

Life in the New Homesteads

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Colonial America

German migration to North America is generally treated as having begun with the 1683 arrival in Pennsylvania of 13 families from Krefeld on the lower Rhine, even though most of them were of Dutch origin. But Germans were in fact the largest group of migrants to the Dutch colony of New Netherlands before the English conquered it in 1661 and long preceded the Krefeld migrants. Given the Frankfurt am Main Heimat of wealthy merchant Jacob Leisler who governed New York briefly from 1689-91,¹ it is likely that some less well-known Germans had their origins in the nearby Bavarian Palatinate. If so, these first “Bavarians” in America were most likely townspeople in New Amsterdam and they blended into the town’s diverse population so completely that we can’t say much about their lives beyond generalizations that could apply to everyone in New Amsterdam.

Individuals and small groups of migrants may have gone from the Palatinate to British North America in small numbers in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, but the first group that shows up in the historical record consisted of Lutheran Pfarrer Josuah Harrsch and about 55 followers who enlisted the help of Queen Anne of England in their migration to the Hudson Valley of New York in 1708.² Harrsch, writing under the name Kochertal had promoted emigration to Carolina, but it was his success in getting the Queen to pay their passage that mobilized thirteen thousand or more Palatines to try to follow him to North America during and after the famine of 1709. After they arrived in England the British government proved less helpful than Harrsch had led them to expect, thousands of Catholics were sent back to Germany and thousands of Palatine Protestants were sent to Ireland and other British territories, while only about 3,500 were sent to North America. Nonetheless, the 2,368 Palatines who made it to New York were the real founders of German America. About 150 of them stayed on in New York City and joined its multi-ethnic diversity. One youth who stayed was John Peter Zenger who became a successful printer and publisher. Zenger is still remembered as a pioneer of freedom of the press in America because he won a legal battle against a Governor who tried to have him imprisoned for publishing articles critical of the Governor.

¹ Edwin G. Burrows & Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*, New York/Oxford, 1999, S 97.

² Georg Fertig, *Lokales Leben, atlantische Welt: Die Entscheidung zur Auswanderung vom Rhein nach Nordamerika im 18. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück, 2000, S. 72-73, 104-5. Agnes Bretting, „Mit Bibel, Pflug und Büchse: deutsche Pioniere im kolonialen Amerika,“ S. 142-43 in Klaus J. Bade, ed., *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland, Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, München, 1992.

While some of the Palatines stayed in the Hudson valley, most found new homesteads in the frontier lands of the Mohawk river valley where land speculators, seeking customers in the aftermath of devastating raids during a war with the French and their Indian allies, made land available on easy credit. The frontier farmers of the German Flats and nearby districts got along well with their Mohawk Indian neighbors at first. Sir William Johnson, the trader and British Indian Agent who lived in the Mohawk valley with his Palatine common-law wife Catherine Weissenberg, said the Palatines taught the Indians to distinguish between themselves and the English to avoid being caught up in the Anglo-French wars for control of North America. Young Conrad Weiser learned the Mohawk language of his neighbors and became one of the important intermediaries between the Indians and the English in the mid-18th century. Adopted by the Mohawks, Iroquois chiefs said of him “He is of our Nation and a Member of our Council as well as Yours.”³ A few Palatines like Peter Spelman and Hans Fife went even further and joined the Indians completely, one becoming a Shawnee and the other a Seneca.⁴

Most of the Mohawk valley Palatines settled down to the hard work of frontier farmers living on scattered farms. “In the rural parts the houses are not build together as are the villages in Germany, but there are some thousands of acres in one piece... If one travels one continually passes through forests; only occasionally does one pass a house, some miles further on there may be another house on the roads. Yet most houses are far away from the roads.”⁵ Despite this contrast with German settlement patterns, the Palatines of the Mohawk valley maintained close ties to each other through church and social activities that were soon reinforced by marriage ties as they and their children married other Palatines. The land was fertile and they had easy access to markets downriver, so their farms were very successful. The country was healthy and their many children generally survived into adulthood, so their numbers increased rapidly. Visitors a generation or two later reported that the Mohawk valley was mostly German in language and culture. The growing numbers of Palatines eventually came into conflict with their Indian neighbors as they increasingly encroached on Mohawk lands as had the English before them. The Mohawks whose numbers had been reduced by European diseases and warfare were forced to abandon the valley after the Revolutionary war began in 1776, leaving it to the Palatines. But long before that some of the

³ Liam Riordan, “The Complexion of My Country” The German as “Other” in Colonial Pennsylvania, S. 112 in Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden & Susanne Zantrop, eds. *Germans & Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections*, Lincoln Nebraska/London, 2002.

