

CHAPTER XVI

BECOMING AMERICAN

“How to become an American”--

in that title, stress the word become.

*Europe to a large extent is still the world of being--
one is what one is.*

*America is the world of becoming--
one is what one can be.*

Henry Grunwald

U.S. Ambassador to Austria (1988-1990)

Chapter XVI

BECOMING AMERICAN

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INTRODUCTION

The process of transforming immigrants into Americans is variously expressed as “Americanization,” “Assimilation,” and “Naturalization,” at times also as “Integration.” While “Naturalization” today refers primarily to the legal steps of gaining citizenship, “Americanization” seeks to incorporate the foreign-born into American culture, or as the long popular “melting pot” idea has it: through this crucible, people of different races and cultures will form the new integrated American society. Different shades of meaning give these concepts specific applicabilities at different historical periods and with varying intent.

We chose an alternative — “Becoming American” — and found ourselves in unison with U.S. Ambassador Henry Grunwald for whom “becoming” is the quintessence of the dynamic American way and thus the way for the immigrant to pursue. “Becoming American” is the process of learning new attitudes, social skills, and behavioral patterns over time while clinging to many of one’s own ethnic traits. This adds to the rich tapestry of a multicultural society.

In his M.A. thesis entitled “The Immigrant Press and Americanization” (Indiana University, 1987), Rainer Baumgärtner quoted from an article in the 1 December 1859 issue of the Indianapolis *Freie Presse* on the give-and-take aspects of becoming American:

“...every German tries his best to become an American in a higher and

better sense: Nobody can make us give up the better parts of our nationality [culture]....But while preserving these parts...we heartily acknowledge the better qualities of our American fellow citizens and try to amalgamate theirs with the better part of our own. That is what we call the process of naturalization.”

Numerous statements of this persuasion came from both inside and outside the ethnic group. J.J. Lalor, e.g., was convinced that “in the future citizen of homogeneous America, an individual whose day is perhaps a hundred years in the future--the German blood will ‘tell,’ and go far to make him what he will be” (1873).

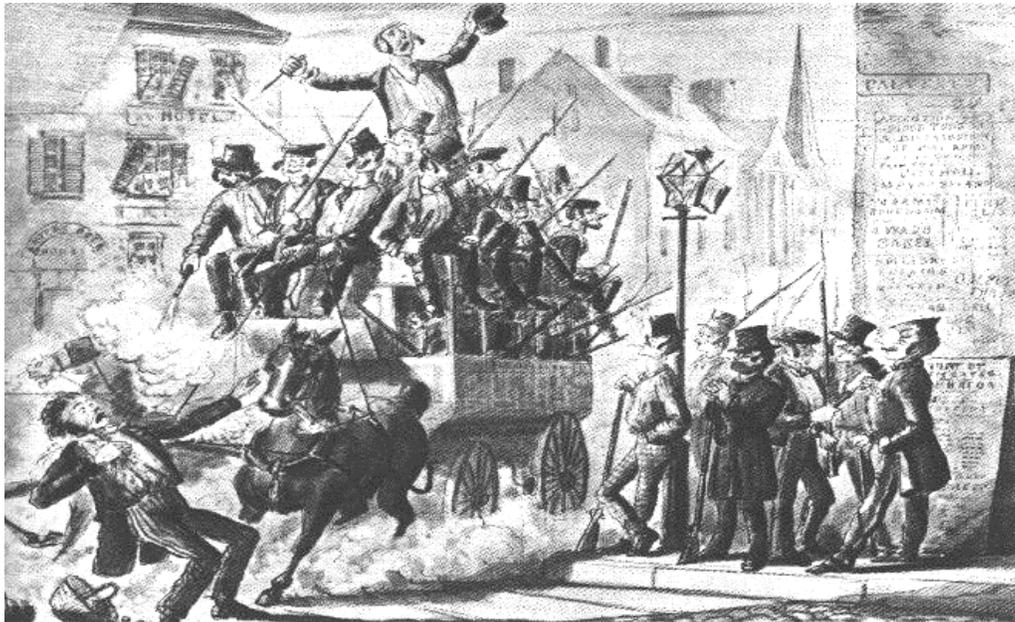
A century earlier, it was Benjamin Franklin who feared that the massive immigration of Germans into Pennsylvania might not lead to their Anglicization but to the Germanization of the Anglo-American majority. This fear became the foundation for the xenophobic and anti-Catholic American Party of mid-19th century, popularly called the Know-Nothings. They wanted to exclude immigrants from public office and extend the 5-year waiting period for citizenship to 21 years. But when the immigrants performed valiantly in the Civil War, the Know-Nothings and their schemes came to an end. However, their violent disturbances in cities like Baltimore, Cincinnati and Louisville were long remembered.

For various reasons, not all German immigrants planned to become

Americans. For many the "land of opportunity" was simply a temporary place to make money. Others felt that American culture was not up to par with that of the fatherland. Both groups never went beyond the first immigrant stage, namely being "Germans in America," and many of them became *Rückwanderer* (return migrants). The overwhelming number, however, moved on to "stage II" and became "German-Americans," loyal citizens of their new homeland but clinging to much of their heritage. Elements of this ethnic retention by the "hyphens"--as they were often referred to--caused heated debates over Sunday observations and temperance ordinances upheld by Anglo-Puritans. President

Theodore Roosevelt became the principal political spokesman for the removal of the hyphen that was suspected to be an indicator of split loyalty. The Great War then brought about "stage III" that made millions of German-Americans willingly or unwillingly to Americans of German descent.

Beginning with the second generation, intermarriage between ethnic groups was no longer the exception but eventually became the rule in the formation of the *homo americanus*. Nearly a quarter of all Americans consider themselves, at least partially, of German descent, thanks to the 8 million German-speaking immigrants who had chosen to become Americans.



*In this 1850s cartoon, armed "Know-Nothings" blast into Baltimore in support of their candidate, Thomas Swann. He represented the American Party's anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant platform. Voter intimidation was not uncommon. Source: WilliPaul Adams, *The German-Americans*, 33.*



BY INDUSTRY WE THRIVE. DURCH FLEISS ZUM WOHLSTAND.

„ProGRESS“ OUR MOTTO!

Fortschritt unser Ziel!

Respectfully dedicated to the new body of Mechanics & Tradesmen in the U.S. by the Publishers

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Characteristic for the age of industrialization was the glorification of industriousness and technological progress. This picture, captioned in English and German, seems to show the collaborative relation between Anglo-Americans and German-Americans building a prosperous future.

Source: Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte.

1. THE OLD HOME AND THE NEW: THE PROBLEM OF AMERICANIZATION

Agnes Bretting

The decision to emigrate is usually not taken lightly, and its consequences are manifold. This holds true for the Krefeld families who went to America and founded Germantown in 1683 as well as for Germans today. The reasons for leaving, legal requirements, opportunities for self-realization and conditions of travel have changed in many ways. What still remains, however, is the problem of how the newcomer is to be absorbed into his new home. An immigrant stands between two worlds. The willingness to be absorbed into the new environment is usually present. The immigrants also wished to build a future, and knew that in order to be successful in this, they would have to become Americanized.

Americanization at first meant nothing more than accommodating oneself as far as possible to certain rules of behavior of American society. Complete integration came in second place. It was achieved only by a minority of the new arrivals. Children, on the other hand, who no longer knew the old country, or who had forgotten it, became integrated quickly and with comparatively little difficulty.

The first step towards Americanization was economic integration. Only when employment had been obtained was the basis secured for a start in the new homeland. The majority of German emigrants left under pressure of economic necessity. America meant to

them hope of economic security and social advancement. Those who had turned their backs on Germany because of religious or social intolerance, and political refugees for whom America was more a land of exile than a new home, were also confronted first of all with the struggle for the basic means of life. Recognition in the new environment and social advancement were dependent on economic progress.

Early German immigrants, mostly farmers and craftsmen, accomplished this economic integration fairly easily, although they had difficulties to overcome mistrust and prejudice. Many of them came as redemptioners and paid for their passage for several years with their labor. Humane treatment was not always certain. On the other hand, the new arrivals were able during this period to learn the language, new techniques of work and the unfamiliar mode of life within a context of economic stability. When an immigrant attained independence after his indentured service, this experience stood him in good stead. All German immigrants had to work hard, but they were needed as settlers and had the same chance of advancement as their neighbors of other nationalities.

Until well into the 19th century, German farmers were often among the pioneers who settled and farmed large

areas. This did not prevent them from remaining German in many respects. Many of them preferred to live in a German neighborhood. Their reports back to the homeland attracted friends and relations. They continued to speak German with each other, built churches and schools, and engaged German teachers for their children. Thus, at least in rural areas, “emigration was not so much a matter of uprooting as of transplanting.” (Walter Kamphoefner) For these immigrants, Americanization meant something other than it meant for many newcomers in the 19th-century mass immigration. It was comparatively easy for them to keep and foster the customs of the homeland. They won recognition through their pioneering activity. If they succeeded in making an economically secure living, further Americanization of their children was scarcely a problem.

Some Americans, however, were already viewing German enclaves with skepticism, and the demand for swift Americanization had prominent advocates. In view of the increasing German element in Pennsylvania in the 1750s, Benjamin Franklin demanded the closing of German schools and forcible Americanization, fearing that the state would become swamped by foreigners. In his “Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind” (1751), he wrote: “Why should the Palatine Boors be suffered...to swarm into our Settlements, and herding together establish their

Language and Manners to the Exclusion of Ours? Why should Pennsylvania founded by the English become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them...?”

For Germans of the early immigration period who settled in the towns this problem did not present itself with the same urgency. By closer contact with their new environment they adapted to it more quickly than did the farmers in the sparsely settled countryside. Although they too, because of their common language and shared religious beliefs, founded their own church communities; their integration into American society appears to have taken place without undue difficulty. The fact that they did not come in such great numbers as those who followed them in the 19th century, together with their economic success and their obvious contribution to the prosperity of the towns, made it possible to achieve integration and at the same time preserve certain traditions of the homeland.

With the onset of mass immigration, the path to Americanization became more difficult. Mass immigration began, as early as the 1830s, to present new problems with regard to learning the language, establishing a living, fighting for social recognition and re-adjusting to new values and techniques of work. This was true for all immigrants. The increase in their numbers was a disadvantage during the crossing, on arrival and on the

journey further inland. Nevertheless, the Germans who pushed on into the interior for the most part met at their place of settlement fellow-countrymen who had already become broadly acquainted with the environment and could be of help. Also economic opportunities were still quite good there. But more and more Germans remained in the towns, since the labor market was favorable. This induced them to postpone the comparatively uncertain future on a farm of their own. Craftsmen and businessmen of the middle class found that the growing economic and industrial centers offered favorable conditions for trade. Other immigrants wished first to accumulate the capital necessary for living on land of their own. Many remained in the ports of arrival, penniless after paying the fare.

Mass immigration meant increased competition on the labor market. It became more difficult to secure the basic minimum for living, and times of economic recession gave rise to high rates of unemployment in the large cities. Immigrants who had given up the environment they knew and the social support of their home community were more at risk in situations of this kind than native-born persons and immigrants of longer standing. As workers belonging partly to the lower social strata, they suffered “dis-proportionately from the hazards of industrial accidents and disease, unemployment and low wages. The alien laborer was often without relatives or friends to help him during a

period of distress, and was therefore more likely than the native-born laborer to become a public charge” (Edith Abbott).

Many Germans in America’s cities were trained craftsmen, and thus brought with them better qualifications for making a start than did, for example, the Irish, who had to hire themselves out in hundreds of thousands as unskilled labor. Nevertheless, even immigrants who possessed a trade qualification were no longer certain, after the 1830s, of finding work and a livelihood in the towns. The effects of rapid urbanization and incipient industrialization were noticeable in all areas. For German immigrants, the problem of the language barrier became more and more obvious in this situation, where the chances of economic participation diminished. In addition to psychological uncertainty, which every new arrival experienced, there was now a real risk of social decline, i.e., failing to attain the social status hitherto enjoyed or of not being able to maintain it. A German tailor, working on contract and setting his whole family to work, or a shoemaker, who escaped working in a factory only by fitting out part of the cellar where he lived as a workshop, or a butcher in Chicago, whose work in the slaughterhouse could already be looked upon as a kind of conveyor-belt job — all these must have felt that their work meant a descent in the social scale. The struggle for existence stood in the foreground of their actions and thoughts. The community which received the immigrant

was interested in him, so it seemed, only for his work potential. "I did not think of what I liked or disliked, but of what was advantageous or disadvantageous," wrote one immigrant in this situation.

The Germans reacted to these difficulties by closing their ranks, by the Germans, the stubborn defense formation of "Little Germanies." Here German craftsmen could work with techniques familiar to them and had close personal contact with their customers. This was also true of shopkeepers and innkeepers, whose establishments were also important centers of news and meeting places for the neighborhood. Not all Germans could work in the German quarter, but all of them found their place in the community here. In connection with the problems of Americanization the function of these German quarters is of importance. The Little Germany acted as a reception center, a kind of buffer zone between the old home and the new. "The self-contained communal life of the immigrant colonies served, then, as a kind of decompression chamber in which the newcomers could, at their own pace, make a reasonable adjustment to the new forces" (Milton Gordon).

A Little Germany was an ethnic community. The common language, common values and traditions from the Old World, and the common experience of being foreigners had brought the German quarter into existence. Social, religious and political tensions among themselves, even tensions which arose

from regional origin, nevertheless persisted in America. This gradually changed as immigration from Germany grew less and the generation of German-Americans born in America, who had no immediate relationship to the culture of the Old World, grew stronger.

Gradually, Little Germany disappeared or lived on only in status-oriented societies; its function as an aid to immigrants in the process of Americanization had been superseded.

