heritage to the event's increasing emphasis on the Maifest's Coronation pageant, which was described by a number of residents as an opportunity for upper-class residents to display their wealth. A respondent who strongly disagreed that German culture is accurately depicted intimated that the themes of the Coronation pageants actually detract from the event's German-American character:

Having toured Germany and participated in Maifest eight years, I'd say only the title of the event itself is German-related. Polyester, spangles, frou-frou odd pageant themes, Hawaiian luaus?

The evolution of the Maifest from an event planned and executed by the German community to an event organized by residents of various ethnic backgrounds parallels the decline in the number of Americans claiming German ancestry. As the Wie Geht's Club's failed attempts to infuse the Maifest with German-themed content suggest, interest in German heritage appears to be waning among residents overall. Dr. Wilfred Dietrich (2006), director of the Brenham Heritage Museum, officer of the Maifest Association, and a lifelong resident of Brenham, explained:

⁴³ In comparison, only 6.5% of residents in both Fredericksburg and New Braunfels felt that ethnic themed events and attractions in their communities lacked sufficient German character.

We [the Maifest Association] went German [in the late 1990s] and we kind of lost interest. We lost money... We had a very strong support from the German group [the Wie Geht's Club] here... They even were strong enough to bring in a band from Germany. And, yes, a few of the Germans went down to the park and listened to the music. But we didn't get the support of enough people to really show that this is what we want.

As reflected in the current emphasis on the Coronation activities, the Maifest was initially developed by German residents as a celebration of Brenham's youth (Dietrich 2006). Today, German music and ambience are of little interest to most of the Coronation's teenaged participants. In describing the Wie Geht's Club's difficulties in stimulating residents' interest in the ethnic aspects of the Maifest, Bill Neinast (2004) explained:

Now, that was one of problems giving Clarence [Spies] so much of a problem, because he was getting a lot of heat from the Maifest Association, because after the Senior Coronation was over, the young people wanted to go somewhere, and they did not like the German music. They wanted to have their rock-and-roll or whatever appealed to them. So there was this pressure: you've gotta have something for the kids to stay and do, and they're not gonna stay for polkas and waltzes.

Increasing in-migration from urban areas, diminished claims to German ancestry at all geographical scales, and the passing of older residents may threaten the future viability of the Maifest event, as Dr. Dietrich (2006) observed:

I really think there's a great separation now, even on the [Maifest] board, because you have some very, very young, and then middle-aged, and then some very, very old who still like to keep the old tradition. In another 5 years from now, I don't know what the Maifest will be like. It may not be ... It's harder and harder to get families involved.

Although participation is dwindling, many residents still regard the event as a crucial contribution to community identity. When asked whether the event should be continued in future years, more than half of the Brenham residents who responded to my survey of

Maifest participants said yes, while only one respondent said no.⁴⁴ The most common justification provided was that the event is a longstanding community tradition; however, only two residents—one German and one non-German—argued that the event should be continued specifically because it reflects and preserves Brenham’s German heritage. The perception of the event as a local tradition that is increasingly divorced from German heritage was further revealed when I asked participants to explain the purpose of the event: only one-third of survey respondents referred to German heritage. Thus, while Maifest continues to be a locus for community identity, it is one that appears to be becoming largely de-ethnicized in the eyes of its participants, reflecting the continued erosion of German ancestry among Brenham’s population.

Today, there are few symbols of German heritage within Brenham’s built environment. Although the downtown holds interest for visitors, owing to its recent listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the buildings reveal no traces of German influence (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). As the Texas Historical Commission (2006) notes: “The majority of the buildings in downtown Brenham were plainly executed in a functional commercial idiom.” Nor does the Art Deco style of the Washington County Courthouse suggest the German presence within the community (Figure 5.3). As Robert Veselka (2000, 1) observed, courthouse squares are among the more self-conscious examples of spaces “designed explicitly to express community values.” As compared to the Old-World style of the Comal County Courthouse (see Figure 5.9) and the original Gillespie County Courthouse, the sleek, modern design of the Washington County Courthouse seems to represent a forward-looking, largely Americanized local population. In the heart of the city, the only evidence of Brenham’s German past is a historical

⁴⁴ The remaining four respondents indicated that the Maifest should “maybe” be continued in future years.



Figure 5.1: This streetscape in downtown Brenham demonstrates the paucity of German landscape signatures in Washington County. In contrast to the ethnically distinctive architecture found in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, the buildings seen here are not much different in appearance from those that can be found in many small Texas towns. Nevertheless, the historical significance of the downtown area has earned it a spot on the National Register of Historic Places (Texas Historical Commission 2006).

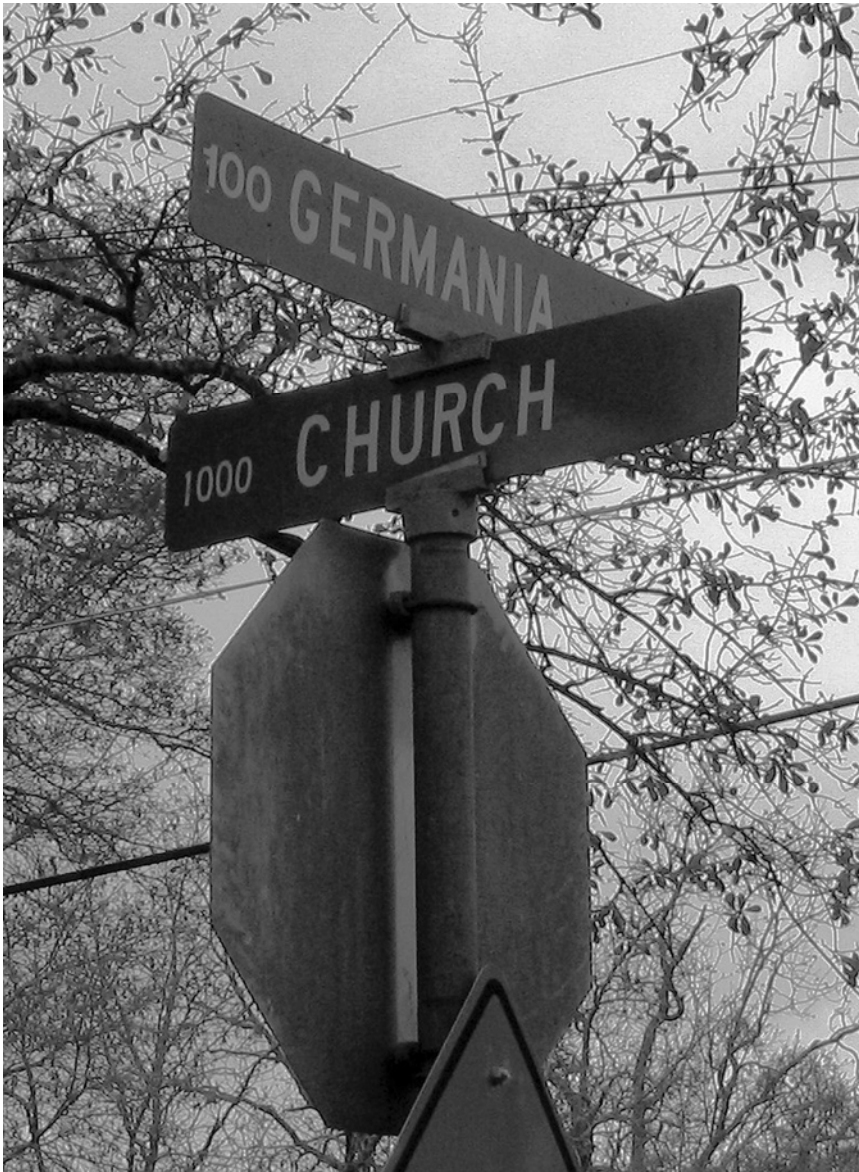


Figure 5.2: Today, toponyms—not marketable attractions in and of themselves—are among the few relics within Brenham’s cultural landscape that belie its German settlement history.



Figure 5.3: Because courthouse squares are often consciously designed to reflect the identity of the local population, the Art Deco style of the Washington County Courthouse suggests the relatively minor role of the German population in the area's settlement history.

marker commemorating the Maifest celebration (Figure 5.4). In a classic example of Selwyn's (1996) concept of "overcommunication" in place promotion, the marker reads:

The Brenham Maifest has evolved from the German Volksfest, a spring festival carried to this area by German Texans who settled near Brenham. When the Brenham Fire Department assumed the duties of the Volksfest Association in 1880, the exclusively German celebration was opened to the public, and the name Maifest was adopted ... Many of the early German traditions are still visible in the annual Brenham Maifest. This cultural continuity, practiced for more than 100 years, provides an important historical link to a rich heritage.

The relative absence of German-made or German-themed material culture in Brenham limits opportunities for German-themed tourism development. John Holchin, Executive Director of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce (2004), explained:

I think [the German heritage] is there, but it's certainly not touted. And I think that the reason it's not touted is that you can't establish expectations that are greater than what you can deliver. And if you were to drive in as a visitor to Brenham, you would have no idea about the German heritage of this town or this county beyond someone having told you that, because you don't see it in the architecture, you don't see it in the restaurants, you don't see it in any visible, tangible way ... We certainly don't downplay it, but I wouldn't say we promote the German heritage to any extent.⁴⁵

Without a framework of concrete German-American elements—whether historic or contrived—on which to base a place image, this aspect of local history cannot be successfully promoted as a tourist attraction. With tourism and festivals playing an increasingly important role in the maintenance of contemporary ethnic identities, the deterioration of vehicles for the expression of German heritage might, in turn, lead to a

⁴⁵ Before its closure in 2003, the Brenham Brewery was referenced in the 2002 Visitor's Guide: "Renewing an old tradition in the 'Birthplace of Texas!' Washington County is German country. Settlers to the area were largely of German and Czech heritage, and with these early immigrants came their thirst for their favorite beverage – beer!" (Washington County Visitor's Guide 2002, 5). The former brewery is the only explicitly German-oriented attraction listed in the 1998, 2002, or 2004 visitor guides.



Figure 5.4: In Brenham's downtown historic district, the only evidence of its German past—or present—is this historical marker commemorating Maifest. In emphasizing “the cultural continuity” of Brenham’s “rich [German] heritage” the plaque overcommunicates the ethnic aspects of the annual event.

further decline in residents' identification with their German ancestry, creating a circular relationship in which the decline of Germanness in Brenham seems inevitable.

PRESERVING HOMEGROWN CULTURE IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

In contrast to Brenham, Fredericksburg and New Braunfels exhibit an abundance of visible evidence of their German heritage. While many German-American places have made their heritage more visible and recognizable to tourists by utilizing Bavarian themes and images, these Hill Country communities have largely relied upon their traditional German-Texan architecture and small-town ambience as tourism attractions. Rather than altering the built environment to more closely resemble stereotypically "German" places, tourism planners, community officials, and residents have consciously resisted the process of Bavarianization, setting the German Hill Country apart from many other German-themed destinations.⁴⁶

The vernacular architecture of Fredericksburg is considered to be "among the most distinctive building forms to emerge in the south-central United States" (Texas Historical Commission 2006). Local officials have taken an aggressive approach to maintaining the ambience of the 40-block historic Main Street district (Kammlah 2006).⁴⁷ Historic preservation efforts and the implementation of landscape, architectural, and signage ordinances have preserved the city's distinctive German-Texan character (Figures 5.5 and 5.6) and deterred Bavarianization (Kammlah 2006). The ordinances

⁴⁶ Leavenworth, Washington, and Helen, Georgia are two well-known examples of ethnic theme towns in which the cultural landscape has been modified to impart a more German atmosphere in the absence of a history of German settlement. One of few American communities to actually be settled by Bavarians is Frankenmuth, "Michigan's Little Bavaria," whose name refers to its ancestral origins in the province of Franconia (Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce 2006). This community, too, has been significantly constructed to more closely resemble an Alpine village. Thus, the process of Bavarianization occurs in places whose Germanness ranges from thoroughly ersatz to organic and historically rooted.

⁴⁷ The Fredericksburg Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 (Texas Historical Commission 2006).



Figure 5.5: The quintessential example of German Hill Country architecture is the “Sunday house.” In addition to their farmsteads, nineteenth-century German colonists received a small parcel of land in town, on which they would construct these unusual 1 ½-storied houses of native limestone. On Saturdays, farm families would travel to town to shop and socialize, staying overnight in their Sunday houses to attend church the following morning (Jordan 1966). Although similar structures can be found in German-settled areas of the northeastern U.S. and Pennsylvania, Sunday houses are rarely seen in Texas outside the German Hill Country, and they are most common in Gillespie County, which includes Fredericksburg (Jordan 2001b). Clusters of surviving Sunday houses can be observed in residential areas near Fredericksburg’s Main Street, adding to the city’s quaint, European-flavored ambience.



Figure 5.6: According to the Chamber of Commerce, Fredericksburg is nicknamed “The City of Steeples” because of its many impressive churches. Their architectural styles and the use of local materials in their construction enhance the city’s German-Texan ambience.

have also helped to avert the placelessness that can result from the incursion of corporately owned service establishments into tourism host communities. The local McDonald's franchise best illustrates how local government has intervened to maintain Fredericksburg's unique atmosphere (Figure 5.7). With 30,000 local franchises operating in 119 countries worldwide, McDonald's has become the quintessential symbol of contemporary corporate culture and its resultant spatial standardization.⁴⁸ When McDonald's proposed opening a restaurant in Fredericksburg, city ordinances forced the corporation to minimize the restaurant's visual impact and integrate the structure into the existing streetscape. As Chamber of Commerce President Joe Kammlah (2006) stated:

The first time [McDonald's] came in, they came in with their typical plastic design and said, "Here it is." And we said no. And they were like, "What do you mean? We're McDonalds." Typical corporate culture. But they conformed and so it works.

Thus, the Fredericksburg restaurant looks like no other McDonald's in the world. The outdoor seating area is neatly landscaped, and the (in)famous "golden arches" stand no more than five feet high, per signage requirements that protect the viewshed. The restaurant itself emulates the endemic Hill Country vernacular architecture—including a façade that appears to be built from limestone, a tin roof, and a covered "front porch." Although some business owners are not happy that their renovation plans must be approved by the city's historic review board, these guidelines have proven very effective in permitting the growth of services that benefit residents and tourists while preserving Fredericksburg's quaint, small-town charm, which many regard as the key to its appeal.⁴⁹ Kammlah (2006) explained that his biggest goal is retaining the city's ambience in the

⁴⁸ Figures obtained from McDonald's corporate website [<http://www.mcdonalds.com>].

⁴⁹ Among residents surveyed regarding their attitudes toward tourism, approximately one-third of respondents indicated that they believe Fredericksburg's atmosphere is the feature most attractive to tourists. Additionally, one-third of respondents also reported that the town's atmosphere is what they themselves like best about living in Fredericksburg.



Figure 5.7: Even international chain businesses such as Wal-Mart and McDonald's are required to conform to a number of ordinances intended to preserve the unique German-Texan ambience of downtown Fredericksburg. Here, the restaurant and its "front porch" have been constructed to blend into the vernacular limestone architecture of the area.

face of continued growth, and the possibility of losing this unique atmosphere is his greatest concern.

