

Allan Lehmann

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

In our April 2009 edition of Friends of Westgarthtown News we remembered some of Westgarthtown's servicemen who fought for Australia in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and the First World War (1914-1918). One of the soldiers we profiled was Ernest Henry (Ernie) Lehmann. On 12 April 1919, five months after the end of the First World War, Ernie married Englishwoman May Cecilia Horne in London and soon after they embarked for Australia, where they raised a family at Reservoir in Melbourne's northern suburbs. One of their children, Allan Alfred Lehmann, served with the Australian Army in Australia, New Guinea and Borneo during the Second World War. The information and photos in this story were kindly supplied by one of our members, Debra Lehmann, of Glenroy.



Father and son: At the end of WWI, Allan's father Ernie married May in London (left). In 1944 Allan married Dorothy (right) during leave from service in the Second World War.

Allan, the second eldest of Ernie and May Lehmann's four children, is now 88 years old and lives on his own at Moonee Ponds. He was born at Newport on 8 October 1922 and after attending Epping Primary and Northcote High schools, trained as a carpenter. He was almost 20 years old, single and in the third year of his apprenticeship when he enlisted in the Australian Military Forces at Preston on 25 September 1941 (V300085). He was then living with his parents at 70 Pine Street, Reservoir.

In November 1941, Allan was allocated to the 16th Australian Field Regiment at Seymour as a Gunner, but as he was unable to handle the weight of the heavy artillery equipment, he volunteered for the Royal Australian Air Force. On 3 February 1942, however, he transferred to the Australian Infantry (VX74547) and after training at various locations in Victoria with the 32nd and 34th Battalions, he entrained for New South Wales in December 1942. Later that month, he embarked aboard the *Katoomba* for New Guinea, where he joined the 2/12th Battalion.

In February 1943 Allan was hospitalised with malaria and the following month shipped back to Cairns to convalesce. In June 1943 he was again ill with malaria and it was not until August that he left Townsville to return to New Guinea. He served there until he was shipped from Lae to Brisbane in May 1944 for leave, during which he suffered a further bout of malaria.

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Diplomat Geoffrey Price was a Westgarthtown descender

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

Geoffrey John Price, MBE was born in Kuala Lumpur on 12 June 1930 and died in Sydney on 1 January 1999, aged 68. He was a career diplomat with the Department of Foreign Affairs and in 1975 as Australia's ambassador to Saigon was required to evacuate Australians and close down the Australian embassy as North Vietnamese troops advanced on the city. Price was also a Westgarthtown descendant, a grandson of Friedrich Vockensohn and Ernestine Siebel.

Friedrich Vockensohn married Ernestine Siebel on 10 March 1874, following the death in 1870 of his first wife, Agnes (née Wuchatsch). For further details about the Vockensohn family, see *Friends of Westgarthtown News* Vol. 9, No. 2, November 2005. The marriage between Friedrich and Ernestine Siebel resulted in eight children, the youngest of whom was Johanna Louise Christiana Vockensohn. Hannah or Nance, as she was known, was born at Epping in 1892 and married Herbert (Bert) Price, a mining engineer. It was while they were living in Malaya that Geoffrey Price was born.

Price was educated at Toowoomba Grammar School and the University of Queensland, where he was awarded a BA honours degree in 1952. Interested in foreign affairs and fluent in French, he joined the Department of External Affairs in 1953. His French language skills were put to good use through postings to Saigon (1953–57), Paris (1960–63), Vientiane (1963–66), Geneva (1969–72), Paris (1972–74) and Saigon (1974–75). From 1957–1960 he had also served as private secretary to the Minister, Mr. R. G. Casey.

Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, fell to the North Vietnamese Army on 30 April 1975. In the days leading up to the 'Fall of Saigon' over 150 Australians were evacuated, the decision to do so having been made in Canberra on 21 April. Price sent a secret cablegram to Canberra in which he described 'the frantic atmosphere as arrangements are made to move Australian staff and nationals to safety.'¹

Price was caught 'between horrific political and moral pressures, while he and his staff struggled to operate

Allan Lehmann

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Allan married Dorothy Elizabeth Welsford at Reservoir on 22 July 1944. Both had lived in Orrong Avenue, Reservoir without knowing each other until they met on a train.