⁴ Colin Calloway, “Historical Encounters Across Five Centuries,” S. 50-53 in Calloway, Gemünden & Zantrop, eds. *Germans & Indians*.

⁵ Hermann Wellenreuther, „Image and Counterimage, Tradition and Expectation: The German Immigrants in English Colonial Society in Pennsylvania, 1700-1765,” S. 90 in vol. 1 of Frank Trommler & Joseph McVeih, eds. *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three Hundred Year History*. Philadelphia, 1985.

Mohawk valley Palatines, like the Mohawks' good friend Conrad Weiser, moved south to Pennsylvania where they became the core of the Pennsylvania Palatines whose settlements attracted increasingly large numbers of later emigrants from the Palatinate after 1727.

In the long run it was the colony of Pennsylvania that became the home of the largest number of Palatines and other Germans in 18th century America. The best farmland in Pennsylvania cost less than a third the average price of land in southwestern Germany and was three times as fruitful.⁶ This alone would have attracted migrants from the Palatinate, especially moderately prosperous farmers who couldn't afford to buy enough land there for their sons. Pennsylvania had large and profitable export markets for its grain, but it suffered from a severe labor shortage so wages were high. Even poorer Germans could rapidly accumulate enough money to buy land if they could just pay for their passage across the Atlantic. As the numbers of migrants increased, Dutch merchants developed a regular trade in migrants from Rotterdam to Philadelphia and began to extend would-be migrants credit towards the costs of the voyage. The Pennsylvania labor shortages meant that farmers and artisans in the colony would pay newly arrived migrants or their ship captains enough to cover the costs of the voyage in return for a contract binding the migrant to several years of labor for the person "redeeming" their debt. A family with several teenage sons could easily finance its travel this way and preserve its resources for buying land, or a single young man with no resources beyond his ability to work could finance his voyage this way. Life for these indentured laborers was often harsh and some compared the system to slavery, but many found it worth the risk—some 68,886 German-speaking immigrants came through the port of Philadelphia between 1727 and 1775 and half of them did so as "Redemptioners" who were bound to service for 2-7 years in exchange for their passage.⁷ Palatines were by far the most numerous group among them so much so that all Germans were often called Palatines and *Pfälzisch* became the basis for the new dialect called *Pennsilfaanisch*.⁸

At first the English of Pennsylvania welcomed the arrival of Protestant reinforcements, but as the numbers of Palatines grew many began to have doubts.⁹ As early as 1735 some English Pennsylvanians doubted the wisdom of granting equal political rights to the Palatines. As Palatine immigration peaked in the mid-1700s and another war with France stimulated English insecurities a

⁶⁶ Georg Fertig, *Lokales Leben*, S. 86-87.

⁷ Georg Fertig, *Lokales Leben*, S. 78, 113-120; Marianne Wokeck, "German Immigration to Colonial America: Prototype of a Transatlantic Mass Migration," S. 7-11 in vol. 1 of Trommler & McVeih, eds. *America and the Germans*.

⁸ Jürgen Eichhoff, "The German Language in America," S. 231 in vol. 1 of Trommler & McVeih, eds. *America and the Germans*.

⁹ For more extended discussions of these issues see: Hermann Wellenreuther, "Image and Counterimage, Tradition and Expectation: The German Immigrants in English Colonial Society in Pennsylvania, 1700-1765," S. 85-105 in vol. 1 of Trommler & McVeih, eds. *America and the Germans*; and Liam Riordan, "The Complexion of My Country" The German as "Other" in Colonial Pennsylvania, S. 97-119 in Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden & Susanne Zantrop, eds. *Germans & Indians*

