

**“NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGNERS:”  
THE PATRIOTISM OF RICHMOND’S GERMAN-AMERICANS DURING THE  
CIVIL WAR**

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## **Abstract**

### **“NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGNERS:” THE PATRIOTISM OF RICHMOND’S GERMAN-AMERICANS DURING THE CIVIL WAR**

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Before and during the Civil War, Richmond’s German-Americans were divided by their diverse politics, economic interests, cultures, and religions. Some exhibited Confederate sentiments and others Unionist. At the start of the war, scores of Richmond’s German-born men volunteered for Confederate military service while others fled to the North. Those who remained found that they were not fully accepted as members of the Confederate citizenry.

Political allegiances within the German-American community were not static. They changed during the course of the war, largely under the influence of nativism. Nativists put into practice a self-fulfilling prophecy that, by accusing the German-born of disloyalty, alienated them and discouraged their sympathies towards the Confederacy. In doing so, by constructing an image of a German antihero, the Confederacy built up its spirit of nationalism.

Although German immigrants moved to cities, in the South and in the North, primarily in order to seek economic opportunities, the immigrants who came to Richmond were different from their ethnic counterparts of the North. As they assimilated and acculturated to the South, their values, behaviors, and loyalties became diverse. By the time of the Civil War, the German-American community of Richmond was quite divided. A common ethnicity failed to hold even those hundreds of German-Americans living in Richmond to one political ideology. Their story illustrates that ethnic divisions often do not coincide with political ones.

Richmond’s German-American community received, during the Civil War, a reputation for universal disloyalty. This myth continues today, though a complex analysis of the German-born does not support it.

To Cindy and Franziska

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## Introduction

In the Confederate States of America, many of the German-born and the foreign-born generally were regarded by the native-born as *Strangers in the Land*. Nativism, as historian John Higham stated in his landmark study, drew its strength from a people's spirit of heightened nationalism.<sup>1</sup> Prior to and during the Civil War, in both North and South, the foreign-born endured vigorous nativist attacks. During the fiery birth of the Confederate nation, particularly intense nativist feelings were kindled, achieving a more potent level than any that had been exhibited in the South before the war. In the Confederacy, German-Americans as a group were regarded with exceptional antipathy by many among the native-born. Threatened by abolitionists, liberal political agitators, and Unionists within the Confederacy's German-American community and by the thousands of German-Americans enrolled in the Union army, nativists characterized German-Americans as a foreign, enemy people. Through the creation of this negative reference group, a group that was thought to endanger the Confederacy's national existence, the Confederate citizenry became more united and motivated to support the war effort. Furthermore, the image of German-Americans as a negative reference group helped to construct the Confederate national identity and increased patriotic fervor in the Confederacy. To survive, to rally its people behind a common agenda, the Confederacy rapidly forged its own national identity, replacing or adding to older national, regional, and local identities.<sup>2</sup> But for Richmond's German-born, the nativism directed against them eroded their own patriotism towards the Confederacy.

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<sup>1</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 4. Higham is also well known for associating nativism with business cycles.

<sup>2</sup> For discussions of how the creation of negative reference groups formed ethnic group identity and increased patriotism by producing additional justifications and opportunities for participation in war efforts, see Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus*

## Concepts and Terms

To clarify what is meant by this last statement, the focus for this thesis, the concepts of nativism, patriotism, and nationalism need to be first defined. And, the people encompassed by the terms “German-Americans” and “Anglo-Americans” need to be identified.

Who were the German-Americans in the early and mid-nineteenth century, before Prussia united the Fatherland? First generation German-American immigrants were born in the several independent German countries that formed German-speaking Europe. In the United States, the German-born called themselves “Germans” due largely to their shared language and culture. They were one ethnic group though they were natives of many countries.

Although German-Americans hailed from different German states, they often socialized together.<sup>3</sup> This is not to state that no differences or divisions existed among natives of different German states. German-Americans from the same country or even locality in Germany tended to congregate in German-American communities or in neighborhoods within those communities.<sup>4</sup> At times, to indicate an underlying level of separateness, they also referred to themselves in terms that indicated their different countries of birth. For example, Polish-born Ludwik Żychliński recorded such competitiveness among German-born officers in the Union army:

I never noticed any agreement among them. Each of them praises his king, elector, or prince, and criticizes the value of the army of

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*to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978) and Mauricio Mazón, *The Zoot-Suit Riots: The Psychology of Symbolic Annihilation* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade,” in *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 69.

<sup>4</sup> Walter D. Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 104-5.

another state . . . . They had a mutual hatred for one another, and whenever they could they argued among themselves.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of the differences that he witnessed, Żychliński still referred to this argumentative group as “Germans.” Accordingly, the term German is used in my thesis as the German-Americans in the antebellum United States used it. It is the name for German speaking people or those with German ancestry.

Anglo-Americans of the antebellum era also identified Germans as those people who shared a common language. German was a strange language to most Anglo-Americans and marked those who spoke it as quite different. Many Anglo-Americans, as outsiders, did not perceive the differences and divisions within the German-American community. This view has continued in the historiography of German-Americans. Rather than regard the German-American community as monolithic, I view German-Americans as individuals who had their own particular interests, preferences, and sympathies. I strongly disagree with the stereotype of German-Americans as universally disloyal toward the Confederacy, due to their common ethnic character.

William Burton, in *Melting Pot Soldiers: the Union's Ethnic Regiments*, also criticized historians for stereotyping ethnic groups. He breaks apart the concept of the ethnic bloc by arguing that religion, political ideology, and regional affiliation split German-Americans. In the North, the political parties time and again sought support from an elusive German-American bloc but failed to gain full German-American loyalty. Even leaders within the German-American community attempted, but failed, to appeal to German-Americans en masse. To claim greater status for themselves, German-American leaders boasted of their influence among their countrymen but in fact greatly overstated their cases. Historians have erroneously used these boasts as evidence of a German-American community bound together in near unanimity. Though, during the Civil War,

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<sup>5</sup> Ludwik Żychliński, *The Memoirs of Ludwik Żychliński: Reminiscences of the American Civil War, Siberia, and Poland*, ed. James S. Pula, trans. Eugene Podraza, East European Monographs, no. CCCXCII (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 64.

Anglo-Americans regarded German-Americans as a united race, most German-Americans held loyalties almost as strong or stronger than their ethnicity. Political sentiments, occupational interests, and local affiliations all worked to dilute the pull of ethnicity as a dominating influence over personal identity.<sup>6</sup> Building upon Burton's thesis, Walter Kamphoefner also argued for the importance of divisions among German-Americans. In "German-Americans and Civil War Politics: A Reconsideration of the Ethnocultural Thesis," Kamphoefner blamed filiopietistic interpretations for perpetrating the myth that the North's German-Americans were all "freedom loving" Republicans. Instead, Republican nativists inspired German-American hatred of the party.<sup>7</sup> Explaining such German-American factionalism, another historian of German-Americans, Bruce Levine, described the freedom and diversity within antebellum American society. Using evidence drawn from voting patterns, public speeches, newspapers, and political platforms, Levine refuted the traditional depiction of German-Americans as united and monolithic.<sup>8</sup>

This new approach to ethnic history is particularly valuable in order to recognize the variety of differences within what were previously regarded as monolithic groups. Rather than celebrate ethnic groups for some mythical positive quality, one needs to question continually the appropriateness of using ethnic categories to describe non-ethnic characteristics. Ethnic groups were composed of people who adhered to a number of different factions, reflecting the many and divergent interests that cut across American society.

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<sup>6</sup> William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: the Union's Ethnic Regiments* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 227.

<sup>7</sup> Walter D. Kamphoefner, "German Americans and Civil War Politics: A Reconsideration of the Ethnocultural Thesis," *Civil War History* 37 (1991): 233, 238.

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Levine, "Community Divided: German Immigrants, Social Class, and Political Conflict in Antebellum Cincinnati," in *Ethnic Diversity and Civic Identity: Patterns of Conflict and Cohesion in Cincinnati since 1820*, ed. Henry D. Shapiro and Jonathan D. Sarna (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 47, 82.

To explain the selection of the term, “German-born,” as well as the choice of another, “German-American,” I use both to refer to an ethnic group whose members were hardly outsiders to American society. “German-born” intentionally refers to both relatively new immigrants to the United States and those older European-born immigrants who were very much acculturated within American society. When “German-born” is inadequate to include one group or another, such as second-generation immigrants, I use the term “German-Americans.” “German-American” conveys the idea that immigrants from the German states possessed values influenced by both Old and New World cultures. In one respect, “German-American” is too general a category. It can be applied to people whose ancestors had emigrated to America generations before.

The German-American community of antebellum Richmond was composed of mostly German-born immigrants and their children. In contrast, those German-Americans living in western Virginia were more likely to have ancestors that had emigrated to America well before the Revolution. Thus, neither the terms “German-American” nor “German-born” is fully appropriate to describe people who may have been second generation, others who may have been recent arrivals, or those who may have been born in Germany and lived in the United States for decades. However, these terms are the best of those available and, in this paper, are often interchangeable. In particular situations, one term is favored when more appropriate than the other.

Another term, “Anglo-American,” is used to apply to those native-born whites who did not identify themselves with the immigrant community. Of course, not all native-born whites were of Anglo-Saxon origins. The term Anglo-American simply differentiates between German-Americans and their white American-born counterparts. In certain situations, I add the terms “Southern-born” and “Northern-born” to specify the native-born who were from these regions. Because of the scarcity of African-American sources within my thesis, and because I am certain that blacks had different attitudes toward the foreign-born than Southern-born whites had, I admit that black sentiments are poorly reflected when I use the terms “Southern-born” and “native-born.” For this

reason, and to avoid unfair stereotypes of white native-born Southerners, I often refer to the “many” among the Southern-born who shared one attitude or the other.

One might argue that the more traditional terms “foreigners,” “Germans,” and “aliens” are in fact more appropriate than “German-Americans” and “German-born” since the former group of terms was chosen by people in the place and time under study. Nonetheless, the former terms are less than appropriate since they classify immigrant peoples as quite dissimilar from native-born Americans and convey only their differences. Such terms give immigrants the status of foreign strangers who were unable to acculturate. Such an attitude was common among the native-born of the United States and the Confederacy. Many regarded their foreign-born neighbors as unable to become loyal Americans and unworthy of American, or Confederate, citizenship.

Grouping the foreign-born into a non-American nationality by calling them “Germans,” “foreigners,” and “aliens” designates that they were an “other” people, as not part of those people who made up the Confederate nation. With similar reasoning, but under different circumstances, as Benedict Anderson stated in his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, by continuing to refer to Confederates as “Americans,” we remember the American Civil War as a civil war between opposing factions of one people, if not one family, and not as a war between two nations.<sup>9</sup> Ethnicity is created when a group sets boundaries around itself to include some and exclude others. Thus, by continuing to fail to investigate the patriotism, or lack thereof, of German-Americans towards the Confederacy, we strip away their Confederate-ness, their Southern-ness, and their loyalty to their new nation. The long-standing image of the Confederate citizenry as composed of only whites who had been born into families that had long lived on Southern soil is maintained. The image of German-Americans as only traitors or enemies to the Confederate nation is furthered. In studying the reactions of those immigrants who lived in the Confederacy, I explore in this

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<sup>9</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 201.

thesis the detrimental effects that nativism had upon residents of the Confederacy, no matter where they were born, in their struggle to establish their new nation.

Nativism is prejudice in favor of natives and against strangers. It is intended to protect the interests of the native-born against those of immigrants.<sup>10</sup> Dale Knobel, in his history of nativism in the United States, *"America for the Americans,"* attributed nativism to conflicts over occupational, neighborhood, and political power and to cultural prejudices and anxieties about strangers and change. Like Higham but in this more complex manner, Knobel related nativism to nationalism. Both nativism and nationalism defined the national character. In the 1850s, many Americans believed that losing one's identity, that is, the identity of the nation, to invading foreigners was to become a slave. Americans activated nativist sentiments in order to cope with losing personal and national autonomy and to forestall changes in the national character as well as the social-economic landscape.<sup>11</sup> Knobel argued that aspiring leaders exploited nativism in defining their nation's characteristics and to attain a particular agenda.<sup>12</sup> Knobel's concept of the origins and uses of nativism has significantly influenced my thesis. I regard nativism as the key that unlocks the door to understanding German-American patriotism in Confederate Richmond. Under attack from nativists, many of whom were Confederates rallying their people to their cause, the German-Americans of Richmond became increasingly disenchanted towards the Confederacy.

I also owe much of my thinking on nativism to Mauricio Mazón, who argued that patriotism could be kindled by nativism. In the so-called zoot-suit riots in Los Angeles during WWII, patriotism was strengthened by the creation of an antihero. Zoot-suit-wearing young men, Hispanics in particular, were viewed as enemies of the American

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<sup>10</sup> J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, ed., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. X (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 238.

<sup>11</sup> Dale T. Knobel, *"America for the Americans:" The Nativist Movement in the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), xxvi, 99-100.

<sup>12</sup> Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1986), xi, 167-68.

war effort. They were associated with the negative ideals of the wartime enemy. This creation of an internal enemy served as a counterpoint to reference the positive attributes desired for citizens in their defense of the nation and its ideals.<sup>13</sup> In Civil War Richmond, as in WWII Los Angeles, the construction of internal foes allowed citizens on the homefront to take direct, active roles in combating their foes.

Other terms, “South” and “North” as well as “Southerners” and “Northerners,” I use in capital letters to represent discrete regions and peoples. Likewise, German-American Southerners were not simply German-Americans who lived in the South. German-American Southerners, as a group, were significantly different from German-Americans of the North. In their rhetoric, celebrations, and political sentiment, Richmond’s German-Americans were acculturating to the South on the eve of the Civil War. During the war itself, many had sympathy for the Confederate nation.

Such Confederate nationalism never had time to “mature,” either among the native-born or the German-born. Even for many white Virginians, the Confederate nation was not the lens through which they primarily identified themselves.<sup>14</sup> I agree with Drew Faust, who stated in her *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, that “nationalism is more often than not ‘insufficient’ at the time of its first expression. Nationalism is contingent; its creation is a process.”<sup>15</sup>

Randall Jimerson was one of the few Civil War historians who explored the popular image of the enemy as a factor in motivating the Confederate people. He argued that Confederate characterizations of Union soldiers as foreign-born Yankee hirelings revealed “an agrarian, ethnically homogeneous South suspicious of the urban, ethnically mixed North.” The Confederate citizenry projected, upon the foreign-born, “their sense of separateness and the personal values they cherished.” Confederates confirmed their

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<sup>13</sup> Mazón, *Zoot-Suit Riots*, 6, 108.