In May 1945, Allan embarked at Townsville for Moratai in the South West Pacific and at the end of June left for Balikpapan in Borneo, where he served until January 1946. He arrived back at Brisbane on 10 January and returned to Melbourne where he was discharged from the 2/12th Infantry Battalion on 29 January 1946 after 1,457 days active service, including 596 days overseas.

Allan was a keen gambler and is said to have won enough money playing two-up against American troops to buy a



Allan's father, Ernie

house at Reservoir. His nickname was Lucky, not as a result of his gambling, but because he escaped death several times. Although reluctant to talk about his wartime experiences, he did reveal that on one occasion a Japanese soldier came up behind his trench, shot two of his mates and turned to shoot him, but the gun jammed allowing Allan's mate on the other side to shoot the enemy soldier. Another time Allan was shot in the wrist when firing from a trench with his head down.

After the war, Allan became a plasterer and continued this trade until retirement. He and his late wife Dorothy, who died in March 1961, raised a family of six children — Robyn, Cheryle, Kaylene, Russell, Debra and Joanne — at Reservoir.

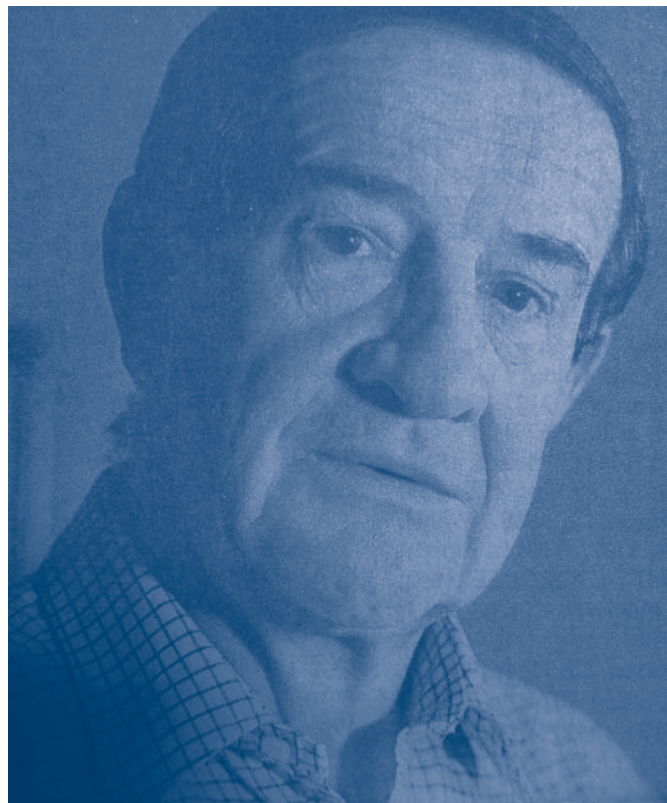
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in a capital facing imminent defeat and while he tried to comply with instructions from Canberra that in many cases he thought were shameful, contradictory or impossible of achievement.²

During the evacuation, ‘communication equipment was loaded into a Kombi van and driven straight onto RAAF Hercules planes...Journalists were included and next of kin in Australia were notified to allay fears and speculation in the press. Price’s concerns extended not only to Australian Embassy staff and Vietnamese nationals, but to Malay and Indian diplomatic colleagues. He hoped that Australia’s withdrawal would be temporary, that the embassy would be secure during the staff absence, and that diplomatic relations would be maintained.’³ Price closed the embassy on 25 April 1975.

