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HISTORY OF  
**HERMANN**  
MISSOURI



HOME OF THE

*“Maifest”*

## Preface

Among the peaceful hills along the Missouri River, some eighty miles west of St. Louis, rests the little town of Hermann. Amid the friendly atmosphere of the old world live some descendants of the hardy people of central Germany, and others, proud of the example set by their forefathers for all liberty loving people.

German ideals, customs, and languages are preserved at Hermann. German food is available to delight the gourmet. This little town of 2500 was founded in 1837 as a German colony and has retained many of its old characteristics to this day.

Visitors are always welcome in Hermann where no person is a stranger.



Sectional View Of Hermann



## Hermann, The Hero Of Germany

Hermann, living in 11 A. D. was a German prince who had learned Roman manners and had served in the Roman army, but had remained a German at heart. He loved his country and longed to see it freed from the yoke of Rome.

Tiberius, recalled from Germany, was replaced by the Roman general, Varus, who treated the Germans as slaves. He aroused the hatred of the people and all they needed was a leader. This they found in Hermann, called Arminius by the Romans, who was only twenty-five years old at this time. He laid his plans well. In the autumn, as had been arranged, a small and distant tribe rose in revolt, and Varus marched to put it down. Hermann, and the princes and people in league with him, gathered and followed the unsuspecting general. The Germany of that day was full of pathless forests, swamps and marshes. So Varus had to pass through the dense Teutoburg Forest. The ground was sodden with autumn rains and the streams were swollen and impossible to ford. To make a path for themselves the Romans had to hew down trees and make bridges over rushing torrents. The rain poured down, and the wind roared in the mighty trees, as heavily laden with baggage and provisions, the men toiled on through forest and swamp.

Suddenly one day above the roar of the storm, the fierce wild war cry of the Germans was heard. It seemed as if the forest around was alive with armed men, and a hail of arrows and javelins poured upon the Romans from every side. It was Hermann and his gathered tribes who had surrounded the Roman Army. The Romans fought desperately but had to retreat before the foe. After two days they were utterly exhausted as thousands fell beneath swords and battle-axes. The retreat became a rout, and the Roman Army of thirty or forty thousand was utterly wiped out. Only the shattered remnant, under cover of darkness, reached the Roman fortress of Alise. Varus was not among these few.

This was the worst defeat which ever befell the Romans, and it was one of the turning points in the history of Europe. When the news reached Rome, the Emperor Augustus, now an old man, was filled with

unutterable grief. With tears running down his furrowed cheeks he cried in anguish, "Varus, Varus, bring me back my legions."

For many years the Romans tried to regain German ground. In one of these battles, Thusnelda, Hermann's wife, was captured and carried to Rome where their son was born. Hermann never saw his son as Thusnelda remained a prisoner in Rome until her death.

"Truly Hermann was the deliverer of Germany," said a Roman writer. "He defied Rome, not in her early days, as other kings and generals had done, but at the height of the glory of the Empire. He fought, indeed, undecisive battles, yet in war he remained unconquered."

To this day the Germans look upon Hermann as the savior of their country. Not far from the town of Detmold, Germany, a huge statue of him may be seen standing guard above the field where it is thought his great battle was fought. This was the man in whose honor the town was named.

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# "Maifest"

## Then And Now

The Maifest, or school May picnic, has been an annual event for over 100 years. It was always a festive occasion, starting with a parade led by the band through the town to the picnic grounds. There the children would eat free buns and "knackwurst," drink pink lemonade, and play games.

Recently plans were made to make this a larger affair, with the people of Hermann acting as hosts to everyone interested in Hermann's history and quaint atmosphere. The idea for a festival originated with Mrs. Clarence Hesse, who with Clarence Hesse, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Schmidt, Mrs. L. G. Graf and Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Harrison planned the larger festival "The Maifest." The Brush and Palette Club became the sponsors. The first "large" Maifest, held in 1952, featured a historical pageant, a tour of some of the old homes, German meals and a big parade, "The Good Old Days." The idea grew and as a result this little town was overwhelmed with some 40,000 visitors.

Our future Maifests will continue to revive the romance of bygone days. Store windows will be filled with priceless family treasures such as jewelry, dishes, clothing, and furniture. The parade will, as in the old days, consist of pedestrians, riders, and horse-drawn vehicles. Some of the old homes will be open to the public, and the pageant will depict some of the town's history. The Maifest is now sponsored by a larger group of interested people who have formed Historic Hermann Inc., with J. J. Rode as its first president. However, so many preparations must be made that the undertaking transcends any committee, or any group, and is actually a community project. Through this, for a few days, we are re-creating the past for ourselves and for our visitors.

## The Founding Of Hermann



Geo. F. Bayer, Agent Of The German Settlement Society

Hermann began as an idea—an idea of establishing a German “state,” first brought before the German people of Philadelphia in a pamphlet published by Friedrich Muensch in 1833. By August of 1836 this seed had taken root in the organization of the “Deutsche Ansiedlungs Gesellschaft zu Philadelphia” (German Settlement Society.) The purpose of the Society was the establishment of a colony where the German language and German customs would remain intact.

The “Gesellschaft” adopted a constitution, and decided that the main city in this proposed settlement be named Hermann—in honor of the famous German hero, under whose leadership the Romans had been routed almost two thousand years before. Shares were sold in the new venture at \$25 each, with provisions made that the poor man could earn a share by working for the Society.

Three men were sent out to look for a suitable location. Favorable reports were presented concerning Old Mexico; the Femme Osage country north of the Missouri River; and the present site in Gasconade County, where the hills were described as being very fertile—good for grass and vineyards. Here too, limestone was to be found—good for

building purposes. The enthusiastic accounts of Gottfried Duden, German traveler and scientist, who had visited this part of Missouri some five years earlier, were of great influence in causing the Society to choose this latter location.

Accordingly, George F. Bayer, a school master, was chosen by the Society to lay claim to this land. He journeyed to Missouri and bought approximately 11,000 acres from the government for about \$14,000, and an additional amount of about 300 acres from private owners for \$1535. The three deputies had recommended a tract near the confluence of the Gasconade and Missouri Rivers, but the actual purchase consisted of scattered parcels, most of it some miles to the east of the mouth of the Gasconade. Bayer selected the site for the future Hermann in the narrow valley of a small stream known as Frene Creek. It is believed that the location reminded him of his old Bavarian homeland. It was later described by Friedrich Muensch as an amphitheatre surrounded by hills.

