

THESIS

“I AM GOING TO FIND A NEW FATHERLAND”: NATIONALISM AND GERMAN  
COLONIZATION SOCIETIES IN THE FRONTIER STATE OF MISSOURI

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## ABSTRACT

### “I AM GOING TO FIND A NEW FATHERLAND”: NATIONALISM AND GERMAN COLONIZATION SOCIETIES IN THE FRONTIER STATE OF MISSOURI

Despite a recent rise in interest among American historians in regard to examining German immigration to the United States, in most cases their methodology remains rooted in the past. American scholars have long shown a tendency to examine the immigrant experience from the moment the immigrants set foot in the New World. Historians in other fields have begun to realize the importance of drawing historical connections that go beyond the borders of the United States. However, scholars studying German immigration to the United States have in large part failed to embrace this transnational methodology. Recent works of transnational history have demonstrated that by making connections to events that occurred outside of the United States, historians can gain a fuller understanding of the forces that shaped the nation’s development.

A series of German settlement societies worked to create a new Germany in the frontier state of Missouri during the early decades of the nineteenth century. By examining these societies connections will be made between political events occurring in the German-speaking states of Europe and expansion into the American West. It will be demonstrated that events across the Atlantic Ocean, events which fed a sense of nationalism that had been simmering since the middle decades of the eighteenth century, had an effect on the state of Missouri that is visible to this day. This transnational

examination of the efforts of German nationalists to create a new Germany in the United States will not only reveal a facet of Missouri's history long neglected by historians, it will challenge American scholars to move beyond the formidable intellectual barrier the nation's borders have placed on their work, allowing them to create more nuanced, more complete narratives of the nation's past.

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## INTRODUCTION: Moving Beyond the Nation's Borders

On August 1, 1834, as he boarded the *Yazoo* on which he would make the Atlantic crossing from Le Havre to New York, Frederick Julius Gustorf must have realized it was unlikely that he would ever see his childhood home again.<sup>1</sup> This was not Gustorf's first journey to the United States, as he had made the Atlantic crossing to North America for the first time in 1819.<sup>2</sup> Unknown circumstances, however, forced him to cut his stay short, and he returned to his ancestral home in Cassel, Germany, arriving in August of 1824.<sup>3</sup> Two years earlier, he had signaled his desire to remain in America permanently when on November 14, 1822, he declared before the Mayor's Court of Philadelphia that it "was bona fide his intention to become a citizen of the United States."<sup>4</sup> Gustorf remained true to his word. Upon returning to the United States following his ten-year hiatus in Germany, the language teacher was granted his American citizenship on September 27, 1834.<sup>5</sup> In terms of his rapid naturalization, Gustorf's story is anything but as simple as it might appear. It would be an easy matter to equate his wish to become an American citizen as quickly as possible with a desire to assimilate into

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The source for the title is the poem *Abschieds vom Vaterlande* (Farewell to the Fatherland) penned by an unnamed member a nationalist student fraternity, the final stanza of which begins with the line, "Ein neues Vaterland geh' ich zu finden." Herman Haupt, "Die geplante Gründung einer deutsch-amerikanischen Republik in der Reaktionszeit," *Deutsche Revue, eine Monatschrift* 32 (1907): 118.

<sup>1</sup> Fred Gustorf, ed., *The Uncorrupted Heart: Journal and Letters of Frederick Julius Gustorf*, trans. by Fred Gustorf and Gisela Gustorf (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Gustorf, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Gustorf, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Gustorf, 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Gustorf, 8.

American society, which meshes nicely with the assumption that immigrants arrived in America filled with a desire to become citizens—anxious to shed their cultural identity and assume that of their adopted homeland. This glosses over the true complexity of the immigrant experience, a complexity that is mirrored in the life of the literary-minded son of a failed banker, who left his homeland to avoid the drudgery that awaited him as a tradesman in the clothing industry.<sup>6</sup> While Gustorf acted on his intention of becoming an American citizen, his travel journal and letters expose a man of striking contradictions. Eager to settle permanently in the United States and take an Anglo wife, to marry his “dearest Harriet,” Gustorf still held tightly to his sense of cultural superiority and was quick to criticize Americans whom he found “repulsive” to the end of his short life.<sup>7</sup>

Gustorf was almost as critical of Gottfried Duden, whose *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America* was widely read by a growing population of disaffected citizens looking to escape the hardships they faced in German-speaking Europe. Taken up by later immigration proponents, Duden’s work, first released to a receptive audience in 1829, played a role in facilitating a decade of chain migration to the frontier state of Missouri.<sup>8</sup> Duden’s conviction that the German people and their culture were being smothered under the weight of overpopulation led him to advance his belief in a “rejuvenated Germania,” which he was convinced would flourish west of the Mississippi if only the spirit of transatlantic immigration could be awakened among the

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<sup>6</sup> Gustorf, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Gustorf, 151, 23.

<sup>8</sup> James W. Goodrich, introduction to *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America: and a Stay of Several Years Along the Missouri River (During the Years 1824, '25, '26, and 1827)*, by Gottfried Duden, edited and translated by James W. Goodrich et al. (Columbia: The State Historical Society of Missouri and University of Missouri Press, 1980), xiii; Walter D. Kamphoefner, “Immigrant Epistolary and Epistemology: On the Motivators and Mentality of Nineteenth-Century German Immigrants,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 37-38.

German people.<sup>9</sup> His vision of a German city in Missouri, established to serve “American Germans as a center of culture,” resonated with social philosophers and immigration proponents of his time.<sup>10</sup> Leaders of immigration societies that formed during the eighteenth century labored under the hope that a German state with a vibrantly German culture would rise along the banks of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Gustorf, who toured the earliest German settlements, including the by then abandoned Duden farm, provides historians with a window through which they can examine the earliest efforts of German immigrants to carve out a life for themselves on the North American frontier. His travel journal paints an intimate picture of hardship, suffering, and death in the forests and grasslands of Missouri. More important to this study, the young travel writer tells a tale of immigrants critical of Gottfried Duden for misrepresenting the conditions they would face in Missouri, indicating the influence Duden had in steering a generation of German immigrants to the American frontier.

Neither Duden’s *Report*, nor Gustorf’s travel journal were anomalous works of literature. In fact, theirs represented a continuation of two centuries of European travel literature that by the nineteenth century was feeding a growing audience of readers interested in learning more about the world being discovered and explored around them.<sup>11</sup> Duden’s often-criticized impulse to provide colorful descriptions of the natural beauty found in the Missouri backcountry might have been influenced by the works of earlier writers such as the Reverend William Gilpin, whose *Observations on the River Wye, and*

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<sup>9</sup> Gottfried Duden, *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America: and a Stay of Several Years Along the Missouri River (During the Years 1824, '25, '26, and 1827)*, edited and translated by James W. Goodrich et al. (Columbia: The State Historical Society of Missouri and University of Missouri Press, 1980), 179.

<sup>10</sup> Duden, 179.

<sup>11</sup> William H. Sherman, “Stirrings and Searchings (1500-1720),” in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21.



*Several Parts of South Wales* published in 1780 ushered in a new genre of travel literature interested primarily in providing picturesque descriptions of the world through which the writer traveled.<sup>12</sup> The people of German-speaking Europe's perceptions of North America were shaped in part by the manner in which travel narratives painted conditions in the United States and along its frontier.<sup>13</sup> Duden was not the first, and would not be the last, to visit the United States in the hopes of discovering the land wherein the people of German-speaking Europe could place their cumulative hopes for a brighter future. Men such as Alexander von Humboldt, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Duden's contemporary, Prince Bernhard the Duke of Saxony, Weimar, and Eisenach each played their part in creating and contributing to a genre of literature that would become a staple in publishing houses and booksellers across Europe during the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century.

Prince Bernhard's work is of particular interest as he, like Duden, came to America seeking to describe conditions he witnessed in the New World during the early decades of the nineteenth century, and his writing offers an interesting contrast to Duden's often romanticized descriptions of life on the frontier as a yeoman farmer. Unlike Duden's focus on describing what the United States represented for potential immigrants in terms of available and fertile agricultural land, Prince Bernhard was more interested in describing social, economic, cultural, and political conditions found in the

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<sup>12</sup> James Buzard, "The Grand Tour and After (1660-1840)," in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writings*, eds., Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 202), 45. The full title of Gilpin's work is *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, etc., Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the Summer of the Year 1770*.

<sup>13</sup> Theresa Mayer Hammond, *American Paradise: German travel Literature from Duden to Kisch* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980), 9.

rapidly industrializing United States.<sup>14</sup> The Prince crisscrossed the United States for almost a year, all the while maintaining a detailed diary, which was published in 1828 under the title *Reise Seiner Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard zu Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach durch Nord-Amerika in den Jahren 1825 und 1826*.<sup>15</sup> Like Alexis de Tocqueville, Prince Bernhard saw the United States as the model democracy. He was inspired by ideas put forward in the American Constitution and he waxed enthusiastically about the political and religious freedoms American citizens enjoyed while marveling at what he perceived to be a lack of class distinctions that Tocqueville would also comment on in his often quoted *Democracy in America* and *Two Essays on America*.<sup>16</sup> Together, Duden and Prince Bernhard represent travel writers intent on portraying America in the best possible light, even though their focus is often on different geographic areas and on differing aspects of American life.

Julius Gustorf's work takes a very different tone, a tone that diverged from earlier writers who had often romantically described America as a vast and unspoiled world of "boundless prairie, an unsettled mass of land without any of the scars of industrialization."<sup>17</sup> Like Duden's, Gustorf's work is structurally typical of its time. By the nineteenth century, travel writers, as in the case of Duden, often fashioned their works in the form of a report, or as in the case of Gustorf, in the form of a diary, which provided a chronological description of the world as he experienced it.<sup>18</sup> This however, is where the similarities end. Gustorf's predecessors and many of his contemporaries including

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<sup>14</sup> Marlis H. Mehra, "Prince Bernhard's Travel Diary: A German Aristocrat's View of American Customs and Social Institutions," *The South Central Bulletin* 40, no. 4 (Winter 1980): 156.

<sup>15</sup> Mehra, 156.

<sup>16</sup> Mehra, 157; Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America*, trans. by Gerald E. Bevan (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 11.

<sup>17</sup> Hammond, 34-35.

<sup>18</sup> Sherman, 30.

Duden and Prince Bernhard more often than not preferred to see America as a land of hope, a “Republic without a Guillotine,” a common theme that pervaded nineteenth-century travel literature dealing with North America.<sup>19</sup> Gustorf’s journal, however, foreshadowed a contradictory literary impulse that would gain traction almost one hundred years later during the years of the Weimar Republic. Instead of seeing America as a land of endless opportunity, Gustorf and other like-minded writers criticized the American people as being devoid of culture and saw America as a land where the desire to amass material goods trumped any consideration of personal and societal betterment.<sup>20</sup> And while writers such as Gustorf were often critical of conditions they found in the United States, they found themselves competing with travel writers like Alexis de Tocqueville, Prince Bernhard, and Gottfried Duden, who optimistically portrayed American political, social, economic conditions, and the bounty to be harvested on the endless American frontier. Even Goethe, who himself never visited the United States, was influenced by works of travel literature, writing that America was a “wonderful land, that drew the eyes of all the world to it.”<sup>21</sup> It was Goethe who, having read the prince’s work as it circulated through the court at Jena, recommended it be published.<sup>22</sup> Goethe used the prince’s journal as his source for his romanticized portrayal of life in America in his final novel *Wilhelm Meisters*.<sup>23</sup> Influenced by writers who had traveled to the United States, the poet and contemporary of Goethe, Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, depicted America as a refuge from the difficulties and uncertainties citizens of German-speaking Europe faced, writing that “everywhere in Europe thunderclouds are gathering;

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<sup>19</sup> Hammond, 35.

<sup>20</sup> Hammond, 35.

<sup>21</sup> Hammond, 48.

<sup>22</sup> Mehra, 156.

<sup>23</sup> Mehra, 156-157.

even in Germany a terrible crisis appears to be nearing; in the meantime America watches the storm and will soon open its arms to gather the fleeing arts and sciences into its lap.”<sup>24</sup>

As technologies made travel less time consuming and in some cases less dangerous, more and more men and women found themselves traveling to the ends of the earth in order to report on what they saw. And while France and the French Revolution, not the far-away United States gave German philosophers fertile intellectual ground for political discussions, America, as portrayed by men like Duden, provided hope for a return to a preindustrial past where the endless American frontier would allow Germans the opportunity to better themselves while also giving the German culture the space it needed to flourish.<sup>25</sup> Many of the primary sources examined in this study take the form of travel literature, which as a genre has recently “emerged as a key theme for the humanities and social sciences, and the amount of scholarly work on travel has reached unprecedented levels.”<sup>26</sup> The works of these travel writers found an interested readership among the masses of Germans who had become so desperate due to the political and economic conditions prevailing across German-speaking Europe that tens of thousands would take the often traumatic and always dangerous step of immigrating to the United States.

Understanding why past generations of historians have in large part neglected to pay closer attention to a century of mass migration could itself be the topic of a scholarly

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<sup>24</sup> Hammond, 49. “Überall ziehen sich in Europa Gewitterwolken zusammen; selbst Deutschland scheint sich einer furchtbaren Krise zu nähern; indessen sieht Amerika dem Sturme zu und wird bald die Arme ausstrecken, die flüchtenden Künste und Wissenschaften in seinem Schoß aufnehmen.”

<sup>25</sup> Hammond, 42-43.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2002), i.

article. According to Wolfgang Helbich, German scholars working in the early twentieth century felt an aversion to dedicating their efforts toward studying a population that was seen to have deserted their Fatherland.<sup>27</sup> The impulse to ignore immigration was interrupted by the National Socialists, whose ideologues expressed such an interest in the foreign German element that it was not until the 1970s that subsequent historians felt comfortable delving into the topic without fear of being unduly associated with the legacy of their nation's Nazi past. Unfortunately, the Atlantic Ocean was unable to keep the effects of National Socialism in check. Just as many German-Americans were compelled by both World Wars to shed their ethnic identities, American historians tended to distance themselves from any work that might have been construed as being too friendly toward a people whom many continued to view with suspicion. Even as a changing dynamic between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany led to relations conducive to increased cooperation between each nation's community of scholars, American historians continue to shy away from German ethnic studies. In part, this might be explained by the fact that the sort of evidence that could lead to new scholarship remains "hidden away in foreign language sources."<sup>28</sup>

In *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History*, author Thomas Bender points to a fundamental flaw both in how historians write about and teach history that goes beyond their inability to work with foreign language sources. Reminding his colleagues that American scholars have long played their part in creating and maintaining a feeling of nationalism "founded largely on a sense of shared memories," Bender calls

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<sup>27</sup> Wolfgang Helbich, "Alle Menschen sind dort gleich..." *Die deutsche Amerika-Auswanderung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann-Bagel GmbH, 1988), 14.

<sup>28</sup> Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich eds., *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters they Wrote Home*, trans. by Susan Carter Vogel (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), xii.

for a more transnational approach to examining the nation's history.<sup>29</sup> His ideas resonate at a time of increased globalization, which has fostered a sense of interconnectedness that allows historians to look beyond the dated notion of American exceptionalism and accept the premise that the history of the United States did not occur in a cocoon bounded by the geographic borders of the nation-state. Bender sees America as a "province" of the larger global community and as such argues that scholars must recognize that the nation's story, from foundation to the present, is "but one history among histories."<sup>30</sup> Not recognizing this essential truth has led to a failure among many scholars to account for the manner in which history takes place across space, not only over time, even through space divided by barriers as geographically and intellectually formidable as the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>31</sup> Bender's transnational thinking, like that of his borderlands colleagues, views national borders as permeable points of contact that allowed for and fostered exchange, which necessarily posits that if one is to fully understand a nation's history, "it must be studied in a framework larger than itself."<sup>32</sup>

Published in 2006, Bender's *A Nation Among Nations* would have been received with enthusiasm by Marcus Lee Hansen, whose posthumously released 1940 *The Atlantic Migration 1607-1860: A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States* won wide critical acclaim.<sup>33</sup> Originally intended as a trilogy, Hansen's broad immigration history, which he wrote from a European perspective, was decades ahead of its time.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 3,7.

<sup>30</sup> Bender, 8.

<sup>31</sup> Bender, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Bender, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration 1607-1860: A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), xvii.

<sup>34</sup> Hansen, xvii.

Many of his contemporaries recognized that his methodology ran counter to American historians' traditional focus on the immigrants beginning with the moment they set foot on the soil of their adopted homeland. Today, modern scholars would label his methodology, called "hitherto neglected" by a colleague, transnational, due to its focus on European push factors that drove mass immigration to the United States in peaks and eddies during the early to mid nineteenth century. Hansen's work has been subject to criticism for his tendency to indulge in "acute speculations and generalizations"; however, his sweeping examination of immigration remains a valuable resource for interested scholars.<sup>35</sup>

The breadth of his work allowed Hansen to do little more than make mention of Gottfried Duden's *Report* and subsequent German attempts at organized mass immigration, including the efforts of the Giessener Immigration Society to settle the frontier state of Missouri with German immigrants. It is surprising that the author, who generally went to great lengths to uncover push factors that drove immigration, only made loose connections to the members of the Giessener Society and events in their homeland that caused them to settle in North America, factors that included the desire to live in a nation organized around a republican form of government.<sup>36</sup> What is more, Hansen makes no mention of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, who along with the earlier Giessener Society, played a significant role in the settling of the Trans-Mississippi West, specifically Missouri with immigrants of all classes desiring to escape

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<sup>35</sup> Irene Barnes Taeuber, review of *The Atlantic Migration 1607-1860: A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States*, by Marcus Lee Hansen, *American Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 4 (January 1943): 518.

<sup>36</sup> Hansen, 123-126.

the prevailing economic and political conditions found in the German-speaking states of Europe.

Unlike Hansen, who barely makes mention of Duden and subsequent organized immigration efforts in Missouri, three works deal directly with German immigration societies to the state, specifically the Giessener Society and German Settlement Society of Philadelphia. Together, they represent the most detailed studies of these organizations to date. John Hawgood dedicates a chapter of his 1940 *The Tragedy of German-America: The Germans in the United States of America during the Nineteenth Century—and After* to discussing the idea of founding a New Germany in Missouri. Much of the chapter is devoted to the efforts of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, whose membership hoped that Hermann, Missouri, a frontier town that was the result of their efforts, would serve as the center of German culture in Missouri.<sup>37</sup> According to the author, the leadership of the Philadelphia Society was inspired by the failed efforts of the Giessener Society.<sup>38</sup> It is a surprise that Hawgood does not interpret Duden's writings to include a desire to create a New Germany on the American frontier, writing that Duden "was innocent of any such intention."<sup>39</sup> That aside, Hawgood's work, while necessarily cursory, provides invaluable background information for anyone interested in the idea of founding a New Germany in North America, an impulse that, according to the author, was not isolated to Missouri, but also failed to take root in Texas and Wisconsin.

Adolf E. Schroeder's 1986 article "To Missouri, Where the Sun of Freedom Shines: Dream and Reality on the Western Frontier," also deserves mention here.

Schroeder who has numerous important works dealing with German immigration to

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<sup>37</sup> John Arkas Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America* (New York: Arno Press Inc., 1970), 115.

<sup>38</sup> Hawgood, 115.

<sup>39</sup> Hawgood, 109.



Missouri to his credit, expands on Hawgood's study by including an account of the little known Ulm Emigration and the Berlin Societies. Though the Ulm Emigration Society never established itself in Missouri, the members of the Berlin Society did precede the Giesseners in following Duden's footsteps and settling in Missouri. Schroeder provides the most detailed examination of the Berlin Society to date, an examination he follows up with a discussion of the Giessener Society, which provides much more detail than Hawgood did in *The Tragedy of German-America*. From Schroeder, we get a sense of the men who organized the Giessener Society and of the events in Europe that shaped their thinking and convinced them that a New Germany in North America was not only a possibility, but a patriotic necessity.

The most detailed study of any single immigration society to Missouri remains William Bek's 1905 *The German Settlement Society of Philadelphia and its Colony Herman, Missouri*. Bek's study provides valuable insights into the planning and founding of the town of Hermann, Missouri. Most valuable is the inclusion of various documents pertaining to the settlement society, including the first written account of the society published in the newspaper *Alte und Neue Welt* and the society's bylaws, which includes a list of the original membership.<sup>40</sup> These sources, combined with correspondence between various interested parties, allow historians to gain insight into the motivations of the leaders and membership of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia. Additionally, the wealth of primary source material Bek's work makes available to historians gives them the opportunity to trace the thinking behind the project, the manner in which it was organized, and difficulties that led to the eventual dissolution

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<sup>40</sup> William Bek, *The German Settlement Society of Philadelphia and its Colony Herman Missouri* (Herman: American Press, 1984), 2,4.

of the society. More than anything, Bek provides his readers with access to difficult to obtain documents, while the author appears to have placed less emphasis on their interpretation.

