

# WARTBURG: DREAM AND REALITY OF THE NEW GERMANY IN TENNESSEE

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In any history of the German element of the United States, Tennessee will occupy only a minor place. Although Germans and German Swiss have been present in that state throughout its existence, their numerical strength has never been large enough to have made itself felt. Their contributions to the various trades, professions and industries were in most cases commensurate with their numbers. Only as farmers may they have given more than their share toward the development of sound farming practices and toward a much needed diversification of agriculture.

East Tennessee was the end of the road for the onwardpushing Pennsylvania German in the decades after the Revolutionary War. What had still been a forceful wave of migration in Western Maryland and in the Great Valley of Virginia, became a mere trickle beyond the New River. By 1790, the first permanent settlements of Germans from Pennsylvania and from the Shenandoah Valley were established in Green, Washington and Sullivan counties, soon to be followed by the infiltration of the Clinch and Holston river valley by German farm families. The fertile mountain valleys of East Tennessee offered the type of land suitable for the small farms the Germans were looking for. Whenever a new settlement reached sufficient numbers, a church congregation was founded. Most of the early German congregations in the area were of the Lutheran faith. In April, 1812, the Lutheran Synod of North Carolina admitted nine congregations in Tennessee (Sullivan, Washington, Green, Knox and Blount counties) into its ranks. In succeeding years, petitions for German-speaking preachers came from Sevier, Franklin, Lincoln and Bedford counties where a number of German settlers from North Carolina had established themselves about 1800.<sup>1</sup>

Most of these German congregations were quite small and they had difficulties in finding pastors willing to serve them in the backwoods. In July, 1820, representatives from a dozen Lutheran churches in East Tennessee met in the small hamlet of Cove Creek in Green county and founded there the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod.<sup>2</sup> They were joined by a number of congregations in Virginia. German was proclaimed the official language of the Tennessee Synod, and, although bilingualism crept very soon into this organization, the language transition was delayed considerably by the efforts of the clergy. Dunker and United Brethren groups from Virginia also located in East Tennessee during the following years. By 1820, scattered German settlements reached a line which may be roughly defined by the course of the Clinch and Tennessee rivers from the Virginia border to Bradley county. A detailed study of this early phase of German

<sup>1</sup>C. W. Cassell, *History of the Lutheran Church in Virginia and East Tennessee* (Strasburg, Va., 1930).

<sup>2</sup>*Kurze Nachricht von den Verrichtungen der ersten Conferenz gehalten in dem Staat Tennessee* (New Market, Va., 1821); Socrates Henkel, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod* (New Market, Va., 1890).

settlement has never been made. It would represent an important contribution to the pioneer history of the state.<sup>3</sup>

In the year 1828, a German traveler, Traugott Bromme, passed through several parts of Tennessee.<sup>4</sup> His account paints a very favorable picture of the area presently covered by Roane, Anderson, Morgan and Cumberland counties. He mentions the many German farmers whom he had encountered along the Holston river. Bromme's glowing reports about the fertility of the soil and the low prices for land were circulated widely among German Americans in the North. Several German businessmen began to look into investment opportunities in East Tennessee. When in 1839, five years after the first publication of Bromme's book, large tracts of land in the Cumberland plateau region were offered for sale in New York City, Georg F. Gerding was among the first buyers. The use he subsequently made of this land and his project of a "New Germany" in Tennessee will be told in the chapters of this article.

Gerding's Wartburg project, however, was to remain the only German colonization venture in the state prior to the Civil War. German immigrants in search of farm land turned toward the Midwest. Certainly, the larger cities and towns of Tennessee received modest numbers of German tradesmen and shopkeepers during the fifth and sixth decades of the eighteenth century, but the large waves of immigrants arriving in New York, Baltimore or New Orleans headed elsewhere. Memphis and Nashville were the only Tennessee cities with German colonies large enough to support the usual clubs and German-language newspapers.<sup>5</sup> By 1854, a lively German weekly, *Stimme des Volkes*, appeared in Memphis. Its editor, August Kattmann, was a Forty-Eighter who was the leader of the Germans in Memphis until his death in 1860. Evidently, there was room for a second German weekly because *Der Anzeiger des Südens* commenced publication in 1858. Nashville also had a German newspaper as early as 1857.<sup>6</sup> German residents of the Tennessee capital in 1850 had founded the German Relief Society "for the protection of immigrants from fraud and other misfortunes" patterned after the venerable German Societies of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>7</sup>

After the outbreak of the Civil War, many Germans left the state and went North. Among those who stayed on, owners of considerable property or substantial business enterprises formed the majority. A small number of Germans from Tennessee fought in the Confederate armies. After the war some of the refugees returned to their former homes but Tennessee was also haunted by a goodly assortment of Germans who arrived within the ranks of the carpetbaggers.

During the immediate post-war period, a group of politically active German businessmen in Nashville, reinforced by speculators from the North, tried to promote German immigration to Tennessee. In the spring of 1866, they put up funds to establish the daily *Tennessee Staatszeitung* under the

<sup>3</sup> Some research into the early German settlements was done in 1939/40 by R. S. Collins at Maryville College and John G. Prank at Vanderbilt University but the results of these studies were never published. A number of old Pennsylvania-German farm families were evacuated during World War II when Oak Ridge was built by the Federal Government. Cf. George O. Robinson, *The Oak Ridge Story* (Kingsport, Tenn., 1950), 32-83.

<sup>4</sup> Traugott Bromme, *Reisen durch die Vereinigten Staaten und Ober-Canada* (Baltimore, 1834), 2 vols. (Reference to East Tennessee in Vol. II, 125 ff.) In 1828 Bromme visited parts of Tennessee. He noted the presence of numerous German settlers along the Holston River near Knoxville.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander J. Schem (ed.), *Deutsch-amerikanisches Conversations-Lexikon* (New York, 1869-1874), 11 vols. "Tennessee," X, 650; "Nashville," VII, 691-2; "Memphis," VII, 193-4.

<sup>6</sup> Karl J. Arndt and May E. Olson, *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals 1732-1955* (Heidelberg, 1961). "Tennessee," 611-614. Olson lists a total of 26 wholly German or German-English publications in Tennessee.

<sup>7</sup> The First German Relief Society were Gerald Seiferle, John Buddeke, Francis Klotz, H. B. Waldmann and Anthony Leonhard. Cf. *Acts of Tennessee, 1850*, 392.

editorship of J. Ruhm who was to provide a special, weekly edition devoted to the promotion of immigration. In August 1867, the various German societies of Nashville called a meeting at Turner Hall "to take into consideration the best measures for promoting German immigration to this state." Simultaneous meetings of Germans were held in Chattanooga, Knoxville and Memphis. The organizers were hopeful that "branch societies of an association would be formed throughout the state to assist immigrants to find suitable locations, and help to get them established." At least in Nashville the organizers had success. "The German Association of the City of Nashville" was founded and received at once a charter from the legislature according to which it was "authorized to procure laborers from parties applying to them, to act as agents for land owners desirous of selling their property, and for parties wishing to buy land in the State of Tennessee." This association held regular meetings for a time. At its first official meeting it suggested that the state government establish a "Bureau of Immigration."<sup>8</sup>

The State evidently carried out this suggestion at once because a "State Board of Immigration" was appointed in December 1867. This Board selected German-born Hermann Bokum as Commissioner of Immigration. Bokum, one time professor of German literature in Philadelphia and Boston, had been a clergyman in East Tennessee before the war and had fled to the North where he earned a living as a lecturer, author and translator of classical German literature, came back to Tennessee at war's end as an agent of the Freedman's Bureau.<sup>9</sup> After his appointment as Immigration Commissioner he tackled his new task by putting his abilities as a writer to work. He compiled a comprehensive handbook on Tennessee intended as a guide for prospective immigrants. Both an English and a German edition of this compendium appeared. In another move, Bokum saw to it that Ruhm's *Staatszeitung* received a handsome subsidy for distributing copies of this German newspaper free of charge to newly arrived immigrants in American ports. Otherwise little activity was deployed by either the Board or its appointed Commissioner and impatient friends at the state house soon called the whole venture off.<sup>10</sup> The public tended to lump immigrants together with carpetbaggers and emancipated Negro slaves as byproducts of the Reconstruction. When a German settlement near Columbia failed miserably in 1868, the local press declared that "the Germans were no better than Negroes, who, at least, were able to speak English."<sup>11</sup>

Despite the failure of official encouragement to immigrants, several private schemes were tried to divert a part of the constant stream of immigrants from the Midwest and direct it toward Tennessee. In 1869, John Hitz, the Swiss Consul General in Washington, and Peter Straub, Swiss Consular Agent in Knoxville,<sup>12</sup> jointly sponsored a Swiss-German Colony in Grundy County which resulted in the founding of the village of Gruetly near Altamont.<sup>13</sup> Three German Emigration Societies settled some Germans

<sup>8</sup> *Nashville Daily Press and Times*, August 14 and 21, 1867.

<sup>9</sup> Hermann Bokum, *Zeugnis eines Flüchtlings von Ost-Tennessee* (Philadelphia, 1863). The two editions of his handbook were published under the following titles: *The Tennessee Handbook and Immigrant's Guide* and *Das Tennessee Handbuch: Eine Beschreibung des Staates Tennessee* (both Philadelphia, 1868).<sup>10</sup>

C. G. Belissary, "Tennessee and Immigration, 1865-1880," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* VII (1948), 229-248.

<sup>11</sup> *Nashville Daily Press and Times*, April 1, 1868.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Straub (1828-1904) was a native of Bilton, Canton of Glarus, Switzerland. He settled in Knoxville just before the Civil War and rose to local prominence as a manufacturer. In 1875, 1876 and 1881 he was elected mayor of Knoxville. Later he served as U. S. Consul at St. Gallen. Cf. Albert Bartholdi, *Prominent Americans of Swiss Origin* (New York, 1982), 177-78.

