Triumph of Will

Printer's boy to publisher: The remarkable story of German immigrant Henry Finnern

Stuart Gorman • Joachim Reppmann

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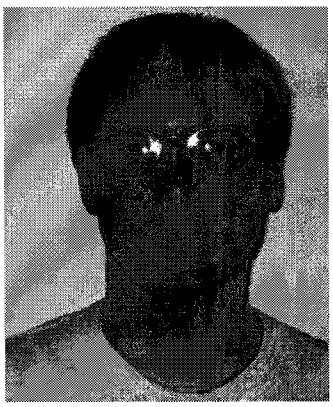
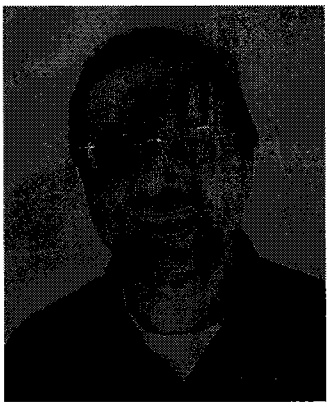


Stuart Gorman

Stuart Gorman was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1978. Studied Linguistics and German at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota from 1996 to 2000. Taught English in South Korea. Postgraduate studies in Berlin. English, German, Italian, Korean, Latin, Ancient Greek, Sanskrit. Five years at Concordia Language Villages: Waldsee, researcher and high school credit teacher; Lago del Bosco, assistant dean. Designs educational card and board games. Working with Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann, his former German professor, Stuart helped write the tri-lingual book *Low German: Platt in America,* for which the authors received the Fritz Reuter and Johannes Gillhoff awards.



Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann

Joachim Reppmann was born in 1957 in Flensburg. He has studied history, American literature, and philosophy at the University in Kiel; written his master's thesis, dissertation, and several books on notable Schleswig-Holstein emigrants and the mass migration to the United States; and served as a Professor of German at both St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges in Northfield, Minnesota.

Since 1983, Yogi has organized both individualized language study–abroad programs and educational exchanges between the United States and Germany and co-founded de.us, Inc. International Connections to facilitate and incubate new business connections between the Baltic Sea region and America's Midwest.

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Dr. Reppmann accumulated the extensive source material for this book and added his historical expertise to ensure that all facts presented were historically accurate.

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Preface

In 1976, the United States observed its bicentennial. Germany also joined in the celebration with an exhibition (USA/Schleswig-Holstein: linguistic and cultural ties) in Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein organized by Paul G. Buchloh. Buchloh, who had previously discovered German-American archival treasures in Schleswig-Holstein, started an American Studies graduate class at the University of Kiel which was attended by two students with a strong interest in visiting the United States.

On their first trip to the United States in 1978, those two students – researchers Joachim Reppmann and Dietrich Eicke – visited Kiel, Wisconsin; Flensburg, Minnesota; and the Iowa cities of Schleswig, Holstein, Davenport, and Denison. While in Denison, Reppmann and Eicke became aware of Henry C. Finnern, a German immigrant from the small town of Fredesdorf in Schleswig-Holstein. Finnern had emigrated to America at the age of only thirteen, and despite a myriad of challenges and obstacles including the rampant anti-German hysteria of World War I, had become a noted newspaper editor, state politician, and civic and church leader.

While in Davenport, Iowa, which by the turn of the century had become known as "the most German city, not only in the State, but in all the Middle West, the center of all German activities in the State," "Dee" Eicke and "Yogi" Reppmann became familiar with many more successful German immigrants including Forty-eighter Theodor Olshausen, one of the well-known leaders of the 1848 democratic revolution in Europe.

The two intrepid Schleswig-Holsteiners take a break from their intensive study of Henry Finnern's German newspapers at Denison's Norelius Library to take part in Holstein's centennial celebration in 1982. The two researchers were given a warm welcome from thousands of visitors including former Holstein citizens representing over forty states.

Sadly, by the time of America's bicentennial celebration, remarkable immigrants such as Henry Finnern and Theodor Olshausen had fallen into historical oblivion both in the United States and in Germany. With events such as the *Legacy of 1848/Finnern Conference* (Denison, IA, October 30-31, 2009) and memorials bearing witness to the inestimable contributions of men such as these, it is our intention to spark the public's interest so that these immigrants who contributed so much may be remembered, honored, and esteemed as role models for future generations.

Heartfelt thanks go to Scott Christiansen (Iowa City, IA) for his research assistance both in the states and in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein (Please enjoy the CD of Scott's book *The Soul of Schleswig-Holstein* included at the back of this book.); Dietrich Eicke (Bad Oldesloe, Schleswig-Holstein) for his design, layout help, and endless patience; Sarah Leake and Jill Engle (Interlibrary Loan, St. Olaf

College, Northfield, MN); Karl Krueger, Forsythe, MO; and Don Tolzmann (Cincinnati, OH), co-organizer of the *Legacy of 1848/ Finnern Conference*.

Thanks are also extended to all our supporters in Denison including Deb McKeown and her fine staff at the Norelius Community Library, Mayor Nathan Mahrt and his wife Amber, Kurt Kaiser, Sylvia Bachmann and Doug Rohde, Grant Lochmiller, the late Dick Knowles, Molly Paulsrud, Michael Mundt, Mearl Luvaas, Eric Skoog, Don Luensmann and his friendly coworkers Nancy Bleuer and Jan Jacobsen, Debbie Sullivan, and the *Denison Bulletin/Review*.

We are also grateful for the support we received from Marcia Paulsen (Buffalo, MN); Rexanne Struve, Art Rix, and Ron Colling (Manning, IA); Bill Roba (Davenport, IA); Claus Bunz (Clive, IA); Larry Grill (Schleswig, IA); Kate Vohs (Des Moines, IA); and *Familie* Rolfs and Gabriele Harfst (Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein).

Finally, our warmest thanks to Virginia Degen (Holstein, IA); Norma Graves née Finnern (Loveland, CO); and Norma's children, Lisa, Todd and Jay, for their hospitality and support which were so crucial in the publication of this book.

Timeline of Major Events in the Life of Henry Finnern

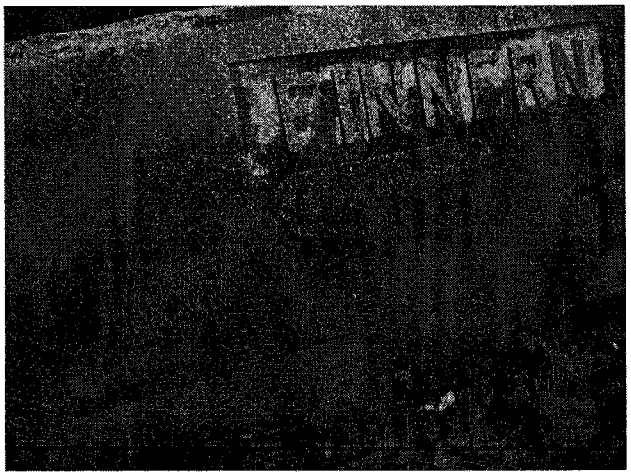
1846-12-28	Iowa becomes America's twenty-sixth state.
1848	Democratic revolutions begin in Europe.
1864-10-30	The duchies of Schleswig and Holstein are ceded to Prussian and Austrian administration respectively. Schleswig-Holstein is no longer part of Denmark.
1871	Fredesdorf becomes part of the unified German Empire.
1875-07-04	Emma Dorothea Finnern (Henry's sister) is born in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1877-08-13	Heinrich Christian Finnern is born in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1877-10-04	Henry is baptized at the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchengemeinde* in Segeberg, Schleswig-Holstein.
1880-06-21	Maria Auguste Finnern (Henry's sister) is born in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1882-07-30	Herman Karl Finnern (Henry's brother) is born in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1883-08-20	Henry enters school.
1884-03-27	Adolf Finnern (Henry's brother) is born in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1887-11-30	Martha Amanda Finnern (Henry's sister) is born in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1887-1891	Henry tends cattle in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1888-09-12	Adolf Finnern dies in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.

1890-12-13	Frida Friderike Finnern (Henry's sister) is born in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1890-12-2?	Christian Rickert (a native of Fredesdorf living in Helena, Montana) visits the Finnern home in Fredesdorf.
1891-03-21	Henry finishes his schooling.
1891-03-23	Henry is confirmed.
1891-04/05	Henry obtains a permit to leave Germany.
1891-05-07	Henry departs Fredesdorf and travels to Hamburg.
1891-05-08	Henry and sister Emma emigrate out of Hamburg on-board the *Fürst Bismarck* accompanied by Christian Rickert and his wife.
1891-05-15	Henry and Emma arrive in New York.
1891-05-19	Henry and Emma arrive in Denison, Iowa.
1892-04	After working on his uncle Fritz's farm in Hanover Township for ten months, Henry leaves to work at *Der Crawford County Demokrat.*
1892-04-17	Henry begins as an apprentice at *Der Crawford County Demokrat.*
1892	Henry's grandfather dies.
1893-02-14	Minna Louise Finnern (Henry's sister) is born in Fredesdorf, Schleswig-Holstein.
1894-06-11	After emigrating, Henry's family arrives in Denison, Iowa.
1896-01-29	Albert Johann Finnern (Henry's brother) is born in Denison.
1897	Henry begins working at *The Denison Review.*
1898-06-08	Hertha Sophia Finnern (Henry's sister) is born in Denison.
1901-01-04	Henry becomes the editor of *Der Crawford County Demokrat.*

1903-05-27	Henry marries Frieda Vosgerau at the Vosgerau home in Denison.
1903-05-27	Henry and his wife take up residence at 1906 Broadway in Denison.
1904-03-09	Lillian Henrietta Finnern (Henry's daughter) is born in Denison at the Finnerns' second residence in Denison (Avenue A).
1904-11-27	Emma Finnern (Henry's sister) dies at the Clarinda Mental Hospital.
1905-04-01	Henry purchases the *Deutsch-Amerikaner* and moves to Waterloo, Iowa.
1908-12-16	Ruby Marie Finnern (Henry's daughter) is born in Waterloo.
1911-01-01	Henry and brother-in-law Otto Vosgerau purchase *Der Crawford County Demokrat.*
1912-spring	Henry and family move back to Denison, renting the home they had previously built.
1912-08-23	Arnold Henry Finnern (Henry's son) is born in Denison.
1912	Henry and Otto purchase *Die Denison Zeitung.*
1913	Henry becomes the first president of the *Deutsche Opernhaus Gesellschaft von Denison.*
1913-03-01	*Die Denison Zeitung* is consolidated with *Der Crawford County Demokrat* and begins to appear as *Der Denison Herold.*
1914	The Denison Opera House Company erects a building at the corner of Main and Broadway, the current home of the Donna Reed Center for the Performing Arts.
1916-09-04	Marvin Walter Finnern (Henry's son) is born in Denison.

1917	The Finnerns build a new home on Wall Street (subsequently known as 143 Avenue B) in Denison.
1917-04-06	The United States enters World War I.
1918-01-25	Anna Maria Louise Finnern née Kaehler (Henry's mother) dies in Kennan, Wisconsin.
1918-10-06	*Der Denison Herold* ceases publication on Henry Finnern's "darkest day."
1918-10-10	*Der Denison Herold*, a German-language newspaper, becomes the *Denison Herald*, an English-language newspaper.
1918-11-01	Henry and Otto purchase the *Denison Bulletin* which they consolidate with the *Denison Herald* (the *Bulletin and Herald*).
1923	The *Bulletin and Herald* moves into its new building at 1309-11 First Avenue North in Denison.
1923-09-04	Marvin Walter Finnern (Henry's son) dies in Denison.
1925-03-07	Johann Christian Finnern (Henry's father) dies in Denison.
1926-01-19	Norma Darlene Finnern (Henry's daughter) is born in Denison.
1928-11	Henry is elected as a state representative of Iowa.
1930-11	Henry is reelected as a state representative of Iowa.
1934-06-01	Henry becomes postmaster of Denison.
1940-01-02	Henry's partnership with Otto Vosgerau ends on Otto's death.
1941-12-08	The United States enters World War II.
1942-02-14	The Finnerns move into their new house at 910 First Avenue South in Denison.
1943-06-01	Henry sells the *Denison Bulletin* (initially known as the *Bulletin and Herald*).

1945-05-07	Germany surrenders near the end of World War II.
1949-06	After fifteen years, Henry retires as Denison's post-master.
1953-05-27	Henry and Frieda celebrate their golden wedding anniversary.
1955-08-19	Henry and his brother Herman sail out of New York on-board the *Italia* bound for Germany.
1955-08-25	Henry sees his old home in Fredesdorf for the first time since May 7, 1891.
1957-07-13	Henry's wife dies in Denison.
1961-08	Construction begins on the Berlin Wall.
1964	Henry retires as president of the Denison Opera House Co.
1968	Henry moves into the Eventide Lutheran Home for the Aged in Denison.
1971-06-28	Henry Finnern dies in Denison at the age of ninety-three.



Henry C. Finnern 1877-1971

Henry Finnern, ca. 1900

Introduction

Prior to 1923, September fourth had always been a happy day for the Henry Finnern family of Denison, Iowa. It was on this day in 1916, that the couple's fourth child, Marvin Walter Finnern, had been born. Like his three older siblings, bright and energetic Marvin was the repository of all the hopes and dreams of Heinrich Christian Finnern, his German immigrant newspaperman father. But those parental dreams became a parent's worst nightmare when Marvin died as the result of a tragic accident seven years to the day after his birth.

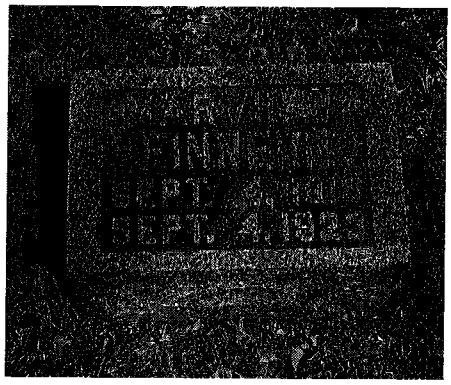
From left to right, the first four children of Frieda and Henry Finnern: Arnold, Ruby, Marvin, and Lillian.

Two days before Marvin's seventh birthday, his parents had presented him with a tricycle. Little Marvin was so enamored with his new toy that he rode it incessantly. While speeding down a steep hill near his home the day before his birthday, Marvin took a severe tumble, falling off the trike and hitting his head. Despite the crash, Marvin got back on his tricycle and continued

riding. Only after returning home, did the stoic little lad report that he had a headache.

On the morning of his seventh birthday, Marvin got dressed to go out and play despite the fact that he was not feeling well. A day of carefree childhood play was not in the cards, however, and Marvin soon returned to the Finnern home and went back to bed. The headache that had started the day before had worsened, and Henry and Frieda's concern resulted in a trip to the hospital. There, the worried parents received the worst news possible: Marvin had suffered a severe skull fracture resulting in bleeding on the brain. Despite the best efforts of the doctors (including a specialist who had been called in from Omaha), the fall from the tricycle proved fatal. Marvin Finnern died on his seventh birthday. Had he been taken to the hospital earlier, the result may well have been the same. Perhaps it was best that he had been able to ride his cherished trike a little more and sleep in his own bed one last night.

The tombstone of Marvin Walter Finnern in Denison's Oakland Çemetery



Norma Darlene Finnern, the youngest child of Henry and Frieda Finnern, recalls accompanying her parents to the cemetery. After looking at Marvin's tombstone, she asked her mother and father why the birth date and death date both read September 4. Because of the tragic circumstances surrounding little Marvin's demise and the fact that Norma's birth had been "prescribed" by her mother's physician as a "treatment" for the depression engendered by Marvin's death, Norma never received an answer to her question.

Henry and Frieda Finnern and their three remaining children mourned the tragic death. The clouds of despair never cleared for Frieda; her devastation was complete and unrelenting. Her depression still not having lifted after two years, the Finnerns went to see their family doctor. His prescription was simple and straightforward and required no trip to the pharmacy. Despite the fact that Frieda was forty-one years old, the doctor recommended that she have another child.

And so it was that the tragic death of little Marvin Finnern resulted in the birth of a fifth child, Norma Darlene, on January 19, 1926. Little did Henry know that this late-in-life addition to his family would be the conduit through which the story of his life would be told.

Today, Norma is the only child of Henry and Frieda Finnern still living. After tracking Norma down in Colorado, historian and author Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann discovered a charming, straightforward, and humble woman. Her recollections and anecdotes proved invaluable in fleshing out the facts of Heinrich Christian Finnern's remarkable life and revealing the humanity of the German immigrant who overcame so much to make a life for himself and his family in his adopted home.

Yogi Reppmann and
Norma Graves née Finnern
in Loveland, Colorado.

Humble Beginnings

"Fredesdorf was a small town of a little over hundred population – two grocery stores, a blacksmith shop, a small hotel and tavern, and no post office, mail being delivered from a nearby town. The major part of the population was farmers and their hired help. The center of town was a public square with a small pond, much alive with ducks and geese during the summer."

-Henry Finnern

Heinrich Christian Finnern was born at six A.M. on August thirteenth, 1877, in Fredesdorf in northern Germany. He was the second child of parents Johann and Anna. Three days later, Johann made the trip to Leezen, a slightly larger town about two miles east of Fredesdorf, and obtained a birth certificate for his new son.

Two months later, on October fourth of the same year, Henry was baptized at the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchengemeinde* in Segeberg, a town about five miles northeast of Fredesdorf. Henry's uncles (Heinrich Schoenfeld and Hinrich Finnern) and Emma Rickert sponsored his baptism. The only other documentation from Henry's youngest days are the records of his vaccination by Dr. F. Henning in Segeberg on June 21, 1878, and by Dr. Nolte in Segeberg on June 14, 1889.

Henry's family lived in a relatively new building with brick walls and tile floors for the first few years of his life. After his grandmother passed away, the Finnern family moved in with Henry's grandfather. Their "new" dwelling was actually much older and had been owned by Henry's grandmother's family for decades. The straw roof

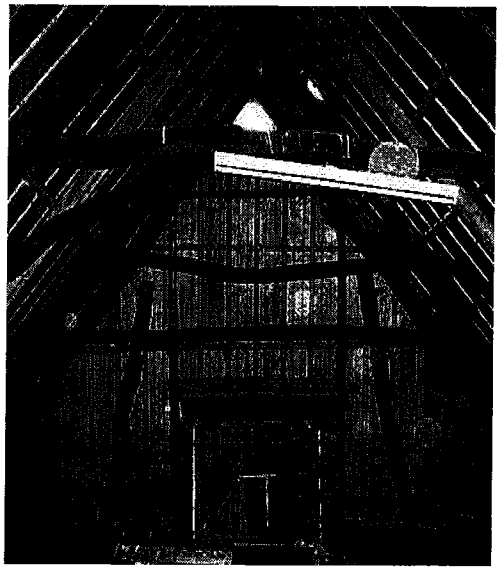
was a foot thick and covered a very large house underneath. Today, inscriptions ("Hans Hinnerich Kock," "Anna Catrina Kock," and "Den 11. September, Anno 1812") on one of the beams supporting the loft are still clearly visible. Hans Hinnerich and Anna Catrina Kock were Henry's paternal great grandparents. The date inscribed on the beam probably refers to the year, month, and day on which the house was completed.

After 165 years, the letters carved in the old beam still bear mute testimony to the builder of Henry's boyhood home, his paternal grandfather, Hans Hinnrich Finnern.

The house was large enough to function as both a barn for the farm animals and a house for the family. The walls inside and out were covered in plaster and calcimine, and the straw roof was waterproof, insulated well, and relatively easy to repair. In an autobiographical sketch, Henry described how his grandfather's house looked in the 1880s:

"The entrance in the front was without doors; this hall led into a second hall, about 18 feet back, through doors. To the left side of this front open hall were the stalls for three head of cattle; then a stall for a couple of swine; the next room was a pantry, then the kitchen and the back room, which was a combination living and bed room. The beds were closed in by sliding doors. The other side of the house contained the 'torf' or peat room; then a stall for a couple goats and a half dozen chicken ... The open front entrance hall was about 12 feet wide ... so that a team and wagon with grain and hay could get in ... Grain was threshed with flails on the cement floor of the second

hall ... During many days in the winter the windows were covered with frost a quarter inch thick, and we kids would take a knife and scrape off enough to get a look outside ... Bread was baked in a large outdoor oven, with brick floor and roof... Our garden provided us with enough vegetables and potatoes; we had pear trees, apple trees, currant and gooseberry bushes; yes, some strawberries too ... Water was furnished by an open well, probably twenty feet deep with the old open bucket dipped into the water on a long rod. The well was located about ten yards from the house and water had to be carried. My grandfather owned an apiary with 40 to 50 hives; so we had an abundant supply of honey all year... The hip of the roof of the house harbored a stork nest; and the storks raised there brood regularly each year; arriving in the spring and leaving for the south – sunny Italy and Africa with the beginning of fall."



Some of the 160-plus-year-old beams and rafters, which appear to have been nothing more than roughly hewn large tree branches, have survived to this day.

The Finnerns had two more children, Marie and Herman, born in 1880 and 1882 respectively. Henry started public school in 1883. Professors Haak and Carstensen were Henry's teachers during his

eight years of schooling. Afterwards, Henry never pursued any formal learning. The school year ran forty-nine weeks with a three-week break in August. Henry, however, only attended four full years. He missed four months from each of the following four years to look after his grandfather's two cows and one calf. Since Henry's family didn't own land to pasture the cattle, they had to acquire permits each year from the town council allowing their cattle to graze on the roadsides, which were abundant with grass and clover. Every day, rain or shine, Henry spent the sunlit hours outside leading his cows around the countryside. He left in the early hours of the morning, stopped home for lunch, and then continued marching till after sunset, that is, quite literally until the cows came home.

Henry's mother milked the cows twice a day, once in the morning before they left to pasture and again in the evening after they returned. She churned the milk and sold butter to a buyer from Hamburg. The Finnerns, however, never ate any of it. They had to sell it all to earn money. They had only honey or lard to spread on their bread.

Adolf, the fifth child of Henry's parents, was born in 1884. Sadly, he died at the age of four from black diphtheria, and was buried in the church cemetery at Segeberg. Diphtheria is a highly contagious disease that is spread by direct physical contact or by breathing in particles that have been coughed out by infected individuals. It is a small miracle that no one else in Henry's family contracted it as well, considering the close quarters in which they slept and lived.