Upon his return to Philadelphia, Bayer was elected General Agent of the Society at a salary of \$600 a year and was granted 80 acres of land. The following plans were then made for the settlement of Hermann: Every lot owner was to build a house valued at not less than \$300 on his lot during the first year, the figure for Wharf Street being \$500. There was to be "eine breite Strasse" to run north and south, having a width of 10 feet in excess of its counterpart, Market St., in Philadelphia. Other north and south streets were to be named after famous German and American men (Franklin, Gutenberg, Schiller, Mozart, Washington, Goethe, and Jefferson.)

It was on December 6, 1837, that the last boat up the Missouri River for the season brought the first immigrants to Hermann. They were seventeen in number and included Conrad Baer; George Riefenstahl, wife, and five children; John Prager, wife and two children; Gottlieb Gentner and wife; and Daniel Oelschlaeger, wife, and one child. Bayer, delayed by illness, was not among them and without leadership very little could be accomplished during that first hard winter. Polly Phillips, a widow who lived here in a log cabin before Bayer bought the land, and other earlier settlers took these people in and helped them.

In the spring of 1838, 230 more people came to the new colony, and about 50 houses were built in a year's time. By 1839 the population of Hermann had grown to 450. The parent Society in Philadelphia disbanded, Hermann became incorporated, and the colony was on its own. Those early years were not without their troubles and hardships. Bayer, unable to do all that was expected of him, died in 1839 at the age of 38 and is buried in the town cemetery. Much hard work remained to be done, but a beginning had been made.

Thus a planned community had its beginning, planned not only in its physical arrangement, but also for a definite purpose—the preservation of the best of an older culture in a newer soil. The idea had now become a reality.

## The Wine Industry



Main Building Of Former Stone Hill Wine Company

Grape culture and the making of wine soon became the leading industries, and in the era from 1847 to 1920 gave Hermann a widespread fame that was not at all proportionate to the size of the town. The "know-how" of those early German settlers, the general topography of the region, and the chemical composition of the soil all combined to encourage these industries. As early as 1870 there was an annual output of 350,000 gallons of wine, which was shipped to all parts of the nation and even abroad.

That Hermann was famous for the quantity production of excellent wines is a well known fact; but it is not so well known that grape culture, as such, was an important industry and was diligently studied. Many new varieties were developed—better adapted to their environment and more hardy than older native and European varieties. Cuttings were distributed widely in other parts of the nation and abroad, and were largely responsible for the extensive cultivation of grapes in New York State.

The first grape, the Isabella, was introduced by Jacob Fugger in 1843. Other vintners, including H. W. D. Wiedersprecher, George Hussmann, and Jacob Rommel, began using other varieties such as the Virginia Seedling and the Catawba. By 1865 many other varieties had become adopted to the climate of Missouri, and the Concord and the Delaware were also grown in large quantities. New varieties developed in this area include Elvira, by Jacob Rommel; Hermann, by F. Langendoerfer; Martha, by Samuel Miller of Bluffton; Missouri Riesling and Grein Golden, by Nicholas Grein; and Dry Hill Beauty by the Robyns. George Hussmann published the *American Grape Culturist*, the only periodical in the United States at this time concerned with grape culture and wine making.

As early as 1844 the town trustees took action to encourage the

cultivation of grapes. They provided that residents might take up from one to five vacant lots, belonging to the town, at a cost of \$50 each, to be paid for without interest within five years. At the end of this time the whole of the lots was to be in grape cultivation. Later this offer was made even more liberal by extending the time to 10 years, with no payment due during the first five years, and records show that exactly 600 such "wine lots" were sold.

Most famous and largest of all the wineries was the Stone Hill Wine Co. It was established in 1847 by Michael Poeschel, and from 1861 to 1878 was conducted as M. Poeschel & Scherer, John Scherer having become a partner. In 1878 the greater part of the business was transferred to William Herzog and George Stark and was known as M. Poeschel, Scherer, & Co. Later, in 1883, Herzog and Stark became the sole owners and changed the firm's name to Stone Hill Wine Co. Mr. Herzog withdrew in 1893, and in 1898 the business was incorporated with a paid up stock of \$225,000.

The main building of the company, used as office and warehouse, was erected in 1869. It is a two story brick building, 60x60 feet, and is still in very good condition. There are three cellars, one below the main building, which was used for fermenting, and two others built into the hill on which the plant was built. The shipping cellar, built in 1861 and enlarged in 1882, is arched like a tunnel, with the older part being of stone and the newer part of brick. The third cellar was built in 1874 and contained the "twelve apostles"—twelve casks varying in capacity from 1500 to 3000 gallons, with the likeness of an apostle carved upon the head of each. Two other casks had capacities of 4,483 and 4,552 gallons. The entire establishment constituted the second largest winery in the United States, and the largest series of underground cellars in the world.

Thirty-five acres of vineyards were owned by the company and additional grapes were purchased from growers in this and neighboring counties. The wines were noted for purity and excellent quality, winning numerous premiums in national and international expositions.

Another bonded winery was that of the Sohns Wine Co., established in 1903 by Henry Sohns Sr., and his sons, Henry and George Sohns. Numerous other vintners owned and operated smaller, non-bonded wineries.

With the passage of the 18th amendment and its "prohibition," an era in the life of the town had come to an end, and the particular industry that had been such a distinguishing characteristic was abandoned. The huge casks were dismantled and sold, and the extensive vineyards were converted to other uses. The two acres of dark cool cellars have since been adapted for the propagation of mushrooms by Mr. and Mrs. William Harrison, managers of the Stone Hill Farms. The main building, of which the upper floor is occupied by the Harrisons, and the cellars, are included in the House Tour during the Maifest.



## The Arts And Culture In Hermann

From its very earliest days Hermann has had musical organizations that have contributed to the enjoyment of its inhabitants. By June 15, 1839, Eduard Muehl had organized a "Musik-Chor Mit Blech Instrumenten." Musical organizations have existed under various names until the present day. Perhaps the most popular one was organized July 30, 1882 under the pious name of Apostle Band. The twelve members played instruments imported directly from Germany. Today we have a municipal band with twenty eight members.

