MISSOURI’s GERMAN

HERITAGE

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**FOREWORD**

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| The United States – a land of immigrants  The United States has always been a nation which oﬀered many economic opportunities to people coming from around the world since it was still a collection of British colonies in the seventeenth century. Various ethnicities migrated to North America; they came from many European countries, from Africa, and from Asia, thus shaping a multiethnic society in the United States.  The most important ethnicity residing in the US is undoubtedly the German one, settling prevalently in Pennsylvania and in the upper Midwest.  Hence, I intend to emphasize specifically the German ethnicity residing in the United States, not exclusively in terms of astonishingly large numbers, but I would also like to expound on the fact that above all their achievements regarding the growth of the United States were considerable; it is indisputable that the German settlers have made it a great country.  Moreover, and more importantly, the German immigrants brought numerous German traditions and festivities with them, German architectural styles, and cultivation techniques, as will be subsequently delineated. Thus, US- states, such as Pennsylvania, and particularly Midwestern states, such as Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, and specifically Missouri, are all characterized by a German flair today.  I would like to mention at this point that especially the Germans’ military achievements in the United States were noteworthy. Hence, during the Revolutionary War, German soldiers even fought for the British as auxiliaries. They were called “Hessians” because many came from that German territory. Those German settlers were some of the first immigrants to settle in America by accepting the oﬀer to switch sides in exchange for land and religious liberty.  After the Revolutionary War, the Congress of the United States established a more viable government with its second charter, the Constitution, in 1789, and maintained open borders to immigrants seeking economic prosperity. As the legislative branch of the government, Congress, was responsible for issuing the laws relating to immigration. Legislators knew the necessity of the immigration for the growth, settlement, and prosperity of the country, but specific rules for immigration were not formalized into legislation at first.  Throughout the nineteenth century, German immigrants continued to experience this same degree of preferential treatment as an ethnic group, resulting in large numbers of Germans migrating to the United States in general, and to the American Midwest, i.e. Missouri, in particular.  Thus, in the first half of the nineteenth century, German immigrants flowed into the US, as it it actively promoted the settlement of new territories in the West. The concept of “manifest destiny” implicated the westward expansion to the Pacific coast. Networks of roads, canals, and subsequently, railroads facilitated the arrival in the furthest frontier of settlement.  10  As the German migration to the US was protracted, remarkably high numbers of German settlers moved to the US, especially throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. A large percentage of German immigrants who came to the U.S. during the 1830s and 1840s, settled in the newly formed state of Missouri, seeking all the economic prosperity that the land oﬀered.  A salient feature pertinent to Missouri Germans is their significant commitment in a political ambit. Most Missouri Germans were politically rather active; and more importantly, they wanted the US to abrogate the law in favour of slavery. Those German settlers were among the strongest advocates for abolition during the Civil War, as will be delineated in the introductive part of this work.    **INTRODUCTION**  German settlements in Missouri – a brief historical outline  During the second half of the 19th century and until the beginning of the twentieth century, about seven million people came to the United States from German-speaking lands (for further details see my work Tondi: 2017). The German immigrants frequently settled in the upper American Midwest, as previously mentioned, specifically in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa, Illinois, and in Missouri. They established towns as they moved up the Missouri River into the frontier and their distinctive traditions dramatically changed the culture of the area. The Germans also started vineyards and wineries and published several German language newspapers.  A restricted number of German immigrants had also come to the United States in the first half of the 19th century. Thus, there were a few scattered German settlements in Missouri even before 1821, the year in which it became a part of the Union, but the German immigration flux to the state became considerable only in the 1830s, when Missouri was commonly regarded as the “Gate to the West” (Auburger/Kloss/Rupp 1979: 125).  Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, the German settlers swarmed to Missouri because of two fundamental reasons: first, Gottfried Duden’s 1829 “Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America” and other similar travel stories defined Missouri as the “Far West” of the US, as a new idyllic fatherland (homeland), with cheap land and rich resources. It attracted large numbers of Germans; and as a result, they decided to migrate immediately to North America. Moreover, the failed German revolution in 1848 incited many participants to flee their home country; they had been compelled to face rather particular exigencies in their native country; and thus, they wanted to ameliorate their social status in the New World.  Georg Sauer subdivides the immigrants of the period from 1830 to 1850 into four social groups: the first group comprises acculturated people who intended to eschew political oppression, secondly, there were romantics disapproving rigorous conventions of German society. Furthermore, Sauer mentions religious separatists aiming at achieving personal liberty. To the fourth and preponderant category belonged German peasants whose principal objective was to improve their life conditions (Sauer 1920: 165-170).  Numerous German people decided to settle in Cole County, Missouri, which was 50 % German by 1875, although Cole County’s first immigrants were of British provenance (Ford 1938: 24). The German immigrants had the chance to arrive without difficulties in Missouri, through the Mississippi from New Orleans; and moreover, the climatic and geographic conditions in that region were relatively similar to the ones in Germany (Sauer 1920: 168).  In 1850, approximately 45.000 German people resided in Missouri, and within 1890 the numbers rose exponentially. There were 250.00 German settlers, and half of them were German-born (Dippold 2007: 8). Also Missouri’s capital, Jefferson City, which had only approximately 3.000 inhabitants in 1859, was expanding rapidly. Data from a subsequent census demonstrated a steady diminution of German people who were not born in the US. Thus, in 1910 solely 12.6 % of the population residing in Jefferson City, and 16.9% of Cole County’s inhabitants were born in the “German Reich”, but despite such a considerable decrease, the German language was the native tongue of most people of German extraction who were not born in the United States (Kloss 1974).  It is also remarkable that the German migration to Missouri was correlated with the American industrialization, undermining the strong economic position of guild artisans and skilled workers in trades and handicrafts; and thus, the Far West seemed to beckon with opportunity. The rolling hills and rivers reminded the early immigrants of their homelands, and their letters home spurred even more chain migration.  After the Civil War, the golden age of German culture was thriving in Missouri. The populations of a large number of small towns were almost entirely German.  Schools, churches and publications were nearly all published in German language. As German businesses in St. Louis and other towns flourished, the immigrants and their families prospered.  Also the German writer Karl May (1842 – 1912) was aware of the importance of German settlers residing in Missouri. Thus, in his novel “Weihnacht”, which is set in Missouri, he mentions that St. Joseph/Missouri had 7.000 inhabitants around 1865, of whom 2.000 people were German- born. They also founded several German associations there, such as a “Jagdverein” dedicated to hunters. Moreover, there were five churches in the above mentioned town, two of which were German.  In May’s opinion, the economic upturn of St. Joseph was achieved, mainly because of the presence of German immigrants (May 1953:107–108).    The towns the German settlers built in Missouri came to resemble what they had left behind. These small Missouri towns preserved much of what was best of their traditions and culture, while embracing at the same time the political freedom offered by their new homeland.   However, in the subsequent century, specifically in the early twentieth century, the situation pertinent to German immigrants exacerbated progressively. An anti-immigrant sentiment aroused, which became a serious problem for Germans residing in Missouri and in other Midwestern states, especially during and after World War I. Also the period of prohibition in the 1920s and early 1930s implicated considerable blows to their culture.  Such anti-immigrant issues and anti-immigrant sentiments recrudesced during World War II. But the unique spirit of the German immigrants remained as they blended into the overall culture of Missouri and the entire American Midwest, and they constitute a rather significant part of the US populace today.  In 1990, a census was conducted, in which Missouri’s residents were asked about their provenance. Astonishingly, 1.844.192 people said to be of German origin, while 1.038.117 people were of Irish background (Dippold 2007: 7).   Since the late 20th century, however, the German immigration to the United States has tapered off. The future immigration waves to the US, instead, are Hispanic and especially Asian (see my works Tondi 2019 / Tondi 2021).  Concluding the introductory part of this survey, it can be maintained that the role the German immigrants and their descendants had, in relation to the settlement and development of Missouri’s political, religious, economic and social landscape, was crucial. (<https://www.nps.gov/jeff/blogs/german-settlement-in-missouri-new-land-old-ways.htm>).  **CHAPTER I**  Missouri Germans  The first chapter of this study is historical in nature. It has a promiscuous content, being characterized by the presence of several sections, each having a different content, in relation to Missouri Germans. Thus, the first section of chapter I outlines the historical background and the intrinsic features of German settlers residing in St. Louis, Missouri in the 19th century.  German settlers in St. Louis  Most German immigrants came from Pennsylvania and from other states to St. Louis. There were only a few Germans in St. Louis before 1820. In the subsequent years, however, they started pouring into the city in significant numbers; and thus, they owned one third of St. Louis in the 1840s. The German immigrants were often proprietors of saloons, restaurants, boarding houses, and grocery stores. A large number of German settlers also worked as barbers, blacksmiths, doctors, and druggists, bringing indispensable skills to a rapidly growing city. (Burnett/Luebbering 1996: 22). It has to be remarked, moreover, that the circumstances and life conditions in St. Louis were rather problematic in that time period. Consequently, the city necessitated the Germans’ support.  Other German immigrants, residing in St. Louis were carpenters, bricklayers, and stone masons, whereas the less skilled workers often found an occupation as gardeners, maids, cooks, or nurses.  Hence, temporary lodging for German immigrants was an exigent problem; and unfortunately, it could not be resolved all at once. Some of them found lodging in one of the hotels or boarding houses on the riverfront. Due to these overcrowded conditions, St. Louis became one of the unhealthiest cities in the world; as a result, people had to face insupportable sufferings and diseases, such as a cholera epidemic. Moreover, there was a devastating flood in spring 1844, and subsequently there was even a huge fire (Burnett/Luebbering 1996: 22).  In spite of these calamities, St. Louis continued to grow and prosper. By 1850, the city had nearly 78.000 inhabitants, of which 24.000 were German settlers. German newspapers, theatres, social clubs, and musical clubs thrived in St. Louis.  In the 19th century, there was a considerable similarity between some neighbourhoods of St. Louis and several sections of German cities. For example, the streets were lined with two-story brick houses with green shutters on the windows and roofs with decorative triangular gables (Burnett/Luebbering 1996: 83).  The German settlers also brought their ideas of entertainment to St. Louis; and furthermore, they supported many public parks and gardens. In those gardens there were many statues of illustrious German writers and statesmen; such gardens were a place where diverse social events were held. Orchestras and singing societies gave concerts, and plays were held in the gardens. The proprietors of private gardens frequently served wine, beer, and sausages (Burnett/Luebbering 1996: 83).  On Sundays large numbers of people came to the gardens. *Tout court*, Sunday afternoon was a time for music, plays, and sharing food and drink. These Sunday activities were often not appreciated by other inhabitants of St. Louis, considering Sunday a quiet and peaceful day spent in worship and reflexion. Thus, American people often inveighed against the German settlers, not approving beer drinking and the German way of relaxation per se.  Music was regarded as a fundamental value by German people residing in St. Louis. They had a predilection for playing the piano, and they also introduced the habit of playing the piano to their American host community. The first choral group in the city was formed by a group of men from a brewery; and successively, the German American community also supported the establishment of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (Burnett/Luebbering 1996: 84).  The first German theatre performance in St. Louis was a production of “The Robbers” (Die Raeuber) by the German playwright, poet, and historian Friedrich Schiller. He was esteemed and even eulogized, being considered a great man by most German Americans.  The German culture was also fostered by social organizations. Thus, there were more than 300 German associations in St. Louis prior to World War I (Burnett/Luebbering 1996: 84). Those German societies appealed to every social and economic class; the “Liederkranz Club”, however, was solely open to the social elite, while clubs that were open to more people were more common and particularly appreciated. There were numerous singing societies, groups supporting impecunious people, entertainment clubs, shooting societies, labour unions, political clubs, and Turner societies. The Turners were organized in Germany in 1811 in order to promote physical education and intellectual pursuits, and they also introduced the habit of teaching physical education in schools.  Festival days were rather utile to maintain and celebrate St. Louis’s German heritage. Thus, there was a ten-days festival, held to commemorate Schiller’s life. During this festivity, a parade was organized, in which eight thousand people marched through streets decorated with American and German flags and pictures of Schiller. After the parade, thirty thousand people reunited in a park to listen to music and to speeches in German and English (Burnett/Luebbering 1996: 85).  In the late nineteenth century, St. Louis was one of the leading cultural and educational cities in the US and was regarded as a kind of German city in the middle of the United States. It had an excellent Symphony Orchestra, a significant botanical garden, and six daily newspapers, two of which were German – language papers with national influence.  German settlers in Concordia/Missouri – a historical background  Also the present section is historical in nature, being dedicated specifically to German immigrants, coming from Northwestern Germany. They commonly did not settle in Missouri’s big cities, such as St. Louis, but rather in Missouri’s rural areas. Hence, a large number of Germans ensconced in Lafayette County, situated in Western Missouri where they founded a little town, named Concordia. (Concordia will be treated mainly from a linguistic point of vue, in relation to the Low German dialect in the third chapter of this study).  Between 1838 and the early 1890s, large numbers of German peasants from the Kingdom of Hanover emigrated to Lafayette County, Missouri, in order to establish a new community centred on the town of Concordia, initially named “Freedom Township”. Hence, a substantial Hanoverian settlement was built by the Dierking emigration party in Southeastern Lafayette County. Goebel defined it as a “starke deutsche Niederlassung” – a strong German settlement (Goebel 1877: 203).  Unlike a large number of Midwestern Germans, the Hanoverians moved to Freedom Township without discernible leadership from nobles, members of the urban middle classes, Latin farmers, or emigration societies formed in Germany (Frizzell 2007: 157). They were all influenced by Gottfried Duden’s book, an author who will be treated more exhaustively in one of the subsequent sections of this chapter.  Moreover, they often decided to quit Germany because of recommendations from relatives, friends, and acquaintances. This process of chain-migration was correlated with numerous out-of-the way locations in Europe with similarly obscure places in America in the 19th century. The Hanoverians made an excellent decision based on several opportunities to continue working the soil provided by available land in Missouri, coupled with economic pressure prevalently caused by overpopulation and the decline of household industry in the Hanover area (Frizzell 2007: 158).  A significant number of German immigrants, arriving in Missouri, in 1839, came from Esperke, situated in County Neustadt, a little town in the north of Hanover. The German farmers operated on a rather modest scale and were unable to reproduce in Missouri the social, legal, and economic undifferentiations of Esperke that separated one farmer from another. After their arrival in Missouri, they did not immediately free themselves from their prior relative positions pertaining to County Neustadt. (Frizzell 2007: 33).  As far as agriculture is concerned, the German settlers in Concordia soon enjoyed enormous prosperity: Lafayette County presented a considerable advantage, apart form being well-suited to crash crops because its upland soils were more productive than most Missouri soils. It was the combination of relatively productive soil and a cash crop very much in demand. They were particularly favourable to the Freedom Township Germans (Frizzell 2007: 51).  Hanoverians in Lafayette County also benefited from the opportunity to cultivate and sell hemp in Missouri, but their Anglo-American neighbours benefited even more notably. The principal reason for this phenomenon ought to be searched in the fact that the Anglo-Americans had been first in Lafayette County; and thus, they had more capital. Furthermore, they brought large numbers of African American slaves to produce hemp on a large scale. Anyway, the German settlers in Lafayette County can be considered unique among nineteenth century German immigrants because they stood beside an area of particularly lucrative, predominantly slave-based agriculture (Frizzell 2007: 55).  Lafayette County was one of the seven counties in west-central Missouri to which the historian R. Douglas Hurt attributed the expression “Little Dixie”. According to Hurt, in 1860, approximately a quarter of the population of Little Dixie consisted of slaves who were employed in growing hemp and tobacco, and in general farming. Three townships in the entire state, all within Little Dixie, contained a slave majority in the farmlands outside the market villages. One of these was in Lafayette County. In two additional Lafayette County townships, slaves composed more than two fifths of the population. The county as a whole contained 6.374 slaves in 1860, more than any other county in the state (Hurt 1992: 239).  