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Germans in Sacramento, 1850-1859

Carole Cosgrove Terry

During the 1850s in Sacramento, German-born immigrants banded together in an ethnically based neighborhood where they created a sub-culture of "German-ness," practicing their own particular rituals and customs.¹ At the same time, these foreign-born joined the Anglo-American majority to address the chaos and disorder brought on by the dramatic increase in Sacramento's population due to the discovery of gold in 1849. Contemporary accounts such as newspapers, directories, histories and unpublished manuscripts confirm the existence of this strong community and its attempts to duplicate institutions they remembered in Germany and ethnic settlements in America. Despite their small numbers, they influenced the dominant Anglo culture to adopt some of its German traditions of joyful celebration. Consequently, the presence and impact of this German sub-culture demands that historians rethink the ethnic relationships and interactions in smaller California cities in the 1850s. Histories of California's gold rush era often focus on Hispanic-, Indian- and Chinese-Anglo relationships throughout the state, addressing ethnic minorities of foreign-born in only communities such as San Francisco where they were proportionally large, neglecting inter-relationships in the smaller towns and cities. The Germans' experience in Sacramento demonstrates that the white populations of the post-gold rush California towns were not necessarily homogenous—the presence of ethnic minorities helped create practices and rituals particular to each California community.

¹ In this study, "Germans" include those born in Germanic States such as Austria, Bavaria, Baden, Prussia and Germany itself, plus others born in Switzerland who actively involve themselves with the Germans or activities of the Sacramento *Turnverein*, the ethnic fraternal organization.

John Bodnar in his *The Transplanted* describes the process where European immigrants to America readily joined together to form ethnic communities, clinging to the cultural practices they had known in their homelands.² The behavior of the German immigrants to Sacramento in the 1850s fits Bodnar's model. Because they came from various political entities not united into a single German nation until 1871, these immigrants experienced a special impulse to create a unified community bound by kinship and ethnic ties.³ The organization of the Censuses and addresses listed in City Directories indicate that the immigrants were more likely to settle in "clusters" or neighborhoods rather than as individuals.⁴ These newcomers continued their German customs and rituals they had known in the "fatherland" and in ethnic neighborhoods in the United States. In 1854, they formed Sacramento's *Turnverein*, replicating the fraternal associations formed by Germans across the United States created to preserve their customs through political discourse, gymnastic programs promoting physical well-being as well as social and cultural gatherings.⁵ The *Turnverein* emphasized the cultural goal of joyful celebration and

² John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigration in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) xvi, xvii.

³ Albert B. Faust, *The German Element in the United States* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1909) 465, 471. George Henderson and Thompson Olatunji, *Migrants, Immigrants and Slaves: Social and Ethnic Groups in America*. (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1955) 109.

⁴ Bodnar, *Transplanted*, 213. Carole Cosgrove Terry. *Die Deutschen Einwanderer in Sacramento: German Immigrants in Sacramento, 1850-1859*. (Master's Thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2000) 59.

⁵ The word "*Turnverein*" literally stands for "to do gymnastic exercise" and was the appellation used for the fraternal associations formed by Germans across the United States. In 1848 in Cincinnati, Friedrich Hecker organized the first *Turnverein*, an intensely zealous and rigorously disciplined elaborate organization reflecting the German traits of diligence and efficiency. The movement spread rapidly throughout America, and by 1857, 157 *Turnvereine* met with an membership of roughly 10,000. Concerned by the nativist Know-Nothings and their attempts to limit political and economic rights to foreigners, Germans organized individual *Turnvereine* into a cohesive union, the *Turnbund*, which was able to neutralize the Nativist movement. Political and intellectual discourse and physical well being through gymnastic exercise were of primary importance, but social gatherings, featuring games and celebration were just as important as vehicles for preserving the German culture and customs. Robert Knight Barney, "Forty-Eighters and the Rise of the Turnverein Movement in America," *Ethnicity and Sport in North American History and Culture*, George Eisen and David K. Wiggins, ed. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994) 19-29, 37. Barney, "Knights of Cause and Exercise: German Forty-Eighters and Turnvereine in the United States during the Ante-Bellum Period," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 13:2 (1982) 37, 62-63. Carl F. Wittke, *The German Interests in America* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967) 8, 12.

the social aim of companionship and communal support by sponsoring many balls, dances, picnics, sporting events and Christmas celebrations.

German individuals did not remain secluded in their neighborhood but joined with the Anglo-Americans in various organizations and fraternal organizations such as churches and the Odd-Fellows. The membership of singing societies, bands and shooting societies included both German- and native-born, and these mixed groups performed and enlivened social gatherings attended by all Sacramento's citizens, allowing the Germans to introduce and encourage merriment in the mainstream cultural activities and gatherings. That the majority of the German immigrants had already resided in the United States before coming to California and thus were familiar with the English language facilitated the interaction between these groups.⁶ By 1859, the Anglo-Americans, as demonstrated in contemporary newspaper accounts, increasingly adopted customs identified with the German newcomers and recognized the German *Turnverein* and its participation in the growth and settlement of the city. The Germans, however, were not assimilated into the dominant Anglo majority – they gravitated to their German neighborhood, retained their cultural rituals and practices and supported their *Turnverein's activities*.

The information in the Federal Census of 1850, the California Census of 1852, eight City Directories published between 1851 and 1860 and the *Turnverein* membership records is invaluable when tracking and identifying those German immigrants who settled in Sacramento. The statistics show that the German settlers who chose permanent residence were a minority of the total population. The 1850 Census lists approximately 300 to 320 German family units in Sacramento City out of a total in Sacramento County of 9,087, and the 1852 census shows an

⁶ The 1852 California State Census shows, for example, that of the 662 German-born immigrants coming to Sacramento that year, 576 had formerly resided in the United States and 85 came directly from Germanic States. Terry, "Énwanderer, 49.

increase in Germans to approximately 700 men and women over the age of 18 out of a total County population of 12,589. Tracing specific individuals is complicated because the answers to the inquiries "Where were you born?" or "Where did you live?" resulted in conflicting information for specific individuals. Another problem is that census takers often excluded thousands who temporarily stopped over on the way to gold fields or back home.⁷ Recognizing these inconsistencies, one can still trace many individual members in a German community that was growing in size and strength during the 1850s, a community able to impact the culture of Sacramento greater than these numbers might attest.⁸

The discovery of gold only served to accelerate the Germans' immigration to California and America. Even before 1849 they had been "pushed" by economic and political conditions in their homelands and "pulled" by the lure of potential prosperity in a new home.⁹ The push

⁷ California Governor, 1852-1855 (Bigler) Governor's message; and report of the Secretary of State on the census of 1852, of the state of California (San Francisco: George Kerr, 1853) 31. *Census of the United States (1850). Population. California* (Washington, D. C.: National Archives and Records Services, General Services Administration, 1850) 969. Bruce Perini, *A German History of the Sacramento Area* (Sacramento Ethnic Survey Report: Sacramento, Sacramento History Center, 1983) Appendix A, Table IV. Severson, *Sacramento*, 89. Other problems such as individual deciphering of nineteenth-century script and contemporary miss-spellings also limit calculating the total number of German newcomers to Sacramento. Alan Bowman notes complications regarding the 1850 Census' script; for example, the letter U could be transcribed as v, a, ee, n. or v. Dennis Harris cautions about using the 1852 Census other than generally due to errors in the Daughters of the American Revolution transcription. Alan P. Bowman, *Index to the 1850 Census of the State of California* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1972) x. Dennis E. Harris, "The California Census of 1852: A Note of Caution and Encouragement," *The Pacific Historian* 23:1 (Spring, 1854) 60.

