

Wukasch Family History and Buildings in Austin, Texas  
Researched and prepared by the City of Austin Historic Preservation Office  
April, 2012

The Wukasch family members who eventually settled in Austin had their beginnings in Prussia in eastern Germany. Wends were a Slavic group with a distinct language and generally adhered to a conservative branch of Lutheranism. Seeking better economic opportunities and a freedom from increasing German oppression, many Wends began to emigrate from their homeland to Texas in the late 1840s and early 1850s, establishing the communities of New Ulm and Industry. A much larger wave of emigration occurred in 1854, when several hundred Wendish families arrived in Galveston and made their way to New Ulm and Industry. Leaders of this group purchased land in Lee County, and established the community of Serbin. The Wends farmed, established churches and schools, and generally maintained an insular existence, speaking their native Wendish tongue and prohibiting intermarriage with outside groups.

Among the Wends who emigrated to Texas was Matthaus Wukasch and his wife, Anna. Born in 1798, Matthaus and Anna Wukasch were part of the great Wendish migration of 1854, and purchased land near Serbin. Matthaus Wukasch was both a sawmill operator and a farmer. He and Anna had 5 children: 4 sons and a daughter. All but the youngest of the children had been born in Germany.

The children of Matthaus and Anna Wukasch grew up around Serbin, and became farmers. Two of Matthaus and Anna's children form the nucleus of the Wukasch family in Austin: George and August, the second son and the youngest son. George Wukasch was born in 1847 in Germany and migrated with his parents to Texas in 1854. August Wukasch was born in 1857 in Texas. George's first wife, Marie Knippa, died shortly after the birth of their first child, Charles. George then remarried, and had 8 more children with his second wife, Marie Pilack. August's first wife Selma Kilian, died before having children. He and his second wife, Emma Fehr, had 3 children, two daughters, and a son, Henry. The two Wukasch family members who moved to Austin at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were Charles Wukasch, the oldest son of George Wukasch; and Henry Wukasch, the son of August Wukasch.

Tough agricultural times in the late 1890s led many people from the farms of rural Texas to seek better economic opportunities in the nearby towns and cities. Charles Wukasch left the family farm in 1898 and moved to Austin, enlisting in the U.S. Army for service in the Spanish-American War. Charles' father, George, died in 1900, but when Charles returned from military service, he did not go back to the farm, but stayed in Austin. Henry Wukasch, Charles' cousin, was already living in Austin when Charles came back from the war. Henry is listed in the city directory of 1900-01 as a clerk for Eugene K. Black, who ran a store specializing in gentlemen's furnishings, millinery, and served as a tailor's agent. Black's store was at 317 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and Henry boarded in a house at 705 Neches Street.

Charles Wukasch is listed for the first time in the 1903-04 Austin city directory as the owner of a confectionery and ice cream parlor at 2400 Guadalupe Street, property he purchased in 1902. Henry Wukasch continued to work for Eugene K. Black, now at 321 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Black's listing in the city directory now stated that the store carried dry goods, clothing, furnishings, millinery, shoes, and hats, as well as continuing to serve as a tailor's agent.

By 1905, Charles G. Wukasch had moved his residence and confectionery to 2218 Guadalupe Street. His business now included serving lunches. Henry Wukasch had opened his own

business with Thomas J. Christal, called Christal & Wukasch. They had a general merchandise store at 102 Congress Avenue.

More of the Wukasch family began moving to Austin after Charles and Henry were established in business here. The 1906-07 city directory shows Charles G. Wukasch with his confectionery and lunch business at 2218 Guadalupe Street; as well as his residence. Charles' half-sister, Martha, was living with Charles on Guadalupe Street, but had no occupation listed in the directory. Henry Wukasch continued his business with Thomas J. Christal at 102 Congress Avenue. Their directory listing now included general merchandise, dry goods, groceries, and "fresh country produce."

By 1910, Henry had moved out of the rooming house he had been living in to a house at 801 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street (now Cesar Chavez). Martha Wukasch had also moved to 308 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Another of Charles' half-sisters, Louise, had also moved to Austin by that time – she was a cook at the Chi Omega Sorority house.