The situation for draft animals appeared to be a case of Germans taking to a Missouri trend faster than their Anglo neighbours. Western Missouri was a central location for breeding the famous Missouri mule. Mules were nearly unknown in Northwestern Germany. In 1850, more than one in eight German families in Lafayette County owned one or more mules, and horses, as well (Frizzell 2007: 57). Mules were cheaper and required less rest than horses during a long day of fieldwork.  Farming was a rather profitable and rewarding business in Lafayette County, but it did not alleviate the lure of California when gold was discovered there in 1848. A large number of German settlers from Missouri went to California, and the most successful among them was presumably John Holtcamp who claimed his parents were the first Prussians in the county. He mined in California until 1856 when he returned to Freedom Township with 1.700 $ with which he bought his own farm (Frizzell 2007: 63).  When the German settlers decided to move to California in 1850 to seek further fortune, they left a relatively prosperous frontier community of four hundred people begun by Hanoverians who were progressively supplemented by settlers from Prussian Westphalia. Subsequently, the community grew to nearly one thousand people, more than a third of whom were young people born in the US. At the beginning of the American Civil War, the community was predominantly rural marked by a social and institutional infrastructure which had been developing tardily in the preceding two decades (Frizzell 2007: 63).  Missouri Germans and slavery  The present section has a totally different content, in comparison with the preceding sections of this chapter. It is dedicated specifically to a significant and somewhat delicate issue, which deserves elaboration. It illustrates the German settlers’ attitudes in relation to the preservation of slavery in Missouri in the 19th century. Slavery is generally considered an extremely deplorable event in American history; and thus, it will never be expunged from American people’s memories.  In order to delineate this issue, it seems particularly appropriate to me to mention Friedrich Muench’s story.  In 1862, when the outcome of the Civil War and the question of emancipation was uncertain, Friedrich Muench, a German-American politician, considered his support of freedom indisputable. Upon Muench’s death in 1881, Franz Rodmann, a political associate of Muench, recalled a conversation after a fervid session of the Missouri State Assembly in which he questioned Muench’s outspoken support of emancipation. Rodmann presaged that Muench’s passion would compromise the cause, but Muench responded fiercely that the subjugated people of Europe had lost their independence and political liberty (Bergerson/Logge: 2019).  Prior historians had often examined the anti-slavery sentiments of the German community in the U.S. Hence, Alison Clark Efford examined in what way the liberalism of the 1848 rebellion influenced the German-American community. Louis S. Gerteis argued that many Germans did not believe in slavery, especially for pragmatic reasons.  In this regard, a collection at the Missouri Historical Society, relating to German immigration to Missouri from 1834-1947, ought to be analyzed. That collection includes several documents all pertaining to Friedrich Muench: Muench himself tried to write a speech about a new anti-immigration organization in Missouri. Subsequently, he extemporized it in front of a crowd on July 4, 1840, and Friedrich’s grandson, Julius Muench, made an address to the Missouri Historical Society about his grandfather’s legacy. A colleague of Friedrich Muench, Franz Rodmann wrote his address *A Farewell to Friedrich Muench* describing Muench’s po litical life; and the *Westliche Post* printed an obituary notice after Friedrich Muench’s death on December 16, 1881. Friedrich Muench’s theories on equity, equal rights, immigration rights, and slavery appear frequently in that collection. He also wanted to understand the attitudes of Germans more thoroughly when they first came to Missouri and how those views changed once they settled there.  It begins by studying the published works of Gottfried Duden, Gustav Koerner, and William G. Bek. Duden published his *A Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America and a Stay of Several Years along the Missouri,* in 1829, intending it to be a guidebook encouraging Germans to ensconce in Missouri.  In 1834, Gustav Koerner wrote a critical response to Duden’s Report, and he titled his response *An Illumination of Duden’s Report on the Western States of North America: From the American Side*. From the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, a historian named William G. Bek collected sources pertinent to German-American history in Missouri (Bergerson/Logge 2019). In that timeframe, Bek published his book *Der Geist des Deutschtums in the State of Missouri,* in which he also reprobated Duden’s Report, but now with the added vantage point of writing in the post Civil War era.  Theories of cultural globalization can help explain what happens when immigration brings diﬀerent cultures together. Cultural Globalization is the term for when the mixing of diverse cultures produces a more consolidated, global culture. These theories analyze the impact various cultures have on each other when they are forced to interact. In this case, educated German immigrants interacted with the culture of native Missourians, a diverse culture in and of itself. As these cultures mixed, immigrants’ concerns for their equal rights evolved into a collective desire on the part of German-Americans to renounce slavery. As tensions mounted over slavery in the 1840s and 1850s, the immigration flux from Germany to Missouri also augmented notably, especially after 1848.  Friedrich Muench was a perspicacious man, a visible and frequently referenced German-American, involved in Missouri’s state politics, and eventually national political movements and elections (Bergerson/Logge 2019). Muench’s legacy was analyzed by reviewing what his family and friends wrote about his most politically active decade, which extended from the late 1850s to the late 1860s. From the 1840s through the Civil War, the German-American community in Missouri was able to proudly insert its voice into the debate over slavery thanks to progressive leaders, such as Muench.  Gottfried Duden  This section is dedicated exclusively to Gottfried Duden, already mentioned in the present work. Duden was an illustrious and educated German emigration writer who was born in Remscheid/Germany in 1789. He worked as a judge, and also studied medicine for some semesters before moving to North America (Emmerich 2013: 58).  Duden was enamoured with Missouri’s impressive landscape and its pleasurable climate. Thus, he emigrated to Missouri in 1824 and wrote a famous, but somewhat idealized book about the state in order to incite German people to quit Germany and to settle in Missouri.  Gottfried Duden’s book for immigrantsbecame one of the most influential examples of 19th century emigration literature (Mehrhoff 2019: 29). Duden presented his Report to his eager readers in the form of readable and credible personal letters. The timing of his Report is correlated with its sympathetic, optimistic, and conversational style, and it also became a bestseller in Germany. Today we would even say “it went viral”.  That work attracted thousands of German immigrants to settle in the rapidly growing frontier state of Missouri. Hence, of the 160,541 foreign-born residents of Missouri, by the time of the Civil War, 88,487 came from the German states (Mehrhoff 2019: 29). Moreover, it provided the audience, prevalently consisting of German immigrants, with a detailed but relatively glamourized view of life in Missouri; unfortunately, it contained several extraneous information, and it somewhat diverged from reality. Despite its flaws, however, Duden’s work can be considered rather successful. It became a sort of “Auswanderung” creation myth, and large numbers of eager German settlers, inspired by Duden’s book, found pioneer farming really challenging and interesting. Consequently, they decided to establish those “fine farms” mentioned by Duden; the German settlers actually intended to found a “New Germany” (Neu-Deutschland) in Missouri (Emmerich 2013: 57).  One group of “Auswanderers”, inspired by Duden’s travel book, was denominated the “Berlin Society”. They settled in what is today “Warren County” (Mehrhoff 2019: 30). The Berlin Society consisted mainly of accultured Germans; and thus, they were named the “Latin Farmers” because of their Latin language proficiency and also because of their ineptitude in relation to hard farm work. They proved to be unable to sustain a permanent settlement on the western frontier in Missouri. Hence, the Berlin Society succumbed within 1860. Despite the fallacious beliefs of the Berlin Society, Duden’s work ought to be regarded as an important contribution to US immigration history, as well as a key artifact of Missouri’s German heritage.  Anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn defined culture as a mirror for human beings, in which they see the world as they have learned to see it, as well as looking at their own reflections in other cultures (Mehrhoff 2019: 31). It is fundamental to recalibrate and revitalize Missouri’s German heritage in order to preserve its timeless qualities while shedding its cultural burdens.  According to American cultural geographer and historian David Lowenthal, heritage is never merely conserved or protected, but it is modified; it can be both ameliorated and deteriorated, by every new generation (Lowenthal 1985).  Thus, the Missouri Heritage Council created the German Heritage Corridor in 2015. Its fundamental objective is to foster a more intense connection to Missouri’s German heritage. The Council has brought together numerous scholars and professionals to aid fashion an interpretative plan for the Corridor and is now collecting oral histories, storytelling, and archival photographs on a website about the German Heritage Corridor cultural region  (Mehrhoff 2019: 32).  It seems appropriate to me to mention at this point that Duden’s book was published prior to the Civil War, and while Duden and other immigrants were cognizant of the tensions between free and slave states, the main concern of the text was the geology and agricultural opportunity of the region.  Regardless of how accurate they found Duden’s descriptions, many immigrants adapted to the situation around them, embracing their new identity – not as German immigrants to America, but rather German-Americans with voices to be heard on the social and political stage. Prior to the U.S. Civil War, Duden’s Report drew not only eager attention, but it was also criticized.  In *An Illumination of Duden’s Report On the Western States of North America From the American Side,* Gustav Koerner, an educated German immigrant, delineated many insuperable difficulties and inconveniences the German immigrants in Missouri might face – adversities Duden had failed to mention. Actually, Duden’s initial felicity and enthusiasm before coming to Missouri, were soon transformed into fear and frustration. He realized that he was completely unable to survive in that unknown land. Thus, Duden decided to conclude his sojourn in Missouri and returned to Germany in 1829 (Emmerich 2013: 58).  In order to establish his authority on both Duden and Duden’s subject, Koerner promulgated his theories and ideas with a lengthy comparative analysis between Duden’s understanding of the geography, climate, and health conditions, and Koerner’s own observations of those same things. Eventually Koerner expressed his consternation and arrived at his first condemnation and warning about Missouri social life (Bergerson/Logge: 2019).. Writing on the unfortunate lack of hired help, Koerner elucidated the fact that there was always one way out, which is to buy a slave, but that requires considerable capital, since it is not easy to find a slave for less than $500. Koerner first commented on the exorbitant cost of slavery, and his next sentence clearly established his moral interpretation of slavery.  Koerner proceeds with his critique, stating that new arrivals who obey this principle, and who have acquired a horror of the execrable conditions slavery implies, must be reviled, if they arrive convincing themselves that political conviction has brought them to set foot on the republican soil of America. If Koerner’s condemnation of slavery had not been obvious precedingly, it was by far more evident subsequently. By “new arrivals,” Koerner was referring to immigrants, and by including such phrases as “acquired a horror” and “repellent” and “must be reviled,” Koerner had oﬃcially moved on from repudiating Duden’s text, to now denouncing the institution of slavery and the individuals, particularly immigrants, that partook in slavery. Koerner refrained from mentioning the German people specifically at this point, solely criticizing the practice of slavery by Missouri citizens, and then expanding that critique to outsiders who adopted the tradition. Koerner terminated this passage by clarifying where Germans fit into this story of Missouri slavery.  Koerner was proud of the fact that the German people had not participated in the slave trade, but he was also fearful of the potential harm the immoral system of Missouri slavery would have on future generations of German-Americans. Koerner failed, however, to expostulate with Duden’s opinion on slavery, using this aside in his *Illumination* to explain exclusively his personal views and theories.  Koerner was not the sole human who criticized and even importuned Duden in the nineteenth century, nor was he the only critic to take a moment to mention slavery in his invective. In *Der Geist des Deutschtums in the State of Missouri,* the early twentieth-century, William G. Bek tried to provide a detailed analysis of German immigration to Missouri over the course of the nineteenth century, including the tumultuous Civil War era. In the first few pages, Bek criticized Duden as “a splendid observer, but a most preposterous exaggerator in his descriptions.” He, much like Koerner, went on to mention the issue of slavery in Missouri (Bergerson/Logge: 2019).  Bek said that unfortunately, the institution of slavery had taken a profound root in Missouri’s soil. For this institution the German mind possessed an innate antipathy, an antipathy that Koerner expressed in his *Illumination*. Bek, writing after the Civil War, oﬀered a valuable, though succinct critique of slavery in Missouri. His critique was not valuable in its uniqueness, but more so in its consistency with the views of Koerner, written more than half a century before. In the collection of text and primary sources Bek complied at the end of his book, he mentions a few names in his bibliography, the first of which is Friedrich Muench.  According to Muench’s grandson, Julius, Muench was also a prominent voice in encouraging German immigration to come to the US in the 1850s. In an address to the Missouri Historical Society given in 1947, Julius explained that his grandfather, in the years preceding the war, lent his support to the presidential campaign of Abraham Lincoln. Muench went on to serve as a Missouri state senator during the Civil War (Bergerson/Logge: 2019).. Unfortunately, Julius was only able to use the first-hand accounts of his grandfather’s unnamed associates to tell Muench’s story.  Conversely, Franz Rodmann, in his eulogy *Farewell to Friedrich Muench,* established that he personally knew Muench in the prime of his political years. In this farewell address, Rodmann described Muench as having been “one of the most prominent and active defenders of the state against slavery.” Rodmann explained that there were two groups of Missouri politicians opposed to a southern secession: one group considered the issues of secession and slavery to be separate matters, but another sizeable group consisted of “radical” politicians who were unyielding in their coupling of southern secession and slavery. Muench was one such “radical” politician, or a member of the “Coal-Blacks” party, as Rodmann named them.  Rodmann described Muench’s character and manner, saying that he had never heard any human being describe the execrable conditions and the misery of indigent and oppressed people in more touching words than “Old Father Muench”.  This descriptive language echoes the anti-slavery diction of Koerner and auspicates the same general viewpoint of Bek with regards to the German- American position on slavery (Bergerson/Logge: 2019). Muench’s speech on July 4, 1840, exemplified the passionate wrath Rodmann considered to be characteristic of Muench. In this speech Muench spoke not directly about the deplorable conditions of slavery but rather a new party of “Natives,” a group of Americans that held intense anti-immigration sentiments. Muench began his patriotic speech in front of a crowd of American citizens, describing the noteworthy privilege he had felt to come to such a great nation. He alluded to the expectations of German-Americans when they came to America. German immigrants based their expectations on both the glorious descriptions of Duden, and the more measured observations of Koerner.  Muench was aware that the self-proclaimed “Natives” might find fault with not only a German immigrant expressing his consternation about his new home’s socio-economic relations. It was at this turning point in his speech where Muench went on the oﬀensive, even picking apart the name that this anti-immigration group chose for themselves. Muench recalled that, if any Americans were actually “Natives,” and not immigrants themselves, they would have been “the red skinned hunters, who, by the arms of the white man, have been exiled from the country of their birth.” Muench considered himself an American patriot, and he regarded the self-styled “Natives” as merely unpatriotic (Bergerson/Logge: 2019).  Speaking directly against the “Natives,” Muench went on to declare that he detested them, being cognizant of the fact that their hatred originates chiefly, from their own mean selfishness and from our surpassing them in true devotion of equal rights and liberty. By “our” he referred to the German-Americans. Almost a century after Friedrich’s speech, in his address to the Missouri Historical Society in 1947, Julius reminded the society of his grandfather’s strong patriotic feelings, echoing the same point his grandfather had made in that speech. Friedrich Muench embodied his idea of how the new members of a “nation” could be more patriotic and representative of that nation’s identity than those who had lived there much longer.  Friedrich Muench passed away on December 16, 1881. His obit described the defunct Muench as “the pride of his country-men in Missouri.” The obituary did not comprehend whether or not Muench’s expression “country-men” refers to Germans, German-Americans, Americans, or Missourians, allowing both Germans and Americans to share in their collective pride in a man who represented a liberal, and more global social progress for the state of Missouri (Bergerson/Logge (2019).  20  The German American Experience in Missouri during World War I  This section illustrates the intrinsic features pertaining to Missouri’s German American experience in the First World War. It is dedicated exclusively to the Missouri Germans’ attitudes and the aversions against German language use during World War I. During the Great War, German Americans and people of German or Austrian extraction, felt pressured to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States owing to national, state, and local mobilization efforts. Men volunteered for active duty, registered with the Selective Service, served when drafted, or if too old participated in the Home Guard. Families invested in Liberty Bonds, purchased War Savings Stamps, conserved food, and supported the Red Cross. (<https://missourioverthere.org/explore/articles/the-german-american-experience-in-missouri-during-world-war-i/>). Most did so to express their heartfelt patriotism; others intended to appear loyal to divert attention from their ethnicity; and some resented the war’s and government’s interference in their daily lives.