

The German Forty-Eighters in Illinois

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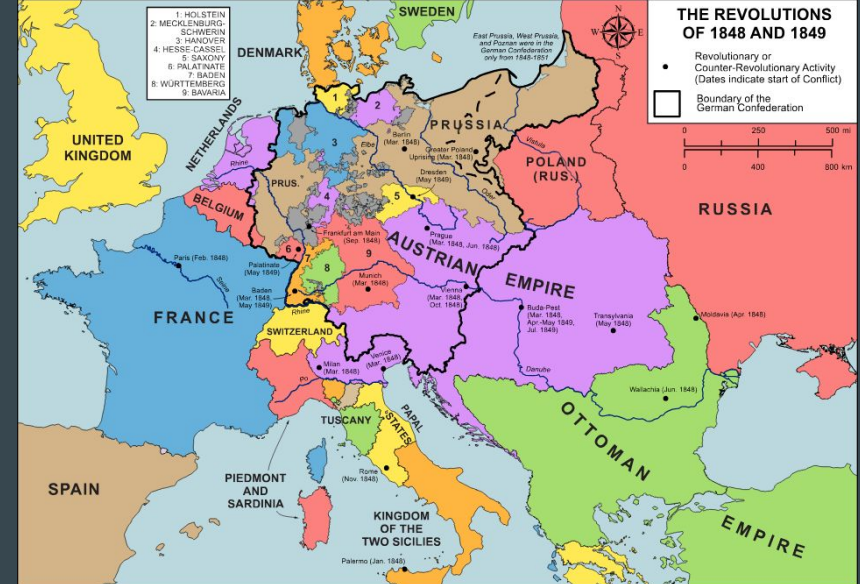
By Harris Dorgan

Europe, 1848



Source: Westera, Rick. "Historical Atlas of Europe (24 February 1848): Year of Revolution Begins." Omniatlas. <https://omniatlas.com/maps/europe/18480224/>.

Germany, 1848



Source: "The Revolution of 1848–49." German History in Documents and Images. <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/from-vormarx-to-prussian-dominance-1815-1866/the-revolution-of-1848-49>.

Illinois German population, 1860

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STATE OF ILLINOIS.

TABLE No. 5.—NATIVITIES OF POPULATION.

UNITED STATES.			FOREIGN COUNTRIES.		
Alabama.....	1,565	Pennsylvania.....	83,025	Asia.....	49
Arkansas.....	620	Rhode Island.....	2,222	Africa.....	19
California.....	175	South Carolina.....	3,283	Australia.....	27
Connecticut.....	11,762	Tennessee.....	32,012	Atlantic Islands.....	453
Delaware.....	1,888	Texas.....	294	Belgium.....	236
Florida.....	87	Vermont.....	18,223	British America.....	20,120
Georgia.....	1,347	Virginia.....	32,978	Central America.....	24
Illinois.....	706,523	Wisconsin.....	4,771	China.....	3
Indiana.....	62,016	District of Columbia.....	343	Denmark.....	712
Iowa.....	4,948	Territories.....	80	England.....	41,745
Kansas.....	99	At sea.....	178	Europe, (not specified).....	90
Kentucky.....	60,183	Not stated.....	3,955	France.....	8,493
Louisiana.....	568			German States:	
Maine.....	7,455	Aggregate native.....	1,387,308	Austria.....	2,106
Maryland.....	16,476			Bavaria.....	12,437
Massachusetts.....	19,023			Baden.....	9,598
Michigan.....	5,516			Hesse.....	10,184
Minnesota.....	285			Nassau.....	1,585
Mississippi.....	794			Prussia.....	24,547
Missouri.....	12,234			Württemberg.....	5,096
New Hampshire.....	7,938			Germany, (not specified).....	63,341
New Jersey.....	15,474			Aggregate foreign.....	224,613
New York.....	125,508			Aggregate native.....	1,387,308
North Carolina.....	13,297			Total Germany.....	130,804
Ohio.....	121,887			Great Britain, (not specified).....	620
Oregon.....	31			Greece.....	620
				Total.....	1,711,521

