



ALVIN T. and ERNESTINE E.

## ZOCH MUSEUM

632 Zoch Lane  
Ciddings, Texas 78942  
Located 3 miles N.E. of Warda

Established By:  
Irene & Richard Weaver  
Evelyn Lehmann  
Elmer & Eva Zoch  
Freddie E. Zoch

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## **FAMILY HISTORY** by IRENE WEAVER & DR. RUDY ZOCH

Alvin Zoch's marriage to Ernestine Mertink took place at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Serbin. It was a small wedding with only a few neighbors and relatives present.

After a few days they moved to his father's place about one mile from where he was born and lived and started a new household. The first night when they moved, some young people gathered together some big plow sweeps and big cowbells and gave them a shivaree. (Katsen music)

When Alvin and Ernestine started their lives and household together, they only had two horses, one buggy, two cows and calves, two pigs, a few chickens, a few walking farm implements, two beds, one table which was six feet long that his father made for him, one wood cooking stove, some kitchen utensils, and two chairs. When Ernestine grew up, she did not do any planting or handling of horses. She had milked cows, hoed and gathered crops and had done all kinds of housework which included caring for her younger brothers and sisters.

They made their living the best they could by adding a couple more, chickens, turkeys, pigs and finally began selling some cream and eggs. Once a week Ernestine hauled them to the Warda Store about six miles one way in the buggy and brought home groceries. Every Sunday when they could cross the three creeks, they attended the Warda Church six miles away.

Soon an exciting event took place. On August 15, 1922, they became parents when their first son, Henry Milton, was born. The other children born on this homestead were Hattie, Irene, Evelyn and Marvin Raymond. The buggy became too small. In the fall of 1928 Alvin and Ernestine purchased a 1925 used Model T Ford touring car which was the family car until 1940 when they purchased a 38 Plymouth.

At the end of 1930, the family moved to Kasper's farm about 2.5 miles east of Warda and farmed. The crops were cotton, corn, and sugar cane from which molasses was made. They raised bountiful gardens. Sweet potatoes and watermelons were plentiful. Born here were the four youngest sons: Elmer, Rudy, Freddie and Eugene.

In 1940 the family moved to the Herman Lorenz's farm and rented it. This 453 acre farm was bought a few years later. Peanuts became the number one crop.

### **AS I REMEMBER IT AND AS I'VE BEEN TOLD BY ELMER ZOCH**

The Zoch family experienced sad and trying days right after Rudy was born. Ernestine (Tina, her nickname) got sick, and was in the La Grange Hospital where she almost died. However she recovered and later the last two children were born. (The story is documented on a video tape.)

Will Ruffin would come to the house on Kasper's farm often. A lot of the discussion was on farming. Many times Mr. Ruffin would bring a letter from the agriculture department, as he could not understand all of them. Alvin would always help him to understand it.

Alvin and Tina enjoyed visiting their parents with their children. The singing of German Hymns after meals at his parents ( "Aura" as Tina would say and Alvin would say "Unsra.")

Alvin and Tina took pride in their children and the ability to raise them and did not want help from the government to raise them. They believed in hard work and expected others to carry their own load also.

Alvin liked to talk Wendish to his father. Some of us children thought that they were talking about breeding hogs or cows which we were not supposed to hear. It appears to be safe to say that Alvin and his father would not talk about sex.

Alvin and Tina would not use bad language nor would they allow the children to use bad language. That upbringing has held so far. As when the children work on the farm today the regular shop talk or army talk is not used. Not even among the boys.

There was always a discussion on the planting time for gardens and field crops prior to deciding when to plant. Such things as new moon, full moon etc. were considered.

Chores on the farm were organized by Alvin and Ernestine. Having to take care of a few hundred laying hens, a few dozen hogs (once up to 60 head) normally between 25 and 35 head or cattle and in the earlier years a few mules and a horse required a lot of work. The children each had their assignments. All water for the chickens had to be carried as there was no running water. Saturday afternoons was the time to iron clothes for church on Sunday.