<sup>13</sup> Adelrich Steinach, *Geschichte und Leben der Schweizer Kolonien in den Vereinigten Staaten* (New York, 1889), 162-167. In 1933 a M. A. Thesis entitled "The German-Swiss Settlement at Gruetly Tennessee" was submitted by Frances Helen Jackson at Vanderbilt University.

near Dover in Stewart county. These societies also acquired a total of 65,000 acres in Lawrence, Lewis and Giles counties but anticipated mass settlement never took place. The Appalachian Plateau region was the scene of all sorts of real estate promotion schemes in those years. The fate of the settlements ranged from tragic to near tragic.

The Swiss colony at Belvidere in Franklin county, settled gradually between 1868 and 1880, met with moderate success.<sup>14</sup> The same may be said of the "New Switzerland" at Hohenwald in Lewis county and of the small German horticultural and farming colony at Allardt (about 1885) in Fentress county.<sup>15</sup>

Two Catholic German communities, Loretto and St. Joseph near Lawrenceburg, owed their founding to the initiative of J. B. Jeup, editor of the Nashville German newspaper *Der Emigrant und Beobachter im Süden*. Jeup persuaded the German Catholic Homestead Society of Cincinnati to settle a number of Catholic immigrants in Lawrence county in 1871. Both villages achieved moderate prosperity.

In the urban centers the German population, despite a number of newcomers in the decades before World War One, remained a small minority. Some of the typical immigrant institutions such as several *Vereine* and German aid societies existed in Nashville, Memphis and even in Knoxville. In the state capital there were German language newspapers, the *Nashviller Demokrat* from 1866 till 1871 and the weekly *Anzeiger des Südens* which lasted miraculously from 1880 until 1916 despite a circulation which never exceeded 900 copies. Several papers were started in Memphis but alone the *Memphis Post* (later named *Südliches Post-Journal*) ever had a mentionable circulation (about 2000 copies) during its long existence from 1875 until 1912. German churches and synagogues were supported in several communities in Tennessee.

When World War One came, there were few vestiges of German settlements and German American activity left in Tennessee. The decline had set in already before that time. Besides a handful of German Catholic and Swiss Reformed congregations and the independent Lutheran church at Wartburg, only five Lutheran churches of the Missouri Synod were still holding German services. The World War wiped out the last German newspaper and most of the *Vereine* dissolved. In the history of Tennessee, German and Swiss immigration was but an ephemeral event. With its several and distinct colonization ventures, isolated and surrounded by a native population unaccustomed to the influx of foreigners, the German and Swiss element of Tennessee presents nevertheless an interesting challenge for case studies. For the following account, the case of the Wartburg project has been singled out for presentation.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Walter Kollmorgen, *The German-Swiss in Franklin County* (Washington, 1940). This is primarily a study of the significance of cultural consideration in farming enterprises.

A. R. Hogue, *History of Fentress County, Tennessee* (Nashville, 1916), 6, 143, 150. "The Germans at Allardt have demonstrated this land to be suited to horticulture as well as general farming" (p. 6). The leaders of the Allardt colony were Max Colditz, a civil engineer and later Finance Commissioner of Fentress County, and Bruno Gemt who "controlled more land than any other man residing in the county" (p. 143).

<sup>16</sup> Hobart Schofield Cooper, "German and Swiss Colonization in Morgan County, Tennessee," M. A. Thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1925. Typewritten MS, 100 pp. plus Appendix A, 15 pp. and Appendix B, 28 pp. H. S. Cooper (1897-1959) was the first and only local historian to gather records on the Wartburg settlement. His work was entirely based on local sources without consulting any German or German American material. His thesis represents an admirable work of local investigation and it shows how love for a subject and systematic search on the spot can produce worthwhile results even though its author had no knowledge of the German language and lacked the guidance of a professor familiar with source material in immigration history. The present study of the Wartburg colony owes great debt to Cooper's spade work. As a matter of fact, the reading of his thesis at the University of Tennessee Library initiated our interest in this settlement.

In the year 1839 much of the land in the Cumberland plateau region until then owned by the State of Tennessee was sold in New York City. In November, 1843, Georg Friedrich Gerding acquired some of this land from one of the original purchasers, Henry Wells. "The news about East Tennessee, its climate, mineral wealth, timber and its inexhaustible pasture lands drew our attention toward this land as an area particularly suited for sheep raising and for the development of iron and coal industries,"<sup>17</sup> Gerding wrote in later years trying to justify the reasons for his purchase of so much property in a far-off state which he had never visited. Typical of the accounts circulating on this area was the glowing description offered by Traugott Bromine who called it "one of the best cultivated and most fertile areas of the State. Only the western part which reaches into the Cumberland mountains rising here to a height of over 2350 feet, is, though arable everywhere, rough and covered by dense forests. The soil is rich, fertile, and well-watered. Land in the western part is being bought at \$4-6 per acre, near the Tennessee river, however, it sells for \$30-45."<sup>18</sup>

Gerding, a native of Osnabrück, had come to New York from Germany in 1825 at the age of 25. He entered the export-import business and after initial employment with a large company, he soon established a partnership with G. H. Simon. This firm, F. Gerding and Simon, with a branch office in Hamburg, became well known for its importation of cut-glass, chinaware and other articles from Germany and France. Observing the great number of immigrants coming into New York every day (in 1840 the Federal authorities registered 80,126 immigrants from Europe, in 1842 99,946 arrivals from Europe were listed),<sup>19</sup> Gerding looked into the profitable "immigrant trade." Already since 1831 he had been a member of the German Society of New York, the largest immigrant aid organization. As a member of the executive council of that society from 1838 until 1840, he had ample opportunity to become familiar with the practices of immigrant transportation. In 1842 he joined with J. C. Kunckelmann, the New York agent of Charles Heidsiek's champagne firm, to found a packet-ship line which was soon to operate four sailing vessels, Westphalia, Emanuel, Sarah-Sheaf, and Provus, between New York and Antwerp.

"This enterprise brought me to Antwerp where I supervised the loading of my ships. The war between Holland and Belgium was over by that time but a business depression lingered on since now the Dutch colonies were closed to Belgian products," Gerding recalled later in a brief account of his Tennessee venture. He continued, "Reports from Tennessee and the prospect of profits there (which is probably always the most decisive factor for a businessman) caused us to organize a company. This company was assured of the help of the Belgian government in the case we could secure a charter guaranteeing the property of foreigners. We were certain to be granted such a charter since it would have been very advantageous to the State. We were assured of a capital of five million Belgian francs." This was—in Gerding's own words—the beginning of the brief, official Belgian participation in the East Tennessee Colonization Company. A prominent Belgian emigration promoter, Theodore de Cock of Antwerp, a member of the *Conseil Général* of the *Compagnie Belge-Brésilienne de Colonisation*, a co-partnership of several capitalists in Europe and New York founded

<sup>17</sup>Letter of George P. Gerding to Heinrich A. Rattermann, dated March 20, 1878. Published in *Der Deutsche Pionier*, X (1878), 18-19.

<sup>18</sup>Bromme, *op. cit.*, II, 125.

<sup>19</sup>*Alien Passengers and Immigrants Arrived In the United States, 1820-1892* (Washington, 1893), 39.

in the early spring of 1844, was selected as the president of the new East Tennessee Colonization Company. The other board members were: G. F. Gerding (New York), Vice President; François Bishop (Antwerp), A. J. Klein (Bingen), Joseph Stock (Kreuznach), J. C. Kunckelmann (New York) and Anton A. Melly (New York), Directors; Dr. Georg Strecker (Mainz), Secretary.<sup>20</sup>

The stock of the company was divided into 250 shares of which de Cock, Gerding, Kunckelmann and Melly owned the majority. Its avowed purpose was "the colonization of Morgan, Scott, Fentress, and Cumberland counties with German and Swiss immigrants."<sup>21</sup> As a first step, on August 23, 1844, the Company appointed Friedrich B. Guenther, an employee of Gerding's firm in New York, as its resident agent in East Tennessee. Guenther, a native of Dresden, was invested with full power to lease, contract, build, or execute any other necessary functions in the interest of the Company. He left New York at once and located in Morgan county where he concluded several important land transactions. Before winter set in, Guenther was busy arranging for the reception of the prospective colonists. This newcomer from the North was most effectively assisted by John White, a native of Morgan County, who advised the Company in many practical matters.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile the directors and a number of specially appointed agents in Europe began soliciting settlers for the Company's lands which soon consisted of more than 170,000 acres comprising large portions of Morgan, Cumberland, White, Fentress and Scott counties. The most concentrated efforts were made in Saxony where a great number of people were willing to emigrate to America due to the economic distress prevailing in several sections of that kingdom. So-called *Auswanderungsgesellschaften* (Emigration Societies) were thriving in many communities. The Reverend Friedrich Behr of Schwarzenberg (Erzgebirge) who had been involved in emigration schemes ever since 1827, and Otto von Kienbusch, a young manufacturer in Plauen (Vogtland) were engaged by the Company to sell land to prospective immigrants and to entice as many people as could possibly be found to colonize the lands of the Company. Preference was given to those who had ready cash for the purchase of their own parcels of land.<sup>23</sup>

The Company also concluded an agreement with the firm of Ernst Weigel & Co. in Leipzig to act as the general agent for Saxon emigration to East Tennessee. Ernst Weigel was to make all arrangements for the emigrants' transportation to the port of embarkation. He immediately took an active hand in the project. He placed numerous advertisements and appeals in newspapers and circulated pamphlets extolling the great advantages East Tennessee offered over other sections of America.<sup>24</sup>

Similar propaganda was disseminated in the Rhineland, Baden and Switzerland. Gerding himself could take a hand at this campaign to secure settlers: in 1845 he was appointed United States Consul for Baden and no doubt much of the activities of his office there was concerned with his own projects.<sup>25</sup>

Another network of agents was set up in the United States. In New York, in New Orleans and in Charleston, South Carolina, arriving German

<sup>20</sup>Heinrich A. Rattermann, "Eine alte deutsche Kolonie an der Cincinnati Südbahn," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, X (1878), 12-19. Cf. also *Knoxville Register*, February 15, 1845.