These people also loved to sing. In 1844 the trustees of the town voted to allow, quote, "that the society for vocal music, existing and known by the name of 'Hermann Mannerchor' be allowed to have the use of the school house for their vocal exercises." In 1875 the "Harmonie Society" was organized for the "purpose of educating the people in vocal music and giving concerts." The S. P. E. B. S. Q. S. A. carries on.

The people in Hermann believed in a joyful Sabbath. It was their fete day. Public opinion outside their community deterred them not a whit. Their Maifest, as well as the County Fair, Weinfest, and Schuetzenfest were always held on Sunday. For such occasion there would be Sunday railroad and boat excursions, bringing throngs of pleasure seekers from St. Louis and other places to "Little Germany."

In 1848, the first large yield of grapes was celebrated with a Weinfest observed annually thereafter. This two day "fest" started with the booming of the cannon over hill and vale. At the head of the parade was a wagon pulled by four horses, on which lay a long cask on which sat "Bacchus," decorated with wreaths, grapevines and flowers, with a goblet of wine in his hand. The caravan started downtown, past the small vineyards to the large ones belonging to Michael Poeschel, where row on row of grapes were laden with the beautiful ripe fruit.

The Theatreverein, which dates to the very early days of the colony, was officially organized in 1847 under the name "Erholung," with a building of its own. By 1876 this Theatreverein was known as "The Thalia Amateur Theatrical Society." Every four weeks a play was presented, works by Schiller or Goethe, as well as comedies such as "Einer Mus Heiraten." All the festivals and plays were usually followed by a ball or quadrille party.

Fast Nacht, the night before Lent, was always a gay time. The youngsters, dressed in all sorts of costumes, went out for a bit of fun before the season of self-restraint began. They would go, and still do, from house to house calling "Fett Kuechli," and the housewives, expecting them, would at once open the door to give them the doughnuts. The adults would have their mask balls at which they danced the schottisch, "Unser Heustock," and "Herr Schmidt." Dancing is still very popular, and nearly every Saturday night you will find either a modern dance, square dance, or old time dance in Hermann.

During the latter part of the 19th century, many of the young

men in Hermann belonged to the Turnverein which was a gymnastic society. Various pieces of equipment were used and the exercises were done in time to music. The first public performance of this group was in 1867.

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## The Hermann Public Schools



Grade School Building. Erected In 1871

Many of the early settlers were well educated and were very conscious of the necessity of providing for the teaching of the young. After the very busy days of 1838 had gone by with the clearing of forests and the buildings of homes and roads, the intellectual welfare of the children was considered. In the spring of 1839, a room was rented in the Oelschlaeger home in which a school was conducted by Mr. Bayer. That summer the first school house was built and was opened in the fall.

The purpose of the school was not only for the teaching of the various branches of learning, but also for the perpetuation of the German language. Instruction was given in "Reading and Writing the German and English languages, Grammatic, Arithmetic, History, Geography, and Drawing." The school master was expected to be proficient in the use of both languages but the German was emphasized.

It is noteworthy that the Hermann school from its very beginning was a free school, and all residents were entitled to its service. By the spring of 1842, the school district of Hermann was defined, a school tax was levied, and a new district school house was erected. For many years the German school and the district school existed side by side.

It became apparent to the colonists that the German school could

not continue to exist unless it had its own resources, as no support could be expected from the state. A German School Fund was established and grew through bequests, gifts from benevolent citizens, and from the sale of land belonging to the town. It was administered by five trustees who constituted a German School Board. The Fund is still in existence, and the German School Board is still serving as its trustees. The two school boards have always worked together and formerly met in joint sessions.

In 1871 the two schools were combined into one, and were housed in a large new building. This building, with its clock tower, is still a prominent landmark in downtown Hermann, and is used by the first five elementary grades. Combining the two schools made it necessary for each teacher to conduct classes in both the German and English languages. The school laws, however, did not sanction instruction in the lower grades in any language other than English so it required a special legislative act to make this arrangement legal. This privilege had been granted in 1849 by the General Assembly of Missouri, when it issued a special charter for the "German School at Hermann." The use of both languages was discontinued at the time of World War I, and the use of the German language in the Hermann schools today is the teaching of German in the high school as an elective or optional course.

The old schoolhouse and the existence of a separate German School Board represent a unique situation. The building does not actually belong to the school district as such. In accordance with an agreement between the two school boards made in 1920, the building was leased to the district for periods of five years at a time—the rental—\$1. The district, through its school board, agrees to maintain the building in good repair and to make any improvements that are deemed necessary. The original agreement also specified that the interest from the German School Fund could be used by the district to further instruction in German, the principal of the Fund being "forever sacred." If the interest were not used for that purpose, then the German Board reserved the right to use it for instruction in German during the vacation months. This was done for a time.

In 1898 a high school was established in a brick building that still stands at the foot of Schiller St. The first superintendent was Mr. C. C. Thudium.

When a new high school building was being planned, it was decided to locate it on a tract of land known as the Eitzen Park. When the plans for Hermann were first being drawn up in Philadelphia, four town squares were included, but the actual terrain did not fit the plans, and only one of these had a practical location. This was Eitzen park. It was town property that had been named in honor of Charles D. Eitzen, a liberal and public spirited citizen who was closely associated with much of the early progress of the town.

The high school building was completed in 1924, and was enlarged in 1941 by the construction of an annex that includes an auditorium-gymnasium and classrooms for the upper three elementary grades. A site adjacent to the high school has been purchased for the

future location of a new elementary school. G. W. Heying is now superintendent.

Information concerning the history of St. George's Schools has been included in the articles on the history of that parish.

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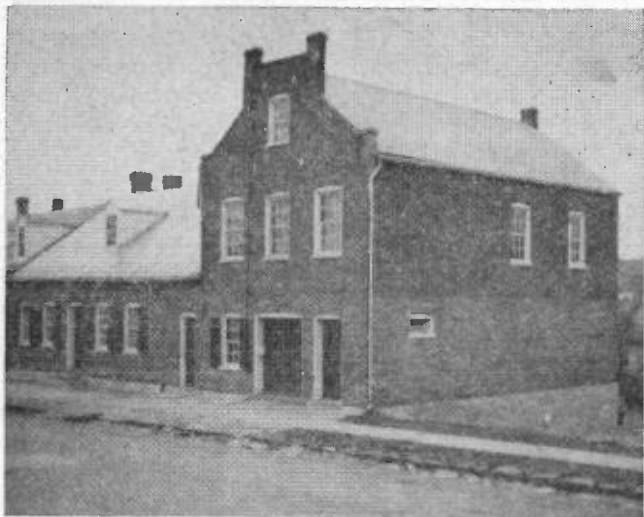
## Architecture In Hermann

Mr. George Bayer, in his report of 1836, sent to headquarters in Philadelphia, said that he had found the ideal location for the capital of the German state, the land of which he was supposed to purchase. An asset that he stressed was that there was plenty of limestone for building purposes.

