

GERMAN SETTLEMENT IN MISSOURI

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I. German Emigration to the U.S. and Missouri 1608-1820

- A. From 1608 through the Revolutionary War roughly 350,000 Germans, mostly in groups, immigrated to the U.S., arriving at Philadelphia and other ports.
- B. In reaction, in 1768 the Holy Roman Empire of German States (HRE) prohibited emigration and instituted penalties for leaving.
- C. 1770-1820 Americans pushing westward towards Missouri, included German-Americans:
 - 1. The first in Missouri is said to be John Hildebrand in 1770 from Pennsylvania to Jefferson County, Missouri. (Houck)
 - 2. German-Americans were motivated by farm land rather than hunting and furs.
 - 3. Missouri settlers, from the 1790s-1820s, in counties such as Jefferson, St. Louis, St. Charles, Warren, and Franklin (county map) included many German surnames, but were mainly second/third generation descendants from eastern States.
 - 4. In the area of St. Charles, Warren, Franklin, arrivals totaled 80 families or over 400 people; roughly 10% of all early American arrivals according to Claggett.
 - 5. In 1800, the first distinctly German settlement in Missouri included 20 German-Swiss families from Lincoln County, North Carolina migrating to Whitewater Creek in Cape Girardeau and Bollinger Counties. (Goodspeed)
- D. American migrants arrived mainly overland or by rivers, lakes, and canals, until the 1840s and 1850s when railroads became more widespread.
 - 1. Main routes: Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.
 - 2. Also important: St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes,
 - 3. And other rivers, such as: Illinois, Wabash, Kentucky, Tennessee, Cumberland.
- E. Research for early German migrants is the same as for Colonial America:
 - 1. The most complete Missouri territorial census is 1791, on DVD at Missouri State Archives. For St. Charles County only, transcripts exist for censuses 1817 and 1819.
 - 2. Try early land and tax records, probates, and county or family histories.

II. Important Changes in the First Half of the 19th Century Promoted Emigration Again

- A. Germany:
 - 1. Between 1792 and 1815 Napoleon ended the German feudal system; abolished the HRE; aggregated the hundreds of tiny German states to more than 30 larger states.
 - 2. Each German state maintained independent administration!
 - 3. 1815 the German Confederation granted all its citizens free movement.
 - 4. Between 1803 and 1821 one-by-one states gradually liberalized emigration policy.
 - 5. From 1817 on, each German state in turn created a united State Church called "Evangelical-Lutheran," uniting Evangelical (Reformed) and Lutheran. But, many Germans still preferred the original two separate churches and emigrated.
 - 6. Prussia united Germany 1871 into the Second German Empire (Germany map). Dark gray states allied with Prussia before 1871 becoming provinces of Prussia.

B. Unites States:

1. 1817 the first steamboat ascended the Mississippi River, New Orleans to St. Louis.
2. 1818 sailing ships began regular passenger service, Germany to U.S, taking about 2 months.
3. 1819 U.S. Congress required ship passenger lists and ended “redemptions”—ship passage paid on arrival by an employer whom the immigrant then served in some capacity for several years until he repaid the passage.
4. 1838/39 first steamships from Germany to U.S., cut travel time to about 18 days; but many immigrant ships continued to be sailing ships for several years thereafter.
5. 1843 propeller driven steamships introduced.

III. Why Leave Germany? Difficult to Generalize as Each German State Differed.

- A. Overpopulation due both to relative peace and industrial competition with piece work.
- B. German state rulers—compensating for increased freedoms and to increase revenue—tightened control on subjects, requiring official permission and much increased taxes to marry, travel, or emigrate.
- C. Revolutions and freedoms in U.S. and France led Germans to demand more individual choice. German revolutions in 1830 and 1848 failed; some participants emigrated.
- D. Gradually many states allowed land to be leased by farmers and inheritance of that land; but some states restricted land purchase until as late as 1850.
- E. Legal emigration costs included: obtain permission, settle debts, sell property, pay for “Manumission” papers from peasant bondage (especially in east), pay taxes of 10-40% of amount owed to local Lord, taxes on property to be taken along, pay for passport, purchase transportation and food for entire voyage for all traveling. Many left illegally.