series of published attacks was launched against the Palatines. Writing about the “Palatine Boors” in 1755 Benjamin Franklin asked “Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of *Aliens*, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion.” Indeed, it was race and not just culture that divided the English and the Palatines in the opinion of British America’s most famous scientist, “...the Spaniards, Italians, French, Russians and Swedes are generally of what we call a swarthy complexion; as are the Germans also, the Saxons only excepted, who with the English, make up the principal Body of White People on the face of the Earth.”¹⁰ The English Pennsylvanians countered any potential “swarthy” Palatine challenge to their predominance by fixing the representation in the colonial assembly at 26 representatives from Philadelphia and the three other English dominated counties versus only 10 representatives from the five counties where the Palatines were dominant. Relations between the English and the Palatines calmed down after 1756 as the Palatines joined the English in fighting off French and Indian attacks and then French power was driven from North America so the English felt more secure. But the division continued to roil Pennsylvania politics for the rest of the century even though Palatine immigration declined sharply after 1756 as a series of wars and revolutions brought German migration to North America to a near standstill until after the end of the Napoleonic wars.

Nineteenth Century Migration

When the transatlantic migration resumed after the end of the Napoleonic wars it increasingly included migrants from all parts of Bavaria, though even as late as 1857 the Palatinate and Franconia accounted for more than 85% of Bavarian migrants to America. The new migration grew only slowly, it was the 1840s before it reached significant numbers and it really took off only in the 1840s and peaked in the 1850s when Bavarians constituted about a quarter of all the German born residents of the US. The end of bound labor for Whites meant that passage had to be paid for in full before the voyage in the 19th century, so very poor Bavarians were few among the early migrants. Observers often noted that migrants were mostly substantial members of the lower middle classes traveling with their entire families. Small-scale landowners with more than one or two sons knew they couldn’t provide enough land in Bavaria for their sons to inherit viable farms, so they sought cheaper and more productive lands in America to secure the inheritance of their sons.

On arrival they extended their area of settlement into the new territories and states west of Pennsylvania where the grandchildren of their 18th century Palatine predecessors had pioneered, especially the portions of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois along the Ohio River and its major tributaries.

¹⁰ Benjamin Franklin, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind*. 1755. Reprinted in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 4, S. 234, Leonard W Larabee, ed. New Haven, 1959.

While a few of the new immigrants moved to frontier settlements, most Bavarians moved to farms in areas where at least some of the ground was already cleared for farming and where they were unlikely to have Indian neighbors. They clustered together in districts where they had friends, relatives and *Landsleute*—and these small clusters attracted further migrants as more relatives and *Landsleute* crossed the ocean to join them. Sometimes they even advertised their origins, as when some immigrants named their new town Bavaria Missouri. Cheap land led to immigrants owning much larger farms than were common in the old country and the farmers lived spread out on their farms rather than in villages. This was the American norm and they also adopted a number of other American farming practices over time, though sometimes it was a full generation before the American custom of women not working in the fields was adopted.

Jewish Migrants

The scattered residences of the farming population created a need for retail services that didn't require a long and difficult trip to a village or town that might take a full day of traveling. Yankee peddlers from New England provided some of these services early in the century, but there were not that many of them and that created an area of opportunity for newcomers. Bavaria had long had its own population of peddlers and petty traders, mostly Jews who were subjected to continuing prejudice and attacks in the 1830s. Increasingly they were ready to seek better conditions elsewhere. Joseph Seligman of Baiersdorf Bavaria was one of the earliest of these emigrants in 1837 and he learned about American peddling from a Yankee peddler in Mauch Chunk Pennsylvania. Soon afterwards he started bringing over some of his many brothers and soon he had his own trading network based in a store he opened in Lancaster PA—he ran the store and maintained the stock while his brothers set out on foot and wagon to peddle dry goods through the countryside. Eventually he relocated the central operation to the commercial capital of the US, New York City, and his brothers spread out to regional trade centers. In 1844 Henry Lehman went from Rimpar Bavaria to Mobile Alabama where he began peddling in style with a wagon rather than a backpack. He too founded a family based trading network built on a large number of brothers, and the Lehmans too soon found they needed a New York base. After Henry's death from Yellow Fever next oldest brother Emanuel took over the family network and he established the NY office in 1858. This sort of family based trade network was widespread and it is only the later successes of the Seligmans and Lehmans that made them unusual.¹¹

Cincinnati, the “Queen City” on the Ohio, was the commercial center for the farming districts most favored by Bavarian immigrants and it became a major center for new family trading networks

¹¹ Stephen Birmingham, *“Our Crowd” The Great Jewish Families of New York*, New York, Evanston and London, 1967.

