

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Wolfram M. Von-Maszewski**

After being laid off again from the oil industry, Mr. Von-Maszewski was offered the position of Manager of Genealogy and Local History at the Fort Bend County Library system in Richmond. In that position, he increased the inventory of microfilm and books on Texas and family history. Von, was known to love history and was fluent in speaking and reading German, especially the old-style script.

During his time at the library he was responsible for transcribing numerous diaries, family letters, military transcripts, historical accounts and church records written in the German language. He was even involved in writing for a German newspaper and was instrumental in the research and publication of the history of Mennonites in Fort Bend County.

Mr. Von-Maszewski also edited manuscripts including the history of the founding of Houston; letters written by a German company commander who served in the Confederate Army; translation of the diary of Prince Solms-Braunfels of Germany who founded New Braunfels; and indexed a 1923 book about the trail drivers of Texas. He continues his efforts even after retiring in 2007.

17 Pages

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Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

Roman Bohachevsky – Director of Fort Bend County Library System
 James Glass, Architect, Researcher, author
 Joyce Kennerly, Fort Bend Museum
 Colonel Thomas N. Waul, Commander
 Captain Robert Voigt – Confederate Army Company Commander
 Thomas Flinthoff – 19th century artist
 Francis Fisher – worked with Prince Solms
 Prince Solms-Braunfels – German Aristocrat & founder of New Braunfels, TX
 Theodore Gish – Professor at University of Houston
 William Penn – English Quaker leader who founded the Province of Pennsylvania
 James Frank Dobie – Texas Folklorist
 Bert Bleil – friend, woodworker

Places / Businesses

Fort Bend County, Texas
 Richmond, Texas
 Pasadena, Texas
 Houston, Texas
 George Memorial Library, Richmond, Texas
 American Revolutionary War
 US Civil War
 Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, Houston, Texas

Family History Centers, Mormon Church
 Europe
 Sugar Land, Texas
 Mormon Church, Salt Lake City, UT
 Rosenberg Rotary Club
 National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C.
 Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas (UT, Austin)
 Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas
 World War II
 Poland
 Germany
 Texas Commerce Bank, Houston
 Confederate Army
 Waul’s Texas Legion
 Blinn College, Brenham Texas
 Washington County, Texas
 Vicksburg, MS
 Camp Morton, Indiana
 Mennonite settlement, Fairchilds, Texas
 Mennonite College, Kansas
 Reformation
 Russia
 Homestead Act
 German-Texas Heritage Society Journal
 Fort Dix, NJ

Events

Laid off from the oil industry, Von received a phone call from his friend Roman Bohachevsky, Director, Fort Bend County Library to become the Manager of Genealogy and Local History in 1989.

Von's love of history permitted him to assist families in translating diaries and letters written in German, a language he learned although he was born in Poland.

Although he was not a US citizen, Von served in the US Army as a paratrooper. While in the military, he obtained, through the G. I. bill, bachelor and master degrees in Art and became a U. S. citizen.

Over the years, he translated and edited letters, diaries, books and church records. Some of his works were published, including his research of the Mennonites in Fort Bend County. Upon his retirement in 2007, Von continues to research and translate documents.