Chicago German population, 1850-1910

Table 1
Population of Chicago, 1850-1910: Comparison of Total, Foreign-Born,
and German Population⁽²⁾

	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
total population (absolute numbers)	29 963	109 206	298 977	503 185	1 099 850	1 698 575	2 185 283
per cent native American with foreign parents	—	—	—	—	29,5	42,8	41,8
per cent foreign-born	52,3	50,0	48,4	40,7	41,0	34,5	35,7
German-born:	5 094	22 230	52 316	75 205	161 039	170 738	182 281
absolute numbers and per cent of total population	17,0	20,4	17,5	15,2	15,2	10,1	8,3

Source: Bureau, US Census. 2021. "1860 Census: Population of the United States." Census.gov. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1864/dec/1860a.html>.

Source: John B. Jentz and Hartmut Keil, "From Immigrants to Urban Workers: Chicago's German Poor in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, 1883-1908," VSWG: Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 68. Bd., H. 1 (1981), 61.

German occupations in Chicago, 1880

Table 2

Employed German Males in Chicago by Occupational Status and Major Occupations, 1880^(a)

2a. Occupational Status ^(b)	% of total employed German males
1. professional high white-collar	1,4
2. proprietary low white-collar	20,0
3. skilled crafts	37,4
4. unskilled	35,8
5. other	5,4
total	100,0

(a) Source: Systematic sample taken by the Chicago Project of German households in Chicago in 1880, based on the Ms. Schedules of the U.S. Census On Population for 1880.

2b. Major Occupations for Categories 2–4 by per cent of total employed German Males

2. propr. and low white-collar	%	3. skilled crafts	%	4. unskilled	%
store clerk	1,8	carpenter	3,4	laborer	13,8
clerk	1,6	tailor	2,1	teamster	1,6
saloon keeper	1,4	butcher	1,7	works in tailor shop	1,1
bookkeeper	1,0	painter	1,7	works in lumber yard	1,0
peddler	0,8	dressmaker	1,6	sailor	0,8
grocer	0,6	cabinet maker	1,5	sewer	0,7
		machinist	1,3		
		shoemaker	1,3		
		cigar maker	1,2		
		baker	1,0		

(b) Occupational status categories were adapted from the Philadelphia Social History Project.

²⁷ The German Society repeatedly warned lower level German professionals and white-collar workers like store clerks and bookkeepers not to come to America: see 40th Annual Report (1893–94), p. 10; also 39th Annual Report (1892–93), p. 8.

Source: Jentz and Keil, “From Immigrants to Urban Workers,” 62.

Report about the Forty-Eighters, 1849

This Senator has made a publication in one of the Wisconsin papers, in which he states that he has been abused by the Legislature of that State, in their instructions, which he calls a “bill of attainder,” and that “he has nothing more to fear of their baseness or to hope from their justice or magnanimity.” And adds, “that until the insult is withdrawn, he shall consult his own feelings and honor, and those of the friends who stand by him, as to the time, place and manner, when, where and how, he shall reply to the indignity.”

Some 200,000 German immigrants, mostly men of means, more or less compromised in the revolutions, are expected to reach America during the summer—probably adding some millions to the funds in the country. The investments for German account in our national and state funds are said to be very large.

A Washington correspondent says: “We are assured that a force of Dragoons will immediately be detailed to the Rio Grande to put down the Indians, with instructions to pursue them till captured or annihilated. The people of Texas are to be protected from further invasions of the Comanches.

DEAD SEA EXPEDITION.—Messrs. Lea & Blanchard have just published, in a large and elegant octavo volume, a full and complete history of the

out?—30 days! How many have you on board? 91 souls! Are you bound in? Yes! A pleasant passage to you! The same to you my fine fellow! And the two ships separated after sending up nine most tremendous cheers.”

There is a new expedition on the way to ascertain the sources of the Nile. Rev. Mr. Rabmann, a missionary of the Church, located on the eastern coast of Africa, four degrees south of the Equator, recently penetrated a hundred miles inland, and came to a mountain, covered with perpetual snow. It is supposed that the Nile draws its supply of water from this source. Dr. Bialoblotzky, from England, is now engaged in endeavoring to solve the mystery.