In his autobiographical sketch, Henry recalled a children's day event one June in the 1880s. Of all the boys in attendance, he was named "king for the day" by winning a carnival game called the king for a day. To Henry's great discomfort, the closing event was a dance where he and the "queen for the day" had to dance the first dance.

He wrote, "Neither of us knew a thing about dancing and the laugh was surely on us. That was the last dance for me." This may have been a formative experience, as Henry was opposed to dancing for the rest of his life.

The Johann Finnern Family

Front row, left to right: Frida, Johann, Albert, Hertha, Anna, and Minna.
Middle row: Martha.
Back row, left to right: Herman, Maria, Henry, and Emma.

Still living in the same house, the Finnerns had two more children, Martha and Frida, born in 1887 and 1890 respectively. Personal space was surely at a premium.

Late in 1890, Henry began confirmation instruction in Segeberg. Along with over three hundred other local children, Henry was con-

firmed on Palm Sunday in 1891 by Pastor David, thereby becoming a communicant member of the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchengemeinde von Segeberg*.

And so this was Henry's preparation for his journey to America - baptism, vaccinations, eight years of public school, and a confirmation. Henry wrote in his autobiographical sketch, "Like other boys who were the sons of poor parents living in our small village, my youth was marked by no particular important events." His typically humble assessment spoke volumes about the stability his parents had provided, stability which would stand him in good stead when he emigrated to America.

In the first thirteen years of Henry's life, the area around his hometown of Fredesdorf had seen no war. But the two previous generations had experienced the first and second Schleswig wars, which took place between 1848-1851 and in 1864. The duchies passed from Denmark to Prussia and Austria in 1864 and from Austria to Prussia in 1868. In 1871, the German Empire was formed, effectively realigning the state's allegiances one more time. 1888, known as the "year of the three emperors," again called the stability of the nation and its leadership into question. Throughout all this turmoil, however, at least one thing was quite consistent: emigration. As Henry approached his fourteenth birthday, the impending draft and the general uncertainty in the region undoubtedly factored into the family's decision for him to emigrate. Despite his peaceful childhood, the uncertain future in his homeland made life in America look all the more attractive.

Buttered Rye Bread

Chain migration was a common factor in the choice of millions of Germans to pull up stakes and set out for a new land. Stories of America filtered back across the Atlantic via letters and visits from friends and relatives, bringing with them the promise of opportunity and freedom. In turn, more Germans made the trip and sent back their own letters.

Christian Rickert, a local carpenter who had emigrated to Helena, Montana in 1884, returned to Fredesdorf a few days before Christmas in 1890. His primary reason for returning was not to spread the word about the wonderful state of affairs in America, but rather, to marry a German woman who would then accompany him back to Montana. Nevertheless, his high praise of America "started the town talking about emigration to that land of greatest promise." Despite the town's excitement, of the dozen or more young people who wanted to travel back with Christian "if only their parents would give their consent," only Henry and his sister Emma ended up making preparations.

The family's plan was for Christian and Marie Rickert to accompany their two oldest children to America, where Henry and Emma would live with their uncle Fritz Schoenfeld on his farm in Iowa. Christian and Marie would, of course, continue on to Montana. Interestingly, Henry's other uncle (Heinrich Schoenfeld) and his wife attempted to dissuade Henry's parents from letting their son and daughter go to America. Heinrich even offered to pay for Henry's tuition and expenses if he would remain in Germany and study for the ministry.

What Emma would do in the case of Heinrich's proposal and the reason for his opposition to their departure are unclear.

At that time in Germany, any able-bodied male who was at least fourteen years old had to serve one to three years in the army. It was illegal to emigrate if you hadn't served your time. Even though Henry was only thirteen, he still needed a permit to renounce his citizenship and relieve him of military duty. Henry's father obtained the necessary permit on April 25th, which would be valid for six months – ample time to purchase tickets on the *S.S. Fürst Bismarck* and otherwise prepare.

One late night in May, a few days before Henry left for America, his mother came to his bedside and asked if Henry would like to get up and eat some rye bread with butter. "What a treat!" thought Henry. Perhaps Anna wanted Henry to know that his tending of the cattle along the roadsides for the last four years hadn't gone unnoticed. Perhaps it was also a testament to the family's hard-working nature or just one last reminder of his *Heimat*, his roots, and his home.

It was still dark on the morning of May seventh; Henry and Emma had said goodbye to the family the night before. Anna stood in the doorway of uncle Heinrich's house with tears streaming down her face. Was she doing the right thing? Would she ever see her children again?

Uncle Heinrich drove a team of horses in front of a wagon, taking Emma and Henry to Segeberg. As the sun arose during their drive from Fredesdorf to Segeberg, Henry and Emma sang *Nun Adieu Du Mein Lieb Heimatland.*

The two siblings boarded the train in Segeberg for the forty-mile

trip to Hamburg, where they would spend the night with relatives. Then it was another forty miles on a small steamer up to Cuxhaven in the morning. It's unclear whether chaperones Christian and Emma Rickert met up with Henry and Emma in Segeberg, Hamburg, or Cuxhaven. At any rate, the four of them were on-board the *S.S. Fürst Bismarck* shortly after noon, steaming away from their native shore.

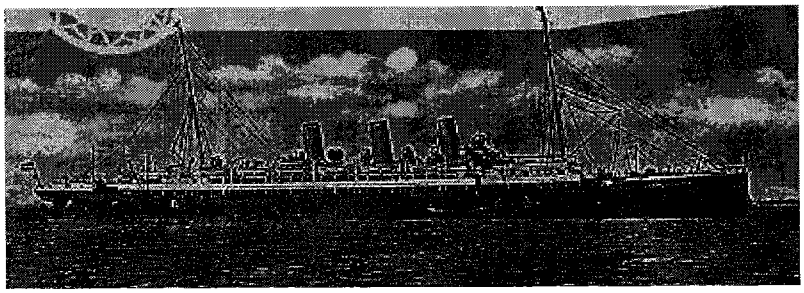
The *Fürst Bismarck's* maiden voyage, the same voyage that Henry and his sister Emma traveled on, began on May 8th, 1891. The trip from Cuxhaven to Southampton and then on to New York lasted eight days. The captain and crew had determined to set a new speed record across the Atlantic and succeeded. The Statue of Liberty came into view on the morning of May 16th, 1891. It was the first trip across the Atlantic not only for the *Fürst Bismarck*, but also for Henry, Emma, Marie, and many of the nearly one thousand passengers who were emigrating in hope of finding a better life in America.

Nun Adieu Du Mein Lieb Heimatland
(Now, farewell my beloved country)

Although Henry sang the words of this old folk song, like all immigrants, he never really left, for the immigrant experience is never-ending, an infinite continuum of linguistic and cultural assimilation. The longing to return, even if only for a brief visit, never leaves, and there's always a sense of incompleteness in both the former *Vaterland* and the new home in America. *Heimat*, home, and homesickness: these are the key components of the immigrant experience of the first generation.

"Oppressed and troubled they left, torn between fear and hope, their souls tortured by the nagging sorrow of parting and an uncertain future in a strange land. They did not leave their homes with light hearts, the home where they were born, where the cradle of their fathers stood, where in the blossoming meadow or the shadow of old lindens they played as children, and where in the village cemetery the bones of their ancestors decayed. When the sailboat raised anchor, the emigrant stood on the deck looking with moist eyes at the distant coast. When the last strip disappeared beyond the whitecaps of the North Sea, his home and fatherland and his past and youth lay behind like a sunken world."

Henry Lau, Davenport



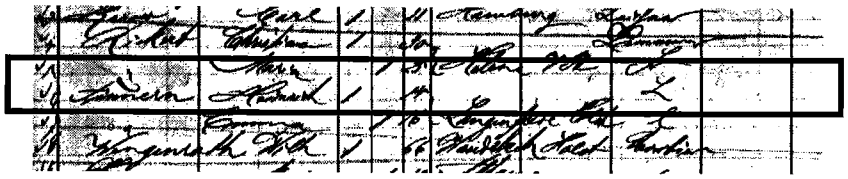
The *S.S. Fürst Bismarck* was built by A. G. Vulcan of Stettin for the Hamburg America Line and launched on November 29th. 1890. She was an 8,430 gross ton ship, 502.6 feet long, and had a 57.6 foot beam. The ship had three funnels, two masts, twin screws, and a speed of nineteen knots. There were accommodations for 420 first-class, 172 second-class, and 700 third-class passengers.

The *Fürst Bismarck's* last such voyage took place in May of 1903. It was sold to Russia in 1904, converted to an auxiliary cruiser, and renamed the *Don*. In 1906, she went to the Russian Volunteer Fleet and was renamed the *Moskva*. In 1913, the former *Fürst Bismarck* was sold to the Austrian Navy and renamed the *Gaea* and used as a depot ship. Seized by Italy at the end of World War I, the ship was rebuilt and renamed one last time as *San Guisto*, sailing for the Cosulich Line. Finally, in 1924, Henry's "majestic Steamer" was scrapped.

Henry and Emma were assigned to a twelve-passenger room with upper and lower bunks. Fortunately, the children had taken upper bunks, as several other passengers in upper bunks were less than careful with the results of their seasickness, vomiting onto their traveling companions in the lower bunks. The waters in the English Channel were very rough, and the steward warned the children not to eat too heavily at their first meal. They didn't listen, and partook of their share. Emma became seasick, but Henry did not. Waves swept across the promenade, and passengers were told to stay below decks until the ship had cleared the English Channel. Once they reached the open sea, the weather calmed, and they all enjoyed a pleasant journey including meals that were "much better than we had enjoyed at home."

When Henry arrived at Ellis Island, he had but five dollars in his pocket. This small amount had been given to him by his uncle Heinrich in German coins and had been exchanged for American currency before reaching New York. At Ellis Island, Henry and Emma had to submit to personal examinations and were asked for their vaccination certificates. What little baggage they had was examined as well.

Henry spent little time in New York before departing by train for Chicago and then on to Denison, Iowa. The twelve hundred-mile train trip began in the evening, probably on May 17th. Henry and Emma were accompanied on the trip by Christian and Marie Rick-

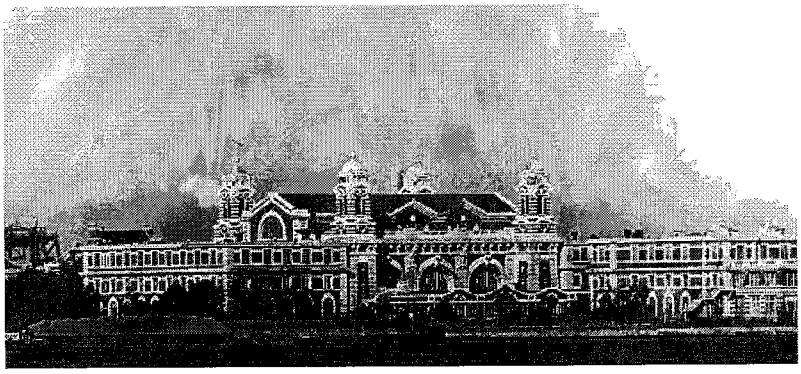


The manifest of the *Fürst Bismarck*

The steamer *Fürst Bismarck's* maiden voyage for the Hamburg America Line (under the command of Captain A. Albers) sailed from the port of Hamburg (or more accurately, from Cuxhaven) on May 8th, 1891, with 996 passengers on-board. The ship stopped in Southampton, England to pick up more passengers before proceeding on to New York, where it arrived on May 16th, 1891. Henry was '13' not '14'.

ert. At about five A.M. on May 19th, the four of them arrived at the railroad depot in Denison. No friends or relatives were there to greet them.

To Henry, Emma, and Marie – all newcomers to the United States – Denison's wooden sidewalks were something they had never seen before. Walking on these, they made there way to the Carstens Hotel at the southwest corner of Main and Broadway. Up to this



Ellis Island as seen from New York harbor

The federal immigration station at Ellis Island opened on January 1st, 1892, over six months after Henry arrived in New York. Henry came a little too early to have been processed in the great one hundred by two hundred-foot registry room with its fifty-six-foot vaulted ceiling – and a little too late to be one of the ten million or so who were processed at Castle Garden between 1855 and 1890. He emigrated in the historically brief period of transition between the two major American institutions of naturalization.

point, the only food Henry had eaten in America was the rye bread and mettwurst given to him by his mother back in Fredesdorf. It is fitting that there was such a direct link. They had finished the rations from the old country, and at six A.M. in the Carstens Hotel, they ate their first meal in their new home of America.

After breakfast, the Rickerts were met by relatives, and they set out for the home of Christian's father, Joachim Rickert, who lived near the present-day town of Schleswig, Iowa. Henry and Emma, ages thirteen and fifteen, were left alone to wait for their uncle Fritz Schoenfeld. With characteristic understatement, Henry wrote that he and his sister "felt quite lonesome." The two of them passed some of the morning with a walk through the business district of Denison, looking into storefronts.

Later in life, Henry Finnern enjoyed Sunday walks near the train depot with Norma, his youngest daughter.

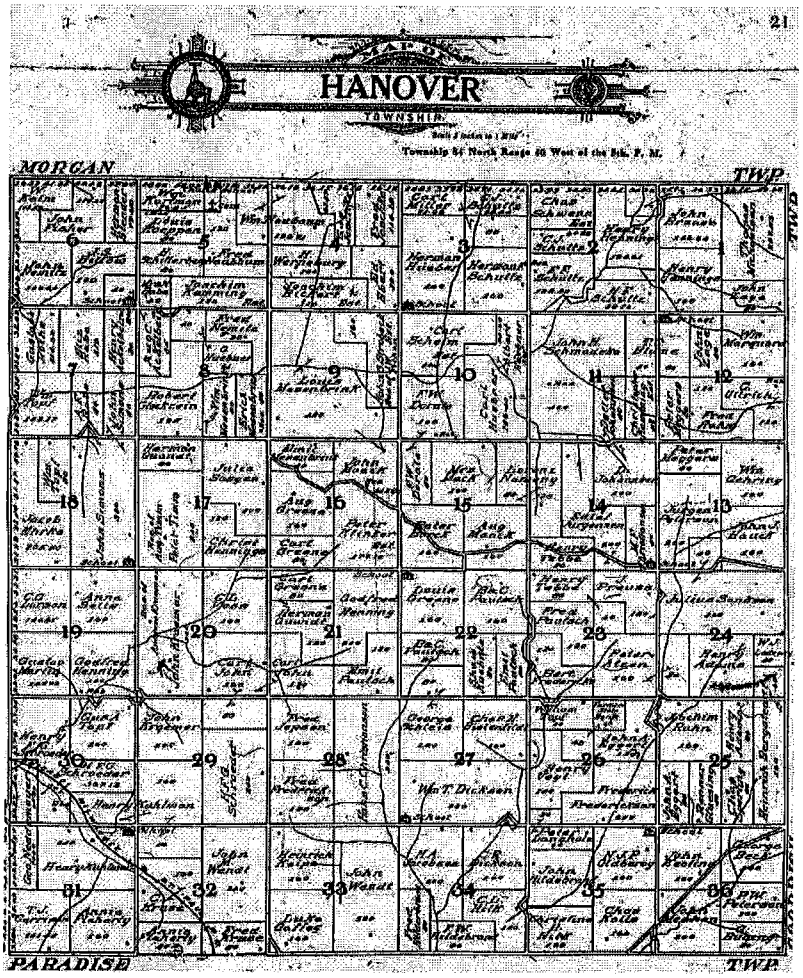
At about eleven A.M., Henry's uncle Fritz Schoenfeld arrived with a team of horses hitched to a lumber wagon. Uncle Fritz had not only come to pick up the children, but also to pick up a load of fence posts which he would take back to his farm in Hanover Township, northwest of Denison.

Fritz and Emma rode on the spring seat in the front of the wagon, while Henry had to ride on top of the fence posts in the back. After three hours and ten miles of bumping up and down on a pile of lumber, Henry saw America "in a different light." He noted the way farmers lived on their own land well outside of town, whereas in Fredesdorf, they all lived in town, traveling to their farms for work every day. The size of American acreages made that unfeasible, but in turn, allowed bigger herds and harvests.

Upon arriving at their new home, Henry and Emma saw a woman walking in the farmyard. Uncle Fritz told the children that she was an Indian squaw, a member of a tribe that still roamed Iowa. He was, however, lying for comedic effect. In fact, the woman was their uncle Fritz's wife, Cecelia.

Henry made his home here in Section nine of Hanover Township for almost a year, working as a farm laborer. But that would change as it became clear that he wasn't built for physical labor. His bright mind, honesty, and dogged determination would lead him down an entirely different path.

The map to the right shows Hanover Township ca. 1908. The Fritz Schoenfeld farm that Henry worked on from 1891-1892 was located in Section nine. As can be seen, uncle Fritz had apparently moved from the farm by the time this map was drawn. Interestingly, however, the name Joachim Rickert appears in Section four (located immediately to the north of section nine). Joachim Rickert was the father of Christian Rickert, the man Henry had emigrated with in May of 1891.


HANOVER
TOWNSHIP
Township 54 North Range 88 West of the 5th. P. M.
MORGAN
TWP
PARADISE
TWP

Setting His Type

Henry's uncle Fritz Schoenfeld served in the cavalry in Germany before emigrating to America in 1889. After making his way to Iowa, he worked as a hired hand before moving to the farm in section nine of Hanover Township. On September 24, 1890, he married Cecelia, a fellow German immigrant, who at the age of only thirty-one, had already been widowed twice. Cecelia's first marriage to Georg Stroback back in 1884 had resulted in two children. After Georg's death in 1886, she remarried the following year, tying the knot with Josef Prokosch.

The wedding portrait of Fritz and Cecilia Schoenfeld with Cecilia's three children from her first two marriages.

Sadly, her second marriage also lasted but two years, as Prokosch passed away in 1889. On his deathbed, Josef supposedly told Cecelia that she should marry for a third time. Specifically, Prokosch identified a hired man on a neighboring farm by the name of Fritz Schoenfeld as the man whom Cecelia should marry.

Cecelia, somewhat taken aback at this, replied "But how do you know he will even have me?"

Despite Cecelia's reservations, she and Fritz were married the following year, Fritz took over the lease on Josef's farm, and the couple joined forces to earn a decent living and raise Cecelia's children from her first marriage. These events dovetailed nicely with the situation back in Schleswig-Holstein (the draft and the uncertain political situation) and Christian Rickert's American boosterism, giving the Finnern children a definite destination. It's very likely that the lack of such a specific destination may have kept many of the other young people in Fredesdorf from following Henry and Emma to America.

Emma was a very devout young woman and probably found inspiration in the adversities that Cecelia had faced. While living on the farm, the two females from entirely different backgrounds forged a strong bond. Unfortunately, little is known about Emma's life at this time. One imagines that she helped look after the younger children, cooked meals, and assisted Henry, Fritz, and Cecelia with work in the fields.

Henry spent just ten months working on his uncle's farm, earning room and board along with the "princely sum" of $3.60 a month. He was small for his age, and after the trial year, Fritz decided that Henry wasn't cut out for hard labor. Luckily, he was a bright young man and was able to find less physically demanding work.

The two most promising job postings that Henry found in *Der Crawford County Demokrat* (the local newspaper) were for a position in a general store and for a boy to learn the printing business at the very newspaper in which the advertisement appeared. Considering Henry's love of literature (which was evidenced by his habit of bringing

his schoolbooks with him when he grazed his grandfather's cattle back in Fredesdorf), it should come as no surprise that he applied for the job at the printing office.

Der Crawford County Demokrat was a German language weekly newspaper edited by Frank Faul and owned by a stock company managed by H.A. Cook. Henry didn't know it at the time, but his

Der Crawford County Demokrat, the area's second weekly German-language newspaper, began publishing in 1887.

professional life and that of Frank Faul's would intersect a great many times in the years to come. During his early years at the Demokrat, Faul was somewhat of a mentor to the young German immigrant.

Initially, much of Henry's ten-hour workday involved mundane tasks necessary at that time to the operation of any office. In the winter, he arrived before sunrise to sweep the floors, wash the windows, and keep the fires in the two heating stoves burning so that it would be warm when the other employees arrived at 7:00 A.M. In essence, Henry was "putting in his time in the mail room," as it were, showing his dedication while gaining valuable experience for what turned out to be a fifty-two-year career in the newspaper business.

Long hours and cold mornings aside, Henry's job at the newspaper office was a much better fit than his previous job as a hired hand on his uncle Fritz's farm. At three dollars a week, the pay was better, too. Of this three dollars, two went towards room and board, as Henry lived with his boss, Frank Faul. The third dollar was Henry's to use for clothing and the other necessities of life. Two dollars went toward room and board – he lived with his boss, Frank Faul – and one dollar was his to keep, to pay for clothing and other necessaries of life.

It was a time when Henry learned many valuable lessons that would stand him in good stead in the following years. His English was improving, he was learning a new trade, and he was living with an American family in the town of Denison, learning about Americans and the American way of life. Sometimes, however, the lessons learned were imparted in a rather abrupt manner. For example, on Henry's first day of work – Maundy Thursday – he was amazed to learn that he would be expected to work the next day. Back in Fredesdorf, only heathens worked on Good Friday. But Henry acquiesced graciously, adopting the philosophy of "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

Like his work on the farm, printing could also be physically taxing at times. Turning the four-page press was a difficult task, and finding someone willing and capable to do it was even more problematical. For a few years, Jackson Broadus, father of the only African-American family in Denison, was the *Demokrat's* steady helper on press days. After he quit the job, several men tried their hand at it, but only stayed for a month or less. This was about the time that the gasoline engine was finding widespread use, however, and soon thereafter, it provided the muscle for turning the presses at the

Demokrat.

In his autobiographical sketch written for his grandchildren, Henry described the printing process at the time. "*The press was turned at a slow pace by men, and the party feeding the paper sheets into the press had in most instances ample time to get them into proper position for the grippers to catch. If the feeder could not place the sheet correctly by the time the cylinder turned around, one would holler to the man turning the press to stop. Not so with the gasoline engine. I tried the commanding word but the press would keep turning until I shifted the belt to the loose pulley. This resulted in spoiling a few sheets which cut down the number of papers as in those days of the ready prints there were only a small number of extras included. Newspapers those days consisted of four pages printed in the publisher's office. When one missed a sheet the tympan of the press would be printed, and although one would wipe the tympan, the offset would still show on the next sheet through the press, blurring the paper and leaving it unreadable.*"

In all likelihood, the death of Henry's grandfather on August 21, 1892, prompted Henry's parents to begin planning for the emigration of the remainder of the family to America where they could be reunited with Henry and Emma. These plans, however, had to temporarily be placed on hold as Henry's mother was about three months pregnant at the time. After Minna's birth on Valentine's Day in 1892, plans for the family's emigration once again began to take shape.