⁸ Tracing the family of Jacob Binninger illustrates these difficulties. He arrived in California before 1850 and is referred to as James Binninger in histories written in 1913 and 1925, as Jacob Benninger from Germany in the Census of 1850 (Bowman lists him as Bininger), J. Binninger in 1851, Jacob Bennuger in the Census of 1852, Jacob Bininger from Wisconsin in the 1853 Directory, Jacob Binninger, German, in the 1855 Directory, Jacob Binninger in 1856, J. Bininger in 1857, Jacob Binninger, German, in 1858, and finally, Jacob Benninger from Illinois in 1860. One can assume these are all the same person because his occupation as hotelier and address match from year to year. Bowman, *Census*, 341. *Census 1850*, 176. *Census, 1852*, 211. Colville, *1853-1854*, 9. Samuel Colville, *Sacramento Directory for the Year Commencing August 1, 1855* (Sacramento: James Anthony & Co., 1855) 15. Horace J. Culver, *The Sacramento City Directory, January 1, 1851* (Sacramento City: Transcript Press, 1851) 9. D. W. Cutter & Co., *Sacramento City Directory, for the year A. D. 1860* (Sacramento: H. S. Crocker & Co., 1859) 8. I. N. Irwin, *Sacramento Directory and Gazetteer, for the years 1857 and 1858* (San Francisco: S. D. Valentine & Son, 1857) 5. L. S. Taylor, *Taylor's Sacramento Directory, for the Year Commencing October 1858* (H. S. Crocker & Co., 1859) 9. Willis, *Sacramento*, 382.

⁹"Push" and "pull" are terms connected with the Laws of Migration originally articulated by E. G. Ravenstein. "Push refers to those forces existing in the place of origin that encourage or impel persons to emigrate . . . Pull

factors were both economic and political. In the southwestern area of Europe, the constantly divided farms, split when the owners died, created individual properties too small to support a family. In the northeast, undivided large estates were handed down to eldest sons, leaving the younger brothers without agricultural livelihood. Both phenomena led immigrants to look to the American mid-western plains to establish farms and in order to relieve their economic hardships. In addition, political refugees of the failed revolutions of 1848 came to America to escape retribution by the conservative Governmental agencies in power in Germany. The new conscription decrees issued in the German duchies immediately after the revolution were another concern for the politically active.¹⁰

The "pull" of opportunities in America and California were well known in these distressed sections of Germany. Commercial enterprises sought to persuade prospective immigrants with schemes such as ships' companies advertising for "human cargo" to fill their ships for the return from Europe. "America letters" from newcomers to friends and relatives at home stimulated immigration recounting the recent arrivals' more pleasant experiences rather than their disappointments. Articles published in Germany extolled Sutter's Fort and the New Helvetia colony, including the 1848 article, *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, and the 1849 guidebook, *Rathgeber fuer Aauswanderer nach Californien* which included a letter from Sutter's physician Freidrich Heyermann. That same year, J. Hoppe, one of Sutter's first settlers, published *Californiens Gegen Wart Und Zukunft* in Berlin, and Carl Meyer included a picture of Sutter's Fort on the cover of his *Nach dem Sacramento*. Heinrich Kuenzel's *Obercalifornien* also described New Helvetia, outlined routes to take to California, and listed Germans who had

refers to those attractive forces emanating from the migrants' goal that draws them." Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991) 17.

settled in the Sacramento Valley. The Germans were aware of opportunities in California—the discovery of gold was an added pull for them to immigrate and to settle in permanent new homes.¹¹

Swiss companions accompanied Sutter when he settled in the area in 1839 and set up his trading post, but Germans were also among the immigrants. Newcomers to California knew they would be welcomed at the Fort where they would receive advice as to where to settle. Some Germans left the Fort to found new small towns. German-born Charles N. Weber began as Sutter's employee in 1839, but in 1845, founded a town he called Tuleburg -- it later became the city of Stockton, the center for the Southern gold mines. Theodore Cordua organized a trading post of two adobe houses and named it New Mecklenburg after his homeland in Germany -- in 1851 it was incorporated as Marysville. In 1846, Sutter had laid out the town of Sutterville on high ground on the American River, but Sacramento City town developed around the Fort and its nearby river ferry, rapidly expanding after the news of gold on his property enticed thousands of newcomers to the area. Many Germans settled in Sacramento in 1849 and 1850 including entrepreneurs Jacob Rippstein, J. H. Heilmann, Pater Kadel, George Zins and Jacob Binninger.¹²

¹⁰Klaus J. Bade, "German Emigration to the United States and Continental Immigration to Germany in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Central European History*, XIII: 4 (December, 1980) 358, 360-1. Barney, "Knights," 62.

¹¹ Barney, "Knights," 62. Faust, *Element*, 2. George Peter Hammond, "German Interests in California before 1850" (Master's Thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1921) 16, 24, 26, 41. J. S. Holliday, *Rush for Riches: Gold Fever and the Making of California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 83. Henry Miller Madden, *German Travelers in California* (San Francisco: The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, 1958) 29, 41. Thor Severson, *Sacramento, an Illustrated History: 1839 to 1874, from Sutter's Fort to Capital City* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1973) 47. Wittke, *Germans*, 8.

¹² Rippstein created the Tivoli Gardens, the site of many German celebrations; Heilmann founded the first factory, manufacturing soap; Kadel built the first brewery; Zins the first brick house, and Binninger the first hotel which should not be confused with the often-mentioned City Hotel constructed by Sam Brannan from a grist mill moved from Sutter's Mill. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, Vol. 23, "The History of California, 1848-1859," Vol. 6 (San Francisco: The History Company, 1888) 15, 448, 463. Samuel Colville, *Sacramento Directory for the Year 1853-54* (Sacramento: Samuel Colville, 1853) 1. Erwin G. Gudde, *German Pioneers in Early California* (San Francisco: R. & E. Associates, 1970) 12-3, 22-4. Holliday, *Rush*, 52, 90, 139. Donald Dale Jackson, *Gold Dust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980) 171. Madden, *Travelers*, 12. Florence Nina McCoy, "A History of the First Five Years of the Sacramento, California, Turnverein, 1854-1859" (Master's

Like the total population of Sacramento in the 1850s, German-born immigrants were both settlers and transients – many listed in one year disappeared by the next. Two notable Germans who did not stay were Charles Christian Nahl and Heinrich Schliemann. After attempting to find gold, Nahl, an artist from a well-known artistic family, came to Sacramento with his mother and brother; however, after the City's 1852 fire destroyed much of his work, he moved to San Francisco. His most famous painting, "Sunday Morning in the Mines," painted in 1872, reflects his prospecting experiences, and he and his brother designed the California bear flag which flew during the short-lived California Republic. Schliemann, son of a Lutheran pastor, opened a bank in Sacramento in 1851 after becoming ill in the diggings. Banking was dangerous in those days -- clerks and bankers went armed, day and night, with long bowie knives and Colt revolving pistols that Schliemann asserted could kill five men in only five seconds. Eventually, his bank closed, and Schliemann left eventually to discover ancient Troy, digging for a different kind of gold.¹³

Throughout the 1850s, however, many Germans stayed and joined the new class of Californian merchants and traders who would eventually prosper. Of all the German immigrants in Sacramento in 1852, 51% worked in professional or middle class occupations. In the same year these occupations attracted only 37% of all native- and foreign-born California's

thesis, California State University at Sacramento, 1962) 59. *Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California, Illustrated* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1891) 189, 195. John F. Morse, *Illustrated Historical Sketches of California* (Sacramento: Democratic State Journal Office, 1854) 41. Walter G. Reed, ed. *The History of Sacramento County California with Biographical Sketches of The Leading Men and Women of the County Who Have Been Identified with Its Growth and Development from the Early Days to the Present*, (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1925) 59, 70. William Willis, *History of Sacramento, California* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Co., 1913) 387.

