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German-Americans In Helena, Montana, 1864-1919

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CARROLL COLLEGE

GERMAN-AMERICANS IN HELENA, MONTANA, 1864-1919

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS TO GRADUATE WITH HONORS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY
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HELENA, MONTANA
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INTRODUCTION

German immigrants have received little academic scholarship and investigation, even though they are very unique among other immigrant groups. They were "the most numerous, the most diverse, and the most influential non-English speaking ethnic group" in America prior to World War I.¹

They immigrated to the United States in great numbers, for over a hundred years. They spoke all dialects of German, but had little in common beyond their language. Their religions ranged from Protestant to Catholic to atheist. Their politics ran the gamut from radical to liberal to conservative to apolitical. Their occupations, reasons for immigrating, education, settlement patterns, and traditions were all distinct.

American natives thought they made "ideal" immigrants. German immigrants acculturated rapidly and successfully, especially economically. Their numbers included names like Heinz, Busch, Rockefeller, Weyerhauser, Lehman, Studebaker, Frick, Schwab, Wanamaker, among others. The German ethnicity was thought to be second only to the English one.²

American governments and industries advertised heavily in Germany to attract new immigrants. Conditions in Germany pushed emigrants out and
the majority chose the United States as a place to settle. Germans were especially fascinated by the idea of America's West. Many German immigrants followed their dreams of the West to Montana. They arrived with the Territory's gold rush and kept coming until after the State's homestead boom. German-Americans settled and stayed, becoming one of Montana's largest non-English speaking ethnic groups. The United States' first ethnically German president was elected in the 1950s; Montana's first ethnically German governor came before Montana was a state.³ Montana's Germans were involved in nearly every level and organization in Montana as Catholics and Protestants, stockmen and farmers, miners and bankers, radicals and nonpartisans.

Helena's Germans were just as diverse and involved. In the period from 1864 to 1919, they came in two waves, first at the city's founding and then after the railroad made its way to Helena. Most of them had settled in the mid-west, before coming to Montana. Some of these immigrants came to the city wealthy; others came with very little and built up local businesses. Occupationally, the city's German-Americans were predominately service providers.

Helena's German community was exceptional. They were successful not only economically, but also ethnically. German-Americans participated in nearly every local organization, but they also formed ethnic societies. These societies cultivated music, theater, education, art, architecture, and culture in Helena. The affection they showed to their ethnic community was not at odds
with their devotion to Helena and the United States. Their German community blended seamlessly into Helena's community, which joined in German cultural activities. German-American economic and community leadership helped secure and direct Helena from the city's inception.

Through emigrating Germans, conditions and policies in Europe directly affected Helena. In the early twentieth century, Europe's actions and the United States' response, fundamentally changed Helena's community once more. World War I started a tidal wave of anti-German paranoia that swept Montana and almost washed away Helena's German community.
END NOTES


2 Luebke, 139, 59-66.

3 Samuel T. Hauser was governor of the Montana Territory from 1885 to 1887. Neil J. Lynch, Montana’s Legislature Through the Years: An Historical Analysis of the Legislature from Territorial Days to Present. (Bozeman, MT: Color World of Montana, 1977), 20.
CHAPTER 1
GERMAN IMMIGRATION

German immigrants were among the first to arrive in North America. Wolfgang Köllmann and Peter Marschalck state that a German named Tyrkir was with the Leif expedition to Greenland in 1000 A.D., and that Germans came to New Amsterdam under Dutch colonization.¹ The first major German settlements were established for religious reasons by entire Mennonite and Quaker congregations in Pennsylvania around 1683.²

The United States was therefore a recipient of German emigration since its inception, and in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, there were two major periods of German immigration to the United States. The first period, from 1815 to 1865, consisted of mostly skilled agricultural workers and farmers, leaving because of overpopulation and unemployment. They sought land and opportunity, settling in rural America. These agricultural Germans continued emigrating in lesser numbers after 1865. In the second period, from 1865 to 1914, the majority of emigrants came from urban Germany, departing because of unemployment and difficult living conditions. They sought jobs and better standards of living, settling in urban America.³

Many of the agricultural immigrants that dominated the first phase of emigration came to Montana chasing gold and land. A significant number of
skilled laborers from this group chose Helena as their home. As a result, Helena's German-Americans made important contributions to its future. Their story became an important part of Helena's story.

The German-American immigration began almost two centuries before Helena was founded. Köllmann and Marschalck write that the first great wave of German immigration to America began in the late-seventeenth century when Germans left a war-devastated, overpopulated southwestern Germany.\(^4\) The majority of these German immigrants arrived over the next century as indentured servants. According to Roger Daniels, German-born Americans were second only to English immigrants in percentage of white residents in the United States.\(^5\) In 1790, they accounted for over one-third of Pennsylvania's white population.\(^6\) A large number of Germans also settled in Maryland and District of Columbia, New Jersey, New York, Georgia, and Virginia.\(^7\) German immigrants accounted for over thirty-six percent of the white population on the eighteenth-century American frontier.\(^8\)

The last major wave of German emigration to the United States came between 1815 and 1914. There are inherent problems in writing a history German emigration from this period.\(^9\) German records of emigration and American records of immigration consider different information and analyze data differently over time. German officials did not account for emigrant destination until 1820. For a number of years, American immigration officials did not count first- or second-class passengers on steamship lines. American records sometimes counted all German speakers as Germans, including
many Austrians, Bohemians, Czechs, and others in the German count. If Germans went first to Russia, Canada, or Australia, when they immigrated into the United States they often were included among the Russians, Canadians, or Australians. Americans did not begin keeping remigration rates until 1908, years after the last major stream of German immigrants arrived.

The 1815 through 1914 German immigration to the United States is best analyzed in two phases. The phases, however, are not strictly limited to a certain type of German emigrant. Emigrants whose motives and characteristics matched the rural emigrants in the first phase continued to emigrate as a smaller percentage of the whole through the end of the second period. Urban emigrants, who had different motives and characteristics, emigrated as the largest percentage of the whole in the second phase. Both periods are meant to account for the beginning of a different wave of emigration—a major shift in the motivations and composition of emigrants within each wave.

The first major period lasted from 1815 to 1865. In 1815, after the Napoleonic wars, the Holy Roman Empire had been dissolved and a war-weary German Confederation of thirty-nine states emerged, dominated by the Austrians until 1866. Germany was, in fact, many principalities, each governed by a monarchy. The largest and most powerful of the Austrian-dominated principalities was Prussia.
After 1815, German emigration law became more lenient with the permission of each principality. Thus the number of Germans immigrating to North and South America rose. Trade with and information about the United States attracted German interest in America. From 1830 to 1914, about ninety percent of all German emigrants reported the United States as their destination.

Some German migrants left for ideological reasons: Austrian oppression and the failure of the revolutions of the 1848 motivated ideologues like liberals and anarchists to leave. In addition, there were still religious families and congregations seeking freedom. Emigrants also left to avoid military obligations and taxes. Those leaving for political or religious reasons, however, were a minority.
Most German emigrants came from the principalities of the southwest for primarily economic reasons. These agrarian areas were governed by inheritance laws that called for an equal division of estates. As the size of farms dwindled from such divisions, families became vulnerable to even small misfortunes. The loss of one crop could devastate farm families, forcing them to sell and emigrate. Some of these farm families and many farm laborers depended on home-based textile production and migration to work in the Netherlands. In 1830, migrant workers were denied employment in the Netherlands. German home-based textiles could not compete with English textiles, and soon laborers and farm families lost this source of income as well. England’s early industrialization intensified the breakdown of the German economy causing a glut of German artisans, which also drove many skilled-laborers to emigrate.

The German migrants from this first phase generally emigrated in families, which was rare among emigration groups. Until 1890, about sixty percent of immigrants came with their families. Between 1855 and 1870, twenty percent of emigrants leaving from the port of Hamburg were under the age of ten.

Some of the rural Germans who might have emigrated were joining Germany’s fledgling industrial work force. But German industry was precarious in the late-1840s as famine and economic crisis gripped Germany. Politically, it was also unstable; in 1848, revolutions swept Germany, forcing most of the principalities’ monarchs to concede to liberal reforms; Austria was
able to ride out the major revolution with its power intact. Due to these conditions, German emigration more than doubled in the early-1850s.\textsuperscript{22}

The second major period of German immigration lasted from 1865 to 1914. Since the 1840s, Germany had been industrializing and urbanizing. However, into the 1870s and 1880s, industrialization was unstable, did not support the workers it employed, and could not absorb the available workforce. Walter Nugent describes the average German life: "The rock-bottom expenses for a laborer in Berlin were $168 a year, but his wages were $123."\textsuperscript{23}

When the Census Bureau announced the close of the frontier in 1890, the agrarian emigration declined dramatically. The American economy was booming and immigration to America was becoming faster, safer, and cheaper. Although some German immigrants were still attracted by land, many more were attracted by higher wages, better living conditions, and economic opportunities. These migrants were predominately male, emigrating as individuals.\textsuperscript{24}

In 1871 Prussia, under the direction of Otto von Bismarck, cast off Austrian dominance and united Germany. As Chancellor, Bismarck helped Germany soar to new heights of power and prestige. Bismarck's \textit{Kulturkampf} against Catholics, however, led some German-Catholics to join this second phase of emigration.\textsuperscript{25}
In 1890, Bismarck was forced to step down. Nationalism had taken hold, and the German government pursued a new policy of Weltpolitik. Even though Germany was acquiring colonies around the world, an average of eighty-nine percent of German emigrants still chose the United States as their destination. The number of emigrants, however, was rapidly declining. As Germany became fully industrialized, it could support its own population with good jobs and decent living conditions--now Germany was attracting immigrants.

In 1897 the German government passed the Imperial Emigration Law, directing its emigrants to German colonies. German imperialism had conquered many colonies around the world; so the nation directed its emigrant population to help secure the its colonial possessions and to
buttress claims for colonial expansion. German immigration to the United States continued to exist but on a much smaller scale.\textsuperscript{27}

The German emigrants might have left for varying reasons, at different times, and from different regions, but nearly all of them chose to come to the United States. To those in Germany's uncertain, tumultuous times of the late-1840s, cheap, plentiful land and gold discoveries in the western United States seemed to present a desirable alternative. German emigrants wanted an opportunity to succeed. They felt locked into agricultural and industrial systems that did not allow them to progress past their present plight. They felt penned in by an ever-expanding population on a dwindling supply of land. The United States offered vast opportunity, a chance for economic advancement, for land ownership, for success.