Within the next year, George's widow, Mary, and more of her children moved off the Lee County farm and into Austin. Charles's half-brother August is listed in the 1910-11 city directory as a driver for George Siglhofer, who operated a bakery at 1006 Congress Avenue (known as the Lundberg Bakery today). Charles' half-sister Frieda, worked as a clerk for him at his confectionery. His half-brother Gerhard worked as a bartender at Scholz Garten, and youngest half-brother Joe, worked as a driver for William A. Achilles, another German immigrant, who ran a produce and feed business at 308 W. 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Louise Wukasch was a servant to Jennie Hilsman, who lived at 402 W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street. Martha continued to work as a clerk for Charles. Charles, August, and Martha lived at 2218 Guadalupe Street, at Charles' confectionery and lunch business. Joe and his mother, Mary, lived at 302 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Henry Wukasch continued to live at 801 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and was in business with Thomas J. Christal at 102 Congress Avenue.

By 1913, August Wukasch was working as a driver for Julius F. Raatz, Jr., who owned a meat market at 301 E. 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Gerhard Wukasch was operating Scholz Garten, and Henry now was the single operator of the store at 102 Congress Avenue, selling groceries, dry goods, notions, shoes, clothing, hardware, and produce. Mary and her sons Joe, August, and Gerhard, lived at 405 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Street, just north of Scholz Garten. Henry Wukasch lived at 801 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, and Charles Wukasch had his ice cream parlor, confectionery, and restaurant at 2218 Guadalupe Street, where he lived. His listing in the 1912-13 city directory, also includes groceries at his businesses.

The 1914 city directory shows that Joe Wukasch, Charles' younger half-brother, who had worked as a driver for William A. Achilles, was now operating a grocery store at 2220 Guadalupe Street, next to Charles' confectionery, ice cream parlor, and restaurant. The 1912-13 directory shows that Charles had started to go into the grocery business about a year before Joe is listed as the operator of the next-door grocery store. August Wukasch, who had worked for Julius Raatz' meat market the year before, now worked for William A. Achilles as a clerk. Otto, Charles' youngest half-brother, was now listed in the directory as a clerk for Joe Wukasch, and lived with Mary, August, Gerhard, and Joe at 405 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Louise and Martha Wukasch both worked as domestics at 2206 San Antonio Street.

The end of the First World War saw the opening of the Wukasch Brothers' Café at Charles' old location at 2218 Guadalupe Street. The café was operated by August and Otto Wukasch, and was listed as an ice cream parlor, confectionery, and restaurant. Joe Wukasch sold groceries,

confections, cigars, and tobaccos at his store next door to the café at 2220 Guadalupe Street.. Louise and Martha Wukasch both worked as Wukasch Bros. Café, and Henry maintained his general merchandise store at 102 Congress Avenue. Charles had married his wife Emma, and lived at 2218 Guadalupe Street, but had no occupation listed in the 1918 directory. August and Otto also lived at 2218 Guadalupe Street. Mary, Joe, Louise, and Martha lived at the house by Scholz Garten at 405 E, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Henry, who had married Matilda, lived at 2600 Lampasas (now Speedway).

The 1920s saw major changes for the family. Charles and his wife, Emma, moved to 611 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street by 1920, but had no occupation listed in the directory. August and Otto lived at 2218 Guadalupe Street, at their café. Joe Wukasch had his grocery next door at 2220 Guadalupe Street. Gerhard now worked as a clerk for Joe, had married Annie, and lived at 302 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Henry and Matilda lived at 2600 Speedway. However, within the next year, following a devastating fire on Guadalupe Street, Joe, August, and Otto moved their businesses to the corner of 20<sup>th</sup> and Guadalupe – Joe's grocery store was at 2000 Guadalupe Street and the Wukasch Bros. Café was at 2002 Guadalupe Street. Henry also appears to have moved his general merchandise business from 102 Congress Avenue to 104-06 W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The family members also moved around residentially – August had married Esther and lived at 109 W. 39<sup>th</sup> Street. Gerhard and Annie lived at 1003 W. 38<sup>th</sup> Street, Joe had married Alma and lived at 4212 Duval Street, Otto had married Alma and lived at 3814 Avenue E (Speedway), and Mary, Louise, and Martha all lived at 3904 Avenue C. Charles is listed as the owner of the confectionery in the 1922 city directory, while Gerhard is listed as a clerk for his brother Joe at the grocery store.