In the 19th century the ethnic communities in an American environment offered self-protection and self-help. Among Germans this was in part accomplished by the proliferation of clubs and societies. Non-German observers saw this either as an expression of German *Gemütlichkeit*, or as a sign of backwardness and unwillingness to be assimilated. Undoubtedly there were societies oriented only towards the past. These, however, were exceptions; the greater number served either to guarantee the economic security of their members or the no less important socialization of the immigrants. Societies for mutual support, lodges, private savings banks and insurance companies were all necessary aids to survival amid the vicissitudes of the immigrant's life.

Social clubs modeled on those which the immigrants had known in Germany sprang up, particularly because American institutions could do little "to satisfy adjustment needs which the natives did not share: most members of the two

groups lacked the common tastes and experiences which form the basis for social interaction.” (Kathleen Neils Conzen).

The great number of German-American societies can partly be explained by the fact that they were based on German models. There were social clubs for the upper and middle ranks of society, clubs for individual professional groups, clubs with various religious or political affiliations and a number of *Heimatvereine* (clubs where German traditions and customs were kept alive). The more Germans settled together, the more clubs were founded.

Smaller German communities which had existed before mass immigration had come together simply through their common language and religion. The Little Germanies which came into existence in towns of the 19th century could assist in the process of Americanization because of the multitude of their societies.

The Americans themselves often failed to appreciate the difficulties of adjustment. What the Little Germanies with all their societies and institutions meant to their inhabitants was not easily understood by outsiders. The Germans were accused of “clannishness.” The fact that most immigrants needed the refuge afforded by the Little Germanies as a support during the phase of change and adjustment could wrongly be interpreted as unwillingness to adjust. Interpretations of this kind, together with an ever-

recurring prejudice against foreigners, led to a situation where many immigrants retreated into the ethnic community for longer than was perhaps necessary.

However, this failure to understand on the part of the Americans became a problem in the Americanization only after the increase of nativism in the 1840s and 1850s. Germans were affected at times by economic nativism. In towns, where nativist activity was more prevalent than in country districts, Germans were prominent in certain occupations, such as tailors, bakers, or toolmakers. The qualifications they possessed for their craft sharpened the competition on the labor market. With regard to social life, nativists often took exception to certain customs of the Germans. The widely subdivided secular world of clubs, sociability and boisterous behavior on the holy Sabbath, beer parlors, where women and children also foregathered, were things which appeared foreign to the stricter, ecclesiastically-minded American.

In the domain of politics the nativists criticized the radical, socialist Germans who, they thought, were endangering American democracy. This accusation concerned only a minority of German-Americans, most of whom were either uninterested in politics or were conformist. But this minority was at times extremely active. Composed for the most part of refugees from the German “Vormärz,” the 1848 Revolution, and Bismarck’s anti-socialist policy, it

supplied the leaders of the communist and socialist wings of the working-class movement. Even freethinkers and anarchists often proved to be citizens who had emigrated from Germany. They were a favorite target of the nativists. How far anti-foreign feelings directed against these groups had spread became clear in the proceedings against and verdicts upon the suspected terrorists in the Chicago Haymarket demonstration of 1886.

Personally, the Germans in America were credited by the public with many positive qualities. They were often praised for their simplicity, their industry and their skill, love of order, diligence, independence and love of freedom. Their habits of conviviality were not shared, but their capacity for taking pleasure in shooting-matches, choral societies and trips into the countryside was recognized.

German-Americans felt all the more affected by social discrimination by the nativists. Denigration and defamation of their familiar customs and institutions, lack of understanding of their situation as immigrants, failure to recognize their achievements, and open hostility could not fail to halt or at least delay the process of Americanization. In all the towns in which German immigrants were subjected to attacks by the nativists, the result was an enhancement of "little Germany" tendencies; German schools and churches experienced an upturn, and German culture was set up more

frequently and clearly as an absolute standard.

The British historian John Hugged has put forward the theory that the German-Americans' insistence on their heritage up to the time of World War I was a reaction against the attacks of the nativists. It is certain, and Hugged also emphasizes this, that a large number of the Germans in America did a great deal to antagonize their neighbors. Belief in the superiority of German culture was present, though latent, among Germans; but it was the politically sensitive "forty-eighters" who gave expression to the corresponding doctrines and used them in the struggle against nativism. Most German immigrants had made the effort to become Americans, without denying their German origin. If this origin was spumed, however, they were quickly ready to produce their German heritage and present it as superior. Amongst other things, they sought in this way to compensate for the feeling of insecurity and inferiority which besets every new arrival in an alien environment. Expressions of exaggerated self-esteem were countered by new attacks on the part of the nativists. How far the disputes and the bitterness of mutual provocation affected the process of Americanization is not easy to determine. The conflicts developed in as many different ways as there were Little Germanies. In many towns the nativist movement was not very prominent; in others the German-Americans lacked an active political

leadership. However, where there was a strong current of nativism together with agitation by the “forty-eighters,” a German *Turnverein*, or a group of German socialists, disputes of the parties could go beyond acrimonious debate to physical encounters. A situation of this kind occurred in May of 1851 in New York City. On this occasion the German-American newspapers reported a serious battle between nativists and German-Americans, who had celebrated a May festival in Hoboken, New Jersey. Both sides used firearms. This resulted in one person dead, one injured, and a number of arrests.

Towards the end of the 19th century, nativism had become a dead issue for the Germans. It was now directed against other immigrants, particularly those from Asia and from Eastern and Southern Europe. And yet the stand held by the Germans, the stubborn defense of their heritage, was not given up quickly; the more so since emigration from Germany had fallen, and nationalistic German-Americans had misgivings about the continuation of their existence as a group. German churches, German schools and sections of the German-language press particularly made every effort to maintain their course. The need to preserve German as an indispensable vehicle of culture was preached. For many immigrants who came to Little Germany in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Americanization became more difficult.

Recognizing that the Germans in America were, in politics, class origins, religion and region of origin, a heterogeneous group and hardly in a position to maintain their German identity in America, the leaders of the German-Americans attempted to organize a kind of pan-German movement. In 1901 the German-American National Bund was founded, with the aim of “promoting German culture in America and the political interests of German-Americans.” The Bund organized supraregional festivals, above all the “*Deutscher Tag*” [German Day]. The aim of these festivals, which were organized at great expense in many places, was to bring together the German communities, which had slowly declined, and to make them conscious of the obligation to maintain their German culture. The Bund enjoyed no small degree of popularity. Before World War I, it had attained a membership of two million. How consciously all these members shared the aims of the Bund may be left undecided. Many of those who took part in the festivals probably came chiefly to have a good time, rather than with the intention of making a decisive gesture in favor of the unity of German-Americans. Nevertheless, the Bund was an adverse factor in the process of Americanization. The German-American *Turnvereine* and socialist alliances warned against it and against functions such as the “*Deutscher Tag*,” since they gave encouragement to feelings of xenophobia and made more

difficult the integration of Germans into American society.

That such warnings were justified became clear during World War I. The leaders of the Bund, whose thinking was strongly nationalistic, identified themselves with the German Empire and saw no difference between imperial German and German-American concepts. The anti-German mood which was coming into existence — in some cases reaching a pitch of hysteria — and the entry of the U.S. into the war affected them like a shock. The German-Americans found themselves in a conflict of loyalties between the old homeland and the new. Many of them were pained by the bitter attacks on everything German and failed to understand that they themselves were partly responsible for them. However, most of them were already so far assimilated that siding with the new homeland was the obvious thing to do.

There was no revival of the movement for German-America after the war, in spite of a temporary increase in immigration from Germany. New arrivals in the Little Germanies came from a Germany which had lost the war and was economically at rock bottom. The children of those Germans who had been longer settled had, for the most part, become assimilated through attending public schools, and the German communities began to dissolve.

During World War II, there were fewer conflicts between Americans and German

-Americans, since Hitler's policies found too few supporters in the U.S., and too few German-Americans still saw their old homeland in Nazi Germany. There was no conflict of loyalties, as in World War I.

The readiness of American society to accept Germans was only one factor of importance for the Americanization of the immigrants. Other factors also played a part in the transition from the old homeland to the new. Thus it mattered a good deal where the new arrival went to. If he came to a German-American neighborhood, he had the best opportunity to overcome the difficulties of Americanization quickly. If he was among foreigners and left to himself, it was hard for him to accomplish the "breakthrough."

An additional factor, which influenced the Americanization process in individual cases, was the individual's own origin. Professional training, together with general education and social status, played its part. In a number of studies on German acculturation in America it is emphasized that those who belonged to the superior grades of society became assimilated more quickly than their fellow countrymen of the middle rank. There are, however, counter examples of immigrants with higher education; these often adopted a critical attitude toward the values of the new homeland, with the result that their own assimilation did not take place without inner conflicts. Meanwhile, the upper ranks of the

German communities possessed greater social versatility, perhaps also a better knowledge of English and could point to greater economic successes. In this way, “the higher social strata of the immigrant population accommodated themselves more easily and quickly to the cultural conditions of their new home, and therefore offered less resistance than the middle and lower strata to the spread of the English language among them” (Dieter Cunz). In the German societies, whose members were in large measure recruited from the upper social strata of the German-Americans, English was introduced early as the language of negotiation.

Immigrants, with their special status as citizens of two worlds, were always confronted with problems. Americanization was a difficult process, influenced by factors both internal and external; on these factors the emigrant himself often had no influence. Americanization, however, continued inexorably to take place. It had to do so, since it was the only adjustment to the new environment which brought a successful conclusion to the process of emigration. How many problems this process contained, and how long it took, depended on the individual immigrant, the good will of his acquaintances and on his economic success or failure. Americanization was not yet absorption into the new environment; this was achieved only when “the desire for a permanent return to Europe and the fear of isolation in America ceased.” But to reach this point, that was a long journey

for the majority; many immigrants of the first generation never fully succeeded. Yet in adjusting to some degree to America they left their children a heritage which allowed them to find a better and more secure life than would have been possible for them in Germany.

Source: Agnes Bretting, “The Old Home and the New. The Problem of Americanization,” in Günter Moltmann, ed., *Germans to America. 300 Years of Immigration, 1683-1983* (Stuttgart 1982), 152-159.

2. THE GERMANS IN THE WEST [1873]

J.J. Lalor

...We are sure that in the coming man—the future citizen of homogeneous America, an individual whose day is perhaps a hundred years in the future—the German blood will “tell,” and go far to make him what he will be....

It may be instructive to say a few words on the fate of the first German emigrants to this country. Part of them settled among the colonists of English descent, and part of them in colonies exclusively German, as, for instance, those of the Mohawk and the Schoharie in the State of New York. Previous to the war of the Revolution, there was not much calculated to bring them in contact with the colonists of a different origin, and they continued in their isolation, almost exclusively German, clinging to their own customs and their own language.

One of the effects of the War was to bring all classes of the population of the country nearer to one another, and to induce more friendly and more intimate relations among them. In this manner it came to pass that the Germans, who had thus far lived as if they constituted a commonwealth apart, began to feel themselves in some way related to the rest of the country. But the union of the two races was not yet complete. In one sense...the fusion of the two peoples was only political. Their social amalgamation took a longer time....

The first step towards the complete assimilation of the German and American

racess was taken when the German gave up his own language and adopted the English. So long as they could not even exchange ideas, there was little hope that much progress would be made towards a coming together; but the young German found it to his advantage to know English; he learned it, spoke it, and was proud of his accomplishment...With the German language disappeared the peculiarly German customs, and the young German differed now from the young American only in his origin. The latter invited his young German friend to church on Sundays, and later to an evening party at his home. The young German of that time found the young American girl fairer to the eye than his lady friend of German descent, — it speaks well for the good taste of the Germans of today that they do the same, — and offered her his hand and his heart; ...and thus love bridged over the chasm that separated the German from the American, and under God’s fusing influence both became indistinguishably one. All that remains of the primitive German emigrant to our shores is a name which his great grand-children make terrible havoc of, and which their reverend sire, the early settler,... would by no possibility recognize as that which he thought it would be his to transmit. A name, and that a mutilated one, is all that is left of him. Will it be so with the Germans now among us?

The great majority...of our present population has come here within something less than a quarter of a century, nine-tenths of all who have come being from the artisan and laboring classes, the other tenth from the middle classes, with an occasional Baron or Count — whom German and American alike declare to be generally “no count”....

Owing partly to political and partly to other causes, the tide of German emigration assumed, about the year 1848, dimensions altogether unwonted; and up to the present time there has been no falling off in the numbers that land from Germany every year upon our shores. Statisticians have estimated them at the yearly average of 100,000 souls, for about twenty years. There are those — German authorities — who claim that of the present population 10,000,000 are Germans and their descendants, and, as the writer takes it, descendants in the first generation, and about as much American as if born in Westphalia. In 1864 they claimed one-sixth of our entire population.

It is not easy to obtain trustworthy information as to the number of Germans in the United States. Of this we are certain, — it is very great. There are as many Germans in many of our large western cities as there are Americans; in some of them there are more. They are found scattered over the East; in the West, they are thick as autumn leaves;

they cover the country and swarm in the city.

Un-American in language, un-American in education, to some extent un-American in their views; socially, and in a degree commercially, isolated from the native-born population, yet endowed with all the rights of American citizens; American *de jure* but not, in a sense, *de facto*, — they present an object of study, political and social, second to none that can engage the attention of the American patriot or statesman. What are they? How do they live? What are their customs? What attitude do they take toward the rest of the population? What of their future? Will they found an *imperium in imperio*, or will they be absorbed into the American body? Will they permanently affect the American character, and how?

The Germans in this country are clannish, gregarious in their instincts. It is sometimes objected to the Germans that they herd together thus; but, as we think, unjustly. What else could be expected on their arrival? To find fault with them for not becoming Americans in a day is, to say the least, very unphilosophical; and whoever does so makes no allowance for the inevitable, and would go to law with gravitation itself.