IV. Explosive German Immigration to the U.S. and Missouri after 1820

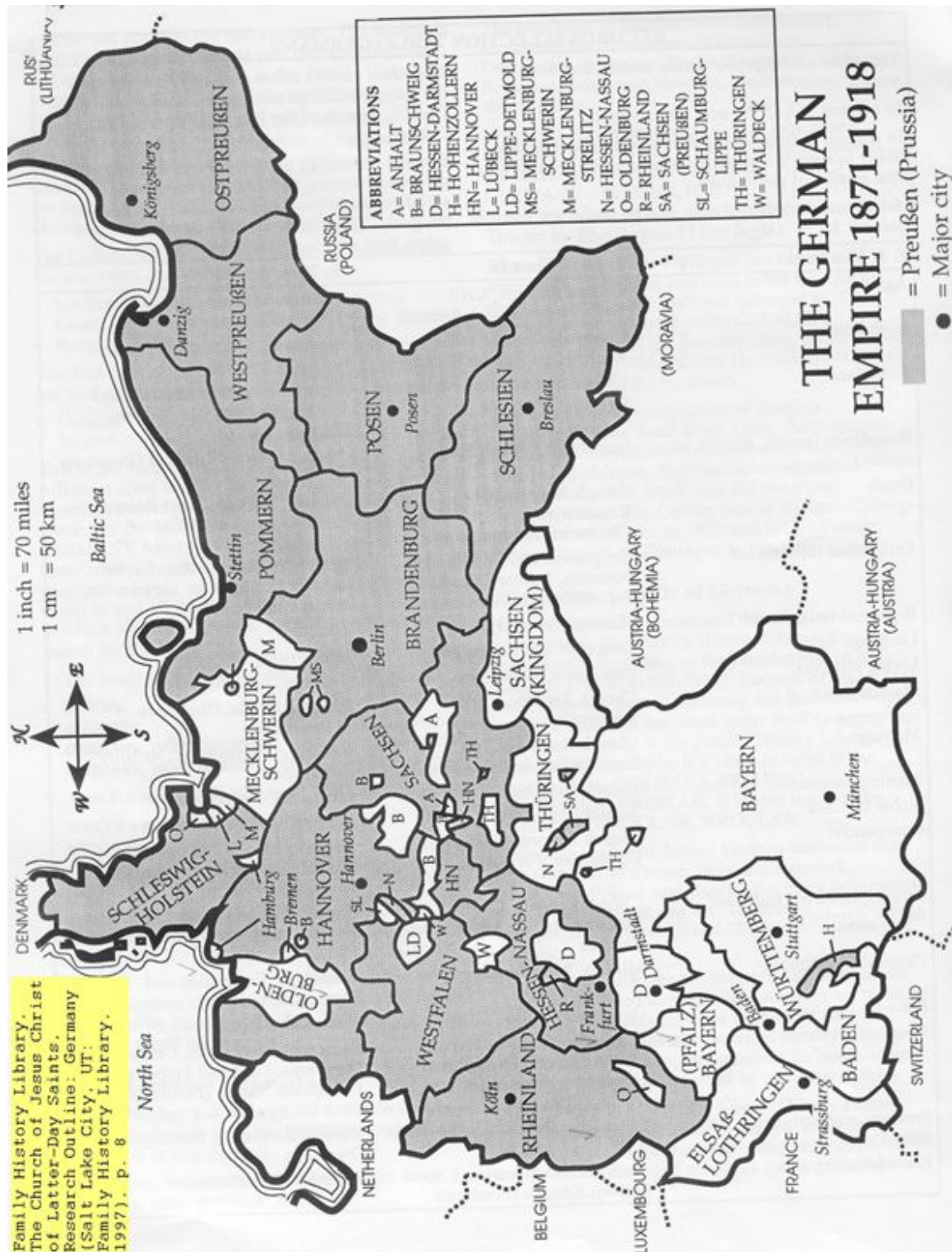
- A. German immigration to U.S. according to U.S. Census Bureau
 1. After 1820 many Germans came to the U.S. again.
 2. Total Germans 1608-1920=approximately 5.8 million, excluding Austrians & Swiss.
 3. Single year German immigration peaks=1854 >215,000 and 1882 >250,000.
- B. Why U.S.? Why Missouri?
 1. Letters home touted:
 - a. Plentiful available vacant land (if unimproved),
 - b. Fewer taxes and regulations,
 - c. Individual freedom of choice,
 - d. Opportunity for relatively quick improved prosperity with hard work.
 2. This led to chain migrations from a German area to the same U.S. place
 3. Books published in Europe promoted emigrant experiences in the U.S. and Missouri.
 - a. For Missouri, particularly, Gottfried Duden’s 1829 book compared Missouri as similar to central Germany and was widely disseminated in Europe.
 - b. Encouraged both more individuals and groups to emigrate.
- C. Where Germans settled in Missouri (Gerlach’s map; pink=Germans):
 1. St. Louis, St. Charles, Warren Counties.
 2. Down the Mississippi—St. Genevieve, Perry County, Cape Girardeau.
 3. And up the Missouri—Franklin, Gasconade, Osage, Cole Counties