established by Bavarian Jews. Linking themselves to national wholesaling operations and credit sources created by other Bavarian Jews in NYC, they set up regional wholesaling operations in their “Jerusalem on the Ohio” that supplied family and friends who peddled and ran small country stores all through a wide swath of rural and small town America between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi, from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada—servicing both German and English speaking farmers and small townsfolk.¹²

Most of the peddler and shopkeeper family networks provided the basis for a comfortable middle class family existence, but few grew rich off this trade. Nonetheless, a few talented and lucky families were able to build great fortunes upon these small beginnings. Levi Strauss of Buttenheim extended his half brothers’ dry goods operation from NYC to San Francisco in 1853 and moved into manufacturing work pants as well as selling them, it was a slow route to wealth, but the company he founded is now world famous. Before Strauss went to San Francisco, two of the Seligman brothers took a large inventory of goods there in 1850 to open a store in the center of the California Gold Rush. Prices in California had rocketed out of sight because there was a lot of gold and a great shortage of goods so the Seligmans not only sold their inventory at a great profit, they soon found themselves dealing in large quantities of gold with their NY brothers as agents. By the middle of the 1850s the NY Seligmans were running a bank that financed the trading operations of many of the family trading networks and grew to be one of the major investment banks in 19th century America. The southern-based Lehman brothers went from dry goods to cotton brokers before they too became investment bankers. A few other Bavarian Jews like Joseph Sachs and Marcus Goldman followed similar trajectories into investment banking and by the last third of the 19th century there was a small group of German Jewish families, mostly from Bavaria, active in investment banking in NY and helping to finance America’s industrial expansion. None of them were as wealthy or powerful as their Anglo-American counterparts like JP Morgan, Jay Gould, and John D. Rockefeller, but they were conspicuous Bavarian-American success stories.

Bavarians in American Cities

Far more numerous than the Jewish peddlers and merchants, never mind the bankers were thousands of Bavarians who moved to American cities to work with their hands. While large numbers of relatively well off Bavarians headed straight for their new farmlands, many others either needed to earn more money in America before they could buy land, or they were handworkers who wanted to settle permanently in towns and cities. Not surprisingly Cincinnati, the gateway to the heartland of Bavarian settlement in America, was frequently the first choice of both kinds of

¹² Stephen Mostov, “A ‘Jerusalem’ on the Ohio: The Social and Economic History of Cincinnati’s Jewish Community, 1840-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1981.

migrants. By 1860 the 15,376 Bavarians of Cincinnati were 35% of the nearly 45,000 German-born residents in this heavily German city and were particularly numerous in the district known as “Over-the-Rhine.”¹³ There they worked as laborers on the river docks, toiled in Cincinnati’s new factories that were pioneers of American industrialization, and they manned the slaughterhouses of the city that was sometimes called “Porkopolis.” They also owned stores and businesses, and even sometimes factories (like Frederick Rammelsberg whose six floor furniture factory employing 250 men and many machines was one of the most sophisticated in America).¹⁴ In religion the Bavarians of Cincinnati were Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Freethinkers (though most were Catholics by birth) and they spanned most of the occupational spectrum as well.

Religion became the main sticking point in mid-19th century America, as a mostly Protestant country in the midst of an “awakening” of religious fervor suddenly had to accommodate itself to the arrival of millions of Catholic immigrants. Anti-immigrant anti-Catholic sentiment called “nativism” increased rapidly along with the pace of immigration from the 1830s to the late 1850s. Irish immigrants generally bore the brunt of this hatred as it exploded in violence and anti immigrant politics in the 1840s and 1850s, but Germans, especially Catholic ones were not ignored. The most violent of the Anti-German riots were directed against “Over-the-Rhine” in Cincinnati and the German neighborhoods of nearby Louisville in 1855. Even more threatening to Bavarian-Americans was the rise of political nativism in the guise of the American Party—known as the Know-Nothings because its secretive members were supposed to reply “I know nothing” if asked about the party. The Know-Nothings were committed to drastically reducing immigration, especially from Catholic lands and to denying full citizenship and voting rights to immigrants for as long as possible. The Know-Nothings briefly became the 2nd largest party in the US in the mid-1850s, before collapsing under the strains of the Slavery question that would soon lead to the Civil War. Even so, anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic issues remained major undercurrents that periodically roiled American politics until the anti-immigration victories of the 1920s put an end to large-scale immigration for more than a generation.