The family made preparations to sell the farm in Fredesdorf and book passage to Iowa. Nevertheless, Anna and Johann prudently waited until Minna was a little over a year old before finalizing their plans and making the transatlantic journey with their five children

(ages one to fourteen). Henry's parents were in their early forties at this time, and father Johann was crippled from a childhood bout with polio. Undeterred, the Finnerns sold almost everything they owned and set out on a journey that would cross the Atlantic Ocean and half of the United States before they reached their final destination in Denison, Iowa, some six thousand miles distant from their home in Fredesdorf.

Henry and Emma had this photo taken to show their parents back in Fredesdorf how well they were doing in Denison.

A Familiy Reunited

Over three years had passed since Henry arrived in Denison on May 19th, 1891. After working ten months on his uncle's farm, he had spent the last two years working for *Der Crawford County Demokrat* where he had taken "a liking to the newspaper business."

One is struck with the contrast between Henry's arrival three years earlier and that of his family on June 11th, 1894. While no one had been there to greet young Henry and sister Emma three years earlier, Henry, Emma, and Henry's friend Willie Otto were there to meet the Finnern family at the Chicago Northwestern Railway station in Denison. Whereas Henry had to ride on top of a pile of fence posts for three hours in the hot sun, his family was escorted to the Schoenfeld farm in two horse-drawn buggies, one driven by Henry and the other by Otto.

Seeing his parents for the first time in three years must have been a very emotional experience for Henry. When he had left Fredesdorf in May of 1891, he was a boy not yet fourteen years of age with little knowledge of life beyond the borders of his hometown. When he greeted his parents and siblings (one of which [Minna] he had never before seen) on June 11, 1894, he greeted them as a young man of almost seventeen years of age who had become an adult in many ways by shouldering a good many responsibilities. Recalling the occasion years later, Henry wrote in the typically understated and factual manner of the newspaperman he seemed destined to be that "It was a very, very happy family reunion."

Nevertheless, Henry was still a son and a brother who had undoubt-

edly missed his family a great deal and who could not really feel "at home" without his parents and the rest of his siblings. The first thing the Finnerns required to reestablish that home life was a house to live in. For any number of reasons, Henry was the member of the family that would be most instrumental in this endeavor. It was Henry who had learned the English language, who was familiar with Denison and knew many of its citizens, and who had familiarized himself with American culture and the town of Denison.

After finding a house available at the southwest corner of Broadway and 20th Street, the family moved in. In Henry's words, he had once again taken "up residence at HOME." The time spent at the new home would be short, however, as the family moved out after only a month. Henry's father had decided to open a shoemaker shop (the same trade he had practiced in Germany), and this was thought to require a more central location.

Hans Sievers' house on Avenue C appeared to be an ideal location. Sievers, a German immigrant who had recently died, had run a shoemaker's shop out of his house for many years, and as a result, his house was extremely well suited for Johann's business. After moving in, however, the Finnerns soon discovered that the house was just too small "for so large a family."

Fortunately, a house right across the street owned by Swedish-born jeweler Fred Berg had recently come on the market. Johann was able to purchase it for eight hundred dollars and move his wife and seven children in. In 1896, the Finnern family grew once again with the birth of Albert, the first member of the Finnern family born in America.

In 1897, Henry left *Der Crawford County Demokrat* to work at *The*

Denison Review, an English language newspaper. The reason for Henry's change of employers may never be known with certainty, but several possibilities come to mind. He may have changed jobs to play a bigger role and receive higher wages. It's also possible, however, that Henry's departure was not entirely voluntary, for at about this time, Henry Faul (the brother of Frank Faul, the *Demokrat's* owner) was looking for employment. Since the 1900 U.S. Federal Census indicates that Henry worked at the *Demokrat*, it's conceivable that Frank asked for or prompted Henry's resignation to make room for his brother. Whatever the motivation for the change of employers was, Henry did well at *The Denison Review*, and harbored no ill will towards Frank, as he would return to work for him several years later.

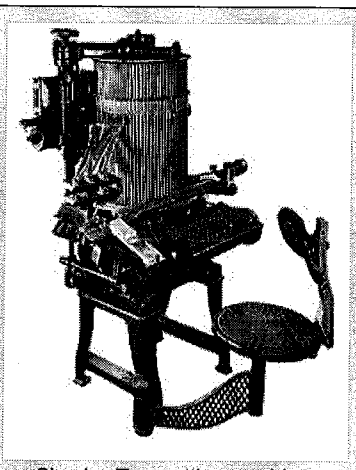
The Finnerns were blessed with their tenth and final child when Hertha was born in 1898. Hertha's birth had occurred twenty-three years after the birth of Emma, the Finnerns' first child. Anna's role as a mother of young children continued long enough to segue directly into her role as a grandmother, as Henry would soon be starting a family of his own.

According to Henry, the house on Avenue C that they bought from Fred Berg would be the Finnern home for a "few years" until father Johann and brother Herman decided to become farmers and moved to an acreage in the southwest corner of Milford Township about two miles northeast of Denison. According to the 1900 U.S. Federal Census (which was enumerated in the month of June), Johann was still working as a shoemaker, and with the exception of Emma, the entire family was still living together under one roof.

Henry's father and brother Herman purchased a 120-acre farm at the southwest corner of Milford Township (about two miles northeast of Denison) from Daniel McCarthy in 1902. One can assume that Herman did most of the actual farm labor himself, as Johann was already over fifty years old and crippled with polio. Furthermore, even when Henry's parents did leave some years later, Herman continued to live and work there.

After his parents moved to the farm in Milford Township, Henry needed to find a place to live. He began boarding at the Hotel Nielsen, formerly the Carstens Hotel. This was the same hotel where Henry and his sister Emma had eaten their first meal after arriving in Denison on the morning of May 19th, 1891.

After Frank Faul won the election for Clerk of the District Court of Crawford County in November of 1900, his path



Simplex Typesetting machine, ca. 1900

Around the beginning of the twentieth century, typesetting machines became available. The publishers of the *Review* installed a machine called the Simplex which was supposed to allow one person to easily set an entire page of type. The Simplex machine had a grooved upright cylinder on which the type was placed. At the touch of the keyboard letter bar, the type would fall and had to be lined up in column widths. Henry claimed that the Simplex was not very successful, since it actually required two people to operate it with any efficiency. The Mergenthaler Linotype made its appearance soon thereafter, followed by another line-casting machine called the Intertype. Both machines were much more successful, and with continual improvements, their basic designs remained in use for decades.

and Henry's crossed once again. Frank needed someone experienced to take the reigns at his newspaper and asked Henry to return to *Der Crawford County Demokrat*. With typical modesty, Henry accepted and began work as the editor on January 1st, 1901. From answering a want ad seeking a boy to "learn the printing business" in 1892 to the editor's chair was an accomplishment that was clearly a testimony to Henry's perseverance and steady personality.

Some time during the next couple of years, Henry met his life's companion, "a very sweet little girl" by the name of Frieda Vosgerau. Born in Stockholm Township in Crawford County on October 27th, 1883, Frieda was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Vosgerau of Denison.

1903 was a year of marriages for the Finnern family, as the three oldest children of Johann and Anna all married in the same year. On April 1st, 1903, Emma was married to Claus Storm, a widower with two children. Emma was almost twenty-eight years old at the time, not an spinster by any means, but older than average for the turn of the twentieth century. Details regarding Emma's life are sketchy at best. She had always been strongly religious, but also had a hard time making her mark on the world, as she'd had no steady work, no husband, and no children. Events in the coming year and a half would explain some of the mystery surrounding her.

On May 27th, 1903, twenty-five-year-old Henry was married to nineteen-year-old Frieda Vosgerau at the Vosgerau home by Reverend F. Lothringer, pastor of the local Zion Lutheran Church. The witnesses were Auguste Heide, Otto Vosgerau, and Maria and Herman Finnern. Otto, Frieda's older brother, would soon become Henry's business partner for the next three decades or so. After their marriage, Henry and Frieda moved into a house at 1916 Broadway, and shortly

This photo may have been taken on May 27, 1903, the wedding day of Fredrika "Frida" W. Finnern née Vosgerau and Heinrich "Henry" Christian Finnern.

Emma Storm née Finnern

thereafter, into a house on Avenue A in Denison.

In October of 1903, Emma was committed to Clarinda State Mental Hospital. She had become fanatical about her religion, and neither she nor her new husband could properly care for herself, nor could her new husband. While the description of her condition lacks precision, her mental state must have been extreme for Claus Storm to have Emma admitted to Clarinda State Mental Hospital.

On December 8th, 1903, Henry's younger sister Maria was married at the Zion Lutheran Church to William Otto of Denison, the same William Otto who nine years earlier had accompanied Henry to the Chicago Northwestern station to greet Henry's family upon their arrival from Germany.

On March 9th, 1904, Lillian Finnern, Henry and Frieda's first child, was born at their home on Avenue A. Henry's salary at the *Demokrat* was twelve dollars a week, a sum on which he and his wife had "managed" for the past year. With the addition of a daughter in their life, weekly expenses were on the rise.

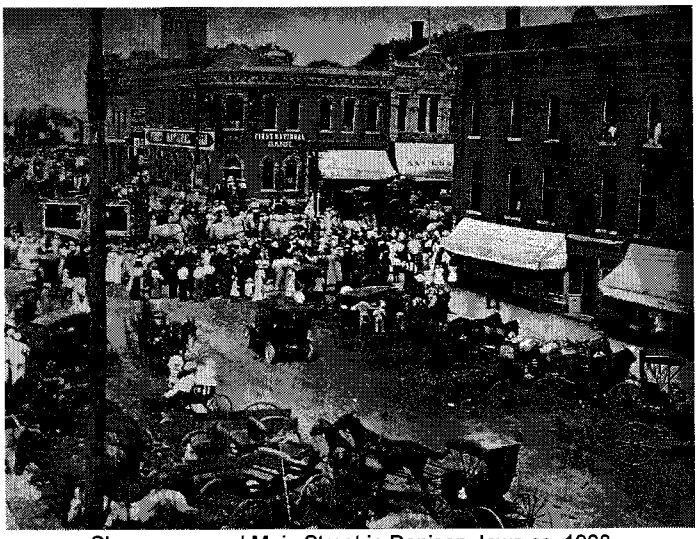
Clarinda State Mental Hospital is a massive building, covering over a 500,000 square feet. It was touted as the world's largest building under one roof, and after four years of construction came to an end in 1888, it had cost the state millions of dollars. Today, the Clarinda State Mental Hospital is a modern facility providing quality care. Back in the early 1900s, however, the dorms were overcrowded, and psychiatric care was simply not as advanced or enlightened as it is today.

In the autumn of 1904, at the same time Theodore Roosevelt was elected president of the United States, Frank Faul lost the election for Clerk of the District Court of Crawford County. Frank decided that he would return to the *Demokrat* as editor in January of 1905 and that Henry would have to relinquish his editorial position.

Losing his job, however, was not to be the only blow befalling Henry in 1904. On November 27th of that year, Emma passed away while still residing at Clarinda State Mental Hospital. The cause of death was recorded as "exhaustion of melancholy." Henry's older sister, the only person to share all his experiences from living in Germany, traveling aboard the *Fürst Bismarck*, and founding a life in America, was gone. The fact that Henry's autobiographical sketch makes no

mention of Claus Storm might reflect some familial ill will caused by Claus' action in committing Emma to the Clarinda State Mental Hospital.

After losing his job at the *Demokrat*, Henry was able to find work a few days a week at the local newspapers, but the wages proved insufficient to support his family. After researching newspapers in other Iowa towns, Henry found that Waterloo's weekly German language newspaper, the *Deutsch-Amerikaner*, was available for purchase. After his purchase of the paper from Schmidt and Horn, Henry took possession on April 1st, 1905. As a result of this purchase, Henry, Frieda, Lillian, and Otto Vosgerau (Henry's brother-in-law and co-buyer of the *Deutsch-Amerikaner*) pulled up stakes and moved to Waterloo.



Shoppers crowd Main Street in Denison, Iowa ca. 1908.

The Waterloo Years

Moving to Waterloo must have been quite a change for Henry and Frieda. At the time of their move in 1905, the population was over eleven thousand, much larger than Denison. Otto Vosgerau came along with the Finnerns to learn the printing trade. It is unclear, however, whether he lived with Henry's family at that time.

The *Deutsch-Amerikaner* began publication on August 29th, 1872, and was edited by A. Schill, a Waterloo resident. Its original form had German on one side and English on the other. On January 1st, 1873, German immigrant Martin Blim, who had wanted to publish a German language newspaper for Waterloo and all of Blackhawk County, purchased the paper and discontinued the English half of the edition. At his death on November 22nd, 1882, Horn and Schmidt, owners of the *Times-Tribune*, an English language daily, purchased the *Deutsch-Amerikaner* and were still its owners in 1905. When Henry purchased the *Deutsch-Amerikaner*, Horn sold his share of the English paper to Schmidt and quit the business. This left Schmidt as editor of only the *Times-Tribune*, the office of which was located upstairs at 626 1/2 Sycamore Street (at the corner of Sycamore and Fifth streets). Knowing about the previous co-ownership of the *Deutsch-Amerikaner* and the *Times-Tribune*, it should come as little surprise that both newspapers shared the same address, office, and printing machinery. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this was a a common practice at the time, as many German language papers in the Midwest shared office space with the local English language newspaper.

At the time when Henry purchased the *Deutsch-Amerikaner*, there

were not one but three daily English language newspapers being published in Waterloo. They were the *Waterloo Courier,* the *Reporter*, and the *Times-Tribune*. Back in Denison, *Der Crawford County Demokrat* was, of course, affiliated with the Democratic party. The *Deutsch-Amerikaner*, on the other hand, was listed as Independent. The *Waterloo Courier* and the *Reporter* were Republican, but the *Times-Tribune* claimed to be both Democratic and Independent!

In 1906, Henry's newspaper was in fine shape. Otto had turned out to be an outgoing and ambitious business partner. He was friendly and gregarious, and as such, found great success in selling subscriptions and attracting advertisers. The newspaper's prosperity allowed Henry and his family to move into a larger house at 317 Lafayette Street, along with their daughter Lillian, of course. On December 19th, 1906, Henry's sister Martha was married to William Paulsen. On May 31st, 1907, Henry's brother Herman was married to Catherine Schneider.

By 1908, Henry's fifteen-year-old sister Minna had moved in with Henry's family. She had completed her schooling and was working for Henry as a typesetter at the *Deutsch-Amerikaner*. With Frieda pregnant with her second child, the house at 317 Lafayette Street would soon become too small for the growing family. As a result, Henry bought a larger house at 1024 Sycamore Street, a purchase no doubt made possible by his continued success in the newspaper business. On December 16th, 1908, Henry and Frieda welcomed their second child, Ruby Marie Finnern.

Henry's brother-in-law Otto was an ambitious man and strove to run a business of his own. Early in 1909, he was offered a position at *The Denison Review*, and the "love of the old home" brought him back to Denison. There might have been even more of a pull to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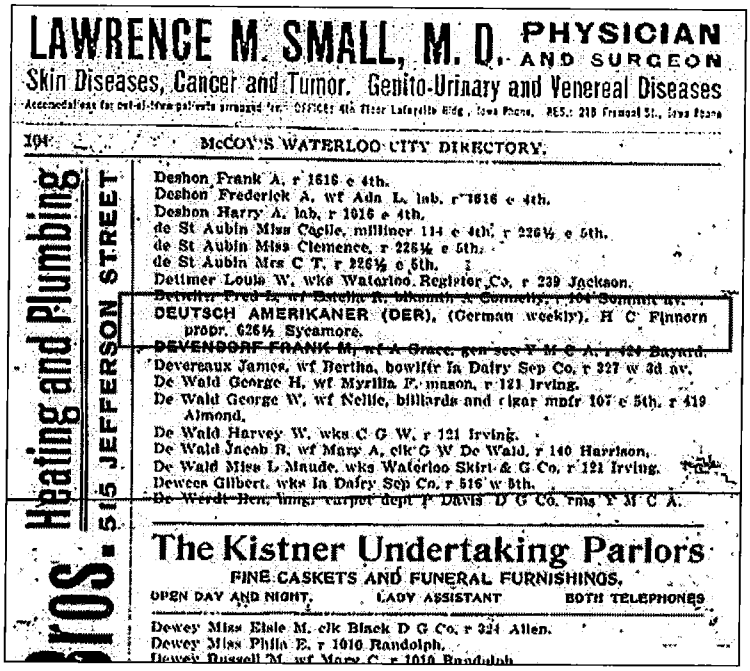
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Deshon Frank A, r 1616 e 4th.
Deshon Frederick A, wf Ada L, lab, r 1616 e 4th.
Deshon Harry A, lab, r 1616 e 4th.
de St Aubin Miss Cecile, milliner 114 e 4th, r 226½ e 5th.
de St Aubin Miss Clemence, r 226½ e 5th.
de St Aubin Mrs C T, r 226½ e 5th.
Dettmer Louis W, wks Waterloo Register Co, r 239 Jackson.
Detwiler Fred L, wf Estelle R, blksmith A Connelly, r 104 Summit av.
DEUTSCH AMERIKANER (DER), (German weekly), H C Finnern propr, 626½ Sycamore.
DEVENDORF FRANK M, wf A Grace, gen sec Y M C A, r 421 Bayard.
Devereaux James, wf Bertha, bowlfir In Dairy Sep Co, r 327 w 3d av.
De Wald George H, wf Myrilla F, mason, r 121 Irving.
De Wald George W, wf Nellie, billiards and cigar mnfr 107 e 5th, r 419 Almond.
De Wald Harvey W, wks C G W, r 121 Irving.
De Wald Jacob R, wf Mary A, clk G W De Wald, r 140 Harrison.
De Wald Miss L Maude, wks Waterloo Skirt & G Co, r 121 Irving.
Dewees Gilbert, wks In Dairy Sep Co, r 516 w 8th.
De Werdt Ben, bngs carpet dept, r Davis D G Co, rms Y M C A.

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FINE CASKETS AND FUNERAL FURNISHINGS.
OPEN DAY AND NIGHT. LADY ASSISTANT BOTH TELEPHONES

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***Der Deutsch-Amerikaner's* listing in Waterloo's 1908 directory**

As was the case in the 1906-1907 directory, the address was listed as 626 ½ Sycamore. Henry Finnern, who was listed as the publisher in the 1906-1907 directory, was listed as the "proprietor" in this directory. Sadly, no issue of or article from this newspaper has survived.

Denison than just a new job, as Otto was married to Margaret Boettger on July 28th, 1909.

Probably also in 1909 but possibly before then, Henry began another business venture, the earliest record of which is a listing from Waterloo's directory. The listing not only touted the *Deutsch-Amerikaner* as the only German newspaper in Blackhawk, Buchanan, Grundy and Tama Counties, but also stated that their office acted as an agent for all steamship lines. It was surely Henry's fondness for his passage to, and opportunity in, America that gave him the desire to run a steamship travel agency on the side. He continued to arrange transatlantic travel for decades to come.

Henry was always a civic minded man with a solid devotion to his community, friends, and family. On December 12th, 1909, the *Waterloo Courier* ran an article that consisted mostly of a letter that Henry had written to the editor of *The Denison Review*. The article read:

"*With pleasure I noticed in your paper this week that Denison Business Men are waking up and are going after some of the good things the town ought to have. Since moving to Waterloo, I have found that the way to make a town grow is to have the businessmen and the real estate owners together with the capitalists go after everything that will make the town grow and to make the place an ideal one to reside in. Take the history of Waterloo. Twenty-five years ago the town had a population of 5,000 ... [twenty] years brought the figures up to 8,000, the next five up to 12,000 and in 1905 the census gave it at 18,071. ... When the census figures of 1910 will be published, you will find us not far from 28,000. ... . The Club and Chamber of Commerce spent many thousands of dollars to get factories to locate here, and business and monied men have taken stock in factories... .*

Now what Waterloo has been doing and is doing, Denison is able to do ... . Get after the federal building, the opera house, and build it for the future... pave the streets ... stir up the old town ... let the world know that Denison is on the map."

Henry wasn't just a motivational writer; he was a doer as well. In just a few years, he would be back in Denison making the improvements he mentioned in his letter to the editor and more.

Also in late 1909, Frank Faul the owner and editor of *Der Crawford County Demokrat*, Henry's first home in the newspaper business, was again elected as Clerk of the District Court. Clearly, Frank's heart was in his civic duties more than the newspaper business at this time in his life, since instead of finding another temporary editor, he offered to sell the *Demokrat* to Otto in 1910.

Otto, Henry's brother-in-law, was excited about Frank's proposal, but knew he would need some help. He contacted Henry to inquire whether he might want to share in both the financial investment and the editorial work. Henry decided that a return to Denison would be most agreeable. Since he still owned the *Deutsch-Amerikaner*, however, he would need to find a way to take care of its daily operations before he could head back to his erstwhile hometown.

The 1910 United States Federal Census bore out Henry's prediction regarding Waterloo's population. By that year, it had already nearly reached thirty thousand.

The Finnerns attended Waterloo's German Lutheran Immanuel Church, located at 207 Franklin Street within close walking distance of their home. The church's first service had been held just after Christmas in 1878, with services in the Railroad chapel in East 4th

Street. By 1890, the church that the Finnerns attended at Franklin Street had been built. There was an associated parochial school founded in 1888, for which a building was erected in 1902. Lillian attended this parochial school, receiving Christian training and instruction in both German and English (with German in the morning and English in the afternoon).

In the summer of 1910, Henry's sister Minna moved back to Denison, leaving the house a little emptier. The Finnerns built and moved into a smaller house at 327 Irving Street, despite their imminent move back to Denison. It is quite likely that the move was made, in part, to free up some capital in order to purchase *Der Crawford County Demokrat*.

On January 1st, 1911, the *Demokrat* officially transfered ownership to Henry Finnern and Otto Vosgerau. Their partnership at the paper would last for about three more decades until Otto's death. Preparing for that partnership, however, proved difficult. Henry's attempts to find a suitable editor to take over his capacities at the *Deutsch-Amerikaner* did not meet with immediate success.