Although economics was the driving force behind German immigration, the German people were captivated by what they imagined America to be: the West. They devoured thousands of books on the subject by authors like Wilhelm Frey, Otto Ruppius, Balduin Möllhaussen, Friedrich Gerstäcker, Friedrich Armand Strubberg, and Friedrich Pajeken.\textsuperscript{28}

One of the most famous authors was Karl May. Many of his stories involved a German immigrant cowboy named Old Shatterhand. Old Shatterhand was a symbol of Germanic perfection. He was a towering superman with long blond hair and exceptional in every way: he was fluent in forty languages and an excellent sharpshooter with the chivalry of a great knight. His most trusted friend was an Apache Indian chief named Winnetou.
In adventure after adventure, the pair roamed the deserts and mountains of the frontier, saving the vulnerable from gangs of criminals.²⁹

**Figure 3.** Book cover from one of Karl May's novels. Reprinted from "European Images of America: The West in Historical Perspective," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 42 (Spring 1992) : 9.
May's tales of the West were completely fabricated; one book cover depicted Indians "in Plains Indian feathered head dresses dancing at a southwestern pueblo before a Pacific Northwest totem pole." The German audience did not care if the stories were misrepresentations; May's tales of Indians, cowboys, Yankees, and the American frontier became ingrained in the fabric of German dreams. The myth of the West tapped the German consciousness, the German identity. The West was fresh, expansive, vital, pristine, adventurous, independent, and filled with epic German heroes.

Capitalizing on this fascination were emigration societies, railroad boosters, U.S. government agents, steamship lines, and letters from successful German immigrants. Even before 1850, there were thirty emigration societies founded in Germany. Emigration newspapers and other forms of propaganda circulated all over the country. Even Texas had its own German colonization society.

The dream of the West could be theirs. Germans could sell their property or save up to purchase tickets to the New World. More often family members, already established in America sent prepaid tickets. Many German immigrants headed to the rural west where railroads and the United States government sold land cheaply to anyone with the capital. Many German immigrants settled for a few years in German communities on the East Coast or in the Mid-West to earn that capital and orient themselves to their new country before moving further west, to places like Montana, where land was still plentiful and opportunity beckoned.
By 1864, gold fever in places like Virginia City and Bannack had carved the Montana Territory from the Idaho Territory placing Montana's capital at Bannack. Prospectors arrived by the thousands. In the first official census, thirty-eight percent of Montana's population was foreign-born. German immigrants were the third largest immigrant group among Montana's miners. Most of them hoped to strike it rich so that they could buy land and settle into farming or ranching. Some of them came as service providers to support the booming mining camps. In order to achieve statehood, however, Montana needed to attract more stable residents than miners.

In 1869, Governor James M. Ashley, a sponsor of the bill that made Montana a territory and provided for Montana's first territorial governor, appointed Benno Speyer "Commissioner of Immigration" for Montana, even before he arrived to take office. Montana needed to attract Scandinavian, English, and German immigrants to come and settle in their territory. Governor Ashley toured the United States lauding the virtues of Montana. He worked with women's groups in Boston to help attract women to the territory.

In the Montana Territorial newspapers that reported on Governor Ashley's activities, German immigrants were already advertising their services. These newspapers catered to the large numbers of German-immigrant readers with news about the railroad being built back home in the Black Forest and a German ceremony honoring a Prussian heroine.
Before railroads interconnected Montana's cities and Montana itself to the rest of the country, the Montana Territory was difficult to access. Some of the earliest German immigrants came with wagon trains overland from the areas around Minnesota. Nick Grommisch, a shoemaker from Luxembourg, John Jurgens, a blacksmith from Holstein, and the Hilger brothers, ranchers whose parents had emigrated from Luxembourg, came to Helena on such trains in 1864.\(^{41}\)

David Hilger was involved in an incident where a band of Native American warriors came at the train in an attempt to protect a tribal encampment nearby. Instead of letting the wagon train's captains shoot at the band of warriors, the Germans marched out with their brass band to greet the Native Americans. The Germans met with the tribe, exchanging foodstuffs, trinkets, and a peace pipe.\(^{42}\)

Other German immigrants were able to use waterways to enter the Territory. Kate Ladner's father first came to New York. He then took his family to St. Louis where they took a steamboat up the Missouri to Fort Benton. They hitchhiked to Helena where they settled in 1886, before purchasing land and running cattle near Polson.\(^{43}\)

Between 1880 and 1890, Montana's population tripled with the arrival of the railroad. Railroads gave Montana access to national markets, and railroad boosters brought in settlers. Cattle and sheep ranches were prevalent. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, agriculture employed the highest number of Montanans. Railroads meant not only
efficient transportation for crops and animals but also easier processing and marketing of Montana's minerals.

Copper mining in Butte and Anaconda City boomed under the direction of Marcus Daly. "The richest hill on earth" as it was called gave rise to "the Twins," the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and the Montana Power Company, that soon came to dominate early-twentieth-century Montana.44

The railroads gave German immigrants cheap, direct access to the almost any city in Montana, from anywhere in the United States. August Sobotka's parents settled with family in Ohio where his father worked as a coal miner. In 1905, Montana's Yellowstone Project recruited German coal miners from Ohio and West Virginia. His family came to Montana on the
railroad, where his father's earnings as a teamster purchased land for their family farm.\textsuperscript{45} Fred Wolterman's brother received a prepaid ticket from their uncle. After working for their uncle in Colorado, he joined a railroad crew to earn passage to Billings, but soon after his arrival, he deserted the railroad and hitchhiked to Helena. Once in Helena he started a grocery/bar, saving until he could bring over all four of his brothers in 1908.\textsuperscript{46}

Helena was one of Montana's boomtowns. Gold discoveries put it on the map in 1864. After the gold rush played out, Helena maintained stable population of a few thousand. The railroad's arrival in the 1880s nearly quadrupled Helena's population. German immigration to Helena followed this pattern. The first wave arrived before 1870, and the second came after the railroad in 1883. The majority of Helena's German immigrants were the skilled agricultural workers who began emigrating in the first phase and continued in the second phase of German emigration. They came predominately from Prussia. Helena's census does not make a record of when immigrants first came to the United States until 1900. In the 1900 census, the majority of the city's German-born are recorded as having immigrated in the 1870s and 1880s.\textsuperscript{47} Germans made up ten percent of Helena's total population, compared with Montana's Germans who were just six percent of the state's population. In fact, over the next half century, Helena maintained a higher concentration of German immigrants than Montana.\textsuperscript{48}
After 1864, Helena's population boomed with the Last Chance gold fields as waves of fortune seekers arrived to stake their claims. Most of these were miners after easy placer gold. An unstable, transient lot, they soon moved on to the next big strike. Helena, however, did not share the fate of ghost towns like Diamond City or Bannack, which withered away when the gold was gone. Helena had been blessed because the Last Chance Gold strike put Helena in the crossroads of the west and attracted fortune seekers of a more socially ambitious ilk.

Most German immigrants were fortune seekers of this kind. They came in great numbers, remaining in higher proportions than Germans in Montana.
or most other foreign-born nationalities. Some used Helena as a springboard into land ownership. Most were the skilled artisans and laborers that began their journey in the decaying agricultural communities of Germany. They came to Helena to build homes, businesses, and new lives. These first immigrants established a strong, vibrant German community, but they also became an indelible part of the Helena community.

Helena's German immigrants worked tirelessly beside the other famous immigrant founding fathers to insure that Helena became the seat of government and that Helena's architecture and society rivaled that of other large American Meccas. They believed in Helena, hoping that their grandiose dreams and hard work would make Helena not only a financial, social, and cultural capital of the West but also of America.
END NOTES


2 Köllmann and Marschalck, 513.

3 Köllmann and Marschalck, 522.


6 Daniels, 25.

7 Daniels, 25.

8 Daniels, 67-68.

9 Inconsistencies between German emigration records and American German immigration records make it difficult to calculate just how many German migrants there were. For example, German records can not account for Germans who emigrated from London, Le Havre or for Germans who first moved to Russia, Australia, or Canada and then emigrated to the United States within a generation. In the American count Jews were, at times, considered a race, resulting in many German-Jews being segregated from the German immigration numbers.

10 Archdeacon, 33.


Köllmann and Marschalck, 516.

Köllmann and Marschalck, 518.

Köllmann and Marschalck, 522.

For a good account of German inheritance systems and the early migration please see Köllmann and Marschalck.


Köllmann and Marschalck, 530.

Köllmann and Marschalck, 536.

Köllmann and Marschalck, 536.

Nugent, 71.

Köllmann and Marschalck, 518.

Nugent, 69.

Köllmann and Marschalck, 538. Nugent explains that German women were employed in hard labor for half the wages of their male counterparts. With only half the wages, it was more difficult for women to migrate, and with the male migration, there were fewer marriageable men to ease the burden for German women to support themselves. Nugent, 70.

Most German-Catholics had sided with Austria during the Seven Weeks War. Bismarck suspected their loyalty and wanted to curb the power of the Catholic Church and their political party. Carr, 123-129.

Köllmann and Marschalck, 518.

Köllmann and Marschalck, 542.

Please see Julian Crandall Hollick, "The American West in the European Imagination," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 42 (Spring 1992): 17-21; Gerald D. Nash, "European Images of America: The West in Historical Perspective," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 42 (Spring
23


30 Nash, 9.


32 Luebke, 407; Gjerde, 5, 31.


34 U.S. Department of Interior. Census Office. Ninth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1870 (Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society (MHS)).


