

SHAPING A TRUE GERMAN IDENTITY:  
NARRATIVES IN HERMAN, MISSOURI, 1837-1857.

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By  
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled:

SHAPING A TRUE GERMAN IDENTITY:  
NARRATIVES IN HERMANN, MISSOURI, 1837-1857.

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## ABSTRACT

Often in social historical research immigrants are presented in a monolithic fashion that suggests all persons sharing an ethnicity, heritage, or language act in similar ways in response to social situations and to the forces of assimilation. With the Colony at Hermann, Missouri being established as a true German community, there is the implication that there was some “true” identity that could be captured and reproduced. I argue that that the identity embraced by the German immigrants in that region was the result of a complex intersection of narratives that helped the immigrants locate themselves within their new homeland. This position is a direct challenge to conceptions that there are some innate and immutable characteristics that come to shape identity.

Drawing upon the conception of narrative identity as put forth by Margaret Somers (1998, 1994) and Margaret Somers and Gloria Gibson (1998) I utilize historical data from the early years of Hermann, Missouri to outline the narratives that were instrumental in shaping a German identity. I show that the narratives of Yankeedom, Old Prejudice, and Authentic Germans call into question the possibility of there being a “true” identity for the immigrants. I conclude that the processes of blending various narratives indicates that the Germans in the Hermann area took an active role in defining what beliefs and behaviors constituted being a proper German. As a result of this process, the boundaries established to separate the true German from the rest of the population were not based upon innate qualities within individuals but rather those behaviors and values that could be expressed in a “proper” fashion.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The conception that immigrants are of a like mind discounts the complexities of how groups and individuals are able to carve out a niche in their adopted homeland and how they are able to progress within a new culture. To hold such a position is to consider persons who share a language or a custom as also sharing beliefs, values, and identities. An excerpt from a 1845 edition of the Nativist paper *St. Louis American* provides an excellent example of how immigrants were seen as being indistinguishable: “This Bremen hive seems in no danger of being emptied of its *serf* and *pauper hordes*. They come in swarms, like Egypt’s locust—but the locusts change their character—annually; the Germans never. Once a Dutchman, always a Dutchman.” (Forster, 1953: 274; emphasis in original). Such an essentialist view of immigrants provides a one dimensional perspective of identity. This does not help in our understanding of how immigrants come to shape their identity in light of these views. While the difficulty in dispelling this notion is indeed monumental, we must consider that the processes that come to shape identity are complex and that even among immigrant groups there is no single shared strategy for survival in the new land.

Historical social research at times has treated immigrants in a monolithic fashion often with a focus upon the American response to cultural conflicts. The immigrant then becomes merely background material for answering social questions of power in relation to contests over cultural barriers. When studies do attend to the conditions of the immigrants, the emphasis trends toward investigating how groups sharing a similar

heritage or regional experience either assimilate to their new culture or find avenues to resist American influences and prejudices. Examinations of ethnic enclaves in urban centers are a good example here. The view of the immigrants remains one of essentialisms wherein persons are bound together through some imagined social connection. What is missing is an understanding of how the role of time, place, and past experiences come to influence the development of an identity among individuals. The purpose of this work is to challenge the assumption of essentialism by unpacking the German immigrant identity narratives in the Missouri River Valley region during the mid nineteenth century. I will examine the narratives presented by the immigrants within this area, as well as other narratives involving local, national, and social issues, all of which contributed in developing the identity of a “true” German. Given that social life is comprised of multiple narratives, in which individuals are immersed, the inclusion of larger political and social narratives will yield a better understanding of how the immigrants either incorporated or excluded portions of the narrative when defining a proper identity.

The focus on the Hermann, Missouri region is important as this area was viewed by many as an area that reflected the geography of Germany and therefore would be an ideal location for fostering the opportunity to rekindle the German spirit and to retain a true heritage. With the social problems facing Germany, America provided a stark contrast for immigrants who felt a need to place German values back in order by returning to a simpler lifestyle that placed an emphasis upon helping their fellow countrymen. In a letter to family in the fatherland, Frederick Steines wrote of how Germans would be able to get a fresh start in America:

But you must remember—Liberty and Equality!—There are no differences in rank. The poorest and the richest mingle on equal terms.—The meaning of taxes is scarcely known, and military obligations are an unknown quantity. There is no oppression of any kind here, so that a German feels here as if he had been taken from imprisonment into freedom. (Bek, 1921b: 537).

The new land was not encumbered with an unwieldy bureaucracy and was therefore more conducive for the immigrant to flourish. Coupled with such glowing accounts, letters and reports from German immigrants and travelers in the early nineteenth century singled out Missouri as an ideal destination in its resemblance to the fatherland, thereby making the burdensome process of emigration less somewhat less stressful. The popular accounts of Gottfried Duden suggested Missouri as a possible location for the establishment of a German community designed specifically for the promotion of all that was good in the German culture. The Colony at Hermann was developed specifically for that purpose, however, there was never an official template as to what a true German community was to entail.

As Carl Schroeder suggests the immigration project in Missouri was to build a free German state and to become a model to the Old World and “the result was a breaking down of the social classes which had existed in Germany as farmers, artisans, and intellectuals struggled together to survive on the frontier and to preserve their language and culture in a new land.” (1981: 93). Keeping in mind that while my focus is on the Hermann colony, I will include immigrants from neighboring communities. In the interest of being a community isolated from the negative influences of Americans and corrupted German immigrants, there were strong ties with other local immigrant communities (e.g.; Augusta, Dutzow, and Washington, Missouri). Being located on a

major waterway, Hermann was well connected with larger communities to the east and there was a reciprocal relationship between the Hermann newspaper, *Wochenblatt*, and the *Anzeiger des Westens* in St. Louis as well as the *Alte und Neue Welt* in Philadelphia. Such connections provided the settlers of Hermann with the means to spread their narrative throughout many German communities.

It is interesting to note that the narrative of the proper German culture in Missouri continues. An article celebrating the centennial of the founding of the Hermann Colony continues to reflect many of the narratives that circulated during the formative years of the community:

Hermann today is an elder of the Nation, arrived at her one-hundredth milestone of life's rugged pathway—and happy, because Hermann is Hermann, —and there is no city of the Grand United States of America like Hermann.

Hermann was a creation of the best thought, precepts, dreams and ideals of the German people of Germany—The language, music, culture, high precepts, character, thrift and individualism of Germany is today highly portrayed, even after a hundred years—There is no pauper class in Hermann, even the charity fund, amounting to thousands of dollars, was donated for the building of the Hermann High School; the rugged individualism of German blood prevails—Hermann is what its founders planned.

Germany on the Missouri, the Rhine of America, the home of the Non-Relief Real Redblooded Americans, who Live by Their own efforts, Defy Charity and are Ready to Defend the Flag of Their Country—Americans Unsurpassed and Proud of it!

Es Lebe Hoch, Hermann

Lebe Hoch! Hoch! Hoch!

(German Settlers' Society, 1936: 8).

We are presented with the character, culture, and values of the people being touted as the bedrock of an American city built upon a strong German heritage, a mixture that is considered to be beneficial to all. From this account, Hermann has become the community envisioned by the founders. However, as Bruce Levine (1991) points out we cannot assume Germans in America were a cohesive group. They were split along class,

and eventually political lines discounting the notion of shared values. The most interesting questions become: How was a German identity in Hermann shaped at a time with little conception of a unified or national identity? With Missouri gaining statehood only 17 years prior to the settlement of Hermann, what influence did the new state with alliances to the South and the institution of slavery have upon the German immigrants? Also, how was true German identity shaped within a heterogeneous immigrant community? Unlike some German Colonies founded upon a shared religious view or a communal goal, Hermann was presented as a haven for all Germans so to get a start in the new land while providing the opportunity to retain all that was considered good within the German culture. Finally, what were the social and historical conditions that allowed for a dominant narrative of identity to emerge in and around the Hermann Colony?

My analysis is informed by the concepts of narrative identity as outlined by Margaret Somers (1998, 1994), Somers and Gibson (1998), and Karen Halttunen (1999). As individuals are immersed within multiple narratives that help to locate the person within a social context, examining how these narratives are drawn upon, sorted and modified helps us to understand the actions of individuals. A historical perspective is important as this offers a broader understanding of how narratives come into contact with the individuals and how these individuals then shape the narrative (Spillman 1997; Griffin 1995). By locating the immigrants in a time and a place I am better able to illustrate how they came to develop their identity. This aids in breaking down the essentialisms, those assumed common bonds among ethnic groups, that often surround identity. It is important to keep in mind that narratives are not exclusive in that they do

not stand alone but are instead compilations of other available narratives. To believe otherwise would suggest an autonomy to the narrative that cannot be justified. What is of interest here is how, from this mixture of narratives, some are pieced together for the purpose of developing an identity.

The chapter on narratives outlines the social and political discourses that were found in Germany and America in the early to mid nineteenth century. These provide us with a background on social changes and overarching narratives that came to define a set of opportunities for action. From Germany, the tensions associated with industrial development and subsequent social problems are juxtaposed against political movements toward unification and revolution. Changes within geopolitical structures were fueled by the tenets of the Enlightenment this, coupled with the success of the American movement against monarchical rule, tended to attract the attention of Germans dissatisfied with their current political situation. As such, the German narrative of self rule cannot be considered as being solely German in origin. It then comes as no surprise that the immigrants in this study so easily blend together the narratives of nationality. Throughout the chapter, the focus becomes more and more localized in moving from the larger national narratives of America to the more specific narratives that the immigrants encountered in Missouri. Along the way we can hone the process of how these individuals shaped their identity as true Germans. These narratives encompass political issues facing all those within the state and again, these have the potential of touching the lives of the immigrants. We must therefore consider how these narratives were appropriated or modified in the context of developing an identity.

I follow up with an examination of the narratives that immigrants utilized to describe the unacceptable behaviors they found to be prevalent among some of the residents in America and Missouri. The chapters on Yankeedom and Old Prejudice outline the perceptions that immigrants held of the Americans and of some other German immigrants living in the surrounding area and larger cities. While these narratives were offered as warnings to both Germans in the fatherland and to recent immigrants, they provide us with the opportunity to discern how proper German behavior should be expressed. The focus of the Yankeedom narrative is directed at the uncultured Americans who were viewed as being overly concerned with the extremes of leisure and for quick financial gain. The Old Prejudice narrative is directed at German immigrants who were considered as holding to tight to practices viewed as having contributed to the problems facing the German states. If America was to be a new start for the German people then the immigrants who merely transplanted old behaviors into the new land were anathema to this goal. Both the narratives effectively locate the true Germans between the undesirable characteristics of both the Old and New Worlds.

The section on Authentic Germans offers a direct account of how the immigrants in the Hermann, Missouri area viewed the characteristics that would define the proper German. As there was no “official” version of how a true German community should look in the new land we are therefore left without an ideal-type of German identity. Still, we get a sense of how the proper German, at least from the immigrants along the Missouri River valley region were concerned, should behave. The narratives for the authentic German are drawn from letters, diaries, newspaper reports, and official minutes from the Board of Trustees for Hermann as well as the School Trustees. These

documents are presented as narratives of both personal and public expectations. Through these sources a glimpse of a proper German community and subsequently German identity can be seen.. Again, we must keep in mind that this identity is related to time (e.g.; pre-Civil War South) and to place, both in their fatherland and in their new homeland.

I conclude by drawing together the multiple narratives so to illustrate the process of shaping a German immigrant identity along the Missouri frontier. I address the contradictions that arise within the authentic narrative as they relate to other narratives. Such contradictions further challenge the essentialism of immigrant identity. I also discuss narratives that are missing from the available data and how these narratives may be expressed through the extant documents.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Framework and Methods

In her work on German ethnic identity in Missouri, De Bres (1986) examines three German communities to chart how the residents in those towns lost their ethnicity and eventually became Americans<sup>2</sup>. The chain of events leading to this outcome are presented as a protracted process throughout which the immigrants attempted to hold tight to a culture and practices that defined them as German. Notwithstanding the establishment of German churches, newspapers, social organizations, and schools dedicated to perpetuating the German language, De Bres suggests that their ethnic identity was no match for the “overwhelming dominance...of the Anglo-American culture.” (1986: 86). While De Bres details how the communities utilized social structures and material cultures to stave off the process of assimilation she eventually portrays ethnic enclaves as mere oases that slowly erode under the pressure of time. In the end, the “mindscape” (i.e.; a shared abstract understanding of ethnicity) is lost leaving only the remnants of a past identity. For the communities in her study, there are only memorials to a cultural identity of the early immigrants, artifacts of a bygone ethnicity are found in “the old red brick core of Germanic buildings surrounded by the white frame assimilation” (De Bres 1986: 241).

To follow De Bres we must assume an essentialist view of culture and ethnicity wherein the intersection of competing cultures results in a zero-sum, all or nothing, outcome. Assimilation is then a foregone conclusion as cultural pluralism, which would allow immigrants to retain their language and cultural practices while being fully

integrated into a dominant society, is simply infeasible (De Bres 1986: 9). Regardless of De Bres' use of hyphenated identities (e.g.; Anglo-American and German-American) it is clear that she perceives that the loss of language and the chipping away of "landscapes" (i.e.; material culture) are the death knell of an ethnicity. Ironically, the dominant Anglo-American culture seems able to retain a hyphenated status as it devours the culture of the Germans while appropriating selected German practices, further memorializing a lost ethnicity.

Such views of culture and ethnicity miss the complexities involved in the shaping of identity. From the above study, the "mindscape" of German ethnicity is bounded and challenged solely by the Anglo-American culture. The communities in the study, and presumably all German communities in the country, are presented as holding to a specific understanding of heritage and history. Once again, immigrants are treated in a monolithic fashion that suggests all members within the group share strategies to fend off attacks to their identity. From such fundamental perspectives, the only variable among these groups is in the level of contact with a dominant culture. Those immigrants having the least amount of contact with Anglo-Americans are better able to withstand the forces of assimilation, at least for a given amount of time. Undoubtedly, a more sophisticated view of the linkages between culture, ethnicity, and identity can dispel the monolithic approach to immigrant groups. As such, the German colony at Hermann, Missouri provides an excellent opportunity to illustrate how an immigrant identity is constructed not only against an American culture and identity but also against competing views of culture, education, and religion both within and across German communities. The Hermann colony was established to be a truly German community envisioned to promote

all that was considered admirable in the German culture while at the same time providing immigrants with a refuge that would insulate them from any shock or unsavory influences that were to be found in the New World.

Also important to the present study, Hermann was settled at a time when national and state identities were in nascent stages of formation. The American government had only been in place for 50 years while Missouri had gained statehood less than 20 years prior to the arrival of the first Germans from the Philadelphia Settlement Society<sup>3</sup>. We must also consider the young age of the settlers in the Hermann area. Data from the 1840 and 1850 federal census of Gasconade County Missouri indicate that nearly 68% of the residents in the township around Hermann were under the age of 30 (Federal Census, 1850; Federal Census, 1840)<sup>4</sup>. Coupled with the youthfulness of the residents, it is important to note that the majority of the settlers in the early decades of the community were first generation immigrants. These factors provide an interesting mixture for shaping a “true” Germany identity.

### **Nation and Identity.**

When examining how an immigrant identity is shaped and maintained it is important to consider the connections between identity and nationalism. Anderson’s (2006) groundbreaking work on nations as being imagined communities capable of holding disparate persons together through shared language and political beliefs is vital for understanding how individuals perceive of boundaries and membership to a community. For Anderson, the imagined community allows for a horizontal comradeship among individuals not only across class lines but also across time and space (2006: 7). Individuals internalizing a national identity then feel a connection to other

members of the nation, even if they will never come into contact with all those who share such a bond through identity.

As nations, and therefore national identities, are boundaries of distinction, Anderson (2006) suggests that a key to maintaining such distinctions is to institute a common language. The implementation of national print-languages became central to defining the nation, not only by distinguishing those who would belong to the community but also in providing space for challenging the structures of political power. Anderson points out that the development of national languages stemmed from challenges to the noble classes by the rising middle strata of the bourgeoisie classes (2006: 76). Holding sway over print media, the educated classes were therefore able to delimit not only a preferred language and dialect but also the information as to how a national history and traditions would be presented and remembered. Hence, the imagined community emanates from this class wherein they are at once the primary producers and readers of the language. The community, and subsequently power, flows through connections that share a language and not through the sharing of bloodlines which have historically held together the aristocracy.

Following along the lines of constructing identity through time and place, Lyn Spillman (1997) problematizes the notion of a shared history by illustrating how a national ethos can be shaped through access to and regulation of media and public discourse. Through a comparison of American and Australian commemorations of nationhood, she argues that national identities spring from symbolic repertoires that romanticize the founding moments of a nation. These symbolic repertoires are produced and reproduced within discursive fields that “establish ‘limits of discussion’ and define

‘the range of problems which can be addressed.’ They delineate the meaningful and valuable from a larger range of potential meanings and values available.” (1997: 10). As with Anderson, those who hold power within a discursive field, be they local or national government officials, textbook printers, or local historical societies, have considerable influence in how the repertoire (e.g.; remembrance of history) is shaped for others. For nations with a relatively short geopolitical history such control is instrumental for expressing the primacy of the founding moments that come to shape a national identity. With regard to America, the imagined community could not be found in a long and storied past, and as such, the identity of the nation was formed around the founding moment of revolution and independence from England while buttressed with the repertoires of liberty and a growing international recognition. This symbolic repertoire came to emphasize American independence through the romanticization of the Revolutionary era and its significant figures. The reproduction of this repertoire has worked effectively in creating a dominant identity for the nation.

In a review of the scholarly field on nations and identity, Calhoun (1998b; 1993) cautions against the tendency to think of national boundaries and ethnic identities as being somehow grounded in a natural past as attempts to locate the true essence of an ethnicity are misguided. Still, while some do seek the fundamental elements that comprise ethnicity, Calhoun emphasizes the constructive quality of the concept by pointing out that “ethnicity is a rhetorical frame within which certain disputes are conducted; participation in the disputes can actually reproduce ethnic understandings.” (1993: 223). Such disputes, be they centered on dialect, regionalism, or long established tradition, should not discount the mythic quality of nations and identity. Notwithstanding

the cultural turn within the social sciences, there remains a tendency to locate proto-nations and ethnicities in primordial times (1993: 221). Hence, Calhoun suggests that what is important, from a sociological standpoint, “is not the antiquity of the contents of tradition, but the efficacy of the process by which tradition constitutes certain beliefs and understandings as unquestioned, immediate knowledge, as the basis for disputing or questioning other claims.” (1993: 222). Like Anderson and Spillman, Calhoun argues that to gain an understanding of nations and ethnicity requires a knowledge of the history of power relationships that shape the narratives and repertoires of identity.

### **Boundaries and Exclusion.**

As we have seen, identities are constructed through selected histories as well as in relation to others who do not share in our community. Eviatar Zerubavel (1991) points out that the process of seeking distinctions is essential in helping to define social reality. Through categorization and differentiation the social world is ordered in ways that allow for the emergence of social entities (e.g.; families, religions, social classes) that help us to define ourselves and our place within society (Zerubavel, 1991: 2). Lines of distinction are continually drawn in finer gradations that further expand the number of categories available for classifying the natural and social world. Such fine lines aid in the creation of physical and social boundaries that, while being mental constructions, possess the ability to influence social action. This is to say, these lines have the capacity to delineate the acceptable from the unacceptable, to define limits of authority, and to separate groups into members and nonmembers (Zerubavel 1991: 15-16).

While categorization, in itself, is not viewed as undesirable, we are cautioned against the rigid mind which finds comfort in holding to the binary logic of either/or

comparisons. Zerubavel does point out that social identity is exclusionary and therefore susceptible to such binary logics (i.e.; to be included in one category is to be excluded from various other categories). Such a “shell of exclusion” transcends the individual as “group identity presupposes a clear differentiation of the group from its surroundings. Hence, it involves playing up the ways in which group members are different from nonmembers” (1991: 42). It is then the rigid mind that perpetuates exacting categories with seemingly impermeable barriers. The “us” and “them” mentality cannot accept the ambiguous individual or object for those that possess shades of gray and that which blurs the lines of definition must be placed within an existing category in order that the social world, as constructed, continues to make sense.

In a historical study of community development, Kai Erikson (1966) touches on how rigid barriers aided in the shaping of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By examining specific crime waves of the time Erikson draws upon acts of deviance as creating “a sense of mutuality among the people of the community by supplying a focus for group feeling” (1966: 4). Being a concept with roots in relativity, deviant behavior is the essence of the boundaries established between “us” and “them” in providing vivid examples of the unacceptable behaviors of some individual or groups while at the same time defining domains of authority within the community. Erikson keenly illustrates how boundary crises within the community correspond to the crime waves that afflict the colony. Realizing that communities are bound both in geographical and cultural space weak boundaries can then become a threat to the social order of the community. Fortunately, boundaries can be reinforced by “locating and publicizing the group’s outer

edges” thereby reestablishing the demarcation between “us” and “them” through defining proper and deviant behaviors (Erikson, 1966: 10).

The historical component of Erikson’s study is key for locating the cultural space of the colony within the context of time. To truly understand how boundary the crises were perceived, and how crime waves emerged and subsequently eradicated, we must come to understand the social influences that created the fine lines of difference between the moral and the immoral. Within the Massachusetts Bay Colony, theological beliefs were important not only in helping to define deviant acts but also in outlining the treatment of deviant individuals. Erikson points out that rehabilitation and contrition were not viable responses to the offenders and therefore exclusion from the community was in line with theological beliefs of salvation. By placing the historical court records within the social contexts of religion and social isolation (i.e.; colony in relation to the homeland) we get a better sense of the forces that resulted in the actions taken within the colony.

Frost (2005) too draws upon history so to illustrate how a dominant understanding of American identity was shaped through a narrative of decency, the role of male protector, and whiteness. She points out that while regionalism was an important factor in constructing such an identity, the narrative crossed geographical boundaries in the form of a shared racialized language that promoted a blazing whiteness. Through an examination of popular literature in the mid to late nineteenth century, Frost shows how the theme of savagery was utilized to promote Americanism along lines of prosperity, racial superiority, and respectability. In the plains region, stories dominating the literature presented images of heroism among the Calvary and the pioneers against

unthinkable horrors at the hands of the massacring Indians. While Indians were becoming less of a concern in California another threat to Americanism was found in the Chinese immigrant. Depictions of the immigrants as being cheaters and heathens reinforced notions of superiority and honesty among American groups. Most interesting was the construction of identity among Northerners and Southerners up to and during the Civil War. Here Frost argues that depictions of white Rebels and Yankees were racialized in order to establish boundaries of superiority. She points out that those in the North characterized the Rebels as savages who resort to indiscriminant acts of violence, while the Southern depiction of Yankees was shaped through images of moral weakness, especially in regard to their susceptibility to the machinations of inferior groups, such as Blacks and immigrants.

Frost concludes by showing that regardless of regional variations, the popular literature tended to emphasize themes that promoted identities which defined a specific understanding of Americanism. Boundary lines were drawn between prosperity and destruction of the American culture, respectability and savagery, as well as racial superiority and racial inferiority. What is of most interest here is that common narratives were utilized between the regions in a manner specific to the boundary crises and social conditions of the time. This suggests that existing narratives can be appropriated to suit the needs of individuals and groups so to establish lines of distinction.

### **Historical Need.**

William H. Sewell, Jr. (1999; 1992) points to the significance of a cultural turn in the social sciences and social science history in particular as promoting exciting new opportunities to expand the discipline methodologically as well as theoretically. By

incorporating a narrative history perspective, social scientists are able to move beyond the mere sequencing of events or compiling lists of historical demographics. Charles Tilly (1988) also laments that historical sociology is often discounted as simply a methodological rather than theoretical approach to sociological analysis. This is unfortunate in that such perceptions privilege contemporary observances as being truly reflective of social structures and processes thereby suggesting that historical analysis becomes simply an exercise in superimposing present social theories unto an unsuspecting past. While Tilly does acknowledge trends toward incorporating time and place into sociological analysis, he argues that a full appreciation of temporal and spatial components cannot occur without historicizing the analysis. Therefore, an ahistorical sociology risks suffering from illusions of continuity wherein theoretical generalizations are viewed as holding constant across all time and space.

In response to the turn, Andrew Abbott argues “historical narration, like ethnography, always emphasizes situated knowledge. The last time historians seriously envisioned universal processes was in the mid-nineteenth century—Spenser’s social Darwinism and Marx’s dialectical materialism are examples—although globalization may be a candidate in the near future.” (2004: 57). While the quest for generalizing theories remains an active pursuit, Abbott admits that it is the case study where ethnography holds the greatest potential and this is particularly true in historical studies, where the emphasis is upon contextualization. As such, ethnography becomes superior in that in comparison of a small number of cases do not contextualize to the degree that is required while a standard causal analysis does not contextualize at all (i.e.; meaning is of no consequence to the analysis) (2004: 68), In relation to my interest in meaning, the foci

will remain on how identity was understood by those in the Colony, how a dominant narrative of identity was formulated and disseminated within the area, and how this set up and reinforced social boundaries.

Through historical examination we are able to question some of the basic sociological concepts that drive our theories (i.e.; concepts that have assumed a taken for granted status) and as such redirect our emphasis to concepts and theories that offer an explanation of the data/event rather than having the data/event help to shape our theories. Historical studies, such as those described above, place an emphasis upon time and space in explaining social action in relationship to social structure. As a result, it becomes apparent that our analytical categories are, in themselves, social constructions and that basic concepts may not help to explain all action in social events and occurrences. Like the rigid mind described by Zerubavel (1991), we attribute ambiguities that do not fit our established classifications to the category of the deviant case, or the exception that proves the rule.

Karen Halttunen (1999) and Larry Griffin (1995) point to how the use of narrative in historical study is often used as a descriptive device rather than a tool for reflective analysis. The narrative becomes merely a singular voice that expresses a linear story leaving intact a presumption that analytic categories are somehow fixed across time and space. By embracing narratives, Griffin argues that analytical categories are “no longer treated as variables, but also as actions, or as the motives for action, or as the consequences of sequences of actions” (1995: 1252). Sommers and Gibson also point out the need to historicize social theory through the use of narrative so to better “understand how competing ontologies of identity, political life, society, and so on, gain currency and

shape the empirical problems that we encounter as sociologists” (1998: 44). Such an approach highlights the importance of time and space to illustrate the mutability of the sociological categories of identity.

Still, for Halttunen (1999) and Somers and Gibson (1998) shifting the gears of how narrative has commonly been utilized in historical study will not be an easy task. The historical use of narrativity must be reframed from that of telling a chronological story about a social event to one of presenting opportunities for, and limits to, social action. Here Sommers and Gibson argue that we should not forget that “narratives are *constellations of relationships* (connected parts) embedded in *time and space*, constituted by *causal emplotment*” (1998: 59; emphasis in original). To do so risks presenting historical actors as individuals who do not have the benefit of contemporary understandings of the social world.

In helping to reframe narrativity, Somers and Gibson present us with four abstract dimensions of narrativity: ontological, public, conceptual and metanarrativity (1998: 60). Briefly, ontological narratives provide social actors with a sense of being that creates an identity and location within the world. Action then stems from one’s understanding of place within the various narratives. Public narratives are those stories which transcend individual actors and which help to promote a specific and selective understanding of events. Such narratives are bound to cultures and social institutions in ways that promote a common, or dominant, perception of behavior; examples of rags-to-riches stories are considered public narratives. Conceptual narratives are those ideas and explanations created by social researchers. These narratives provide the link between ontological and public narratives thereby connecting individual identities and actions to larger social

structures. Finally, metanarrativity are those master-narratives that suggest an evolutionary progression of the social world. As we are all embedded in these master-narratives, Somers and Gibson point out that such narratives become fixed in the core of social theory. While metanarratives do possess elements of “transformation, major plot lines and causal employment, characters and action” they lack a conceptual narrativity which therefore leaves social actors and structures isolated both temporally and relationally (1998: 63).

In order to understand how a German identity was shaped in Hermann, Missouri in the mid nineteenth century I will be focusing on the narratives that were presented at the time. Emphasizing the plural, I follow Somers and Gibson (1998) by drawing upon the ontological and public narratives of the immigrants. We must remember that these persons were newcomers to America, hence exposed to public narratives of German romanticism, statehood, and potential unification as well as American conceptions of freedom, liberty, and opportunity. With specific regard to Missouri, the Germans were confronted with the public narratives of slavery and Nativism, both of which are seemingly in contradiction to the equality narratives of American and German ideals. As for ontological narratives, the Germans in Hermann did not emigrate as a group and as such, the community was a blend of individuals with various levels of education, political values, and religious beliefs. With many available narratives from which to build an identity, there was also plenty of opportunity to construct boundaries as to which narratives would be privileged over others; a rigid construction of the “true” German identity.

As with much of historical research, these narratives are reconstituted from surviving materials and while there is always the critique that this presents a skewed understanding of the social actions and structures (i.e. surviving documents overrepresent the voice of males, the elite, and the powerful) I argue that oppositional perspectives of German identity can be found in the dominant narratives that proscribe proper German behavior. Following from the work of Erikson (1966), Frost (2005), and Zerubavel (1991) lines of distinction and inclusion are framed in relation to those of exclusion. This is to say that the unacceptable actions of immigrants in the community and elsewhere become visible within the dominant narratives of German identity as presented in Hermann.