From left to right: Frieda, Lillian, Ruby, and Minna, Henry's sister.

In the spring of 1911, Henry hired a man by the name of Leopold, who turned out to be quite capable, but dishonest. After a

few months working for Henry, Leopold was imprisoned in the Fort Madison penitentiary for stealing money and forging checks.

No promising candidates for the position presented themselves until later in the fall of 1911, when Henry took on Mr. J. Baumbach of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as editor and manager of the Waterloo newspaper. After a few months of training and supervision, Henry felt comfortable leaving the *Deutsch-Amerikaner* in the hands of his new employee, thus finally freeing him up to move back to Denison and take the reigns at the *Demokrat* once again.

Henry, Frieda, Lillian, and Ruby packed up their belongings at 327 Irving Street and headed for Denison, Henry's true hometown. Before selling his Waterloo house, Henry rented it out for some years.

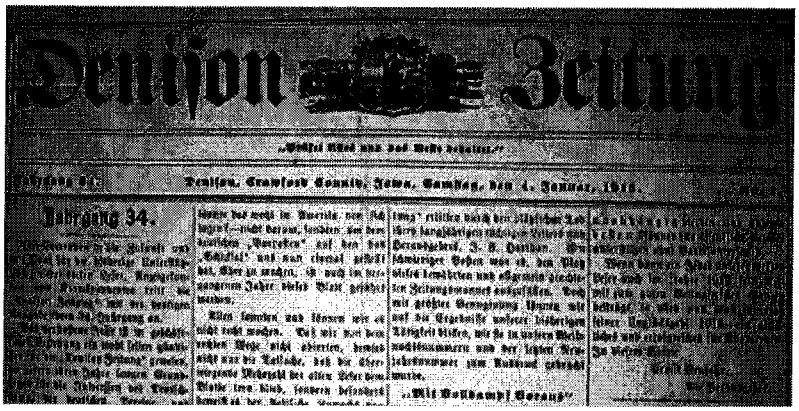
Storm Clouds on the Horizon

Henry Finnern moved back to Denison in the spring of 1912 with his wife Frieda and daughters Lillian and Ruby. He found that his newspaper, *Der Crawford County Demokrat* (distributed every Thursday) was in competition with three other publications: the German language *Die Denison Zeitung* (distributed every Saturday by Julius F. Harthun), the *Denison Bulletin* (distributed every Wednesday by Grant Leroy Caswell), and *The Denison Review* (also distributed every Wednesday by Meyers and Tucker).

Despite the competition, or perhaps to counter it, Henry and Otto decided to expand, and bought a building on Main Street. This was a big change, as the *Demokrat* had been printed in the office of the *Denison Bulletin* since its inception in 1887, just as the *Deutsch-Amerikaner* had been published from the same facilities as the *Times-Tribune* in Waterloo.

Professor Julius F. Harthun originally came to Denison to teach at

the German language school run by Denison's German *Verein* (traditional Germanic association), but later, also assumed editorship of *Die Denison Zeitung*.


Denison's first German-language newspaper, Die Denison Zeitung, began publishing in 1879.

While still active in his profession and community, Professor Harthun died unexpectedly in 1912. A few months later, Henry and Otto purchased the paper from his estate and consolidated it with the *Demokrat*. On March 1st, 1913, the combined newspapers were renamed *Der Denison Herold*, the title it would keep until the fateful day of October 6th, 1918 – Henry's "darkest day."

Frieda had been pregnant with their third child when the move was made back to Denison. On August 23rd, 1912, their first son, Arnold Henry Finnern was born.

1912 was a very busy year for Henry, as he also became a candidate for the appointment of postmaster of Denison. With *Der Crawford County Demokrat* being a Democratic publication and President

Wilson having been elected on the Democratic ticket, Henry had hoped that he would receive the appointment, but it was not yet his time. The county chairman of the Democratic party also had designs on the position, not for himself, but rather, for his son. All these ambitions met with disappointment. Henry did not become Denison's postmaster in 1912 and neither did the county chairman's son. Henry's aspirations never waned, however, as he was called to the duty of postmaster some twenty years later.

In 1913, Henry organized with fourteen other men (including prominent businessmen and civic leaders) to provide Denison with a suitable building for public gatherings. In January of 1913, the *Deutsche Brüderschaft* or German Brotherhood (which changed its name to the Columbia Society in 1918), of which Henry was a member, voted to raise fifty thousand dollars by selling five hundred shares of stock valued at one hundred dollars each in *Die Deutsche Opernhaus Gesellschaft von Denison* (The German Denison Opera House Company). Henry bought five shares himself, no small investment for the time. The opera house's name was kept the same until 1918, when it was changed to the Denison Opera House Company. At the company's founding, Henry was unanimously elected president and continued in this capacity (unopposed at each election) for the next fifty years.

The opera house was officially opened on May 18th, 1914, with a performance of *The Ghost Breaker*. Commenting on the show, Henry wrote that "Unfortunately, it turned out to be a farce. People paid a good price to see it and it certainly wasn't worth what they paid." Despite a rocky first night, the new 775-seat opera house on the corner of Main and Broadway received a warm welcome in the community. It was financially successful for many years, paying its investors yearly dividends checks until 1962.

The new opera house was later converted into the Ritz Theater where Denison's most famous citizen, Donna Belle Mullenger, better known as Donna Reed, fell in love with motion pictures.

In 1988, the Donna Reed Foundation, with community financial support and corporate grants, saved the building. In 1995, the first

Denison's most famous resident, Donna Reed (the former Donna Belle Mullenger), flanked by Denison mayor Nathan Mahrt and Henry Finnern biographer, Yogi Reppmann.

phase of restoration was completed, and on June 25th, 2004, the Donna Reed Heritage Museum was opened to the public. The building is also currently home to the Donna Reed Performing Arts Center.

A fourth child, Marvin Finnern, was born on Septemer 4th, 1916. One year later, the continued success of *Der Denison Herold* enabled Henry and Frieda to build a new home on Wall Street. Wall Street has since been renamed, and the house's address is now 143 Avenue B. All in all, life was treating the Finnerns very well. But storm clouds were on the horizon – not just the coming World War and

Denison 1910 - 1915

The population of the town was 3133 in 1910. Many exciting events were taking place in Denison during these years.

In August of 1910 thousands gathered at the Northwestern Depot to greet former president Roosevelt, during his short train stop visit in Denison. President Taft spoke briefly to a crowd of 3,000 at the Illinois Depot in 1911, and 1915 President Wilson's train stopped for a short time as the train took on water at the Illinois Central Depot in Denison.

In 1910 some Denisonites gathered to view Haley's Comet from the hill by the college. Prohibition became an issue. 5,000 were on hand to celebrate the Fourth of July, and a large circus came to town which was so pleased with the turnout that they returned in 1912.

"Crawford County History", 1987, p. 68.

the growing xenophobia towards all things German, but also several personal tragedies that were in store for Henry and his family in the coming years.

Outside the scope of Henry's life, the rest of the world was tilting ever closer to one of the twentieth century's terrible lessons, the World War I. Germany declared the waters surrounding the British Isles a war zone on February 4th, 1915. In April of that year, the Imperial German Embassy attempted to place warnings in fifty U.S. newspapers, advising Americans to avoid sea travel in the declared war zone. The State Department, however, blocked the publication of all but one of these ads. The *Des Moines Register* was the only Iowa newspaper that printed Germany's public warning.

On May 7th, 1915, the *RMS Lusitania* was torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine, *U-20*. 1,198 souls were lost, 197 of them American. Even though the sinking of the *Lusitania* did not impel America directly into the war, the event quickly permeated the nation's

psyche, bringing about the largest early wave of anti-German sentiment.

On June 5th, 1917, Congress passed the Espionage Act. The fifth section of this act stated that "whoever harbors or conceals any person who he knows, or has reasonable grounds to believe or suspect, has committed, or is about to commit, an offense under this title shall be punished by a fine of not more than $10,000 or by imprisonment for not more than two years, or both." This severe penalty "laid the foundation for a spirit of vigilantism and suspicion" by fostering a climate where all things German were suspected of being unpatriotic and threats to the war effort.

After the U.S. had entered the war, President Wilson, in order to "whip up the war fever," turned to journalistic muckraker and friend George Creel to head the Center for Public Interest (C.P.I.). Organizing writers, musicians, artists, teachers, and scout leaders, the C.P.I. grew into a massive agency "burrowing into almost every aspect of daily life."

One of many actions taken by the C.P.I. was the creation of a cartoon bureau. Realizing that many Americans read the funnies and little else in the newspaper, the C.P.I. decided that cartoons would be the perfect bed in which to plant anti-German propaganda. As a result, the "dreaded Germans" now sprouted snouts, tusks, hairy faces, red eyes, and fangs.

The C.P.I. also affected the movies that were made during this time. Films such as *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin*, *The Claws of the Hun*, *The Prussian Cur*, and *Wolves of Kultur* were typical fare. An afternoon at the movies would include the C.P.I.'s weekly newsreel, the *Official War Review*.

Music, too, was not exempt from the reach of the C.P.I., as one of its nineteen domestic divisions focused efforts solely in this area. The common theme was the need to unite against the shared enemy, the Germans. Music was infested with anti-German lyrics and imagery of the "grotesque and evil Germans." Pro-war messages were often printed on the sheet music itself, and over one hundred anti-Kaiser songs were written including *We Are Out for the Scalp of Mister Kaiser.* Beethoven was banned in Pittsburg, and Dr. Karl Muck, the German-born conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, was arrested on charges that he was a national security threat.

Other areas in the artistic realm were impacted as well. Statues of Goethe, Schiller, and other German cultural icons were torn down. Even artistic adornments on buildings were not spared, as the figure of the goddess Germania was removed from the Germania Life Insurance Building in St. Paul, Minnesota. In Davenport, Iowa, a statue of the same goddess in a local park that had been a German cultural center was sold as scrap iron.

On November 23rd, 1917, the Iowa State Council of Defense proclaimed that the "public schools of Iowa, supported by public taxation, should discontinue the teaching of the German language ... in the interest of harmonizing and bringing our people together with a common language, believing thus they would act more patriotically and more essentially with a common purpose."

In February of 1918, Lafayette Young, chairman of the Iowa Council of National Defense, asked public libraries across the state to take "pro-German" books or books that aimed to "defend Germany's course in the war" off their shelves. When the Davenport public library removed three "decidedly pro-German" books from its shelves, the *Davenport Democrat and Leader* trumpeted this as

an act in the "crusade to extract Kaiser Wilhelm's poisonous 'kultur venom' from Iowa libraries." The director of one Iowa library stated "During the past summer and fall we had a few pro-German books donated, but I burned them as they came in." On May 18, in an event endorsed by the school faculties in Davenport, Iowa, students of several local schools assembled on school grounds and proceeded to burn five hundred German textbooks while singing patriotic songs. In Fergus, Montana, a principal who had the temerity to continue teaching German language classes was forced to kiss the American flag and proclaim his loyalty while German books were tossed into a fire and the crowd sang *America* and the *Star Spangled Banner.* Back in Denison, a mob broke into the Denison School's Central Building, gathered all the German books, piled them in the schoolyard, and set them on fire. As if the point had not been driven home hard enough, someone left the message "No more German" on one of the blackboards.

A nationwide attempt was made to drive German influence from America's vocabulary. Children no longer contracted German measles; instead they were sick with "liberty measles." Sauerkraut became "liberty cabbage", hamburgers were rechristened "liberty steaks", and dachshunds were transmogrified into "liberty dogs."

Town and street names were changed as well. Berlin Township in Clinton County, Iowa, was renamed Hughes. In Muscatine, Bismarck Street became Bond Street and Hanover Avenue became Liberty Avenue. In Kossuth County, the town of Germania was renamed Lakota. In Cincinnati, German Street became English Street, Berlin Street morphed into Woodrow Street, Bremen Street changed into Republic Street, and on and on.

Businesses were renamed to "show their patriotism" or, more to the

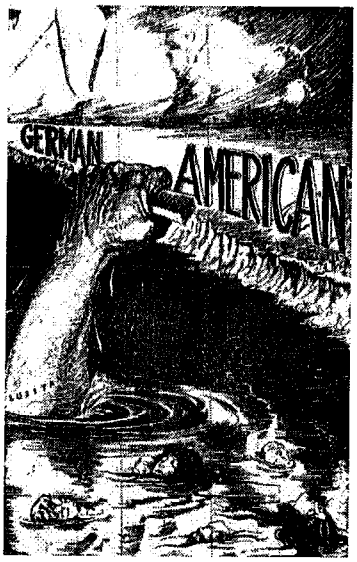
point, to allow them to stay in business. Names like the German Savings Bank in Davenport, Iowa, were simply no longer viable. Parks like Davenport's *Schützenpark* were also rechristened with names such as Forest Park, and patriotic assemblies were held within their confines to make abundantly clear that they were not gathering places for German sympathizers. This same sentiment forced Henry's opera house to change its name to the Denison Opera House Company.

German newspapers were especially hard hit. Under a 1917 law, these newspapers were required to supply English translations to local postmasters to see if any censorship was needed. On September 7th, 1918, one of the oldest and most respected German language newspapers in the state, Davenport's *Der Demokrat*, ceased publication. In Manning, Iowa (only twenty-three miles from Denison), the front of the *Der Manning Herold* building was splashed with yellow paint. This threatening action caused the paper to make an abrupt change from German to English and to change its name to the *Manning Monitor*. Many of the loyal readers of these newspapers throughout the country were furious at losing their German newspapers, as many of them had emigrated from Germany long before World War I and felt no responsibility for what was happening in Europe.

Publisher Ron Colling

Could German-Americans be loyal Americans while still speaking the enemy's language?

Iowa's Governor William L. Harding did not think so. The loss of one's native language, Harding believed, was a "small sacrifice compared to the good it could do saving the lives of American boys overseas by curbing sedition at home." On May 23rd, 1918, Harding issued what became known as the Babel Proclamation. This proclamation, which made Iowa the only state in the nation to decree English as the only legal spoken lanuguage, forbade the use of other languages "in public, private, denominational or other similar schools ... in public spaces, on trains and over the telephone ... (in) all public addresses," and in all religious services.



Removing the hyphen:

"Now it Must Be Either One or the Other!"

As is so often the case in times of war, patriotism was the guise under which the "systematic eradication of German language and culture" proceeded.

Most violations of the Babel Proclamation that resulted in arrest involved party line telephone conversations. Switchboard operators and eavesdroppers, fearing that people speaking German were collaborating with the enemy, reported infractions to the authorities. Iowa's overzealous language restrictions made Governor Harding the laughingstock of the nation when five Scott County farm wives were arrested for speaking German during a party line conversation.

Ironically, one of the five reasons Harding cited in support of his ban

was "to promote peace and harmony in the communities." Unfortunately, federal and state laws, proclamations such as Harding's Babel Proclamation, and acts of government agencies such as the C.P.I. did not promote peace and harmony. Instead, they fostered a climate of distrust and antagonism towards anything recognized as "foreign" and put an official imprimatur on the actions of private individuals that were often hateful, mean-spirited, and sometimes violent.

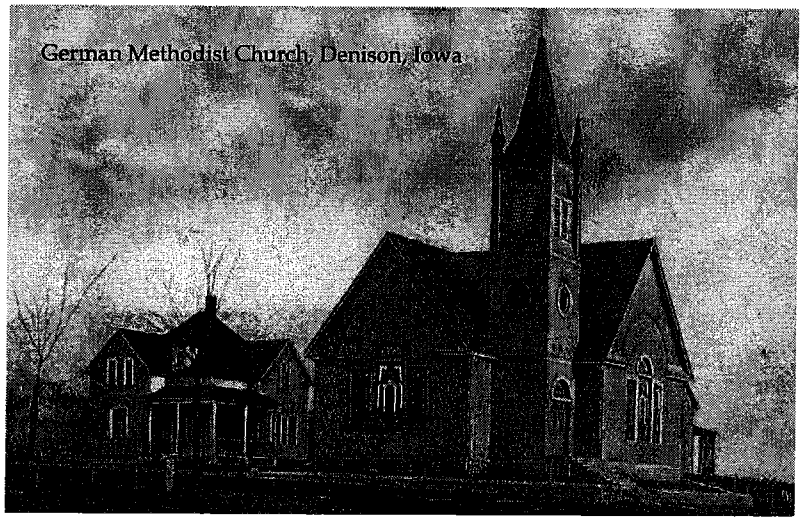
Governor William L. Harding

In his extensively researched *German Americans in the World Wars*, Munich 1995, Don H. Tolzmann stressed that after the formation of the volunteer vigilante group known as The American Protective League (APL), which had ties to the Department of Justice, 'patriots' had no worries about repercussions when harassing, intimidating, or physically assaulting German-Americans since local and state officials rarely interceded to protect their rights.

Tolzmann explains that the APL's task of investigating alleged suspicious activity that 'posed a danger to the war effort' drew in over 250,000 members who eavesdropped, opened mail, burglarized, slandered, and illegally arrested innocent people.

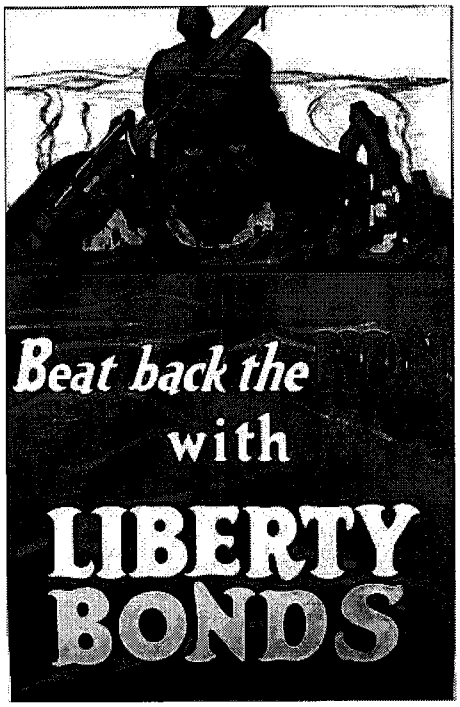
In Denison, oral history of events that went unreported in local

newspapers, reveals that citizens went to the local German Methodist Church and demanded that it stop holding services in German. Some believe that there were threats to burn down the church. In early 1918, after the church's name was changed to the Second Methodist Episcopal Church, the congregation disbanded and sold the building. Nothing of this was mentioned in the Denison newspapers.



Sadly, these two concrete steps are the only evidence of the German Methodist Church that once occupied this lot on Main Street in Denison. In an era of rampant anti-German sentiment, the church was cut into two parts in 1918 and transported (possibly by train) to Hull, Iowa. Today, little if anything is known about what became of the congregation and the church they worshiped in.

On May 8th, 1918, the headline in a Davenport newspaper – "Gov't. Marshals begin round-up of pro-Germans" – bristled with patriotic fervor. The story recounted how the county defense council had visited a number of farmers (of German heritage, no doubt) suspected of having made anti-American statements. John Schrag, a Mennonite farmer was doused with yellow paint, threatened with hanging, and beaten when he refused to salute the flag on religious grounds and buy liberty bonds.



A 1918 poster by Fred Strothmann

Throughout the country, county Councils of Defense such as the one in Crawford County, Iowa, issued orders that each resident purchase War Savings Stamps based on their property value. German Americans were often intimidated both physically and emotionally into buying Liberty Bonds. Crawford County farmer C. M. Pederson's mailbox had a sign nailed to it that read "C. M. Pederson, worth $30,000, bought $250 worth of bonds. Slacker." Across the country, failure to accede to these threats could result in being whipped, tarred and feathered, or the loss of one's job.

One of the most egregious examples of violence perpetrated by those Henry Finnern called the "super-Americans" occurred on the night of April 4th, 1918, in Collingsville, Illinois. A group of local miners apprehended Robert Paul Prager, a baker's assistant who was thought to be a German spy. Prager was dragged from his home, forced to kiss the American flag and sing patriotic songs in front of a crowd, and interrogated about his supposed actions as a German spy. Prager pleaded in vain that he was loyal to the United States, but undeterred, the mob of miners wrapped him in a flag and hanged him from a tree. Although Prager's protestations about not being a spy were true, no member of the lynch mob received any jail time. During their trial, the defendants wore red, white, and blue ribbons, while a band in the courthouse played patriotic songs. After only twenty-five minutes of deliberation, the jury returned their verdict of "not guilty." Unbelievably, the members of the lynch mob were even commended for having allowed their victim to write a farewell letter.

A propaganda poster entitled "Destroy This Mad Brute" by H. R. Hopps, ca. 1916.

In Texas, a German Lutheran pastor was whipped for preaching a sermon in German. In Nebraska, a pastor was beaten by a mob for the same "offenses." In South Dakota, high school students were praised for dumping their German textbooks in the river. In Colo-

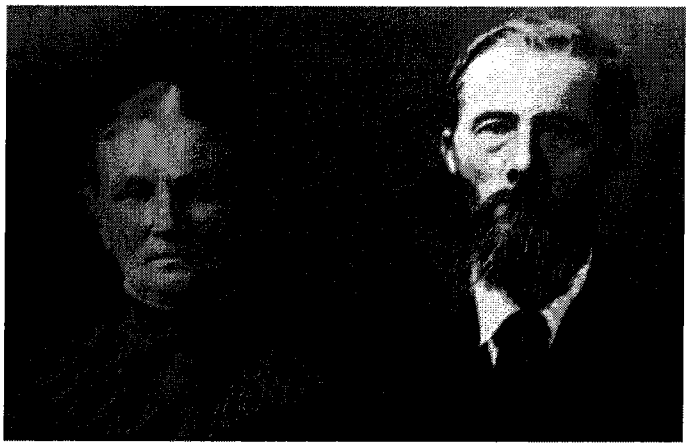
rado, a German book-burning rally drew hundreds of participants, while in Kansas, a German parochial school was burned down by "patriots." Even grave sites were not off limits for this super-patriotism. In New Jersey, graves in a Hessian cemetery, containing remains from the Revolutionary war era were exhumed and thrown in the river.