<sup>14</sup> William Blair, *Virginia’s Private War: Feeding Body and Soul in the Confederacy, 1861-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 149-50.

<sup>15</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 6.

own superiority by constructing the enemy as “objects of invidious comparison.”<sup>16</sup> Reid Mitchell took a similar view. He stated that Southerners did not fight for the concept of secession. They rallied to fend off an invasion of the enemy, who, it was feared by many, would rape their women and pillage and burn their homes. Such an invasion endangered their families and threatened to overthrow their sectional rights and characteristics as well as the slave system. Within this threatening environment, the Confederate citizenry developed the popular image of the North and the Union army as composed largely of the foreign-born.<sup>17</sup> Such a viewpoint was a negative image of the Confederacy’s own sense of peoplehood. It reinforced a national sense of shared Confederate culture.

The definition that I use for “nationalism” is that formulated by Benedict Anderson, who argued that all communities larger than those based upon interpersonal contacts are imagined. Since members of a national group mostly never deal with one another directly, their community exists only in their conceptions of how the group is defined. Anderson defined the nation as geographically limited, politically sovereign, and culturally imagined as a one community. An individual’s love of nation is a prerequisite for membership in the national community, but it is not the only one. Though their members may love the nation, Anderson asserted that ethnic groups can be excluded from or invited into the national community in which they live.<sup>18</sup>

This dynamic of inclusion and exclusion is particularly relevant to Civil War history, not only in relation to German-Americans but also to issues of national reconciliation. Part of the reason, Anderson states, that many Americans do not regard the Civil War as a war between separate nations is that, for purposes of reconciliation, Americans are taught to remember it as a civil war between brothers over the course of their nation’s history. If the Civil War had been won by the Confederacy, and had it

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<sup>16</sup> Randall C. Jimerson, *The Private Civil War: Popular Thought during the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 124-25, 127-28.

<sup>17</sup> Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Penguin Group, 1988), 3-4, 30, 175-77.

<sup>18</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.

endured as a separate nation, the war would surely have had a more unbrotherly legacy.<sup>19</sup> American political unity has, at times, been held together by force, but cultural devices have been more effective in maintaining national unity. During the Civil War, the concepts of the German-born as aliens to the ideals of the Confederacy and as threats to the well-being of Southern-born whites conspired to unite the native-born within the Confederate nation.

Closely related to the concept of nationalism was the standard of patriotism. Patriotism was not proven by inner feelings but by behavior. It was most simply defined as “love of one’s country.” Expanding upon this ideal, Webster’s *American Dictionary* defined patriotism as “the passion . . . to serve one’s country, either in defending it from invasion” or in “protecting its rights and maintaining its laws and institutions in vigor and purity.”

Thus, as this definition suggested, service in the armed forces was the clearest evidence of an individual’s patriotism. In combat, the seal of patriotism was placed upon men with blood. However, identifying patriotism with only battlefield service is problematic, since a significant number of Southern-born whites, who claimed to be and were regarded as Confederates, did not engage in combat on the blood-stained battlefield. Instead, they worked in government, industry, agriculture, and elsewhere. Many Southern-born men served on the homefront to supply the battlefield and did not serve under arms. Does this failure of many to volunteer for military service indicate a widespread disloyalty among Southern-born whites? Since these comparisons between the patriotism of German-Americans and that of Anglo-Americans are not the object of this thesis, I will leave this question unanswered. Instead, I interpret patriotism towards the Confederacy as indicated not only by political statements but as exhibited by a broad range of service in supporting the Confederacy’s struggle for its existence.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 201.

In the course of my research, I ran across a significant number of patriots, traitors, and others in both immigrant and native-born groups. I am not convinced that the Confederacy's German-Americans were, as a group, less patriotic toward the Confederacy than were the Southern-born. Seeking to avoid further controversy, I do not place a value judgment upon patriotism's qualities. After all, in this as in any civil war, the Southerner who was a patriot towards the Confederacy was deemed by many to be a traitor towards the Union and vice versa.

Markedly exhibiting the patriotism of Richmond's German-Americans was their response to the Confederacy's call to arms at the start of the war. Often cited as evidence of German-American disloyalty, many of the same men, who had enrolled under Confederate arms at the start of the war, quit the regular army one year later. They returned to Richmond to join other German-Americans as workers, particularly in war industry, and as soldiers in the militia. When discussing the patriotism of these workers and part-time soldiers, I submit that many, but of course not all, of these militiamen and male and female workers were also patriots towards the Confederacy even though most of them had never experienced the fire of battle. In Richmond, patriots were found in the military and in offices, homes, factories and shops.

Identified by the native-born as members of one group, Richmond's German-Americans were held accountable for their community's patriotic fervor. After all, patriotism in the antebellum United States was defined as "the characteristic of a good citizen."

## **Historiography**

The myth of German-American disloyalty towards the Confederacy has survived to the present time. Much emphasis has been placed by historians upon the role of the foreign-born in the Northern war effort. One of the best and most recent examples is the previously mentioned work by William Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*. Studies by German-American historians have also similarly concerned themselves with the

antebellum North's German-Americans.<sup>20</sup> These Northerners were frequently the historians' ethnic contemporaries or ancestors. Few historians of German-Americans have been interested in analyzing the German-Americans of the South. One prominent exception was Andress Dorpalen, who wrote that, throughout the South, "only in Baltimore did the North have more than just a handful of sympathizers among the Germans."<sup>21</sup> Pointing out an example of the void in German-American historiography, Alexander Niven wrote in 1959 that Wilhelm Kaufmann's *Die Deutschen im Amerikanischen Bürgerkriege 1861-1865* covered the participation of German-Americans during the Civil War but "the Southern side is poorly described and represented."<sup>22</sup> The relatively few German-born men and women of the antebellum South, although they numbered in the tens of thousands, have been overwhelmed and even silenced in the historiography by their more numerous Northern brethren.

Long overlooked by academics, immigrants to the antebellum South have only recently sparked academic interest. Two of the best studies have been statewide in scope. In 1966, Terry Jordan published *German Seed in Texas Soil*. In 1987, Walter Kamphoefner completed *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri*. Both identified similarities and differences between the German-born and their Southern-born neighbors.

In their 1983 article, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves: Urban Workingmen in the Antebellum American South," Ira Berlin and Herbert Gutman issued a call to arms for historians of the South to study further the large number of non-Southern-born workers who lived in Southern cities. Berlin and Gutman brought to light slaveholders' worries: how might immigrants have affected and opposed slavery? And how might immigrants' attitudes toward slavery have influenced their loyalties toward

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<sup>20</sup> Examples are J. G. Rosengarten, *The German Soldier in the Wars of the United States* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1886) and Frederick C. Luebke, *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Andress Dorpalen, "The German Element and the Issues of the Civil War," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 29 (June 1942): 58.

<sup>22</sup> Alexander C. Niven, "German Military Literature and the Confederacy," *The German-American Review* (Feb.-Mar. 1959), 33.

the Confederacy? Previous histories, especially those on Southern urban labor and slavery, had erred in marginalizing the contributions of immigrants.<sup>23</sup>

Despite signs of interest by historians, Ella Lonn's *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (1940) remains the most comprehensive study of immigrants who lived in the Civil War South. She persevered in her work despite comments similar to the following, that was articulated by a member of her book's publishing staff: "That book can't sell and it should not."<sup>24</sup> Lonn's emphasis was mainly military, discussing immigrants' service under arms and the policy of the Confederate government regarding conscription. Contradictory, however, were Lonn's explanations of the patriotism of the German-born. She referred to the "inspiring ardor" with which all foreign-born "sprang to the defense of their states" yet, she wrote, the German-born were coerced to defend the Confederacy even though they "almost unanimously . . . preferred to remain neutral."<sup>25</sup> Indicating where her opinion of Germans lay, writing during the first year of World War II, Lonn blamed the German-born in Richmond who, "naturally, tried to leave" their newborn nation and, by doing so, caused accusations of treason to arise.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, while dated, Lonn's book remains often cited and is an excellent starting point for further study of German-Americans' patriotism towards the Confederacy.

No surprise then, given the scarcity within the historiography, that Jason Silverman was satisfied with publishing an article, in 1988, that utilized mainly only a few secondary sources to chronicle the foreign-born in the Confederacy.<sup>27</sup> Silverman also authored an entry, on the German-born in the Confederacy, in the recent

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<sup>23</sup> Ira Berlin and Herbert G. Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves: Urban Workingmen in the Antebellum American South," *American Historical Review* 88, no. 5 (1983): 1175, 1177, 1198-1200.

<sup>24</sup> Ella Lonn, "Reconciliation between the North and the South," *Journal of Southern History* 13, no. 1 (Feb. 1947): 14.

<sup>25</sup> Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (n.p.: University of North Carolina Press, 1940; reprint, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), 311, 478.

<sup>26</sup> Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 403.

<sup>27</sup> Jason H. Silverman, "Stars, Bars, and Foreigners: The Immigrant and the Making of the Confederacy," *Journal of Confederate History* I, no. 52 (1988).

*Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*. In this entry, Silverman concentrated upon the Unionism of a segment of German-Americans in Texas but devoted only cursory attention to German-Americans elsewhere.<sup>28</sup>

Like Silverman, Georgia Lee Tatum in *Disloyalty in the Confederacy* concerned herself only with those German-born who were prominent in Texas for their refusal to enter into Confederate military service. They organized, under arms, to prevent their conscription. Tatum was more justified than Silverman in limiting her coverage of German-Americans to those in Texas since her study dealt with disloyalty only and was not intended to survey one ethnic group's political sentiments in their entirety.<sup>29</sup>

Within the Confederacy, both inside and outside of Texas, the German-born were present in significant numbers. Their political sentiments spanned the wide range between disloyalty and patriotism. Unfortunately, their stories and the complexities of their political sentiments have been largely lost within Civil War historiography. Attempts to record and preserve their history in Richmond were made by Herrmann Schuricht, a German-born Richmond resident and a Confederate veteran, in *The German Element in Virginia* and much later, in 1969, by Klaus Wust in *The Virginia Germans*. These books continue to be invaluable resources, although they serve more to memorialize rather than to analyze the German-American experience in Virginia.

Returning to the broader perspective, only two years after the publication of Berlin and Gutman's article, Randall Miller asserted that the "mythical homogeneity" of whites in the antebellum South obscured "the impact of immigration on midnineteenth-century Southern society." Primarily, Miller drew attention to the actions of native-born whites as they concerned themselves with immigrants who might become "the enemy

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<sup>28</sup> Jason H. Silverman, "Germans," *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, Vol. 2, ed. Richard N. Current (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> Georgia Lee Tatum, *Disloyalty in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 45-49.

within.” In addition, he contributed a more complex view of the antebellum South’s foreign-born and claimed that they held diverse loyalties during the Civil War.<sup>30</sup>

Dennis Rousey also argued that the image of Anglo-Saxon ethnocultural purity among white Southerners served not only to symbolize their virtue as a people but also to embrace a concept of unity that never truly existed among them.<sup>31</sup> Rousey devoted much of his article to proving that there were so many “aliens in the WASP nest” of the South. Although he called for more studies into how white ethnic groups adapted to Southern society, Rousey failed to insist that historians study the diversity and disunity of the immigrant ethnic groups themselves.<sup>32</sup>

Were immigrants to the South determined to reconcile themselves with the society in which they lived? Or, were the foreign-born, as a group or individually, aliens within this slave-based society and culture? A related question to ask with regard to the Civil War is this: Did immigrants to the South support their new nation of residence—the Confederacy?

Most recently, Gregg Kimball, in his dissertation “Place and Perception: Richmond in Late Antebellum America,” answered this last question with a resounding no. In a chapter with the suggestive title “‘Aliens,’ Yankees, and Unionists in Divided Richmond,” Kimball admitted that the German-born at the start of the war “responded enthusiastically to the call for troops” but, by war’s middle and end, they had only “flagging interest in the war.”<sup>33</sup> Since they “were only loosely tied to the southern economy,” their patriotism towards the Confederacy was only “tenuous at best.”<sup>34</sup> For

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<sup>30</sup> Randall M. Miller, “The Enemy Within: Some Effects of Foreign Immigrants on Antebellum Southern Cities,” *Southern Studies* 24, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 52-53.

<sup>31</sup> Dennis C. Rousey, “Aliens in the WASP Nest: Ethnocultural Diversity in the Antebellum Urban South,” *Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (June 1992): 152.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>33</sup> Gregg David Kimball, “Place and Perception: Richmond in Late Antebellum America” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1997), 337, 347.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

Kimball, that many among the German-born became disenchanted with the Confederacy was more important than describing and characterizing the diverse sympathies within Richmond's German-American community. After all, his dissertation was intended to emphasize the clash of two worlds. One world was the urban environment typical of the North and the other the agricultural landscape more characteristic of the South. Though this aspect of Kimball's thesis is similar to the argument pursued by Randall Miller, one major difference is evident. Kimball portrayed the German-American community as monolithic, while Miller advocated a more complex view.

In 1993, Melvin Johnson in his thesis concluded that many in Texas's German-born community were, prior to the start of the war, assimilating into Southern society. Many accepted Southern institutions and the doctrine of state's rights. Meanwhile, a minority of other German-Americans aggressively pursued liberal agendas. Johnson argued that some among Texas's German-American community were Confederate sympathizers, others were Unionists, and still another group sought to avoid involvement with either side. Unsympathetic to the diversity of German-Americans were Anglo-Americans. Instead of discriminating among German-Americans and confronting their divided political sentiments, Anglo-American Confederate sympathizers, especially the nativists among them, suspected German-Americans to be a monolithic group and disloyal toward the Confederacy.<sup>35</sup>

In agreement with Johnson's work, I also find that members of the German-American community held diverse political sentiments. Not united, German-Americans did not believe in one worldview. This insight is derived, to some extent, by studying the German-American community within the context of the broader community of Richmond. By not treating the broader community as the whole and its ethnic sub-communities as its indivisible parts, I interpret the patriotism of Richmond's German-Americans community differently than other historians who have refrained from dividing

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<sup>35</sup> Melvin C. Johnson, "A New Perspective for the Antebellum and Civil War Texas German Community" (M.A. thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 1993), abstract.

groups along more than one line. By analyzing people from the bottom up, instead of the top down, the complexities and diversities among people are revealed.

Thus, though most of the German-Americans who came to Richmond were seeking economic opportunities, they were not of one political mind and did not live in united harmony with one another. They had recognized, before their immigration, the unique nature of Southern society and pursued a diversity of strategies to adapt to it.

Recently, graduate students have written theses that described the German-American community of Richmond during the periods shortly before and immediately after the Civil War.<sup>36</sup> My thesis builds upon these two works while also dealing with a question that has new meaning as a result of current ethnic conflicts: Why were Richmond's German-Americans patriotic or disloyal toward their new nation?