On rainy days in January and February Alvin always got his seeds ready for planting. He listened to the radio a lot. Among his favorites were the Lutheran Hour with Dr. Walter A. Meyer, Amos and Andy and the Grand Ole Opry. He listened to a few news casts daily but did not like President Roosevelt.

There was nearly a very serious accident on the farm prior to Elmer being drafted. Alvin and Elmer were in the field shredding. Elmer worked under the shredder with the tractor running as it was hard to start. Elmer just had crawled out from under the shredder when Alvin pushed the hand clutch on the tractor forward. Elmer felt only the wind from the large blade on the left side of his face and still remembers exactly how it felt until this day.

Alvin and Tina while on the Lorenz farm would let the children keep the money they earned picking cotton, hoeing, working in peanuts etc. The children were always anxious to work for others. The people who hired the children the most were Herman Lehmann, Johnie Teinert, Bennie Pietsch and Herbert Jurk.

Many times Alvin would write information on the Family Tree of the Greater Zoch and Mertink family members. This may have been by divine inspiration as the information can now be used in their Family Museum. It is also safe to assume that Alvin and Tina never thought that someday the old Kasper house would be moved to its present location and made into a museum in their honor.

Alvin kept up an insurance policy which he hoped would pay for his burial as he didn't want to be a financial burden on his family if he died.

Alvin and Ernestine did their best to keep the farm in tact. They must have wondered what would happen to it. The dividing of the farm was not planned. The discussion of the farm came up after Alvin's death. Elmer stated that he wanted his part of the inheritance in acerage. He did not want money due to the fear of spending it quickly and then have nothing. Other family members began to feel the same way. The farm was then divided. It would have been great if Alvin and Tina would have seen the

divided farm prior to their death.

On Sunday's after church Alvin would normally wear his best overalls as it was a day of rest.

The purchase of the farm was a major challenge. A large down payment followed by three annual payments including 6% interest. The farming on the Lorenz farm had changed somewhat compared to that at the Kasper farm. That was because of the purchase of a new John Deere "B" tractor in 1943. Marvin Raymond was the primary tractor operator until he went to work in Dallas. The Elmer was the primary operator until he was drafted into the army.

Another highpoint in the 40's was the successful conclusion of World War II and with the safe return of Henry Milton from the war. This was followed by three more highpoints which was hosting the weddings of Irene, Evelyn and Hattie. Alvin built the tables in the two west rooms of the museum for the weddings which were held on the farm. The table boards are from pine logs cut on the farm.

In the late 40's when electricity came to the farm Alvin was concerned with an obligation of starting to have monthly bills due. The electric bill started with \$4.00.

The 50's brought in the Korean conflict. Marvin Raymond returned from serving with the U.S. Army in Germany as Elmer left to serve with the U.S. Army in Korea. Elmer's biggest shock upon returning home was that His father's hair had all turned gray.

In the 60's and 70's things started going down hill. Alvin always talked about his leg problem which was because of all the hard work on the Kasper farm especially plowing with mules. We remember him always talking about Roxey, Jack, Kate, Pete and Frank. (The last 4 animals were used on the Lorenz farm also.)

During that time many Friday evenings and Saturdays Alvin would lookdown the road to see if any of the children would come to visit.

Alvin and Ernestine also believed it to be true when their Pastors read from Genesis. God said to Adam, "cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Alvin and Ernestine also believed the Gospel according to St. Luke chapter 2 verse 10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is

Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

They also believed the Easter story, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the resurrection of mankind on the last day. They also believed that Jesus went to prepare a place for them.

The second weekend of February of 1980 Alvin and Ernestine Zoch celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in La Grange with many friends and relatives.

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On the evening of February 14, 1980 Alvin read out of the devotional booklet and the Bible as he had done many times and then closed them for the last time. A few hours later Alvin Zoch died of a massive heart attack.