After Saigon, Price served in Singapore, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Turkey and USA. In 1995, following his retirement, he broke his silence about the ‘Fall of Saigon’. He wrote that ‘he believed Australian forces had served “bravely and well” in South Vietnam, fighting to uphold the independence of people who did not wish to live under communist rule.’ However, he condemned the Whitlam Government for its ‘failure to protect locally engaged Vietnamese embassy staff, who feared for their lives under the communists.’ He added ‘Mr Whitlam’s instruction to me was I should simply tell them “there was nothing to fear” from a North Vietnamese occupation.’ Price stated ‘We should have been more generous and sympathetic to our loyal employees. Shamefully we were not.’⁴

When Price died in 1999 he left a widow, Margaret (née Tuttell), whom he married on 30 January 1960, and three children — Christopher, Christina and Julia. He also had a sister, Iris, who lived in Western Australia. In 1996, eager to learn more about his German ancestry, Price phoned me wishing to purchase a copy of my 1985 Westgarthtown book. In a subsequent letter, he noted Friedrich Vockensohn’s Victorian naturalization in 1865, the importance of citizenship being something Geoffrey Price was well familiar with through his diplomatic work.



Geoffrey Price [courtesy of *The Age*]

1. National Archives of Australia website www.naa.gov.au/whats-on/online/find-of-the-month/past-years/2007/april.aspx
2. Edwards, Peter, *The fall of Saigon, 1975*, R. G. Neale Lecture Series, 1 May 2006, The National Archives of Australia and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at www.naa.gov.au/images/rgnealedwards_tcm2-12023.pdf
3. National Archives of Australia website www.naa.gov.au/whats-on/online/find-of-the-month/past-years/2007/april.aspx
4. *The Age*, 11 January 1999.

Westgarthtown's 160th celebration a great success

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

On Sunday 21 November 2010, the Friends of Westgarthtown, City of Whittlesea, Thomastown Lutheran Church and Wendish Heritage Society Australia joined together to celebrate the 160th Anniversary of German and Wendish settlement at Westgarthtown.

The celebrations began with Sylvia Schultz, President of the Friends of Westgarthtown and Cr John Fry, City of Whittlesea, welcoming about 150 descendants, residents and friends to Ziebell's Farmhouse. Both spoke of the debt of gratitude owed to the enterprising German and Wendish settlers who established Westgarthtown from 1850 and also their hardworking descendants and others who have worked tirelessly in recent years to ensure the preservation of Ziebell's Farmhouse and the Thomastown Lutheran church and cemetery.

Geoff Borrack, our Vice-President, then launched the long awaited Westgarthtown Precinct Farm Buildings interpretive panels, located in Ziebell's Farmhouse. This exhibit, funded by the City of Whittlesea, was designed by Geoff and Léon Borrack and outlines the architectural features and agricultural uses of Westgarthtown's farmhouses and outbuildings, such as stables, barns and milking sheds.

John Hawker, Heritage Victoria's Horticultural Historian, followed Geoff by launching the Ziebell Farmhouse Garden Guide. This comprehensive guide, published by the Friends of Westgarthtown, includes a large garden plan, list of permanent plants and history of the garden. It was prepared by Sylvia Schultz and Ziebell's Farmhouse Garden Coordinator Gillian Borrack, with support from Heritagecare volunteer horticulturalist Prue McColl and design by Léon Borrack.

The garden has been restored since 1995 under the guidance of Sylvia Schultz, a fifth generation Ziebell descendant and former resident of Ziebell's Farmhouse.

The final speaker was our historian Robert Wuchatsch, who spoke of continuing research into Westgarthtown's history and the Friends of Westgarthtown's plans to include a reconstructed list of Westgarthtown Cemetery burials on its website www.westgarthtown.org.au in 2011.

Walking tours of Westgarthtown were then conducted by Tatiana Joukoff, the Friends of Westgarthtown's tour guide and Robert Wuchatsch. As part of the tours, Irma Hatty welcomed visitors to the Thomastown Lutheran



Church and spoke about its history. Everyone then enjoyed afternoon tea at Ziebell's Farmhouse, where the Wendish Heritage Society Australia also had a display table and Volkhard Wehner, author of *Heimat Melbourne: A History of the German Speaking Community of Melbourne 1855 to 1865* sold and signed copies of his recently published book.