Bavarians in America’s cities were proportionately greatest in Cincinnati, but the real center of Bavarian America was in New York City where the only slightly lower proportion (31% rather than 35%) of a much larger total in 1860 made for more than twice as many Bavarians there as in Cincinnati. The 37,195 Bavarian-born New Yorkers and their 25,000 or more American born children were not only the largest concentration of Bavarians in America, they could have challenged

¹³ Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity Religion and Class in New York City, 1845-1880* (Urbana and Chicago, 1990), S. 22, 163.

¹⁴ Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana and Chicago, 1992), S. 75.

Nürnberg's claim to be the 2nd largest Bavarian city that year.¹⁵ Bavarian American migration never again assumed the scale of its 1840-1860 peak and Bavarians accounted for only half their former proportion of the German American migration stream when it resumed after a lull due to depression and Civil War in the US. Nonetheless, New York City must have been increasingly attractive to those Bavarians who did migrate in the later 19th century as they were over represented by 28% among New York's German-born at the end of the first great wave of migration in 1860 and by 47% at the end of the second great wave in 1880.¹⁶

Many mid-19th century Bavarian migrants came from the Palatinate like their 18th century predecessors and didn't fit the stereotype of Bavarians as Catholics, though we have no way of determining what proportion of them fell into each category or if NYC differed from Cincinnati and the Ohio Valley in this regard. Dr. Philipp Merkle was born in the Palatinate and got a theology degree from Heidelberg shortly before he moved to New York in 1833. He soon abandoned Lutheranism and started a Freethinker "Universal Christian Church." He had a greater impact in 1847 when he founded the Harugari, which grew into the largest German fraternal organization in America under his leadership. Merkle was also active in Democratic Party politics, he left his church to take up a series of political appointments after 1857 and moved to Albany NY in 1865 to take up a position as coroner there.¹⁷ Another Bavarian liberal from the Palatinate was Dr. Maurice Meyer, a lawyer who was a member of the revolutionary government in 1848. When the revolution collapsed he moved to New York where he joined another German-American fraternal order, the Jewish B'nai B'rith. He too rose to play a national leadership role in his fraternal order, becoming General Secretary in 1863.¹⁸

As a major part of the great German-speaking metropolis the Bavarians naturally spanned the social spectrum in New York even more than they did in Cincinnati. Few Bavarians made it into the top rank of German merchants in New York that required trade connections with the ports of northern Germany. But we have already seen that a number of them made it into the top ranks of New York bankers, and both Joseph and Jesse Seligman were invited to be officers of the Committee of Seventy, the organization of elite New Yorkers that engineered the downfall of the corrupt Tweed

¹⁵ As this total of 62,195 is just under the Nürnberg total of 63,000, and as the estimate for the number of American born children could be too low, it is possible that New York may really have been in 2nd place that year. Nadel, *Little Germany*, S. 25, 42; Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (München, 1983), S. 113.

¹⁶ That is they were 128% and then 147% more numerous than they would have been were Bavarians the same percentage of NYC's German-born as they were of the US as a whole (24% in 1860 and 12% in 1880). Nonetheless, there were nearly 7,000 fewer of them in 1880 than in 1860 and they were down to 18% of the city's German-born population from their 1860 31%. Nadel, *Little Germany*, S. 181, fn. 46.

¹⁷ Nadel, *Little Germany*, S. 98, 111-12, 131, with a photo of Merkle on the 6th page of pictures.

¹⁸ *American Israelite*, 13 September, 1867 obituary.

Ring in 1871. Several Bavarians, like Georg Gillig and Johann Eichler were experienced beer brewers before they moved to New York and made their fortunes by establishing some of the best breweries in America. Bavarians were also active in journalism. Two of the most conspicuous successes among them were Jakob Uhl and Anna Behr of Würzburg. Uhl was the son of a Bavarian military man and trained as a typesetter before migrating to NY in 1836. Anna moved to Buffalo NY (350 miles away) in 1837 with her brother, but she and Jakob must have known each other from Würzburg because they married in NYC the next year. In 1846 they took over ownership and editing of the *New Yorker Staatszeitung* and built it into the premier German newspaper in America—one with close ties to the German shopkeepers of the city. After Jakob died in 1852, Anna continued to run and develop the paper until she married her editor in 1870 and turned her attention to philanthropic works. Some later Bavarian migrants also went into journalism. After Dr. Julius Würzburger was expelled from München for revolutionary activities in 1849 he became associate editor of the *Staatszeitung*. Otto Bretthauer was another Bavarian ‘48er who relocated to NY and after a few years at the *Abendzeitung* he helped found *die Humorist* in 1858.