Ernestine Zoch died on Nov. 18, 1983, after a stay in the Giddings and Austin hospital. She died one day after she was placed from the hospital into a rest home.

Both were God-fearing persons, faithful and active in the Holy Cross Lutheran Church at Warda and had daily family devotions, including reciting the creed every morning. They are buried in the church's cemetery.

#### MORE THOUGHTS OCCUR EVEN PRIOR TO THE TYPING BEING COMPLETED

Alvin was a member of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society.

He organized the small Zoch Reunion. A handwritten copy of the letter to Elmer is on display in the glass cabinet of the museum.

Things found among their belongings were letters written in German to each other before they got married.

They also saved the valentines the children received from the children at the Warda School so that the children could have them.

When Elmer and Rudy were small children Alvin took them to La Grange on election evening to show them how the election judges bring in the votes. They also watched the posting of votes in the hot race when Jim Flournoy became Sheriff. Elmer and Rudy learned something as they each have completed over 20 years serving as election judges in Harris County.

The nine children of Alvin and Ernestine Mertink Zoch

Henry Milton Zoch	8-15-22	(Emily)
Hattie Zoch Lovaasen	8-27-23	(Vern)
Irene Zoch Weaver	4-20-25	(Richard)
Evelyn Zoch Lehmann	7-31-27	(Ernest) †
Marvin Raymond Zoch	3-24-29	(Joyce)
Elmer Leroy Zoch	2-17-32	(Eva)
Rudy Franklin Zoch	11-23-34	(Genie)
Freddie Elwood Zoch	8-3-37	
Eugene Wallace Zoch	7-22-40	( Barbara)

Visits to the Museum may be made by invitation or you may contact the following for an appointment or open day information.

Irene and Richard Weaver	1-409-242-3400
Evelyn Lehmann	1-409-968-5424
Elmer and Eva Zoch	1-713-466-7868
Freddie Zoch	1-409-242-3280

I want to make a donation to the Zoch Museum.

I want to give a memorial in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

I want to give \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: THE ZOCH MUSEUM  
632 ZOCH LANE  
GIDDINGS, TEXAS 788942

#### ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS BY IRENE AND ELMER

Papa, Milton and Hattie went to the field early, that's the way things were done in those days. Mama took care of the things around the house that needed to be done. She hitched up Roxy to the buggy. Evelyn and Raymond sat on the floor. We are not sure if it was the spring before Rudy was born or the spring after. Mama and I sat on the seat as Mama held the reins and was driving. I held the baby (either Elmer or Rudy).

When we would get to where we go down hill she would get off and lead the horse down the hill by holding the bridle. This day she stayed on her seat in the buggy. I don't know if the reins were too short. She sat on the left (like we do in cars) the left wheels went up on the bank while she tried to control the horse. She then fell as she went over the front axle. I can still see her long hair all spread out hanging toward the ground.

The horse kept running when we were on level ground. I put the baby on the floor and I jumped to the ground on the left side of the buggy and ran to catch the horse. I got him stopped by grabbing the bridle.

I saw Mama come walking toward us. She said her shoulder hurt. She sent me home to get liniment. She was working the sugar cane close to the gate where we went into the field. I can still see her sitting by the cane rubbing her shoulder.

by Irene Weaver

Dad talked about the 1925 drought many times, including the well story. It is my understanding that they had a well used by more than one family. The well was the kind which was 2 to 3 feet in diameter and 20 to 30 feet deep. The location was not on the hill but closer to the creek where a spring was.

Because of the dry weather the well went dry, but no one wanted to crawl down to the bottom to clean it, as there wasn't very much oxygen there. Dad did not want to go down because if he wouldn't survive he would not be around to feed his children. Some time passed and Dad changed his mind. He went down because he had a family to take care of and stock to water. They solved the oxygen problem by tying tree limbs with green leaves all over his body. The green leaves gave him enough oxygen to do the work and be pulled back out by a block and tackle.

