



# **An Immigrant Miller Picks Texas: The Letters of Carl Hilmar Guenther**

*Carl Hilmar Guenther*

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## **An Immigrant Miller Picks Texas: The Letters of Carl Hilmar Guenther** Carl Hilmar Guenther

These letters describe the odyssey of Carl Hilmar Guenther, who sailed from Germany in 1848 at the age of 22, to seek his fortune in America. For two years he tried construction and factory work in New York, farming and milling in Wisconsin and Ohio and was a carpenter on a plantation in Louisiana. Then he learned of opportunities in Texas.

In 1851 Guenther built the only grist mill in the German community of Fredericksburg, Texas. Eight years later he built a new mill in nearby San Antonio and put down roots. His legacy continues through C. H. Guenther & Son, Inc., a San Antonio-based food products company. It is the oldest business in Texas and the oldest continuously-operating family-owned milling company in the United States.

The first letters to and from Guenther's family in Germany were written at the time of his departure from Germany in 1848. They continue through the travails of getting established on the Texas frontier, then on through the Civil War to his only return visit to Germany, in 1891. They were translated from German by Regina Beckmann Hurst and by Walter D. Kamphoefner, Texas A&M University professor of history, who also contributed the foreword.

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