It seems strange that the limestone buildings actually built in Hermann can almost be counted on the fingers of one hand. Most of the first homes were built of brick, of soft orange color, which the early settlers burned for themselves. These houses can easily be recognized when driving through town today. Most of them are built close to the street with the eaves dripping on the sidewalks. Large flower and vegetable gardens, and grapevines were planted behind the houses.

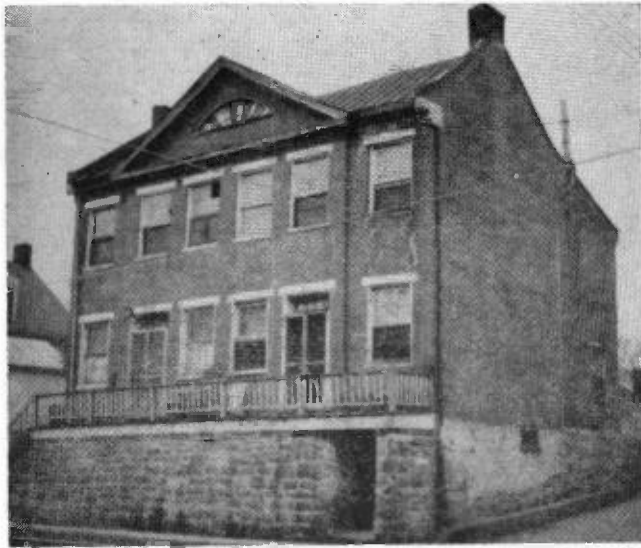
Brewing and wine-making having been important industries, many of the houses were built over vaulted cellars, whose thick walls and heavy simple arches have a medieval character. Similar to these cellars are the ruins of the old breweries found in the hillsides with their great arched openings.

Some of the interesting buildings, are described in the following paragraphs:



The Strehly house on West Second St., is in two sections. The older 1½ story brick was built prior to 1845, when it was purchased by Edward Muehl and used as a print shop. The two story addition was added later by Carl Strehly and plainly shows, in the color of the

brick, where work was halted during the Civil War. The front door step is a block of lithographic limestone originally used in the print shop.



The Gentner house on North Market St., was built about 1850. It is a two story brick building with a formal 18th century type facade, especially interesting because of its Greek style pedimented gable and Greek revival design cornice wood work.



The Breuer country home, southwest of Hermann, is a limestone cottage that was restored and furnished by Judge and Mrs. R. A. Breuer. It houses an interesting collection of antique furniture, glass and pottery.

The Hermann Star Mills building was erected in 1860 by Mr. Reitemeyer. It was four and one half stories high, 45x65 feet and cost \$40,000. In 1880 it had a capacity of 240 barrels of flour a day. This old building, located on the corner of First and Gutenberg Sts, is used today by the Ritepoint Co. in addition to their main plant.

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## Newspapers In Hermann

The first newspaper to be published in Hermann was the Licht Freund (Friend of Light), which made its appearance in 1843. It was issued by Edward Muehl, assisted by his brother-in-law, C. P. Strehly, and was the fourth volume of this publication, the first three having been published by Muehl in Cincinnati. Muehl believed strongly in the freedom of man and fought for the abolition of slavery. His paper contained much philosophical discourse and discussion of various topics, but was unprofitable; so the partners discontinued the Licht Freund and issued in its stead the Hermanner-Wochenblatt (Weekly Paper). The new paper preserved only a few of its predecessor's characteristics, being devoted almost entirely to news.

Edward Muehl was no obscure country editor. He was widely known as a writer, poet, and lecturer—a man of scholarly intellect. Some years after his death, which occurred in 1854, a number of his friends had a monument erected to his memory on his grave in the town cemetery. Those who contributed to this memorial and were present at its dedication included Friedrich Muench and Gert Goebel, famous writers; and B. Gratz Brown and Joseph W. McClurg, both of whom later became governors of Missouri.

Jacob Graf became the publisher of the Wochenblatt in 1854 after the death of Eduard Muehl, and changed the name of the weekly to Hermanner Volksblatt (People's Paper). After his death in 1870 the paper was published by his wife, Mrs. Christine Graf, with Rudolph Hitzel as editor. In 1873 Mrs. Graf sold the paper to Charles Eberhardt and Herman Lindermann, but bought it back within one year. Then Mrs. Graf, with Joseph Leising of Chillicothe, Ohio, as editor, started the Gasconade County Advertiser, the first English language newspaper in this county. Fred Wensel had started a campaign sheet in 1872 and the Gasconade Courier in 1874, which were absorbed by the Gasconade County Advertiser in 1877. The resulting publication was known as the Advertiser-Courier.

The German language Hermanner Volksblatt was discontinued in 1928. Theodore Graf, son of Jacob and Christine Graf, was editor of both papers until 1914, when his son, Leander Guy Graf became the editor, continuing until his death in 1950. He was succeeded by Julius J. Graf, a great-grandson of Jacob Graf, who continues in the family tradition as editor of the Advertiser-Courier.

In 1930 the Hermann Independent made its first appearance. It is now published by Herbert Gerdemann who has been its editor since 1935. In January of 1953 the Independent absorbed the Rhineland Record, which had been published by W. T. Dowling since he established it in 1902.

## The Churches In Hermann

On Sunday, places of business were open until noon and the country folks came to town to purchase, as well as to pray. Such was the custom since pioneer days and the early settlers saw no wrong in this practice. They believed that Sunday was made for them, and not they for the day. No wonder that they regarded it as an infringement on their rights when Governor Polk proceeded to enforce the laws of the state relating to Sunday closing. But to the credit of the people of Hermann, Governor Polk paid them a fine compliment when he said in his address of June 7, 1905, "They are the most law-abiding and law-respecting people of the world. They may not agree with me as to the wisdom of the law; but so long as it is law, they will uphold its enforcement until it is repealed."

