

March 15, 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of the docking of the S.S. Brandenburg, a German passenger liner, at Galveston, Texas. On board was 26 year old **J. B. Wieser**. He was leaving behind a promising career as a bookkeeper in Germany and now at the invitation of a wealthy, second cousin had decided to accept his invitation for employment. His timing could not have been more fortunate. A month later the Great War broke out across Europe. It ended contact with his family for the duration. Fluent in Spanish and somewhat proficient in Italian and French, his inability to speak English became a barrier that he quickly realized needed to be overcome. Consequently J.B. mastered English in less than a year's time. Within three years he earned his law degree, was admitted to the Texas Bar, and licensed to practice law. Unfortunately, a few weeks of hanging out his shingle in Hamilton, Texas, the United States was swept into war frenzy as she joined the Allies to defeat the Kaiser. Encouraged by the White House, Americans were driven to view everything German with suspicion. The use of German was declared illegal. Through executive power President Woodrow Wilson declared all Germans not yet having met the five year residence requirements of citizenship to be declared enemy aliens and denied the right to work or seek employment. Opportunities vanished as J.B. realized that his remaining in North Central Texas was in jeopardy. A move to an enclave of Germans which had largely remained isolated within the Pedernales Valley was a logical solution. Fredericksburg became his new home in late August of 1917 and there he set out to truly live the **American Dream** for in his first three years in America he had learned that the United States truly offered everyone an opportunity to make something of oneself. Unfortunately he was never able to convince his much younger brother to see the opportunities that America offered everyone and sadly the two were destined to spend decades living very different lives. While unable to achieve his highest goals, J.B. never lost faith in the American Dream and in his last decade of life drew upon his experiences to predict that Americans would eventually embrace socialism and communism more than the democracy and that the freedoms that he had experienced would one day only become a distant memory.



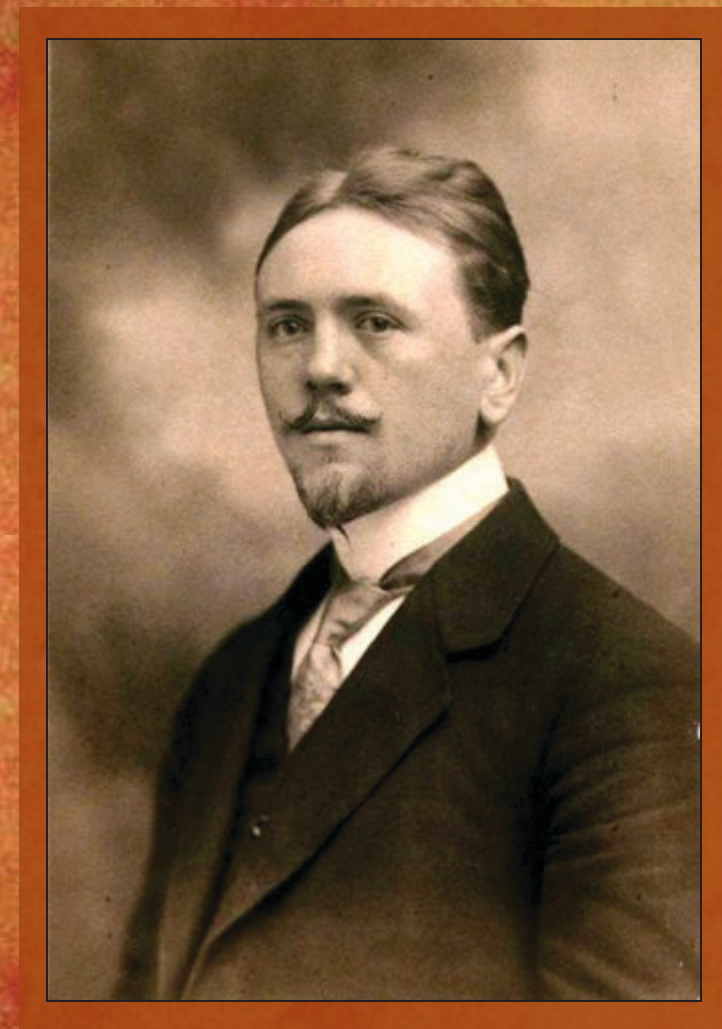
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By Mark B. Wieser

A 20th Century German Immigrant to Texas

J. B. Wieser and His American Dream



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