

# THE GERMAN AMERICANS: IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

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In 1507, a German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller having just completed a map of the then known world and looking at the great unexplored land behind the West Indian islands wrote into this vast, white space the word "America," to honor the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci. Martin Waldseemüller named the continent which was to evoke the greatest migration of nations known in history.

In the centuries after this baptism of a continent millions of Germans decided to leave their country. When they looked over their maps, their eyes would stop at the country, which more and more showed signs of cartographical animation, whose map presented with each successive edition more names, lines and dots, and from which they had received encouraging if not luring reports of friends who had gone there before. Millions packed their belongings, sailed down the Rhine or the Elbe and started out for the adventurous and trying voyage to a new home.

## I. SETTLERS AND IMMIGRANTS

When did the first Germans come to America? The Germans had no seafaring tradition; they did not take part in the first explorations of the continent; in fact, they cannot even claim the legendary German sailor in Columbus' crew. Some of the acts of naturalization show that there were individual Germans in the colonies in the first half of the seventeenth cen-

tury. One of the first outstanding Germans was John Lederer from Hamburg who wrote his record into early American history by exploring the Alleghany regions of Virginia and the Carolinas, and who later gained a great reputation as a physician in New England. This happened around 1670. Towards the end of the 17th century, Jakob Leisler from Frankfurt was the leader of a revolt against a suppressive regime in the City of New York.

However, the history of the Germans in America is not the story of individuals, but the history of a mass movement. This history began on October 6, 1683 when the ship *Concord* landed in Philadelphia, disembarking thirteen German families, weavers from Krefeld who had come to the New World with the professed desire "to lead a quiet, godly and honest life." The day of the arrival of the *Concord* (often called the *Mayflower* of German immigrants) is considered by the German Americans as marking the beginning of their history. This first group settled six miles outside Philadelphia (today within the city limits) and called their settlement Germantown. The leader of the group was Franz Daniel Pastorius, a man of unusually broad education and marked literary ability. For many years he served as burgomaster and town clerk of Germantown and was the driving spirit in its public affairs and educational matters. His reports on the general conditions in

<sup>1</sup> The greater part of this article was published previously as a contribution to a cooperative volume *One America, The History, Contributions, and Present Problems of Our Racial and National Minorities*, (New York, Prentice Hall, Inc., Third Edition, 1952), edited by Francis J. Brown and Joseph S. Roucek. We wish to express our appreciation to publisher and editors for their permission to reprint this article here.—The author wants to acknowledge his indebtedness to the writings of the four scholars who have made most outstanding contributions to German American historiography and whose writings were most helpful in the preparation of this article: the late Albert B. Faust of Cornell University, John A. Hawgood of the University of Birmingham, Carl Wittke of Western Reserve University and A. E. Zucker of the University of Maryland.

Pennsylvania which he sent home to his father in Frankfurt represent a valuable source for the history of the early colonies.

The real mass migration started around 1710, and it came primarily from the Southwestern part of Germany, particularly the so-called Palatinate. Economic, political and religious reasons caused this exodus. Between 1710 and 1720 about 3000 Germans settled in the present state of New York. In sentimental attachment to their old sovereign the Duke of Pfalz-Neuburg (who had, however, mistreated and exploited them whenever possible) they named their first settlement Newburgh. The majority of the Germans in New York settled along the Schoharie and Mohawk Rivers. Place names like New Paltz, Rhinebeck, Oppenheim, Frankfort, Herkimer still testify to the provenience of these early German settlers.

These Germans living along the frontier were noted for the peaceful relations they maintained with the Indians. One of them, Conrad Weiser, practically grew up with an Indian tribe.<sup>2</sup> He spoke several Indian dialects and knew their mentality so well that the authorities employed him repeatedly as a very skillful negotiator in Indian affairs.

Unfortunately there was from the beginning some tension between the Germans and the New York authorities. The friction grew to such an extent that finally quite a number of the settlers in the Mohawk valley moved south to Pennsylvania which during the entire eighteenth century was the center of German immigration. Pennsylvania attracted the greatest number of German newcomers. They concentrated particularly in the Southeastern part of the state, in such counties as Lehigh, Montgomery, Berks, Chester, Lancaster, York—the region which to the present day is called the "Pennsyl-

vania Dutch" country.<sup>3</sup> Folklorists are divided into two feuding schools of thought whether these people should be called the Pennsylvania Dutch or the Pennsylvania Germans. Yet there is general agreement that they were the best farmers of early America and that their progressive farming methods over two centuries have made the soil more and more fertile. The Pennsylvania Germans retained stubbornly their old folkways and customs. They even preserved in the midst of an English-speaking country their peculiar Pennsylvania Dutch language, the dialect of the Palatinate with naturally a considerable admixture of English words. In spite of this apparent resistance to integration, the Pennsylvania Germans belong into the picture of American history as much as the New England Yankees, the Spanish in Florida or the French in Louisiana.