It would be easy for a modern historian armed with the benefit of historiographical hindsight to pass judgment, to search for and find flaws in these earlier studies; however, historians must bear in mind that these works represent stages in the continuing progression of scholarship, and as such, are imbued with inherent value. Before scholars are too quick to point an overly critical finger at the writings of these past historians, whose work represents the foundation upon which modern scholarship is being built, one should carefully consider the words of Carl Becker, who in his 1931 speech to the American Historical Association reminded his colleagues that

the historian is not the same person always and everywhere; and for him, as for Mr. Everyman, the form and significance of remembered events, like the extension and velocity of physical objects, will vary with the time and place of the observer.<sup>41</sup>

It is not the intention of this work to point out the shortcomings of previous scholarship but to outline what has been done in terms of examining early immigration societies to the state of Missouri. The works of Bek, Hawgood, and Schroeder each represent years of research and the painstaking examination of primary source material. Each represent a valuable point of entry for any historian interested in gaining a fuller understanding of the immigrant experience and German immigration societies to the state of Missouri.

Since Bek, Hawgood, and Schroeder published their works dealing with German immigration societies interested in settling in Missouri, the topic has seen little interest from historians on either side of the Atlantic. However, in 1997 Harvard University

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<sup>41</sup> Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *The American Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (January 1932): 234.

Press published Edmund Spevak's biographical study of Karl Follen titled *Charles Follen's Search for Nationality and Freedom: Germany and America, 1796-1840*.

Spevak provides a comprehensive examination of the life of Karl Follen, shedding light onto Follen's life as a student radical while also demonstrating that Follen transferred his revolutionary impulse to the United States when he was forced to flee, becoming a vocal leader in the budding abolitionist movement. Scholars interested in understanding the manner in which nationalist thinking developed among radical student organizations, some of whom advocated for violence that they hoped would lead to a general uprising among the population of German-speaking Europe, will be well served to consider Spevak's meticulously researched work. According to Spevak, Follen was considered an extremist even among radical thinkers, an active revolutionary who advocated for violence, who saw any means justifying the end of liberating the German people from the oppression under which they continued to live in the years following the wars of liberation from Napoleonic occupation.

Spevak's work is all the more impressive in terms of tracing Follen's activities as a leader of the most radical of student dissident organizations when one considers that Follen, knowing he was under constant police surveillance, was careful to destroy his writings and correspondence. Readers interested in the manner in which student radicalism eventually was translated into a desire to create a New Germany on the American frontier will find this work a valuable look into the world of eighteenth-century student organizations. These idealists were intent on overthrowing the landed aristocracy, a failed idea that led to the notion of a New Germany in America, which it was hoped, would serve as both a refuge and example for the people of German-speaking Europe.

This idea germinated in the minds of student thinkers and radical-minded social philosophers such as Follen and his friend Friedrich Münch, who along with Karl's brother Paul would found the Giessener Society, as they recognized their inability to affect change in the Old World.

From a methodological standpoint, Spevak's work is truly a model of transnational history. Follen's radical manner of thinking and the events he found himself caught up in in Europe during the tumultuous early decades of the nineteenth century are shown to have affected him in the United States. And while Karl Follen distanced himself from any notion of creating a New Germany in the North America upon arrival in Boston, he did not leave behind his penchant for radical thinking and a burning desire to play a prominent role in alleviating the evils in the world around him as he saw them. Karl Follen, erstwhile European student radical, implicated in but not convicted of playing a role in instigating a political murder, would in America become a vocal spokesperson in the abolitionist movement. According to Spevak, Follen was and remained to his early death

a man of strong convictions, all of which developed out of his longing for the attainment of freedom. German national unity, a republican form of government, philosophical idealism, theological liberalism, and the abolition of slavery in any form, physical or spiritual, always remained his goals.<sup>42</sup>

When considering the immigration phenomenon as a whole, the last two decades have witnessed the emergence of a generation of historians on either side of the Atlantic Ocean who have built upon the works of their predecessors in order to cumulatively contribute a remarkable body of scholarship specifically directed toward the larger study of German immigration. By focusing on regional contexts, scholars including Robert

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<sup>42</sup> Edmund Spevak, *Charles Follen's Search for Nationality and Freedom: Germany and America, 1796-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2-3.

Frizzell, Walter Kamphoefner, and Helmut Schmahl continue to peel back the layers of complexity that define a century of human migration. Taken together, their writings represent the cutting edge of modern scholarship and convey a richer understanding of German immigrants that move beyond the “outdated, filiopietistic” writings that dominated the field for generations.<sup>43</sup> As a group, they shift thinking away from Oscar Handlin’s dated notion that the immigrant experience was defined by a sense of loss, that the newcomers “abandoned their past and consequently had only the future toward which to look.”<sup>44</sup> Where Handlin saw the Atlantic Ocean acting as an impregnable, one-way barrier that separated the immigrant “forever from the old home,” recent scholarship points to the durable ties immigrants maintained with the Old World.<sup>45</sup>

Any transnational study of immigration and colonization societies, whose leadership hoped that the fruit of their labor would result in a growing German presence in Missouri, will escape the “analytical cage” of the nation-state and add to an expanding body of transnational scholarship concerned with German immigration.<sup>46</sup> Examining those who most represented a desire to immigrate to the United States for reasons other than assimilating into American society will challenge scholars and the public at large to rethink how they imagine the immigrant experience in a manner that moves beyond generalizations and considers the full complexity of motivations and expectations a diverse population brought with them when they crossed the Atlantic Ocean to start new lives in the American wilderness.

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<sup>43</sup> David L. Valuska and Christian B. Keller, *Damn Dutch: Pennsylvania Germans at Gettysburg* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2004), xiv.

<sup>44</sup> Oscar Handlin, *Children of the Uprooted* (New York: George Braziller, 1966), xiii.

<sup>45</sup> Handlin, xiii.

<sup>46</sup> Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 2.

Paul Follen, Friedrich Münch, and like-minded German patriots' desire to affect the creation of a German state on the American frontier reminds historians that the settling of the American West did not occur in a void but was inextricably connected to events occurring an ocean away. Their work on behalf of a unified Germany would, like their efforts to establish a New Germany in North America, ultimately result in failure. Yet while a rise in German nationalism was unable to affect significant change within the German states during the early decades of the nineteenth century, it did manifest itself in a lasting manner in Missouri, evident in German communities such as Hermann and in the rich viticulture tradition that is visible along the banks of the Missouri River to this day.

The early German immigration societies to Missouri are central to this study. Where Gottfried Duden, Friederich Münch, and the leaders of subsequent immigration and colonization movements, including the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, believed that they were establishing the foundation of a German state within the Union, Gustorf witnessed struggle and failure, writing that it was “a shame to see strong men, who could have been very useful to their own country, wasting time and talent, abandoning their professional careers, and try and start a new life in this wilderness. There are exceptions, of course, but they are scarce.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Gustorf, 87.

## CHAPTER 1: MISSOURI—GOTTFRIED DUDEN’S SOLUTION TO THE “EVILS FROM WHICH THE INHABITANTS” OF GERMAN-SPEAKING EUROPE WERE SUFFERING

Julius Gustorf made the journey to North America twice, and while we know little of the ten years he spent in Frankfurt prior to returning to the United States, it is clear that this represented a time of heightened anxiety for the German people as a whole. In the hundred years or so prior to Gustorf embarking for North America for the final time in 1834, the population of the German states had increased twofold.<sup>1</sup> By the middle decades of the 1800s, Europe, scene of centuries of inadvertent population control brought on by catastrophic epidemics, incessant conflict, and widespread famine, gave way to a period of relative stability.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, no single factor can account for what one historian labeled a “population surge not previously experienced anywhere in the world.”<sup>3</sup> Increased agricultural output, land reclamation projects initiated in large part by Frederick II, and the introduction of the potato resulted in a relatively stable food supply that allowed the population of the German-speaking states to increase from seventeen million people in 1750, to thirty-five million by the eve of the 1848 March Revolution.<sup>4</sup> German attempts at turning vast swaths of forests and marshes into arable land date back to the

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<sup>1</sup> Brendon Simms, *The Struggle for Mastery in Germany, 1779-1850* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 149.

<sup>2</sup> Hagen Schulz, *The Course of German Nationalism: From Frederick the Great to Bismarck, 1763-1867* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Schulz, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Schulz, 35.

Teutonic Knights and Cistercian order.<sup>5</sup> However, as David Blackbourn's *The Conquest of Nature* illustrates, population growth and land reclamation did not become linked until the eighteenth-century German Enlightenment. During the forty-six years that Frederick the Great was in power, his efforts to drain vast swamplands resulted in an unprecedented amount of land becoming available to a rapidly growing population.<sup>6</sup>

The growth of German-speaking Europe's population accelerated in the early decades of the nineteenth century for a number of reasons. Legal obstacles to marriage were removed, allowing couples to marry at a younger age, resulting in women bearing more children over the course of their lives.<sup>7</sup> Medical advances including vaccinations against smallpox, which became mandatory in Bavaria in 1807, for example, increased knowledge of the importance of personal hygiene.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, an extended period that did not see the outbreak of a major epidemic disease led to a lowering in infant mortality and longer life expectancies.<sup>9</sup> Combined with access to a more nutritional diet and favorable climactic changes, all these factors contributed to a significant and rapid increase in German-speaking Europe's population over a relatively short period.<sup>10</sup> However, the most important reason German-speaking Europe experienced such a rapid increase in population during the nineteenth century, according to the noted historian of German history Martin Kitchen, "was that couples made conscious decisions to have large families," a phenomenon demographers have yet to adequately explain.<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>5</sup> David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 29.

<sup>6</sup> Blackbourn, *Conquest of Nature*, 41.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany: 1800-2000* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Kitchen, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Kitchen, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Kitchen, 29.

<sup>11</sup> Kitchen, 29.



combination of these factors virtually guaranteed that the growth in population that began in the eighteenth century continued, and while the Confederation of the Rhine was home to approximately 33 million people in 1816, by the year that marked the end of the American Civil War, this population had grown by 60 percent.<sup>12</sup>

Population growth, however, proved to be a double-edged sword. An increased rural work force fed an embryonic putting-out system as a growing merchant class helped reshape the traditional social order, while at the same time, an increase in population contributed to German-speaking Europe becoming a recognized, if fractious, regional power. However, by the time Gottfried Duden released his *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America*, he and like-minded social philosophers believed that the only solution to rising population pressures, to “the evils from which the inhabitants of Europe, and particularly those of Germany” were suffering, was “emigration en masse.”<sup>13</sup> This movement of people was underway by the time Duden published his travel narrative, but what had begun as a trickle of humanity in the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth century began to accelerate in volume by the 1830s, and it has been estimated that from 1816 to 1865, three million Germans left the Old World, the majority of them choosing to settle in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

In the preface to Duden’s first edition of his *Report* released in 1829, the travel writer was careful to outline the effects of and the conditions that in his mind defined overpopulation, writing that he had

become convinced that most of the evils from which the inhabitants of Europe, and particularly those of Germany, suffer are due to overpopulation, and are such that they cannot effectively be alleviated without first achieving a decrease in

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<sup>12</sup> Kitchen, 29.

<sup>13</sup> Duden, 6-7.

<sup>14</sup> Kitchen, 29.

population. I realize that while a certain density of population is absolutely essential for the successful development of the individual and the state, overpopulation will distort social conditions in an unfortunate manner. Regardless of all the resistance of intellectual powers, overpopulation can only end by changing the state into a universal institution of coercion.<sup>15</sup>

Duden went on to write that

the real evidence that a state is overpopulated consists solely in showing that the masses of the people can be kept within the bounds of order only by force, and that this condition of the whole is due, in the final analysis, to the excessive number of people in relation to their economic circumstances. The most important and unfortunate result of overpopulation is the necessary oppression of the majority, which brings them very close to the lot of beasts of burden.<sup>16</sup>

In his view, this was exactly the situation in which the people of the German states found themselves—economic conditions were such that the population could no longer be adequately supported by the limited amount of available land, leading to the minority's oppression of the masses, who were seen as little more than slaves to the state. Thus, Duden was convinced that overpopulation and the economic woes this entailed were inextricably linked with the political repression of the German people, a situation he believed could only be alleviated by bringing the population of the German states to a level that could be supported with existing resources. In his mind, this would lead to the sort of political institutions that allowed the masses to free themselves from the yoke the powerful aristocracy had placed around their necks.

Mass immigration was, in Duden's estimation, the only solution to the many difficulties plaguing the people of German-speaking Europe. The only question that remained was where might German immigrants have the greatest chance of successfully carrying out such a risky venture? With this in mind, he set about reading all available literature about North America, hoping to discover

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<sup>15</sup> Duden, 6.

<sup>16</sup> Duden, 10.

1. what area of this large territory was best suited for Germans in regard to climate, fertility, cost of land, as well as accessibility to waterways;
2. how a settlement could actually be made in the forests and plains (in the so called wilderness); for what difficulties, expenses, inconveniences, and dangers one must be prepared; and
3. with what degree of likelihood would all these obstacles be overcome...<sup>17</sup>

Readers can gain insight as to why Duden settled on Missouri as the destination for mass immigration when they consider his words in regard to the manner in which German immigrants base the success of their future in North America on agriculture. To Duden, nature and agriculture held the key to the success of any immigration venture. He clearly expressed how much importance he placed on farming when he wrote that he proceeded with his research working from the assumption

that a European in the new country must at first make his lot dependent on nature and consider the utilization of the soil as the actual basis of his life there; that, to be sure, some individuals could plan to earn a livelihood for themselves through crafts, technical industry, teaching, and the practice of medicine; that caution, however, would force one to consider an agricultural basis as the only sure one, and that emigration en masse could undoubtedly be based on this alone.<sup>18</sup>

From Duden's *Report* it becomes clear that he placed a premium on access to waterways in addition to fertile agricultural land in order to give immigrants the best chance of succeeding in the New World. Property costs were also a critical consideration as he was

of the opinion that emigration from Europe had to be directed to the same regions where most of the natives were also looking for new homes, just as Europeans in their initial adjustment looked upon the natives as models. Therefore, I considered it a serious mistake to make the final goal of the journey the lands on this side of the Alleghenies, where good places would be as expensive as here.<sup>19</sup>

Later immigrants would express their pleasure at the availability and price of "Congress land" in the fertile areas west of St. Louis—land that according to Herman Spannagel, who arrived in Missouri in 1837, was still available at the price of one and a quarter

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<sup>17</sup> Duden, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Duden, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Duden, 9-10.

dollars per acre, was practically not taxed, and would never require any additional fertilizer.<sup>20</sup>

At the confluence of three major waterways, the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio, as well as countless smaller rivers, the fertile Missouri bottomlands certainly met Duden's requirements for the site of future German settlements. As Missouri was a sparsely inhabited state on the frontier, he was correct in expecting land prices to be at a level that would give immigrants the opportunity to establish themselves as independent farmers. Additionally, the fact that Indians had been removed west of the territory prior to its admission into the Union as a state in 1821, appeared to guarantee a peaceful and stable environment, which would allow German immigrants to participate in the sort of liberal democratic institutions men like Duden so fervently hoped would someday replace traditional aristocracies ruling German-speaking Europe.<sup>21</sup> In Duden's estimation, Missouri represented the ideal location for future German immigrants and settlements. Waterways not only created the fertile soil that had been attracting Anglo settlers for generations but also allowed for the transport of goods and services to and from distant markets. Government land was still available in vast quantities and could be purchased at prices that Duden believed would give German immigrants the possibility of quickly establishing themselves as independent farmers, something that had become a virtual impossibility in the Old World.

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<sup>20</sup> Herman Spannagel, September 16, 1837, Briefe von Herman Spannagel, Nordamerika-Briefsammlung, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Germany.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), xxi.

After crossing the Atlantic on the *Henry Clay* and journeying overland from Baltimore, Duden arrived in St. Louis, Missouri, in October of 1824.<sup>22</sup> His subsequent letters reveal his enthusiasm at finding Missouri perfectly suited as a destination for German immigrants and his hoped-for German colonies. On the Missouri frontier, he found immense areas of land suitable for agriculture that had not yet been purchased by private investors or speculators, land owned by the United States government and therefore available at prices unheard of in the Old World.<sup>23</sup> Duden and his companion Ludwig Eversmann bought adjoining properties “fifty English miles above the mouth of the Missouri” near a stream in Montgomery County.<sup>24</sup> And while the European wars had played a role in briefly raising the price of grain and therefore land in the United States, peace in Europe led to prices dropping again, and Duden reported that government land was still available for \$1.25 per acre, while land for sale by private owners was only slightly more expensive.<sup>25</sup> In his letter dated February 20, 1825, Duden wrote at some length describing the various rivers that come together in Missouri, rivers including the smaller Gasconade and Meramec Rivers where he found “fertile areas of considerable extent.”<sup>26</sup> He also made note of the fact that central Missouri had seen a rapid influx of internal migrants since the end of the War of 1812, and that the region was connected to international trade, not only via the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, but with Spanish Mexico along the Santa Fe Trail.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> James W. Goodrich, “Gottfried Duden: A Nineteenth-Century Missouri Promoter,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (January, 1981): 135; Duden, 47.

<sup>23</sup> Duden, 47.

<sup>24</sup> Duden, 57.

<sup>25</sup> Duden, 56, 57.

<sup>26</sup> Duden, 53.

<sup>27</sup> Duden, 54.

Missouri was the jumping off point for the Santa Fe Trail, and while much of the state's commerce with the outside world flowed east or south down the Mississippi, the Santa Fe Trail connected the United States with far away Spanish Mexico. The potential for financial gain that overland trade with Mexico represented, coupled with the lure of the exotic was more than the German immigrant Carl Blümner could resist. Blümner, who immigrated to the United States in 1831, eventually settling in Warren County, Missouri, wrote his mother of his plans to travel to Mexico via the Santa Fe Trail. According to Blümner, the people of the "Spanish province of Mexico" relied on overland trade for access to goods, and he expected to turn a handsome profit on his investment. This trade had been going on for some time, and according to Blümner, the previous year had seen the first German, a Swiss man named Sutter, making the roundtrip.<sup>28</sup> Johann A. Sutter, who falsely claimed to have been an officer in the famous Swiss Guards, had borrowed money in order to purchase "pistols, trinkets, and German student jackets" from St. Louis pawnshops, items he traded with Indians along the Santa Fe Trail.<sup>29</sup> As a result of Sutter's success, Blümner and fifteen other Germans attached themselves to a trade caravan that headed south and west in 1836.<sup>30</sup> In Blümner's case, it was not just the opportunity to make money that motivated him to undertake the perilous journey to Santa Fe, but also the idea of simply "taking the trip," the desire to travel to a distant land, which compelled him to become one of the first Germans to travel the Santa

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<sup>28</sup> Blümner, March 24, 1836.

<sup>29</sup> Adolf E. Schroeder, "To Missouri, Where the Sun of Freedom Shines: Dreams and Realities on the Western Frontier," in *The German-American Experience in Missouri: Essays in Commemoration of the Tricentennial of German Immigration to the Americas, 1683-1983*, eds. Howard Wright Marshall and James W. Goodrich (Columbia: Publications of the Missouri Cultural Center, 1986), 6.

<sup>30</sup> Blümner, March 24, 1836.

Fe Trail on a trade expedition that would end in tragedy for many of his companions and financial ruin for Carl Blümner.<sup>31</sup>

Access to trade and the abundance of fertile soil resulted in early Anglo settlements in the region being focused along the Missouri River—centered on the towns of Columbia and Franklin, which were located 150 and 170 miles respectively from the junction with the Mississippi River.<sup>32</sup> Vast tracts of land, including the bottomlands further east, property which included that which the Philadelphia Immigration Society would later purchase in order to found the town of Hermann, was still available as earlier settlers had found the land further west to be more fertile. Duden summed up his excitement in his letter dated March 1827, written as he was preparing for his journey back to Europe. Reflecting on his stay he wondered how often he had

thought of the poor people of Germany. What abundance and success would the industry of a few hands bring to whole families, whose condition in their own country an American-born farmer cannot imagine to be possible. There is still room for millions of fine farms along the Missouri River, not to mention on the other rivers.

The great fertility of the soil, its immense area, the mild climate, the splendid river connections, the completely unhindered communication in an area of several thousand miles, the perfect safety of person and property, together with very low taxes—all these must be considered as the real foundations for the fortunate situation of Americans.