<sup>21</sup>Letter of Anton A. Melly to the Hon. Thomas A. R. Nelson, dated February 2, 1866. Seldon Nelson Papers, McClung Collections, Lawson McGee Library, Knoxville, Tenn.

<sup>22</sup>Cooper, 14.

<sup>23</sup>Otto von Kienbusch, *Bericht über die deutsche Kolonie Wartburg* (Leipzig, 1848); Hildegard Rosenthal, *Die Auswanderung aus Sachsen im 19. Jahrhundert. 1815-1871* (Stuttgart, 1931), 71.

<sup>24</sup>Rosenthal, 73.

<sup>25</sup>Cooper, 88.

immigrants were approached by the Company's recruiters. Along the principal travel routes to East Tennessee arrangements for overnight lodgings and feeding of the migrants were made well in advance.<sup>26</sup>

The public in Tennessee also began to get interested in this first, large-scale attempt to bring foreign settlers into the state. Newspapers sent their reporters to Morgan County to interview Guenther and White who had worked relentlessly and against many odds to make the wilderness hospitable to the large number of colonists which the Company expected. The following account, based on an interview with Guenther, "the very intelligent agent of DeCock & Bishop of Antwerp," may illustrate what the Company was planning just prior to the arrival of the first settlers:

About 200,000 acres of land have been purchased and two or three hundred immigrants are daily expected to arrive. Others will follow from time to time as fast as preparations can be made for their reception. Both manufacture and agriculture will engage the attention of the colony. For purposes connected with the former there is water in great abundance. The agricultural operators will have reference to the cultivation of the vine and fruit trees generally. Special attention will be given to the raising of sheep and the growing of wool. In view of the last mentioned object, the Company have already sent over a few of the finest Electoral Saxony Rains whose original cost was \$500.00 apiece. They also recently purchased from Dr. John Shelby, of this vicinity, his valuable flock of Bakewells and Southdowns."<sup>27</sup>

#### ARRIVAL OF SETTLERS FROM GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND

In July 1845 the much-anticipated event took place: the first fifty immigrants reached the lands of the East Tennessee Colonization Company. This first contingent of colonists had been recruited by Dr. Georg Strecker in Mainz. They landed in New Orleans and proceeded up the Mississippi and Cumberland rivers to Nashville where Guenther and White met them. Agents for other colonization schemes, notably in the Midwest, were sparing no efforts along the road trying to divert the newcomers to other parts of the country, but seemingly without success. The reporter of the *Nashville Whig* was on hand to witness their arrival:

Fifty immigrants arrived at this place yesterday on their way to the Georgia settlement in Morgan County. Others to the number of 800 or a thousand will follow as soon as the necessary preparation can be made for their reception. The immigrants are far superior to the general run of that description of persons. They have been selected with great care, and none but individuals with good character and habits will be permitted to join the colony. We learn from the intelligent agent of the colony, that it is intended to make the situation of these immigrants entirely comfortable. They are of a character, in fact, which entitles them to kind and respectful attention on the part of their employers.<sup>28</sup>

From Nashville the band of Germans crossed the Cumberland plateau by ox carts, commonly known as "tar greasers," by way of the primitive Nashville-Knoxville road.

When they arrived at the end of their long journey from the Rhine to the Emory river, they found almost nothing but a wooded expanse at the place where the new town of Wartburg was to be built. A large "Receiving House" provided shelter for part of the families. Others were housed temporarily at Scott's Tavern in the nearby hamlet of Montgomery (then the county seat of Morgan). The Company's agent could hardly be blamed for the absence of any signs of civilization. In less than a year he had

<sup>26</sup> Johann G. Häcker, *Bericht aus und über Amerika* (Leipzig, 1849), 25-31.

<sup>27</sup> *Nashville Whig*, May 3, 1845.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, July 3, 1845.

bought some 170,000 acres from many different owners, oftentimes only after lengthy negotiations. Contrary to the map of the Company's territory which was being distributed by Ernst Weigel in Germany (showing the entire property as one single, coherent area), the lands were widely scattered over the area of several counties with many locally-owned farms and large properties of speculating absentee owners lying in between them.<sup>29</sup>

One of the largest contingent tracts was located at the southwest end of Bird Mountain on a minor plateau between Crooked Fork Creek and Emory river. Here Guenther decided to establish the center of the settlement to which he gave the popular German name "Wartburg" evoking the memories of the mountain fortress in Thuringia made famous by Martin Luther. Guenther had already platted the projected town when the first group arrived. Much of the resident agent's time had also been spent surveying the lands lying close to the town site.

Guenther has been described as "a generally amiable and honest man who unfortunately was more of a theoretician than a practician. This accounts for many blunders committed at the time of the founding of town and colony. They caused the Company heavy expenses and also impeded the progress of the colony for years to come." The "Receiving House," for instance, a roomy log structure, was built at great expense. It had three rooms each on the ground floor and on the second floor, each large enough to house a family of five. Windows were installed but Guenther forgot to make provisions for stoves and for a chimney. During the winter months its occupants could not heat the building and all cooking had to be done outside. Evidently misunderstanding instructions from the Company, Guenther released the first group of colonists to prepare their own farmsteads for the purchase of which most of them had made arrangements in Mainz. Thus the new settlers busied themselves clearing the land and erecting log houses. They soon ran out of funds and provisions. Instead of employing them for the construction of houses on the town site—most of the men were highly trained craftsmen and as such carefully selected by Dr. Strecker—Guenther had them build a fence around 400 acres of timber land at the cost of 1300 dollars from the Company's treasury.<sup>30</sup>

Unfavorable conditions which developed during the fall and winter months greatly discouraged the settlers. A second party composed of Saxon emigrants led by Pastor Friedrich Behr had also arrived meanwhile. Behr instilled some optimism into the isolated band of pioneers during his brief stay there. But he soon hurried back to Saxony to organize further emigration to Wartburg. There is little doubt that most colonists must not have shared the exaggerated enthusiasm of the good pastor who wrote home from Wartburg: "I am here in a paradise of North America, in a region resembling the surroundings of Teplitz or the forests of Thuringia!... A beautiful country. Nowhere in America could be found a better climate, a more excellent opportunity for mining and manufacturing."<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile Guenther tried his best to bring another project of the East Tennessee Colonization Company nearer realization. The *Nashville Whig* had this to say about it in September 1845:

We learn but little of the progress of the enterprise of late, but what we do hear is of a character favorable to its success. We understand recently, that an eligible site has been selected, and a plan for a town to be called Wartburg, projected, and efforts are made for the removal of the county seat to the new town, from Montgomery. In case the change is effected, Mr. Guenther proposes on behalf of the

<sup>29</sup> Cooper, 23.

<sup>30</sup>Häcker, 52-53.

<sup>31</sup> Rosenthal, 53, 71.

Company, to erect without expense to the County, neat and commodious buildings for a Courthouse and Jail.<sup>32</sup>

The Spring of 1846 saw renewed building activity. Urgently needed materials arrived, accompanied, interestingly enough, by a large shipment of German books. Plans now called for the erection of a second large building to be used as a school house while serving also as a temporary center for divine worship.

The propaganda campaign of the Company's agents in Europe showed further results. Again two large contingents of Germans and German-Swiss, the latter from the Grisons and St. Gall, arrived. Besides, many individuals found their way to Wartburg having been persuaded by agents in the ports that the new "Teutonia" in the *Erzgebirge* of Tennessee was the most desirable home for immigrants of means and imagination.

From 1846 on, the treks no longer used the river route from New Orleans. They first landed in New York, where agents Constantin Brause and Gottfried Schulze received them and arranged for their transfer on steamers to Charleston, S. C. There in turn they were met by Friedrich Schneider, proprietor of the Globe Hotel, who provided overnight accommodations under contract with the Company. The following morning the immigrants would board the train to Hamburg, South Carolina, the same evening transfer to the Georgia train and reach Atlanta by the next morning. Again another train ride from Atlanta to Dalton would bring them to the end of the railroad line. By wagon they continued their journey to Chattanooga where delays in their onward trip were frequent because river boats were not always available. Once arrived at the Clinch River, Guenther would meet them and lead them over the last strenuous leg of their journey. This last part was done by wagon, ox cart and on foot. The group which had left Europe on March 26th, 1846 arrived at Wartburg early in July.<sup>33</sup> Those on the second transport which had sailed from Europe on May 9th did not arrive at the site of the colony until September 17th because their ship had been driven off course on the Atlantic. After horrid weeks at sea (which included an outright mutiny) they landed first somewhere along the southern coast of Georgia before reaching Charleston. A physician engaged by the Company for the colony, Dr. Gustav Brandau, was on this eventful voyage.<sup>34</sup> The first shipload of 1846 was accompanied by the Reverend Johann Friedrich Wilken whom Gerding had selected in Germany as the pastor for the colonists.

During the second year of its existence, the colony began to assume certain aspects of civilization. Some streets of the town site appeared. A few roads received improvements. The company-owned "Haag's Tavern" opened its doors to thirsty residents. In Mannheim, Gerding had persuaded a dyer, Carl Haag, to become Wartburg's tavernkeeper. No doubt, the presence of this modest recreational institution helped to enliven the spirits of the settlers. Wilken, on a \$200.00 annual salary from the Company, began worship services and set up a school for the great number of children of the colonists. Dr. Brandau opened his medical practice in Haag's Tavern. The Company paid him \$250.00 annual subsidy for the care of those among the colonists who could either not pay at all or make only token payments.<sup>35</sup>

Among the 1846 arrivals we encounter a number of poor individuals who required financial assist from Company funds until they could be on their own. While the number of settlers steadily increased and the first diffi-

<sup>32</sup> *Nashville Whig*, September 23, 1845.  
<sup>33</sup> Hacker, 26-31.