During the eighteenth century the American colonies between the Hudson and the Potomac (today often called the Middle Atlantic states) received the strongest influx of German immigrants. Whereas New England and the South were characterized through a distinct British texture, the Hudson-Potomac section soon began to represent "that composite nationality which the contemporary United States exhibits, that juxtaposition of non-English groups." (F. J. Turner). The very presence of the Germans helped to evolve the democratic system which has been the basis of the country throughout its history. The German immigrants were the largest group of non-English speaking settlers. None of them belonged to the official Anglican church; thousands of them were sectarians. The first in these states could live with the newcomers only if this "New World" was based on the fundamentals of political and religious toler-

<sup>2</sup> Paul A. W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser, 1696, Friend of Colonists and Mohawks*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945). Arthur D. Graeff, *Conrad Weiser, Pennsylvania Peacemaker*, (Allentown, Pa., Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1945).

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Wood (ed.), *The Pennsylvania Germans*, (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1942). Fredric Klees, *The Pennsylvania Dutch*, (New York, MacMillan, 1950). See also the serial publications of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society.

ance. This society could exist only if the settled majority would voluntarily established the rights of the minority. To be sure, the Germans were not very active in politics, but through their mere presence they contributed to the development of the principles of American democracy.

From the original German population reservoir in Southeastern Pennsylvania German farmers soon spread out over the neighboring states. Through careful estimates, we know that on the eve of the American Revolution there were a little more than 100,000 Germans in Pennsylvania, that is to say, about one third of the Pennsylvania population. Thousands moved on to New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. In Maryland they deserve special credit for opening the hinterland, for developing grain production in a colony which so far had a dangerously lopsided tobacco economy.<sup>4</sup> The Germans, coming from Pennsylvania and moving through "Western Maryland, pushed forward through the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia and they extended this long wedge of German farmers along the Alleghany mountains down into the Carolinas.<sup>5</sup> It is no coincidence that the German word "hinterland" was adopted by the American language. In most of the Atlantic states the Germans settled not in the seashore counties, but in the backwoods, in the hinterland.

At the same time while the land along the mountain range received this influx of Pennsylvania German stock, there was also immigration coming directly from Germany. Thousands of German immigrants landed in Annapolis and from there went to Baltimore or the Western Maryland counties. In the South, Charleston, S. C. became the distributing center of the new arrivals from Central Europe. In North Carolina

Swiss and German settlers founded New Bern. In the interior the Moravians (in spite of this name a predominantly German sect, led to America by the Silesian Count Zinzendorf) founded the colony of Winston-Salem.<sup>6</sup> Bethlehem, Pennsylvania became the other center of the *Mährische Brüder* (Moravian Brethren). Their special contribution to American culture consists in their beautiful church music. The southernmost German settlement in colonial times was Ebenzer, Georgia, founded by Protestant refugees from Salzburg who became noted for their attempts in the rearing of silkworms and the manufacture of silk.

After the American Revolution the German settlers participated in the opening of the Transalleghany country; they pushed forward into Kentucky and Tennessee and they spread north over Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. David Zeisberger and his Moravian missionaries converted the Indians in the Eastern part of Ohio and established settlements in Schönbrunn and Gnadenhütten. Cincinnati and St. Louis became the rallying points for German immigrants to all the Central states.

The first great wave of German immigrants starting around 1710 came to an end at the time of the Revolutionary War. A second wave began after the Napoleonic wars, around 1825. The first wave had been absorbed by the Atlantic states; the second wave went into the Midwestern states, following the valleys of the Ohio, Missouri and Mississippi. "Whereas in the East the Germans had come into established political set-ups, in the Midwest their arrival coincided with the civic and political organization of the territories. In the Midwestern states north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi the Germans constituted one of the basic

<sup>4</sup> Dieter Cunz, *The Maryland Germans, A History*, (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1948).

<sup>5</sup> John W. Wayland, *The German Element in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia*, (Charlottesville, Va., The author, 1907). Hermann Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia*, (Baltimore, Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, 1898-1900).

<sup>6</sup> Adelaide L. Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, (Raleigh, N. C., Edward & Broughton, 1922-1947). A. L. Fries, *The Road to Salem*, (Chapel Hill, N. C., University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

population elements in its significance comparable only to Pennsylvania and Maryland in the seaboard states. Wisconsin often has been called "the" German state of the Union; Milwaukee kept its distinct German traits longer than any other American city. Up to the present time there is something like an irregularly shaped "German quadrangle" on the map of the United States, within the lines New York—Minneapolis—St. Louis—Baltimore. The Census of 1900 (taken at a time when the wave of German immigration began to recede) shows that of the fifteen cities with the greatest percentage of German-born, fourteen would be situated within this "German quadrangle." In the order of the size of the German population they were: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Baltimore, Detroit, Newark, Pittsburgh, Jersey City—San Francisco being the only one outside of the quadrangle. In 1900 the total population of those fourteen cities was 10,284,710. Among them there were 2,494,136 of German parentage, (24.3 percent) and of these 942,863 of German birth (9.2 percent).