Charles and Emma Wukasch opened Charlie's Confectionery at 2220 Guadalupe Street in the mid-1920s, which featured candy, cigars and cigarettes, and a soda fountain. Charles also operated Charlie's Lunch Room at 407 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in 1924. The Wukasch grocery and café were still located at the corner of 20<sup>th</sup> and Guadalupe Streets, and Louise and Martha both worked for their brothers August and Otto at the café. However, by 1927, Louise and Martha had moved with their mother, Mary, to 1903 Wichita Street, and were the cooks at the Wukasch Bros. Café. Henry's son Rudolph was listed as a salesman at his father's general merchandise store.

The 1930-31 city directory shows the Wukasch Bros. Café as a confectionery with a soda fountain and lunches at 2002 Guadalupe Street. Joe and Alma Wukasch maintained their grocery store next door, and had built a brick house at 1001 W. 22½ Street (now 1101 W. 22½ Street). Charles Wukasch had no occupation listed in the directory, as he had handed off Charlie's Confectionery (2270 Guadalupe Street) to his son, Walter, who had just graduated from the University of Texas. Charles, Emma, and their son Walter lived at 611 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. August and Esther lived at 109 W. 39<sup>th</sup> Street; Otto and Alma lived at 3814 Speedway; and Gerhard, Louise, and Martha lived at 1903 Wichita Street. All of the family members except for Henry's son, Rudolph (a cotton buyer), worked in the family businesses.

In 1935, August and Otto remodeled their building at 20<sup>th</sup> and Guadalupe Street with an Art Deco façade. Charles Wukasch had passed his family's business to his son, Walter, who had married Billye and now lived at 503 (now 603) W. 30<sup>th</sup> Street, a property owned by his parents, Charles and Emma Wukasch. The 1937 city directory shows Charles and Emma Wukasch as the proprietors of Charlie's Confectionery, the business they had given their son Walter earlier in the decade. Walter Wukasch operated Charlie's Liquor Store with his brother, Martin – the first location was at 403 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street. By the early 1940s, Walter and Billye were running Charlie's Liquor Store, now with two locations: 403 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, and 1326 Rosewood Avenue. August

and Otto Wukasch continued to operate the Wukasch Bros. Café at 2002 Guadalupe, next to their brother Joe's grocery store at 2000 Guadalupe Street. Henry Wukasch continued to operate his general merchandise store at 104-06 W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Louise and Martha Wukasch began operating the Wukasch Sisters' Bake Shop at their home at 1903 Wichita Street in the mid-1940s. Their business continued through the mid-1960s. August and Otto Wukasch operated the Wukasch Bros. Café, where "home cooking" became a specialty from the mid-1940s through the mid-1950s. Henry Wukasch maintained his general merchandise store at 1<sup>st</sup> and Congress through the late 1940s. Walter Wukasch switched his operations from Charlie's Confectionery in the early 1940s to Charlie's Liquor Store; by the late 1950s, they had 4 locations, including 403 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, 1326 Rosewood Avenue, 105 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and 3202 South Congress Avenue. In addition, Walter and Billye operated the Regal Liquor Store at 312 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Crow's Nest Restaurant, at 1010 W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street in the late 1950s through the late 1960s. By 1969, all of the Wukasch family enterprises had faded from the pages of the city directory. August was retired; Otto's widow Alma was also retired. Martin Wukasch, the youngest son of Charles Wukasch, and Walter Wukasch's younger brother, became a radiation specialist at State Department of Health. J. Eugene Wukasch, the oldest son of Joe Wukasch, became an architect and engineer, as did his cousin, Arthur Fehr.