While Gaye Tuchman points to many of the cleavages between historical and sociological research (i.e.; methodological issues and accuracy of representation) she argues that “Any social phenomenon must be understood in its historical context.” (1994: 306).

Therefore, without a firm grasp on the historical background one is unable to fully understand the social actions and outcomes of the time. For Tuchman, historical study is then primarily a methodological heuristic wherein the sociologist is cautioned against delving too deeply into the debates between historians as they possess their own agenda and language. She warns that “It is tempting, but dangerous, to confuse historians’ disputes with one’s own theoretical aim. Their disputes best serve as sensitizing devices.” thereby relegating historians to helping determine what data would be most fruitful for study (1994: 314). With regard to the present study, I utilize data that draws upon personal and public documents that outline patterns of expected behaviors of the residents

along the Missouri River Valley region. I am drawing upon the meanings that were promoted in Hermann at the time as to what constituted being a true German. While this “truth” certainly did not represent the views of all persons residing in the community and the surrounding county, I do present them as being important as they are the dominant narratives as expressed through public records and press. We get the a sense of the everyday life, here, the ideal everyday life, of the Germans in the Hermann area. This is supported by personal letters and diaries that support the dominant narratives.

Contrary to Tuchman, Chandra Mukerji argues that historical sociology has tended to disregard “time itself, periodicity, or the negotiations of past and present that give cultural depth to social processes.” (2007: 50). A more productive path would be to incorporate a cultural sociology, utilizing ethnography, to historical research wherein the culture is placed in the foreground of research. She continues that “comparative methods from historical sociology were never designed to answer questions of culture.” and to pursue such a method suggests that varying social outcomes are immune to the importance of culture leaving culture to be represented as passive to social forces. (Mukerji 2007: 50)

For Mukerji, cultural genealogy seeks to unearth the lines of cultural knowledge. Through analysis, “we should recognize not only the social nature of our experience, but also the cultural necessity of how we think.” (Mukerji 2007: 52). Here she is suggesting that knowledge is culturally based and that this information is passed through generations, however, while the original meanings of the knowledge (i.e.; information linked to specific practices) may have changed, this does not preclude that the knowledge itself is discarded. Whether we call this toolkits, collective memories, etc. it is the

shared, or socialized, information of the culture that perseveres. Therefore, Mukerji's project is to "find and follow subjects who do the work of remembering and forgetting the cultural past." (Mukerji 2007: 55). While this sounds much like Spillman's discursive fields, the arenas that allow specific narratives to be expressed and reinforced, the distinction is that Mukerji argues that cultural knowledges and practices simply do not disappear but may rather lay dormant or expressed in other forms. With regard to the Germans in the Hermann, Missouri area, we must consider that there is some sense of continuity amongst them through their experiences while in Europe. Also, it is important to consider that the Germans were active agents in their use of culture and in their selection of specific narratives. While I do not go as far as Mukerji in tracing the continuity of cultural forms (i.e.; culture expressed through "habits, sub-conscious predispositions or under-articulated practices" as well as other intuitive understandings (Mukerji, 2007: 66)), I do follow that the identity being presented in the Hermann area is highly influenced by the blending specific aspects of the German and the American culture. With the use of the signifier, "the German element", among the immigrants there is a sense that some underlying knowledge does bind the German people together in a bond that even the blending of the German and American cultures cannot destroy. Still, attempts to delve into the subconscious knowledge of the immigrants in the Hermann area is beyond the scope of this project. Instead, the focus will remain on challenges to notions of essentialisms in relation to identity and assimilation.

## **Method.**

While some may criticize the case study as being limited in the capacity to test hypotheses or to be theoretically generalizable, John Walton (2000) argues that case

studies have been instrumental in building many theoretical frameworks within sociology. While there are numerous case studies that may be used as a template for this research, for example E. P. Thompson's (1963) *The Making of the English Working Class*; Erikson's (1966) *Wayward Puritans*; Paul Johnson's (1978) *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*; and Marc Steinberg's (1999) *Fighting Words*, it is not my intent to parallel any specific study if only for the reason that the answers to the questions I seek are not found in any exemplar that I have reviewed.

At times, case studies are viewed merely as building blocks for a comparative method designed to produce substantive social science theory. Charles Ragin (1987) does discuss the value of the case study but suggests that the holistic quality of such studies become too complex to be of value in large comparative models. Given that "the urge to get the big picture, to generalize, to make broad theoretical statements, is great." the value of the case study can be greatly enhanced by comparing multiple cases through algebraic Boolean analyses (Ragin 1987: 171). This tends to discount the value of case study in and of itself for building social theory (Walton 2000; Glaser and Strauss 1967). As Walton (2000) points out, comparisons are made within the case study thereby allowing for theoretical statements to emerge. Glaser and Strauss (1967) also stress the importance of approaching the data with no preconceived notions as to how the data would, or should, fit into an existing theoretical construct. They recommend that through a saturation of data and constant comparison that analytical categories will emerge thereby providing the foundation to develop a theory that is grounded in, or best suited, for the subject of study.

When approaching narrative from the conceptual perspective, Somers and Gibson point out the importance of emplotment, or placing the narrative temporally within social structures. Such a practice turns events into episodes thereby giving us an understanding of how the narrative has developed to that point in time (1994: 59). My purpose is to locate the immigrants in the Missouri River Valley region by examining their narratives for commonalities that offer insight into how they viewed themselves in their new land. To be successful in this venture I must include the narratives that the immigrants brought with them from Germany and from their experiences in the American east.

As this is a case study of Hermann, Missouri, I did not limit my research by any specific type of document or theme. I collected data until I felt that all available sources had been exhausted. This is not to say that I uncovered all existing documents pertaining to Hermann, only those that were not hidden in distant or obscure locations. Collecting historical data is truly an exercise in detection as one quickly realizes that documents do travel. Documents can be scattered due to items remaining with families as they move around the country and the globe but can also surface in distant archives depending upon the acquisition requirements of particular libraries and historical societies; vital documents were found in archives as far as 90 miles from Hermann. The primary documents used in this project include: Board of Trustee Minutes (1839-1857); School Board Minutes (1842-1857); personal letters (13); diaries (2); Hermann newspapers (1845-1857)<sup>5</sup>; and a memoir. Also included are secondary documents that contain translations of letters, reports, and diaries from Germans having contact with, or living briefly in and around Hermann.

With the goal of piecing together a social composite of the community in the mid nineteenth century, I did not exclude any documents or portions thereof. Still, there are gaps in the available information leaving some voices silent; these deficiencies will be addressed below. The data was collected in no particular time order again due to the dispersion of the documents. Detailed notes and verbatim transcriptions of the primary documents were made as well as photocopies and digital photos of documents when such opportunities were available. The notes and facsimiles were converted to word documents, which not only provided a continuity of format to the information but also afforded an additional reading of the data prior to coding<sup>6</sup>. I coded the information from the documents along the lines of narratives that expressed a definition of being a proper German in relation to other individuals; these include Americans, low culture and peasant Germans, and aristocratic and high culture Germans. We then see that the conception of the “true” German was shaped not in direct opposition to one group but rather multiple groups. Again, the narratives are complex in that they are not, for the most part, explicit representations of social and cultural boundaries as expressed through a shared culture and ethnicity. Rather, the narratives are a compilation of other cultural and social narratives (e.g.; ontological, public, and metanarrative) that are chosen and represented in such a manner as to proffer an understanding of how “true” German citizens should behave. I have identified three general categories: Yankeedom, Old Prejudices, and Proper German within the narratives; the former illustrating behaviors that exclude an individual from being a “true” German, and the latter, which promotes practices that define German identity. The following chapters will locate the narratives temporally

within antebellum America and structurally within the social elements of economy, education, politics, and religion.

A note on historical documents is in order at this point. The personal diaries and letters are commonly filled with details that would aid future emigrants. Primarily, this includes price of land, food, and materials; the quality of the land and climate; and social factors such as diets, entertainments, and religious issues. Interspersed within the documents are experiences with Americans and other Germans in the New Land. This is particularly helpful for understanding how these immigrants shaped their identity in relation to others in Missouri. It is important to note that historical documents are not immune from issues of proper grammar and spelling. This issue did add a degree of difficulty when trying to translate some materials. While the Trustee Minutes were copied in both German and English the data for this research is drawn from the English version<sup>7</sup>. There are some inconsistencies within the Trustee Minutes which would indicate that some secretaries did have trouble with the Anglicized writing style. When constructing a demographic representation of Hermann and surrounding area the 1850 census did slow the data gathering process due partly to having to decipher hand writing styles but also in discerning the Anglicization of German names (e.g.; Conrad Baer as Conrad Bear, Pierre Brunet as Peter Burnette, and Martin Maus Hund as Martin Mouse hunt). There is also an issue with shifts between High and Low German grammar relating to the presentation of names and events (i.e.; Carl Strehly appears in the documents as Karl Strehly and Charles Strehly). While I will remain consistent throughout this work with regard to proper names, the quotes from the original documents will reflect the spelling variations as well as other grammatical inconsistencies.

## Chapter 3

### Community Background

In the second edition of *Symbolic Crusade*, Joseph Gusfield admits that his work has treated immigrants “as unchanging and monolithic” leaving the impression that the individuals engaged in temperance issues acted in an essentialistic fashion (1986: 190). He suggests that since the first edition of his work others have begun to fill in the details of the nuanced factors surrounding the complex issues of establishing the boundaries that come to define acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. While it is true that more attention has been paid to other factors affecting the Temperance debates, there remains a tendency to keep the immigrant contained within a stereotypical role that emphasizes only differences in cultural values. Studies that investigate how women used temperance movements as vehicles to carve out political space within male dominated organizations seem most susceptible to overlooking the dynamics of cultural debates (Sellman, 1999; Nicolades, 1996; Donovan, 1995; Dannenbaum, 1981). Admittedly, the foci of these studies is on the contests of power within gendered spheres, yet they too fall upon Gusfield’s concerns of an unchanging and monolithic immigrant. Once again the immigrant is relegated solely to the dram shop, a fortress of immorality, or worse yet, atheism. Indeed, this is not the holistic approach that Gusfield seems to champion.

With a focus upon the nineteenth century, others have allowed the immigrant to come front stage and therefore challenge the essentialisms of an ethnic identity. Whether studying shifts in cultural meaning, contests of power along class and socio-political lines, or issues of control within community and religious spheres, we are given insight

into the complexities that come to shape immigrant identities (Levine, 1991; Tentler, 1983; Davis, 1982; Roberts, 1981). Yet, there remains a gap in many studies wherein the immigrants are presented within particular events, leaving them merely participants in a confluence of larger social forces. Rarely are we presented with a more holistic view of the immigrants, a perspective that emplots the individual within a specific time and place.

In examining nineteenth century German settlements along the Missouri River Valley region, I emplot the immigrant within a time stressed by social changes in both the economic and political spheres and within a place experiencing the nascent stages of identity construction. In so doing, I show how the immigrant assumes an active role in shaping their identity in relation to past experiences from their homeland and to the challenges faced within their new land. This approach presents the complexities involved in the shaping of an identity construction among the immigrants thereby calling into question essentialist views that common bonds (e.g.; heritage, language, religion) are the forces needed to survive against attacks on ethnicity, be they assimilation or Nativism.

### **Colony.**

Social and political strife within the German states gave rise to notions that a better life could be found by establishing a new fatherland within the New World. While Germans had been emigrating to America for more than a century, the opening of western territories offered the potential to realize the dream of a land where traditional German ideals could flourish without the hindrance of an aloof monarchy. Other German settlement societies were established to promote German heritage and values, however, many were founded upon shared religious views, shared regional identities, and as unofficial organizations at the behest of some German nobility to promote colonization

efforts (e.g. Amana, Iowa; Bethel, Missouri; Westphalia, Missouri; Aldelsverein, Texas)<sup>8</sup>. It is important to note that the terms colony and colonization are politically charged and that a distinction can be drawn between colonization societies and settlement societies. While the former holds underlying motivations for the exploitation of indigenous populations and natural resources, the latter is most interested in establishing a habitable space that allows for populations to claim an area as their own so to develop their particular identity. As such, the community at Hermann is classified as being a settlement society despite being regularly identified as a colony. I attribute the frequent use of the term as being seeded in the vernacular of a time when nation states were flexing their political strength<sup>9</sup>. The Hermann colony was unique in that the community was organized and established by Germans already residing in America as opposed to settlement societies that were formed in Germany prior to emigration. Also, the Hermann Colony was promoted as a stock venture so to legitimate the effort as something more than a mere communistic exercise (Bek, [1907]1984)<sup>10</sup>. The mission statements of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia tap into the existing desires of some immigrants to regain a romantic heritage, a return to a past that had suffered through recent social changes:

When our goal of founding a new German Fatherland has been attained through harmony and mutual brotherly support, then we may rely on the comforting hope, that the German will still be endowed with all those virtues through which our people stand out among all other nations of the world, like a rugged, venerable oak among the trees of the forest; that in their purity there may be preserved that unselfish generosity, that warm faithful attachment to its own people, that upright honesty, that hospitality, that persistent industriousness, that fervent love of the Fatherland and our ancestors, and finally that inspired sense of freedom which in the hour of trial is still as genuine as it maintained itself centuries ago and when it played an honorable role in the struggle of these colonies against their oppressors. (Bek, [1907]1984: 9).

Here we see that this effort was an attempt to bridge social boundaries and as a result the Colony was comprised of immigrants not only from many different regions of Germany but also from different religious and social backgrounds looking to maintain their German identity in light of the corrupting forces of assimilation that plague the eastern states. It is interesting to note that with so much support for establishing a colony built around German heritage and values for the purpose of bring together a disparate group of Germans, the project was designed in light of disdain for many of the German immigrants living in the Eastern states.

### **Path to Missouri.**

Again, we cannot assume that the Germans drawn to the Hermann Colony effort shared any experience or motivation to leave Germany for Missouri. For some, America offered the hope of a fresh start and a means to wash away the memories of a tarnished homeland. Others sought their freedom in the new land but felt that they could never truly leave behind the Germany of their past. Frederick Münch and Paul Follenius, organizers of the *Giessen Gesellschaft* (e.g.; Giessen Society) tapped into the frustrations felt with the German government. The only hope was to leave for a new fatherland in North America:

We have come to this resolution, since we are convinced that the conditions which obtain in Germany will make it impossible, now as also in the future, to satisfy the demands which we as men and as citizens of the state make upon life, not only for our selves but chiefly for our children. We have come to the conclusion that only a life such as is possible in the freestates of North America can suffice us and our posterity. (Bek, 1924b: 418-419).

Here the government is shown as incapable of dealing with and alleviating social ills, and as a pastor, Münch knew well the pressures placed upon those clergy who were

considered to be a radical element in opposition to the empire and the government. Another member of the *Giessen Gesellschaft*, Cornelius Schubert, echoed the sentiment held by some that America offered the best possibility for Germans to develop as citizens. While awaiting transport to leave Bremerhaven for America, Schubert told in his diary of how “the American flag, a dark blue field with gold stars, surrounded by red and white stripes was planted on the highest point of our house, accompanied by three cheers.” (Schubert, Saturday 17 May, 1834). After having waited in Bremerhaven for over a month, the group finally received its first view of the ship to take them to America. Schubert recounted, “There she lay, the stately Medora which was to take us to the land of freedom and equality, our new Fatherland.” (Schubert, Thursday 29 May, 1834). For Cornelius, and other members of the *Giessen Gesellschaft*, there was no doubt that America would be their new homeland, free of religious oppression and the social problems that afflicted Germany. Frederick Steines, emigrating with his family and close relatives, also indicated little sentiment for leaving his homeland. It is clear that a motivation for emigration was the changing social condition of Germany felt to be exacerbated by the overregulated government. In a letter of 1 April, 1834 Steines expressed his discontent with the excessively high taxes imposed by the state:

Oh Europe! Europe! what unnatural exertions your distorted conditions make necessary! I feel that I am fortunate to be so close to your borders. Even my last hours spent in you must bring such things to my attention that my departure may be made more easy. Is it not painful, most painful to have to curse one’s fatherland, because selfish crowned despots have forged about her bonds, so that a human being, who has the love of freedom in his breast, can not endure to live within her borders? Farewell Germany! Farewell Europe! May there rise over you a new, a more cheering sun, whose light will send peace and joy into the hearts of men. (Bek, 1921b: 521)

However, there were those who felt that the ties with the homeland could not be easily severed. Prior to his departure from Bremerhaven, Eduard Mühl still held some emotional connection for his homeland:

On the fine August morning all the ship's passengers were gathered on the deck. I thought of what a beautiful harvest day it would be in my homeland, where from the familiar garden of my birthplace I could see into the far distance and could make out the horses pulling the harvest wagons and the farmers. I thought of the fruit trees in the garden, and felt a strong yearning for it all. Our native land retains a special attraction which never leaves us. It also sheds the fullness of God's blessing on us. (Mühl, *Notebook*, 16 August, 1836; emphasis in original).

This view ties a German heritage with a romantic vision of the past and not to the government or social situations of the country. These divergent positions on an attachment to the fatherland point to the complexities of identity calling into question the strength that nation and region play connecting individuals to one another. More detail on the motivations that drove desires to emigrate will be covered in later chapters.

While America was seen as a new, or in some cases, a surrogate, homeland, we must understand why Missouri attracted so much attention. To answer this question the influence of Gottfried Duden cannot be overlooked. As James Goodrich points out, Duden was from a well to do family, state Proctor for Germany, and a critic of political and social discord in the German states (1981: 133). Duden attributed much of the discord to repressive rules imposed after the Napoleonic War as well as problems with overpopulation in the region. He felt that the German states assumed a reactionary position to the social ills and that any possible responses to the problems would have to emanate from the people either in blind obedience to bureaucratic rule, revolt, or emigration (1981: 134). For Duden, the most promising choice would be emigration thereby allowing not only for a relief among the pressures facing Germany but also for

offering a fresh start for Germans in a new land. As Goodrich states, as “he believed emigration to be the proper solution to his countryman’s problems, Duden looked to America as their final destination. Available land and democracy prompted his decision.” (1981: 134).

On his journey through America, Duden became so enamored with Missouri that he purchased a tract of land along the Missouri River in what is now the Dutzow area. Believing that the region was reminiscent of the Rhine River Valley, Duden wrote idyllic reports about Missouri and openly encourages his fellow countrymen to follow his path to what could become a “new Germany.” In the thirty-first letter of his report Duden expressed his desire for Germans to make the voyage to America:

How often I have 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 the other rivers. (Duden, [1829]1980: 176).

Here we see the value of America, specifically Missouri, in offering a salvation for any German willing to make the journey. In the new land the poor could find a pleasant life and the well off German could find a bountiful existence. Duden argued that for a modest sum, many Germans would find a superior and more comfortable life in Missouri than in their current conditions:

How many men there are in Germany who have funds amounting to four to six thousand *Thaler* without any other prospect than to use them for living expenses! But this sum is more than abundant to provide a happy life for an entire family on the banks of the Missouri, even if eight hundred to a thousand *Thaler* should be spent for traveling expenses, provided that they did not lack guidance. Such a financial status is very common in Germany among persons who are forced by what is called propriety and decorum to make expenditures that, without providing pleasure for the present, veil the future with anxiety. With the above-mentioned sum the immigrant can buy two adult slaves (one male and one female), which cost about twelve hundred Prussian *Thaler*, and establish himself

in such a manner that he can live more happily and, especially in regard to the future lot of numerous descendants, with many less worries than if he possessed six times that amount in Germany. (Duden, [1829]1980: 179-180).

Duden's picture of a land of opportunity was credited with sparking a new wave of German migration to Missouri. The German emigrant, regardless of social status, would feel welcome in the new land, for "on the steamships along the Atlantic coast, for example, there is only one class, and no European will have the slightest reason to complain about this. If a person lacks none of the qualifications for good society except poor clothing, he can soon be helped in America." (Duden, [1829]1980: 152). Truly, Germans of all social backgrounds would be able to find a refuge from the miseries that plagued their homeland.

Unfortunately, many immigrants who were drawn to the New World as a result of Duden's Report did not always fare well in Missouri. In his diary, Frederick Steines noted conversations with other Germans on his trip across America: "Of Duden they say: 'That man has much to answer for, he has led many people to misery.'" (Beck, 1921b: 524). For the most part, Steines discounted these criticisms as it was Duden's work that had motivated him to make the journey to Missouri. However, discontent seemed to be the fate of many so-called Latin Farmers (i.e.; well-educated gentlemen farmers unprepared for difficulties of undeveloped frontier land.). The dense forests and uncultivated soil posed a myriad of problems for the new immigrants. Given their financial resources, the Latin Farmers were able to hire out for work to be done on their land. Many soon found their funds depleted leaving them to sell their land to their laborers and then having to either retreat to the larger cities back east, or return to Germany altogether. Others, such as Joseph Aretz, Gert Goebel, Frederick Steines, and

Theodor Van Dreveldt found the climate not as hospitable as Duden<sup>11</sup>. Emigrating in groups was no guarantee of success against the unforeseen circumstances and harsh conditions encountered along the journey to Missouri. The *Giessen Gesellschaft* headed by Frederick Münch and Paul Follenius was one such settlement venture that met with failure. The group was divided into two units, one landing in Baltimore for an overland journey to Missouri, the other entering America at New Orleans. The initial destination for the society was Arkansas, however, it was soon learned that Arkansas was not a desirable choice and it was determined that the groups to meet at St. Louis (Bek, 1924b). Unfortunately, the contingent that sailed through New Orleans suffered an outbreak of cholera on the voyage leading that part of the society to disband. The former group, upon hearing the news, and themselves running low on funds, also disbanded. Frederick Münch, along with a small contingent did continue on to Missouri and settled near Duden's farm in Dutzow, Missouri.

### **Settlement Success.**

The German Settlement Society of Philadelphia was founded in August of 1836 for the purpose of establishing a colony in the Far West. The view at the time was that American cities and the culture east of the Alleghenies was a corrupting force upon German immigrants. Pointing to the Pennsylvania Germans, there were concerns that some immigrants fell too easily to American ways, not only in having lost their language but also in forgetting the true heritage of the German people. The settlement venture was welcomed by many Germans, most of whom were already living in America. Funding for the project was financed through the sale of stock certificates that could be traded for plots of land within the Colony. William Bek points out that the commitment to the

success of this effort could be found in the fact that each share of stock was sold for 20 times that of the going rate of an acre of land in Missouri. Among the 678 shareholders, a total of \$30,464.51 was raised for the Colony (Bek, [1907]1984: 181-191). Clearly, this venture differed from other settlement societies that were formed in Germany by religious groups, villages, or some members of nobility.

Three deputies of the society were sent west to scout lands in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin for the settlement. Missouri was chosen as the most ideal location for the Colony and George Bayer was commissioned to purchase the land from the state of Missouri<sup>12</sup>. While the land selected was not conducive to conventional farming due to the numerous hills in the area, the site was located on a point in the Missouri river with the hope of the community becoming a major commercial hub. Upon receiving word that land had been purchased, the name of Hermann was chosen, and without knowing the topography of the location, the town streets as well as major portions of the city were drafted by the members of the society (Shoemaker, 1957; Bek, [1907]1984). In the excitement to begin this experiment, seventeen members set out in the fall of 1837 so to be the first to settle the area. Unfortunately, Bayer, the General Agent, fell ill and did not arrive until after the first winter leaving the early arrivals without official guidance and having to bear the winter with the aid of some American settlers in the area. From the outset, there was a growing dislike of George Bayer. He was later found by the early settlers of the town to be incompetent in his duties and in 1838 left his appointment due to the vote of no confidence and he passed away shortly thereafter (Shoemaker, 1957; Bek [1907]1984)<sup>13</sup>.

Discontent among the inhabitants of the town grew and it did not take long for the members of the colony to wish to cut ties with the original settlement society in Philadelphia. There was some contention among the settlers about control over the colony, with most inhabitants of the town wishing to hold local control over settlement assets. The argument being that with documents (e.g.; deeds, shares, financial statements) located in Philadelphia hindered actions that required swift attention (e.g.; contested claims, payment of bills). Most of the settlers living in the country region felt that incorporation of the town of Hermann and subsequent control over Colony business would be detrimental to the vision put forth by the Mother Society. There was fear that individuals who gained power within the town would disenfranchise country settlers and impose a control and will over the operation of the settlement that was not in the best interest of a true German community. Such a move seemed on its face to be disingenuous to the notion of a union between rural and urban residents, as agriculture and manufacturing were to go hand in hand, working together for the common good of maintaining a German heritage through cooperation, something that had been lacking in the fatherland. While eventual local control over the colony was always assumed, the Mother Society was reluctant to yield control in light of the concerns voiced by Daniel Trautwein, Frederick Husmann, and Frederick Leupold in regard to threats against the equality of all members, rural and urban, within the Colony. Acknowledging the value of local control and protections offered by the state of Missouri, the Mother Society remained somewhat hesitant to yield control and formally presented concerns against the swift move to self governance until there were some guarantees against any potential abuse of power and to preserve the intent of the venture. The inhabitants of the town

responded that they have sufficiently, at least in their view, satisfied the concerns of the society as well as those of the surrounding landowners<sup>14</sup>. In light of concerns regarding fair treatment for all shareholders, it is interesting to note that eventually the incorporated town ceased to recognize the lot shares issued by the society. Taxes were imposed upon unimproved land, and, if the taxes were not paid, the property would revert to the town and sold to the highest bidder. As a consequence, those not living in the town nor receiving regular updates on activities in Hermann found their shares to be worthless shares and therefore lost their opportunity to claim any land in the Colony.

By securing the signatures of two thirds of the taxable inhabitants of the town, Hermann officially incorporated within Gasconade county less than 19 months after the initial land purchase by Bayer. Having established by-laws for the Town and electing a Board of Trustees, much of the business of the Trustees was focused on acquiring the necessary documents from the Mother Society. Now empowered by the state of Missouri, the town leaders were ready to take legal action against the Philadelphia Society unless the property and affairs of the society were transferred immediately (Ordinance Book, August 3, 1839).

### **Settlers.**

The Germans who settled in Hermann and the surrounding Roark Township were, by all accounts, a very young group. The demographic data for this region are drawn from the 1840 and 1850 federal census. While these sources do provide a statistical picture of the area near both the beginning and the end of the parameters for this study, it should be noted that the 1840 census does not provide the detail that is found in the 1850 census. The former record does not distinguish between the Township and Hermann

proper nor does the document list place of birth, occupation, or specific ages of the residents, only the heads of households are named with the respective number of males and females in the residence listed within a specific numeric range (e.g.; 0-5 =2; 5-10 = 1; 10-15 =0; etc.). Regardless, the information does prove valuable in making comparisons between the early and later years of the community.

The median age in both 1840 and 1850 for the town of Hermann and for Roark Township was in the early 20s. In 1840, only 31.78% of the residents in the Township were over the age of 30; in 1850 33.02% of the town and 32.02% of the Township were over the age of 30. I emphasize the percentage over the age of 30 as the high number of infants (i.e.; children under the age of 5) in the community skews the mean age of the population and tends to inflate the percentage of persons under the age of 30. Also of interest for the resident of the community is their place of birth. As already stated, the 1840 census did not record this information. The data from the 1850 census indicate that 88.87% of the residents in Hermann and the greater Roark Township were born in Europe with nearly 50% of the residents in the area identified as being from the eastern German states<sup>15</sup>. These figures may suggest that the immigrants in the Hermann area possibly did share more in social experience and in motivation for leaving Germany than the primary data lets on.

The young age of the settlers is of interest as these persons were not only willing to emigrate from Germany, but to also to make the journey to Missouri and subsequently play a significant role in defining what it meant to be a true German. Concomitant with the youth within the colony, the social status of these immigrants may also have contributed in framing the narratives of the community and in shaping their identity.

From the 1850 census, Hermann claimed being home to 34 carpenters; 19 shoemakers; 7 merchants; 5 school teachers; 5 cigar makers; 4 physicians; 2 piano makers and 1 musician<sup>16</sup>. The residents of Hermann were comprised mainly of craft persons and professionals. The only occupations listed for persons living in the rural area of Roark Township is that of farmer. Since Hermann had gained recognition for wine production by the early 1850s, it is unfortunate that census category of farmer does not distinguish between viticulture and more conventional forms of agriculture.

### **An Urban Center.**

The Colony at Hermann was envisioned to be the prototypical German community that expressed all things German. While there were some American and French property owners in the area, the majority of residents were from German states. The city was to emulate German urban centers and be in contrast to the American cities that were dirty, overcrowded, and unnavigable. It is for these reasons that the width of Market Street (i.e.; the main street perpendicular to the Missouri river) resembles a promenade intended to rival those of Philadelphia. Under guidelines set by the German Settlement Society landowners, upon entering a town lot, were obligated to develop the area with a structure valued at least at \$300.00. As log cabins were banned from the town, most structures were built in stone and brick.