Their quarters — and they have separate quarters in all large cities where they have settled in any numbers — are readily distinguished, so unlike are they to other quarters of the town, so un-aristocratic, so un-American, so unpretending in their architecture. The

stores and dwellings wear a strange aspect. The huge German characters on the sign-boards, generally gilt or some exceedingly dazzling color, flare down on the spectator, and tell him that he is not among those "to the manner born," while the English on the same is frequently so inhumanly butchered that he feels very certain he is among no very near relations, even of the King's subjects.

The never failing lager-beer saloon opens its hospitable door to him at every step. He advances, and lager-beer saloons multiply. He advances at an arithmetical rate; but lager-beer saloons increase in a geometrical ratio. They gain upon him. He finds them at his right and his left, behind and before him;...for saloons are countless....Just at this point it is that the observer is in danger of coming to a wrong conclusion from all he sees; for he is lost in wonder how all these saloons are supported, and, if given to hasty generalization, soon comes to the conclusion that either all German saloon-keepers must starve, or that all Germans who do not keep saloons must be the most punctual of tavern patrons, and the least temperate of men; neither of which conclusions, as his further acquaintance with German saloons and German saloon-keepers will satisfy him, is, owing to lack of data, correct; for German saloon-keepers do not starve, and a confirmed German inebriate is as rare almost as a German advocate of total abstinence. Our German population may, relatively,

support the largest number of saloons. They by no means produce the greatest number of drunkards.

The appearance of the people is in keeping with the quarters in which they live. The men, as a rule, are large, vigorous, and handsome; the women more noticeable for their robustness than for their beauty; the children, compared with the American children, for their greater size, strength, and weight.

Here no waterfall, Grecian bend, or Dolly Varden. Here only original Teutonic simplicity and severity. Here no affected gait, no strained attention to the style of locomotion. Here men and women who seem to believe that it is more important they should walk than *how*; that they should be dressed than *how*; who care more to live in the present and provide for the future than after what fashion they shall do the one or the other. Here no fastidiousness of any kind, and yet nothing that can shock the most fastidious; for if there is nothing ornamental here, there is nothing here that is indecent. The Germans are a prolific race, raise large families, and enjoy doing so. Here, therefore, children swarm. Here children scream and grow large-chested; climb up piles of wood, over their father's heavy wagons, and grow broad-shouldered and muscular. Here infants drink from the fountain nature intended they should feed at; here "soothing-syrup" and the nursing bottle are unknown. Here no effeminacy—no effeminacy even in women. Here the five

-year-old learns sometimes to earn his daily bread, and the ten-year-old divides his time between school and work. Here men and even children who know the value of a penny, — men and children who are willing to work, who understand from the cradle that life is a struggle, who earn relatively much, and spend relatively little; who are willing to live on beer and coarse meat and brown bread, and think it no self-denial to do so. Here, in fact, in the sternest of schools, are brought up those whom the children of Americans will have to meet in the battle of life; the men into whose hands, or into the hands of whose children the wealth and influence of the West, in less than half a century, will, in a great measure, have passed, and with the wealth and influence the great West—which in a few years will mean more than half the continent—it may be the wealth and influence of the whole country; provided always the children of American parents are not brought up in a more Spartan-like school than they are at present, and taught that only through those virtues by which their fathers earned the competence they enjoy can that competence be preserved.

The stern early training of the young German is reinforced by the virtues he witnesses about him, economy, honesty, and industry, all of which in a high degree the German claims and obtains credit wherever he settles.

The man works, the children work, and the women work, and work as hard as if not harder than the men; for the German,

although not destitute of romance, is far from believing that woman was made to be only ornamental. Mere accomplishments go a very little way in deciding a German's choice of a wife. He inquires how well she will wear and how hard she can work, whether she can sew and cook. He has never been guilty of the folly of seeking in his wife an intellectual companion. If he is a philosopher, he does not want his wife to be one. The less she knows of syllogisms the better. Among the opponents, accordingly, of woman-suffrage, the Germans are the staunchest. Even the best-to-do Germans, men of education, professional men, expect their wives to superintend the cooking, and in many cases to do it themselves.

The wife helps her husband in all small businesses. She stands behind the counter and retails beer for him, not ceasing, however, to take care of her baby, usually a fat and rosy one, and so rugged, indeed, that a couple of hours' neglect daily could not possibly harm it; or she helps you to fit on a pair of boots or shoes which her husband has made or mended for you, perhaps sold you. The industry of the women is sometimes marvelous. The writer has known German women to walk six or seven miles to market before seven o'clock in the morning, with no burden but a dozen of eggs or a pound or two of butter, and to wait there a half a day before they had disposed of it.

As a rule, the German in the West owns his own house and the ground it is built

on. It may be, and generally is, a humble one, yet he is proud in the consciousness that its possession constitutes him a land owner. He plants a row of poplars before his cottage, and then the last touch is given to his manorial estate. In addition to his other good qualities he is provident, and at his death rarely leaves any one who cannot take care of himself unprovided for. It is the prevalence of these virtues amongst them that has given the Germans their reputation as good, quiet, respectable, peace-loving, law-abiding citizens, — a reputation which they certainly deserve.

These virtues are sometimes carried to that extreme where they begin to look to the less moderate American like faults. The German is so content to leave well-enough alone that he can see nothing to be gained by incessant and feverish attempts at improvement. Hence, with all his love of immediate gain, he cares little for that which is prospective, if attended with ever so small a risk. German speculation is confined to the regions of philosophy; it never shows itself in the market.

The German is quite social, that is, with his own countrymen. With them he will sit, and smoke, and drink a glass of beer or wine, never of brandy or whiskey, unless perchance he has been Americanized in that one particular, which sometimes happens. With Americans he is more reserved. He seems to feel that between them and him there is an impassable gulf. His only intercourse

with them is of a business character, and of that even he has but little. If he keeps a wholesale house, or a very large retail one, he may have a small number of American customers; otherwise, his business relations are confined to those of his own nationality. Americans are practically foreigners to their German fellow-citizens whom it is a kind of petty treason to the fatherland to patronize. Hence the German population have their own merchants, artisans, mechanics, dressmakers, and professional men.

They have their own literary and scientific societies, their own reading-rooms, their own libraries, their own theatre, and their own press, all of which compare favorably, everything considered, with similar institutions among Americans. They like a doctor of their own, and a lawyer, where they can find one. The German seems to have conscientious — it were more correct, perhaps, to say gastronomic — scruples against being physicked by an American doctor; for deep in his soul lies the conviction that no one but a German can understand the intricacies of a genuine German stomach. A Yankee dentist has no vocation to fill a German tooth, or grind at a German molar, not even to extract one from a German jawbone.... [T]he American shoemaker even is not honored by his German fellow-citizen. There is a something about the American boot absolutely forbidding to him....

It would not be hard to misinterpret this feature of the German character. Its

existence, however, should not be attributed to any dislike of the German for the American. He may love him very well, he loves his countrymen more. And it is quite natural he should; it is but one instance in a thousand of the effects of the moral chemical affinity of race.

The German has, as might be expected, his own Church...and, as might not be expected, his own school, to say nothing of certain institutions peculiarly his own. In religion he is either Lutheran, of the German Reformed Church, or Roman Catholic; and when he professes the creed of any of these his orthodoxy is unquestioned. The opinion obtains very extensively that rationalism, or infidelity, or some form of unbelief, is widely prevalent among the German portion of our population. There is some truth in this. Yet the vast majority of the German population...are Christians of some kind. The best educated amongst them, however, are, for the most part, members of no Church; and of the children of German parents born in this country very many, perhaps a majority of those who receive anything approximating to a collegiate education, do not accept Christianity in any form; of these again, probably the greater number favor absolute materialism. It cannot be said that it is American modes of thought or the atmosphere of American opinion that engender this change. American thought, or its equivalent, New-England thought, has no influence on the Germans in America. Of all our authors, Emerson is

perhaps the only one who enjoys any reputation as a thinker among them, and his is to be attributed in part to the fact that they claim he is only a popularizer of German speculations. The minds that form theirs are German; they read Büchner, Vogt, and Haeckel.

The German radical or the German materialist is not as fair minded as the American who entertains the same views....

It cannot be said that the German radical's science is always profound, or that he knows both sides of momentous questions; but he never suspects that he is superficial, or seems to care whether there is anything to be said on the other side. Christianity...is losing among the German population in America faster perhaps than among any other class of people in the world; and should the extreme radicals in religion — that is, those of American birth and parentage — ever attain to political significance in the country, they will be warmly seconded by a large and growing class of Germans in the West, who, if anything, are much more radical in the matter than Americans are, or think it consistent with the most enlightened liberty to be; for whereas the American is content with the freedom to hold and defend his views, the German, owing perhaps to the atmosphere in which he was educated, is somewhat inclined to act as if no views but those he entertains are entitled to respect. He is not satisfied with dissenting from your opinion, but has,

moreover, the greatest contempt for it, and perhaps for you that you entertain it.

The German's idea of Sunday is anything but Puritanic. It is the very opposite. It is for them a day of amusement. It is no unusual thing to be asked by a German on Monday morning, "Well, how did you amuse yourself yesterday?" There are those among the Germans, of course, who respect and keep the sabbath; but then there are always enough of them who do not; and to judge by the numbers in which they frequent their places of amusement on Sunday, — the parks, beer-gardens, and public halls, — a stranger might possibly be tempted to inquire whether the Germans had any idea of a sabbath. Men, women, and children, older men with their wives, and younger ones with their sweethearts, throng these places every Sunday, and enjoy themselves, careless of what impression they make on their fellow-citizens of American origin, to whom the sound of brass instruments is anything but welcome or edifying. In the cold of winter, when the parks and beer-gardens are dreary and shorn of their beauty, the German seeks amusement in some hall instead. Here he treats himself to a compound of rather heterogeneous elements, — to music, beer, and smoke; and to all of them at once. Any Sunday afternoon in the cold of winter, you may find him, with his wife or child, or both, in some large hall, one of a hundred or five hundred, smoking his meerschaum or his cigar, sipping his beer, wine, or

coffee, and listening to a selection from Meyerbeer or Beethoven. Were it summer, he would add the odor of roses to the fumes of his tobacco and the smell of his beer; for he is as fond of flowers as he is of any of these, and is never happier than when the air, trembling to the notes of the orchestra, is redolent with tobacco-smoke, the perfume of the rose, heliotrope, and hop....

We remarked above that the German has his own school, from which it may be inferred that he does not patronize the public-school system of the country; and this inference, within limits, is not without correctness. A great many Germans do send their children to the public schools. A few of the best-disciplined schools, and of the most thorough that we know, are public schools frequented exclusively by German children; but can such a school be properly called a public school? It may, inasmuch it derives its support from the public, that the teachers are appointed by the people, through a board of school-commissioners, and that it is open to all children who apply for admission to its classes; in all these respects it is a public school; but it is not what the American people understand by that appellation, since...these are sometimes peculiarly German; for the teachers are German, the moral atmosphere is German, the methods in part German, and the language of the school, to say the least, as much German as English. When Germans can find a school of this kind,

their objections to the public-school system are in part, if not entirely, removed; and no doubt could our school system be Germanized to this extent everywhere, all objections would be removed.

The Roman Catholic German keeps his child from the public school for the same reasons that the vast majority of Roman Catholics do, namely, because they claim that the schools are not sufficiently unsectarian. The Lutheran German builds a school-house next to his Lutheran Church, and then sends his children to be brought up Lutherans. His objection to the public-school system is, that it does not do this for him. But even with the German who professes no adherence to creed or church, the public-school system is no favorite, and that for quite different reasons. Generally — this is not the place to inquire why — much better educated than the rest of his countrymen, perhaps with all the advantages which Germans could afford for education, with a mind of his own on most points, and fully able to decide what is best for his children, he chooses rather to send them to some private institution, to one, if possible, as near in character to those of his fatherland as he can find. He objects to the employment of women in the schools. The school-ma'am is one of the American institutions least consonant with his modes of thought and his ideas of the sex and its sphere. He is of opinion, and not at all humbly, that neither physically nor mentally is woman competent for the

labor of teaching. He would as lief his daughter should shoulder a musket as seek a teacher's diploma. Again you meet one who occasionally finds fault with the public-school system because it is too religious. For the Roman Catholic it has not religion enough, nor of the right kind; for some Germans it has a vast deal too much. The name of God, or an allusion to Providence, or something else equally unscientific, in a reading book in a school, is sufficient to warn a thorough German radical of its dangerous influence on the young mind. What he wants is an institution in which there shall be no praying, no reading of the Bible, no allusion to a heaven or a God; where science shall be taught without any reference to a first cause, and literature without specimens from the writings of bishops, priests, or deacons, or even from a Milton, who, though a great man and gifted with real poetic genius, was so unfortunate in his choice of a subject—...he chose a theological one—that all he has earned is a right to be forgotten. Another reason why this class of Germans do not patronize the national system of schools is, that they look upon them as de-Germanizing in their influence, and destructive of an individuality which they are anxious to preserve.

To secure this end, that is, to avoid their denationalization, and what they think to be evils in the public-school system, they have erected schools of their own. Their teachers are generally competent, and

compare very favorably with the teachers in the public schools. Their methods of teaching are the same that are followed in Germany, and the results the same, — scholars thorough and accurate in their knowledge, who are, besides, as gentlemanly, as well-behaved, and as respectful to their teachers as the children that frequent the most orthodox schools in the land. In the matter of education, at least, they lose nothing from the fact that they do not frequent our public schools.

There are branches of education, sometimes neglected by Americans, which are attended to by our German friends with scrupulous care. We refer particularly to physical education and education in music. The German sends his little boy, and his little girl when he can, to a school of physical training, where they are exercised in calisthenics and kindred arts. The young man grows up and becomes a member of a Turnverein, or society of gymnasts. These institutions for physical and intellectual development are looked upon with suspicion by a great many people, and even by a great many Germans, as the members of them are frequently, most frequently, members of no church, and antagonistic to religion in every shape. Occasionally the best gymnasts from the various localities in the country meet in some large city, and go through competitive evolutions, — marks of distinction, honors, or diplomas being granted to those who distinguish themselves by feats of strength or skill.