In what other country is all this combined?<sup>33</sup>

Missouri, or the lands that would become the state of Missouri, had for centuries been a place where people and cultures came into contact. The confluence of rivers guaranteed that long before Europeans arrived, indigenous peoples had settled in and traveled through what author Stephan Aron termed “North America’s most prominent

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<sup>31</sup> Blümner, March 24, 1836, April 3, 1838.

<sup>32</sup> Duden, 54.

<sup>33</sup> Duden, 176.

meeting point.”<sup>34</sup> The arrival of German settlers only further diversified a region already complicated by the convergence of differing peoples, as Missouri increasingly became the destination for internal and external immigrants. By the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the rivers that came together in Missouri guaranteed extensive trade connections to the outside world. Both St. Louis and New Orleans quickly grew into bustling centers of capitalism that gave Missourians access to international trade networks. As early as 1840, a recently-arrived German immigrant expressed his amazement at passing “1600 ships of all nations and 80 colossal steamboats anchored at New Orleans” and no less than 60 steamboats anchored at St. Louis, while “at least 50” were continually traveling up and down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.<sup>35</sup>

Missouri had already been the destination of internal immigration for decades prior to Duden’s stay. Central Missouri, named “Boon’s Lick country” after Nathan and Daniel Boone, who briefly settled in the area with the intention of harvesting salt in 1805, saw an influx of settlers in the wake of the Boone brothers’ stay.<sup>36</sup> This area, which stretched 140 miles along the banks of the Missouri river from St. Louis deep into the interior of the territory, represented the furthest reaches of white civilization.<sup>37</sup> Word of the rich loess soil found along the banks of the Missouri River quickly spread east. This soil, described as being “almost as black, and very similar in appearance as gunpowder” excited the imaginations of potential settlers, particularly those living in the southern states of the Union looking, like their German counterparts, to improve their lot in life.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Aron, 1.

<sup>35</sup> A. Friedmann, September 5, 1844, Briefe von A. Friedmann, Nordamerika-Briefesammlung, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Germany.

<sup>36</sup> Aron, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Aron, 2.

<sup>38</sup> Aron, 2.



Settlers began moving into the area as word spread that the lands beyond the floodplain of the Missouri were perfectly suited to farming at a time when agricultural methods had yet to become mechanized.<sup>39</sup> Many of the first settlers who arrived from the Appalachian region were attracted to the gently rolling terrain found on either side of the Missouri River and by rumors that the soil went so deep that soil depletion, even for crops such as tobacco and cotton, would not be a problem.<sup>40</sup> As more people became aware of the potential the territory represented, Boon's Lick country saw a rapid influx of Southerners eager to take advantage of inexpensive land prices, access to navigable waterways, and the fertile soil of the Missouri territory.

The 1808 Osage treaty and the end of the War of 1812 brought peace to a hotly-contested territory and opened the floodgates of internal immigration that had begun with a trickle in the wake of the Boone brothers' short stay. In 1814, close to 526 free white men had settled in the region, a number that had risen to 1,050 by 1817. These numbers were eclipsed in the years following Boon's Lick being designated Cooper County in 1818, as by 1820, approximately 12,000 people had settled in the area.<sup>41</sup> Attracted to what one surveyor reported as "the richest considerable body of good land in the territory," the "easiest unsettled country in the world to commence farming," settlers continued to migrate westward in the expectation that the crops that were the mainstay of the Southern economy such as cotton, hemp, and flax could be harvested in "greater abundance than [in] any county near the same latitude in the United States."<sup>42</sup> The majority of these early immigrants arrived from the Southern states of Kentucky,

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<sup>39</sup> Aron, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Aron, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Aron, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Aron, 5.

Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, which guaranteed that they brought traditional Southern farming practices including the institution of slavery, which led to central Missouri being known as “Little Dixie” for generations.<sup>43</sup> By 1835, when immigration numbers surpassed any of the previous years as Virginians, Kentuckians, and Tennesseans continued to flood Missouri, residents began to voice their concerns over the increasing number of Germans who had also begun to arrive in the state.<sup>44</sup> Germans were viewed as problematic because they did not speak English, did not assimilate themselves into the local culture, and were often urban intellectuals rather than farmers.<sup>45</sup> These German intellectuals, deridingly termed “Latin farmers” because they knew more about Latin than farming, were also seen as a threat because they held the institution of slavery in disdain.<sup>46</sup>

Knowing that many Germans would find the fact that slavery had taken hold in Missouri problematic, Duden went to some effort to rationalize the institution. His purpose in writing on slavery was, in his words, “to remove the effect of the abhorrence that Europeans feel at the mere words *Negro* [sic] *slave*.”<sup>47</sup> He clearly stated his belief that there was a hierarchy among men, that Africans were unworthy of equal treatment or citizenship and therefore must be held as wards of the state or private citizens. In

Duden’s mind, citizenship had a racial component, as he believed that

the more important and the freer the status of a citizen is, the more should be required before one is accepted as such. To tolerate within the state a large number of adults who are not adapted to citizenship without subjecting them to

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<sup>43</sup> R. Douglas Hurt, *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri’s Little Dixie* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 6.

<sup>44</sup> Hurt, 52.

<sup>45</sup> Hurt, 52.

<sup>46</sup> Walter D. Kampfhoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, and Ulrike Sommer eds., *News from the Land of Freedom*, trans., Susan Carter Vogel (Munich: C.H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1988), 97.

<sup>47</sup> Duden, 107.

special supervision and restriction is without danger only where the citizens themselves live under the greatest restrictions. Therefore it must be clear that a class of unfree individuals could arise among the free citizens without the latter being accused of oppression.<sup>48</sup>

Duden rationalized the existence of slavery in Missouri by not only noting that slavery was legal in the state but that for centuries slavery had “been part of the legal order” in previous civilizations Europeans considered advanced, even enlightened for their time.<sup>49</sup> Not only was slavery in the United States a legal mechanism that allowed the state and private citizens to exercise “family rule over those human beings who must unquestionably be kept under close supervision and guidance,” according to Duden, chattel slavery as practiced in Missouri placed those in bondage in a better situation than that suffered by “domestic servants and day laborers” across German-speaking Europe.<sup>50</sup>

Frederick Steines, who in 1834 immigrated to Franklin County, Missouri, via Baltimore, might better represent the ambivalent attitude many German immigrants had toward slavery.<sup>51</sup> While Duden sought to rationalize the institution in order to attract German immigrants to Missouri, others like Steines saw slavery as an institution that ran counter to the moral fabric that separated Germans from their American neighbors. However, one must be careful when interpreting Steines’ words regarding slavery, as they are tinged with a sense of racism. While looking down on the slaves themselves and the few Germans who did own slaves, in this case, Duden’s erstwhile traveling companion Ludwig Eversmann, Steines could not reconcile himself

to the idea of owning slaves. In the first place most of them are not worth much, being deceptive, lazy and thieving. Moreover, I cannot see how a freedom-loving

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<sup>48</sup> Duden, 109-110.

<sup>49</sup> Duden, 106, 107.

<sup>50</sup> Duden, 110, 106.

<sup>51</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 522.

German can subscribe to the principles of slavery, and certainly it must require a great deal of Americanization in order to start a negro factory, if I may express myself that way, as Eversmann, for example has.<sup>52</sup>

Slave-holding Missourians had little to fear from Gottfried Duden. His rationalization of slavery was based on the legality of the institution and the specious claims of genetic inability of those of African descent to participate as full and equal citizens, and his writings point to racial attitudes toward Africans that were typical of his time. According to Duden, German immigrants should have no qualms about settling a state where Africans lived in bondage, as the African occupied a lower station in the pantheon of humanity. Duden describes African slaves as being from a generally unattractive race, unable to rise “above average, although some have enjoyed a good education.”<sup>53</sup> According to Duden, German immigrants should not view the institution as an evil, as the slaves themselves recognized their place in society, made “no claims on equality” and readily accepted the “inborn superiority” of their white masters.<sup>54</sup> Duden was criticized for exaggerating the potential Missouri represented for immigrants and inaccuracies that led thousands of settlers to a life of suffering and even death on the American frontier. Nowhere are inaccuracies as evident as in his discussion of slavery. Duden portrayed the institution as practiced in Missouri as a more benevolent form of slavery than that found in the Deep South. In many respects, Duden was parroting the language employed by Missouri slaveholders who engaged in an “informal public relations campaign” in an effort to improve their image in the eyes of their neighbors,

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<sup>52</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1921): 621.

<sup>53</sup> Duden, 114.

<sup>54</sup> Duden, 115.

who in many cases were less than enthusiastic about the institution.<sup>55</sup> According to the historian Diane Mutti Burke, slave holders in Missouri “sincerely believed that slavery in the state was more humane, and they publicly congratulated one another that they had perfected a milder” more paternalistic system of bondage that contrasted with the manner in which slavery was practiced in states normally associated with large scale plantation slavery.<sup>56</sup> In his effort to convince German immigrants to settle in Missouri, Duden minimized that fact that while slavery differed from how it was practiced in the Deep South in form, “the wonton destruction of slave families is the strongest evidence of slavery’s unique brutality” on the American frontier.<sup>57</sup> In fact, Missouri’s slave codes were modeled after Virginia’s, and while slightly more lenient, the codes were expected to maintain control over slaves through the threat of violence, which included corporal punishment for minor infractions and capital punishment for certain crimes committed against whites.<sup>58</sup>

Beyond being a descriptive work designed to entice would be immigrants to Missouri, Duden’s *Report* was a sort of how to guide that gave potential immigrants detailed advice as to how they could best undertake the journey. Unfortunately, the manner in which Duden suggested Germans immigrate placed a monetary requirement necessary for success that made it seem impractical for the poorest of the poor, those most affected by overpopulation, to establish themselves in the New World.<sup>59</sup> Certainly,

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<sup>55</sup> Diane Mutti Burke, *On Slavery’s Border: Missouri’s Small-Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2010), 143.

<sup>56</sup> Burke, 143.

<sup>57</sup> Aaron Astor, “Belated Confederates: Black politics, Guerrilla Violence, and the Collapse of Conservative Unionism in Kentucky and Missouri, 1860—1872” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2006), 82.

<sup>58</sup> Hurt, 245.

<sup>59</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, vii.

the vast majority of German immigrants who settled in Missouri were of the common stock. However, being unable to raise the 800-1,000 Prussian thalers Duden recommended for a family of five, those most likely able to participate in his vision of a new *Vaterland* in the manner he proposed were not likely to hail from the masses of starving farmers, artisans, and laborers.<sup>60</sup> Those possessing the means to quickly establish themselves as successful yeoman farmers were more likely to be members of the cultured and monied classes in addition to a growing population of professional citizens—of the pseudo-middle class that began to emerge in the states of German-speaking Europe during the eighteenth century.

Both Duden and Gustorf were products of the emerging professional class and educated bourgeoisie that began to make its presence felt as German-speaking Europe's traditional agrarian economy gave way to the Industrial Revolution. Gustorf immigrated to the United States in large part to avoid having to seek employment in the trades when his father's banking career was ruined after the Francophile Kingdom of Westphalia was dismantled in the wake of the French defeat at Leipzig.<sup>61</sup> Along with his brothers and sisters, Gustorf benefited from an exclusive private education, which served him well during his first stay in America, as the Harvard College catalog for the 1820-1821 academic term included a Frederick J. Gustorf, "Private Teacher in German [sic]."<sup>62</sup> Ambitious as he was, it must have been a horrible disappointment when the one-time student revolutionary, Karl Follen, was chosen above him as the faculty German

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<sup>60</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, xvii. At that time, 800 to 1,000 Prussian thalers was approximately 775 to 900 dollars.

<sup>61</sup> Gustorf, 5.

<sup>62</sup> Gustorf, 5.

instructor.<sup>63</sup> In any case, residing alternately in Boston and New Haven, he continued to work as a German language tutor at both Harvard and Yale until he suddenly returned to Germany in 1824.<sup>64</sup>

Like Gustorf, Gottfried Duden was born into the growing professional class. The son of the provincial town of Remscheid's government-sanctioned apothecary, young Duden was assured the "status and social prestige" that his father's place as a prominent member of the business community virtually guaranteed him.<sup>65</sup> Gottfried and his brother Leonhard were also in a position to take advantage of the education their father provided them.<sup>66</sup> In 1811, after studying jurisprudence at the universities of Dusseldorf, Heidelberg, and Göttingen from where he graduated, he gained an appointment as an attorney in the employ of the expanding Prussian civil service.<sup>67</sup> Together, Gustorf, who would teach English in Frankfurt upon his return to Germany, and Duden, who spent the early part of his professional career employed as a state bureaucrat, epitomize the growing class of the educated bourgeoisie, who jealously protected their privileged status above the impoverished masses. It was from this class of citizens, the intellectual elite and burgeoning merchant and professional classes, that a sense of the German *Volk*, a people bound by a common culture and language, manifested itself in an ambiguous sense of cultural nationalism that became increasingly evident during the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth centuries.

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<sup>63</sup> Gustorf, 5; L. Viereck, "Zwei Jahrhunderte deutschen Unterrichts in den Vereinigten Staaten," in *Das Buch der Deutschen in Amerika*, ed. Max Heinrici (Philadelphia: Walther's Buchdruckerei, 1909), 275-276; Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 10-11. Karl Follen, was born Karl Follenius.

<sup>64</sup> Gustorf, 5, 6.

<sup>65</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, ix.

<sup>66</sup> Goodrich, *Gottfried Duden*, 132.

<sup>67</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, ix; Goodrich, *Gottfried Duden*, 133.

Political nationalism of the virulent variety that rose from the ashes of the Napoleonic conquest and lengthy French occupation found its roots in a far more benevolent sense of national consciousness that considered language, culture, and a shared history, as the traits that unified the German people. Eighteenth-century intellectuals, including Johann Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt expressed their beliefs in the world of ideas and defined the nation as a “purely cultural, not a political phenomenon.”<sup>68</sup> Early nationalist thought, articulated by men who were products of the German Enlightenment, was strictly apolitical—an “abstract, humanistic, cosmopolitan, philosophically rarified” system of thought that pointed to cultural and linguistic similarities shared throughout German-speaking Europe.<sup>69</sup> Language became a marker of a patriotic German spirit as prominent thinkers like Herder reacted to decades of cultural assimilation that placed all things French above what were seen by many to be rustic German cultural mores.<sup>70</sup> Recognized by contemporaries as the “father of the fatherland,” Herder, a fervent German patriot, firmly believed that a unified German nation could only be built upon a cultural foundation buttressed by a common language.<sup>71</sup> This sentiment took hold across German-speaking Europe and was articulated by the patriotic German poet and historian Ernst Moritz Arndt who answered the question, where is Germany with the simple refrain: Germany is “wherever German is spoken.”<sup>72</sup> Herder was convinced that outside influences had led to a people who were ashamed of

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<sup>68</sup> Robert M. Berdahl, “New Thoughts on German Nationalism,” *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 1 (February 1972): 66-67.

<sup>69</sup> Kitchen, 1.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Reinhold Ergang, *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), 28.

<sup>71</sup> Ergang, 114.

<sup>72</sup> Kitchen, 2.



their language and thus of their national identity, compelling him to remind his fellow Germans that

our language is strong and redoundingly brave like the people which speaks [sic] it, and only to the weakling does it seem fearful and terrible. Of all the cultivated languages of Europe flourishing at the present time it is ours, which free of the shackles of rhyme, is most like the language of the Greeks and Romans. An obvious excellence which should make it dear to us... You say, 'My language disgraces me!' Take heed that you do not disgrace your language. What man among us will explain to us its history and beauty? Who will take the cloud from our eyes?<sup>73</sup>

Herder's words were a warning that would be heeded by later writers, including the brothers Grimm, whose fairy tales evoked powerful images of an idealized identity, a romantic vision of the German people rooted in the conviction that Germanic culture was a fundamental "expression of the national genius."<sup>74</sup> Herder's romantic, enlightened sense of cultural nationalism was not a static system of thought. The writings of the brothers Grimm epitomized the manner in which Herder's cosmopolitanism had, by the early decades of the nineteenth century, been co-opted and morphed into "an arrogant feeling of cultural superiority."<sup>75</sup> This sense of cultural nationalism allowed Germans like Duden to look beyond traditional geographic and political boundaries and formulate a vision of a German people, a unified nation-state bound by cultural ties that subsumed political differences. His dissatisfaction with the status quo, as articulated in his travel guide, saw to it that the American West came to represent a possible safety valve for the nationalist ambitions shared by a cadre of intellectuals seeking the space necessary to establish a New Germany.

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<sup>73</sup> Ergang, 152-153.

<sup>74</sup> Louis Snyder, *Roots of German Nationalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 40.

<sup>75</sup> Kitchen, 2.

Duden's idea that overpopulation was the chief culprit behind a host of problems leading thousands of Germans to seek to improve their economic situations was nothing new by the time he began work on his *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America*. The decades following the Napoleonic Wars witnessed years of internal immigration that only worsened the already difficult economic situations being experienced in the various German states in the early decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>76</sup> Even as many local governments attempted to better understand and curtail the exodus, some going as far as to ban people without proper authorization from removing themselves, Germans across Europe sought to improve their lot by seeking opportunities where it was perceived they might better themselves.<sup>77</sup> After examining the phenomenon, the nationalist Hans C. von Gagern decided as early as the second decade of the nineteenth century that overpopulation and a shifting economy were the primary motivators behind the mass movement of German-speaking people within and out of the poverty-stricken German states.<sup>78</sup> Like Duden and the leaders of both the Giessener Society and the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, Gagern's research led him to believe that immigration was a moral and societal imperative, as it worked to the benefit of both the immigrants and the German states by easing the problems associated with the rapidly growing pressures of overpopulation.<sup>79</sup> Duden's later investigation into the problem convinced him, like his liberal nationalist predecessors, that the issues which plagued the German people of Europe extended beyond individual states and needed to be addressed in the context of a unified people bound by a common heritage and

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<sup>76</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, x.

<sup>77</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, x.

<sup>78</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, x.

<sup>79</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, xi.

language. This put him in line with nationalists who were convinced that a unified German state was a step toward solving the social ills that only seemed to be worsening in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>80</sup>

Given what little is known of the short life of Julius Gustorf, it would be an exaggeration to label him a nationalist. However, he took every opportunity to point out the lack of cultural refinement in the Americans with whom he came into contact, going as far as to write that everything he found in “American cities or societies...loaths[ed]” him.<sup>81</sup> This language, and his constant maligning of everything American, smacks of the sense of cultural superiority that became a part of the German nationalist psyche during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Gustorf’s sentiments regarding Americans were mirrored in the letters of Frederick Steines who wrote that there was “only one thing which the German ought to emulate the example of the American, and that is in the handling of the axe, otherwise in nothing.”<sup>82</sup> Steines’ letters in their entirety reveal a man convinced of his cultural superiority based on the fact that he was German. In his opinion, Americans were a culturally backward people whose

amusements such as dancing and music are very wretched efforts. To a German taught in music their efforts are an abomination. Their attempts at playing the violin and flute are usually so ear-rending that children can be intimidated to do most anything thereby, so wretched that they produce nausea in the healthy adult.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, xi.

<sup>81</sup> Gustorf, 146. Writing from Philadelphia on October 26, 1836, Gustorf stated that “as to myself, I feel that I am not a fit subject for these American cities or societies. Everything loathes me, and I feel happiest when within the four walls of my room which, bye the bye, is in a tavern where—you can imagine all the etceteras.”

<sup>82</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1921): 666.

<sup>83</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1921): 667.

Steines was so critical of his American neighbors, so convinced of the inherent laziness of the Americans on the frontier, that in a letter written to his relatives in the Old Country on February 16, 1835, he expressed his hope “that many European immigrants should come, in order that this sort of living be done away with.”<sup>84</sup>

It was not just individuals who pointed a deriding finger at Americans’ lack of culture. Newspapers also published articles, some designed to dissuade Germans from immigrating to the United States, which portrayed Americans as a people marked by laziness and a lack of both education and culture. In June of 1833, for example, the *Oldenburgische Blätter* printed a series of articles titled “Concerning the Sapping of Physical and Spiritual Vigor in America,” in which the writer portrayed the American as “phlegmatic by temperament. He is completely apathetic; his intellectual powers are limited, and his moral values are nonexistent.”<sup>85</sup> An article published on December 9, 1816, in Augsburg’s *Allgemeine Zeitung* tried to play on the anxieties of potential immigrants by calling immigration “a sort of suicide,” as it divided Germans “from all that gives value to civilized existence.”<sup>86</sup> According to historian Kenneth Kronenberg, these articles represent an attempt by government officials to curb the rapid loss of valuable human resources.<sup>87</sup> However, government attempts at slowing the steady stream of Germans emigrating to the United States, based in these cases on representing America as a cultural wasteland, were destined to fail. Prussia, for example, could do nothing to influence emigration recruiters who operated outside of the Prussian state and could not

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<sup>84</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1921): 541-542.