RETURNED.—A man by the name of Luther, with his wife, left Alton two years' since for San Francisco. He has just returned with his wife, having made money enough to gratify his desires. How much that is, is not said. He showed the editors of the St. Louis Republican, a bag containing some 20 lbs. of the metal. He confirms all the previous accounts of the abundance of gold in California.

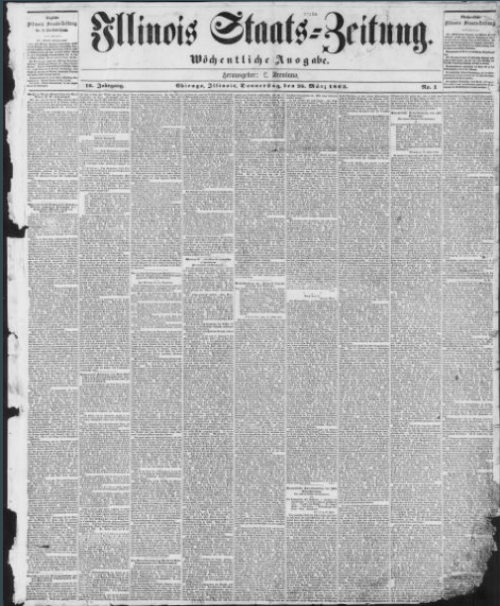
Indian ravages on the Rio Grande.—By a telegraphic despatch from New Orleans of June 9th, we have most melancholy details of Indian ravages which sweep tempest-like toward civilized

I have been directed to the practicability of a through the country. My opinion is, that no will present itself. With from the route it pursued, throughout the whole line not exceed ten feet in a mile points, as it may be carried half the way. But few of a single arch will suffice to build one or more points of natural foundations for abutments, limestone for lime good timber of every variety ready, almost where purpose, are strange, across the valley of the Canada connecting link between extremes of our continent

THE BRITISH COLONIAL POSSESSIONS OF GREAT CANADA, NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, NEWFOUNDLAND, and the Cape of Good Hope, the Mauritius, the Seychelles, the Mauritania, the Gambia, the Sierra Leone, the Cape Coast, and St. Helena, cost £3,170,388; and the cost of the colonial empire upon the mother country in the 31st of March cost of £9,743,354 solely

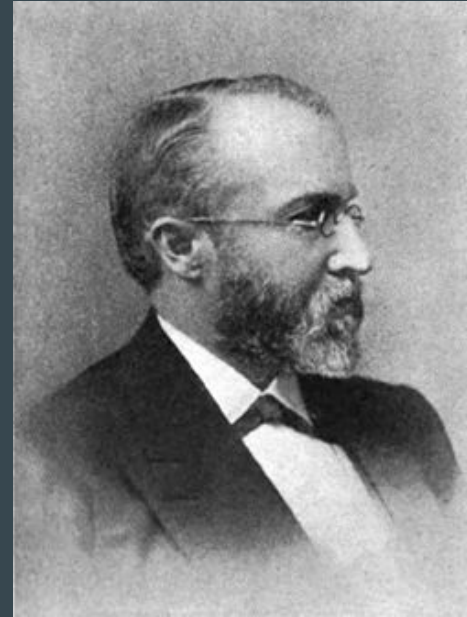
Source: Sangamo Journal, June 25 1849.

Example of the Illinois Staats-Zeitung



Source: Illinois Staats-Zeitung, March 26 1863.

Photograph of George Schneider



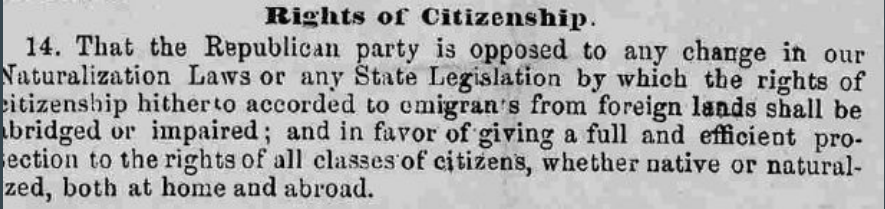
Source: Paul Selby (1906). "George Schneider". Papers in Illinois history and transactions. p. 330.