We mentioned the population figures of some big cities, yet we should hasten to add that the German immigrant of the nineteenth century in general tended to go to small towns and rural districts rather than into large cities. Since 1830 an ever-increasing stream of German immigrants flowed into the wide Midwestern plains. Recent studies have shown that the average German immigrant of the nineteenth century was not by inclination or by choice a frontiersman or pioneer. He settled behind rather than along the American frontier, "and his function was more often consolidation than it was innovation." He wanted to establish a permanent place of residence; he invested money and labor in his land which would yield interest perhaps only to his sons or grandchildren; he

desired security before riches. Whereas his neighbor of English or Irish descent often stayed only a few years and then followed the frontier, the German would select a piece of land and would then settle for good. He would forget all westward moving opportunities, but he would keep in mind the benefits which the second and third generation might reap from his methods of soil conservation, from intensive cultivation and fertilization, from a well and a road, from a sturdy barn and a solid stone residence. One of the characteristics of the German immigrant (true also of other nationalities) is that he sought an environment comparable to that of his homeland; he settled preferably near a forest and near the water. The successful farming of the Midwestern German settler has often been noted. "The relatively high proportion of fully trained farmers, as well as of skilled craftsmen among the Germans ..." says the British historian John A. Hawgood "naturally helped them on the land, just as their relatively high standard of education and large proportion of qualified professional men, made the Germans stand out among the immigrants in American cities."

Very often the Germans arrived in groups, bound together by a common idea, the desire to found a religious or social Utopia. In 1805 a group of Southern Germans, led by George Rapp, settled at Harmony in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, at the head of the Ohio Valley, where they founded a settlement in which all property was held in common. Some years later they moved on to the banks of the Wabash in Indiana continuing their communist principles, but they later returned to Eastern Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh. An offspring of the "Rappites" was another communitarian settlement in German town, Louisiana. Similar German utopian communities developed in Zoar, Ohio; Communia, Iowa; Aurora, Oregon; Peace Union and Teutonia,

Pennsylvania. Most of them were influenced by the teachings of Robert Owen.

Other waves of group immigration came about through some attempts at founding a German state on North American soil. The political events in Germany have very distinct bearings on the curves of German immigration into the United States. When around 1830 liberal German elements began to realize that there was little chance for a democratic Germany, some of them sought to realize their ideal by founding New Germanies across the seas. It was in essentials the desire to transplant German civilization and life to a region where it could develop unhampered by the restrictions (whether political, social or economic) then obtaining in Germany and Europe generally, and in their new environment to keep the German settlers racially distinct, geographically isolated, and, as far as possible, politically and economically independent of outside or alien influence or interference.<sup>7</sup> The most noteworthy of these organized German immigrant settlements occurred in Hermann, Missouri and Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, Texas,—all in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century. These colonies attracted a considerable number of German immigrants, and they preserved their German characteristics for many decades. Yet, they proved to be a great disappointment to the propagators of the "New Germany" idea. To be sure, these settlements became American towns with a predominantly German population; however, they soon cast off their ties to the German colonization or settlement societies and went their own ways, dictated by the necessities of their American environment. These attempts are so interesting because they show most impressively that America was a "New

World," and not an extension of Old World ideas and concepts.

A new type of German immigrant appeared on the American scene after the collapse of the liberal German revolution of 1848.<sup>8</sup> The "Forty-eighters" came to the United States as political refugees; they considered their sojourn a temporary exile and planned to return at the moment when a new democratic Germany would emerge. However, they soon were caught by the absorbent powers of the new land and after a few years most of them began to integrate themselves into the realities of American life. Numerically this group which arrived in the early fifties was not remarkable. Yet, because they arrived at a time when the political fronts were being reorganized and because they were very articulate and aggressive fighters, their intellectual and political influence was out of proportion to their small number. At no other period did America receive a wave of immigrants with so much political consciousness and idealism. Until 1850 the German immigrants and settlers had not displayed much interest in political life. They were good citizens, but they took the economic and political freedom of the country for granted without doing too much thinking about it. The Forty-eighters considered it their task to make their German-American *landsleute* conscious and alert in the matters of public life. Unlike the preceding wave of German immigrants who had a decided predilection for rural surroundings, the Forty-eighters took to the cities more readily than to the countryside. Some stayed in the big cities of the East; most of them went to the Middle West. Here their arrival coincided with the development of the big urban centers and thus they could here exert more political influence than in the stable cities of the Atlantic states. The Forty-eight-

<sup>7</sup> John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America*, (New York, G. P. Putnam, 1941), p. xv.

<sup>8</sup> A. E. Zucker (ed.), *The Forty-eighters, Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1950). Carl Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution, The German Forty-eighters in America*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952).

ers left a distinct mark on the early history of some cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, Milwaukee and Davenport. New-Ulm, Minnesota, was a pioneer settlement founded by the *Turner* (gymnastic societies) movement which came to America in the wake of the Forty-eighters. Since a great number of the Forty-eighters were men experienced in politics and journalism, they plunged immediately into political life and became the flying squadrons of the newly founded Republican Party. They persuaded thousands of German voters to give up their allegiance to the Democratic Party which traditionally had been *the* immigrant party, and to rally behind the Republican banner. In 1860 they had considerable influence on the nomination and election of Abraham Lincoln.

The last and highest wave of unrestricted German immigration, arriving in America during the last third of the nineteenth century, was not canalized into any predominantly German regions. It spread over the whole country, into urban or rural areas wherever an opportunity for the immigrant arose. In fact, these late German arrivals, with a high percentage of craftsmen, artisans, skilled workers and small businessmen had a greater tendency to stay in the cities. During these decades after 1870, Little Germany sections grew up in many cities where the Germans had their own newspapers, churches, societies, schools and other institutions. One of the best known of these Little Germanics is the one in New York City, the Yorkville area between 70th and 90th Streets on the Eastside. Such sections in which one would hear more German than English existed in many other cities: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, to cite just a few.