. They had some water in the spring. Mother had to get water out of the well about every half hour. The neighbors (white and black) worked together helping each other during bad times and survived.

The primary language was German when the children grew up. The first 8 were confirmed in German and the last 1 in English. Speaking 2 languages was the norm.

The children were not supposed to go on dates with other than Missouri Synod Lutherans as the parents did not want what they called mixed marriages in the family.

Even today many adults are not good at reading maps. During WWII while Henry was in Germany Dad would spend time with the family looking at the latest progress of the Allied forces. This way he also trained his children how to read maps. In those days when a service man got hurt in the war, the way to notify the families was for someone to drive to the service mans home. A lot of times Dad would look down the road to see if someone was coming with bad news.

Putting Rudy through Concordia and Seward was a great and important challenge. Dad did not want any collections taken at any function for tuition at the two colleges.

It has been a good experience for me to do some research and write about our family. One thing that comes to mind is that they had no central heat or air conditioning. I assume the winters were just as cold then as now. Just compare our complaints of today to the way things were in their early years.

#### ONE MORE THING---

Dad did a lot of church work, physically. I don't remember his title but he fixed things. The major thing I remember was the task of cutting wood for stoves at Alvin Nitches farm for the church, school and for the Pastor and Teachers houses. Each family would donate one day of labor per year. Dad scheduled the work days and got the volunteers. That helped the church budget a lot.

It would be nice if volunteers work at my church today would take care of the winter heating and stove cooking needs of our large church, large school of 200 children, 8 teachers, principal, organist, secretary etc. That really would help our budget.

Someone asked me once, if we ate left overs when I was a child. I told him that we were 9 children and didn't have left overs and therefore didn't need a refrigerator. Even the dogs had to do their own hunting.

Elmer Zoch



## HOW THE MUSEUM GOT STARTED

The first thought of a Zoch Family Museum was expressed by Elmer in the early 80's. His plan was to build a 20 x 20 foot frame building near the bluff under the trees. The drawings were then changed to 20 x 30 feet and some T-111 siding was purchased, and blocks delivered. However he did not start construction as things did not seem to be right. Meanwhile, Hattie Lovaasen, executrix of the estate liked the idea and started to make plans for the items to be exhibited. She put various items in boxes which were placed in Elmer's mobile home for storage. This included the wedding dress, purses, scarfs, shoes, sweaters, gowns , other dresses etc. Also saved by Elmer was Father's hat, shoes, overalls etc. Father's box of old pictures was also stored. The years went by and the plywood for the museum rotted. Then the break came.

Spring break 1990 Dale and Ruth Ann (Weaver) Sechrist and family came to visit her parents, Richard and Irene (Zoch) Weaver who were spending the winter near Warda, TX. Richard and Irene took them to Kasper's farm about 2 miles south where Irene, one of M/M A. T. Zoch's nine children lived from 1930 to 1942. The four youngest were born there.

While looking around and thru the windows of the house, Elgin Kasper, one of the owners, came over and said they were getting ready to tear the house down. Irene told her brothers and sisters Elmer was very interested in buying it. He had talked about a museum for a long time. He, Evelyn, Freddie and Irene purchased the house.

One house mover thought that the house was too bad to be moved. The other house mover was not very busy, moved the house in 2 pieces from the Kasper Farm, across the two creeks to the present location. The top 4 feet of the roof had to be cut down as it was too high. Elmer and Freddie worked with the movers one week. It was very embarrassing as the house looked so bad. The following week Elmer and Freddie rebuilt the roof and nailed up the open windows with tin and boards to prevent further rain damage.

The material cost and amount of labor to restore the house was about 5 times of what was anticipated.

Other family members also have items on exhibit at the museum.

A flag pole was installed next to the museum. At the time of this printing the flag is flying at half staff due to the sudden unexpected death of Ernest Lehmann.