39 Deerlodge New North-West (Montana), 7 January 1870

40 Deerlodge New North-West (Montana), 11 March 1870; Deerlodge New North-West (Montana), 7 January 1870.

42 White, 246-247.

43 Kate Ladner, interview by Laurie Mercier, 6 August 1981, OH 183, tapes, (Helena, MT: MHS).


45 August Sobotka, interview by Laurie Mercier, 24 October 1981, OH 201, tapes, (Helena, MT: MHS).


CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF GERMANS IMMIGRANTS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF HELENA

...[that] Helena is the richest city of its population in the United States is no idle boast... that it is to grow and grow rapidly, is its manifest destiny. It has reached that condition that no possible combination of circumstances can retard its future.¹

By 1889, the Helena Daily Herald dubbed Helena the richest city of its size in the world.² Helenans were filled with a radiant optimism: their own success seemed to be inevitable. Their confidence in Helena's triumph gave them the faith to endure the many hardships the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries brought. The people of Helena took advantage of their early mineral resources, their location, and their dedication, to create a service- and government-based economy.

German immigrants and their descendents contributed to every level and stage of this economy. German-born Helenans were predominately proprietors and skilled-service providers. Over time the number of women in their workforce grew, and the second generation rose in economic status. German-American diversity, hard work, and ingenuity helped make Helena a banking, shopping, and administrative center for Montana.
Many of these German immigrants ascended to the upper echelons of Montana society. German-Americans provided the leadership and tenacity essential to the city's survival and growth.

Though Helena had been blessed with gold and silver, it did not have the wealth of natural resources that other Montana cities depended on for permanence. Helena developed some industrial facilities, and there were quite a few farmers and ranchers, but nothing on a comparable scale with the industrial or agrarian bases of Montana's other great communities. All Helena possessed to make it a lasting city was an early and brief strike of precious metals, a convenient crossroads for early travelers who needed to stop on their way to somewhere else, and a few thousand proud Helenans determined to make it their home. So in 1864 when the cry of gold went out, Helena's destiny was anything but inevitable.

Just days after the Last Chance Strike, thousands of prospectors arrived in what they would call Helena. Among those thousands were many German immigrants. Some of them, like the Hilger brothers, the Sieben brothers, and Conrad Kohrs arrived in 1864, poor but with dreams of land ownership. They worked in the surrounding area until they were able to buy land and expand their holdings into ranches. The Siebens and Hilgers worked adjoining pieces of land just outside Helena. They created the Gates of the Mountains tour and remained in Helena for generations, all the way down to present day. Conrad Kohrs also established a ranch, and became known as the "Cattle King of Montana."
Many German immigrants came with land in mind; the immigrants that made Helena their home, however, were predominately skilled laborers. Gjerde calls them "town Germans," they were a small part of the first and second waves of German immigrants to the United States.⁶

Many of Helena's town Germans migrated west in stages, stopping over for years in the Midwest. Their years in the United States began the process of acculturation and the acquisition of English. Some, like Edward Zimmerman and the Loeb brothers, were able to amass wealth, which they brought with them west. Others, like C. B. Jacquemin and George Herrmann, came to Helena with very little.

All of these German immigrants invested their energy and diligence to make their businesses successful. Many of them started out in one profession, but then moved on to work in completely different professions.

Figure 6. The earliest known photograph of Helena was taken on Bridge Street in 1865 by Michael Reing, an immigrant from Bavaria. Reprinted from Gold in the Gulch (Helena, MT: Bar Wineglass Publications, 1981), 13.
Most of Helena's German immigrants were in their early thirties when they decided to chase the gold fields of Montana, ending up at the site of the Last Chance Strike. Millions of dollars in gold were pulled out of the Prickly Pear Valley. This wealth had to be handled, stored, and/or transported by banks. Charles Dahler, from Prussia, came to the Montana Territory in 1863. He took up mining and struck it rich, putting his money into his own bank.\(^7\) Another banking house was established by Bernard and Jacob Loeb, both from Hesse-Darmstadt, who came to Helena in 1866. In 1868, Bernard returned to Germany to marry Jeanette, who, in 1870, had the first of their two children. The Loeb's ran Helena's lottery and later a clothing store.\(^8\)

Samuel T. Hauser, a Kentuckian of German decent, and T. H. Kleinschmidt established one of the earliest banks in Helena, called the First National Bank and Assay Office.

Figure 7. The First National Bank and Assay Office as taken in 1869. Reprinted from Gold in the Gulch (Helena, MT: Bar Wineglass Publications, 1981), 16.
Kleinschmidt's father died the day his family emigrated from Prussia; T. H. was able to move them from New Orleans to St. Louis where he met Hauser. Hauser became the president and Kleinschmidt became the clerk/cashier, a director, and a board member. After establishing their bank, Kleinschmidt returned to St. Louis to marry Mary Blattner; they made their home in Helena. Soon T. H.'s brothers, A. K., H. F. C., and R. H. joined them.9

By November of 1865, L. H. Hershfield, a New Yorker of German descent, had a bank in Virginia City and two in Helena. In 1867 his younger brother Aaron joined him to help establish the Merchants National Bank of Helena. In 1868, their correspondents in New York defaulted on $107,000, which the Merchants National Bank would never regain. The Hershfield brothers covered all of their obligations with their own savings.10

Helena, however, needed more than banking to support the miners' camp. Most of Helena's food, clothing, and other necessities had to be hauled into the area. The city's mainlines were the roads to and from Fort Benton and Virginia City. Both routes were poorly maintained, requiring mule or bull trains manned by muleskinners or bullwhackers to make the journey. Montana's unpredictable weather often caused the loss and delay of supply shipments, which meant high prices and frequent shortages of Helena's necessities.11

The first store in Helena, established just months after the Last Chance strike, was Constance and Jurgens.12 J. H. Jurgens had been born in Hanover, Germany thirty-one years earlier. After he established his
grocery/mercantile store in Helena's mining camp, he was able to open businesses in Marysville and Belmont. 13 Soon after Constance and Jurgens, Michael Reinig, an immigrant from Bavaria; Samuel Schwab, also Bavarian; Frederick Lehman, from Prussia; and Moses Morris, also Prussian, all founded lasting stores and remained key players in Helena's economic development.14

One of the earliest drug stores in the Territory was established by 26 year-old H. M. Parchen who had been born in Prussia. He moved westward working in Ohio, Indiana, and finally arriving in Virginia City as a bookkeeper in 1864. In early 1865, he went into a partnership and opened a drug store in Helena, which became the major supplier of pharmaceuticals to the Montana Territory. 15

In that same year, George Herrmann and his wife Anna both immigrants born in Bavaria thirty-one years before, settled in Helena. He made furniture and built a furniture shop called Herrmann & Company. 16 A few years later, Henry Sonnefield, a Prussian who settled first in Indiana, came to Helena and went to work as a contractor.17

Miners required more that just clothes and food, so to meet the demand Nickolas Kessler and Charles Beeher built Helena's first brewery. Nickolas Kessler was born in Luxembourg. He immigrated alone went back to Germany shortly afterwards. He came to America to stay soon thereafter, drifting from gold strike to gold strike in Montana until he met up with Charles Beeher and settled in Helena at the age of 31. In 1865, he took over the
brewing operation, naming it the Kessler Brewery. In 1866, he established Helena's first brick works, naming it the Kessler Brickyard.¹⁸

In 1865, John Horsky, Ignatius Miller, and Herman Richter built the Helena Brewery. Ignatius Miller and Herman Richter were both German immigrants. Herman Richter was born in Hanover twenty-five years earlier. He married Jennie who was from New York and of French descent.¹⁹

Figure 8. The Helena Brewery. Reprinted from Gold in the Gulch (Helena, MT: Bar Wineglass Publications, 1981), 23.

Unreliable roads and difficult travelling were also a boon to the centrally located Helena. Travelers were grateful for a place to rest in Helena as they made the rough journey across the Montana Territory. Twenty-year-old, Max Sklower, from Prussia, came directly to Helena and worked as a baker until he was able to build a hotel and become its proprietor.²⁰ Jules Germain, also from Prussia, established Helena's International Hotel.²¹
Business was good in Helena, but the businesses that survived from mine camp days not only had to succeed in a difficult economic climate, but also had to endure complete devastation. On April 28, 1869, a fire started in a Chinese gambling house that burnt down most of the business district. The Helena Fire Department, created after a fire in February of 1869 was poorly organized and lacked access to the large quantities of water needed to extinguish such a blaze. In this fire the precedent began whereby breweries like the Helena and Kessler companies used large kegs of beer to drench their own and surrounding buildings in an attempt to save the structures.22

Beer, however, was never enough, and many of Helena's businesses were decimated by fires. The Hershfield brother's Merchants National Bank was completely destroyed. Hauser's First National Bank burnt to the ground. Dahler and Company, Jurgens and Company, Kessler, Kleinschmidt, Lehman and Newman, Parchin, Jules Germain, and the Loeb brothers all suffered heavy losses. The International Hotel was rebuilding within days, leading Helenans to call it "the Phoenix." The community finally confronted the scourge of fires with a better-equipped fire department and a fire tower.23

On August 23, 1872, a fire started in the North Pacific Hotel, burning through most of Helena. This fire was Helena's ninth and would be remembered as among the three major fires in early Helena. Sonnefeld lost everything, including his home. He rebuilt his contracting business
successfully. Weisenhorn's entire business burned. He was able to restore his carriage repair shop.\textsuperscript{24}

In the bitter cold of January 9, 1874, yet another fire started at the same Chinese gambling house as the fire of 1869. This was the third of Helena's great early holocausts. Two bartenders were killed in Kessler's saloon. In the Gans and Klein clothing store, Isaac Greenhood and Herman Gans were trapped, trying to save merchandise. They broke through their wall into the Kessler Brewery to safety. The only clothing store in Helena to survive the fire was Feldberg's, which pledged not to raise its prices. Edward Zimmerman's home was destroyed. The Loeb brothers lost their entire business. Schwab and Zimmerman's Cosmopolitan Hotel was completely lost. Hauser's First National Bank burned to the ground. Hauser, like most of these hardy businessmen, reopened and started rebuilding just days after the loss. In 1876, responding to the ongoing danger of fire, Helena's fire department received funding for more and newer equipment. The city equipped its fire tower with a massive bell with "Helena Queen City of the Mountains" engraved on its rim\textsuperscript{25}

From 1870 to 1920, German-Americans were an important part of the service-economy of Helena.\textsuperscript{26} They were most numerous in the building trades, like carpentry, masonry, contracting. Almost as many owned establishments; they were saloon owners, brewers, merchants, butchers,
mechanics, tailors, and jewelers. As a smaller percentage of the whole, German immigrants worked as laborers, servants, and cooks. The number of highly trained professionals, grew throughout the period. From 1870 forward, German-Americans served Helena as clerks, musicians, physicians, druggists, engineers, and attorneys.