The religious denominations have existed since shortly after the settlement of Hermann: the Roman Catholic and Evangelical since 1840, and the Methodist since 1844. The ritualistic and all the other ministerial work of the Evangelical and Catholic Churches was conducted exclusively in the German language until the turn of the century. The Methodist Church employed both English and German in its services.

### St. Paul Evangelical And Reformed Church

By Rev. Friedrich Rest

The long history of St. Paul Evangelical and Reformed Church may be condensed by looking at it from the standpoint of growth, cooperation, and Christian service.

The church began with fifty charter members in 1844, following the merger of two congregations existing since 1841. A scenic site along the Missouri River bluff had been selected for the church in 1839, but it wasn't until 1844 that a building was erected. Parenthetically, the original bell in this first church building has since been removed to the City Hall where it still serves the community. The first church building was outgrown by 1907, when the present edifice was constructed. In this predominantly Protestant community it is not too surprising that the church now has about 800 communicant members, and over two hundred baptized but unconfirmed members. The present parsonage was erected in 1919, replacing the one that was built around 1851.

The cooperative spirit was shown in such events as the original merger proceedings in 1844; in the resolution passed in 1881, when the congregation decided to permit the Methodists to ring the Evangelical bell for funerals until such time as they would secure a bell of their own; and in the subsequent mergers with the Evangelical congregations from Case and Big Springs.

Church services were always held in the language of the people, which meant that they were held in the German language until 1910, when it was decided to hold one service a month in English. The services on Good Friday morning and the early service on the Sunday of the Maifest are the only two services now held in German; all the rest are held in English.

One hardly knows where to begin in describing the extent of

Christian service which the church has rendered to the community. The Women's Guild has been in existence for 98 years, starting out as the Ladies' Aid, and their numerous activities would fill a volume if the whole story were included. The Sunday school has been organized for nearly sixty years, and of late has had a teacher and an assistant teacher for each of the 24 classes. The choirs of the church have been rendering outstanding services; other organizations, of more recent origin, have also done great work. Three organizations have joined Historic L Hermann, Inc., namely: The Women's Guild, the Churchmen's Brotherhood, and the Young Adult Fellowship. Possibly one could give a suggestion of the Christian service rendered by stating that up to 1953, 3,945 persons have been baptized in the name of the triune God; 2,019 have been confirmed; 1,611 couples have been united in holy matrimony; and 2,388 individuals have been given Christian burial.

Pastors during the first half century of the church's existence were: Reverends Friedrich Hundhausen, Friedrich Birkner, Karl Nestel, Konrad Eppens, Karl Feldman, and Herman Koenig. Pastors during the church's second half-century were: William Beck, 1894-1899; H. Bender, 1900-1905; L. Suedmeyer, 1906-1912; and Rudolph Kasmann, 1912-1944.

Starting the second century of service was Rev. Henry G. Kroehler, 1944-1948. The present pastor, Rev. Friedrich Rest, started serving in Hermann and community in 1948.

A number of people from the congregation have entered full time Christian service. Mrs. Olivia Schultz, nee Bareis, wife of Rev. John Schultz of Burlington, Iowa, was a missionary in India with her husband for 21 years; the Rev. A. O. Mann, Henderson, Minn., a member here while he was County Superintendent of Schools; the Rev. R. G. A. Bareis, Billings, Mo.; the Rev. Rodney Heckman, Buffalo, N. Y.; Sister Olivia Drusch, Sister Superior at the Deaconess Hospital, St. Louis; Rev. Leslie R. Poeschel, Gladbrook, Iowa, his wife, the former Carolyn Sohns; Rev. Edwin A. Wahl, Louisville, Ky., who was ordained in this church, and was united in marriage to Evelyn A. Kasmann; Mrs. E. H. Gumper, nee Bareis, wife of Rev. Elmer Gumper, of West Burlington, Iowa, who was for 14 years with her husband a missionary in Honduras, Central America; and Mrs. Margaret McClure, nee Sohns, wife of the Rev. Dr. Walter E. McClure, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

## St. George's Catholic Church

By Rev. Father Colman

The history of St. George's Church dates back to the origin of the town itself. Among the early settlers of Hermann there were thirty-three Catholics headed by three prominent gentlemen, Magnus Will, Celestin Diebold and Bernard Niehoff. Jesuit Fathers from nearby Washington ministered to the spiritual needs of the group until the appointment in 1849 of the first pastor, who completed the little church begun in 1845. In 1875, the parish was entrusted to the Franciscan Fathers who still operate the parish.

With the arrival of the Franciscan Fathers and Brothers renovation of the interior and exterior of the little church began. Within a



short time the parish had an enlarged and beautified place of worship. In the year, 1892, a stately tower was added. This tower was retained by a special request of one of the donors when the new church was erected in the year 1916. This edifice stands at the present time and is an imposing structure of simple Gothic architecture, a monument to the craftsmanship of the Franciscan Brothers who were the architects and builders. Outstanding works of art in the church are the three ornate Gothic altars that are still in use today. The wood for these altars was taken from the forests of local parishioners, seasoned, and then delicately carved by hand into masterpieces of religious art.

In 1916 on July 9, the Most Rev. John J. Glennon dedicated the new building to the service of God. The cost of the entire structure was only \$35,000, due to much volunteer labor and the donated architectural services of the Brothers.

The local Franciscan Friary was erected at the same time. The spacious home provides living quarters for the parish priests and mission pastors and their offices.

The centenary of the founding of the parish was celebrated on September 23, 1945. In preparation for this celebration the entire church was renovated and beautifully decorated. The Most Reverend Bishop Donnelly, Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, sang the Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving of the occasion. The centennial celebration was a tribute of praise to Almighty God for a century of blessings, and prayer for the continued success of the parish, so that the church might fulfill its purpose to lead men to a wholesome and happy life here and to an eternity of happiness hereafter.

### St. George's Parochial School

By Rev. Father Colman

St. George's parochial school came into existence in 1868. The early records give an interesting picture of its beginning. Fr. Hinssen writes: "Convinced of the necessity of Catholic parish school I gave this subject my very special attention. Since at the time of my arrival no such school existed I myself taught school for the first two months. In the meantime I gained the confidence of the people and I could engage a teacher. By the grace of God it was possible to continue the parochial school for two full years and there is hope that it be kept in existence for the future." The hope of this pastor was realized, for since that time the school has continued and grown. Father Schilling, a succeeding pastor, likewise taught school himself until he could engage the help of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri. This pastor erected the first combination school and Sisters' home in 1872 at a cost of \$3,500.