<sup>85</sup> Kenneth Kronenberg, *Lives and Letters of an Immigrant Family: The van Dreveldt’s Experiences along the Missouri, 1844-1866* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 34.

<sup>86</sup> Kronenberg, 34.

<sup>87</sup> Kronenberg, 34.

prevent Gemans from boarding ships leaving from the port cities of Hamburg and Bremen, as they were free cities outside of the control of the Prussian state bureaucracy.<sup>88</sup>

Unlike disgruntled immigrants and state bureaucrats, Duden was motivated to paint conditions in the United States in the best possible light. Consequently, he carefully praised his American neighbors, or at least portrayed them in neutral terms. His nationalist sentiments ran much deeper than Gustorf's simple desire to elevate himself above Americans, whose "habits and customs" the language teacher found it impossible "to get used to."<sup>89</sup> Duden's vision of a "rejuvenated Germania," went beyond the "political and social loyalties" of the German-speaking people of Europe that during the nineteenth century rarely extended beyond individual states. In *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America* he articulated his belief that a New Germany, the center of a united German cultural community, could spring from the North American wilderness if provided with the proper impetus.<sup>90</sup> His words, and the writings of men like Friedrich Münch, the brothers Follen, and the leadership of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, betray the deeply held belief that only the American West could provide the space needed for the German culture to bloom. Coming more than half a century before Frederick Jackson Turner unveiled his frontier thesis in front of a largely unresponsive audience at the Columbian Exposition Congress of History, Duden's and subsequent immigration proponents' belief that the American West represented a safety valve for Germanic culture parallel the ideas Turner later made public in his "hastily"

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<sup>88</sup> Kronenberg, 34.

<sup>89</sup> Gustorf, 134.

<sup>90</sup> Duden, 178; Hawgood, 93-94.

completed *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*.<sup>91</sup> Filled with enthusiasm at the possibilities that mass immigration represented, these German patriots hoped that a unique culture would thrive in the vastness of the American West. Unlike Turner however, they believed that it was a Germanic culture that would assert itself and serve as an example of unity for the fragmented German states to follow.

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<sup>91</sup> David S. Brown, *Beyond the American Frontier: The Midwestern Voice in American Historical Writing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), xxiii.

CHAPTER 2: “GERMAN STRENGTH AND GERMAN LOYALTY, ON THE  
MISSOURI YOU SHALL BLOOM”: RADICAL GERMAN NATIONALISM AND  
IMMIGRATION SOCIETIES ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

Julius Gustorf began his travel journal titled *Trip from Philadelphia to the Western States, and Stay in the German Colonies in Illinois and Missouri* on May 9, 1835. It is certain that he was already familiar with Duden’s guide to Missouri when he took the recently opened railroad as far as Columbia, Pennsylvania on the Susquehanna River before continuing to Pittsburgh via canal boat.<sup>1</sup> Gustorf’s colorful descriptions of the people he met and countryside he traveled through as he made his way to the site of the Duden farm betray the lively curiosity of a man witnessing the world around him for the first time. During the three months it took him to arrive at Duden’s “shabby” cabin, which he found occupied by a “poor shoemaker surrounded by his ragged children,” Gustorf made note of the Germans he met along the way, many of whom complained of having been misled by the latter day pied piper of Missouri as to the conditions they would find upon arrival in the forests and prairies of the American Midwest.<sup>2</sup> While recording the plight of his countrymen, whose despair could “be read in the deep, dark lines in their faces,” Gustorf became increasingly convinced that those who had immigrated to the United States based on Duden’s often glowing accounts of life as an independent farmer in Missouri had been misled by a man who himself never truly

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<sup>1</sup> Gustorf, 73, 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Gustorf, 135,

experienced the hardships that were a reality on the American frontier.<sup>3</sup> Among the ruins of the cabin Duden had described as being located among forest-covered hills and valleys so beautiful that it appeared as if an “artist had laid out a park,” Gustorf was moved to reflect on his countrymen who, without the financial or practical means necessary to survive in the Missouri hinterlands, had condemned themselves to a lifetime of toil.<sup>4</sup>

I sat on an old bench, thinking about Duden and the fate of the many Germans who were influenced by him to emigrate to this country. So many of them were unfit for the life here in the wilderness, and they regret the day and the hour when their eyes and their fancies were captivated by Duden’s fallacious accounts of America.<sup>5</sup>

Months of travel among the poorest of sufferers convinced the young writer that with few exceptions, immigrants of all classes who traveled to Missouri with the intention of making a living farming the land now found themselves in the saddest of predicaments, with nothing left but to “live in memory of the sweet past, in contrast with the miserable present.”<sup>6</sup>

The day before his long-awaited visit to the Duden farm, Gustorf’s journal reveals his palpable sense of relief at being welcomed into the comfortable home of the “eccentric” Baron Wilhelm Johann von Bock.<sup>7</sup> Along with the other members of the Berlin Society, the German nobleman had chosen to settle on a site near the Duden farm.<sup>8</sup> They had wanted, in the words of one visitor, to be near the travel writer’s “Eldorado.”<sup>9</sup> The society established the town of Dutzow, named after the baron’s estate in

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<sup>3</sup> Gustorf, 77.

<sup>4</sup> Duden, 84.

<sup>5</sup> Gustorf, 137.

<sup>6</sup> Gustorf, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Gustav Phillipp Körner, *Das deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, 1818-1848* (New York: E. Steiger & Co., 1884), 299.

<sup>8</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Gustav Koerner, *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner, 1809-1896: Life-sketches Written at the Suggestion of His Children*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas J. McCormack (Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press Publishers, 1909), 320.



Mecklenburg, and chose to lay it out with street names that memorialized German poets.<sup>10</sup> It must be pointed out that Duden's *Report* inspired the leaders and members of the Berlin Society including Baron Heinrich von Martels and the brothers August and Carl Blümner, who made the acquaintance of von Martels in Baltimore and decided to join the party traveling to Missouri, where they arrived on October 28, 1832.<sup>11</sup> According to historians Walter Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich, the society purchased "a very nice farm with a stone house, liquor distillery, mill and the entire harvest" within a month of arriving near the Duden farm.<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Münch, whose home was located near the settlement, recalled that the society "lived for a time a common (communistic) economy."<sup>13</sup> In 1834, von Martels, one of the Berlin Society's founding members, published a book about his experiences in North America. In it, he wrote that the society had consisted of "14 persons, all relatives and friends," who by 1834 "had decided it would be best to disband," its members moving to separate properties.<sup>14</sup>

One of the earliest organized efforts to settle Missouri with German immigrants, the Berlin Society's failure to thrive on the frontier can likely be explained by the fact that its membership was comprised almost exclusively of "estate owners, bankers, merchants, and doctors," few of whom were equipped to contend with frontier life.<sup>15</sup> In fact, some members such as von Martels and von Bock were members of the nobility, not

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<sup>10</sup> Koerner, 320; Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Kamphoefner, *News From the Land of Freedom*, 95-95.

<sup>12</sup> Kamphoefner, *News From the Land of Freedom*, 96-97.

<sup>13</sup> Kamphoefner, *News From the Land of Freedom*, 97.

<sup>14</sup> Kamphoefner, *News From the Land of Freedom*, 97.

<sup>15</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 5.

a profession that lent itself well to farming in the Missouri wilderness.<sup>16</sup> Gert Goebel, who visited the settlement, recalled that the Berlin Society's neighbors did not know what to make of this eclectic group of newcomers. Goebel later wrote that "the old Americans observed the doings of the people with dumb amazement, the Germans laughed at them, for their ceremonials contrasted strangely with the simple customs of their neighbors."<sup>17</sup> Von Bock's dream of turning Duden's Lake Creek into a navigable waterway in order to bring tourists to the now famous Duden settlement where the baron had hoped to build an opulent hotel never became reality.<sup>18</sup> Instead, as their financial resources dwindled and the harsh realities of frontier life began to take their toll, the members of the Berlin Society sold their lands to those they had once paid to work them in their stead. Many of those who did not end their own lives (twelve members committed suicide within two years) were forced to relocate to St. Louis and find means of supporting themselves that must have seemed beneath the places they had once occupied in German society. Some may even have joined Johann Sutter's trade ventures to Santa Fe, as Sutter had visited the Berlin settlement in 1834 and evidently impressed the members with his tales of fleeing Paris during the July Revolution of 1830.<sup>19</sup>

A faint path had taken Gustorf the last miles to the Berlin settlement. He and his guides followed it over fences as it snaked its way past tidy fields that had been carved out from among the same purple dogwood trees that Duden had admired in his journal nine years earlier.<sup>20</sup> Almost losing their way in a swamp and after crossing a small stream on a bridge of felled trees, Gustorf and his companions finally arrived at von

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<sup>16</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom* 6.

<sup>20</sup> Gustorf, 134; Duden, 84.

Bock's small brick home. This far into the Missouri wilderness it was an unusual yet "welcome sight."<sup>21</sup> Weary to the bone, he was greeted by the lady of the house and von Bock's five daughters.<sup>22</sup> The family exuded a sense of refinement that seemed out of place so deep in the Missouri backcountry.<sup>23</sup> Having refreshed himself, the writer settled in for a stimulating evening of *Gemütlichkeit*, the sort of German hospitality for which von Bock and his family were known among the immigrant community.<sup>24</sup> Months of living among frontier rustics and desperately poor German immigrants had left their mark, and Gustorf took great pleasure in relaxing in the comfort of the baron's finely appointed home. There, entertained by a host of young Germans, who hailed from the most "cultured classes," the traveler enjoyed an evening celebrated among the trappings of high society.<sup>25</sup> Dinner, coffee, and punch were served on the finest china, and surrounded by the niceties one would expect in the home of a continental gentleman, Gustorf and the company of "jubilant German youth" sang folk songs late into the hot Missouri night.<sup>26</sup> Three years earlier when the ex-revolutionary Gustave Koerner passed through the same area during his walking tour of Missouri, he noted that the Berlin settlement had mostly been comprised of "highly educated men."<sup>27</sup> Even so, what he found inside their homes must have been a surprise. Many of the log cabins and brick houses were filled with "good pictures, libraries and pianos," attesting to the great lengths to which von Bock and his fellow settlers had gone in order to provide themselves and

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<sup>21</sup> Gustorf, 134

<sup>22</sup> Gustorf, 134.

<sup>23</sup> Gustorf, 134.

<sup>24</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Gustorf, 135.

<sup>26</sup> Gustorf, 135.

<sup>27</sup> Koerner, 320.

their families with a lifestyle that resembled the world they had left behind in Mecklenburg.<sup>28</sup>

After enjoying a fine German breakfast, Gustorf took a tour of the surrounding farms, including one he mentioned in passing as belonging to a man named “Münich.”<sup>29</sup> Münich, it turns out, was none other than Friedrich Münch, one of the founding members and intellectual leaders of the Giessener Society, which Koerner, a man generally critical of immigration societies, considered the “best organized colonization-party that ever left Germany.”<sup>30</sup> History has shown this to be an exaggeration, especially when one considers that the grand designs of the Giessener Society never came to fruition. It is likely that their failed, yet highly publicized, attempt at creating a German colony dissuaded the mass immigration of the liberal intellectuals the leadership of the immigration society had hoped would form the nucleus of their New Germany.<sup>31</sup> However, the efforts of men like “Far West,” as Münch became known by his German neighbors, would not go unnoticed by the masses of economically-driven immigrants who continued to settle the Missouri Valley for the better part of the 1830s.<sup>32</sup>

Inspired by the ardent revolutionary Karl Follen, Münch and Follen’s younger brother Paul began organizing the Giessener Society as frustration with their inability to affect significant political change within their homeland mounted.<sup>33</sup> Like Duden, who had fought in the Napoleonic Wars as a Lieutenant in the First Battalion of the Second Bergian Infantry where he evidently served with distinction, Karl Follen briefly served in

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<sup>28</sup> Koerner, 320; Gustorf, 135; Schroeder, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Gustorf, 135; Koerner, 320.

<sup>30</sup> Koerner, 308.

<sup>31</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 15.

<sup>32</sup> Koerner, 307; Siegmur, Muehl, “A Visit With Friedrich Muench,” *Der Maibaum: The Deutschheim Association Newsletter* 9, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 5; Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 10.

the War of Liberation from French occupation.<sup>34</sup> On his return, Karl set about organizing a militant student organization their opponents dubbed the *Bund der Schwarzen*, the League of Black Brothers, whose members dedicated themselves to the struggle for a unified Germany under a republican government.<sup>35</sup> Münch, who took over his father's Lutheran congregation before immigrating to Missouri, was intimately involved with Follen's nationalist *Burschenschaft*, the heart and soul of which he later described as being Karl.<sup>36</sup> He is said to have worked tirelessly to instill a sense of *Volk* in his compatriots' minds and actively agitated for a unified, educated, and free German people with a zeal that took on a religious fervor in the eyes of his contemporaries.<sup>37</sup>

Karl Follen's and like-minded patriots' zeal for a united Germany came about in large part in reaction to the changing world around them. In relation to their powerful neighbors, the fractured German states remained backward, and given the confused political climate it is no surprise that the industrial revolution took hold in Germany decades after England embraced industrialization.<sup>38</sup> The sort of student radicalism in which Karl Follen would assume a prominent leadership role was shaped in part by the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, which had only weakened German-speaking Europe's already tenuous position in relation to France and England. The poet and satirist Jean Paul expressed the frustrations and anxieties of people across German-

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<sup>34</sup> Goodrich, *Gottfried Duden*, 133; Schroeder, 10.

<sup>35</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 10; Münch, *Gesammelte Schriften von Friedrich Münch*, ed. Konrad Ries (St. Louis: Verlag von C. Witter, 1902), 45. According to Münch, their opponents began calling them the *Bund der Schwarzen* in reference to the black, traditionally German garb fraternity members chose to wear.

<sup>36</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 10; Münch, 45; David Blackbourn, *History of Germany, 1780-1918: The Long Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 91. *Burschenschaften* were fraternal student organizations who first made their appearance in 1815 at Jena and were active in advocating for a unified Germany.

<sup>37</sup> Münch, 47.

<sup>38</sup> Kitchen, 39.

speaking Europe when he wrote “that providence had given the French the empire of the land, the English that of the sea, and to the Germans that of the air.”<sup>39</sup>

The relative helplessness of the German people in the face of their neighbors became painfully clear when Napoleon handily seized the German territories east of the Rhine River and reorganized the separate German states to his advantage.<sup>40</sup> As a result, the once powerful Holy Roman Empire was officially dissolved in 1806 when Napoleon organized the southern German states into the Confederation of the Rhine and forced the last Holy Roman emperor, Emperor Francis II, to abdicate.<sup>41</sup> The humiliating defeat of the combined armies of Prussia and Russia during the French campaign, which began with the Battle of Austerlitz and ended with the Battle of Friedland, compelled many of the German states to join the Confederation of the Rhine and led to a lengthy period of repressive French occupation throughout much of German-speaking Europe.<sup>42</sup> By redrawing the map of central Europe, Napoleon not only created a buffer zone between France and Russia, he also effectively divided the states of German-speaking Europe against themselves. Some German thinkers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, however, admired the Corsican, believing that Germans could only be united under a strong ruler such as Napoleon, a sentiment he articulated when he wrote that

all component parts would benefit from Germany becoming a state, but such will never come about as a result of deliberations, but only of force that is in tune with the general level of education and combined with a deeply and clearly felt desire for the need for unification. The common mass of the German people along with the estates, who only know of the separation of the various regions and who think of unification as something quite foreign to them, must be brought together by a

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<sup>39</sup> Kitchen, 9.

<sup>40</sup> Kitchen, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Kitchen, 10; Eric Dorn Brose, *German History 1789-1871: From the Holy Roman Empire to the Bismarckian Reich* (Providence: Bergham Books, 1997), 51.

<sup>42</sup> Brose, 50, 52.

conqueror's power. They must be coerced into regarding themselves as belonging to Germany.<sup>43</sup>

As the reality of France's brutal occupation set in, few Germans, much less patriotic student revolutionaries, shared Hegel's belief that the German people could only be united by a conqueror, and believed even less that continued rule by the aristocracy, instead of a political system based on ideas of liberal democracy, best represented the interests of the German masses.<sup>44</sup>

In some German states, the period of French supremacy was a time of change as liberal and conservative thinkers alike sought to implement competing visions of societal reform. In many cases, reformers whether liberal or conservative were influenced by ideas put forward by French revolutionaries. Nowhere were "tensions between the aspiring middle class and the aristocracy" more evident than in Prussia where ideas of the French Revolution gave rise to hopes for a society where the hegemony of the landed elite would be supplanted by "bourgeois concepts of freedom and equality."<sup>45</sup> In order to avoid the sort of violence and bloodshed that swept across revolutionary France, conservative reformers determined that any social revolution that took place in Prussia should come from above and result in a parliamentary monarchy that enjoyed popular support from the masses.<sup>46</sup> The most radical idea put forward by reformers was the "liberation of the peasantry" from the shackles placed upon them by feudal society.<sup>47</sup> Ultimately, it was hoped that the traditional rule by the estates would be replaced by a governing bureaucracy, which would allow for a class society in which citizens were

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<sup>43</sup> Kitchen, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Kitchen, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Kitchen, 16, 14.

<sup>46</sup> Kitchen, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Kitchen, 16.

socially mobile based on ability and innate talent, not heredity.<sup>48</sup> The once powerful Prussian military was also to be thoroughly overhauled as some members of the military elite such as Gerhard Scharnhorst advocated for a system of merit to determine promotion.<sup>49</sup> Critical to student revolutionaries like the Follen brothers and Friedrich Münch was educational reform, as they insisted that the university system be opened to all citizens based on ability, not bloodline.<sup>50</sup> It was their belief, a belief they shared with many of the American Founding Fathers that a system of liberal democratic rule could only succeed if the citizens were, as a whole, well educated. Of course, the landed aristocracy pushed back against any reform that threatened their station in society, guaranteeing that while changes were made, the reforms that were instituted were not enough to satisfy the more radically minded who, determined as they were, continued to agitate for a complete restructuring of Prussian society.

The continued Napoleonic occupation gave rise to a sense of German patriotism, as more and more Germans began to associate efforts to end French rule with a struggle against foreign tyranny. In 1813, Casper David Friedrich's painting *The Grave of Arminius* resurrected the legendary German figure in an effort to unite the German people against the French as Arminius had against the Romans in 9 A.D.<sup>51</sup> Patriotic themes in art and music became commonplace as Germans sought an outlet for their frustrations. After the *Eroica* symphony for example, Beethoven's works became more and more imbued with anti-French sentiments, and Friedrich Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, like the works

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<sup>48</sup> Kitchen, 17.

<sup>49</sup> Kitchen, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Kitchen, 20.

<sup>51</sup> Brose, 67.



of many other contemporary writers, was filled with a sense of patriotism.<sup>52</sup> Patriotic poems and songs written by idealistic-minded artists and intellectuals became the vogue, especially among young student revolutionaries who yearned for the day when they would be called to action in the struggle for independence. The motto of the patriotic student organization *Germania*, founded by Karl Follen and other students at the University of Giessen, typifies the manner in which patriotic themes pervaded all aspects of society.

Courage in the heart  
Defiance under the hat  
Blood on your sword  
And all will be well.<sup>53</sup>

Nowhere was this patriotic sentiment more evident than in the *Turner*, or gymnastics clubs founded by the Prussian schoolteacher Friedrich Jahn in 1811.<sup>54</sup> Like art, athletics became a form of nationalist expression, where participants sang patriotic songs as they prepared their minds and bodies for the expected struggle to free themselves from Napoleonic rule.<sup>55</sup> *Turnen*—gymnastics became more than a physical activity, it became a mechanism through which patriotic Germans, particularly student activists, created a sense of militarism that they could direct toward their enemies, “be it French armies, local authorities, or princes.”<sup>56</sup> Jahn, however, had royalist leanings and was more concerned with Prussia assuming a dominant position over Austria among the nations of

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<sup>52</sup> Brose, 67.

<sup>53</sup> Spevack, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Brose, 69.

<sup>55</sup> Brose, 69.

<sup>56</sup> Spevack, 24.

