

G-SIG FORUM #12

...from the German Special Interest Group. G-SIG is an effort of the St. Louis Genealogical Society and the German American Heritage Society, St. Louis.

This communication is a forum for educational, historical and genealogical information with fresh insights and ideas on German traditions and ancestry. Gerald Perschbacher, Group Leader for G-SIG, serves as *FORUM* compiler and coordinator.

If you would like to include a notice or request, please submit your information in condensed form for the *EXCHANGE!* section (limit 50 words). *EXCHANGE!* notices run only once, but you may resubmit. We reserve the privilege to shorten and edit. Send your *EXCHANGE!* submission to germansig@stlgs.org.



G-SIG Receives Schurz Award

The German American Heritage Society of St. Louis (GAHS), has awarded G-SIG the 2006 Carl Schurz Heritage Award. The award was named for the famous 19th century German immigrant who served as a Civil War general, newspaper publisher, U.S. envoy to Spain for President Abraham Lincoln, U.S. Senator from Missouri, as well as Secretary of the Interior under President Rutherford B. Hayes.

G-SIG was honored for “dedication to the preservation of the history and heritage of our German forebears.” On hand to receive the award on Oct. 14, 2006, at a GAHS banquet were John D. Wittenberg and Hermann Eisele, G-SIG associate group leaders.

Gerald Perschbacher, G-SIG group leader, had a prior commitment with the Missouri Historical Society and Museum, but noted heartfelt gratitude. “This special honor is a gauge of the successful achievements that have followed the growth of G-SIG from a mere idea to a functioning entity involving about 350 families in its first year. Now G-SIG is an active group of individuals promoting educational, historical and genealogical information with fresh insights and ideas to help individuals in their research or enjoyment of German traditions and ancestry. We are highly appreciative of the Carl Schurz Heritage Award and will strive to maintain the high achievements which it honors.”



Accomplishments of Carl Schurz

"Our ideals resemble the stars, which illuminate the night. No one will ever be able to touch them. But the men who, like the sailors on the ocean, take them for guides, will undoubtedly reach their goal." --Carl Schurz

When Carl Schurz came to America, he made his lasting mark on history. He was born in Liblar, near Cologne, Germany, on March 2, 1829. While a student at the University of Bonn, Schurz became active in a political movement during the German Revolution. As part of the Franconia Fraternity, he advocated massive reforms for

governments and universities. Schurz gained notice in the 1848-1849 revolt to depose Frederick William IV of Prussia. The uprising was crushed. Schurz was imprisoned but escaped through a storm sewer. He fled to Switzerland, later became a newspaper correspondent in Paris, and then taught in England. In 1852 he and his wife traveled to Philadelphia, then moved to Watertown, Wis., in 1855. After studying law, Schurz practiced in Milwaukee.

His love of politics resurfaced. He ran for lieutenant governor and governor, but lost each time. In 1860, as a leading Republican, he campaigned for Abraham Lincoln in states where Germans had settled in large numbers: Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Soon President Lincoln appointed Schurz as the U.S. envoy to Spain.

Schurz is known for many things. He campaigned strongly against slavery. He recruited Germans to serve in the Union Army. He negotiated with European nations on behalf of Lincoln. During the war, he was brigadier general in command of the 3rd Division of the Army of Virginia (June 26 to September 12, 1862).

After the war, he became editor-in-chief of the *Detroit Post*. In 1867 he became editor of the German language newspaper, the *Westliche Post*, in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1869, Schurz was elected to the Senate. In 1877, President Rutherford Hayes appointed him as secretary of the interior. In 1881, upon leaving office, Schurz once more returned to journalism. He went on to be managing editor of the *New York Evening Post*. He also wrote for *Harper's Weekly*.

Schurz's last outspoken attack was against United States imperialism, using the Spanish American War as the subject. Schurz died in New York City on May 14, 1906. During the late 1800s, Carl Schurz was perhaps the best known German who had come to America.

Many of the Carl Schurz papers are in the Library of Congress, but the Balch Institute Library in Pennsylvania (www.balchinstitute.org) has a microfilm copy of those papers. Additional Schurz papers at Balch were collected by the National Carl Schurz Association.



When the Wall Fell

“Tell us your story and enter to win a brand new iPod shuffle!” So said *The Week in Germany* Web site. “Tell us YOUR own personal story of Nov. 9, 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down, and you could win a brand new iPod shuffle!”

Specific questions are: Where were you when it happened? How did you first hear about it, and what did you do when you got the news? In what ways did the fall of the wall change your life?

“If you would like to share your own authentic account of the events of 1989 with thousands of readers of www.germany.info, send us your story, and be one of our many ‘Voices from the Wall.’ If you are too young to remember the fall of the wall, then get your parents' permission to interview someone you know who experienced it. The best stories will be published on www.germany.info.”