As Stephen Frenkel and Judy Walton (2001, 567) observed in Leavenworth and other western towns that have engaged in “theming”: “Ironically, although millions of dollars are spent to achieve a unique ‘look’ or ambience, with so many towns following the same text the result is a rather limited, familiar set of highly scripted tourist landscapes.” Fredericksburg’s approach to development has prevented the city from succumbing to a similar fate. On Main Street, one can spot the occasional window box, and there are more egregious exceptions, such as Friedhelm’s Bavarian Inn (Fig. 5.8), which lies just outside the historic district and is thus not subject to the city’s architectural ordinances. However, the community has generally resisted pressures to remake itself in an Alpine image, in part because many residents are aware that the city’s founders did not originate in Bavaria. As Kammlah (2006) explained:

When someone is trying to market their business and what they do, they could dress their waitstaff in dirndls and lederhosen, and that’s Bavaria. And we’re not Bavaria ... And so we are creating a perception that is wrong when people do that, and we don’t encourage it. But, I think people understand it as an authentic heritage, and we don’t start putting up facades of little chalets and all that sort of stuff.

Comparing the city to the infamous German theme towns, he added: “That’s all fine and dandy, but that’s more like a theme park and we’re not. We are who we are.”

CVB Director Ernie Loeffler (2006) notes that, without tourism, Fredericksburg’s quaint landscape might look very different today:

Like in any city or town, there are people that hate tourism. But the fact is that if it weren’t for tourism, many of those historic buildings would have never been preserved, because many of the B&Bs are in historic buildings that have been preserved, quite frankly, by money from outside of Fredericksburg.



Figure 5.8: Friedhelm's Bavarian Inn is an unusually prominent example of Bavarianization within Fredericksburg's cultural landscape. Located just outside the Fredericksburg Historic District, this building is not required to comply with the city's architectural ordinances, which are intended in large part to prevent this type of construction.

Owing to the role of place in the construction of individual and group identities, tourism development, through the preservation of this evocative landscape, could be an important factor in sustaining Germanness in central Texas. The Texas Historic Commission's (2006) description of Fredericksburg's Historic District eloquently describes how this unique landscape both reflects and helps to maintain an evolving sense of German-Texan identity:

Until recent decades, Texas architecture was of little interest to the rest of the country. Fredericksburg, however, was recognized not only locally or statewide, but nationally as early as the 1920s. Innumerable newspaper and magazine articles have praised the quaintness of the town's Sunday houses, and books on the city and German Texans have further documented the city's extraordinary architectural heritage.

The increased interest in the architecture is a reflection of a much greater interest in the entire German Texan culture. Historians and social scientists have analyzed the language, food, customs, traditions, dress, music, and numerous other facets of life in Fredericksburg and the German Hill Country. A great many Texans have German ancestry, and others have found the Germanic heritage irresistible. This trend has been enforced by Fredericksburgers, who have been able to continue long standing local traditions and events, and at the same time benefit from tourism.

Like Fredericksburg, New Braunfels boasts a wealth of material culture that communicates its German heritage. For example, the striking Comal County Courthouse has become a local place icon (Figures 5.9 and 5.10). Although it was not designed expressly to depict the city's German roots, the Romanesque Revival Style it exemplifies conveys a feeling of Old World heritage, while its use of limestone connects the courthouse to the local physical environment and to other elements within the cultural landscape. The building thus embodies the fusion of German and Texan cultures in New Braunfels. Although its architectural style is not expressly German, its location is. As Robert Veselka (2000) observed, the seats of Texas counties settled by Central Europeans



Figure 5.9: Although its design is not specifically “German,” the European-influenced style and use of native limestone in the Comal County Courthouse embody New Braunfels’s German-Texan heritage.



Figure 5.10: The Comal County Courthouse's fusion of German and Texan elements has made it an important place icon of New Braunfels.

were typically centered on an open public plaza or market square. The “plaza courthouses” in these counties were typically located adjacent to the public square, rather than in its center as in the “Shelbyville” configuration that was preferred in Anglo-dominated settlements like Brenham (Veselka 2000, 82).

Other evidence of New Braunfels’s German heritage is not as organic. Bavarian-style images and references can be observed throughout the community, often in contexts that are clearly not of an ethnic nature. For example, the local Wal-Mart sits in a shopping center called “Bavarian Village,” and visitors can spend a night at the “Bavarian Inn.” Images of “Opas” and “Omas” abound. A lederhosen-clad Opa greets players to the Landa Park Golf Course with a hearty “Willkommen” and a stern reminder that only soft-spiked shoes are allowed (Figure 5.11a). The Texas Department of Transportation has recently begun adding architectural enhancements to newly constructed highway overpasses; today, the Interstate 35 overpass in New Braunfels features an Oma on its west-facing side and an Opa on its east-facing side (Figure 5.11b). Despite the suggestion of Bavarianization, one might alternately interpret the prevalence of Omas and Opas as a reference to the costumes worn by the Wurstfest Association (see Fig. 1.2 and 4.9). Thus, some of these images might be considered examples of localization, rather than spatial standardization, depending on one’s perspective.

These and other highly symbolic, largely decorative uses of Bavarian markers have not dramatically altered New Braunfels’s built environment. However, other Bavarian-influenced elements are more permanent and substantial, such as the buildings that make up the Wurstfest complex. Yet, because the Wursthalle and Marktplatz are only used during the annual festival and they are not readily observable when passing through town, these structures do not significantly affect one’s perception of the local cultural landscape. This, however, is not the case when it comes to Schlitterbahn.



Figures 5.11a and 5.11b: Bavarian-themed images, such as the ever-popular lederhosen-clad “Opa” and dirndl-clad “Oma,” are often seen around New Braunfels. However, Bavarianization rarely results in significant modifications or additions to the built environment. The display of overtly German symbols in decidedly non-German contexts, such as on the golf course sign and highway overpass above, further suggest the symbolic importance of German heritage to New Braunfels’s place identity.

Named America's top water park by The Travel Channel, Schlitterbahn's six separate park areas and 40 rides sprawl across 65 acres along the banks of the Comal River (Schlitterbahn 2005). Because it abuts residential neighborhoods and major tourism attractions such as the downtown district, the Wurstfest grounds, the golf course, Landa Park, and various "toob" outfitters, it is nearly impossible to travel through New Braunfels without spotting Schlitterbahn or its image, which is featured on numerous billboards. The park, which opened in 1979, ingeniously combines the two major place images associated with New Braunfels: the river and German heritage. The castle-shaped building that is the park's main entrance was patterned after the Bergfried Guard Tower at Solms Castle in Braunfels, Germany (Figure 5.12), and its very name—which is said to mean "slippery road" in German—further recalls the city's settlement history. The park features a number of additional German-themed elements, including a giant fiberglass beer stein at the center of the kiddie pool and park areas named "Blastenhof" and "Surfenburg." Despite its apparent constructedness, I argue that Schlitterbahn does not detract from New Braunfels's authentic aura precisely because it is so self-conscious. The park is a clearly bounded, somewhat ephemeral space (open only during the summer months) that is distinctly separate from the rest of the city. New Braunfels is not a theme town just because it has a theme park. Indeed, the presence of the park may actually enhance the authentic feel of the city overall: as Dean MacCannell (1989, 15) has pointed out, "pseudo" or "tacky" attractions "enhance the supposed authenticity of 'true sights.'"

Judy Young, Director of the New Braunfels Convention and Visitors Bureau, explained that, with the obvious exception of Schlitterbahn, New Braunfels's heritage tourism has grown from pre-existing elements, rather than the deliberate construction of a Germanized landscape. She explained:



Figure 5.12: Schlitterbahn Waterpark, a top attraction in New Braunfels, deftly combines the city's two most important place images: water recreation and the city's German heritage.

It's more organic and it's not something that's put together ... There's an effort to preserve and educate certainly, but the product was not invented. And it wasn't like Frankenmuth, totally invented out of nothing because of a Christmas story ... So, if you come here expecting to see Frankenmuth, that's not going to happen. It's more of an effort. People have to be really interested to understand that it's not going to slap you in the face, because it's part of our everyday life ... It's just a natural evolution [that] makes us different and unique, and it's not something we conjured up. (Young 2004)

As in its sister city of Fredericksburg, German heritage tourism in New Braunfels draws upon and emphasizes the adaptation of German culture to the unique environment of central Texas:

For us, and from what I was taught in school, it's really about being a Texas-German pioneer and setting your own identity and establishing your own home and making it yours. And it wasn't about replication. And so that's why things that apply in Germany definitely didn't apply here ... It was really about making it your own way. So as far as authenticity goes ... if you're expecting to see window boxes and Bavarian facades, that's not gonna happen. You're going to come here and see what Texas-German pioneers built and made their own. (Young 2004)

Thus, in both Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, an emphasis on locally rooted expressions of German heritage has not only helped to preserve their built environments, but has contributed to the creation of highly marketable place images that continue to attract additional tourism.

ACCOMMODATING ETHNIC DIFFERENCE IN GERMAN TEXAS

The persistence of German place images in the Hill Country raises questions about non-Germans' perceptions of community identity and their ability to share in the benefits of tourism development. As I explained in previous chapters, the relative size of

the German populations in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels is declining with the continued growth of its Hispanic and Anglo-Texan populations. Under these circumstances, competition for cultural capital within the communities could be expected. Even in Brenham, where displays of German heritage are fading, Germans and other ethnic groups might nevertheless seek increased visibility of their own heritages within the community in response to demographic change.

On the surface, concerns related to racial and ethnic diversity appeared to be rare among residents' comments regarding the effects of tourism on their communities. For example, when asked to identify ways in which tourism has negatively impacted their communities, no survey participants in any of the study communities made explicit references to issues related to race or ethnicity. The top concerns were largely issues of aesthetics and convenience, such as traffic and parking issues, crowding, littering, and tourist behavior. When discussing what they would most like to change or improve about tourism development, only a handful of respondents raised issues related to German heritage or other ethnic concerns. For example, only one response each from Brenham and New Braunfels mentioned diversifying the heritage theme to include other ethnic groups, while no one in Fredericksburg made this suggestion. Two respondents from New Braunfels suggested limiting alcohol consumption at events, including Wurstfest. A single respondent, from Fredericksburg, took issue with the way in which German heritage is represented, suggesting "more emphasis on original German arts (singing groups/shooting groups, etc.), but tourists seem to like oompah and beer more than arts that are authentic. [Of] Course, beer is great, too."

Table 5.3: Residents’ responses to question “Would you like your own ethnic ancestry to be represented in festivals and/or tourism activities in [community name]?”

Data source	Yes (%)	No (%)	Maybe/ Don't know (%)	Total
Brenham	23.2	31.2	45.6	125
Germans	32.7	21.2	46.2	52
Non-German whites ^a	10.2	42.4	47.5	60
Non-whites	50.0	21.4	35.7	13
Fredericksburg	33.6	32.8	33.6	131
Germans	47.3	17.6	35.1	74
Non-German whites ^a	16.1	51.8	32.1	56
Non-whites		100.0		1
New Braunfels	35.1	36.6	34.3	142
Germans	48.5	22.1	29.4	68
Non-German whites ^a	13.5	54.2	37.3	62
Non-whites	58.8	30.8	15.4	12

^a Category includes residents who did not specify or did not know their ethnic ancestry

While few comments mentioned race or ethnicity when respondents were asked to discuss tourism in general, questions that probed residents’ feelings regarding representation and participation in tourism activities revealed differences in attitudes among the various ethnic subpopulations in each community. As Table 5.3 illustrates, German respondents and non-white respondents in each community more frequently expressed an interest in being represented in tourism or festive activities than did non-

German whites. These results support the contention that ethnicity is becoming increasingly peripheral to the lives of many white Americans, while remaining an important concern for Americans of color (Waters 1990). Non-German whites frequently commented that ethnicity does not interest them personally, that their ethnicity is “too boring” to be of interest to others, that they identify with an “American” identity rather than a specific national origin group, or that their ethnic backgrounds are too mixed to permit strong identification with any single ancestry or to allow a coherent depiction of their heritage in tourism activities. All of these responses reflect trends in white ethnicity that have been previously observed by scholars—including white Americans’ propensity to identify with an undifferentiated “European” ancestry, increasingly symbolic attachments to ethnicity, and ethnicity’s diminished relevance to daily life (Alba 1990, Waters 1990).

The figures in Table 5.3 further indicate that non-white residents as a group were fairly evenly divided about whether they would like to see their heritage(s) represented in ethnic-themed activities in their communities. Among those respondents who stated that they would like to see more representation of their ancestry, only a few indicated that they felt marginalized on the basis of their ethnicity. For example, a long-time African-American resident of Brenham stated: “[I would like to see more representation] because there is not enough diversity. Other groups are just tolerated.” A resident of New Braunfels who claimed Mexican-American, Native American, and European roots suggested that the maintenance of less prominent ethnic identities might be endangered without increased attention: “We need to see more Hispanic and Native American cultures displayed for our children's sake.” However, not all non-white respondents voiced such concerns. Several reported that they would simply enjoy the opportunity to participate in festive displays of culture. For example, a Hispanic respondent from New

Braunfels seemed quite cheerful when she replied: “Definitely would be my answer. I'd love to see more Mexican culture festivities!!! I'd even help organize.”

In contrast, the other half of non-white respondents seemed relatively uninterested in being represented in ethnic-themed activities and did not communicate feelings of exclusion. Instead, they reported that they enjoy participating in existing heritage-based activities and view them as beneficial to the community overall. Illustrating the fluidity of contemporary symbolic ethnicities, the sole Hispanic respondent from Fredericksburg, who happens to operate a lodging establishment, stated: “I enjoy traditional events commemorating the German heritage—[we] need to increase the events and time devoted to this.” Other non-white residents suggested that their ethnic backgrounds would not fit the existing place image of their communities. A “Tex-Mex” respondent explained, “Sure we have small [Hispanic] festivals but New Braunfels will always be known as a German town,” while a Brenham resident of mixed Mexican and European ancestry felt that greater emphasis should be placed on other aspects of community history, “I think tourism has failed to capitalize on the extremely rich historical significance of this area as related to the establishing of Texas. This would be more important to me [than representing other ethnic groups].”

Echoing the sentiments of their neighbors quoted above, the majority of non-German whites also did not seem terribly concerned about the greater prominence of German heritage relative to their own. Among those who provided comments, the largest proportion—approximately one-fifth of all respondents from each community—explained that the portrayal of cultures other than German would not accurately represent the larger community. These respondents frequently pointed to the area's German settlement history as the most appropriate basis for tourism development, or in some cases, they stated that their ancestry group is too small or not distinctive enough to

generate interest. Many others justified their lack of interest in other heritage-based activities by stating, “This is a *German* town,” or any number of other variations on this sentiment. One Fredericksburg resident discussed the potential challenges of trying to accommodate the various groups that make up the city’s increasingly multicultural population today:

The community has a history of German and Mexican culture. We should continue to emphasize this. If you expand to other cultures, you will either offend some or you won't be able to cover all cultures. Besides, who's going to decide which cultures to represent and which to not represent? Leave it alone.

Respondents also expressed concern that attention to other ancestries would dilute the German place images that have become so well-known and successful in attracting tourists. “Fredericksburg tourism benefits by focusing on the German heritage it is known for. Why send mixed marketing concepts?” asked an Anglo resident who is married to a Hispanic.