(De Witt: 2012). Federal legislation directly impacted many German Americans. Immigrants from Germany and Austria who had not yet become naturalized citizens were defined as alien enemies and had to register with federal authorities.  In Missouri, 5,890 men and 2,684 women registered, including several American-born women who had married German-born men and, according to the 1907 Naturalization Law, had acquired the nationality of their husbands.The Trading-with-the Enemy Act required that editors of foreign language newspapers, including the Westliche Post in St. Louis and Missouri Volksfreund in Jefferson City, file with local postmasters translations of articles related to the national government and war. Editors who refused, lost their second-class mailing privileges and in several instances had to close German-language newspapers, including the “Osage County Volksblatt” and the Sedalia Journal (Kennedy 1980).  The Trading-with-the-Enemy Act also gave the alien property custodian the authority to confiscate property belonging to any German citizen or person residing in Germany. The custodian seized several businesses in St. Louis and took partial ownership of companies in St. Joseph and Kansas City.  For example, the Bush family from St. Louis personally experienced this legislation. Clara and Wilhelmine, the American-born daughters of Adolphus Busch, had married German citizens and lived in Germany. The custodian confiscated both their inheritances, about two-eighths of the entire Busch estate. Eliza “Lilly” Busch, the widow of Adolphus Busch, had visited her daughters in 1914 and decided to remain there in case one of them should become a widow. The custodian took possession of her inherited estate, consisting of one-eighth stock ownership of the Brewery because her actions in Germany, including donating money to hospitals and turning her home into a rehabilitation center for German soldiers, fit the interpretation of aiding and abetting the enemy. Mrs. Busch regained her property in December 1918 when she returned to the US (<https://missourioverthere.org/explore/articles/the-german-american-experience-in-missouri-during-world-war-i/>).  The 1917 Espionage Act, outlawing any actions that could interfere with the military, and the 1918 Sedition Act, controlling dissent through limitation of the freedom of speech, led to the arrest of several German Americans who expressed pro-German or anti-American thoughts (Kennedy 1980: 75-77).  Punishment, however, was not universal in severity. August Heidbreder, a wealthy farmer in Gasconade County received a $100 fine for his suggestion that President Wilson should be stuffed into a canon and shot out to sea, and August Weist, the deputy collector for St. Louis, had to pay a $200 fine for allegedly stating “Our boys have no damned business being over there…. By contrast, August Scheuring, a German-born resident in St. Louis, received a lengthy prison sentence at Fort Leavenworth because while traveling in a streetcar and sitting in front of uniformed soldiers he allegedly stated that “the Kaiser will win the war.” (<https://missourioverthere.org/explore/articles/the-german-american-experience-in-missouri-during-world-war-i/>)  State and county institutions responsible for mobilization had an even greater impact on the lives of German Americans because they defined disloyalty in contexts of personal relationships and decided how to punish unpatriotic individuals. The Missouri legislature had ended its biennial session in April 1917 and would not meet again until January 1919. Governor Frederick D. Gardner and the Missouri Council of Defense, appointed by him upon the instructions of the National Council of Defense, were in charge of mobilizing the state. Gardner used his appeal for “one people, one sentiment, and one flag; ready to cooperate, ready to sacrifice, ready to suffer” to instill patriotism but also defined disloyalty by declaring in April 1917 that “this is no time for slackers…it is our duty to drive them out and brand them as traitors (Shoemaker 1919: 320). One year later he asserted that all pro-Germans were German spies and threatened to establish martial law in Missouri if he discovered “these traitorous wretches.” Both the governor and the state council instructed county and township councils that they held the responsibility to meet mobilization quotas and control dissent.  This local enforcement power expressed itself in various forms. In Osage County, the draft board rescinded Paul Paulsmeyer’s exemption from military service for physical disability because he had made derogatory remarks about Red Cross volunteers. <https://missourioverthere.org/explore/articles/the-german-american-experience-in-missouri-during-world-war-i/>). In Jefferson City, a “Committee of citizens” gave Fritz Monat, a German-born Socialist, a public flogging and forced him to kiss the flag because he had made pro-German remarks and his association with militant labour unions threatened to destabilize the city’s labor relations. In Gasconade County, “intensely and aggressively patriotic” German Americans, fearful that the county acquire the “slacker” label, coerced fellow German speakers to more enthusiastically support the war, increase their purchase of liberty bonds, and keep any critical thoughts to themselves. They also supported the renaming of the small town of Potsdam to its more patriotic name, Pershing.  Several communities attempted to outlaw the use of German. The Cass and Linn County Councils of Defense banned the use of German on the telephone. The Franklin County Council of Defense resolved that conversing in German in public would be “unwise and unpatriotic.” The St. Louis Republic agitated for an end to the German-language press and initiated a city-wide campaign to change street names from offensive-sounding German to acceptable American names. Such local demands had state-wide impact because the State Council reacted in August 1918 by announcing a resolution that strongly encouraged all Missourians to speak English.  Coercive pressures through national legislation, state organizations, and local institutions created suspicions of all things German during World War I and led in some cases to super-patriotic activity but in other cases to peaceful treatment of suspected disloyals.  Less than enthusiastic individuals, whom zealous war supporters mistrusted, often diverted attention from themselves by harassing others. German Americans, who desired to impress their own sense of patriotism on their neighbours, reported fellow German Americans to the authorities (<https://missourioverthere.org/explore/articles/the-german-american-experience-in-missouri-during-world-war-i/>). Physical violence, however, was limited to individuals who flaunted their support for Germany.  The German church in Missouri  The final section of this chapter contains a succinct outline of German church congregations in Missouri. It examines German language use and specifically it delineates eventual language shift from Standard German to English in German church communities in Cole Camp, Missouri.  German church has always played a crucial role in most German-American speech islands, being a significant means of preservation of German culture and German traditions; and concomitantly, it can be regarded as a barrier to assimilation to American mainstream society. Immigration historians have often claimed that in ethnic communities, including the German ones, the church is typically the centre for the immigrants’ cultural and communal life. Apart from satisfying the religious impulse itself, a local church has always been one of the very few institutions an immigrant group could control and enjoy with no concern for American laws and customs or the English language (Frizzell 2007: 64).  This feature can also be ascribed to the Hanoverians, residing in Freedom Township where they founded several German churches within 1860 (Frizzell 2007: 88).  Two of those churches had the objective to have exactly the same features the churches in Germany had, while two other ones embodied Anglo or frontier influences, although operating in German language. Those who wanted to be exempt from compulsory support and attendance of any church, were allowed to do so. Members of the community had learned to use the legal system for their purposes, and they had also demonstrated that despite the numerous opportunities of their new community, people could fall victims to several relational problems, such as religious rivalry and serious matrimonial discord. Fortunately, by 1860 all those challenges were entirely overcome (Frizzell 2007: 88).  A particularly valuable sociolinguistic survey in relation to German church congregations in Missouri was conducted by Doris Dippold, although not in Freedom Township; Dippold’s thorough investigation was entirely based on German churches in Cole Camp, Missouri.  In Dippold’s view, those German church congregations were marked by an intense German heritage, representing five denominations: Roman Catholic, German-Methodist, Evangelical-Lutheran, (Iowa Synod, Missouri Synod), and German-Evangelical (Dippold 2007: 3).  Missouri had seven Catholic communities, most of which were located in small towns. However, there is a bigger community, named St. Peter, in Jefferson City (Dippold 2007: 33). To the German Evangelical Synod, instead, belong solely two communities: an urban community in Jefferson City and a second one in Brazito, whereas a further community in Russellville succumbed after a few years (Dippold 2007: 59).  German was the common language utilized in church ceremonies in most German church communities in Missouri until the early 1920s. Subsequently, however, the usage of German became progressively less frequent.  In the early 1950s language shift from German to English terminated in most German church communities in Missouri, albeit German was preserved in some niches (Dippold 2007: 142).  Language shift had initiated in the 1920s due to a rather severe assimilation pressure, mainly caused by World War I. It was a protracted phenomenon; and thus, it did not cease immediately. A lack in institutional support toward the German language, and a changing composition of social groups, implicated a loss of the language in most domains, which more importantly was in correlation with a cultural loss, as well.  World War I, however, cannot be considered the major reason of language shift in Cole Camp’s German-American congregations. Shift in language use and cultural perception usually do not occur without changes in the social and demographic structure of an immigrant community. Thus, World War I only accelerated language shift, being a phenomenon which had already commenced precedingly (Dippold 2007: 3).  Moreover, “language loss” can be generally defined as a loss of cultural competence and cultural connections of an ethnic group and their traditions (Dippold 2007: 143). This feature can also be attributed to Hanoverians residing in Cole Camp. Consequently, the possibility to foster German traditions and culture in that area has notably diminished, following the conclusion of the assimilation process, albeit there is still a restricted number of German speakers in Cole County, in the early 21st century, and there are also some German associations and churches in the 21st century.  However, the results regarding language shift in Cole County cannot be attributed *tout court* to any other speech island in the US because the situation in relation to the preponderant factors, such as school, external assimilation pressure, and combination of social groups, is excessively fluctuating.  Recent studies on German linguistic islands in the US have demonstrated that an isolated position of a speech community may cause a retardation of linguistic assimilation (Dippold 2007: 139), and there is incontrovertible evidence that such a feature can be ascribed to Cole County’s German communities, as well.  **CHAPTER II**  Missouri’s German flair  The second chapter of this survey contains several sections, each having a different content. They illustrate Missouri’s German customs and traditions, and they also describe a typical German flair pertinent to Missouri in the 21st century.  It is a well-known fact that no other immigrant group has had a greater influence on Missouri’s history than the Germans. They influenced its agriculture, arts, architecture, sciences, and cuisine.  From St. Louis to Indian Grove, Missouri has an officially designated German Heritage Corridor. It encompasses sixteen counties on both sides of the Missouri River, from the confluence with the Mississippi and through Lafayette and Chariton Counties. Lafayette County does not touch the Missouri River, but indeed the river turns back south and runs along much of the county’s border. It is part of the Corridor, as well, especially because of Concordia’s strong German heritage.    German architecture in Missouri  As far as architecture is concerned, Missouri has one of the few remaining housebarns that German settlers built in the United States. It has four levels, with the bottom level built into the hillside and serving as a stable and storage. The front porch welcomed visitors. The historic Pelster Housebarn still stands half-hidden in the heart of the German Heritage Corridor, nestled into a hillside south of New Haven in rural Franklin County. It is a splendid survivor of an Old World building style that integrated house and barn into one structure.   * Constructed by German Lutheran immigrant Friedrich Wilhelm (William) Pelster (1825–1908), the housebarn sheltered the Pelster family, livestock, and its farm work all under one roof. The superstructure rests in typically solid German fashion on a massive, mortared, twenty-four-inch-thick stone foundation, entirely visible from the rear and almost completely banked into the hillside on the front. Weatherboarding masks its uniquely German Fachwerk (half-timbered) construction, in which the wooden wall framing—studs, cross beams, and braces—are exposed to the outside while plaster, brick, or stone fill the spaces between the timbers (https://missourilife.com/missouris-german-heritage/) * A steeply pitched gabled roof covers the structure. The roof, originally covered with wooden shingles, sloped down the front to shelter a porch on the house end and an enclosed storage area on the other. Family history suggests that the front room of the second level served as the “parlor” to welcome visitors, while the middle room served as both family living space and bedroom. A back room served as a kitchen, cupboard, and storage space. A Diele (a broad central hallway) separated the house section from the grain and hay storage areas. Tongue and groove planks, originally fastened with handcrafted wooden pegs, covered the floor. Traditionally, the Diele would have been used for threshing as well as unloading hay from wagons. * According to the Missouri Agricultural Census, in 1870, Pelster was the proprietor of six horses, five milk cows, four other cattle, twenty-four sheep, and eleven swine. In today’s planning parlance, the Pelster Housebarn was the ultimate mixed-use development project (https://missourilife.com/missouris-german-heritage/).   Pelster came to central Missouri in that wave of German immigrants seeking refuge or fortune in America between the 1830s until the Civil War. Emigrating from the village of Dissen, near Osnabrueck, Hannover, in northern Germany, Pelster arrived in Missouri in 1842 with his wife Maria Katherine and his sons Rodolph and Wilhelm. Strikingly familiar, a hamlet named Dissen lay a few miles north of the Pelster farm.  Like many other German immigrants in rural Missouri, the Pelsters erected a temporary log dwelling, prior to constructing a more permanent (and more German) dwelling.  While no written documentation clearly dates the Pelster Housebarn construction, it might have begun on the eve of the Civil War, but its fulfillment was unfortunately procrastinated until after the war. Franklin County tax assessment records show Pelster’s property value rose significantly in 1867, supporting the family story. In true Missouri German custom, Pelster family members occupied the housebarn for more than sixty years.  The situation pertaining to farm life in the German Heritage Corridor changed rather tardily, while the Pelster family occupied the housebarn.  With the exception of St. Louis and St. Charles, the German Heritage Corridor remained almost entirely rural and remote until well into the 1900s. The Highway 19 bridge across the Missouri River did not open until 1931, whereas the bridge over the Missouri River at Washington did not open until 1936. The few state roads throughout the counties of the German Heritage Corridor consisted of gravel, and many properties were solely accessible by two-track dirt trails for horses and wagons, and the trails frequently followed the creeks.  The typical rural household in the German Heritage Corridor tilled and toiled through a succession of long days. They planted, raised, and harvested their crops while also planting  *gemusegarten* (kitchen gardens) for fruits and vegetables, preserving the food that was not consumed fresh for later consumption.  Many of them planted, raised, and harvested flax, which was then retted, broken, and combed with a succession of ever-finer combs to separate the linen fibers from the broken flax stalks, then spun the linen into thread, wove the thread into cloth, and made their own linens and clothing. (https://missourilife.com/missouris-german-heritage/).  They raised chickens, pigs, sheep, and cattle for meat, then butchered and cured meat or made sausage. Moreover, they made soap, cut wood, built fences, and baked bread. A larger number of Missouri German families raised grapes and made wine, while many others practiced a trade such as furniture-maker, wheelwright, carpenter, blacksmith, cobbler, or shoemaker.  Like the Pelster Housebarn itself, Missouri German farm families integrated a large number of activities into one household for self-reliant freedom. The immigrants planted cabbage in their kitchen gardens but usually entire fields elsewhere. The rule of thumb was one hundred heads of cabbage per person annually.  The German immigrants often constructed their own buildings, as they were grounded in an ancient European construction tradition. In Holland and northern Germany in the fourteenth century, for example, such structures were erected to shelter humans and livestock, often without partitions between living and stabling areas. Known in Holland as the *los hoes* and in Germany as the *Hallenhaus*, the house section occupied one end and the barn section the other of these long houses. This basic type, with its centuries of regional variations, was still built in northern Europe until the 1900s (https://missourilife.com/missouris-german-heritage/).  Although the Pelster family hailed from northern Germany, their housebarn more closely reflects the kind of housebarns built in Switzerland and the southern Alpine region of Germany, banked into the slope of a hillside.  At the time of its 1978 National Register of Historic Places nomination and acceptance, the Pelster Housebarn was one of only a dozen remaining housebarns in America. Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Texas all still possessed some type of housebarns. The Pelster Housebarn compared most closely to the Wisconsin examples, also built by German immigrants. However, the Pelster Housebarn was intended as a permanent dwelling, while the Wisconsin examples were replaced by detached dwellings.  The Pelster Housebarn exemplifies unique “Fachwerk” construction. Massive white-oak timbers, hewn to desired size and shape with a broad axe, form the framing. All joints are expertly mortised, tenoned, and secured with wood pegs rather than nails. Noggings of limestone and plaster laid between the framing members provided insulation. In keeping with old-world traditions, each section of the frame bears a chiseled Roman numeral, designating its place in the structure. Pieces were laid out on the ground and assembled, then each section, or “bent,” was raised and individually braced while the next one was assembled. (https://missourilife.com/missouris-german-heritage/).  