<sup>34</sup> Cooper 25-27  
<sup>35</sup> Hacker, 53-54.

culties were overcome, the shareholders of the East Tennessee Colonization Company grew restless because no profits seemed to come forth from their considerable investment. The directors considered replacing Guenther who resigned hastily and turned toward an ill-fated venture of exploiting iron-deposits near Kingston.<sup>36</sup>

G. F. Gerding appointed Otto von Kienbusch, Jr. as the new resident agent. Kienbusch had worked with the Rev. Behr in recruiting colonists in Saxony. He brought sounder business concepts into the colony than his predecessor. But his zeal in putting the Company's interests first led to much dissatisfaction. Criticism centered on his tendency "to exaggerate the value of the Company's lands to sell them to newly-arrived immigrants at the highest price," a practice which should have earned him the gratitude of the Company's directors.

During the warmer months of 1847 new settlers arrived continuously. One large organized contingent from Germany was led by young Dr. Eduard Goetz whom Gerding had befriended in Mannheim. Early in 1847 he visited Wartburg briefly to get an impression of the place. After returning to Baden just long enough to arrange his affairs, he cast his lot with the colony.<sup>37</sup>

#### MOUNTING DIFFICULTIES FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Wilken and Goetz both became recognized leaders in the colony. They represented the interests of the settlers while Kienbusch tried to serve the Company well. It came to unpleasant clashes between the agent on one hand and the clergyman and the physician on the other hand. The pastor found himself soon embroiled in another type of controversy. The Company had hired him to serve as a pastor for all colonists which meant to conduct union services acceptable to both Lutherans and Reformed (most of the Swiss were of the latter persuasion). However, Wilken steadfastly refused to preach and to serve communion in any other form than such as prescribed by the "Unaltered Augsburg Confession." A deep split between the Lutherans and the Reformed ensued and lamentable incidents disrupted the much needed concord of the colonists. The climax came one day when the Swiss, armed with pitchforks, stormed the pastor's house. Kienbusch put the blame on Wilken's stubbornness but the latter was endorsed by the vestrymen of his congregation. The Church Council expressed approval of Wilken's actions on August 14, 1847:

Mr. John F. Wilken, pastor of the Lutheran Church at Wartburg, Morgan County, Tennessee, has given splendid proof of a truly Christian character during his ministry here. In word and deed he has served the congregation as a model most worthy of emulation. In addition to his regular divine services, he has provided instruction in the school with diligence, persistence, and most admirable patience. For this we owe him special gratitude.

This testimonial (and probably other, more pressing problems) prevented the dismissal of Wilken by the Company. Although he did not compromise his convictions, he was able to deal with the dissenting elements in a tactful and patient manner until a certain harmony was established. The stricter adherents to Calvin's tenets left the church and conducted their own religious meetings in the home of Johann Kreis, who, ironically enough, had built the frame structure in which the Lutherans worshipped.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>37</sup> Eduard Goetz (1818-1876) was a native of Baden. Cf. Cooper, 60.

<sup>38</sup> The history of the Lutheran congregation at Wartburg was first compiled from the few extant,

Further unrest was caused by the presence of a good number of newcomers who had not been selected by the Company in Europe but simply had drifted in from various parts of the States after the new colony received much publicity in the German American press. Many among them were professionals with no practical abilities applicable to a two-year old pioneer settlement.<sup>39</sup>

Still another detrimental factor was an intensive "anti-Wartburg" campaign emanating from certain members of the German Society of New York with vested interests in Midwestern colonization schemes. Their agitation against Wartburg and the East Tennessee Colonization Company cost the colony a great number of prospective settlers.

Contrary to its established principle of non-involvement in speculative immigration ventures, the Board of Directors of the German Society of New York endorsed a publication recommending to immigrants the state of Michigan where certain members had financial interests. Several other members, among them Gerding, Melly and Kunckelmann, protested vehemently against this endorsement, the more so since the Board of Directors had previously refused outright to endorse similar literature on the Tennessee project. A bitter feud was carried on for many years. Within the Society heated debates took place filling many columns of the German American press. It was customary to shower immigrants arriving in New York harbor with promotional literature aimed at influencing their decisions as to their final destination in the new country. For several months, if not a whole year, they were also given a pamphlet by a man posing as an agent of the German Society which caused many of them to stay away from Wartburg—if we may believe J. G. Hacker who arrived in New York in November 1848. This libelous broadside (actually the reprint of an article which appeared in the *Wochenblatt* of the New York *Deutsche Schnellpost* of March 1848) described Morgan County as "the penitentiary of Tennessee," elaborating further: "Its population is made up of fugitive criminals whom the local authorities decline to apprehend and of fugitive slaves. One should pass through this part of Tennessee only armed to the teeth." At the same time the German Society of New York in its annual report for 1848 expressly repudiated a promotional publication on Wartburg written by C. G. Schultze. Schultze was accused of having described himself as a member of that Society without being actually carried on its roll.<sup>40</sup>

G. F. Gerding whose appointment as consul in Mannheim had expired in 1847 returned to New York to find his Wartburg project beset by many difficulties. News from Saxony was most discouraging, too. A group of 760 persons in Annaberg ready to leave for Wartburg, were forced to abandon their emigration when their home town failed to advance them funds previously pledged for their transportation. Saxon authorities, alarmed by reports of an impending mass exodus, restrained municipalities from lending financial aid to emigrants. A "Plan Concerning the Wartburg Colony" which the Emigration Society of Dresden submitted to the Royal government in 1848, was flatly rejected.<sup>41</sup>

primary sources and from personal interviews with old Wartburg and Knoxville residents by the Rev. Oscar Feucht in 1922. His findings were later incorporated in a pamphlet edited by Richard B. Faerber, *Centennial of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1847-1947* (Wartburg, 1947). Cf. also Cooper, 65-71, and *Morgan County News*, April 7, 1944. The oldest church record still available is the *Kirchenbuch*,<sup>39</sup> which dates back to 1878.

<sup>39</sup>Rattermann, 12.

<sup>40</sup>Anton Eickhoff, *Die Deutsche Gesellschaft der Stadt New York* (New York, 1884), 5, 96, 123; *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Gesellschaft der Stadt New York für 1848* (New York, 1849), 3; Häcker,

<sup>41</sup>Rosenthal, 73.

From Wartburg Kienbusch reported that " agriculture is still in a sad state,"<sup>42</sup> and Gerding stated with bitterness: "At this very time, the Legislature refused us a charter because it wanted no part of Catholics and beggars. These Know-Nothings! Of course, the partners then withdrew. The Belgian government turned toward South America and bought the possession of Santo Tomas de Guatemala. Tennessee thus lost the most promising enterprise backed up by money, energy and ability because they sent jack asses into the legislature (*comme toujours*) and I was given an elephant to ride which I could hardly tame and which was to absorb all my means and all my strength." <sup>43</sup>

At that time Gerding decided to abandon his business interests in New York. Early in 1849 he moved to Wartburg with his family. " In order not to remain stuck in the mud, I moved to Wartburg where I did all I could to keep things together," he writes. Once Gerding assumed all responsibility for the colony and the lands of the Company, a resident agent was no longer required. Gerding's presence on the spot helped inspire the settlers with more confidence in their future and contributed to restoring a certain unity among them. The vigor of his personality made itself felt in a variety of projects within the colony. Soon the people of the county bestowed upon him the epithet *Little Dutch King*—indicating that his decisions did not lack a certain degree of high-handedness. The colony surely needed strong leadership. Additional burdens fell on Gerding's shoulders some time later when Theodore deCock, the Belgian president of the East Tennessee Colonisation Company, decided to dissolve the Company " owing to much dissatisfaction in the administration of the affairs of the Company." This action involved Gerding in lengthy litigation with other members of the now defunct firm.<sup>44</sup>

While new settlers still continued to arrive in the years between 1848 and 1885, there were no longer any large, organized groups coming to Wartburg. The additions in numbers were more than offset by the constantly increasing departures from Wartburg. Among the Swiss, dissatisfaction was particularly widespread. Many among them had purchased their farm land under the high sounding name of " estate " (*Landgut*) only to discover upon their arrival that they had become owners of a parcel of virtual wilderness. Crop failures due to unfamiliarity with soil and climate and an ensuing lack of cash funds prompted many a Swiss and German immigrant to seek employment in Nashville or in the less distant towns of Knoxville, Kingston, Rockwood and Crossville.<sup>45</sup> The news of the California Gold Rush also echoed in the mountain colony and a number of young men in Wartburg promptly joined the westward treks.<sup>46</sup>

When Gerding arrived from New York, the entire colony consisted of 475 souls not counting some native born inhabitants. His main concern was to keep these people together. To achieve a certain stability for the colony, he

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>43</sup> Rattermann, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Letter of Anton Melly to Thomas Nelson.

<sup>45</sup> " The settlement does not prosper and it will most likely be abandoned as a colony. The land is too poor, the roads are too bad and the journey required to reach it is too costly and too troublesome in relation to what one finds there . . ." wrote the traveler, Johann C. Büttner, in his *Hand- und Reisebuch für Auswanderer* (Hamburg, 1853), 297.

<sup>46</sup> An old story reminiscent of those days is still being told occasionally: During the Gold Rush of 1849, a Wartburger left for California where he made a rich strike. He returned to Morgan County bringing his fortune in gold nuggets. After a short stay, he decided to go back to California. Fearing that he might be robbed, he buried the gold somewhere on the bluffs of Big Clear Creek. Upon his arrival in the West, the miner became ill and sent word of the cache to a relative in Wartburg who failed to find the hidden gold. The miner died in California, and as far as anyone knows his treasure has never been found. Many believe that it is still buried in the vicinity. Cf. *Tennessee A Guide to The State*, WPA-Project (New York, 1949), 361-362.

decided to proceed first of all with the development of the town itself in order to give the settlement a true center.