Bavarians were much more commonly middle class shopkeepers and workers than they were members of the elite, but much less is known about them. No doubt many of them worked in the breweries of their Bavarian *Landsleute* as they did in many other sectors of NY industry and commerce.

Bavarians were naturally very involved in the Catholic Church. Although Father Johann Raffeiner, the Vicar-General for German Catholics in the 1850s was from the Austrian Tyrol, much of his support came from Bavaria—he got financial aid from both King Ludwig himself and the Ludwig Mission Society.¹⁹ With the aid of the latter Raffeiner brought 2 nuns and two lay teachers into his parish from the Sisters of St. Dominic in Ratisborn. Cosmopolitan German NY, dominated by commerce, freethinkers and radicals, proved inhospitable to the more religiously inclined, so the center of German Catholicism was across the river in Williamsburgh and Brooklyn where Fr. Raffeiner had his Holy Trinity Parish. It was “Bavarian Farmers” in Brooklyn Heights who got Fr. Raffeiner to establish St. Boniface Church near the Heights so they could worship in a church with the same religious societies that they had known in their Bavarian home village.²⁰

Bavarians stuck together in NY, as elsewhere. The group of Bavarian farmers in Brooklyn Heights who had come from the same village was emblematic of this pattern. All through the German neighborhoods of the city, especially in giant Kleindeutschland, Bavarians clustered

¹⁹ James Sigurd Lapham, “The German-Americans of New York City, 1860-1890,” unpublished PhD dissertation, St. John’s U., 1977, S. 54-58.

²⁰ *Ibid.* S. 57.

together and formed Bavarian neighborhoods and districts. They lived together and socialized together—attending the same churches or synagogues, and joining the same *Vereine* as their Bavarian friends and neighbors. They also married each other. In 1860 72% of Bavarian born New Yorkers who had married in America were married to other Bavarians. And their children were only a little less likely to do the same. In 1880 60% of the married American born children of Bavarian immigrants were married to either Bavarians or the children of Bavarians.²¹

In 1874 Bavarians belonging to different Landsmannschaft vereine and other social organizations met to lay the basis for a grand Bavarian festival. They founded the Bayerisches Volksfestverein to organize the festival that year and in the years to come. Bavarians in Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Chicago soon copied their New York compatriots and some of these Volksfest-vereine lasted into the second half of the 20th century. But New York, with the largest number of Bavarians had the largest and best Bayerisches Volksfest. The spirit of these festivals—and of the organizations that promoted them—is expressed in Edmund Feuerholzer’s “Lied der Amerika-Bayern!” It was sung to the tune of “Gott mit Dir, du Land der Bayern” and went:

**Ueberm Meer—in weiter Ferne liegt das schöne Bayernland
Wo wir froh als Kinder lebten, wo das Vaterhaus einst stand.
Ach, das Schicksal hiess uns wandern weit hinweg vom Heimatgau—
: : Doch es zogen mit die Farben unseres Himmels—weiss und blau.: :**

**Und so grüssen Bayernsöhne aus der Ferne Bayernland
Alle sind wir fest umschlungen von der Heimatliebe Band.
Tief im Herzen loht die Flamme immer wieder hoch aufs neu:
: : Bayernehr und Bayernliebe, Bayernstolz und Bayerntreu. : :**

**Wenn dereinst wir müssen scheiden. Wenn das Todesstündlein schlägt
Und der Bayern Freundestreue uns zur letzten Ruhe trägt—
Ruhn wir wohl in fremder Erde weit von Bayerns Heimatgau
: : Uebers Grab noch spannt der Himmel Bayerns Farben—weiss und blau. : :²²**

Bavarian Migration After 1880

We can clearly see that a vigorous Bavarian-American subculture developed in these major centers of Bavarian-American migration in the late 19th century. And we know that Bavarian migration continued to flow to the United States after 1880. But as a result of German unification we find it nearly impossible to distinguish Bavarians from other Germans in American records. With no distinctions made after 1880 we don’t know where the concentrations of Bavarians were and we don’t know how many Bavarian migrants there were (though the Bavarians can’t have been anywhere where there were no Germans and the Bavarian migrants had to be fewer than the total for all Germans). If the patterns already developing before 1880 held, Bavarians in the third great wave

²¹ Stanley Nadel, “Kleindeutschland, New York City’s Germans, 1845-1880,” unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia U. 1981, S. 302-304.