Perhaps the saddest result of all the things done in the name of patri-

A November, 1917 cartoon by *Des Moines Register* cartoonist J. N. "Ding" Darling reinforces the idea that German-Americans could not be trusted.

otism, however, was that many German-Americans began rejecting their Germanic culture and heritage. Family names were "Americanized." Membership in German cultural and political organizations plummeted. Family bibles were discarded and German heritage hidden, thus cutting off their own descendants from access to music, photographs, family anecdotes, and oral and written history.

Back home in Denison, Henry received news that his sixty-five-year-old mother had died in Kennan, Wisconsin on January 25, 1918. Her body was sent back to Denison where she was buried in the cemetery of the Zion Lutheran Church. Her service was held in German, and the memorial page was printed in German as well. That memorial page, or *Gedenkblatt*, is one of the last German language documents from Henry's life. Nearly all manifestations of German in the lives of the Finnerns ceased later that year on October 6th, or as Henry called it, "the darkest day."



Henry's parents, Anna Maria Louise Finnern née Kaehler and Johann Christian Finnern

The Darkest Day

Henry quotes an article from *The Denison Review* in his autobiographical sketch regarding the events of Sunday, October 6th, 1918:

"Mr. Finnern was then called upon to address the meeting. He stated that he came to Crawford County when he was 13 years of age and had made his home here ever since with the exception of a few years when he lived at Waterloo, Iowa. Mr. Finnern stated that he was a loyal American citizen, and had supported his government to the best of his ability. He explained that he was complying with all the government regulations pertaining to publication of foreign publications, that an exact translation of all articles pertaining to the war or war activities were filed with the postmaster J. T. Carey, and that a copy of the paper was sent each week to the Treasury Department at Washington D.C. where it was carefully checked over by government officials. Mr. Finnern acknowledged that there was a feeling against German language newspapers and that while he had preferred to have changed the language of the publication at a later date he appreciated the fact that the majority of the people were against it and the change would be made at once. His address was loudly cheered and at the conclusion several people stated that they would support the paper if it was published in English."

The article only hints at the gravity and volatility of the situation that befell Henry. Indeed, the threat was far more imminent and hostile to Henry's life and livelihood.

Early that afternoon, about five hundred people from southwestern Iowa gathered in Dow City, about six miles outside of Denison. The

"delegation," as it was called by *The Denison Review*, rolled into Denison in one hundred automobiles. Upon arrival, the mob gathered near the office of *Der Denison Herold.* They were joined by a few hundred curious, concerned, and equally incensed Denison residents. Curiously absent from the throngs were Denison's mayor, the county sheriff, and members of the local police force.

Someone started a fire in the back of the building, but it was quickly spotted and extinguished by Denison's more levelheaded residents. By about three P.M., a spokesman had emerged from the crowd, Reverend Barker, pastor of the Baptist Church at Dow City. Barker explained that the crowd consisted of concerned citizens interested in seeing Governor Harding's Babel Proclamation upheld. Unless "favorable" action was taken regarding Henry's newspaper, however, Reverend Barker would not take personal responsibility for "what might happen in the future."

The German contingent in Schleswig, (twelve miles north of Denison) was a hearty bunch, however, as was recounted by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Dale Maharidge in his book *Denison, Iowa.*

"Some days later, a procession of a dozen or so cars of the same men from Dow City drove to Schleswig, to the north, brandishing shotguns and rifles, determined to 'change the name, stop the speaking of German, and make the people into good Americans', wrote Larry Grill in his self-published book, Schleswig in Iowa.

Mayor Jimmy Schultz waited for them, alone, by a flagpole. He welcomed the Dow City men and then listed all the Schleswig men who were fighting in the war and those who had purchased war bonds. Schultz asked: Did they have this much patriotism in their community?

'As the mayor spoke, the men from Dow City began to notice that from every window, every doorway, over every fence and from every alley, there was a gun barrel pointed at them ... He thanked them for their visit and wished them a pleasant trip home,' wrote Grill. The mob left without incident."

From: "Building a Bridge - How the citizens of Holstein, Iowa renewed contacts with their ancestral homeland.", E. Böttcher, V. Degen, J. Reppmann, Davenport, 2006, p.88.

Six men from the crowd were then appointed to retrieve Henry to see if some arrangement might be made to do away with the printing of the paper. The appointees may not have been carrying a rope as they headed off to Henry's house, but Henry's daughter Norma had heard that a lynching was certainly an option in their minds. A friend of Henry's, however, had already called to say that he ought to get over to the office.

If anyone was well acquainted with the stories of public humiliation, vandalism, and beatings of German-Americans, it was newspaperman Henry Finnern. Knowing full well the danger and explosiveness of the situation, Henry courageously and resolvedly chose to directly confront the mob.

Henry was met by the six men on Wall Street (now Avenue B) and escorted to his office. After briefly stepping inside to collect a few documents, he locked the door and climbed atop a truck to address the crowd. Henry's calm demeanor, even-keeled personality, and lifelong dedication to his community would all be required if he were to survive the volatile situation he had injected himself into.

Henry began by showing his draft card to the crowd. (Although already forty-one years of age, Henry had dutifully registered for the draft.) He then produced the War Savings Stamps he had purchased to show that his investment exceeded the suggested ratio based on one's property value. Continuing to make the case that he was a loyal American, Henry read from various letters and documents from state and public officials. These documents demonstrated that *Der Denison Herold* had not only complied with regulations, but had also stressed the importance of winning the war and supporting all war activities such as buying war stamps, bonds, and the like.

Nevertheless, the mob was not completely satisfied with the case that Henry had made. His words had mollified the throng to some extent, but in the end, it was his announcement that publication of *Der Denison Herold* would immediately cease that "set things right" with the crowd. They were even more pleased when Henry informed them that a new paper, the English language *The Denison Herald*, would replace the former *Der Denison Herold*, and that it would continue with the same political alignment as before and with similar content and readership."

Henry Finnern (left) with his staff inside *Der Denison Herold.*

It seems that Henry may have narrowly avoided becoming another Robert Paul Prager. Surely that was a great relief and no small thing to be thankful for. His livelihood, however, underwent the same change as the *Manning Monitor*, many parks, schools, banks, and countless other institutions. The storm clouds had finally gathered overhead and rained directly on Denison, but with the end of the war,

the political climate would begin to clear. As the "darkest day" in Henry's business career drew to a close, the crowd dispersed. Henry had survived to fight another day, but now faced the costly and difficult task of changing the language of his newspaper. Switching the language of a newspaper in those days was not an easy task. Entirely new type and typesetting equipment had to be purchased, English composition skills had to be honed, and contracts with advertisers and readers renegotiated. Amazingly, Henry's new competitors, the publishers of the *Bulletin* and the *Review*, helped out by setting type and lending use of their English type and facilities until The *Denison Herald* could procure its own.

Otto was out of town visiting friends that Sunday, so the news regarding his own business (he was a co-owner of *Der Denison Herold*) reached him after Henry's pronouncement to the mob. Nevertheless, he supported Henry's actions, and the two men saw to it that the first edition of the nascent Herald was released that same week.

Inside Henry's newspaper

Perseverance and Honor

After spending about seven years building up a successful business I came to the point to start over again.

Henry Finnern

When the "darkest day" in Henry's business career had ended, there were discussions about bringing the leaders of the mob to justice. After consulting with attorneys and members of the Military Board of the county, it seemed unlikely that any restitution would be forthcoming. Recently, however, Norma Graves née Finnern (Henry's youngest daughter) suggested that the real reasons no legal action was pursued were Henry's practicality and Christianity. Henry had calmly assessed the situation, weighed the costs and benefits, and decided to "turn the other cheek." The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and deal with setbacks was a personality trait that served Henry well throughout his entire life.

With the support of brother-in-law Otto, Henry stepped directly into the English newspaper business and found great success in his endeavor. Facing no political pressure to leave, most of Henry's advertisers stayed with him after the change from German to English. The readership, however, showed a greater turnover, as many subscribers could not read English. Henry's focus, therefore, had to be on winning as many English-reading subscribers as possible from his competitors, *The Denison Bulletin* and *The Denison Review*.

Considering their identical political alignment, it should have been clear that Henry's *Denison Herald*, Caswell's *Denison Bulletin*, and Meyers and Tucker's *Denison Review* would suffer in this new com-

petition. Something had to give. Caswell's popularity waned due to his "conduct of the war," causing some of his readers to leave and start subscribing to *The Denison Herald.* This proved to be the cause of a tipping point, wherein Caswell's readers put down the *Denison Bulletin* and picked up The *Denison Herald.* Caswell noticed this, of course, and offered to sell his paper to Henry, who completed the purchase on November 1st, 1918. The change in readership came swiftly, as the deal was effected on November 1st, 1918. Henry now operated the largest newspaper in Denison (rechristened *The Denison Bulletin and Herald*) with a circulation much larger than that of its only competitor, *The Denison Review.*

Ten days later, somewhere in the Compiegne Forest, World War I ended in a train car. November 11th brought an armistice treaty between the Allies and Germany, but did not resolve the contempt for German language and culture that had become so prevalent in the United States. It would be many years before the seeds of German culture again sprouted in American soil.

Prohibition was enacted in 1919, but had little effect on Denison, and even less of an impact on Henry's life. The next constitutional amendment, the nineteenth, was proposed by the United States Congress that June. While ratification of the amendment would take another year, women's suffrage meant that Henry's wife and daughters would soon have the right to vote, a right that would surely mean a great deal to a community-minded family such as the Finnerns.

The 1920 U.S. Federal Census reveals that the Finnerns lived on Wall Street, had four children, and were paying on a mortgage on their home. Henry was still president of the English Denison Opera House Company and still a member of the Lutheran school board

and the Denison chamber of commerce. Henry's commitment to the town, his church, and his friends was far more than window dressing; it was his way of life.

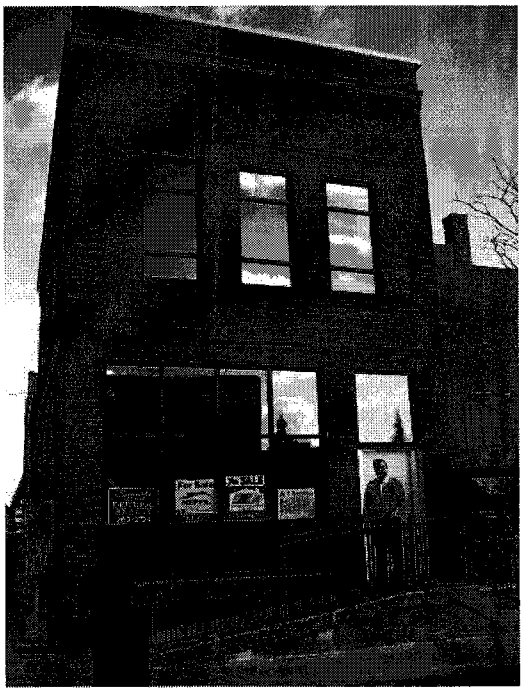
The Schleswig-Holstein Plebiscites of 1920 validated some of the reasons for Henry's emigration twenty-nine years earlier. As a result of these plebiscites, Northern Schleswig again became part of Denmark, thus resolving much of the border-related tension that had been so prevalent at the time of Henry's departure almost three decades earlier.

Another indirect comment on the timing of Henry's emigration was the Emergency Quota Act of 1921. The first act of its kind in the United States, it limited the number of immigrants that would be admitted each year from a given country to three percent of the American population from that country that had been living in the United States as of 1910. This act was evidence of a growing isolationist sentiment resulting from World War I. Although there had been armistice in effect since 1918, the United States did not officially declare peace with Germany, Austria, and Hungary until 1921. America was ready to wrap things up with Europe and begin focusing its attention at home.

Although radio was not yet as popular a source of news dissemination as newspapers, its popularity was growing quickly. President Warren G. Harding is said to have installed a radio in the White House early in 1922, and gave, his first presidential radio speech in June. Ultimately, however, radio had little impact on Henry's newspaper.

The *Herald* was still in healthy competition with the *Review*, but there was plenty of room for prosperity. By 1923, *The Denison Bul-*

letin and Herald's increasing circulation made it clear that its current offices on the corner of Main Street and First Avenue North had grown too small. Henry and Otto commissioned the construction of the new Bulletin Building at 1309-11 First Avenue North. The outer walls were made from local brick and measured forty by eighty feet. Their new office was opened the same year.



Larry Grill, Schleswig, Iowa in front of Henry Finnern's newspaper building, 46 N Main St. In 1918 the mob was in front of this building.

Although October 6, 1918, was the "darkest day" in Henry's professional life, the events of September 4, 1923 proved much more tragic and left much deeper scars. On that day - the birthday of his son Marvin - Marvin died during surgery to repair brain hemorrhaging and a fractured skull caused by a fall from his tricycle. Marvin's obituary ran the next day on the front page of *The Denison Bulletin and Herald.* The obituary's author was probably Otto Vosgerau, Marvin's uncle, or perhaps the *Review* had lent a hand as they had graciously done in 1918. Marvin was interred at Oakland Cemetery.

Calvin Coolidge became president after Warren G. Harding died in office in 1923. In 1924, Coolidge became the first president to deliver a radio speech from the White House. That same year, Coolidge signed the Immigration Act of 1924. A stricter and more xenophobic version of the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, this act limited immigration to two percent of America's population in 1890.

Two years after Marvin's death, Henry's father died. Johann had led a long life, married a good woman, fathered ten children, and experienced the adventure of building a life on not one but two continents. He had plied two trades (shoemaker and farmer), raised his children well, and accomplished it all despite a crippling childhood bout with polio. Written in English, his obituary stated that he had died on March 7th and been laid to rest next to his wife who had died seven years earlier.

Henry's sorrow at losing both his son and his father within such a short period of time was replaced with the joy of an addition to his family on January 19, 1926, when daughter Norma Darlene Finnern was born. The silver lining would come in 1926 in the form of a baby girl.

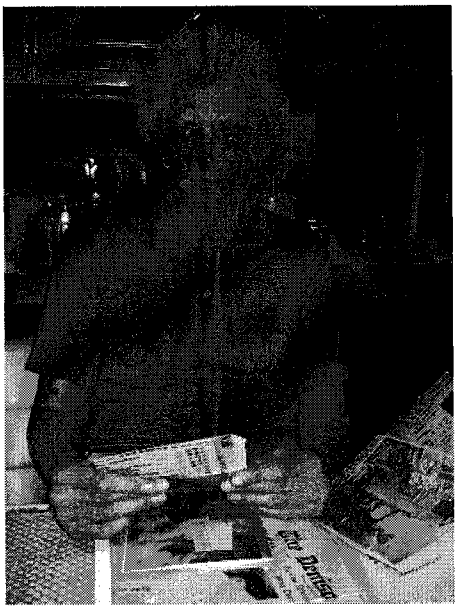
Finnern family lore explains that a consultation with a local physician "prescribed" another child as a cure for Frieda's understandable grief over the loss of her youngest son. With Norma's birth, the Finnern family was now complete, although somewhat incongruous, as the ages of little Norma's siblings at this time were twenty-one, seventeen, and thirteen.

Henry's civic contributions were about to expand, however, as the Democratic party was searching for a candidate to run for state representative.

Public Service

I came out the winner in the November election, defeating my Republican opponent, James D. Fleming, by a substantial margin.

Henry Finnern



Norma Finnern studies her father's scrapbook in her home in Loveland, Colorado.

Henry was a humble and honest man. The phase "substantial margin" may be the closest Henry ever came to showing an ego in his writing. At the same time, however, the phrase "came out the winner" is typical of the understatement, reserve, and grace that were hallmarks of Henry's character.

After his election as state representative for the fifty-sixth district, Henry began regular trips to Des Moines, and stayed at the Brown Hotel near the capitol. He supported his constituency so well that he was reelected in 1930. During his time in office, the Finnern family continued to live in their house in Wall Street in Denison. The mort-

gage had been paid off, and Henry's newspaper was still the largest in town, turning out editions every day.

Sometime during his first term in the state senate, Norma recalls traveling with her mother and father to Des Moines. She apparently became fast friends with another state representative, Caroline Pendry of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, who let little Norma sit on her lap during the session and push either the ‚yes' or ‚no' voting button as bills came up.

Henry's wish to become postmaster in 1912 was finally realized in 1934 after the election of Franklin Roosevelt. The Democratic party needed a local Democrat for the position and turned to Henry because of his sterling public service career. On May 16th, 1934, Postmaster General James A. Farley sent a letter to Henry that read: "It is a pleasure to notify you that the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, has appointed you postmaster for a term of four years."

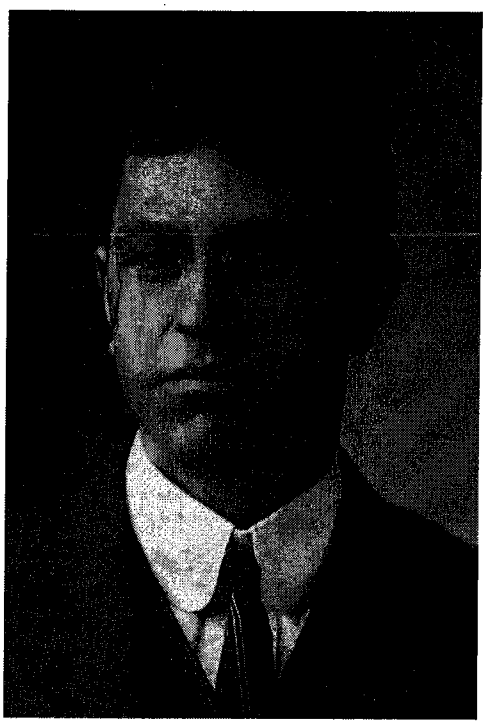
Denison post office ca. 1910

At home each evening at half past nine, Henry played three games of cribbage and two games of pitch with his wife. He also loved to take walks and enjoy his hometown of Denison first hand. Norma recalls many pleasant Sunday afternoons spent exploring the neighborhood with her father, especially the Illinois Central Railroad

tracks. On the other hand, Norma does not recall hearing any German while growing up, with only two exceptions. The first was when Henry and Frieda needed a secret code language to discuss Christmas presents and the like. The second was an occasional visitor. Travelers would call for an appointment and come over to make travel plans on steamers back to Germany, a travel agency being a business Henry ran on the side. Norma's experience with the German language was far different than her older sister Lillian's. During Lillian's childhood (pre-World War I), the German language was prevalent not only at home but on the streets, in the shops, and at school and church.

Norma remembers a reveal series of events that could be grist for one of today's soap operas. On a few mornings after Henry had already gone to work but before Norma headed off to school, her aunt Maggie showed up at the front door. Aunt Maggie was Otto Vosgerau's wife, Margaret Boettger, whom he married when he returned to Denison to work for *The Denison Review* in 1909. Maggie and Frieda talked in the kitchen, Frieda consoling Maggie who was terribly upset, sometimes on the verge of tears, because husband Otto had been spending time with a woman by the name of Lydia Kral. Each morning that Maggie came over, she brought a loaded revolver in her purse, not to shoot her husband, but in theory to shoot Lydia. Thankfully, Maggie knew to come to Frieda first, who was always able to talk her out of it. Despite this, Frieda and all the other Finnerns were perfectly polite to Lydia in public. Like the saying goes, you would never know unless you knew.

Henry's tenure as postmaster occasionally took him away from the newspaper. He was very exacting when it came to following postal regulations, and because of this, spent two weeks each years riding along every postal route in the county.



Otto Vosgerau, ca. 1920, Henry Finnern's brother-in-law and business partner for thirty years

On January 2nd, 1940, Otto Vosgerau, Henry's brother-in-law and business partner for over thirty years, passed away at the age of fifty-three. Henry soldiered on, but Otto's lively and gregarious personality was definitely missed at the Bulletin Building

The last house that Henry and Frieda occupied back in Waterloo was the first house that they built, and such, was always fondly remembered by Frieda. They also built the house on Wall street, which by 1940 had been readdressed as 143 Avenue B. On Valentine's Day in 1942, the Finnerns moved into Frieda's dream house at 910 First Avenue South, a house the couple had carefully planned based on all their experiences in the houses they had previously lived in.

By 1943, Henry had been postmaster for nearly a decade. His newspaper business had never been quite the same since Otto had died. On June 1st, Henry sold the *Bulletin* to Mr. Mark Cramer, thus ending his fifty-one years in the newspaper profession. From answering an ad for "a boy to learn the printing business" back in 1892, to man-

Henry and Frieda in front of their "dream-house", a few yards away from the Zion Lutheran Church.

off with exactly eight hundred dollars, which she was supposed to budget herself, paying for tuition, food, books, and whatever she needed. This was Henry's way of giving responsibility to Norma, teaching her to function as an adult outside the realm of parental supervision.

More than anything else, Henry was devoted to his children and aging, editing, and then owning his own newspapers, Henry had shown dedication, mettle, perseverance, and business acumen for over five decades. He had always felt it was better to fill the space on a page with an article rather than an advertisement. Even on the busiest of days, he'd take the time to find something pertinent to the lives of his readers and then set the type.

Henry Finnern's youngest daughter Norma attended Valparaiso University. Each September, Henry would send her

Norma Finnern ca. 1942

would do anything for them. Norma took German to satisfy Valparaiso's language requirement. Given her German ancestry, she had expected that it would be easy. However, it wasn't quite the cakewalk that she had imagined. She came home for winter break with a German book which she had to write a report on. The book was *Germelshausen* (A story by Friedrich Gerstäcker concerning a cursed village that sank into the earth long ago and is permitted to appear for only one day every century.), but since Norma couldn't make heads or tails out of it, Henry sat with her for a week reading the book aloud and explaining what it was about. Norma credits him with getting her through German class.

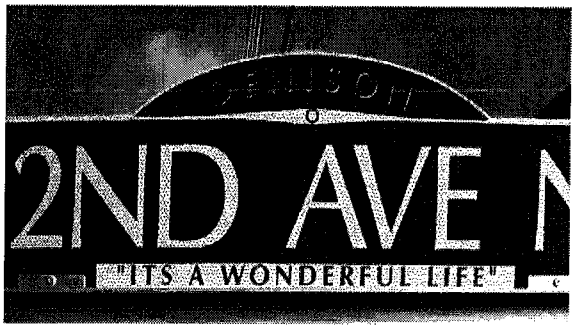
Back to Denison! On January 14th, 1947, Henry wrote a touching letter to Norma for her twenty-first birthday. The letter read: "This will probably be the last letter I write to you before you reach your twenty-first anniversary of your birth... The main [thought] was your welfare - whether or not I would be with you until this important date - the day you come of age - a woman with all the rights and privileges an American citizen can hope for. Now that day is with us - you have taken care of yourself all during your college years, and when you graduate next June you should be well equipped to fight the battles of life ... May the good Lord grant you wisdom. No wisdom, and you perish; no ideal, and you're lost; your heart must ever cherish some faith at any cost; some hope, some dream to cling to, some rainbow in the sky, some melody to sing to, some service that is HIGH." Henry also told Norma to buy herself whatever she would like for her birthday, and that he was making a donation to the Valparaiso building fund. Henry was ever dedicated to whatever community he touched.