In Helena, the proportion of females within the German-American community was consistently lower than the proportion of females in the general population. The majority of German immigrant women were married. These German women worked hard in family businesses, took in boarders, and did laundry. Quite a few of them were nurses, mid-wives, servants, and teachers.

More of the second generation worked in family businesses and moved higher on the economic ladder. Few of them were laborers or servants. By 1910, German-American women were single and married in roughly equal numbers. They went out to work more often than the first-generation immigrant women.

In 1870, Helena had 3,106 residents, two-fifths of whom were foreign-born. Two-hundred-and-thirty-seven of these foreign-born had immigrated to the United States from Germany. They came predominantly from Prussia but many came from Bavaria and other parts of the German Confederation, which echoes the composition of German immigrants in Montana as a whole. In
Montana's population, forty percent of German immigrants were engaged in mining. In Helena, however, German immigrants were principally skilled service providers; only twelve percent were miners. The average German-born man in Helena was in his early thirties and single.\textsuperscript{27}

The 1870s were difficult years in Helena. Much of the easy placer gold had played out, even though thirty-seven percent of Helenans were employed in mining.\textsuperscript{28} Lewis and Clark was Montana's most highly populated county, and Helena continued to be a population and financial center in the territory. However, the economic times were hard for the United States as well as Montana. Helena suffered more because of its isolation, the high cost of goods and taxes, and natural disasters. By 1880, only eighteen percent of the people counted in the 1870 census remained.\textsuperscript{29} Yet even in rough times Helena attracted German immigrants. Ike Greenhorn was born in Bavaria and arrived in Helena in 1876 at the age of 34. He worked as a clerk until he was able to start a dry goods and liquor store. Charles Hagemann from Prussia and Earnest Hahn, also from Prussia, established lasting businesses in Helena in the mid-1870s.\textsuperscript{30}

After a long, heated battle, Helena became the capital of the Montana Territory in 1875. The irony of Helena becoming the seat of territorial government was that Helena had no government of its own. After five votes on the issue, Helena was still not an incorporated city. Even with the three
railroad subsidies passed in 1876 by Montana's territorial government, Helena still did not have viable transportation lines to support its economy. The Montana Territory was deeply in debt, and the Federal government was trying to regain some of that money through high taxes on the territorial economy. On November 23, 1877, the leading businessmen of Helena met in the International Hotel to establish the Helena Board of Trade. The town's leading businessmen had finally taken the future of Helena into their own hands.31

Henry Parchen, the druggist from Prussia, became the board's first president. Among the board of directors were A. K. Kleinschmidt, Isaac Greenhood, T. H. Kleinschmidt, Frederick Lehman, Nickolas Kessler, and Michael Reinig. Over a third of the directors were German immigrants. Members of the board included H.F.C. Kleinschmidt, Ike Greenhorn, Jacob Loeb, Max Sklower, Edward Zimmerman, and Frederick Gamer.32

The first act of the Helena Board of Trade was to begin their long, loud protest against heavy Federal taxation. They sent letters and telegrams to the Secretary of the Interior and others to be read on the floor of Congress. They addressed their transportation concerns even more capably. In 1878, they were responsible for the development of the wagon road between Helena and Butte. They lobbied railroads endlessly to come to Helena, working with the national press and networking with other boards of trade all
over the United States. The Helena Board of Trade was determined to lead Helena into its manifest destiny as "the richest city of its size in the world."³³

By 1880, Montana's population had nearly doubled, but Helena's population remained relatively unchanged except that mining employed only fifteen percent of the population.³⁴ It was still Montana's largest city. Deer Lodge County, however, took the lead over Lewis and Clark in county population size. The city had 3,624 residents, 271 of which were German-born.

Helena blossomed in the 1880s. Silver, quartz, and other mineral wealth enriched the town. The prosperity in Helena led to the largest building boom in all of its history. Helena began the decade with 3,624 residents and ended it with 13,834 citizens. Helena's seventy-three percent growth beat the seventy percent growth statewide.³⁵ Helena had crawled into the 1880s shaking and weak; the city charged out of the 1880s roaring and triumphant.

In 1881, Helena finally voted in a city government. Christian Kenck and August Weisenhorn served as aldermen. By 1882, Helena had finally voted to incorporate itself. Jacob Loeb, a Democrat, became Helena's city-treasurer, serving two terms. T. H. Kleinschmidt, a Republican, was elected to Helena's Board of Health.³⁶ The break between Loeb and Kleinschmidt in party affiliation is representative of the German community as a whole. Helenans of German birth entered the political arena to influence the
economic and educational policies of their community, not as ideologues. Few Germans in Helena subscribed to more radical political views. They split somewhat equally and dispassionately between the major parties.37

In 1883, Kleinschmidt was elected Helena's mayor in a landslide.38 He took office just in time to preside over the celebration at Gold Creek, near Helena, when the golden spike was driven and the Northern Pacific finally connected Helena with the rest of the world. Samuel T. Hauser won the bid for the first round-trip ticket from Helena to St. Louis. Afterward he presented the ticket to his friend and business partner, Mayor T. H. Kleinschmidt.39

The arrival of the Northern Pacific meant everything to the survival and prosperity of Helena. In early 1883, leading up to the summer ceremony in Gold Creek, Helena had more than three committees planning the schedule of the event and the elaborate celebration that followed. Stories and advertisements came in every issue of the newspapers; stores lowered their prices post-railroad levels months before the rails were finished.40 Helenans knew their isolation was over, and now was easily accessible to the rest of the nation.

As the Helena community grew and East Helena was established, Helena's businessmen recognized a need to help provide the housing for the lower middle class. So, on June 5, 1885, they established the Home Building and Loan Association. Among the board members were Charles N. Kessler,
eldest son of Nickolas Kessler, I.L. Israel, and P.G. Schroeder; the first loan was granted to Edwin J. Bickel.\textsuperscript{41}

In 1885, Nickolas Kessler, made wealthy by his successful brewery and brick works, built a magnificent new home just outside Helena. Historians estimate that over seventy-five percent of the bricks used to build Helena came from the Kessler Brickyard. Henry Parchen used Kessler bricks and other local materials to build the Parchen Block in that same year.\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{kessler-beer-wagon.jpg}
\caption{Kessler beer wagon in a city built with Kessler bricks. Reprinted from \textit{Helena: An Illustrated History} (Norfolk, Va: Donning Co., 1983), 72.}
\end{figure}

In 1889, the Hershfield brothers' Merchants National Bank built the Securities Building. A beautiful stone structure, it was really two buildings, separated and supported by a massive firewall.\textsuperscript{43}
In 1889, Montana became a state; the Helena Daily Herald rejoiced "the termination of our territorial vassalage, the beginning of our grand career as a sovereign state." The celebration continued into May of 1891, when
Helena businessmen devised the first annual Montana State Fair with L. H. Hershfield, T. H. Klienschmidt, and H. M. Parchen as trustees. Helena was a quarter century old and boasted the presence of four national banks whose deposits topped seven million dollars. Helena dubbed itself the richest city of its size in the world, but as the country went into recession and the price of silver dropped, Helena faced hard times. The Panic of 1893 caused banks and mines to collapse all over the state. In July, Hauser’s First National Bank and the Hershfield brothers’ Merchants National Bank were forced to close their doors and enter receivership under Eugene T. Wilson. Hauser was able to pull the First National Bank out of receivership and back into business. The Merchants National Bank never recovered.

Kleinschmidt sold his home and most of his possessions to Massena Bullard, a prominent Helena attorney, for one dollar indicating that Kleinschmidt was on the verge of bankruptcy. Kleinschmidt recovered, and in 1894, he bought back his possessions and became one of the founders of the Helena Electric Company whose steam-generated electricity powered Helena for the next several years. Moreover, Kleinschmidt, along with Parchen, Weisenhorn, and other foresighted Helena businessmen saw the future need for a larger electrical power supply so they called for a dam. By 1898, Helena’s Canyon Ferry Dam was providing that electricity.

The Helena Board of Trade met the Panic of 1893 head on. They looked for ways to reduce the city’s expenses. Helena’s businessmen had
been hard hit by the panic, and as they watched Anaconda grow larger and more powerful, they determined that Helena must win the state capital to ensure its future as a powerful, economic, and cultural center of Montana. In 1894, voter fraud was discovered in the most recent election for capital. When the votes were recounted, Helena was awarded the state capital.

Christian Kenck, of the Magnolia Hotel, Samuel Schwab, of the St. Louis Hotel, and Loeb and Brothers Clothing promised a reward "for the conviction of those responsible for the Meagher County election fraud."50

In that same year, Montana railroad workers joined in a nationwide strike, which meant the city's modern transportation was unavailable. Helena never confronted strikes like these because it did not have large-scale organized labor.

Helena's businessmen responded with their own ground transportation. Kessler sent six wagonloads of beer to Great Falls in one shipment.51 This behavior was typical of Helena's small business climate. Though the economic climate was tough, German-American businesses held up well. Ever resourceful and tenacious, nearly every German-American business in Helena survived the crisis intact; some even thrived. Dr. O. A. Kenck, a dentist and second-generation German-American, was able to move from the portable wagon in which he had been practicing to an office in the prestigious Gold Block.
In 1900, Montana had grown by forty-six percent. Helena, with 10,770 residents, had lost twenty-two percent of its population. However, the number of German-born citizens had grown by almost sixty percent to 645 since 1880.