4. Additional settlements sprinkled everywhere else.
5. Also moved into neighboring southern Illinois counties.
- D. Individuals and families immigrated.
 1. St. Louis became the destination for many, without residing elsewhere in U.S. first.
 2. Desiring land, immigrants moved to counties as quickly as possible.
 3. They settled in clusters, in the city, but especially in rural areas. For example:
Lafayette County from Esperke, Hannover. Warren County from Lippe-Detmold. St. Charles County and Cape Girardeau County from Westerkappeln, Westphalia.
- E. Some immigrated in settlement groups: German Emigration Societies (ES)
 1. Berlin ES 1832, Gießen ES 1834, Solingen ES 1834; settled Dutzow, Warren County. Many were ill-prepared “Latin Farmers” (educated) and ended in St. Louis instead.
 2. Settlement Society of Philadelphia 1836-39 founded Hermann, Gasconade County.
 3. Saxon Lutherans 1838-1839; settled in St. Louis and Perry County and began the Missouri Lutheran Synod—Lutherans following the Augsburg Convention—not the German State United Evangelical-Lutheran Church.
- F. Contributions
 1. Kept Missouri from succeeding at start of Civil War; secured Union control.
 2. Newspapers—*Westliche Post*, *Anzeiger des Westens*; 18 locals in the Missouri 1872.
 3. Politics—City Governments, State Legislature, even U.S. Congress.
 4. Industries—Anheuser-Busch, Mallinckrodt Chemical, and many shopkeepers.
 5. Churches—1834 Evangelical-Reformed, 1839 Lutherans, 1843 Catholics (St. Louis).
 6. Schools—educated Germans established schools and taught.
- V. Finding Records for German Ancestors and Doing Research in Germany**
 - A. Understand Second German Empire Map and independent multi-state administration before 1871. Begin with the Family History Library’s research wiki how to page at https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Genealogy
 - B. Rely on Family Search for U.S., as well as German records.
 - C. Obtain and use a list of available record-types at St. Louis Genealogical Society (StLGS) <https://stlgs.org/media/freeforms/r114-source-checklist-2015.pdf>
 - D. Obtain a list of Missouri repositories and contents (earlier presentations or StLGS).
 - E. First, in U.S., find immigrant’s German village in EARLIEST FAMILY record, before moving to German records and visits.
 - F. Research in Germany begins at the parish; need village from U.S. records to find parish.
- VI. Conclusions**
 - A. Some already assimilated German-Americans arrived in Missouri early 1770-1820.
 - B. Massive German immigration occurred after 1820, arriving through St. Louis, but quickly finding land in Missouri counties.
 - C. The deluge of Germans spread along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers into:
 1. St. Charles and Warren 1831/32; Franklin and Gasconade 1833
 2. Osage and Cole 1835; Benton 1836, Lafayette 1838, and Perry County 1838/39.
 - D. New arrivals tended to follow where their relatives or neighbors had gone initially.
 - E. German immigrants changed our culture, outlook, State, and Country.