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<sup>36</sup> See Michael Everette Bell, "The German Immigrant Community of Richmond, Virginia: 1848-1852" (M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1990) and Rudolph H. Bunzl, "Immigrants in Richmond after the Civil War: 1865-1880" (M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1994).

## **Prologue:**

### **Richmond on War's Eve**

On the eve of the Civil War, Richmond was one of the largest cities in the United States and growing rapidly. Europeans, chiefly Irish and German, but also those from many other lands, had immigrated to Richmond. Attracted to a political and economic hub for the state of Virginia and the south Atlantic region, immigrants also came due to the expansion in trade and industry in the Atlantic market economy. Lines of transportation and communication, along which flowed trade, immigrants, and capital, had long connected the city; and the freight which new rail lines carried was increasing.

The concept of the city as a nexus connecting its residents and economy with the region, nation, and world outside of it and as a mixing bowl of diverse people and ideas is essential to my thesis. David Goldfield, in his *Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism: Virginia, 1847-1861*, astutely observed that to leading Southerners of the time, cities were important for Southern prosperity and independence. Goldfield also noted that many historians have brushed aside the importance of the South's rapidly growing cities to its economic strength and ethnic character and, instead, have focused upon the differences between South and North to explain the tensions that led to the Civil War. These historians interpreted the war as between an agrarian Southern region and an industrial Northern one. They treated cities in the South as exceptions upon the Southern landscape, bastions of urban values in an agrarian land. Rather, Goldfield argued, city supported country in the South as country supported city, in both economic and cultural terms. The urban environment encouraged the growth of the rural economy as much as the rural landscape supplied the urban economy with raw materials. In the North, a similar phenomenon occurred. Injected into this dynamic in large numbers in the antebellum era, the foreign-born increased as a proportion of the populations of both North and South and, as they did so, fueled the commercial and industrial development of these regions. Though immigrants were a significant labor resource to the Southern

urban economy, the foreign-born of the South were, on an absolute and relative basis, much fewer than those in the North. However, their smaller numbers belied their importance to the South. Nativists attacked the foreign-born because the foreign-born represented a challenge to the ethnic status quo and to their local, state, and national agendas. By targeting the foreign-born, Southern nativists of both city and country built, for the white native-born of the South, their own imagined community. Hence, in opposition to the claims of many other historians, Goldfield and I both argue that North and South, on the eve of the Civil War, were regions that were becoming more alike in socio-economic terms even as their ethnic characteristics, their senses of peoplehood, were becoming increasingly incompatible.<sup>1</sup>

In determining where immigrants settled in the United States, interpersonal chains of communication, invitations from acquaintances, and job offers were critical. Other strong factors included guidance offered by religious leaders in Germany and by the many propaganda pamphlets intended for the prospective emigrant to the United States.<sup>2</sup> Once immigrants had arrived in the United States, their mobility often did not end at their initial destinations. Before migrating to Richmond, many had lived, for example, for a few years in the port city of Baltimore, which hosted an economically and socially thriving German-born community even larger than that of Richmond, or had moved from one of the even larger port cities to the north.

Richmond by 1860 had become a bustling commercial and industrial city, which held economic opportunities that were quite attractive to migrants and immigrants. Land and water transport brought German-Americans and Germans by the scores throughout the late antebellum era. Awaiting them was a native-born Anglo-American population that deeply felt this onslaught of foreign-born. The business community was especially sensitive. Capital had long flowed out of the city and the surrounding region and into the

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<sup>1</sup> David R. Goldfield, *Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism: Virginia, 1847-1861* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), xxv-xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Luebke, *Germans in the New World*, 164-65.

accounts of Northern or European merchants, including the Germans among them. The higher rates of interest that capital fetched in the North, in commercial and industrial projects, was one reason for this outflow. Another was that many of Richmond's commercial enterprises were owned by outsiders, who had little interest in the welfare of the city. Also of concern to many Richmond residents was that imports from the North, whether they were Northern manufactures or goods imported from Europe via Northern ports, were believed to be hindering Richmond's economic development, and hobbling its capital base.<sup>3</sup>

Side by side with trade goods, immigrants journeyed to Richmond along growing transportation arteries: railroads, canals, and roads. The several hundred mile-long James River and Kanawha Canal, built in large part by German immigrants brought to Virginia in the 1830s for its construction, lowered the cost of transportation to Richmond and boosted Richmond's commercial vitality. Iron foundries, paper factories, and flourmills became established along the city's canal and riverfront.<sup>4</sup> Railroads soon joined the canal, though they did not make the canal obsolete. By 1860, five railroads ran through Richmond.<sup>5</sup> They, and the ships that traveled along the James River from the Chesapeake Bay, more efficiently connected Richmond to the north, south, and west, as well as to Europe. Additionally, financial capital, transmitted through the heavy volume of mail as well as messages sent via telegraph, circulated into and out of the city.

Though Richmond's economy was based firmly upon the produce of the hinterland, Richmond was more than a waystation and a processing center for agricultural commodities. It had also developed a base of heavy industry, artisan shops, and retail and financial trade that served both the needs of the city's residents and those of the surrounding region. South and west of Capitol Square lay the financial and commercial

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days* (Richmond: West & Johnston, 1860; reprint, Richmond: Dietz Press, 1946), 40-41, 44.

<sup>4</sup> Kimball, "Place and Perception," 44.

<sup>5</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 306.

district.<sup>6</sup> Along Main Street, twenty-one banks serviced the financial needs of the city's businesses and residents. Northern and European banks handled much of the financial business in the city. Likewise, continuing through the end of the antebellum era, insurance agents from Northern and British companies plied their business in Richmond. In the late eighteenth century, a German-American had founded the first Virginia-based insurance company, the Mutual Assurance Society. Even by the eve of the Civil War, the establishment of this firm was still regarded as a victory by those who believed that more of Richmond's businesses should be owned by Virginia's residents.<sup>7</sup>

Shops, theaters, drinking establishments, and hotels lined Richmond's downtown streets. In particular, along Grace and Franklin streets, as well as Main, were located the city's dry goods and other retail shops. To stock these shops, the city relied mainly upon Northern factories and Northern importers. The majority of the United States' imported goods entered through New York, as did the greatest number of immigrants. At the same time, as immigrants filtered south toward Richmond, so also did European manufactured goods.<sup>8</sup> Helping to draw them southward, Richmond's businessmen and women often traveled to the North. One German-born resident recalled going to New York to buy stock for his saloon.<sup>9</sup>

Tobacco was the primary product processed in and distributed through Richmond. It was exported to both the North and Europe. The volume of the tobacco trade between Richmond and Germany explained the half dozen or more ships that could be found anchored in the James River at any one time. They took on board tobacco hogsheads destined for Bremen and Hamburg. While Richmond's own German tobacco houses, E. W. de Voss & Co. and F. W. Hanewinkel & Co., handled the trade for the Austro-

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<sup>6</sup> Kimball, "Place and Perception," 63.

<sup>7</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond in By-Gone Days*, 320-21.

<sup>8</sup> Kimball, "Place and Perception," 63, 65 and Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), xxiii.

<sup>9</sup> John Gottfried Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," c. 1870-80, trans. Ida Windmueller, 119-20, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va..

Hungarian government and D. von Groening supplied the French government, several more traders operating out of other Virginia and European cities exported tobacco from Richmond.<sup>10</sup>

More than fifty tobacco warehouses lined the industrial district. Inside, nearly four thousand workers, mostly male slaves, processed tobacco each day.<sup>11</sup> Still, indicating that slave labor was valued more highly elsewhere, on a relative basis, Richmond also had a busy slave market from where slaves were sold to the expanding Southwest, among other places.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, slaves in Richmond were employed by the thousands, often side by side with free workers, as whites and blacks, free and slave, manned the machinery of Richmond's burgeoning economy. Coal and iron ore were brought to the massive Tredegar Iron Works as well as to the city's other iron foundries and used to produce railroad locomotives, farm implements, and industrial equipment. To satisfy the thirst of many of the ironworkers and others whose tastes accompanied them to Richmond from abroad, Richmond supported one wheat beer and two lager beer breweries. Apart from the tobacco warehouses, iron foundries, paper factories, flourmills, and breweries, other enterprises flourished in Richmond on a smaller scale. Ranging from shoemaking to building construction, from barrel making to distilling, from leatherwork to printing, no one enterprise composed more than a small percentage of the economy individually. Altogether, though, these small businesses contributed significantly to the city's economic vitality.<sup>13</sup>

In Richmond, opportunities awaited both laborers seeking work and entrepreneurs pursuing profits. Free workers, both native and foreign-born, often found jobs through

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<sup>10</sup> Herrmann Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II (Baltimore: n.p., 1900; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977), 50 and D. von Groening, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 200, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, Mass.

<sup>11</sup> Kimball, "Place and Perception," 51.

<sup>12</sup> Claudia Dale Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South, 1820-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 123.

the recommendations of family or personal acquaintances. Hiring agents found situations for slaves whose labor was not required in their masters' households or businesses.<sup>14</sup> Often though, slaves were permitted to seek out their own employment.<sup>15</sup> Thus, slaves competed with free workers, black and white, for work in antebellum Richmond, a city with an ever-increasing demand for labor. To supply this demand, immigrants moved to Richmond in great numbers.

The employment of workers, both free and slave, was steadily rising. In Henrico County, where Richmond accounted for almost all the manufacturing establishments, the number of workers engaged in manufacturing increased 73% in the 1850s, from 4,377 to 7,589. Workers in industry accounted for approximately 10% of the county's population in 1850 and an even greater 12% in 1860.<sup>16</sup> Due to its thriving industrial base, Richmond had a tight labor market and therefore used slave labor to a greater extent in manufacturing than did other Southern cities. On the eve of the Civil War, as slave labor costs were climbing higher relative to free labor, Richmond's manufacturers wanted to benefit from decreased labor costs as immigrants poured into Richmond.<sup>17</sup>

While workers composed a majority of the city's population, they did not make up the city's leadership in nearly the same proportion. Merchants, industrialists, bankers, and professionals led the city. Overwhelmingly, Virginia-born, wealthy slaveholders dominated the political scene.<sup>18</sup> Predictably then, Richmond was a politically conservative city.

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<sup>13</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Manufactures of the United States in 1860* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865), 616-17 and Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 51.

<sup>14</sup> Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 42.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>16</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Statistical View of the United States* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854), 320, 325 and Superintendent of the Census, *Manufactures of the United States in 1860*, 616-17.

<sup>17</sup> Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South*, 122.

<sup>18</sup> Goldfield, *Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism*, 34-36, 38-39, 41.

Four English language newspapers, and one German, dominated the city's readers: the *Dispatch*, *Enquirer*, *Whig*, *Examiner*, and *Anzeiger*. While the *Dispatch* and especially the *Enquirer* tended to be Democratic, the *Whig* had supported, in the 1850s, the Whig and later the nativist American parties. The *Examiner* was also biased towards nativism.<sup>19</sup>

The increasing foreign-born population posed a threat to the city's native-born. In fact, while they tended to win much of the rest of the state, the Democrats in Richmond were usually defeated by the adherents of the Whig and American parties, which included the nativist so-called "Know Nothings."<sup>20</sup> In both Richmond and elsewhere, the Whig party was closely identified with the "Know Nothings," who were called by one German-American in Missouri, as late as 1860, "die Feinde der Ausländer" (enemies of foreigners).<sup>21</sup> It was a defeat for the foreign-born that, at the height of the nativist crisis in Richmond in 1855, voters chose the Know Nothing candidate Thomas Flournoy for governor by a majority of almost one thousand votes. Though Flournoy took the city, Democrat Henry Wise won the state.<sup>22</sup> In the city elections the month before, Know Nothing candidates won by a better than 2:1 margin. In the city's Jefferson ward, German-born Augustus Bodecker ran for city alderman with Democratic support but lost by an even greater 3:1 ratio, similar to that of other Democratic candidates in the eastern Jefferson and central Madison wards. Not surprisingly, in the more German-American western Monroe ward, Democrats lost to Know Nothing candidates by a lesser ratio of 2:1.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1971), 18.

<sup>20</sup> *Richmond Whig*, 7 Apr. 1855.

<sup>21</sup> Johann Bauer, Sand Hill, Mo., to parents, brothers, and sisters, 20 May 1860, in *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home*, trans. Susan Carter Vogel, ed. Walter D. Kamphoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, and Ulrike Sommer, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 159.

<sup>22</sup> *Whig*, 29 May 1855.

<sup>23</sup> *Richmond Enquirer*, 6 April 1855.

Such foreign influence in Richmond was becoming increasingly feared by the city's nativists. In 1860, one native-born resident articulated such feelings, though in a generally favorable manner:

Lager has raised its head and a strong one it is, as are those of its countrymen. Lager has gone ahead of all other beverages. The number of "Saloons" that bear its name, is scarcely exceeded by that of clothing-shops, kept also by Germans. They are a valuable acquisition to our city, in many useful trades. They are also our gayest citizens, and enjoy their hours of relaxation. They have their Musical and Turner's Societies, their private theatres, their "Volks Garten," and support two or three newspapers, and though last, not least, Churches of different denominations.

This is a new and pleasant phase in the aspect of our city. More German names than any other appear over the doors in some parts of it, and to judge by the conversation heard in the streets, one might be at a loss to know whether German or English is the language of the country.<sup>24</sup>

Richmond's German-American drinking establishments ranged from the city's smallest to among its largest. These included Louis Rueger's Lafayette Saloon, August Schad's Hall, and Simon Steinlein's Monticello Hall.<sup>25</sup> German-Americans, by their patronage of these establishments, elevated their owners to rank among the German-American community's leaders. Both owners and patrons were well-known by Richmond's native-born residents as part of "a joyous race."<sup>26</sup>

The economic, social, cultural, and political prominence of immigrants within Richmond rose rapidly during the antebellum era. In Capitol Square in the 1850s, and along the other streets where the city's militia companies held their many parades,

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<sup>24</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 246.

<sup>25</sup> Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville, Va.: The University Press of Virginia, 1969), 207.

<sup>26</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 223.

German and Irish-American militia companies often publicized their groups' positive contributions to the City of Richmond.<sup>27</sup>

Richmond by 1860 had become a city that was effectively integrated within the greater national and Atlantic economies. People, products, capital, commerce, and cultural influences had created Richmond's growth, making it a place to find work and establish businesses, making it an attractive destination for thousands of immigrants during the antebellum years.