The tradition of building housebarns rarely survived the sea change of immigrant culture to America. While common in Europe, where high land and construction costs made consolidation of farm enterprises in one structure secure and economical, the Far West of Missouri posed an entirely different set of circumstances. Abundant land, timber, and popular tastes worked against the housebarn style.  Hillside siting, weatherboarding, a visible porch, and a gabled wagon entrance distinguish the Pelster Housebarn from other American housebarns.  In relation to German architectural styles in Missouri, it seems appropriate to mention a little town, named Westphalia which clearly distinguishes Missouri’s German heritage. It was founded in 1835 by a colony of Catholic Westphalians and Rhinelanders from Northern Germany. Its population is 389 today, and it is situated within a band of the winding Marais River south of the Ozage River in a hilly wooden landscape (Mehrhoff 2019: 49). The church in Westphalia is a Romanesque Gothic edifice which provides a forceful orientation point being located prominently on a hill. It is surrounded by a school, a convent, and by a series of 19th century houses; German architectural styles are preponderant in the town. Westphalia seems to be an Old World village transplanted to the middle of the American continent.  Moreover, Westphalia was used as a significant example of chain migration by the historian Walter Kamphoefner, in his book, entitled “The Westphalians”. He contrasted it positively throughout his work, in comparison with the more celebrated emigration societies, such as the “Giessen Emigration Society” (Kamphoefner 1987).  Missouri’s German cuisine  The present section aims at illustrating succinctly Missouri’s German cuisine and the presence of a large number of German restaurants in the state.  German culinary specialties and German restaurants are rather popular throughout the entire state. They clearly testify the remnants of German culture and the German heritage in Missouri. Unfortunately, in 2020, some German restaurants in St. Louis folded, mainly due to the pandemic, but although being threatened by the virus Covid 19, Missouri’s German restaurants are still rather popular and appreciated by most people residing in the state.  At first, I would like to mention the “Bavarian Smoke House”. It is a genuine German meat shop, which opened in New Melle, in 1996. It is particularly popular and well-known in most parts of Missouri. The proprietors Jim and Karen Joerling offer German-style sausage, several *bratwurst* types, smoked pork or poultry, different bacons, smoked ham, and other specialty and smoke meats (Mehrhoff 2019: 101).  Another restaurant, the “Feasting Fox Historic Restaurant”, endowed with a Teutonic character, promises German fare, German fun, and German drink.  The same feature can be attributed to the “G &W Sausage Company” in St. Louis which is run by Bob and Gerhard Wanninger. They are descendants of two brothers who moved to St. Louis from Regensburg/Bavaria/Germany in 1965. Their products, such as thirty different types of Bavarian-style sausage, are sold at many St. Louis restaurants, and at many grocery stores, as well.  “Gus’ Pretzels” is family-owned shop that has been using the same pretzel recipe since 1920 (Mehrhoff 2019: 101 – 102). Pretzel bakeries could be already found in St. Louis’s German communities in the early 1900s.  Also the “Hermann Wurst House” is worth to mention. It offers 47 kinds of *bratwurst* and German sausages. The Wurst House has a market and deli; and consequently, you can sample flavours, enjoy a deli lunch or early dinner. The market sells other Missouri-made products and sausage-making supplies. Moreover, the business offers catering and custom butchering and processing of beef, lamb, and pork, as well as offering some deer sausage processing options. The owner of the Hermann Wurst House is Mike Sloan (Mehrhoff 2019: 102).  Another restaurant, called “The Schneithorst’s Hofamburg Inn” in Ladue, likes to tell *die Geschichte*, or its story. The present-day Schneithorst’s made its way to Lindbergh and Clayton Roads in 1956, although the story really begins in 1917, when Arthur Schneithorst started Benish’s Restaurant in downtown St. Louis at Eighth and Olive Streets. They offer a typical Bavarian atmosphere and menu, but also serving lighter dishes.  Finally, I would like to mention “The Vintage Restaurant” at Stone Hill Winery in Hermann which is in the winery’s former carriage house and horse barn and serves German specialities and contemporary cuisine, as well, paired with their wines (Mehrhoff 2019: 102).  German *Turnvereine* in Missouri  This section emphasizes the considerable popularity of German *Turnvereine*, not only in Missouri, but in the entire American Midwest.  Hence, German sport associations, called Turnvereine, have always played a fundamental role, as far as Missouri’s German heritage is concerned. They are enormously popular in the entire Midwest, until our days. Thus, the German, Friedrich Jahn, a Prussian gymnastics educator and German patriot is honoured in the Friedrich Jahn Memorial in St. Louis’s Forest Park.  The Friedrich Jahn Memorial was donated to the city of St. Louis by the North American Turn Bund-St. Louis Chapter. It occupies the site of the 1904 World’s Fair German pavilion, appropriately enough near a running path (Mehrhoff 2019: 110).  Jahn founded the “Turnverein international gymnastic and social society” in Berlin in 1811 (Mehrhoff 2019: 110). Jahn is best known as “father” of modern gymnastics and systematic physical culture, promoting the usage of rings, parallel bars in international competition. Moreover, he conferred a significant contribution in relation to the amelioration of the modern Olympic movement. His Turnverein movement was organized to prepare German youth to defend their country in the early part of the 19th century. It was considered indispensable because of a larger reaction to the defeat of Prussia and other German states by Napoleon. The “Turnen Gymnastic Physical Culture” organization was founded for political reasons, i. e. to liberate Prussia from French occupation and to create a democratic Germany by dismantling its repressive feudal kingdoms (Mehrhoff 2019: 110).  Jahn’s balanced approach to physical fitness, correlated with the Latin motto of a sound mind in a sound body, became immediately popular in the United States, especially in relation to the American political situation prior to the Civil War. Liberty and tolerance were key concepts for most American people being enamoured of Jahn’s democratic principles. Thus, the Nord-Amerika Turnerbund was considered fundamental, like Jahn had foreseen half a century before.  German festivities held in Missouri  The main goal of this section is to list and describe a series of German festivities, such as different kinds of Oktoberfests, German breweries, wineries, and German cuisine, etc. which clearly testify Missouri’s strong German heritage.  The **OKTOBERFEST** in Jefferson City is on the historic “Southside,” where the Germans settled. Separated from Jefferson City at first by Wears Creek and a hill, the communities connected when bridges over the creek were built. You can still hear accordions and polka music at the festival today.  The **ANHEUSER-BUSCH BREWERY OKTOBERFEST** features German music and entertainment, plus German-style beer and food. Games include barrel rolling and stein relays. September 20–22.  The **JEFFERSON CITY’S OKTOBERFEST** is hosted by the Old Munichburg Association. Live music, a beer and wine garden serving authentic German food, demonstrations, and other activities are on West Dunklin, Washington, and Broadway Streets. September 27–28.  The **HERMANN OKTOBERFEST** is a month-long celebration, with polka music, German food, and other activities every weekend of October.  The **OKTOBERFEST IN COLE CAMP** offers traditional German food, a wine and beer tasting, and antique farm machinery. September 28.  The **SOULARD OKTOBERFEST** takes place in the oldest continuously run farmers’ market west of the Mississippi, founded in 1779. Authentic German fare, a wine garden, and live German bands complement the bier hall. October 11–12.  The **ST. CHARLES OKTOBERFEST** is in Frontier Park along the Missouri River and next to the historic district. The festival features German music, vendors, food, and drink. September 27–29.  Urban Chestnut  The cofounder of Urban Chestnut Brewing Company in St. Louis grew up in Bavaria, where he apprenticed at a local brewery. Florian Kuplent spent time in Germany, England, New England, and finally at Anhueuser-Busch in St. Louis before helping launch Urban Chestnut in 2010. Kuplent points out that while Urban Chestnut does not focus exclusively on German-style beers, it’s definitely part of the company’s roots. The handles of beer taps feature names such as Dorfbier, Oachkatzlschwoaf, and Stammtisch. The Urban Chestnut Brewing Company offers a free self-guided tour of the Grove Brewery and Bierhall. The tour takes visitors through the production process. You can also purchase a tasting with the self-guided tour, or you can book a free guided tour on Saturdays. Reservations are required because there are only twelve spots on the Saturday tours. The Urban Chestnut Bierhall is at *4465 Manchester Avenue*, and the more traditional Biergarten is at *3229 Washington Avenue*.  The Magic Chef Mansion was built by Charles Stockstrom, who came to St. Louis from Germany in 1880. He made a fortune in the Quick Meal Stove Company, later renamed Magic Chef. The company was the largest stove maker in the world at one time. The mansion was completed in 1908 and modeled after the Schloss castle in Germany. The mansion is open for tours.*Photo by Michael Daft.*  A National Landmark  In 1980 the proprietors Harry and Jean Panhorst donated the housebarn to the Missouri Heritage Trust. While the state of Missouri now owns the housebarn and the land it sits upon, it cannot be seen by the general public. Cindy Browne, site administrator of the Deutschheim State Historic Site in Hermann, and others are working to preserve the housebarn, but the future of the Pelster Housebarn feels much less secure than its sturdy, traditional construction.  Die Deutsche Kueche  A *Huffington Post* blog dealing with the highly popular local food movement in America on June 5, 2015, called kitchen gardens the latest, must-have kitchen tool. Today, anyone can visit an authentic kitchen garden at Deutschheim State Historic Site in Hermann.The four-square garden at the Deutschheim Historic Site in Hermann demonstrates a typical family’s kitchen garden. A guide in period costume explains how it works to visitors. *Photo by Michael Daft.*  The four-square garden, long buried and forgotten for decades, has been identified, excavated, and restored to a highly productive working garden. The rectangular garden plot is subdivided into equal sections by wide paths that cross in the middle, just as they did in Germany dating back to the Roman occupation and medieval monasteries.  Heirloom varieties like those used by German immigrants grace the carefully tended plots of Deutschheim’s four-squares. Here you will find flowers such as harlequin marigolds or sweet alyssum planted among the garden vegetables; the flowers offer both beauty and practicality. Studies have shown marigolds discourage nematodes, for example, and sweet alyssum provides nectar for hoverflies, which feed on aphids.  The demonstration garden often features a site interpreter dressed in period costume and assuming the identity of a historical figure while answering visitor questions. Hermann’s popular annual June garden tour typically features the site as well. If your timing is particularly good, the dulcet tones of a hammered dulcimer or other period instrument might lure you to the four-square demonstration garden. Whatever attracts you there, it’s definitely worth finding your way to this highly significant Missouri German artifact.  Public records clearly indicate that German immigrants settling in Hermann preferred property lines with long plots of land and homes that fronted public sidewalks with gardens in the back. These long plots behind the homes, typically about 60 by 120 feet, were large enough to accommodate cisterns, generous gardens, and even small livestock. The Deutschheim State Historic Site’s 1840 Pommer-Gentner House is a perfect example of the home fronting public sidewalks with the gardens behind.  Middle class gardens shared this attitude of usefulness. In this respect they distinctly differ from the English middle-class model of the cottage (or cutting) garden primarily as a beauty spot. The further down the economic ladder one goes, the more yard space served utilitarian purposes.  German Americans also customized the flavour of vinegar with herbs and spices cultivated in the garden. The vinegar can be created from any number of sources, such as apple cider, beer, honey and water, whiskey and water, or vegetable juice. Homemade vinegar could then be used in the essential pickling process. Many people believed homemade vinegar tasted better than bottles purchased from a store, if a store was even available back then.  Root crops such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, and especially cabbage were also important household crops, although the four-square garden might contain only small amounts of those vegetables. The bulk of the household’s root crops might be cultivated in farm fields located at another site. Archival photos of nineteenth-century Hermann actually show vacant lots planted entirely in cabbage. The general rule of thumb was to provide one hundred heads of cabbage per person annually as a winter food allowance. A sturdy root cellar often supplemented the four-square garden.  Hermann hosts several festivals, including a Wurstfest, a Maifest, and Oktoberfest. Here, music in the Festhalle entices dancers. The historic building had housed a car dealership until it was renovated.  Feasts and festivals strongly reflect and still resonate with the natural and cultural heritage of Missouri Germans. And nearly every burg in Germany sets up a *Kristkindlmarkt* (Christmas market). Hardy visitors and shoppers can explore historic sites; browse through the colourful stands selling handicrafts, wooden toys, and glass ornaments; sample the *glühwein* (hot mulled wine), all kinds of fantastic cookies, and various hot nuts in a paper bag; or just savour the festive atmosphere and good spirits.  These fairs have proven so popular that other parts of the world have started copying, or reviving, the tradition. According to *German World* magazine, the Hermann *Kristkindlmarkt* offers one of the most authentic German Christmas markets in North America.  Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Louis was founded in 1839 by Saxon immigrants. This was the mother church of the Missouri Synod denomination. Below, a monument in Montpellier, France, honours German grape growers for helping save their wine industry in the 1870s when they suffered devastating losses to a phylloxera aphid infestation.  Deutschheim State Historic Site holds its annual *Weihnachtsfest*, a traditional nineteenth-century German Christmas celebration, during the first two weekends in December. During the festival, the historic *Deutschheim* Site decorates its historic 1840 Pommer-Gentner House with seasonal greenery and lamplights.  The Weihnachtsfest also features traditional German music of the Christmas season in the piano-making workshop, which displays the beautiful 1830s pianoforte built by owner Charles Pommer back in Philadelphia before he came to Missouri.  Its historic rooms feature Christmas trees decorated with authentic German ornaments. An early type of artificial tree called *Federbaeume* (feather trees) were made to resemble European firs, the preferred German Christmas tree symbolizing eternal life. On the practical level, their open shape makes displaying ornaments much easier. Feather trees are made from goose quills that have been dyed green and then wrapped with wire around wooden dowels so that the sheared feathers resemble pine needles. Feather trees were first made in the 1860s when the unlimited cutting of firs for Christmas decorating was outlawed in Germany.  However, not all Christmas trees stood on floors or tables. In some parts of Germany, Christmas trees actually hung from the ceiling (with care, of course), a custom that some immigrants brought with them to Missouri, which is recreated at Weihnachtsfest. A “tree” of boughs affixed to a framework creates the image of a lovely hanging tree, decorated with ornaments made of ribbons, straw, gilded walnuts, painted eggs, and paper ornaments or “scraps” that you would have found in the nineteenth century. *Scherenschnitte*, paper ornaments artfully cut by hand with scissors, also decorate the glamorous feather trees.  One highlight of Weihnachtsfest includes sampling the delicious culinary custom of traditional German Christmas cookies, including springerle, Lebkuchen, and zimmerschied. The site’s Weihnachtsfest gift shop not surprisingly offers springerle molds and rolling pins, recipe books, imported German pop-up cards, and books for visitors looking for unique Christmas gift-giving opportunities.  In addition to the displays and museum guides at Deutschheim State Historic Site, other venues such as the Festhalle, The Mill, and the outdoor Hofgarten of the local Hermannhof district all hold festive activities involving this annual holiday celebration.  The Pommer-Gentner House is decorated in the German tradition. Browne noted that she chose to hold Weihnachtsfest at the house because it directly and elegantly links Philadelphia to Hermann. The Philadelphia German Settlement Society sent settlers to Hermann, and Philadelphia was where the first Christmas tree in the United States was cut.  Stone Hill Winery and Hermannhof Winery  Stone Hill Winery was established in 1847 and grew to be the second-largest winery in the United States. The wine produced there was known around the world and won gold medals in eight world fairs, including one at Vienna, and by 1870, the winery was shipping 1.4 million gallons of wine per year. After Prohibition, the wine cellars were converted to produce mushrooms, until 1965 when Jim and Betty Held bought the winery. In fact, the Helds are often credited with reviving Missouri’s wine industry. Today, Missouri has more than 130 wineries.  Stone Hill’s annual production now is about 300,000 gallons of wine. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the winery offers free guided tours, which include seeing the historic cellars. You can also enjoy tastings or dining in the restored carriage house in a restaurant that specializes in German and American cuisine paired with Stone Hill wine.  Hermannhof was built between 1848 and 1852 as a brewery, and its ten stone cellars and brick building are on the National Register of Historic Places. Prohibition brought a halt to this successful operation’s beer making, but the Jim Dierberg family bought the cellars in 1974 and began restoring the building. Today, all of the cellars hold premium wine. You can tour the cellars, located at the eastern edge of Hermann on Highway 100.  Historic Hermann Museum at the German School  The German School building was erected in 1871 and served as Hermann’s elementary school until 1955. Classes were taught in both English and German for much of its history. Today, the edifice serves as the Historic Hermann Museum. The town clock atop the building tolls the time every hour. Volunteers wind the clock by hand twice a week, and the clockworks can be seen on the second floor. The museum has seven rooms of collections, including the Kinder Room, full of antique toys, a handmade carousel, school desks, and old dollhouses. The River Room has a replica of an early pilot house, models made by riverboat captains, and other Missouri River artifacts. The museum is at the corner of Fourth and Schiller Streets.  (https://missourilife.com/missouris-german-heritage/). |