German-speaking Europe, as he saw weakness in the Austrian state because in his mind its population was not truly German, but made up of “mixed peoples.”<sup>57</sup>

Jahn and other German patriots seized their chance as France found itself weakened by the disastrous 1812 campaign in Russia.<sup>58</sup> It is a sign of French influence with the German states that of the 600,000 men in the Emperor’s *Grande Armee* who marched into Russia, 180,000 were Germans who the Rhenisch Confederation, Austria, and Prussia were forced to provide in order to appease Napoleon.<sup>59</sup> One can get a sense of the contributions vassal states made in terms of manpower in Count Philippe-Paul de Segur’s account of the Russian campaign. As Napoleon’s *Gande Armee* prepared to cross the Russian frontier, de Segur recalled the disposition of the Emperor’s forces writing that

at the extreme right, coming from Galicia, Prince Schwartzberg with thirty-four thousand Austrians; on the left, coming from Warsaw and moving toward Bialystock and Grodno, the King of Westphalia at the head of seventy-nine thousand two hundred Westphalians, Saxons, and Poles; farther to the left, the Viceroy of Italy who had effected the junction of his seventy-nine thousand five hundred Bavarians, Italiens, and French near Marienpol.<sup>60</sup>

Within a year of Napoleon’s crushing defeat at the hands of the Russians, Prussia’s King Frederick William III had allied himself with Russia and declared his intention of going to war with France.<sup>61</sup> Austria vacillated for a time before finally joining the pan-German alliance, which had arrayed itself against France, whose combined forces met and defeated the 200,000 French soldiers Napoleon had positioned around the city of

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<sup>57</sup> Brose, 70.

<sup>58</sup> Brose, 74.

<sup>59</sup> Kitchen, 24; Brose 72.

<sup>60</sup> Philippe-Paul de Segur, *Napoleon’s Russian Campaign*, ed. Norman P. Ross, trans. J. David Townsend (New York: Time Incorporated, 1958), 4.

<sup>61</sup> Brose, 73.

Leipzig.<sup>62</sup> The *Völkerschlacht* or Battle of the Nations was and continues to be viewed as a turning point in German history. Three days of battle resulted in the French and allied forces suffering a combined 60,000 casualties.<sup>63</sup> And while Napoleon had at one point been so confident of victory that he ordered the church bells of Leipzig to be rung in celebration, by October 19, 1813, with his reinforcements pinned down by General Blücher and unable to come to his aid, Napoleon was forced to concede defeat and ordering his remaining forces to retreat to the Rhine.<sup>64</sup> For Napoleon, things quickly spiraled out of control. Fighting under the slogan “the Rhine is a German River, and not Germany’s frontier,” a fragile coalition being held together through the energetic efforts of Austria’s Prince Clemens Lothar von Metternich entered Paris in March of 1814.<sup>65</sup>

German-speaking Europe’s future was decided at the Conference of Vienna, which provided Austria with the chairmanship over what was nothing more than a loose confederation of German states, a position filled by the ultra conservative Metternich.<sup>66</sup> The Conference of Vienna did not, as hoped by many, create a federal state, as it provided for neither a federal court nor army.<sup>67</sup> And while the Conference of Vienna strengthened Prussia’s political position in relation to its neighbors, Austria remained the dominant political player in German-speaking Europe, even as Prussia and Austria competed for hegemony among the German-speaking states of Europe. Liberal-minded thinkers like Gustave Koerner were critical of the Metternich clique, as these aristocrats “owed their higher titles and the increase of their States to Napoleon,” and “looked with

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<sup>62</sup> Brose, 73.

<sup>63</sup> Kitchen, 26.

<sup>64</sup> Brose, 74.

<sup>65</sup> Kitchen, 26.

<sup>66</sup> Kitchen, 27.

<sup>67</sup> Kitchen, 27.

great distrust upon the popular uprising that had actually defeated” the French Emperor.<sup>68</sup> According to Koerner, Metternich was opposed to all “popular liberty, for fear that his own motley monarchy might be contaminated by the liberal ideas of other German states.”<sup>69</sup> Those who had hoped that the Congress of Vienna would lead to a significant shift toward more liberal forms of governance in the states of German-speaking Europe were sadly disappointed as a period of political reaction set-in during the immediate aftermath of the War of Liberation. Readers get a sense for the disappointment liberals felt in the words of Koerner, who described the situation he and other liberal thinkers found themselves facing under Metternich.

The new constitution of Germany, the German Bund, was a very loose affair. Leaving the sovereigns who constituted it almost entirely independent as long as they followed the dictates of Austria and Prussia, the Diet (Bundestag), the moment they showed signs of granting liberties to their people, repressed them. The articles of the Act of Confederation, which provided for freedom of the press and guaranteed to the several states representative governments, were either not executed at all or evaded by miserable caricatures of such governments. Very soon Liberal [sic] writers were persecuted, the censorship of the press (Censur) instituted, and the most despotic principles openly avowed.<sup>70</sup>

Metternich set about to implement his “System Metternich,” which was intended to create stability among the German states under the leadership of the Habsburg dynasty.<sup>71</sup> Both King Frederick William III and his successor King William IV of Prussia were considered “very weak and vacillating, and were soon reduced to play a secondary part to the artful Metternich.”<sup>72</sup> And while ideas of republicanism and German unity were gaining traction across German-speaking Europe, Metternich and like-minded

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<sup>68</sup> Koerner, 14-15.

<sup>69</sup> Koerner, 37.

<sup>70</sup> Koerner, 37.

<sup>71</sup> Alexa Geisthövel, *Restauration und Vormärz: 1815-1847* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008), 14.

<sup>72</sup> Koerner, 37

reactionaries were determined to sweep aside any talk of a German federal state.<sup>73</sup>

Metternich's policies were bitterly opposed by nationalists, some of who had served in the War of Liberation and who, imbued with a sense of patriotic zeal, were less than pleased by the fact that the defeat of Napoleon had not led to a pan-German state.

Dissatisfied with what seemed like a continuation of the political status quo, the gymnastic organizations founded by Jahn shifted their attention away from ideas of liberation from French rule and toward thoughts of constitutional reform and the creation of a united German state. Jahn's gymnasts found common cause with the members of student *Burschenschaften*, fraternal organizations whose members were passionate nationalists.

The first *Burschenschaft* was founded at the University of Jena in 1815.<sup>74</sup>

Marching under the black, red, and gold battle standard of the Lützow Frei Corps, and adopting their slogan: "Ehre, Freiheit, und Vaterland," the Jena *Burschenschaft* and the *Burschenschaft* from the University of Giessen headed by Karl Follen began to agitate for a united German republic.<sup>75</sup> Karl Follen, widely recognized as an important figure among the membership of *Burschenschaften* across German-speaking Europe, was considered a particularly gifted poet and song writer, and his patriotic works dealt with topics that ranged from glorifying the War of Liberation to the creation of a German state.<sup>76</sup> His song titled "Deutsches Burschenlied" or German Student Song, is typical of its time, as patriotic intellectuals sought an outlet for their frustrations:

Storm, you sound of freedom,  
Storm, like the power of waves

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<sup>73</sup> Geisthövel, 14.

<sup>74</sup> Kitchen, 52.

<sup>75</sup> Kitchen, 52-53. Honor, Freedom, and Fatherland.

<sup>76</sup> Spevack, 25.

From the inside of a rocky cliff!  
Cowardly the bunch of enemies shivers,  
But our heart beats so warmly,  
Our youthful arm aches  
filled with a longing for action.<sup>77</sup>

Students like Follen were disappointed that the defeat of Napoleon had not led to a federal pan-German state, in fact, recent events convinced them that the German states were moving in the opposite direction.<sup>78</sup> Dissent turned to action in October of 1817, when the Jena and Giessener *Burschenschaften* organized the Wartburg Festival, a gathering of approximately 470 students and 300 nonstudents at the Wartburg castle high above the provincial city of Eisenach.<sup>79</sup> The students chose to gather on a date that marked both the fourth anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig and Martin Luther's releasing his ninety-five theses.<sup>80</sup> Both events held enormous symbolic importance to nationalists, as did the location of the event, for it was at the Wartburg that Martin Luther translated the Bible into German, which, in the eyes of nationalists, validated the German language and represented a rejection of Papal rule.

Metternich was horrified by news of the Wartburg Festival, which many contemporaries and modern Germans alike view as a pivotal moment in German history—the first tangible effort to unify the German states and shed the yoke of aristocratic rule. To this day, a thirty-three meter tall statue completed in 1902 to commemorate students who perished in the War of Liberation stands across the valley from the Wartburg, above the town of Eisenach in eastern Germany.<sup>81</sup> In modern times,

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<sup>77</sup> Spevack, 26.

<sup>78</sup> Geisthövel, 20.

<sup>79</sup> Geisthövel, 52.

<sup>80</sup> Geisthövel, 52.

<sup>81</sup> *Das Burschenschafts Denkmal: Ein Erlebnissreicher Besuch—Hoch Über Eisenach* (Eisenach: Denkmalverein Eisenach e.V.).

the monument also serves as a site to commemorate the Wartburg Festival. The gathering was followed up by acts of violence that forced Metternich to respond. When a follower of Karl Follen, Karl Sand, stabbed the writer August von Kotzebue to death because radical nationalists had deemed his writings un-Germanic, Metternich was provided with a rationale for instituting repressive measures designed to curb student radicalism.<sup>82</sup> Sand's eventual execution provided radical nationalists with a martyr, and a garden shed, built by the sympathetic executioner out of wood taken from the scaffolding, became a shrine visited by nationalists from across German-speaking Europe.<sup>83</sup> Metternich reacted by having prominent revolutionaries arrested and placed universities, long considered the hotbed of political dissent, under police surveillance.<sup>84</sup> The Carlsbad Decrees passed on September 10, 1819, banned student *Burschenschaften*, established a commission to expose revolutionaries, and instituted an aggressive system of censorship directed at newspapers and pamphlets.<sup>85</sup> According to the historian Martin Kitchen, as a result of the Carlsbad Decrees, "the sole function of the German Confederation was now to crush radical dissent."<sup>86</sup>

The ability of the reactionary leaders to put pressure on members or former members of *Burschenschaften* can be seen in the life of Theodor van Dreveldt, who left for New York on December 9, 1844, with the intention of settling near a friend outside of Hermann, Missouri.<sup>87</sup> Van Dreveldt had started his studies at the University of Bonn in

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<sup>82</sup> Kitchen, 53-54.

<sup>83</sup> Kitchen, 54.

<sup>84</sup> Kitchen, 55.

<sup>85</sup> Kitchen, 55.

<sup>86</sup> Kitchen, 55.

<sup>87</sup> Kronenberg, 36.

1831, where he immediately joined a banned student *Burschenschaft*.<sup>88</sup> And even though the academic senate deemed the organization non-political, possibly even vouching for its membership's loyalty in front of the Prussian king, ten students were expelled, and six, among them van Dreveltdt, were forced to withdraw from the university.<sup>89</sup> Eight months later, van Dreveltdt was reinstated after a police official vouched for him, writing that he had in the interim "led a life free from reproach."<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, his past membership in a banned student organization would have an effect on him even after he completed his studies in 1835, when his request to be allowed to take the civil service exam was rejected by an official of the Royal Regional Higher Court based on his past membership in a *Burschenschaft*.<sup>91</sup> Not only was his request rejected, van Dreveltdt was imprisoned at the citadel at Wesel while his case was being investigated.<sup>92</sup> Van Dreveltdt could consider himself lucky as the ringleaders of the *Burschenschaft* were sentenced to death, sentences which were later commuted to life in prison, while van Dreveltdt was given a sentence of three years in prison.<sup>93</sup> In the end, he had his sentence reduced to six months by the King of Prussia, and while he was given permission to take the civil service exam upon his release, young Theodor van Dreveltdt had lost interest in becoming a civil servant in the employ of the Prussian state and immigrated to America.<sup>94</sup>

Karl Follen was born in the small town of Romrod outside of Giessen in the state of Hesse-Darmstadt on September 4, 1796.<sup>95</sup> According to his friend and fellow

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<sup>88</sup> Kronenberg, 20.

<sup>89</sup> Kronenberg, 20.

<sup>90</sup> Kronenberg, 20.

<sup>91</sup> Kronenberg, 21.

<sup>92</sup> Kronenberg, 22.

<sup>93</sup> Kronenberg, 22.

<sup>94</sup> Kronenberg, 25.

<sup>95</sup> Münch, 41.



revolutionary Friedrich Münch, Karl was a gifted student who by the time he began to study law at the University of Giessen, had already mastered six languages.<sup>96</sup> At an early age, Karl was caught up in the patriotic fervor having been exposed to the writings of men like Jahn.<sup>97</sup> In the wake of the Battle of Leipzig, the seventeen-year-old Karl enlisted in a military unit made-up for the most part of fellow students; however, the French were already in full retreat and he never participated in any fighting.<sup>98</sup> After returning to his studies at the University of Giessen, Karl became politically active, and in order to protect themselves from conservative students who acted out against them, Karl and other student radicals formed the *Bund der Schwarzen*.<sup>99</sup> It was Karl's deeply-held conviction that in defeating the French, the German people had earned an "honorable place" among the nations of the world, and must be united into a "free Christian Germanic state."<sup>100</sup>

The Carlsbad Decrees of 1819, designed to eliminate revolutionary threats "to the social order," convinced Karl that all had been in vain.<sup>101</sup> In spite of his best efforts, the German people continued to exist in a state of political fragmentation. To Karl Follen and other liberal activists, the decrees implemented by the reactionary leaders of Austria and Prussia virtually guaranteed the disunity of the German states and political "slavery" to the aristocratic elite for the foreseeable future.<sup>102</sup> Historians can trace the desire of the Giessener Society to found a New Germany on the American frontier to this moment in

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<sup>96</sup> Münch, 43.

<sup>97</sup> Münch, 43.

<sup>98</sup> Münch, 43.

<sup>99</sup> Münch, 45.

<sup>100</sup> Münch, 47.

<sup>101</sup> Blackbourn, *History*, 91; Haupt, 117.

<sup>102</sup> Blackbourn, *History*, 91; Haupt, 117. "Statt Volkseinheit und allgemeiner gleicher Freiheit ist uns Volkszerstückelung und allgemeine gleiche Knechtschaft geworden"; Schroeder, 11.

time. The situation convinced Karl Follen that a unified state “on German soil had been made impossible.”<sup>103</sup> The time had come to shift the focus of their collective efforts to North America, where it was hoped that patriotic German immigrants would be able to maintain their German culture and create a new Fatherland unfettered by economic hardships and political repression.<sup>104</sup>

Karl Follen escaped prosecution for his revolutionary activities by fleeing first to Switzerland before immigrating to the United States, where he accepted the German language position at Harvard College to which Gustorf had hoped to be appointed.<sup>105</sup>

Karl Follen’s efforts on behalf of mass immigration ended when he secretly left Giessen so quickly that he did not even take the time to make his plans known to his family.<sup>106</sup>

His dream of establishing a German republic in America was taken over by his youngest brother Paul and their friend Friedrich Münch. In 1833, the two published a pamphlet titled *Invitation and Explanation in Regard to an Extensive Immigration from Germany to the North American Free States*, in which they made their broader goals known to the public.<sup>107</sup> In it they expressed the hope that their efforts would result in the “formation of a German state, which, of course, would necessarily have to be a part of the United States, but with the maintenance of a political system which guarantees the perpetuation

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<sup>103</sup> Haupt, 117.

<sup>104</sup> Haupt, 117.

<sup>105</sup> Haupt, 118.

<sup>106</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 11.

<sup>107</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, xiv. Bek’s detailed study of Herman Missouri was first published in the monograph series titled *Americana Germanica* in 1907. The pamphlet released by Münch and Follens was titled *Aufforderung und Erklärung in Betreff einer Auswanderung im Grossen aus Deutschland in die nordamerikanischen Freistaaten*.

of German customs, assures the German language and creates a genuine free and national mode of living.”<sup>108</sup>

Lofty indeed! When the first Giesseners departed for New Orleans under the leadership of Paul Follen on March 31, 1834, they believed that the western frontier would allow the German culture to flourish, and provide them with the space necessary to establish a new Germania for the benefit of future generations of Germans.<sup>109</sup> Münch, a prolific writer and poet, immortalized the excitement of the moment in his 1834 “Immigration Song,” the final verse of which sums up the hopes and dreams of the many thousands who set out for a new life along America’s western frontier:

German strength and German loyalty-  
Over the ocean they shall flee.  
Oh let them bloom anew,  
German strength and German loyalty  
On the Missouri you shall bloom!<sup>110</sup>

Münch was eventually able to create a life for himself as a free yeoman farmer after settling near the Duden farm in Warren County, Missouri. Paul’s fate, and that of the society as a whole, is far more emblematic of the thousands of countrymen who felt themselves pulled “by the nose” by Gottfried Duden and found Missouri to be not a land of unity and freedom, but of toil, disease, and death.<sup>111</sup> In a letter Paul wrote just a few short weeks before dying of malaria, he reflected on the realization that he would never be in a position to truly enjoy the fruits of his labor, expressing his hope that everything

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<sup>108</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, xv.

<sup>109</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 13; Julius Goebel, “Ein unveröffentlichter Brief von Paul Follen,” in *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter: Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois*, ed. Julius Goebel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915): 353.

<sup>110</sup> Münch, 3. “Deutsche Kraft und deutsche Treue- Ueber Meere flieh’n sie hin. O so blühe denn auf’s Neue, Deutsche Kraft und deutsche Treue, Am Missouri sollt ihr blühn! ”

<sup>111</sup> Hawgood, 111; Gustorf, 87.

he and his fellow immigrants had achieved would at least benefit their children.<sup>112</sup> Written in St. Louis on August 23, 1844, Paul went to great lengths to describe the hardships he had endured in his failed attempt to establish himself as a free, Germanic farmer on the American frontier. Financial difficulties had plagued him from the outset.<sup>113</sup> Even more devastating was a flood that destroyed everything he and his family owned. The rain-swollen river submerged his property under ten feet of water for five weeks, leaving his land effectively useless for agricultural purposes for many years.<sup>114</sup> Shortly before his death, he rented out his struggling farm, and moved his family to St. Louis where he had hoped to start a German-language newspaper. Like so many of his countrymen, the life of ease Duden had promised was not to be.<sup>115</sup> Instead, Paul, who at fifteen had volunteered for a Hessian infantry regiment only to be seriously wounded during the 1814-1815 campaign against Napoleon, suffered the sad fate of so many of his compatriots.<sup>116</sup> Ten years of effort on the unforgiving frontier and a lifetime advocating for his people ended in the throes of a violent malarial fever.

Paul Follen's early demise is a metaphor for the failure of the Giessener Society to affect the creation of a German state outside of Europe. Even though they had made themselves largely aware of the conditions they could expect, the idealistic members, chosen for their "uprightness, idealism and public-spirit," were wholly unprepared for life in Missouri and quickly dispersed into the four winds.<sup>117</sup> Many, like Paul, eventually

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<sup>112</sup> Goebel, 352-353.

<sup>113</sup> Goebel, 354.

<sup>114</sup> Goebel, 354.

<sup>115</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 14.

<sup>116</sup> Körner, 305-306.

<sup>117</sup> Hawgood, 111-112.

moved to St. Louis where they were assimilated into the growing German community.<sup>118</sup> Münch, on the other hand, would realize his dream of establishing himself as a successful yeoman farmer, becoming known far and wide for his great skill and love for viticulture.<sup>119</sup> Writing under the pseudonym “Far West,” Münch was published in German language newspapers and periodicals in subjects as far afoot as politics, philosophy, religion, and wine, leading to his becoming a household name among Germans across the United States.<sup>120</sup> More than his individual achievements as a leader in the German immigrant community, Münch’s writings on Missouri were widely published in the Old Country and helped facilitate a decade of migration to parts across America, particularly the American Midwest.<sup>121</sup> It would be easy to dismiss the efforts of Paul Follen and Friedrich Münch in light of their failure to achieve their lofty goals; however, the cumulative efforts of the Giessener Society cannot simply be unhitched from the larger phenomenon of German immigration to the state of Missouri. Largely overlooked by modern historians and state folklorists alike, the former members of the nationalist League of Black Brothers, the “Black Dutch” as they were called by their Anglo neighbors, played a role in convincing German immigrants to settle along the Missouri and Mississippi River Valleys and factored into the subsequent founding of the German settlement at Hermann, Missouri.<sup>122</sup>

As more and more Germans began to look across the Atlantic, the mass movement of Germanic people was not a new phenomenon. German-speaking Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century cannot be described as the “static society” past

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<sup>118</sup> Hawgood, 111.

<sup>119</sup> Muehl, 5.

<sup>120</sup> Muehl, 5.

<sup>121</sup> Hawgood, 114.