Publication Plans

BY LÉON BORRACK

The Friends have established a roadmap for publications and promotional material that continues our focus on attracting and informing visitors to Westgarthtown.

The 160th anniversary saw the launch of our new Ziebell's Farmhouse Guide. This publication, complimentary to all paying visitors to Ziebell's Farmhouse, provides a rich and truly unique guide to the history and plants in the garden.

Establishing Ziebell's Farmhouse as an appealing destination for garden lovers is a strategy we have identified to attract a new demographic of visitors to Westgarthtown. Combined with more consistent maintenance of the garden, we aim to enter the site in Australia's Open Garden Scheme, as well as promote it as a destination for garden tours. Funded with the assistance of Heritage Victoria, the Garden Guide makes a significant step towards achieving these aims and is one that sets both a quality and strategic benchmark for future publication projects.

Next in line for production is a comprehensive visitor's guide to the Ziebell's Farmhouse buildings. Now in design, this guide will also be offered free to visitors, complimenting the Garden Guide by providing a description of the historical uses for each of the rooms of the main farmhouse building and outbuildings.

Beyond these projects, plans are in place for the expansion of the Westgarthtown website (including a reconstructed burial list for the cemetery), a self-guided tour brochure of the Westgarthtown Heritage Walking Trail (that will also be made available as a printable A4 download from our website) plus various gift shop items that will be made available for sale to visitors such as bookmarks, gift cards and postcards.

Material already successfully produced by the Friends of Westgarthtown includes our website (www.westgarthtown.org.au) and the newsletter you are reading, circulated to all subscribers as well as MPs, councillors, historical societies and government organisations at all levels. Our 46-page Westgarthtown Booklet (\$7.50), has sold over 3,000 copies and over 7,000 copies has been circulated of our 6-page DL-size promotional brochure for Ziebell's Farmhouse. Combined with our comprehensive interpretive panels at Ziebell's Farmhouse, these publications help to make Westgarthtown one of the most professional volunteer-managed destinations in Victoria.



As well as providing a wealth of new information to visitors familiar with Ziebell's Farmhouse, our Garden Guide aims at creating broader appeal for visitors to Westgarthtown. Complimentary to paying visitors, the guide describes each section of the garden, its history and the plants that have traditionally grown there.

Wendish Heritage Society Australia

Do you have Wendish ancestry? The Wends (also known as Sorbs) are a Slavic people who spoke a Slavic language – Wendish or Sorbian. The Wends live in Lusatia, an area in eastern Germany which during the mid-nineteenth century was divided between Saxony and Prussia. Five families who settled at Westgarthtown were Wendish – Graff, Grutzner, Rosel, Wuchatsch and Zimmer.

The Wendish Heritage Society Australia researches and promotes the Wendish/Sorbian and Germanic heritage and family history in Australia. Its meeting room and research centre is located at the Ivanhoe Lutheran Church's meeting room, 27 Livingstone Street, Ivanhoe, Victoria and is open on the first Sunday each month February-November, from 1.30 – 5.30 pm. The Wendish Heritage Society Australia's postal address is PO Box 307, Heidelberg, Victoria 3084. For further details see www.wendishheritage.org.au

Thomastown Lutheran Church Services

Services are held on the second and fourth Sunday of the month at 2.30 pm at the Thomastown Lutheran Church, German Lane, Lalor. For further details, contact Irma Hatty on 03 9338 9064 or see the Calvary Lutheran Church website at www.calvarychurch.com.au

Visiting Ziebell's Farmhouse

Ziebell's Farmhouse is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month, 1–4 pm. For enquiries, call 03 9464 1805 or enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au

Tours can be organised for groups of ten or more people. For information and bookings contact Tatiana Joukoff on 03 9464 5062 or tatianajoukoff@hotmail.com

Trinity German Lutheran Church Archives, East Melbourne

If you had German Lutheran ancestors in Victoria, the Trinity Church Archives at East Melbourne may be able to help you.