Similar attitudes were conveyed by residents of Brenham. One survey respondent replied:

My descendants are from Scotland/Ireland. While I am proud of my heritage, I would not necessarily take away from the German ancestry that permeated Brenham by promoting a festival celebrating my ancestry.

Another Brenham resident, who claimed a mixed ancestry that includes “Texan” as well as German roots, explained, “Every town has a mixed heritage and almost all small Texas towns could promote the small town atmosphere, [therefore] we should maximize our uniqueness, not homogenize.” Considering the various arguments for adhering to predominant themes, it seems that tourism development is helping to entrench the German identity of central Texas to some degree, despite the increasing diversity of the region’s population in recent years. The perception and promotion of these host

communities as “German towns” are often taken for granted and largely unquestioned by both German and non-German residents alike.

While most respondents argued that a single, dominant theme is most logical, some residents suggested that increased representation of other groups would be appropriate and beneficial. Among residents of New Braunfels especially, numerous comments noted that the Hispanic culture is particularly worthy of representation, owing to its substantial and growing presence within the region. As one respondent explained:

I'm half English and German—this town was founded by Germans on Hispanic land—so those are the two cultures that should be celebrated. People from other ethnic ancestries can celebrate in their own homes.

A few Fredericksburg residents also argued for the broadening of activities to reflect the Hill Country’s Hispanic heritage. A 20-year Fredericksburg resident, who claimed partial German ancestry, maintained:

It is not my personal ethnic ancestry, but from a cultural standpoint, I believe more recognition, planning, outreach, events, involvement, dedication of energy and assets should be afforded toward the Mexican-American community. If you look at a plat map of the Pedernales River valley, it was their culture who came between the Comanches and the Germans. They are here and they are an essential and vibrant part of this community. We should not be this far apart!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The quotation above suggests some degree of ethnic tension between German and Hispanic residents within the region. Although relatively few non-German respondents overtly challenged continued promotion of a dominantly German image, a number of survey responses imply that, among white respondents, there is some discomfort with the influx of Hispanic newcomers into the central Texas. On one hand, some responses, such as the following comment from a Brenham resident, suggest uneasiness with any discussion of ethnic difference:

Sometimes I feel like there is such an effort to be part of the “me too” groups. The groups that feel like because someone else has a celebration, they have to also. I don't find the need to celebrate my ethnic ancestry in specific. I think some celebrations can become more of a racial/ethnic issue than a celebration.

On the other hand, a few responses received from each study community reflected outright hostility toward groups seeking greater visibility. For example, a Brenham resident of mixed European ancestry, including German, complained: “Why are you wanting to be so 'PC' [politically correct]? I always hoped this town would not lower itself to that.” A Fredericksburger, also of mixed European ancestry, declared: “Multiculturalism is B.S. When in Rome (Fredericksburg) do as the Romans (Fredericksburg-ians) do. If you want to be weird, stay in Austin.” A New Braunfels resident asserted, “My ethnic ancestry died off in the '60-'70s: ‘American.’”

Although a few respondents were somewhat defensive of the dominant images of their communities, some within the German community are not happy about the commodification of their heritage as a tourism attraction. A lifelong, middle-aged resident of Fredericksburg stated, “My ancestry started in Germany in the 1800s. You all exploited it for the money.” Another respondent noted:

The culture of New Braunfels can't be represented by what goes on at Wurstfest. The German culture that remains with the “*alt Neu Braunfelser*” is to be thrifty, hardworking, sharing, keeping the town and homes clean and neat. Caring about our community rather than the mighty dollar the Chamber of Commerce responds to.

Despite the fact that German heritage has become an important and highly visible component of the place image of several central Texas communities, sentiments such as those above were expressed very rarely by respondents. Nevertheless, it is important to note that resistance to the dominant ethnic theme is shared by some who claim German ancestry, as well as residents who do not.

I also asked residents if they believe that participation in tourism activities in their communities is open to residents of all ethnic ancestries. As Table 5.4 demonstrates, respondents of all ethnic and racial backgrounds were less likely to disagree than to agree or respond neutrally to this item. Surprisingly, non-white respondents as a group were more likely to agree that participation is open to all residents than white respondents. The difference might be attributable to the fact that white respondents were more likely to respond with uncertainty to this item. Perhaps they felt they are not qualified to comment on the experiences of their non-white, or non-German, neighbors.

Table 5.4: Residents' agreement with statement "All residents of [this community] are welcome to participate in the planning and enjoyment of tourism activities, regardless of their ethnic background"

Data source	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral/ Don't know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total
Brenham	10.9	30.7	38.0	13.9	6.6	137
Germans	15.5	34.5	32.8	15.5	1.7 ^b	58
Non-German whites ^a	4.7	31.3	45.3	10.9	7.8	64
Non-whites	26.7	13.3	26.7	20.0	13.3	15
Fredericksburg	20.3	31.5	36.4	9.1	2.8	143
Germans	20.0	36.5	31.8	9.4	2.4	85
Non-German whites ^a	19.3	24.6	43.9	8.8	3.5	57
Non-whites	100.0 ^b					1
New Braunfels	15.4	22.4	44.1	14.0	4.2	143
Germans	16.2	20.6	41.2	16.2	5.9	68
Non-German whites ^a	13.8	23.1	47.7	12.3	3.1	62
Non-whites	25.0	25.0	33.3	8.3 ^b	8.3 ^b	13

^a Category includes residents who did not specify or did not know their ethnic ancestry

^b Figure represents a single respondent

In Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, white respondents were more likely than non-whites to disagree that participation in tourism is open to all. However, it should be noted that non-whites were significantly under-represented among survey respondents relative to their groups' proportion within the total population. For example, the only Hispanic respondent from Fredericksburg, an upper-income resident who owns a tourism-related business, stated, "Being of Hispanic origin, I have never had a problem—the residents of Fredericksburg are great!" However, comments from other respondents suggest that this resident's perception is not representative. Among those who provided explanations of their answers, 13.5% of respondents mentioned the need for greater incorporation of the Hispanic population into tourism activities. Inadequate ethnic representation was frequently linked to issues of economic class and social status, which were raised by 9.4% of those providing comments. The following statement, from an eight-year resident who claimed "American" ancestry and declined to report his income, conveys these concerns: "Fredericksburg is very segregated. Not only from ethnicity, but also from who you are, who your family is, and who you know!" An upper-income, lifelong resident of German ancestry echoed this sentiment:

[Participation by all in Fredericksburg] is a little idealistic since the poor, Hispanic, etc. are certainly not as welcome as much as the aggressive with "means." We even consider ourselves very comfortable but no match for the rich or want-to-bes that have moved here.

A more recent arrival, also German and of higher income, also felt that influence is concentrated among the local elites:

Those residents who are members of the old, German Fredericksburg families are welcome, as are new members of the community, if they are white, have money, and don't try to change the status quo. If one is Hispanic, poor, or openly expresses ideas that disagree with those of the establishment, they don't want to hear from you.

While ethnic considerations were raised more frequently than class-related concerns among Fredericksburg residents, distinctions based on income and social status were much more prominent among responses from New Braunfels residents. While only 2.3% of those respondents providing comments felt that Hispanics were less able to participate in tourism-related activities than white residents, 15.9% reported that economic or social class was the key determinant of one's ability to participate.⁵⁰ One resident noted, "I've noticed there are more upper-class white people planning most things (I'm 1/2 Mexican, 1/2 German)," while another middle-class Hispanic resident concluded, "I haven't noticed anything different; it just takes money (socioeconomic instead of ethnic issue)." I suspect that the difference in perceptions between Fredericksburg residents and New Braunfels residents is linked to the fact that New Braunfels has a much larger and longer-established Hispanic population, whose size and tenure appear to encourage their cooperation and integration in tourism-related activities.

Relative to Hill Country residents, non-whites in Brenham were more polarized regarding the inclusiveness of heritage-based activities, reflecting the persistence of a color line between black and non-black residents. Of five black respondents, four disagreed or strongly disagreed the participation in tourism was open to all, while only one out of 10 Native American, Hispanic, and Asian residents disagreed. Furthermore, 14.6% of all respondents explicitly stated that participation in tourism activities is constrained by ethnicity or race. A middle-class German who is a lifelong resident of Brenham stated, "I've never felt that blacks, Asians, or Hispanics have been included in anything." Several respondents suggested that non-white residents simply do not volunteer or do not feel comfortable participating, rather than being deterred by active

⁵⁰ There is no clear statistical relationship between agreement that tourism activities are open to all and the income bracket of respondents. Calculation of the correlation coefficient between these two variables revealed that the similarity in their variance was only slightly more than 0% in Brenham and New Braunfels and just over 2% in Fredericksburg.

discrimination. For example, one German respondent observed: “Less participation from minorities. Partly their choice for not coming forward.” A non-German white and lifelong resident asserted: “Though there is little minority representation in tourism, minorities would be *more* than welcome to participate” [respondent’s emphasis]. Although responses such as these failed to account for local circumstances that might explain non-whites’ discomfort with or reluctance to participate in tourism activities, answers such as the following, from a recent newcomer to the area, were more explicit in pointing out the racial divide within the community: “Brenham residents (born and raised here) are prejudiced against blacks, and I’m married to a black man and have an interracial child.”

As in New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, socioeconomic class was also frequently mentioned in the survey responses from Brenham, referenced in 10.1% of all answers. A number of participants indicated that economic status overrides racial difference in terms of who is involved in tourism activities. A 25-year, non-German white resident observed:

Middle-class residents like myself have to earn a living—don’t have time to sit on committees. The richer folks always have run things around here. Example: if you volunteer to help at Maifest, I’d probably be assigned to pick up trash afterwards. Only the “elite” get to coordinate the better activities. I’m white, but if you’re black and wanting to participate in Maifest, it would depend largely on your income bracket as far as acceptance into Maifest.

While racism is clearly a concern among some Brenham residents, further support for the notion that social and class distinctions might be the more divisive force within the community can be found elsewhere in the survey responses. When asked to assess the social and economic vitality of the community, only two respondents (1.6%) mentioned racism, while 11 respondents (8.7%) cited poverty, income disparity, or “clannish” behavior on the part of some residents. When asked what they would most like to change

about Brenham, 6.0% of respondents mentioned problems related to class differences, while 4.5% mentioned or demonstrated racist attitudes or behaviors.⁵¹

GERMAN-THEMED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ATTACHMENT TO PLACE

The most polarizing issue in regard to tourism development in the study communities seems to be their other-directedness (Jackson 1997). As Table 5.5 demonstrates, a substantial proportion of survey respondents reported that their communities prioritize the needs of visitors over those of residents. In general, the survey respondents as a group were rather divided when it came to perceptions of tourism's benefits to residents and visitors. Many residents recognized and expressed appreciation for the economic boost tourism provides their communities. In these cases, respondents were rather forgiving of the inconveniences that often accompany the influx of visitors. As one New Braunfels resident noted: "This town is all about tourism. And it should be, otherwise it wouldn't survive." This notion was echoed by a resident of Brenham, who asserted: "I think tourism is the lifeblood of any town or community. Towns live or die by tourism." However, some of these respondents' fellow central Texans were more ambivalent. A Fredericksburger noted:

It's hard for me to answer this question. On one hand I recognize the economic need for tourism, but on the other, I find the traffic, the crowded sidewalks, the overpriced shops on Main Street, and all the other tourist related issues a nuisance.

A respondent from Brenham agreed that tourism's impacts are not so clear-cut:

It is great for visitors. As far as residents, I don't know. Tourism alone doesn't provide a whole lot to improve all of the "economic needs" of all the residents. It

⁵¹ For example, I coded responses such as "Get everyone to speak English" and "Get rid of illegal immigrants" as evidence of race-based conflict within the community.

does, however, seem to propagate a safer community from crime and community togetherness.

Table 5.5: Residents’ agreement with the statement “Tourism development in [this community] does a good job of balancing the needs of residents and visitors”

Data source	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral/ Don’t know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total
Brenham	8.0	32.6	41.3	13.8	4.3	138
Germans	13.3	26.7	46.7	10.0	3.3	60
Non-German whites ^a	3.2	39.7	39.7	12.7	4.8	63
Non-whites	6.7	26.7	26.7	33.3	6.7	15
Fredericksburg	12.1	32.6	24.8	23.4	7.1	141
Germans	10.6	34.1	22.4	23.5	9.4	85
Non-German whites ^a	12.7	30.9	29.1	23.6	3.6	55
Non-whites	100.0 ^b					1
New Braunfels	3.5	27.3	25.2	30.8	13.3	144
Germans	4.4	29.4	16.2	36.8	13.2	68
Non-German whites ^a	3.1	26.6	32.8	21.9	15.6	63
Non-whites	8.3 ^b	16.7	33.3	41.7	0.0	13

^a Category includes residents who did not specify or did not know their ethnic ancestry

^b Figure represents a single respondent

Rounding out the spectrum of opinions, still other respondents expressed a high degree of certainty in favor of the notion that visitors’ needs are privileged over those of residents. One respondent provided a colorful metaphor to illustrate this relationship: “Tourists are viewed as cake and frosting when the residents of Brenham are the cake and tourists should be the frosting.” A Fredericksburg resident opined:

The town is geared more towards the tourist than the residents. Shop owners do not really care if locals can afford their merchandise (my opinion of course). Tourists are the bread and butter of this town.

Similar views were shared by a resident of New Braunfels:

It is virtually impossible to get anywhere in town during peak tourist season, especially Home Depot/Kohl's, and you can forget about going out to eat. Plus, the Wal-Mart parking lot is covered with empty beer cases/boxes by noon Saturday. Residents get to look at that for the rest of the day!

The last comment above refers to the crowding that occurs in New Braunfels during the summer months, when water recreation is in high demand. This concern and many others reported were not necessarily directed at German-themed events and attractions. In fact, none of the residents surveyed mentioned impacts specific to heritage tourism, although a number of respondents did implicitly or explicitly refer to other types of tourism development (such as water recreation) or discussed tourism in non-specific terms. Nevertheless, the survey findings suggest that there is an ethnic dimension to residents' perceptions. In Brenham, the similarity in perceptions between German and non-German whites is likely related to the fact that German heritage is not greatly emphasized in the community's promotion. However, non-white respondents were much more likely to disagree that the needs of tourists and visitors are balanced than white respondents (both German and non-German), suggesting that residents of color might not accrue the benefits of tourism development to the same extent as whites. Thus, cultural capital—in the form of the promotion of the region as the “Birthplace of Texas,” which carries an Anglo-Texan connotation in its celebration of the overthrow of Mexican rule—may translate into financial capital in East Texas.

In New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, the most apparent distinction in perceptions lies between non-German whites and residents of other ancestries. Non-

German whites might be less likely to disagree because their median length of residency is less than 15 years, as compared around 19 years for Germans and Hispanics. In Fredericksburg, the gap is even greater: Germans' median length of residency is 22.1 years, as compared to just 8.4 years among non-Germans. Thus, the German and Hispanic residents of the Hill Country have observed the impacts of tourism for a longer period, on average, and might be more aware of its impacts as a result. A few survey responses explicitly supported this hypothesis. For example, one New Braunfels resident stated:

The older people (Germans) don't like the tourists because they don't respect our town. I think we should put a big sign up. Respect our city.

