



Danube- Swabian Association of the USA, Inc.
Verband der Donauschwaben in den USA. e.V.

December 2008

Liebe Donauschwaben, Dear Friends,

The Donauschwaben Christmases of yesteryear were spiritual, with humble gifts for the children, yet filled with gratitude for the gift of life, family, and friends. Simply, wholesome and beautiful. When you had all this, you had everything, thus making those times almost golden in the beloved homeland. The love of the old Heimat and culture remains deeply engraved in their hearts and minds.

The words of Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) describe the sentiments in:
“Remembrance is the only paradise from which we cannot be expelled.”
Christmases of war, expulsion, refugee-and-death camps were extremely brutal, harsh, and inhumane. Survival was questionable, feelings numb. Unwanted, often hunted, hopeless.

Simply described with the words of Katharina Nysten (1963):
“There was Christmas without gifts. There was no hope, no candy.
There was no feeling for a thanks. There was not even holy.
There was no gladness for old Yule. There was no home, just worthless money.
There was not even a glistening star. There was no face of merry.”

Faith in God, his gifts to us, i.e. hope, endurance, the will to survive, and to work hard, picked us up again and brought us to new shores, a new Heimat, new hope.

Christmases of the new homelands brought us freedom, opportunities and success. The generations born here enjoy a world of riches. The stories they hear from their families and friends, the “Erlebnissgeneration- Survival Generation”, seem so unreal, so unbearable. “How could you stand it and survive those times?” Have you every wondered why you have been given so much by your parents, Omas and Opas? They cuddle you with love, try to keep you from any wants and harm. You are their treasures, as well as your own, treat yourself accordingly.

“New Generations of Donauschwaben”, please , value the gifts you have received from your ancestors- their values, their faith, their endurance and their love of their culture. Many of you do, but please don't give up because it might not be considered to be “IN”. Your inheritance is a wealth, treat it with respect, character and honor. Be thankful for your heritage.

Take the mandate give to you, and continue to uphold it. **BE PROUD TO BE A SCHWOB!**

Leo Mayer
President