<sup>122</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 11; Hawgood, 115.

historians tended to imagine.<sup>123</sup> Instead, the migration of people settling new lands, including the vast swaths of marshlands reclaimed under Frederick the Great, led to a pioneer tradition built around a people's collective efforts to claim and cultivate frontier territories.<sup>124</sup> Duden's *Report* was in fact a continuation of a tradition of travel literature, which became increasingly popular as Germans sought an outlet for the travel and migration "mania" that swept across the Old Country during the German Enlightenment.<sup>125</sup> The desire to emigrate, to settle untamed frontier lands and bring them to heel, which men like Friedrich Münch and Gottfried Duden articulated, was an extension of decades of internal immigration that saw hundreds of thousands of desperately poor people from every corner of the German-speaking world migrating to Prussia, a state that advertised itself as a sort of utopian promised land.<sup>126</sup> By the time the members of the Giessener Society made plans to settle in North America, they were a manifestation of an impulse that had its roots in the massive movement of people initiated by Frederick The Great. Instead of looking within and clearing marshes and primeval forests, of turning internal frontiers into arable land, they shifted their gaze across the Atlantic Ocean, where the seemingly endless American West awaited the sweat of their labor. The American frontier was the new promised land, and while modern historians have shown that Frederick the Great was anything but a nationalist, he shared with the members of the Giessener Society a belief that space—land and the wealth held therein were the key to the survival of the German people. The parallels between land reclamation in Prussia and European efforts in North America are striking, something

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<sup>123</sup> Blackbourn, *Conquest of Nature*, 54.

<sup>124</sup> Blackbourn, *Conquest of Nature*, 50.

<sup>125</sup> Blackbourn, *Conquest of Nature*, 24.

<sup>126</sup> Blackbourn, *Conquest of Nature*, 51.

that was not lost on continental migrants who built their settlements at Warthebruch on lands reclaimed during the reign of Frederick the Great and named them Maryland, Florida, Philadelphia, and Charlestown.<sup>127</sup>

When the settlers at Warthebruch chose the names for their communities, they looked west and into the future for inspiration. The heirs to the Giesseners' dream of founding a New Germany in Missouri, the leadership of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, on the other hand, reached far into the past and chose to immortalize a man many viewed as a symbol of German freedom and unity. Their decision to name their settlement after Hermann (also known as Arminius), the legendary figure, who in 9 A.D. united the warring Germanic tribes long enough to effectively end Rome's plans to expand the reach of the empire east of the Rhine River, was a conscious action that carried enormous symbolic value and was expected to excite the imaginations of the German people.<sup>128</sup> Some historians have long tried to shelve Hermann among those figures of antiquity whose actions were of little or no historical consequence.<sup>129</sup> By the latter half of the eighteenth century however, Germans had resurrected the legendary figure and pointed to the destruction of three of Rome's finest legions deep in the Teutoburg forest as the moment when a unified German people stood and defended their language and culture—the very essence of their Germanic selves against the seemingly inexorable Roman advance into Germania magna.<sup>130</sup> To men like Karl Follen, this was

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<sup>127</sup> David Blackbourn, “‘Conquest from Barbarism’: Taming Nature in Frederick the Great's Prussia,” in *Nature in German History*, ed. Christof Mauch (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 14.

<sup>128</sup> Schroeder, *Sun of Freedom*, 19; Adolf E. Schroeder, “The Persistence of Ethnic Identity in Missouri German Communities,” (Germanic=America 1976: Symposium on German-American Literature and Culture, University of Kansas, October 8-9, 1976): 297.

<sup>129</sup> William Oldfather and Howard Canter, *The Defeat of Varus and the German Frontier Policy of Augustus* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1915), 19-20.

<sup>130</sup> Ralf-Peter Martin, *Die Varus Schlacht* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag GmbH, 2008), 299.

the “founding act of the German nation.”<sup>131</sup> The marshes Frederick the Great would later seek to tame proved Germany’s salvation. “Hemmed in by forests and marshes and ambushes” the Romans were slaughtered “almost to a man,” and in the years following Napoleon’s catastrophic defeat at Leipzig, patriotic Germans could not help but draw parallels between Rome’s defeat at the hands of the “long haired traitor” and the French debacle of October, 1813.<sup>132</sup>

The wish to immortalize the man the Roman historian Tacitus called the “deliverer of Germany” had its roots in centuries of legend and tradition that bound Germans through the common threads of a heroic past.<sup>133</sup> Constructing a statue of proportions fitting Hermann’s status as the savior of his people became the life’s work of Joseph Ernst von Brandel, who in September of 1836, while standing at the summit of the Grotenburg in what is now the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia realized in a moment of almost mystical inspiration that he had found the perfect place to construct his monument.<sup>134</sup> Donations, including money given by Germans who had immigrated to the United States, financed the project, which would take von Brandel thirty-nine years to bring to completion.<sup>135</sup>

The same month von Brandel stood atop the Grotenburg, the leaders of the Philadelphia Immigration Society chose J.G. Wesselhoeft and the newspaper he edited as the official means for making the society’s ideas public.<sup>136</sup> There could not have been a better choice than Wesselhoeft to represent the idealistic vision of the society. Described

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<sup>131</sup> Martin, 299.

<sup>132</sup> Vellius Paterculus, 2.119; Martin, 301; Ovid *Trista*, 4.2.19-4.2.47.

<sup>133</sup> Tacitus *Annals*, 2.88; Adrian Murdoch, *Rome’s Greatest Defeat: Massacre in the Teutoburg Forest* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2006), 169.

<sup>134</sup> Murdoch, 169-170.

<sup>135</sup> Murdoch, 170.

<sup>136</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 2.



as a man who directed all of his energies toward “the unification of the Germans,” Wesselhoeft and the German language newspaper *Alte and Neue Welt* played a key role in the success of the Philadelphia Society in establishing the German community of Hermann, Missouri.<sup>137</sup> The first reference to the society appeared in the May 7, 1836 edition of *Die Alte und Neue Welt* in which a writer who patriotically called himself simply “A German,” advocated for the organization of a settlement society.<sup>138</sup> The anonymous writer’s primary concern appears to have been the maintenance of German language and cultural mores in a far away and very foreign land, something the author believed could only be accomplished by creating ethnically German cocoons on the American frontier. The author also alluded to the fact that this was not an isolated impulse, writing that

for some time past at various localities in the United States societies have been organized in order to discuss the founding of a German city which should be the center of a German settlement in one of the western territories of this country. Such a settlement, in the case that it were to be realized by sincere, intelligent and industrious people, would certainly be a great gain for German language and customs, for German art and science, and would offer a welcome refuge, a new home to thousands who would gladly leave the old Fatherland if only they would not have to renounce the fine comfortable German national traits in the foreign land. It is therefore the wish of some inhabitants of this city to also organize such a society and, if possible, to unite it with the others into one large unit. For this purpose there will be held a meeting on May 21, at 8:00 P.M. in the Northern Exchange on Third Street opposite the northern lot of the Commissioner’s Hall, to which are invited not only those who have intentions of migrating to the distant west, but also all those who desire the maintenance and dissemination of German culture. It would be desirable that several would prepare discourses appropriate to the occasion.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 2. Gustav Körner said of Wesselhoeft that “all his endeavours were directed toward the unification of the Germans, to admonish them to the maintainance of their mother tongue, to make them strong and recognized in the political sphere.”

<sup>138</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 5.

<sup>139</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 5.

Although the meeting planned for May 21 never took place, the minutes of subsequent gatherings provide insight into the thinking of the embryonic society's most influential thinkers.<sup>140</sup> The minutes of the early meetings were prefaced with statements that appear to focus attention on the creation of a German city. For example, the minutes of the one meeting was prefaced as follows: "First session of the committee which assembled today in consequence of a general vote for the investigation of a more comprehensive illumination of the project for the founding of a new German city."<sup>141</sup> Even though the political climate was less than settled, Texas was seriously discussed as a proposed site for a German city during the earliest phases of the society.<sup>142</sup> However, some immigration proponents were considering a project that went far beyond the creation of a single German community. The desire to implement a project on a grander scale was summed up by Xavier Jenderich in his response to those who advocated for the creation of a German city designed to serve as the locus for mass immigration. Jenderich's words leave little room for doubt as to the future he envisioned and his opinion as to why earlier efforts to achieve the unification of German immigrants in the United States had failed:

For a long time the wishes and plans of us Germans concerned themselves with the founding of a new Germany, a new Fatherland, a secure refuge for us, our children and their descendants in the United States, so that we may live peacefully and independently within the circles of our families to an even greater extent than we have been accustomed in the past.

Up to the present these aspirations have remained unfulfilled due to our own fault. As already in our fatherland, and also here, numerous and accomplished organizations devoted to this purpose have always separated and dissolved and dispersed themselves here and there throughout the land. Two essential

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<sup>140</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 5.

<sup>141</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 6.

<sup>142</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 6.

requirements were always lacking: harmony, and the most important one of all—the means. But now a new star appears to have risen.<sup>143</sup>

Like the anonymous writer before him, Jenderich made it clear that the desire to found a German city or even a German state in North America was not an isolated impulse but was an idea that had gained traction among German thinkers in both the United States and back in the Old World. Unfortunately for the Settlement Society of Philadelphia, Jenderich's words were also prophetic. It would be a lack of internal unity and the inability of the society to steer a significant number of immigrants to Missouri that led to the society's eventual dissolution.

The planners moved quickly. On August 6, 1836, just three months after the first notice of intention written by our anonymous patriot who simply called himself “A German,” the *Alte and Neue Welt* published a call for a meeting in order to write the bylaws needed to organize and govern the society, which by August 27 appeared in draft form under the title “Constitution and By-laws of the German Settlement Society, founded in Philadelphia on August 27, 1836.”<sup>144</sup> The ultimate aspiration of the thinkers behind the Philadelphia Society, their desire to establish a New Germany in North America, was summed up in an address given by Dr. Wm. Schmoele before a crowd of enthusiastic supporters. After waxing poetically on the opportunity the society represented for the betterment of the German people, Dr. Schmoele, whose full name has been lost in the historical record, concluded by reminding his listeners to bear in mind that it was the duty of the settlement society and, therefore, of its membership as a whole, to work tirelessly for the unification of Germans across the United States and to direct their energies toward the creation of a new German Fatherland on the American

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<sup>143</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 7.

<sup>144</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 14, 26.

frontier.<sup>145</sup> The record of his speech delivered at an emotionally charged meeting held on August 27 has been saved for posterity and gives readers a glimpse into the mindset of these patriotic Germans who were intent on going to any length in order to found a New Germany. After briefly summing up what had been accomplished to that point, Dr. Schmoele turned his attention to the future goals of the society:

Yes, truly, German brethren, if ever something great and splendid shall arise for the German nation in the land of freedom, then this society must be it. It possesses the characteristic of magnificence. It is the ripe fruit of the present momentous spirit of the age—though it has been brought to the light that which had been lying hidden in all German souls and which had been darkly experienced.

Union of the Germans in North America, and thereby the founding of a New German Fatherland—that is the noble task of our Settlement Society! For this it must, for this it shall strive with all its might and with all its means.

In the fulfillment of the entire great plan each individual must find the establishment of his own fortune. Then the venture can, and must, and shall flourish to the glory and the welfare of the great German nation in America's bosom of freedom.<sup>146</sup>

According to historian William Bek, the Philadelphia Society was cause for excitement across the United States and German-speaking Europe. Certainly not all the press coverage was favorable; however, the amount of attention the press gave the society demonstrates that the public not only was aware of the society and its plans but was interested in following its progress.<sup>147</sup> The *Allgemeine Zeitung* of New York compared the difficulties and dangers German immigrants faced in the United States, dangers that led many to perish, to falling in “battle” to protect the Fatherland from foreign enemies,

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<sup>145</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 32-33.

<sup>146</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 32-33.

<sup>147</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 36.

while at the same time praising the efforts of the Philadelphia Society.<sup>148</sup> According to the editors of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, the creation of Hermann, Missouri, would

afford those living here an opportunity to draw closer to each other, to support and disseminate the elements of German life, to promote scientific efforts, to transplant from the Fatherland everything that is lofty and beautiful in that so far as it is suitable here, to assign a home to the German immigrant immediately upon his entry into the United States where he shall feel himself more at home than he would standing alone.”<sup>149</sup>

As the Philadelphia Society worked to agree on a suitable site for their settlement, Texas and Mexico were rejected due to political instability. Instead, it was decided to explore the possibility of settling in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, eastern Michigan, or western New York.<sup>150</sup> Agents were sent to explore each of these areas. As a result of their reports, Missouri was chosen as the location for the settlement in July of 1837.<sup>151</sup> Their decision was affected by the attention Missouri had garnered in recent years, attention that began with the Missouri Compromise and was fueled by books written by immigration propagandists like Gottfried Duden and later works by Traugott Bromme, which provided geographic and climactic information on Missouri that prospective immigrants interested in sustaining themselves through farming found informative.<sup>152</sup> The highly publicized Giessener Gesellschaft’s attempt at settling en mass in Missouri also turned the Philadelphia Society’s attention to the state, a state the leaders of the Philadelphia Society recognized

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<sup>148</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 37.

<sup>149</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 37.

<sup>150</sup> Hawgood, 116.

<sup>151</sup> Hawgood, 116.

<sup>152</sup> Hawgood, 116. See also Traugott Bromme, *Missouri, eine geographische-statistische-topographische Skizze für Einwanderer und Freunde der Länder und Völkerkunde* (Baltimore: Verlag der Buchner’schen Buchhandlung, 1835).

as having some disadvantages to prospective immigrants; however, these disadvantages appeared to be outweighed by the great advantages Missouri seemed to offer.<sup>153</sup>

The society quickly sent an agent who purchased almost 12,000 acres in Gasconade County, and began drawing up plans for a large city that would serve as the center of the New Germany they hoped would grow as more and more German settlers arrived, lured by land the society advertised for sale at very competitive prices.<sup>154</sup> In order to make their plans known to German immigrants, the society opened branches in Albany, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, Montreal, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, and propaganda leaflets were sent back for distribution in the Old Country.<sup>155</sup> These branches were created in order to inform recent immigrants, many of whom planned to settle in the Midwest, of the society's settlement in Hermann and of the potential the state of Missouri represented for immigrants, while propaganda being sent back to the Old World was designed to make the people of German-speaking Europe aware of the German settlement and the planned beginning of a New Germany on the American frontier.<sup>156</sup> The future city of Hermann was laid out and planned on a "grand scale" and the name Hermann, was chosen for this center of German culture on the American frontier as it was hoped the name would, like von Brandel's statue, excite the imaginations of patriotic Germans.<sup>157</sup>

Blindness robbed von Brandel of the chance to admire the result of a lifetime of effort dedicated to a monument that eventually towered over the German countryside.<sup>158</sup>

While work on the *Hermannsdenkmal* preceded with frustrating slowness, the town of

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<sup>153</sup> Hawgood, 116.

<sup>154</sup> Hawgood, 117.

<sup>155</sup> Hawgood, 117.

<sup>156</sup> Hawgood, 118.

<sup>157</sup> Hawgood, 117.

<sup>158</sup> Murdoch, 170-171.

Hermann, Missouri, quickly emerged on the land a society representative purchased at the confluence of the Missouri and Gasconade Rivers in September of 1837.<sup>159</sup> Within a year of the first immigrants' arrival, a visitor reported that new settlers were appearing daily, rapidly adding to a community of approximately 450 inhabitants living in 90 frame or stone houses, as it seemed that log homes were "no longer in style."<sup>160</sup> The *Alte and Neue Welt* was, by May of 1839, able to report that in addition to the growing number of private homes, Hermann boasted five stores, two inns, a post-office, had a school under construction, and that both Catholic and Lutheran churches were in the making.<sup>161</sup> As the United States spiraled toward the Civil War, Hermann's population exceeded 1,500 people, each eager to enjoy the prosperity the Gasconade County seat had to offer.<sup>162</sup> Surprisingly, Traugott Bromme's 1846 immigration guide does not make mention of Hermann, even as the author lauds the state as a destination for agriculturally-minded immigrants.<sup>163</sup> However, Bromme's 1866 guide does point out that viticulture had taken hold around the German settlements in Missouri, particularly "in and around the little town of Hermann."<sup>164</sup> In 1858, when Friedrich Münch crossed the Missouri to visit Hermann, he found himself in a bustling German frontier town that had become a stop on the Pacific Railroad, with a growing economy built upon a burgeoning wine industry that

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<sup>159</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 73, 75.

<sup>160</sup> Bek, *German Settlement Society*, 134.

<sup>161</sup> Hawgood, 117.

<sup>162</sup> Hawgood, 121.

<sup>163</sup> Traugott, Bromme, *Neuestes vollständigstes Hand und Reisebuch für Auswanderer aus allen Klassen und jedem Stande nach den vereinigten Staaten von Nord=Amerika, Ober=und Unter=Canada, Neu=Braunschweig, Neu=Schottland, Texas, Santo Thomas in Guatemala und den Mosquitoküsten* (Bamberg: Verlag der Buchner'schen Buchhandlung, 1846).

<sup>164</sup> Traugott, Bromme, *Hand und Reisebuch für Auswanderer und Reisende nach Nord-Mittel-und Südamerika (den gesammten Vereinigten Staaten, Texas, Canada, Bazilien, Mejiko u.s.w.* (Bamberg: Verlag der Buchner'schen Buchhandlung, 1866), 287.

reminded one of the Rhine and Mosel Valleys.<sup>165</sup> The neatly laid out vineyards covering the hills that rolled into the Missouri River were an unmistakable reminder that hearkened back to Hermann's ties to the Old World. Walking down tidy streets and among perfectly trimmed homes and businesses, Münch found himself at an epicenter of German culture and language on the American frontier, where it was easy to forget one was "not actually in Germany itself."<sup>166</sup>

Hermann survived the tumultuous years that pitted neighbor against neighbor and the German population against Anglo secessionists, who saw the Germans living among them as a dangerous threat to their ambition to join the Confederacy. Hard work and the efforts of a people intent on creating a life for themselves allowed Hermann to prosper while maintaining its distinctly German feel. Traveling across America in 1867, Friedrich Gerstäcker exited the train at Hermann, only to step into a world that was so German it was as if it had been "magically created" before his eyes.<sup>167</sup> Hermann might have sprung from the American frontier, but surrounded by all the cultural mores that reminded one of the Old World, it was as if the very air Gerstäcker breathed was German, and he reveled in the sound of children playing and speaking the language of their forefathers.<sup>168</sup> Gerstäcker, who would later publish an account of his adventures that took him across the United States and South America, noted that hardly anyone of non German descent lived in Hermann, whose German citizens had industriously managed to cultivate a thriving wine industry under the most difficult of circumstances.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Hawgood, 122.

<sup>166</sup> Hawgood, 122.

<sup>167</sup> Friedrich, Gerstäcker, "Friedrich Gerstäcker's Visit to Herman, Missouri in 1867," *Society for German-American Studies Newsletter* 28, no. 1 (March 2007): 3.

<sup>168</sup> Gerstäcker, 3.

<sup>169</sup> Gerstäcker, 4.



Viticulture, such an intrinsic part of the German psyche, had found roots in the rich soil of the Missouri Valley, and the first Weinfest celebrated in 1848 represented a turning point for a community seeking to define itself as distinctly German in a distant and often hostile environment.<sup>170</sup> The sound of cannon fire welcoming visitors from as far away as St. Louis shattered the peaceful quiet of the lowlands, announcing that while Missouri would never be turned into the German state so many had fervently hoped for, the German people and their culture had found a firm foothold in the American West.

Viticulture has remained a vital part of Hermann's identity. In 1874 the viticulturist, inventor, and photographer Edward Kemper, who was born to German parents in Gasconade, County, Missouri in 1871, took over the family farm called *Kemperhof* located just an hour's ride from Hermann.<sup>171</sup> German was spoken in the school he had attended at a time when the sort of "German cultural and social life and the economic prosperity envisioned by the members of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia were being achieved."<sup>172</sup> By 1897, Kemper had taken over his father's vineyards, and in 1900 he attended the University of Missouri, Columbia in order to learn the newest viticulture techniques, particularly how to grow new, more disease-resistant varieties of grapes.<sup>173</sup> However, Kemper was disappointed by what he learned while in Columbia, as growers in the Hermann area had already developed strains and techniques that were unknown to the experts teaching at the university.<sup>174</sup> Along with his wife Anna, whose parents had purchased a share in the Philadelphia Society for \$25.00 while

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<sup>170</sup> Anita M. Mallinckrodt, *From Knights to Pioneers: One German Family in Westphalia and Missouri* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 260.

<sup>171</sup> Anna, Kemper Hess, ed., *Little Germany on the Missouri: The Photographs of Edward J. Kemper, 1895-1920* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 2-3.

<sup>172</sup> Kemper, 3.

<sup>173</sup> Kemper, 3.