Report on Lincoln's speech in Bloomington



Source: Papers of Abraham Lincoln.
<https://papersofabrahamlincoln.org/documents/D200799>.

The “Dutch Plank” of the Republican Platform



Source: A Reprint of the Original Broadside Containing the Republican platform of 1860, Adopted by the National Republican Convention held in Chicago, May 17, 1860.] Chicago, 1860. | library of Congress. Accessed April 24, 2026. <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.0180010b/>.

Article on Germans in the Midwest

Within a year or two the movement of abandoning the sham Democracy, has been in progress among the Germans, and now there are comparatively but a few left in the ranks of that unprincipled organization. In Illinois, they are, almost unanimously, Republicans, and in Ohio, where they have been gradually coming over to the support of the Republican party, they are now deserting the Democracy in scores, being disgusted by the illiberal and pro-slavery tendencies of the Buchanan politicians of that State. And now we are gratified to learn, in Wisconsin the same general movement is in progress. In that State the Germans are holding meetings, and by hundreds resolving to oppose the party that has deceived them.

Source: Sangamo Journal, October 2, 1857.

Article on protests by the German Lincoln Club

[From the Alton Courier.]
AN IRISH REPUBLICAN SPEAKS!
THE CITY HALL FULL!
FREEDOM OF SPEECH SUSTAINED!

Last evening was the occasion of what will justly be regarded as one of the most important meetings of the campaign. We had a speech from Wm. J. Masterson, Esq., of St. Louis.

It had been said about town all the afternoon that he would not be allowed to speak. That he is an Irishman and a Catholic, and yet a Republican, seems to be unpardonable in the eyes of many of the Irish of the city. We did not believe the threat would be put into execution, but we think it had the effect to put Republicans on their guard.

About eighty of the Wide Awakes and German Lincoln club turned out with their torches and made a short march through the streets, preceded by music, and a large canvass hall, inside which were lights, which was rolled along, and deservedly attracted a great deal of praise and admiration.

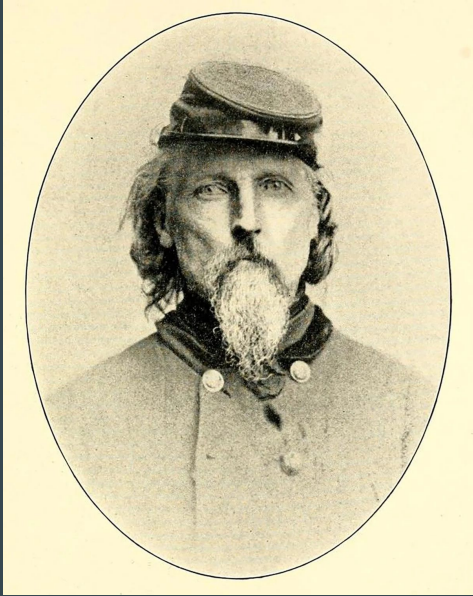
Arrived at the Hall, an audience was found assembled which comfortably filled it. Mr. Masterson was introduced by John Tribble, Esq., and was received with loud and hearty cheering. He at once proceeded to pour hot shot into the ranks of Democracy, and kept doing so for about an hour, receiving much applause.

Outside, during the speaking, some twenty or so were congregated, of whom half a dozen were not sparing of cursing and denunciation, and we heard more than one suggestion to stone Mr. Masterson as he came out. What would have been done we of course cannot say; but Messrs. O'Ryan, Hugh Maguire and James Maguire, deserve the thanks of all lovers of good order for their efforts to keep down the rebellious spirit of the crowd.

The speaker passed out unmolested, and was escorted to the Alton House by the Wide-Awakes. Thanking them, he intimated that he might be with us again before the canvass closes. We shall be glad to see him.

Source: Sangamo Journal, August 23rd, 1860.