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<sup>27</sup> Louis H. Manarin and Lee A. Wallace, Jr., *Richmond Volunteers: The Volunteer Companies of the City of Richmond and Henrico County, Virginia, 1861-1865* (Richmond, Va.: Westover Press, 1969), 194 and Musician's diary, 28 April 1856, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

## Chapter I

### Coming to Richmond

#### Leaving the Old World

Richmond in 1860 had one of the largest concentrations of foreigners out of all of the South's cities and rivaled Northern cities as well. According to one standard, Richmond was regarded as relatively more attractive for the German-born than were the largest cities of the North. The German-born made up a larger percentage of the foreign-born in Richmond than they did in New York and Philadelphia. Of course, the cities of the Midwest were the most attractive of all cities for the German-born. St. Louis, Chicago, Louisville, and Cincinnati, among others, all counted the German-born as the most numerous foreign-born segment of their populations. In addition, Richmond, out of all the major Southern cities in the eleven seceded states, had the largest portion of German-born as a percentage of its foreign-born population. A substantial 33% of Richmond's foreign-born was German-born. Its German-born population increased in the 1850s, at an even faster rate than the heavily German-American slave cities of Baltimore and New Orleans, and rivaled the growth rate of the German-born in St. Louis (see table 1).<sup>1</sup> Demographically, Richmond was an attractive destination for the German-born. Immigrants were pouring into the country, and changing the ethnic character of the nation. To account for why the German-born came to the South and to illustrate that which made the South's German-born similar and different from their ethnic counterparts in the North, the reasons behind their immigration must be explained.

Increasingly, during the antebellum era, immigrant passenger ships from Germany, mainly from Bremen and Hamburg, docked in American Atlantic and Gulf coast ports. For the overwhelming majority of German immigrants, New York was their

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<sup>1</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxxi-xxxii, 611, 614-15; Superintendent of the Census, *Statistical View of the United States*, 399.

port of entry. Other ports of arrival included, in order of importance, New Orleans, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Galveston (Texas), and Charleston.<sup>2</sup>

Many German immigrants and German-Americans therefore came to Richmond after first stopping in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans, though some traveled directly to Richmond or emigrated via the ports of Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia. While Norfolk and Portsmouth, which received only a few to a few hundred immigrants per year through the antebellum era, were minor ports of immigration; still, their proximity made both port cities valuable for the German-born who settled in Richmond.<sup>3</sup>

German-born immigrants came to the United States for several reasons, which can be divided into push and pull factors. Push factors were those conditions in their countries of departure that made continued residence relatively undesirable and contributed to immigrants' departures. Their migration was also stimulated by pull factors, attractive conditions perceived to exist in the United States. In the case of German emigration to the United States, both push and pull factors were important. Push factors included poor crop yields, rising food prices, declining wages, escalating rents, the growing scale of production, and the 1848 revolutions. Pull factors included encouraging personal correspondence between immigrants to the United States and those Germans who remained behind, available land in the American states beyond the Mississippi, and the reputation of the United States for political freedom and economic prosperity, as well as its absence of a nobility and church aristocracy. German immigrants included professionals, merchants, artisans, laborers, peasants, and others. Both rural and urban areas in Germany were drained as a result of emigration.

Several of the German states regulated emigration, permitting only those who held a certain minimum wealth level to depart. Though such regulation was intended to

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<sup>2</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxiii.

prevent mass emigration, it also had the effect of further discouraging the poorest Germans, barely able to pay the costs of passage, from emigrating to the United States. Therefore, Germans, on average, emigrated with at least enough money to afford some minimal comforts upon their arrival and, in a relatively small number of cases, with capital with which to establish businesses. In general, Germans emigrated to the United States without truly substantial financial resources, but they were not destitute.<sup>4</sup>

Further contributing to emigration, German peasants, laborers, and workers, rural and urban, were hurt by the poor harvests, of the late 1840s and early 1850s, in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Making up half of all German immigrants to the United States in the antebellum era, agricultural laborers were under great economic pressure to emigrate and arrived in larger numbers than peasants. Less tied to the land than peasants, agricultural laborers earned their living in cash wages. In the early nineteenth century, laborers' future in Germany appeared bleak. With prices to purchase or rent land increasing due to rural overpopulation, they grew less able to own or rent their own fields.<sup>5</sup> These laborers viewed the United States as a vast land reservoir, where good land for farming could be purchased cheaply.<sup>6</sup>

Craftsmen and artisans joined the agricultural workers who sailed from German ports. Significantly, the number of master artisans was holding steady while the number of apprentices and journeymen was skyrocketing. Those masters who operated on a larger scale, as well as large merchants, increasingly dominated their smaller competitors. An excess supply of artisans glutted the German labor market. Particularly following the unsuccessful 1848 revolutions, in which skilled urban craftsmen constituted

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<sup>3</sup> Herrmann Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 29; U. S. Census manuscripts, City of Richmond, 1860; and William J. Bromwell, *History of Immigration to the United States* (New York: Redfield, 1856; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 21, 137, 165.

<sup>4</sup> Uwe Reich, "Emigration from Regierungsbezirk Frankfurt Oder, 1815-1893," in *People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820-1930*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Jörg Nagler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 83 and Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 40-50.

<sup>5</sup> Uwe Reich, "Emigration from Regierungsbezirk Frankfurt Oder," 83, 86-88, 99.

<sup>6</sup> Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 42.

approximately two-thirds of the rebelling population, skilled artisans departed the Fatherland in great numbers and constituted approximately one-fifth of German emigrants.<sup>7</sup>

Both rural and urban immigrants came to the United States not simply because of push factors but also due to pull factors. They knew about the economic opportunity that awaited them because they had been enticed, persuaded, and invited by letters that their relatives, friends, and former neighbors, who preceded them, had sent back to Germany. Such so-called “chain migration” caused many German-American communities to be populated mostly by former residents of a single German village or region.<sup>8</sup> Much the same phenomenon occurred in Richmond. Many came from Hesse and Saxony, and particularly from the city of Marburg in Hesse. One of the other reasons for this concentration of Saxons was that the Richmond-based Immigration Society, in conjunction with the Emigration Society of Meissen, Saxony, published a pamphlet in 1849 to entice emigrants to settle in western Virginia. Included in the pamphlet was a description of Richmond and what it touted as the city’s fifty-one hundred Germans, likely an overstated number.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the city’s German-American population was not simply composed of those from Hesse and Saxony but was diverse.<sup>10</sup> Richmond was in this way similar to nearby Baltimore. Baltimore also had a relatively large population of immigrants from Hesse. They composed 20% of its German-born population, which also included immigrants from the many other regions of German-speaking Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Chains of communication also transmitted word of poor social and economic conditions in the United States. During favorable economic conditions in 1855,

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<sup>7</sup> Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 31-32, 36 and Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 104-5.

<sup>9</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 29, 56.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census manuscripts, City of Richmond, 1860.

<sup>11</sup> A breakdown of immigrants’ German countries of origin was not compiled for Richmond, as was done for Baltimore. Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860*, 611.

decreased immigration statistics were evidence that economic forces did not solely determine migration. Instead, another reason must explain this decrease in immigration. Historian Walter Kamphoefner attributed the drop to the peaking of the nativist movement in the United States.<sup>12</sup> When prospective emigrants heard that their presence would be resented by so many in the United States and in such an outspoken manner, they did not migrate to the United States.<sup>13</sup> Germans realized that, as targets of the nativists, their lives would be made uncomfortable and their employment prospects clouded. By 1857, after nativism had declined, immigration returned once again to its previously high level.<sup>14</sup> Shortly thereafter, the economic difficulties that followed the Panic of 1857 led to another decrease in German immigration.<sup>15</sup>

Even though nativism discouraged immigration, the United States had a reputation among Germans for political freedom and economic prosperity, both of which pulled Germans to America.<sup>16</sup> Emigration to the United States was an attractive option for those seeking freedom from German governments' oppression, of which conscription was a particularly loathsome example. In addition, many thought that compulsory taxes and other payments to government, church, and lord were either absent or less burdensome in the United States. Political representation and land reform were also widely desired by Germans, and many believed that these demands could be satisfied in the United States.<sup>17</sup> Once in Richmond, therefore, the German-born were quite active when they believed that their rights had been compromised.

Despite the pull that the United States exerted upon those seeking political freedoms and economic reforms in Germany, it was only a segment of German

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<sup>12</sup> Walter D. Kamphoefner, "German Emigration Research, North, South, and East: Findings, Methods, and Open Questions" in *People in Transit*, Hoerder and Nagler, 27-28.

<sup>13</sup> Philip Schaff, *A Sketch of the Political, Social, and Religious Character of the United States of North America* (New York: C. Scribner, 1855), 93.

<sup>14</sup> Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 54-55.

<sup>15</sup> Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 54-55.

<sup>16</sup> Schaff, *The Political, Social, and Religious Character of the United States*, viii.

<sup>17</sup> Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 62.

immigrants who believed in notions truly radical to Americans. Their outspokenness, and the sensitivity of Anglo-Americans to their issues, made the number of radical German-born in the United States appear larger than it actually was. Certainly, significant numbers of so-called Forty-Eighters, radical refugees from the German revolutions of 1848, agitated to affect change in American society, but their initiatives were not focused and were sometimes at odds with one another. In fact, they were greatly divided. Carol Poore divides Forty-Eighters into four groups: (1) radicals who wanted to extend American democratic institutions while remaining free of socialism; (2) supporters of the Free Soil movement and land reform; (3) utopian communists who agitated for cooperatives, frequently in the form of organized labor; and, (4) socialists who mobilized labor into a political force for change on a grand scale. Among the German-born in the United States, though, those dedicated to the radical principles of the Forty-Eighters comprised only a minority. German-American conservatives, mostly the Catholic and Lutheran clergy, economically successful businessmen and professionals, and the previous immigrant generation (including the so-called Dreissigers—those refugees from the 1830s revolutions in Germany), had a greater interest in maintaining the status quo and therefore opposed the influence of Forty-Eighters in the German-American community.<sup>18</sup>

Few Forty-Eighters came to Richmond. In 1850, one Mr. Steinmetz visited Richmond and organized the short-lived socialist Freie Gemeinde (Free-thinking Society) but attracted only twenty-two in membership. The organization passed support for abolitionist Cassius M. Clay's plan for the federal emancipation of slaves. It also resolved several issues of special concern to German-Americans, including German education and language instruction, and to workers, including a reduction in the working day, creditor protection, and socialist reforms. Due to the more radical of these

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<sup>18</sup> Carol Poore, "Changing Visions of the Future: Radical Forty-Eighers Encounter American," in *German Forty-Eighters in the United States*, ed. Charlotte L. Brancaforte (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 105 and Bruce Levine, "Immigrants, Class, and Politics: German-American Working People and the Fight Against Slavery," in *German Forty-Eighters in the United States*, Brancaforte, 130.

resolutions, Steinmetz was threatened with personal harm and soon departed the city. Without its leader, the Free-thinking Society disassembled shortly thereafter.<sup>19</sup> Ironically, two of Richmond's residents who had been most outspoken in the revolutions of 1848 were college professor William Flegenheimer and teacher and architect Oswald Heinrich. Neither of these men was radical politically once settled in Richmond. Flegenheimer penned Virginia's Ordinance of Secession in 1861.<sup>20</sup> Another German revolutionary, Reverend Karl Minnigerode, of Richmond's Episcopalian St. Paul's Church, had been imprisoned in Germany for several years for inciting revolutionary activity in the 1830s.<sup>21</sup> By the 1860s, though, he ministered on many occasions to President Jefferson Davis. At the same time, Minnigerode was ostracized by many of Richmond's German-Americans, who thought of Episcopalians as religiously intolerant.<sup>22</sup>

Most different from any of the previous migrations of Germans who came to America was that in the nineteenth century most Germans, excluding German Jews, did not migrate to escape religious persecution. Many only wanted to avoid religious obligations and did not attend church regularly. Others were agnostic or atheist.<sup>23</sup> In Texas in the early 1850s, Frederick Law Olmsted met one of these non-churchgoing German-born, who explained to him that among the reasons for his leaving Germany was to escape the power of the established church.<sup>24</sup> Many other German-born immigrants were similarly satisfied that they had escaped the forces of oppression upon their emigration and, in the United States, enjoyed their freedom from the influence of church and state. Their satisfaction with the state of affairs in the United States discouraged

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<sup>19</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 34-36.

<sup>20</sup> Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 210.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>22</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 42.

<sup>23</sup> Schaff, *The Political, Social, and Religious Character of the United States*, 176.

<sup>24</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Slave States*, ed. Harvey Wish (reprint, New York: Capricorn Books, 1959), 129.

them from agitating politically for radical change. Because they perceived the United States as a place where individual freedoms were guaranteed, many Germans emigrated to the United States, to both North and South.

### **Moving South**

Immigrants came to both newly settled lands and urban areas in the United States. The South during the antebellum era, because it had insufficient open land, slavery, and smaller cities, failed to attract immigrants in the same numbers as the North did. Nevertheless, Germans and German-Americans did come by the thousands to Southern cities and the southwestern states of Missouri and Texas.

In many of the Southern states, the census figures of 1860 hide the importance of immigrants to urban life. While Virginia's 35,058 foreign-born represented only fractionally more than 2% of its residents, the foreign-born as a percentage of the white population was 20% in Richmond.<sup>25</sup> Other Virginia cities reported, on average, the same figures: 20% of the free population of urban Virginia was foreign-born, compared to only 2% of rural Virginia. In many other Southern states, the urban/rural balance was similarly skewed (see table 2). In all of the South's cities, German-Americans resided by the hundreds, even thousands.<sup>26</sup> In the coming Civil War, the resources that the Confederacy drew from its cities were to a great extent the contributions of its foreign-born population.

Labor, both slave and free, was a critical resource to the Southern economy. Slave labor was often a substitute for free labor. In the urban South, though, the demand for both often expanded simultaneously since free labor was more frequently used in skilled work and slaves mostly labored in unskilled work. In many cases, free and slave labor worked side by side. Occupational overlap between the two groups was significant,

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<sup>25</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxix.

especially in Richmond where a minority of slaves worked more highly skilled jobs than slaves in other Southern cities.<sup>27</sup> The demand for skilled labor was largely satisfied by non-Southern-born workers' migration to the South. The influx of Northern and foreign-born workers into Southern cities, beginning largely in the 1840s, was a major force in dampening the relative price of free labor. This decline in the relative price of free labor, compared to slave labor, consequently dampened the demand for slaves and encouraged the sale and transportation of Richmond's slaves to the states toward the southwest.<sup>28</sup> In Richmond, in the antebellum era, German-Americans and slaves were inexorably linked. German-Americans did not somehow exist on the fringes of Richmond's slave-based economy. They competed within it on a daily basis, and some even supported it.