The goal was to be a shining example of Germanness and the town leaders continued this mission by requiring that footpaths and sidewalks be paved at the lot owner's expense (Ordinance Book, May 18, 1839). All lots that were entered were to be developed within 12 months and the lands were to be fenced at the expense of the owner. A failure to comply with these ordinances would result in a forfeiture of the rights and

title to the land (Ordinance Book, January 3, 1840). Attention to developing the infrastructure of the community is reflected in the minutes for the Board of Trustee given the diligence toward maintaining the integrity of this vision by continuous street and bridge maintenance, river front development, and attention to social activities. The construction of schools and other municipal buildings took priority over the building of churches. Town lands were set aside as gathering areas for community activities. Road and bridge construction and maintenance, as well as the digging of wells for drinking water occupied much of the business for the Board of Trustees (e.g.; strict regulations on drinking water, constant concerns of the grading of roads). It is clear that the appearance and habitability of the town be maintained. Contrary to possible concerns regarding temperance, the town held strict ordinances against drinking, obnoxious noises, and raucous behaviors. Still, there seemed to be many instances for revelry with wine festivals and Fourth of July celebrations.

### **Rationalist Influence.**

As Muehl (1991), Forster (1953), and Schneider (1939) point out, the rationalist influence among German immigrants in Missouri was quite strong and exhibiting an antagonism toward organized religion and concentrations of power and wealth. This influence is connected with the original members of the German Settlement Society. For Hermann, the rationalist, and those sympathetic to them, include: Eduard Mühl, Carl Strehly, Wilhelm Krech, August Leimer, Julius Leopold, J.G. Bartz, H. Burkhardt, Dr. J. Feldmann, Otto Brix, to name but a few. Each of these persons had ties to editing the town newspapers, being on the Town Board and School Board, teaching in the schools,

leading local music and shooting societies, and helping found the Lutheran church in the community.

Education was very important for these immigrants. The settlers to the area were from an educated (e.g.; bourgeois) class that was referred to as the Latins for their knowledge of classical study and appreciation for the arts. An educated populace was promoted as being vital to the community, to maintaining the German heritage, and for bettering culture of the local Americans. As stated above, Hermann was not at a loss for teachers. The parents also took a great interest in the education of their children as the instructors were reviewed by the residents on a regular basis (Heming, 1998; School Minutes). Private tutors and special work schools were also plentiful in the community. While the building of churches did not take priority, this did not mean that religion was nowhere to be found in Hermann. The area was able to support Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist and rationalist congregations. The congregations were allowed to meet in the school house, however, there were times when shifts in the Board of Trustees revoked this privilege. While there were many rationalist in the area, most were aligned with the Lutheran church giving St. Paul's a limited advantage in the community. Given this situation, Lutheran ministers were not immune to verbal criticisms at the hands of the rationalist.

Established upon the notion of promoting all that was good within the German culture, the Colony of Hermann did seem to veered from those original ideals. What must be kept in mind is that the time between the desire to establish a true German Colony and the dissolution of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia transpired within 40 months (i.e.; establishing the Society in August 1836, purchasing land in

October 1837; Incorporation of Hermann in May 1839; dissolution of the Society in December 1839). The rapidity of these events belie the notion that there was much forethought into what would constitute a “true” German community. As noted above, the town was planned as a large urban center without knowing that the land purchased was neither conducive to a large city nor productive farming. Still, this did not seem to dissuade the Germans in their quest. The following chapters will show how this idea of being a true German was then defined among the settlers of the Colony and surrounding area. The following chapters will examine how the German settlers of the area shaped their German identity

## Chapter 4

### Narratives

Lyn Spillman's (1997) conceptualization of symbolic repertoires in helping to create national identities helps us view how identity is shaped through selected and specific representations of events. Through the charting of discursive fields she not only illustrates which repertoires are presented but also the means through which they are disseminated to the members of the respective nation. By focusing on the preparations for the commemoration celebrations, Spillman points to the power structures of politicians and social groups, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, as having considerable influence upon the remembrance of America's founding moment<sup>17</sup>. Utilizing Edward Shils' work on cultural centers and peripheries, Spillman is then able to locate a loose network of elites as having influence over the shaping of the repertoires that are diffused throughout an even looser network of individuals in the cultural periphery (1997; 34). While Spillman points to the usefulness of such a model, she does caution that there is no clear evidence that individuals within the cultural center hold a common set of values, nor do individuals within the periphery willfully accept the repertoires being presented.

Understanding that Spillman's project is to examine the dynamics of discourse and cultural production in the shaping of national identity I do find this work valuable for clarifying the linkages between mechanisms of power and the construction of a dominant identity discourse. However, I would take her critique of Shils further by suggesting that the cultural center and periphery model presents a uni-linear comprehension of individual

action in the shaping of repertoires and identities. A more interesting question is to ask how individuals shape an identity from the complex of overlapping socio-cultural narratives available at a given time and place. Such questions redirect the focus of identity upon the individual in actively choosing, or blending, narratives that help one to make sense of their location within society, be it local, national, or global. From this perspective we are also better able to understand how such a blending of narratives is used to establish and reinforce social boundaries that proscribe acceptable characteristics of a specific identity.

In line with Somers (1994) and Somers and Gibson (1998) we should remain aware that multiple narratives circulate within various levels of social realms. As such, individuals come into contact with many, at times competing, narratives that are drawn upon in bringing meaning to one's surroundings (i.e.; social location at a specific time and place). Therefore, narratives are not restricted to personal stories but rather include those larger stories and abstractions that are presented and re-presented in various mediums (e.g.; newspapers, official transcripts, orations, and personal letters). These narratives provide the background against which the immigrants developed their identity. It must be remembered that such narratives are not static but rather are malleable, always being constructed through networks of power and networks of resistance. To ascribe an autonomy to larger (e.g.; public) narratives is to erect artificial barriers between the narratives and the individual actors. Hence, not only do actors have a hand in shaping the larger narratives, they are also not obliged to accept any narrative, either in whole or in part. Shaping an identity then is a dynamic process influenced not only by the available narratives but also by the time and the place in which the individual interacts with the

narratives. Even though the piecing together of identity narratives suggests fluidity, there remains the need to establish boundaries that help define identity (i.e.; marking who we are by pointing to who we are not).

For the purpose here, I will review some of the narratives that German immigrants arriving in the Missouri River region undoubtedly encountered both in their homeland and their new land. Given the myriad of reasons individuals held for wanting to leave Germany in the early nineteenth century, caution must be taken so not to attribute emigration to any single motivating factor. It is for this reason that my goal is to review some of the social conditions that propagated particular narratives thereby casting light upon the enticements leading to the decision of some individuals to leave their homeland. I will then present some of the narratives facing the immigrants upon their arrival in America, the state of Missouri, and subsequently the Hermann region. While I cannot say that each person arriving in Missouri and settling around the Hermann area shared equally the meanings presented by these narratives, I do find that within the surviving materials certain narratives are repeated thereby giving credence to the notion that many of these Germans did share some commonalities that aided in shaping a specific sense of identity.

### **Old World.**

While there are indeed many narratives within German history from which to choose, I will underscore three larger narratives of revolution, romanticism, and American utopia, as being central in shaping the identity of many German immigrants. With Europe of the early nineteenth century in the throes of geopolitical tensions associated with efforts at nationalization, the narratives of human rights and revolution,

fueled by Enlightenment philosophies, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars, were finding avenues into German institutions of higher education and religion. While the Rhine Confederation (i.e.; eastern German states from the Holy Roman Empire) reverted to free states after the Napoleonic Wars, the Austrian and Prussian empires maintained a considerable influence in the region. By embracing liberal ideals, a growing movement of Rationalist, or free-thinkers, were leading the challenge against monarchical rule and the dogma of organized religion (Hanson, 1951; Schneider, 1939).

In an effort to maintain the cohesion of the German states, as well as that of the Austrian empire after the wars, the Carlsbad Decrees were put into place by Prince Metternich as an attempt to squelch social dissent within the press and the universities. In particular, student groups, such as the *Burshenschaften*, were identified as radical liberals in need of censure if Germany was to avoid revolution. The oppression of the Decrees sparked an emigration of many educated Germans to lands that welcomed the ideals of freedom (Kronenberg, 1998; Hanson, 1951; Curti, 1949; Wittke, 1948). In a further effort to unify the German states, Frederick Wilhelm III of Prussia looked toward establishing a liturgical bond that coalesced in the formation of the Evangelical Church of Prussia, a move which effectively de-legitimated the Lutheran and Reformed churches within Germany (Foster, 1953; Hanson, 1951; Schneider, 1939). The pressures placed on the pulpit as a result of this action propagated the growth of German emigration societies seeking free religious expression. In light of these governmental constraints America's break with the British empire had a tremendous influence upon German intellectuals, including Goethe and Schiller, who were frustrated with monarchical rule (Curti, 1949). Adding to the revolution narrative were the writings of Thomas Paine which had been

translated, as early as 1777, into German and embraced by the freethinker community for his views on political, religious, and social freedom (Kistler, 1962: 82).

Emigration from Germany to America dramatically increased in the early half of the nineteenth century. Walker (1964) does argue that to explain levels of emigration by looking for correlations with fluctuations in the economic situations of the time leaves little in way of understanding the diversity found among those Germans who decided to leave their homeland. Pointing to statistics indicating that immigration patterns did not follow a rational wisdom (i.e.; individuals emigrating to other German states that are economically worse off) Walker suggests that seeking to describe a typical *Auswanderer* (e.g.; emigrant) becomes a futile exercise as levels of emigration varied across regional and socioeconomic dynamics. Still, we must consider that increases in population, implementation of enclosure laws, limited land capacity, and political trends toward individual rights exemplified the tensions within Germany that resulted from industrialization. We are then provide with a complex tapestry of motivations to emigrate. As Schneider (1939) and Walker (1964) point out, the rapid shift associated with moving from an agricultural to industrial based economy can be viewed as a significant factor for the rise of emigration as this transition can be credited with being the catalyst for the social ills of broken families (e.g.; hiring out children), crime, and poverty facing the German states. With actions by the state viewed as being largely ineffectual, there was a growing sense that German life was much more desirable under the “old traditions” (Kronenberg, 1998; Walker, 1964; Schneider, 1939; Duden, [1829]1980). This sentiment, coupled with dissatisfaction with state censorship, excessive taxation, and compulsory military service, began to gain traction among many

divergent groups in Germany<sup>18</sup>. Another motivating force could be found in the romanticism of older traditions and the view that America was a land with the ability to reinvigorate the German spirit among anyone willing to make the journey. Pointing to this deep sense of romantic idealism, Walker suggests that individuals began to embrace the idyllic narrative of a new land, however, “[g]enerally speaking, the less a romantic knew about America, the higher his opinion of it.” (1964: 58). There is evidence that not all Germans viewed America as being the salvation for the German spirit. As Curti points out that prior to the 1830s, there was a resistance among intellectuals who felt America to be culturally deficient in relation to the European states (1949: 64). Kronenberg (1998), Walker (1964), and Hansen (1851) each tell of how the Prussian government viewed glowing representations of America as a threat to stability, a belief that led to the confiscation of immigrants’ letters to family members as possible propaganda against the empire. Still, a shift in the perception of America began when more glowing reports filtered into Germany in the form of travel guides that dealt with the new land from a more analytic point of view that described the abundance of natural resources and the climatic differences the potential immigrant could expect (Walker, 1964; Kistler, 1962; Bek, 1919; Duden [1829]1980). This emphasis upon nature dovetails perfectly with the romantic narrative. The Germans were then able to envision what was truly a land of opportunity (i.e.; a land of fertile wide open spaces reminiscent of simpler times, and a land, particularly in the western regions, devoid of an American influence). Adding to this vision of a simple lifestyle were reports boasting of the American political structure being free of religious oppression, taxation, and military conscription (Walker, 1964; Kistler, 1962; Curti, 1949). The political composition of

America truly highlighted the frustrations associated with the narrative of revolution while also promoting the narrative of romanticism. Regardless of the criticisms of American culture, and of the American in general, the lure of being free of an oppressive monarchy, of impracticable bureaucracies, and from crime and poverty associated with industrialization, emigration to America was certainly seen as a viable route for many Germans. The attraction of America for many of these emigrants was then to regain that which was lost in the social changes of Germany, and not to be part of some grand new experiment (Walker, 1964).

The American utopia narrative found support among Germans who felt that they would be able to transplant themselves as well as their culture into a new land without reproach from the American government or its people<sup>19</sup>. Credited with sparking a surge in German emigration throughout the 1830s Gottfried Duden contributed heavily to the American utopia narrative with his *Bericht* (e.g.; report) touting the wonders of Missouri (Tolzmann, 2006; Muehl, 1991; Goodrich, 1981; Walker, 1964; Schneider, 1939; Goebel, 1879)<sup>20</sup>. Born into a bourgeois family, Duden was educated in medicine and law and later became a Proctor of the State, a position that allowed him to theorize about connections between crime, poverty and the growing population of German states (Goodrich, 1981; Schneider, 1939). He concluded that a root cause for social ills was the erosion of traditional values, wherein the strong sense of solidarity among Germans gave way to a more self-centered populace concerned only with their personal well-being (Duden, [1829]1980). Rather than continue to prosecute persons for transgressions and crimes, a situation that he viewed as a result of one's living conditions, Duden felt that a more proactive approach could be found in reclaiming a heritage lost in the shift toward

industrialization. Having read limited reports on America, Duden took it upon himself to travel to the new world so to investigate whether the country would be suitable for emigration as a means to alleviate the social problems facing Germany.

Upon arriving in America, Duden detailed his journey across the country with his reports becoming more optimistic the further west he traveled from the Alleghenies. Settling along the Missouri River, Duden painted a glowing portrait of the area and likened the rolling hills of the Missouri River Valley to those bordering the Rhine. This similarity in vistas was intended to offer a comfort to German immigrants as settlements in Missouri would closely resemble communities found in the homeland. It was in Missouri that Duden saw the greatest opportunity for the German spirit to be rekindled and to flourish. Within his *Bericht*, Duden advanced his social theories by weaving the romantic narrative with that of the American utopia narrative. The message put forth was that the idyllic communities being lost in Germany could be recreated in Missouri. Emigration would then allow an opportunity for individuals to sow the seeds of old traditions in a new land and therefore maintain a German heritage based on an era prior to industrialization. For Duden, not only would immigration benefit those leaving Germany but their actions would also relieve pressures upon the social conditions in the homeland.

The American utopia narrative was advanced by suggesting that, even those with few resources could, with ambition and industriousness, prosper in the new land. As Duden states, an initial investment of sweat and labor would be rewarded “After housekeeping has been organized and the first purchases have been paid for, the whole family lives a carefree and happy life without any cash. And this is the real reason small sums are less important here than in Europe.” (Duden, [1829]1980: 69). With little

attention paid to the difficulties associated with emigration the *Bericht* emphasized that America was a land of opportunity, especially for those Germans having to survive at a subsistence level. For persons reading the *Bericht* the vision of America was that of a land constructed around a romanticized life of farming. It is clear that Duden's focus was upon the task of transplanting a culture of old traditions based upon a rural economy as he spent little time writing about the larger cities in America.

Again, the larger narratives of revolution, romanticism, and American utopia overlap within Germany in such a way as to provide a foundation that shapes the identity of persons planning to emigrate to America. Together these narratives highlight issues of social change, social values, and social opportunities. The immigrants arriving in the Hermann, Missouri area were able to interlace these narratives so to develop a sense of purpose in America wherein they could maintain the traditions they envisioned as a German heritage.

### **New World.**

The larger narratives of the New World cannot be understood without considering the events that helped to shape America as a nation free of British rule<sup>21</sup>.

With an emphasis upon civil government and natural rights, narratives of anti-tyranny, equality, and freedom, run strongly through documents of early nineteenth century America. Again, the narratives here cannot be considered exhaustive, however, the repetition of themes does suggest a longevity to the ideas that resonated among many members of the society. For the purpose here, I will draw upon a sampling of Fourth of July orations and views of the Andrew Jackson presidency as examples of national narratives. While Spillman suggests that near the middle of the nineteenth century Fourth

of July celebrations began to wane in many regions in America, particularly in frontier areas, the commemorations did appear to remain strong in those areas that were home to groups with strong political motivations (1997: 24). The speeches here span three decades and were given by national political and spiritual leaders (i.e.; John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State: 1821; Hubbard Winslow, reverend with a lineage to the Mayflower Pilgrims: 1838; Daniel Webster: 1851). It should be noted that while these orations did share common themes promoting civil government, none embraced wholeheartedly the political vision of Jacksonian Democracy (e.g.; strong egalitarian views between 1815-1840). For expediency, I will conflate the themes of anti-tyranny, equality, and freedom, to the narrative of Liberty.

As Spillman (1997) points out, the national commemorations in America tended to focus upon founding moments. Here, the Forth of July speeches also present a historical lineage that culminates in a unity revolving around the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The imagery of togetherness is expressed in the form of family as in discussing founding fathers, the mother country, and the strength of bonds such as those as between parent and child as well as brother and sister. While there may, at times, be differences among family members, Daniel Webster suggested there were occasions where disputes may be overlooked from time to time:

But to-day, we are Americans all; and all nothing but Americans. As the great luminary over our heads, dissipating mists and fogs, now cheers the whole hemisphere, so do the associations connected with this day disperse all cloudy and sullen weather in the minds and hearts of true Americans. Every man's heart swells within him; every man's port and bearing becomes somewhat more proud and lofty, as he remembers that seventy-five years have rolled away, and that the great inheritance of liberty is still his: his, undiminished and unimpaired; his in all its original glory; his to enjoy; his to protect; and his to transmit to future generations. (Webster, 1851: 7).

With an emphasis upon future generations in all the orations, there was the sense that the “family” would continue to prosper. Hubbard Winslow also pointed out that while not every member may be equal in ability, there was no group within America that held a special privilege:

The importance of *union*, or that state of the republic in which harmony of views, feelings and interests prevail between the various classes and members of society and the different sections of the country, has always been justly maintained. Education and all other interests and pursuits and pursuits, should be conducted upon those republican principles, which favor this desirable result. There must be no aristocracy of knowledge, wealth, or rank; the means of obtaining them must be, as far as possible, thrown equally open to all. (Winslow, 1838: 23; emphasis in original).

Not only were these bonds unlike any of those found in the Old Countries, they were also seen as being superior in maintaining the ideals and values upon which America was built.

This sense of uniqueness was reflected in the success of America breaking free from the tyranny of both ecclesiastical and monarchical oppression. The histories presented in these speeches do not focus upon freedom at the point of a sword or barrel of a musket but rather from the power of ideas and the will of the people. For John Quincy Adams, the subtlety of the declaration was the source of its strength:

The Declaration of Independence in its primary purport was merely an *occasional* state paper. It was a solemn exposition to the World, of the *causes* which had *compelled* the people of a small portion of the British empire to cast off the allegiance and renounce the protection of the British king; and to dissolve their social connexion [sic] with the British people. In the annals of the human race, the separation of one people into two, is an event of no uncommon occurrence. The successful resistance of a people against oppression, to the downfall of the tyrant and of tyranny itself, is the lesson of many an age, and of almost every clime. (Adams, 1821: 12; emphasis in original).

The values that precipitated the American independence are then identified as being unique to the American people. As Daniel Webster stated, “liberty is characteristic,

peculiar, and altogether our own. Nothing like it existed in former times, nor was known in the most enlightened States of antiquity” (1851: 8). With the distinction of being the first nation having a legitimate civil government, America was then to become a model for all others to follow in their quest for freedom. Continuing with the imagery of immortality, Winslow suggested that the spark begun with the American revolution would endure throughout eternity:

The modern republics of Germany and Switzerland are of a different character from ours; and those of South America are just struggling to birth. This is the first strictly elective and representative system, under full and mature operation, in the annals of mankind. It owes its existence, under God, to a pure and invincible love of civil and religious liberty, kindled in some of the noblest spirits that ever honored humanity. Until the sun himself tires and falters in his burning path, their memory will live in all hearts true to freedom and philanthropy. (Winslow, 1838: 8).

It is only when individuals turned from the ideals and values that are the basis of a civil government would liberty cease to exist.

The American form of self-government was attributed to an adherence upon natural rights, a tenet that found fertile ground in a land away from monarchical rule. It was therefore intelligence and reason that prevailed over tyranny. These values were found even in the earliest settlements of America:

The corruptions and usurpations of the Church were the immediate objects of these reformers; but, at the foundation of all their exertions, there was a single, plain, and almost self-evident principle—that man has a right to the exercise of his own reason. It was this principle which the sophistry and rapacity of the Church had obscured and obliterated, which the intestine divisions of the same Church itself first restored. The triumph of reason was the result of inquiry and discussion. (Adams, 1821: 7).

There was no tolerance within the country for a privileged elite with claims to unrestrained power. Hubbard Winslow evoked stability and permanence of the free government by focusing on the indomitable spirit and industriousness of Americans.

This value could only be achieved with the participation of everyone as “there must be no aristocracy of knowledge, wealth, or rank; the means of obtaining them must be, as far as possible, thrown equally open to all.” (Winslow, 1838: 23). He continued by proclaiming that the uniqueness in origin and design of America effectively circumvented such an occurrence:

There *are* no monopolies, there *can* be none, in this republic. If the speaker believed there were, he would be among the first to condemn them. His entire sympathies are with the people at large; and had he any influence in public, it should always be employed to defend their common rights. But the truth is, we have no men of mammoth size and power, not can we ever have, as they have in some of the hereditary governments of the Old World, who live by devouring the poor. The blessed genius of our institutions forbids it. (Winslow, 1838: 30; emphasis in original).

The sense of equality and promotion through individual merit was then the hallmark of America. This argument was present within each speech and all hinged upon the notion that individuals had the ability, and the right, to govern themselves. It was within the uniqueness of this experiment that natural rights and innate abilities could be freely expressed without fear of reprisal and it is for this reason that the country should be considered as a beacon for the rest of the world, for as Daniel Webster points out:

Man is an intellectual being, destined to immortality. There is a spirit in him, and the breath of the Almighty hath given him understanding. Then only is he tending toward his own destiny, while he seeks for knowledge or virtue, for the will of his Maker, and for just conceptions of his own duty. Of all important questions, therefore, let this, the most important of all, be first asked and first answered: in what country of the habitable globe, of great extent and large population, are the means of knowledge the most generally diffused and enjoyed among the people? The question admits of one, and only one, answer. It is here; it is here in these United States (Webster, 1851: 22).

Andrew Jackson also played a role in contributing to and benefiting from anti-monarchical and egalitarian narratives. Riding his successes in the War of 1812 to political election, Jackson gained popularity as being a president for the common man.

This was not without contradiction as Jackson remained part of a privileged southern land owning class holding sympathies with slave owners (Remini, 1972; Gatell and McFaul, 1970). Still, Jackson personified the egalitarian spirit of America in standing against national concentrations of power, both economic and political<sup>22</sup>. In his veto of legislation to renew the charter of the Second National Bank, Jackson expressed his view of the purpose that motivates a civil government:

It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant title, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics, and laborers—who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government. (Remini, 1972: 80-81).

While the tone still expressed the anti-monopoly (i.e.; to be read as anti-aristocracy) perspective found in the orations, there was a shift in emphasis from an individual's freedom for self governance to their freedom from injustice at the hands of American institutions. Protection for all citizens then became a primary focus for the American government. The popularity of this perspective is reinforced in editorials denouncing concentrations of power within the country:

Of all the countries on the face of the earth or that ever existed on the face of the earth, this is the one where the claims of wealth and aristocracy are the most unfounded, absurd, and ridiculous. With no claim to hereditary distinctions, with no exclusive rights except what they derive from monopolies, and no power of perpetuating their estates in their posterity, the assumption of aristocratic airs and claims is supremely ridiculous. Tomorrow they themselves may be beggars for aught they know. (Remini, 1972: 96).

This excerpt from the December 6, 1834 New York Evening Post continued by portraying the monopoly of the banking structure as being no different from the oppressive “steel clad feudal baron or a minor despot” of the Old World. (Remini, 1972: 98).

From these narratives we see the emphasis upon America as truly being a land founded on the ideals of equality, freedom, and liberty. The imagery of family and unity empowered everyone to stand up against tyrants, be they the aristocrats of Europe or the moneyed interests found in America. For immigrants arriving in America in the early nineteenth century, these narratives would undoubtedly resonate against their experiences in the Old World. I will later show how the Germans in the Hermann area drew upon particular themes of the New World narratives so to shape their identity as an authentic German.

### **Far West.**

Recalling that Missouri gained statehood in 1820, this date then will be the point from which I will address the narratives that helped to define the area beyond the classification of an unorganized territory. As such, the state was in the nascent stages of an established identity thereby leaving room for contests over what would become “Missouri.” Entering the union as a slave state in a compromise that incorporated Maine as a free state, Missouri was then institutionally aligned with the South. This situation helps us to comprehend some of the narratives faced by the German immigrants. This is important as we can then begin to see how narratives overlap and become intermingled (i.e.; interrelationship between the Missouri narratives and those brought by the immigrants). While some attention must be paid to the contribution of Gottfried Duden,

the main focus of this section will be upon narratives of religious freedom, slavery, and Nativism.

Presented as a gateway to the west, with the Missouri River as the main thoroughfare, the state was ripe with inexpensive land and was primed for expansion and population. As discussed above, Duden's journey to America was to provide an accurate depiction of the land as a site for potential German immigration. From his *Bericht*, it is clear that Duden was not enamored with the plains of Illinois and considered the task of farming the land much too difficult<sup>23</sup>. Upon crossing the Mississippi River to St. Louis, Duden was struck by how few individuals seem to be aware of the opportunities available in the West:

It is surprising that the population does not grow more rapidly. It also strikes one as strange that the fertile soil near the city is not at all utilized and that food products are almost all procured from the east bank, from the state of Illinois. The inhabitants are mostly out-of-state merchants who concern themselves with nothing except the quick sale of their wares. Few own property, and some of the married ones did not even bring their wives along because they consider their stay here so transient. (Duden [1829]1980: 64).

Keeping in mind that only four years prior, the land was a territory and St. Louis a trading center, for Duden then, Missouri remained a secret that was hidden from the rest of the country, and particularly from the Germans living east of the Allegheny mountains. His representation of Missouri as a plentiful land of lush rolling hills, clear cool streams, and an abundance of fish and other wild game certainly strengthened the argument that this unspoiled region would be an ideal location for many Germans wishing to find a fresh start and to avoid the problems that faced the fatherland. In a later entry of his *Bericht*, Duden portends what became the impetus for the Colony at Hermann:

If a small city were founded with the intention of serving the American Germans as a center of culture, one would soon see a rejuvenated Germania arise and the

European Germans would then have a second country here, such as the British have. If only a live interest for such a project would develop in Germany! No plan of the present day can be more promising to the individual and to the whole than such a plan for the founding of a city as the center of German culture in the western North America, and especially in the areas west of the Mississippi. It would add to all the direct gifts of nature that which must always proceed from human beings themselves. No one should fear that any political obstacle or envy of the Americans would oppose it. German immigrants are generally welcome here, and as soon as they have set foot on the new continent, they are considered equals of the citizens. (Duden, [1829]1980: 179).

Certainly, Missouri became an attraction for Germans abroad as well as immigrants already living in America.

An additional advantage to a newly opened land was that there were few established institutions imposing rules upon individuals. This made Missouri ideal for immigrants fleeing the bureaucracy of the German states as well as the repression of religious expression by dogmatic state and synodal organizations. As the Mississippi River was viewed as a symbolic barrier dividing America into East and West, for many Germans the waterway also marked a barrier against organized religion. Schneider (1939) points out that early German settlements in Missouri actively rejected the Eastern synod and disrupted attempts to establish a *Kirchenverein* (e.g.; Church union) within the state. While the charge that many German immigrants were irreligious is in dispute, there is little doubt that a strong Rationalist influence among the German settlers tended to pit immigrants against one another (Muehl, 1991; Muehl, 1986; Foster, 1953; Schneider, 1939; Bek, 1924b; 1923; Falbisaner, [1903]1931; Mühl, *Notebook*; Helfrich, 1848). The tensions between Lutheran and Rationalist groups in Germany were also transplanted on the Missouri frontier (Foster, 1953; Schneider, 1939). Being Free from state censorship, German newspapers in St. Louis and the surrounding areas became battlegrounds wherein these groups could freely launch attacks against one another:

The very name ‘*Kirchenverein*,’ according to this critic, contained a contradiction. By what right could only seven ordained ministers, apart from their congregations, arrogate to themselves the status of a Church! Perhaps the congregations were not entitled to a voice in these matters, since, after all, they were but as sheep to be made ready for the shearing! Did we escape the misery of Europe and did we build our homes in the freest land on earth in order now to bow ourselves again under the most abominable servile yoke which human ignorance and malice can devise? (*Anzeiger des Westens*, May 10, 1842, cited in Schneider, 1939: 118).

I must caution that antagonism against organized religion should not be considered as being synonymous with atheism. While German Rationalism in America did range from liberal Protestantism to being radically anti-clerical, the free-thinkers in the Hermann, Missouri area remained aligned with the Lutheran Church. In correspondence to his wife, Pauline, Mühl expressed that variation within the groups did exist and that he did not see eye to eye with the eastern Rationalists, a position that he felt had made him many enemies in the eastern communities (Mühl, *Letters*: June 16, 1842; July 27, 1842).