The hundred years after 1830 were the century of the greatest mass migration from Europe to the United States. In the first sixty years, from 1830 to 1890, the Germans held the leading place in this mass movement.

If we would draw a curve indicating the ups and downs of American immigration, we would see the curve of total immigration from 1830 to 1895 roughly paralleled by the curve of German immigration, ranging on a correspondingly lower level. In 1854, the first high peak in the total immigration curve, the Germans furnished about 50 percent of the total, in the later fifties and sixties 35 percent, later at least 33 percent. After 1895 the German share in total immigration decreased rapidly and at no time thereafter exceeded 10 percent of the total. Between 1830 and 1930 six million Germans came to the United States; five million out of these six arrived before 1900. This shows clearly that German immigration is primarily a nineteenth century phenomenon. Yet, as late as 1930 the Germans with 1,600,000 held second place (next to the Italians) among the foreign born living in the United States; in 1940 their number had decreased to 1,240,000; in 1950 to approximately 1,000,000.

German immigration declined rapidly after 1930; in 1933 it fell to a low of 5 percent of the allotted quota. Thereafter a new resurge followed. The depression lifted, and at the same time the Hitler regime in Germany began to consolidate itself. Religious persecution and political oppression forced thousands of Germans to leave their country. The immigration curve began to rise again and reached its peak in 1939 when 32,000 Germans entered the United States. The total of German immigration in the two decades between 1930 and 1950 is somewhat above 200,000. During the twelve years of the Hitler regime (1933-1945) more than 125,000 Germans found refuge in the United States and integrated themselves into the economic and social structure of the country. The vast majority among them became citizens. In the decade after 1940 the number of naturalizations of former German citizens rose to 233,000. It is indicative of the readiness of these late arrivals

to assimilate and to make the new country a new home.

## II. OLD WORLD HERITAGE, INTEGRATION AND ASSIMILATION

In the hearts of the immigrants a many-faceted cultural heritage has come over to the new continent. The Germans, along with other immigrant groups, tried for a long time to preserve their old ways and to reconstruct a cultural and social environment similar to the one they had left. Language preserves longer than anything else the national identity of an immigrant group. Therefore the German language press had an important function as a bridge between the German past and the American present of the immigrant.

The German American press has a long and distinguished history. Christopher Sower, a German Quaker of Germantown, Pennsylvania, began in 1739 the publication of the first German paper in the country. John Peter Zenger, a German immigrant who published an English newspaper in New York, became famous through his fight for the freedom of press. The number of German papers increased steadily during the nineteenth century. At the climax of German immigration (1893-94) there were almost 800 German language papers in the United States. In the century after 1830 the German press consistently held first place among the foreign language publications in the United States. "The German press has outlasted German immigration more tenaciously than the press of other foreign-speaking groups has persisted after their immigration peak."<sup>9</sup>

The two decades after 1930 saw a steady decline of the German language press. In 1940 there were about 180 German language publications (including all weeklies, quarterlies, trade journals, periodicals on religion, education, literature, etc.). In 1950 their number had been reduced to

sixty. The number of daily papers shrank from 12 (1940) to 7 (1950). Today daily German papers are published in the following cities: New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Rochester and Omaha. New York has the oldest and largest daily, the *New Yorker Staatszeitung und Herold*, which has been published uninterruptedly since 1834. It has a daily circulation of 25,000 with 45,000 on Sunday. The paper has been in the hands of the Ridder family since 1900, Valentine J. Peter is the owner of a chain of German newspapers issued in Omaha, St. Paul, Bismarck, Chicago, Denver, Buffalo, Baltimore and San Francisco; one of his weeklies is published in Lincoln, Nebraska, for the Volga-German farmers in the Central states. "The German press was a vital factor in the Americanization of hundreds of thousands of German immigrants, and thereby rendered to this nation a service which cannot be measured in ordinary terms." (Ludwig Oberndorf).

A bi-monthly periodical *The American German Review* (circulation 5,000) was founded in 1934 as a means of preserving the cultural heritage of the German element in the United States and of promoting intercultural relations between the old and the new country. It is published by the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation in Philadelphia which was founded 1930 and was named in honor of the greatest German American. During the last two decades the Carl Schurz Foundation has become a very important point of crystallization for all the widespread efforts to record the history of the Germans in the various parts of the country.

Ever since the middle of the nineteenth century the Germans showed a great inclination for the founding of German societies. Most popular were the *Turnvereine* and *Sängerbünde*, i. e. the gymnastic and singing societies. The gymnastic movement, dating back to the Germany of the Na-

<sup>9</sup> Robert E. Park, *The Immigrant Press and its Control*, (New York, Harper, 1922), p. 320.

poleonic era, was brought to the United States by some of the early liberal refugees such as Charles Follen and Carl Beck. Later it was spread widely through the efforts of the Forty-eighters. After 1849 *Turner* societies were founded in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York and other cities. Theoretically they propagated a harmoniously balanced development of body and mind; practically they were more concerned with physical exercises. In the beginning the *Turnvereine* were an exclusively German affair; towards the end of the nineteenth century they accepted more and more non-German members. In many cities the *Turner* societies were responsible for the introduction of physical education in public schools. The whole idea of physical education then spread from the Germans into the general American public by way of the YMCA movement. The idea of physical education which 100 years ago was upheld only by these German American societies has today a firmly established place in our school curriculum; the emphasis has shifted largely from gymnastic exercises to competitive games.