### **German-Americans, Blacks, and Slavery**

The abolitionist Frederick Douglass exaggerated for effect when he declared, "A German has only to be a German to be utterly opposed to slavery. In feeling, as well as in conviction and principle, they are anti-slavery."<sup>29</sup> While many German-born immigrants regarded slavery as repulsive, many also had no sympathy for blacks. Their views of the institution depended upon individual intellectual outlook and socio-economic condition. Throughout the South, German-born immigrants successfully competed with slaves in the labor market. That is not to claim that conflicts did not exist between free and slave labor. Some German-Americans participated in protests, along with Anglo-Americans, over the employment of slaves. A few German-Americans viewed slavery as a means to get rich and embraced their ownership rights. Others regarded the institution as reprehensible solely on humanitarian grounds. Some feared

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<sup>26</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Statistics of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866), lviii.

<sup>27</sup> Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South*, 114, 123.

<sup>28</sup> Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South*, 123.

<sup>29</sup> Frederick Douglass, "Adopted Citizens and Slavery," *Douglass's Monthly*, August 1859; quoted in Levine, "Immigrants, Class, and Politics," 130-1.

slavery might one day expand to enslave them; they thought that if slavery were ever to spread beyond its racial boundaries, immigrants would be the most vulnerable victims. In these respects, the German-American community of Richmond was divided over the issue of slavery. As commonly depicted, simply because few of Richmond's German-Americans supported a slaveholders' property rights did not cause the German-American community to become disloyal towards the Confederacy. Slavery, though affecting German-Americans significantly, was a less than deciding factor in determining their patriotism.

Before they had migrated to the South, German-Americans knew that they would be living among free blacks and slaves.<sup>30</sup> One German emigrant was warned, as he was waiting for his ship in Bremen, Germany, that slaves were sold in the United States "like cattle." Nonetheless, this man still emigrated to the South.<sup>31</sup>

German-born immigrants in Richmond aggressively upheld their rights, to avoid slipping towards enslavement. In Germany, even before the 1848 revolutions, these rural laborers and urban workers had agitated for their rights. In the American South, slaves could not. In pre-1848 Prussia, before feudalism was abolished, the noble Junker remained as the lord of his estate. The Junker was a holdover from the feudal system that had previously encompassed Germany. While he had considerable, if not total, influence over the lives of the laborers that relied upon his land, he was not an owner of people. He owned the land that they farmed and had the right to administer those who lived upon his territory. In the American South, the slaveholder derived his power over the lives of his labor through his direct ownership position as master of them.<sup>32</sup> The idea that one could own other persons, and therefore deprive them entirely of their rights, was foreign to the German-born. In addition, the continual emphasis that some German-Americans in

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<sup>30</sup> Martin Weitz, Rockville, Conn., letter to father, brother, sister-in-law, and children, 13 Nov. 1856, in *News from the Land of Freedom*, ed. Kamphoefner, Helbich, and Sommer, 100, 356-57;

<sup>31</sup> John Gottfried Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 65.

<sup>32</sup> Shearer Davis Bowman, "Antebellum Planters and Vormärz Junkers in Comparative Perspective," *American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (October 1980): 787.

Richmond placed upon their own rights coincided with the desire of many German-Americans to have slavery abolished.<sup>33</sup> Though they might have preferred abolition, most German-Americans avoided attacking the institution that was so important to their powerful Anglo-American neighbors.

The economic advantages of free labor were explored by Northern anti-slavery advocate Frederick Law Olmsted, during his tour of the South shortly before the war. In his travel accounts, he recalled discussions that he had with one Virginia farmer who used only free labor. Although this farmer stated that he opposed slavery on humanitarian grounds, he also claimed that, due to the increase in the price of slaves in the 1850s, the cost of free labor had become less than that of slave labor. Free labor, he noted, worked harder and more efficiently than slave labor. Though he hired mostly native-born labor, whites and free blacks, the German and the Irish-born also composed a significant portion of his labor pool. The cost of slaves, this man told Olmsted, was no different from that of free labor. The employer had to pay for boarding both free laborer and slave, but the master of slaves was additionally responsible for providing clothing, absorbing damage caused by slaves without being able to deduct losses from wages, and enduring slaves' sicknesses and absences.<sup>34</sup> Another cost not mentioned by this Virginia farmer was the profit that a slaveholders' investment would have earned had it not been invested in slaves. These were significant costs that the employer of free labor did not bear. In Richmond, as in rural Virginia, slaves were also not purchased or rented cheaply. The city's increasing immigrant population made free labor relative quite competitive with slave labor.

In Richmond, immigrant workers worked in tension with slave labor. Workers resented the encroachment of slaves into skilled occupational classes that they claimed as available for free labor only. In Richmond, in 1857, the city's mechanics resolved to restrict slaves to unskilled jobs. The city's political and economic leaders refused to

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<sup>33</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 70, 137.

<sup>34</sup> Olmsted, *The Slave States*, 79, 82-83.

compromise the rights of slaveholders.<sup>35</sup> Voluntarily, though surely under the pressure of free white workers, manufacturers in Richmond had already excluded blacks entirely from the skilled occupations of machinist, iron molder, tinsmith, and cabinetmaker.<sup>36</sup> This certainly pleased many white workers, including the German-Americans among them. In addition, German-born immigrants were pleased that black slavery elevated them from having to labor in the most menial jobs.<sup>37</sup> In 1860, nine out of ten of Richmond's German-American workingmen practiced skilled trades.<sup>38</sup>

The 1857 workers' protest was but a shadow of a costlier one in 1847, when the white workers of the Tredegar and Armory Iron Works went on strike, demanding not only higher wages but also that black workers be prevented from working certain jobs. Many German-Americans were certainly among the strikers. Most Tredegar workers were born outside of Virginia, and were the Northern, Irish, and German-born. A rumor, which the workers refuted, swept the city that they might storm the Iron Works over their complaints. In reaction, Tredegar's senior partner, Joseph R. Anderson, denying rumors that he planned to move blacks into those jobs cited by the workers, fired all the strikers. In essence, Anderson discriminated between his right to employ the labor of his choice and his practice of restricting black labor to less skilled jobs. Thus, in breaking the strike, Anderson both calmed white workers' unrest and retained his prerogatives as an employer. Most of the city's leaders supported him. One newspaper editor stated that if the strike "be sanctioned, it will render slave property utterly valueless, and place employers in the power of those employed." The strike's significance was not only limited to Tredegar's operations but also struck at the heart of the slave system. Another editor wrote that employers have the right "to select such kinds of labor as they may prefer . . . which the law itself cannot deprive them" and also soothed workers' fears by adding that "the sympathies of all communities are naturally and properly most generally

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<sup>35</sup> *Enquirer*, 27 Aug 1857 in Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South*, 31.

<sup>36</sup> Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 238.

<sup>37</sup> Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves," 1195.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 1188.

in favor of the hard working-man, whose toil ought to be fairly requited.”<sup>39</sup> The German-born were greatly supportive of this last ideal. This was one sentiment shared by both radical Free Thinkers and more conservative German-American workers alike.

While those German-born who emigrated to the South had accepted the presence of slavery, many more German-Americans were those who preferred to remain in the free states of the North. Therefore, labor costs were high for establishments like the Tredegar Works. Managers relied upon contacts in the North to provide them with a skilled labor force of native and foreign-born workers. In order to lure free workers south, workers were offered a higher wage than they could obtain in the North. One Tredegar manager complained that labor costs were three times that of English competitors and were almost twice as high as a northern Virginia competitor in the City of Wheeling. While free workers were economically competitive with slaves and were frequently preferred by employers, free workers were not convinced cheaply to compete within a slave society.<sup>40</sup>

Though Richmond was a city prospering economically on the eve of the Civil War, its leaders were continually challenged by conflicts between free and slave labor. Many Anglo-Americans suspected that the German-American community was overwhelmed by radicals, who were mostly abolitionists.<sup>41</sup> In fact, these individuals were a minority. In addition to the Free Thinkers, many in Richmond’s German-American Turner Society also probably leaned toward radicalism on the slavery issue. The Turner Society combined a belief in physical exercise and a progressive political agenda. Its national charter advocated all people’s human rights, regardless of their race, religion, or place of birth.<sup>42</sup> These two Richmond societies were a small minority of the German-American community. The Free-thinking Society numbered twenty-two and the

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<sup>39</sup> *Enquirer*, 1 June 1847.

<sup>40</sup> Charles B. Dew, *Ironmaker to the Confederacy: Joseph R. Anderson and the Tredegar Iron Works* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), 28-29, 31.

<sup>41</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 34-36.

<sup>42</sup> Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 210.

Turner Society had approximately eighty-one members.<sup>43</sup> Among other German-Americans, though most disapproved of the institution of slavery, they also disliked blacks even more. Reflecting this sentiment, Herrmann Schuricht, prewar editor of Richmond's *Virginische Zeitung* and an unreconstructed Confederate, named northern fanatics as “*inclined to sacrifice a cultured part of the southern people [sic] to the terrorism of an uneducated and inferior race.*”<sup>44</sup> Despite his prejudice, and in spite of his later Confederate sympathies, Schuricht refused to “write in favor of slavery” and noted that “there were no pro-slavery men among the Germans except a few Hebrews.” On this critical issue of the times, German-American sentiment in the Richmond stretched across the full range of opinion, with most backing moderates.<sup>45</sup>

As many of Richmond's German-born worked side by side with blacks, some also lived among them, although not usually in the same household.<sup>46</sup> Some German-American shopkeepers benefited from blacks by buying, for a cheap price, goods stolen by slaves.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to what this evidence suggests, when they first arrived in the South, the German-born were acculturated to be wary of blacks. One German-born man, freshly arrived from Germany, remembered how he was told to watch over his baggage or it would be stolen by blacks.<sup>48</sup> Throughout the antebellum era, a sense of distance was maintained between German-Americans and blacks, although some mixing among them in neighborhoods, workplaces, shops, and drinking establishments occurred.

Some German-Americans owned the black slaves who resided nearby. Several among the German-Americans of the South were slaveholders, although they were relatively fewer than the slaveholders among the native-born population. German-American slaveholders tended to be those who were in the upper-middle class in the

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<sup>43</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 36 and *Enquirer*, 7 March 1862.

<sup>44</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 70.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41, 70.

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Census manuscripts, City of Richmond, 1860.

<sup>47</sup> Berlin and Gutman, “Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves,” 1196.

<sup>48</sup> Lange, “The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World,” 74.

United States or were of German upper-middle class origins, who were married to native-born women, or who belonged to Anglo-American churches. In 1850, thirty of Richmond's German-born owned eighty-one slaves. The largest slaveholder owned nine. Others owned only one, two, or three. They were fairly evenly distributed among the German-born of all the city's German-American religious congregations, except for St. Mary's Catholic Church, which had only one slaveholder among its flock. Slaves represented a substantial financial investment. These were resources that many of the city's German-Americans, who were mostly workers, lacked.<sup>49</sup> In 1860, approximately 80% of Richmond's slaves were employed in manufacturing or in domestic service to merchants, planters, professionals, and politicians. Only 12% of slaves served skilled workers and small entrepreneurs, the classes to which most German-Americans belonged.<sup>50</sup>

Slaveholders' suspicions that this latter group, skilled workers and small entrepreneurs, included anti-slavery activists were common in Richmond and elsewhere in the South. In part because of the actions of the abolitionist and anti-slavery agitators among the German-born, slaveholders believed that free workingmen were organizing in opposition to slavery. Christopher G. Memminger, years before he was appointed Treasury Secretary of the Confederacy, declared that blacks acted as a deterrent to immigrants' coming South:

Drive out negro mechanics and all sorts of operatives from our Cities, and who must take their place? The same men who make the cry in the Northern Cities against the tyranny of Capital—there as here would drive before them all who interfere with them—and every one of those men would have a vote.

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<sup>49</sup> Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 116-17; Bell, "The German Immigrant Community of Richmond," 86-87; and Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves," 1184.

<sup>50</sup> Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves," 1186, 1184-85.

Some slaveholders, therefore, supported reopening the African slave trade because this would displace immigrant workers from their jobs in the South. As long as the South required foreign-born labor, these slaveholders would have preferred to import African slaves and limit free white immigrant competition in the labor force.<sup>51</sup> As illustrated by these sentiments, nativism against the German-born was in part motivated by slaveholders' pursuit and protection of their slave interests.

At the same time that the argument to reopen the slave trade was offered, the migration of immigrants' southward forestalled another pro-slavery movement, the one organized to re-enslave free blacks. Many slaveholders believed that the re-enslavement discussion only served to drive out free blacks, with their places taken by the foreign-born. Thus, while the expansion of slavery was debated, slaveholders warily assessed the sentiments of immigrants for signs of abolitionist and anti-slavery activity.<sup>52</sup>

As they weighed the benefits of free blacks and white immigrants, the South's leaders also believed that their placing limits on black participation in the labor force had purchased the loyalty of many white workers. In the late antebellum era, these same leaders also attempted to buy the allegiance of white native-born workers by arguing that the South's lack of immigrants was a factor in keeping salaries high for native-born workers. Southern advocate J. D. B. De Bow, in an open letter to Southern white non-slaveholders, condemned immigrants' effects upon native-born salaries and working conditions in the North. He also blamed immigrants in the North for urban riots and for the strength of the Republican party. Slavery, compounded by what De Bow supposed might be the preference that immigrants had for avoiding the slave states, saved the South from the same fate. Only in those cities, Baltimore and St. Louis among them, where slaves were relatively scarce did immigrants present a problem, De Bow argued. Thus, by maintaining slavery, the South also established a disincentive to mass immigration and

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 1198-99 and Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York, 1970), 210; quoted in Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves," 1198.

<sup>52</sup> Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves," 1199.

furthermore, De Bow argued, caused the immigrants who did come to be only “of a select class . . . approximate very nearly to the native standard.” In supporting slavery, the South’s leaders used a nativist argument to appeal to whites’ interests.<sup>53</sup>

In summary, on the eve of the Civil War, for white native-born Southerners, that relatively fewer immigrants came to the South was a confirmation that they might avoid the maladies afflicting Northern cities. However, even as they formed their arguments, Southern cities were filling with migrants from the North and from abroad. Some among these immigrants were abolitionists who personified the fears of Southern leaders. Most others simply had little empathy for slaveholders and fought to protect any erosion of their own rights and to oppose any expansion in slavery to include them.<sup>54</sup> Judging at least by the small membership of the Free-thinking Society, few of Richmond’s German-Americans believed it prudent to take any action to oppose slaveholders actively. However, simply because German-Americans did not share the interests of slaveholders did not mean that they had alienated themselves from the values of the Old South. Though nativists made them feel unwanted, Richmond’s German-born still referred to the South as their “new Fatherland.”<sup>55</sup> Though their discomfort was apparent, most of the German-born had accommodated themselves within the South’s slave society and culture by the eve of the war.