Furthermore, there is some tension between newcomers (or "*Auslanders*")—many of whom discovered the region as tourists and today provide much of the capital behind historic preservation and tourism development—and long-time residents who are more resistant to change. As one Fredericksburg resident explained:

In spite of tourism's benefits, it does sometimes seem there is more emphasis on tourists than locals, and many locals, especially the older natives and those who moved here for peace and quiet, are resentful. They feel the "newcomers" have ruined their old way of life.

Reflecting the sentiment expressed in the preceding quote, many residents disagreed that the benefits to tourism development are shared equally (Table 5.6). The community in which ethnic differences appear to most influence these perceptions is the one with the greatest amount of racial diversity: Brenham. Only 20% of non-white residents agreed or strongly agreed that tourism benefits all residents equally, as compared to more than a third of all white residents. Both white and non-white respondents noted that residents of color see fewer of tourism's advantages than whites. An African-American resident claimed, "The Black community don't get anything from

Brenham,” while a white resident stated, “I don't see how most events appeal to or benefit African Americans or Hispanics.” Others suggested that racial differences are manifested in socioeconomic attainment. An “American” observed: “Strong color lines: non-white in ‘service,’ white in ‘business.’ Racism cuts both ways, very strongly.”

Table 5.6: Residents’ agreement with the statement “Tourism benefits all residents of [this community] equally”

Data source	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral/ Don’t know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total
Brenham	10.7	22.9	30.0	28.6	7.9	140
Germans	10.0	25.0	31.7	25.0	8.3	60
Non-German whites ^a	12.3	23.1	27.7	32.3	4.6	65
Non-whites	6.7	13.3	33.3	26.7	20.0	15
Fredericksburg	12.6	22.4	25.2	29.4	10.5	143
Germans	12.9	22.4	22.4	29.4	12.9	85
Non-German whites ^a	13.8	48.3	22.4	15.5	0.0	57
Non-whites	100.0 ^b					1
New Braunfels	4.9	16.1	19.6	43.4	16.1	144
Germans	8.8	13.2	17.6	44.4	16.2	68
Non-German whites ^a	1.6 ^b	21.9	18.8	40.6	17.2	63
Non-whites	8.3 ^b	0.0	33.3	50.0	8.3 ^b	13

^a Category includes residents who did not specify or did not know their ethnic ancestry

^b Figure represents a single respondent

Class is also perceived as a constraint on white residents' ability to benefit from tourism. Summarizing the views of many of his neighbors, a respondent of German ancestry described the economic disparity he observed upon moving to Brenham just five years ago:

It benefits the people that make a living from tourism. But there are limited opportunities to make a living from tourism. The community seems to be made up of quite a bit of retired/financially independent people, people commuting elsewhere to make a living, college employed. However, there seems to be a large group of people that are surviving on minimum wage and welfare. Tourism could perpetuate the latter even more. I was surprised to see how many housing projects for poor people there were here. It's kind of the extremes here.

A resident of mixed Hispanic and German heritage further noted: "Brenham's large population of disadvantaged citizens do not benefit as well as advantaged citizens. (A distinct 'haves' and 'have nots' grouping.)"

New Braunfels residents' replies to this survey item also diverged on the basis of race, but not as strongly as in Brenham. Non-whites as a group were less likely to agree that the benefits of tourism confer equally on all residents. Most of the comments provided by those who disagreed either focused on the fact that residents living near water recreation amenities bear a disproportionate share of tourism's negative impacts or pointed out that business owners benefit more than other residents. Only four out of more than 100 comments provided specifically addressed ethnic concerns. A German respondent questioned the degree to which the Hispanic community benefits, while a Hispanic respondent stated that tourism development should better represent the city's ethnic diversity. Two residents, one white and one Hispanic, addressed the need for increased development of the west side of town, where the majority of the Hispanic population is concentrated. Thus, residents' concerns far more frequently focused on the divide between haves and have-nots than ethnic or racial differences.

Fredericksburg's non-white population is relatively small, and it was poorly represented among survey respondents. However, perceptions of the distribution of tourism's benefits diverged between German and non-German whites. Just over one-third of German respondents agreed or strongly agreed that tourism's gains are equally distributed throughout the community, as compared to 62.1% of non-Germans. Again, I suspect that this difference is linked to length of residency in the community, as several survey responses suggest. For example, a non-German who came to the area about six years ago stated, "I've heard that some of the long-time residents, especially the seniors, do not like all of the traffic and 'chain' businesses that come with growth." Furthermore, many of the owners of tourist-oriented businesses are wealthy migrants or investors from Houston, Dallas, or other metropolitan areas of the state (Kammlah 2006). A rift within the community between long-time residents and newcomers was observed by a recent arrival, who has lived in Fredericksburg for only two years:

Not everyone wants the tourists. Some old timers want things to stay the way they were 30 years ago. Tourism has driven up property values and likewise the property taxes of people that do not want tourism.

Many argued that tourism is generating only low-wage service jobs and that the profits are not trickling down to poorer residents. As one German resident observed:

Tourism creates jobs, but those are mostly low paying service and retail jobs, often without benefits. We have a large, although largely ignored, Hispanic population that, in my opinion, sees very little benefit from tourism.

Another white resident, who is married to a Hispanic, reported, "The busboys and maids that keep things running, make \$7 an hour, and can't afford a decent house don't benefit much." In sum, the results from all three study communities suggest that ethnic and racial subgroups within the local populations have divergent attitudes toward and perceptions of

tourism; however, these distinctions are often embedded within larger economic disparities, suggesting that perhaps the more salient divide within these communities is between the haves and have-nots rather than between white and non-white or between German and non-German.

CONCLUSION

The data presented in this chapter illustrate the development—and more importantly, the mobilization—of symbolic ethnicity in German-themed tourism development. Because of the flexibility of contemporary ethnic identities, many non-German residents feel that they can engage in German heritage tourism and partake of its benefits. While the privileges of symbolic ethnicity appear to be less readily available to non-white residents, the data suggest that income and local connections are perhaps more significant social divisions than racial difference. However, it is critical to recognize that structural factors related to racial discrimination may inhibit non-white residents' ability to increase their socioeconomic standing. Because “race” often equates with “class” in American society, these findings should not be interpreted as evidence that color line within central Texas has been erased. Rather, as I will discuss in Chapter Six, I believe that participation in German-themed tourism reflects a continued process of racialization in which the critical distinction is not between “white” and “non-white,” but between “black” and “not black.”

My findings also suggest that tourism destinations are able to alternate among various place identities, owing to their incorporation of symbolic place identities. By incorporating ephemeral or hyper-constructed Bavarian elements such as Oktoberfest-style events and German-themed water parks into their package of attractions, tourism producers provide tourists with the best of both worlds—an “authentic,” locally rooted

German-Texan experience that simultaneously permits a certain degree of romanticization and playful kitsch—and thus appeal to a broad market of potential consumers. I will return to the idea of symbolic place identity in Chapter Six.

Chapter Six:

Conclusion

“The Texas of today is the U.S. of tomorrow”

– State Demographer Steve Murdock⁵²

Demographic trends in Texas are a harbinger of the future diversity of the United States. As of July 2004, Texas is the fifth state (along with Hawaii, New Mexico, California, and Washington, D.C.) to achieve minority-majority status, and Hispanics are expected to account for more than half of the state’s population sometime within the next 15 to 35 years, according to various estimates (Petersen and Assanie 2005, Raymond 2005, U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Albeit to a lesser degree, the trends toward greater heterogeneity among Texas’s residents are expected to be reflected in the national population, with one in four Americans projected to be Hispanic or Asian by 2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000).

At the same time—perhaps in response to changes within the population—heritage tourism is increasing in importance throughout the United States (National Trust 2005). The National Trust for Historic Preservation (2005) reports that travel and tourism directly contributed \$600 billion to the U.S. economy in 2004, and nearly 20% of adult travelers in 2002 could be classified as cultural heritage tourists. According to John Nau, Chairman of the Texas Historical Commission, Texas is considered one of a handful of states at the forefront of heritage tourism development; in fact, the Travel Industry

⁵² Quoted in Raymond 2005.

Association of America ranks the state as the second most-popular destination in the U.S. for travelers interested in historic and cultural attractions (Jones and Staton 2002).

In formulating guidelines for the development of heritage tourism, the National Trust (2005) urges:

Sustainability should conserve resources; respect local culture, heritage and tradition; focus on quality balanced with economic opportunity for residents; optimize the visitor experience through a creative mix of cultural, natural and historic resources; and measure success not in numbers alone, but also in the integrity of the experience that contributes to economic viability of the institutions, resources, community and its residents.

The Economic Development & Tourism Division of the Office of the Governor (2004, 2) further encourages tourism host communities to preserve their local distinctiveness:

The cultural event and heritage site must be authentic to be believed; but, human visitation can harm historical places and may adversely affect ethnic events. Special care should be taken to avoid the appearance of contrived authenticity. The event or site should remain an accurate representation of the original purpose or function of the tourism attraction.

As I have demonstrated in the preceding chapters, Brenham, Fredericksburg, and New Braunfels have been fairly successful overall in achieving these goals for heritage tourism development. However, increased population growth, expanding diversity, accelerated resource consumption, and a number of other factors will change the equation over the years to come. With Texas at the leading edge of both heritage tourism and demographic trends, the lessons learned in German Texas may prove vitally informative to further development efforts, both within the state and beyond. In this chapter, I will review the key conclusions of my research and discuss their implications for the future of the region.

SYMBOLIZING GERMAN IDENTITY THROUGH TOURISM AND FESTIVAL

Heritage-based festivals are a prime example of what Eric Hobsbawm (1983, 2) calls “invented traditions,” “responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetitions.” He argues that since the industrial revolution, the “predominant” type of invented tradition includes “those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or membership of groups, real or artificial communities” (Hobsbawm 1983, 9). Although tourism and festivals might sometimes represent ethnic groups in ways that are considered historically inaccurate, they nevertheless serve an important function in communicating and facilitating individuals’ membership in larger communities of interest. Furthermore, the study of invented traditions can yield insights into the dynamics of the communities that create them (Hobsbawm 1983).

At the scale of the individual participant, German heritage activities reflect the increasingly symbolic nature of contemporary European-American ethnic identities. Because ethnicity is becoming ever more peripheral to the lives of many white Americans, it has become highly symbolic and largely voluntary, a leisure-time activity that provides a pleasant diversion from everyday life. As my data demonstrate, participation in festivals and other German-themed events and attractions helps German Americans express and reconnect with their ethnic heritage, providing opportunities to engage in such symbolic ethnic activities as eating German food, listening and dancing to German music, and undertaking modern-day “pilgrimages” to sites associated with German settlement history. Through their participation in touristic activities, German Americans not only maintain their individual Germanness; they are continuing a process of group identity creation that has been ongoing for more than 150 years. The early German Americans had few shared traits, aside from their common language (which was

itself complicated by a wide variety of regional dialects) and festive traditions. Thus, as Kathleen Neils Conzen (1989) and others have established, festive culture provided the content from which notions of German-American collective identity were constructed. Today, German Americans continue to be a very diverse group and they have more or less been absorbed into the mainstream of American culture, owing in part to earlier generations' self-conscious efforts to create a group image that was compatible with prevailing cultural and social norms. Like their ancestors in the nineteenth century, modern-day German Americans have little in common to engender a strong sense of belonging to a distinctive culture group, but those who are interested can celebrate and join in fellowship with others of shared heritage through ethnic tourism. Anthony Cohen (1993, 69) argued that people "become aware of their culture when they stand at its boundaries." It is probably no coincidence that German heritage only began to be consciously marketed as an attraction in central Texas after significant numbers of non-Germans (including both whites and non-whites) began to move into the region in the 1960s and 1970s (Kammlah 2006). Thus, growth in the number of events and the increasingly public character of festive culture in recent years probably serve to reinforce German Texans' identity in an environment in which they more and more frequently interact with non-Germans.

Festive activities also continue to cultivate and promote positive images of German Americans and their culture, challenging the widespread negative perceptions that dominated the first half of the twentieth century. Such image creation and manipulation may be essential to the continued strength of German Americans as an ethnic group. Despite the fact that the number of Americans claiming German ancestry has declined precipitously in recent decades, Michael Hout and Joshua Goldstein (1994) found that the number of Americans claiming German ancestry nevertheless exceeds

estimates based on rates of natural increase. The high visibility and positive image of German heritage fostered by festivals and tourism might encourage ethnic identification among a white population that is overwhelmingly second-generation or later and of whom nearly half claim multiple ethnic ancestries (Hout and Goldstein 1994).

Further underscoring the symbolic nature of contemporary ethnic identity, ethnic-themed tourism and festivals offer opportunities for those who do not necessarily claim German ancestry to temporarily join an “ethnic” community—to become “German for a day.” Festivals build community by temporarily abolishing social barriers between participants and observers (Bungert 2003). The notion of extending the boundaries of Germanness to include non-Germans within the festival context is not a new phenomenon, but continues a long-standing tradition. In her analysis of German-American Carnival in the nineteenth century, Heike Bungert (2003) describes various ways in which non-Germans were incorporated into the festivities. For example, during the “procession,” guests would join performers in a parade through the dance hall, thus joining and temporarily becoming a part of the “reveling German-American community” (Bungert 2003, 330). The “Grand Procession” held on the opening day of Wurstfest and the Maifest parade in Brenham clearly mirror this custom. The inclusiveness of contemporary celebrations reflects the fact that, in our current era of symbolic ethnicity, ethnic heritage is often viewed as the common heritage of a local community, not necessarily the domain of a particular ancestry group. As Steven Schnell (2003) observed in Lindsborg, Kansas, participation in Swedish heritage activities reflects a desire for community bonds that extend beyond the boundaries of ethnicity. He argues that the trappings of Swedishness (or, in the case of central Texas, of Germanness) are largely incidental, because participants who claim a variety of ancestries are seeking to experience a sense of community and connection to the past, rather than to identify with a

specific ethnic group (Schnell 2003). In central Texas, the “real or imagined” community to which participants claim membership is not necessarily the German-American ethnic group, but the community of residents to which German Americans have contributed. This emphasis on the relevance of ethnic heritage to the development of the larger local community helps to broaden the appeal of the events. Attracting participants from a variety of ethnic backgrounds might prove essential to the festivals’ perpetuation in shifting demographic contexts. The size of the “host” German-American population is declining as proportions of Anglo- and Mexican-American residents increase and as more German Americans describe themselves as undifferentiated white Americans, continuing the process of assimilation and, in effect, becoming “Anglos” themselves.

At the same time, residents can reject such blanket representations of community identity. Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) note that the content of heritage usually reflects the dominant ethnicity or ethnicities within a place, despite recent trends toward multiculturalism. When the dominant group changes, “Often this exacerbates rather than resolves the accompanying tensions as such transfers of power are often accompanied by aggressive assertions or reassertions of dominance” (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, 99). For now, German place identities do not appear to be sources of conflict within the communities I observed; however, it will be interesting to see if touristic depictions of place are eventually contested in response to the continued decline of the region’s German population.