It is clear that while the Rationalists along the Missouri River Valley were extremely vocal, strong pockets of Catholicism, Orthodox and Reformed Lutheranism, and Methodism took root in many Missouri communities (e.g.; Augusta, Dutzow, Rhineland, Washington, and Westphalia). With the level of religious diversity in Missouri, coupled with memories of religious intolerance in the fatherland, theological issues often became a point of heated debate among the immigrants. Correspondence between Pastor Frederick Birkner in Hermann and the American Home Missionary Society indicates that acts of violence were a persistent occurrence for ministers in some Rationalist areas. (Schneider, 1939). Personal conversations with Gasconade County Historical Society staff and Reverend James Elliot suggest that until recently sectarian tensions in Hermann remained elevated.

As indicated above, the slave question narrative has inextricably been linked to Missouri since statehood, linking Missouri, institutionally, with the South and politically with Southern Democrats. A popular conception holds that Germans universally denounced the practice of slavery wherever they settled, however, as with religion, the German position on the slave question was highly contested (Tolzmann, 2006; Olbrich, 1996; Muehl, 1986; Dunson, 1965; Wittke, 1948; Schneider, 1939; Bek, 1921b; Trexler, 1914; Goebel, 1879; Duden, [1829]1980). Still, for persons emigrating from their homeland for reasons of oppression, it seemed antithetical to settle in a state with the institution of slavery.

The German element in Missouri did play a considerable role, through politics, the press, and the pulpit, in calling for the abolition of slavery. Eduard Mühl, founder of the *Freier Männer Verein* (e.g.; Union of Free Men) of Hermann, did champion rights for all men, not just for white men. As editor of the *Hermanner Wochenblatt* he used the paper to call upon the Missouri legislature to change the state's constitution so to reflect the view that slavery had no place in a free country. In order to express the savagery of the institution, over the course of twenty six weeks Mühl dedicated the front page of his paper to reprint a German-language version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*<sup>24</sup>. The German language papers sympathetic to the Rationalist and the '48ers (i.e.; the collective term *Achtundvierziger* referring to political refugees of 1848) also presented disturbing abuses imposed upon slaves and at times free Negroes (Olbrich, 1996; Dunson, 1965). As Schneider (1939) and Trexler (1914) suggest, the slave question was divisive to religious denominations throughout the West and the reluctance of Eastern and Northern patrons of

missionary societies to support ministries that did not denounce slavery placed an extra burden upon some congregations in Missouri.

Still, the German position on slavery cannot be viewed as being purely dichotomous. William Olbrich (1996) argues that upon closer analysis the view put forth that the Germans were staunchly anti-slavery is in part factual but mostly the result of mythologizing attempts to distance Missouri Germans from their associations with the pro-slavery Democrat party. A more accurate assessment is that for Missouri Germans, slavery was a necessary evil that was sanctioned by the government. In his *Bericht*, Duden ([1829]1980) does indicate that given the laws of Missouri, owning slaves is a viable option for immigrants who can afford the expense. Devoting considerable space to justifying the practice of slave owning Duden details comparisons between the American institution and the plight of the day laborers in Germany. Arguing from an academic point of view Duden states:

The mental level of the free Negroes in North America is nowhere superior to that of the servant class in Europe, and slaves are much better off physically than the European domestic servants. There would still be the question whether the limited mental span of an underprivileged European day laborer has so many advantages over that of a Negro slave that it balances the better physical care the latter receives. ([1907]1984).

Suggesting that the condition of the American slave was much better than that of the German day laborer was not unique to Duden. Adelbert Baudissin, a count who fled Germany after the 1848 revolutions and settled in the Missouri River Valley region also wrote of his distaste for slavery but felt there was little he could do against this legal institution. Feeling constrained by the laws of Missouri, Baudissin is left with extolling the conditions of slave life in the state: “When I lately describe to our Negro maid the situation of a German maid in Germany and asked her thereafter whether she perhaps

would like to exchange with her, then she said—Germany must be a hard country.” (cited in Dunson, 1965: 363). Slavery then, at least in Missouri, could be seen as a humanitarian act, as Duden described:

If, in the abolition of slavery, nothing else were to be considered but the welfare of the slaves themselves, it could not escape the most limited view in what a sad situation some of them would find themselves as a result of attaining a freedom for which they were not prepared. In their helplessness many would resemble domestic animals that having grown up under the constant care of men are suddenly left to their own resources. In the United States the master is obligated to assure the maintenance of the slaves, whether they are capable of working or not; and granting them their freedom does not release him from this duty toward the indigent. If one considers mental welfare, then the mere relinquishment of power over primitive human beings does not deserve any special praise. ([1829]1980: 112).

Olbrich (1996) concludes that for some Germans, the issue of slavery was less about concern for civil rights than about either the integrity of due process (i.e.; lynchings were viewed as violations on legal grounds) or the integrity of America (i.e.; the slave question being seen as synonymous with disunion in the country). The indifference toward slavery was again veiled in the legal aspects of the institution. Even within the churches, hard line positions against slavery were avoided possibly in the attempt to maintain unity within the congregation. The Northern Methodist conference at Hannibal stated concerns about the moral, political, and social implications of slavery, however, “we do heartily protest against any attempt, directly or indirectly, at producing insubordination among slaves; we do heartily condemn...the underground railroad operation, and all other systems of negro stealing.” (Trexler, 1914: 130). Feeling pressure from ministry officials to denounce the evil institution, Pastor Karl Nestel of Hermann reported that there was a small group of slaveholders in the area and that they

were viewed as being a scandal, even among the “irreligious part of the community.”

(Schneider, 1939: c.f. 73: 354). He assured the officials that:

With regard to the point of slavery, I am happy to state that there is no slaveholder in my church and that a strong feeling exists among the members against slavery as a great sin. I can speak in and out of the pulpit and pray as I feel on this subject. There is no particular law concerning slavery in our discipline and the German brethren who first established churches here thought it would be clear to every truly Christian mind that stealing or withholding man’s liberty was a grosser outrage than stealing or withholding man’s property. (Schneider, 1939; c.f. 73: 354).

Nestel’s predecessor, Pastor Friedrich Birkner, suggested that an active ministry against slavery may not be necessary within areas of Missouri that were home to large populations of immigrants as:

It is evident, that wherever the German immigrants increase, the slaveholders retreat, and it is certain that the general principles and feeling with regard to the personal rights of men in which the Germans have been brought up in the native country and their cosmopolitical character will never allow them to become friends of slavery. It is indeed a truth, which admits of no doubt, that *Christian Germans* would only by the most pressing circumstances be induced to submit to holding slaves (Schneider, 1939; c.f. 73: 353; emphasis in original).

Here the narrative of the Old World is placed in conflict with the narratives of the Far West. It is telling that Birkner leaves the door open to the possibility for Germans to hold slaves. This hints at confirmation of Olbrich’s (1996) argument that while Germans may have cared little for the slaves themselves, the greater concern was that to hold slaves was an affront to German honor.

While not specific to Missouri, the narrative of Nativism was developing in the larger communities of the state. The tremendous influx of Germans to the region fueled concerns that eventually the practices of the foreigners would supplant those of the Americans, particularly in regard to calls for repealing Sabbath laws, anxiety over the “atheistic” behavior of the Rationalists, and the possibility of increased agitation against

the slave question. Given that the Far West was still sparsely populated, the fear was that foreigners, by sheer numerical majority, would gain control of government and remake the land into the grotesque image of a new Europe. In his *A Plea for the West* Lyman Beecher expressed this concern as:

The danger from uneducated mind is augmenting daily by the rapid influx of foreign emigrants, unacquainted with our institutions, unaccustomed to self-government, inaccessible to education, and easily accessible to prepossession, and inveterate credulity, and intrigue, and easily embodied and wielded by sinister design. In the beginning this eruption of revolutionary Europe was not anticipated, and we opened our doors wide to the influx and naturalization of foreigners. But it is becoming a terrific inundation; it has increased upon our native population from five to thirty-seven per cent, and is every year advancing. It seeks, of course, to settle down upon the unoccupied territory of the West, and may at no distant day equal, and even outnumber the native population. (cited in Stephenson, 1922: 192).

Political schisms between the Democratic and Whig parties, as well as the developing Know-Nothing and Republican parties did little to assuage fears of losing governmental control to the immigrants. As Trexler points out, within politics, ethnicity can be overlooked as Missourians were encouraged to work with “the contemptible ‘Dutch’” so to draw them away from the Republican party of the North (1914; c.f. 108: 165).

This enmity toward immigrants did not hold across all ethnic groups. As the German population in St. Louis and the Missouri River Valley regions rapidly increased, the Irish immigrant was elevated to a position necessary of sympathy. As reported in a Nativist news paper “The Irish are passing away from our sight, before the strong blast of the Dutch competition. Six Dutchmen can live, where one Irishman would starve.” (St. Louis American, Feb. 19, 1847 as cited in Forester, 1953: 272). The paper repeatedly challenged the current wave of immigration by asking:

Where again are our Irish, diggers and hodmen, who with all their faults, are a noble, generous-hearted nation? They, too, are mostly gone! A Dutchman was

preferred—he did his day’s work a few bits less, and got the pay. (St. Louis American April 7, 1847 cited in Forester, 1953: 272).

If the concern for the wellbeing of the Irish seems out-of-place, there was no doubt that the Germans were viewed as usurpers:

They are everywhere and at everything in and around the town, and in every hole and corner in the town. If a hole is to be dug, or a wheel turned, there you find a Dutchman. Pass Market street, and eighteen out of the twenty you meet are Dutch. The lower end of the city formerly called Frenchtown, now more emphatically *Dutchtown*—we say that they have nearly monopolized every branch of industry, to the exclusion of our own citizens, who aided in the growth and prosperity of the city.  
(St. Louis American April 7, 1847 cited in Forester, 1953: 273).

Away from urban centers, the relatively isolated German immigrant faced less of a challenge to their place in America. Still, the immigrant threat was ever present. As Know-Nothing champion, Thomas Richard Whitney found, the German craft workers and tradesmen were “respectable in their sphere” however, they too brought with them the scourge of “Red Republicanism, which by giving the ‘largest liberty,’ would paralyze industry, and render both life and property insecure.” (Levine, 2001: 469). The immigrants were painted in broad strokes wherein they were seen as “the malcontents of the Old World, who hate monarchy, not because it is monarchy, but because it is restraint. They are such men as stood by the side of Robespierre.” (Levine, 2001: 469). Even the limited restraints of a civil government were thought to be at risk from the machinations of a foreign element.

### **Settlement Plan.**

These immigrants felt that they were to be part of a grand experiment to establish a new German state in America. That the Colony at Hermann was envisioned as a pure

German community that would challenge St. Louis in size and influence was expressed by a Philadelphia newspaper editor:

When we consider the United States in its present expansion, in its unrivaled progress in all its national undertakings and thereby contemplate the important role which the Germans play in this and how little they in fact profit thereby, if we think of us Germans as *Germans*, if we further take into consideration, how the striving of the Germans gradually awakens in order to safeguard their rights as citizens, in order to maintain their splendid language, and there, where the majority are Germans, to maintain dignity before the courts, then we are completed, in viewing the masses of Germans living here in this country and the continual impetus of immigration, to regard a Society as yours is as a most opportune phenomenon. This affords 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 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 along, and where he will be assigned a sphere of action in which, by industriousness and frugality he will soon be able to achieve a measure of independence, which if he first must seek for it a long time, will often be difficult for him. We are acquainted with the state of the German immigrants, we know which struggles often wait upon them and how many fall in battle. It will be different if he knows that he travels to a colony where he will find friendly souls, who are able to assist him with advice and deed. (Alt und Neue Welt, September 17, 1836; cited in Bek [1907]1984: 37).

Reminiscent of Duden's vision, we see the lofty goal of bringing together all Germans in the new land so to help them maintain their identity "as *Germans*." As discussed above the planning and settlement of the Hermann Colony was approached in a hasty manner with little instruction on what was to define a true German identity and heritage.

Again, as Somers (1998) and Somers and Gibson (1998) suggests, actions are informed by the narratives in which social agents are embedded. To fully understand how the immigrants in the Hermann, Missouri region constructed their identity we must not only consider the various narratives that flowed throughout the German states that motivated the *Auswanderer* to leave for America but also the narratives that drew the immigrants to Missouri. We can then begin to comprehend how the immigrants began to

view themselves as “true” Germans in a new land. The confluence of ethnic, political, and religious, narratives provide the insight into how this group of immigrants saw their role in weaving all that was considered to be good in Germany with that which was considered ideal in America and Missouri. This blending of narratives was not without contradiction and offers an interesting perspective on how a German immigrant identity was formed. The following chapters will detail how these immigrants located themselves within a specific narrative that identified them as being “authentic” Germans in relation to Americans, including those Germans who too easily assimilated to American ways, as well as those Germans who were considered as holding tightly to old practices that had no place in this new land.

## Chapter 5

### Yankeedom

You have crossed the Mississippi, and from now on the unpleasant Yankee element becomes less apparent (Frederick Münch, 1859: 14).

The narratives presented in the last chapter show that the attraction of America for the emigrant was firmly rooted in the ideas of freedom, liberty, and self governance. This is in line with the Enlightenment and republic narratives that were percolating throughout the Germans states, particularly in the pulpits and universities, before being suppressed. While issues of corruption and deceit in the port cities of Germany was well documented in the diaries and letters of the immigrants, there is little information regarding such experiences in the port cities of America. Still, there is considerable evidence indicating that the newly arrived immigrants were targeted by unscrupulous individuals. It is unclear whether the immigrants in this study were able to avoid such encounters or simply chose not to focus upon them in their correspondence and writings. The lack of attention given to American cheats suggests the possibility that the Germans traveling in large groups (e.g.; emigration societies and extended networks of relatives) were viewed as being less desirable targets. While the diaries and letters are replete with the grandeur and beauty of the new land, there is little in way of discussion of the cultured and hospitable American. The accounts of interactions with Americans most often relate stories of their lack of refinement both culturally (i.e.; level of education and sophistication) and socially. It is within these narratives that we are allowed a glimpse at the sense of superiority held by some of the Germans settling in the Hermann, Missouri

region. Again, these individuals were settling in a new land that held little in the way of a specific culture, or at least a culture with a long and rich history, such as that shared by persons from Germany. Given that culture and related behaviors are not left behind when individuals emigrate, Wittke too suggests that immigrants linked with the European revolutions of 1848 did not forego their practices to become “mere ‘raw material’ in building a Yankee nation which they found so disappointing in many respects.” (1948: 714).

As discussed above, not all Germans found America and Missouri to be the utopia that Duden presented in his *Bericht*. While Duden did note that his American neighbors were friendly and often offered advice on living on the frontier, his accounts suggest that he spent little time with Americans in the area. It is most likely then that the critical representations of Americans in the correspondence was to provide a more accurate depiction of Missouri than the one proffered by Duden in his idyllic portraits. What we can take from these narratives is that the immigrant would, inevitably, come in contact with persons who are not as well versed in culture or in possession of a rich heritage. Regardless, the narratives expressed that the German not only could survive in the Missouri regions but would also be of benefit to all those living in the area by bringing a sense of culture to this barren frontier.

Through the accounts of the immigrant contacts with Americans we begin to see that lines were being drawn with regard to shaping a German identity. The narratives became templates of unacceptable behaviors to be avoided by all proper Germans. From the practices described in the narratives, I have found some common themes that circulated among the inhabitants of the Hermann area. Under the generalizing epithet of

Yankee, the Americans were presented as being wasteful, uncouth, at times childish, and more interested in financial concerns than in concern for others. From these narratives, I will show how proper German behavior is shaped in contrast to the behavior of the Yankee.

### **Yankee Influence.**

Often the expressions “The North American” and “Yankee” are used as terms of derision within the narratives that describe Americans. While these monikers do not always appear when pointing to the flaws found in the behavior and character of Americans there is still a sense that those described would be classified as being a Yankee<sup>25</sup>. For the most part, Yankeedom represents that which is most deplorable about the new homeland. Remembering that Missouri was presented as being an untouched land ready to be molded into whatever visions the settlers held, the region was in stark contrast to eastern communities. Again, the Alleghenies were a major point of division for some German immigrants. As seen in the quote that begins this chapter, the Mississippi River also became another barrier that marked the Far West from the host of problems found in the east. With the increasing scarcity of land in the eastern states the larger cities were often seen as being reflective of the problems found in Germany. As Münch pointed out in his treatise on Missouri, while the new homeland had much to offer the German, the immigrant should remain cautious:

Our large cities, on the other hand, are much too noisy for you, the activities of the people too hurried. Everything is too much attuned to quick profit and the pleasure of the moment. The people themselves seem cold and superficial to you in their thinking and striving. (Münch; 1859: 13)

Large American cities were described as being unsavory due to the utilitarian practices of the inhabitants. Again, there was much to offer in these urban centers, yet there were

signs of cultural growing pains (i.e.; remnants of America's rural background juxtaposed against cultural attractions). In comparison to the urban centers of the Old World, American cities seem unable to breach the expectations of these educated Germans.

Frederick Steines related this sentiment in his letter of September 15, 1834:

On the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> we arrived at Cincinnati, where a stop of two hours was made. I hastened up town to see some acquaintances of ours.—Cincinnati is a beautiful city. It has perhaps the cheapest market in America. The presence of cows and swine on the streets is very offensive, however. But this is a condition which I have observed in all the American cities I have seen. (Bek, 1921b: 532).

Notwithstanding this criticism, cities with large populations of German immigrants did tend to somewhat temper the North American influence. Franz von Löher's depiction of St. Louis hints at the vital contribution that the German element had upon this uncultured country yet there seemed to be a constant struggle against American practices:

The city smacks of Europe...looking at the people, one can see that Yankeedom is not all the rage here, even though it has infested the place. Here, something of European culture and Continental ease temper restless Yankee commercialism. As is well known, in place of a heart the true commercial Yankee has money. (Trautmann, 1983: 370-371).

For the Germans settling along the Missouri River Valley region, the larger communities tended to flourish in a manner contrary to the romantic ideals of the immigrants. There was little doubt that urban living conditions in the early to mid nineteenth century was not always a pleasant experience. Disease and corruption were always a concern, as expressed by Frederick Steines in his September 15, 1834 letter about bilious fever (e.g.; cholera) and filth in St. Louis:

Such frightful heat, clouds of dust in the streets, stench everywhere in the city, arising from animals which had died in the streets, or from swamps near the city that were drying out, or from tanneries, slaughter houses and similar sources, for boundless is the filth in the American cities, and nowhere a trace of rules of sanitation. No wonder that one sees the hearse almost constantly on the streets during the hot months." (Bek, 1921b: 527-528).

On his travels to some eastern communities so to find subscriptions to his newspaper, Eduard Mühl wrote to his wife attesting to the repugnant character of the larger cities. The threat of urbanization (e.g.; concentrated population and industrialization) was ever present, Americans also had not been able to address these ills:

I have also seen the vices and inhumane lives of the poorest people in great cities...I have such a longing for simpler places where one is close to nature, and where degradation of human beings, their disorderly and riotous life, is not to be seen. (Mühl, *Letters*, July 27, 1842).

The journey had helped him to understand where “the German view point is in error” allowing him to contemplate what it meant to be a German, part of which was a return to the way of life fondly remembered in the fatherland. Recalling Mühl’s idyllic reflections upon leaving Germany, we can see that they remained with him in a letter to Pauline:

The frightful noise in this city is really awful compared to the quiet in Hermann. To me everyone is so confined to their houses and without fresh air that it would take me a long time to be able to live in a place like this again...Our quiet cheerful house in little Hermann where you and the children are almost sees like a lost paradise, one that I had once known. When I see the noisy goings-on in the cities, these narrow streets and dark rooms, then it seems to me we could no longer live in a big city and be as content as we are in your little house in Hermann. Be content my good wife. I believe you would also have a longing after the quiet life as we have in Hermann if you made a trip with me. (Mühl, *Letters*, June 14, 1848).

Given that Hermann was envisioned to rival St. Louis as a true German community that would circumvent the problems faced by larger cities in both the Old and New Worlds. Still, with the relative isolation and calm of the Colony, the Yankee influence could not be avoided entirely. There was much contact with Americans, and as such, opportunities were rarely missed for highlighting comparisons that exemplified the preeminence of the German culture.

## **The American Boor.**

Many of the personal narratives from the immigrants attest to how the crass behaviors of the Americans were an affront to German sensibilities. We must keep in mind that the Germans settling in the Hermann region were linked with the Latin Farmers and as such held a background of higher education and therefore were possibly more sensitive to these concerns. The attraction of Missouri was the opportunity to be immune to the corrupting forces that dominated the eastern regions of America. There was the sense that the further west the immigrant moved, the greater their chance of finding the freedoms that they sought. In his letter of September 15, 1834, Frederick Steines related, after crossing the Alleghenies, that this may be true in pointing out how “on this side of the mountains the people are more hospitable than the mountaineers.” (Bek, 1921b: 530). While the Yankee element did seem to diminish, there was no lack of examples of how American practices would be considered inferior to potential immigrants living in Germany. Continuing in his September letter, Steines recounted images of crass deportment along his journey west:

We have seen travelers do some very queer things in inns. We have seen them come into the office of the inn, and tho they did not lodge or take their meals there, occupy a chair in the middle of the room, lay their bundles, etc., beside them, spit tobacco juice on the floor, throw their quid in the corner of the room, and after having rested pick up their belongings and go away. To us Germans this seems very peculiar. Our women especially were offended thereby, since they are not accustomed to such things. (Bek, 1921b: 530).

It is clear that German immigrants should be prepared for such ill-mannered behaviors as the American way of life seemed little concerned with the perceptions of others.

Upon settling along the Missouri River Valley, the new immigrants were not lacking in their critique of Americans. The backwoodsmen were able to carve out a niche

and provide a living, albeit often at a subsistence level, by clearing areas for farming. Still, they were viewed as short sighted by being exceedingly wasteful and focused solely on their immediate needs. Duden, and later Münch, did caution German farmers wishing to emigrate against bringing their own implements to the New World as they were much too light for the uncultivated lands of the Missouri frontier but there was also caution for what could be expected from their American neighbors. The perception of the American farmer was one who provided minimal investment in the operation and upkeep of his farm. As a point of contrast, the Germans would lament that an American farm consisted of only one structure. A criticism by the Americans was that the Germans constructed so many out buildings that it seemed as if they were designing a city (Bek, 1921a: 664). Many accounts depict the farmers as being little concerned with the care for, let alone the location of, their stock (i.e.; animals were allowed to roam the woods leaving fences to keep them out of areas rather than keep them in) as well as the condition of their farm house.

It is clear that the German immigrants were appalled at the lack of industriousness exhibited by their American neighbors. Within the Yankeedom narrative, the German emphases on heritage, developing roots, and holding to a work ethic are implied in relation to criticisms of their improvident neighbors. In his travels, Gert Goebel tells of coming across many buildings that he considered to be abandoned only to find that they were indeed American farmhouses. He wrote that even in cases where the structure was in serious disrepair some inhabitants seemed reluctant to invest in improvements:

There were fellows, who would crawl from one corner to another to keep from getting too wet when it rained, rather than patch up their defect [sic] roof, they would wrap themselves up in their blankets rather than to daub their walls and

they would not think of chopping wood until the last chip was smoking on the fire. (Goebel, 1879: 146).

This behavior was consistent given the feckless character of the Yankee as described by other immigrants. Goebel's account substantiates the immigrants perception that some American farmers would prefer to sell their land to the highest bidder and then relocated so to start anew rather than to put any effort into regular maintenance. Such behaviors tended to highlight the German perception that Americans held a misplaced sense of responsibility. Frederick Steines supported this belief in his October 18, 1834 letter when describing the Americans in his local area:

The people live very comfortably here, but some of them are exceedingly lazy. Oftentimes I have seen the man of the house stretched out on his back in the middle of the room sleeping for hours, his wife sitting in a rocking chair, her hands folded idly in her lap, and the daughters of the house sitting lazily about fanning themselves. The women like to adorn themselves and on ordinary occasions appear as well dressed as the German women are on Sunday. The men on the other hand are almost carelessly dressed, and it is not at all surprising to see the husband wearing tattered garments walking or riding beside his wife in all her finery (Bek, 1921b: 537).

The indolent North American was little concerned with filling free time with avocational or intellectual pursuits. Worse yet, anything resembling hard work would cease when enough was earned, only to be spent frivolously on adornments and nothing more.

Boorish behavior was also described in American culinary practices. The refined German was not only shocked by the table manners of the Yankee but also by the lack of variety in their consumption patterns. In line with the view of the Americans' feckless behavior, eating then became merely a task rather than an event meant to be lingered over and enjoyed. In a letter to his family, Joseph Aretz writes of an early dining experience with Americans:

For breakfast and supper coffee is never missing, and they brew it so strong that a German hardly can drink it. On the table is always a big sugar bowl, which often has the size of a “Maas”. They take three to four big spoonfuls of sugar and then pour the coffee over it. Several times I saw a man who in addition put a clump of butter in his cup. He told the others to do the same, because it would taste good. Then everybody took a few pieces of roasted meat, (cooked meat you’ll find seldom here) and put so much butter on each mouthful of bread that it would have been enough to make a complete sandwich from. He drank one cup of coffee after another, in his right hand a large sharp knife, rounded at the head, in his left hand a fork with two teeth, with which he put big portions on the knife. Even vegetables or salads together with coffee are not unusual. Everything goes so quickly that after a few minutes the whole business is over. For those Germans, belonging to the group of ruminants and who are too shy to stay longer at the table than the others, this habit is exasperating (Aretz, 2000: 117-118).

It is important to note that Germans experiencing this dining behavior were at risk of assimilating to the American habits. The North American was then someone who had little sense of taste and was not versed in the pleasures of European dining and conviviality. In correspondence detailing his boat trip to Hermann, Franz von Löhner slights American dining practices by telling of how the crew of the boat:

[S]et us an excellent table, which we could partake without having to bolt food as if eating were a matter of life or death. Crew and passengers being largely German, there was temporary freedom here from American customs and barbarisms. For the first time, I was on a boat whose passengers wanted to travel for pleasure and not merely for business (Trautmann, 1983: 381)

It then seems that if the German were to retain his or her heritage, they must then avoid the Yankee element.

Limitations on the diets of the American farmer were attributed to their lack of forethought and inability at rationing. Goebel told of how some farmers would be relegated to eating nothing but potatoes by the end of the winter months as they would over indulge on their meat and vegetable stocks earlier in the season. Again, the Yankee was presented as living only for the moment and giving little concern to the future. An influx of the German element was seen as a remedy not only for the

differences found in individual but also for the social well-being of all Missouri. In a November 22, 1834 letter to friends and relatives in Loehdorf, Frederick Steines articulated how simple changes could have tremendous benefits:

[The Americans] live a wretched life indeed. Their food consists of corn bread and bacon and then again bacon and corn bread with coffee or tea. Yet they seem to be satisfied and wish for nothing better, in fact many of them do not know that there is anything better. How strange that just in a land where nature and the political conditions make it possible to have the greatest superabundance so easily, man is too lazy to acquire it. It is therefore well that many European immigrants should come, in order that this sort of living be done away with (Bek, 1921b: 541-542).

It is clear that the Yankee element was viewed as having a deleterious effect upon some immigrants, therefore, the German should not be “too shy” in their dealings with Americans. Frederick Steines was one who did not seem to have difficulty in engaging the Yankees near his home:

Sometimes when I am out spading my garden the Americans come over and say; ‘That work is too hard, you will kill yourself.’ Then I reply; ‘I shall not kill myself, but I fear I shall die if I eat nothing but bread and meat as you people do.’ (Bek, 1921b: 541).

Here, a line is being drawn that defines the German living in Missouri as an individual who does not follow the practices of the Americans. What appeared to be a simple exchange, in actuality, established lines of demarcation that reinforce a German identity that promotes the characteristics of industriousness and the cognition of the value of a varied diet.

The German criticism of the gauche behavior of the Yankee also focused upon the Americans lack of cultural refinement with regard to music and entertainment. Given that American culture had yet to establish a long history, as opposed to those of European countries, it is easy for the Germans to express a sense of superiority over their new

Missouri neighbors. Without having produced the likes of a Mozart, a Goethe, or a Schiller, the Americans were somewhat limited in their country's musical repertoire. Frederick Münch lamented that the Americans know very few songs other than monotonous patriotic tunes such as Yankee Doodle. Goebel too was not impressed with the musical background and preferences of his American acquaintances:

That, what was called 'music' in those days would in all probability never have been considered music in any part of civilized Europe but simply 'noise'. The few national hymns, marches and dances which were then known sounded well enough, if they are played correctly and executed with the proper expressions but when these pieces of music are scratched off on a fidel [sic] out of tune, with frantic rapidity and without devoting particular attention to keeping time, it is enough to make a dog howl. Of the theory of music and the laws of harmony nothing was known in the early Western wilderness and also notes were nothing but incomprehensible dots and the few music pieces, which were played, had been transmitted from generation to generation by a kind of ear tradition (Goebel, 1879: 173).

While it appears that the cultured ear of the German often had to suffer the Yankee taste in music, so too did the American have to endure the German musical experience.

During an orchestra performance, Goebel related the comments of an old American doctor in stating that Germans: "[a]re a strange set of people, you dont [sic] make music like we Americans, even if ever so many of us are playing together, we all play the same tune, but each of you five have played his own piece." (Goebel, 1879: 174).