When Henry started at the post office, the yearly receipts tallied $27,000. By 1949, hard work had brought the receipts to over

$40,000, an important benchmark for a post office at that time, as it meant that Denison had moved from a second to a first class post office. By the middle of 1949, Henry Finnern had served as Denison's postmaster for fifteen years. Post office regulations required postmasters to step down if they were seventy or older and had held the position for at least fifteen years. Having reached the age of seventy-one, the time had come for Henry to step down and let someone else take the reins. Even though he had sold the newspaper and retired as Denison's postmaster, Henry did not withdraw from public life. He continued to serve his community as he had for the past six decades, involving himself with his church and the opera house. That summer, the Finnerns settled in for their golden years. Family life and enjoyment of their dream home in their beloved Denison stretched out ahead of them.

Henry Finnern served as the president of *Die Deutsche Opernhaus Gesellschaft von Denison* for fifty years. This 1913 photo shows the opera house under construction

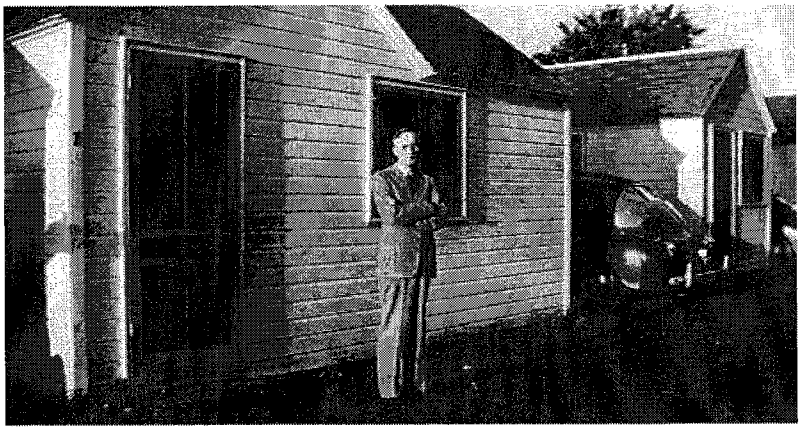
A Wonderful Life



Henry never owned a car. He figured, "Who needs a car?" For his lifestyle, this was quite true. He walked to work, (either at the newspaper or the post office) and to just about anywhere else he needed to go in Denison.

Henry's only extensive use of automobiles was on the road trips which brought him such enjoyment during his retirement years. The longest of these trips occurred in 1951 when Norma drove her parents and uncle on a nearly two-month journey that included visits with her brother Arnold in Los Angeles and her sister Ruby in Demopolis, Alabama. The self-sufficiency and independence that Henry had worked so hard to instill in Norma was evidenced near the end of the trip when Norma had to change a flat at midnight on a dark highway three hours outside of Denison.

Henry's precise account of the trip chronicled all the landmarks they saw, when they saw their first palm trees, the elevation they drove at in Colorado, the hotels in which they stayed, the arrival and depar-



After Henry's retirement, he made quite a few sightseeing trips by automobile throughout the United States. This photo, which was provided by Henry's grand niece, Debbie Sullivan, was taken somewhere in Iowa in front of an early "motor lodge," the precursor to today's motel.

ture times for each city visited, odometer readings, and even the quantity purchased and price paid for the gallons of gas consumed. Even though he was retired, Henry would *always* be a newspaperman at heart, a trained observer recording all the details he saw much as an artist would do in painting a landscape.

On May 27th, 1953, Henry and Frieda celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with an open house in their home at 910 1st Avenue South. More than 150 friends, neighbors, relatives, children, and grandchildren were in attendance. Hundreds of cards and presents for the couple were sent from Alabama, California, South Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and other areas of the country by those unable to attend.

The Finnerns' golden anniversary was a joyous occasion and a time to celebrate, but also, a time to reflect on lives well led. In this

Mrs. Arnold Finnern – Henry's charming daughter-in-law

last regard, Henry's children and grandchildren, especially Ruby's son Robert Greene, asked Henry if he would write a short autobiography for them. Henry complied, and the resulting autobiographical sketch proved immeasurably helpful in reconstructing the events of Henry's early life.

Later in 1953, Henry and his brother Herman set out on another road trip, this time to the northeastern part of the United States. On the way, they stopped at Valparaiso where Norma had attended the university, and also stopped at Fort Wayne, Indiana, where Henry reconnected with an old friend. The highlight of the trip was the Washington, D.C. area, where the brothers saw the White House, Pentagon, Arlington Cemetery, and Capitol Building. No doubt the U.S. Capitol was an especially noteworthy sight for the former state representative.

Henry's travels continued in the summer of 1954 when he, Herman,

and Herman's wife made a trip to Montana. Several of his comments about the trip are indicative of his character. Montana's roads, which were often in poor shape, were noted in characteristic understatement as "sometimes lacking." It just wasn't in Henry's nature to complain. With what he'd overcome in life, a few bumpy roads were pretty insignificant. Henry's final sentence in his account of the trip – "Thanks to the good chauffeur for a pleasant outing" – was a subtle reference to the omnipotence and omnipresence of God in Henry's life.

Henry's next trip, and by far his most significant one, was his 1955 voyage to Europe. He was accompanied by Herman and his wife, but not by Frieda, who never having been in Germany before, felt no burning desire to do so at this stage in her life. The trip began on August 9th and ended exactly two months later on October 9th. Interestingly, the bulk of Henry's journal centers around his time on the *Italia*, the steamer on which they crossed the Atlantic. No doubt his keen interest in this aspect of the trip was engendered both by his trip on the *Fürst Bismarck* sixty-four years earlier and by the travel agency he operated for so many years.

While in Europe, the Finnerns visited Switzerland and Germany. The "main attraction of the trip," to use Henry's words, was, of course, his hometown of Fredesdorf. Henry's newspaperman-like report about his old home – "*The old home was vacated upon order of authorities, not habitable anymore. The house appeared the same as of our days there, but the old well, the fruit trees and currant and gooseberry bushes are gone ... The old bake oven is still there, but not in use, as well as the apiary, but equipped with modern bee hives.*" – belies what surely must have been a torrent of bittersweet memories of his youth and his *Heimat*."

Despite the fact that it had been sixty-four years since Henry had last been in Schleswig-Holstein, he was successful in locating quite a few relatives, many of which he stayed with for a day or so. For travels to cities outside of Schleswig-Holstein such as Cologne, Munich, and Zurich, the Finnerns relied on hotels.

This photo, provided by Henry's grand niece, Debbie Sullivan, shows eight of the children of Johann Christian Finnern (1850-1925) and Anna Maria Louise Finnern née Kaehler (1853-1918). Pictured from left to right are Frida Friderike Denker née Finnern (1890-1985), Martha Amanda Paulsen née Finnern (1887-1979), Hertha Sophia Parpart née Finnern (1898-1996), Heinrich Christian Finnern (1877-1971), Maria Auguste Otto née Finnern (1880-1959), Albert Johann Finnern (1896-1948), Minna Louis Tews née Finnern (1893-1989), and Herman Karl Finnern (1882-1957). The other two children, Emma Dorothea Storm née Finnern (1875-1904) and Adolf Adolf Finnern (1884-1888) had died prior to this photo.

Some immigrants leave their hearts in their homelands, and others find life and love in the new country. On the *Italia*, Henry met many passengers who "were returning to their home in Europe, either

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Dorcas Society, the Ladies' Aid and the Evening Circle serve the interests of the ladies. These groups busy themselves with many works of love from visiting the shut-ins to sewing blankets for world relief. They are also affiliated through the Lutheran Laymen's League. Fellowship for the men is offered through the Lutheran Laymen's League. There is also a Fellowship group which serves the needs of young couples. Young people, after confirmation, continue their interest in Christ's word and work through Lutheran Youth for Christ.

Frieda Finnern was a founding member of the Dorcas Society in Denison.

In 1942, Henry was President of the Church Counsil, his daughter Norma was Secretary of the Junior Young Peoples Society - Walther League.

"... After being served by Pastor Doescher, enough Lutheran families had been found to warrant a congregation. This took place on September 25, 1872. ... In 1879, Zion congregation joined the Iowa District of the Missouri Synod."

In: *70th Anniversary Zion Lutheran Church*, Denison, Iowa, 1872-1942.

disappointed after a few years in the United States, or were going home to spend the evening of life with relatives. Many had earned and saved enough to take life easy and spend their social security or pensions in their old home." Henry, on the other hand, had built something honest and lasting in the United States. He had truly become American and felt his patriotism deeply. He adopted Denison, and through his dedication to community, Denison had in turn adopted him.

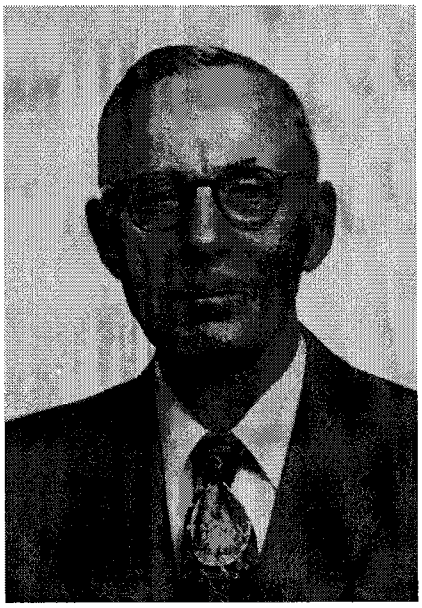
The only hint of nostalgia that Henry left for us in his account reads, "Again at Fredesdorf, our farewell visit. Seemed hard to say goodbye forever, but we were happy about the fact that we were taking the first steps toward home." He acknowledged that he would never again return to the land of his birth, but didn't seem overly sad at this, as America had truly become his home.

On March 16th, 1957, Herman passed away in Lakefield, Minnesota. This marked the end of

Henry's traveling days. Less than four years later, Henry suffered another blow when Frieda, his wife of fifty-four-years, passed away at the age of seventy-three. Frieda, a patient, pious (Frieda was an active member of the Dorcas Society for many years.), and intelligent woman, had not only been a fine mother to her children, but also a supportive and loving wife to Henry. Henry's oldest daughter Lillian, who had been living in California, returned to Denison immediately. Even though Henry was still quite fit at the time, she stayed to look after him, never returning to California and having her belongings packed and shipped to Denison by a moving company. Undoubtedly, Lillian's presence eased the loneliness that Henry felt, as over the years, the Finnern house had not only been home to Henry, Frieda, and their children, but often to their relatives, sometime for years at a time. Now with his wife and brother deceased, and his children grown up and scattered throughout the country, having Lillian come to live with him was certainly a blessing.

By 1964, Henry was ready to retire from his presidency of the Denison Opera House Company. He declined the nomination that year, despite running unopposed, as he had done for fifty years. An article in *The Denison Review* from February 24th describes his term as "One of the most remarkable lengths of tenure as an officeholder in Crawford County and perhaps the entire state of Iowa." Although he had stepped down from the presidency of the opera house, Henry remained active in his church.

Henry was given a lifetime achievement award by anonymous Denison businessmen in 1967 for his dedication to the community and its newspapers. Two years later, Henry, now eighty-six years old, moved into Denison's Eventide Lutheran Home for the Aged. Daughter Norma recalls that it took some convincing to get



Henry to move, but that there was one argument that finally persuaded him. Henry had been one of the major organizers of the Eventide Home, raising funds for it and commissioning its construction. Shouldn't he enjoy the very home that he helped build?

In October of 1970, Henry visited the current offices of the *Denison Bulletin* and inspected the massive Goss offset press. Needless to say, he was very impressed with this sophisticated piece of machinery, and reflected on how different things were from the hand-powered press used when he first began in the newspaper business.

On the day before Lillian's birthday in 1971, Henry typed a letter and mailed it to 910 First Avenue South. The first paragraph of that letter said "Another year has gone into the past in your life. All the time you have been the joy of your father and tomorrow I shall remember you in my prayers from morning until night." As always, Henry was mindful that all of his blessing emanated from God.

Three months later, on June 28th, 1971, Henry passed away at the age of ninety-three at Eventide. He was survived by four sisters, four children, six grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

The turnout at Henry's funeral showed how many lives he had touched over the years. Whether giving money to neighbors to fix their plumbing, building an opera house, serving as the town's postmaster, or representing its citizens in the state legislature, Henry's achievements perfectly reflected Denison's town motto of "It's a wonderful life." Heinrich Christian Finnern had achieved the goal that all men strive for: he had left the world a better place than he found it.

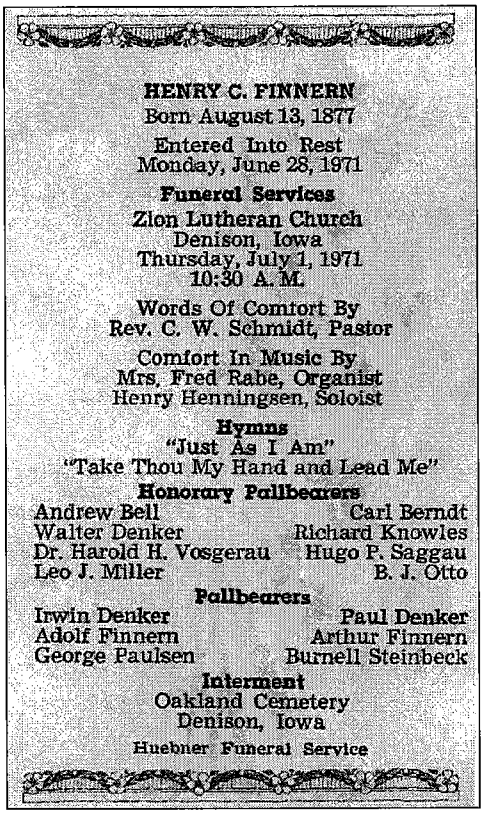
Henry's deep faith gave him the strength and wisdom to accept the things he could not change. This pragmatism born of faith was manifested at an early age. Recalling his trip to America on the *Fürst Bismarck*, Henry wrote "During the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean my thoughts were of the future, not the past left behind."

In the best immigrant tradition, Henry was the epitome of the self-made man. He mastered English, spoke it without an accent, and wrote prolifically in it. He became a superb businessman, succeeding with every newspaper he was ever associated with.

But Henry Finnern was more than a successful self-made man; he was also a proud and patriotic American, all the more impressive given the "darkest day" he had to endure during the anti-German hysteria which swept the country during World War I. His first thought was never to take what his community had to offer, but rather, to give his own time and talent to help better it. As Denison's postmaster, he brought the local office up to "first class status," and as a state representative, he zealously and effectively represented his fellow citizens. Although possessed of no particular musical talent, he supported the arts, helping found the local opera company and serving as its president for over half a century.

Despite these professional and civic successes and contributions, however, the greatest satisfaction in Henry's life was the love he felt for and received from his children and grandchildren. But for his courage and resolve, these descendants might never have known America as their home and enjoyed all its many benefits. Writing at the end of his autobiographical sketch, Henry directly addressed his loved ones. Ironically, his own words, although referring to his wife, sum up the essence of his life in a most beautiful and succinct manner:

"As I am sitting here in front of the old Underwood (Note: Not Underwriter!!) No. 5 typewriter, I glance to my left and there I see and study the picture of your mother and grandmother – so dear to you and me, who through her every effort has set an example for you of the highest type of a good Christian wife and mother and grandmother. God bless her and you."



HENRY C. FINNERN
Born August 13, 1877

Entered Into Rest
Monday, June 28, 1971

Funeral Services
Zion Lutheran Church
Denison, Iowa
Thursday, July 1, 1971
10:30 A. M.

Words Of Comfort By
Rev. C. W. Schmidt, Pastor

Comfort In Music By
Mrs. Fred Rabe, Organist
Henry Henningsen, Soloist

Hymns
"Just As I Am"
"Take Thou My Hand and Lead Me"

Honorary Pallbearers

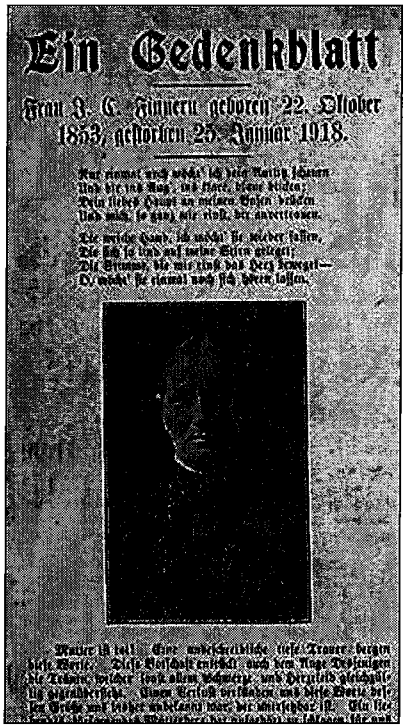
Andrew Bell	Carl Berndt
Walter Denker	Richard Knowles
Dr. Harold H. Vosgerau	Hugo P. Saggau
Leo J. Miller	B. J. Otto

Pallbearers

Irwin Denker	Paul Denker
Adolf Finnern	Arthur Finnern
George Paulsen	Burnell Steinbeck

Interment
Oakland Cemetery
Denison, Iowa

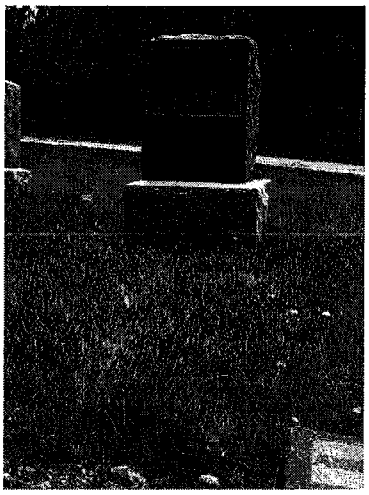
Huebner Funeral Service



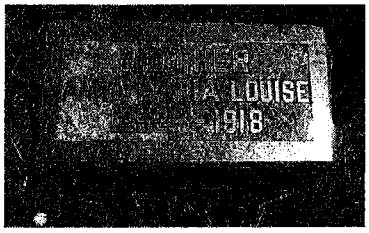
Ein Gedenkblatt

Frau H. C. Finnern geboren 22. Oktober 1853, gestorben 25. Januar 1918.

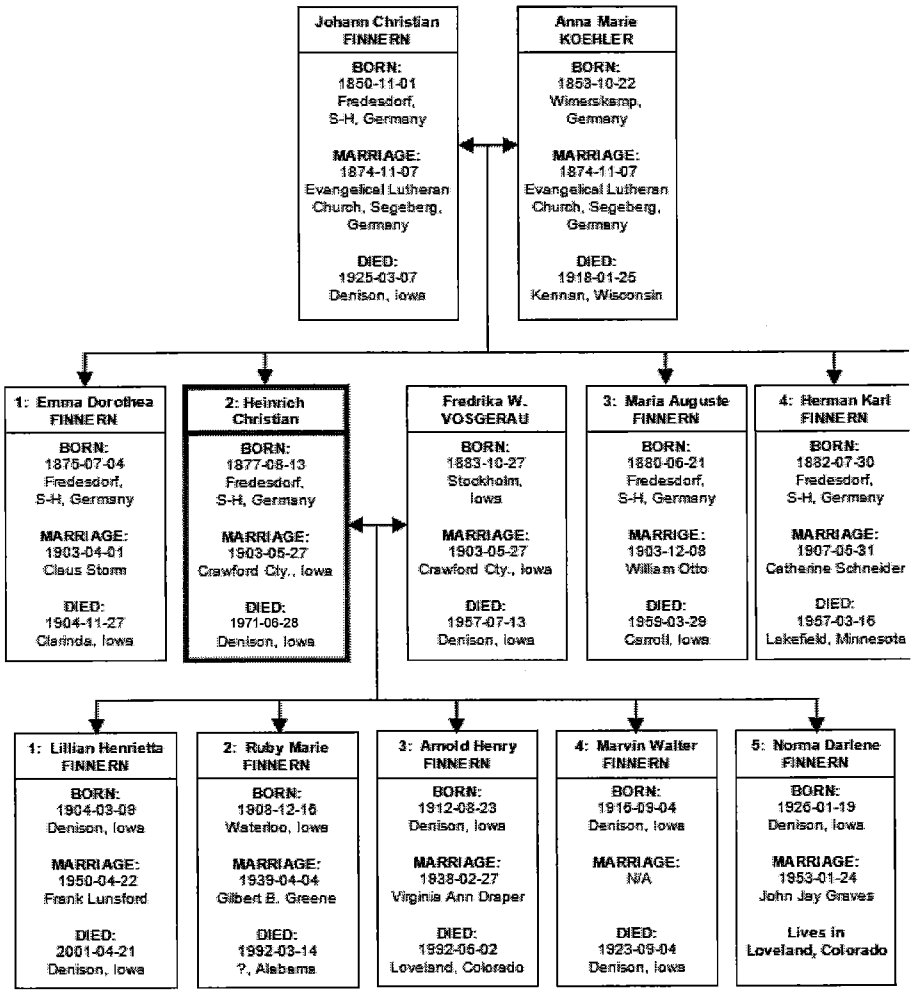
After the death of Anna Maria Louise Kaehler née Finnern on January 25, 1918, Henry wrote a memorial (*Ein Gedenkblatt*) for his mother which was read at her funeral. Other than his German-language newspaper, this may have been the last time that Henry chose to write in his native language. Several days after the funeral, this memorial appeared in *Der Denison Herold*. Almost a century later, Henry's heartfelt words about his beloved mother are still moving.



This impressive marker at the Zion Lutheran Cemetery in Denison was purchased by Henry Finnern. It marks the gravesite of his parents (Johann Christian Finnern and Anna Maria Louise Finnern née Kaehler) and his older sister (Emma Dorothea Storm née Finnern).