The Saengerfest is peculiarly German. Wherever a number of Germans are to be found in any place, it would be very strange if a musical society did not start into being. Such societies are found in all large cities where there is a German population, and in many smaller ones. A German community without music is unthinkable; as well talk of a German community without a language or a brewery. The Americans soon catch the contagion. So great, indeed, is the influence of the Germans upon the taste of the Americans in this respect that we believe it possible our western cities may shortly take the lead in point of musical, as much as the eastern cities do in point of literary, talent in this country. As in the case of gymnasts, so it is with the various German musical societies. At a specified time and place they meet to try their relative musical powers; and they come from all directions for that purpose. They generally meet...where their countrymen are well represented; and the occasion of their coming together is a gala-day. Evergreens adorn the streets, arches are erected in various places, devices and mottoes are abundantly displayed in prominent localities, flags, German and American flutter from German houses, the entrance to the lager-beer saloons are made as inviting as the grotto of a nymph, German faces in extra supply are met with at every corner. The Saengerfest is held in some place of public amusement; the various societies

compete and are awarded prizes according to merit.

Another “fest” is the Schützenfest in which the prizes awarded are to the best marksmen. These feasts are all good, and the American who believes in physical education and the influence of good music will be glad that they exist.

We have mentioned so many points in which the German is isolated from the American that the question, in what do the two agree, would not be impertinent. Have they anything in common? We think they have. We think that in their common adherence to the rights of humanity, and in their devotion to the principles of human liberty, they are one; that the German in America would fight side by side with the American for any broad principle of liberty or human right, for the dignity or independence or union of the country, — with this distinction, however: the American would fight for the country and the principle, the German, we think, for the principle only; that is, if the two could be separated. In other words, the German does not love America as his fatherland; he loves that which alone makes America — we do not say dear but — supportable to him, — liberty, and the opportunity it affords him to better his condition.

Although he does not mix with the American portion of the community, and has no very great love for it, he is no enemy of the American, he bears him no ill-will. That he does not mingle in American society or positively loves the

native American is not his fault. He cannot, and it should not be expected from him. There is nothing to bring the two together but a common adherence to a few abstract principles, — principles which have no active opponents, and which, therefore, do not tend to cement the union of the German and American peoples as they would were they threatened from without or within.

His language, customs, education, and traditions, his daily mode of life, even, are different; hence he does not meet his American fellow-citizen as often as he would were any of these things held by the two in common. Germans and Americans cannot meet even at the same table, which, however good it may be for one or the other, never can suit both at the same time, so different are their culinary tastes. The German tells you that he can get nothing to eat at an American boarding-house or hotel; and in a German one the American assures you there is nothing he can eat. In this way it happens that not only the requirements of the head and heart, but those of the stomach even, tend to keep the two people separated; and in the process of their amalgamation, the stomach of the German must be educated to the American standard before that amalgamation will be complete.

From all that has been said, it may be inferred that the German does not frown on or flatter the American. He gives him credit for perseverance, enterprise, and pluck, for his ability for self-government; but here ends his praise. He can tell us,

on the other hand, and his less intelligent fellow-countryman learns to repeat it after him, that we, compared with the people of Europe, possess a purely colonial character; that we have produced nothing in literature, art, or science that is peculiarly American; that in the little we have accomplished, we have been imitators; he will add, perhaps, if he cares to be severe, that to this there is one exception: that the world is indebted to us for originating spirit-wrapping and table-turning and Mormonism, — all of which bear an unmistakable American character.

Such being the light in which we appear to those of our German population who trouble themselves at all with speculations as to the probable future of their race in the United States, it is not much to be wondered at that they do not wish to be Americanized any faster than they can help it; that they resist the change, if Americanization means changing them into anything what the American is to-day....In fact, the German looks upon the invitation to Americanize himself as an invitation to forget his early associations and European impressions, to exchange the Alps for the Alleghenies and the Rhine for the Hudson; to efface Heidelberg and Berlin from his memory, and fall in love with Cambridge and New York: “to throw Goethe and Schiller into the fire, and read the Bible and Miles Standish”; to turn away from the grand old minster, and feast his eyes on ordinary houses built of fiery red brick.

To hear him discourse of how much he would be under the painful necessity of giving up to become an American, you would imagine him certainly the heir, and the exclusive heir, of all the ages. He dilates on the merits of Schiller and Goethe, as if Schiller and Goethe did not belong as much to the world as to Germany, and might not be appropriated by any one who wished and was able to make them his own, in Cambridge as in Weimar itself. In fact, you might imagine that Schiller, Goethe, and Lessing were his ever-attendant spirits, forever whispering into his ear. Between him and the American alike, and the old cathedrals of Europe, and its celebrated galleries of art, the Atlantic rolls; yet he speaks as glibly of them as if, by some mysterious in-fluence, they were where he might inspect them at any moment he chose; and although his great grandfather may be the last of his kin that saw them, he, according to all appearances, knows as much about them as if he carried them all in his breeches-pocket.

But what of the future? By the very force of circumstances, and in spite of what the German wishes, his descendants will be American. If we are ever to become one nation, a homogeneous people, the distinction of German and American must cease. The German does not like this. He does not like to be swallowed up by the great American people, body, bones, and all. He does not like to be told that he will disappear and

leave not a trace behind, for he has within him the instinct of immortality.

Will he live in America in any sense? We think he will. Even at present, German ideas are not without their force. It is not for us to say whether this is always for the best. Let others decide whether the German boast — that they are the born enemies of “Yankee” thought and “Yankee” ideas — is true or not. All we aim at is to take an objective view of them, not sparing them where their faults are patent, nor caring to spare the reader who would fain find everything as he would wish it to be.

Wherever they have settled in any numbers, they hold — or may hold if they so choose — the balance of power, and it would be almost impossible to pass a Maine Liquor Law, or a Sunday Law, or if passed, to enforce it. The principle that Christianity is part of the common law is fast disappearing wherever they settle. In any question involving that point no judge, anxious for the German vote and caring more for the vote than the principle, or the dignity of the bench, would dare to affirm it.

They claim exemption from taxes for institutions professedly devoted to the combating of Christianity on the ground that churches and schools are exempt from taxation; and there are places where it is not improbable they will carry their point. On all of which we leave it to the reader to make his own comments.

The German will affect the American community in two ways: by his blood and

by his ideas. The resultant will be neither “Yankee” nor German; it will be American. The German character—there are enough of the nation among us to do it—will complement the American, and of all characters it is in some respects the one most able to do it. The American is too much taken up with the pursuit of gain: an infusion of German blood will have the effect of making him less so, but, at the same time perhaps, more saving; less abstemious in the matter of wine and beer, if this could be considered desirable, more so in that of brandy and whiskey; less given to commercial speculation, fonder of music and drama, of flowers and of nature.

It is not probable that they will influence our form of government or our political principles at all. The mission of the Anglo Saxon race appears to be to educate men into governing themselves. Here Germany must come to school to America. Her genius is not political, however contemporaneous events may seem to favor the opposite view. Among no people are the ties of friendship and family stronger. Among no people is political coherency less powerful. As a people they may be manipulated by a skillful hand. Bismarck’s success in moulding them in a short period into a great nation, if it proves the ability of the man, proves also a lack of political self-assertion in the people themselves. Were their political prejudices stronger, they could not have been overcome so easily. Of the thousands of Germans who have

come to our shores, the late Dr. [Franz] Lieber is, perhaps, the only political writer of any prominence they have given us; and of distinguished statesmen, they have not produced one. Their own most eminent writers do not hesitate to confess that, as a people, they have no political genius. They had no idea of the state until they came in contact with the Romans; and they have always considered the government as an estate, and not as a trust. We should be inclined to think that, if true to their instincts, they would in this country favor State rights, for they have always been impatient of universal governments, ecclesiastical and civil, and a tendency to decentralization runs through the whole of their history. Hence, the small States which only yesterday were united into an Empire, — a union of which no one feels warranted to prophesy the perpetuity. We repeat it, therefore, it is only socially, and in our religious history that the Germans will act upon us; and, in the long run, perhaps, more in the latter respect than in the former. There seems to be a tendency in the German character that is anti-Christian. We recollect finding ourselves one Christmas day in the house of a venerable German patriarch, — a man with hair as white as the snow that covered the ground outside. His little grandchildren were about him, climbing his knee, and talking of the “Christ-kind,” or Christ-child, who had sent them all the pretty golden fruit, and the tree that bore it, their aged grandparent the while extolling Rénan,

and arguing against the existence of God. Before these children had doffed their small clothes, Santa Claus and the Christ-kind were both relegated to the mythic age of the nursery. And something like this is taking place every day among the Germans in the West.

When it is known that one of the objects of the Turnvereins is the propagation of the most radical ideas in matters of religion and politics, and that these societies are found in every State of the Union, something is learned of how they are affecting us in that direction. These and other influences will survive the German in America. He will go; but they, for good or evil, will remain. The German’s character will not die out, but will change; his name, his feelings, his thoughts, and his aspirations will cease to be German, and, in ceasing to be German, become American; but, on the other hand, not American in precisely the signification that word bears today; for America, even, is not exempt from the laws which produce the vicissitudes of nations and the constant variation of national character.

Source: J.J. Lalor, “The Germans in the West,” in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XXXII (October 1873), 459-470. [abr.]

3. I HAVE COME TO LOVE THIS COUNTRY

Christian Sack, M.D.

South Bend, [October 1863]

Dear Friend,

...I have come to love this country during my stay here, in as much as I have gotten to know America in terms of its federal institutions and its inner life in this state and through reading political and social writings regarding the other states; and I have recognized the freedom, even if often seen in wrong application, as something that yet makes a people great, how good that I do not want to leave here anymore.

If I put myself back, with the exception of the beautiful year of '48, to the beautiful places where we enjoyed our most beautiful hours, and think with what kind of fearfulness political questions used to be discussed, with what kind of restraint one got into such discussions, how one first asked oneself fearfully whether one had not, after all, uttered something unwelcome, or even high treason for which one would earn some censure. Friend, there is something beautiful about freedom.

Of course, we also have some noticeable afflictions in this young state caught up in its development. We have to suffer much unpleasantness through insufficient or inappropriate laws and are in some respect humbugged and swindled. Yet these are nothing but small matters when set against the sweet and unrestricted enjoyment of freedom of

speech and freedom. Clerical doings, hypocrisy, stupidity esp. from their own people who cannot exist or be happy without a leader of the herd, such desires of Americans often make one sick. But this nonsense is not tenable and is blown away to nothing by free speech and a free press.

And what life, what ceremonious bustle it is when the election battles begin and the parties seek to trump each other in extravagance and magnificence! When drums and pipes and the sound of German brass music announce the significance of the day and call upon everyone to recite his free opinion. Friend! That is something beautiful and magnificent which often moves me to my innermost being, esp. when thinking of the beautiful homeland I left, for which I likewise wish such a beautiful and golden freedom...

Fare well,

Your loyal friend

Christian Sack

Source: Gabrielle Robinson and Erwin Scherer, *Life in Letters. A 19th Century Correspondence Between Bavaria and South Bend* (Indianapolis: Max Kade German-American Center, IUPUI, and Indiana German Heritage Society, 2006), 93-95 [abr.]. The editors reproduced 71 of 222 extant letters of this contact of the Dr. Sack family with their friends and relatives back home in Arzberg, Bavaria, from which many emigrated and settled in South Bend. Among them was also Friedrich Elbel, the "Mr. Music" of South Bend. Strong Sister City relations unite the two towns today.

4. HOOSIER *KULTURKAMPF*:

ANGLO-GERMAN CULTURAL CONFLICTS IN FORT WAYNE, 1840-1920

Clifford H. Scott

The realities of life for people living in the Old Northwest were measured by their membership in reasonably well-defined ethnic and cultural groups. Such is the case in northern Indiana's Fort Wayne where ethnic loyalties to national origins, language, and religion made up the flesh and blood of interpersonal contacts and defined the nature of social and political conflicts. The ebb and flow of ethnic encounters during the 19th and early 20th centuries suggests that the well-known Anglo-German antagonisms of the World War I years were but the culmination of a well-established pattern of conflicts waged to determine the cultural structure and values of America's towns and cities.

Early 19th century ethnic relations in Fort Wayne show relative cooperation in the 1820s and 1830s between the German and Anglo (English and Scottish) Protestants living within a population majority of Miami Indians and French and French-Canadian Roman Catholics. But splits developed by 1837 when separate ministers and buildings emerged for the Protestants—divided chiefly between German Lutherans and Anglo Presbyterians. Open friction was the case by the 1840s as each group staked out rival religious and social territories.

Incipient friction was fed by ethnic values of religious and cultural superiority, if not of confidence in an

exclusive possession of the truth. Conservative German Lutherans would not allow their people to use the English language as it was believed to corrupt the purity of their theology, and they saw themselves as the redeeming influence in a corrupt English culture. The battle lines for northern Indiana were clearly drawn. Fort Wayne evidence of the ensuing cultural combat is found by 1844 in the existence of three rival parochial school systems run by German Lutherans, German Catholics, and Anglo Presbyterians. These school divisions and their cultural perpetuation were characterized by school-children fights after school, which were carried on for well over a century. The parochial school divisions closely approximated the ethnic population balance in a community that would remain until the 1890s composed of approximately one-third German Lutheran, one-third German Catholic, and one-third English and Scotch Protestants.

Critical ethnic divisions in Fort Wayne in the 1850s led to the famous cultural and political conflict between the Know-Nothing Movement (the aggressively Anglo-assimilationist party) and the ethnic Democrats. Know-Nothing issues in Fort Wayne centered around advocacy of anti-Catholicism, public education, temperance, and restrictions on immigration and voting in order to

restrain the “flying horde of Europe’s vomit.” Most German ethnics resented such rhetoric and opposed politically such cultural objectives. Battlefield leadership in Fort Wayne was led for the Anglos by the Presbyterian editor of the Fort Wayne Times and Methodist ministers, while the German opponents were led by Lutherans and Catholics.