¹³ John E. Baur, "Californians Elsewhere: The Golden State's Nineteenth-Century Citizens at Large," *Southern California Quarterly*, LXVI: 2 (Summer, 1984) 98. James Harvey Berner. "A History of Lutheran Churches in Sacramento, 1851-1925" (Master's thesis, California State University at Sacramento, 1967) 1. John Walton Caughey, *Gold is the Cornerstone* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948) 217, 283. Gudde, *Pioneers*, 16. Severson, *Sacramento*, 160. Victor Wolfgang von Hagen, *The German People in America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press) 307.

newcomers, demonstrating that merchandizing, trade and skilled labor were the predominant avenues of employment chosen by Germans. Having come to California with financial resources, appropriating their new-found wealth in gold or skilled in crafts in demand in Sacramento, many immediately started their own businesses, including baker Jacob Frank, clothier Morris Goldstein, merchant Louis Sloss, real estate holder Louis Hagen, and grocer Charles Heinrich. Another example is the Lady Adams company established by Frederick Bartels, C. Ihmels and Theodore Stockflieth in an abandoned ship in 1849 and later in a two-story building in 1852. By 1853, the number of German city-dwellers and families increased, reflecting the decline of opportunities for individual miners in the gold fields as companies or corporate endeavors supplanted them. As more and more German-born came to Sacramento, those already in residence were quick to help the newcomers financially or with jobs.¹⁴ Johann Bickel in his journal and his daughter Barbara give an German immigrants' view on the support they received when they arrived in their new homeland – financial, social and cultural. Johann gives several examples of the generosity of the German residents of Sacramento, often expecting nothing in return. Barbara has the advantage of finding instant employment with Charles Heinrich as well as opportunities to make friends and enjoy social gatherings with other Germans.¹⁵ In the cultural arena, the active involvement of accomplished instrumentalists Conrad Adam, Arnold Heyman, L. Lotthamer, J. P. Melchoir and Carl Wolleb, illustrates how

¹⁴ Cutter, 1860. 70. Hon. Winford J. Davis, *Illustrated History of Sacramento County, California*. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1890) 138. Paula Mitchell Marks, *Precious Dust: The American Gold Rush Era, 1848-1900* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1994) 187. McCoy, "Turnverein," 127. Kenneth S. Moore, Jr., "Fate of the California Gold Rush Miner" (Master's thesis: California State University at Sacramento, 1970) 7, 25-7. Terry, "Enwanderer," 141, 144, 146, 149, 181. Albert H. Thompson and Albert Augustus West, *History of Sacramento County, California with Illustrations, 1880*. Reprint, with a foreword by Allan R. Ottley. (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1960) 77, 284. Willis, *History*, 393.

¹⁵ California Potpourri, pg. 40, 41, 42, 45, 59, 60, 66, 74-5.

the German love of music was demonstrated to Sacramento citizens.¹⁶ The middle class status of the Germans and their community's eagerness to envelop and help its newest members helped them play an integral part in helping the Anglo-Americans conquer the dramatic changes wrought by the Gold Rush and its attendant upheavals.

The contrast between Sacramento in the 1850s and John Sutter's settlement before the discovery of gold is dramatic. Before the spring of 1848, his New Helvetia was a bucolic site and the center of economic activity in Northern California. Engaging in farming, milling, fishing, vineyards, tanning, hunting and trapping, Sutter instituted a feudal agricultural system where his word was law, exploiting the Indians of the area as slave labor. He kept in contact with the Pacific Coast through his regular launch service to San Francisco. He regularly sent out rescue parties for travelers stranded in the Sierra Nevada. A mercurial personally, Sutter both welcomed the assorted traders and farming families to his establishment and complained about the "rabble" who stopped for his hospitality. The discovery of gold on January 24, 1848, dashed his dreams and unleashed the tumultuous forces shaping the future of Sacramento and California.¹⁷

The phenomenal rise in population in Sacramento beginning in 1849 as migrants moved from San Francisco and the eastern United States created an instant town of shacks, tents and a few substantial buildings where the infrastructure was sadly lacking. In April of 1849, the inhabitants numbered around 110 inhabiting around 69 buildings. In just two months, the city had 100 houses. Two months later, Sacramento had 1,000 houses, and by October of the same

¹⁶ McCoy, "Turnverein," 127. Quoted in Kenneth S. Moore, Jr., "Fate of the California Gold Rush Miner" (Master's thesis: California State University at Sacramento, 1970) 7, 11, 25-6. Colville notes that the Lady Adams building survived the great fire of November 2, 1852, and thus was considered a "landmark of the city's primitive architecture" in 1856. Colville, *1856*, 81.

year, an estimated population, both permanent and transitory, of 10,000, a 100 times increase in six months. Between 1848 and 1852, an estimated 52,000 permanent and transient travelers came by land plus thousands by boat from San Francisco. They found a town of almost entirely built of cloth spread on light frames -- hotels, boarding houses, restaurants, saloons, hurdy-gurdy houses, bowling alleys, bathhouses, gambling places and not inconspicuous brothels. How the inhabitants, German and Anglo, faced this chaos makes Sacramento's history particularly interesting.¹⁸

Many contemporary writers recorded only the seamy side of the city's culture. J. A. Benton, a religious leader of Sacramento, noted that crowds in the streets swarmed in quest of excitement where the lights of the Orleans Hotel and other saloons illuminated the streets, enticing miners with stirring music, exciting drinks, and, most of all, gambling, creating a hell on earth. Franklin Street noted that the finest buildings in Sacramento were all built for gambling which was practiced up to an almost continuously, and all an aspiring casino entrepreneur really needed was a tent, a few tables and a pouch of gold dust. "Quarreling and cheating form the employments [sic], drinking and gambling the amusements, making the largest pile of gold, the only ambition of the inhabitants," complained clergyman Daniel B. Woods.¹⁹ Writers seemed overwhelmed with the exuberant life-style exhibited on downtown streets of Sacramento, almost overlooking the primitive living conditions confronting both transient and permanent resident.

¹⁷Bancroft, *Works*, 14. Gudde, *German*, 11. Holliday, *Rush*, 54, 58, 79. Jackson, *Dust*, 171. Madden, *Travelers*, 12. Morse, *History*, 41. Johann August Sutter, "General Sutter's Diary," Kenneth N. Owens, ed. *John Sutter and a Wider West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994) 2, 5, 9. Severson, *Sacramento*, 32.

¹⁸Bancroft, *Works*, 32, 58. Thomas D. Clark, *Gold Rush Diary: Being the Journal of Elisha Douglas Perkins on the Overland Trail in the Spring and Summer of 1849* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967) 145, 181. Holliday, *Rush*, 188-9. Holiday, *Rush*, 53-4, 79. Dr. John F. Morse, "History of Sacramento," Colville, 1853, 5. June Oxford, *The Capital That Couldn't Stay Put: The Complete Book of California's Capitals* (San Jose: Smith McKay, 1983) 66. Reed, *History*, 59, 69, 110. Mitchel Roth, "Cholera, Community and Public Health in Gold Rush Sacramento and San Francisco," *Pacific Historical Review* 66:4 (November, 1997) 64. Severson, *Sacramento*, 32. Willis, *Sacramento*, 137.

The physical day-to-day existence in Sacramento in the 1850s could be overwhelming for any newcomer. The streets, for example, were covered with uncollected horse manure. Water sprinkled during the summer stirred up thick swarms of flies and created a smelly mess. Artist J. D Borthwick verbally described the streets as a “maze of wagons, coaches, rearing horses, grooms attempting to restrain them, drivers swearing at each other as they locked wheels and passengers were struggling to board.” Natural and man-made disasters struck often in the early years of the decade. Scurvy, diarrhea and dysentery felled the newcomers who arrived, often penniless, in poor health from long overland or sea voyages.²⁰

The year 1850 began with unexpected and cataclysmic floods and continued with catastrophes. The flood waters reached the tops of one-story buildings, flooded the primitive hospital established the prior summer, and damaged the first theater organized in California, the Eagle, forcing it to close. Merchants including Germans Jacob Binninger, William Pfeiffer and Louis Geisse saw their goods floating off down river, but they quickly worked to restore their business. Another flood threatened the city in March, but through the efforts of future Mayor Hardin Biglow to maintain the levees, the damage was considerably less. Three months after that flood, the first of many fires broke out, destroying eight to ten buildings. In August, the landholders and squatters rioted over some 800 claims to some 14 million acres of land. Settlers, bringing with them the idea that empty land was theirs merely for the taking, did not recognize the Mexican land titles of John Sutter and others and, after unfavorable court decisions, initiated an armed confrontation where the sheriff and tax assessor died and Biglow injured. The “Pro

¹⁹ Benton, *Pilgrim*, 175-180. Jackson, *Dust*, 207. Reed, *History*, 60. Street, *California*, 46. Woods quoted in Holiday, *Rush*, 138.