In a similar way the singing society came to America. In 1835 and 1836 the two first singing societies were founded by the Germans of Philadelphia and Baltimore. Thirty years later there were singing societies in every town and city with German stock, and they continue to flourish down to the present day. The singing societies meet at irregular intervals for big competitive singing festivals. These societies have a musical as well as a social function, and they are perhaps the strongest instrument to preserve a certain coherence among the German Americans today. However, it may be added that the singing society, originally a German and then a German-American institution, has been adopted by Americans of other national origins. Thousands of glee clubs all over the country may trace their descent from the first German

American *Männerchor* in Philadelphia and the *Liederkrantz* in Baltimore.

Competitive gymnastic and singing festivals were usually held on Sundays which was shocking to Sabbatarians of the old stock of native Americans. The old German custom of celebrating the Sunday with outings, picnics and festivals set the Germans apart from the old Anglo-Saxon elements. The battle between the "Continental Sunday and the Puritan Sabbath" stretched over a century of German-American history. What one party called the "joy of living" was for the others "ungodly behavior." The stubborn resistance of the Germans against the American Blue Laws never stopped, and it was later carried over into the Dry-Wet struggle, in which the Germans were decidedly "wet," insisting that the freedom to drink or not to drink was one of their sacred constitutional rights. It is interesting to see that a map of the regions opposed to prohibition coincides roughly with those sections of the country which have the densest settling of German immigrants.

It has often been acknowledged that the buoyancy of the German element left a distinct imprint on the country in general. The German Americans were always ready to start some celebration at the slightest provocation. On the outskirts of many a city in the "German quadrangle" there was the *Schützenpark* where thousands of people would gather for rifle practice and other amusements. Very often neighbors of other nationalities took part, and this contributed largely to spreading the custom of the Continental Sunday to the rest of the population.

The Germans brought over their particular way of celebrating Christmas. The old American custom to celebrate the day resembled somewhat Halloween pranks. Mischief, uproariousness, dances and heavy drinking were characteristic features. In Germany all emphasis had been placed on the domestic side of the feast, the



family gathering, the presents on Christmas Eve, the big dinner on Christmas Day, the goose and the cookies, the carols, candles and church service. The Germans introduced the Christmas tree to the Americans, and it is well known how rapidly this custom, indeed the entire German way of celebrating Christmas (including their most beloved Christmas song *Stille Nacht*) became popular throughout the whole country.

German folkways centering around such blissful religious events were readily accepted and adopted by other Americans. But tension arose when the Germans attacked organized religion in a country which was still close to its Puritan origins. Among the German immigrants of the nineteenth century there was a large percentage of anti-clerical elements. Since in Germany the church had identified itself with the monarchy and other conservative institutions, all German. American liberals were either cool or even hostile towards organized religion. They had a great influence in the early socialist movement in the United States; in fact the early conventions of the American socialists were conducted in English and German. Karl Heinzen, Wilhelm Weitling, Robert Reitzel and Joseph Weydemeyer were the best known of these German American radicals.<sup>10</sup> Early attempts to organize labor were greatly accelerated through German immigrants who came from a country which for a long time was the leader in the labor union and social security movement. However, it should be pointed out that it was a very articulate but numerically small sector of German immigration which adhered to radical ideas. The majority of the German Americans had—and have to the present day—distinct conservative tendencies in economic as well as in political matters.

It is impossible to establish for the

German Americans a trend towards certain occupations and professions. German American immigration history stretches over two and a half centuries; millions of Germans have integrated themselves into all walks of American economy. The great masses of German immigrants had no special predilection for certain occupations. In some professions there is an unproportionately high number of outstanding German individuals, such as in music and in film production. One branch of American business which from its beginning was almost 100 percent in German hands is the brewing industry. German cooking and special German dishes found their way into every American home and restaurant. It is interesting to see that most of the linguistic contributions of the Germans to American speech center around eating and drinking: Frankfurter, Hamburger, sauerkraut, sauerbraten, schnitzel, liverwurst, pumpernickel, pretzel, zwieback, lederkranz, lagerbeer, stein, seidel, rathskeller, katzenjammer, gesundheit, etc.

The assimilation of the German immigrants and their descendants has advanced to such a degree that one can hardly speak of the German Americans as a distinct racial minority. Since German immigration is part of the "old" immigration with its peak in the nineteenth century, most German Americans have been "native" for two or three generations and they have often lost the consciousness of the national identity of their forbears. There was a strong anti-German feeling in the country during the years 1917-1920. The first World War broke through the psychological barriers of the Little Germanies; it was the last clash between nativism and the German sector of the population. Thereafter the awareness of difference disappeared more and more. Even the resurgence of

<sup>10</sup>Carl Wittke, *Against the Current, The Life of Karl Heinzen*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1915). Carl Wittke, *Utopian Communist, A Biography of Wilhelm Weitling*, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1950). A. E. Zucker, *Robert Reitzel*, (Philadelphia, Americana Germanica Monograph Series, No. XXV, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1917). Karl Obermann, *Joseph Weydemeyer, Pioneer of American Socialism*, (New York, International Publishers, 1947).