ETHNIC TOURISM AND RACIALIZATION IN GERMAN TEXAS

As Wurstfest Executive Director Suzanne Herbelin (2005) explained, the underlying idea behind German heritage festivals in central Texas is that “anyone can be a little German for a little while.” Despite the fact that such events encourage broad

participation, both to sustain ethnic heritage among group members and to increase their revenue, my research suggests that the boundaries of Germanness are not equally flexible for members of all ethnic and racial groups. A significant proportion of those participating—both as consumers and producers of the events—are whites who do not claim German ancestry. Their involvement supports the notion that white Americans increasingly identify with a non-specific “European” heritage (Alba 1990) and demonstrates the ease with which they can assume various symbolic ethnicities. The boundaries of Germanness appear to be much less permeable for Americans of color. As I demonstrated in Chapter Three, Hispanic and black Texans are greatly underrepresented among participants in German-themed festivals, especially as compared to their representation in the population of central Texas and in neighboring areas that contribute tourists to the region. While none of my data indicate a conscious attempt to limit the participation of non-whites in these activities, they nevertheless suggest that processes of racialization, which began as soon as the first white settlers arrived in Texas, are still under way.

David Montejano (1987) has demonstrated that Mexicans in Texas have long occupied a liminal position when it comes to their racial status, with perceptions of “whiteness” often contingent upon the class of the individual or family in question. Neil Foley (1999, 15) further observed that in central Texas, “whiteness fractured along class lines and Mexicans moved in to fill the racial space between whiteness and blackness.” Thus, while there was no constitutional provision for “separate but equal” treatment for Mexicans, as there was for blacks under Jim Crow, Mexicans were often regarded as part of the state’s “race problem,” in both political and sociological terms, until the middle of the twentieth century (Montejano 1987).⁵³ The era of Jim Crow was characterized by

⁵³ Montejano (1987, 260) notes that the 1930 *Salvatierra* case held that the provision of “separate but equal” treatment did not apply to Mexicans, but no action was taken following the decision.

whites' nearly complete separation from and control of blacks and Mexicans in Texas (Montejano 1987). During this period, many American-born Mexican Texans attempted to "whiten" their status by highlighting the perceived inferiority of Mexican-born immigrants, blacks, and Indians; emphasizing their Spanish ancestry; and intermarrying with prominent white, landowning families (Montejano 1987, Foley 1999).⁵⁴ More recently, a number of factors have contributed to increased parity between Mexicans and whites in Texas. Urbanization; industrialization; the outbreak of World War II; the demise of policies such as segregation, malapportionment, and one-party political control; the growth of middle- and upper-class Mexican-American populations; and the rise of Mexican-American political activism in the 1960s and 1970s all contributed to the decline of older race arrangements (Montejano 1987). Montejano (1987) cites Mexican-Americans' increasing use of English, intermarriage rates, and upward mobility as evidence that they have been integrated into the Anglo population to some degree. The resultant "whitening" of the status of Mexican-Americans is further suggested in this study by their higher rates of participation in German-themed festivals and their more positive perceptions of these activities as compared to black Texans. However, discrimination and ethnic tensions between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans still exist within the state, as recent debates over English-only laws and illegal immigration demonstrate all too well.

The socioeconomic position of blacks in Texas changed little after the Civil War. Although they had received their legal emancipation, black Texans remained economically bound to former plantation lands as sharecroppers and continued to occupy the lowest stratum of the social hierarchy (Jordan 1966). While Hispanics were able to

⁵⁴ Neil Foley (1999) further documents how, in the first half of the twentieth century, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) encouraged Hispanics to claim distinct Latin-American identities in order to distance themselves from Mexican immigrants, blacks, Chinese, and Native Americans and to claim the privileges of whiteness.

construct identities that emphasized their whiteness during the twentieth century, blacks were not afforded these same opportunities. Despite their upward mobility and intermarriage with other groups, many blacks remained—and still remain—racially defined by the “one-drop” rule, at least socially if not legally. Furthermore, their blackness was often emphasized as other groups sought to underscore their whiteness (Foley 1999). Thus, in Texas, one can witness a historical process in which the important racial distinction seems to have shifted from white/non-white to black/non-black. In my study communities, lower rates of black participation in German-themed activities and black survey respondents’ greater concern about race-based discrimination appear to reflect this trend. My research does not clarify whether the concept of “Germanness” problematizes “blackness” or “blackness” problematizes “Germanness” or both, but the results nevertheless suggest the persistence of the color line in central Texas, even when it comes to largely symbolic expressions of ethnic identity.

Despite claims to inclusiveness, ethnic tourism focusing on European ancestry groups has the potential to normalize whiteness within increasingly diverse host communities. In ethnic-themed activities, Germanness, and whiteness more broadly, becomes a neutral backdrop against which other groups stand in contrast (Kobayashi and Peake 2000).⁵⁵ In the increasingly non-white and non-German milieu of central Texas, these displays of heritage continue portray Germanness as the “natural” identity of the community and its residents and thus, by extension, intentionally or unintentionally portray members of other ancestry or racial groups as “outsiders” or “others.” Furthermore, the heritage and culture of European-derived ethnic groups, who typically share similar histories of immigration and settlement, are often depicted as embodying

⁵⁵ Wilbur Zelinsky (2001) has further demonstrated how many scholarly definitions of “ethnicity” specifically exclude the dominant culture as an ethnic group and how the concept of ethnicity has rarely been applied to largely assimilated European Americans. Such notions of ethnicity reinforce the normalization of whiteness and the designation of non-whites as “Others.”

what it means to be “American.” This particular interpretation of the meaning of ethnic identity marginalizes the experiences of American ancestors who were brought to this country involuntarily or under duress, or whose presence predated the arrival of European colonists and explorers. Thus, the ostensible inclusiveness of German-themed festivals reinforces the notion that whites’ cultural practices and values are universal and “normal” among Americans (Frankenberg 1993; Kobayashi and Peake 2000).

Broader participation in the symbolic and adaptable forms of touristic ethnicity might have the power to refashion the identity of host communities and to challenge the normalization of whiteness and Germanness in central Texas. As Tim Cresswell (1996, 163) explains:

People acting “out of place” suggest different interpretations. If enough people follow suit, a whole new conception of “normality” may arise. In effect, the “reading” of people acting in space is also a kind of “writing” as new meanings are formed. The consumption of place becomes the production of place.

Applying this observation to tourism, we can hypothesize that as larger numbers of non-Germans, especially participants of color, partake in these celebrations the projected image of the host community might become more multicultural, perhaps eventually undermining the distinctive German image that currently appeals to many visitors. Despite this risk, communities and events in central Texas increasingly offer an array of multiethnic food, music, and souvenir options that reflect the expanding ethnic diversity of their visitors and residents. It remains to be seen whether this practice will ultimately prove self-defeating to German-themed tourism or whether it is a necessary survival strategy for destinations that are becoming more ethnically and racially heterogeneous and that serve increasingly diverse consumer markets.

TOURISM PROMOTION AND THE MYTH OF GERMANNESS

Tourism provides a classic example of the meaning of heritage, which is said to clarify pasts “so as to infuse them with present purposes” (Lowenthal 1998, xv). Heritage thus invokes specific interpretations of historical events to confer advantages upon those who create and promulgate it. In this dissertation, we have seen how tourism development efforts have mobilized the past in order to attract capital and investment, to maintain and manipulate the images of people and places, and to preserve individual and group identities.

The construction and maintenance of social myths is one example of the process of heritage creation. German-themed tourism development has employed existing myths about German Americans and their culture and contributed to the creation of new ones. Perhaps the most obvious example I observed in my research is the purported predominance of Germans and Germanness within the host communities. Today, German Americans are no longer the majority within any of the local populations I studied. While many long-time residents can recall speaking German in their homes and on the streets as recently as the 1960s and 1970s, the use of the German language in everyday contexts is rare today. One is probably more likely to hear Spanish spoken on the streets of Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, or Brenham. And yet, as I demonstrated in Chapter Four, these places are still often depicted as “German” communities in tourism promotion.

Brenham is perhaps the most interesting example of this process because its Germanness is very situational, emerging strongly during the Maifest, but remaining in the background much of the year. In previous chapters, I discussed the relative lack of German artifacts within the city’s cultural landscape and the fact that German settlers in East Texas were largely absorbed into an existing Anglo-American framework.

Regardless, many residents continue to describe Brenham as a “German” place. As Dr. Wilfred Dietrich (2006) explained:

Many of the people here say this is a German community, the Germans founded it. They didn’t. It was the English who settled here. They laid out the town, they established all of this and the Germans came later. The Germans came in about the 1870s [compared to Anglos who arrived in the 1830s].

I believe that the perception of Brenham as a German-founded town is linked to the tradition of Maifest. Maifest is a highly visible reminder of the community’s German roots. Underscoring this notion, Dr. Dietrich (2006) further explained that some people within the community think that only Germans are allowed to participate in Maifest, despite the fact that many of those producing the event do not themselves claim German heritage:

I don’t think there’s a German on the board. They may claim that...but they don’t even know the German language and the German customs, or whatever.

Although the event is no longer organized by Brenham’s German population and Maifest has shed much of its ethnic content over the years, it remains linked to the city’s historic German community in the perceptions of many residents and visitors alike and in the promotion of the event (see Figure 5.4).

As compared to Brenham, Germanness is more strongly emphasized in the landscape, tourism development, and place promotion of the Hill Country communities of New Braunfels and Fredericksburg (Figures 6.1 and 6.2). While these cities still contain abundant artifacts attesting to their German heritage, they too are experiencing declines in their German-identified populations. The success of German heritage tourism is contributing to the cities’ continued perception and promotion as German places, but it is simultaneously eroding the bases of their “Germanness.” As Mike Dietert (2005),

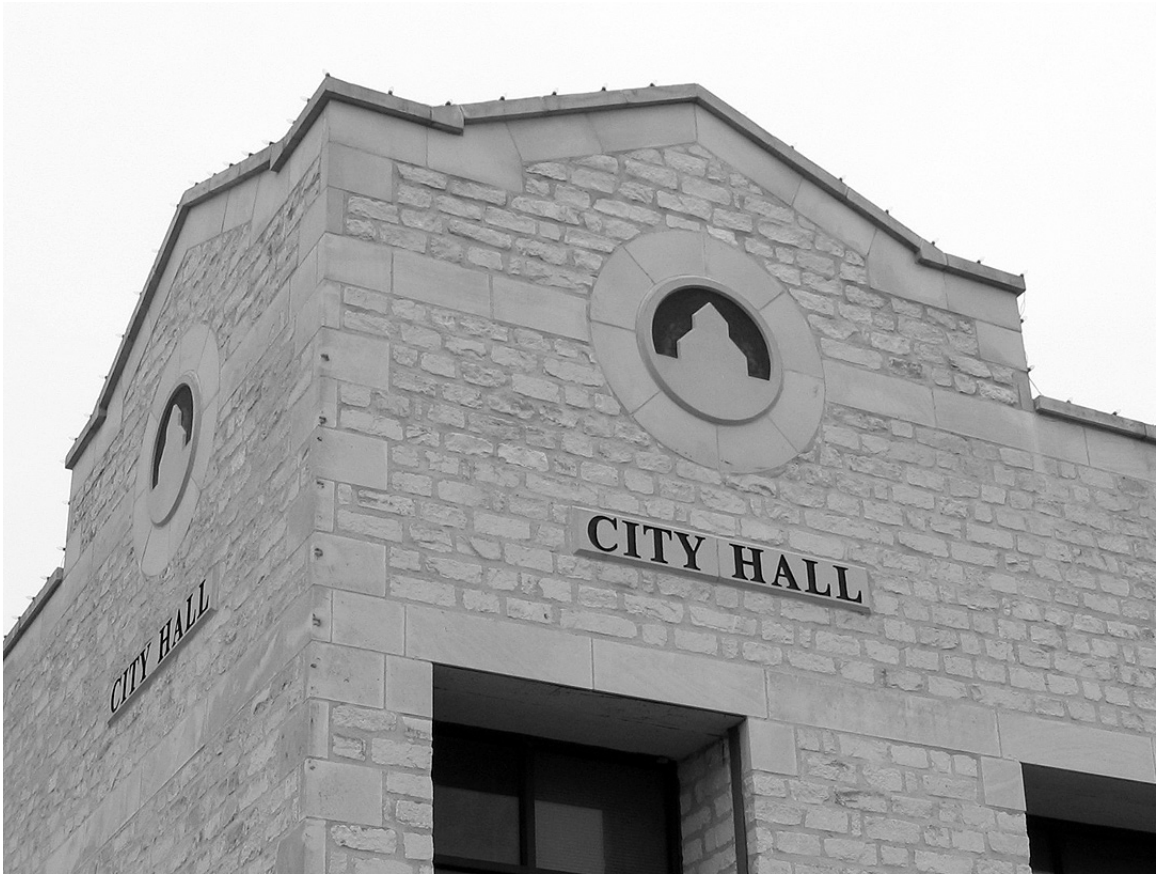


Figure 6.1: As the image of the Comal County Courthouse has become a place icon of New Braunfels (see Figures 5.9 and 5.10), the distinctive shape of the Vereins Kirche has become an official symbol of Fredericksburg, underscoring the centrality of German heritage to the city's identity and image.



Figure 6.2: Vereins Kirche, Fredericksburg

manager of the New Braunfels Smokehouse and former New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce director, observed:

And I guess we probably are victims of our own success because the community has become successful. It's grown. It's not a small, quaint little city anymore. We have all the fast food places. We have all the big hotel chains and everything that goes along with that. And as that continues going on, we're probably diluting our German heritage some because we're just not all Germans anymore.

Fredericksburg CVB Director Ernie Loeffler (2006) shared these concerns:

I think that the ironic thing is, for a lot of those people who are moving to Fredericksburg, one of the reasons they're moving to Fredericksburg is because of its German heritage and the fact that it's still very close to the surface and very touchable, I guess, in some ways. But by coming for that, they actually help in kind of diluting it to a certain degree ... But the general feeling, I think, of the majority of residents is that the German identity, the German heritage, the Hill Country experience is very important and something that they do want to preserve. How you go about doing that—and I'm sure this is faced by ethnic communities all across the United States, if not the world—is tougher.

Thus, in overcommunicating their Germanness and downplaying other elements in their ethnic compositions, these communities are perpetuating myths of German cultural and demographic dominance that, especially in the case of New Braunfels, can be traced to the late nineteenth century. While these myths do not appear to be divisive forces within the study communities today, they have the potential to spark conflict in the future. In mythmaking, as Celeste Ray observes (2003, 3):

What individuals and groups perceive as heritage replaces what outsiders may regard as “fact” or “history” and becomes memory. When we choose to remember a selected past in a similar way, we celebrate our unity and experience *communitas*, but in doing so we also celebrate what divides us from all those with other memories or perhaps a different memory of the same selected past.

THE EVOLUTION OF SYMBOLIC PLACE IDENTITY

Places reflect the societies that inhabit them, and those societies, in turn, shape places. Thus, it comes as no great surprise that as German-American ethnic identity has become more symbolic, so too has its expression in the landscapes of “German” places. With the tendency toward spatial standardization that has accompanied economic globalization and the assimilation of its German-American population, German Texas has lost some of its distinctiveness. An aura of Germanness has been somewhat reconstructed through the incorporation of readily identifiable ethnic markers and symbols in the cultural landscape. In turn, as German Americans have less direct knowledge of what constitutes “German” culture, they increasingly construct their personal identities from these symbols and therefore increasingly expect ethnic landscapes to incorporate them. Thus, a circular relationship exists between symbolic place identity and symbolic ethnic identity. However, unlike “theme towns” that can be found elsewhere in the United States, central Texas has largely avoided the Bavarianization that often signifies “Germanness” by promoting its unique vernacular architecture and emphasizing its locally distinctive, Texanized version of German heritage.