German traditions in the Ozarks

The present section is dedicated specifically to German customs and traditions in the Ozarks, Missouri which deserve a special treatment.

The popular image of the Ozarks is one of a region reflecting a British heritage brought by descendants of early English and Celtic settlers. They had progressively migrated west from the Atlantic coast to the hills of southern Missouri and northern Arkansas in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It can be stated with absolute certitude, that the British heritage of the Ozarks was the preponderant cultural force throughout much of the region in past times, and to some extent it remains so to this day.

A second tradition is suggested by Ozarks place names such as Frankenstein (Osage County), Rhineland (Montgomery County), Freistatt (Lawrence County) and Altenburg (Perry County). These and other Teutonic place names confirm a significant German presence in the Ozarks, and it was and continues to be a major presence. (<https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50306.htm>).

Germans first entered the Ozarks in the 18th century, at a time when the Louisiana Territory was under the control of the French and then the Spanish. Some Germans were mixed in with the English, Welsh and Scotch-Irish who moved west from the Alleghenies in the early 18th century. These assimilated Germans found their way to most parts of the Ozarks, and their descendants remain in the region to this day. Along with descendants of many European nationalities, they form part of what one might call the old-stock American population of the region.

The first distinctly German settlement in the Ozarks occurred in 1798 when a group of German-Swiss from North Carolina located in the Whitewater Creek bottoms of Cape Girardeau and Bollinger counties. The Whitewater Dutch, as they were known, remained distinctive for some generations and their farms were said to be the best in that section of the territory (<https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50306.htm>). Over the next several decades Germans trickled into Missouri with most locating along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers west and south from St. Louis. By 1818, in anticipation of a large number of foreign immigrants, an Immigrant Aid Society was organized in St. Louis, especially for the Germans and Irish.

St. Louis evolved as the primary distribution hub for Germans in the middle Mississippi Valley and became a major centre of German culture and influenced the location of many German communities in the propinquity (<https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50306.htm>).

German immigration to Missouri proved to be perfectly organized with numerous settlers coming directly to St. Louis from Germany by way of New Orleans, and large numbers were associated with organized settlement societies.

Some Germans moved to Missouri with the nascent hope of establishing a German state in North America. The first effort was organized by the “Giezner Gesellschaft” which brought 500 settlers recruited from throughout Germany to a location near Duden's farm in Warren County in 1834. Over the next several years other organized German groups settled in the same area, including the Berlin Society in the town of Washington in Franklin County, and the Solingen Society which established a settlement at Tavern Creek in the same county. The largest and most ambitious effort to establish a German state in Missouri occurred only a few years later. In Philadelphia, the cradle of German colonization in America, the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, was formed in the 1820s to establish a German colony somewhere in the "Far West." The society selected a site in northern Gasconade County; and thus, was begun the colony of Hermann (<https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50306.htm>).

German settlers continued coming up the Missouri River leading one observer to characterize the route from St. Louis to the west as "a veritable German highway." The Germans continued moving west along the river, buying out Americans as they went, eventually reaching Kansas City.

In addition to settlements along the Missouri River, other Germans moved south from St. Louis establishing communities along the Mississippi all the way to the Missouri Boot Heel. In Ste. Genevieve County, German Catholic communities were founded at New Offenburg, Zell, Coffman and Weingarten in the 1840s, and Germans moved into formerly French settlements, such as River aux Vases and even Ste. Genevieve itself. The settlement of Germans continued south into Perry and Cape Girardeau counties where large numbers from Baden located in the 1840s and 1850s.

Some Germans were attracted to the Ozarks seeking religious liberty. Osage County attracted several thousand German Catholics whose principal reason for emigrating from Germany was religious. Their spiritual leader, Father Helias, established a parish in Westphalia in 1834, and in subsequent years seventeen settlements, composed primarily of Rhinelanders, were established in Osage, Cole, Miller and Maries counties (<https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50306.htm>).

In Perry County, a large settlement of "Old Lutherans" from Saxony was established in 1839. They came to Missouri with the objective of establishing a semi-autonomous theocratic community.

A filling-in process followed the initial phase of German settlement in the Ozarks. In most cases the Germans settled in areas already having large German populations. More than most groups, Germans placed considerable value on land quality. The areas initially occupied by Germans in the Ozarks were frequently those with high quality soils. By the time of the Civil War, German settlements were confined to the northern and eastern Ozarks borders where the hills were capped with *loess*, a rich material deposited by winds during the time of the glaciers. Inland, where the *loess* was absent and the soils were thin and rocky, Germans established no significant settlements. Even though thousands of Germans continued to enter the Ozarks annually, the areas of German settlement did not expand considerably with the exception of several small settlements associated with the railroads in the 1870s and 1880s (<https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50306.htm>).

A peculiarity of Ozarks’ Germans is that they remained where they had originally located. The German areas of the Ozarks are as heavily German today as they were in the mid-19th century. The core areas of Ozarks German settlements, such as those in Gasconade, Osage and Perry counties, are often 90 percent or more German, and usually unmixed German. As a result, a sense of ethnic group or community has persisted among Ozarks Germans to a remarkable degree. Not only do they share a common historical bond, but they continue their participation in Old World religious denominations. Lutheran, Evangelical and Reformed, and Catholic churches in the rural Ozarks remain for the most part ethnic German churches. The use of spoken German, while in decline in German settlements throughout the United States, has persisted among the Ozarks Germans. In these and other ways, ethnicity is an active part of life for Ozarks Germans rather than being simply an historical legacy put on occasional view in the form of festivals and other commemorative events. (That the Germans in the Ozarks still have them is evidenced by the annual Maifest at Hermann, and the Erntfest at Freistatt).

German cultural landscapes in the Ozarks reflect their Old World heritage in both obvious and subtle ways. They introduced to the Ozarks some distinctly German settlement features. Old World string villages, or “Strassendoffer”, are found in several Ozarks locales such as Westphalia, Altenburg, and Frohna. While most Germans abandoned traditional Old World architectural styles, there are examples of half timbering, combination house barns, and side opening threshing barns in the German settled areas in the Ozarks. (<https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50306.htm>Their landscapes reflect order, long-term investment, and a neatness that appear to be lacking in the region as a whole. They built large edifices, often constructed of brick or native stone, suggesting a desire for permanence, and a large number of their original structures remain occupied to this day. They were grain farmers in a region better known for its livestock, and their carefully fenced fields continue to reflect this emphasis. They were regarded as good and careful farmers who developed land in a region better known for the exploitation of its land.

In these and other ways Ozarks Germans have retained their distinctive character. Their settlements seem to be different whether one is looking at place names, structures, field patterns, or churches. They maintain traditions that discern them from others in the region whether in the churches they attend, the amount of beer they consume, or to whom they will sell their land. However, like most hyphenated Americans, Ozarks German-Americans have experienced enormous pressures to assimilate. Over the last century the emphasis has shifted from German prior to World War I, to German-American up to World War II, then to American in the subsequent years. It is likely that German Ozarks will terminate a living which will pass to a relic German landscape. Then, like Ste. Genevieve and the French, we shall remember our Ozarks German heritage primarily through the material culture they left behind rather than through the people whose progenitors originally brought it (<https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50306.htm>).

**CHAPTER III**

The German language in Missouri

In the third chapter of this work emphasis will be laid on the salient features of German language use in Missouri, and it specifically expounds on the usage of the Northwestern German dialect Low German, primarily spoken in Concordia and Cole Camp, both situated in Missouri.

A resurgence of interest in various German dialects, present in a large number of regions of the United States has led to the gathering of data in many small towns throughout the Midwest whose dialects, prevalently Low German, will go extinct within a few decades. There is exiguous evidence that the dialect will survive. With this realization, research efforts in these communities have been conducted over the last decades, as the pressure of a most certain deadline has been evinced. The researchers of this project, primarily graduate students at the University of Kansas under the supervision of Prof. William Keel, are seeking to record, analyze, and preserve these dialects for future study before their total extinction.

The objective of my study is to rely on ongoing research into the Low German dialects spoken in the region of Western Missouri in and around Lafayette County, particularly in the towns of Concordia and Cole Camp (Benton County). Thus, I intend to underline both dialectological and historical significance in helping to complete the precise picture of Germans in America, their language, and their culture.

As a specific example, I would like to mention that fieldwork in the town of Concordia has been undertaken in order to illustrate how cultural ties to the German homeland, the historical development of the town, its religious affiliations, and its Low German Club have contributed to a revitalization of sorts in its efforts to preserve its heritage and language.

According to the U.S. Census, about 49 million Americans claim either full or partial German ancestry. But paradoxically only 2 percent of those German Americans actually speak the language.

A Rare German Dialect Is Dying, But A Missouri Town Is Fighting For Its Survival

This section contains a detailed analysis of the usage of the Low German dialect in Cole Camp/Missouri in recent years. Through extensive fieldwork and scholarship, it has been evinced that the moribund Low German dialect was once rather widespread and utilized as a home language, and it was also spoken in public domains by numerous people residing in that area.

Hence, Gene Beckman, being interviewed, said “he had grown up as an only child on a family farm in the town of Cole Camp, smack in the middle of Missouri”. As a boy, he only spoke “Plattdüütsch”, a dialect of Low German. He did not learn English until he went to school in a one-room schoolhouse. (https://www.kcur.org/community/2020-02-22/a-rare-german-dialect-is-dying-but-a-missouri-town-is-fighting-for-its-survival).