#### A STRUGGLING NEW TOWN: WARTBURG

We are indebted to Johann Gottlieb Häcker for a detailed description of Wartburg as it looked at the time of Gerding's arrival: "The first view of the town considerably dampens the expectations which had been heightened by the rather well developed area through which we traveled. To your right, you see a large, vacant space. On the left side of the street stands a pleasant-looking house which contains Mr. Gerding's store. It is presently inhabited by Mr. Friedrich Gerding, Jr. and a clerk. Then follows a similar building serving as church and school house. It also contains an office but otherwise it is uninhabited. Next comes a larger structure, a German tavern which belonged to the Company until the beginning of this year but has since been bought by the former tenant whose family consists of five other persons. The Company physician, Dr. Brandau, also lives there. At some distance, there is a little old log cabin which serves as a home for widow Bauerkeller. Right beside it you find a nice frame house belonging to Pastor Wilken who lives there as well as Dr. Cramer with his wife and four children. On the opposite side of the street stands a very old log cabin which is to be razed. Presently, however, it still serves old Mr. von Kienbusch as a home. Behind it, at the corner of the future market square, is a handsome frame house built by an American, Mr. White. He lives there with his wife, his seven children and a slave. A short walk behind the church near the woods and on the road to the mills, there is the log building of the Company for the temporary lodging of new arrivals which is presently occupied by about 25 persons of five families."<sup>47</sup> Six houses and two old log cabins—that was all Hacker could find of the "Town of Wartburg" in the Winter 1848/49, of the same town which had been written up and presented as a real German center, the new *Teutonia* in the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee, in numerous newspaper articles, advertisements and pamphlets.

The original plat of the town as designed by Guenther prior to the arrival of the first immigrants in 1845, showed six streets running north and south. They were numbered I to VI consecutively. Crossing them in an east-west direction and forming town squares of 240 feet each, were five other streets. One of them, the main street, was designated as Antwerp Street. Three others bore frames of German cities, i. e. Frankfurt, Mainz and Cologne. The squares formed by these streets were each divided into six city lots of 80 by 120 feet. Each lot was offered for sale at the price of 25 to 30 dollars. One exception to this pattern, however, was the area bounded by Antwerp, Cologne, II and III Streets which was set aside as the public square where the hopeful planners expected the Morgan County courthouse to be erected. Cologne and Antwerp streets were to be lined by trees planted at forty feet intervals. All streets were sixty feet wide while their length was left more or less indefinite in the plan. During his service as agent of the Company, Guenther had already planted the trees along the two streets but most of the other space designated on the plat as streets was not cleared for use for many years and remained covered with its original growth of bushes and trees.<sup>48</sup>

As the two successive resident agents, Guenther and von Kienbusch, had

<sup>47</sup>Hacker, 49.

<sup>48</sup>Cooper, 24-25. The town remains today essentially as it was conceived at that time.

concentrated on selling farm land instead of town sites, only seventeen of the 475 members of the colony resided in Wartburg when Gerding took over. The price for the town lots was very high compared to the selling price of farm land which could be had for anywhere from fifty cents to four dollars per acre. "Under these circumstances," Häcker writes, "a professional man would hardly venture into building a house. The farmers of the vicinity cannot afford to and do not want to build a house in town for their mere pleasure so long as they will not have much extra money to spend. At my departure, I was assured that this year (1849) several new houses would be erected. Their construction had not yet begun because the saw mills had hitherto been unable to furnish any lumber."<sup>49</sup>

Although Gerding was certainly as much interested in building up the town as he was in disposing profitably of the farm land, he urged von Kienbusch and White to obtain a charter for the town of Wartburg as soon as possible. He effected a change of the street names, eliminating all European traces, probably to appease native criticism. His new plat gave the following names from West to East: Rose (the Gerding residence in New York had been on Rose Street), Church, Maidenlane (the firm of Gerding & Simon was located on Maidenlane in Manhattan), Kingston, Cumberland and Mill streets. From North to South the new names became Eliza (named for his wife, Eliza Lowe Gerding), Court, Main, Spring and Green Streets. The incorporation of Wartburg occurred in 1857.<sup>50</sup> John White became the Chairman of the Commission. The other Town Commissioners were Charles F. Kraemer, Carl Haag, Thomas Jones and William Jones. Only Kraemer and Haag were not native-born Americans.

The building of the town made but slow progress. Most craftsmen who were supposed to have opened shop in town, preferred to live on the cheaper lands of the vicinity. Despite the lack of a real, central community, the ensemble of settlers began to function as an economic entity. It was, however, a far cry from what the promoters had intended to create, namely a complete economic unit, self-sufficient in every respect.

#### ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE WARTBURG SETTLEMENT

Gerding and his partners had high-flung but rather vague concepts of the economic development of the colony. The first step was to establish a sound agriculture, flour and saw mills and small crafts. Livestock raising was one of the main features in the original planning but due to difficult access to markets and partly inexperienced operators, neither sheep nor beef cattle raising were ever carried out on a large scale. Even poultry keeping was limited to the needs of local consumption with the exception of a few flocks of geese which found their way into Knoxville every year. Milk production likewise was entirely for use in the colony area. There were times when meat was difficult to obtain in Wartburg and the nearest butcher lived in Knoxville.<sup>51</sup>

During the first two years, many crops were failures. Seed brought over from Saxony and Switzerland did not lend itself to the soil of the new country. Potato, green beans, cabbage, rye and barley crops failed. Kienbusch observed in his report of 1848 that successful farming could be practiced only by "capable people smart enough to test everything and to retain but the best, people neither bent on introducing all at once a Saxon

<sup>49</sup> Häcker, 50.

<sup>50</sup> Western A. Goodspeed et alia, *History of Tennessee* (Nashville, 1886), 841.

<sup>51</sup> The 1850 Census lists one "Gottfried Junker, Butcher" in Morgan County. In 1854, however, the Rev. Johann Etter wrote "It was difficult to obtain meat since the nearest butcher was located at Knoxville." (quoted by Cooper 75)

agricultural system nor following the American jog-trot."<sup>52</sup> Wheat and garden vegetables were profitably grown from the first year on. The more enterprising among the farmers soon added native corn to their crops. A Swiss recalled the shortage of meat but added " we had plenty of good, wholesome food—corn bread and potatoes as well as vegetables and milk."<sup>53</sup> Several large orchards were planted and in due time began to produce. Not only their fruit but also various fruit brandies found a ready market among the colonists. A special feature—common to many German settlements at that time—was the moderately successful attempt to grow grapes on the hillsides. The colony's vineyards attracted quite some attention because wine growing was a practice hitherto unknown in that part of Tennessee. In March 1854 the *Kingston Gazetteer* reported:

Recent experiments have been made which well attest to the fact that grape grows finely and matures well in that region. Several enterprising Germans have planted thriving little vineyards; and during the past year they have had the pleasure of manufacturing one or two hundred gallons of wine which compare well with those manufactured in Europe.<sup>54</sup>

Several months later the same paper again spoke of the Wartburg vineries:

On the east and south are nice farming districts which are kept in a fine state of cultivation. Many fine species of grape are successfully grown, from which a splendid article of wine is manufactured, not such as is usually offered for sale, but such as we read of.<sup>55</sup>

In his *Tennessee Handbook* of 1868, Hermann Bokum calls Wartburg "a settlement of German vinedressers" and states: "The census for 1860 gives 242 gallons as the product of the vineyards at Wartburg, and, I think, needs correction in this."<sup>56</sup> A young Bavarian brewer, Franz Xavier Heybranck settled in the colony but nothing is known of any brewery in the area.<sup>57</sup>

Some settlers tried tobacco as a cash crop. In 1849 Otto von Kienbusch and Gustav Brandau opened a tobacco factory in the town of Montgomery one mile west of Wartburg. Eventually they marketed some of their smoking tobacco and cigars in Knoxville, Nashville and even as far away as Cincinnati.

Two miles southwest of Wartburg, on Crooked Fork Creek, G. F. Gerding had several mills built. A corn grist mill, another one complete with bolter for wheat flour and an oil mill were operated for Gerding by an experienced Swiss millwright, Jakob Kreis.

Johann Kreis and Christian Kreis, like Jakob hailing from Glarus, Switzerland, operated the first saw mill of the colony as early as 1846. A new, large saw mill was opened two years later. Johann Kreis had arrived well-equipped for this task. He brought innumerable tools with him from Europe. In subsequent years he became the leading contractor and builder of Wartburg and the surrounding counties.

The abundance of lumber led to the establishment of another industry which, however, never achieved any importance beyond filling the immediate needs of the settlers: furniture making. The New York cabinet

<sup>52</sup> Rosenthal, 72.

<sup>53</sup> Cooper, 75.

<sup>54</sup> *Kingston Gazetteer*, March 30, 1854.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, November 4, 1854.

<sup>56</sup> Hermann Bokum, *The Tennessee Handbook and Immigrant's Guide* (Philadelphia, 1868), 37-38.

<sup>57</sup> Much information on the occupations and professions represented in the Wartburg colony was gathered from the original records of the Seventh Census of the United States for 1850 in the National Archives. The Census of Morgan County (pp. 553-633) was taken between August 12 and November 28, 1850.

manufacturer, Johann A. Aurin came to Wartburg with his sons and set up a shop in which a number of other craftsmen were employed.

The strangest enterprise in the colony was no doubt the "Wartburg Piano Company." Gerding's oldest son had learned the fundamentals of piano making in New York. At the age of eighteen his father let him set up a piano factory in Wartburg with the assistance of Fritz Beneike, an experienced piano builder from New York. The firm also employed a journeyman, Heinrich Waltersdorf, who had worked in this trade in New York for five years before coming to Wartburg in 1850. Supplies were purchased from Bancroft-Beaver & Co. in Philadelphia through G. L. Gillespie & Co. in Kingston who conducted much of the outside business of the colony. Several pianos were actually produced in Wartburg. Beneike's account book which has been preserved, reports at one instance: "finished a fine instrument of seven octaves made of mahogany." <sup>58</sup> According to the elder Gerding, the factory's business "was quite profitable."