While central Texas communities have not been thoroughly transformed into stereotypically “German” places by tourism development, specific locations and specific times have been designated for more overt, sometimes more constructed displays of heritage. For example, during most of the year Brenham’s image is dominated by the theme of Texas Independence; it becomes more “German” during the period surrounding Maifest. New Braunfels is regarded as a water recreation destination during the summer months, but it is a more “German” place during the fall and winter seasons, when numerous German-themed festivals take place. In both Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, Bavarian symbols are largely and consciously avoided, except during German-

themed festivals when the communities willingly adopt a more constructed image to enhance the atmosphere of the events and conform to participants' expectations. Wursthfest Executive Director Suzanne Herbelin (2005) described this period of heightened Germanness in New Braunfels:

Although there are many Oktoberfests in the state, we are one that sticks solely to the polka, waltz, oompah style music. You won't find a rock band or a country-western band or anything like that here. You're going to come here and you're going to enjoy that ethnic-style entertainment. And it's a lot of fun. It's not something you hear everyday; that's what makes it different. You have to search hard to find that music anyplace else. It's so different than anything else you do the rest of the year ... You enjoy it and you come back and then it's that time of the year again and you're ready for oompah music and potato pancakes, bratwurst and sauerkraut.

By incorporating a limited number of ephemeral or hyper-constructed Bavarian elements into the fabric of the host communities, tourism producers provide opportunities for playful, self-conscious ethnic celebration alongside "authentic," locally rooted German-Texan experiences, while simultaneously protecting the uniqueness of place that is valued by residents and visitors alike.

As these communities evolve and their populations become more multiethnic, new ethnic festivals and attractions continue to be developed, further illustrating the concept of symbolic place identity. For example, in recent years Fredericksburg has begun hosting an annual Cajun Crawfish Festival. For one weekend a year, the city temporarily embraces a thoroughly symbolic "Cajun" identity. As event manager Debbie Farquhar-Garner (2005) explained:

I didn't think marketing a crawfish festival with Cajun and zydeco music would be the best thing for a German community, but it was very successful because people came out for the music and the crawfish. The reason I'm telling you this is that you can market a festival anyplace you want to, I have come to find out, if you do it right and do it competently.

Dr. Dietrich (2006) reported that Brenham's annual Heritage Fest, which celebrates a variety of ethnic groups within the community, will emphasize its growing Hispanic population this year: "Since we have a lot of Mexicans who've moved to Brenham now, one of them suggested that we have kind of a Mexican dinner, then Mexican music, and a Mexican dance or something to kick it off." Thus, the flexibility of festive expressions of ethnicity permits communities to adopt varied, transient ethnic personas and to do it convincingly, if the proper ethnic symbols are faithfully incorporated. This practice mirrors participants' consumption of ethnicity in festive contexts, wherein they consume symbols like food, music, and costume to temporarily "become ethnic" for a day. Therefore we might regard these short-term spatial transformations as "symbolic place identities."

PROGNOSIS: THE TENUOUS FUTURE OF GERMAN HERITAGE IN CENTRAL TEXAS

While some critics have implicated tourism development as an agent of placelessness and an undermining influence on the "natural" evolution of ethnic groups (e.g., Relph 1976, MacCannell 1984), I contend that German heritage tourism in central Texas actually helps to maintain the identities of many of the region's people and places. As Brenham, Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, and other communities look toward the future, an important question they will face is: How will they sustain their German identities in the years to come? Perhaps even more importantly, should they or can they sustain their German identities and images as their local populations and the state's population as a whole become more diverse?

As ethnicity becomes more symbolic and more of a leisure-time activity for many German Americans, heritage must be adapted to meet consumers' desires and expectations. New Braunfels CVB Director Judy Young (2004) is acutely aware of the

tension that underlies the commodification and commercialization of heritage, which she considers essential if Germanness is to remain an important attraction within the community. She told me about the resistance she faced from some community members when she proposed using an image of the city's founder, Prince Carl, wearing an inner tube in New Braunfels's promotional materials, noting, "They haven't quite grasped that it's actually their existence that's in jeopardy." She further explained:

I said, "Look, you may not like this, but it's funny. People are going to look at it. People are going to read it. You've just got to understand that, in order to get the next generation engaged, it's got to be fun. It may be your passion, you may have your blinders in that direction, and you may think just reading that book is just fascinating. But this generation is not buying it." And they said OK. (Young 2004)

She further emphasized the importance of integrating German heritage into other local attractions in order to ensure its continued viability and appeal to visitors:

Segmenting things like [German heritage] takes so much money to market. It would just take a phenomenal amount of money to market each segment like that. The only people who do it and do it really well are Williamsburg, because that's it. They even got over themselves and said, "This next generation's going to have to have some fun, so let's build a water park." Now they have a killer water park. Williamsburg has a water park! If you really think about it, even the guys with the real deal know that they've got to be able to add an element that is just pure fun, pleasure. Don't make me think, don't make me learn, I just want to go have a blast. And until that filters all the way down [among New Braunfels residents], it's going to be a struggle. Put an inner tube on Prince Solms, it's a challenge.

Pointing to examples of other communities that are facing similar challenges in regard to German-themed tourism, Young concluded:

Fredericksburg is struggling. I don't make any bones about it. Their retail is struggling because their product has not changed, their product has not adapted. I think that they're at a real crossroads, because they really are struggling with a generational shift in exterior market and interior [market] ... You still have to have a viable economic generator in order for the heritage to survive. If there's nothing

to feed it, it doesn't matter how passionate you are ... It's that passion cocoon. You're in the cocoon. "Love me because I'm here, not because I'm fun, entertaining, or leave you with any merchandise"... Can the product survive the wait [until such resistance to tourism development fades]? I don't know.

Thus, Judy Young's position in the debate over the direction of tourism development in New Braunfels accords with Lowenthal's (1998, 164) assertion that "Sites willfully contrived often serve heritage better than those faithfully conserved ... [tourists] have come for a good time, not for a history lesson."

As ethnic identity mutates into new forms, places like New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, and Brenham will be faced with the challenge of developing place-products that reflect and support emerging conceptions of ethnicity. The difficulty lies in balancing preservation with evolution, to mirror symbolic ethnicity in ways that do not undermine the meaning of the community and its heritage for residents and visitors. Former Chamber of Commerce director Mike Dietert (2005) observed that the more traditional heritage-based events and attractions in New Braunfels struggle to attract participants today:

It's not glamorous. It's not the thing that the tourists really want anymore. And I don't know how you cross that bridge to get people to enjoy them. Wurstfest has probably come the closest to it, but there again with the sheer numbers of people coming to it, you lose some of the quaintness of it

.... Here it's all kind of plastic sometimes, when it's really all said and done. It's just not as real as it should be. I guess it's just become so commercialized and I guess that's just a natural attribute of mine and anybody else who's getting older. You always like to keep things the way they used to be. I don't know how you really change that ... I guess we're all victims of the same thing.

As tourism development encourages the molding of place identities and place images in ways that reflect the evolution of American ethnic identity, it is important to

recognize that these changes reflect the vibrancy of a living heritage, one that shifts and reconfigures itself in response to new circumstances. Bankston and Henry (2000, 403) agree with Young's assessment, arguing:

Perceptions of historical tradition provide the substantive imagery of ethnicity, but this imagery must be reshaped into contemporary forms. To fit into a consumer economy, ethnicity must become a commodity.

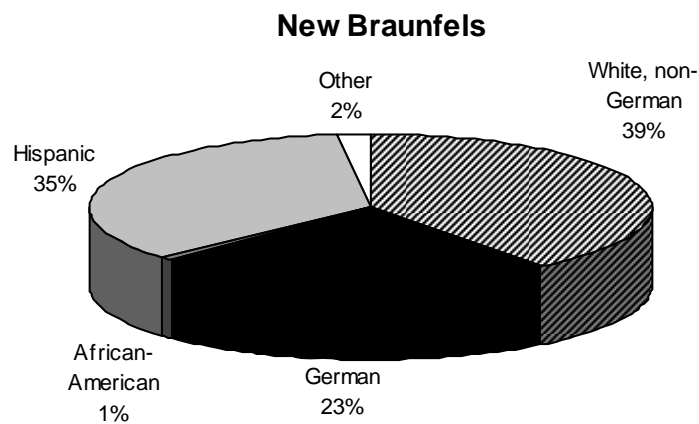
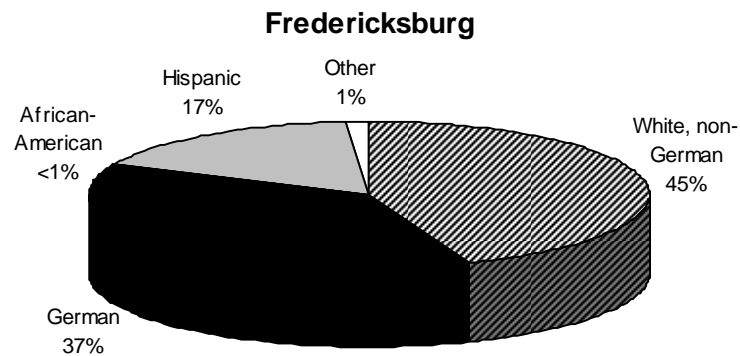
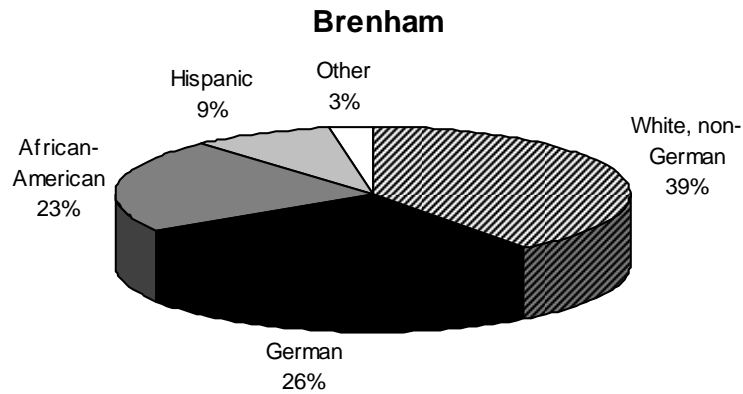
To reject or try to hinder this process means that heritage is likely to become petrified and irrelevant, no longer something worth preserving and celebrating. And we should take care not to regard tourist-oriented activities as inherently destructive of places and identities. As Stephen Ward and John Gold (1994, 14) remind us:

There is potential within the temporary event for a popular reclaiming of place. Fairs and festivals can become more than just part of the accelerating process of capital accumulation requiring the creation of new place images with ever greater rapidity. They can provide a setting for a genuine rediscovery of place and community.

While recreation and leisure are among its central components, tourism is much more than just fun and games, and German-themed tourism is much more complex and influential than its emphasis on *Gemütlichkeit*, polkas, and sausage on a stick might suggest. Heritage tourism provides a medium for the creation, rediscovery, and maintenance of identity. As importantly—if not more so—it creates spaces for the contestation, manipulation, and re-creation of these identities as well.

Appendix A:

Ethnic composition of study communities



Appendix B:

Research Methodology

The key data sources that inform this study are the views and attitudes of tourism participants and others affected by tourism development. I therefore work within a constructivist paradigm that acknowledges the existence of multiple and sometimes competing interpretations of “reality” among participants (Guba and Lincoln 1998). As such, I did not establish testable, a priori hypotheses but followed an inductive approach in which conclusions emerged through the analysis of empirical data, archival and secondary sources, and information provided by participants and residents. In analyzing multiple cases, my research departs from the approaches employed in previous studies of ethnic tourism, which have typically involved the in-depth analysis of a single host community. Studying cases that share a German-American ethnic theme but operate within different regional and demographic contexts has allowed me to isolate tourism development processes and effects that are place-specific. Furthermore, this approach permitted the identification of phenomena that are common to the three study communities, suggesting that these shared traits could be linked to the tourism development process itself and less influenced by specific geographical contexts. In the following paragraphs, I provide an overview of the data collection tools and analysis procedures employed in this dissertation.

FESTIVAL PARTICIPANT SURVEY

My research is largely based on two sets of survey data: one provided by event participants and the other provided by residents of each study community. I designed surveys to collect both quantitative data (such as demographic information and satisfaction ratings) through closed-ended questions and qualitative data (such as explanations of ratings, descriptions of ethnic identity, and perceptions of various phenomena) through open-ended questions. I first surveyed participants in each study community's main German-themed festival (Brenham's Maifest, Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest, and New Braunfels's Wurstfest) in 2004. At each event, I approached individuals and asked them to fill out a card with their contact information, as well as answers to a few brief questions about their past attendance at the event, age, residence, and ethnic background. Appendix C includes a facsimile of the form used to collect the above information. The data collected were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, which permitted the calculation of descriptive statistics and the sorting of records into relevant groups for analysis. Additionally, I used the participants' mailing addresses (city and/or ZIP code provided) to acquire the approximate latitude and longitude coordinates of their hometowns from the U.S. Census Bureau's on-line gazetteer.⁵⁶ Using these coordinates, I mapped the origins of festival participants and estimated the distance each person traveled to attend the events.

The volunteers who filled out the brief questionnaire during the events were later sent a survey (via post or email, depending on their specified preference) that included detailed questions about their experience at the festival, their ethnic identity and participation in ethnic activities, and basic demographic information. Appendix D lists

⁵⁶ The U.S. Census Bureau's gazetteer is available at: <<http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/gazetteer>>.

the questions included on the detailed survey form. After approximately two weeks, volunteers who had not yet responded to the survey were sent a reminder email or postcard to improve response rates. Of the 633 survey volunteers, 611 provided a valid address, and 326 surveys were returned, for an overall response rate of 54% (excluding invalid addresses). Table A.1 provides the response rates by study community.

Table A.1: Response rates for event participant surveys

Study site/event	Valid addresses	Surveys completed	Response rate (%)	Decline rate ^b (%)
Brenham/Maifest	69 ^a	33	47.8	0.0
Fredericksburg/Okttoberfest	228	125	54.8	0.9
New Braunfels/Wurstfest	314	170	54.1	1.3
All combined	611	328	53.7	1.0

^a The significantly smaller pool of respondents is due to the fact that Maifest is a much smaller event (approximately 500 attendees) than Oktoberfest (15,000 attendees) or Wurstfest (over 100,000 attendees). While I did not intentionally limit the number of participants, there were fewer people available to recruit for the survey.

^b No specific reasons were provided by any of the individuals who declined participation in the survey.

I analyzed the responses from two perspectives. First, I compiled all of the data into a single dataset to identify and interpret overarching issues relating to ethnic identity, representation, and participation in German-themed tourism; second, I looked at the data for each event separately in order to understand the role of place in the marketing and consumption of ethnicity and to identify issues unique to each study community. The data analysis consisted of the calculation of descriptive statistics for the quantitative data and content analysis of open-ended, qualitative responses.