²⁰ R. E. Mather, “Borthwick’s California: Gold Rush Panorama,” *Californians* 10:4 (1994) 21. Marks, *Dust*, 203. Morse, *History*, 13. Roth, *Cholera*, 530. *Sacramento Transcript*. 23 October 1850 I: 149 p. 2, col. 3. Franklin Street, *California in 1850, Compared with What It Was in 1848, with a Glimpse at Its Future Destiny* (Cincinnati:

Law and Order” forces won the struggle, the squatters reverting to legal procedures to back their claims.²¹

Following on the heels of the riots, cholera arrived on the same steamship that brought statehood news on October 20th. Businesses closed, and roads and levees were crowded with residents fleeing the disease, and approximately 15% of the population perished over the six-week epidemic. Floods struck again in January of 1852, leaving Sacramento in a “wretched condition,” with streets again converted to canals and house-tops rising out of the water. In November, seven-eighths of the city burned with losses estimated at \$6,000,000, leaving inhabitants virtually homeless and fortunes wiped out by a firestorm they were powerless to control.²² Sacramento, it would seem, was not destined to be the second city of California.

But the contemporaries of the time describe the residents, both Anglo and German, as resilient and unwilling to admit defeat. They struggled to overcome the catastrophes that beset the City as well as counter the pleasure-seeking, uncontrolled actions of the transient miners. After the Cholera epidemic, Dr. John Morse proclaimed:

But those who supposed that ... Sacramentans could be so easily crushed had not learned their character. The very moment that morality began an obvious retreat from the premises, that moment, those who survived their flight returned.²³

During the floods of 1852, the artist Borthwick saw business conducted as usual from the upper stories of the city’s mercantile establishments, and, afterwards, the state legislators marveled at

R. E. Edwards & Co., 1851) 12. Dr. John Morse said, “only one in 100 arrived in the county with money enough to buy him a decent outfit for the mines.” Colville, *1853*, 13.

²¹ Bancroft, *Works*, 244. Colville, *1853*, 19. David Goodman, *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) 142. Jackson, *Dust*, 292-4. *Memorial*, 202-3. Morse, *History*, Colville 26-7. Reed, *History*, 74, 81-3, 105, 136. Severson, *Sacramento*, 72-3, 76. Street, *California*, 30. Willis, *Sacramento*, 103, 106

²² Bancroft, *Works*, 231. J. A. Benton, *California Pilgrim: A Series of Lectures Sacramento*: Solomon Alter, 1853) 188-190. Hon. Winford J. Davis, *Illustrated History of Sacramento County, California* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1890) 130. Holliday, *Rush*, 193. Mather, *Panorama*, 21. *Memorial*, 201. Morse, *History*, 13. Roth, *Cholera*, 536, 543. Severson, *Sacramento*, 106. Willis, *Sacramento*, 79.

²³ Morse, *History*, 37.

how quickly Sacramentans rebuilt their city. In 1854, determined that the State Capital should be there, not at Benecia, Sacramentans occupied the only hotel and boarding house before the legislative session began. They influenced and bribed the lawmakers, disgruntled about the scarcity of accommodations and lack of improvements, to designate Sacramento as the new state capital. When Patrick Manoque, the first Bishop of Sacramento, arrived in 1854 and exclaimed that it was one of the prettiest and most enterprising cities in the Union he had seen.²⁴ Pioneer settler Margaret A. Frink summed up how she and her fellow Sacramentans felt about their home:

As the years passed on, the mushroom city of tents and rough board houses grew, in defiance of fires and floods, to be capital of the state, and one of its most prosperous, beautiful, and wealthy cities.²⁵

Conventional wisdom in the eastern United States was that gold had brought a social decline, yet Hinton Helper in 1855 declared that in Sacramento, despite the inhabitants all-consuming rush to get rich, their main priority was to preserve order. The men traveling to California brought ideals of domesticity with them, using ritual and association to control their unregulated individualism. Historian David Goodman, in his study of gold rush communities, contests the theory of academics such as Hubert H. Bancroft that women brought “civilization” to California, contending that it was the newcomers’ innate love of order drove them to re-establish conventions they had known in the East. An example of this impulse in Sacramento was the first fancy dress ball held on July 4, 1849, at the City Hotel, the proclaimed headquarters of fashion and Sacramento's elite, complete with much decoration and a sumptuous supper.

²⁴ William Breault, S.J., *The Miner was a Bishop: The Pioneer Years of Patrick Manoque California-Nevada, 1854-1895* (Rancho Cordova, California: Landmark Enterprises, 1988) 5. Mather, *Panorama*, 21. Oxford, *Capital*, 60-62. Severson, *Sacramento*, 62.

²⁵ Margaret A. Frink, *Journal of the Adventures of a Party of California Gold-Seekers Under the Guidance of Mr. Ledyard Frink During a Journey Across the Plains from Martinsville, Indiana, to Sacramento, California, from March 30, 1850, to September 7, 1850. From the Original Diary of the Trip Kept by Mrs. Margaret A. Frink.* (Oakland, 1897) 128.

Only eighteen women could be found to attend even though the men scoured the countryside.²⁶

Josiah Royce proclaimed: “Despite themselves and out of the chaos of self-interest, the Californians built a society to a civilization.”²⁷

Sacramentans, both native- and German-born, formed and supported churches and fraternal associations as early as 1849 and continued throughout the 1850s. The first church service was held in April of 1849 in the open air, and by the end of the year, clergy had organized four Protestant churches. Rev. J. A. Benton organized the First Church of Christ that year, followed by the First Methodist Episcopal Church and the First Baptist Church in 1850, both of which included German-born Peter Bohl, William Walter and Carl Wolleb in their congregations.²⁸ The Hebrew Benevolent Society was formed in 1852 as an adjunct with the Congregation B’Nai Israel, first meeting at the home of Mr. M. Hyman. The German Methodist Church was organized in 1856 but records are missing since debts forced the church to disband in 1866. Non-religious associations also prospered in the 1850s and included German-born members. The first Masonic Lodge was chartered in April of 1850, and other lodges were formed throughout the decade. The Sacramento Lodge organized in 1853 included W. J. Kohlmann and H. Greenbaum among its members, and the Union Masonic Lodge organized in 1854, Morris Kohn, J. Wormser, D. Theile and Solomon Kohlmann. The International Order of Odd Fellows El Dorado Lodge organized in 1852 included Joseph S. Korn and W. Prosser.²⁹

²⁶ Bancroft, *Works*, 233-235. Colwell, *1853*, 2, 9, 18. Goodman, *Seeking*, 14, 64, 92, 181-4, 186. Reed, *History*, 62. Severson, *Sacramento*, 123.

²⁷ Quoted in Goodman, *Seeking*, 14.

²⁸ Rev. Benton carefully omitted the word “Congregational” in order to appeal to as many people as possible. Severson, *Sacramento*, 56.

²⁹ Frank Kline Baker, *Souvenir History of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Sacramento, California Written for the Sixtieth Anniversary* (Sacramento: J. M. Anderson, 1909) 36, 77, 79. Reed, *History*, 109. Severson, *Sacramento*, 56, 124. Willis, *Sacramento*, 307.