### **To Richmond!**

Through the 1850s, Richmond’s economy was expanding and demanded labor from all sources. It therefore benefited greatly from the increased immigrant labor pool. Without immigrants’ presence, blacks in Richmond and elsewhere in the South would

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<sup>53</sup> J. D. B. De Bow, “The Non-Slaveholders of the South,” *De Bow’s Review* XXX, O.S. (January 1861): 72-73.

<sup>54</sup> Miller, “The Enemy Within,” 32-33.

<sup>55</sup> *Richmonder Anzeiger*, 6 Nov. 1860. With some assistance, I personally translated all of the *Anzeiger* quotations in this thesis. As with most translations, to improve readability, they are not literal.

arguably have been more highly sought after. Immigrants were decreasing black workers' share of many occupations within Southern cities. They took skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled jobs alike.<sup>56</sup> They came in the 1840s and 1850s in great waves that changed the demographic character of the Southern urban landscape.

By 1860, Richmond boasted a total population of 37,910 (23,635 whites and 14,275 blacks). Of the white population, the foreigner-born composed 21%, a seven point increase since 1850. The census takers counted the German-born as numbering 1,623 and the Irish-born were 2,244 in 1860 (see table 3).<sup>57</sup> The German-American population would have been counted as much larger if second-generation immigrants had been tabulated. Instead, the census defined "Germans" as only those people who had been born in Germany. Children of immigrants were still not fully assimilated and had much culturally in common with their parents. Perhaps exaggerating, Richmond's German-born historian, Herrmann Schuricht, estimated that Richmond had seven thousand German-Americans by 1860.<sup>58</sup> Clearly, there must have been a sizeable American-born ethnic German-American population, which would have been recorded without regard to ethnicity on the census. Scores of German-born individuals, who were listed in other documents as living in Richmond before and during the Civil War, were not enumerated by the census takers. Nevertheless, as reported by the census, the German-born population in the decade of the 1850s increased 119% in Richmond, much faster than even the 55% increase in the white native-born population, although not as much as the 228% increase in the Irish-born population.<sup>59</sup> As the city's self-appointed

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<sup>56</sup> Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 231.

<sup>57</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxxii, 519; Superintendent of the Census, *Statistical View of the United States*, 119, 399.

<sup>58</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 53.

<sup>59</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxxii, 519; Superintendent of the Census, *Statistical View of the United States*, 119, 399.

historian Samuel Mordecai observed in 1860, Richmond was a place where the German language was commonly heard.<sup>60</sup>

Richmond was not the only American city where this was happening. The United States received more than ninety percent of the Germans who emigrated from Europe in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup> Over 152,000 came in the decade of the 1830s; 434,000 in the 1840s; and 951,000 in the 1850s. In its 1860 figures, the Census Bureau reported the presence of over 1.3 million natives of Germany and that the population of the United States was becoming increasingly foreign-born. By the eve of the Civil War, 15% of the total population was born outside the country. The German-born made up a substantial 31% of the foreign-born and ran a close second to the Irish-born, who constituted 39%.<sup>62</sup>

Despite the onslaught of immigrants, native-born white men continued to occupy the higher paying and more powerful occupations in Southern cities. The overwhelming proportion of merchants, bankers, commission agents, doctors, and lawyers were native-born Anglo-Americans. Native-born whites, especially the Southern-born, also occupied those skilled jobs for which their networks of personal relationships gave them a great advantage: building trades, piloting, and printing.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, blacks, the foreign-born, and the Northern-born were disproportionally represented among the city's working population.<sup>64</sup> Of the city's adult free workingmen in 1860, approximately 39% were foreign-born, 14% black, and 8% Northern-born. Southern-born whites were thus a minority of the free urban working population in most Southern cities.<sup>65</sup> One estimate has slaves making up only between 8 and 14% of skilled workingmen in Richmond while they composed 71 to 73% of

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<sup>60</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 246.

<sup>61</sup> Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians*, 56.

<sup>62</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxii, xxviii, xxix.

<sup>63</sup> Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves," 1189.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 1179-81.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

unskilled workingmen.<sup>66</sup> The Irish-born also occupied unskilled occupations heavily. They composed more than 40% of free unskilled workers.<sup>67</sup>

Despite its large black population, Richmond was becoming increasingly white. The free black population of Richmond grew by only 9% between 1850 and 1860, from 2,369 to 2,576; the slave population increased 18% from 9,927 to 11,699. Meanwhile, the white free population grew 55%, from 15,274 in 1850 to 23,635 in 1860 (see table 3). This was a continuation of a trend that had been ongoing since the 1830s, when the rate of growth of the free population as a whole surpassed that of the slave population. In most other Southern cities, the story was similar. Slave populations crested between 1830 and 1850 and declined in the 1850s. Immigrants were out-competing free blacks and slaves in the work force, especially in the more skilled occupations.<sup>68</sup> Thus, Richmond was a city becoming increasingly free, black, and foreign-born.

While German-Americans were some of the first purchasers of lots when the city of Richmond was founded in 1733, their numbers did not escalate rapidly until the 1830s. Many were first transported to Richmond directly from Germany as laborers in the construction of the Kanawha canal.<sup>69</sup> John Gottfried Lange remembered how he felt when he first stepped off the ship that brought him to Richmond from Germany. At two o'clock in the morning, he and dozens of other Germans hired to work on the canal arrived. As day dawned and the city awoke, hundreds of people came down to the waterfront and were fascinated by the Germans' strange clothing. Lange and the other Germans were, in turn, fascinated by the Americans' clothing and by the appearance of so many blacks. Lange did not speak English, so imagine his pleasure when he successfully negotiated to sell his pistol for one dollar, that he used to buy bread and

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 1186.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 1187-88.

<sup>68</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Statistical View of the United States*, 398; Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860*, 519; Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South*, 1, 52.

<sup>69</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. I, 80 and Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 29.

cheese. Along with some fresh water, he and several of his countryman then feasted like they had not since they had departed Germany.<sup>70</sup>

Simply adjusting to new surroundings was difficult for immigrants. One pamphlet informed prospective German emigrants that it took the German at least half a year to adjust to the American environment and, in this time, if they did not utilize the assistance of other German-Americans, they would probably come to several “wrong conclusions” and commit “rash actions.”<sup>71</sup>

Communication was one of the most frustrating problems for German-born immigrants. Lange joked that he was unable to communicate with even a mule, since the animal did not understand German and he did not understand English. Several months had passed before his English improved to a passable level.<sup>72</sup> In the early 1840s, many of the city’s German-born still could not speak or understand English beyond a few basics though they had been in Richmond for years.<sup>73</sup> German-Americans often aided one another in adapting to their American environment. Older immigrants served as agents for the newly arrived.<sup>74</sup> Those who were more proficient at English drafted letters for those who were not so skilled. Those who desired citizenship were assisted by those who had already made their way through the process. One German-American might assist another in negotiating business relationships with native-born businesses.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Lange, “The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World,” 73-74.

<sup>71</sup> Ferdinand von Herff, *The Regulated Emigration of the German Proletariat with Special Reference to Texas: Being Also a Guide for German Emigrants*, trans. Arthur L. Finck, Jr. (Frankfurt: Franz Varrentrapp Publishing Company, 1850; reprint, San Antonio, Tex.: Trinity University Press, 1978), 66.

<sup>72</sup> Lange, “The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World,” 75, 83.

<sup>73</sup> Ignatius Remke, *Historical Sketch of St. Mary’s Church* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), addendum, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

<sup>74</sup> Heinrick & Krauser, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 271, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>75</sup> Musician’s diary, 26 Feb., 6 Mar., and 17 Mar. 1856.

For many of Richmond's German-American shopkeepers, German-American customers at first composed the bulk of their business.<sup>76</sup> Other German-American entrepreneurs opened in business with small shops and, through their contacts with the Old World, developed extensive import or export businesses.<sup>77</sup> Still others, who began selling door to door and were able to do well enough to open their own shops, achieved as much economic success on a relative scale.<sup>78</sup> Such economic mobility allowed a tailor to change occupations and become a barkeeper, and a toy and fancy goods store owner to become the editor of the *Anzeiger*.<sup>79</sup> One German-born man was said to have "engaged in half a dozen trades and succeeded in none."<sup>80</sup> On the down side, the fluid economic conditions of Richmond's economy also resulted in numerous business failures. Bankrupt individuals often moved to another town and opened again for business, in a place where their reputations were still unknown.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, a substantial portion of Richmond's German-born, who were in business or were workers, resided in the city

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<sup>76</sup> J. Ruchser, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 169, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>77</sup> H. von Groning & Co., Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 193, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>78</sup> H. C. G. Timmerman, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 158, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>79</sup> Augustus Schad, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 166, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection. and Wm. Hassell, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 110, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>80</sup> Jacob Kirch, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 86, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection. In all quotations from the R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, instead of the abbreviations, the full words are used to improve readability.

<sup>81</sup> Charles S. Voegle, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 219, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

only a short time before moving elsewhere.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, by the eve of the war, German-Americans were well represented in the city as ironworkers, shoemakers, grocers, dry goods shopkeepers, tailors, butchers, domestics, and laborers, as well as in other occupations and as proprietors of other business enterprises.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Hy. Wechster, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 215, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>83</sup> Bell, "The German Immigrant Community of Richmond, Virginia: 1848-1852," tables 6-8.

## **Chapter II**

### **Richmond's German-American Community**

Several differences set German-Americans apart from other ethnic groups in the city. Members of the community shared a common language and certain German-American values, concentrated their residences and businesses in certain neighborhoods of the city, and organized into groups that were distinctly German-American. However, the fact that they were different from other native and foreign-born groups did not cause the city's German-Americans to view themselves as one united people, as all sharing the same values and interests. Within the community itself, German-Americans were split. Workers had different interests from owners. Turner Society members had different values from German Rifle Company members. Catholics did not experience life in the city the same as Lutherans or Jews. Men assimilated differently than did women. In summary, the German-American community was a diverse mixture of people who had aspects of German-American culture in common but who were also affected by various other influences.

#### **Institutions**

Richmond's German-Americans had a talent for creating many diverse organizations. German-American social organizations in the city included a Turner Society (Sociale Turnverein), a Free-thinking Society (Freie Gemeinde), a mutual aid society (Krankenunterstützungsverein), an Odd Fellows lodge (Schiller Lodge), a singing society (Gesangverein Virginia), a theater company (Theaterverein), and a militia company (Deutsche Jäger). Churches and synagogues were also important social institutions, although many German-Americans were not religious practitioners.

The Turner Society had the largest membership of all of the city's German-American social organizations and met in Simon Steinlein's Monticello Hall. Suspected

by the native-born in Richmond for its association with the politically active Turnerbund of America that had its center in the North, Richmond's Turner Society had political and educational initiatives, many of which were deemed socialist by contemporaries.<sup>1</sup> It also organized concerts and dances, as well as the gymnastic practices and exhibitions typical of the Turner belief in physical exercise.<sup>2</sup>

The Free-thinking Society, more of a pure political organization, numbered twenty-two members and was active only a short time, with meetings hosted by one of its members, Simon Steinlein. One German-born man recalled that the radical Free Thinkers earned the title "Die Rothen" (the Reds) for advocating the issues of "red republicanism," including abolitionism, that were so feared by many among the native-born. Illustrating the splits within the community, a substantial portion of Richmond's German-born regarded the Free Thinkers with hostility, more so as a result of the anti-German-American response that they stimulated among the native-born than as a result of opposition to their political sentiments.<sup>3</sup>

One of the earliest organizations that German-Americans founded in Richmond was the German Society for the Relief of the Sick, formed on May 22, 1847, primarily to aid one another while sick, widowed, orphaned, or under other difficulties.<sup>4</sup> It also organized social functions for its members. Another group, the Schiller Lodge of the Odd Fellows, had similar charitable and social purposes.<sup>5</sup>

German-American singing and theatrical groups held their performances at many of the city's public buildings. The German Singing Society, also known as the "Virginia," traveled north to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York to participate in festivities with other German-American singing societies. August Schad, a member of

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<sup>1</sup> Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 208, 210.

<sup>2</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 54.

<sup>3</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 36.

<sup>4</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 87.

<sup>5</sup> Herrmann Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 54.

the Singing Society, often opened his Schad's Hall, where a theater group regularly met, for German-American cultural festivities, which included dancing "for the German lasses."<sup>6</sup>

Also well known to the city's Anglo-Americans was the German Rifle Company, formed May 1, 1850. Its members hoped to enhance the reputation of the city's German-Americans. Dressed in their distinctive green uniforms, they often paraded along the city streets and conducted their social functions and military exercises on picnic grounds outside the city.<sup>7</sup>

Religious organizations were also prominent within the German-American community. These included two Lutheran, one Catholic, and one Jewish congregation.<sup>8</sup> All four operated their own schools by 1860. Each pursued its own educational priorities.<sup>9</sup> In 1850, religious practitioners within the German-American community were nearly equally divided. Of those 45% of households, headed by the German-born, for which religious affiliation could be determined, 38% were Lutheran, 31% Catholic, and 30% Jewish.<sup>10</sup> Others, a significant portion of German-Americans, remained aloof from organized religion.<sup>11</sup>

The four congregations were all located within or near the city's northwest section, around Navy Hill. Here lived the highest density of German-Americans. They lived among other foreign and native-born groups, including a scattering of blacks. One Richmond resident noted that the north side of Broad Street, between Fourth and Fifth Streets, was occupied primarily by German-American shopkeepers. He referred to the

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<sup>6</sup> Herrmann Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 53-54 and Augustus Schad, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 166, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>7</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 104, 110.

<sup>8</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 163-64.

<sup>9</sup> Bell, "The German Immigrant Community of Richmond," 27-28 and Herbert T. Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews of Richmond* (Richmond, Va.: Herbert T. Ezekiel, 1917), 226-27.

<sup>10</sup> Bell, "The German Immigrant Community of Richmond," 37-38.

<sup>11</sup> Schaff, *The Political, Social, and Religious Character of the United States*, 176.

area as a “German colony”, a name that marked them as separate from the Anglo-American community.<sup>12</sup> In making this statement, what this native-born man failed to recognize was that divisions could also be found within the city’s German-American community, despite their common ethnic qualities.

### **Divided Interests**

Interpersonal conflicts often flared within Richmond’s German-American population. For example, in 1856, at a joint meeting of several German-American organizations, it was agreed to hold a celebration on a farm outside the city. Within two weeks, their newfound spirit of cooperation disintegrated. The Singing Society dropped out first, followed by the Turners and the German Rifles. Recording dissatisfaction, the secretary of the Singing Society wrote:

It was evident that the friendship confederacy was built on bad ground, that . . . the friendship was empty words only, . . . that to straighten out old enmities, to bring about friendship, only new ones were added on, which for the most part had their foundation in jealousy and envy of those that were involved. Finally, among people who were still far apart with friendship . . . , with embittered feelings were facing each other, no real friendship festival, much less a friendship confederacy, could be formed.