Limitations of the event participant surveys

The findings presented in this primarily qualitative study are not based on a statistically significant, random sample of all event participants. According to event organizers, an estimated 500 people attend Brenham's Maifest, 15,000-25,000 people attend Fredericksburg's Oktoberfest, and more than 100,000 people attend New Braunfels's Wurstfest each year. Because of the relatively small sample sizes, the results are intended to demonstrate the scope of opinions, attitudes, and characteristics among a sample of festival participants, as opposed to depicting the "typical" visitor and his or her responses. The results should not be construed as representative of all festival attendees for three additional reasons. First, participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and it is possible that certain categories of attendees were more likely to volunteer than others. For example, adults accompanied by young children were generally less willing or able to complete the survey form than those attending the event in groups composed entirely of adults or those accompanied by older children. Second, I observed that many groups tended to nominate a "representative" to complete the survey on their behalf, even when the groups appeared to be composed of multiple generations or households. This tendency was particularly pronounced among elderly festival participants, who often allowed a companion to participate "for them," and therefore might have resulted in the under-representation of participants in the older age cohorts. Third, due to noise levels and out of respect for performers and festival participants, I generally avoided recruiting volunteers seated in performance areas, except during intermissions. This approach, while necessary to ensure clear communication and positive relationships with potential respondents, might somewhat bias the survey results due to the under-representation of certain groups, such as devoted polka fans, many of whom I observed remaining largely

within the bandstand areas throughout the event. Nevertheless, the sampling strategy resulted in the recruitment of a broad cross-section of festival participants, representing a variety of ethnicities, ages, places of residence, and income levels (Appendix E).

RESIDENT SURVEY

In addition to collecting data from event participants, I also surveyed residents of each study community. Although some people who responded to the event participation survey were residents, I felt it important to conduct a separate survey because those who participate in German-themed events are likely to have different views on tourism than those who do not. Furthermore, because of their ethnic nature, those who attend the events are probably more likely to claim German heritage. Thus, the resident survey was intended to address these potential sources of bias and to gain further insight into tourism development and its impacts.

I purchased an unstratified, computer-generated random sample of 3,003 names and addresses—1,001 residents from each study community—from InfoUSA, a market research company.⁵⁷ While other sampling strategies, such as using local utility records as the basis for the sampling frame, might have been somewhat more inclusive, time, financial, and manpower considerations favored the use of the market research database. Approximately two weeks after mailing the survey forms, I sent a reminder postcard to residents who had not yet responded, which appears to have significantly increased the number of responses.⁵⁸ Of the 3,003 resident addresses I purchased, 2,681 proved valid

⁵⁷ InfoUSA compiles its mailing lists from telephone directories, mail-order customer and subscriber lists, deed and tax assessor records, voter registration, magazine subscriptions, and survey responses. The lists are updated monthly. According to the company's website, an independent, third-party review found InfoUSA's consumer database "to be the strongest competitor in the industry based on the comprehensiveness and accuracy of its data" (InfoUSA 2005).

⁵⁸ To gauge the effect of the reminder postcards on response rates, I noted how many of the respondents in the second round of mailings (500 addresses in each study community) replied after the estimated delivery date of the reminder. Because the postcards were printed and mailed from out of state, I sent a postcard to

and 432 surveys were completed, for an overall response rate of 16.1%.⁵⁹ Table A.2 provides the response and decline rates by study community.

Table A.2: Response rates for resident surveys

Study site	Valid addresses (out of 1001)	Completed surveys	Response Rate (%)	Decline rate ^a (%)
Brenham	910	141	15.5	1.4
Fredericksburg	856	146	17.1	1.1
New Braunfels	915	145	15.8	1.1
All combined	2681	432	16.1	1.2

^a Of 32 people who declined participation in the survey, eight (25.0%) claimed they were not actually residents of the study community, five (15.6%) cited inability due to age or health, two (6.3%) refused to participate because of their dissatisfaction with tourism, two were deceased, two were new residents and felt ill-equipped to respond, and one person felt the survey was too long. The remaining 12 (37.5%) did not specify a reason.

As expected, the response rates for the resident survey were significantly lower than the response rates for the event participant survey. This discrepancy can likely be attributed to a few specific factors. First, volunteers for the event participant survey were recruited in person. The personal connection that I established with potential participants and the opportunity for them to ask questions about the purpose of the survey likely contributed to an increased willingness to participate and diminished any concerns about the potential for misuse of their personal information. Second, the recruitment process for

my home address to estimate when the postcards would be received in central Texas. In the second-round mailings, it appears that 28.6% of surveys from Brenham, 25.0% of surveys from Fredericksburg, and 28.6% of surveys from New Braunfels were completed after the reminders were received.

⁵⁹ The percentage of invalid addresses is consistent with the estimates provided by InfoUSA on its website, which states: "It is not uncommon to have 10-20% undeliverable names, especially in the consumer market. Consumers move on a regular basis." Thus, the number of invalid addresses should not be attributed to survey administration procedures.

event participant survey respondents permitted potential respondents to decline becoming part of the survey pool. While I estimate that fewer than five percent of the event participants I approached refused to complete the survey enrollment card, these on-site refusals could have slightly inflated the response rate for the event participation survey. Finally, the mailing of surveys to a random sample of residents is less targeted than recruiting volunteers from a heritage-based event. Those participating in German-themed tourism are more likely to have an interest in the content of the survey, and increased salience of a survey to potential respondents has been shown to have a positive impact on response rates while surveys sent to general populations tend to have lower response rates (Heberlein and Baumgartner 1978).

After mailing the first set of surveys to 500 residents in each study community and assessing the response rates, I reviewed my research design to see if I could improve the response rate for the second round of mailings. Much research has been conducted into this issue, focusing on survey administration and follow-up and survey design and presentation. After reviewing the literature, it was apparent that easily modified aspects of the survey presentation, such as changing the color of the ink or paper (Helgeson et al. 2002, Kaplowitz and Lupi 2004, King and Vaughan 2004) or increased personalization (Helgeson et al. 2002), would not affect the response rate. I considered using business-reply mail as a means to reduce administrative costs, which would enable me to send additional surveys; however, a number of studies suggest that response rates are improved when the envelopes are hand-stamped (Fox et al. 1998, Heberlein and Baumgartner 1978, Yammarino et al. 1991).⁶⁰ Findings presented in the literature are mixed regarding the effect of survey length; regardless, it would be impossible to abridge the survey while maintaining the comparability of results generated between the two

⁶⁰ However, Helgeson et al. (2002) concluded that the type of postage has no effect on response rates.

mailings and achieving the depth of responses desired for this study.⁶¹ Therefore, the most practical and potentially effective alternative was to send a pre-notification postcard announcing the impending arrival of the survey, describing its general purpose, highlighting the incentive for participation (a lottery drawing for a grocery gift certificate), and providing a link to the on-line version of the survey.⁶² The web link also helped to lower administrative costs because those participating on-line before the mail-out date were not sent a hard-copy survey. The postcards further minimized costs by alerting me to invalid addresses, which were purged from the mailing lists prior to the distribution of the survey forms about one week after the initial postcard was sent. The response rates for the second mailing were higher in New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, although lower in Brenham, suggesting that the prenotification was at least somewhat beneficial.⁶³ I also sent a reminder postcard to non-respondents about two weeks after the surveys were mailed.⁶⁴ As in the other mailings, the postcard provided telephone and email contact information so that respondents could request another copy of the survey if theirs was misdelivered or misplaced.

⁶¹ Research findings disagree about the effect of survey length on response rates. For example, Sharp and Frankel (1983) and Heberlein and Baumgartner (1978) conclude that refusal is related more to attitudes toward the survey than survey length or complexity. However, Helgeson et al. (2002) and Yammarino et al. (1991) both argue that survey length is negatively correlated with response rate. Others' findings are mixed: In a survey of Norwegian respondents, Lund and Gram (1998) found that the shortest version of a survey obtained the highest response rate, but the longest version did not obtain the lowest response rate.

⁶² A number of studies support the efficacy of prenotification in improving survey response rates (Fox et al. 1988, Larson and Poist 2004, Martin et al. 1989). For instance, Martin et al. (1989) concluded that prenotification is the most cost-effective way to increase responses, generating four times as many responses as a follow-up mailing, while Fox et al. (1988) found that prenotification increased response rates in their study by 8%.

⁶³ The response rates for the second mailing, which included prenotification, increased to 17.2% (from 14.3%) in New Braunfels and 18.5% (from 15.0%) in Fredericksburg, but declined to 14.6% (from 16.9%) in Brenham.

⁶⁴ Heberlein and Baumgartner (1981) found that a follow-up mailing increased response rates by 20% and determined that sending a second questionnaire was no more effective than a reminder postcard. However, Becker et al. (2000) concluded that mailing a second survey generated more responses than sending a postcard, but at a significantly higher cost (250%, not considering the additional labor involved). In light of these contradictory findings and the cost limitations of this self-funded project, I determined that the reminder postcard was the most appropriate option.

The survey consisted of a combination of multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions to gather information regarding residents' attitudes toward tourism generally and German-themed tourism specifically. It also asked participants about their perceptions of tourism's inclusiveness and its representation of their community, their ethnic identity, and basic demographic information. The survey emphasized open-ended responses, including opportunities to explain answers to most Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions, in an effort to allow respondents to discuss these issues in their own words and to thus generate the richest data possible. The resident survey materials were available in both English and Spanish.⁶⁵ Although only one respondent utilized the Spanish version, I felt it was critical to offer this option to ensure that potential respondents would not decline participation due to linguistic concerns. Appendix F includes a facsimile of the resident survey.

As with the event participation survey, I analyzed the data by first aggregating the responses received from residents of all three study communities to understand larger issues relating to identity, representation, and participation; later I analyzed the data from each community separately to illuminate the role of place in issues regarding tourism and ethnic identity. As with the event participant survey, I analyzed the data by performing descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data and content analysis of qualitative responses.

⁶⁵ Although survey research textbooks (e.g., Babbie 1998) have made the case that bilingual surveys can raise issues of reliability and validity, research has demonstrated that English-only surveys can result in significant inaccuracy in survey results in areas with large Hispanic populations because the views of English-speaking Hispanic respondents are more similar to those of Anglos than the views of Spanish-dominant Hispanics are (Hill and Moreno 2001). The cover letter was in English on one side and in Spanish on the reverse, and the survey form itself offered instructions (in Spanish) explaining that the respondent could request a Spanish-language survey form by simply checking a box and returning the form in the envelope provided.

Limitations of the resident survey

Two limitations should be considered when evaluating the results of the resident survey. First and perhaps most important is the relatively low response rate. A number of studies address the issue of non-response and note that survey response rates among Americans have been on the decline for some time (e.g., Bradburn 1992, Steeh 1981).⁶⁶ This general trend is likely to have accelerated in recent years with increased media attention and heightened concerns about identity theft and privacy issues as well as potential survey fatigue as a result of increased marketing research efforts.⁶⁷ A number of researchers point out that when response rates are low, the responses tend to reflect the views of the most interested or opinionated people among those sampled; in essence, these respondents are “self-selected” to participate (Fowler 1993, 40). My intention here is not to “describe” or “measure” the views of the people who inhabit each host community, but to see what issues are raised and consider how they might inform our understanding of the relationship between ethnic tourism development and issues of identity. Therefore, the data obtained fulfill the objectives of this study. The results are not presented, nor should be they interpreted, as “representative” of general consensus among each study community’s population. Nonetheless, the survey participants represent a diverse range of backgrounds, including residents who participate in tourism activities to different degrees, long-time residents as well as recent arrivals, and individuals of varied socioeconomic status and ethnicity (Appendix G).

⁶⁶ The trend in declining response rates has been traced back to at least the early 1950s and is attributed to factors such as urbanization, concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality, survey fatigue, and disillusionment with the purposes and use of survey research (Steeh 1981). The substantial increase in non-response rates has thus been attributed primarily to a rise in refusal rates. For example, Bradburn (1992) cites data from the Gallup organization showing that the percentage of participation in its polls had declined from over 80% in the mid-1970s to 60% by the early 1990s.

⁶⁷ Goyder (1986) identifies a negative correlation between frequency of being surveyed and positive attitudes toward survey research.

A second limitation of the resident survey lies in the way the addresses were obtained. Residency was determined by each study community's postal designation. Therefore, residents who live outside a particular study site, as defined by the post office, but who are closely connected to and may consider themselves part of the study community might have been excluded from the survey pool. Conversely, some respondents declined participation in the survey because they did not consider themselves residents of a study community, despite the fact that their postal address listed them as such.⁶⁸ There is no way to how many potential participants declined participation due to these considerations and simply did not return their forms.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the mail surveys allowed me to access a large pool of potential respondents relatively quickly while minimizing costs. By including a variety of open-ended questions, the survey strategy, in most cases, allowed the collection of rich information comparable to what I collected in face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, the anonymity afforded by the mail surveys probably encouraged greater candor among respondents than might have been elicited in person. Thus, through this method of data collection, I achieved my goal of obtaining individualized, detailed responses within the constraints of time and financial resources that necessarily accompany qualitative research.

SUPPLEMENTAL METHODS

Survey research is an appropriate method for exploring what is happening in regard to ethnic tourism and ethnic identity in the study communities; however, to attempt to understand how and why these phenomena have occurred, further inquiry into

⁶⁸ For example, four potential respondents in the New Braunfels survey returned their surveys, but declined to complete them because they actually live 15 miles away, in the community of Canyon Lake, and do not consider themselves residents of New Braunfels.

their context is essential (Yin 1994). To supplement, expand, and triangulate the survey data, I therefore employed a variety of additional methods. I conducted interviews with key figures who could give me additional insights into the tourism development process and its impacts. To ensure comparability of results across study sites, I interviewed the following individuals in each study community, at a minimum: a representative or representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, someone involved with the production of the main German-themed festival, and an expert on local history. I also identified a few survey participants with whom I wanted to further discuss their responses and ask additional questions. In each community, interview participants were asked questions similar to those posed to their counterparts elsewhere in order to facilitate cross-case comparison, but additional interview questions were also included to highlight issues particular to each study site.

Content analysis of past and current marketing materials and other archival sources provided additional data regarding each community's tourism development process, depictions of German culture and other ethnic cultures, and attitudes toward tourism. For example, brochures and other promotional materials—including visitor maps, travel guides, and billboards—demonstrated how and to what extent Germanness is portrayed in tourism-related activities and revealed modifications to place image that have occurred over time.

Field observation in each community and participant observation at German festivals revealed the extent to which the contemporary cultural landscape displays visual evidence of the German theme, provided insight into patterns of participation, and demonstrated the association between depictions of Germanness and expressions of American, Texan, and other identities. Comparison of my observations with data obtained from primary sources (such as interviews and first-hand historical accounts) and

secondary sources (such as newspaper articles, local histories compiled by residents, and scholarly historical and geographic research) allowed me to evaluate modern representations of ethnic heritage in light of community histories and to assess how place identity might have changed as a result of tourism development.

CONCLUSION

The combination of methods outlined above yielded a vast amount of data, which I present, analyze, and synthesize in the preceding chapters. The incorporation of qualitative and quantitative data and methods enhances the quality of the research by providing insight into both the subjective and objective “facts” of the community, by enhancing my analysis, and by strengthening the validity of my findings (Yin 1994). As a rare comparative study of ethnic tourism development and its impacts in multiple study communities, this study significantly contributes to our understanding of the interdependent relationships between identity and place and of the significance of ethnicity in modern American society.

Appendix C:

Event participant survey enrollment form

Entry Form for Event Participation Study

Please fill in the requested information below to participate in the survey. Participants will be selected randomly from all entries received. Your personal information will be used only for this research study and will not be shared with any other parties.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Email Address: _____

How many times have you attended this event? _____ (Answer "1," if this is your first time to attend.)