In addition to churches and fraternal groups, Germans played a prominent role in the organization of musical societies in Sacramento, offering newcomers a cultural link to their ancestral homes. The Philharmonic society was organized in 1855 with 40 members, and Carl Wolleb was the pianist and officer. It was very active, performing 45 concerts over the next fourteen years. Brass bands also offered concerts for the Sacramento's entertainment. Musicians organized the Sacramento Union Brass Band in July of 1857 and elected G. Hesse as their conductor, J. Heidlinger, Ch. York, A. Wetterman, J. F. Wassberg, H. Dierson, and J. Zwicker among its members, and its headquarters in the hall over Zwicker's Saloon. They were available to play at parties, processions, excursions, serenades, and funerals. Their competition was the American Brass Band, organized in April of the same year, a group of 15 pieces including Carl York and Alex and Arnold Heyman.³⁰

Another German ritual, the popular sport of target shooting, was formalized with the Swiss Rifle Club, organized in 1853, including Rippstein and Wollab as officers, and Germans A. Koppikus, J. Wolf, X. Staffelbach and W. Alexander as members, and the Sacramento Rifle Club included Germans J. Stuber, F. X. Ebner, Wolleb, Koppikus, and Charles Heinrich as members.³¹

Despite this interaction, the Anglo-American majority in California did not always accept their German neighbors as equals. Some evidence suggests that some Americans resented them

³⁰Bee, 2 July 1857 V: 751, p. 3, col. 3; 3 October 1857 p. 3, col. 5. Irwin, *1857-1858*, xxii. Colville, *1855*, xi. Colville, *1856*, 90. Reed, *History*, 198, 200, 202. 20 *Sacramento Daily Union*, 1 October 1857 XIV: 2033 p. 3, col. 1; 12 October 1857 XIV: 2042 p. 2, col. 4; September 1859 XVIII: 2646 p. 3, col. 1. Severson, *Sacramento*, 123, 150. Taylor, *1858*, xxi. Willis, *Sacramento*, 253.

³¹Colville, 1853, 30. McCoy, "Turnverein," 72-4. Thompson, *History*, 124. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 1 July 1853 V: 709, p. 2, col. 6; 6 July 1853 V: 712, p. 2, col. 3,

in the gold fields, feeling that they were taking gold that rightfully belonged to native-born citizens.³² The Journal of Elisha Perkins contains an interesting, almost envious, description:

By the by, Dutchmen [Germans], in the minds, are usually very fortunate in their labor. They are industrious and savings [sic]. Some of them seem to find gold by instinct...I mean one of the miserly looking fellows 4 feet 11 inches and three quarters in height, than can live a week upon two Boston crackers and a glass of water, with small dreamy eyes, a low forehead prominent above the eyes: a small sharp nose contracted into wrinkles. . . one who would beg his dinner with a thousand dollars in his pocket, one who would mourn the loss of an half eagle as he would that of a child. With such a one for my partner I would feel sure of a fortune. He would point on coming upon a rich place, as surely and certainly as a settler dog would on coming upon a woodcock³³

In another example of some covert prejudice, miners often remarked that Germans had a penchant for monstrous watches and heavy gold chains -- this might have been the source of the story about the Dutchman who, during the Floods of 1850, kept his gold in a belly bank, or money belt, and died when his small boat sank. He could not support both his gold and himself, and he apparently chose to drown rather than let go of his prize. In more overt actions, Germans were sometimes quickly arrested on suspicion of committing crimes, released when no evidence was available.³⁴

In Sacramento, the antagonism of the Anglos against the Germanic sub-culture was both overt and subtle. The clergy of Sacramento did not like the “continental Sunday” the Germans practiced, although they did feel that straight-laced practices loosened over the journey from home.³⁵ Individuals joined Anglos in specific activities such as concerts, but the German

³² Barney, *Forty-Eighters*, 24. Holiday, *Rush*, 128.

³³ Clark, *Diary*, 190.

³⁴ Caughey, *Cornerstone*, 192. Morse, *History*, 20. Severson, *Sacramento*, 72. *Union*, 1 July 1852 III: 399, p. 2, col. 3. Wittke, *Germans*, 11.

³⁵ Benton, *Pilgrim*, 72, 140-142. George Willis Read in his journal also bemoaned the lack of celebration of the Sabbath. At the beginning of his travels, he noted that the pause in the wagons' journey was merely to do “unlawful work, repairing waggons [sic], fishing, hunting, etc., etc.,” on May 5, 1850, but, by Sundays on May 26 and June 2, he did not mention any religious scruples about working, riding or traveling on. Georgia Willis Read, ed. *A Pioneer of 1850: George Willis Read, 1819-1880* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1927) 21, 45, 53.

community was a group was kept at a distance. Newspapers, when they reported activities of the *Turnverein*, gave the impression they were talking about “outsiders” rather than fully integrated members of Sacramento. They reported the numbers attending balls and functions, but they would be consistent with the number of German-born rather than including Anglo participants. As late as 1859, this negative under-current may have influenced the Turners to abandon their colorful uniform in the July 4th parade.³⁶

In Sacramento, as in other communities across America, the customs Germans practiced customs often generated conflict with the native-born. In contrast to the many Anglo-Americans living with them in Sacramento, Germans believed that sociability and festivity were basic human needs and that rituals should include public camaraderie and joyful expression; therefore, they brought with them a legacy of joyous celebration. They were critical of the solemnity they saw in American life -- they sought to present alternative ways of celebrating that were more public and sensuous and included more feminine participants and the consumption of wine and beer. They criticized the state and local laws that made Sunday a sober day, for example, rather than one of joy including festive gatherings. They changed the character of Christmas from solemnity to gaiety by including the customs of gift-giving and Christmas trees introduced in Germany in the early nineteenth century. They frequently held festivals or gatherings on the outskirts of a city, sometimes in connection with a national event, a *Turnfest*,

³⁶ McCoy, “Turnverein,” 48. *Union*, 6 July 1859 XVIII: 2581 p. 3, col. 1. The anti-German sentiment did not seem to encompass anti-Semitism during the 1850s as it might at the end of the nineteenth century. Members of lodges and clubs included Jewish members such as Sol Kohlman and Joseph Korn as well as Gentiles Carl Wolleb and J. Wormser. *Turnvereine* welcomed Jews as members as a way of increasing their membership and support for their group, and, in turn, the Jews found *Turnvereine* a means to assimilate and become “Germans of the Mosaic persuasion.” Only when Jews kept their stores open on Sunday, rather than in social situations, were they singled out. Benton, *Pilgrim*, 139. Colville, 1856, 90-91. William M. and Norton B. Kramer, “The Turnverein: A German Experience for Western Jewry,” *Western States Jewish History* 16:3 (1984) 227. Joseph B. Marks and Lisa J. Sanders, “The Blue Laws Debate: A Sacramento Shopkeeper’s Story,” *Western States Jewish History* 25:3 (1993) 211, 224.

Sängerfest, *Maifest*, or just on a Sunday afternoon. Many were highly educated, knew the classics, and were interested in music and the performing arts. Believing physical strength was just as essential to their well being as intellectual pursuits or celebrations, they prized physical exercise, particularly gymnastics and sports such as target-shooting. *Schützenvereine* (sharp-shooter groups) formed in Sacramento and other cities with German immigrants and these held *Schützenfeste* which often culminated with the crowning of the “king of sharp-shooters,” ceremonies copied from homeland customs and rituals. The Germans also formed *Turnvereine* to offer opportunities gather socially, discuss their individual “freethinking” ideas, and to perform, and observe, gymnastics, the leading form of physical exercise.³⁷

By 1854, the German community in Sacramento had grown and coalesced enough to form its own *Turnverein*. San Francisco’s already well-established *Turnverein*, the three German-language newspapers published there and the national *Turn-Zeitung* offered guidance and advice.³⁸ In their meetings’ minutes, the Turners stated their purpose of the society:

... to contribute, through mutual and reciprocal aspirations, to the spiritual and physical improvement of [the members of] the Society, as well as to create and promote a friendly and social atmosphere among the members.

No political or otherwise private purposes and interests shall be promoted by the

³⁷ Barney *Forty-Eighters*, 19, 27. Barney, *Knights*, 63, 71. Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth Century German Americans on Parade,” Werner Sollors, ed. *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 48-50, 58-9. Faust, *Element*, 278, 381, 383, 387, 409 465, 471. Henderson, *Migrants*, 109. Wittke, *Germans*, 8, 13.