Upon the arrival of the Franciscans in 1875, Franciscan Brothers took over the teaching duties in the school, until the Franciscan Sisters of Lafayette, Indiana, came in 1887. These good Sisters have staffed the school with teachers to the present day.

St. George's parish began a large building program in the year 1914. It included a new church, rectory and school. The new school which provided class rooms, meeting rooms and a social hall was completed in 1916 at a cost of about \$20,000.

A fire that might have proved serious if it hadn't been discovered

in time broke out in the boiler room on the night of January 31, 1933. Thanks to the alert Hermann volunteer fire department the blaze was extinguished promptly. Damages amounted to \$2,500. The old school and Sisters' house was demolished and a new home was erected for the Sisters in 1941.

In September 1947 the school was expanded to include a high school department. Each year another grade was added until it reached the regular four year high school course in 1951. The increase in enrollment necessitated a new building so the parish began the erection of a new and modern high school building and gymnasium in 1950. The new school, accredited by the University of Missouri, was solemnly dedicated by Most Reverend Joseph Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis, November 23, 1952.

## The Hermann Methodist Church

By Rev. B. V. Wulff

The Hermann Methodist Church was organized in 1844, under the then German Methodist Conference. During the earlier years of its organization, services were held part time in a then Presbyterian church building located on West Fourth Street and occasionally in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Christ Wehmer.

In 1883, under the leadership of Rev. M. Nutzmann, a small but beautiful building of brick construction was built which still constitutes part of the present building. This building was made possible through the generosity of an elderly couple above mentioned, Mr. and Mrs. Christ Wehmer. Besides this donation of around \$5,000 they bequeathed their estate to the church which included the present building adjacent to the church that is being used as a parsonage.

During the early years of its existence, the Hermann church was served by the pastor of the Berger Methodist church, but in 1885 it became self sustaining for several years. Later it was connected with Jefferson City German Methodist Church and at intervals with Big Springs Methodist Church.

In 1895, under the pastorate of Rev. Fred Koenig, a Dr. C. M. Ellis united with the church, became an ardent worker for the Kingdom, was granted a local license and assigned as pastor of the church. During his pastorate the church took on new life and grew in membership and inspiration.

In 1924 the building was remodeled and enlarged with a basement under the entire building, making it a modern plant with more space for Sunday School and recreational facilities.

In 1925, through the merger of the English and German Conferences, the church program became to be in the English language in its entirety. Again in 1939, through the unification of the three bodies in Methodism, it became a part of the great body of Methodism comprised of over 9,000,000 members.

Under the leadership of Rev. J. A. Wilson an electronic organ was purchased. Under the leadership of the present pastor, Rev. B. V. Wulff, the pulpit and choir loft have been completely remodeled, new pews purchased, making the sanctuary a place of beauty and inspiration. A

Property adjacent has been purchased and is being renovated for educational purposes until a building program can be launched.

The present membership is 286, with a Sunday School enrollment of 160, a splendid choir, an active Women's Society of Christian Service, a Methodist Men's Club, and various class organizations.

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## River History At Hermann

By Capt. W. L. Heckmann

Author of "Sixty Five Years on Missouri Rivers."



View Of Hermann Riverfront

Let's go back about 120 years and write about things that have happened on our rivers near Hermann. In 1836 Captain Joe La Barge started on his long career on the Missouri rivers. For years he was employed by the American Fur Co. at an annual salary of \$8,000 for making trips from St. Louis to Fort Benton, Montana, over 2,300 miles up the Missouri river. In 1843 the steamer Big Hatchie blew up at the local wharf and killed some 70 people, mostly German immigrants seeking new homes in the Far West. Some 40 of these unfortunate people are buried on top of the hill at the east end of City Cemetery, in unmarked graves.

From 1836 to 1875, our mountain pilots, as they were known, were privileged characters and were at the head of one of the highest paid professions in America. They received from \$6,000 to \$8,000 for a trip to Fort Benton that lasted from 3½ to 6 months, and an 8 day trip from St. Louis to Omaha often brought in \$1,000. Hermann was the boyhood home of four men who were our best mountain pilots: Captains Bill and John Massie were born in the old brick Loehnig home below Hermann; and Captains John and Jim Gunsolis were also

born just below Hermann. The parents of Bill and John Massie were early settlers on Upper Massie's Creek, and that crystal clear stream was named in their honor. These four men became well known from Fort Benton to New Orleans, as first class pilots and owners of Missouri River floating palaces. The same thing can be said of Captain Joe La Barge.

What was known as the Golden Era of steamboating was from 10 years before to 10 years after the Civil War. Mr. Charles D. Etzen got his first start as a steamboat agent in Hermann and became its richest citizen. During those days we were never out of sight of steamboat smoke, but as time went on the Iron Horse stopped this smoke, and now the Diesel has stopped the smoke of the Iron Horse.

The first steam ferry boat at Hermann was the W. A. Knapp, owned and operated by John and Fred Graf. In 1864, during the Civil War, this boat took most of the women and children up to Graf's Island. They stayed there until General Sterling Price's army went up west through Hermann, burning the railroad bridges, and shooting up everything that did not strike their fancy. Before the steamer Knapp operated at Hermann, a Mr. Carl conducted a hand powered ferry boat business here.

Along about the year 1880, Henry Wohlt and his two sons, August and Gustave Wohlt, started the Hermann Ferry and Packet Co., in company with Wm. L. Heckmann Sr. They operated out of Hermann on the Missouri, Osage, and Gasconade rivers. This little steamboat company was perhaps the most successful ever organized. At times it paid as much as 200 per cent on its investment, and during the more than half century of its existence, it never lost a boat or damaged a cargo.

In 1903 we had the worst flood in the history of the Missouri River. We had seven steamboats operating out of Hermann at that time, and they saved a number of lives and millions of dollars in property.

From 1845 until the shoe factory commenced to operate, it was boats that kept Hermann on the map. our little City Beautiful should go down in history as being the most successful river town. We built some 40 steam and gasoline boats, and some 30 barges at and near Hermann; and sent more boat men out on our rivers than any other place between St. Louis and Fort Benton. No history of Hermann would be complete without mention of the Wohlt and Heckmann families.