German nationalism in 1933 had little effect on the German Americans as a whole.

The German Americans have been in a predicament which no other racial or national minority experienced. Twice within a generation they faced a situation in which their country went to war with the land from which their ancestors had emigrated. Anyone who comes to such a crossroad has to make a painful decision. The German Americans as a whole have fulfilled their duties as citizens and soldiers without any qualms and doubts. In German American newspapers of 1917 one often finds the phrase: "Keep in mind that while Germany is the land of our fathers, this is the land of our children and children's children. Yonder the past—here the future." The fact that both conflicts took place under Democratic administrations may have brought German American votes to the Republican Party, yet, the German American resentment (as far as there was one) never went beyond the protest of the ballot box.

The only German group in the country which still sets itself distinctly apart from the rest of the population is found among rural elements in the Pennsylvania Dutch counties. Whereas usually the German Americans of the second generation gradually gave up German as a medium of daily conversation, these rural groups in Pennsylvania have retained their Pennsylvania Dutch dialect through two centuries up to the present day. Though native American in the sixth or seventh generation they have for religious, sociological and economic reasons resisted a complete integration. They form an ethnocentric community completely independent of and untouched by later German immigration. Their speech, their religious and cultural habits have kept awake the awareness of difference, yet it is in no way resented by the surrounding population ele-

ments; in fact they are respected as a venerable and precious institution of American folklore. There is even a long tradition of Pennsylvania Dutch literature; the dialect poems of Henry Harbaugh and John Birmelin belong to the household goods of many a Pennsylvania German family.<sup>11</sup> Even after World War II, a weekly *The Pennsylvania Dutchman* was founded which is widely read throughout the Middle Atlantic states. Pennsylvania Dutch furniture, china, earthenware, glass and iron-work belong to the coveted possessions of the antique collectors. The Landis Valley Museum near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, founded by two old Pennsylvania Dutchmen, Henry and George Landis, has the most representative collection of the physical evidence of the cultural and economic development of the Pennsylvania Dutch.

The waves of German immigration that swept over the country have left their mark on the map of almost every state. Hundreds of place names indicate the origin of their early settlers: Frankfort, Kentucky; Potsdam, New York; Bismarck, North Dakota; Heidelberg, Pennsylvania; Anaheim, California; Oldenburg, Indiana,—or the many names which tell the story of a German immigrant who here had found and founded his "New World," such as New Berlin, Illinois; New Munich, Minnesota; New Holstein, Wisconsin; New Bremen, Ohio; New Braunfels, Texas; New Germany, Maryland.

### III. CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN LIFE

Any evaluation of this kind, confined to a few pages, can give only a few samples, a few representative names which must stand for hundreds and thousands of unknown or unnamed individuals. There seems to be good reason to begin this enumeration with the contributions of the

<sup>11</sup> Earl F. Robacker, *Pennsylvania German Literature, Changing Trends from 1683 to 1942*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1943).

Germans to the development of musical life and music appreciation in America. We touched briefly on the musical interest of the *Mährische Brüder* to whom we owe the Bach Festivals in Bethlehem, Pa., and we mentioned the merits of the German singing societies. The cultural climate in early American was not conducive to the growth of interest in music. The austerity of the New England Puritans receded gradually when the love for music spread from the German communities in the Middle Atlantic states. Philadelphia with its large German population produced the first ambitious concert of classical music in 1786. In Boston the Händel and Haydn Society was founded in 1815. In the middle of the nineteenth century New York followed with the Philharmonic Society and the Germania Orchester. It was composed mainly of German refugees of the revolution of 1848; during the first six years of its existence it gave almost 900 concerts in all parts of the country. German musicians such as Carl Zerrahn, Gottlieb Graupner, Karl Merz figure prominently in the history of nineteenth century American music. George Henschel and Wilhelm Gericke, both Germans, were the first conductors of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Theodore Thomas established his orchestra in Chicago. The Damrosch family (Leopold, the father, and his two sons Frank and Walter) held a dominant position in our musical life for many decades. In our day two of the greatest conductors, Bruno Walter and Fritz Reiner, and some outstanding composers such as Paul Hindemith and Lukas Foss should be mentioned. Many German names appear in the annals of the Metropolitan Opera—the stage designer Joseph Urban and stage director Herbert Graf, not to mention a great number of singers.