First-generation German-Americans were employed heavily in the professions, such as mechanics, clerks, and engineers; the second generation followed in these same professions, but there were few laborers and miners. At that time, eight German-Americans were practicing law in Helena, one of whom was the clerk of the Supreme Court. German-American
men filled positions as public administrators, county auditor, deputy sheriff, police officers, fire fighters, newspaper editors, and state officers.\textsuperscript{52}

Women, now, made up nearly fifty percent of Helena's German population, and with the end of the Victorian Age, Helena's women were entering nearly every profession. In the 1900s, the first women doctors and lawyers practiced in Helena.\textsuperscript{53} Both the German-born and second-generation German women also took to the workforce in unprecedented numbers. Both generations worked in family businesses, with status equal to their brothers and husbands. The second-generation German women worked in higher percentages, often as dressmakers, stenographers, and teachers. The German-born women of Helena remained mostly married; many women in the second-generation of Germans, however, were single.\textsuperscript{54}

As the new century had dawned, Helena was losing its entrepreneurial stalwarts. Nickolas Kessler, Henry Parchen, L. H. Hershfield, and H. M. Sonnefield among others died in this decade; many of the surviving former business leaders were too old to drive Helena's economy and direct Helena's future.

Helena had seen its horizons recede in the 1890s, and many Helenans were at peace with Helena's secure position as a bureaucratic city and local leader, rather than a national one. The 1900s were an era of slower economic growth and more community development in Helena. On a rainy July 4, 1902, soggy Helenans welcomed the new Capitol.\textsuperscript{55} President Theodore Roosevelt visited the city in late-1903. Halfway through the
decade, the Hauser Dam was built; toward the end of the decade the Holter Dam was finished. In 1909, President Taft came to Helena's Montana State Fair and then proceeded to lay the cornerstone of what would become Carroll College.\textsuperscript{56}

By 1910, Montana had grown by thirty-five percent. Helena had 12,987 residents, a gain of seventeen percent in its population. The number of German-born citizens had declined to 609, probably due to deaths. By 1920, the German-born population of Helena decreased by a third. Most of these German-born immigrants' descendents remained in the Helena area.\textsuperscript{57}

A major shift in the German community was the number of young second-generation German-Americans in the work force. The vast majority of these twelve to sixteen year-olds went to school, but then had jobs as bellboys, drivers, nurse's aids, workers in the cracker factory, or as candy makers. The number of young second-generation German-Americans rose in the workforce and remained nearly gender equal.\textsuperscript{58}

From 1910 to 1920, Helena's population remained constant. In 1914, Montana's women received the right to vote, five years before the United States granted women suffrage. In 1916, the first woman ever elected to the United States Congress, Jeanette Rankin, came from Montana.

Arthur Seiler was fifteen when he came to Helena from Germany. Michael Reinig took him in and gave him a job. Seiler was able to open a confectionery shop, which he ran very successfully. The shop, however, collapsed while he visited family in Germany. When he returned, he worked
at odd jobs, until he opened a bakery. The bakery was less successful, and he opened a saloon. He soon managed a chain of saloons and became quite wealthy.⁵⁹

In 1911, Fred Gamer, the boot maker, died in an accident. His widow, Emma, had worked as a music teacher in the public schools for a number of years. Three of their sons had opened a very successful chain of confectionery stores in Butte. In 1916, Emma decided to open one in Helena, the Gamer Candy Company. She ran it very successfully, hiring a number of teenagers from the Helena community.⁶⁰

Helenans were leading normal lives and prospering, but the world was plunging into war. As Germany became the United States' enemy in World War I, Helena's German community did not suffer economically. According to the tax assessments and the city directories, the wealth of German immigrants and their businesses remained relatively stable or grew.⁶¹

Socially, however, Helenans would turn on their long-time neighbors of German descent, exclusively and viciously. The Montana Council of Defense would hold trials in Helena prosecuting persons of German descent from all over the state. Without the formality, Montana's German-Americans were also on trial, and their neighbors were the jury. Suspicions and paranoia ran rampant as Helenans scrutinized the German community, looking for enemies. The story of Helenans and Montanans demanding that German-Americans destroy their own German communities to prove their loyalty to the larger community will be told next.
Germans had come to Helena the year it was founded. They made their homes here, surviving fire and difficult economic conditions. They contributed their leadership, hard work, and ingenuity on every level of Helena's economy and, in particular, provided economic and community leadership at crucial points in time that made the city last. The grandiose dreams of Helena as the world's richest city per capita may have given way; however, many of those German pioneers children's children remain in Montana, continuing to play an important role.
END NOTES

1 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 5 September 1887.

2 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 31 December 1889.

3 Much of this chapter focuses on these German-Americans because the middle and working class immigrants' role in Helena is less documented and the lower classes left fewer lasting records behind.


11 Malone, Roeder, and Lang, 71-78.
12 Helena City Directory, 1870 (Helena, MT: A. W. Ide, 1870).


17 Leeson, 1250.

18 Leeson, 184; Guide to Kessler Family Papers, (Helena, MT: MHS).


20 Leeson, 1250.


22 Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 16 February 1869.

23 Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 16 February 1869; Paladin and Baucus, 28.

24 Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 23 August 1872.

25 Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 9, 10 January 1874; Paladin and Baucus, 30-32.

26 Most of the employment information presented has been compiled by the author from census reports. The census began asking residents for their parents' birthplaces in 1880. Second-generation German-Americans were defined in every census as having both parents born in Germany. Unless by name, there is no way to track the third generation through the census--so they have been left out of the analysis. U.S. Department of Interior. Census Office. Ninth Census of the United States Taken in the Year

27 Compiled by author from the U.S. Department of Interior. Census Office. Ninth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1870 (Helena, MT: MHS).


29 Petrik, 13.

30 Leeson, 1215, 1228.

31 Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 24 November 1877.

32 "Helena," vertical file, (Helena, MT: MHS); Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 24 November 1877; Harry Collins, Asst. Sec. Helena Board of Trade Scrapbook, (Helena, MT: MHS).

33 Leeson, 707; Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 31 December 1889.

34 Petrik, 11.

35 These numbers are compiled from the US Census. The 1890 Census burned so no numbers are available for German-born residents of Helena. The German-born in the Lewis and Clark County (based on numbers taken from subsequent censuses) show a growth of 22 people, roughly 5 percent. U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900 (Helena, MT: MHS).

36 Leeson, 702.

37 Leeson, 1226, 1223, 1240; "Helena," vertical file, (Helena, MT: MHS).

39 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 22 August 1883.

40 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 14 July - 22 August 1883.


42 Baucus, *Helena and Her Historic Homes*.


44 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 9 November 1889.

45 Collins, Helena Board of Trade Scrapbook, (Helena, MT: MHS).

46 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 31 December 1889.

47 First National Bank Records and vertical file, (Helena, MT: MHS); Merchants National Bank Records and vertical file, (Helena, MT: MHS).

48 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 22 April 1892.

49 Paladin and Baucus, 86.

50 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 1 January 1875.

51 Paladin and Baucus, 81.

52 Compiled by author from the U.S. Department of Interior, Census Office. *Tenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1880* (Helena, MT: MHS); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900* (Helena, MT: MHS).

53 Petrik, 21.

54 Compiled by author from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900* (Helena, MT: MHS).

56 Paladin and Baucus, 118-123.
Compiled by author from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910 (Helena, MT: MHS).


CHAPTER 3
GERMAN-AMERICANS IN HELENA'S SOCIETY

The Sleeping Giant.... The appearance I spoke of may be seen from many points favorable to it, in Helena and the hills around. The figure has the similitude of a stout German of corpulent form stretched on his back, as becomes so stout a figure. It might be the figure of a stout Burgomaster [the mayor of a German city] who, after a night of wassail and good cheer, had laid himself down on his broad back for a sound sleep.¹

German immigrants had become part of Helena's economic and social landscape. German-American leadership and industry had helped secure Helena's economic future, building "the richest city of its size in the world."² Helena, however, was not just wealthy in terms of dollars. Helena was rich in culture. Anaconda, during the battle for the capital, satirically pointed out Helena's snobbery and social pretensions to the Montana electorate by using a propaganda booklet called, "Helena's Social Supremacy: Montana's Center of Fashion, Refinement, Gentility, Etiquette, Kettle Drums, High Fives, Progressive Euchre and Mixed Drinks."³ Helena had distinguished itself among Montana cities because those who made wealth in Helena also made their homes in Helena. Affluent leading citizens like T. H. Kleinschmidt and more average citizens like Fredrick Kuphal, Jr. enriched their community with
their appetite for sophistication and civilization. Born a mining camp, Helena was determined to become the cultural Mecca of the West.

German immigrants helped to build the symbols of such a Mecca, all the while maintaining their distinct ethnic identity and culture. One must, however, examine the German community within the context of the Helena community. The German-born Helenans were so fragmented and heterogeneous that a monolithic entity of German-Americans or German-American interests never existed. The German community, unlike other prominent ethnicities in Helena, did not usually emphasize events or involvement in their native land; their energies and resources stayed focussed on life in Helena. Helena's German ethnic community saw no contradiction between their participation in Helena's events and their own ethnic events: they split their time and passion equally between the two.

Helena received two waves of German immigrants, but most of these immigrants had lived in the United States before settling in Montana and entered Helena's economy very successfully. The role of the German ethnic community was, therefore, less economic support and more what James M. Bergquist and Jon Gjerde argue was common to many German-American communities: a role based on recreation and preservation of cultural heritage. Unlike the national German-American community, however, the Helena German community did not reach its zenith in 1890 and then decline
from disinterest. Helena's Germans maintained, with the participation of second and third generations, a strong dynamic community.

Helena accepted this community as part of its own. Non-Germans came to German events and advertised in German newspapers. German-Americans were active in every level of Helena society. Helena's German community never declined in prominence until it was confronted with World War I. After the targeting and harassment occasioned by the war, German-Americans gave up their ethnic heritage; the ethnic community they had built would nearly vanish from the history of Helena.

From the beginning, German-Americans were involved with the associations that shaped Helena's society. One of the first organized groups in Montana was the Vigilantes. The Vigilantes were men, mostly Masons, who kept law and order in the Montana gold fields that were far removed from Federal authority. These men captured, tried, and hung those they deemed criminals so secretly that most of their names are not known today. If their identities were exposed, members of vigilance committees would have faced Federal prosecution and retribution from criminals.