There was no hesitation for the German immigrant to feel pity for their American neighbors for not having the ability to enjoy fine music. However, some accounts indicate that the Americans may never come to appreciate a sophisticated taste in dance and music. On his return from Hermann, Franz von Löher's packet boat stopped for the night:

and in a twinkling, the main parlor was turned into a ballroom. But the only music to be found was that made by an old Negro on a wretched fiddle. He sat on

a stool and scratched out heart-rending tunes in the monotonous wail of a bagpipe—tunes that appear again and again among Welsh and Slavs, gypsies and Negroes. The dances were splendid. First came the briskest, in the form of reels, with important variations. Our little captain led off, looking dead serious, a dancer who lacked vigorous address—as sure a sign of cowardice as the thundering approach of a goaded braggart. A waltz was danced but ended soon; it seemed too hard for these people. Then a jig, the farmers' dance, a version of children's reels. The young women exactly in their element; leaping, shouting, and falling—and gasping for breath. It was the acme of wildness (Trautmann, 1983: 393).

Von Löher later reported that he had to leave this “obnoxious frenzy” for the calm of the upper deck. In this short entry, von Löher not only infantilizes the American passengers on the boat for their inability to perform a basic waltz, but he also aligns his backwoods traveling companions with having the tastes of “Welsh and Slavs, gypsies and Negroes.” The lack of sophistication among the Americans in the Missouri River Valley region clearly set them apart from the new immigrants. Such a cultural divide made it easy for the Germans to set boundaries that defined their behaviors and tastes as desirable.

### **Dollar Society:**

Within the narratives, possibly the most significant difference between the American and the “true” German was the tension between a material and an intellectual existence. There was an utilitarian quality found in the Yankee that tended to permeate most every aspect of American life. As seen above, Von Löher preferred traveling with Germans for “usually the American resembles a valise, shut when traveling, to open upon arrival” (Trautmann, 1983:382). The focus of the Yankee was to turn a quick profit, which would then be spent frivolously, and not to enhance the quality of life through philosophical conversation, appreciation of fine literature and music, or to simply enjoy the act of dining. Again, these narratives point to boundaries between the individuals

with regard to personal and social priorities. As Frederick Steines pointed out, business is the driving force for the North American:

To make money is the sole ambition of the average American. Money is the mainspring of his actions, it is the axis around which the whole world turns for him. In this sense a school-master in the little town of Washington on the Missouri once wrote into the copy-books of his pupils as follows: 'God made bees, and bees make honey; God made men, and men make money.' This shows sufficiently what in general seems to be the end and goal of the earthly existence of most Americans (Bek, 1921a: 696).

Recalling that in the Old World these German immigrants comprised a bourgeois class and that a motivation for emigrating to Missouri was the desire for a return to a way of living that had been lost in a changing Germany. The individualism of the Americans was anathema to goals of the immigrants who looked to establish communities with strong ties among the inhabitants. Frederick Münch echoed Steines' concern that the American way of life was overly superficial:

I have come to the unpleasant conclusion that life in America, however free, however comfortable, however advantageous it may be, lacks one chief element to give it a genuinely human and worthy character, namely that it lacks the romantic element almost entirely, and that it will hardly ever attain it. In their restless striving the American people seek only those things which are of temporary benefit (Bek, 1924a: 568).

Joseph Aretz also noted similar behavior in a letter to his family:

The men work—even if they do not own any slaves—approximately 3 to 6 months a year, the rest of the time they spend hunting. Their wanderlust is an additional problem for them. In my opinion, it is possible to buy all their goods and chattels for little money. (2000: 118).

While Yankeedom was seen as an overpowering force, however, it was a force that could be resisted by Germans of strong conviction and holding a dedication to the superior culture and heritage of the Old Land. The Yankee then became an individual who had few ties to an area and was willing to move if he could sell his land and possessions for a

decent price. It seemed as if there was little that could be done to shake a person loose from the grasp of the dollar society. This is not to suggest that the Americans were indifferent or rude to the Germans nor that the Germans actively avoided contact with their American neighbors. It is obvious from the narratives that the immigrant settlers in this region had significant interactions with the Americans. However, as Frederick Steines pointed out in his letter of October 18, 1834, a German should be well versed in dealing with Yankees:

I find the people here exceedingly friendly. But they are all speculative, and if they can drive a sharp bargain and get a little more in a deal than is right they will rarely pass the opportunity by. If, on the other hand, you stand your ground and frankly tell them, 'That is too much, so and so much is sufficient,' they are usually satisfied. This is no place for a stupid person." (Bek, 1921b: 538).

Certainly, the utopia presented by Duden was not a place for the inexperienced immigrant. This caution is also expressed by Mühl, Münch, and Frederick's brother, Herman. Potential immigrants were warned to read Duden's work closely before making a decision to leave Germany as the transition would be neither easy nor without peril (e.g.; death, exploitation, financial ruin). In describing his journey to the west, Frederick Steines did offer a rare account of Yankee cheats attempting to relieve the immigrants of their monies by talking them into purchasing expensive land in the east:

Soon there came also a man who purported to be a Frenchman, and who claimed that he had emigrated when France put Louis Philippe on the throne, saying that he had left his fatherland because he did not like the latter ruler. He spoke French, German and English fluently. This man looked more Jewish than French to me. He too became very much animated when he learned that we were bound westward. I soon detected their purpose and told them so. I told them that I recognized in them, the clever agents who were sent out to find buyers for the estates of some land owners. After some protestation they gave me up and tried their cunning on Prafrath [a traveling companion]. The latter was indeed very much tempted to take their advice. He asked me as to what he should do. I told him what I thought about it, but urged him to use his own judgment. In the end he decided to go with us.

As soon as the newspapers announce the arrival of immigrants every speculator sends his agents and helpers to the highways which the immigrants are said to travel. They are found in the inns and everywhere along the way. They insist upon accompanying you on your way for a distance. What are they trying to do? They want to get the money of the immigrant, that is all (Bek, 1921b: 531-532)<sup>26</sup>.

To survive in America the immigrant must remain diligent in their goal and should not succumb to speculation of the dollar society.

### **Americanized.**

The reference to “stupid person” in the above narrative also helps to define the boundaries among the immigrants themselves. Again, many of the Germans who were able to find success in Missouri were well educated but this is not to suggest that they shared the sensibilities of nobility as did many of the Latin Farmers of the early settlements. These individuals were able to adapt to the unforgiving environments of Missouri without sacrificing their German identity. As evident by the plan of the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, this was not the case for all immigrants. The narratives of the Germans in the Hermann area establish boundaries between “true” Germans and those Germans who had become Americanized. These latter immigrants are often viewed as having forsaken their heritage and as such have become an embarrassment to proper Germans everywhere.

Possibly the most notable German in the area to become Americanized was Ludwig Eversmann. Eversmann was Duden’s traveling companion and stayed in Missouri after Duden returned home. While it was not uncommon for German immigrants to take an American woman for their wife, Herman Steines noted that this was the case for Eversmann and that he “had become very much Americanized. His children speak English and do not understand any German because their parents speak

only English with them.” (Bek, 1920: 441). As we will see, the German language was held by the immigrants around Hermann as being superior to that of English and to speak proper German marked an adherence to one’s heritage. More disconcerting for some “true” Germans, particularly Eduard Mühl and Frederick Münch, was that Eversmann became a slave holder, a practice considered uniquely American. Tax receipts from 1848 indicate that Lewis Eversmann owned six slaves, valued at \$1100.00 (Eversmann, Family Papers). Again, while the German position on the slave question was not consistent, there is no record of anyone owning slaves in Roark Township.

The lure of Americanization was seen as being quite strong, especially within the cities. As von Löher suggest, even for Germans who resist the influence of assimilation, the struggle was indeed difficult:

[G]radually, American ways draw even him into their turbulence, or they exhaust him. If the first happens, he usually becomes an angry scornor of things German and cannot scold enough the fainthearted German people. If the second happens, he tries in vain to withdraw into peace and quiet. Yet, try as he might to bar windows and bolt doors against American life, nothing avails; it forces itself in through countless cracks, and continues to sting and buffet him (Trautmann, 1983: 375).

This narrative is very important as it acknowledges that identity is not static and that there is no direct or exact process for assimilation (i.e.; the affect of multiple narratives producing multiple outcomes). Given that, the individual is immersed within the narratives, even when attempting to be isolated, there is no real isolation. The cities then became a showcase for established identity boundaries to be exhibited and reinforced wherein acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are in constant contact. Editorial accounts circulated in some German language papers expressed disdain for the German

frontier women who forget their deportment and taken to acting like their backwoods neighbors:

the embarrassment felt by the German nation as a whole for the noisy, crude behavior of German farm women who had accompanied their husbands to town...how offensive the “immoral’ habit of riding *astride* their horses, discomfiting all respectable women around them and exposing their less than clean legs to the public gaze. (*Anzeiger des Westens*, June 10, 1837; cited in Pickle, 1985: 294-295).

These narratives were not merely attacks upon their American neighbors, but rather were devices that clearly defined the proper practices separating the true German from the American. Therefore, the benefit that the German element had upon the new homeland was in making clear that the German way of life be viewed as being superior to that of the Americanized life.

Through the boundaries expressed in the narratives, the immigrants would pit one culture, at least that German culture found in Missouri, against another. While the draw of Missouri was to be in relative isolation from perceived negative influences (e.g.; Americans, organized religion, and oppressive government) there would always be interaction with those persons and institutions holding competing narratives. Rather than viewing the immigrants as assuming a defensive position against the forces of assimilation to the American influence, we should consider these Germans as taking an active role in the shaping of their identity. Through these narratives we can see the identity of the proper German being outlined. This occurs in contrast to the Yankee. Characteristics detail a specific understanding of German identity and behavior. The Yankee depiction emphasizes both a feckless and an utilitarian quality of American culture. This is contrary to the understanding of German culture being recalled. These narratives express proper methods and practices for eating, dressing, speaking, working,

home economics (e.g.; saving and spending) and entertaining. The next chapter will examine narratives that establish the boundaries of a true German identity within their own culture.

## Chapter 6

### Old Prejudice

The men complain much of boredom. It is certainly unfortunate when a person has so little education that he cannot think of anything to do with himself. (Mühl, *Notebook*, August 23, 1836).

The opportunities that Missouri offered for immigrants was heralded as being available to anyone willing to make the journey. The Far West was ideal for those seeking to reinvigorate the German spirit and especially for those wishing to avoid the corrupting forces of American behaviors so often encountered in the East. While Missouri may not have been the utopia as described by Duden, Theodor van Dreveldt assured his family that any misconceptions about the area could be forgiven as “[i]n exchange I am freed from a patronizing government, from bothersome police, from crawling spies, from creeping civil servants, from hypocritical pietists, etc., etc.” (Kronenberg, 1998: 51). Indeed the immigrants were free of the constraints of the German governments, however, this was not enough to ensure success in the new land. As discussed in the last chapter, Yankeedom narratives provided a backdrop of crass, insensitive, and wasteful American behaviors, against which German immigrants could shape an identity designed to embrace the culture and history of their fatherland. Immigrants who too easily adopted the practices of Americans were seen as having turned their back on their rich heritage and consequentially their German identity. In this chapter the narratives are directed toward those Germans who seemed unable, or unwilling to maintain certain behaviors that were considered desirable for holding onto a German heritage in the new land. For the purposes here, Old Prejudice will describe the

old habits from Germany that were to be set aside if the immigrant were to prosper in Missouri. While many of the Old Prejudice criticisms are aimed at those Germans holding on to their class privileges as nobles and elites, the narrative was also directed at persons who, possibly living as poor farmers or day laborers in Germany, continued a life of complacency in America. As the above quote suggests, individuals of lower education were viewed as not capable of taking an active interest in their surroundings let alone their lives.

With the goal of developing a “new” Germany in the new land the question undoubtedly needed to be addressed as to what that would entail. Remembering that this was not a Colony devised by the German government but by Germans living in America wishing for a fresh start, it became obvious that some Germans were better able to adapt themselves to the Missouri frontier through their diligence and sheer persistence. In warnings to friends and family living in Germany correspondence from early settlers, such as Joseph Aretz, Herman Steines, and Theodore van Dreveldt, suggested that the most fertile and therefore most valuable land was very near the river, however, there was much considered to be too steep and the soil much too rocky and shallow (Aretz, 2000; Kroenberg, 1998; Bek, 1920). It must be remembered that not everyone in Germany was fortunate enough to have this information and most relied on Duden’s *Bericht* for their knowledge of the Missouri climate and terrain. Still, acknowledging that the land may not be the best choice for everyone, decent land could still be obtained while the rest could be tamed. In a later account, Goebel pointed to the difficulty of this task at hand while suggesting that dedicated and stout Germans could, and did, survive:

...these Germans, who had settled in the above described hills and who could only by very hard and unused labor convert then forests in to fields, had a fair opportunity to demonstrate to their American neighbors what industry, perseverance and frugality could do. The Americans had been sensible enough to select the best lands for themselves, before they had seen a German and their notions of useful and worthless lands caused them to predict that these poor Germans would either have to perish or leave their land; this alternative did not take place, but the reverse. (1879: 44).

Here the spirit of the Germans shined through (i.e.; hard work is part of the character of being German). The emphasis upon the qualities of hard work and frugality also overlapped with the Yankeedom narrative wherein the Germans would continue to invest in their property, and when successful would buy out their American neighbors.

May the time speedily come, when old antiquated prerogatives shall cease, and every man's undeniable claim to his natural rights at last receive due recognition. One recognized very well in Germany what the times irrevocably demand and what changes must take place, changes which a rising civilization will no longer be denied. But there are still too many aristocrats. They cannot put aside imagined privileges and prerogatives and you will hardly be able to make the antiquated nobility understand that there is only one real nobility which every man is able to acquire, and is entitled to acquire. How glad I am that I live in a Republic, which long were this divested itself of this sort of European rubbish, where all are equal before the law, and where the rights and claims of the one injured are taken cognizance of, not matter as to whether these rights have been injured by those of high or low station. (Bek, 1921a: 681).

While this narrative is directed at the immigrants in the Missouri area, it is clear that it flows from the conditions left behind in Germany. As the focus of the narrative is not so much to highlight the undesirable behaviors of the immigrants, such criticism does show through in the frustrations felt in dealing with a select group of immigrants (i.e.; why start anew with ideas of the old?). It was best to leave some behaviors behind if one wished to be successful in Missouri. Friedrich Münch stated that without old prejudices, new immigrants “cast aside the all too trivial respect of persons, the bourgeois formality, the long consideration, the exaggerated and slow-moving caution, along with other

characteristics of Germanism.” (1859: 12). America was the land of equality and opportunity and therefore was no place for holding tight to either arrogant posturings nor lack of taking an interest in one’s condition. For the most part, the narrative is comprised of accounts regarding the Latin Farmers, the pretentiousness of both the old nobility in Germany and the new affluent in America, and the naïveté of some immigrants in the area.

### **The Latins.**

Early German settlers to the Missouri River Valley region are often described as the Latin Farmers. This description of the immigrants was to reflect upon them as being a more cultured (e.g.; versed in classics and Latin) and wealthy class generally acting in the capacity of being gentlemen farmers rather than given to any hands on operation of a farm. As part of the early wave of immigration, the *Dreissigers* (i.e.; thirty-ers emigrating after the revolutions of the early 1800s) clearly were influenced by Duden’s glowing description of the region. Most notably, von Martels and von Bock (Tolzmann, 2006; Aretz, 2000; Bek, 1920a, 1919; Goebel, 1879) were identified as being gentlemen farmers enamored with Duden and were often criticized for what was seen as their frivolous use of resources in shaping their farms as social clubs rather than as productive establishments. Living near what was soon to be Hermann, Missouri, Joseph Aretz reported to his family that the Missouri frontier is habitable and that:

Life in America is not as unsociable as you might think. In a radius of 4 English miles there live 11 German families, some of them rather educated people. Hospitality among them is common, and so their life is not solitary as long as one does not only find pleasure in wild drinking parties. It is even entertaining if you prefer simple conversation to idle talk, gossip, empty complaints and rigmarole. (Aretz, 2000: 139-140).

Given Duden's and Eversmann's social standing in Germany, it is safe to conclude that those early immigrants to Missouri were also of a wealthy class, and this was what Aretz found.

The Latins seemed prepared to merely transplant their German estates into the Missouri wilderness, unfortunately, the life of a gentleman farmer was not well suited for the uncultivated ground found along the Missouri River. Upon reading Duden's ([1829]1980) *Bericht* it is easy to see how some came to the idea that this would be a relatively simple process. Given Duden's purpose for the report, the information about the Missouri frontier was, for the most part, accurate. However, a close reading does find that Duden spent little time and effort on his farm with most of his activity focused on his interests in hunting, reading, and reporting on his neighbors. Duden even admits that he often avoided the local mandatory roadwork detail due to physical ailments and his ability to pay others to take his place. The impression given then could be interpreted as one of living a life of leisure in the idyllic pastures of Missouri.

Experiencing the reality of frontier life, the Latin Farmers found little of what could be considered a leisurely life and began to be held in ridicule by others as examples of Old World practices failing in the New World. Herman Steines indicated that the fate of the Latin Farmers should come as no surprise as:

Often accustomed to intoxicating pleasures, and given over to an easy-going, often indolent life, they find here nothing that corresponds to what they have been accustomed to. Constant work, a simple and frugal mode of living, and the all pervading solitude are simply horrifying to them. (Bek, 1920a: 440).

The theme of hard work runs throughout the narrative as a means of reestablishing the foundations of what made Germany a desirable homeland and thereby setting allowed individuals to set boundaries between themselves (e.g.; the industrious immigrant) and

the wealthy who attempted to hold onto their past practices. This distinction is expressed by Friedrich Muench in suggesting that place and station of the upper-class could not substitute for experience and sheer drive:

Since an adult who has been reared in cultured circles can, even with the best of intentions, hardly ever, when confronted with tasks which demand perseverance and physical strength, accomplish what a person does who has been reared as a peasant or a day laborer, this disadvantage must, if possible, be compensated for by greater wealth, by means of which the most necessary help is procured. (1859; 110)

It seems as if many of the Latin Farmers did compensate for their lack of everyday knowledge and physical ability by employing the help of day laborers. This practice soon began to take a toll on many as such expenditures would quickly turn some Latin Farmers into Latin Peasants. Whether the gentlemen farmers lost their fascination with the rustic life and returned to Germany or merely exhausted their resources and relocated to St. Louis, such occurrences did not go unnoticed. As Friedrich Steines reported:

Many of the German gentry are faring badly in America, and I hear, there is great danger that some of their farms may soon be sold on account of debts. This is bad, very bad for all of us. 'Pray and work' must be the motto here as everywhere else. Nothing good can come of mere pleasure walking, feasting and the like. (Bek, 1921a: 677).

This excerpt is telling in that the practices of the Latins propagated an image of the non-industrious and wasteful German not only to the Americans in the area but also to other immigrants and potential emigrants. This failure to prosper in Missouri, or elsewhere, was not attributed to the forces of nature but rather to the trivial pursuits that detracted from a meaningful life. Seeing that such practices may have contributed to the troubles facing Germany the holding tight to these old prejudices certainly finds no benefit in America. The gentlemen farmer's fate seemed to be more of a disappointment than embarrassment wherein they were presented as examples of how Germans should not act.

While their motivation for coming to Missouri had links with notions of romanticism, theirs was in a contrast with other settlers seeking to regain what was lost in Germany rather than simply recreating current social structures of Germany in the new land (i.e.; viewing the Missouri River valley as a retreat for the German gentry). An editorial in the *Hermanns Wochenblatt* extolled the growth of settlements in the area by stating “It was a great misfortune that at one time so many “Latins” located on the Gasconade, attracted there by the favorable hunting and fishing. Indeed, such people are not suited to bring an area to prosperity through cultivation.” (June 22, 1853: 2). The implication here is that progress within the local German community was hindered by some of the early settlers to the area with their focus on self interest rather than on creating benefits for all Germans.

The transplanted gentry are then used to define the boundaries between the German immigrants along lines of wealth and tenacity. While the German spirit did require knowledge, education without the balance of purposeful application (i.e.; engaged in work that can sustain oneself and the community) was seen as being worthless. It is important to note that the broadsides leveled against the old prejudices held by the gentry were not only directed against men:

Most unfortunate is the habit of depending on menial service. One can obtain it but it is very expensive and inconvenient and often connected with annoyances as the female servant demands to be treated almost like a guest. If we compare the accomplishment of a lady of culture in Germany during our time with the daily task of a capable woman here, the former seems almost nil. If this lady during the time which she devotes to vain finery, the reading of novels, the useless if artistic embroidery and knitting, and to social pleasures, finds a few moments to give instructions to her army of servants, her day’s work is done. But does that mean that she is fulfilling worthily that part of the mission of mankind which every single person should voluntarily assume because it is the duty of all? What is the life of such a creature worth to humanity? Less than that of the lowest female day laborer. (Muench, 1859: 119).

Here the role of the proper German wife is being defined against the life of leisure.

Women too must be industrious and not devote excessive amounts of time to frivolous pursuits and vain finery. In drawing a comparison between culture and labor, we see that hard work was prized above any accumulation of wealth. The German wife should then seek the balance between education and contributing to the maintenance of the family<sup>27</sup>.

### **Unfounded Aims.**

Having arrived in a country that promoted egalitarian values, many immigrants felt there was no place for the old prejudice of false pretensions among Germans. Again, we see the animosity directed against concentrations of wealth which was viewed as being coupled with a sense of entitlement and superiority. For some, class distinctions were to be left on the shore of Germany. In preparing for the journey to America, Cornelius Schubert told of how his group was instructed on the proper use of the familiar form of address (e.g.; du) in relation to the more formal form (e.g.; sie); “Almost all of us call each other ‘du’ now, and yesterday we had a lecture by professor Hornby of Prague, on the wrong use of ‘sie’ and today we scarcely hear any ‘sie’.” (Schubert, May 13, 1834). Such egalitarianism tended to consternate aristocratic Germans who felt it an affront to their station when confronted by “the vulgar and ignorant *Bauer* whom American conditions threatened to make his peer.” (Schneider, 1939: 28).

The value of Missouri for the immigrants was in the opportunity to start afresh which meant having to adapt German customs to the practices of new land. It is interesting to note that the lack of tolerance towards arrogance was not limited to the immigrants themselves. When describing the hospitality of the American neighbors, Goebel related that:

Strangers were treated with civility and regard provided they behaved themselves properly and they were never importuned by over curious or indiscreet questions, but such, who had not relinquished their old, absurd prejudices of rank or who tried to impose by self conceited supremacy or who interpreted American liberty as a privilege for coarseness and improper forwardness, were treated very coolly and their departure was never impeded in the least. (1879: 152-153).

This cautionary account highlights that attempts to establish a new Germany by merely transplanting a culture without consideration of holding to practices viewed as pretentious would always come in conflict with American behaviors and values. Titles held little sway in a region where persons needed to rely on their own abilities and, at times, assistance from friends to survive. As with the disappointment in regard to the Latin Farmers, the influence of the aristocrat could not compensate for failings of character. In America, imagined superiorities were to be set aside thereby allowing persons to be judged on their actions. For many of the immigrants along the Missouri River, this meant that the value and power of the individual was found in their contribution to humanity. However, there remained among the immigrants:

men who lack firm and noble principles, whom only the rod of the strong feeling of class consciousness which was so powerful in the old world, kept within the bounds of outward propriety, here probably throw all respect for honor overboard and consider only their own selfish advantages. (Muench, 1859: 94).

The trappings of nobility became transparent when not supported by deeds that deserved respect. Such men who operated only within their own self interest had no place in Missouri as they were once again representative of the misguided path of social policies found in the German states. The proper German then was to denounce such behaviors as they had placed the wealthy out of touch with many of the German people, a behavior which once again pitted Germans against Germans.

Concerns over undeserved airs however were double edged in that the sense of egalitarianism in America could be taken too far by some Germans. Tied to the Yankeedom narrative with regard to the dollar society within America, immigrants were able to achieve a position of authority based solely on the merit of accumulating wealth in the new land. In line with the criticisms of accumulated wealth in Germany, some financially prosperous immigrants in Missouri were reproved for assuming a level of what Friederich Steines considered undue respect:

Thus the educated immigrants constantly come in contact with men of wealth without ideals. They must associate with men of low caliber, even with wretched, brutal saloon keepers, who because they have made money, play an important role, and who never fail to let their educated but poor countrymen feel their superiority. It is the peculiarity of a new and crude country that crudity adapts itself best there. For this reason you will find most of the educated, cultured people poor, gaining their subsistence but meagerly, while on the other hand, the commonest artisan earns much money, and in consequence of this fact plays an important role. (Bek, 1921a: 697)

While such encounters were more common in the urban areas, persons in rural areas also had difficulty in avoiding these interactions. Liberties taken by these immigrants presented a conundrum as to particular motivations for emigrating from Germany. Why would one leave a country that that suffered from a lack of concern for one's fellow countrymen only to come to a new land, for a new start, and continue to disregard and disrespect your fellow countrymen. Again there was the necessary linkage that with wealth should come character, ideals, and a drive toward a purposeful life (e.g.; humanitarian concerns). The actions of the person were most important suggesting there were concerns that people putting on such airs are not deserving. In his 1840 letter to family in Germany Frederick Steines showed signs of frustration when he warns that:

Educated Germans live a truly wretched life in America. They come in contact with

their rude uneducated countrymen, who arguing from the premise that America is a free country, assume the right to unwarranted familiarities. From his intercourse with Americans, too, he derives but little pleasure. Usually these people are endowed with an unwarranted egotism. Of course, only a few of them have enjoyed a thoro [sic] education. Their general character is so cold, I should say so stiff, so unfeeling, that the warm heartedness of the Germans is unable to awaken any kind of sympathy in them. In short, the uneducated, boorish Germans ought to come here, where they may and do become happy, moreover, those Germans ought to come here who because of business undertakings are able to enrich themselves more quickly here than anywhere else, and those who are undecided as to whether they intend to make this their permanent home or not. But if they come here to enjoy the ideal of country life, they are deceived. They had better stay where they are. (Bek, 1921a: 695).

Conceding that America was a land of opportunities, Steines' did draw attention to the downside of the egalitarian quality of the country. The characterization of being cold, stiff and unfeeling in relation to the "warm heartedness of the Germans" threw into stark relief how the proper German immigrant was to behave. Of great concern was that the poor and uneducated immigrant would become overly attracted to the selfish quality of life in America and forget that which made them German. As I will show in the next section, the peasant class of immigrants too were not well regarded by the romanticists and if the German heritage was to be maintained, it was to be directed by those who were knowledgeable about such matters and would be able to aid the poor immigrant in holding onto their culture while also helping to navigate life in America.

### **The Naïve Immigrant.**

Recalling that Duden's motivation was to find an area where his social theories could be put to the test of alleviating the problems that afflicted Germany (i.e.; the tensions of industrialization, overpopulation, poverty, and increases in crime). The theory was that if some of these trends could be curtailed and that people could return to a simpler form of life then social harmony would come back into balance. With the

theory directed toward those suffering from poverty and overcrowding, the peasant seemed the likely choice to take advantage of the situation in Missouri. Following such directives were the immigrants from the Giessen Geselleschaft, the Soligen Society, and the German Settlement Society, with the latter comprised of immigrants already in America and living primarily around the Philadelphia area. I focus on these groups as they were, for the most part, of a slightly higher social class and education. The distinction of the Colony at Hermann and the popularity of the region along the Missouri River valley undoubtedly drew a great deal of interest and a broad spectrum of immigrants<sup>28</sup>. Again, early settlement to the area was with the Latin Farmers, this was then followed up by the educated *Dreissigers*. These were passionate persons with a dislike for the direction that Germany was taking and which provided a motivating for emigration. For these immigrants, the constraints felt in Germany were exemplified in the paternalism of the states thereby leading to an overregulated life. America, then, offered the immigrant a chance to find value in his own work, to become involved in the operation of government, and to assume a more active role in his own life.

As stated above, part of the old prejudice was expressed by those Germans not changing practices when arriving in America. This meant not only setting aside pretensions but also leaving behind the complacencies of peasant life where satisfaction was found in a minimal subsistence and subordination to the government. Again, the emphasis was upon a meaningful life, a life that was to give to humanity, give to the community, give to the German heritage. The sense of duty to provide for their fellow German runs strong within this narrative, Ironically, there was a degree of contempt when dealing with, or describing persons who were seen as not being aware of the

opportunities available. Such a position teeters on the brink of the paternalism that was so desperately derided by the immigrants against the German authority. This becomes clear as Frederick Münch described the desires held by the *Dreissigers* for their new homeland:

So deeply had the indignities of the home conditions, the intolerable guardianship of a paternal government, the general pressure impressed itself upon them, that amid all the toil and privation they never directed gaze back upon the externally comfortable positions which they had given up, contented now to be free citizens of a great commonwealth. Their first care after the preservation of their own families was to lift up their less educated countrymen and induct them into American public life, thereby to save of their better German nature as much as possible. (Bek, 1924b: 427).