In the history of the pictorial arts there is also a distinct German influence. In the 1840's the Düsseldorf school, and towards the end of the century the Munich school, were

clearly represented among American painters. Emmanuel Leutze's "Washington Crossing the Delaware" (1851) is considered by most modern art historians a mediocre painting, yet for a century it has been the best known and most popular of all American historical pictures. Albert Bierstadt introduced the Düsseldorf style into American landscape painting; his Western landscapes (such as "Storm in the Rockies" or "Mount Corcoran") still have a strong appeal today. One of the ablest American painters of German stock was Frank Duvenek whose "Whistling Boy," painted in the manner of the Munich school, is still widely admired. The percentage of American sculptors of German birth or descent is disproportionately large, from William H. Rinehart, Elisabeth Ney, Karl Bitter in the nineteenth century to Hans Schuler and Henry Rox in more recent years. Another field in which the Germans excelled was that of caricature drawing. The first great caricaturist in America was a German immigrant, Thomas Nast, who in his cartoons created the Republican elephant, the Democratic donkey, the Tammany tiger and other figures which are still alive today. Two German-American architects, John Smithmeyer and Paul Pelz, drew the plans for the Library of Congress. Alfred Stieglitz is still revered as the father of photographic art in America. Recently a German immigrant, Fritz Eichenberg, has become known as one of the best book illustrators in the country.

We mentioned before that there is a great number of Germans in the movie industry, not so much among the actors as among the directors and producers, from Carl Laemmle and F. W. Murnau of the early days, down to William Dieterle, Eric Pommer, Ernst Lubitsch and Billy Wilder. Among the German-born dancers Hanya Holm deserves mention as she was instrumental in introducing modern dancing in the United States.

In the history of American letters

some of the best known names belong to writers of German stock: Theodore Dreiser, Joseph Hergesheimer, H.L. Mencken, John Steinbeck, Louis Untermeyer, Peter Viereck. Thomas Mann is the greatest representative of the large number of outstanding German writers who left their country at the beginning of the Hitler regime and found refuge in America.

In the history of American education German influence is especially noticeable on the lowest and on the highest level of our system: in the kindergarten and the university.<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Fröbel, the originator of the kindergarten had disciples and followers in Europe and America. The first American kindergarten was founded in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1856. In the next year others followed in Columbus, Ohio, Hoboken, N. J., and Washington, D.C. (all operated by Germans), and soon others were established all over the country.

The German university served as a model when in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the American undergraduate college expanded into a university and graduate school. This influence is clearly felt in the founding of the Johns Hopkins University and in the growth of the major universities; however, it was transmitted directly from the German to the American institution without the intermediate help of German Americans. It is impossible to compile the long roll of German scholars who have taught in American universities, so we must confine ourselves to a few representative names. The president of Hunter College, George N. Shuster, who descended from German immigrants, is today one of the foremost educators in the country. Men of German descent or German birth contributed to the growth of scholarship in our universities: among germanists Kuno Francke, Alexander R. Hohlfeld and Karl Vietor; historians Carl L. Becker, William L.

Langer and Carl Wittke; musicologists Alfred Einstein and Manfred Bukofzer; Erich Auerbach and Helmut Hatzfeld in romance philology; Oscar Hagen and Erwin Panofsky in art history; Reinhold Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck and Paul Tillich in theology; K. A. Wittfogel in sinology; Herbert von Beckerath, Adolf Loewe and Arthur Salz in economics; Walter Gropius in architecture; Bernhard V. Bothmer in archaeology; Ernst Levy in jurisprudence; Robert Ulich in education; Wolfgang Koehler in psychology. In the field of psychiatry the share of German immigrants and their descendants is very conspicuous. The fame of the psychiatric clinics of Karl A. and William C. Menninger in Topeka, Kansas has spread over the whole world.

As a unique contribution of the Germans we would like to mention their share in the development of the science of forestry, which always was particularly cultivated in Germany and for a long time was dangerously neglected in the United States. Carl Schurz during his years in the Department of the Interior became interested in this problem. Later German foresters brought the idea of community forests to America. The most outstanding names in the history of American forestry (Joseph T. Rothrock, Bernhard E. Fernow, Filibert Roth) are German.

Trained German technicians and engineers arriving during the nineteenth century in a country which had no technical institutes soon occupied leading positions in all technical industries. The Brooklyn Bridge and the suspension bridge over the Niagara River testify to the ingenuity of John A. Roebling. Two great names figure in the history of electrical engineering: Charles P. Steinmetz and George Westinghouse. A German engineer in Baltimore, Othmar Mergenthaler, constructed the linotype machine, one of the most revolu-

<sup>12</sup> John A. Walz, *German Influence in American Education and Culture*, (Philadelphia, Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 1936). For the contributions of German refugees after 1933 see Maurice R. Davie, *Refugees in America*, (New York, Harper, 1947) and Stephen Duggan & Betty Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, (New York, Macmillan, 1948).

tionary inventions in the art of printing. We should mention a few outstanding names in the development of the chemical industry: Dohme, Pfizer, Vogler; in the manufacture of optical instruments: Bausch and Lomb; in piano making: Steinway, Knabe, Wurlitzer, Stieff; in car manufacturing: Chrysler, Studebaker, Kaiser; in the textile industry: Oberlaender, Thun, Janssen; in the steel industry, Schwab; in the food and canning business: Heinz, Schimmel; in the brewing industry: Schlitz, Pabst, Anhaeuser-Busch, Blatz, Ruppert, Schaefer, Gunther, Heurich and many others. Three German names hold a prominent place in the opening of the American Northwest: John Jacob Astor who organized the fur trade, Frederick Weyerhäuser who built up the lumber empire and Henry Villard who built and organized the railroads in the Pacific Northwest.