However, some vigilantes did come forward. T.H. Kleinschmidt, of the First National Bank of Helena and a Mason, was the president of the Vigilance Committee of German Gulch (a mining site near Helena); a fact he admitted in a later biography. Then there was the infamous X. John Xavier Beidler was born in Pennsylvania to recent German immigrants. He came
west to the gold strikes in Bannack, and took up "law enforcement." As X., he was legendary, helping to hang Henry Plummer's road agents and becoming a well-known Deputy U.S. Marshal. He claims to have organized Helena's Vigilance Committee in 1865 in response to Helena's first murder.⁹ The murderer was promptly strung up. In its early years, Helena's hanging tree was used many times, in what J. H. Jurgens, of Constance and Jurgens, called "good western justice."¹⁰ The last men hung on the hanging tree received the death penalty for robbing and "beating almost to jelly" George Lenharth, an aged German immigrant.¹¹

While the Vigilance Committee was carrying out "justice," Montana's third church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, was holding services in Helena. Frederick Gamer, the boot and shoe merchant from Baden, was a charter member that helped found it, remaining an officer of the church for many years. As Helena society grew, Gamer would become a member of the German Methodist Episcopal Church, which met on the third floor of the Parchen Block. This church provided services exclusively in German. By the 1890s, the church held open concerts. In the fliers promoting the concerts, area sponsors advertised in both German and English.¹²

There were other active German churches in Helena. The German Lutheran Church was established by 1886. Henry and Jacob Adami, of Adami Construction, were members of this Church. Maggie Adami became the treasurer of the German Lutheran Young People's Society.¹³
The First German Evangelical Lutheran Church, which belonged to the Colorado Synod, was established by 1884. F. W. Kuphal, Sr. joined this church. F. W. had brought his family, including his son Fredrick Kuphal, Jr., from Germany to Helena on invitation from his wife's cousins, the Kleinschmidts, and established a grocery in Helena. F. W.'s daughter Mary Kuphal became the secretary of the First German Lutheran Ladies Society. Another prominent member of the First German Evangelical was Charles Albrecht, a shoemaker from Germany, who opened a shop in Helena in the late 1860s. His sons Charles and Fred Albrecht became members of this church as well. The church published a German newsletter called *Der Lutherische Wächter*. By 1879, it became known as the *Lutheran Watchman* and continued publication through 1928. The church also founded the German-American Parochial School. The First German Lutherans allowed the fledgling Scandinavian and Norwegian parishes to use their building.

Some German Catholics decided to build their own church. "As a marked token of respect for the city of Helena," they named it St. Helena German Catholic Church. When they laid the cornerstone on March 10, 1889, the dedication speeches were entirely in German, but the St. Helena Church and its members were decorated in red, white, and blue. St. Helena published a newsletter for a number of years called the *Rond den Heerd*.

Helena had a large and active Jewish population, which included German-Americans like the Loeb brothers, Moses Morris, and the Hershfield
brothers. The Hebrew Benevolent Society appeared in the first Helena
directory, with Edward Zimmerman listed as secretary.\textsuperscript{18} By 1890, they had
laid the cornerstone of Temple Emanu-El, the first Hebrew Synagogue in
Montana, Edward Zimmerman and Jacob Loeb both gave speeches at the
dedication. \textsuperscript{19}

Some Germans attended the Unitarian Church. A. K. Kleinschmidt, of
the Kleinschmidt Brothers, and Frederick Kuphal, Jr. were members of this
church. Kuphal became the church's musical director, organizing and
directing concerts as well as performing himself. \textsuperscript{20}

T.H. Kleinschmidt was an organizer and remained a trustee of the First
Presbyterian Church of Helena. H. M. Parchen, the druggist, and his children
were also active in this church. Mrs. T. H. Hauser and Mrs. Schroeder both
belonged to the First Presbyterian's Ladies Aid Society. The Ladies Aid
Society did charity work in Helena and helped raise funds for the Catholic St.
Joseph's Orphanage and for the Presbyterian St. Peter's Hospital. In 1894,
Presbyterians and Methodists formed a committee to combine their energies
to raise money and send support to Cubans suffering from disease and
famine. Fred Gamer, of the German Methodist Episcopal Church, was on this
committee. \textsuperscript{21}

Many German Catholics remained with the mixed congregations of
Helena's other Catholic churches. The Catholic Diocese valued their ethnic
communities because their success would come from "German thoroughness
combined with Irish lightness."²² Within these larger Catholic churches, Germans formed the St. Joseph's Verein. John Commers, the vice president of Naegele Publishing, served as president, and Charles Geier served as vice president. This group was involved in the building of St. Joseph's Orphanage. The Verein was also active on an international level; in 1907, they received a letter from the Vatican written on behalf of the Pope thanking them for raising Western cognizance of a crisis that was occurring in France and thanking them for their charity.²³ German-American women were also actively involved with the Ladies Literary and Benevolent Society. Rose Geier became an active member, and Kate Jacoby served as President.²⁴

As Helena's Catholic community grew, Bishop John Carroll and Monsignor Victor Day saw the opportunity to build "one of the finest cathedrals on the continent."²⁵ On October 4, 1908, the cornerstone of the Cathedral of St. Helena was laid. In the parade afterward, St. Joseph's Verein marched in the first division.²⁶ German-Americans were instrumental in building the St. Helena's Cathedral. The design of the Cathedral was based on the Votive Church of Vienna, which was modeled after the Köln Cathedral of Germany. Five German-Americans served on the Advisory Board and Building Committee.²⁷ Zettler, a glass firm from Munich, Germany, made all of the stained glass windows. The Jacobys and Herrmanns each purchased two of these windows. Literally hundreds of Germans donated thousands of dollars to the effort.²⁸ Some of them, like Kesslers, Reinig,
Seligman, Kleinschmidt, Kencks, and Seilers, were not even Catholic.

German immigrants received many of the building contracts including building the spires to painting the frescos. On Christmas Day in 1914, when the spectacular St. Helena's Cathedral opened its doors, all Helenans rejoiced.29

Figure 12. The Helena Cathedral 1914. Reprinted from Gold in the Gulch (Helena, MT: Bar Wineglass Publications, 1981), 69.
These churches illustrate how deeply involved German-Americans were in Helena's religious society. They were active in nearly every church in the history of Helena. The German community's loyalty was never exclusive. In families like the Kuphals, members of the same family belonged to different churches. Members of various churches came together in support of good causes like aiding Cuba and building the St. Helena's Cathedral.

German immigrants and their children were equally involved in Helena's secular society. After 1870, Helena's civic organizations blossomed. Helena's Germans became an integral part of most of these organizations and established their own ethnic organizations. In Helena's very first directory, the Gesang Verein Harmonia Society appears with its officers: President T. H. Kleinschmidt of the First National Bank; Vice President Charles Albrecht the shoemaker; Secretary Herman Richter of the Helena Brewery; and Treasurer Michael Reinig the grocer.\footnote{30}

The Helena German community built a community center called Turner Hall. The Turner Verein was a German society that existed in many German communities nationwide in order to help preserve German culture. In the summer of 1892, Helena hosted the sixth annual convention of the Turner Verein. Arthur Seiler, John Geier, Emil Kluge, Fredrick Kuphal, Jr., and Fritz Naegele were all members of the committee responsible for preparations. John Geier was the secretary and treasurer of Herrmann's furniture company; his brother, Charles Geier, was a well-known Helena attorney.\footnote{31}
The Harmonia Verein (an orchestra and singing society) whose vice president was Frederick Kuphal, Jr. and whose treasurer was Jacob Loeb, hosted concerts at Turner Hall. Helena Turnverein, Turn Verein Vorwaerts, and Helena Maennerchor, whose trustees included John Geier and Herman Richter, also met at Turner Hall. The Athletic Society of Helena used the hall to host athletic events.\(^{32}\)

During the 1890s, Germania Hall was established. President John Adami and Secretary/Treasurer Charles Geier ran the Hall where St. Joseph's Verein and the Brothers of Herman met. The Gesang Verein's president was C. B. Jacquemin, a jeweler who came to Helena in the mid-1860s and whose shop occupied the first floor of the Atlas Block for over 50 years. Secretary John Commers and Music Director Arthur Seiler were officers of the Germania Verein. Jacob Adami served as president of the Krieger Verein. Germania Hall soon became Germania Block and a civic center of Helena. Many non-German Helena societies, like the Knights of Pythias, the Scandinavian Brotherhood of American, Masonic Lodges, Knights of the Maccabees, and the Women Woodworkers all held their meetings in Germania Hall.\(^{33}\)

The Sons of Herman had two lodges in Helena. The first was Helena Lodge No. 3, whose membership were German speaking males, of which Frederick Naegele, who ran Naegele publishing and was the vice president of the Montana Children's Home Society, was the treasurer. The second was Walpura Lodge, whose membership were German speaking women. Marie
Commers served as president. The Sons of Herman wanted to maintain the German language, to promote good citizenship, and to contribute to the civic improvement of their communities.\textsuperscript{34} From 1909 to 1918, they published their own newspaper called \textit{Der Hermans-Sohn in Montana}.\textsuperscript{35}

There were many German newspapers over the course of Helena's history, including \textit{Montana Freie Presse}, \textit{Montana Staats-Tidentde}, and the \textit{Montana Herold}. The largest and longest lasting, from 1889 to 1917, was \textit{Montana Staats-Zeitung}, which was published by Frederick Naegele and later Fred Schulten and Bernard Baurschmidt, with Karl Wiess as editor. The newspaper included advertisements by both German and non-German businesses, both in German and English.\textsuperscript{36}

Most of Helena's German community worked with Germania Verein to hold an annual carnival celebration for the entire town of Helena. Many non-German businesses and societies built floats for the Germania Parade. Non-German Helenans arrived at Germania Hall in elaborate costumes to take part in the German Maskenball. Lavish prizes for the ball's costume competitions were donated by Helena's German-American merchants.\textsuperscript{37}

Germans also shared their language and music with Helena. The German Methodist Episcopal Church sponsored a Deutsches Theater to give concerts and productions. Mrs. John Adami, Charles Geier, Arthur Seiler, and Louise Kuphal all performed at a concert on April 23, 1899.\textsuperscript{38} German-Americans also ran a family theatre in Helena and many orchestras. Two of
the most famous and long-lasting orchestras in the city's history are Kuphal's Orchestra and Madame Ericke's Orchestra.\textsuperscript{39}

German-Americans enriched the culture of Helena. Dr. Emil Starz, a Helena druggist, scientifically displayed Montana's plant-life. T. H. Kleinschmidt put on an exhibition of his collection of C. M. Russell's paintings at C. K. Wells Bookstore. Hershfields' Merchants National Bank put on a display of artifacts from Colombia and sold a thousand Colombian half-dollars. \textsuperscript{40}

Some German Helenans were open about their wealth and enjoyed its accoutrements. R. H. Kleinschmidt, for example, traveled internationally. He and his wife visited Washington, D.C. in 1876 to celebrate the centennial. They also traveled in Europe, toured the United States, went to Alaska, vacationed in Vienna, and frequently sojourned in Chicago, San Francisco, and the East Coast.\textsuperscript{41} On T. H. Kleinschmidt's visit to Germany, he purchased two "German masterpieces" which he donated to the Montana Club.\textsuperscript{42}

The Montana Club was one of the most prestigious social organizations in Montana. Formed in the mid-1880s, membership was reserved for the wealthy and well-connected. At first, members met on the third floor of the Parchen Block. By the end of the 1880s, they had built a lavish building, designed by J.C. Paulson. The Montana Club hosted presidents, foreign ministers, and other distinguished guests. H. M. Parchen, A. J. Seligman, and Samuel T. Hauser all served as president.
T. H. Kleinschmidt served as treasurer. Hauser was unanimously voted the Montana Club's first Honorary-Member-for-Life.  