The two branches of the Wukasch family who migrated from rural Lee County to Austin beginning at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had significance in the development of the commercial development on Guadalupe Street adjacent to the University of Texas. Charles Wukasch operated Charlie's Confectionery, which served as a confectionery, ice cream parlor, and lunch room; he eventually passed the business along to his son, Walter Wukasch, who then transformed the family business to Charlie's Liquor Store – the main locations were at 405 E. 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 1326 Rosewood Avenue. Joe Wukasch had a grocery store at the corner of 20<sup>th</sup> and Guadalupe Street from the early 1920s through the mid-1950s, right next door to his brothers' café, Wukasch Bros, which operated from the mid-1910s through the mid-1950s under August and Otto Wukasch. Henry Wukasch, a cousin of the restaurant-focused Wukasch brothers, had a successful general store at 1<sup>st</sup> and Congress for many years. Other Wukasch family members were instrumental in the running of the family businesses – sisters Louise and Martha worked for the Wukasch Bros. Café and eventually opened their own bakery. Brother Gerhard Wukasch worked at the café for many years, then became a bartender on his own. The business enterprises of this family reflect the close family relationships that were bred on the farm in Wendish Serbin, Texas, and followed the family members through their journey off the farm and into business in Austin.

The principal sites associated with the Wukasch family in Austin represent their residences, as their places of business have all been either replaced or modified completely away from their historic appearance.

Properties associated with the Wukasch family in Austin are:

#### RESIDENTIAL:

1. 915 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The home of Charles and Emma Wukasch, the proprietors of Charlie's Confectionery, one of the first Wukasch family businesses, was originally at 611 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, but has been moved to its current site, where it is a tri-plex. The house appears to retain a high degree of architectural integrity.





915 WE. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Formerly sited at 611 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street

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2. 719 Carolyn Avenue. The home of Walter Wukasch from around 1940 through the late 1960s. Walter Wukasch was the son of Charles and Emma Wukasch, and took over Charlie's Confectionery from his parents, and transformed the business to Charlie's Liquor Store.



719 Carolyn Avenue

3. 1101 W. 22½ Street. Joe Wukasch, who operated the grocery store next to his brothers' café at 20<sup>th</sup> and Guadalupe, is still intact, although the address has changed from the 1001 W. 22 ½ Street shown in city directories to 1101 W. 22 ½ Street today.





1101 W. 22½ Street

4. 603 W. 30<sup>th</sup> Street. A house owned by Charles and Emma Wukasz, and lived in by their son, Walter Wukasz, after his marriage, for approximately 8 years. The Wukasz family then rented the house out and eventually sold it. Walter Wukasz moved to the house at 719 Carolyn Avenue, where he and his wife lived for the next 25+ years.



603 W. 30<sup>th</sup> Street

**COMMERCIAL:**

1. 1326 Rosewood Avenue. The site of Charlie's Liquor Store – Walter Wukasch maintained this location even after closing the original W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street location of the liquor store.





1326 Rosewood Avenue

2. The buildings at 2000 and 2002 Guadalupe Street (Joe Wukasch's grocery store and the Wukasch Bros. Café) remain, but with heavily-modified storefronts.



2000 Guadalupe Street – the site of Joe Wukasch's grocery store



## 2002 Guadalupe Street – Wukasch Bros. Café

Later homes of the family members in retirement still exist, but many have been demolished. The homes of Louise and Martha Wukasch at 1903 Wichita Street, Otto Wukasch (one of the proprietors of Wukasch Bros. Café), at 3814 Speedway, August Wukasch, the other proprietor of Wukasch Bros. Café, at 109 W. 39<sup>th</sup> Street, and Henry Wukasch, who had the general store at 1<sup>st</sup> and Congress, and who lived at 26<sup>th</sup> and Speedway, have all been demolished. Henry Wukasch's general store has been demolished, as has the Wukasch Sisters' Bake Shop. Tyler's in the 2200 block of Guadalupe Street, is a new façade, but has a tablet in the parapet of the building, reading "Wukasch" – this was the site of Charlie's Confectionery when it was located at 2270 Guadalupe Street in the 1930s.