The cultural division was also a political party division: German Democrats vs. Anglo Whigs—later many of the Whigs participated in the People’s or Know-Nothing Party and then still later in the Republican Party.

The conflict of the 1850s cemented Germans of Lutheran and Roman Catholic background into the Democratic Party for the next fifty to seventy years. Ironically, in many ways these conflicts of the 1850s created a “German” nationality in America where none had existed in Europe because of the various political and traditional divisions among the numerous German states. But now in America, immigrant perceptions of a common “English” cultural opposition and the lack of distinctions in the perceptions of Anglos created an inclusive “German” nationality.

One of the Know-Nothing issues which remained throughout the century in the center of Fort Wayne German-Anglo group controversies was the availability of alcohol. In the early 1840s the Presbyterians along with other Anglo-Protestants sponsored their own separate Fourth of July celebration in Fort Wayne

claiming that the public festivities were controlled by the Germans who only commemorated the liberty of drunkenness. When the 1855 Indiana legislature with strong Know-Nothing support passed state-wide prohibition, Fort Wayne saloon keepers—heavily German—refused to abide by it until local Anglo-prohibitionists hired lawyers to force the state to prosecute.

In 1894, the German Democratic coalition temporarily split on the rocks of rival German Lutheran and Catholic mayoralty candidates allowing the Anglo temperance and American Protective League candidate to slip into the mayor’s office. German Lutherans who switched party votes to elect a law-and-order anti-Catholic instead of the German-Catholic Democrat were dismayed to find that not only did the mayor seek to close the saloons on Sunday and at 11:00 p.m. on weeknights, but that his attempted city patronage against “anti-Protestants” included German Lutherans as well as Catholics. German Catholics counterattacked through a criminal libel suit brought by local Bishop Joseph Rademacher against the editor of the Fort Wayne A.P.A. *American Eagle* for an inflammatory article alleging sexual immorality by priests in the local Catholic orphanage.

Public education in Fort Wayne was also a continuing controversy for ethnic rivals. It was no accident that Fort Wayne was very slow in developing a public school system. While there were false

starts in the 1850s, it was really not until the immediate post-Civil War period that fully tax-supported education came to Fort Wayne. Public education was supported by Anglo Protestants, especially Presbyterians, and opposed by German Lutherans and Catholics. In fact, during the early experiment with public schools in the 1850s, leading German families refused to pay a property tax to support public schools. This issue, along with temperance, was crucial in holding together the Lutheran and Catholic Democratic coalition. The reasons German ethnics opposed public schools were their opposition to taxes for public education since they were already subsidizing parochial schools and their fear that public education would become ungodly, or, even worse and much more likely, it would become Anglo Protestant. It was no coincidence that the public school's first superintendent in Fort Wayne was an ordained Presbyterian minister and the former teacher-director of the local Presbyterian church school. When compromises were finally worked out in the late 1860s for Fort Wayne public schools, four elementary schools were set aside for instruction in German. By the 1890s enrollment in these all-German schools had dropped, and the schools were reduced to two. Under a reorganization plan in 1901, German language instruction was given to more students—in five schools for all eight grades of each—but now it was taught for only one class hour a day by a special

language teacher. This modified bilingual effort in a period of greater ethnic assimilation proved more successful, and with the stimulation of increased German cultural activities such language instruction spread to fourteen of the seventeen Fort Wayne elementary schools by 1916.

When the public high school opened in 1868, a German language teacher was one of the highest paid instructors; German remained the only modern foreign language taught in the school. At the time World War I broke out, the high school was employing five teachers of German and eight of English in its language arts program. In the separate Lutheran and German Catholic parochial schools German was ordinarily the language of instruction, especially in the Lutheran schools; but by 1915 an increasing use of English was relegating German to the status of a foreign language and as the language for religious instruction.

Rivalry between parochial and public schools continued into the 20th century based upon perceptions of religious exclusion. Older Anglo residents relate, for example, that in the summers they played with German parochial students, but when school commenced in the fall, Lutheran and Catholic parochial students would no longer play with them, the perceived reason being that parochial teachers taught that outsiders were religiously impure, would not go to

heaven, and that their students should not become contaminated.

Basic characteristics of these ethnic divisions in the Fort Wayne population can be reconstructed from the 1880 census rolls. The census shows 9,632 first and second generation German-Americans in Fort Wayne, or about 36% of the total population. Assuming, conservatively, a German third generation roughly equal to the size of the second generation, the total percentage of German Americans in the late 19th century was nearly 60% of the Fort Wayne population. A representative group of 100 first and second generation immigrations in Fort Wayne in 1880 shows 75 Germans, 12 Irish, 4 English, 4 French, 3 Scots, and 2 miscellaneous. In the rural areas of Allen County there was a smaller percentage of first and second generation Germans than in the city—20%—but still the largest fraction of rural ethnics.

Of the first generation immigrants in Fort Wayne in 1880, nine out of ten Germans married either a first or second generation German, eight of ten Irish married first or second generation Irish, while only four of ten Anglos married a first or second generation Anglo spouse. The differential rate of ethnic assimilation is even more clearly seen in the 1880 census in the marital selection of second generation ethnics. At that stage one finds nine of ten Anglos had married at least third-generation or native

-stock spouses, six of ten Irish, but only four of ten Germans.

The cultural loyalties of many of these German families were to expressions of things German. Ernest Sihler, son of the patriarch of St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, for example, wrote of the superiority of the Lutheran parochial schools compared to the public schools, noting that the German classes provided the intellectual nourishment of Goethe, Schiller, and Luther instead of the "infantile" English-language primers found in the public schools. Sihler also claimed that the German parochial teachers were "scholarly men, not half-baked products of the crude educational beginnings of the West. They had been trained at German gymnasia and had studied at German universities." German pride was amply evident.

By the 1900-1914 period, increased cultural assimilation had occurred, for by then up to four generations of German-Americans had lived in Allen County. They and more recent arrivals were subject to powerful economic and social forces encouraging assimilation. Revealing examples of this cultural process include Charles Biederwolf, a second generation German who was the popular secretary of the town's Chamber of Commerce. Originally of a Democratic Lutheran background, by the time of his Chamber of Commerce position he was a Republican and a member of the First Presbyterian Church. Edward Hoffman,

another second generation German, moved from the farm to law school and rose to the post of secretary of the Democratic National Committee; along the way he shifted denominationally to First Presbyterian. George Waldschmidt, a first generation German, kept his Lutheran affiliation, although belonging to a First Presbyterian Men's Club, but as one of the 1908 founders of the German-American Bank and Trust Co. he became a prominent Republican Party leader. The pursuit of social respectability led into the Republican Party; and for those with shifting secular loyalties or a desire for Masonic membership—prohibited by the Catholics and the Missouri Synod Lutherans—it led into Anglo-Protestant denominations.

While there was noticeable assimilation, there was also ethnic tenacity in this period. The National German-American Alliance served as an umbrella organization for numerous Fort Wayne German clubs and singing societies and the local German press. German newspapers in Fort Wayne dated back to the 1850s, and in 1914 one of only three German dailies in Indiana was located in Fort Wayne. The German community was held together by a leadership of Lutheran and Catholic clergy, press editors, parochial teachers, and Democratic Party leaders among all of whom self-interest and personal beliefs coincided. New strength in the German community of 1900-1914 was shown by the establishment of the German-

American Bank (which became the "Lincoln" National Bank when the U.S. entered the war in 1917) and by a newly annual "German Day" celebration held in Germania Park which was owned by the Berghoff Brewing Co. This celebration ceased with U.S. entry into the war, and with it the park which was sold to the Elks.

In the 1914-1917 period, cultural conflicts moved from the second to the front page of the local press as the European war heightened the ethnic identity of Anglo-Americans and German-Americans alike. Both Germans and Anglos from Fort Wayne lobbied Congress over U.S. entry into the war. Each contributed money and letters to the press to support their respective European preferences.

German-American businessmen in Fort Wayne lobbied Anglo banks to refrain from proposed loans to the British. German farmers and tradesmen attended pro-German plays in the local theaters where, by their contributions, they joined the Society of the Iron Cross. The two-party press in Fort Wayne, not anxious to antagonize German voters, provided surprisingly balanced coverage of the war up until January of 1917. Yet political shifts occurred in 1916 as German Lutheran Democrats, always the softer element in the ethnic coalition, shifted to Republican national candidates in retaliation for Woodrow Wilson's increasing tilt to the British and for intervention.

The war years from 1917 to 1919 was the time for the Anglos to gain the upper hand in the long-term cultural clashes with the German ethnics. Now they could yield the added weight of patriotism to force Anglo-assimilation upon the only moderately meltable German ethnics. The new cultural power was dramatized in the issues of prohibition, women's suffrage, the use of the German language, and yet another offensive against parochial schools. Old and new organizations were used. The traditional ones were the Anglo-Protestant denominations; the new ones were the County Council of Defense and the American Protective League. Importantly, the Anglos were now aided by assimilationist Germans—mainly German business and professional leaders.

The number and complexity of ethnic conflicts involving Germans and Anglos during World War I are more than can be dealt with here. A few examples, however, suggest the culmination of a pattern of cultural conflict that dated back three-quarters of a century. Early friction resulted from the federal government order for all un-naturalized German immigrants to file "Alien Enemy Registrations." The requirement and what it suggested about one's reputation was devastating for local German residents, while it gave further evidence to Anglo-assimilationists that they should use every device and government power to enforce Anglo conformity.

The persistent issue of the use of German language returned in the war with a vengeance. As a result of new political support to suppress those notoriously militaristic German verbs and sentence structures, the use of the language in Fort Wayne schools, churches, and public trolleys was prohibited by 1918.

Some of the other cultural issues involved wartime prohibition and the battles fought between brewers and leaders of the women's suffrage movement over the relationship between men's liberty to drink beer and women's right to cast votes. Another conflict involving Anglos and Germans was fought out over the methods used in selling war bonds to local ethnics.

With the advantage of hindsight, it is easy to see the unnecessary pain, humiliation, and heartaches that the war-time climate of ethnic suspicion encouraged. The arrogance and naiveté of the time is embarrassing to behold. Every consumer complaint, from ground glass in the peanut butter to a sick milk-cow, was blamed on one's German neighbors. A major irony was the circumstance that local Germans who enlisted with the first beat of the war drum and who marched off in step to defend the world from Prussian militarism were accorded patriotic cheers, while local German Anabaptists, who had left Germany in part to avoid military involvements, became the target of vilification and personal abuse. Yet, it was also true, as

contemporary critics pointed out, that Allen County Anabaptist farmers were happy to gain wartime profits from the high prices being paid for grain, hogs, and draft horses. Everyone was a casualty of wartime moral ambiguities.

Inner turmoil shook the foundations of local Germans. On the eve of America's entrance into the war, an elected county commissioner of German background had to fight for his good name, as well as his political life, after ordering county employees to remove flags from courthouse windows. The resulting attack upon his patriotism forced him to grovel before the electorate with apologies and solicited testimonials from Anglos in high standing. Elsewhere in town some parents refused to speak German in the presence of their children so that their offspring would not grow up with the accents that brought suspicion upon the father and mother. While no one went to the local courts to change their Germanic last names, a number of families unofficially altered spellings to Anglicize names ending with "meier" and "engel."

What were the results of this accelerated drive against German cultural characteristics during the war years? The evidence suggests that German cultural traits and activities were driven from the public arena, although some would survive within the home or within private organizations. Overall, German ethnicity would never regain its pre-World War I strength in Fort Wayne.

The broader anti-foreign movement of the 1920s, legislative restraints on new immigration, the rise to power of the Nazis in Germany in the early 1930s, and World War II did not provide a sufficient interval of time for any substantial public revival of ethnic pride in things German. The long-term raids against German culture had escalated into a military war against "the Hun," and in Fort Wayne the Anglo-

5. AMERICANIZATION

Read before the Indianapolis Literary Club, April 19, 1920

Theodore Stempfel, Sr.

....The war has coined new words and definitions. One of these, generally current at this time, and often spoken of as if it were a sudden revelation, is "Americanization." I confess, frankly, at this point, that having been born on foreign soil I feel constrained in discussing the problem, notwithstanding the fact that after having gone through the process of evolution myself, I should have some knowledge of the subject.

Americanization, the process of assimilating to the customs and institutions of the United States, has heretofore been understood to mean the gradual and voluntary adaptation by the immigrant to the social, commercial, economic and political life of America.

The Meaning of "Americanization"

As the result of the war, the definition of Americanization has undergone a change. Instead of being a natural development from within, it is to be inculcated from without. The immigrant, woefully neglected in the past, quite often treated as a human being of the lower order, suddenly finds himself the center of attraction. He is to be Americanized in the most speedy manner; he is to be taught the English language, in a minimum of time, by persuasion, if possible; by coercion, if necessary. He is expected to forget the old home across the sea, the language in which his mother

sang at his cradle; he is to be transformed into an American by the same methods that the military drill-master uses in making soldiers of unsophisticated farmer boys.

Americanization has almost become a newly discovered science—or is it a fad? We even speak in all soberness of changing our school system for the purpose of a more intense Americanization. Could it be possible that our system of educating our children has been inadequate and faulty; that we have neglected the fundamental principle of every school—that of rearing useful and loyal citizens? And all this agitation, notwithstanding the fact that no nation engaged in the World War has been represented by a finer body of men and demonstrated a nobler spirit of patriotism, a more unselfish eagerness to be of service to mankind than the American nation, recruiting its citizens from all parts of the world?

The process of Americanization is slow and gradual. It will be accelerated or retarded in proportion to the degree of education and intelligence of the immigrant, in proportion to his talent of assimilation and his ability to acquire the knowledge of the English language, and lastly, in proportion to the treatment he receives on the part of the native American.