In what year were you born? _____ Have you ever lived in this community? ☒ yes ☐ no

What is your ethnic background? _____

_____ Check here if you would consider participating in an interview, in addition to receiving a survey.

Please see the reverse side of this card for general information about the study.

Event participation research study information

What is this project about?

This research project addresses a variety of issues related to special events in Central Texas communities. It will help event planners maximize potential benefits to the community, minimize potential negative impacts, and determine how to improve the quality of experiences for participants.

What happens if I fill out the entry form?

By filling out the form, you might be contacted to participate in a survey about your experiences at this event. Participants will be randomly selected from all entries received, and these individuals will receive a survey within 4-6 weeks.

How will my personal information be used?

Your personal information will be used for research purposes only. It will not be shared with any other parties.

I am a resident. Am I still eligible to participate?

Yes! Understanding the participation patterns and opinions of local residents is an important part of this study.

Who is sponsoring this study?

This research is a self-funded project to satisfy the requirements for a doctoral degree at the University of Texas at Austin. There is no outside sponsor.

Whom do I contact if I have questions about this study?

For more information, contact Joy Adams, Primary Investigator, at 512-557-3554 or joy.adams@mail.utexas.edu. You may request a copy of this information for your reference.

Appendix D:

Event participant survey questions

Question **FORMAT**

1. In what year did you first attend [this event]? **OE**
2. How many times have you attended [this event]? **OE**
3. Why did you attend [this event] this year? **MC/MR**
4. How did you learn about [this event]? **MC**
5. In which of the following events/activities did you and your family participate at [this event]? **MC/MR**
- 6a. With whom did you attend [this event]? **MC/MR**
- 6b. In total, how many people were in your party? **OE**
- 7a. Were you involved in the planning, organization, or operation of any aspect of [this event]? **Y/N**
- 7b. If yes, why did you choose to assist with [this event]? **OE**
8. Are you a current resident of [this community]? **Y/N**
9. If you answered “no” to Question 8, what other features of [this community] encouraged your recent visit? **MC/MR**
10. If you answered “no” to Question 8, what other events or attractions did you visit during your trip? **MC/MR**
11. If you answered “no” to Question 8, how many nights did you stay in [this community] to attend [this event]? **OE**
12. Based on your experience, what is the main purpose of [this event]? **OE**
13. What do you like best about [this event]? **OE**

14. What would you suggest to change or improve [this event]? **OE**

15. Would you like to attend [this event] again in the future? **Y/N/M**

16a. Should [this event] be continued in future years? **Y/N/M**

16b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 16a: **OE**

17. Based on your experience, approximately what percentage of [this community]'s population do you believe to be of German ancestry *at the present time*? **OE**

18. Please list any other German-American communities/events in Texas that you have visited. **OE**

19. Please list any German-American communities/events outside Texas that you have visited. **OE**

20a. How did your experience at [this event] compare to your experiences in other German-American communities, either in or outside Texas? **LS**

20b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 20a: **OE**

21a. Have you ever attended events that celebrate or reflect ethnic ancestries other than German? **Y/N**

21b. If yes, please list the places or events you attended and the groups represented by the places and events: **OE**

22a. How has attending [this event] influenced your interest in your own ethnic ancestry? **LS**

22b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 22a: **OE**

23a. Would you like your own ethnic ancestry to be represented in festivals and/or tourism activities? **Y/N/M**

23b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 23a: **OE**

24a. Indicate your agreement with the following statement: [this event] accurately portrays German culture. **LS**

24b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 24a: **OE**

25a. Indicate your agreement with the following statement: Anyone is welcome to participate in [this event], regardless of his or her ethnic ancestry or race. **LS**

25b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 25a: **OE**

26. Please describe your ethnic ancestry (ethnic background). **OE**

27. Please describe your spouse/partner's ethnic ancestry (ethnic background). **OE**

28. How important is your ethnic ancestry to you? **LS**

29. In what activities does your family participate to learn about or celebrate your ethnic ancestry? **MC/MR**

30a. Have you ever lived (or do you now live) in [this community]? **Y/N**

30b. If yes, in what years did you live (or have you lived) in [this community]? **OE**

31. Has any member of your extended family ever lived in [this community]? **Y/N**

32. What is your current ZIP code? **OE**

33. What is your sex? **MC**

34. What is your current age group? **MC**

35. What is your marital status? **MC**

36. What is your annual household income? (for statistical purposes only) **MC**

Please provide any comments or additional explanation of your answers in the space below. **OE**

Key to abbreviations:

LS	Likert-scale
MC	Multiple-choice, single response permitted
MC/MR	Multiple choice, multiple responses permitted
OE	Open-ended
Y/N	Yes/No
Y/N/M	Yes/No/Maybe or don't know

Appendix E:

Characteristics of respondents to event participant surveys

Category	Maifest (%) N=33	Oktoberfest (%) N=125	Wurstfest (%) N=170
German	54.5	48.0	51.6
Other white	24.2	35.2	32.3
Hispanic	12.1	4.0	8.7
Black	0.0	0.0	0.6
Other	3.0	4.0	1.8
Unspecified or unknown	6.1	8.8	5.0
Male	40.6	44.3	47.0
Female	59.4	55.7	53.0
Married/domestic partnership	56.3	76.5	62.7
Single/divorced/widowed	43.8	23.5	37.3
Resident	57.6	13.7	27.6
Non-resident	42.6	86.3	72.4
Never attended before	30.3	58.4	23.8
Attended 2-5 times	30.3	26.4	35.1
Attended 6-10 times	3.0	8.0	11.9
Attended 11-20 times	18.2	4.8	14.3
Attended more than 20 times	21.2	2.4	15.5
Median value	<i>3 times</i>	<i>1 time</i>	<i>4 times</i>

Category	Maifest (%) N=33	Oktoberfest (%) N=125	Wurstfest (%) N=168
Less than \$10,000 annual income	9.4	2.4	1.8
\$10,000-19,999	0.0	6.5	2.4
\$20,000-29,999	15.6	5.6	8.8
\$30,000-39,000	6.3	9.7	14.1
\$40,000-49,000	12.5	12.1	11.2
\$50,000-74,999	25.0	19.4	16.5
\$75,000-100,000	9.4	12.9	18.2
Greater than \$100,000	3.1	16.9	19.4
Declined to respond	18.8	14.5	7.6
Under 18 years of age	3.1	0.0	0.0
18-24	15.6	8.7	7.8
25-34	0.0	24.3	24.7
35-44	12.5	15.7	24.7
45-54	12.5	18.3	21.1
55-64	34.4	24.3	12.7
65-74	18.8	7.8	7.8
75 or older	3.1	0.9	1.2

Appendix F:

Resident survey questions

Question FORMAT

Para recibir esta encuesta en español, marque aquí y vuelva el formato en el sobre incluido, cuyo costo de envío ya se encuentra pagado. **CB**

1. How long have you lived in [your community]? **OE**

2a. How would you rate the social and economic health or vitality of [your community]?
LS

2b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 2a: **OE**

3. What features of [your community] make it most attractive to residents? **OE**

4. What do you like best about living in [your community]? **OE**

5. What one thing would you most like to change or improve about [your community]? **OE**

6. What features of [your community] make it most attractive to visitors? **OE**

7. In what ways has tourism benefited your community? **OE**

8. In what ways has tourism negatively affected your community? **OE**

9. What one thing would you most like to change or improve about tourism in [your community]? **OE**

10a. Have you ever participated in the planning, organization, or operation of any tourism-related activities in [your community]? **Y/N**

10b. Have you ever participated in the planning, organization, or operation of German-themed activities or events in [your community]? **Y/N**

10c. If yes to 10a or 10b, please describe the nature of your involvement: **OE**

11a. How would you rate tourism development in [your community] as compared to tourism in other communities you have visited? **LS**

11b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 11a: **OE**

12a. Indicate your agreement with the following statement: Tourism accurately portrays [your community] to visitors. **LS**

12b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 12a: **OE**

13a. Indicate your agreement with the following statement: Tourism benefits all residents of [your community] equally. **LS**

13b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 13a: **OE**

14a. Indicate your agreement with the following statement: Tourism development in [your community] does a good job of balancing the needs of residents and visitors. **LS**

14b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 14a: **OE**

15a. Indicate your agreement with the following statement: All residents of [your community] are welcome to participate in the planning and enjoyment of tourism activities, regardless of their ethnic background. **LS**

15b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 15a: **OE**

16a. Have you ever attended [event name]? **Y/N**

16b. If yes, approximately how many times (number of years) have you attended [event name]? **OE**

16c. If yes, in what year did you first attend [event name]? **OE**

17a. Indicate your agreement with the following statement: German-themed events and activities in [your community] accurately portray German culture. **LS**

17b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 17a: **OE**

18a. Would you like your own ethnic ancestry to be represented in festivals and/or tourism activities in [your community]? **Y/N/M**

18b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 18a: **OE**

19a. Indicate your agreement with the following statement: Overall, tourism is good for [your community]. **LS**

19b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 19a: **OE**

20. Please describe your ethnic ancestry (ethnic background). **OE**

21. Please describe your spouse/partner's ethnic ancestry, if applicable. **OE**

22. How important is your ethnic ancestry to you? **LS**

23. In what activities does your family participate to learn about or celebrate your ethnic ancestry? **MC/MR**

24. In what German-themed activities does your family participate in [your community]? **MC/MR**

25a. How have German-themed events in [your community], such as [event name], influenced your interest in your own ethnic ancestry? **LS**

25b. Briefly explain why you chose your answer to question 25a: **OE**

26a. Based on your experience, approximately what percentage of [your community]'s population do you estimate to belong to the following ethnic groups *at the present time*? **OE**

26b. Briefly describe the information or observations on which you based your answer to question 26a: **OE**

27. What is your sex? **MC**

28. What is your marital status? **MC**

29. What is your current age group? **MC**

30. What is your annual household income? (*for statistical purposes only*) **MC**

31a. Would you consider participating in an interview with the primary investigator to further discuss your answers or other information or opinions you might have about tourism development in your community? **Y/N**

31b. If yes, you may provide contact information (such as a phone number or email address) in the space above or enclose a separate sheet of paper in the reply envelope.

You may also send this information to Joy Adams under separate cover, using the information provided in the survey cover letter, to ensure the confidentiality of your survey responses. **OE**

Please provide any comments or additional explanation of your answers in the space below. **OE**

Key to abbreviations:

CB	Check box
LS	Likert-scale
MC	Multiple-choice, single response permitted
MC/MR	Multiple choice, multiple responses permitted
OE	Open-ended
Y/N	Yes/No
Y/N/M	Yes/No/Maybe or don't know

Appendix G:

Characteristics of respondents to resident survey

Table G.1: Characteristics of Brenham resident survey respondents

Category	Survey respondents (%)	Total population ^a (%)
German	41.7	25.7
Other white	36.1	40.1
Hispanic	3.5	8.9
Black	3.5	22.5
Other	3.5	2.8
Unspecified or unknown	11.8	--
Male	44.4	46.8
Female	55.6	53.2
Married/domestic partnership	75.0	47.8
Single/divorced/widowed	25.0	52.4
Less than one year residency	1.4	--
1-5 years	14.6	--
5-10 years	17.4	--
10-20 years	18.1	--
Greater than 20 years	48.6	--
<i>Median value</i>	<i>20.0 years</i>	--

Table G.1: Characteristics of Brenham resident survey respondents (cont.)

Category	Survey respondents (%)	Total population^a (%)
Less than \$10,000 annual household income	5.0	16.9
\$10,000-19,999	5.9	15.9
\$20,000-29,999	2.5	14.0
\$30,000-39,000	16.0	13.0
\$40,000-49,000	9.2	9.3
\$50,000-74,999	21.0	18.3
\$75,000-100,000	21.8	7.3
Greater than \$100,000	18.5	5.4
Declined to respond	21.8	--
<i>Median value</i>	--	<i>\$32,198</i>
Under 18	1.4	--
18-24	1.4	20.2
25-34	9.7	15.4
35-44	14.6	16.4
45-54	25.7	15.1
55-64	21.5	9.5
65-74	16.0	9.7
75 or older	9.7	13.8
<i>Median value</i>	--	<i>34.7 years</i>

^a Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table G.2: Characteristics of Fredericksburg resident survey respondents

Category	Survey respondents (%)	Total population^a (%)
German	59.4	37.4
Other white	32.2	44.2
Hispanic	0.7	16.9
Black	0.0	0.2
Other	0.0	1.3
Unspecified or unknown	9.1	--
Male	51.7	45.7
Female	48.3	54.3
Married/domestic partnership	68.5	60.4
Single/divorced/widowed	31.5	39.6
Less than one year residency	2.8	--
1-5 years	17.9	--
5-10 years	22.1	--
10-20 years	20.0	--
Greater than 20 years	37.2	--
<i>Median value</i>	<i>12.0 years</i>	--

Table G.2: Characteristics of Fredericksburg resident survey respondents (cont.)

Category	Survey respondents (%)	Total population^a (%)
Less than \$10,000 annual household income	2.1	10.6
\$10,000-19,999	6.8	18.3
\$20,000-29,999	13.0	17.2
\$30,000-39,000	5.5	13.3
\$40,000-49,000	9.6	12.2
\$50,000-74,999	20.5	15.6
\$75,000-100,000	9.6	5.2
Greater than \$100,000	14.4	7.6
Declined to respond	18.5	--
<i>Median value</i>	--	\$32,276
18-24	1.4	7.6
25-34	5.6	11.1
35-44	10.5	15.0
45-54	17.5	15.4
55-64	23.1	13.1
65-74	18.9	15.6
75 or older	23.1	22.3
<i>Median value</i>	--	47.2 years

^a Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table G.3: Characteristics of New Braunfels resident survey respondents

Category	Survey respondents (%)	Total population^a (%)
German	47.9	22.8
Other white	35.2	42.6
Hispanic	7.7	34.6
Black	0.0	0.9
Other	0.7	2.0
Unspecified or unknown	8.5	--
Male	44.7	48.0
Female	55.3	52.0
Married/domestic partnership	76.6	60.3
Single/divorced/widowed	23.4	39.7
Less than one year residency	3.5	--
1-5 years	20.4	--
5-10 years	12.7	--
10-20 years	26.1	--
Greater than 20 years	38.0	--
<i>Median value</i>	<i>15.1 years</i>	--

Table G.3: Characteristics of New Braunfels resident survey respondents (cont.)

Category	Survey respondents (%)	Total population^a (%)
Less than \$10,000 annual household income	4.4	8.6
\$10,000-19,999	5.2	12.7
\$20,000-29,999	6.7	13.2
\$30,000-39,000	10.4	15.3
\$40,000-49,000	13.3	12.6
\$50,000-74,999	25.2	20.4
\$75,000-100,000	12.6	9.4
Greater than \$100,000	22.2	7.6
Declined to respond	6.9	--
<i>Median value</i>	--	<i>\$40,078</i>
18-24	0.0	14.8
25-34	11.3	19.0
35-44	19.1	19.2
45-54	23.4	17.0
55-64	18.4	10.7
65-74	15.6	10.2
75 or older	12.1	9.1
<i>Median value</i>	--	<i>36.2 years</i>

^a Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

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Vita

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