³⁸ Karl J. R. Arndt and May E. Olsom, comps. *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals 1732-1955* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1961) 27, 28, 30. McCoy, “Turnverein,” 11 The *California Demokrat* was a daily and Sunday paper, published between 1852 and 1944. The *California Staats-Zeitung* was published weekly between 1852 and 1918 with the daily *California Staats-Zeitung* published between 1851 and 1853. The *San Francisco Journal* was published between February 1855 and October 1857. Arndt notes that Julius Korn was editor of the *Journal* in 1856. Perhaps there was a familial connection with the three Korn brothers who operated the hotel in Sacramento and were always active in Turnverein activities. The Sacramento Journal was not established until 1868, making the likelihood of the Sacramento dependence on San Francisco papers even stronger. Arndt, *Newspapers*, 24, 27-8. Carl F. Wittke, *The German-Language Press in America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957. 100.

Society as a Society.³⁹

Sacramento's lack of political emphasis was at odds with the national *Turnbund* and San Francisco creating a conflict regarding political discussions among its members. After its membership dropped from 71 in June of 1855 to 35 in 1856, the Sacramento Turners adopted a compromise emphasizing that the *Turnverein* would become committed to its members rather than to a national cause--political discussions were permitted only if the membership chose. By May of 1858, the members revised the by-laws so that all religious and political discussions were forbidden at meetings. Reluctant to be regulated by the eastern *Turnvereine*, the Sacramento Turners were "pushed" to resign from the national *Turnbund* in January 1859, acknowledging its commonality with other Western societies, oriented to California, rather than the eastern United States. After a regional *Turnfest* held in October in 1859 in Sacramento, Carl Wolleb and David Korn initiated discussions about founding a Pacific *Turnbund*, a western-based organization, which was eventually established in April of 1860. This internal conflict in the *Turnverein* was largely hidden from the Anglo community. The only notice of the *Turnverein's* official "business" appeared in the *Daily Union* announcing its inauguration on June 20, 1854 followed by an announcement of a gymnastic site on June 22. Members were quite upset over the publicity and reprimanded Moses Greenebaum for submitting the news to the paper--this may account for the future lack of "organizational news" items.⁴⁰ Politically, Sacramento's Turners may have been quiet, but many of the social activities they planned between 1854 and 1859 received extensive reporting in the *Daily Union* and *Sacramento Bee*.

³⁹ McCoy, "Turnverein," 23.

⁴⁰ *100 Years - Sacramento Turn Verein 1854-1954 Festschrift* (Sacramento, May 15, 1954, May 23, 1954) 19. McCoy, "Turnverein," 24, 26, 29, 54, 63, 88, 91, Appendix E, 55. *Union* 20 June 1854 VII: 1012, p. 2, col. 3; 22 June 1854 VII: 1014, p. 2, col. 4.

During the first year of their society's existence, the Turners sought to solidify their new fraternal association by selecting a permanent meeting site, choosing a uniform and seal, and organizing a ball in November. A building containing H. Ehmann's home and barbershop was the site of their first meetings with the vacant lot behind it rented for gymnastics. The fire of July 13, 1854, destroyed the building, *Turnverein* headquarters and gymnastic equipment, interrupting their regularly scheduled meetings. After temporarily meeting at member Frank Ebner's Sierra Nevada Hotel, they rented a "*Zinkhaus*," a small building with a metal roof, as their first *Turnhalle*, complete with a plate on the door to announce the headquarters' site. A year later, members rented a larger frame building to serve as a gymnasium so members could exercise during inclement weather. To accommodate its rapidly expanding membership, on January 15, 1856, the Turners dedicated an expanded one-story building built on the *Zinkhaus* site with a ceremonial *Kränzchen* (private party). In January 1859, at the same meeting at which it resigned from the national *Turnbund*, the Sacramento *Turnverein* decided to invest in a larger, permanent facility, to accommodate its many activities, and to reawaken interest in those who had fallen away. The members chose a "stripped," two-story design by architect A. F. Eisen for a cost of \$8,000. Masons, the Sutter Rifle Company and the Sacramento Brass Band participated in the laying of the cornerstone on June 1, 1859, and David Korn's dedication speech emphasized that the new *Turnhalle* would not only enable the Germans to enjoy their own customs, festivals and amusements but also introduce the German community to their Anglo-American neighbors.⁴¹ It was opened on September 5th with a grand inauguration ball with a

⁴¹ *100 Years*, 17. Colville, 1855, 30. McCoy, "Turnverein," 22, 27, 28, 60-1, 91, 94, 95-100, 144. *Union* 28 July 1854 VII: 1044, p. 3, col. 1. *Union* 9 July 1855 IX: 1340, p. 2, col. 3. Louis, Jacob and David Korn are listed as hotel-keepers in the 1860 Directory. Cutter, 1860, 69. A. F. Eisen is listed in the 1860 Directory. He was not a member of the *Turnverein* and his nativity is unknown. Cutter, 1860, 34. There was some confusion over who performed what function in the *Turnhalle's* construction. The directory lists the architect as W. F. Knox in the

supper, dancing and carriage rides to and from the party which the *Daily Union* predicted would be gay and joyous with a dancing floor large enough to “afford ample scope for the whirling and stepping of those who pay court to the fascinating waltz.”⁴² The *Turnverein* now had a permanent presence in the Anglo community and was included in the 1860 City Directory with its their address, description, and officers and with a membership of 80 members.

The *Turnverein*, like other nineteenth-century fraternal associations, deemed uniforms, official insignia, and badges essential to identify members at public functions as well as solidify their own commonalty. The Turners chose mandatory attire for all official functions and public processions of gray trousers and jackets, gray hats, red neckerchiefs and special black leather belts called *Gürtel*, incorporating the traditional red and black of the original *Turnvereine* in Germany. Members often paraded and escorted their San Franciscan guests from the docks into town, to Columbus Hall, and to Tivoli Gardens during two-day festivals. When the *Turnverein* was invited to join the other Sacramento fraternal associations marching after city officials, police and firemen in the fourth of July parades in 1857 and 1859, their uniforms distinguished them from other ethnic clubs and benevolent associations. Spectacular parades marked the Regional *Turnfest* held October 9 - 12, 1859, with delegations from Marysville, Stockton and San Francisco parading to and from the embarcadero, events, and festivals, complete with nine German and American flags the blue and silver *Harmonie* banner picturing a lyre, and the gold-fringed “*Eincracht*” banner showing hands clasped hands, both with German legends. Carl

directory while the Minutes of the *Turnverein* Society lists Eisen. Since Knox is listed in the directory as a builder and carpenter, perhaps he was the contractor acting under Eisen. Cutter, 1860, x, 69.

⁴² *Bee*, 5 July 1859 VI: 805, p. 2, col. 3. The site of the property, on K Street between 9th and 10, was the site of the Senator Theater in 1954. *100 Years*, 17.

Böettger, a gunsmith, created their official seal or insignia with a sword, torch and crossed handshake symbolizing bravery, liberty and friendship.⁴³

The *Turnverein* sponsored a fancy ball on Saturday, November 14, 1854, the first of many social gatherings it planned for Sacramento's German community. *Turnverein* members and non-members could enjoy opportunities for newcomers to create and strengthen kinship ties. Because the newly-formed society had little money, the first endeavor was financed on credit -- the hiring of three coaches to transport attendees from their homes, the catering of the meals, and the musicians. Although the *Turnverein* membership totaled only twenty-nine, 120 attended and the dance operated at a profit.⁴⁴ During the next five years and despite their small membership, they planned five more grand balls, several "*Kränzchene*," yearly *Turnfaherte* (spring-time Sunday outings), anniversary celebrations and the large three-day, regional *Turnfest* held in October of 1859.