Several stores provided supplies of all types for the settlers. G. F. Gerding kept the largest general store in Wartburg where also German books and newspapers were to be had. Ludwig Gohren was the local grocer. Brandau and Kienbusch opened a store to supplement the meagre earnings they derived from their tobacco factory. Charles and Henry Mozer were dealing in all kinds of merchandise. Constantin Brause, former agent of the Company in New York, established a general store in Montgomery where he competed with five other stores operated by native residents.

Many of the skilled craftsmen—especially among the Swiss—owned and operated farms but they provided various services to the settlers as a sideline. A breakdown of the adult, male immigration population of Morgan County from the Census of 1850 provides the following picture: 59 farmers, 15 laborers, 7 carpenters, 4 shoemakers, 3 cabinet makers, 3 merchants, 3 physicians, 3 pianomakers, 2 cigar makers and one each of the following occupations: tavernkeeper, brewer, clergyman, painter, cooper, blacksmith, butcher, stonemason, grocer, trader and clerk.

With the exception of the three piano makers, this array of trades and professions seems realistic enough for a young colony in a rural setting. But from other records it can be derived that the settlement was a gathering point for a heavy number of people with academic and professional background. Among those listed as "farmers" are quite a few who had not come to the colony with the intention of clearing the forest and tilling the soil.

Some intellectuals came merely out of curiosity and soon afterwards drifted on. Others hoped to find a congenial, little German community in the mountains far from the hectic life of the emerging industrial centers. A third type was expecting to make fast money through speculations in land transactions and mineral deposits.

The number of physicians whose presence in the colony has been recorded, is particularly striking. Besides the two Company physicians, Drs. Brandau and Goetz, a third medical doctor, F. A. Sienknecht, a native of Holstein, established a practice in the colony. He came in 1848, and bought a small tract east of Wartburg. In 1855 he moved into town where he opened a much needed drug store. Dr. Sienknecht grew his own herbs and prepared many of his own medicines. He soon became the most successful physician of the area. When Dr. Brandau began to devote all his attention to various business enterprises and to livestock raising and Dr.

<sup>58</sup> Cooper, 49. H. S. Cooper had access to Fritz Beneike's Account Book. Gerding's version of the enterprise is recorded in Rattermann, *op. cit.*, 19. Beneike was a native of Braunschweig.

Goetz moved away to Kingston in 1854, Sienknecht remained the only physician constantly at the service of the colonists until the Civil War.<sup>59</sup>

A Viennese-born physician, Dr. Rudolf Knaffl, who had had a well-established practice in New York, decided to take up an offer of agents to buy land in Morgan County on account of his failing health. Although he lived there in semi-retirement, he practiced to some extent among the settlers.

Dr. Charles F. Kramer, English-born but of German descent, lived in Wartburg for many years. Nothing is known of his professional activities. His active interest in the colony, however, is attested by the fact that he was a member of the first Board of Commissioners of the Town of Wartburg.

Dr. Augustin Gattinger, fresh from medical school in Munich, where he had engaged in revolutionary activities arrived with his wife and his brother-in-law, George Dury, in East Tennessee in 1849. While Dury settled near Wartburg, Gattinger left the colony after but a brief stay there and located near Kingston.<sup>60</sup>

In 1847 another physician, Dr. Johannes Majorsky, played a guest role at the colony. From 1847 until 1849 Dr. Christian Rauschenberg of Leipzig lived in the vicinity of Wartburg as "a physician and explorer." Häcker writes of him: "Christian Rauschenberg who has been in this area for the past 1 1/2 years as a physician and naturalist, in cooperation with his brother-in-law, Alexander Gerhardt, formerly *Conservator* at the Zoological Museum of Leipzig, furnished me with their notes on climate, flora and fauna."<sup>61</sup>

Also from Saxony came the architect, Carl Rothe, who lent a hand at the construction of the modest houses in the colony for a while before trying his luck in Knoxville. The reports of a local piano factory had attracted a "professor of music," Gustav R. Knabe, who purchased land in the colony in 1847 from an agent in New Orleans. He could not find any pupils in the mountain wilderness and being unwilling to till the soil, Knabe soon left the settlement only to begin a brilliant life-time career as a music teacher at Tennessee colleges.

The settlement did not lack its share of nobility either. The most prominent representative of aristocracy was Baron F. von Forstner from Stuttgart. The Baron had arrived in New York in 1847 with his young, second wife, two sons and three daughters. He was on his way to Texas in search of a place with a benign climate where he could improve his impaired health and at the same time pursue some leisurely farming. The collapse of the Texas venture sponsored by the *Mainzer Adelsverein*, a society of nobelmen bent on founding a New Germany in Texas, and personal contact with Gerding persuaded von Forstner to "take up an estate in Morgan County, Tennessee." The Baron purchased 1500 acres of land (one hundred acres of which were already cleared) and had a large home built on it, "no doubt the most beautiful one in all of Morgan County." The good baron was quite dismayed by the remoteness of his new home from civilization but having invested most of his financial resources, he stayed in Wartburg until his death at the age of sixty in 1860.

<sup>59</sup>Cooper, 62.

<sup>60</sup>R. A. Halley, "Dr. Augustin Gattinger," in *Tennessee Old and New, 1796-1946*, (Nashville, 1946), II, 817-889. Gattinger (1825-1908) lived in several East Tennessee towns until the Civil War when he joined the U. S. Army as an assistant surgeon. After the war he held several public positions. He became well known for his books on botany and mineralogy. His collections of botanical material are now at the University of Tennessee while his botanical library is being preserved at Peabody College. His brother-in-law, George Dury, whom Häcker met at Wartburg, became a successful portrait painter. His portrait of Mrs. James K. Polk still hangs in the East Room of the White House in Washington. Cf. also Häcker, *op. cit.*, 51.

<sup>61</sup>Häcker, 38.

He had little contact with the other immigrants except for taking an active hand in organizing the Lutheran congregation there.<sup>62</sup>

#### FAILURES OF OTHER COLONIZATION SCHEMES

The settlement as it presented itself some five years after its initiation resembled very little the "New Germany" of the original project. It was at best a struggling backwoods community endowed with a lot of human ballast. Relentless hard work and endurance on the part of the hardier among the settlers led slowly to a moderate success and as we shall see later, the ill-begotten utopia was turned into a small, useful community.

The Wartburg project fared better than other similar endeavors in its vicinity. In November 1847, Gottfried E. Schulze of Leipzig and A. Scholz of Hessen-Nassau purchased 10,000 acres of land from G. F. Gerding on the Obed's River and Crab Orchard Creek. They had already acquired considerable acreage on the Kingston road from other owners. A New York newspaper reported on their plans in July 1847: "They have also acquired land here for a company and started to prepare the exploitation of considerable iron deposits. A map of the adjacent mountain region which they have drawn up themselves, show much diligence and accuracy in typographical respect. It is full of interesting annotations." No record could be found of even the slightest success of this venture. Moreover, much of their land was bought by one Jean-Baptiste Letorey in 1853.<sup>63</sup>

A more imposing scheme was that conceived of by Johann Gottlieb Häcker of Chemnitz whose brother, Friedrich E. Häcker was one of the early Wartburg settlers. J. B. Häcker was the mentor of a local Emigration Society in his native Saxony. In September 1848 he left for Tennessee in order to investigate the area, locate sites for large settlements and purchase suitable acreage. By early December 1848 he arrived at Wartburg and remained there until April 1849. During these four months he compiled a comprehensive account of Morgan County with special emphasis on agricultural possibilities, transportation, prices of commodities, material and labor which seems quite accurate despite the author's great enthusiasm for the place. In his book on Morgan County, Häcker included detailed information on climate, flora and fauna of the County gathered by the botanist Christian Rauschenberg and the zoologist Alexander Gerhardt.

He left Wartburg with a blueprint in his mind for two villages and a large, supporting agricultural colony. The town of "Neu-Chemnitz" was to be laid out along the right bank of the Big Emory River, twelve miles from Kingston and seven miles from Wartburg. Häcker contracted with Gerding for the option on thirteen tracts of land comprising, in all, 50,000 acres west of the Big Emory River. The purchase price was fixed at 35,000 dollars.<sup>64</sup>

A second town to be named "Marienberg" was to be located along the Nashville-Knoxville road some seven miles beyond Wartburg and eleven miles distant from the projected site of Neu-Chemnitz. For this purpose, Baron Forstner reserved Häcker the option on seven hundred acres of flat land. Häcker lost no time after his return to Saxony. His *Bericht aus und über Amerika* almost entirely devoted to descriptions of Wartburg and

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 51. For the *Mainzer Adelsverein* see F. August Strubberg, *Friedrichsburg, die Colonie des Deutschen Fürstenvereins in Texas* (Leipzig, 1867).

<sup>63</sup> Morgan County Deed Book B, 110. The article appeared in the *New Yorker Deutsche Schnellpost*. It was reprinted in *Der Deutsche Pioneer*, x (1878), 12-13.

<sup>64</sup> Morgan County Deed Book G, 388. Büttner, *op. cit.*, 297, refers to this project laconically: "Also the colony which Mr. J. G. Häcker in Chemnitz was planning to found in the same colony under the name of "New Chemnitz" was doomed from its very beginning."

Morgan County was published soon after his return home. But despite intensive agitation for his projects, he failed to recruit enough people willing to emigrate to Tennessee. By 1853 he definitely buried his plans and his contract with Gerding was cancelled. Thus another scheme, which, had it been successful, would have immensely strengthened the precarious German and Swiss colony in Morgan County, came to naught. Häcker had prepared it soundly—probably more soundly than the East Tennessee Colonization Company had devised its own planning. Furthermore he had staked his personal fortune in this venture but the South once again proved unattractive to the German immigrant who saw much greater opportunities in the westward push into the Great Plains.