To Germans, reunification meant various things. Some saw it as a return to past glory, others as a means to strengthen the nation's economic gain and personal income. Some welcomed the freedom of mobility that had been lacking for several decades. Still others longed for predictable, stable lifestyles that had been controlled by communists.

Personally, I saw the destruction of the wall as a monumental event. It was difficult to believe that the East German government had collapsed, that life had almost miraculously turned a corner, and that a symbol of terror and restriction had been unceremoniously removed, chunk by chunk, with pieces being sold by promoters.

I've got to add, I really wanted a good chunk of that wall to hold and ponder, but never got one. Now the magic isn't as strong, but the reality of a unified Germany continues to foster a welcome climate for visitors and researchers. GP



What's so Great about the Golden Madonna of Essen?

Online Wikipedia recently featured the Golden Madonna of Essen, a gilded statue from circa 980 A.D. Experts say it is "the oldest known sculpture of the Virgin Mary and the oldest free-standing sculpture north of the Alps."

It's amazing to think that the piece, located in Westphalian Essen, is one of only a few major items of art to come down from Ottonian times (936-1024). No one is sure who made the statue

The Golden Madonna statue is honored almost as much as the priceless gilded treasures of Emperor Charlemagne in Aachen. Wikipedia reports that the statue "remains an object of veneration and symbol of identity for the population of the Ruhr Area."

Whether Catholic or Protestant, most Germans appreciate the statue as an object of adoration or an object of historic significance. You can read more on other German topics at <http://www.wikipedia.org/>



A Uniform can tell a Story

If your family has pictures of ancestor in German military uniforms, take heart. Those pictures may unlock some interesting details on family heritage.

For one thing, the picture may indicate rank. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, camera pictures often were expensive undertakings so pictures were taken at key times, such as entering the service or right after a promotion. Dress uniforms were the standard types usually shown in photographs, which may be a big help for the researcher since certain coat cuffs, colors, buttons, and hats or caps can reflect territorial connections. While old pictures often were printed in black and white, different shades can hint at color changes. When compared against a color rendition, either old or new, the observation may answer questions about the territorial connections of your ancestor.

Maybe you aren't tracing an ancestor but you simply like to examine uniforms in some old books or pictures you have obtained over the years. Regardless, it can be a

fascinating past time. But you won't get too far unless you've got some good books for reference.

One new book that can help in your study of uniforms is *Uniforms of the German Soldier, An Illustrated History from 1870 to the end of World War I*, by Alejandro M. De Quesada, \$34.95 in bookstores; or order from Motorbooks International at 1-800-826-6600 or check www.motorbooks.com.

In 192 pages, hardbound, the author includes about 400 black and white photos and 50 in color. Sections on uniform plates of Imperial German troops indicate regimental emblems. Descriptive paragraphs and captions pinpoint units. Saxon troops, Prussian soldiers, Bavarians, and top leaders are in full regalia. Some pictures are hand colored. The types of helmets and other paraphernalia are also explained.

So, take heart—that old picture of Uncle Heinrich in uniform may have its secrets unlocked with research.



Duden's Words Encouraged Germans

Gottfried Duden came to America and chronicled his experience. Later he wrote *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America and a Stay of Several Years Along the Missouri (During the Years 1824, '25, '26, 1827)*. That literary work encouraged countless Germans to immigrate to America. It also became their guidebook on how to select their destination and settle down. Early German immigrants who came to Missouri plus central and southern Illinois often were aware of Duden and his pioneering experiences. While it is estimated more than 150 such works had been widely circulated in Germany, Duden's was the most famous. By today's standards, it was a best seller.

I'll quote from a 1919 translation rendered by Dr. William G. Bek who wrote for *Missouri Historical Review*, translating documents and offering insights on early German settlers in the area.

In 1825, Duden wrote, "The meat of domestic animals is inexpensive, since a pound of beef costs only 1 1/2 cents, and a pound of pork 2 cents. However, there is so much game, such as deer, turkey, quail, wild dove, pheasant, snipe and others, that a good shot can easily supply a large family with meat. The hare is not found here, its home if farther to the north, but rabbits are very numerous. They are very destructive to gardens and young fruit trees.

"In the whole United States hunting and fishing is absolutely free. On land that is not fenced in, anyone may hunt big or little game, when and how he desires, with dogs, nets, snares or traps, or with gun. Slaves, however, are forbidden to bear arms, a precaution which is not strictly enforced.... Since I am not a good hunter, I let a neighbor supply me with turkeys each week, chiefly for soup. A turkey must weigh at least 15 pounds or the hunter will refuse to take it home with him. I pay 12 1/2 cents for a turkey. Bison is not seen in these parts any more. It has retreated farther to the north and west....