A committee of wealthier Turners planned the second ball for February 24, 1855, to be open to both members and the public. The *Daily Union* received free tickets in lieu of advertising and ran a notice of the event appeared in its February 16th edition. The organizers put advertisements in the San Francisco newspapers *California Demokrat* and *California Staats-Zeitung* for two weeks prior to the event. Two days later, the *Daily Union* reported that "taste and liberality were displayed," with a good supper and vocal musical offerings by Turners. Since 250 gentlemen and 150 ladies attended despite a *Turnverein* membership of only 80, the entire German community seemed to welcome this opportunity to gather socially. For the third,

⁴³ *Bee*, 2 July 1859 V: 751 p. 2, col. 3. McCoy, "Turnverein," 48-9, 62-3. *Union* 6 September 1856 XI: 1701, p. 4, col. 5. *Union*, 4 July 1857 XIII: 1956, p. 3, col. 5. *Union*, 9 October 1859 XVIII: 2663, p. 3, col. 1; 10 October 1859 XVIII: 2664, p. 3, col. 1; 11 October 1859 XVIII: 2665: p. 3, col. 1; 12 October 1859 XVIII: 2666. p. 3, col. 1. Columbus Hall and Vauxhall Gardens were the same place. Originally, German-born John Anthes owned and operated the facility as the Columbus Hall. When he sold out to Mrs. Minna York in 1856, she renamed it Vauxhall Garden. Colville, 1855, 11. Irwin, 1857-1858, 98.

a Christmas Eve ball in 1855, they invited Turners from San Francisco, Nevada City, Dutch Flat as well as the Swiss Rifle Club, and the 150 couples attending vocal music and saw a gymnastic exhibition by twenty-five members. Hamilton Hall, owned by member Melchor, was the site of the fourth ball on August 19, 1858, with a program of gymnastic performances and a “good band” of musicians.⁴⁵ The *Daily Union* reported on December 26, 1859, that the fifth ball was a:

Christmas Gift Ball to be held these evening at Turn-Verein [sic] Hall bids fair to exceed any festival hitherto given by the Turn-Verein, it being determined to spare no pains or expense to render it in all respects an unusually pleasant and agreeable affair.⁴⁶

In 1856, 1857 and 1858, the *Turnverein* planned seven small, intimate, private *Kränzchene* to augment the large, often public balls. The Turners, their wives, and members’ guests paid a nominal admission charge to cover the cost of the supper and beer spent the evening dining, singing and dancing. Occasionally, a grander affair would be held at Vauxhall Gardens with a small group of musicians.⁴⁷ These functions attracted both active and inactive members of the German community. For example, in February, 1856, Barbara Bickel attended her first and wrote home to her sister:

Three weeks ago I went to the last German Ball with Mr. Drüke, a good friend of Mr. Heinrich. My ball dress was white, too [as was her sister’s]. I have a dress of mull that is ‘lo näck’ or décolleté, short sleeves with a white bow in my hair--in a crown--, white boots or slippers and white kid gloves. This all looked very good.⁴⁸

Barbara's letters home described a chaotic and lonely existence in Sacramento, but she found companionship and comfort in the *Turnverein* activities. At this particular gathering, for example, she met her future husband, George Drüke.

⁴⁴ McCoy, "Turnverein," 40-43.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 46, 76. *Union*, 16 February 1855, IX: 1216, p. 2, col. 2. 26 February 1855, IX: 1225, p. 2, col. 3. *Union*, 26 December 1855, X: 1485, p. 2, col. 3.

Union, 16 August 1858, XV: 2304, p. 5, col. 3.

⁴⁶ *Union*, 26 December 1859, XVIII: 2729, p. 3, col. 1.

⁴⁷ McCoy, "Turnverein," 74-5.

⁴⁸ Cosgrove, *Potpourri*, 75-6.

During the years 1856 through 1859, members attended annual springtime *Turnfaherte*, more formal renditions of the traditional Sunday outing when a German *Hausfrau* would leave the dishes to be washed on Monday and join her entire family, or a party of several families, together for an outing. They would meet at the *Turnhalle* as early as ten o'clock in the morning and parade to a site outside the city limits for the usual picnicking, informal exhibitions of free gymnastics, some friendly competition and usual group singing, returning by procession back to the city. In cold weather, they would gather in their own *Turnhalle* for light-hearted merrymaking, moving to the open countryside in warm weather.⁴⁹ The *Daily Union* described a typical picnic held on May 31, 1859:

The Sacramento Turners, on Sunday last, held a very pleasant picnic...in a beautiful grove of oaks...There were of the party, including ladies, about seventy-five persons. Aside from a bountiful supply of edibles and sustaining beverages, the party were regaled with singing and dancing--the music for the occasion being furnished by Lottheimer and Wettermann, and among other incidents to enliven the festival were a footrace between several of the ladies and a bag race...The party left the city for the ground in vehicles about 8 A. M., and started on their return about 5 P. M., well pleased with the trip.⁵⁰

The *Turnverein's* social highlight every year was the anniversary celebration of its founding. The first anniversary celebration was held on June 18th and 19th in 1855 and was a gala event. Forty members of the San Francisco *Turnverein* came up on the steamer, "Senator," to participate in the event and were escorted by torch-light to Columbus Hall. After the German ladies presented the club with a beautiful banner, Turners paraded to the *Festplatz* at Tivoli Gardens, where they were greeted with cannon firing and other "complimentary demonstrations." After a mid-day dinner replete with toasts and speeches, the festivities continued with music by the band, songs by both the San Francisco and Sacramento

⁴⁹ Barney, *Forty-Eighters*, 27. McCoy, "Turnverein," 13-4, 75-6.

Gesangvereine (singing societies), gymnastic sports of vaulting, leaping and running in sacks, and a Swiss Rifle shooting tournament. Dancing began after the games “which was sustained with unflagging fervor until 8 o’clock” when the party paraded by torch-light back to the city, stopping at the Indian Queen Saloon for refreshments. The next day, the festivities resumed at Tivoli, with songs and gymnastic exhibitions, culminating, as the *Daily Union* reported, with a “fine ball” with a large attendance, including John Sutter, bedecked in the colorful red and blue souvenir ribbons with the legend, “First Anniversary Festival of the Sacramento Turn Verein [sic].” A “delegation of their brethren of this city, headed by a band of music” escorted the San Francisco visitors to the docks on June 21st, and the singing of a “glee or two” on parting marked the close of the festivities.⁵¹ The secondary anniversary festival was also a two-day affair, held September 7th and 8th of 1856 with a program similar to the prior years’ celebration outlined in the *Daily Union*. Because the third anniversary was a closed affair, the reports in the *Daily Union* only described a Grand Ball at Vauxhall Gardens where “order prevailed,” the music excellent, and the scene “gay and pleasing.”⁵²

The culminating social activity of the 1850s for the German community and the Turners had to be the Grand *Turnfest* on October 9, 10, and 11, 1859. As the *Daily Bee* exclaimed, “This is not a mere local affair, but is an ingathering of Turners, from all parts of the State, or on the coast. . . at which a large delegation--probably a hundred persons--will be present from San Francisco, and lesser bodies from other cities and towns.” Saturday, the eighth, visitors were greeted at dockside and escorted to the *Turnhalle* for a reception. The next morning, attendees marched in a body, accompanied by drummers, to the picnic grounds from Sacramento where

⁵⁰ *Union*, 31 May 1859 XVII: 2551 p 2, col. 1.

⁵¹ Colville, 1855, 46. McCoy, “Turnverein,” 50-51. *Union*, 19 June 1855 IX: 1321 p. 2, col. 3; 20 June 1855 IX: 1322 p. 2, col. 4; 22 June 1855 IX: 1324 p. 2, col. 4. *100 Years*, 17.

they spent the day feasting, prize shooting, observing and performing gymnastics, listening to songs from the Glee Clubs and dancing under a tent. That evening, the Turners and visitors enjoyed a concert at the *Turnverein's* new *Turnhalle* and saw prizes awarded for the afternoon's shooting competition, including a penny whistle awarded to C. Kleinsorge being the worst shot. On Monday, the Turners and the Rifle Corps processed through several streets to the *Turnhalle* with banners flying and music sounding. Competitions in gymnastics for prizes filled the afternoon. That evening, they held a grand ball in the *Turnhalle* with "delightful music, bright lights and sparkling eyes will give zest to the enjoyment of the dance, so that tripping feet will still be busy in the waltz when the morning star begins to fade."⁵³ The German community had matured enough to host a regional gathering and deport itself with honors.