For the thinking immigrant the

transformation into an American is the result of an inner struggle, in comparing, weighing and contrasting the advantages and disadvantages of his old and his new home. This is but a natural mental process both for the European in America and for the American in Europe.

Impressions of childhood are not as easily changed and laid aside as one changes his coat. At the death of Andrew Carnegie, who certainly may be ranked among the most useful American citizens of foreign birth, the American press, eulogizing him, directed particular attention to the fact that “he retained to the last his love for Scotland, where he maintained Skibo castle and used millions for philanthropic enterprises.”

It need not be denied, however, that for some foreign-born this inner struggle never culminates in a decisive conclusion.

It is not the purpose of this paper to give a minute description of the conglomeration of races and nationalities arriving in the land of unlimited possibilities, with hopes and expectations for better future days. I shall not try to differentiate between Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians, Rumanians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Bohemians and Czechs, Turks, Armenians and Syrians, Russians, Poles and Ruthenians, Italians and Sicilians, commonly classified as “Hunyaks” and “Dagos.” I shall, therefore, use the collective name of Southern Europeans, and confine myself to such foreigners, whom I have known....

Treatment of Immigrants

Let us follow a group of immigrants from the moment their steamer comes in sight of the Statute of Liberty bidding them a hopeful welcome in the New World. They stand in line on the lower deck, with their bulging bags and bundles, ready for disembarkation at Ellis Island, sometimes called the “Isle of tears.” (I am speaking of prewar times. I do not know the conditions existing today.) On their arrival at the island, the immigrants are examined, and if found in good physical condition and in possession of the required sum of money, they are taken in hand and tagged by an agent of the steamship company, whose only interest in them is to get them quickly beyond the gates of Ellis Island to save his company the possible expense of deporting any rejected immigrant. As designated on their tags, the newcomers are transported to specified “hotels” or lodging houses in which, in all probability, the steamship company itself, or quite likely some of its officials are interested to the extent of a rake-off of so much per head on the price paid for board and lodging.

No sympathetic hand is found to direct those confused strangers in this cold, new land. The only ones who seem to take a passing spiritual interest in them are the voluntary distributors of religious tracts. But what the immigrant needs is advice and practical help of an earthly, rather than a spiritual nature.

Shortly after the immigrant is lodged in

his boarding house, the employment agent comes around, and for a consideration of one or several weeks' wages, proposes to find the job for him that in all probability had been definitely contracted for while the particular immigrant was still in mid-ocean. This the immigrant does not know. Nor does he know that at the time when he received in his old home a letter from one of his countrymen in America, urging him to come over, even then his services may have been guaranteed "sub rosa" on this side to some large corporation.

No doubt a good many Southern Europeans leave their native land for the sole purpose of earning enough money within a few years of hard work to afford them a better livelihood upon their return home. At the time of their departure for America they are not inspired with lofty political ideals or interested in American institutions of government. The voice of freedom has not called to them from beyond the Atlantic. Quite likely there has been a letter from some friend or acquaintance to the folks at home, pointing out how hundreds of dinars, drachmas, kronen or liras may be earned each week in America, whereas in the old home such sums could not be earned in many months.

And furthermore, that letter may have brought the alluring news that in America meat is served with every meal, while in the old country the daily menu consists of potatoes or rice. But let us return to the lodging house, where we now find the

money shark busily engaged in exchanging the money the immigrant brought along for American money, at a liberal discount.

After the immigration commissioner, the steamship agent, the boarding house keeper, the employment agent and the money changer are through with him, the immigrant is turned loose in that large, strange metropolis, with its bewildering street traffic and its huge, awe-inspiring buildings. Another group of immigrants is taken from the lodging house to the train and shipped in the most unceremonious fashion into the interior, to Pittsburgh, Chicago, Gary or other industrial centers. On arrival at their destination, the employment agent looms up again, and after making sure of his fee, just like his colleague in the East, he finds jobs for them in steel mills, foundries, packing houses and other industries requiring hard manual labor.

The Exploited Immigrant

In the hustle and bustle of American business life it can not be expected that immigrants coming from far lands and not knowing a syllable of the English language should be accorded a special reception, but as a matter of self-protection, there ought to be some official agency leading them into the proper channels of our economic and social life, instead of leaving them entirely to the mercy of the schemer and exploiter. There are in our own city, as in all other industrial cities, settlements of foreigners

from Eastern and Southern Europe, working as common laborers wherever strong muscles are in demand. Italians and Greeks prefer employment in commission houses or as bootblacks or street peddlers. These foreigners live huddled together in lodging houses in as primitive a manner as the regulations of the Board of Health will tolerate. Through the Foreign Department, which I organized eighteen years ago in the bank with which I am connected, I came in contact with a large number of these "Hunyaks" and "Dagos." Despite their rusty appearance and deplorable lack of cleanliness, I became interested in them. They were always visibly grateful for a friendly greeting, and as soon as they felt themselves in safe hands, they came in droves to buy checks for the folks in the old home.

After the immigrants have gradually acquired the harsher and quicker tempo of American industrial activity, they are approached through their leaders by two distinct types of citizens of our public life: (1) the walking delegate and (2) the ward politician. They are given to understand that by joining the labor union they will be taken care of and obtain higher wages for shorter hours of work. Who can blame them for trying to improve their living conditions? What the politician promises can only be surmised because he prefers to speak in a whisper. But we know his eagerness in lining up the "Hunyak" vote and we also know that party managers have in the past been

always ready to procure, free of charge, the first naturalization paper for the much despised foreigners, giving them the right to vote. To use foreigners, ignorant of American institutions of government, as "voting cattle" is one of the most serious crimes against American citizenship.

In my conversations with Southern Europeans, I was especially interested to learn from them by what means they had gained a livelihood in the old country. In the majority of cases their answer was that they were working "on the land." They were farm laborers. Some of them had owned small farms. Agriculture is the principal occupation of the peoples of Southern Europe. Their economic life is chiefly dependent upon the products of the soil. Farming in Southern European states, with the possible exception of Rumania, is in the most primitive state of development. Little is done for the cultivation of the soil. The farmers follow the methods of their parents, just as they had been handed down to them. The farms are small; the implements used are of the most ancient pattern. Ill-fed, decrepit animals supply the motive power. Not infrequently a human being, sometimes a woman, is hitched to the plow together with an animal.

The increasingly strenuous work yields only a meager existence. Those people of the South certainly are hard-working and thrifty and make no immodest demands on life. Although their income is small, some manage to lay aside a modest little

sum for a rainy day, or for a trip to America.

At the time of their arrival, many of them are financially able to make a good start, if given proper and reliable assistance. They are strong and sturdy men, willing to work. They would gladly settle with their families on farms, but they are afraid of being cheated out of their savings. So they work out their lives in factories and foundries, while the evils of the cities may lead their sons and daughters to ruin, and often to crime. Why should not a serious effort be made to divert numbers of them, especially those with families, to the country, instead of thoughtlessly massing them in industrial centers, where, under unscrupulous leadership, they may become a danger in times of economic upheaval?

Helpful Instruction of Foreigners

I can conceive of an organization, say in connection with a university or an agricultural college, having as its object the instruction of these foreigners, either in their own language, or by means of motion pictures, in the use of modern farm tools and machinery, and in the art of cultivating the soil. On a trip through Western states one may observe rich fields, truck farms and gardens with flowers, berries and orange trees directly adjoining strips of desert land with sage brush and cactus trees. Immense areas of desert land could be converted into fertile soil by irrigation and cultivation. Such

conversion would produce wealth, contentment and happiness, and proportionally reduce the high cost of living.

The railroads are vitally interested in colonizing the West. They have spent large sums without tangible results in inducing people to move "back to the farm." The main reason for the comparatively small progress made in that direction seems to be lack of assistance for the small farmer. Supposing our government would undertake some constructive work in causing the formation of a company, international in scope, philanthropic in spirit, and at the same time remunerative in character, for the purpose of protecting the immigrants in all financial matters from the day of their arrival at Ellis Island? How much good could be accomplished! With what little effort could they be won over, if they were made to feel that they were in safe hands, and that the authorities of their new country were taking a watchful interest in their material welfare. Some of them might be induced to invest the small capital they brought along in productive farm land in the West. Under a lease contract only a small initial payment would be necessary. The balance of the purchase money could be made payable on an amortization plan for a period of twenty-five to fifty years, combining therewith, as additional security, a life insurance policy, in favor of the lessor, for the amount of the unpaid purchase

money. Other expenses, such as taxes, irrigation rentals and premiums on other insurance, deemed advisable to safeguard the investment, could be included in the payment plan, arranged in easy installments and maturing at a time when farmers can realize on their products. The co-operation of railroads and insurance companies could be secured without difficulty.

Good crops obtained through expert advice in cultivation would enable the foreigners to build up a home for their families; their example would encourage others to do likewise; they would feel everlastingly grateful for the assistance given them through the agency of the government. Many a foreigner would be drawn away from industrial centers with their sinister influence. He would perhaps unwittingly Americanize himself and save us the trouble of Americanizing him by compulsion. But let us turn from this vague and perhaps utopian picture of future possibilities to the grim reality of the present.

Living Conditions of Foreigners

In traveling through any part of this country one may notice on sidetracks long strings of miserable, antiquated box cars, assigned as homes to foreigners while they are working on roadbeds. Is it not quite natural that once in a while they should compare their own lot in life with that of the occupants of the passing train, who seem so comfortably seated in the Pullman or buffet car? Or in taking a

stroll through the foreign settlement of a large manufacturing town, one may observe without much effort the unhealthy conditions under which these foreigners are living in their crowded quarters....

Royal Dixon, special lecturer for the Board of Education of New York City, reprints in his book on Americanization...the following description by a foreigner of a labor camp:

“Where the padrone, an agent of capital, controls the alien workers, the padrone, by false promises, entices the immigrants from the larger cities to the labor camps. When the aliens arrive they are placed under actual conditions of peonage. They are housed in an old shack with no light, no ventilation. Their food is stale and unwholesome. They dare not rebel, as armed guards and yelping bloodhounds keep watch... They can not appeal to law, as the company owns the courts and controls the police, but even if the state does intervene, the aliens are shown to be in debt to the employers. Their outraged souls are stirred by the knowledge of wrong. They do not live in America, but under it, in the cellars, in the hovels, in the dark, in the damp.

Thus it is in the mines, in the sweatshops, in the labor camps, the immigrants are exploited, outraged. How appalling is this policy when nineteen out of every twenty workers in mines and factories are foreign-born. You realize that it is the immigrants who bear the brunt of exploitation. You realize that it is the immigrants who are the victims of industrial injustice, who were massacred at Ludlow, whose lives were snuffed out in the Illinois mine disasters, who were burned in the Triangle factory fire. These immigrants, by their faithful toil in the field of industry--in the mines, in the

tunnel, in the shop--earn not your honor, but your indifference, your hatred, your exploitation !”

In the *Atlantic Monthly* of last month, [March 1920] John Kulamer, a lawyer of Czecho-Slovakian origin, writes:

“The foreigner is very seldom called by his name--he is always referred to as ‘Hunkie,’ or ‘Dago,’ or the like; he is made on all sides to feel that he is despised, that he is a stranger and unwelcome. His children are discriminated against, no matter how hard he tries to bring them up according to the American standard. To bring this home: Several times my little girl asked me: ‘Daddy, why does Jennie call me a ‘hunkie?’--It hurts...”

Foreign Labor and Strikes

During the recent strike in the steel industry, there was in the press an outcry against foreign labor. If there were no foreigners, the papers said, there would be no labor troubles. That may be true. But if it were not for foreign labor, the steel industry would never have developed on the immense scale existing today.

The leaders of the strike were neither “Hunyaks” nor “Dagos,” they were native Americans. If the rank and file of the strikers believed or were made to believe, that they were fighting for their rights, it was not because they were foreigners, but because they were human beings. Their demands may have been unreasonable and extravagant, but the assertion may not miss the mark very far

that originally their employers preferred them to native Americans, because they were willing to work longer hours for smaller wages.

One need not be a labor unionist, nor a socialist or communist, nor a menshevist, bolshevist or spartacist to recognize and deeply deplore the injustice and unfairness usually practiced in the treatment of foreigners.

The habit of the Southern Europeans of sending their hard-earned savings abroad has often been advanced as one of the many reasons for their undesirability as members of the American commonwealth, but a man who is taking care of an old mother or father 3,500 miles away must be good at heart. One should also take into consideration that the economic values these foreigners have produced by their toil are far in excess of the sum represented by the checks they are sending to their native land....

Foreign labor has become an economic necessity. A large number of our industries are depending on it. In the construction of the New York subway system, 71 percent of the laborers employed were Southern Europeans, and it is universally admitted that the work of these despised foreigners was of immense benefit to the war industries. Traveling through Middle and Western Europe—in pre-war times—one could see this same type of men at work in constructing and repairing railroad tracks. They were not eligible for citizenship. In Germany, for

example, they were not permitted to stay longer than two consecutive years. However, after the lapse of one year they could return for another period of two years. But they were not compelled to live in dilapidated box cars; their housing conditions were far superior to the quarters assigned to them in this country.

The assimilation of Southern Europeans, especially those without families and children, can not be accomplished within a short time, because their conception of life is so entirely different from the American point of view; their native language is so radically at variance with English, from the first letter of the alphabet to the construction of the most simple sentence. The schooling they received in their early youth is scanty and primitive. Historical figures like Washington and Lincoln, and the cause they stand for, are beyond their comprehension, because the history of their native land is an endless chain of religious and racial struggles, instigated by land grabbing czars, sultans and emperors. That history seems now to continue its bloody course under new government, hurriedly patched together under the peace treaty. The Balkan has always been the powder barrel of Europe, and the Big Four at Versailles succeeded in adding new inflammable material for future explosions.