“I tell kids in school now, we had it tough,” Beckman says. “We didn’t have any indoor restroom to go to, we didn’t have any school hot lunch. We didn’t have any water fountain to go to. We had to go to the pump to get well water and a lot of us ate just biscuits and cornbread that were left from breakfast.”

Fast forward about 80 years, and Beckman still remembers his Plattdüütsch — even if most German Americans do not.

“The language is the heart and soul of the immigrant community,” says Bill Keel, who studies German immigrant communities and language at the University of Kansas. “It’s the glue that holds their whole culture together.”

*Credit Courtesy Of Neil Heimsoth*

The old general store and new drug store opening in Cole Camp, Missouri, in 1885.

German immigrants in the Midwest came from different parts of Europe, including modern-day Germany, Austria, and Russia, and settled in communities in both Missouri and Kansas. Some of this migration happened before Germany united as a nation in 1871, and the regional dialects at the time varied significantly. (Standard German only developed a conventional spelling system in 1901.

In the 1830s, a wave of immigrants from northern Germany settled in the Cole Camp, Missouri, area, bringing with them their farming skills and Plattdüütsch (https://www.kcur.org/community/2020-02-22/a-rare-german-dialect-is-dying-but-a-missouri-town-is-fighting-for-its-survival).

Neil Heimsoth is the glue keeping Cole Camp’s Plattdüütsch-speaking community together. A retired illustrator for the U.S. Forest Service, Heimsoth worked with Gene Beckman to translate over 40 country songs into their Plattdüütsch dialect as part of their Low German theater.

*Credit Suzanne Hogan / KCUR 89.3*

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Neil and Marilyn Heimsoth have devoted much of their time to preserving the language and stories of immigrants to Cole Camp, including erecting this monument.

Now, Heimsoth hosts monthly Plattdüütsch-speaking groups at a restaurant in Cole Camp, where people can gather to practice speaking while they play cards. The group has almost 25 members and leans toward older-aged adults. Heimsoth says he wishes there were more members.

Little towns in Missouri and Kansas preserved many different dialects of German, which can sound completely different from one another. KU Professor Bill Keel and his team of researchers have made [a map of the dialects in Kansas](http://www2.ku.edu/~germanic/LAKGD/Atlas_Intro.shtml), but they are disappearing.

Many historians trace the loss of German language to anti-German discrimination during World Wars I and II. Keel attributes the decline to changes in education and people becoming less isolated. He notes that most of the people he interviews for his research who still speak their German dialect are in their 80s and 90s (https://www.kcur.org/community/2020-02-22/a-rare-german-dialect-is-dying-but-a-missouri-town-is-fighting-for-its-survival).

"Why are they now the last generation?" Keel says."Well, if you look at some of the social aspects of the United States, Kansas, Missouri; the Model T is introduced in 1908. Our system of paved roads gets going in the 1920s and ’30s. A high school education becomes a major factor between the two wars. Prior to World War I, very few people completed high school."

*Credit Suzanne Hogan / KCUR 89.3*

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Sam Cole opened The German Table some years ago. She says Neil Heimsoth helped her develop and perfect the restaurant's German dishes, including Schnitzels and potato pancakes served with German beer and apple schnapps.

Despite the challenges, Cole Camp residents have tried to maintain a strong German identity. The town’s downtown strip, for instance, has German-themed shops and hosts an Oktoberfest every year.

In 1989, when the town celebrated its 150th anniversary, a German dance troupe travelled to Cole Camp for the festivities. Neil Heimsoth says the festival marked a turning point when many Plattdüütsch speakers in town became proud of their language.

“We had people who had been kind of ashamed that they were German because of the Second World War, and all of a sudden they were proud that they could talk German,” he says.

For that 1989 festival, Neil Heimsoth and his wife Marilyn Heimsoth helped publish the “Little Red History Book,” which documents the story of German immigration in Cole Camp (https://www.kcur.org/community/2020-02-22/a-rare-german-dialect-is-dying-but-a-missouri-town-is-fighting-for-its-survival).

*Credit Suzanne Hogan / KCUR 89.3*

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Neil Heimsoth proudly shares the story of his progenitors in Germany.

A few years ago, the Heimsoths created a German immigrant memorial, where people can buy bricks in honour of their families who immigrated to the region. The memorial has become a focal point of German pride in the community.

William D. Keel says that while a community’s efforts to try and keep a culture alive through special festivals is admirable, it is still not enough if the language is fading.

“They may try to keep a cuisine, a special food going,” he says. “They may have festivals that they will celebrate, but without that language, really the core of that culture is decimated” (https://www.kcur.org/community/2020-02-22/a-rare-german-dialect-is-dying-but-a-missouri-town-is-fighting-for-its-survival).

Neil and Marilyn Heimsoth, Gene Beckman, Sam Cole and dozens of others in Cole Camp are trying their hardest to prevent that from happening. (<https://www.kcur.org/community/2020-02-22/a-rare-german-dialect-is-dying-but-a-missouri-town-is-fighting-for-its-survival>)

A Low German dialect spoken in Concordia, Missouri

Concordia is a farming community, situated an hour’s drive east of Kansas City, Missouri. It had approximately 2.900 inhabitants in 2019 (www.google.com). As a cohesive community, it has been extant since the middle of the 19th century, and it was populated prevalently by chain migration from the area north of Hanover, in Northern Germany. Thus, as a primarily German community with a significant German heritage, a large number of Concordians of the older generation spoke a dialect of Low German until the late 20th century. It had been transplanted to North America with their progenitors, between 1830 and 1870, and was preserved in the form of a spoken “time capsule” (Ballew 1997: 10).

It has been determined through oral interviews and through the responses of survey questions that the decline of the Low German dialect in Concordia occurred rapidly following World War I.

From the founding of the town in the 1830s until the 1920s, Low German was the predominant language, spoken by Concordia’s residents, to the total exclusion of English (Ballew 1997: 127). After World War I, instead, the Low German dialect underwent a considerable decline at school and on the streets while dialect usage in a familiar domain and at work places remained comparatively high. That situation was protracted; it continued for approximately fifty years, and most members of the generation born during that time period had a relatively satisfactory proficiency of the dialect, being able to understand it, but they generally spoke it very little, being solely passive speakers, whereas fluent Low German speakers were extremely rare.

The German emigration from the areas of Northern Germany, between Hanover and Bremen commenced in the late 1830s. The German settlers soon constituted enclaves in the rural farming areas and began to farm Lafayette County, Missouri, in and around Concordia, including Alma, Emma, Sweet Springs, and Blackburn as well as in the proximity of the town of Cole Camp, an hour's drive south from Concordia.

All of these towns exhibit nearly identical Low German dialects except for Cole Camp, Missouri, whose dialect is very similar. These similarities are not surprising since the settlers of Cole Camp-Concordia region landed there as a result of chain migrations from proximal areas in Germany. According to interviewees, the pressure to assimilate into the American cultural mainstream must have been particularly slight until well past the turn of the twentieth century.

In fact, the local German (Modern Standard) weekly newspaper, the Missouri Thalbote: Ein Wochenblatt fur deutsche Familien, was printed in Higginsville, the county seat of Lafayette County, until well after the turn of the twentieth century, and boasted a healthy readership numbering around fourteen thousand. It cost $1.50 per year and its goal was, as stated on the front page of the 1 January 1903 edition: "... to serve the growing readership, hoping for 5000 new subscribers in the new year." (Ballew 1997: 108). Serve it did, very well, with everything from international to local news and advertisements from as far away as St. Louis and serial reprints of current popular novelettes and short stories all translated into German for the benefit of the non English-speaker. The interviews conducted with dialect informants while gathering data in 1995-96 specifically soliciting information pertaining to the decline in the usage of the dialect in Concordia resulted in consistent responses to most questions across informants (Ballew 1997: 108).

Since no official study has been conducted in Concordia that can be used as a basis of comparison with J. Neale Carman's observations on foreign languages spoken in Kansas, solely individual reports of informants' recollections could be used to form the basis of a coherent picture of the state of the Concordia dialect precedingly. There must necessarily be some form of positive reinforcement present for the speakers of any given language to continue speaking that language; otherwise it will become extinct. Positive reinforcement for speaking the dialect in Concordia diminished considerably throughout the period during and after the World Wars, especially World War II. It was during this time that the dialect ceased to be passed on to successive generations and its death became inevitable.

The death knell for the dialect occurred, as it did with many of the German dialects in the United States, during the transition of generations following World War I and World War II. For a number of reasons, the preceding generation did not pass the dialect on to its children. For example, it was during that period that many states effectuated important reforms and passed laws similar to the Kansas State Statute of 1919 stating that "all elementary schools in this state, whether public, private, or parochial shall use the English language exclusively as the basis of instruction."

In interviews with Concordians born to the generation of the late nineteenth and turn of the twentieth century, a large number remembered having grown up in the 1920s and 1930s speaking almost solely the dialect at home, in the fields, and frequently on the playground at both Lutheran parochial and public schools (Ballew 1997: 109). Lessons were taught in English and in High German, particularly in the parochial schools; some lessons were still taught in High German as late as 1942, according to some informants. Low German was, however, never spoken between student and teacher even in casual conversation, as it was considered by most to be an excessively jovial and informal language for this sort of interaction.

In sum, it can be maintained that the inhabitants of the Great Plains states were, in contrast to the East Coast at the time during and immediately after World War I, relatively intolerant of ethnic and immigrant groups which were differentiated from the native Americans on the basis of religion and language (Ballew 1997: 110). These sentiments ranged from indifference to open hostility in an especially volatile period during which the United States was facing critical decisions regarding the degree of its own involvement in World War I. As the United States decided to join the war on the side of the Allies, meaning the country would go to war against Germany in the European theatre, anti-German sentiment was reaching an apex due in part to superpatriotic movements centred in the American Midwest in the state of Nebraska.

With the Siman Act of 1919, sponsored by Senator Harry Siman of Nebraska and signed into law on 4 April 1919, it became a misdemeanor "to teach any subject to any person in any language other than the English language ... in any private, denominational, parochial or public school." This decree, along with other enactments such as the federal Smith-Towner bill and Nebraska's even more stringent ReedNorval Act, was eventually declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court on 4 June 1923 (Ballew 1997: 111).

In Missouri, the general patriotic spirit of the populace may have indeed agreed with the laws passed by many other states in the Midwest, but no such act was ever signed into law by the state legislature. However, the Missouri Council of Defense did issue a statement in July 1918 which "expressed its opposition to the use of German in schools, churches, and public meetings, but did not expressly prohibit it. The failure to pass such laws in Missouri is not so surprising when one takes into account the strength in that state of the German-American Alliance (also called the DANB for Deutsch Americanischer National-Bund), a hierarchical federation which guided propaganda campaigns and promoted leadership within the German American community, particularly in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area. According to Detjen in his historical look at German-Americans in Missouri entitled The Germans in Missouri, 1900—1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation, the proliferation of German-language schools was widespread, particularly in the St. Louis area, which boasted a German population of over 100,000 at the turn of the 20th century. In fact, the first public school in St. Louis opened in 1838, but the first German language school had already been established two years prior to that in 1836 (Detjen: 1985).

By 1860 there were thirty-five public schools with 6,253 pupils and 38 German-language schools with a total enrollment of 5,524. Of those 38 German-language schools, twenty were Protestant, six were Catholic, ten were nonsectarian, one was Free Thinker, and one was Jewish (Ballew 1997: 113). Because of the intense augmentation experienced by the German schools, and because of the stiff competition they posed the native American public schools, the St. Louis Public School Board began to allow German classes to be taught in public schools as early as 1864 in order to compete with and undercut the appeal of these private German schools. This attempt succeeded to a degree, but as Detjen points out, such a degree of deference toward a particular ethnic community aroused resentment among native Americans. One may also assume that the German-Americans resented being specifically targeted and labelled as competitors as well. It was not until 1887 that the elimination of German from the public schools became a significant issue in St. Louis, with lines drawn between the "citizens slate," proponents of the elimination, and the "Turner slate," opponents of the same (Ballew 1997: 114).

From there, it immediately became divided along partisan lines into a Democrat versus Republican issue, with the Democrats siding with the "citizens slate" in order to break what they deemed to be the Republican's control of the School Board. The Republicans, on the other hand, sided with the "Turner slate" retentionists. With the German community itself still divided along Catholic-Protestant lines, the "Turner slate" did not have the cohesion it needed in order to enforce its will. Hence, the "citizens slate" would go on to win the debate and German instruction was abolished under the guise that it cost too much to hire German-speaking teachers, though Detjen rightfully assumes it was actually because of a combination of "nativist pressures" and sore feelings on both sides of the issue. Though the terms genocide and linguacide do not apply in Concordia, the lack of intermediary bilingualism in its language community is a definite earmark of impending language death.

Not surprisingly, the rate of dialect extinction seems to be so rapid in Concordia that the number of semi-speakers weighed against the number of fluent speakers is very low, with solely one generation of speakers showing real signs of intermediary bilingualism. To put it simply, most of those speakers remaining in the late 20th century, although they have not spoken the dialect regularly since before World W ar II, can still be considered fluent rather than semi-speakers, especially in light of recent efforts to reinvigorate the dialect. The subsequent generation, for the most part, did not learn the dialect at all. Pressure from all sides during the latter half of World War I and afterwards were protracted and continued to affect the speaking of foreign languages, particularly German as the language of the enemy, as the superpatriots ran their xenophobic anti-foreigner campaigns (Ballew 1997: 116).

The negative effects of such laws on dialect speakers are intuitively manifest, but the more subtle effects of exposure to an overwhelming and geographically preponderant language group, native American English speakers, on speech islands may not be so intuitive. As an example of how individualized a given speech island's situation can be, the current situation with respect to language death in Concordia stands in opposition to Enninger's hypothesis pertaining to the Pennsylvania Dutch which asserts that Pennsylvania German is so firmly anchored in the daily routine of the dialect speakers that the halting of the use of Pennsylvania German in school instruction has had little or no effect on the proficiency of the speakers or on the frequency of usage outside of the instructional environment (Enninger 1986).

One could also conclude that the message sent via the legislative changes in the language laws, namely that foreign languages - especially those of the enemy - are not appreciated in the US, may have been stronger in the conservative Midwest than in the more ethnically diverse Northeast. Enninger argues, presumably somewhat counter-intuitively, that Pennsylvania German exhibits more "vitality" (Vitalitat) than, say, Amish High German (AHG) because of the "structural instability" (strukturelle Instabilitat) within the framework of Pennsylvania German's diachronic syntactic history, which allows it greater flexibility in dealing with the dominant language, i.e., American English. From these ideas, he further concludes that Amish High German, being reliant upon a body of "frozen Texts" (gefrorene Texte) as a prescriptive linguistic determinant is, thus, actually closer to language death than is Pennsylvania German, even though AHG is more prescriptively aggressive (Ballew 1997: 117).