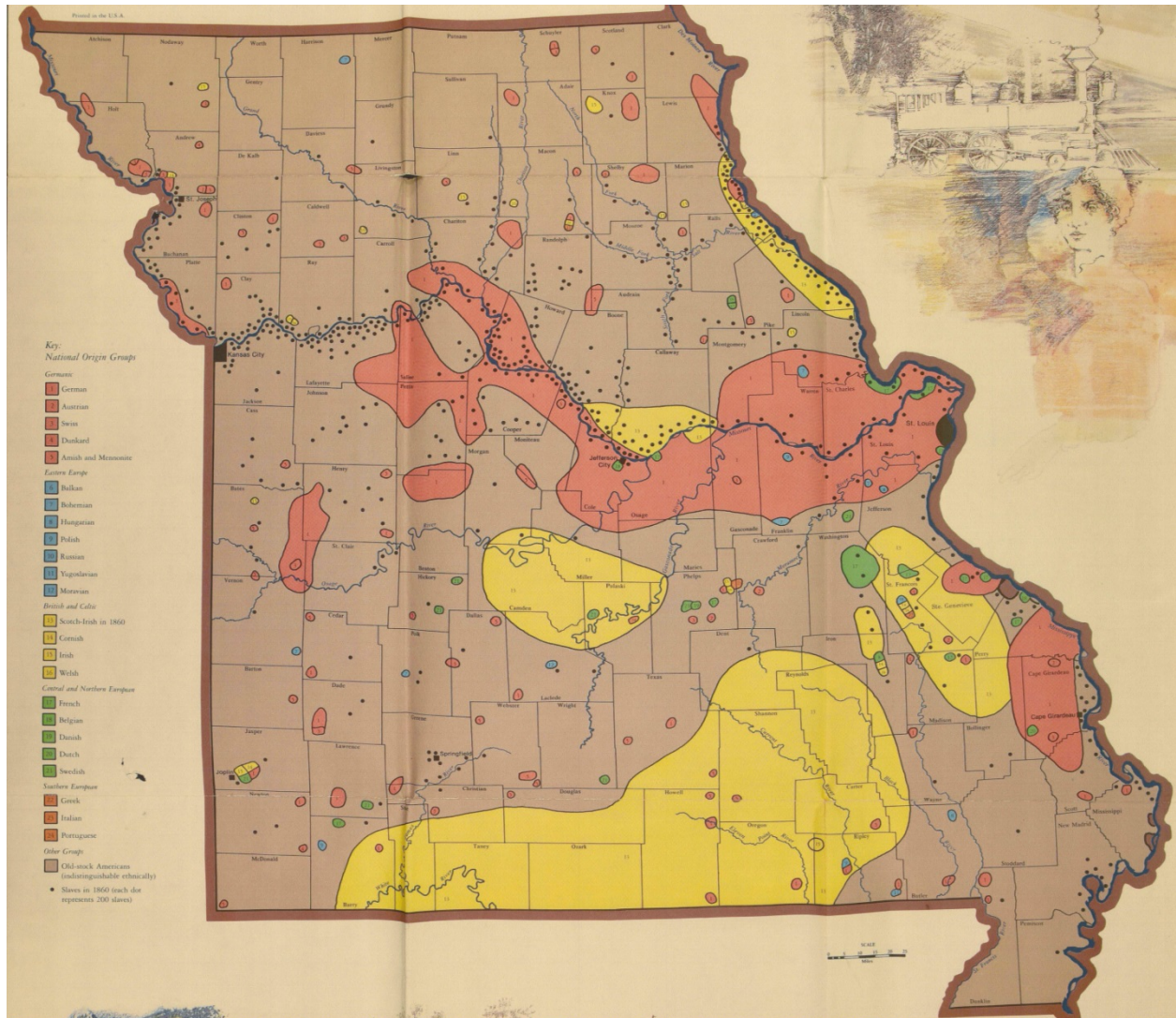
County Map



Germany Map



Gerlach's Map (pink=Germans)



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