Three of the major churches in America were founded by Germans: the Lutheran, the German Reformed and the United Brethren. The German immigrants of the eighteenth century were extremely church conscious. Until the end of the nineteenth century the churches strengthened the forces of cohesiveness and German group solidarity, even after the church language had shifted to English. Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg is generally considered the father of Lutheranism in America; he is the patriarch of a family which distinguished itself in various realms of public life.<sup>13</sup> The United Brethren were the most successful Indian missionaries. German Catholic immigration increased during the second half of the nineteenth century. The most prominent German American in the Catholic hierarchy was Cardinal George Mundelein. German sectarians (Mennonites, Amish, Schwenkfelders, Dunkards) were particularly attracted to Pennsylvania but later

spread into other states such as Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Kansas. A unique type of German sectarians is a group of Volga-Germans, the Hutterians, who objected to military service in Russia. In 1874 they left their old grounds at the mouth of the Volga and settled in South Dakota and Canada.

The influence of the German Americans in politics has never been commensurate with their numerical strength. Only the generation of the Forty-eighters plunged into politics soon after their arrival; otherwise the first generation of the German Americans usually refrained from active participation in political battles. Two political issues, however, consistently evoked the antagonism of the Germans during the nineteenth century: slavery and blue laws. German American historians have always proudly pointed to the fact that the earliest protest against Negro slavery came from the Germantown settlers in the year 1688, drawn by Franz Daniel Pastorius and signed by the representatives of the first German colonists. This anti-slavery sentiment was later revived by the vast majority of German immigrants and it partly explains the fervor with which thousands of them fought in the Union army. The two most famous German immigrants in the first half of the nineteenth century joined the abolitionist movement: Charles Follen, the first professor of German at Harvard University, and Francis Lieber, the father of Political Science in the United States.<sup>14\*</sup>

German Americans of the second or later generations frequently went into politics and some of them made names for themselves as mayors of big cities where they fought for good government and reform: W. F. Havemeyer (New York), Rudolph Blankenburg (Philadelphia), John Wagener (Charleston), William F. Broening

<sup>13</sup> Paul A. W. Wallace, *The Muhlenbergs of Pennsylvania*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950).

<sup>14</sup>G. W. Spindler, "Karl Follen, A Biographical Study," *Jahrbuch der deutsch-amerikanischen historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois*, (Chicago, 1916), pp. 7-234. Frank Freidel, *Francis Lieber, Nineteenth Century Liberal*, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1947).

(Baltimore), Adolph Sutro (San Francisco), Henry L. Yesler (Seattle). On the gubernatorial level Gustav Koerner and John Peter Altgeld figure prominently in the annals of the state of Illinois. Senator William E. Borah of Idaho and Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York held dominant positions on Capitol Hill for many years. Men of German extraction are to be found in cabinet posts of various administrations since the Civil War: John Wanamaker, George von L. Meyer (Postmaster General), Charles Nagel (Commerce), George H. Dern (War), Lewis B. Schwollenbach (Labor), John W. Snyder (Treasury), Carl Schurz, Harold L. Ickes, Julius A. Krug (Interior). Carl Schurz, who distinguished himself as a general in the Civil War, as minister to Spain, as senator from Missouri and as one of the closest collaborators of President Hayes, accomplished his most creditable achievements in his successful efforts to inaugurate the long needed Civil Service reform. "His pen and tongue were constantly and vigorously active on behalf of human liberty and honest government," (Wendell L. Willkie).<sup>15</sup> Carl Schurz has long been considered by his German American compatriots as the symbol of civic virtue and as the exemplary immigrant. We mentioned previously that towards the end of the nineteenth century German workers were very active in the early American labor movement, and one of the best known labor leaders today, Walter P. Reuther, is descended from German immigrants.

No presidential candidate of German descent was ever elected until the election of 1952. Dwight D. Eisenhower is the first President whose ancestors of paternal and maternal lineage immigrated from Germany.

In the histories of the wars of the United States there is an abundance of German names. A former Prussian officer, General Frederick William Steuben, has always been given credit for welding the courageous but unorganized guerilla troops of 1776 into a disciplined, well drilled army. Congress honored him through a statue in Lafayette Park "in grateful recognition of his services to the American people in their struggle for liberty." Other German Americans lived up to the Steuben tradition. General Jean DeKalb also in the Revolutionary War, General Franz Siegel in the Civil War, Admiral Winfield Scott Schley in the Spanish American War, General John Pershing in the first World War. The military leaders who headed the three branches of our Armed Services during the second World War are all men of German descent: Dwight D. Eisenhower, Chester W. Nimitz, Carl A. Spaatz. German-born general Walter Krueger became famous for his successful operations in the Pacific.

Krueger, Wagner, Schurz, Follen, Steuben, Pastorius—the names of outstanding Americans of German birth are spread over almost three centuries of American history. Those in the limelight of history and those in the obscurity of the masses of immigrants integrated themselves into the rhythm of the new country and did their share to shape its fate. Wendell Willkie whose grandparents immigrated from Germany said of Carl Schurz: "His life proved that true Americanism is a matter of spirit, not of birth." We are sure that the great German American would have accepted this praise for himself and as the representative of many millions of fellow immigrants.

<sup>15</sup> Wendell L. Willkie, "They Were Giants in Those Days," *American-German Review*, IX (1942), ii, 4.

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