²² Bayerisches Volks Fest Verein von New York, *Fest Zeitung* (New York, k.d.).

of migration were even more likely than their predecessors to go to cities, and were especially likely to have gone to New York, Philadelphia and Cincinnati—though the rapidly growing German population of Chicago might have started increasing its share of Bavarians by the end of the century. Famous, or infamous migrants who left a clearer historical trail than most can help verify that hypothesis.

Johann Most from Augsburg had a conspicuous career as a German Socialist and was twice elected to the Reichstag before he fled to London in 1879. In 1883 he moved to New York and soon became America's most infamous Anarchist. He spent most of the next two decades in that center of German-American life, but at some point he moved to another Bavarian-American center, Cincinnati, where he died in 1906.²³ Dr Otto Kiliani from München wasn't nearly as well known as Most, but his career as a successful surgeon in New York after his 1891 migration there did make a mark. He was not only a member of German organizations like the German Medical Society of NY, he was also a member of the very exclusive NY Athletic Club, indicating that someone could be fully accepted as a member of the city's elite even though he had come from Bavaria and was active in ethnic organizations.²⁴

In fact the increasing acceptance and integration of German born migrants, never mind their American born descendants, was the most outstanding characteristic of the period between 1880 and 1914. The old nativist fears of foreigners and Catholics hadn't entirely disappeared, but they now focused on the "new" immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe (Italians, Greeks, Slavs and Jews) and the "old" immigrants from Germany and Ireland were increasingly accepted as part of what Benjamin Franklin had called the "principal Body of White People." Bavarians in America benefited from this change and they and their organizations flourished as part of the larger German-American success story.

All that changed with the outbreak of the First World War. First some recent arrivals in the United States were widely reported to be trying to return to Germany when the reserves were mobilized, and this was taken as casting doubt on the loyalty to America of all immigrants. When British anti-German war propaganda was taken up by the English language press in the US the German language press was vilified for questioning it. Finally the US declared war on Germany and there was a massive campaign against all things German in the US—crippling or destroying many German-American organizations, newspapers and institutions.

²³ A. Sartorius von Waltershausen, *Der Moderne Socialismus in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Berlin, 1890), S. 193-197; Jan Girjik, „Nachtrag zur Biographie des John Most“ in *Memoiren: Erlebtes, Erforschtes und Erdachtes von John Most* (Reprint Edition, Hannover, 1978).

²⁴ Otto Spengler, *Das Deutsche Element der Stadt New York* (New York, 1913).

In the decade after the war nearly 400,000 migrants from all of Germany entered the US and a quarter of them went to New York. We don't know how many of them were Bavarians, but they were numerous enough to sustain, if not revive, the German ethnic organizations and institutions that had survived the wartime repression. Migration almost ceased again during the Great Depression of the 1930s, though a few thousand prominent anti-Nazi refugees like Augsburg born Bertoldt Brecht were admitted at the end of the decade. Brecht skipped the traditional places of Bavarian settlement in America and went straight to Hollywood, but most of the new immigrants went to New York and other old centers for Bavarians. A post-1933 attempt to take over German-American organizations to promote the interests of Nazi Germany failed, but it had enough support among some of the 1920s migrants to greatly weaken the target organizations even before WWII put new pressure on them to abandon their Germanness.

Bavarians resumed their migration to America in the aftermath of WWII with young Bavarian women breaking the path as so-called "war brides." Married to American servicemen, they spread out all over the US and were almost completely integrated into American society, though some studies of "war-brides" suggest that their integration was not always without severe social and psychological costs. When their relatives followed them to the US over the next half-century they too spread out all over the country. Like other Americans in these years they tended to settle in major cities and their suburbs, but there was little of the old tendency to settle in Bavarian or German ethnic communities to be seen. Non-European immigrants have been the most conspicuous element in the new "new immigration" of the past thirty years and German migrants have become almost invisible, at least to journalists and researchers.