The most commonly used records held by Trinity Church Archives are the marriage, baptism and confirmation registers, church minutes and correspondence. Information on many early members of the Trinity congregation is also kept.

The Trinity Church Archives are located at 22 Parliament Place, East Melbourne Victoria 3002. Opening hours are Tuesdays from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. (Tel: 9639 8137).

More new Epping North street names

In previous newsletters, we have noted the welcome trend for new streets in the City of Whittlesea to be named after early pioneers, including German and Wendish settlers. Here are some more new names.



Leberecht Fiedler

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

Christian Leberecht Fiedler (1818-82) was born at Lomnitz near Erdmannsdorf, Silesia on 21 April 1818 and arrived in Melbourne with his wife Therese (née Knobloch) and two children aboard the *Pribislaw* in February 1850. One child, Anne Marie, had been born at sea on 25 October 1849 and was baptized by Rev. Alexander Morison at the Independent Church in Melbourne on 10 March 1850. Leberecht and Therese had been married in Germany in 1844.

As Leberecht, a shoemaker, was naturalised as a New South Wales citizen in December 1850, it would appear he had an immediate intention to buy land. For some reason, however, he did not purchase his 70 acre farm at Westgarthtown (Lots 29 & 30, Section 25, Parish of Keelbundora – in the area of today’s Main Street Reserve and Melaleuca Drive) until 6 June 1853, when he paid Moritz Wöhner, the original owner, £3 per acre or a total of £210. This price yielded Wöhner a profit of £140, land values having risen dramatically since the discovery of gold in 1851. Unfortunately for Wöhner, he invested it all in Friedrich Krumnow’s controversial Herrnhut Commune near Hamilton and lost every penny.

It is not known where Leberecht and his family lived from 1850-53. They may have stayed at Westgarthtown with neighbour Gottlieb Knobloch, a possible relative, or with other Germans there.

Leberecht and Therese’s daughter Anne Marie apparently died soon after the family’s arrival in Melbourne, but

another daughter, Anne Elizabeth (Annie), was born in 1856. In the same year, Leberecht was appointed as one of three trustees of the Lutheran church and school at Westgarthtown. He had previously donated ten guineas towards the erection of the church and school building. Leberecht was also a foundation member of the synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Victoria.

Therese Fiedler died in the Melbourne Hospital on 9 October 1860 of ‘malignant disease of knee joint’ aged 48 and was buried in the New Melbourne Cemetery at Carlton. On 18 March 1861, Leberecht, described as a widower with two children, married Katharina (Catherine) Erhardt at the Trinity German Lutheran Church, East Melbourne. Catherine, from Hägenach in Württemberg, was aged 23 and an unmarried servant living at Oakleigh. She had arrived in Australia aboard the *Electric* in December 1856.

On 2 May 1859, Leberecht borrowed £200 against his land at Westgarthtown from merchants Mark Folk and Isaac Lazarus. On 9 November 1861, he sold most of his land (Lot 29) to a neighbour, Jakob Grützner, for £280. On 20 February 1869, he mortgaged his remaining land to another neighbour, John Maltzahn, for £120.

During the early 1860s his eldest son Charles Gustav Oswald Fiedler served in the Coburg Rifles, a local volunteer militia unit. Leberecht continued market gardening at Westgarthtown until he sold his remaining 26 acres (Lot 30) to Jakob Grützner on 13 May 1872 for £400 and moved to Richmond. From 1862-70, four more children had been born – Leberecht (George), John August (August), John Adolph Henry (Adolph) and Elizabeth Ernestine (Kate). A further child, Ernest Francis (Frank), was born at Richmond in 1873 and finally two more - Rosine Barbara (1875) and Alfred Albert (1879) - at Caulfield, where the family moved shortly after.

Leberecht died aged 63 at the Alfred Hospital on 8 January 1882 of liver disease and was buried in the Brighton Cemetery. The Fiedler family was then living at Booran Road, Caulfield where they ran a market garden on 36 acres of leased land. Leberecht’s estate was valued for probate purposes at £208 three shillings and sixpence and consisted mainly of a house in Berlin Street, Richmond. Catherine died at Heatherton on 8 August 1920 aged 82 and was buried with Leberecht at Brighton.