From this retelling we begin to see that a proper role for German immigrants was envisioned by those who considered themselves as being part of the cultured and educated groups, those who felt as part of an intelligentsia that knew what was best and what must be done so to become a new and responsible German.

Country living was idealized as the best option for Germans emigrating to America. In their correspondence to friends and relatives, both Frederick and Hermann Steines often recommend that for persons to truly be happy in Missouri, they should avoid the larger cities and settle in the country where they could maintain an independent and isolated life away from the negative influences in the new land (Bek, 1921a; 1920a.; 1920b.; 1919). It is then ironic that the poor German farmers who took advantage of the chance to establish themselves in America came under the scrutiny of other immigrants. Here, being too complacent was a failure to embrace the values of the Enlightenment only to hold to the practices of old Germany. It was disturbing that some Germans took little interest in the political affairs that would impact their lives, as Goebel pointed out:

Their indifference in relation to everything of what might transpire in public must principally be attributed to their utter unacquaintance with the system of our republican government, and as detrimental for the common good such an indifference may be, it could not well be otherwise. The people, while they lived in Germany, had hardly ever seen an other political document but their tax receipts, they were trained to view a squire or a policeman or any other officer with respectful timidity and their little village councils were about the only public discussions and transactions which they did know—how can it reasonably be expected that these people should all at once participate in our public affairs with interest and clear understanding. (1879: 294-295).

Here the uneducated farmers were not criticized too harshly for their indifference as this was all that they knew. However, they must set this behavior aside and work toward being a better German citizen. Again, this was a duty left to the “more intelligent classes” who had settled in the area for while:

Many of these plain, simple German farmers may have endeavored to arrive at a better insight into the system of our National and State government, but their ideas remained very defect and fragmentary as long as they had to depend upon their own reflections and mediation alone, but by their constant intercourse with their more intelligent neighbors, those nebulous forms, which had glimmered before their eyes, were frequently dispelled and they could see a clear and distinct image before them. (Goebel, 1879: 295).

For the “more intelligent classes” it was unfortunate that many of the uneducated Germans too easily found the means to accept the path of the dollar society resulting in desires to chase money and not the purposeful life. The narrative was to provide the proper means for all Germans to come together under the aegis common good as outlined through the values associated with romanticism and other, very specific, visions of being German.

Part of the narrative against old prejudice also focused on perceived ignorance in relation to religion. Again, the Rationalist influence tended to dominate the narrative of setting aside orthodox religious views which were considered to be blinding individuals from the truth. Believing that organized religion greatly contributed to the German

immigrants remaining ignorant, it was not uncommon for some Rationalists to confront the pastors and priests in Hermann by publicly challenging them on religious views (Muehl, 1991; Schneider, 1939)<sup>29</sup>. The criticisms involving religion became personal in the Hermann community as recounted when a local Catholic, Adam Sengenberger, confronted the Rationalists on their beliefs regarding religious truth. The encounter prompted a sarcastic editorial reply in the *Hermanner Wochenblatt* from an individual identified as “a Farmer.” Wishing to make a bust of the great man, Sengenberger, however, after being described as a big pinhead and previously as a hollow lantern head the writer stated that he was having difficulty in constructing the piece:

After my anatomical calculations, my work may be in vain. In regard to Dr. Galls studies of the head, men with too small a cranium do not live at all, and too large a cranium, filled with 15-16 parts water is unusual, which is why I politely ask for an exact description of Sengenberger’s head for my design. As I live in the country I do not know Sengenberger personally. I do not wish it to be misunderstood that I want his actual head. (August 20, 1852: 2)

Recalling that religious oppression in Germany was a motivating factor in emigrating to America, the personal attacks against individuals within the community added to the boundaries that divided those immigrants who were seeking truth through reason and those who were seen as being led astray by orthodox religion. Continuing to embrace a mystical religion was considered to be keeping the people from thinking for themselves and advancing the true German identity. Persons not willing to “see the light” would probably fare better back in Germany as there was little change in their conditions.

The Old Prejudice narrative worked to set boundaries between those immigrants who embraced the image of America and Missouri that painted by Duden and refined by others. This was to be the start of a new Germania, a land where the best of the German culture could flourish, regain beauty, and continue its contribution to the world. This was

a project to correct the mistakes that were harming Germany and the German people. This narrative then identified the practices that immigrants should not be embracing, that is, those that they should have left in the Old World. The narrative tends to focus on the value of life through a meaningful existence, for whatever that entails. This is the key element in the shaping of identity for the Germans settling in Missouri. It seems clear that those espousing the narrative knew exactly what they were considering as being representative of a German identity. The Latins were viewed as failures because they did not embrace the notion of change, they merely wished to relocate their social position and their estates into Missouri. This did not fare well, as pointed out by other German immigrants to the area, for many did not possess the knowledge, the will, nor the ability to forge a new life. The result for many was to surrender and relocate to where they would better fit into society, be that Germany or the larger communities of America. Again, this may have contributed to reasons for some Germans to avoid the cities and settle in the country; too many people holding on to their old ways.

Also, those immigrants who were quick to embrace the desire to rise to positions of financial superiority were seen as forgetting the situations in Germany that were contributing to the social problems facing their culture. In only looking out for themselves and not for the benefit of their German countrymen, these immigrants exemplified the problems that highlighted the lack of purposefulness among some of some Germans. They lacked noble principles, falling back upon the understanding that American freedom literally meant that one could be free to step across social boundaries; this becomes somewhat of a contradiction among the Germans. This was another reason to avoid the larger cities. This ties into the vision of placing Hermann in a remote area

away from negative influences. The draw of the rural life seemed to become dominant and took the lead, overshadowing the plan of being a community that rivaled St. Louis in size and scope.

Another concern was leveled against those immigrants who were viewed as being apathetic to their personal condition, both while in Germany and especially while in America. The complacency of the “uneducated” immigrant was viewed as a continuation of the problems facing Germany and the German heritage. Those who sat back and did not get involved with their community or their social condition were not worthy of being a proper German. How could individuals so easily want to live a life of meaninglessness? Implied in the narrative was that immigrants should embrace their heritage and as Münch argued, if they were unable to do so it was up to the cultured and educated classes to help them along so that they may become productive citizens in the new “fatherland.” Here we find that there was a definite vision of what the proper German should be and that many immigrants did not fulfill this image.

Again, the romanticism and utopia narratives overlapped with the German identity narrative. This exposed some contradictions wherein the bourgeoisie mentality assumed a role reminiscent of the paternalism that was so despised in Germany. Those desiring to be the proper German then must act in a particular manner. The next chapter will detail how the role of a German identity was put forth and reinforced by dominant narratives in the Colony of Hermann. This will show how the actions of the community and the German leaders were promoting a particular vision of how immigrants to the area were to behave, how they embraced and interpreted the goals of the Colony. This will

illuminate how the Colony viewed the proper German role in relation to various narrative circulating among the immigrants and the new country, and state, at the time.

## Chapter 7

### Authentic Germans

We are Germans and want to remain Germans, and one must be able to see by our farms that Germans live here. (Frederick Steines, cited in Bek, 1921a: 680).

Making claims to authenticity is to assert that there is some template for social practices which yields a standard against which others (e.g.; cultural objects and individuals) can be judged. Such assumptions suggest an immutability that often cannot be sustained over time. Those who hold power are in a position to define what is authentic and this is no less the case with regard to German behavior. Acknowledging that there is a conceptual distinction between “authentic” and “proper” or “true” I use the terms here as being synonymous as some immigrants did imply that there was something unchangeable about the German character. From the narratives of Joseph Aretz, Gottfried Duden, Gert Goebel, Eduard Mühl, and Herman and Frederick Steines, the German character and culture shines through even after the deleterious affects of assimilation. These qualities were deeply rooted in German history and culture and could not be easily separated when an individual leaves their place of birth<sup>30</sup>. The goal of the Colony was to maintain cultural connections to a past, albeit romanticized, wherein the immigrants would be the example of what true Germans could accomplish.

The previous chapters provide an illustration of contests over the identity of being an authentic German. For these immigrants, connections with a German ancestry were not enough to ensure inclusion as being a proper German. This was exemplified in the criticism of the Pennsylvania Germans for not being “real” Germans as they developed a hybrid form of language that was neither American nor German. Personal behaviors too

president as appearance, comportment and hospitality were emphasized as being representative of the proper German culture. As discussed above, particular attention was given to the presentation and upkeep of the town. Cornelius Schubert confirmed that Hermann was a true German community in his diary when he described that:

The inhabitants are pure Germans from all parts of the old fatherland, and occupy now some 250 houses, among which there are some imposing buildings, many built with taste.—There are several thousand building sites. (The first 4 streets are already sold) (Schubert, October 10, 1844).

The attention and hospitality given to strangers reflected the concerns over the care for fellow countrymen. An entry in Hermann Steines diary is one of many examples that pointed to the warm appreciation Germans held for others within their character:

In the Bonhomme bottom we visited Hermann Heinrich Honnem, who, in good old-fashioned manner met us at the gate and welcomed us most cordially, and altho [sic] we were not especially well acquainted he offered us a beaker of punch. He and his good wife are simple, obliging and hospitable countryfolk. (Bek, 1920a: 442).

This passage subtly describes the proper behaviors for the German immigrants as well as offers clues that these practices are linked with a simple country lifestyle (i.e.; simple as living a meaningful and minimal existence).

I have also described how the immigrants to the Hermann area felt that some Germans in the fatherland had lost their way by not providing the proper guidance for the country and by not challenging the nobility to take action in order to reestablish the social conditions that could bring a return to prosperity. Again, it was America that offered the chance for a fresh start, to be left alone, and to make one's life as he saw fit. It was Missouri were the true German could set roots and flourish, becoming a model for Germans everywhere (i.e.; in America, in Europe, and other German colonies). Their goal was to provide the best that Germany had to offer to all immigrants and to their new

homeland. As Forster points out the cultural and intellectual benefits of German immigration was immense as “Germany’s chief contribution to the conquest of the New World had correctly been described as that of sending not a few great men, but many good men.” (1953: 246).

In their pamphlet promoting the Giessen settlement society, Frederick Münch and Paul Follenius outlined the expectations for the potential members. Those who could withstand the challenges of the journey and life in the New World would then be the Germans who restored a way of life free of poverty and filled with prosperity for future generations:

We expect to find decided advantages for the maintenance of our bodily existence.

We expect hard work. But in this hard work we expect the co-operation of the farmer and the artisan as well as the educated man. Those who know that their physical and intellectual ability has no practical value are not suited for our undertaking. We hope to escape forever from the sight of workless and breadless human beings. We hope to escape anxiety for the future of our children, whom we there hope to see enabled to choose their profession according to their ability and inclination. (Bek, 1924b: 420)

We see here a challenge to the rules of inheritance and privilege as found in Germany. In America, the immigrants could hold on to their German virtues, and to do so would bring prosperity to all, leaving no worry concerning unemployment or lack of food. This statement indicated that the landscape the authentic German occupied lies between the uneducated and unmotivated individual and the arrogant and pretentious nobility and Germany bureaucrat. It is within these boundaries that the immigrants shaped their identity as being the ideal that Germany had to offer. The remainder of this chapter outlines how this identity was expressed and prescribed within the narratives of the community.

## **True German Fashion.**

There were many claims to activities and behaviors as being undertaken in the proper German fashion. The writings of the Germans in and around Hermann often include the phrase “in proper German fashion.” We hear of hosts pouring wine in the proper German fashion (Helffrich, 1848); entertainments (e.g.; dances and other gatherings) put on in the proper German fashion (Goebel, 1879; *Wolkenblatt*); New Year’s being celebration in the German manner (Mühl, *Notebook*: 112). These statements are presented without description thereby suggesting that the proper German fashion was already understood by those who were considered to be authentic Germans. This again reinforces the idea that these immigrants were holding to their heritage and not succumbing to the loathsome practices of the Americans. This statement is also used as a symbolic boundary for group division. While Mühl had been portrayed as being the arbiter of Germanness, an account by Wilhelm Helffrich explicitly attacked Mühl and cast him in contrast to other, proper, Germans. During a visit to Hermann to exercise a claim on a town lot, Helffrich sought out Mühl who had been an acquaintance of his father while living in Ohio. According to Helffrich, Mühl indicated that all the best town lots had been taken and that he would gladly pay the face value of the share. As Helffrich recounted:

The sale was arranged. The next day in talking to other citizens I learned that the ‘honest’ man had cheated me out of just on-half the value of the ticket, as the established price of the lots still outstanding was just one-half higher and several men offered to pay that price. However, what was done was done. I had traded in good faith and trust. I felt defected, not so much over the loss of the money, but that a man whom my father fully trusted and who had been treated with all kindness and friendliness, should turn around and deceive his benefactor. Muehl was also an unbeliever who had masqueraded in Pennsylvania as a Christian. (Helffrich, 1848).

The trip was not an entire loss for Helffrich as he did make the acquaintance of “Mr. Taebner”, who he claimed to be the most prominent man in Hermann. Through Helffrich’s account, Carl Teubner is presented as holding the characteristics of being an authentic German: “Yes, here was a true German gentleman’s home. He served wine in the true German custom.” (1848). While Mühl may possess the ability to behave as a proper German in everyday activities, Helffrich suggests that elements of character are also vital for the true identity.

The quote heading this chapter points to the belief that Germans embrace some cultural practices that mark themselves to others in such a way that expresses their heritage. In an 1834 letter to his family, Joseph Aretz also suggests that there are certain characteristics within a German that cannot be lost through assimilation: “But if you find a farmer who possesses 20 or 30 slaves, also a nice farm and a number of cattle you can take it for sure that he is a German, at least of German descent, even if he does not understand a word of German.” (2000: 118). These statements suggest that there is a quality among German people that cannot be covered even if the immigrant has succumbed to the powers of assimilation.

Hermann, as an ideal German community, was expected to become the Philadelphia of the west and to rival such urban centers such as St. Louis. Holding to this vision, the Colony was set up to be an urban center denoting all that was considered to be good about the German culture, so to become a showpiece for America and the world. This explains why there were strict requirements for lands to be developed quickly upon owners taking possession and that no unattractive structures (e.g.; log cabins) be allowed in the town. While farming was expected of some settlers, the emphasis was placed upon

the appearance and infrastructure of the town, particularly that there was to be a large promenade (e.g.; Market Street), and paved streets with gutters. Most structures were built in brick and with chimney, roof, and stone work reflecting a German style and were set close to the street leaving the large area in the back to be a garden<sup>31</sup>. The image of the community was to be cosmopolitan and sophisticated. This could be confirmed by the fact that the settlement quickly built a school and established many social groups, such as a Musik-Chor, Theatre Vereine, and Jaeger Battallion. While the immigrants in the area did take issue with the leadership of Germany they did not separate themselves completely from their connections with their past. As Frederick Münch stated, this was true for many of the Germans along the Missouri River:

We plan to maintain the closest intellectual connection with the German nation, and the German language and German ideas will develop here as they do in the fatherland. It is the most important contribution that Germany has made to the world in recent times, and will perhaps continue to make, that it sends to all corners of the earth not only industrious and skilled hands, but along with them a more advanced culture, finer customs, and the most valuable products of art and science, thereby conquering a world for itself. (Muench, 1859, 92).

Such statements reinforced the argument that there was some authentically German characteristics that could not be altered and that these qualities would continue to flourish, if not in Germany then wherever the German settles.

In line with being an urban center, the Board of Trustees resolved numerous ordinances that outlined the proper behaviors individuals in the community were expected to follow. Recalling from the Yankeedom chapter, American cities were viewed with mild contempt for their excessive noise, lack of cleanliness and overcrowding. From the earliest days of incorporation, the Trustees resolved:

Said Board of Trustees shall have power to pass by-laws, and ordinances, to prevent and remove nuisances to prohibit gambling and gaming houses, to

license, regulate or prohibit theatrical amusements, to prevent or restrain the meeting of slaves, to regulate and establish markets, to erect and repair bridges, to prevent the firing of firearms, to prevent the furious and unnecessary running, galloping or driving of any horse or mule or other beast within said town or such part thereof as they may think proper. To establish night watches and patrols to prevent and suppress bawdy houses and other disorder houses within the limits of said town or the commons thereto attached. To open, establish, widen, extend and repair, streets, avenues, lanes, Alleys, public squares, drains and sewers and to keep the same clear and in order to erect and maintain hospitals to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases and to secure the general health of the town. (Ordinance Book, May, 18, 1839).

Hermann was to be clean and well regulated, a community where German families could live without worry. The Trustee Minutes reflect that this was taken seriously as fines were set for various infractions such as galloping horses through the town, bathing in the river, and making unusual noise (Ordinance Book, July 3, 1843; July 1, November 4, 1848; March 4, July 3, 1850)<sup>32</sup>. In keeping with the value of appearance, the aesthetics of the community was a priority for the settlers. The residents of the town were expected to develop and fence their lots as well as to put in sidewalks and keep the gutters clean in the front of their property. There was also continuous work on building and repairing bridges as well as on grading and paving the streets of the community. Everyone was to offer their time to the town for the purpose of road maintenance:

That it shall be the duty of every citizen of this Town to work gratuitously one day in this year on the Streets and bridges within this town under the supervision of the overseer, until the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1846 under penalty of one Dollar. (Ordinance Book, April 12, 1845).

All citizens must work regardless of their economic condition and status within the community, thereby reinforcing the notion that the Germans do work together for the betterment of the colony. While this ordinance may reflect fiscal issues facing Hermann, it does reinforce the belief that hard work was part of the life of a true German immigrant. Again, as part of living a meaningful live, a strong work ethic marked a

person as holding the desirable qualities sought by these immigrants. As an article from the Hermann newspaper indicated, persons exhibiting the desirable qualities were welcomed into the community even if they were not German:

The Swiss are winegrowers and will pursue this type of agriculture here, as we understand. Their progressive and hard work will very much further this field of endeavor.

What is also very fortunate for us is that we find among the young Swiss girls come who have received a very good education. To our surprise, we have had the opportunity to see that they write well and without difficulty in ordering their thought. Putting them on paper in order to write letters to those left at home.

We mention this deliberately because it has the possibility of shaming the many adults here whose children would not be capable of this and which cannot be due to the negligence of the school.

The Swiss stem from a great, heroic family, for they claim Tell and Winkelreid as fathers. If they bring the mind and spirit of these great men with them to this land and then they will prove to be ardent and firm republicans. We will not have cause to complain that they, as with many other immigrants, will not take part in public affairs. For this reason, we express the hope that they bring with them the old Swiss spirit of their famous forefathers, the spirit of single-mindedness and a stubborn love of freedom.

We extend them a warm welcome to their new homeland. (*Wochenblatt*, July 17, 1846; p. 2)

We see that the Swiss immigrants possessed many of the qualities that come to define an authentic German: industrious, educated, connection with a “heroic” past, and a strong sense of freedom.

With harmony among fellow countrymen being a goal for the Colony, there were some tensions with regard to the composition of the community between a vision of an urban center or a farming community. As discussed above, American cities were derided for animals being allowed to roam freely through the streets. Adolph Greef told relatives in Germany about his experience in St. Louis regarding such an issue:

St. Louis is only in its infancy. At present it has a population of 12,000 souls, but it has no street illumination, nor regular sidewalks. Cows, swine and horses are allowed to run at large. I never go out in the evening without a lantern, in order not to fall over sleeping cows or hogs. (Bek, 1920b: 218).

This issue also touched Hermann and by the summer of 1844 the subject was considered to be a problem that required regulation. In July of that year, the Board of Trustees resolved:

That the running at large of hogs within the cultivated part of the Corporation be prohibited and punishable by a fine of one dollar for each hog for each offence, and that the Constable of the town be authorized, to seize all hogs running at large, and in case the same are not claimed within 3 days and the fine thereon and other costs paid, he is to sell the same to the highest bidder, and to pay over the overplus, if any, of the purchase money, to the owner. (Ordinance Book, July 1, 1844).

Chairman D. Widersprecher urged that no action be taken on the ordinance until the State Attorney General could be consulted on the issue of seizing and selling of personal property. The struggle for power over defining proper behavior came to light when the ordinance was reintroduced and supported at a board meeting in which Widersprecher was not in attendance. As with all ordinances the new resolution was posted throughout the town. In August of that same year, Widersprecher was removed from his position as chairman of the board and subsequently fined for tearing down the posted ordinance. This battle continued for over a year and eventually enlisted every citizen to catch any hogs in town and turn them over to the constable for sale at auction (Ordinance Book, September 1, 1845). The board was successful in defining Hermann as an urban rather than a rural community and by including all citizens in the maintenance of the ordinance the Trustees were able to reinforce this definition.

## **Education.**

The value of a proper education cannot be overlooked among these settlers. This suggests a link between education, which perpetuates the language and traditions, and culture. For the Rationalist, classical education provided the knowledge that was the key

to challenging the mysticisms of organized religion and the power of governments. As with other aspects of the German heritage, Mühl, while still in Ohio, wrote of the superiority of German teaching methods: “I gave music lessons and founded a German school. However, the school soon closed down because the German school methods proved too lively compared to the slow and uninspired English approach.” (Mühl, *Notebook*: 115). While there is no detail on the material being taught, the emphasis is placed upon the practice (i.e.; the lively method of instruction) as being a barrier between cultures. From the previous chapters, there was a clear resentment toward those Americans and Germans who did not possess a strong education. While the Americans did have the skills and ability to work the Missouri frontier land as well as having marksmanship abilities that rivaled those of the Germans, their lack of refined culture earned them a lower status among some of the German settlers along the Missouri River valley region.

There are numerous indicators that education was a priority for the town, as well as, what should constitute a well-rounded and cultured training. Most telling is that a school was built within 19 months of the arrival of the first settlers and five years before the building of any church (e.g.; St. Paul’s in 1844). In August of 1839, Mathäus Krauter was commissioned to build the town school (Trustee Minutes, August 7, 1839). Shortly thereafter, the Board of Trustees appointed a committee consisting of Wilhelm Pommer, Julius Leupold, and D. Widersprecher to examine Mr. A. F. Hemme on his knowledge of German and English language for a position as teacher (Ordinance Book, August 9, 1839). It is interesting that the instructor was required have a grasp of both languages and to instruct the children in the same. This mastery of two languages does hold with

the notion that the German language was important to the settlers as the tool that could most accurately express the German culture, while the English language suggests the need for the immigrants to interact with their American neighbors and to participate in the political systems of Missouri and America.

As Hermann became a focal point of the township, it was eventually designated for a district school by the state of Missouri (Heming, 1988; Bek, [1907]1984). The result was that Hermann would have a dual education system (i.e.; the original German School and the Hermann District School). It is unclear whether these two schools were in operation at the same time, however, there is some indication that this was the case. With the Hermann District School being chartered in 1842 the Board of Trustee Minutes and the School Board Trustee Minutes concentrated on issues involving that school. However, the August 1852 editions of the *Wochenblatt* ran articles concerning Wilhelm Krech's teaching at the German School and covered petitions calling for his removal (*Wochenblatt*, August 6, 1852: 3). Krech did not show up as being a teacher in either the Board of Trustee Minutes or the School Trustee Minutes suggesting that the two schools did operate simultaneously.

The involvement of the citizens with regard to the instructors also provided some insight into the important role that education played in maintaining a German identity. The school year was prescribed by the town and the instructor was expected to teach, with few exceptions, without fail:

William Frank was unanimously chosen Teacher of said School District, his services commence from this day untill [sic] 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1844 under the following Conditions, that the said Wm. Frank will and truly attend to his Office as Teacher and keep School constantly without interruption, with the exception of the following days, all and every after noon of each Saturday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Christmas day, New years day, Washington's birth day, Easter monday [sic],

ascension day, the 27<sup>th</sup> August Whitsuntide, good friday [sic] and three days at the sitting of the Courts of the County and Circuit, and besides that one whole week during the dog-days (School Trustee Minutes, June 19, 1843).

The schedule was to be taken seriously. The Ordinance Book indicated that teacher Thomas Dwyer was to have five dollars deducted from his salary for canceling school for a week without having the permission of the Trustees (Ordinance Book, January 5, 1853). Instructors were also to be evaluated by the citizens on a regular basis so to ensure that the children received a proper education. This level of involvement by the members of the town may have had some deleterious affects. With regard to the District School, there was some difficulty in retaining teachers for more than two years. Entries in the Ordinance Book indicated that between June of 1842 and December of 1855 there were ten different teachers hired by the town with an average tenure of 19 months. With some instructors teaching only 2 months before being asked to leave, there is no consistency with following a complete academic year (i.e.; there are long periods of time where there appeared to be no teacher for the school). Still, the town continued to pride itself on a commitment to education through the sale of town lots for funding the construction of a new German School (Ordinance Book, May 1, 1856).

The rigorous schedule for the school year may also have sparked a conflict with the farmers in the rural area surrounding the town. School inspectors were required to provide annual attendance information for the District School, however, the records merely indicate the surname of families and the number of school age children (e.g.; between ages 6-20) residing in the household. These reports merely compare the number of eligible children in the community with the number attending the school. From these records, the annual attendance was around 50% for the community. The low level of

attendance may reflect the issue of a dual school system in the town and Catholic preferences for a parochial education, particularly in light of Rationalist teaching in the town schools. The issue of school attendance was a persistent concern for the community:

It may seem strange to see a weekly list of pupil tardiness yet as many parents from here do not regularly send their children to school, we regard it as our obligation to inform them. This is a large grievance as it keeps our youth from prospering and having a fortunate outcome. Also, the most capable and conscientious teacher cannot promote a pupil's happiness if they are so often missing. For those careless parents mentioned above, the common complaint that their children do not learn anything is natural if they think there is nothing to learn. The objection of so many parents that they cannot do without their children in the morning and afternoon ended with the addition of new furniture. If everyone visited the school for only half a day we are confident that our fellow citizens would share our love for the school which promotes the future of our youth. Thereby, in the future: Children should regularly be sent to school.

J. Leupold

E. Mühl

J.B. Harrison

School Inspectors

(*Licht-Freund*, June 12, 1844: 4).

The criticism was directed at the parents as their lackadaisical practices would eventually harm the children by limiting their ability to fully develop their educational foundation (i.e.; learning the classics and the English language) for a meaningful life. Once again, the issue of attendance came to the forefront when Julius Leupold wrote Mühl expressing the high level of esteem the Hermann school held in comparison to similar institutions he had seen on his journeys:

Friend Mühl!

Your business did not permit you to be present this morning at the mid year examination of our school children. Therefore I will inform you that the overall results pleased me as well as my colleagues, the school directors.

First of all, we owe to our teacher, Mr. Kröger, the recognition that he conducts himself with love and great diligence in his heavy obligations, and has worked under the prevailing conditions not without pleasing success. His subjects are: Morals, mental and paper reckoning, English and German language, calligraphy,

natural history, geography, world history, and singing. The progress of his young students in these subjects were in many instances very surprising.

I hold our free school as one of the best of its kind in the state, and I would be proud of it, if I were not confronted with the evidence in our school attendance register. Its deplorable record shows that much more could be accomplished, if the worth and benefit of a good school education were more prized by both parents of our German school children be insisting on regular school attendance. However, as much as I would prefer to remain silent, it would be ill-suited to my role as Director not to express publicly my complete disapproval to the parents concerning this situation and set forth the facts. These absences result partly from indifference, partly from petty selfishness in denying their children and those committed to their care the priceless benefit of a solid school education!

I speak now, not of those, who keep their children home in case of illness, or those who may need help around the household in small chores. These absences are unfortunate. However, our school record shows too many inexcusable absences. Too many children are from well off families, which in itself, I believe, makes claim to a certain degree of education. At the extreme, I find the name of the child of Geo. Friedr. Bayer (the former Gen. Agent of the German Settlement Society) whose 14 year old son, without illness or alibi, had been present less than 3 1/2 months in the last half year of school. A disgrace to his step-father! Since dereliction of duties in this way cannot be defended under our constitution, I will in the future make it my task to make public a complete list of these absences in hope of evoking a sense of shame, which is bound to occur. In the European states, such cases may incur a set fine as regular punishment.

Yours

J. Leupold

(*Wochenblatt*, Friday, April 10, 1846: 2)

The focus of the criticism was again placed on the inappropriate actions of the parents in their disregard toward the children and by hindering them from receiving a top tier education. The courses being offered would undoubtedly help the children in shaping their skills for the future.

Noting the 1850 census, the opportunities to receive some form of education in Hermann was readily available. The record identified four persons as having listed their occupation as a school teacher (e.g.; Charles Behne, Wilhelm Dörner, Wilhelm Krech, and Chrisoph Moller). Moller had opened a language school in his home which eventually gained renown and drew students from throughout the state of Missouri. The

town paper reflected the appreciation for this form of education being offered within the community:

That the German language is becoming more and more appreciated on the part of our fellow English talking citizens is evident by the circumstance that so many parents of the Native born do not shy away from letting their children be exposed to the language.

Already there are various opinions that our Hermann would be a suitable location for an institute for young Americans to learn the German language. Our friendly and healthy demeanor and the comfortable alliance with St. Louis suggest that such an institute would be very favorable. Our fellow citizen, Mr. Moller, decided on such an enterprise and as several pupils have already applied, it seems the conditions in Hermann are favorable. Also, his roomy and friendly house is extremely favorable for such an enterprise. In addition, the French language will be taught with the same level of skill as the German and English and given this added instruction such a venture is doubly desirable and recommended to appear.—With the happy beginning for Mr. Moller we have no doubt whatsoever that the enterprise will continue with pleasing outcomes and with it advance our neighborly desires. (*Wochenblatt* July 17, 1846: 2).