<sup>174</sup> Kemper, 3.

in Montreal, Kemper developed his company “into a thriving business that shipped thousands of grape cuttings to customers throughout the United States and beyond.”<sup>175</sup> Years of hard work and dedication paid off for Edward Kemper as his name and that of his business, Hermann Grape Nurseries, had the finest reputation not only in the United States and Canada, but in Europe and Mexico as well.<sup>176</sup> Sixty years after the first seventeen settlers survived their first winter in Missouri intent on founding the settlement of Hermann, German culture was alive and well, thriving in fact, along the banks of the Missouri and Gasconade Rivers.<sup>177</sup>

According to historian John Hawgood, Hermann remained “essentially German in appearance, language, and culture” into the twentieth century.<sup>178</sup> When William Bek visited Herman in 1907, he found it had changed little in comparison to the descriptions provided by earlier visitors.<sup>179</sup> Hermann and the surrounding area were still referred to as Little Germany, and German was still the language generally in use by most of the inhabitants of the little town that continued to serve as a center of German culture so far from the Old Country.<sup>180</sup> Certainly signs of Americanization had begun to make themselves seen as evidenced by Edward Kemper’s decision to give his business an American name, but this process of Americanization was relatively slow in coming until the First World War changed the dynamic for German immigrants and their offspring across the United States.<sup>181</sup> In the decades following the war, Hermann morphed into a sort of hybrid community. The older inhabitants still tended to speak German amongst

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<sup>175</sup> Kemper, 5.

<sup>176</sup> Kemper, 5.

<sup>177</sup> Hawgood, 117.

<sup>178</sup> Hawgood, 121.

<sup>179</sup> Hawgood, 123.

<sup>180</sup> Hawgood, 123.

<sup>181</sup> Hawgood, 121.

themselves, and as late as 1929 one could spend a day in Hermann without hearing a word of English being spoken.<sup>182</sup> However, photos published in Anna Kemper Hess's *Little Germany on the Missouri: The Photographs of Edward J. Kemper, 1895-1920* show businesses as early as the turn of the century bearing names and advertising their services in English, something that certainly would have disappointed the founders and intellectual leaders of the Philadelphia Society. Hermann, while rooted in its German past, was obviously a community struggling to find its identity.

Today, one does not need to look far in Hermann to recognize a community that takes great pride in its ties to the past, which include long-forgotten German patriots who hoped their community would grow into the center of a New Germany and serve as an example for the fractious German-speaking states to follow on their road to political unification. Modern Hermann embraces its German heritage, proclaiming itself the "Heart of Missouri Wine Country," and places great stock in its Old World charm and historic past.<sup>183</sup> What has been glossed over in the weekly wine festivals and German celebrations is the memory of the patriotic immigrants who risked so much in the hopes of advancing the ideal of a unified German people and arrived in America not with the intention of becoming American but to establish an outlet on the Missouri where the German culture might "bloom" anew.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Hawgood, 124.

<sup>183</sup> "Historic Hermann, Missouri," <http://www.hermannmissouri.com/> (accessed April 15, 2010).

<sup>184</sup> Münch, 3.

### CHAPTER 3: “IMMIGRATION FEVER”: THE EFFECT OF DUDEN’S WORK ON THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE FROM GERMAN-SPEAKING EUROPE TO THE UNITED STATES

During the ten years Julius Gustorf lived in Frankfurt before returning to the United States in 1834, he was not only anxious to return to his future wife, he also expressed his impatience at having to wait to complete a task he had been “scheming” about for some time.<sup>1</sup> According to his biographer, Fred Gustorf, this scheme involved making a detailed examination of the various Duden settlements that had been springing up in Missouri since Gottfried Duden had published his immigration guide in 1829.<sup>2</sup> Like thousands of other Germans disenchanted with political and economic conditions across German-speaking Europe, Julius Gustorf had read Duden’s *Report*, and he seemed intent on investigating conditions in Missouri as described by Duden. Gustorf’s interest in examining the Duden settlements and his desire to emigrate were certainly affected by an excitement that was sweeping across Europe—an excitement at the possibilities emigration seemed to present for those hungering for the opportunity to better themselves and their families’ lot in life in a distant land far-removed from the problems that continued to plague the people of German-speaking Europe in the wake of the Napoleonic occupation and Wars of Liberation.

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<sup>1</sup> Gustorf, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Gustorf, 9.

According to Henriette Bruns, who settled in Missouri in 1836, her husband's restless determination to emigrate to the United States was fed in large part by an excitement that was "in the air," and emigration had become a topic of almost constant conversation in her household and among friends and family.<sup>3</sup> Her husband, Dr. Bernhard Bruns, had read the Duden report, and while they were not emigrating to America to "seek a glittering fortune," Dr. Bruns' decision was based on widespread poverty and his unhappiness with "having to extort his fees" from patients who did not even have the means to properly feed their families.<sup>4</sup> Henriette, or Jette as she was known by her friends and family, was not as enthusiastic about the prospect of leaving her ancestral home, friends, and her family behind. However, recognizing that her husband had caught the "emigration fever" that was in the air, a fever "furthered by reports of Duden, von Martels, Löwe, and others," Jette, heart heavy with the thought of leaving those who meant the most to her behind, agreed to accompany her husband to the newly established German settlement of Westphalia near the site of the Duden farm in Gasconade County, Missouri.<sup>5</sup> Jette was full of trepidation and sorrow as she prepared to board a ship bound for the New World yet, as frightened as she was, she wrote her brother one last letter in which she told him that she was determined to

board that ship courageously. Since I have left all of you, the land of my home is far away. What is a strange world to me? Why should Bremen fascinate me? Only Westphalia drew tears from me that will never dry again. I have no Fatherland anymore. The wide world stands open to me!<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Adolf E. Schroeder and Carla Schulz-Geisberg, eds., *Hold Dear as Always: Jette, a German Immigrant Life in Letters*, trans. Adolf E. Schroeder (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Schroeder, *Hold Dear*, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Schoeder, *Hold Dear*, 46, 64, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Schoeder, *Hold Dear*, 64.

Jette was not excited at the prospect of leaving her home for a strange and uncertain life on the American frontier, but she felt compelled to submit to the wishes of her husband, whom she loved dearly. Her worst fears, fears that come to light when one reads her most intimate thoughts in letters penned to her family in the Old Country and in an autobiography she was never able to complete, would come to fruition, for in Missouri Jette would not discover the *Schlaraffenland*, the mythical land of plenty so many who read the works of men like Duden expected.<sup>7</sup> Instead, she found herself thrust into a world of loneliness, difficulty, and heartache, into a land that would claim her husband at an early age due to disease and also take her son, who like so many German immigrants and their sons perished while serving the Union cause during the American Civil War.<sup>8</sup>

Called “the most important piece of literature in the history of German immigration” by one historian, how great a role Duden’s writings played in motivating immigrants to settle in Missouri remains a matter of debate.<sup>9</sup> Like New England abolitionists who responded to the Missouri Compromise by publishing literature designed to make internal immigrants aware of the possibilities Kansas represented for would-be settlers, Duden’s work created awareness among the desperate people of German-speaking Europe as to the possibility of emigrating to Missouri or the western United States in general.<sup>10</sup> According to historian James Goodrich, more than 150 works of immigration literature were published in German-speaking Europe between 1827 and 1856.<sup>11</sup> Goodrich argues that Duden’s *Report* “significantly influenced German

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<sup>7</sup> Schoeder, *Hold Dear*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Schoeder, *Hold Dear*, 194, 188.

<sup>9</sup> Hansen, 149.

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy Neely, *The Border Between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 39-40.

<sup>11</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, vii.

emigration before 1860 and represented an outstanding example of one German's attempt to heighten his countrymen's awareness of American opportunities."<sup>12</sup> According to Goodrich,

the book's timing, format, comprehensiveness, literary qualities, and idyllic descriptions of pioneer farming in Missouri all combined to make it an instant success. Discontented individuals in Germany and Switzerland enthusiastically read it, organized emigration societies in accordance with Duden's advice, and began their preparations for an Atlantic crossing. After they settled in the United States, these people's letters and reports mailed home to relatives and friends, though not always supportive of Duden's findings, contributed to the popularity of his book and helped broaden its circulation.<sup>13</sup>

Historian Walter Kamphoefner, on the other hand, seems to minimize the effect immigration societies and guides and Duden in particular, had in the overall system of transatlantic migration. He points out that his research has found few references to Duden in letters immigrants wrote to their families in Germany.<sup>14</sup> Kamphoefner, who is certainly among the leading scholars in the field today, has a multitude of books and articles to his credit, some written in conjunction with another leading scholar, Walter Helbich. His great-great-grandparents took "the much more arduous Duden route" and traveled overland in order to settle in Missouri, so it is no surprise that Kamphoenfer has focused the attention of some of his most valuable works on the state, including his 1986 study entitled *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri*, in which he makes use of a case study in order to trace the system of chain migration that resulted in such a strong German presence in Missouri during the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

In the spring of 2009, Kamphoefner published an article titled "Immigrant Epistolary and Epistemology: On the Motivators and Mentality of Nineteenth-Century

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<sup>12</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, vii.

<sup>13</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, viii.

<sup>14</sup> Kamphoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 39.

<sup>15</sup> Kamphoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 38.

German Immigrants” in the *Journal of American Ethnic History*. His article is a thoughtful repudiation of David Gerber’s 2006 book *Authors of Their Lives*, in which Gerber questions the usefulness of letters as sources to be used by historians. More than that, Gerber’s work is “reminiscent of Oscar Handlin’s *Uprooted*” as he describes the immigrants arriving in the New World as being in the throws of a “deep psychological crisis,” which left them struggling to maintain their sense of self in a strange world cut off from all that was familiar to them.<sup>16</sup> Kamphoefner’s article convincingly demonstrates that immigrant letters are an invaluable resource for the responsible and thoughtful scholar. He goes on to argue that immigrants were rational agents of their destiny, who made use of letters written by those who had preceded them in order to reduce the very real risks associated with immigration by “drawing upon personal ties and community resources to cushion their entry into a new society and economy.”<sup>17</sup>

One resource that was available to many immigrants of all classes were the various guidebooks, including Gottfried Duden’s *Report*, which enjoyed wide circulation across German-speaking Europe at a time when the population was thirsty for any information concerning emigration to the New World. While conceding that “emigration guidebooks and propaganda did have an appreciable influence on emigration,” Kamphoefner limits this influence to the “outset of the movement.”<sup>18</sup> Kamphoefner goes on to write that both American historians and their German counterparts tend “to give guidebooks and colonization projects more attention than they deserve.”<sup>19</sup> In his effort to demonstrate the effect letters written back to the Old Country had on either spurring or

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<sup>16</sup> Kamphoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 34.

<sup>17</sup> Kamphoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Kamphoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 37.

<sup>19</sup> Kamphoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 37.



retarding the flow of immigrants, Kamphoefner places too much emphasis on the letters themselves. In doing so, he undervalues the manner in which books like Gottfried Duden's *Report* played their part in informing an eager readership about the possibilities the American frontier held for potential immigrants.

Walter Kamphoefner is of course correct in pointing out that immigrants went to great efforts to educate themselves so that they might have a "realistic and differentiated picture of America before they set out," and that this information was gleaned in part from letters written by family members and friends who preceded them to the New World.<sup>20</sup> It must be pointed out, however, that the fact that one can find only few mentions of immigration guidebooks, including Duden's, in the over 7,000 letters being maintained at the Nordamerika-Briefsammlung currently archived at the Forschungsbibliothek in Gotha, Germany, is by no means a true indicator of the readership these works enjoyed, as argued by Kamphoefner.<sup>21</sup> The source guide made available by the Nordamerika-Briefsammlung and a week's work at the archive demonstrate that only a fraction of the letters being maintained there are relevant to a discussion of the effect Duden's work had on immigration to Missouri. For example, of the 708 sets of letters listed on the source guide, only 80 were penned between the years 1830-1850—the years one would expect the Duden *Report* to be at the height of its popularity.<sup>22</sup> Of the 80 sets of letters written during that time frame, only 14 sets were sent to the Old World from the state of Missouri.

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<sup>20</sup> Kamphoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 44.

<sup>21</sup> Kamphoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 39.

<sup>22</sup> This online source guide is available at the Nordamerika-Briefsammlung, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha website at: <http://www.auswandererbriefe.de/>.

Various travel diaries written by period witnesses to the immigration phenomenon point to a very different conclusion than that drawn by Kamphoefner. It is not the intention of this work to exaggerate the effect travel literature in general and Gottfried Duden's work in particular had in directing masses of people from across German-speaking Europe to the United States. However, writers like did Duden did play their part in the process of transatlantic migration. The works of travel writers who visited Missouri or settled there themselves subsequent to the publication of Duden's *Report* lead to the conclusion that Gottfried Duden did in fact have a marked effect on generations of immigrants seeking new lives on the American frontier.

As a starting point, it is worth considering the amount of criticism to which Duden was subjected as an oblique measure of the influence he and his travel guide exerted on early immigration to Missouri. Gustorf made it clear that it was his intention to study conditions in Missouri "so highly praised by Duden," yet at every turn, Gustorf made note of German immigrants of all classes and hailing from "all parts of Germany," who complained of having been "enticed" by Duden's travel "propaganda."<sup>23</sup> On October 15, 1835, while staying in a boarding house outside St. Louis operated by a German named Atorf, Gustorf wrote of having met

many people who came here from all parts of Germany, enticed to this country by the propaganda of Duden and Gerke. Many of them bought farms when they first arrived and have since sold or rented them if they had an opportunity to do so, because they lost their money and their health trying to make a success of farming. Their stories of hardship and suffering are all the same and are too numerous to describe here.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Gustorf, 122, 68.

<sup>24</sup> Gustorf, 68, 10. "Gerke" refers to Dr. Henry C. Gerke whose writings the author of this piece was unable to locate.

Gustorf's October 15 entry not only provides some insight into the manner in which immigrants from across German-speaking Europe were aware of and had been "enticed" to the United States by the works of travel writers and immigration proponents, including Gottfried Duden. His words also speak to the manner in which Duden affected the movement of people to Missouri and of unfulfilled hopes and expectations, wretched poverty, and death far from the world they had left behind. Gustorf continued by writing that

wherever I go, Duden and Gerke are maligned, and I have been told how people who settled near Duden's farm destroyed the property because of sheer exasperation. Many people who were able to recover some cash from the sale of their farms, fed up with farming and farm life, have gone back to Europe, cured of all extravagant ideas of American freedom, culture, and fellowship in the West. The only people who can better themselves in this country are the common classes, day laborers, and craftsmen. Despite their complaints about the climate, they can earn a living with their hands, and as time passes they can accumulate enough money to buy a piece of property. They are satisfied as long as they have enough to eat.

More than 300 German people died in this town last year. Entire families died within a few days. I see many people who still bear the signs of illness on their faces.<sup>25</sup>

Gustorf never made clear what he proposed to do with his journal upon its completion. Perhaps he meant to publish it, to add his voice to those who, in his opinion, had been far too gentle in pointing out the flaws in Duden's romanticized accounts of life on the American frontier.<sup>26</sup> We can only speculate, but his narrative voice makes it clear that it was written for an audience—perhaps to serve as a warning to an enthusiastic German readership that continued to call for travel literature from around the world.

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<sup>25</sup> Gustorf, 74.

<sup>26</sup> Gustorf, 79. He is particularly critical of Gustav Körner, who published a pamphlet against Duden, which Gustorf believed did not go far enough in attacking Duden for misleading their countrymen.

Like Gustorf, Gustavus Körner immigrated to the United States, and in the course of his extensive travels, he also visited the various settlements in Missouri that, in Körner's opinion, were the result of Germans being "so strongly invited" by Duden's report.<sup>27</sup> Toward the end of his days, the children of Körner urged their elderly father to leave a written record of his long and eventful life. The resulting autobiography was not intended for publication, but was designed as a personal history to be passed on to his family.<sup>28</sup> In the course of his visit to Missouri, Körner became convinced that Duden's

was an unsafe guide and had been the cause of so many serious disappointments that I was determined to counteract in some measure the effects of his publication by writing an extended review of it. As Duden was a highly respectable man, whose errors were owing to insufficient experience and to the fact that he was a man without a family, with ample means and of a rather sanguine and optimistic character, my critique was not intended to be a capricious and hostile one. I am sorry to say, [sic] however, that in a later publication of his concerning his views on the United States he took occasion in the preface to complain of my review, and returned my kindness with silly and reprehensive remarks, which were the best proof I had hit the mark.<sup>29</sup>

Körner's review of Duden's *Report* titled *Beleuchtung des Duden'schen Berichtes über die westlichen Staaten Nordamerikas, von Amerika aus* was published in 1834, and the fact that he went to such great effort to write and publish a critique of Duden's work speaks to the effect Körner believed the propagandist was having on luring German immigrants to Missouri. Körner, a proponent of emigration himself, believed that emigration would become a necessity if the economic and political woes plaguing the German states could not be solved.<sup>30</sup> He felt compelled to correct information put forward by Duden, information he believed painted an unrealistic picture of conditions in

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<sup>27</sup> Koerner, 325.

<sup>28</sup> Koerner, v.

<sup>29</sup> Koerner, 325-326.

<sup>30</sup> Gustav, Körner, *Beleuchtung des Duden'schen Berichtes über die westlichen Staaten Nordamerikas, von Amerika aus*, transcribed by Michael W. Beatty (Frankfurt am Main: Karl Körner, 1834), 4.

Missouri precisely because he believed Duden's *Report* was being read by, and influencing the decision-making process, of so many people of all classes who were considering emigrating to the United States.<sup>31</sup> Of the many books published concerning immigration Duden's *Report* had, according to Körner, the greatest influence among those of the educated classes.<sup>32</sup> However, it was not just among the educated elite that Duden's *Report* was doing its work. Advocates of mass emigration had thousands of copies printed and distributed among those without the means to acquire a copy for themselves in order to inform them as to the conditions they could expect to find on their arrival in the New World.<sup>33</sup>

Körner objected to the overly "flattering and vividly colored" language Duden used in describing Missouri to would-be immigrants, citing for example one instance of Duden's propensity to stray into the world of literary hyperbole:

It will not and cannot be believed in Europe how easily and agreeably one lives in these western countries. It sounds strange, too fabulous, to be believed, that such regions of the world exist, which have so long been banished to the world of faeries.<sup>34</sup>

Beyond the unrealistically positive spin Duden put on conditions in Missouri, Körner pointed out that Duden's portrayal of Missouri's climate, specifically the mildness of winters, did not do justice to reality as Körner experienced it during his stay.<sup>35</sup> More than with these objections to Duden's work, Körner "aroused Mr. Duden's ire," with his "unqualified condemnation" of Duden's lengthy attempt to rationalize the institution of

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<sup>31</sup> Körner, *Beleuchtung*, 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> Körner, *Beleuchtung*, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Körner, *Beleuchtung*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Koerner, 326.

<sup>35</sup> Koerner, 327.

slavery, something Körner felt compelled to denounce “in the strongest terms.”<sup>36</sup> Körner would live through the American Civil War, and late in life he recognized how prophetic his words had been when he criticized Duden for denying “that the slavery question was likely to divide the Union; I on the contrary, prophesized in my “Review” that it would lead to secession and necessarily to a bloody civil war.”<sup>37</sup> Körner went to great lengths to refute the claims Duden made in his *Report*, although Gustorf would have said that Körner’s polite and respectful tone and carefully worded repudiation did not go far enough. It is worth considering the very fact that men like Gustorf and Körner traveled to, and wrote specifically about those who had been affected by the Duden *Report*, as a measure of its readership. Historian James Goodrich put it best when he wrote that “while the merits of Duden’s ‘*Report*’ can be argued, there can be no question that he effectively promoted Missouri as a place of unlimited potential.”<sup>38</sup>

In James W. Goodrich’s 1981 article titled “Gottfried Duden: A Nineteenth-Century Promoter,” the author gives his readers an idea of the reverence with which many immigrants viewed Duden and his work. That Duden did have an effect on those who read his *Report* can be demonstrated by the fact that his abandoned farm became a destination for immigrants who felt compelled to make a pilgrimage to see it with their own eyes. Goodrich quotes one Herman Steines, who was just one of thousands who “read Duden’s report with romantic fervor.”<sup>39</sup> Steines’ words reflect not only his personal enthusiasm for Duden’s *Report*, but also give historians an idea of the wide readership the travel guide enjoyed and that the Duden farm had become a site many

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<sup>36</sup> Koerner, 327.

<sup>37</sup> Koerner, 327.

<sup>38</sup> Goodrich, *Gottfried Duden*, 145.

<sup>39</sup> Goodrich, *Gottfried Duden*, 145.