Image of Friedrich Hecker



Source: Burlet, Jürg. "When Baden's Revolutionaries Retreated to Switzerland." Swiss National Museum, December 17, 2025.
<https://blog.nationalmuseum.ch/en/2024/07/when-badens-revolutionaries-retreated-to-switzerland/>.

Officers of the 82nd Regiment



Source: The 82 Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment.
<https://civilwartalk.com/threads/the-82-illinois-volunteer-infantry-regiment.126794/>.

Article about German Davenport demonstrators

Was die Operationen der Agitation betrifft, so sind die Berichte in dem Augenblicke, in welchem wir dieses schreiben, noch ziemlich verworren. Doch scheint so viel gewiß zu sein, daß die Truppen des General Hunter (wenigstens theilweise) auf der John's Insel landeten, die von Charleston durch den Stone und Myles-Fluß und eine kaum 3 Meilen breite Landenge getrennt ist. Vom südlichen Ende der John's Insel bis nach Charleston ist es kaum 3 Meilen; die Insel ist 16 Meilen lang und 8 bis 10 breit. Ihren nördlichen Theile entlang haben die Rebellen auf verschiedenen Punkten Batterien am Stone Flusse errichtet, um unsere Schiffe am Hinauffahren und unsere Truppen am Ueberschreiten der Insel zu verhindern. Die Landenge zwischen dem Stone und Myles Flus ist auf's manichfache besetzt und die dortigen Hauptfortifikationen können nöthigenfalls von der Stadt aus beschoßen werden. Aus diesen Daten ersieht man, daß ein Angriff auf Charleston auch von dieser Seite aus nur unter gewaltigen Kämpfen vor sich gehen kann. Auf den übrigen Kriegshauptplätzen hat sich wenig von Belang ereignet. Die Räumung (und Verbrennung) Pensacola's durch unsere Truppen hat sich befüllt. — Die Potomac Armee ist durch neue Schneestürme am Rappahannock festgehalten; doch wird sie durch Streifsätze der Rebellenreiterei und durch Demonstrationen von Rebellenstruppen am Shenandoah fortwährend im Wagem erhalten. Das immer wieder auftauchende Gerücht, daß sich die Rebellen zur Räumung Richmonds und ganz Virginien anschließen, ist natürlich vorerst als total müßig zu betrachten. Allerdings scheinen unter den dortigen Rebellenstruppen manichfache Translokationen vor sich zu geben; aber sie berüchtigen noch lange nicht zu der Annahme, daß die Rebellen Virginien räumen wollen, sondern sie entspringen weit wahrscheinlicher dem Wunsche, nöthigenfalls einem Plänenangriff von Fortsum oder Suffolk aus besser beizugehen zu können.

Source: Illinois Staats-Zeitung, April 9, 1863.

Article after the Emancipation Proclamation

Ich brauche kaum erst zu bemerken, daß die Sklaverei dieser ganzen Rebellion zu Grunde liegt und daß sie in Missouri den Krieg immer von Neuem entzündet. Dank dem Old Abe, ist in Arkansas diese Frage beigelegt. Alle Unionsmänner und Nicht-Sklavenhalter im Staate acceptiren die Emanzipations-Proclamation als Gesetz und zwar mit Freuden. Indem die Sklavenhaltenden Rebellen (und alle Sklavenhalter sind Rebellen,) mit ihren Sklaven aus dem Staate flohen, ward die Negersfrage in diesem Staate bereits geordnet. Nur Eins ist zu fürchten! Wenn die Ver. St. Regierung die Verwaltung dieses Staates einem conservat'ven Vorosklaverei-Manne anvertraut, der den reichen Sklavenhaltern zu Willen ist und in ihnen die Hoffnung erregt, daß die Emanzipationsproclamation „ein bloßer Hauch“ sei (wie Rollins von Missouri sich ausdrückt), und daß ihnen das Sklavenhalten auch ferner gestattet sein werde, dann wird dieser Staat auf Jahre hinaus für die Union verloren sein und von einem Guerillakrieg, wie der in Missouri, heimgesucht werden.