Another prestigious Helena society was the Montana Pioneers. In order to qualify for membership into the Montana Pioneers, prospective members, had to prove that they were settled in Montana prior to Christmas Day in 1864. Nickolas Kessler, Conrad Kohrs, and Henry Elling were all early presidents of the organization. German immigrants dominated the position of treasurer for over a decade. L. H. Hershfield, T. H. Kleinschmidt, Moses Morris, H. M. Parchen, Samuel Schwab, J. H. Jurgens, Jacob Loeb, Henry Sonnefield, Michael Reinig, and August Weisenhorn among others made up the German-American membership. Many second-generation German-Americans became involved with Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers. Albert I. Loeb became the first president, and Marie Kleinschmidt was elected the first secretary. Annie and Charles Reinig were both charter members, and Charles went on to be elected treasurer. Charles N. Kessler served as president of this organization. Francis Jurgens first served as Lewis and Clark County's vice president to the state association and later as the president.  

Helena also had many selective societies, most of which had German members. Germans were particularly active in the Masons, the Independent Order of Oddfellows, and the Ancient Order of United Workmen. The Masons were the most prestigious among the west's selective societies. German leadership was apparent in the many Masonic lodges in Helena, as well as
statewide. F. W. Kuphal, Henry Sonnefield, Michael Reinig, and August Weisenhorn all served as Masonic officers for the state of Montana. In the late 1880s the Masons of Helena built the Algeria Shrine Temple, the first major Masonic temple between St. Louis and Seattle.  

Figure 13. The Algeria Shrine Temple built in 1889. Reprinted from Gold in the Gulch (Helena, MT: Bar Wineglass Publications, 1981), 68.

The Masonic Temple Association's Board of Trustees included T. H. Kleinschmidt, H. M. Parchen, and Moses Morris. Kleinschmidt and Parchen
also served as secretaries; Morris was a treasurer. Morris was also the vice president of the Masonic Home of Montana, a home for older Masons, their wives, and orphans. The Masons gave rise to their female counterparts such as the Eastern Star and the Daughters of Isis. Both Parchen’s daughters and Hattie Shober belonged to these organizations.  

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows also had many German-American members. Jacob Loeb and Edward Zimmerman served as state officers. Emil Kluge served as an officer in two of Helena’s lodges. The Ancient Order of United Workman included Charles Reinig, A. M. Jacoby, Emil Kluge, Fred Gamer, and Ignatius Miller as officers.

Leadership in Helena’s educational system also came from among the German ranks. Fred Gamer and Dr. Emil Starz both served many terms on the Helena Board of Public Schools as did many other German-Americans. In the early 1890s, Minnie Raifenrath became the Lewis and Clark County Superintendent of Schools. She was the daughter of Herman Raifenrath, who came to Helena in 1885 as the stationmaster for the Northern Pacific Railroad. Ella Kleinschmidt, daughter of T.H. Kleinschmidt, and Frederick Kuphal, Jr., son of F. W. Kuphal, taught in public schools. Kuphal became assistant principal. Emma Gamer, wife of Fred Gamer, was also a music teacher in local schools.
German-Americans contributed to the municipal functions of the city of Helena as well. Herman Richter, Moses Morris, Jacob Loeb, and Charles Geier among others served as city aldermen. J. H. Jurgens was Helena's sheriff early in its history. Dr. Emil Starz held the position of Lewis and Clark County Bacteriologist and later was a member of Helena's Board of Health. Jacob Adami served as the Street Commissioner. Charles Reinig and Victor Kessler were members of the Helena Fire Department. Samuel Hauser and T.H. Kleinschmidt were both treasurers of the Montana Historical Society. H. M. Parchen and Jacob Loeb were both on the board of trustees for the Helena Public Library. Nickolas Kessler planned Helena's first housing project in 1891. In order to help the less fortunate families in Helena own a home, he furnished brick and land for six percent interest per year.
By 1900, Helena had a street named Hauser, a school named Kessler, and blocks named Herrmann, Gamer, Parchen, Kleinschmidt, and Germania. Some of Helena's finest mansions and most treasured historic landmarks were named after their owners, like the homes of Kluge, Kessler, Dahler, Kleinschmidt, and Parchen. John C. Paulson, born in Hanover, Germany, contributed to this German-American architectural legacy. In the mid-1880s he established an architectural firm in Helena and designed some of Helena's best-loved buildings: the Penn Block, the Novelty Building, the Pittsburgh Block, the Montana Club, the Granite Block, the Phoenix Building, the Montana National Bank Building, and the Broadwater Natatorium.

German-Americans put Helena above religion, politics, and ethnicity, remaining deeply patriotic. They often built floats for and rode in parades and celebrations of American Independence Day.

Figure 15. colorful, patriotic parade, 1908. Riding in the carriage are Henry Sieben's daughters. Reprinted from Vivian Paladin and Jean Baucus, *Helena: An Illustrated History* (Norfolk, VA: Donning Co., 1983), 123.
Helena's German community fought ardently to make their city the state capital. A. J. Seligman, Samuel T. Hauser, H. M. Parchen, T. H. Kleinschmidt, L. H. Hershfield, C. B. Jacquemin, and Jacob Loeb were all among the twenty-five signers of the petition requesting that Helena be placed on the ballot for state capital.\textsuperscript{54} In October of 1892, Helena was rounding up loyal voters, 202 Germans were naturalized, which was almost double the next closest ethnic group.\textsuperscript{55} August Weisenhorn shipped out the carriages he made with placards on the top reading, "Helena for Capital."\textsuperscript{56} When Helena finally did win the capital, marching proudly at the front of the second division was Marshal F. W. Kuphal, the Kreiger Verein, Harmonia Gesang Verein, Turn Verein, and "the German-American Club."\textsuperscript{57} Some German immigrants marched with the Grand Army of the Republic as former United States soldiers. Charles Albrecht and all three Kleinschmidt brothers all served as post commanders of Helena's GAR.\textsuperscript{58}

On February 6, 1893, H. M. Parchen received a wire from Senator Power that the Secretary of War had approved Helena as the site for the "central military headquarters of the Northwest."\textsuperscript{59} After Fort Harrison was built, Parchen headed up a committee with A. J. Seligman and Nickolas Kessler to raise funds so guard camp soldiers could train Fort Harrison's regular troops.\textsuperscript{60}
German-Americans, like most Americans, were not aware of the international tensions that would soon engage the United States military. German imperialism and militarism after 1890 challenged English hegemony, drawing England out of isolation and into alliances with France and Russia. In response, Germany clung tighter to Austria-Hungary. So, in 1914, when Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated, the whole world was pulled into war. By 1917, in the United States, Germany was portrayed as the evil enemy, and President Woodrow Wilson pushed for America's entry against Germany into "the war to end all wars."61

Americans were not able to distinguish between their German enemies and German-Americans. All over America, anything German was erased. Even food was perceived to be "pro-German;" thus sauerkraut was renamed liberty cabbage, and hamburgers became liberty sandwiches. Before the war was over in Europe, the international tension was recreated on Helena's streets.

When the United States entered the war on April 4, 1917, all the underlying stress came to the surface. German language bans went out all over the state. The Montana Council of Defense and the Loyalty League were given the task of "root[ing] out sedition, disloyalty, and pro-Germanism."62 The Montana Council of Defense brought German-Americans, especially those with suspected pro-German or socialist ties, into Helena from all over the state to be tried for sedition and espionage.63
Governor Samuel Stewart called the Montana legislature into Special Session to reaffirm the Montana Sedition Act.

In Lewistown, German books and the public high school were burned, and a "pro-German" man was almost hung by super-patriots. In Miles City, a man who tried to correct the misrepresentation that Germans had chopped off the hands and feet of Belgian children, was severely beaten and banished from the town. All over Montana acts of violence and harassment were committed against German-Americans. 64

While Helena's German community sent off its loved ones off to war and saw German surnames listed in the column of the Helena Independent labeled "Dead in the battle for Democracy," the scene in Helena was near hysteria. Alleged German plots and spies in the United States were reported daily in the newspaper. The Independent asked, "Are the Germans about to bomb the capital of Montana?" 65 "Have the Germans invaded Montana? Have they spies in the mountain fastnesses equipped with wireless stations and aeroplanes?" 66

Super-patriotic Helenans were on the lookout: "Your neighbor, your maid, your lawyer, your waiter may be a German spy." 67 Members of Helena's German-American community could be arrested and jailed, like John Goeltnzer, if they were rumored to be pro-German. 68 When R. H. Kleinschmidt did not buy Liberty bonds, conscientious citizens ran ads denouncing his pro-German tendencies to the community. 69
Notice!

The Executive Committee of the Lewis and Clark County Third Liberty Loan Campaign has decided, after mature consideration, to publish the names of citizens in this district who, without good reason, refuse to subscribe for Liberty Bonds.