Americanization through Foreign Language Press

The foreigners can best be reached by men of their own race and by newspapers printed in their own language. It should, therefore, be the aim of any comprehensive plan of Americanization to keep in touch with the more advanced leaders of the different racial [ethnic] groups. If they are honest and reliable, they will accomplish infinitely more by instructing their countrymen in their native tongue than the most eloquent orator, who can only express himself in English. The editorials in their papers can be supervised, if need be. It seems folly to suppress them because they are printed in a foreign language. This would deprive the Americanization movement of the very best medium of influencing and directing the mind of the foreigner towards true Americanism.

Night schools for instruction in English and civics may do much good, but their efficiency is often largely overestimated. The teaching of English to foreigners seems to many well-meaning men and women the most important part of the Americanization program. "We must teach those foreigners to speak and think in English," said one of the delegates at an Americanization conference in Philadelphia last year. That gentleman has unquestionably never made the slightest attempt himself to learn a foreign language, otherwise he would have realized that an intimate knowledge of a language is essential in order to be

able to think in it. One may also read understandingly a foreign language without being able to speak it. It seems almost inhuman to expect a foreigner to be in the proper frame of mind for English lessons at a night school after a day of tiresome manual work in a steel mill or a slaughter house, or on a traction road. But we are an impatient people, and like to collect quick dividends on the investment of our energy. We are not methodical and may, therefore, quite often unintentionally demand the impossible.

With the advancing years the study of a foreign language becomes more difficult even for a man of good schooling. One may write and converse to perfection in two languages, but almost unconsciously one will at times revert to the language first heard in the kindergarten. Certain shades of expression peculiar to one language are untranslatable into another language. Even Carl Schurz, who had full command of English, wrote that part of his autobiography relating to his early youth, in German, and had it translated by a friend.

The task of converting Southern Europeans into true American citizens, after restricting them in the use of their native tongue, and depriving them of their newspapers, as has been repeatedly proposed, seems like trying to fill the vessel of the Danaides with water.

The legislature of the state of Oregon recently went to the very extreme by passing a law forbidding the circulation,

by mail or in person, of any book, paper pamphlet or letter published in a foreign language, unless accompanied by an English translation printed parallel with the foreign text. Not only belletristic, but also all scientific books are forbidden fruit for the Oregonian if they are printed in a foreign language. In the book of Horace Bridges on "Becoming an American," doubt is expressed whether a member of the Catholic church, being directed from Rome, can ever become a true American! Should this country, the hope of the world, surround itself with the proverbial Chinese wall? Would we profit by clamping down the lid at Ellis Island? Would our life as a nation be enriched, if we held ourselves aloof from the personal contact with other races?

The Test of the True American

And after all, does the knowledge of the English language alone make a true American? Is the accident of birth the true starting point in measuring the value of true citizenship? Is the father of an unbroken line of Mayflower ancestors, who satisfies the vanity of his daughter by opening his swollen purse for the purchase of an empty title of an European princeling, a better American than the obscure immigrant who speaks broken English, but has a distinct feeling for the fundamental truth emanating from the Declaration of Independence?

Every man of education ought to know a foreign language, at least to the extent of being able to read it. It seems an

offense against the principle of education if parents, who next to English command another language, neglect the opportunity of instructing their children in that second language, which they can acquire without much effort. I know Americans of German descent who pride themselves on being unable to speak or understand German, but from the standpoint of education, not of war expediency, I doubt very much whether that is an accomplishment worthy of self-glorification.

While we were destroying, instead of regulating, if necessary, the teaching of German in our public schools, many of our soldiers over in France, knowing the language, were assisting French school children in learning their German lessons.

...[T]he process of Americanization is described as an inner struggle of the immigrant in contrasting the advantages and disadvantages of his old and his new country. The extent of the transfusion of American ideas into the mind of the foreigner is often unknown to him, until, after some years of absence, he returns to his old country. Let me quote for illustration from the diary of a young German who had left his parental home in a spirit of adventure thirty-seven years ago. He had come to America, not for the purpose of escaping military service, because after serving one year in the army he was honorably discharged; neither had he come with the intention of making money. He merely followed the bewitching call of "Wanderlust"...and,

without definite plans for the future, he longed to see the new world. After having experienced seven hard years as a "greenhorn," full of disappointment, homesickness and humiliation on account of his inability to express himself intelligently in English, he visited his old home for a few months. He landed again in New York in July, 1890. His diary reflects the following impressions:

Notes from a Diary

"Under the inspiring tune of the American national hymn our steamer neared the Hoboken pier, welcomed by the lusty cheers of the thickly packed crowd assembled there. How happy were all those of our companions, who were recognized and greeted by relatives and friends....

After the usual tedious and tiresome waiting, the inspection of our baggage was at last finished. There is quite a difference between the easy-going, jovial American official and the stern, dignified officer in green uniform on the other side of the ocean. My preference is the American custom inspector, because he is less efficient and more accommodating. As I stepped from the pier into the street I almost fainted, so intense was the heat, so suffocating the air. The people, the houses, the streets, in short, everything I observed at first glance, looked so dusty, so unclean and dilapidated, that I was longing for the fresh ocean breeze and for the land beyond. Here I stood before the most sober prose in life, the chase after money. There those poor creatures hustled and ran, trying to outdistance each other in spite of the glowing heat. The street crossings were blockaded by a long train of wagons, carts, omnibuses and all sorts of vehicles. The noise in the street was terrific. Everybody seemed to be in a hurry, spurred by the greed for the almighty dollar! I

finally arrived at a cheap looking typical Hoboken hotel. Seated in the farthest corner of the dining room, I let my impressions of my whole trip pass in review. During my travels through Germany the superiority of America's political and social institutions and customs became more clear to me, and now after my return to 'God's Country' the many advantages of Germany seemed to allure me. Distance lends enchantment. In that respect we Germans in America are much alike; while the depth of feeling, the love for the arts, for nature, and the serene enjoyment of life awakens in us a silent longing for our native land, we are, nevertheless, captivated by the free, independent spirit, the absence of class distinction, the liberality in business, prevailing in our adopted country. Why, I asked myself, did you leave home? Why did you not return seven years ago, as you first intended? In order to divert such annoying thoughts, I picked up from the table a German periodical, *Die Gartenlaube*, and carelessly turned the leaves. My attention was attracted to a full-page picture entitled: 'The New Court Custom—Die Neue Hoftracht,' showing men in knee breeches. Indignantly I dropped the magazine. Forgotten was the longing for Germany. The wavering feeling vanished in an instant. I regained my balance. America forever! What a pity! Fully grown men, the leaders of a nation of 'thinkers and poets' present themselves in knee breeches at the command of an eccentric monarch. Where is that manly pride before the thrones of kings of which Schiller sang? That manly pride is wearing knee breeches, because an ambitious emperor is trying to revive the 'ancient regime' of bygone centuries, the epoch of Frederick the Great.

'Well and good, the experiment may succeed. He may order knee breeches, the cue and the cane, he may find men willing to wear them, and to powder their hair. They may bend their backs most obediently before him and he may imitate the hocus-pocus, the arrogance and frivolity of

the Rococo age, which has been blown off the face of the earth by that purifying cyclone of the French Revolution; he may reconstruct the whole machinery of that Punch and Judy show, but, alas! the principal role can not be filled, the role of a Frederick the Great! Instead of a genius, there is now only a braggart--instead of a Frederick the Great, only a second-hand William.

"O, you princeling, you may make speeches and travel; you and the other monarchs, 'by the grace of God,' may exchange Judas kisses and, preparing for war, speak of peace, but the time will come, must come, when the consciousness of the people will awaken; when no emperor nor princeling will succeed in commanding a halt to the avalanche of a freed, democratic spirit. But lo, how disheartening is the present. The nation of thinkers and poets is wearing knee breeches!

"Our train was rolling westward. The day was hot. The contrast quite significant between my present trip and the one I made through Germany a few weeks before. The whole country had been suffering under a long spell of dry summer heat. Everything looked dusty, disorderly and withered. The grass had turned yellow. As a precaution against fire, the grass was burned off along the railroad track, forming a broad rim of black mourning from East to West.

"Traveling through Germany I was impressed by the beauty of the country. Every inch of ground seemed to show the loving care of an artistic hand. Cheerful orchards, blooming meadows, clean villages, romantic forests, lovely flower gardens, wooded hills with old castles, mementos of past centuries greet the traveler everywhere.

"But here you see for hours and hours, without change, endless fences, fields covered with rotting tree stumps, dilapidated railroad stations. I had to recall to my mind the picture of the knee breeches to regain my composure.

“At last I arrived in Indianapolis. Some of my friends greeted me at the station. I had been away for three months, and, as every traveler does after a long absence, I looked for changes in the streets. I found none. But in the street car I discovered an innovation. It was a new sign, so posted as to catch the eye of every passenger. It read: ‘Gentlemen, please do not spit tobacco juice upon the floor of the car.’ On the way home I could not keep my eyes off that nauseating sign, but remembering Germany’s class distinctions, brass buttons and uniforms, I drank my first toast at home to: ‘AMERICA — FOREVER!’”

Qualifications for Citizenship

The author of that diary was at the time fully able to read and write English, but it took years before he attempted to speak the language, because he was constantly self-conscious of his faulty pronunciation. An applicant for citizenship undergoing before the court the ordeal of an examination may seem in his embarrassment and confusion incapable of expressing himself in correct English, but this does not necessarily prove his unfitness as a citizen. Only recently the application of a foreigner was denied by the court on that ground, and for the additional reason that the applicant was lacking in state pride, because he was ignorant of the startling fact that the vice-president [Charles W. Fairbanks] is a product of the Hoosier state. To quote Kulamer, “Language is a very useful means to an end; also is something to which a strong sentiment attaches, but it is a mistake to make language an end, the test of a man’s

loyalty.” The main stress seems to be laid on the teaching of English in the literature on “Americanization,” flooding the country during the past five years. One of the best and sanest books on the subject was written by a woman, Frances Alice Kellor. Her book, entitled *Straight America*, published in 1916, is dedicated to the “President-elect.” Miss Kellor’s line of thought received special commendation by the late Theodore Roosevelt.

The book is a sort of an “oratio pro domo.” The author calls attention to the discrimination against aliens in the different states of the Union, and criticizes the absence of a uniform system of naturalization laws.

“In the matter of standards for citizenship,” she says, “the burden of determining the qualifications of prospective citizens rests upon the Bureau of Naturalization...primarily concerned with technicalities of law and proof of residence, placing legal evidence before the judge, and showing that the law has been complied with.

“The actual granting of final papers,” she continues, “rests with some 2,380 judges, each applying his own idea of qualification.”

In the *Yale Review* of January 1919, Miss Kellor contributed an article entitled “What is Americanization,” giving...the essence of her previous book. I may be permitted to select a few paragraphs of that article to illustrate my own point of view:

“Beyond the slogans of ‘a common language and a common citizenship’ a program of Americanization has not been accepted. America, the greatest immigration country in the world, has no national domestic policy whatsoever, and no organization as a government for dealing with race assimilation, its most delicate and fundamental problem. Americans like to think in a crude way of this country as a melting pot, with peasants from Ellis Island going in at the top and citizens in American clothing coming out at the bottom...

“Let us face the inevitable truth. There can be no Americanization from the top down or in the mass. It will not come from the court that grants a citizenship certificate, nor from the school that teaches English, nor from the speakers that talk patriotism; nor from the patriotic society that prints platitudes. It will come from basic conditions being right, and none is more vital than industrial relations. It will live as we shorten the distance between the Constitution and the shop. It will be believed in as we square every act in the shops in America with every utterance in public print....

The man who comes here expecting opportunity, fair remuneration for his day's work, fair working conditions, friendly personal relations, can not be met with limitations and discriminations, and still become Americanized.

Meaning of Americanization

“Americanization having its political roots in political ideals can not be achieved so long as these ideals, as interpreted by the sources of authority in America, mean one thing for the native born, and another for the foreign born; one thing for men and another for women; one thing for employer and another for employees; one thing for the rich and another for the poor; one thing in one state, and another in an adjoining state.”



THE “UNDESIRABLES”

SHADE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN—I stand among you, good people. *My father could never have passed!*

Source: *Puck*, March 21, 1914

....A liberal treatment of prospective citizens of foreign birth, an honest effort in improving their living conditions, a lenient judgment of their faults, an ungrudging appreciation of their good qualities, the reciprocal spirit of give and take, a touch of human kindness, less superciliousness and broader justice will bring about in them a quicker change of

heart, a deeper veneration for the land of their choice, a more thorough Americanization, than all police regulations and oratorical feasts, all teachings and admonishings by self-constituted reform societies will ever be able to accomplish.

For the common people of Europe, America has been the shining ray of hope, not only during the last decades, but ever since the first cannon shot at Bunker Hill vibrated through the world. America has been the magic word for all men yearning for liberation from the tyranny of the established church, from the yoke of political autocracy, from the slavery of industrial servitude, from the oppression of artificial class distinctions.

The Declaration of Independence was the first message of a newer and better world, it clarified the mind of the leaders of the French Revolution, it destroyed the cornerstone of that solid granite block of authority, erected and fortified since the dawn of the Middle Ages upon the ruins of human liberty.

That reverent admiration for America's mission was reinforced and embellished when the name of Abraham Lincoln, the greatest man of the 19th century, was inscribed with golden letters in the book of history.

America the Hope of the World

During the agony of the World War every man, woman, and child of Europe looked imploringly to America. From there had come repeated assurances for

a better future. America responded liberally and unselfishly. The American soldiers, imbued with that jovial democratic spirit, which is typically American, were welcomed by the people of all lands, and they have no warmer admirers than among the people of the nation which they helped to conquer....