While the 1850 census showed that eight male students were boarding at the Moller home, correspondence from Samuel Farrington indicated that that at one time there were as many as twelve students residing in the home:

Mr. Mollers [sic] house is situated about a square from the river and is quite a handsome house. It is built of brick and is two storys [sic] and a half high. The second story is appropriated to the boys. The back room is the schoolroom and the front the sleeping room.. We sleep on lounges or cots one in each. There are now 12 boys here and all good fellows. I have made a good many acquaintances [sic] since I have been here among whom there are a good many pretty girls. (Wade papers, February 18, 1850).

Moller was not alone in his private school endeavors as Mühl taught a Sunday school based on Rationalist principles. The newspaper also ran advertisements from other citizens who were providing extra opportunities for learning:

Notice: The undersigned intends to open a Sunday school for older children beginning the third Sunday in June. I also intend to start a daily private school in my house, recently belonging to Mr. Gehlerd on West 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The curriculum one can examine at my house and also learn about the school fees. For country students I will provide inexpensive room and board.

With elementary instruction, I will make use of a new method of learning during the school year.

Parents who want to see for themselves what I am talking about will be welcome to come to my house where they will observe for themselves.

Hermann 11 June 1847 J.C. Roland (*Wochenblatt* July 10, 1847: 4).

It is evident that no one in Hermann was excluded from receiving some form of instruction. The importance placed upon education and on becoming a cultured and worldly citizen attests to the narrative of being an authentic German.

### **Patriots.**

The early immigrants to the Missouri River Valley region (e.g.; *Driezeigers*) were part of a group who experienced revolution in 1819 and subsequent oppression in Germany. The settlers of Hermann were akin to this group in their desire for freedom, liberty, and the aspiration to reclaim a German heritage that was being spoiled by the changes associated with industrialization. While it is not clear as to whether any of the settlers in the area were associated with the later group of émigrés (e.g.; *Achtungundverizigers*) there is little doubt that they were sympathetic to their political activism. The authentic German narrative incorporated the belief that a political consciousness was complimentary to any meaningful existence. The connections with history and patriotic figure could be seen not only in the name of the Colony but also in the names of the streets running perpendicular to the Missouri River: Mozart, Schiller, Goethe, Guttenberg, Gellert, Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin<sup>33</sup>.

Consistent with the narrative of revolution, it is interesting to note the blending German scholars and artists with American intellectuals and leaders.

For some of the immigrants, this blending of identities began prior to leaving Germany. While waiting for departure in Bremen, Cornelius Schubert noted in his diary

that “in the evening the American flag, a dark blue field with gold stars, surrounded by red and white stripes was planted on the highest point of our house, accompanied by three cheers.” (Schubert, Saturday 17 May, 1834). Clearly, America was the new homeland. Still, a lack of appreciation for freedom and political activism came to mark a division between the immigrants. In describing the accomplishments of the ‘48ers Goebel ridiculed other Germans for failing to comprehend the patriotism of the exiled revolutionaries:

[B]ut many of our own countrymen cannot be praised by any means, that they also did not appear to be competent to comprehend the noble motives of these political fugitives and because these themselves stood upon such a low grade of mental accomplishments, that they could only recognize contemptible money making as the highth [sic] of ambition, they would in their stupidity souringly call these men whose aim was freedom compatible with human dignity, not very seldom ‘excentric [sic] demagogues’ and ‘impractical fanatics.’ (Goebel, 1879: 291).

The lack of appreciation for the actions of the ‘48ers came to define some immigrants as being indifferent to freedom and therefore indifferent to the values of being a proper German.

This commitment to political activism was expressed by an overlapping of American and German narratives. As Hermann was to be the center of the German communities in the west, then it should also be the seat of government for the county. By successfully moving the county seat from Mt. Sterling to Hermann the Germans became the political center of Gasconade county. As Goebel recounted, this did not sit well with some locals citizens in the county:

[T]his victory of the Germans over their native born fellow citizens provoked the jealousy of many of them and this jealousy was almost inflamed into fanatical hatred by the unterrified [sic] attitude of the brave Emil Muehl, who would boldly assail the institution of slavery in the ‘Hermanner Wochenblatt’ edited by him, however, his opposition at the early time was a little too premature yet to do good

and by these reciprocated antagonistic sentiments not very seldom bloody fights where engaged; the Germans however asserted their position firmly and would not allow themselves to be intimidated and still less could they be driven off. (Goebel, 1879: 277-278).

Here we see the ideological and political divisions between the Americans and the Germans. Again, the Germans are superior in the arena of politics as Mühl, and other Germans, take political participation to another level. While Mühl's earlier paper, *Licht-Freund*, was focused more on religion and the tenets of Rationalist thought, the later paper, *Hermanner Wochenblatt*, became a political arm for Hermann. Along with running a serial version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the *Wochenblatt* was dedicated to keeping the citizens informed about the political issues of the day in Missouri and across America. As an example, Mühl dedicated the front and back pages of the February 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 1846 editions of the paper to reprinting the Missouri State constitution. In 1852, the paper also tracked the travels of the Hungarian revolutionary, Lajos Kossuth, on his tour of America.

The identity of these immigrants is melded in the overlapping of the freedom narratives between nations. Part of being a good German was to celebrate America's independence and patriots. For these Germans, the Fourth of July became a prominent holiday, more so than Christmas and "other clerical holydays." (Goebel, 1879: 169). Again, such celebration were embraced prior to arriving in Hermann. While still at sea, Schubert recorded in his diary that the "day of Independence of the U.S.A." was marked by a special meal aboard the ship (Schubert, July 4, 1834). A key to celebrating the holiday was found in the reading of the Declaration of Independence coupled with other patriotic speeches. An early celebration was recounted by Samuel Farrington who, at the time, was studying at the home of Christoph Moller:

Dear Ed.

I have neglected to answer your letter for some time but as I had nothing to write I thought that I would wait till after the 4<sup>th</sup> so that I could write you what they done up here...On the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, we all got our guns and blazed away for about an hour as hard as we could. We then got a couple of tarbarrels and made a bonfire and then went to bed. In the morning the soldiers marched and shot their muskets and cannon. They are a beautiful looking set. They marched about town some with their muskets on their right and some on their left shoulder, and when they fired some had just got done loading while the others were shooting. Mr. Moller had a fine dinner for us as much pie, cake, and jelly as we could eat. They are such varieties up here that I suppose I eat too much and it made me feel bad all the rest of the day. In the evening we made another fire on the top of a bluff and it made us sweat to lug the barrels and boxes up the hill. We had a large sugar hogshead at the bottom filled with shavings and tarkegs and 2 or 3 barrels piled up on it. The fire shot up through the top 10 feet high, and lit up the town all over. (Wade papers, July 6, 1850).

Accounts by Goebel (1879) and the *Wochenblatt* also related similar sketches of Fourth of July celebrations starting early in the morning and involving most of the inhabitants of the town. The festivities would last the entire day and include a parade, refreshments, political orations and a reading of the Declaration of Independence. This gave way to picnics, dinners, birdshoots (e.g.; marksmanship contests) and other activities. The day would end with another parade, fireworks, and revelry. An excerpt from the *Wochenblatt* account provided some detail as to how the German spirit enhanced the American holiday:

If the celebration has made an impression on everyone (and the case can be made that it has) then we must say that it was a beautiful German-people's holiday, one that the Native born citizens cannot imitate, as they are missing the heart and soul which characterizes the magnitude of German celebrations. Even our wives and children (without which the German has no reason to celebrate) will fondly recount the July celebrations for some time to come. As this is the first celebration of it's kind in our Hermann, we hope this will be a recurring event. With this public holiday the level of camaraderie mentioned in this celebration can be considered a victory for the society of Free Men in leading the way for making such close cooperation possible. (*Wochenblatt*, July 9, 1852: 2).

It should be noted that there was some concern about this particular celebration as the 4<sup>th</sup> fell on a Sunday that year. It is interesting that the Germans felt that they could celebrate the American holiday better than the Americans. Again, this pointed to how the Germans were better able to show the Americans the meaning of freedom and liberty. Also of interest is that the Rationalist (e.g.; society of Free Men) were credited with bringing the community together. Within the narrative, the reference to women and children suggests that family was a key to the German identity.

The appreciation for American patriots and politics did not end with the celebrations of America's Independence. As evident from being a namesake for a town street as well as closing school to commemorate his birthday, the admiration for George Washington was high among these immigrants. The newspaper often ran advertisements selling copies of Washington's portrait:

This magnificent engraving under the direction of the talented artist, Thomas Sully, details the portrait of Washington, the most popular work of art bought throughout this country. The truthfulness of this statement can be seen in letters written by Washington's son, by G.W. Parke Custis, "It is a faithful representation of the famous original." And superior court judge Taney, of the highest court in the States, says: "As a work of art in this regard, it's splendor and beauty must be evident to everyone, and those who see a less favorable version would note little similarity to the father of this country. I had the great fortune to see it in my childhood and it's whole features are, even now, firmly stamped upon my memory. Of all, this portrait seems to me to be completely exact in expression and the form of the face perfectly represented." Senator Cass says: It is a lifelike representation of the large original. President Fillmore says: The dignity of the work it is worthy of my admiration and is highly valued by the public. Marchant, the excellent portrait maker and student of Stuart says: "Oddly, the portrait, in my opinion, is possibly the most accurate of the original picture, particularly in representing the calm and noble expression ever seen of the great man. On account of the great value of this picture, we refer each admirer of Washington to stop by the office of the newspaper to see for themselves. All the press throughout the whole union recognizes the value of this wonderful picture. The low price of \$5.00 will be offered to everyone. The purchase will be through George W. Childs N.W. corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Arch, Philadelphia.

Copies of the picture are sent through the post office for the \$5,00 price. A Gold frame can be added for an additional \$5,00. (*Wochenblatt* December 3, 1852: 4)<sup>34</sup>.

The paper noted that no public house should be without a representation of the great man. Other advertisements in the paper announce the sale of the works of Thomas Paine<sup>35</sup>. The promotion of Paine's work was consistent with the ties to the Enlightenment and the revolutionary narratives among the Germans. The suggestion that all home libraries should have copies of his work highlighted the belief that a cultured background would include an appreciation for political thought. This couples the value of political awareness with an identity that espoused a meaningful life.

An appreciation for other American military and political figures is found in the attention paid to Andrew Jackson. As discussed in the Narratives chapter, Andrew Jackson was considered as marking the beginning of the egalitarian era in his challenges the economic and political elite. Gert Goebel stated that in Missouri, January 8<sup>th</sup> was a holiday to mark Jackson's victory at the Battle of New Orleans which was seen as the final defeat of the British army in America (1879: 169). If the Germans in the Hermann area did not agree with Jackson's views on slavery or other social issues, they did consider his passing to be of such significance as to lead the Board of Trustees to pass an ordinance closing town businesses in Hermann out of respect for Jackson:

That the Merchants and business men of this Town be requested to close up their stores and shops from 8 till 11 O'clock a.m. of the 5<sup>th</sup> of July and to join the funeral procession in honour of the memory of General Andrew Jackson. (Ordinance Book, June 30, 1845).

The blending of identity narratives is important here as the embracing of American celebrations, political thinkers, and political leaders, tended to make the Germans more American than the Native born citizens. This highlighted the value of

being involved with one's role in their country and the affairs that may affect his life.

Goebel succinctly offered a definition for being an authentic German in Missouri:

These educated Germans, inclusive of the men of 48, are called sneeringly 'latin farmers' by ignorants, simply because they do not prosper well materially upon an average than such, who think of nothing but to make money and to go to heaven (however not too soon) but these men, who have an earnest desire for mental perfection, who will spend a portion of their time by reading and studying, I order to keep themselves posted in relations to the political events of the times and the progress of the fields of science, are far more reliable supporters of the republican principals, than such who will only indulge six days in the week from early dawn in the morning until starlight in the evening and who have no conception of recreation than their regular doze [sic] of church on Sunday. (Goebel, 1879: 300).

The boundary lines of culture, education, patriotism, and religion were neatly connected within this criticism.

### **Religion.**

As Hermann was not a community based around a single religion the vision of a German heritage brought together individuals with varying backgrounds and interests. There were no boundaries that excluded settlers based upon religious beliefs, however, this did not mean that there were no conflicts among the inhabitants, both town and country, that stemmed directly from religion. As discussed above, education took priority over religion for the community as was evident by the building of a school house before the building of any church. However, this should not be seen as an indication that there was no interest in religion. There was a desire for a organized religion but not a church system with an established infrastructure (Forster, 1953; Schneider, 1939; Bek, 1924c). Religious instruction was to available through circuit riders preaching in private homes, and in the case of Catholics in Hermann, Bernhard Niehoff would provide transportation for the priest in Washington, Missouri so to make regular visits for mass (Draper, 2004: 299). Still, there was a strong interest in having regular meetings for

church members and in having churches built. As early as 1841 the Trustees of the Town passed resolutions for setting allowing congregations to hold meetings in the school house and to set aside lands for the construction of churches:

That the request of the Trustees of the General German Church, to be allowed to hold their meeting in the schoolhouse, be granted. That the house of the late Ph. Kochler, now belonging to the Town may be used by the General German Church in Herman for their litrny [sic] and religious meetings, as long as the Town has no other use of said house. That the Town is willing to sell to the German General Church lots no 5 and 6, at a price of \$112.50 each, on ten years credit, with 6% yearly interest, but that no donation of lots in favor of the Church can be granted. (Ordinance Book, April 26, 1841).

It is interesting to note that the church was offered land well above the regular price for town lots. Shortly after this resolution, the Trustees were petitioned by the General German Church, the Catholic Church, and the Evangelical Church requesting that town donate land for the building of churches, however, the Trustees voted that the petitions could not be granted (Ordinance Book, June 21, 1841). The Catholic community soon took action to procure property (Ordinance Book, July 6, 1841). The following month, the church organizations took action to secure their own property:

That to the General German Church lot no 7 in West Wharf Str instead of Lot no 5 in the same street be granted, according to request.

That lots no 8 and no 9 be granted to the Evangelical Congregation on the same terms as those granted to the Gen. German Church and the Catholic Congregation.

That the lots taken up by the Gen. German Church, the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church be granted to them on ten years credit at prices now usual, without interest; from the day they are taken up.

That letters of sale be granted to the Gen. German Church for the lots take up by them on giving security by mortgage by their representatives.

That the request of the Evangelical Church to receive letters of sale for the lots taken up by them, on a handbill of their Trustees, cannot be granted, but that they shall have letters of sale on giving security by mortgage. (Ordinance Book, July 26, 1841).

While the town did not seem willing to give property for any religious organization, they did allow the denominations to use the school house for the purpose of providing Sunday services. Here again the favor toward the churches did not last long as the Trustees resolved “[t]hat the school house can no more be granted to religious denominations for religious purposes.” (Ordinance Book, October 10, 1841). These ordinances indicated that the town was not going to sponsor or provide services for any religious organization, particularly those that would involve town facilities. Yet, the following year the Trustees reversed their position by once again opening the school “to all religious persuasions for the purpose of holding their congregations therein.” (Ordinance Book, July 21, 1842).

The building of churches progressed slowly and it is not clear as to why this was the case. While the Catholic community, in late 1843, was first to request and receive permission for using wood from communal town lands so to provide lumber for the building of their church, the Allegemeinde Deutch Kirche (e.g.; General German Church) was the first allowed to cut timber from the town land without expense (Ordinance Book, March 11, 1844). The Allegemiende Deutch Kirche and the Envangelische Kirche unified their congregations to become St. Paul Lutheran church which was built by 1844. While the move to build the Catholic church had begun much earlier, a series of difficulties resulted in a structure not being built until 1851. The relationship between the churches and the town was somewhat strained with apparent favoritism expressed toward the Protestant denomination. In addition to free lumber from town lands, a town lot was donated to the church for the purchase of a bell and annual payments were made to St. Paul’s for ringing the church bell at noontime every day (Ordinance Book, May 27, 1846). A compensation of \$15.00 per annum was granted to St. Paul’s in 1848. A town

lot was granted to St. George's on May 2, 1853 intended as a contribution toward the purchase of a bell, however, there was the stipulation that the land would not be given if the bell were not already in the town. This extra stipulation indicated that the Catholic church was under closer scrutiny than the other churches. It is interesting to note that St. George's was also compensated for ringing their bell at noontime, but this did not occur until January 3, 1857. Both churches then received an annual payment of \$10.00 for providing this service to the town.

As noted above, this was a community with a strong Rationalist influence that was not at ease with organized religion. Carl Schneider points out that Rationalists "as a whole, denounced religion as an impediment to the welfare of the human race." (1939: 194). Gert Goebel expressed the tensions between rationalism and organized religion:

If the results of the thorough researches in all the departments of science and in consequence thereof the always spreading enlightenment had suited the designs of the pontiffs and religious hypocrites, the immigration [sic] of these patriots would have been praised by them as a direct divine ordinance and if these men of independent minds would have ignored the principles of true humanity, equality and liberty by paying servile homage to priests and their devout admirers, they might have been even consecrated, but the position, which had been occupied by these men, has been and is yet a thorn in the eyes of all advocates of humble stupidity and ignorance and of all such, who are claiming rights for themselves while they are trying to deny those same rights to others. (Goebel, 1879: 292).

Religion then was holding individuals from reaching their full potential, keeping people ignorant and turning them against true German patriots. Therefore, religion was seen as keeping some of the immigrants from becoming proper Germans (i.e.; hindered by carrying with them their old prejudices from the Old World). This argument supports the situation found in Hermann. While the Rationalists in the Hermann area were critical of organized religion, they were not radically anti-religious, as were some groups that settled in the east. Again, Eduard Mühl's early paper, *Licht-Freund*, was decidedly

geared toward religious discussion and expression from the Rationalist point of view. Mühl would regularly offer histories of Mormonism, Buddhism, Confucius, Judaism, as well as Catholic and Protestant religions. Mostly, the paper was a challenge to the mysticism espoused by organized religion and interspersed with articles praising the moral actions and teachings of Jesus Christ. An early edition of the paper offered a glimpse into to possibilities life west of the Mississippi can have for the potential to foster an enlightened religion:

Our Germans in the West can be compared to an unspoiled child, which can be guided and trained to become a thinking human being if enough effort and diligence is applied. So far the mysticism and fanaticism has not taken firm root there yet as it has in the East, where people have been led to believe that revivals, excitements and a blind faith in the teachings of Luther or another person whom the Church has chosen as patron of their faith, is part of Protestantism. (*Licht-Freund*, May 1, 1844)

The members of St. Paul's tended to embrace a Rationalist, or at least a more liberal, perspective with regard to religion. This was confirmed by Frederick Birkner's criticism of Pastor Friederich Hundhausen as well as much of the congregation in his correspondence to the American Home Missionary Society. Trained as a Lutheran minister, Eduard Mühl seemed to have more tolerance for Protestant denominations. Still, tolerance should not be considered synonymous with acceptance. The *Licht-Freund* article on his life as an American music teacher while living in Cincinnati, recounted how he would challenge the views of the local Methodist (*Licht-Freund*, May 1, 1844). Another leading Rationalist in the area, Wilhelm Krech, was a school teacher and secretary of the free men society and frequently challenged Pastor Birkner more vigorously than any other Rationalist (*Wochenblatt*, July 2, 1852: 2).

While the Catholics appeared to be somewhat marginalized within the community, there was no indication that they were excluded from community service. While information on the religious affiliation of many settlers was limited, Catholics Anton Miller, Bernhard Niehoff, and Martin Weber did hold positions of authority in the town<sup>36</sup>. Still, the Catholics and the Rationalists were at odds. The confrontation on the street between Sengenberger and Mühl resulted in a spew profanities (*Wochenblatt*, August 6, 1852) which later led all Catholics to cancel their subscription to the paper (*Wochenblatt*, April 30, 1852). As with Birkner, Father George Türk did seem to bring a conservative religious element to Hermann. Still, the rationalist influence could be felt in the parish as indicated by references to “free-thinking Catholics” and Catholic settlers being married by the Justice of the Peace rather than in the church by Father Türk (Blattner, 1995; *Wochenblatt*, August 6, 1852; August 20, 1852). Again, the issues were drawn along the line of organized religion as being a hindrance to the values and visions that the American west had to offer in relation to the circumstances in Germany.

As the Rationalist gained strength in the region, they organized their own Sunday meetings to counter the churches in the community and presented speakers each week to discuss inconsistencies found in the Bible and religious doctrine. It is interesting that the group antagonistic to organized religion (e.g.; the *Kirchenvereine* and the Roman influence) would set aside time on the Sabbath to bring together persons for discussions of religious doctrine. These meetings drew individuals from around the region to present their views: Julius Koch on “The Inevitable Contradiction of Opinion about Things We Cannot Know.”, April 23, 1852; Wilhelm Krech on “House of David: The False

Genealogy of Christ and Its Basis.” June 4, 1852; Alfred Behr on “Concerning Miracles.” August 6, 1852; J. Feldmann on “Nature, Science, and Religion.” November 12, 1852.

What we see is that religion was not banned within the community, nor were persons denied serving on Town and School Boards because of their religion. However, from the data, it cannot be determined if those serving were of the “free-thinking Catholic” variety. Still, worship was a focal point for providing a cultured and educated identity within the community. This was exemplified by Sengenberger being referred to as a pin-head and challenges to the Sabbath in continuing with a celebration of American Independence on a Sunday, regardless of concerns that this would be disrespectful. Again, worship was encouraged, but how this was to be done was contested. We can see this in the influence of the Rationalist upon the Town and School Boards in controlling where church congregations could meet and in their position toward the Catholic church in placing extra restrictions upon building and bell ringing.

### **Proper Women.**

The proper role of women must be inferred from the data as I was unable to locate any primary documents from the women of the region. Therefore the proper woman was expressed from the male perspective and consistent with the romanticist narrative, the role of women was prescribe in a specific and patriarchal, manner.

We get some sense of where the identity of women fit into the picture for the settlers. While on the voyage to America, Mühl commented on how his journey would have been much more pleasant if he were to have female servants:

If the journey remains as calm as it has been until now, it will prove a pleasant experience for a man indifferent to domestic conveniences. If only I had close at hand a friendly soul, I should be quite content. Also, it would be convenient to have a maid to take over the many routines such as scalding the

tinware after meals and shaking out the bedding which I put out in the sea air everyday. (Mühl, *Notebook*; August 4, 1836).

It appeared that Mühl was not indifferent to domestic conveniences and this implies that there were clear distinctions for gender roles.

There are also hints that the identity of the German wife was idealized. From the above account of the Fourth of July celebration in Hermann, we see that women and children were considered a focal point for German life. In his diary, Mühl also pointed to the importance of family:

On December 13, 1842 at 5:10 in the morning, a son was born to me whom I called Thuisko Lichtfreund. The mother and child are doing well. I am now a father—a happy feeling. We propagate the human race by our animal instincts. But a child must be educated to become human being. This is the highest duty of a father. To baptize the child with fire and spirit through example and education is my fondest desire. I hold it no purpose to baptize the child with water. (Mühl, *Notebook*: 117-118).

Here the narrative of family was coupled with the role of religious instruction. Goebel also detailed how proper German housewives were a compliment to the German farmer.

I had occasionally the opportunity to observe, that just the really and thoroughly cultivated German woman very often proved to become the most exemplary farmers wives, they were the most unassuming and the most modest and would never demand from their husbands the gratification of comforts and in essential pleasures, to which they had been accustomed in the old country but which were incompatible with the financial resources of their husbands in this country; these ladies, who never lost sight of their true female dignity, did not consider themselves disgraced or degraded to wash with their own hand, to scrub or to milk cows, labors, which they formerly never done; by so doing the universal esteem which they had gained for themselves, never was depreciated, on the contrary, sensible people, who were acquainted with their former affluent circumstances and who were familiar with the conditions in their country, only esteemed them so much higher. (Goebel, 1879: 148; emphasis in original).

From this account, we see that “the really and thoroughly cultivated” women were content in serving their husband and family regardless of changes in their social condition. The ability to remain stoic seemed to be the desirable trait as one should not

complain about leaving the luxuries of Germany for the trials of frontier living. These women were set as examples of dutifulness, the maintenance of dignity, and furthering the German lifestyle wherever they found themselves. This view, as well as Frederick Münch's statements cited in the Old Prejudice chapter placed women in a subordinate role where they were to follow the values expressed by the men of the community. While there were some indications that women in Hermann did operate businesses and did, on occasion vote in town elections, these women were the widows of prominent town leaders (Goodspeed, 1888). Granted, Pickle (1986, 1985) does contest this perception of female German immigrants by suggesting that life in the new land was not always optimal given that lack of family, lack of friends, and lack of luxuries, particularly in rural areas of Missouri often led to misgivings for having left the homeland.

Female participation in community events also seemed somewhat limited. While it is likely that women did participate in the theatre society, they were not members of the community bands. Women in the larger and more affluent communities in the east were part of the *Schuetzenvereine* (e.g.; shooting clubs) but there was no indication that the women in the Hermann area were allowed to partake in this type of activity (Museum of Our National Heritage, 1991). The roster for the Jaeger Battallion in Hermann did not list any female members and the accounts of shooting matches do not note female participants ( Jaeger Company, n.d.; Goebel, 1879).

Even within religious organizations, women held a constrained role. Not until 1854, at the request of Pastor Nestel, were women allowed to stay in the congregation if their husbands had died: "Women who were widows were voted to qualify as members after their husband's death, if they continued to meet all the requirements for membership

(and if they ‘behaved themselves’). Prior to this time, a wife was automatically a member by virtue of her husband’s membership. Her membership ceased to exist if her husband died prior to this time.” (Jubilee, 1919: 39). Again, the proper place for the German woman was in the home and caring for the family. Recalling the Yankeedom chapter, American women were an affront to the cultivated German immigrant, still, there did seem to be a contradiction among these immigrants. Women were to be cultured, educated, and subordinate, yet there was little information as to how their education was to proceed in Hermann. Lacking attendance information for the German School and the Hermann District school it is not clear as to the level of coeducational instruction within the community. From the Samuel Farrington’s letter relating to Charles Moller’s language school, this was a male only facility. Advertisements in the *Wochenblatt* provided some clues as to the education of women in the town:

It gives us great pleasure to report that the girls’ vocational school opened here some time ago by Miss Gruber has made good progress. It is a long-time and firmly held view of German mothers in our settlement, who send their daughters and gladly entrust them to such good hands to have these skills imparted.

Since Miss Gruber very ably represents a woman’s role in German culture, it gives us special satisfaction to bring to her this deserved recognition.  
(*Wochenblatt* July 17, 1846; p. 2)

It is telling that vocational school is operated by a single woman who reflects a “woman’s role in German culture.” And later:

Permit me to announce to all parents that I intend to start a workschool this coming Monday. In this school, I will spare no effort with the girl students entrusted to me to instruct them in sewing, knitting, and crocheting.

Your kind consideration requested

Rosette Fugger

(*Wochenblatt* April 30, 1852).

Again, given the number of alternative schools being offered we see that education was a priority in Hermann, however, we also see from these schools being advertised that an education for women seemed tied to home economic skills.

There was the implication that the women settling in the Hermann area were from a more wealthy and educated class, but this was gleaned from the professions of the males in the Town and the accounts found in the letters and diaries. Still, there was no indication as to the level of education for the women in the community nor the dedication to extend their knowledge beyond enjoyment of the available arts in the Colony. What we are left with is a picture that while the women may have been cultured, this was to be put aside when it came to family duties.

### **The Authentic Role.**

These immigrants felt that there was something inherent within the German people that could be distinguished within their behavior and character no matter where they settled. With Hermann being established as the true German community this authentic role was heightened through an adherence to prescribed roles. From the narratives of the community we can see that identity of the proper German was to be based upon frugality, a strong work ethic, a commitment to being cultured (i.e.; appreciation for classical literature and music), political activism, a tempered relationship to organized religion, and an adherence to traditional gender roles. We begin to see that the authentic narrative blends together the narratives of immigration, Missouri life, and American patriotism. While Hermann was situated in a rural area, the Colony was envisioned to be an urban center with prescriptions for building and maintaining a neat and orderly community. Restrictions against raucous and ungentlemanly behaviors

implied that the town was neither farming community nor a city that suffered from the detractions of American urban centers. The ordinances and narratives laid the framework for how a true German city should look.

Looking toward the cultivation of the German heritage, we see that education took a priority and those not following this expectation were chastised for failing the German children (i.e.; the future of the German people). So too do we see that religion was to be expressed in a more rational manner. While the local Rationalist were not radically anticlerical in their position to religion, only antagonistic to organized religion, this was consistent with most communities west of the Mississippi. The purpose was not to forego religion but to only question the mysticism of the doctrine. We can see that the Rationalist influence was widespread in Hermann not only through individuals who listed themselves as free-thinking Catholics and free-thinking Protestants but also through the number of persons married by the Justice of the Peace (i.e.; this may imply a reluctance to married in the church).