The tombstone of Anna Maria Louise Finnern (1853-1918)


Johann Christian FINNERN
BORN: 1850-11-01 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany
MARRIAGE: 1874-11-07 Evangelical Lutheran Church, Segeberg, Germany
DIED: 1925-03-07 Denison, Iowa
Anna Marie KOEHLER
BORN: 1853-10-22 Wimerskamp, Germany
MARRIAGE: 1874-11-07 Evangelical Lutheran Church, Segeberg, Germany
DIED: 1918-01-25 Kennan, Wisconsin
1: Emma Dorothea FINNERN
BORN: 1875-07-04 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany
MARRIAGE: 1903-04-01 Claus Storm
DIED: 1904-11-27 Clarinda, Iowa
2: Heinrich Christian
BORN: 1877-08-13 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany
MARRIAGE: 1903-05-27 Crawford Cty., Iowa
DIED: 1971-06-28 Denison, Iowa
Fredrika W. VOSGERAU
BORN: 1883-10-27 Stockholm, Iowa
MARRIAGE: 1903-05-27 Crawford Cty., Iowa
DIED: 1957-07-13 Denison, Iowa
3: Maria Auguste FINNERN
BORN: 1880-06-21 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany
MARRIGE: 1903-12-08 William Otto
DIED: 1959-03-29 Carroll, Iowa
4: Herman Karl FINNERN
BORN: 1882-07-30 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany
MARRIAGE: 1907-05-31 Catherine Schneider
DIED: 1957-03-16 Lakefield, Minnesota
1: Lillian Henrietta FINNERN
BORN: 1904-03-09 Denison, Iowa
MARRIAGE: 1950-04-22 Frank Lunsford
DIED: 2001-04-21 Denison, Iowa
2: Ruby Marie FINNERN
BORN: 1908-12-16 Waterloo, Iowa
MARRIAGE: 1939-04-04 Gilbert B. Greene
DIED: 1992-03-14 ?, Alabama
3: Arnold Henry FINNERN
BORN: 1912-08-23 Denison, Iowa
MARRIAGE: 1938-02-27 Virginia Ann Draper
DIED: 1992-06-02 Loveland, Colorado
4: Marvin Walter FINNERN
BORN: 1916-09-04 Denison, Iowa
MARRIAGE: N/A
DIED: 1923-09-04 Denison, Iowa
5: Norma Darlene FINNERN
BORN: 1926-01-19 Denison, Iowa
MARRIAGE: 1953-01-24 John Jay Graves
Lives in Loveland, Colorado

FAMILY TREE FOR HEINRICH CHRISTIAN FINNERN

5: Adolf Adolf FINNERN	6: Martha Amanda FINNERN	7: Frida Friderike FINNERN	8: Minna Louise FINNERN	9: Albert Johann FINNERN	10: Hertha Sophia FINNERN
BORN: 1884-03-27 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany	BORN: 1887-11-30 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany	BORN: 1890-12-13 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany	BORN: 1893-02-14 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany	BORN: 1896-01-29 Denison, Iowa	BORN: 1898-06-08 Denison, Iowa
MARRIAGE: N/A	MARRIAGE: 1906-12-19 William Paulsen	MARRIAGE: 1919-03-02 Paul Otto Denker	MARRIAGE: 1920-09-27 John Frank Tews	MARRIAGE: 1924-02-20 Lillian Tews	MARRIAGE: 1924-10-18 Louis Parpart
DIED: 1888-09-12 Fredesdorf, S-H, Germany	DIED: 1979-07-31 Round Lake, MN	DIED: 1985-04-04 Denison, Iowa	DIED: 1989-02-02 Catswba, Wisconsin	DIED: 1948-10-15 Lake Park, Iowa	DIED: 1996-11-03 Price, Wisconsin

NOTE:

Heinrich Finnern had good longevity in his bloodlines:

Self: 93
Father: 74
Mother: 64
Brothers: 74, 4, 52
Sisters: 29, 78, 91, 94, 96, 98
Children: 97, 83, 79, 7, 80+

Therefore, Henry, four of his siblings, and one of his children lived into their 90's!

Among those posthumously pardoned were Herman Bausch, Frank Waara, Janet

Pardons issued 'abo

By MATT GOURAS • Associated Press

• Montana absolved 78 mostly working-class pe who were convicted of sed

HELENA, MONT. – It was a black mark on dozens of family histories that lingered for nearly nine decades — until a journalism professor and a group of law students examined what happened to citizens who spoke out against the government during World War I.

On Wednesday, nearly 80 people convicted of sedition amid the war's anti-German hysteria received the first posthumous pardons in Montana history, including one who was charged merely for calling the conflict a "rich man's war" and mocking food regulations during a time of rationing.

Gov. Brian Schweitzer said the state was "about 80 years too late" in pardoning the mostly working-class people of German descent who were convicted of breaking what was then one of the harshest sedition laws in the nation.

"This should have been done a long time ago," said Schweitzer, the son of German immigrants.

About 40 family members attended a ceremony where the governor signed the pardons.

Seventy-six men and three women were convicted of sedition. They were imprisoned for an average of 19 months, often on the basis of casual comments made in saloons. One man was previously pardoned.

GEORGE L

Drew Briner — grandson of Herman Bau Bausch's journal during the pardon ceren

Journalism professor Clem Work of the University of Montana said many were turned in by friends, acquaintances or in some cases by people jealous of their land holdings.

Star Tribune, Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 4, 2006: During World War I, many Americans with German roots were confronted by rampant anti-German hysteria. For Henry Finnern, this confrontation – his "darkest day" – came to a head on October 6th, 1918.

Associated Press • Montana Historical Society via New York Times
Smith and Leo Reno, in photos released by the Montana Historical Society.

ut 80 years too late'

3 men and one woman,
ople of German descent,
lition during World War I.

ANE • Independent Record via Associated Press
sch, pictured in background — read from
ıony Wednesday in Helena, Mont.

"Today's a day of redemption and redress, helping the families put closure to the wounds and at the same time make an affirmative statement for free speech," said Work.

While some of the comments seem shockingly benign, others were less so. But even those who cussed the president and the flag should not be considered criminals, said Work, whose book, "Darkest Before Dawn: Sedition and Free Speech in the American West," inspired law students at the university to write petitions for the pardons and help find family members.

Laws at the time even made it illegal to speak German. Schweitzer said his grandmother was not allowed to speak the only language she knew while out in public.

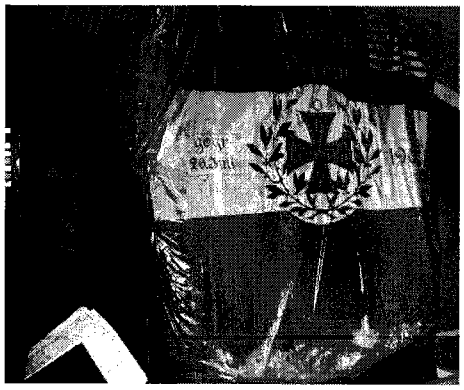
After serving their sentences, many of those who were convicted often moved out of the state and started new lives.

Work warned that similar cases could happen again if the nation caves in to fear and hysteria, pitting security against liberty. "It is not until decades later in these cases that we recognize we overstepped our bounds," he said. Laws designed to enhance security after the 2001 terrorist attacks are encroaching on civil liberties, Work said.

The governor agreed. "In times when our county is pushed to our limits, those are the times when it is most important to remember individual rights," Schweitzer said.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS
Read about the Montana Sedition Project at www.startribune.com/a811

Built in 1881, Denison's *Germania Halle* was used primarily by German-Americans prior to 1918. English language classes were taught in the hall's basement, and the *Landwehr Verein* (a veterans' organization founded some years after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871) held their meetings there and staged grand events and festivities at the hall for native Germans living in the community.



In 1908, the *Landwehr Verein* spent $150 for an embroidered silk flag, which, according to unwritten history, was approved by the German emperor.

The flag bears the words *Denison und Umgebung* (Denison and surrounding area) and features an iron cross at its center with the word *Landwehr* (militia). Back in 1918, an angry mob in Denison sought to burn the flag, but were thwarted by a German resident who hid it in a mattress.

Denison Herold Changed to English

After Denison Has Had a Newspaper Published in the German Language for Forty Years Unusual Times Demand Change. The Denison Herald is the Successor and asks Favorable Reception.

To Our Readers, Patrons, Friends and the Public:

Today the Herald comes to you printed in the American Language, the language which is written the Great Constitution of our beloved United States, the official language of this, our country, the language of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and our honored president, Woodrow Wilson. This change comes sudden, too sudden for the publishers because there was no opportunity to prepare and our readers will excuse any shortcomings in this and several issues to come.

Although the Herald does not approve of the ways and means which were instrumental to bringing about this announcement, nevertheless the publishers are willing and ready todo all in their power to help, that harmony among our citiczens may be manintainded.

To change from the German to the English language has been given consideration for some time, as the fact remains, that with the cessation of the immigration the field was limited and it was a question of some years only that the change woldhave to have geen made for financial reasons.

The war baby has been born, will you help it to grow as it will elp to win the war? Hand in news items of every nature, especially do we ask this of our niisters, the secretaries of the several lodges, societies and organizations. Every little bit helps.

Respectfully yours,

The Denison Herald

Finnern & Vosgerau, Publishers

H. C. Finnern, Editor

October 10th, 1918. A war baby is born: Henry Finnern and Otto Vosgerau announce the birth of their new English-language newspaper, the *Denison Herald*, during the final days of World War I.

Field Research in Manning and Denison - a Report

At 6:45 on a beautiful Saturday morning, Yogi Reppmann departed from my home in Holstein, Iowa. I would accompany him to Manning and Denison where he would conduct interviews hoping to learn more about Henry Finnern.

We whizzed through Denison en route to our first stop at the Manning Plaza Nursing Home where Arthur Rix resided. He greeted us warmly and then set the tone for the meeting by singing "Lorelei" for us. (German legend has it that the beautiful maiden Lorelei sat perched on a huge rock at the fork of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers, distracting ship captains with her seductive charms causing them to lose their way or crash into the rock.) Yogi sang along on the first verse, but Mr. Rix soloed on the second because Yogi didn't know the words. After Mr. Rix had finished, we were asked to sign his guest book.

Ninety-six years old (going on seventy!), Mr. Rix is an amazing gentleman with nary a wrinkle in his face, a quiver in his voice, nor a tremor in his hand. A delightful conversationalist, he answered Yogi's questions about the anti-German hysteria of 1918 concisely and without hesitation.

All too soon, the time to leave had come, and I extended my hand to say goodbye. With a twinkle in his eye, Art suggested that a hug would be a lot nicer. And it was!

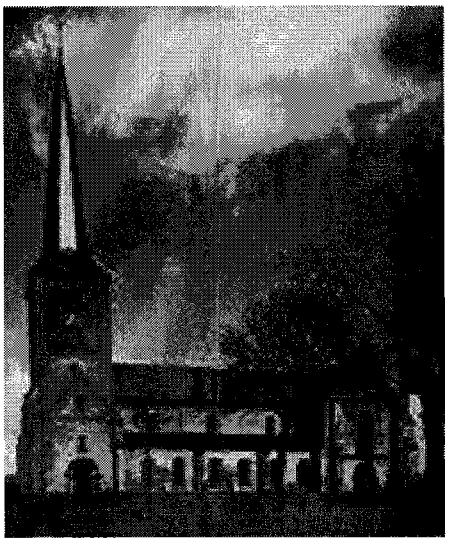
The painting on the wall behind Arthur Rix and Virginia Degen depicts a German hausbarn that dates to 1566. A few years ago, this ancient Schleswig-Holstein farmhouse was transported to Manning, Iowa, where it was restored to its original condition.

Denison was our next stop, but we would have wound up in Coon Rapids if I hadn't stopped Yogi, who has no sense of direction, from turning east. There we met Richard Knowles, the retired editor of the local newspaper.

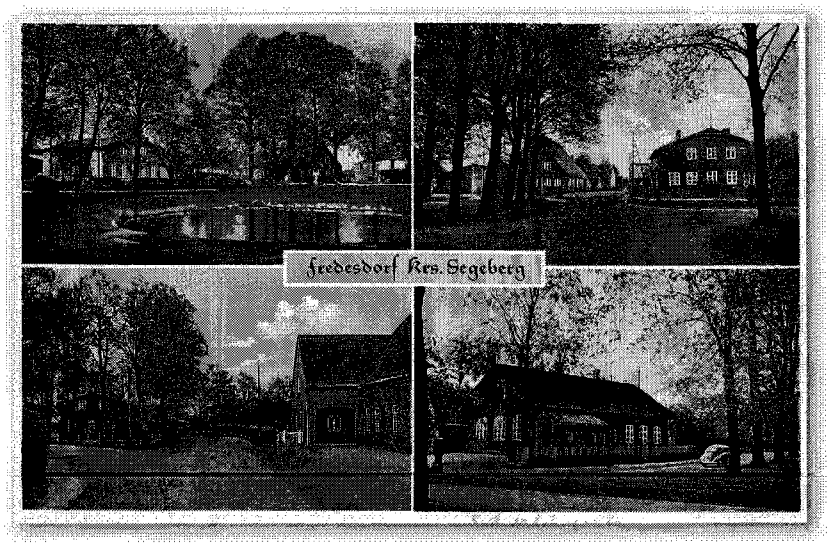
We arrived back in Holstein at 11:00. It had been a very productive morning, and I was happy to have been a part in helping find out a little more about Heinrich Christian Finnern.

Virginia Degen, Holstein, Iowa 2007

(Editor's note: Virginia Degen, Erhard Böttcher, and Joachim Reppmann co-authored *Building a Bridge* in 2006, a book chronicling the efforts of Holstein, Iowa's citizens in renewing contacts with their ancestral homeland in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.)

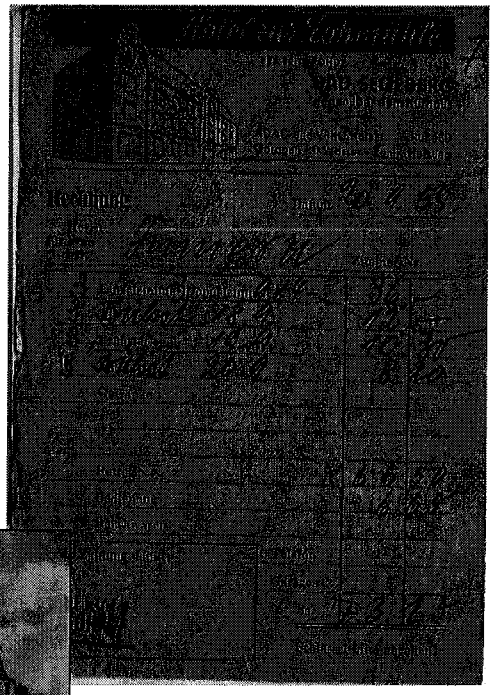


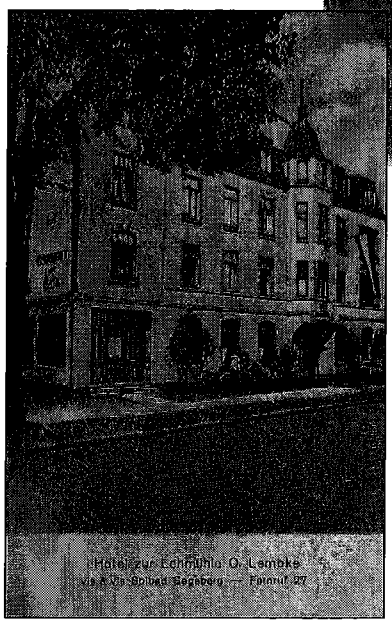
Henry was vaccinated in Segeberg and had his confirmation classes in Segeberg's *Marienkirche* and left for the United States via Segeberg.



After a trip to his birthplace in Fredesdorf, Henry Finnern returned to Denison with a scenic postcard of his old hometown. (left page).

Fredesdorf is located in the Kreis (rural administrative district or county) of Segeberg in the state of Schleswig-Holstein. Bad Segeberg, the county seat of Kreis Segeberg, is well-known throughout Germany for hosting an open-air Wild West show every summer based on the novels of Karl May (Germany's Fenimore Cooper).

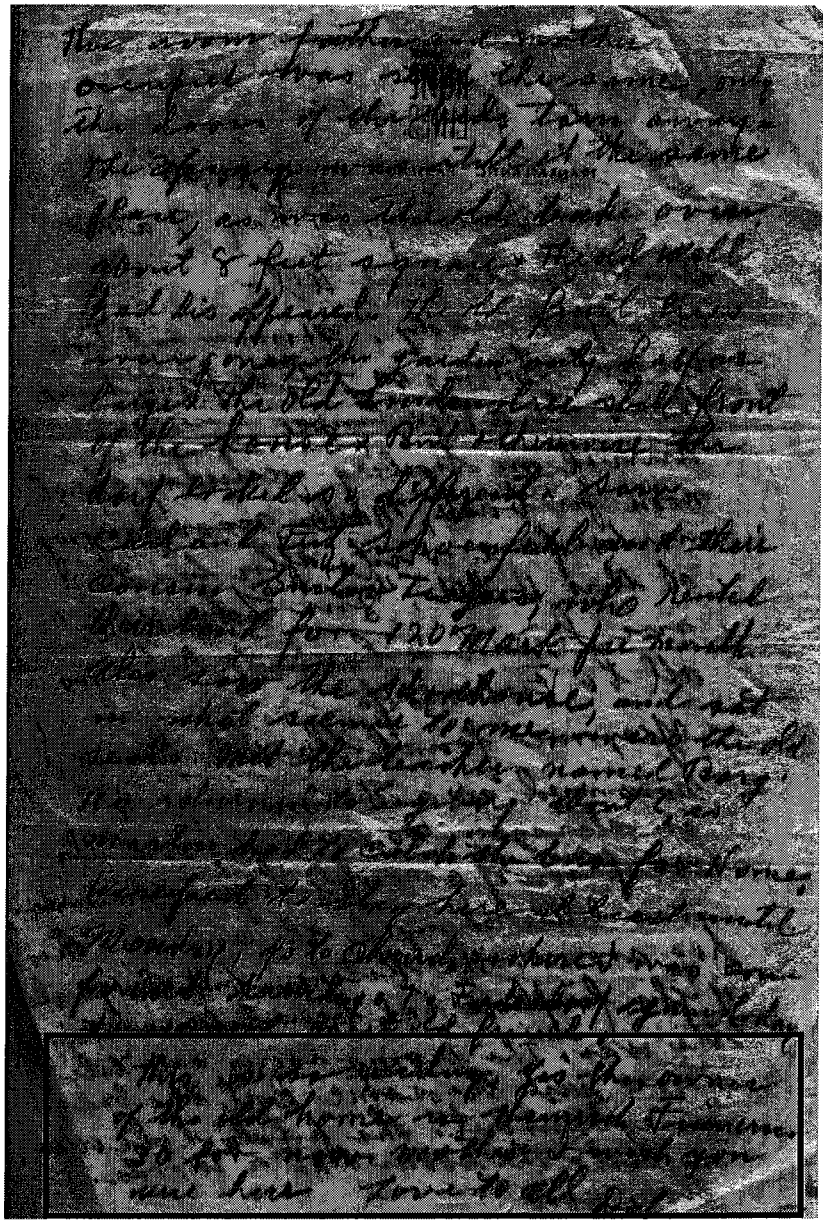




The hotel bill (provided courtesy of Henry's daughter Norma) for Henry, brother Herman, and sister-in-law Tine's stay in Bad Segeberg. The bill for three nights and three breakfasts for the Finnerns came to 73.15 German Marks, which at the time, would have equated to about twenty dollars.

Bad Segeberg city historian Peter Zastrow was able to locate the photo of the hotel.

In a letter sent to his beloved wife from Fredesdorf in 1955, Henry wrote: "Yes, we found the old house! ... this is so exciting. Yes the owner of the old home is Heinrich Finnern. ... I wish you were here."



The German Forty- Eighter Legacy

An international "Legacy of 1848 Conference" will be held in Denison, Iowa, October 30 to 31, 2009, and coordinated by well-known German-American historians Dr. Joachim (Yogi) Reppmann and Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann. The conference will focus on the German Forty- Eighters in America and their legacy for today. The inestimable contributions of the Forty-eighters from Europe - although relatively small in numbers were perhaps America's most influential and unique immigrant group. Many German Forty- Eighters from Schleswig-Holstein, settled throughout Iowa, bringing with them new and often higher standards of journalism. These German immigrants exhibited talents, skills, and patriotism for their adopted home that can be - with their visions and values - an example to all in these troubling times.

In 1848, a group of Schleswig-Holstein freedom fighters began fighting for liberty, democracy, and national unity in a war with Denmark. Unsuccessful in their struggle, many of these democratic revolutionaries immigrated to the United States, hoping to find the freedom they had fought for in vain in their homeland. These 1848ers provided an intellectual transfusion, which not only affected their fellow United States countrymen but also had a pronounced effect on the political and social his tory of America during one of its most critical periods-before and during the Civil War.

The story of Henry Finnern, who came along subsequent to the Forty - Eighters, is especially noteworthy. His hard work resulted in his eventual ownership of a Denison newspaper. Before the backdrop of his humble upbringing in a tiny German village in Schleswig-Holstein, he fought for equality and fairness in Denison. Perils he faced, choices he made, and the grit and determination he demonstrated are all too famil-

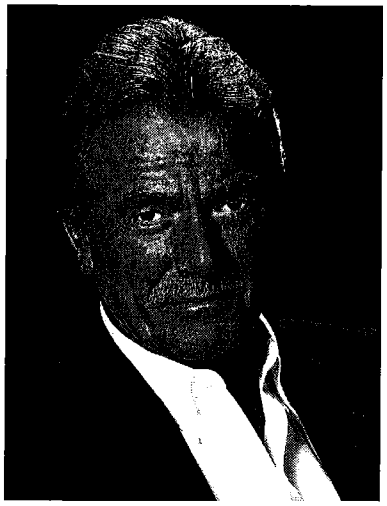
iar to many today seeking to become part of the American dream.

In addition to his career as a newspaperman, Finnern also worked as a public servant, being both an Iowa State Representative and working as Denison's Postmaster. The life of Henry Finnern provides an example - maybe even a blueprint-of how the immigrant can succeed in his adopted home, be a constructive part of his new community, and even help shape the future of his fellow citizens.

Finnern's biography will be presented at the conference.