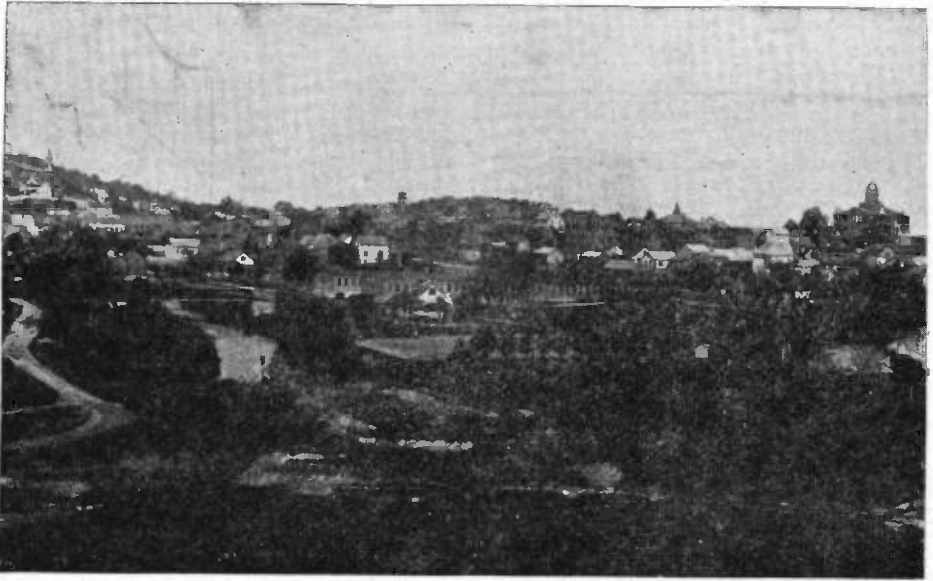
The ferryboat Hermann was the last of some eight steam ferry boats, and the gasoline powered Loutre Island was the "last of the Mohicans," as our magnificent highway bridge spanned the river here in 1929. While our river business is dead on the Missouri River today, the big barge lines on the western rivers are carrying more than twice as much cargo as our old floating palaces ever did. When the Pick Sloan Dams are complete, the Missouri will come back to her own, and the 400 mile stretch from St. Louis to Kansas City will be the busiest section of river in the whole world.

After spending 71 years in active service on our rivers, let me

make this prediction, so stick a pin in it: In time we will get over slaughtering people and the age of speed will go back to where one can enjoy trips on our rivers, and the floating palaces will be there to carry you on all our western rivers.

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## A Period Of Growth And Development



Old Sectional View of Hermann

Hermann entered a new phase of its development on February 4, 1839, when the County Court of Gasconade County acted favorably on a petition for the incorporation of the town. In May of the same year the citizens elected a Board of Trustees to serve as an executive body, the following being chosen: Friedrich Lehder, Heinrich Heckmann, Hermann Bock, Julius Leupold, and Silvester Doess. This system of government by town trustees was continued until 1905, when it was decided to modernize the administrative set-up by electing a mayor, aldermen, collector, marshal, and other officials. August Wohlt was then elected as the first Mayor of Hermann, along with a board of aldermen composed of Gaus, Moebus, Schuch, and Bohlken.

R. W. Ochsner is the present Mayor of Hermann.

The first store in Hermann was that of H. W. D. Wiedersprecher, located on Wharf St. It was taken over in 1841 by Charles D. Eitzen who had been the clerk for about 3 years. Stores were also kept at about that time by Mr. Leupold and Mrs. Pommer.

Other businesses started in 1838 were those of Morlock and Rudolph, gunsmiths and blacksmiths; John Nieder, shoemaker; and Fran-

cis Langendoerfer, shoemaker. The carpenters at that time were Mr. Betzhold, Paul Hoffmann, and G. H. Gentner, the latter also being a cabinet maker.

Dr. Kramer and Dr. Ferdinand Kaempf were the first physicians, both beginning their practice here in 1842. The first birth in Hermann was that of Herman Strecker who was later given 80 acres of land by the town because of this distinction. The second and third births were those of Herman Bensing and Charles Hoehn.

Gasconade County was but sparsely settled at the time that Hermann was founded. The county seat had been located at Bartonville, Gasconade City, and then Mt. Sterling. However, the center of population was shifting to the northern part of the county because of the steady influx of settlers in this area. As a result the county seat was moved to Hermann in 1842, and was housed in a brick building paid for by the town. This courthouse was replaced in 1898 by the present building on the same site. The cost \$50,000, had been previously provided for in the will of Charles D. Eitzen.

Charles D. Eitzen came to Hermann in 1838 and worked as a clerk in a store. By initiative and industry he became a wealthy man, but he was willing to share that wealth. The county, schools, churches, and various organizations all received considerable financial support because of the generosity of this public-spirited man. A bust of Mr. Eitzen occupies a place of honor in our City Park.

By 1843 it had become apparent that the ownership of thousands of acres of land by the town was not a practical idea. It was decided to dispose of the land at public sale and the town trustees offered it at \$2.25 per acre. Later the price was reduced to \$1.25 per acre which had been its cost price. Thus the town divorced itself from the much larger undertaking that the Settlement Society had originally set up for itself.

During the decade from 1840 to 1850, iron from the Meramec Iron Furnace in Crawford County, about 65 miles to the south, was hauled to Hermann by means of ox teams. This iron was shipped by boat to Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. On the return trip the wagons were loaded with various provisions. The construction of the St. Louis and San Francisco R. R. through Crawford County stopped this profitable activity for Hermann.

In 1854 the Pacific Railroad was completed through Hermann, and another era in the life of the town had begun. The population was listed at about 1400 soon after this.

The first fraternal organization in Hermann was that of the Odd Fellows, forming in 1850 under the name Robert Blum Lodge. Robert Blum had been a German patriot of that period. Soon after that and in the same year, the Masons organized as Hermann Lodge 123 A. F. and A. M.

The original plans for Hermann included a very broad Market Street that was to run north and south, and which was to have market houses built in the street. One such building, the Market House, was erected in 1856, and was located just below the intersection of Fourth and Market Sts. The building was a two-story brick structure, with the first floor divided into stalls for butchers and provisioners.