German immigrants affected by Duden's work simply had to visit for themselves. To many, the Duden farm had become a veritable Mecca worth the hardship a pilgrimage to visit it entailed. Of his visit to the farm, Steines wrote that

we finally went to the adjoining farm of Gottfried Duden...full of certain yearning and with beating hearts. The cause of this agitation is known to every one in the Dutchy of Berg. Now we stood on this historic spot. We saw the hut in which he had lived, the half finished log house, the shade walk to the spring, Lake Creek, the courtyard, the field and finally the forest so fantastically described by Duden...Many a German had been at that place in the last four to six years, in order to see where and how that one lived, who with magic powers had lured hordes of sons of Germany from their dearly beloved, but oppressed and mistreated fatherland, who with magic pen had clothed this wilderness with such a pleasing and attractive garment, and who had banished the fear of those who thought this to be a country of Indians and beasts. After we had tasted the water of the spring and of Lake Creek, we went into the hut and recited some passages from Duden's letters which we carried with us.<sup>40</sup>

Herman Steines' words are important on a number of levels. Obviously he demonstrates the veneration he and his companions had for Duden and his *Report*. However, he also makes it clear that they were not the first to make the pilgrimage to the Duden farm. More important is his reference to the Dutchy of Berg where he indicates that Duden had become a household name and that his *Report* had become a source of great interest and excitement among the general population.

Herman Steines is almost certainly "Hermann," the brother of Frederick Steines who immigrated to Missouri in 1834.<sup>41</sup> Frederick already had family waiting for him in St. Louis when he made the journey to Baltimore with members of his immediate and extended families, as well as friends from his and surrounding communities.<sup>42</sup> Before boarding the *Jefferson*, Steines reflected on his reasons for leaving and on his hopes for

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<sup>40</sup> Goodrich, *Gottfried Duden*, 145.

<sup>41</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, "The Followers of Duden," *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 526, 519.

<sup>42</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, "The Followers of Duden," *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 519.

the future. Frederick seems to have been motivated by the continued political repression of the German people who were forced to live under the thumb of “crowned despots.”<sup>43</sup> Greatly influenced by the words of Gottfried Duden, Steines and his party hoped that in saying farewell to Germany they could look forward to a bright future “in the still seclusion of the Missouri forests, where nature still reigns supreme,” for “there it must be better.”<sup>44</sup>

Taken as a whole, the letters of Frederick Steines are one of the most fascinating and illuminating sources in the form of letters available to scholars interested in German immigration to Missouri during the nineteenth century. Frederick writes of his and his compatriots’ enthusiasm for the New World and the hopes they had for a better life. He also gives readers an idea of how the system of chain immigration functioned, when he describes how his party was greeted in New Orleans by his brother Hermann and his cousin Greef, who had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of Frederick and his party.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, his is also a tale of tragedy, as shortly after arriving in Baltimore, Frederick would lose all four of his children and his wife to cholera.<sup>46</sup> Frederick was quick to blame the “filth of American cities” where there is “nowhere a trace of

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<sup>43</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 521.

<sup>44</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 521.

<sup>45</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 526.

<sup>46</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 527-528.



sanitation.”<sup>47</sup> In his mind it was “no wonder that one sees the hearse almost continuously on the streets during the hot months.”<sup>48</sup>

Even in the face of his “nameless grief,” Frederick had to go on with life in a new and perfectly strange world.<sup>49</sup> He purchased a 115-acre farm, including all the livestock and farm implements for \$1000.<sup>50</sup> Immediately thereafter, he purchased an additional forty-three acres of government land that adjoined his farm for \$1.25 an acre, after which he quickly began construction on his home.<sup>51</sup> The necessities of frontier life required he find a second wife, and on December 2, 1835, he married Bertha Herminghaus, who, along with her parents, had immigrated with Frederick and whom he described to his relatives in the Old Country as a “cheerful girl, pretty, healthy and strong.”<sup>52</sup>

What is important to this essay is the information that can be gleaned from Frederick’s letters in regard to Duden’s *Report* and the influence it had on the system of mass immigration to the American frontier taking place during the early decades of the nineteenth century. According to Frederick, by 1834, an “exceedingly great number of Germans” were arriving daily in Baltimore and other cities along the eastern seaboard.<sup>53</sup> While still in Baltimore, Frederick was inundated with Germans, who “exhausted

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<sup>47</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 528.

<sup>48</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 528.

<sup>49</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 528.

<sup>50</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 534.

<sup>51</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 534.

<sup>52</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 540.

<sup>53</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 523.

themselves in lamentations and deprecations regarding their lot,” and who said of Duden: “That man has much to answer for, he has led many people into misery.”<sup>54</sup> Frederick however, was unflinching in his resolve to follow the advice of Gottfried Duden, and determined to “hasten as quickly as possible to the lower Missouri.”<sup>55</sup>

From beginning to end, Frederick’s letters are filled with references to Gottfried Duden’s *Report*. It is also apparent that he was writing for readers who had read Duden’s work and were considering emigrating themselves. For example, in one letter penned in 1835, Frederick reminded his readers that “Duden’s advice on page 237 in regard to having a certain surplus for a better dwelling is well to be heeded.”<sup>56</sup> In a later letter Frederick admonishes his readers to “disregard Duden’s statement in regard to the ease in which an American farmer lives. Looking on and participating in a piece of work are two different things. Duden’s lack of actual experience and his romantic tendency are the reasons why he has made so many mistakes in regard to outdoor life.”<sup>57</sup> By July of 1835, Frederick was advising those considering emigrating to Missouri to steer clear of buying land near the Duden farm as the “influx of Germans thither” had increased the price of land to as much as ten dollars an acre while good land in other parts of Missouri was still to be had at \$1.25 an acre.

Frederick’s letters never cease to mention Duden’s *Report*. In some cases he pointed to the accurate manner in which Duden portrayed conditions in Missouri. More

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<sup>54</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 524.

<sup>55</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 524.

<sup>56</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 541.

<sup>57</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, “The Followers of Duden,” *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1921): 665-666.

often than not, Frederick wrote about how his experiences were inconsistent with the expectations he had brought with him, expectations that resulted from settling in Missouri based on Duden's immigration guide. In one letter alone, Frederick makes six references to Duden's *Report*, most of them explaining the difficulties of frontier life in contrast to Duden's glowing and obviously overly optimistic portrayal. Frederick, who had been so enthusiastic about what he expected to find in Missouri, sent a stark warning to those still considering emigrating based on Duden's guide:

When all is summed up, it must be said that the state of Missouri is no Utopia, [sic] as Europeans commonly assume, and that there is no thought of Utopian [sic] living. My friends, I know why I like it better in America than in Germany, but I pray you do not come here, for you are not I, and I am not you.<sup>58</sup>

Even as letters praising or lambasting Duden were arriving in the Old World, Duden's *Report* continued to be read by would-be immigrants across German-speaking Europe. Duden's *Report* was published numerous times, beginning in 1829. It was rereleased with revisions in 1834, while at the same time his work was continually being reprinted by numerous immigration proponents for distribution among the poorer classes. In 1832 and 1835, the Swiss Emigration Society also released Duden's *Report* to a responsive audience of German-speaking Swiss.<sup>59</sup> In 1830, the men who would become the leaders and driving force behind a colonization society intent on creating a New Switzerland on the American frontier came to possess a copy of Duden's *Report*.<sup>60</sup> Influenced by his book, members of the Koepfli and Suppiger families left their homes in

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<sup>58</sup> The letters of Frederick Steines as published by, William G. Bek, "The Followers of Duden," *The Missouri Historical Review* 15, no. 3 (April 1921): 542-543.

<sup>59</sup> Goodrich, *Gottfried Duden*, 132.

<sup>60</sup> John C. Abbot, forward, introduction, and prologue to *Journey to New Switzerland: Travel Account of the Koepfli and Suppiger Family to St. Louis on the Mississippi and the Founding of New Switzerland in the State of Illinois*, by Joseph Suppiger, Salomon Koepfli, and Kaspar Koepfli, edited by John C. Abbot, translated by Raymond J. Spahn (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), xxix.

the town of Sursee in the canton of Lucerne and headed for the state of Missouri where they hoped to establish a Swiss colony.<sup>61</sup> And while economic issues certainly affected their thinking, their primary reasons for leaving appear to have been based on political considerations, for as

middle-class Swiss, they realized the manifest absurdity of a loose confederation of twenty-two cantons, each with its own militia, currency, and economic regulations, all stifling to commerce, industry, and agriculture, which increasingly had to be competitive with countries where such reforms had been achieved.<sup>62</sup>

The fifty-seven-year old Dr. Kaspar Koepfli and his nephew Joseph Suppiger, both liberal-minded and well-educated and therefore atypical of the common Swiss immigrant, were the intellectual movers behind this well-organized attempt to found a Swiss colony in the New World.<sup>63</sup> It was their intention to find and settle in a suitable location so that further members of their families and other Swiss who learned of their enterprise could join them at a later date.<sup>64</sup> With this in mind, they maintained a detailed record of their journey that was intended to augment the Duden *Report* on which they had based their venture.<sup>65</sup> Their journals and letters were sent back to aid subsequent immigrants as they made their journey to the New World, and as they made mention of Duden's work sixteen times in their travel report, "there can be little doubt that Duden's book was decisive in persuading the founders of New Switzerland to emigrate," and "virtually everything Duden wrote reinforced their high expectations for a prosperous future in America."<sup>66</sup> In Kaspar Koepfli's "Farewell Letter," Duden's influence is apparent as Koepfli's words echo Duden's sentiments concerning the ills the people of

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<sup>61</sup> Abbot, xxv.

<sup>62</sup> Abbot, xxv, xxvii.

<sup>63</sup> Abbot, xxv.

<sup>64</sup> Abbot, xxv.

<sup>65</sup> Abbot, xxix.

<sup>66</sup> Abbot, xxix, xxx.

German-speaking Europe were faced. His emotionally-charged farewell is worth quoting at some length as it not only gives insight into the reasons why they had chosen to leave their ancestral homes, it also sheds light on the influence Gottfried Duden had on their decision. And while he opened his “Farewell Letter” by outlining the political and religious “despotism” he and his companions hoped to escape by immigrating to the United States, he concluded by outlining economic issues—the same issues that were at the fore of Duden’s *Report*.

It is difficult indeed to leave one’s homeland, but what have we to look forward to here in Switzerland or in Europe generally? Scholars may preach otherwise, but it remains fact that the Old World is suffering from an ill which it can recuperate only by promoting colonization. This ill is called over-population.<sup>67</sup>

He went on to write that

if the population does indeed reach such proportions that it creates poverty; [sic] that it robs the arts and sciences of their value; [sic] that it slows down the trades so that all classes are affected by unemployment and the heads of families are troubled by worries in the face of an uncertain future; [sic] that lies and deceit, artifice and frustration are the order of the day; [sic] that decency is suppressed and denied the people advance by cruelty and lack of consideration for one another—when all of these things become part of our existence, who can refrain from cursing a population creating so many ills! [sic]”<sup>68</sup>

His hopes and Duden’s influence are both made clear in his conclusion, as was his desire that the efforts of his party might pave the way for future emigrants.

According to confirmed reports which you can read for yourself in Mr. Gottfried Duden’s travel account, the particular area on the Missouri where we hope to settle is the most fruitful of all land discovered to date...that we might show the many and active but presently starving and troubled family head the way to a better future for his family.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Abbot, xxxiii.

<sup>68</sup> Abbot, xxxiii.

<sup>69</sup> Abbot, xxxiv.

The first fourteen members of the Koepfli and Suppiger families departed for Missouri in April of 1831.<sup>70</sup> Further members of both families arrived in 1833 and 1834, with the final contingent arriving in 1839.<sup>71</sup> The story of the Koepfli-Suppiger emigration is a fine example of the manner in which the mass emigration of Germans to the New World often took the form of chain migration where subsequent parties joined friends and family that had already emigrated and reported back about the conditions they found on arrival. Kampfhoefner is correct in pointing out the effect letters written by those who had settled in the New World had in convincing friends and family in the Old World whether or not to join them.<sup>72</sup> He is also not mistaken when he argues that letters from friends and family “exercised a constant control over the trustworthiness of immigration propaganda and agents.”<sup>73</sup> That being said, the role that immigration guides played as sources of information should not be underestimated. Immigrants of all classes were agents of their own destinies, and as such, went to great lengths to gain as much information as possible in order to make the most informed decisions. In addition to letters received from the New World, immigration guides, including Duden’s, played their part in decades of mass emigration to the United States from all across German-speaking Europe.

In the end, it was decided to found their “New Switzerland” 27 miles east of St. Louis in the state of Illinois after a man offered to sell them his 450-acre farm.<sup>74</sup> This

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<sup>70</sup> Abbot, xxx, xxv.

<sup>71</sup> Abbot, xxx.

<sup>72</sup> Kampfhoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 47.

<sup>73</sup> Kampfhoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 43.

<sup>74</sup> Joseph Suppiger, Salomon Koepfli, and Kaspar Koepfli, *Journey to New Switzerland: Travel Account of the Koepfli and Suppiger Family to St. Louis on the Mississippi and the Founding of New Switzerland in the State of Illinois*, by Joseph Suppiger, Salomon Koepfli, and Kaspar Koepfli, edited by John C. Abbot, translated by Raymond J. Spahn (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 135.

points to another problem with Kampfhoefner's assessment of the effect Duden's *Report* had on the process of transatlantic migration. Kampfhoefner makes note of the fact that by the Civil War, Illinois had attracted 50 percent more Germans than Missouri, even "without any Duden to plug for it."<sup>75</sup> It cannot be assumed that every reader of Duden's work eventually settled in Missouri. In many cases, Missouri was the intended destination but not where immigrants who had read the Duden guide eventually settled. Difficulty adjusting to the reality of frontier life, opportunity (as with the Koepfli-Suppiger party), or the inability to make the overland journey to Missouri often resulted in immigrants settling far from Duden's promised land. Whether they settled in Missouri or not, their decision to emigrate was often affected by the writing of Gottfried Duden, even if his idealistic vision of a rejuvenated German culture had little resonance with economically-minded immigrants interested primarily in bettering themselves in a land that seemed to hold so much promise.

Gottfried Duden would spend much of the rest of his life defending himself from his critics, who, like Julius Gustorf, believed that his unrealistically enthusiastic portrayal of conditions in Missouri had led thousands of hopeful German immigrants astray and sent them into the wilderness wholly unprepared for the conditions they would find. Certainly Duden had warned potential migrants not to emigrate "by oneself and without careful consideration"; however, his words of caution were lost among his optimistic portrayal of Missouri as a land where one needed to simply reach up and pick the fruit from the vine, or was ignored by those desperate enough to hear only that which fit their hopes and aspirations.<sup>76</sup> Increasingly embittered by the mounting criticisms directed at

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<sup>75</sup> Kampfhoefner, *Immigrant Epistolary*, 38.

<sup>76</sup> Duden, 178.

him, Duden eventually distanced himself from his ideas of founding a New Germany in North America, and after releasing a final defense of his work, he returned his attention to studying jurisprudence.<sup>77</sup>

Everywhere Gustorf went, Duden was “maligned” by immigrants who found themselves living in desperate squalor, or in conditions that shamed their previous standing as well-to-do members of the German social and economic elite.<sup>78</sup> In Gustorf’s estimation, Duden was a pariah whose travel account was not only widely read but influential in directing a generation of immigrants to Missouri. In the words of one frustrated settler who had followed her husband to Missouri, the “emigration fever” created by Duden’s account of life on the frontier was a “disease among the Germans” that would lead far too many to their destruction.<sup>79</sup> Duden’s desire to create a German state in North America never became a reality, but Gustorf makes it clear that whether immigrants were motivated by his call for cultural protectionism or simply made use of his work as a how-to guide, Duden and his *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America* factored into the greater system of immigration to Missouri in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It is this system that is of vital concern. Duden, Gustorf, the Follen brothers, Friedrich Münch, and the leaders and members of the Philadelphia Society were caught up in something that went far beyond themselves, and modern scholars will be well served to consider the greater continental issues that factored into the immigrant experience. To provide the greatest depth to our understanding of the past, scholars must follow the example of historians like Wolfgang Helbich, Robert Frizzell, Walter Kamphoefner and Helmut Schmahl and recognize that

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<sup>77</sup> Goodrich, *Introduction to Report*, xxii.

<sup>78</sup> Gustorf, 74.

<sup>79</sup> Gustorf, 130.



one cannot simply disentangle the immigrants from the larger forces swirling around them that factored into the often traumatic decision to uproot themselves and their families and move west into an uncertain future.

It is just as important to bear in mind that behind cold statistics and the great events and systems that flowed back and forth across the Atlantic, the story of the immigrant is at its essence a tale of largely anonymous individuals. George M. Stephenson the author of the first broad history of American immigration, reminded his readers that in order to truly understand the immigrant experience, scholars should not immerse themselves in the

exploits of the battlefield or describe the pleasures of kings and nobles; on the contrary, his researches will lead him to the cottages of the peasants and to the humble dwellings of the laborers in the factory and in the farm. The task of writing the history of the commoner is immeasurably more difficult than that of portraying the lot of those upon whom fortune has smiled more graciously.<sup>80</sup>

While Julius Gustorf might appear on the surface to be an anomaly, his experiences are in many respects sadly typical of the long forgotten men and women who desperately thrust themselves into an unfamiliar environment. After leaving the site of the Duden settlement, Gustorf made his way back to Harriet Benson, his “hearts true love,” who he married on September 13, 1837, and with whom he fathered three children.<sup>81</sup>

Unfortunately, he was destined to suffer the fate of so many thousands of his countrymen when he suddenly fell deathly ill while visiting Harriet’s brother in Peoria, Illinois, in the summer of 1845.<sup>82</sup> It is likely that it was cholera, the killer of so many German immigrants, that took the life of the man who had been moved to record the suffering of

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<sup>80</sup> O. Fritiof Ander, “Four Historians of Immigration,” in *In the Trek of the Immigrants: Essays Presented to Carl Wittke*, ed. O. Fritiof Ander (Rock Island: Augusta Library Publications, 1964), 17.

<sup>81</sup> Gustorf, 154, 171.

<sup>82</sup> Gustorf, 171.

German immigrants who “saw mountains of gold where there was only lead; he [sic] dreamed of rich fields of grain and found only Indian corn; fat cows and healthy calves where there were only American swine.”<sup>83</sup>

Unlike Gustorf, Friedrich Münch lived to see the political unification of the German states that had to wait until a German Empire was ushered in on a “wave of nationalist euphoria” brought on by the German victory over the French at the Battle of Sedan in 1870.<sup>84</sup> Long before Otto von Bismarck was able to unify German-speaking Europe into a nation-state, Münch witnessed the exigencies of frontier life bring together a people long separated by geographic and political boundaries. In America, the German spirit did bloom anew. Embracing a common language, culture, and history, German immigrants on the frontier looked beyond centuries of tribal rivalry that precipitated a fractious existence in the Old Country. Embracing these commonalities, Missouri Germans, hailing from all corners of German-speaking Europe, fashioned a “harmonious and peaceful” existence far from a world where unity had long been virtually impossible.<sup>85</sup> In Münch’s mind, the unique personage that emerged from Turner’s American frontier was a true German patriot who, unshackled from the repressive and fractured nature of continental life, shaped himself into a Germanic ideal that allowed a sense of cultural unity to set an example for generations of continental Germans to look toward.

Pruning shears in hand, the man upon whose strength of spirit so many contemporaries commented was found dead, lying among the vineyards that had become

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<sup>83</sup> Gustorf, 171, 137.

<sup>84</sup> Kitchen, 118-120.

<sup>85</sup> Friedrich Münch, *Der Staat Missouri geschildert mit besonderer Rücksicht of teutsche Einwanderung* (New York: Verlag der Farmers’ & Vine-Growers’ Society, 1859), 77.

such an important part of him—had kept his connection to his German roots alive during years of hardship in the Missouri backcountry.<sup>86</sup> Münch and other patriotic Germans who settled Missouri left their permanent imprint on the rich traditions and history that are visible up and down the Missouri River valley to this day. Like the *Hermannsdenkmal* that, sword in hand, continues to symbolize the strength of the German people, Hermann, Missouri, is a testament to the efforts of a small group of German patriots. Together, they believed that the American frontier and the example set by their unified existence was the only hope for a people living under the tyranny of overpopulation, disunity, and political repression. For modern scholars, Friedrich Münch is a reminder that the Atlantic Ocean was not the barrier Oscar Handlin envisioned when he wrote of the immigrant experience. In fact, the Atlantic Ocean was a conduit. It allowed for the transmission of systems and ideas and ensured that even the settling of the most remote corners of the American frontier did not happen in a vacuum. Frontier expansion was tied to issues that went far beyond individuals and their efforts to improve themselves, to events that were much greater than their desire to escape a world of privation. Immigration and the settling of the American West was a transnational event. To fully understand the American experience, scholars cannot forget the ties that bound individual immigrants to the Old Country, and through their collective story the history of America remains linked to its European past

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<sup>86</sup> Koerner, 307.

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