The Sacramento *Turnverein* organized cultural activities valued by the Germans in addition to its many social activities through its singing society and shooting club. The *Gesangverein* began in 1855, and its participation in an 1857 inter-*Vereine* concert in San Francisco attested to its success. Under the auspices of the San Francisco *Harmonie*, the *Eincracht* and a section of the San Francisco *Turnverein*, many singers from Marysville, Stockton and Sacramento joined San Franciscans for a concert at the Metropolitan Theater. German vocalists numbering 125 to 150 participated, and the *Daily Union* listed the twelve Sacramento *Gesangverein* attendees led by John Schwegerle.⁵⁴ After that concert, Schwegerle left town and the *Gesangverein* was inactive until his return in March of 1859 and the new *Turnhalle* provided space the singers could use for their meetings. The activities of the Turner's

⁵² McCoy, "Turnverein," 83. McCoy, "Turnverein," 78. *Union*, 30 August 1856 XI: 1694 p. 2, col. 5, 30; 6 September 1856 XI: 1701, p. 3, col. 5.

⁵³ *Bee* 8 October 1859 VI: 833, p. 3, col. 1; 9 October 1859 VI: 834, p. 3, col. 1; 11 October 1859 VI: 835, p. 3, col. 1; 14 October 1859 VI: 837, pg. 3, col. 1. McCoy, "Turnverein," 54.

⁵⁴ McCoy, "Turnverein," 43-4. *Union*, 10 July 1857 XIII: 1955, p. 3, col. 2; 23 July 1857 XIII: 1968, p. 2, col. 3. *100 Years*, 17.

Rifle Club were short-lived perhaps because members were already active in the Swiss Rifle and Sacramento Rifle companies. Lotthammer spearheaded an effort to organize the *Turnverein*-sponsored club in July 1856, but since the rifles took ten months to come, interest waned. Also, when members left Sacramento, they took the rifles with them, leaving none for the society's newer members to use. After 1857, activities ceased until January of 1859 when it became another activity spurred on by the building of the *Turnhalle*.⁵⁵

The *Turnverein's* activities would seem to cater solely to the small-sized German community, influencing the Anglo community only by example of festive celebration. Just as influential on the Anglo-based culture, on the other hand, were the German individuals' activities in musical and sporting mainstream groups. The Sacramento Union Band, for example, played for both Anglo and German-sponsored events including regular concerts at John Zwicker's Wiener Coffee Hall.⁵⁶ Martin Simondson was the violin soloist in the band playing at the Empire Hotel, and A. Heyman's orchestra performed for at least at two of the many Anglo balls held in Sacramento.⁵⁷ With grand balls an important part of the Anglo-American culture of Sacramento, Germans, including Heyman and Melchoir, advertised instruction and "*soiree dansants*" where both Germans and Anglos could enjoy learning the latest dance steps.⁵⁸ The concerts offered at Zwicker and Hubbard's Garden, Henry Frick's Nolan's Gardens and the Vauxhall Gardens every Sunday gave Anglos as well as Germans an opportunity to celebrate

⁵⁵ McCoy, "Turnverein," 72-74.

⁵⁶ On July 4, 1859, the Sacramento Brass Band was hired to be the main musical ensemble at the celebration for a sum of \$500.00 Union, 4 July 1859 XVII: 2578, p. 3, col. 1. Advertisements appeared in the newspapers and the City Directories. *Bee*, 3 October 1857 II: 209, p. 1, col. 7; 30 April 1859, V: 697 p. 5, col. 4. 2578, pg. 3, col. 1.

⁵⁷ The two were the July 4, 1854, Grand Ball at Knight's Landing and the January 1855, Social Ball at the Western Hotel. *Invitation to the Social Ball at Western Hotel, January 1855. Transcript* 24 September 1850 I: 124 p. 2, col. 2. *Union* 1 July 1854 VII: 1021 pg. 2, col. 7.

⁵⁸ *Bee*, 3 October 1857 II: 209 p. 3, col. 5; 10 October 1857 II: 216 p. 3, col. 5. *Union*, 4 July 1856 XI: 1645 p. 3, col. 1; 30 August 1856 XI: 1584 p. 3, col. 5. At Christmas in 1857, for example, both Heyman and Melchoir offer subscription dances through the newspaper. *Bee*, 22 December 1857 II: 276, p. 3, col. 1; 23 December 1857 II: 277 p. 1, col. 7.

joyfully the end of the week.⁵⁹ Newspaper reports disclose the Protestant Churches' adoption of *Maifest* excursions and the German Christmas traditions of trees and gift-giving, probably encouraged by German-born members of the congregations.⁶⁰ The newspaper coverage of the Swiss Rifle Club and Sacramento Rifle Club report many competitions, often held in conjunction with balls, with Germans and Anglo-Americans winning many prizes.⁶¹ A *Daily Union* editorial promoted gymnastics as an avenue to good health, reflecting perhaps the *Turnverein's* emphasis on that sport, and Fred Van Vleck was appointed to teach gymnastics to public schools boys and girls at his Gymnasium which he prominently advertised in the *Sacramento Bee*.⁶² The merchants and clerks of Sacramento organized the first baseball club in California. Since Germans dominated this industry, they probably were numbered among the club's players.⁶³ German newcomers, as well as the *Turnverein*, were instrumental in introducing German traditions to the Anglo community.

During the 1850s and despite its small size, Sacramento's German community actively created and maintained its ethnic rituals and practices while offering many opportunities for the Germans, both *Turnverein* members and non-members, to assemble at social gathering and sporting events. This sub-culture aggressively celebrated its own "German-ness" while impacting the dominant Anglo community, influencing the majority to adopt some of their ethnic

⁵⁹*Bee*, 20 June 1859 V: 740 p. 3, col. 3. *Union*, 1 July 1857 XIII: 1954 p. 3, col. 4.

⁶⁰ An editorial in the *Transcript* promoted "keeping Christmas" particularly including the traditional Christmas tree. *Transcript*, 25 December 1850 II: 53 p. 2, col. 1. The *Union* and *Bee* describe the Christmas tree celebrations at the Protestant churches in 1857, 1858 and 1859. *Bee*, 24 December 1857 II: 278, p. 3, col. 1. *Union*, 23 December 1858 XVI: 2415 p. 3, col. 1; *Union*, 23 December 1859 XVIII: 2727 p. 2, col. 2; 26 December 1859 XVIII: 2727, p. 2, col. 2; and 27 December 1859 XVIII: 2730, p. 3, col. 1. May day celebrations are described in 1853, 1855, 1857 and 1859. *Union*, 28 April 1853 V: 655, p. 2, col. 3; 1 May 1855 IX: 1279 p. 2, col. 3; 1 May 1857 XIII: 1902 p. 2, col. 4; 3 May 1859 XVII: 2527 p. 2, col. 2; and 9 May 1859 XVII: 2532, p. 3, col. 1.

⁶¹ *Union*, 1 July 1853 V: 700 p. 2, col. 6; 1 October 1857 XIV: 2033, p. 2, col. 4; 27 October 1857 XIV: 2042 p. 2, col. 4; and 20 September 1859 Union XVIII: 2646, p. 3, col. 1. Charles Heinrich, Barbara's former employer, was a winner in September of 1859.

⁶²*Bee*, 3 October 1857 II: 209 p. 3, col. 5. McCoy, *Turnverein*, 94. *Union*, 10 May 1856 XI: 1592, p. 2, col. 1.

⁶³Natalie Vermilyea, "Krank's Delight: California Baseball, 1858-1888," *Californians* 8:6 (1991) 33.

customs. In addition, the Germans were able to mix comfortably with the native-born in Anglo-sponsored associations and at mainstream cultural and social events. The Germans had distinct advantages over the racial minorities which were marginalized in California – they looked like the Anglo-Americans, they often were of a middle class background, many came with resources they could put to immediate use, and many already had a command of the English language--but they did not assimilate into the Anglo culture. They created a new identity, "German-Sacramentans," equally concerned with conquering the post gold-rush chaos in their new home and with maintaining their own sub-culture. By infiltrating the Anglo-American system while remaining separate, they were able to exert an influence on Sacramento larger than their small numbers would indicate. The experience of the German-born in Sacramento complicates the histories of gold rush spawned communities. White populations were not a homogenous whole but were made up of parts – Anglo, German, or other European-born immigrants. The impact of each of them needs to be researched and recorded.