It would require more than the German-Americans’ many celebrations, barroom conversations, and musical and theatrical programs to placate the deep-seated divisions within Richmond’s German-American community.<sup>13</sup>

The separation of the Lutherans into two churches was another example of the divisions and the separate identities within Richmond’s German-American community.

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<sup>12</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 119, 163-64 and U. S. Census manuscripts, Richmond, Va., 1860.

<sup>13</sup> Gesang-Verein Virginia, minutes, trans. Laura Victor, 16 April 1856, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.

Dissenters within St. John's Lutheran, who had disapproved of their pastor's liberal views, quit and established the younger congregation, Bethlehem Lutheran. This furor caused years of bad blood between the two congregations. Further exhibiting the spiritual independence of Richmond's German-Americans, both Lutheran churches remained separate from Virginia's long-established Lutheran church structure. In fact, after initially accepting membership in the Virginia Synod, Bethlehem Lutheran left the state church structure and took the unusual action of calling its second pastor from outside the state, from the Missouri Synod, the most orthodox of all German Lutheran synods in the country.<sup>14</sup> As another sign of its conservatism, as well as further splits within the young congregation, their pastor excommunicated several of Bethlehem Lutheran's founding members.<sup>15</sup> No wonder that, during the Civil War, Bethlehem's church attendance decreased drastically among both men and women. Thirty-eight were on the church's membership list at the start of the war. At war's end, only twenty-one remained.<sup>16</sup> The war added another division to those that had already separated Richmond's German-American population.

Within St. John's Lutheran, a similar waning of spiritual energy occurred, beginning in the years before the war. After its founding in 1843, with fifty full members, no members joined the congregation in the 1850s.<sup>17</sup> In part, this was probably related to the "peculiar fashion" of its Reverend John C. Hoyer, who acquired a drinking problem at the start of the war and neglected his duties as religious leader and school teacher.<sup>18</sup> During the war, Hoyer could often be found in German-American bars, arguing over political issues. At the same time, whether because of the pastor's alcoholism or the war, church attendance at St. John's decreased markedly to only less

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<sup>14</sup> *Bethlehem Centennial*, no. 4 (Richmond, Va: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Oct. 1952), 4 and Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 206.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Gross, "Excommunication of Ernst Gemmelmann: 14 August 1861," (Bethlehem Lutheran Church Archives, Richmond, Va.) in Bell, "The German Immigrant Community of Richmond," 71.

<sup>16</sup> *Bethlehem Centennial*, 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Fest-Programm zum 65. Jubiläum der Deutschen Ev. St. Johannes Gemeinde*, n.p.

<sup>18</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 142-43.

than a couple of dozen, and those churchgoers were often unexpectedly disappointed when their minister abruptly canceled services as a result of his drinking binges.<sup>19</sup> Though pastor for over twenty years, Hoyer was fired August 1, 1865.<sup>20</sup>

Like Bethlehem Lutheran, the city's German-American Catholic congregation had formed by separating from another. In this instance, the cleavage was along ethnic lines. In 1848, Richmond's German-American Catholics split from the predominantly Irish-American St. Peter's Church to form their own house of worship, St. Mary's Church. Before the split, in order to conduct services and confessions in German and to nurture a common ethnic identity, the German-American Catholics received, about every three months, a visiting German-speaking priest who ministered to them in the basement of St. Peter's. Although they met in church together, German-American Catholics were still divided. Several years after German-Americans founded St. Mary's, the newly named Reverend Joseph Polk was still confronted with churchgoers who were mostly "strangers" to one another. The church's historian described them as people who had such different "characters and dispositions" and so many customs, manners, dialects, and nationalities. That they were so different from one another is evidence of the inability of common German-American characteristics to unite a diverse ethnic population.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, the predominantly German-American Jewish synagogue, established in 1840, competed with a much older synagogue of Portuguese heritage for German-American membership.<sup>22</sup> Among the city's Jews, several social and educational organizations were formed. Such diversity indicated the differences among Richmond's German-American Jewish population, which included newly arrived immigrants and those individuals whose families had lived in America for many decades.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 182.

<sup>20</sup> *Fest-Programm zum 65. Jubiläum der Deutschen Ev. St. Johannes Gemeinde*, n.p.

<sup>21</sup> Remke, *St. Mary's Church*, 6, 14 and Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 206.

<sup>22</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 30, 144.

<sup>23</sup> Herbert T. Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews of Richmond* (Richmond, Va.: Herbert T. Ezekiel, 1917), 229-31.

Another divide also separated German-American men from German-American women. For example, many of the German-born women who had emigrated to the United States found work as domestic servants, living apart from their ethnic countrymen.<sup>24</sup> Within Anglo-American households, where they were surrounded by different values, customs, and language, these women acculturated quickly due to their limited contact with other German-Americans. When they left household service to marry German-American men, these women had a profound acculturating influence upon their families, particularly their American-born children.<sup>25</sup> In many cases, immigrant men preceded immigrant women to the United States. Throughout the late antebellum era, male German immigrants arriving in the United States outnumbered female by a ratio of three to two.<sup>26</sup> Once immigrant men had established themselves economically, many desired to bridge the differences between their New and Old Worlds by returning or writing to Germany to arrange marriages with German women.<sup>27</sup> Others married German-American women. Because of female work experience outside the German-American community or due to spouses' arrival in America years apart from one another, cultural discrepancies between males and females opened a divide between the sexes. One German-American, writing in 1858, regretted that so many German-born women were "all long since Americanized, disdainful of newly arrived Germans, especially of the laborers."<sup>28</sup>

German-Americans who had contacts with Anglo-Americans were economically advantaged and were assimilated more quickly to native-born American society. One

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<sup>24</sup> *Richmond Compiler*, 11 July 1844 in Bell, "The German Immigrant Community of Richmond," 7.

<sup>25</sup> Silke Wehner, "German Domestic Servants in America, 1850-1914: A New Look at German Immigrant Women's Experiences" in *People in Transit*, Hoerder and Nagler, 269.

<sup>26</sup> Bromwell, *Immigration to the United States*, 108, 140, 168.

<sup>27</sup> Suzanne M. Sinke, "The International Marriage Market: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives" in *People in Transit*, Hoerder and Nagler, 230-31 and Louis Hoyer, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 115, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>28</sup> Karl Theodor Griesinger, *Lebende Bilder Aus America* (Stuttgart: n.p., 1858) in Howard B. Furer, *The Germans in America, 1607-1970* (New York: Oceana Publications, 1973), 124.

German-American man was saved from his creditors by a hot stock tip given to him by a native-born neighbor. He made a substantial sum by purchasing several shares of a building company's stock offering. With the proceeds, he paid off his debts and even had such an excess of funds that he opened a savings account with the Farmer's Bank of Virginia.<sup>29</sup> Another German-born man, a tinsmith, prospered economically when given an order for tin cans by an Anglo-American apothecary.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, due to the relationships that he had cultivated outside his ethnic community, a third German-born man received the personal endorsement of a wealthy Anglo-American man and was able to finance his business.<sup>31</sup>

Another example of a close relationship between the native and German-born was that with Abel Mayo, the city's clerk of the court that processed applications for citizenship. He, like many others among the city's native-born, often hired German-American musicians to entertain at parties.<sup>32</sup> At such mixed events, while differences between the native and foreign-born were evident to both, those German-born in attendance were assimilated.

Nonetheless, most of German-Americans' experiences were with those who shared their ethnicity. Family relationships were established by intermarriage among the city's German-Americans. Such relationship building facilitated the flow of capital within the German-American community.<sup>33</sup> While this cooperation was an indication of community solidarity, more than one relationship probably soured when an individual was held accountable for the losses of a family member. At least one financially strapped

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<sup>29</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 113.

<sup>30</sup> Disallowed Claims, U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Record group 233, Office 0975, Report 2, National Archives, Washington.

<sup>31</sup> R. M. Zimmerman, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 93, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>32</sup> Musician's diary, 2 May, 9 June, and 11 June 1856.

<sup>33</sup> L. Hyneman, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 141, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection and H. von Groning & Co., Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 193, 200, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

German-American defaulted to his wealthier countrymen, who had guaranteed his obligations, to pay his debts.<sup>34</sup>

Because so many German-Americans were in the retail trade, they also had frequent contact with “the country folks & negroes” who bought clothing, beer, candy, and other goods from them.<sup>35</sup> Many native-born whites disdained such trade. Thus, those German-Americans who circulated among the lower class were pulled one way while those who dealt with the upper class were influenced in another. An example of the second category was a German-born piano tuner, who traveled extensively outside the city and likely had extensive contact with upper class Southern society.<sup>36</sup> His work and the experiences of other German-Americans composed the daily interchanges that assimilated members of the German-American community into Anglo-American society.

One example of a much-assimilated German-American was Augustus Bodecker, a wealthy German-born Richmond druggist, co-founder of the German Rifle Company, and owner of three slaves as well as a farm outside the city.<sup>37</sup> In 1855, as previously mentioned, he ran a losing campaign for city alderman.<sup>38</sup> With his political connections and wealth, reported to be in excess of thirty thousand dollars by 1861, Bodecker was also among the most assimilated of Richmond’s German-Americans. His prestige lasted throughout the war. In March 1862, when German-Americans were subject to intense nativism, Bodecker was appointed a commissioner for the city’s elections. Not surprisingly, Bodecker’s wealth correlated with Anglo-Americans’ perceptions of him as

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<sup>34</sup> Joseph Doerslinger, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 87, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>35</sup> A. Muller, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 128, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection and Louis Lichtenstein, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 169, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>36</sup> O. Mayer, Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 138, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>37</sup> Bell, “The German Immigrant Community of Richmond,” 46.

<sup>38</sup> *Enquirer*, 6 April 1855.

a man of good character.<sup>39</sup> With such high standing, Bodecker was one who bridged the German-American and Anglo-American communities.

As was acutely evident during the sectional crisis, because assimilation had occurred to varied degrees among German-Americans, their political sentiments spanned a wide spectrum. At the same time that they continued in their assimilation and acculturation, nativism was a uniting force that provoked Richmond's German-Americans to defend themselves and their ethnic distinctiveness.

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<sup>39</sup> Virginia, Vol. 43, Augustus Bodeker, p.100, 398, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection and *Enquirer*, 4 March 1862.

## Chapter III

### Prelude to War

#### Nativism

When German-born shoemakers came to Richmond, they “caused a real revolution.” Native-born shoemakers were behind the times with their styles. Challenging them, the foreign-born brought new styles and the skills to produce them. These and other challenges posed by the foreign-born were interpreted by many among the native-born as threatening influences to their society, their culture, their politics, and, finally, to their identity as a people. To advertise his progressive styles, German-born boot maker John Gottfried Lange hung a sign outside his Richmond business that advertised “French Boot Maker.” Lange’s French-styled boot offerings hurt the sales of the shops owned by the native-born who refused to alter their product mix. In a humorous incident, when a French couple entered his shop and asked “Parlez vous Français, Monsieur,” Lange failed to understand their question because he could not understand them.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the threat of foreign influence posed by the foreign-born was often not as it seemed. In this case, a German-born man adopted French styles. In his new environment, Lange utilized those methods that he thought might work best and supplied that which the locals desired. In this and in other ways, German-Americans did not live in the United States as Germans lived in Europe. They adopted practices and values from outside their German cultural base. They became a people different from those that they had left behind in the Old World. Since their acculturation in the United States occurred slowly, their differences, their European-inherited practices and values, were interpreted as threats to many among the native-born who were resistant to change.

The foreign-born brought with them their foreign cultures, and new, sometimes radical, political ideas. Most came to Richmond in order to make a living economically.

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<sup>1</sup> Lange, “The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World,” 89.

They were interested in laboring within the urban economy or in establishing businesses supplying the needs of Southerners, native and foreign-born alike. Opposing them, menacing their positions within their adopted nation were the nativists.

Bruce Levine, in his study of German-American political refugees from the 1848 German revolutions, claimed that German-Americans of the North were more interested in local politics than in national affairs. Instead of being swept away by the revolutionary political agendas advocated by a major segment of their leaders, German-Americans were galvanized politically by the issue of most concern to them—nativism. In the 1860 presidential election, German-Americans of the North tended to vote for the Republicans and Lincoln in only those localities where local Republicans had least associated with nativists.<sup>2</sup> In Richmond, a similar voting pattern emerged. The Democrats garnered German-American support due to Democratic opposition to the nativists.

Violence exploded in Richmond on June 20, 1853. On that day, the city's German-American associations held a parade and flag presentation to celebrate the German Singing Society's first anniversary. Afterwards, the attendees reassembled at picnic grounds outside the city. There, a group of nativists crashed the celebration and engaged in a fight with several of the participants that ended the festivities. After the storm of violence had blown over, the former celebrants, escorted by the German Rifle Company, returned to the city as a group. A rumor arose that "the whole German population had risen en masse upon our native citizens, and were about to take entire possession of the city." On Second Street, nativists threw stones at the German-Americans, who responded by counterattacking. The nativists then fled, only to reappear a few blocks later. A violent street battle erupted. Police broke up the melee. Five German-Americans were arrested. Several bystanders, including a female storekeeper,

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<sup>2</sup> Levine, *The Spirit of 1848*, 250-1.

were injured. One man was seriously injured. At least thirty German-Americans were accused of participating in the fights.<sup>3</sup>

The legacy of these attacks, i.e., the possibility of physical violence erupting from nativist feeling, continued to haunt Richmond's German-Americans. Later, during the Civil War, in a city plunged into crisis, German-Americans feared a reoccurrence of nativist violence. The editor of the *Anzeiger* contemplated such an event when he urged his readers, during the 1861 elections, to go to the polls peacefully and then return to their workplaces without lingering among the native-born. The implication was that the threat of violence against the German-American community certainly continued to endure, even in 1861, though the nativist Know Nothing crisis of the mid-1850s had passed.<sup>4</sup>

Nativism had long been a staple of Richmond politics. As the city's foreign-born population increased in the late antebellum era, party politics increasingly exploited Richmond's ethnic divisions. In 1850, a publicly circulated broadside named, as Democrats, many of the city's German-Americans. Predictably, in 1850 and afterwards, few German-Americans were supporters of the more nativist parties. Some identified their interests with the nativist Whig party, probably more in support of their own business interests than due to the party's nativist tendencies. For example, the economically successful German-born Philip Rahm, the iron machine shop and foundry owner, was listed among the "Know Nothings," many of whom were Whigs in the early 1850s.<sup>5</sup> Rahm was an example of those who, according to Schuricht, "forgot their self-respect and joined their enemies."<sup>6</sup> Rahm's Eagle Machine Works, with agents throughout the South, supplied planters with steam engines and machinery as well as a patented sharpener for tobacco processing. Rahm was interested more in pro-business

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<sup>3</sup> *Enquirer*, 24 June 1853 in Klaus G. Wust, "German Immigrants and Nativism in Virginia, 1840-1860," *Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland* 29: 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Anzeiger*, 4 Feb. 1861.