At this point, the issue seems to be merely a matter of philosophical perspective: Which avenue is more effective at preserving a given speech island dialect, borrowing extensively from the dominant language, or remaining strictly pure and prescriptive in dialect application? Furthermore, does Pennsylvania German's "structural instability" indicate a core dissolution of the dialect or a more peripheral fraying, and to what degree is Pennsylvania German prescriptively flexible? The answers to these questions must be searched somewhere between the "prescriptive" and "flexible" ends of the spectrum. Neither prescriptive action nor "structural instability" seems to be the case for Concordia Low German, as there is no prescriptive text guiding its syntax.

However, the argument remains of interest in comparing the situations of Concordia Low German and Pennsylvania German because of the similarities of the "firm anchor" of daily dialect usage and the abrupt cessation of dialect speaking within environments of formal instruction. Following Enninger's arguments, the instability of Pennsylvania German syntax allows it to grow and stretch to accomodate outside influences and interferences, thereby keeping itself more "alive." Hence, such should have also been the case with Concordia Low German, as was also deeply rooted in its community both in social and religious contexts. The crux of the matter seems to be the political context of both communities and the desire of the inhabitants to "familiarise themselves" with the dominant language group. The Pennsylvania Dutch sectarians such as the Amish have always been somewhat more socially isolated and protective of their ways than have the Concordians, albeit both groups are bound internally by strong sense of church and community. Thus, the desire of the Pennsylvania Germans to "fit in" with the dominant group has always been secondary to their intense desire, to belong to their own culture; unlike in Concordia where cultural traditions were already more similar to the preponderant group from the beginning, making such transitions less difficult.

Enninger's assertions, although they may implicate some cultural differences behind Concordia Low German and Pennsylvania German, fail to apply to Concordia Low German as he does not specifically account for the relative religio-cultural conservatism of the Pennsylvania Dutch and their self-imposed separatism from the modern world as a force in the retention of Pennsylvania German. One cannot, however, deduce from this instance that the linguistic effects of World War II were much more considerable in the Midwest than in the Pennsylvania German settlements of Pennsylvania as the number of variables is too great to warrant such certitude. The end effect was indeed the dislodging of the "firm anchor" of daily dialect use within the span of a few years in one community and not in the other (Ballew 1997: 119).

Following Dressler the premise that a breakdown of the morphological rules that govern the formation of neologisms in a dialect is a signal of language death, is also questionable with reference to Concordia Low German (Dressler 1981). Johnson reports the neologism geblacktoppt (meaning to asphalt a road) as an example of neologistic formation which still follows the rules of the Volga German dialect (Johnson 1995). Thus, the continuing application of the morphological rules of the dialect in order to create a neologism would, according to Dressler's arguments, only be considered a secondary precursor to language death as opposed to the total breakdown in word formation rules as a primary precursor. He suggests a spiraling effect by which productive word formation rules become unproductive as a natural function of the speakers' diminishing opportunities to speak the dialect and, because unproductive rules get lost, any recent neologisms cease to follow the rules.

Lexicalization becomes rampant and the morphological transparency of derivatives augments to the point that the motivation to speak the dialect is reduced so drastically that the dialect ceases to be spoken - exclusively remembered. At this point, the dialect has ceased to be productive and hence, it has ceased to exhibit Vitalitat and it gets extinguished. Once again, Concordia Low German seems to flaunt this conventional logic. Although speakers of Concordia Low German report that, when the Concordia Low German word will not come to them, they merely insert an English word, this perception is not evident in the data.

In other words, although the dialect is in its last generation of speakers, they seem to have full command of usage, and therefore no need to fall back on borrowing from English. It seems that Concordia Low German has skipped Dressler's intermediary steps in dialect death and will, with the death of the last speaker, move from fluency to non-existence in one moment (Ballew 1997: 120). This author would suggest that Concordia Low German has experienced an effete modification of Dressler's "linguacide" which, rather than being a "brutally enforced" edict on the part of an outside force, has stemmed from within the subconscious of the speakers themselves, due to their merest perception of the national “Zeitgeist” during the first half of the twentieth century. The change in dialect usage frequency and social definitions of when and where the dialect was to be spoken became subtly ever more altered and limited as speakers' exposure to English slowly increased. Thus, with time, it simply became easier to use English in all language situations and Concordia Low German was put into storage by default.

It is striking to note that, within a single speaker's lifetime, that person could experience a series of language events like the following: 1) learning Concordia Low German and using it exclusively for the first decade of life; 2) gradually becoming bilingual over the next decade; 3) supressing Concordia Low German ability slowly over the ensuing several decades; 4) rediscovering and reviving Concordia Low German usage in the last two decades of life.

The literature on the subject of language maintenance and death in the Midwest is immense. There are large numbers of different scholars representing the various immigrant groups of the nineteenth century. In this regard, Jan Bender, professor at Lewis and Clark College, has written many works on the Germans in Nebraska, while Paul Schach, professor emeritus at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, has selected language extinction in both German and Scandinavian immigrant groups from Manitoba to Texas for study. The patterns of language maintenance and death for communities of immigrants weave a consistent story of initial discrimination leading to reduction of dialect usage and eventual conformity with the dominant language group (Ballew 1997: 122).

As is demonstrated by Enninger's study, the multiplicity of reasons for language death is as individual as are the speech island communities themselves. Speaking the dialect in Concordia in contrast to the situation in St. Louis, the speaking and teaching of German in Concordia was only annulled during the time between World Wars I and II by the arrival of a new teacher sent by the Missouri Lutheran Synod in 1936 to the local Lutheran school who did not speak German. Some informants who attended school during this time remembered the abuse they took at his hands because they could not speak English.

Psychologically, with a good deal of the students' opportunity to speak German removed by force and rule, the reasons for passing the dialect on to future generations were undermined and the foundation of positive reinforcement for speaking the dialect began to erode. This psychological pressure coupled with the very real pressure imposed by society during and following World War I not to speak the "tongue of the enemy" dealt the final blow to the desire to pass the language on to successive generations.

It was possibly the first time for many that they had ever been made to feel shame for having a German heritage and speaking the language of their progenitors. As one interviewee states, some repudiate it indicating the social stigma still attached to Low German today by some factions of non-supporters of the Hadn Tohopa. Moreover, the citizens of the United States were becoming increasingly mobile and had more contact with Concordia, while Concordia had better travel access to other parts of the United States via the Missouri Pacific railroad line between Sedalia and Myrick, with connections to St. Louis and Kansas City.

Conversely, speaking Low German in a relatively isolated speech island had its advantages as well. The language, along with the Lutheran heritage of the local families, served to promote sentiments of cohesion among the members of the farming communities of Lafayette County that helped bind them together for over 150 years. This binding effect is expressed on a smaller scale in the story of the new teacher not being privy to his students' conversations. The shift from "overt" speech act to "covert" speech act on the part of the students reflects the shift in attitude of the entire community of speakers at the onset of World War II: a "prohibited" language moving underground, out of the public arena and into the private.

World War I did not appear to have a particularly significant effect on the speaking of Low German in Concordia as did World War II, although the beginnings of discrimination were apparent during the period immediately following World War I. Many informants reported remembering the burning of the German Lutheran Church in Sweet Springs, a neighbouring community considered primarily "English" in background. The church was burned along with its school and the temporary building used as a school thereafter because of the teaching, reading and writing of German.

For 80 percent of the informants, however, the message appears to have been more subtle, as they report in their surveys having experienced no discrimination. The reasons for this were detected in a most interesting discussion with a group of informants who almost unanimously concurred that they (Concordians) themselves were the ones who did the discriminating against outsiders (Ballew 1997: 126).

The decline in usage of the dialect occurred rapidly over the course of three generations. From the founding of Concordia in the 1830s until the 1920s Low German was the common language, spoken by many to the total exclusion of English. Hence, informants born in the 1920s and precedingly have excellent command of the dialect and report having spoken it in a familiar domain and at school until the time around the beginning of World War II when they were told by their parents not to speak German in public any longer. At this point, dialect usage at school and on the streets experienced a considerable decline while home and work usage remained high. This trend was protracted and continued for approximately fifty years and forced the use of Concordia Low German out of public areas and back into the home. Many members of the generation born during this period report understanding "some to well" but speaking "little to none." It was also at this time that the women of Concordia became the primary retainers of the language. As the men toiled relatively unaccompanied in the fields during the day, the women had more opportunities for social contact where the language could be spoken with neighbours and friends.

This trend led to the present gender differences in speaking abilities among informants. Women interviewed have retained the language better in most instances than have men, with few exceptions, in part because, as daughters raised in a traditional environment, most stayed at home and helped their mothers during the day. After marriage, husbands went to work in the fields with loud heavy machinery, which does not lend itself well to open conversation; while the women worked at home or went into town and consequently had more opportunities to converse about a variety of 20 subjects.

Hence, in determining a critical year for Concordia Low German, this difference could be taken into account and critical years assessed for both genders. The female critical year would then fall later than the male critical year, though the critical year determination for both genders, would fall between 1930 and 1940, with the female critical year closer to 1940 and the male critical year closer to 1930 (Ballew 1997: 129). In families where the prior generation of non-nuclear family members lived in the same household, the critical year for both genders would be somewhat later, the children learning German in order to communicate with the proximate relative or relatives.

As would be expected, the introduction of radio and television into the homes of Lafayette County residents must also be considered as playing a major role regarding the attenuated usage of Low German and the consequent acceleration of English into position as the primary language of choice. The lack of German programming became another reason that the young people never felt the need to learn German - another signal that the world outside of their area spoke a different language and would refuse to yield and learn their dialect. A great many of the residents interviewed, especially those in outlying areas, have satellite dishes in their gardens. Such overpowering influences became responsible for the influx of English terminology into the dialect. It has been evinced that, if a word is not known or does not exist in the dialect, one is borrowed from English and "Germanized." This borrowing is not unexpected, as it occurs in most (if not all) instances where languages come in contact with one another; but it is one of the markers that can signal the death of a dialect in an isolated speech island environment surrounded by a dominant language.

In final analysis, the Low German dialect of Concordia, Missouri, has been on the verge of extinction since the second half of the 20th century. The beginning of the decline can be traced to the period during and following World War I and continuing through the two decades that followed (critical year approximately 1935), a time when the use of the dialect became restricted to the home environment and gradually faded (Ballew 1997: 131). The resurrection of the dialect that has occurred within the last decades of the 20th century came in part as a response to the dissolution of the community and the disappearance of family farming culture in favour of corporate farming concerns.

In his work on the Volga German dialect of Ellis County, Kansas, Johnson cited four reasons for the decline and death of that dialect as follows: 1) loss of a self-contained community tied together by a local dialect; 2) loss of desire to maintain cultural identity through the German language; 3) lack of formal institutions to support the use of the German language; 4) outside pressure to assimilate into the English-speaking American cultural mainstream.

There are numerous superficial similarities, both concrete and existential, between the Volga Germans of Ellis County and the Low Germans of Concordia in the sense that both are primarily rural farming cultures with many of the same types of concerns for the future involving collective ideals of community and livelihood and perceived threats to both.

Both communities have become progressively uncertain of their futures as the younger generation departs with no plans of returning to farming, leaving the family-run operations there open to corporate farming concerns poised to move in for the kill.

In the third decade of the 21st century, presumably, the older generation will be gone with fewer and fewer to replace it, and the populations will dwindle, and the towns will shrink to a minimal population. Ellis County lies in west central Kansas off of Interstate 70, several hour's drive from any major population centre; while Concordia, also on 1-70, is within an hour's drive from Kansas City, Missouri. Hence, the Volga Germans of Ellis County are much more isolated and rural in comparison with the Low Germans of Concordia (Ballew 1997: 133).

The point of making an attempt at dialect preservation via the formation of organizations such as theatre groups, choirs, and the like is completely lost in a more insular, more subsistence-oriented agricultural population. The main focus in such groups is on existence rather than enrichment. Furthermore, tensions between Catholic and Protestant (predominantly English) villages, stemming from the maintenance and eventual repeal of the non-intermarriage policies of the Catholic Volga Germans, as reported by Johnson, are not present in Concordia due primarily to the Lutheran homogeneity of that region. The religious differences between nearby communities in Ellis County are correlated with competition with and suspicion of each other which, in turn, have generalized to suspicion of all outsiders and of the government. These aspects of Ellis County communities, which are not present in Concordia, represent social structures that developed in the years following World Wars I and II, and which have impeded the retention, usage and chances for rehabilitation of the Volga German dialect.

Thus, in contrast to Johnson's reasons for dialect decline and extinction, only reason number four, “outside pressure to assimilate into the English-speaking American cultural mainstream," seems to have any bearing on the current situation in Concordia. Reason one, "loss of a self-contained community tied together by a local dialect," was never the case in Concordia, because many of the descendants of the families which originally settled in the area in the 1830s are still residing in Concordia. In fact, Concordia's attempts at reviving interest in the language are in direct opposition to reasons one through three, albeit it is most probably too late for a successful re-establishment of the dialect without the installation of a programme for teaching it to the young children of the town (Ballew 1997: 134).

It can be maintained, moreover, that although the Low German dialect of Concordia, Missouri is, as previously mentioned, on the verge of extinction, there is still a restricted number of speakers of the dialect who usually are in their eighties. I was told so in summer 2021, by Professor William D. Keel, Professor Emeritus and Adjunct Professor of German Studies at the Department of German Studies, at the University of Kansas.

Thus, it seems that William Ballew’s prediction in 1997 has not come true; it cannot be entirely confirmed. He presaged that Low German would go extinct in 20 years, i. e. in 2017. (Ballew 1997). The exact moment, however, when the dialect will go extinct cannot be prognosticated and determined with absolute certainty.

Furthermore, according to more recent studies, German, is still occasionally used in the 21st century. In this regard, a newspaper article from “St. Louis Post Dispatch”, published on October 5th, 2018, stated that German, i. e. Saxon German is still being spoken in Perry County/Missouri where the German heritage is still alive and German traditions are fostered. ([https://www.stltoday.com/news/multimedia/pictures/german-history-runs-deep-in-perry-county/collection\_3ab936bf-6561-53ee-ab46-9d4e86222584.html#1](https://www.stltoday.com/news/multimedia/pictures/german-history-runs-deep-in-perry-county/collection_3ab936bf-6561-53ee-ab46-9d4e86222584.html" \l "1)).

The German language in Missouri, however, does not only consist of Low German, but it comprises Pennsylvania German spoken by the Amish, High German for church ceremonies, and Saxon German, as well (Nicolini 2004: 26).