#### CONSOLIDATION OF LIFE IN THE COLONY

Life for the sturdy and for the weak who remained in the Wartburg colony after the discouragements of the first few years, began to consolidate and optimism replaced the earlier gloom. "We progressed rapidly. Every craft was well represented and slowly rising standards dispelled petty bickering," Gerding recalled about the decade just prior to the Civil War.<sup>65</sup>

The church quarrel between the Lutherans and the Reformed also was permanently settled. The Lutherans adopted a new constitution on November 26, 1851 which set forth that "the services shall be held in the German language according to the rules of the Evangelical Church, and in accord with the Unaltered Augsburg Confession."<sup>66</sup> By Summer 1854 the congregation had raised enough funds to contract with Johann Kreis for a new church. The solidly constructed building was completed in the course of the following year. It was to serve the congregation well for seventy-seven years. A part of the building fund had been contributed by Lutherans in New York City.<sup>67</sup>

The Swiss Reformed population was likewise able to establish a formal congregation after having met for several years in the home of Jacob Kreis. It owed its organization to a chance visit of a Swiss minister in Tennessee in 1850. The Rev. Johann Etter, accompanied his friend, the Rev. Samuel Weishaupt to Fair Gardens, Tenn., where two sons of the latter lived. There Etter heard of the plight of the fifty Swiss families in Wartburg. He went to see them and was quickly accepted by them as their minister. Etter began to collect funds for a church but his parishioners were too poor to contribute much. In the Winter of 1854/55 he set out on a fund raising trip to the North and eventually to Switzerland. More than a year later, in the Spring of 1856, Etter returned to Wartburg with sufficient funds for building a church which was immediately constructed. Once the edifice was completed and the financial affairs of the congregation put in order, the minister left again late in 1857 for several months of English study at the Reformed Seminary at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. He was never to return to Wartburg. A call to a midwestern congregation was more enticing to him than the prospect of going back to the isolated mountain village.<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, his pastoral activities at Wartburg had firmly established

<sup>65</sup> Rattermann, 19.

<sup>66</sup> *Kirchen-Ordnung der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutheranischen Kirche in Wartburg, Morgan County Tennessee* (1853), 12-13.

<sup>67</sup> Faerber, *op. cit.*, 6. Pastor Wilken also preached in other communities. He was called "the missionary of East Tennessee" because he served groups at Kingston and Paint Rock, and held occasional services at Mill Creek, Emory District, Montgomery, Knoxville and other communities where scattered Germans lived.

<sup>68</sup> Cooper, 74-75.

the Reformed church there which was being held together by Jakob Kreis until the Civil War. In 1860 it was granted a charter as "German Reformed Church of the Zwingli persuasion," specifying that this church "shall have the same privileges and be governed by the same rules and regulations as the German Lutheran Church."<sup>69</sup>

The establishment of a school for the colony had been one of the first preoccupations of the East Tennessee Colonization Company. Teaching school was expressly included in the duties assigned to Pastor Wilken who opened classes soon after his arrival in 1846 in the large hall which served then also as a church. Wilken, sometimes assisted by the Rev. Etter, taught regular elementary courses in German. This German school at Wartburg was for a period of time the only school in Morgan County. Other schools were either not available or had such meagre curricula and reduced school year (three months of school a year were not uncommon) that the Wartburg school remained the most important educational institution available to the colonists' children until the Civil War. Thus the first American-born generations grew up with the German language and remained largely aloof from the other, English-speaking youth of the county.

This isolation, moreover, was not limited to the young people alone. The entire German-speaking community remained apart from its old Tennessee neighbors for a long time. The social and educational level of many Wartburg settlers was quite different from that of the modest mountain folk who sparsely populated the area. There was little business activity within the county which would otherwise have brought about a closer contact between the newcomers and the natives. The settlers transacted all their local business in the German language. Direct commercial relations seem to have existed with German American firms in New Orleans, Cincinnati, Philadelphia and New York City although many transactions were carried out through merchants in Knoxville and Kingston.

The two churches and the tavern were the social centers for the scattered settlers. Hacker observed in 1849 "A considerable number of colonists consists of cultured people who have already developed a rather pleasant social life. Some families have joined together in a *Sonntagsnachmittags-Kränzchen* or Club, and plans for setting up a *Casino* with its own social hall are being considered. Last New Year's Day I saw the less cultured colonists in a very merry mood in the tavern where they danced to the tune of a clarinet."<sup>70</sup> The *Casino* was never built. The German custom of afternoon *Kaffeetrinken* stayed alive for a long time. Christmas was, of course, celebrated in the old country fashion. Weddings were always preceded by a *Polterabend*. Just like Indian corn had invaded the dinner tables of the settlers, whiskey was the first American intruder into the social life of Wartburg. But it underwent some changes before being consumed. It served as the base for a hot drink which was never absent from any festivity. For generations this "Dutch Punch" remained a favorite on the Big Emory River. Home-grown grape and fruit wines were also plentiful.

The men of the colony often organized shooting matches. Harvest parties, Swiss and Saxon style, were a popular diversion. Some American frontier pastimes also made their entry such as quiltings and log rolling.

By and large, however, assimilation was very slow and few signs of it were discernible before the Civil War. The number of native Americans

<sup>69</sup> Incorporation of the German Reformed Church, February 28, 1860. *Acts of Tennessee 1859/60* 318.

<sup>70</sup> Häcker, 54.

within the colony area was very small. Political interest and ambitions were almost non-existent among the immigrants. Only Gerding, Goetz, Wilken and Brause showed some concern in county affairs, mainly to promote Gerding's project of removing the county seat from Montgomery to Wartburg. The first unsuccessful attempt had already been made by the East Tennessee Colonization Company in 1845.<sup>71</sup> In 1850 Constantin Brause became a trustee of Morgan County. The Rev. Wilken accepted a position as a teacher in the small school of Montgomery. Despite constant prodding, Montgomery remained the county seat. A last try was made in 1860 when a bill was formally introduced in the Tennessee legislature for removal of the courthouse to Wartburg but it was rejected by a majority.<sup>72</sup>

Unlike many other small German settlements of that time, Wartburg did not have a print shop of its own. German-language papers from New York and Cincinnati were subscribed to, particularly the then popular *Schnellpost* of New York. There was an ephemeral German weekly published in 1857 in Nashville but it lasted only a few weeks. Memphis had its *Anzeiger des Südens* from 1858 on which it tried to reach readers all over the state and in other isolated settlements of the South.

It is doubtful whether a great number of the settlers maintained much contact with the outside world. Most of them were preoccupied with their own, precarious existence. The great distances separating them from their countrymen in other sections of the country precluded interchange and frequent visits. In this atmosphere of isolation from both the American environment and from other German American communities, the Wartburg colony lived along quietly and inconspicuously until the outbreak of the Civil War.

#### WARTBURG BECOMES AN AMERICAN TOWN

The economic and political issues leading to the secession of the South seemed of little direct concern to this German community in East Tennessee. Most of the farmers and artisans had no knowledge of the issues involved. If they had read their German newspapers from the North, they were more likely to share the pro-Union attitude which so many of their countrymen in the North and in the border states supported. Since they did not own any slaves, the Negro question was of no avail to them. The intellectual leaders of the colony, however, passionately took sides in the ensuing conflict. The others soon found themselves caught in an area where both the Union and the Confederate cause had supporters and where feelings ran high. The Union influence among the native Americans of the Cumberland region was extensive. As the fortunes of war went up and down and the armies of both factions brought disruption and disorder into the area, the settlers began to take sides themselves. The two religious congregations split into warring factions with Pastor Wilken strongly supporting the Union cause. Drs. Eduard Goetz and Gustav Brandau joined the Union armies as medical officers. Dr. F. A. Sienknecht likewise emphatically stood for the Union while two of his sons volunteered for the Confederate Army. Early in the war, many Union-sympathizers had to flee. O. G. von Kienbusch sought refuge in the North. Pastor Wilken also left temporarily but returned as soon as the area was firmly in Union hands. Then the turn to flee came for the supporters of the Confederacy. Their most outspoken leader was Georg F. Gerding. Carl Aurin, Rudolf Braun and Rudolf Freytag also rallied around the Southern banner. While most

<sup>71</sup>Nashville Whig, September 23, 1845. Cf. also *Acts of Tennessee*, 1845, 223, 225.

<sup>72</sup>*Acts of Tennessee*, 1860, 534.

of the pro-Confederates remained in hiding nearby, Gerding fled to Louisville, Kentucky, where he waited out the remainder of the war. Later he described this trying period: "Then the war came and it destroyed almost everything. The Southern sympathizers were chased away—I was among them. The better ones among the Unionists, notably Kienbusch and Wilken, went north—thus Wartburg lay waste!"<sup>73</sup>

The colonists who remained on their lands, led an austere life during these years of trial. Deprived of an effective leadership, at times without a minister and teacher and through most years of the war without even a physician, their homes and barns were an easy prey for marauding bands of soldiers who looked with suspicion upon this settlement of foreigners. When the war finally ended, Wartburg was only the shadow of its earlier appearance. Some of the refugees returned in order to survey the devastations and try to recover whatever was left of their possessions. Pastor Wilken tried to rally his congregation but distress within and without caused him to resign in August 1866.<sup>74</sup> There was another exodus from the settlement which is partly revealed in the records of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Knoxville. When this congregation was organized in October, 1869, ten of the twenty-two charter members were former Wartburgers.