Love & Lace

City of Whittlesea Cultural Heritage Program

BY GILLIAN BORRACK & ELLEN MITCHELL

With the support of the City of Whittlesea, the Friends of Westgarthtown will present Love and Lace as part of the 2011 program to celebrate the History and Cultural Heritage of the City of Whittlesea:

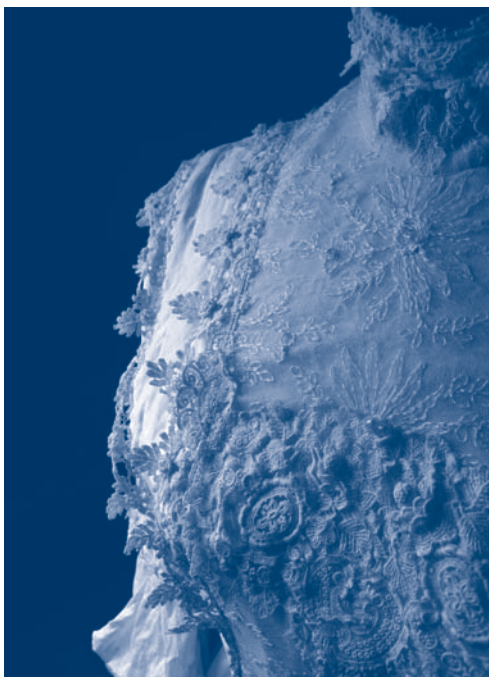
LOVE AND LACE

Sunday 20 November 2011 (1pm – 4pm)

Please find enclosed program booklet for further information.

In 2006 the Friends of Westgarthtown received a generous donation of various historic items of women's clothing from Gladys Knight (née Thiele) a descendant of the Finger family. Like many Westgarthtown families, the Fingers migrated to Australia aboard the 350 tonne wooden barque *Pribislaw* which arrived in Melbourne on 2 February 1850. Emma Finger married Johann Thiele on 15 April 1880.

In 2010, Gladys Knight and her niece Lindy McKew donated photos and love notes to the Friends of Westgarthtown. These additional donations have enabled the Friends of Westgarthtown to host this fascinating display of antique clothing with a beautiful and romantic history. Featured among the collection will be Minna Thiele's wedding dress, along with love notes from the bride and groom, dating back to 1910.



In addition, the Friends of Westgarthtown are delighted to host a number of members of the Australian Lace Guild (Victorian Division) who will demonstrate the making of German Lace, Tatting Lace, Bobbin Lace and Needle Lace throughout the afternoon.

We hope you can join us.

Afternoon tea will be served between 2pm – 3pm.

FRIENDS OF WESTGARTHTOWN INC.

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Caretakers	Ellen Mitchell Jordan Mitchell Rob Wuchatsch Léon Borrack
Editor	
Design	

Westgarthtown is the oldest and most intact German/Wendish settlement in Victoria. Established in March 1850, it celebrated its 160th Anniversary in 2010.

The Thomastown Lutheran Church at Westgarthtown is the second oldest surviving Lutheran Church building in Australia and the oldest still used as the principal worship centre of a Lutheran congregation.

Heritage Victoria has included the Lutheran Church, Cemetery and Reserve; and Graff's, Siebel's, Wuchatsch's and Ziebell's houses on its Heritage Register, recognising their outstanding heritage value and providing legislative protection for the future.

Ziebell's Farmhouse is Victoria's oldest German immigrant building.

Siebel's Farmhouse, erected in 1860, is the birthplace of Albert Siebel, who in 1934 established the Pura Dairy at Preston, to retail Westgarthtown's milk. Pura has now developed into a leading national Australian brandname.

Wuchatsch's Farmhouse is believed to be the oldest house in Melbourne to have been constructed, owned and continually occupied by the same family.