And even now, with so many hopes shattered at Versailles, with so many idols broken to pieces through the subtle craftiness of designing Old World diplomacy, the people have not faltered in their belief that America will yet come to their rescue, because, as the former Secretary of the Interior, Franklin K. Lane, so eloquently expressed: "America is not the name of so much territory. It is a living spirit...which has purpose and pride and conscience; knows why it wished to live and to what end; know how it comes to be respected of the world, and hopes to retain that respect by living on with the light of Lincoln's love of man as its old and new testament.

...(I borrow this thought from the Minneapolis Journal.)"

"Americanization is the modern attempt to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. It is a program as imperative today as when our forefathers announced it."

6. HOW SOME HOOSIER GERMANS GOT NATURALIZED

6.1 At St. Meinrad's Monastery

Frank J. Feeney

Nearly 50 percent of the monks (50 of 105) were foreign born; of these 37 had emigrated from Germany. When the war commenced some of the lay brothers were found without full naturalization papers. Indiana passed a law requiring "second papers," i.e. full citizenship and voting privileges, for all immigrants. Some of the brothers possessed only "first papers" which had until this time sufficed for some voting privileges. At the Abbot's request, Father Columban gave these men a full course in civics and brought them before a judge in Rockport to be examined by Federal agents.

Nearly all the brothers passed the first test, but a few had to learn more civics before receiving second papers. These interrogations produced a few light moments and some genuine irony. Brother Philip Ketterer, both well-informed and intelligent, a chef in the monastic kitchen, was routinely asked, "Where does the Governor of the State reside?" "Ordinarily in Indianapolis, the State Capital," he replied, "but at the present time he is residing in the Federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia."

The examiner, smiling, turned to his right and remarked, "Pretty good, eh?" The fact was the governor had been found guilty of embezzlement of state funds and had been sentenced to prison as punishment.

Columban Thuis (*Interview*, October 7, 1969) relates the anecdote a bit differently: After asking the question and listening to Brother Philip's reply, the court experienced a "dead silence." And the examiner passed him in a hurry and summoned another.

To the question, "What is the function of the judge?" one brother somewhat befuddled by the correct answer (to interpret the law) because of poor English, replied to the amusement of all assembled, "The judge is supposed to know the law." The examining U.S. agent turned to the judge with a smile, "Your Honor, is the answer correct?" The judge, likewise grinning, said, "He is supposed to, but I don't know if he does."

Source: Frank J. Feeney, "World War I German-American Sentiment at St. Meinrad." M.A. thesis, Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University (1970), 55-56.

6.2 How Johannes Hermann Theilig Became a Citizen Louise Lamkin

My father's brother, Johannes Hermann was born in Flensburg, Schleswig Holstein, 1899. He served in the German Army in Croatia during World War I. When he returned home from the War, both parents were dead, a brother had been killed on the Western Front, their home was dismantled and everything was

sold. His brothers and sisters were living with families as farm/household workers. Hermann went to live with an aunt and uncle in Denmark.

Soon he joined the German Merchant Marine, sailing on windjammers and cargo ships. Then in 1923 in Port Arthur, Texas, Hermann "jumped ship." He found employment in Texas, then in

Indianapolis and later in Chicago. In Indianapolis Hermann worked for the "Southside Gardeners," while learning bookkeeping at night school. He found employment at Merchants Bank in the Travel Department and soon became its head.

He moved to Chicago where he had a job in the Travel Department of the

Line _____ Prepaid Ticket No. _____

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION FOR VISAE.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

State of Indiana }
 County of Mason } SS.
Henry Schlenker being duly sworn, deposes and says:

THAT

- I am 43 years of age and have resided continuously in United States since: _____
 having been born in United States
- My present address is R. R. 4 Box 610, City of Indianapolis
 County of Mason, State of Indiana
- I am a citizen of United States, holding Certificate of Naturalization Number _____ issued
 at _____, by the _____ Court,
 County of Mason, State of _____
- I have declared my intention of becoming a citizen of United States and hold Declarant Certificate
 Number _____ issued at _____ by the _____
 State of _____
- My present dependents consist of: Wife and three children
- My regular occupation is _____ and my average weekly
 earnings amount to \$ 300.00
- I possess property to the value of:
 Real Estate \$ 20,000.00 personal \$ 1,000.00
 and that the incumbrance on said property, if any, amounts to \$ 7,000.00
 I occupy a _____ room house/apartment.
- It is my intention and desire to have the undermentioned at present residing at _____
Expatante bei Aiderbach bei Schlenker
Schlenker, Holstein, Germany
to Georg Paulsen
 come and remain with me in the United States until such time as they may become self-supporting.

The above mentioned is/are in good health and physical condition, to the best of my knowledge and belief.
 That I am and always have been a law-abiding resident and have not at any time been charged with or arrested for any crime or misdemeanor. That I do not belong to nor am I in anywise connected with any group or organization whose principles are contrary to organized Governments, nor do my relatives mentioned herein, to the best of my knowledge and belief, belong to any such organization, nor have they ever been convicted of any crime.
 That I do hereby promise, agree and guarantee that I will properly receive and take care of them and that I will at no time allow any of them to become public charges on the United States or any community or municipality of the United States, and I do further promise and agree that any who are under sixteen years of age will be sent to day school and that they will not be put at work unsuited to their years.
 That this affidavit is made by me for the purpose of inducing the United States Consul to vize the passports knowing full well that the United States Consul will rely upon the representations herein made by me under oath, to be the truth.

Henry H. Schlenker
 (Signature of Deponent)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public
 in and for said County, this _____ day of _____ A. D. 1927

Witness: Carson
Thielig

My Commission Expires April 9, 1928



Charles Dawes Bank. Here some complications set in, for he had no citizenship papers and, having come ashore in Texas illegally, would have a hard time getting it. But Charles Dawes, the U.S. Vice President [1925-29] under

President Calvin Coolidge, had taken a liking to him and personally went with Hermann before the judge.

This is how Johannes Hermann Theilig became a citizen of the United States.

 Source: Louise Lamkin, *IGHS Newsletter*, Vol. 21, No.3 (2005), 13.

TO BE GIVEN TO
THE PERSON NATURALIZED

No. 3863988

DEPARTMENT OF
IMMIGRATION AND
NATURALIZATION

Petition No. 102

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Age 26 years, sex Male, color White, complexion Ruddy, color of eyes Blue, color of hair Dk. Brown, height 5 feet 4 1/2 inches, weight 145 pounds, visible distinctive marks None, marital status Single, race White, former nationality German.

I, certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

RICHARD GOTTHILF THEILIG
 (Complete and true signature of holder)

State of Indiana, County of Ripley, ss.
 Be it known that Richard Gotthilf Theilig then residing at Batesville, Indiana, R 1 having petitioned to be admitted a citizen of the United States of America, and at a term of the Circuit Court of Ripley County Indiana held pursuant to law at Versailles, Indiana on May 15th 1935 the court having found that the petitioner intends to reside permanently in the United States, had in all respects complied with the Naturalization Laws of the United States in such case applicable, and was entitled to be so admitted, the court thereupon ordered that the petitioner be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 15th day of May in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and thirty five and of our Independence the one hundred and fifty-ninth.

Willard C. Voss
 Clerk of the Ripley Circuit Court

By _____ Deputy Clerk

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Richard Gotthilf Theilig

Affidavit of Support, Richard's Passport (previous page) and Certificate of Citizenship (above) supplied by Louise Lamkin,

6.3 "Naturonality" Eberhard Reichmann

Until my twelfth year, I didn't know that Austrians were not exactly Germans. Only one thing had disturbed me immensely as a child: when my father spoke Austrian in public instead of the dialect of my hometown Stuttgart. I was so embarrassed because he did not speak *Schwaebisch*.

One day, in 1938, our teacher said, "Everybody stand up, except Eberhard!" My God, why was he singling me out? What had I done? He started speaking to us about a triumphant Hitler entering Vienna and bringing Austria "home into the Reich." And then he said, "This long-awaited day is also a great day for our class, because our own Eberhard is now, finally, also a *real* German, a citizen of the Reich. Let's all congratulate him!"

I think I went from red to pale and red again, and was thoroughly confused and ashamed when they all shook my hand. What had I been yesterday? Not a German? Not the right kind of German? A wrong kind of German? Yes, that was it, like my father, sort of half-German — a damn Austrian-German.

When I got home, my mother said she was glad that father didn't have to go to the police anymore to have his residence permit renewed ever so often. At times she had feared that some day he would come back from the police registry without a renewal and that he, and perhaps the whole family, would be

deported to Austria. Strangely, my father had no comment on the *Anschluss* — as this reunification was referred to. He always kept his political opinion to himself.

Now let's jump seven years. In September of 1945, when I came home from the war, I went to the police registry to get an ID card. I filled out the form. The clerk checked my entries against the records.

"Ja, Herr Reichmann, you made one error, you are no longer a German citizen, you are Austrian again."

"Says who?" I wanted to know.

"The Military Government," he said.

"See that dirty uniform I'm wearing?" I responded, "that's not Austrian, that's German. And see the ruins out there. These are the ruins of my hometown, and if I ever wanted to be German, I want to be it now in this hellishly hopeless year of 1945." He said he couldn't help me, he had to stick to the laws of the Military Government, and I should be glad to be Austrian, for as a *foreigner* I'd be getting a somewhat larger food ration than "the Germans."

I assured him that I wanted no preferential treatment. He just shook his head. I told him that my uncle was the new state prosecutor. That impressed him somewhat. "So, so, Herr Zais is your uncle, but not even he can help you in this case." I left the place with a new ID card and a new-and-old nationality: Austrian.

Now let's jump six years. In 1951 I had a chance to spend a year in America. The U.S. Office of Education had initiated a program for young German teachers to experience the famed "American Way of Life." That was for me. I was accepted and I wrote to the Austrian Consulate in Munich that I needed a passport. When I read their reply I had the financial shock of my life. The fee was 42 German marks or \$10. My net salary was something like 175 marks a month — with which I could usually survive the first three weeks. And they wanted 42 marks! That was impossible, and having been raised in the old German cash-only tradition, borrowing seemed out of the question.

I talked to a friend who had just been abroad. He said he paid 2.50 marks for his German passport. That sounded more like it, and it gave me an idea. I went to the county office and told them — in the thickest local *schwaebisch* dialect — that I was offered a year in America and that I needed a passport.

"How exciting!" the clerk *schwaebisch*ed back at me. Then came the personalia.

"Born?" "December 8, 1926."

"Where?" "En Schtuagert" [Stuttgart]

"Occupation, yeah, teacher." "Yeah, poorly paid."

"Religion?" "Catholic, but not really practicing."

"Makes no difference. Still Catholic."

"I suppose."

"Nationality? ha, ha, naturally."

"Yeah, ha, ha, naturally."

"And that'll be two marks and fifty pfennigs."-- "Gladly."

Now take another jump with me, twelve years, to 1963. Eugene and Norma Bristow [an IU faculty couple] had invited Ruth and me to a cocktail party in Bloomington, and, prompted by my accent, the inevitable three-part question came up:

"How long have you been in America?" "Ten years."

"How do you like it over here?" "I like it very much."

"Do you plan to become an American citizen?" "No." Surely the man had not expected my "no" answer, for he nearly dropped his dentures into his martini. I felt I owed him an explanation. Meanwhile our host drummed up everybody to hear why I would want to forego the blessings of American citizenship. So here goes:

"I am now a first-class citizen of a second-class country. I don't see any sense in becoming a second class citizen of a first-class country."

"What do you mean by first and second class citizen?"

"If I try hard enough, I can become president or chancellor of the German Federal Republic. But no matter how good I'd be here, I could never become president of the USA, because I'd always be a foreign-born, naturalized citizen, and thus disqualified for the highest office, hence *second class*."

The first comments were twofold. A minority held that “Eb has a point there.” The majority, though, felt that this was a hypothetical case and, after all, “Who’d be crazy enough and wanna be president, anyway?” Our gracious host waited patiently until all had their say. But then, appropriate for the advanced cocktail mood, Gene lambasted everybody, “Wrong, wrong, wrong! Shame on all of you! You don’t know how our Constitution works! If we want Eb to be the next president of the United States, we will amend the Constitution.” We all drank to that, and I had a question for Gene and Norma: “Will you two act as citizenship sponsors for Ruth and me?” Of course, they agreed. And one day in 1964 the two “natives” drove the two “foreigners” to the swearing-in ceremony in Indianapolis, and on the way back there were four “Americans” in the car.

P.S. *Naturally*, in the meantime I’ve dropped the idea of running for president, 'cause that wouldn’t leave me no time no more for them old Hoosier Germans.

Source: Eberhard Reichmann, ed. *Hoosier German Tales—Small & Tall* (Indianapolis: Indiana German Heritage Society, 1991), 211-213.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



THE STATE OF OHIO, } ss.
HAMILTON COUNTY.

Be it Remembered, That on the 9th day of October
in the term of October eighteen hundred and fifty-
of the Criminal Court of Hamilton Co Ohio
holden within and for the County
of Hamilton aforesaid, personally came Henry Hembroke
a native of Hannover

and produced a Certificate under seal, that on the 27th day of December
A. D. 1854 he declared his intention to become A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
before the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas of
Hamilton Co Ohio
agreeably to the Act of Congress in such case made and provided, and proved his residence
and character by the oath of Louis Wayhoff

and being admitted to Citizenship by this Court, took the oath to support the Constitution
of the United States of America, and that he then did absolutely and entirely for-
ever renounce and abjure all ALLEGIANCE AND FIDELITY to every Foreign Prince,
Potentate, State, or Sovereignty whatsoever, and particularly to the King of
Hannover

This is therefore to Certify, That the said Henry Hembroke
has complied with the Laws of the United States
in such case made and provided, and is therefore admitted A CITIZEN OF THE
UNITED STATES.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my name, and affixed
the Seal of the said Court, at Cincinnati, this 9th
day of October A. D. 1854

Ammonius
Clerk.
Deputy.

Henry Hembroke, like many German immigrants, came to Indiana via Ohio. He became an American citizen in Cincinnati in 1854.