G. F. Gerding, by now thoroughly disillusioned and filled with great bitterness over his past experiences, turned his back on Wartburg. Whatever land he owned in the town and its vicinity, he sold in New York in 1865 with the exception of some acreage which he retained until 1879 when he sold it to the Board of Aid to Land Ownership for the English colony at Rugby, Morgan County.<sup>75</sup> Gerding withdrew completely from public life and spent his remaining years on a farm owned by him near Oliver Springs, Anderson County, Tenn.<sup>76</sup>

The 1870 Census lists only 57 German-born and 41 Swiss-born inhabitants for all of Morgan County. Most of these remaining immigrants lived in or near Wartburg, Mehlhorn and Lansing. They were soon outnumbered by the influx of other people, particularly in Wartburg which finally became the county seat in 1870. The distinctly German settlement had ceased to exist. The final integration of the immigrants and the first American-born generation could proceed. The Lutheran Church remained the last vestige of German language and traditions.

The Wartburg Germans began to take their place within the East Tennessee population at large. German and Swiss family names began to appear on the rosters of public life. Charles H. Delius was the first Wartburger to become prominent in public affairs. He was a magistrate, county judge, chairman of the court, county superintendent of schools, and United States Commissioner in quick succession. The Kreis family rose to prominence. Johann Kreis was entrusted with many public building projects, among them the handsome courthouse in Wartburg. Harmon Kreis, son of the 1847 settler Jakob Kreis, made a sizable fortune in the marble business. As a leader in civic and business affairs he was elected Sheriff of Knox County and a member of the Tennessee legislature.

In the 1880s the construction of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad provided an unexpected source of income for many Wartburg craftsmen

<sup>73</sup> Rattermann, 19.

<sup>74</sup> Faerber, 7. Wilken accepted a professorship at Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, where he served until his death twenty years later.

<sup>75</sup> The English immigrants' colony at Rugby and its fate were recently well described by Wilma Dykeman in the *New York Times* of March 25, 1962.

<sup>76</sup> Gerding died in 1884. Cooper, AB 8-9.

and farmers' sons. The master stonemason, Franz Schubert, who built bridges and tunnels under contract for the CSRR employed many fellow-Wartburgers.<sup>77</sup>

Slowly the wounds of the war began to heal. Gerding wrote to Rattermann, editor of the *Deutsche Pionier* in Cincinnati in 1878: "Wartburg has now recovered considerably from the war. It has now three churches, a good hotel, four stores, and without doubt will become the summer resort for many Cincinnatians once the railroad has been completed."<sup>78</sup> The expected summer guests from Cincinnati and other places, however, never came.

The three churches mentioned by Gerding were the old Lutheran Church, now called St. Paul's, a Presbyterian church which had absorbed many Swiss members of the defunct Reformed congregation, and a Roman Catholic Church. A very small Catholic congregation had been in existence as early as 1847. It was then served by an itinerant priest. In 1878 a congregation was again formed and a church built in the following year but it was soon afterwards supposedly "destroyed by enemies of the Church."<sup>79</sup> The only institution founded by the East Tennessee Colonization Company which has survived to the present day is St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The early events in the life of this congregation have been related above within the context of the entire colony. After the Civil War, St. Paul's assumed a singular position as the rallying center of the German-speaking inhabitants of Morgan County. This additional function as the only German social center enabled the church to survive prolonged periods without a pastor. Laymen such as Johann Kreis, Franz Freytag and Friedrich Engert conducted public reading services while Lutheran pastors from Nashville and notably Pastor J. Heckel of Knoxville, preached occasionally in Wartburg. In 1872 the congregation secured the services of an aging clergyman of the Lutheran Iowa Synod, John L. Hirschmann who rendered an almost heroic service to his mountain flock during two years. While serving at Wartburg, Hirschmann frequently visited Lutherans in Chattanooga where he organized a congregation which called him as its own pastor in September 1874. With the exception of a brief sojourn in Illinois, Hirschmann never fully deserted his people at Wartburg, visiting them for ministerial acts at frequent intervals and finally returning there for his retirement.

Meanwhile St. Paul's appealed to various synods in order to procure a permanent, German-speaking pastor. Most Lutheran churches of the old immigration in Tennessee had formed the Holston Synod in 1860. This group became an affiliate of the United Synod of the South eight years later. Practically all its congregations were English-speaking and for many years the Holston Synod had no German pastor available to answer the call of St. Paul's. But in 1877 this Synod found a German-speaking, evangelical minister, Carl A. Bruegmann who was willing to accept the Wartburg charge. Bruegmann proceeded at once to reorganize the congregation, liberalizing its doctrines in order to make it a place acceptable to all people willing to share in its worship without strict adherence to purely Lutheran doctrine. He urged St. Paul's to join the Holston Synod because of this body's liberal and lax practices. The school was reopened and a new *Kirchenbuch* started in 1878 which became a faithful chronicle of

<sup>77</sup> Information on several German families in Wartburg was contained in the Special Historical Edition of the *Morgan County News* of April 7, 1944.

<sup>78</sup> Rattermann, 19.

<sup>79</sup> Cooper, 79-80.

the further life of the congregation. Lutherans in Rockwood and Kingston donated the church bell which is still in use today.

Die-hard Lutherans within the congregation and the now feeble, old Pastor Hirschmann became increasingly disturbed by the new minister's lack of doctrine. Their severe criticism centered on Bruegmann's sermons and on the "Unionistic Hymnals" he had introduced. After much strife, the congregation acceded to the urging of the orthodox critics. Pastor Bruegmann was dismissed and in 1881 St. Paul's withdrew formally from the Holston Synod. Hirschmann advised the congregation to affiliate with the Missouri Synod. A vote was taken on the issue with the result that the majority decided in favor of St. Paul's independent status as it had existed before it became a member of the Holston Synod. The Missouri Synod, however, became interested in this steadfast outpost of Lutheranism and tried to furnish the church with pastors.<sup>80</sup> This dependence on Missouri Synod clergy contributed much to preserving the distinctly German character of this congregation. The Missourians were not always able to speedily provide new pastors when others went on their way to more comfortable posts. But a number of mostly young pastors of the Missouri Synod have served St. Paul's during the more than eight decades since. Most noteworthy among them were Otto Carl Praetorius (1884-1889),<sup>81</sup> John G. Goeringer (1890-1899),<sup>82</sup> Edward Nauss (1910-1913), Edwin H. Demetrio (1913-1920), Oscar E. Feucht (1920-1925) and Richard B. Faerber (1943-1948).

Until the turn of the century, St. Paul's remained a purely German congregation but then the English language made considerable inroads. English services were introduced to accommodate the young people and to prevent their drifting away to other churches. By 1910 English and German services were given equal time every Sunday but already in 1913, when Pastor Nauss left St. Paul's, only one German service was held each month. During World War I community pressure was strong against everything still sounding German in this isolated area. The descendants of the hardy German and Swiss settlers put their critical neighbors to shame by proving their patriotism in every way. Several of their sons served in the armed force. Of the 110 members of the Wartburg chapter of the Red Cross, 93 belonged to the "German Church." In the Third Liberty Loan drive alone, the small band of St. Paul's members raised 6000 dollars under the leadership of Pastor Demetrio. Although the twelve German services a year were not discontinued during the war years despite pressure to dispense with them, the use of the German language became soon unnecessary for want of participants. Pastor Feucht preached the last German sermons in the early twenties. At precisely the same time he began to probe into the German past of Wartburg. We owe him the preservation of many a fact of bygone days. Thus the German colony of Wartburg became the object of historical interest at the very moment

<sup>80</sup> St. Paul's Church did not join the Missouri Synod until the early 1920s.

<sup>81</sup> During the pastorate of the Rev. Praetorius a church building was erected in the Mehlhorn settlement southwest of Wartburg at the ford of Crab Orchard Creek, immediately west of the Emory River. This German settlement had developed around a tract of 1886 acres of land purchased by Christian Mehlhorn in 1848. Adjacent to the west and north was another complex of German farms, long called the Ruppe settlement. It was grouped around the property of Friedrich Ruppe. Both settlements were too far removed from the center at Wartburg to have frequent contact. The inhabitants of both areas organized their own Lutheran congregations. Wartburg pastors visited them occasionally but "Father" Ruppe himself held regular lay services there for several decades. Mehlhorn Station was later called Deermont and it is known today as Camp Austin. The present Wartburg pastor, the Rev. Robert P. Nergger, is still holding services for the small flock there every Sunday evening.

<sup>82</sup> Goeringer was succeeded by the Rev. John P. Barkow, pastor of the Lutheran congregation at Allardt, Fentress County. Barkow also served a small colony of Polish farmers at Deer Lodge.

when the German language disappeared from its last refuge, the pulpit of St. Paul's.<sup>83</sup>

Today, even to the casual visitor, Wartburg is still full of lingering memories of its German past. Its name alone provokes questions as to its origin. Along the highway names like Kreis and Freytag and Heindle are still commonly found on mail-boxes and billboards. The weary traveler can rest at a Schubert Motel and the curious tourist will be surprised to find German inscriptions on the tombstones on the little God's Acre. When the German *Bundestag* deputy, Dr. Ludwig Ratzel of Mannheim, visited Wartburg in April 1960, he was cordially welcomed by the descendants of the German immigrants.<sup>84</sup> After the Hon. Ratzel had addressed them in St. Paul's Church and brought them the greetings of the city in Germany where G. F. Gerding once was the U. S. Consul and where he had gathered immigrants for Wartburg, Pastor Robert P. Nerger closed the meeting with a prayer in German. Before parting with their visitor, the congregation spontaneously rose and all those present joined in the singing of Martin Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." At that moment many Wartburgers felt the strange emotion of being aware of their long and thorny history which created this small American town in the mountains out of the Utopian dream of a businessman who was looking for profits and found himself suddenly in charge of men and women and children who looked up to him for leadership which despite his faults and shortcomings he provided for many years.

<sup>83</sup> For details on the recent history of St. Paul's Church see Faerber, *op cit.* 8-9

<sup>84</sup> *Morgan County News*, April 21, 1960.