Hence, a large group of Saxon German Lutherans came to Perry County by the way of New Orleans in 1839. Their history runs deep in that area, but the ones who speak German today are progressively diminishing. Some people, however, are trying hard to hang on to their German heritage; and thus, it will presumably not fade away very soon. The Saxon Lutheran Memorial in Frohna and the Lutheran Heritage Center and Museum in Altenburg are preserving that history. Furthermore, the article showed a photograph in which Edgar Dreyer, aged 83, speaks in Saxon German with his friend, Bill Bock, aged 83, on Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018, at the Saxon Lutheran Memorial in Perry County, Mo. According to the article, only a few dozen members of the community still speak German. (<https://www.stltoday.com/news/multimedia/pictures/german-history-runs-deep-in-perry-county/collection_3ab936bf-6561-53ee-ab46-9d4e86222584.html#1>).

Bill Bock showed a class from the Altenburg school on Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018 how people used to hand carve axe handles with a device called a “schnitzelbank” - a shaving bench, at the Saxon Lutheran Memorial in Frohna in Perry County, Mo. The students were on a field trip learning how the early settlers worked and lived.

The newspaper article also said that Warren Schmidt, 68, and Gerard Fiehler, 66, talk about the German history of the region that is posted on the historic marker on Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018, at the Lutheran Heritage Center and Museum in Altenburg in Perry County, Mo. Warren Schmidt and Gerard Fiehler talked about the German history of the region that is posted on the historic marker on Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018, at the Lutheran Heritage Center and Museum in Altenburg in Perry County, Mo. (<https://www.stltoday.com/news/multimedia/pictures/german-history-runs-deep-in-perry-county/collection_3ab936bf-6561-53ee-ab46-9d4e86222584.html#1>).

The article also stated that an important tradition in the German families was to make a shadow box of wedding memories on Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018, at the Saxon Lutheran Memorial in Frohna in Perry County, Missouri. There is Kathy Scholl, who was guiding Altenburg third and fourth grade students through the memorial. (<https://www.stltoday.com/news/multimedia/pictures/german-history-runs-deep-in-perry-county/collection_3ab936bf-6561-53ee-ab46-9d4e86222584.html#1>).

Interestingly, there is also a facebook website, “Missouri-Germans” , from St. Charles, Missouri. It is for everything German in Missouri. This facebook website, which is currently followed by 2.060 people, (January 2022) is an open German-American organization devoted to the preservation of the heritage, culture and history of the German emigrants that settled in Missouri. They partner with other like minded organizations to bring programmes, books, and events to those across the U.S. with the same interests and goals (<https://www.facebook.com/mo.germans>).

In relation to Missouri Germans also an interesting film was made in 2013. Its title is “New Offenburg”, and it was directed by Johannes Suhm.

New Offenburg is a portrait of the little town of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri and its descendants of German immigrants from the Black Forest who founded three little villages called Zell, Weingarten, and New Offenburg. That is the last generation of people who grew up as foreigners in the US, learning the “Badisch” dialect as a first language. Now they are Americans, but still keep their second identity, hidden and unknown even for their own children and grandchildren and the generations to come (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3316324/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl>). “

Ste. Genevieve County was once founded by French immigrants, a well-known ordinary scenery of rural America with common people. Behind the curtains of New Offenburg’s wooden farmhouses, however, lively marks of one of the most intense immigration periods in human history, dating back to the mid-19th century, can still be traced. Often unknown to their children and grandchildren, the elderly people of New Offenburg have kept alive an old German cultural identity characterized by a strong Catholicism, a mystical love to nature, and a notably dirty sense of humour inherent to the German dialect of farmers from Germany’s Black Forest. In fact, as kids of German immigrants in the USA, these elderly people solely spoke this bizarre dialect typical for the area in the south of Germany called “Baden”. Becoming proper American citizens over the many years of their long lives, some of them have still a hidden knowledge of this dialect, which is still used today, around the German city of Offenburg.  
  
 The documentary sheds light on the very last moments of a small regional German culture after surviving in a foreign country over more than 150 years – that even saw the temporary prohibition of the German language in the USA in the wake of the First World War. As the last generation remembering their old German dialect and rituals and behaviours of their culture of “Baden”, the people in this documentary probably add a final living chapter to German immigration to the USA that, as a matter of fact, can usually be found only in history books (<https://www.german-films.de/filmarchive/browse-archive/view/detail/film/new-offenburg/>).

The German DVD of the above mentioned movie is available on the internet, on the website [www.amazon.de](http://www.amazon.de) (January 2022). Its title is “New Offenburg – die letzten Badener der USA”. The DVD was released on September 1st 2015.

This documentary is defined as a fascinating portrait of a German-speaking minority in Missouri, whose progenitors migrated from Baden, in southwestern Germany, to the US, in the mid- 1840s. It is the last generation of people who still speak ”Badisch” in Missouri in the 21st century (https://www.amazon.de/New-Offenburg-Die-letzten-Badener/dp/3000486895/ref=sr\_1\_1?\_\_mk\_de\_DE=%C3%85M%C3%85%C5%BD%C3%95%C3%91&).

The American English influence on Missouri German

The present section expatiates on Mid-Missouri German, and particularly on the influence of American English on Missouri German parlance which is presumably the result of diverse factors, such as trade with English speakers and the pressures against using the language during World War I (Siebeneck 2014: 25).

American English lexical impositions in German-American speech have often been a subject of research, examining the sway held by American English over the German language in the US. An intermingling of two languages, in this case German and English, occupying the same geographic region, produces words which are generally defined as hybrids or loanblends. In such a case the borrowing speaker constructs a word by translating the foreign word into his native language. However, it may occur that the newly adopted terms are misunderstood by some speakers of the standard language, attributing an erroneous meaning to it. An example of this phenomenon would be the Missouri German loanblend “Hochschul” which is defined as American English “high school”. In Standard German, however, this term is used to signify “higher education” as in college. Presumably, the Missouri German speaker translated it directly. The word high in German is “hoch”, while school is “Schule”. Thus, it can be defined a loan translation (Siebeneck: 2014: 28).

Two further loan translations are “Katzenfisch” and “Sonnenfisch” which refer to a variety of fishes in various German dialects. In Missouri German, however, these lexical items refer to “catfish” and “sunfish” being particularly common in Missouri rivers and streams. These are instances of nouns which are structurally identical to their counterparts, and they are correlated with things which are similar but not identical to those specimens they designate in Modern Standard German (Siebeneck: 2014: 29).

Another representative of this kind of hybrid is the Missouri German word “Honigsuckel” which is related to the sweet-smelling flowering vines that is defined as “honeysuckle”. The peculiarity of this word is that the similar Alsatian “Honigsugerle” refers to a plant, generally known as the “deadnettle”. It is not incontrovertible that this term may be considered a loan translation, as its existence has been detected also in other German dialects. Hence, a more appropriated definition in relation to this sort of hybrid or loanblend would be semantic loan (Schach 1952: 261).

Also Missouri German “Kuperschlang” ought to be regarded as a semantic loan. The first part of the compound “kuper” has an affinity with Standard German “Kupfer” which signifies copper, while the second part “schlang” means “snake”.

Although the preceding example may seem to have a structural resemblance, there are instances in which the resemblance is one of a phonetic nature, relying on the sound of the words. An example in this regard would be the German word “Taler” which refers to English “dollar” (Siebeneck 2014: 31). It is one of the most recurring German loanwords in American English vocabulary (Tondi 2017).

Moreover, in Missouri German, prevalently in Cole and Osage counties, *Nehm die Bibel tu Kirk*, the preposition *tu* has been phonetically modified from the Standard High German “zu” to resemble its English equivalent “to”. The preposition and the article in the accusative case of the Standard High German “Nehm die Bibel in die Kirche” has also been surrogated by its English semantic equivalent (Siebeneck 2014: 31).

It may also occur that the acquired meaning of a word replaces the native one entirely. For example the Modern Standard German word “gleichen” has the meaning of being similar. In Missouri German, however, there has been a semantic alteration, since it has acquired the meaning “to like” , as in the phrase: “Ik gleich dich” (I like you). Interestingly, the original Standard German meaning of “gleichen” (to be similar), is of rare usage, having been replaced by an alternate expression (Siebeneck 2014: 32).

A second case in which the acquired significance has displaced the initial one, can be encountered in the Standard German verb “spenden” (to dispense). In Missouri German the word “spenden” denotes the English “spend”. The semantic alteration ought to be attributed once again to the phonetic similarity of both terms. The English “spend” and the German “spenden” are homonymous; and thus, the Missouri German speakers is inclined to adopt the English meaning.

The same feature can be ascribed to Standard German “bekommen” which means “to receive”. It should be reiterated that a shift in meaning occurred due to homophony. This term has acquired the meaning of “to be becoming”, as in “Der Hut bekommt ihr” (The hat becomes her), while in Standard German this it would be said: “Der Hut steht ihr”. There are also cases, however, in which “bekommen” is used to signify “to become” as is the case in Cole County/Missouri “Ik bekomme en Doktor” (I am becoming a doctor). In Standard German, instead, people would say: “Ich werde Arzt” (Siebeneck 2014: 33).

A further locution of this type is the Standard German verb “aufgabeln”, which means “to pick”, but the Amish Missouri German counterpart “uffgaveln” has borrowed the meaning of the English “to gobble up”. Some words may arguably be English loanwords, which happen to be homophonous with some Missouri German terms. In some cases a substitution of the native forms occurred, rather than the borrowing of foreign words (Schach: 266). Such is the case of the Standard German “passen” which means “to fit”, but in Amish Missouri German it has acquired the meaning of “pace”.

In sum, it can be maintained that such borrowings implicate the structuring of a language. If the construction is rather complicated, it is less probable to be adopted, and if the construction is totally foreign to the language, it might be discarded.

According to Haugen, patterns which are utilized frequently, will not sound unusual to the native speaker. A pattern, however, which is rarely employed, might be regarded as foreign (Haugen: 229). For example, the Missouri German expression “Ik geh Heim” is in common usage among Missouri German speakers, but it is archaic or dialectal in Southern Germany and Austria. In Standard German, most people would use the expression: “Ich gehe nach Hause”. The archaic expression “Ik geh Heim” might be interpreted as a structural loan, because it is similar in construction to its English equivalent (Siebeneck 2014: 35). We do not know with certitude whether this structure was originally imported from Germany or borrowed from English.

Moreover, it has not been evinced which terms or phrases were actually borrowed and which may be features of the language. In German a distinction is made between a “Fremdwort”, a contemporary fact, such as American slang “cool” which is frequently used by young Standard German speakers and Missouri German speakers alike; and the “Lehnwort”, a historical fact, such as a word which has been borrowed throughout the history of the language and has fused with it to become a part of the language itself. Modern languages have no set of categories to classify words. They possess a large number of categories which are utilized frequently as well as those that are solely employed in some circumstances. Single words or groups of words might have habits of their own, which can exclusively be delineated in terms of lexical distribution (Haugen: 230).

Schach presents clear formulae: “German-American near-synonyms of English terms often become synonyms, homologues tend to become heteronyms, and homophones may become loan homonyms (Schach: 267).

The main goal of the above mentioned statements has been to delineate a number of German-American words and phrases, whose significance or structure have been modified due to the American English influence. The modification of one of the two languages is correlated with the fact that both English and German belong to the West Germanic language family; they are cognates. Thus, this close linguistic relationship between these two languages, implicates the modification of one influenced by the preponderant one, or at least, such an influence is probable, and sometimes, even inevitable.

In relation to German language maintenance in both Missouri and Texas, I would like to mention at this point a recent study which was conducted by Walter Kamphoefner.

Kamphoefner maintains that Texas is outstanding regarding the degree to which the German language has persisted across the generations, more intensely than in any other state, except with groups such as the Pennsylvania Germans, where it was reinvigorated and protected by separatist religion. In addition, it has been evinced that German language preservation was more considerable in Texas than in Missouri, albeit German immigration commenced concomitantly in both states, i. e. in the 1830s.

It is apparent, moreover, that German language use was protracted in rural areas and specifically in the farm population, in comparison with urban areas, where continuous exposure to American culture and the English language were inevitable. Thus, the contrast between the two states examined might be explained by the fact that approximately half of Missouri Germans resided in St. Louis, whereas the urban share of Texas Germans was less considerable. Hence, the rural and particularly the farm populations of the two states were analogous in relation to German language retention (Kamphoefner 2019: 2-3).

The diffuse usage of the German language in both Texas and Missouri, was explicated by Kamphoefner, as well. According to his detailed analysis, in the urban areas of the two states, there were nearly three times as many German speakers among immigrants in Missouri as in Texas, and more than double the number of German speakers in the second generation. The number of third generation German speakers, however, was virtually equal in both states. In the rural nonfarm population, instead, second generation speakers outnumbered third generation German speakers in Missouri, whereas in Texas, third generation speakers held a slight edge, in Kamphoefner’s view (Kamphoefner 2019: 3).

In the farm population, third generation German speakers outnumbered those of the second generation in Missouri, as well, albeit by less than a 10 % margin. In Texas, the lead of the third generation was more like 20 %. Thus, even in the rural and farm population, Texas German was decisively distinct from Missouri Germans.

As far as the preservation of German language use in both Missouri and Texas is concerned, it can be evinced that the commonalities prevail over the contrasts, since both states were rather hospitable toward German language use throughout the 19th century. Hence, the longevity of German in a familiar domain is remarkable in both states, although today German is facing extinction in both Texas and Missouri, and in any former German speech island in the American Midwest, intergenerational transmission having ceased in the late 1940s.

**CONCLUSION**

The American dream

It seems particularly appropriate to me to conclude my study on Missouri Germans by quoting exclusively a statement expressed By James Truslow Adams, regarding the so-called “American Dream”.

According to Adams, the “American Dream” included more than only the right to create one’s own material success. He maintained that the dream required higher values that would emerge via efforts to achieve and excel in the realms of culture and the intellect (Frizzell 2007: 168).

Most German settlers in the US would have agreed with his statement, save the Hanoverian Germans in Western Missouri, being under scrutiny in this survey. Their view was rather different, in comparison with other German settlers residing in the US.

Their horizons generally extended scarcely further than the field and the church. With the Germans of Freedom Township and their descendants, Missouri and the nation gained a population that accentuated work, parsimony, reliance on self and family, and traditional, confessional Protestant Christianity. Concomitantly, they had a German respect for the benefits of technology and material amelioration.

It was an immigrant German population, many members of which had arrived during and after the failed German Revolution of 1848, but they had a rather different political and social perspective from that of the German revolutionaries who ensconced in cities, such as New York, Chicago, St. Louis, or Cincinnati (Frizzell 2007: 169).

Since the end of reconstruction, the rarely-celebrated conservative population of Lafayette County, Missouri has served as a counterweight to Americans who seek nonmaterial social, intellectual, and cultural innovation. Those tradition- minded people have always been considered marginal. When social change has seemed excessive, however, these people, whether remaining in agriculture or living in the suburbs and working in modern urban occupations, have always seemed central to what America is today.

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