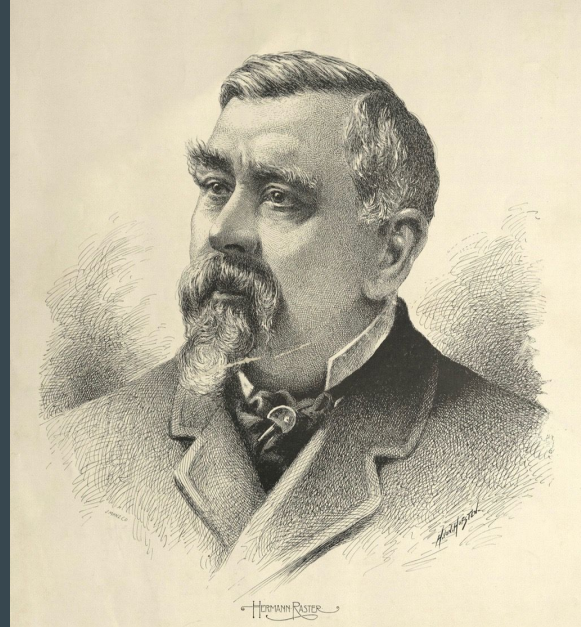
Source: Illinois Staats-Zeitung, October 20, 1863.

Photograph of Anton C. Hesing



Source: Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, vol. 35, no. 3 (Sept. 1942), pg. 268.

Image of Hermann Raster



Source: "Hermann Raster (1827-1891) - Find a Grave Memorial." Find a Grave.
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/68128620/hermann-raster>.

Criticism of Edward Stanton

Selbst der N. Y. Herald ist empört über Sigel's Behandlung.
Wir finden in den Zeitartikelspalten des N. Y. Herald folgenden kurzen Artikel:
„Die naturalisirten Bürger und der Krieg.“
Die Art, wie der Kriegsminister die Generale Sigel und Meagher, welche die Deutschen und Ir-länder repräsentiren, behandelt hat, ist wirklich schändlich. Diese Herren sollten aktive Commandos in der Armee haben; und der Umstand, daß sie nicht im Besitze eines solchen Commando's sind, beweist, daß Hr. Stanton von einem Neste jenes verabscheuungswürdigen Know-Nothing - Geistes angesteckt ist, der vor einigen Jahren wucherte.“
Uebrigens hätte der Herald seinen gerechten Tadel nicht sowohl gegen den ihm verhassten Kriegsminister Stanton richten sollen, als gegen den Ober-Know-Nothing Galleck, den faktischen Herrn und Meister im Kriegsdepartement, der den Kriegsminister in die Position eines bloßen Bureau-Chefs hinabgedrückt hat.

Source: Illinois Staats-Zeitung, June 4th, 1863.

Transcript of a letter from William Massenberg

IB 2

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NPA
JUN 6 1872

GERMAN

Illinois Staats Zeitung, April 6, 1872.

Wm. Massenberg to the Editor of the Illinois Staats Zeitung:

"Greatly astonished I see what interpretation you give my letter in the Chicago Journal of March 22nd. Nothing was further from my thought than to defend the recently adopted so-called Temperance Law. My German colleagues in the Legislature will testify that I did everything I could to prevent its adoption - and, that is to say, by the only means at our disposal, namely, by submitting a substitute. My law simply prohibits the sale of intoxicating drink to known drunkards, to those already intoxicated, to minors, and, in cases where a member of the family forbids the bar-keeper orally or in writing the sale of liquor to an alcohol addicted relation.

Source: Foreign Language Press Survey. https://flps.newberry.org/id/5418474_2_1_0751.



Source: "Erinnerung an den Befreiungskampf in der verhängnisvollen Nacht 18.-19. März 1848", Kreidelithographie, koloriert, gedruckt im Verlag Winckelmann, Eigenth. v. C. Glück, Berlin, Signatur rechts unten nicht lesbar, wohl Blatt II, post-1848 und zeitgenössisch (genaues Datum unbekannt), gescannt von User:APPER, siehe <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/MRY6LN4XHOSUJMQMOUHQDPMGCJBYGN>