The first case which the committee wishes to report is one which they consider particularly flagrant, that of

REINHOLDT KLEINSCHMIDT
of Helena, Mont.

This man was repeatedly solicited and finally summoned before this committee. Argument and persuasion failed to alter his decision Not to Subscribe. The committee believes the people of this community are entitled to this information and will be interested in it.

Signed:
H. R. Cunningham, Chairman,
S. McKennan,
Thos. A. Marlow,
M. S. Gunn,
T. O. Hammond,
O. M. Lanstrum,
Will A. Campbell,
H. H. Pigott.

Figure 16. Liberty Bond Committee's denouncement of R. H. Kleinschmidt. Reprinted from the Helena Independent, 19 April 1918.

There was an interesting dichotomy in Helena. Ireland was against the United States in World War I, and many of America's national Irish societies were loudly pro-German, yet the Helena Independent remained staunchly behind Irish-Americans, excusing the national Irish-American societies' and Ireland's support for England's enemy, Germany: "... Americans of Irish blood... will put a quietus on the mad one per cent which would have us believe all Irish-Americans are traitors."70
The *Helena Independent*, however, also engaged in vitriolic attacks on the *Montana Staats-Zeitung* calling its "treason-spreading sheets" "a menace to the country." The *Staats-Zeitung* was not specifically pro-German; in fact, the newspaper questioned the patriotism of the members of the Sons of Herman because of their secretive meetings. The main crime the *Staats-Zeitung* seemed to have committed was that it was printed in German: "the most despised language in history," according to the *Independent*. The *Independent* hounded *Staats-Zeitung* advertisers, printers, and editors: Karl Weiss "did what the Kaiser wanted him to do," and Frederick Naegele was "that miserable German."  

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**Naegele Denies Responsibility**

To the editor of *The Independent*:

I desire to make oath that neither myself nor the Naegele printing company have any interest whatever in the *Montana Staats-Zeitung*. We have nothing to do with the ownership nor publication of the paper except as printers. Our firm sold whatever interest we had in the publication approximately 10 years ago or in May, 1908.

Our firm merely does the printing of the paper for the publishing company, and its publisher is Dr. Carl Weiss, who now resides in Chicago and sends weekly contributions toward the paper and controls its editorial policy from there. The *Independent* gave the impression in an editorial Friday that the Naegele printing company was "publisher" of the paper in the sense that we were responsible for its editorial policy and its existence. We are "publishers" merely as printers, not as owners nor editors of the *Montana Staats-Zeitung*.

We have nothing in common with the kaiser or the German government. The attached affidavit I have made and hope you will publish the same.

**AFFIDAVIT**

County of Lewis & Clark—ss.
State of Montana.

Fred Naegele, being duly sworn, deploys and says, that the Naegele Printing Co., of which he is the president and manager, has no connection with the political, editorial or business policy of the *Montana Staats-Zeitung*; that there is no relation in the publication or the ownership existing between the two; that the Naegele Printing Co. disposed of all its right, title and interest in that concern to the present publishing company approximately ten years ago—the exact date being May 7th, 1908.

FRED NAEGELE.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 1st day of September, 1917.

[Signature]

U. S.*Commissioner for the Dist. of Montana.

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Figure 17. Naegele's Affidavit. Reprinted from the *Helena Independent*, 3 September 1918.
Naegele replied to the *Independent*'s charges with letters and an affidavit, renouncing the *Staats-Zeitung*. Helena's leading newspaper called Naegele more names, but came to this conclusion: "The Independent hopes he [Naegele] has learned his lesson and will never again utter a word which can be carried from one person to another until he is pointed out as a German sympathizer . . . ."75

Some of Helena's German-American community took action forming the Helena Independent Citizens League with Bernard Bauerschmidt as president and Charles Geier as secretary.76 This organization and the larger German community wrote unanswered letters to the *Helena Independent* and worked within Helena defending their institutions and affirming their American loyalties.77

Naegele's response, however, seemed to mirror many German-Americans choice of action, reaffirming their loyalty to Helena and abandoning any ethnic activity found to be offensive. In 1918, the German churches included English services in Helena's directory. By 1920, the churches had dropped any form of German ethnic identity.78 In 1922, Germania Hall ceased to exist. By 1918, all that remained of Helena's German ethnic community were the Krieger Verein, the Sons of Herman, and the St. Joseph's Verein. The two former societies disappeared by 1922, the latter by 1929.79

Helena's German community would never be the same. Although German-Americans had weathered the war, by 1920, no German language
papers existed in the state. Many German-Americans had given up their language and culture, the ethnically German societies were erased, and Helena's remaining German institutions Americanized their names.⁸⁰

Helena and its German community would heal. Today all of Helena joins in the celebration of Oktoberfest. The history of German-Americans in Montana, however, has remained unwritten; just as the history of German-Americans in Helena was not written until now.

German immigrants made significant contributions to the founding and building of Helena. They were responsible, in part, for Helena's uniqueness among Montana's towns through their economic and personal investment in the town's economy, infrastructure, and society. Helena first it survived the gold rush, and then its isolation and lack of natural resources until finally it won permanence and security as the state capital. All through the trials of fire, flood, and world war, the city has maintained a cultural fabric that is truly rare. The men who made money in Helena, invested it here, in Helena's buildings and society.

Helenans have become used to beautiful architecture, fine music, theatre, and community entertainments unknown to cities even twice its size. German-Americans have been one of Helena's largest and most stable ethnic populations, influencing nearly every level and stage of the city's development. The government/education/service economy, the high society, and the buildings they constructed have become Helena's icons and continue to serve the city well.
END NOTES

1 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 23 December 1893.

2 *Helena Daily Herald* (Helena, MT), 31 December 1889.

3 "Helena's Social Supremacy: Montana's Center of Fashion, Refinement, Gentility, Etiquette, Kettle Drums, High Fives, Progressive Euchre and Mixed Drinks," (n.p.: privately printed, 1894) can be found in Corette Library, Carroll College, Helena, MT.


5 Gjerde, 319-321; Berquist, 60-64.

6 Due to the material available, this chapter will focus on more prominent Germans and on the more important cultural events of Helena.

7 The definitive work on vigilantes is Thomas Dimsdale's *The Vigilantes of Montana*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).


9 Sanders, 188.

10 "Vigilantes," vertical file, (Helena, MT: MHS).


12 German Methodist Episcopal Church, MF 111, (Helena, MT: MHS).

14. Helena City Directory, 1886 (Helena, MT: A. W. Ide, 1886); Sanders, 1168.

15. Sanders, 872.

16. Evangelical Lutheran Church Helena 1884-1953, MS 309, (Helena, MT: MHS); First German Lutheran Church, vertical file, (Helena, MT: MHS).


19. Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 3 October 1890.


21. Presbyterian Church Helena, MF 352, (Helena, MT: MHS); The Helena Independent 24 January 1898.


26. The Helena Independent, (Helena, MT), 5 October 1908.

27. Advisory Committee to New Catholic Building Minutes, 1907, (Helena, MT: Catholic Diocese of Helena Archives).


35 "Sons of Herman," vertical file, (Helena, MT: MHS).


38 German Methodist Episcopal Church, MF 111, (Helena, MT: MHS).


41 Miller, 673.


43 Meyers, 30-51.


52 U.S. Department of Interior. Census Office. Tenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1880 (Helena, MT: MHS).

53 Baucus, Gold in the Gulch. 25, 30, 38, 46, 53.

54 "Helena," vertical file, (Helena, MT: MHS).


57 Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 12, 13 November 1894.

58 Miller, 673, 789, 813; Sanders, 872.
60 The Helena Daily Herald (Helena, MT), 22 January 1898.


63 Among these men were Martin H. Skiedheim, Judge Charles Crum, Ves Hall, J. A. McGlynn, Bill Dunn, and on and on. For a more comprehensive story of the Montana Council of Defense and Montana's espionage and sedition trials, please see Arnon Gutfeld, Montana's Agony: Years of War and Hysteria 1917-1921, (Gainsville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1979); Montana Council of Defense Records 1916-1921, RS 19, (Helena, MT: MHS).


65 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 18 October 1917.

66 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 1 September 1917.

67 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 24 March 1918.

68 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 30 August 1917; Arthur Seiler, interview by author, 20, 27 February 2002, in author's collection.

69 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 19 April 1918.

70 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 16 May 1916; The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 22 September 1917; The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 1 February 1918.

71 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 1 September 1917.

72 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 13 April 1917.

73 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 31 August 1917.
74 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 31 August 1917.

75 The Helena Independent (Helena, MT), 3 September 1918.


CONCLUSION

Germans immigrants gave up their communities and security, risking everything to venture thousands of miles and carve out a place for themselves in a harsh and isolated section of the West. They settled in a valley, that was deficient in mineral resources and transportation—two of the most important city-building-elements in Montana’s nineteenth-century. Helena’s Germans had large dreams for their city and fought hard to enrich and advance its interests. Due in part to the dedication and ingenuity of its Germans, Helena rose out of peril and isolation to become Montana’s capital.

Helena’s German community helped to build a solid economy based on service and government. Though devastated by fire, flood, and isolation, German-Americans were determined to thrive. They were capable of changing professions or running many different businesses at the same time. A baker became a saloonkeeper, then a hotel manager, then a restaurant owner. German-American businesses were some of Helena’s longest lasting: Herrmanns did not disappear until the late-1980s and Gamers still exists. Much of the leadership that brought in railroad transportation, governed the city, and secured the state capital came from German immigrants. Their dedication was richly rewarded, and they made the city their home.
In Helena, German-Americans could be both ethnically German and patriotically American. Their love of their language and culture never competed with devotion to Helena and to the United States: the two forged one identity. Helenans were, in part, melded by this German-American identity: culture became part of its soul. The fact that the small city of Helena has so many outlets to enjoy music, plays, architecture, food, history, and the arts is not an accident of government. Culture is deeply rooted in Helena’s psyche nurtured by its first pioneers and now by its residents.

Yet Helena was not so far removed from the world that it could avoid the fundamental change brought by the First World War. Montana suffered one of the highest per capita losses in World War I. Helena’s German community was yet another casualty. In order to prove their loyalty German-Americans had given up their ethnicity, and Helena lost a vibrant and valuable ethnic community.
END NOTES

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