The role of women must be inferred, but given the accounts by male immigrants, and the focus on the family being the center point of German life, a more conventional role for women was considered to be desirable. The proper *Hausfrau* was to be complacent with her duties of the home. The apparent lack of involvement of women in community business indicates that the German women of the region were more constrained in their community activities than were their eastern counterparts.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Discussion**

Throughout this work I have drawn upon the various narratives used by German immigrants in the Missouri River valley region that aided in the shaping of an identity considered to be fitting of a proper German. As discussed earlier, to treat immigrants in an essentialist fashion discounts the active role that individuals play in the development of their identity and, perhaps more importantly, masks the influence that time and place have upon how some narratives that contribute to outlining social meaning assume a prominent position while others are left aside. I argue that the identity embraced by the German immigrants in the Missouri River Valley region was the result of a complex intersection of various, at times conflicting, narratives. This discounts the conception that individuals who share a culture, heritage, and language also share a perception of expected behaviors and strategies that come to define an identity. By examining how national, local, and personal narratives came together we can better understand how boundaries were established that set true Germans apart from those immigrants who were seen as having forsaken their cultural heritage.

In light of changing social conditions in the German states, some emigrants looked to America as an opportunity to establish a new life steeped in the traditions that they felt emphasized the finest qualities that the German people had to offer. With what may be considered overwhelming support for establishing a true German community in the western territories of America, it is interesting to note that there was no clear understanding of what such a community might entail. As there was plenty of discussion

with regard to upholding German culture, German values, and maintaining a German heritage in America, there was, however, little detail provided in these abstractions. The immigrants settling around the Hermann, Missouri area were then instrumental in outlining a true German identity in relation to the narratives that they brought with them from Germany as well as those narratives encountered while traveling and living in America.

### **Blending Narratives.**

As Somers and Gibson (1998) and Somers (1994) argue, individuals are immersed within many layers of narratives suggesting then that narratives may not be easily separated nor can they be considered as exclusive. Given the multiplicity of narratives, identity and meaning are then a composite of narratives that travel with individuals from place to place coming in contact with other, complimentary or contradictory, narratives. I have already shown that through correspondence and other reports to friends and relatives in the fatherland how American and Missouri narratives were tempered by the German immigrants. The overlapping of narratives is found in the analysis as both proper and improper behaviors were expressed within each narrative. Given the importance of place, the identity being promoted along the Missouri River may not resemble the identity held by Germans elsewhere in America, especially those Germans who quickly assimilated to the American culture. The identity being discussed here must be considered in relation to circumstances the immigrants encountered in Germany as well as their own goals and the promises offered by a life in Missouri. From these narratives, the immigrants were able to piece together their vision of what defined a proper German.

The narratives I describe as Yankeedom, Old Prejudice, and Authentic German come together in such a way as to promote an idealized vision of German history wherein a pastoral economy is representative of a commitment to one's countrymen and therefore the wellbeing of the homeland. To be part of this vision, an individual must partake in a meaningful existence that not only enhanced a person intellectually and spiritually, but also bettered the lives of those around him. The theme of a meaningful life permeated the narratives but was most clearly defined within that of the Authentic German. The emphases placed upon education, industriousness (e.g.; continual attention to municipal development and maintenance), political involvement, and a rational approach to religion come to illustrate how the proper German stood apart from American citizens and other immigrants. The Authentic German then puts forth an identity that blends all that is considered to be the best that Germany and America had to offer.

It is then through the Authentic German narrative that the template of the true German community emerged. Through a compilation of patriotic and revolutionary narratives as well as criticisms of frivolity and wastefulness the Authentic German was to become a model for persons throughout the world. As such, the development of Hermann was less a replication of some existing German city than it was a vision in contrast to the many flawed American and German cities encountered by the immigrants. Through the theme of an industrious and meaningful life this narrative outlined the acceptable behaviors that came to define the true German identity. Citizens were encouraged to improve and maintain their town lots in proper German fashion while social organizations (e.g.; the theatre verein; musik verein; Jaeger Battallion) were promoted as contributing to a sense of community built around refined tastes. The value

of education was evident in the fact that a school was built within nineteen months of the arrival of the first Philadelphia society settlers. In line with the Rationalist influence, public and private education superceded the need for organized religion. Most important for the Authentic German identity, individuals were to be actively engaged in the political life of the new homeland. As an example of political will, the German immigrants were instrumental in relocating the Gasconade County courthouse to Hermann. Also, the writings and portraits of American political leaders being promoted in the local newspaper were espoused as a necessity for any cultured German household. It is important to note that while there remained an interest in the political environments throughout Europe, much of the political involvement of the immigrants was tied to their place in America.

### **Boundaries.**

What was striking about the shaping of a true German identity in Hermann and the surrounding area was that the initial goal of the Colony was to be a settlement that promoted the best of German behaviors as well as being a beacon of culture that Germans everywhere would emulate. Unlike other settlement organizations centered around shared regional or religious connections, the Colony at Hermann was to include Germans of all social conditions (e.g.; class, home region, occupation, religion). Notwithstanding such a noble motive, there was little conception of what would constitute a true German community let alone what would be seen as proper German practices. As a result, the blending of narratives by these immigrants provided the social definitions of behaviors that acted both as barriers and bridges between individuals and groups in the shaping of German identity. Through the analysis I have shown how Germans in the Missouri River

Valley region situated their identity between uncultured Americans who were often depicted as being excessively fixated on financial gain and German immigrants who were seen as not having altered the flawed behaviors they held in the Old World. As a result, these immigrants established boundaries that came to define practices that exhibited a commitment to education, concern for fellow countrymen, frugality, and hard work as being representative of a meaningful life and therefore characteristic of a true German.

As discussed above, even after the affects of assimilation, the quality of being a German would continue to be expressed through both manner and lifestyle. Ironically, the practices, as outlined in the narratives, operated as a means to exclude some German immigrants from being accepted as Germans, particularly those immigrants who became “too Americanized.” This calls into question any immutable quality of “being a German.” Hence, practices, rather than innate qualities, then came to define German identity in the Hermann area. Throughout the narratives, there was little evidence that being born German had much bearing on whether an individual would be considered as having a German identity. While the Pennsylvania Germans were seen as having lost their way in the New World, the Swiss immigrants were openly welcomed to the Hermann area as they possessed those behaviors (e.g.; hard working, well educated, and possessing a heroic lineage) found to be desirable by the established residents. Information from the letters written by students attending Christoph Moller’s language school suggest that Americans, too, could come to embrace the German culture by learning the language and particular cultural practices. As such, the barriers that keep German born persons from sharing a “true” German identity are bridged by those who

possess the desired qualities as expressed by the narratives in the Missouri River Valley region.

Through the Yankeedom narrative, American culture and practices were presented as being an affront to proper Germans (i.e.; to Germans who are perceived to have possessed a rich cultural heritage and a refined education). Through descriptions of dietary habits, farming practices, and tastes in entertainment, American customs were viewed as radically divergent from those of the Germans and therefore persons wishing to emigrate must be conscious of these differences and most importantly be cautious of adopting such behaviors. Keeping in mind that the narrative of American behaviors was filtered through the immigrants living in the area, the American interest in quick profit was given both as a warning to be on guard against the unscrupulous American looking to take advantage of the immigrant and to make individuals aware that the American tended to care little about a meaningful existence, let alone the well-being of others. While this did establish a barrier between the Americans and the immigrants, from the writings of Gert Goebel, Frederick Münch, and Eduard Mühl it was clear that America would benefit greatly from the German element. This too hints to the permeability of this barrier as Germans who become too Americanized are denied access to the true German identity while others are welcomed in the community.

The Old Prejudice narrative also emphasized a theme of pursuing a meaningful life. Within this narrative German immigrants who held too tightly to the old social structures of Germany were a threat to the vision for developing a new Germania. As expressed above, for many immigrants along the Missouri River region the new homeland of America was an escape from the oppressions found in the Old World.

Those immigrants who demanded deference for their European title were seen as expressing both an arrogance and ignorance that was considered to reproduce behaviors thought to be at the root of the social problems that afflicted Germany. Ignorance was also a criticism aimed at those persons who blindly accepted a life without feeling the need to question those in authority. America offered the opportunity to take an active interest in one's own governance and therefore to not accept this responsibility was anathema to a meaningful existence. Included among the "ignorant" were those immigrants who continued to follow organized religion. Accepting the mysticisms of religion only at the word of the minister or priest placed some immigrants at odds with those who espoused narratives of revolution and romanticism. The Old Prejudice narrative then was a rebuke of those who had journeyed to America and were believed to have not taken full advantage of the opportunities offered in their new homeland.

Most interesting with regard to the Authentic German narrative, beyond outlining the goals of a meaningful life, is that the narrative for the proper, or true, German identity was bounded not only by those individuals who were considered to be not German enough but also by immigrants who were viewed as being too German (e.g.; living by the rules of the Old World). This supports the notion that identities are formed through a blending of narratives and therefore makes problematic essentialist views of identity that seek to bind individuals and groups through underlying immutable bonds. While the prescribed behaviors of the Authentic German narrative did provide lines of demarcation between those who were considered to be true Germans and those who were not, there remained the issue that proper Germans were expected to hold specific ideals and values. Evidence from the data does suggest that not all persons residing in and around the

Hermann area embraced, in toto, this narrative. To attribute this lack of consensus solely to the corrosive forces of assimilation once again diminishes the role that individuals play in the shaping of their identity.

### **Flexibility in Identity.**

The boundaries established around the Authentic German identity appeared rigid but were, at times, rather pliable. The true German was defined in the middle ground between the extremes of the Yankeedom and Old Prejudice narratives. From the narratives we can see how some practices came to be defined in such a way that allowed for the boundaries to be pushed slightly by the true Germans. An example here would be the description of the Fourth of July celebration in the *Wochenblatt* where the American holiday was celebrated as a true German peoples day and as something that even Americans could not emulate. These Germans then were more American than even the Americans. Here again the narratives become both barrier and bridge to identity wherein behavior rather than innate qualities come to mark the individual.

Throughout the research I did encounter what could be considered incongruencies within the narratives, however, given that narratives overlap so to do the expectations of identity (i.e.; the combinative quality of personal narratives). Such contradictions highlight the flexibility within identity that allow individuals to adjust boundaries so to accommodate shifts in social and structural relationships. Here, the contradictions can be broadly categorized by issues regarding Americanized practices and the tensions between freedom and oppression. Previous research suggests that immigrants tend to locate in ethnic communities as a strategy for survival in a new culture and for the preservation of an ethnic identity (Greenway, 1998; Olzak, 1989; Clawson, 1985; Tentler, 1983;

Burchheit, 1982; Davis, 1982; Forster, 1953). With the Colony at Hermann designed to promote the German heritage there was a concerted effort to purchase the land owned by American settlers thereby establishing a community comprised solely of Germans. While, for the most part, being an isolated community the prominence of the English language seems somewhat out of place. Not only was a mastery of English a qualifying requirement of the teachers hired by the community but adult residents were encouraged to learn the language. Copies of the Board of Trustee Minutes and the School Trustee Minutes are kept in both the German and English language, as were the resolutions set by the Board of Trustees to be posted throughout the town. This does seem odd, however, living in America and dealing with the official body of the state of Missouri did possibly have an affect on this practice. It may also be that a comprehension of English would reflect a commitment to furthering one's education and personal abilities.

For all his criticism of the English language and of many American practices, most notably slavery, Eduard Mühl does identify himself in the May 1, 1844 edition of the *Licht-Freund* as an American music teacher. Again, this provides an excellent example of how identity is a compilation of multiple narratives. As discussed in previous chapters, Mühl expresses the superiority of German teaching methods, of the German language, and how Germany would always be a part of him, yet he does align his identity with being American. In a letter to his wife, Pauline, Mühl writes of encountering a “foreign woman” who speaks proper Low German (Mühl; *Letters*: August 1842). This is interesting in that Mühl had been in America for only six years at this time and the implication being that the immigrant identity had been shed.

Also interesting is that so much was made of the dollar society yet there were some citizens of Hermann who did become wealthy as a result of land speculation and by domination of the wharf area of the town. This list includes Charles Eitzen, D. Widersprecher, August Leimer and Charles Behne, to name but a few. These individuals played a prominent role within the town by sitting on school and town boards and as founding members of various religious and social organizations. While there is the possibility that they did use their influence in the town government and Lutheran church to advance their financial position, the incomplete nature of the data does not definitively support this assumption<sup>37</sup>. The lack of criticism to accumulated wealth of a select few may reflect the belief that these individuals did live a “meaningful life” thereby allowing them to be included as true Germans rather than immigrants under the hold of Old Prejudice.

Most disconcerting were the tensions within the narratives between social views on freedom and oppression. The Narrative and the Yankeedom chapters detail of political and slave holding issues that confronted the immigrants. From the reports of Duden and the writing of Münch and Steines, America was presented as a land of equality that was blind to social class (i.e.; no pretense to status places all persons on the same social level). Levine (1991) does point out that cohesiveness among Germans in Ohio did split along political and social class lines. Class differences among immigrants living along the Missouri River Valley seemed not to be an issue, that is, as long as the upper and lower classes acted properly. Again, morality, in the form of meaningful life, became tied to class distinctions wherein the narratives indicated that social status among immigrants was not an issue as long as the nobility do not flaunt their position and the

ignorant *Bauer* (e.g.; farmer) showed the proper respect to the more intelligent Germans (e.g.; cultured, educated, Rationalist). Linked through the narrative of Old Prejudice was the criticism that the paternalism found in the German states was at risk of being reproduced in Missouri in the form of organized religion. Ironically it was the “intelligent Germans” who knew what was best for their fellow countrymen in regard to cultural, political, and spiritual pursuits. Much was made of leaving the oppressions of Germany yet political and religious freedom was tempered among the immigrants as core groups appear to know what is best for the others.

While the contradictions with regard to slavery have been outlined above, this is an issue that requires further attention. Granted, there were many Germans, most prominently Eduard Mühl, who actively fought for the abolition of the slavery institution, however, this political position was not universally held by all immigrants. This too appears to be tied to an Old Prejudice narrative and paternalistic practices. For the most part, the German immigrants were indifferent to the institution of slavery as they seemed more concerned with the legal rather than humanitarian issues. Olbrich (1996) does suggest, in regard to a lynching in St. Louis, that the editor of the *Anzeiger des Westens* was more concerned over denying an individual the right to due process rather than the mutilation and burning of a human being. Goebel (1879) also recounts a story of lynching in great detail yet seemed more shocked by the owner demanding compensation for the person’s death as this was a loss of her property. Joseph Aretz, Gottfried Duden, Cornelius Schubert and Frederick and Herman Steines all make mention of slave holding, but only in passing and without disgust or outrage, as the institution was merely part of life in Missouri. Again, as stated above, the slave in Missouri was felt to have led a

better life than slaves elsewhere in the country and certainly a better existence than that of the day laborer in Germany. This dissonance can only be understood through the narratives brought with the immigrants from Germany, wherein the day laborer, while free, found themselves in a wretched situation as a result of their lack of education and the insensitive regulations of the state governments. There are glimpses from the writings of the immigrants that Negroes were considered to be inferior humans and therefore in need of protection, from ruthless slaveholders, from greedy Americans, and from themselves. They were then seen as a class of persons who would benefit from the paternalism of the more intelligent classes.

Lastly, the apparent low attendance rate among children in the Hermann area ran counter to the emphasis placed upon education. While the German Town School and the Hermann District school seemed to have operated simultaneously there is little extant evidence as to how this dual system was managed. The attendance rates of the District school may reflect the presence of the parallel system wherein parents may have preferred the teacher at one school over that of the other. Also, without detailed information about the Catholic residents of the area, it is unclear how much the desire for parochial education played in keeping children out of the municipal schools and away from the influence of the Rationalists within the educational system. With the role of education taking such a prominent position for the true German identity the numerous private schools and work schools may have provided the requisite credentials for being a proper German thereby circumventing the public system altogether. Regardless, the emphasis upon education seems flexible given the multiple opportunities to expand upon

one's knowledge, yet it is vital for presenting a boundary as to what it meant to be a true German.

### **Missing Narratives.**

The narratives presented within this work are those that have survived over time. More detail as to the selection of documents and narratives will be given in the appendix. For now, I must acknowledge that there are pieces missing that could better tie the immigrants and narratives together. As such, the narratives that remain reflect the voices of power within the area. What is missing are those narratives that challenge the notion of an authentic German, most notably those narratives of resistance, of women, and of Catholics.

From the documents we can imply that there was resistance to the dominant narratives. Such challenges were tacitly acknowledged when proper behaviors were proscribed in the documents, most specifically in the town minutes and the *Wochenblatt*. The accounts from Helffrich (1848) and the correspondence of Birkner and Nestel (Schneider, 1939) do provide some insight into alternative narratives. There is also the broadside (Broadside, n.d.) leveled against the newspaper and town leaders for over-extending their authority. Unfortunately, such documents are in the minority making a coherent alternative narrative difficult to defend.

Conspicuously absent are the narratives of women in the area. Much of the data provides a paternalistic view of women (i.e.; Münch, Goebel, and the *Wochenblatt* offer some insight to how a proper *Hausfrau* should behave). Linda Pickle (1986) does suggest that lack of documents from women can be explained by lower levels education and the difficulty in finding time to write amongst the requirements of household duties.

This may account for the dearth of records particularly in light of Münch's views on women of leisure. There are glimpses of women's involvement in the community through tax records and documents from St. Paul's church, however, there is nothing substantial that would offer a better understanding of their views on identity. Burnett and Luebbering (2005), Schroeder and Geisberg (1988) and Pickle (1986, 1985) do offer excellent examples of the voice of German women on the Missouri frontier, however, as these accounts were from women further west and in more rural locations, it would be inappropriate to generalize their experience to those of the women in Hermann.

While the Colony was home to three churches throughout the 1850s, there is little information that could be considered as presenting a Catholic narrative. The Gasconade County Records and Archives does not hold much information on the church and contact with the officials at St. George yielded only limited historical material. The *Wochenblatt* does mention confrontations between Father Türk and Wilhelm Krech, as well as other accounts of antagonisms between Catholic and non-Catholic citizens, however, these too are provided from the perspective of the Rationalists. Also, there is no indication that the citizens were physically divided along sectarian lines as Catholics did hold some positions of authority on the Board of Trustees.

### **Further Questions.**

The true German identity for the immigrants in the Hermann region then is one formed out of revolution, oppression and strife in the fatherland. Immigrants settling in the area were of a more professional social class that sought value in refined tastes, however, such appreciation was to be balanced with frugality and hard work. Most interesting was that a true German identity also included a knowledge of the English

language and an appreciation for American freedom and liberty. The identity for these immigrants is a patchwork of the multiple narratives of the time and places that they passed through on their journey to Missouri. German heritage is then a contested term that is not universal among the immigrants. Most interesting is that these immigrants left an Old World, suffering the tensions of changes and new relationships, in order to move to a New World, where they could reestablish old traditions. The narratives that shaped their identity traveled with them. More attention should be given to how these narratives cross boundaries and how they are reconfigured through time and place.

While this study was localized to immigrants along the Missouri River valley, further research on nineteenth century German communities, particularly communities with a strong rationalist influence such as those found in Wisconsin and Minnesota, would be beneficial for additional information on how identity is affected by time and place.

Along similar lines, research into other communities espousing true identities (e.g.; Vedic City, Iowa and Ave Maria, Florida) might yield a contemporary understanding of how pure communities are established and maintained.

## Notes

1. Live Long, Hermann Live Long! Long! Long! Mixing of the English and German language is not uncommon in Hermann.
2. De Bres is conducting a cultural geography of Hermann, Union, and Washington, Missouri. The study is an attempt to challenge notions of cultural determinism and theories of assimilation.
3. While 1776 is generally used to commemorate the birth of America, I am using 1788, the ratification of the Constitution, as the start of a political identity so to be in line with Anderson's (2006) definition of constructing a national identity. The territory of Missouri was granted statehood in 1820.
4. Respectively, 67.8% and 67.1% of the residents in the Township were below the age of 30. The average age of residents in the Roark Township in 1850 was 21.9. An average age for the same area in 1840 cannot be determined as the census did not record the specific age of individuals, only the number of persons in a household who fell within predetermined age ranges.
5. There are 62 surviving issues of the *Licht Freund* and 164 surviving issues of the *Hermann Wochenblatt*. The paper stopped shortly after Mühl's death in 1854 and printing was not resumed until after 1857.
6. Many documents were written in English. When necessary, translation of documents is my own, given my recent knowledge of the language along with the aid of translation dictionaries and software.
7. The English version of the Trustee Minutes can be found in the microfilm collection at the Hermann public library. The original German version of the Trustee Minutes are located at the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis, Missouri.
8. The Aldesverein (i.e.; Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer/Society for the Protection of German Immigrants) near what is now Fayette County, Texas, was a society established by German nobility to promote colonization efforts in the New World; see Walker, 1964: 82. While the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, banned colonization of American lands by European powers, Texas was, at the time, its own republic and allowed for such colonization efforts to proceed. German colony efforts were also very active in South America.
9. Bek ([1907]1984) does point out that the members of the Philadelphia Settlement Society initially did wish to purchase land from the federal government so to create an autonomous German state in the Western territories.

10. Not all settlement ventures are viewed as being viable. Eduard Mühl, tells of the failing commune, Teutonia, in McKean Co. Pennsylvania (Mühl Letters, Baltimore, June 16). Bek also points out that there was much skepticism to the Hermann venture within some eastern German language newspapers.

11. It is assumed that during Duden's brief stay in Missouri he was privileged to have experienced unseasonably mild summer and winter months.

12. The selection of Bayer as General Agent for the Society remains unclear. Other than being a respected individual, his career as a school teacher provided little background in financial and community administration. As agent, he was charged with surveying the area, enforcing the rules of the society, and financial management, certainly assignments that he was not prepared to execute (Bek, [1907]1984).

13. Bayer was buried in a remote section of the cemetery and facing away from the town; no one was to be buried within a distance of 50 feet of Bayer. Animosity against Bayer remained strong as was evident from actions by the Trustees of the Town against his widow and the attacks aimed at his son in the *Wochenblatt*. As a result of a "trial" in 1986, Bayer was absolved of any wrong doing whereupon the citizens exhumed his body and re-interred him facing the town.

14. For a detailed account of the establishment of the Settlement Society and controversies surrounding issues of control over the Colony see William G. Bek. [1907]1984. *The German Settlement Society and Its Colony; Hermann, Missouri*. American Press, Inc.

15. Here I am only using the adult population numbers of ages 18 and over. I chose 18 as a cut off age given that persons in Hermann were required to attend school until that age and, persons of at least age 18 were born 5 years prior to the founding of the Hermann colony. For purposes of clarification, first generation European immigrants comprised 91.6% of the town of Hermann and 85.19% of the township. I count as the eastern German states: Baden, Bremen, Hanover, Hessa, and Württemberg. Immigrants from these states totaled 48.78%. Saxony and Prussia also contributed heavily to the immigrant population in the area with 21.8%. Less than 8% of the individuals in the area listed the generic "Germany" as their place of birth.

16. The census records 273 occupations for persons residing in the town of Hermann. The most common occupation listed is laborer (N=67), however, this occupation is not clearly defined. No women in the community are listed as holding an occupation.

17. A founding moment is somewhat misleading as the signing of the Declaration of Independence is selected as the "moment" within the series of events leading up to and culminating in the American revolution.

18. The Prussian government did take some precautions for the emigrant by circulating flyers warning them to be wary of cheats in America who prey upon unsuspecting immigrants. However, some German governments were ridiculed for deporting poor and unruly persons without any means of assistance or plan upon arrival in America. Walker tells of the Gosszimmern affair wherein Hessian officials literally dumped immigrants onto the streets of New York thereby adding to anti-immigrant sentiments in America. This was upsetting to Germans already living in America as Walker states “German pride was incensed, and officialdom had done it (1964: 87)].

19. It is important to keep in mind that America was not the only destination for German emigration. There were German colony movements in Africa, Australia, and South America.

20. When hearing the outline of my research, persons in the Missouri communities of Dutzow, Marthasville, and Washington would most often reply “So, you’re interested in the ‘followers of Duden’”. In a series entitled “The Followers of Duden,” William G. Bek has compiled a considerable volume of work that is mostly translations of the diaries and letters of the early German settlers to St. Louis and the Missouri River Valley area.

21. While being aware of the contested use of the term New World, I will use it as being synonymous with America as the phrase was often used in this manner during this time.

22. It should be noted that while the rhetoric of the Jacksonians and that in the above orations appear similar, the Jacksonian view discounted the notion that only political elites (e.g.; career politicians) are able to lead the government. Hence, the political split resulting in the Democrat and the Whig parties.

23. Duden’s preference for the Missouri landscape reinforces the romantic narrative of the Germans as the Missouri River Valley is likened to the German countryside. Ironically, sod-busting may have been an easier task than cultivating forested areas strewn with roots and dense undergrowth.

24. The serial dominated the front page of the paper from March 11, issue 21-August 26, Issue 44. The archives are missing issues 33, 34, 38 and 42 however there is confidence that these papers also ran reprints of Stowe’s work. There is an exception on July 1, Issue 36 which shared the page with a 2 1/2 column story recalling 1776 and the Declaration of Independence.

25. The frequency of unflattering depictions of Americans should be tempered against accounts of how welcoming many Americans were of their new neighbors. The kindness and hospitality, particularly of persons the Missouri backwoods, can be seen in reports of Americans opening their homes to traveling strangers, inviting Germans to partake in picnics and shooting contests, and especially in helping the early Hermann settlers make

it through their first winter in Missouri (Hanson, 1951; Bek, 1922,1921a,1921b, [1907]1984; Goebel, 1879)

26. It may be that this account is only rare in the narratives of the Germans settling in the Missouri River Valley and Hermann area.

27. Linda Pickle suggests that Münch's views on menial service may have come from experience as he too had female servants. This seems common as Mühl, in a letter of July 19, 1848 to Pauline, suggest the benefits of getting a young girl to help around the house.

28. The 1850 Federal Census of Hermann indicates that among 273 listed occupations, the community boasted thirty-four carpenters, nineteen shoemakers, twelve merchants, twelve stonemasons, four physicians, three school teachers, and two piano makers. The 1850 Federal Census for the Roark Township lists only the occupations of farmer and laborer. There is no distinction of what type of farming as viticulture was quite popular and profitable in the Hermann area at this time.

29. The second pastor of St. Paul's in Hermann, Friederich Birkner assumed the position due to the lack of integrity. There were some who wanted to embrace the Evangelical religion. "Many of the congregation wished to have me for their preacher, whereas one of the elders did all he could to hinder this and enlisted as voting members even Catholics, atheists and enemies of the Gospel of all kinds, who all joined in preventing the choice of a 'Jesuit.' And yet I was chosen—and it was particularly the miserable condition of this people, that determined me to resign the quiet prospects in my native home and to accept the choice hither... A succession of offenses and insults began, which are not ended as yet. All those Freemasons, Odd Fellows, store-keepers and others that had become members (of the congregation) in order to prevent my election, could not quietly behold the light of truth invading the darkness and joined those of the old congregation who were averse to hear the truth." Correspondence with the American Home Missionary Society, March 18, 1853. Schneider also notes that both Birkner and Carl Nestel were victims of physical assault at the hands of anti-*Kirchenverein* (1939: 197).

30. The Colony was named in honor of general Hermann who, in 9 A. D., defeated three Roman legions to save Germany from slavery. In providing an account of general Hermann, Floyd C. Shoemaker states that "Although he had learned Roman manners and had served in the Roman army, he remained a German at heart and longed to see Germany freed from the yoke of Rome." (1957: 236).

31. For detail on the German architecture and landscaping of Hermann, Missouri, see Renn, 1999; De Bres, 1986; Schroeder, 1981; van Ravenswaay, 1972.

32. The Reverend Blarrer, August Klarig, Jr., Christopher Koch, August Mauschund, Joseph Mondéviller, Carl Teubner, and Martin Weber were listed as breaking one of the ordinances. From the limited information in the data, all infractors appear to be Catholic.

33. The namesake of Gellert Street is presumably Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, professor poetry and ethics at Leipzig.
34. Roger Brooke Taney was Chief Justice of the United States 1833-1861. Senator Cass being Lewis Cass of Michigan.
35. The works of Thomas Paine are still available in the Deutschheim visitors center run by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.
36. The records for St. George church were closed to my review. I was informed by the current Pastor at St. Paul's and by members of the Gasconade County Records and Archives that tensions between the Catholic and Lutheran populations continue to be strained. I was able to identify some Catholics through markers at the St. George cemetery. Matching names and dates that correspond to the information on the 1850 federal census.
37. The Broadside (n.d.) criticized town officials for favoring residents of the city over those of the country and suggests that the donations of town lots for the purpose of cultivating grapevines was merely a plan to further the wealth of select town citizens.

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—. "Washington's portrait." December 3, 1852; 7; 57: 4.

## VITA

Matt Lammers was born in Iowa City, Iowa on October 5, 1962. Between 1984-1987 he attended Mt. Mercy College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where he received a B.A. degree in both business administration and sociology. He enrolled at the University of Northern Iowa in 1997 and received his M.A. in sociology in 2000. His research interests are concentrated on the dynamics between culture and personal identity, the impact and use of material culture on society, and issues of social control as expressed through public narratives.