These stalls were rented out by a market-master, who was responsible for the supervision of the market-house and the marketing regulations. The upper story was one large room used as a town hall and for public meetings. In 1906 a new City Hall was built, and the marketing stalls were no longer being used, so the old Market House was taken down.

A volunteer fire department was organized in 1859 under a special charter from the State of Missouri. The first officers were: George Pfautsch, captain; Caspar Schubert, lieutenant; Gottlob Rippstein, secretary; John Gutmann, treasurer; and Ludwig Leland was another officer.

At first the company functioned only as a bucket brigade, but at about the time of the Civil War two hand pumps had been obtained. The construction of the city water system in 1912 was very helpful to the fire department, for it provided an almost unlimited supply of water under pressure. A steam engine was purchased in 1925, but since 1932 the equipment has been motorized. The membership today, as before, is composed of public-spirited volunteers. George Stock is the present Fire Chief.

An interesting incident occurred at Hermann near the end of the Civil War. General Sterling Price with his 25,000 Confederate troops was approaching Hermann in October, 1864. Most of the younger men of the town were enlisted in the service of the nation, but a half dozen resolute old men, who had received training in the German army, decided to play a trick on the invaders. They mounted a small cannon that the town owned on one of the hills that overlook the town, and when the troops appeared in sight, they discharged a shot at them and beat a hasty retreat, dragging their cannon with them. Price's men halted and opened fire on the unseen foe. After a short time the attack came from a second hill and later from a third hill. The invaders were bewildered for they believed that a strong force had been unexpectedly encountered. Detachments of troops were detailed to reconnoiter, and they ascended the three hills in succession. On the last hill they found the old cannon, unmanned, and spiked. By transferring their weapon quickly from one hill to another, the old men had created an impression of strong, organized resistance. The troops, seeing that they had been tricked, rolled the cannon down the bluff into the Missouri River, and passed by without molesting the town. Years later, the old cannon was taken from the river, and is now mounted on the lawn in front of the courthouse. It was used on many festive occasions after that, but was badly damaged while being fired on the occasion of Hermann's 50th anniversary. It was to have fired a shot for every year, but after about 40 rounds it burst.

Business activity continued to expand. The industrial and agricultural prosperity led to the organization of the Hermann Savings Bank in 1867, with Otto Monnig as president, and Philip Weber as cashier. Robert Robyn became cashier in 1880, and Eugene Rippstein was appointed as assistant cashier in 1882.

Five business firms established before the turn of the century are being operated by descendants of their founders. These companies and their founders are: Graf Printing Co., by Jacob Graf in

1854; Schuch Memorial Works, by Henry Schuch, Sr., in 1871; Eberlin's Hardware Store, by Christ. Eberlin in 1889; Ruediger's Furniture and Undertaking Co., by Edward E. Ruediger in 1892; and Schlender's Shoe Store, by Christian Schlender in 1893.

An important milestone in the development of the town was reached around 1903 when a shoe company was organized with local capital, and a factory was built on Gutenberg and Fourth Sts. This project was a failure until it was taken over about a year later by the Peters Shoe Co. of St. Louis. The building was then extended down to Fifth St. and shoe making became a major industry in Hermann. In 1912 the Peters company affiliated with several other shoe manufacturers to form the International Shoe Co., which is now the largest shoe manufacturing company in the world. A three story addition was built in 1923 to meet the needs of the expanding industry. Today almost 500 people are engaged in the making of about 6300 pairs of shoes per day. Charles Shipley is superintendent.

The completion of the highway bridge over the Missouri River in 1929 extended the trade area of Hermann tremendously. This event, along with the general improvement of roads and highways and the mass production of automobiles, accelerated the change from Hermann to the Hermann community. The city limits are not dividing lines, for the interests of the town and of the surrounding area are the same.

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## Other Major Industries

Since 1923 the old cellars of the Stone Hill Wine Co. have been used for the production of mushrooms. This enterprise, employing 20 people, is operated by Mr. and Mrs. William Harrison as Stone Hill Farms. Annual production is from 75 to 100 tons and is seasonal, with the harvest period beginning about October 1 and extending up to about June 1. About half of the crop is marketed in the St. Louis area, and the remainder is sold throughout the South as far as Brownsville, Texas, and deep into Florida.

A new industry began in Hermann in 1939 when F. G. Baker established the Missouri Milk Products Co. It is now rated as one of the finest and best equipped of such plants in Missouri. The stainless steel equipment is capable of handling 70,000 pounds of milk daily and processing it into many different varieties of cheese, as well as cottage cheese, butter, and dried whey.

Ritepoint Co., Hermann Division, was established in 1948, and is housed in a modern factory building. About 225 people are employed in the manufacturing of mechanical pencils, ball pen units, and defense and ordnance items. Defense production consists of complete oil pump assemblies used on Sapphire jet engines. Ordnance production consists of component parts for the M52 point detonating fuze, which is used by the infantry to explode 60 mm. and 81 mm. mortar shells. Charles Temple is superintendent.



## Hermann Today

Hermann today is a progressive little city—large enough to provide its citizens with all the advantages of modern living, but not so large that each does not consider himself a friend and neighbor to all. Our stores are modern and our businesses are operated in a spirit of public service. Houses are neat and well-kept, and home life is maintained in the finest American tradition; church congregations are active in the promotion of the Christian life and ideals; and the teaching in the schools is excellent.

We hope that you like our town. It is not perfect but we think that it is a good place to live.

In extolling the virtues of the town to others, however, one thinks sometimes of the lines written by Abraham Cowley in "The Wish":

"I should have then this only fear:  
Lest men, when they my pleasure see,  
Should hither throng to live like me,  
And make a city here."

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## Acknowledgment

Information used in writing this booklet was obtained from these sources: "The German Settlement Society of Philadelphia and Its Colony Hermann," by Bek, published by Americana Germanica Press, Philadelphia; "History of Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, Crawford, and Gasconade Counties of Missouri," published by Goodspeed Publishing Co. of Chicago; "The Grapes of New York," by Hedrick, in the 15th Annual Report of Department of Agriculture, State of New York; "Eduard Muehl," by Adolph Falbisaner, published by German American Annals Press, Philadelphia; and various old records that were kept in Hermann. We thank the authors of the signed articles, and all others who assisted by giving facts and suggestions.