"Board and lodging can be secured here for one dollar per week. The care of one horse is usually not figured on at all. The superabundance of provisions explains the hospitality of the people. Wherever a house is found there one may count on finding

shelter and accommodation, and but rarely will a farmer accept pay from a fellow countryman, much less demand it.

“A small family requires no more than 4 or 5 acres of land to begin with. Half an acre suffices for garden vegetables, another half acre for wheat (for the sowing of which it is usually too late in the first autumn), after which there are left 3 or 4 acres for maize.”

Duden reported on daily life and the way in which men and women shared duties on the homestead. He added, “The household, having thus been established, and the first acquisitions paid for, the family lives carefree and happy without the least bit of ready money on hand. This is the true reason why small sums of money are regarded as of less value than in Europe. If the man of the house does bring home some money, then his wife finds herself at once in need of something, and the peace of the household is usually disturbed until everything has been spent at the nearest store, usually for gewgaws....”

In the 1825, one-fourth of a percent was “due as a state tax on value of all real estate on all full grown live stock and on articles on luxury, to which class gold watches belong and in addition to this a small sum is asked to defray the expenses of the county. Capital is untaxed. Taxable property is evaluated so low that a tax of 6 dollars is indicative of a considerable amount of property... In Germany it will be an item of surprise to learn that here in Missouri the assessor as well as the collector is obliged to hunt up the people. No one is obliged to take his money to the collector...this is usually done upon the latter’s kindly request....

“I have tasted old brandy made of maize, a gallon of which cost 30 cents, and it was equal to the best French brandy. Even without slaves the American farmer lives in a condition that by far surpasses that of the German peasant who commands the same amount of wealth....

“There are various means of lightening the more burdensome tasks of the household. The clothes, for instance, are washed at a nearby brook, where a fire is built under a huge kettle. The place for drying and bleaching the clothes is not far distant either, and in summer a shady spot is chosen, of course.”

Duden noted that settlers lived only 2 or 3 English miles away, which caused no problem for men or women. Each homestead had at least 2 horses. “Women and girls, old and young, ride horseback, sitting cross-wise in the saddle, in the manner of the English. They ride well, fast or slow, and sometimes to great distances, just like the men. Not a week passes to which the housewife does not take a ride to pay her neighbors a visit, going either alone or in company with other women. On Sundays only the inclemency of the weather can keep them at home. On such days the whole family frequently leaves the house, without the least concern regarding thieves. Many houses do not even have locks, although the kitchen utensils alone are worth more than 20 dollars. Horse racing, cock fighting and target shooting are here, as elsewhere, the most frequent occasions for the gathering of the men....”

There is a new translation of Duden’s popular book (James W. Goodrich, general editor). It may be ordered for \$49.95 from the State Historical Society of Missouri (ISBN 0-8262-0295-0). This 400 page book was printed by the University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO 65201, Phone: (800) 828-1894 M-F, 8-5 Central Time.

E-mail (orders only) to: orders@umsystem.edu .



EXCHANGE! Comments, ideas, and requests from those in G-SIG:

+ Marilyn Gesch (marilyn.gesch@sbcglobal.net) says one Web site “that may not be known to many English-speakers is a German site with indexes to the archives of the state of Hesse. The URL is www.hadis.hessen.de .

+“There was little that was more detrimental to the enemy’s morale than the capture of his baggage train. Not only did it contain the reserve supplies, it usually also carried (soldiers’) wives and families and all the non-combatants.” That’s the way war remained in many parts of the world up to about 150 years ago. The information is shared in *Greek & Roman Warfare—Battles, Tactics and Trickery* by John Droco Montagu. Also priced at \$34.95; through bookstores, or available from MBI Publishing (1-800-826-6600 or check www.motorbooks.com).

Reaching back even farther, did you know “it was the Spartans who developed the first recorded method of enciphering messages, which they used for conveying information from one commander to another. They used an instrument called the *scytale*, which is described by Plutarch.” In effect, the message was written on parchment wrapped around a wood rod in a widening spiral. The message could only be deciphered when the parchment was wrapped around a rod of matching size.

All sorts of ancient methods of warfare are detailed in the hard bound, 256-page book. Section One deals with general practices. Section Two offers specific engagements and maneuvers.

What does this book hold for genealogists and historians? Battle actions and theories often were based on the classical battles of yore. Educated generals knew these and wise leaders modeled success after them. If you want to know how the minds of German strategists worked over succeeding centuries, this book can help.

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Have some great ideas for the G-SIG FORUM? Any topics to suggest? Want to share your findings in order to help others in their search? Then submit your material to

germansig@stlgs.org

or mail it to: Attn: G-SIG, #4 Sunnen Dr.,
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