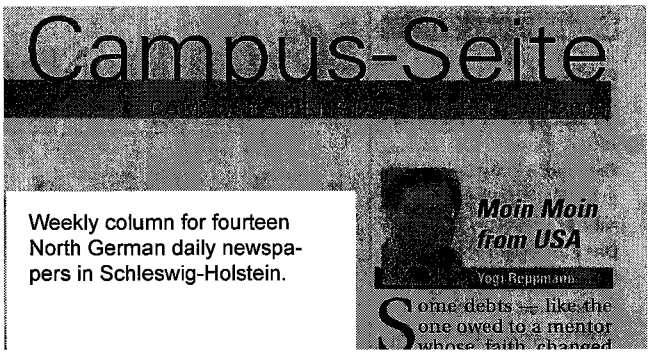
Eric Braeden, Hollywood film and television star, and himself a Schleswig-Holstein immigrant, will present the keynote address. Braeden is the recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and the Federal Medal of Honor from Germany's president on two occasions for his contributions to German-American relations.

German Life, April / May 2009, Denville, NY, (Bi-monthly magazine)



Eric Braeden, born Hans-Jörg Gudegast in Bredenbek, Schleswig-Holstein, was the keynote speaker at the Low German Conference held in Grand Island, Nebraska in October of 2001.

Eric, who has starred for thirty years on CBS's *The Young and the Restless*, is the president of the German-American Cultural Society in California.



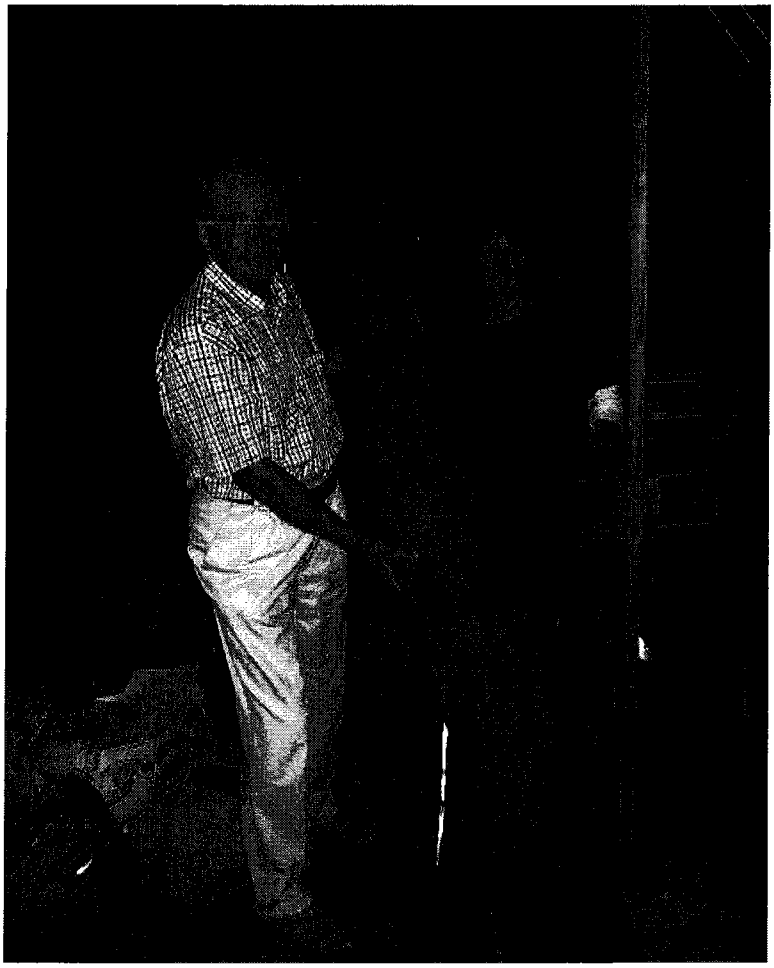
Some debts - like the one owed to a mentor whose faith changed the arc of your life - can't be paid with euros or dollars. Gerhard Stoltenberg was such a mentor for me. -As a young student of history, Stoltenberg spent some time in the U.S. in 1952. There, he met the young Harvard professor Henry Kissinger, and the two men established a close friendship.

Fast forward 25 years. Perhaps remembering what his own U.S. visit had meant, Stoltenberg, now Ministerpräsident of Schleswig-Holstein, gave money to send a poor student from Flensburg to the New World.

Some years later, and now a professor myself in Minnesota, I received a call from newspaper editor Stephan Richter who had just published Stoltenberg's latest book. He was hosting a party for the author and asked me to produce a short video interview with Kissinger as a surprise. Speaking in his native German, "Heinz Alfred" Kissinger expressed his deep admiration for "Stolti," his German friend and colleague.

Watching the video, tears welled up in the eyes of the old politician, the man many thought would be Germany's next chancellor. Sadly, Stoltenberg died less than two years later with my "debt" to the great man still on the books.

This October, I'm staging a conference on the legacy of that most remarkable immigrant group, the 1848ers. It will be dedicated to the friendship of historians Kissinger and Stoltenberg. Gerhard Stoltenberg's faith in me changed my life; I will always do what I can to honor his.



Gabriele Harfst of Fredesdorf is the current owner of the original Finnern Kate (cottage) where Henry Finnern grew up. She donated an original oak beam from the early nineteenth century residence which will be cut in slices and given to all participants of the *Legacy of 1848/Finnern Conference* held on October 30-31 in Denison. Uwe Rahlf (shown in the photo), an expert from the Eutin area of Schleswig-Holstein, authenticated the beam donated by Gabriele.

On June 5th, 2009, the Olshausen Memorial was dedicated in Schleswig-Holstein's capital city of Kiel as part of the "Street of Democracy."

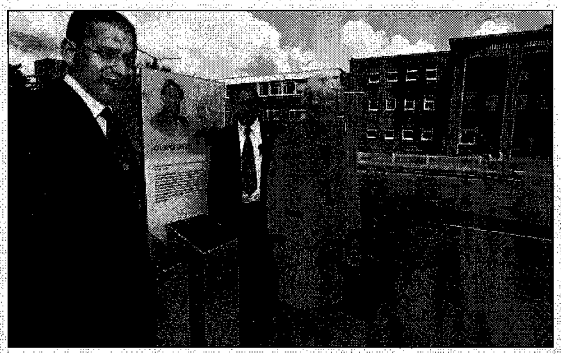
Erinnerung an zwei „48er"

Christian-Albrechts-Universität ehrt die Brüder Theodor und Justus Olshausen mit einer eigenen Gedenkstele

Kiel – Obwohl die Olshausenstraße gewissermaßen die Central Avenue der Universität darstellt, lässt sich heute nicht mehr rekonstruieren, ob ihr Name auf Theodor oder seinen Bruder Justus Olshausen Bezug nimmt. Als Vorkämpfer der Demokratie während der 1848er Revolution hätten beide es verdient – weshalb ihnen die Alma Mater nun eine eigene Gedenkstele widmet.

Von Oliver Stenzel

Der eine war ein bedeutender Gelehrter, der andere ein umtriebiger Journalist und Verleger. Gemeinsam war Justus und Theodor Olshausen ihr engagiertes Eintreten für die Demokratie in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Während der Kieler Orientalistik-Professor Justus 1848 nicht nur



Spurensuche nach den demokratischen Wurzeln der Stadt: Universitätspräsident Gerhard Fouquet, Steinen-Initiator Joachim Reppmann und Stadtpräsidentin Cathy Kietzer vor der neuen Gedenkstele. Foto Mölter

Pictured from left to right in this June 6, 2009 photo from the *Kieler Nachrichten* are Christian-Albrechts-Universität president Professor Fouquet; Yogi Reppmann, spiritus rector of the memorial; and Kiel city president Cathy Kietzer (a native of Denmark).

Even though one of the longest streets in Kiel (cutting through the university campus) is named after the Olshausen brothers, very few people (if anyone) knew anything about the Olshausens. Before the formal dedication ceremony of the Olshausen memorial, that situation was rectified at a conference in the Audimax dealing with the charismatic and visionary Forty-eighters. Excellent talks were given by Gwen Jung, Schleswig; Jürgen Weber, Kiel; and Klaus Lemke-Paetznick, Wilhelmshaven. Festive music was provided by a German-American pop band comprised of exchange students from the Lübeck Music Conservatory and the McNallySmith College of Music in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Party time! Please join us on Friday, June 5, at 11am for the Olshausen infotainment event at 24118 Kiel, University, Audimax. The unveiling of the three-piece memorial will take place on Olshausen Str. 40 next to the large administration building.

Dr. Bruno Olshausen, an associate professor of Vision Science, Optometry, and Neuroscience at the University of California at Berkeley, visited Kiel on July 4, 2009. Bruno is the great-great grandson of Arthur Olshausen (a half-brother of Theodor Olshausen), the man who gave Joseph Pulitzer his start in journalism.

Theodor Olshausen published newspapers in Schleswig-Holstein and the USA from 1830 to 1865. He was a leader in the democratic revolution of 1848, for which The Danish King excluded him from the general amnesty. Olshausen had to leave for America in 1851.

In Davenport, the center of Schleswig-Holstein immigration, Olshausen ran the newspaper, "Der Demokrat", 1856-60, and in St. Louis the "Westliche Post", 1860-65. At the beginning of the US Civil War, Olshausen helped secure the State of Missouri for President Lincoln, and his newspaper later jump started the career of Joseph Pulitzer, who founded the Pulitzer Prize.

Olshausen should serve as a role model in this time of decreasing political participation and financial meltdown. In her thesis paper, "A Forgotten 1848er from Schleswig-Holstein", Gwendolin Jung writes, "Looking back to democrats like Olshausen would strengthen the discourse for a healthy Germanic patriotism. It would smoothly pave the way for many of us to develop a positive national awareness. We have a democratic tradition and through early republican leaders and their merits we could establish our German identity beyond nationalism and chauvinism."

from: *Moin-Moin from USA*, "Flensburger Tageblatt", May 19th, 2009 (Weekly column for fourteen North German daily newspapers in Schleswig-Holstein.)

THE AMBASSADOR Fall 2008

Dedication of the Forty-eighter monument *in Davenport*

It took ninety years, but Davenporters set things right recently. A 24,000-pound monument honoring a select group of German immigrants known as the "Forty-eighters" was erected near the banks of the Mississippi. The story behind this massive monument begins almost 160 years ago in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. On March 24, 1848, a group of German patriots from Schleswig-Holstein began fighting a war with Denmark to gain liberty, democracy, and national unity. Unsuccessful in their struggle, many of these Schleswig-Holsteiners emigrated to the United States where they hoped to find the freedom they had fought for in vain in their homeland. These Forty-eighters are considered by many to be America's most remarkable and unique group of immigrants. They provided a cultural and intellectual transfusion which affected not only their fellow countrymen but which also had a pronounced effect on the political and social history of America during one of its most critical periods.

Remarkably, a great many of the Forty-eighters hailing from Schleswig-Holstein emigrated to a single area of the Midwest, choosing Scott County, Iowa, as their adopted home. In 1872, more than two decades after emigrating to Davenport and its surrounding communities, these vanquished freedom fighters organized a veterans' society known as *Der Davenporter Verein der Kampfgenossen der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Freiheitskriege von 1848, 1849 und 1850* (The Davenport Society of Veterans of the Schleswig-Holstein Wars of Independence of 1848, 1849 and 1850).

The first president was Jürgen Peter Ankerson, who for many years had operated a grocery and provisions store across the street from the present site of Davenport's German American Heritage Center. Julius Langheim, a Justice of the Peace in Hickory Grove, served as vice president, while Emil Geisler, for many years a driving force behind Davenport's Free German School (*Freie Deutsche Schule*), served as the *Schriftführer*, or recording secretary. Ernst Claussen, who would subsequently serve as Davenport's mayor for a record seven consecutive terms, was the group's first recording secretary, and Hans Heinrich Andresen, who would become president of the German Savings Bank, was the organization's treasurer.

One of the first acts of the newly formed veterans group was to name as their first honorary member Hans Reimer Claussen, perhaps Davenport's most well-known German immigrant and a Schleswig-Holstein patriot who had diligently worked for the cause of freedom. But what does all this have to do with the recent erection of a 24,000-pound monument? On March 24, 1898, a massive stone monument commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Forty-eighters' fight for freedom in their homeland, was dedicated in Washington Square Park in Davenport, now the YM/YWCA building. The dedication ceremony included the planting of three oak trees with 1200 people in attendance. Two of these were donated by Otto von Bismarck, the former chancellor of the German Empire. The third tree was a twin oak, for many years the symbol of the inseparability of the former duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Bleik Peters, the long-time *Kampfgenossen* president, dedicated the stone, and Emil Geisler made a moving speech commemorating the struggle of the Forty-eighters in their native homeland and their accomplishments in their adopted home of Iowa.

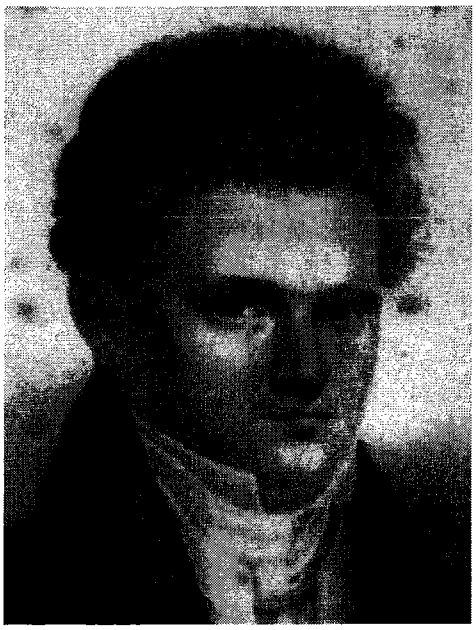
L to r. Cal Wemer, President German-American Heritage Center, Davenport, IA and Yogi Reppmann, keynote speaker and 1848er historian

In less than two decades, however, World War I brought about a wave of anti-German hysteria that swept across the nation, and Scott County was not exempted from the vitriol and mean-spiritedness that was directed towards all things German. In an act symbolic of the times, the stone monument honoring Scott County's Forty-eighters was painted yellow (a popular way of scornfully identifying and defacing something having German ties) and tipped over. At some point, the stone disappeared from Washington Square never to be seen again.

On March 30, 2008, a new stone was dedicated on almost the same spot where the old stone had been located. A beautiful ceremony was held with speeches by Davenport Mayor Bill Gluba and ASHHS president Jack Schnuckel. Fittingly, the keynote address was given by Dr. Joachim Reppmann, one of the world's foremost authorities on the Forty-eighters. He has devoted much of his life to bringing the remarkable accomplishments of this immigrant group to light. The Forty-eighter monument is the spark that will ignite a number of projects honoring Scott County's Forty-eighters. Dr. Reppmann is staging a conference in Denison, Iowa, in September of 2009, that will focus on a variety of German-American topics, including the Forty-eighters.

Further information, please go to Downloads: www.moin-moin.us. *Scott Christiansen, Iowa City, Iowa/ Yogi Reppmann, Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein [Note: Jürgen Peter Ankerson, Scott's great-great grandfather, was the first president of the Schleswig-Holstein Kampfgenossen Verein von 1848-49-50.]* ❖

The Ambassador, a publication of the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA, Washington, D. C., Fall 2008
(In 2010, the GAHF will open its German-American Heritage Center of the USA.)



In 1848, Gabriel Riesser of Hamburg was elected by the constituency of Lauenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, to serve in the democratic revolutionary Frankfurt Parliament. Riesser was a member of the *Kaiserdeputation,* which offered the Prussian king Frederich William IV the German crown.

When the civil rights of the *Paulskirchenverfassung* (Paul's Church Constitution) took effect in February of 1849, Riesser was able to become a citizen of Hamburg. In 1859, he became *Obergerichtsrat* (chief judge) and holds the distinction of being the first Jewish judge in Germany.

Three years earlier, Riesser had visited his close friend, the famed Forty-eighter Theodor Olshausen, in Davenport, Iowa. Back in 1836, Olshausen had started publishing articles from Riesser calling for the emancipation of the Jews.

In 2010, we will dedicate a Forty-eighter memorial for him as part of the "Street of Democracy" in Hamburg.

An Open Letter from the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA:

A digital rendering of the proposed German-American Heritage Center of the USA.

To my fellow Americans of German-speaking ancestry,

The German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA (GAHF) needs your help! The GAHF was founded in 1977 (originally chartered in Pennsylvania as the United German-American Committee of the USA, Inc.), as a non-profit, not partisan, 501(c)3 educational organization to serve as a national umbrella organization through which Americans, proud of their German heritage and language, work together on vital issues of common concern and promote their heritage.

Our mission is to preserve and promote the heritage of Americans of German-speaking ancestry and to promote the understanding, knowledge, and friendship between people of Germany and those of the United States.

Germans represent the largest ethnic group in the United States. They have been active in America since the founding of Jamestown and have had a major impact on the American culture and economic progress of this great nation. Yet, they are one of the few ethnic groups that do not have a national museum or heritage center. The time has come for us to create a national German-American heritage center, and we found the perfect location.

Today, the GAHF has a major opportunity to dramatically expand its research and education programs and increase its overall effectiveness through the purchase of a historic building built 1888, by a German merchant, in the heart of the revitalized section of Washington, D.C. and turning it into the first ever national German-American Heritage Center of the USA.

This is our primary goal for 2007. The Heritage Center will tell the story of all Americans of German-speaking ancestry and the ways they helped shape our great nation. The Center will collect, record, preserve, and exhibit this rich cultural legacy. It will be a place for continuing discussion, study, and development of ideas about German, Swiss, Austrian, and Slovakian Americans, their heritage, their values, and their future. We need to raise $8 million to complete the purchase and renovations of this historical building by October 2007. We have already raised over $1 million, but time is running out.

All gifts of $100 or more will be listed in the official campaign registry, which will be permanently archived at the Center. If you are able to fund a specific need or donate $25,000 or above, the Foundation will honor you by permanently inscribing your name on our "Wall of Honor" in recognition of your generous gift.

While there are many clubs, religious institutions, and organizations throughout the United States working diligently to preserve German heritage, language, and traditions, we believe that having a national organization situation in the nation's capital is the most effective way to accomplish our goals. A location in Washington, DC, gives us the opportunity to reach tens of millions of people each year by leveraging off the already established tourism trade. It also gives us a prime location near the seat of the federal government where we can represent the voice of Americans of German-speaking ancestry on important issues of the day.

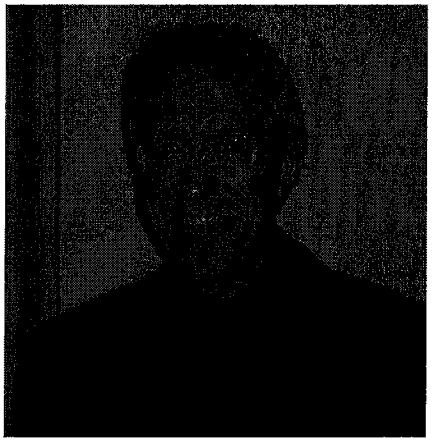
I hope you agree that now is the time to reaffirm and preserve our German-speaking heritage and I hope you'll consider making a significant leadership gift in support of this important project. Please feel free to contact me at (215) 862-2807 or email me at b.deichmann@att.net. We look forward to hearing from you and working together to make the preservation of our rich heritage a bright and ongoing reality.

Sincerely,
Bern E. Deichmann
President
German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA

In 2010, the German-American Heritage Center's German-American Immigration Museum will open in Washington, D.C. An exhibition about Forty-eighters from Schleswig-Holstein that emigrated to the United States is planned for the near future.

From: *The Soul of Schleswig-Holstein*

"After our quick walk around the old harbor area, Yogi decided to make a brief stop at Rantrum on our way back to Flensburg. I snapped one last photo, we loaded in the car, and began the short drive to the town where Jürgen Peter Ankerson was born. As I stared through the windows of the Mercedes at the lush, green Schleswig-Holstein countryside, my thoughts returned to Iowa City and all the research I'd done there. The words of Jürgen's auto-biographical sketch that had appeared in the Davenport German-language newspaper, the *Iowa Reform*, rattled around in my head ... 'As the youngest son of beloved and worthy parents, I was born on the first of March in the year 1824 in Rantrum.' The time was at hand; I was finally going to see the place where my great-great grandfather's life had begun."



Scott Christiansen received a B. A. degree in Economics from the University of Iowa and a J.D. degree from Florida State University. He practiced law for several years in his hometown of Davenport, Iowa, and then operated a small business in Iowa City for twenty years.

After retiring, he began doing genealogical and historical research with a special emphasis on "Forty-eighters" who emigrated from Schleswig-Holstein and settled in Davenport, Iowa.

While Scott Christiansen was researching his family's genealogy, he became fascinated with one of his great-great grandfathers, Jürgen Peter Ankerson, one of a small group of immigrants that collectively became known as the "Forty-eighters." As Scott's research progressed, he traveled to Schleswig-Holstein, immersed himself in north German culture and history, and began contrasting the lives and Weltanschauung of Schleswig-Holsteiners with his own.

Please enjoy the insights, informative research, humorous reflections, and entertaining photos documenting Scott's journey in the enclosed CD of his book *The Soul of Schleswig Holstein - An Iowan's insight into his ancestral homeland.*

"Six men from the crowd were then appointed to retrieve Henry to see if some arrangement might be made to do away with the printing of the paper. The appointees may not have been carrying a rope as they headed off to Henry's house, but Henry's daughter Norma had heard that a lynching was certainly an option in their minds. A friend of Henry's, however, had already called to say that he ought to get over to the office.

If anyone was well acquainted with the stories of public humiliation, vandalism, and beatings of German-Americans, it was newspaperman Henry Finnern. Knowing full well the danger and explosiveness of the situation, Henry courageously and resolvedly chose to directly confront the mob."

Hesperian Press, 1137 Kirkwood Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803 broba@eicc.edu

Stuart Gorman was born in Minneapolis, MN, in 1978. He designs educational card and board games. Working with Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann, his former German professor, he helped write the tri-lingual book *Low German: Platt in America*, for which the authors received the Fritz Reuter and Johannes Gillhoff awards.

Joachim Reppmann was born in 1957 in Flensburg, State of Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. He has taught at both St. Olaf and Carleton College, Northfield, MN. www.moin-moin.us

ISBN 0-941947-09-2

Included at no charge is a CD of Scott Christiansen's *The Soul of Schleswig-Holstein*