<sup>5</sup> "List of Know Nothing and Democratic Voters in Madison Ward," Broadside, 1850, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va. in Bell, "The German Immigrant Community of Richmond," 88-89.

<sup>6</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 37.

aspects of Whig party politics than in defending the rights of the ethnic minority into which he had been born.<sup>7</sup> By 1852, economically successful only seven years after he had established his business, he employed over forty workers and was said to have eliminated, in his speech, any trace of his German birth.<sup>8</sup> However, for most of the city's German-Americans, the Democratic party was their party of preference and their bulwark against the nativists.

In the 1850s, the rise of the Know Nothing nativists made politics of critical importance to the city's German-born. One German-born man remembered the "dark clouds" of nativism between 1854 and 1856 when "the Germans were politically and socially slighted."

The Know Nothings, secretly organized into nativist lodges but publicly organized into the American party, arose prominently upon Virginia's political scene in 1854 by exploiting the native-born's fears over the increasing numbers of immigrants. Platform planks included restricting all foreign-born from political office, limiting their voting rights, and using all legal means to prevent the "immigration of the vicious and worthless, the criminal and pauper."<sup>9</sup> In the April 1855 city election, the American party overwhelmingly won by a better than 2:1 ratio in all electoral races.<sup>10</sup> Basing its platform not upon the defense of slavery but upon the threat of growing foreign influence, represented particularly by Catholicism but also by the foreign-born in general, the American party in Virginia focused upon a national issue in an age of sectional tensions. Perhaps, it went too far in its nativism. By the late 1850s, the American party collapsed, defeated by the Democratic party, which succeeded by more closely associating itself

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<sup>7</sup> Eagle Machine Works advertisement, *De Bow's Review*, Vol. XXXI, Old Series, Jan.-Feb. 1862, ii and Kathleen Bruce, *Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era* (New York: Century Co., 1931), 313-14.

<sup>8</sup> *Richmond Dispatch*, 7 May 1852 and Philip Rahm, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 146, 388, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>9</sup> The American Party platform, passed during its Winchester, Virginia Convention of March 13, 1855, can be found in James P. Hambleton, *A Biographical Sketch of Henry A. Wise* (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1856), 254-55.

with Southern rights. The Democrats better articulated that the threat to Virginia came from the North, not from immigrants residing within the state. Though the Democrats won their political battle against the nativist parties of the 1850s, nativism itself did not die.<sup>11</sup>

Even literature and philosophy were open to the nativist contest. In *De Bow's Review*, one Virginian, George Fitzhugh, urging the South to develop its own school of thought and literature and to establish a Southern university, argued that New England's fascination with German literature and philosophy was evidence of the North's insanity. Fitzhugh regarded German literary and intellectual thought as ungodly, as lacking Christianity. He asserted that "German learning and research . . . have subverted everything," including property rights, Christianity, and marital fidelity on this list.<sup>12</sup> Pointing to the North, he also argued that "the Yankees had a long lucid interval after the Revolution, but German books and German immigrants have again run them stark raving mad, and prepared them for acts of mischief and desperation." A "German tailor" was classified in the same category as an abolitionist "Boston clergyman." Thus, the threats to the South were identified by nativists as originating both from the North and from the German-born living in the South. Even before the war, nativists concentrated their attacks upon the German people and culture in order to nurture a sense of Southern identity.<sup>13</sup>

Religion also surrounded much of the nativist sentiment in the city. In 1853, the city's German-American Catholics formed the St. Joseph's Society, founded "to keep

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<sup>10</sup> *Enquirer*, 6 April 1855.

<sup>11</sup> W. Darrell Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South* (n.p.: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 56, 294.

<sup>12</sup> As an example of such subversion, German-American barkeeper A. Muller lived unmarried "a-la-free-love" with a woman who was reputed to be a prostitute. A. Muller, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 128, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>13</sup> George Fitzhugh, "German Literature," *De Bow's Review* XXIX, Old Series (Sept. 1860): 285-87.

Catholic men from joining secret or anti-Catholic societies.”<sup>14</sup> In addition, the German-American tendency to hold festivities on the Sabbath aroused nativist anger. One German-American concert, scheduled for a Sunday, was cancelled after Richmond police responded to a complaint.<sup>15</sup> Disagreeing with the nativists, many of whom believed that the Sabbath should be a day of sobriety, the German-American community interpreted such prohibitions as attacks upon their culture and community.<sup>16</sup> Also subject to prejudicial treatment were German-American Jews, who were identified by their distinctive appearance.<sup>17</sup> Many Anglo-Americans regarded Jews as worthy of trust only as far as “you can swing a Bull by the tail.”<sup>18</sup>

In 1856, another violent incident demonstrated both the divisions, and even feuds, within the German-American community and the nativism arrayed against it. On a summer day, the German Rifle Company held a rifle practice, attended by many spectators. However, the event turned to bloodshed when a young German-born butcher quarreled with a corporal. The militiaman shot his enemy, who died the next night.<sup>19</sup> In response to the shooting, the city council voted, six votes to three, to discontinue its financial support of the German Rifles, although payments continued to all the city’s other militia companies.<sup>20</sup> Interpreting this action as an affront against their community, a group of two hundred German-Americans met to discuss the abridgment of their rights as citizens and the denial of their “equal privileges.” The council’s action was termed “an act of impudence and insult to the German Rifle Company . . . and an outrage to the whole German population of the State of Virginia.”<sup>21</sup> The assembled group resolved that

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<sup>14</sup> Remke, *St. Mary’s Church*, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Musician’s diary, 27 April 1856.

<sup>16</sup> Conzen, “Ethnicity as Festive Culture,” 54.

<sup>17</sup> Silberman & Bro., *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 109, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>18</sup> Moses Bachrach, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 126, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>19</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 39.

<sup>20</sup> *Dispatch*, 22 July 1856.

<sup>21</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 38-39.

that the revocation was “calculated to create discord between foreigners and natives, and particularly to generate the hatred of the latter against the German adopted citizens of Richmond.”<sup>22</sup> At least until the start of the war, the city continued to deny subsidies to the German Rifles, by then renamed the Virginia Rifles.<sup>23</sup> The incident also lingered in the memories of the city’s German-Americans as another example of nativist attacks against them and as evidence that those among them who had acquired citizenship still had not acquired rights equal to those of the native-born.

Others among the native-born, particularly the Democrats, were friendlier to the German-American community. This was most publicly evident in Henry Wise’s winning campaign for the Virginia governorship, which gained extensive national attention. Wise spoke eloquently in support of the rights of the foreign-born. Later, German-born Herrmann Schuricht lionized Wise for making “the relations between the English and the Germans in Virginia more harmonious and beneficial.”<sup>24</sup> In the midst of the Know Nothing crisis, Wise argued against nativism, stating that it was “against Americanism itself.” Furthermore, Wise upheld the existing immigration laws by asserting that “one of the best fruits of the Revolution was to establish . . . the human right of expatriation.” Recognizing that heightened levels of nativism had weakened the foreign-born’s sympathies for the nation, he continued by stating, “if we let foreigners be naturalized and don’t extend to them equality of privileges, we set up classes and distinctions of persons wholly opposed to Republicanism.”<sup>25</sup> With such rhetoric, Wise won the election. By supporting existing immigration and naturalization policies and by advocating equal

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<sup>22</sup> *Enquirer*, 2 Aug. 1856.

<sup>23</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 39.

<sup>24</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Henry A. Wise’s letter against the Know Nothings in “An American,” *The Sons of the Sires: A History of the Rise, Progress, and Destiny of the American Party* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1855), 202, 207.

rights for the native and the foreign-born, Wise and the Democrats also won the appreciation of Richmond's German-American community.<sup>26</sup>

Nonetheless, the city's German-born recognized that the political parties, controlled by Anglo-Americans, exploited ethnic groups to their advantage. Prior to elections, Anglo-American political candidates and their supporters plied the city's German-American beer halls. Buying drinks for voters, politicians buoyed the sales of German-American saloonkeepers.<sup>27</sup> A German-born musician recalled that, after he had been naturalized, his "co-citizens tried to get me into politics, but I found out that they only wanted to take advantage of me." Though he did not want to become too involved in politics, his band, most of whose members were German-born, was asked to play in the election rallies surrounding the 1852 Presidential election.<sup>28</sup> For many within Richmond's German-American community, elections were stressful since they called attention to the differences between native-born and German-born political sentiments. One German-American noted that, after he voted in the 1856 Presidential election for the Democrat Buchanan, he "got hissed" at the polls.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast, other Anglo-Americans were more positive in their support for the foreign-born. The editors of the *Richmond Enquirer*, also sympathetic to the Democratic party, wrote that "the German brings to us in the best instances great learning, warm, social feelings, and domestic refinement." However, the *Enquirer* also differentiated between desirable and undesirable German-Americans by expressing its regrets that so many of the most recent German immigrants to the United States were radicals. Overall, though, the *Enquirer* supported the city's German-American community:

Yet, of our American Germany as a whole, we must say, that it is a great blessing to us, enlarging our wealth by its decided agricultural taste, confirming our freedom by its decided Protestant

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<sup>26</sup> *Anzeiger*, 6 Nov. 1860.

<sup>27</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 116.

<sup>28</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 89, 106.

<sup>29</sup> Musician's diary, 4 Nov. 1856.

tendency, balancing the Celtic immigration by its intellectual independence and habitual pursuits, and promising at last to learn the thrift and quicken the artistic taste and special feelings of the Anglo-Saxon.<sup>30</sup>

The German-American community had many defenders among the native-born in Richmond. Nevertheless, German-Americans remained largely outsiders as a result of the strong nativist sentiment that enveloped them.

In opposition to the nativists, German-Americans were not passive. They possessed both the determination and the power to organize. For example, the German Rifle Company was formed, in part, to earn the respect of the native-born. On July 4, 1853, Independence Day, the Rifles exemplified the German-American community's patriotism by parading through the city. At the end of their march, outside of town, they were met by "the whole German crowd of Richmond who greeted" them "with a big harrah." The community proudly and conspicuously displayed their patriotism towards their new nation.<sup>31</sup>

On September 14 and 15, 1857, to demonstrate to the native-born that they did not threaten traditional American ideals, the city's German-Americans celebrated the Revolutionary War hero, General Frederick William von Steuben, in a two-day long affair. It included prayers, speeches, music, singing, the unveiling of a Steuben bust, and children's' games organized by the community's women.<sup>32</sup> A general in the Continental Army during the Revolution, Steuben after the war had been naturalized as a citizen of the newborn American nation and had also received land grants and statements of appreciation from several state governments, including Virginia.<sup>33</sup> Generations after this death, Steuben became one of the most significant symbols to German-Americans in their

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<sup>30</sup> *Enquirer*, 10 Oct. 1854.

<sup>31</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 104, 110.

<sup>32</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 31-32.

<sup>33</sup> Friedrich Kapp, *The Life of Frederick William von Steuben*, with an introduction by George Bancroft (New York: Mason Brothers, 1859), 577.

drive to gain the acceptance of their native-born neighbors. Richmond's leading politicians, including the mayor, appeared at German-American celebrations to toast their foreign-born neighbors and German-American history. A German-born man recalled that during one celebration, "we Germans were flattered" by many of the native-born "but we knew the reason for that was to win us over as voters for the next Presidential election in November."<sup>34</sup> In Richmond, celebrations were organized not only to strengthen German-American pride in the German-born's contributions to the establishment of the United States but also to teach their "Anglo-American fellow-citizens . . . to understand and to respect German customs."<sup>35</sup>

While the German-born continued to be on the receiving end of nativist attacks, and as German-Americans organized their community in response to nativism, the clouds of war gathered. One German-American in Missouri wrote, in the spring of 1860, in a letter to his family in Baden that despite the sectional difficulties, he was thankful that he was in the United States rather than in Germany because, in Germany, he would be "in danger of being stuck as a soldier" in the on-going conflicts within Europe.<sup>36</sup> Only a few months before these words were written, the First Virginia Regiment—the German-Americans of the Virginia Rifle Company among them—was sent north to the Charles Town area, after rumors spread of a conspiracy to free the prisoners from John Brown's unsuccessful raid on Harpers Ferry. During this as well as during other incidents, though German-Americans continued as a community to demonstrate patriotism to their nation, the upcoming sectional conflict would parse their loyalties along their many varied political interests while at the same time uniting the majority of them in defense of their rights in the face of nativists' attacks.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 115-16.

<sup>35</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 31-32.

<sup>36</sup> Johann Bauer, Sand Hill, Mo., to parents, brothers, and sisters, 20 May 1860, in *News from the Land of Freedom*, ed. Kamphoefner, Helbich, and Sommer, 159.

<sup>37</sup> Lee A. Wallace, Jr. *1st Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg, Va.: H. E. Howard, 1984), 6-7.

## Secession

On the eve of the 1860 Presidential election, the *Anzeiger* knew that playing the race card would rally the German-American community to oppose Lincoln. Widely supported by Richmond's German-American community, the newspaper criticized Northern Republicans:

The Negro rule in Ohio is a fact. Soon they will dominate every Northern state, if the people express their approval of Lincoln's and Hamlin's Negro worship.

A few days later, the *Anzeiger* told its readers that, on election day, they should keep in mind that Lincoln and the abolitionists of the North would, if elected, socially promote those "most vulgar blacks" above the foreign-born.<sup>38</sup>

German-Americans enviously regarded emancipation as granting, to blacks, rights of citizenship without requiring anything from them in return. The foreign-born had to reside in the United States for five years before they could take an oath to be naturalized. German-Americans were therefore motivated to action. In order to obtain their political franchise, several of Richmond's German-born men concluded their naturalizations only weeks before the 1860 Presidential election.<sup>39</sup> During the war, many of Richmond's German-Americans were astonished that so many German-Americans of the North supported the war effort, especially when their success would give rights of citizenship, to blacks, that exceeded those allowed the un-naturalized German-born. In summary, issues important to Richmond's German-American community, i.e., naturalization and

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<sup>38</sup> *Anzeiger*, 31 October 1860; quoted in Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 219; *Anzeiger*, 3 Nov. 1860.

<sup>39</sup> Hustings Court Minutes, Richmond City, 1860, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va..

nativism, loomed large in their political discussions immediately preceding and during the Civil War.<sup>40</sup>

While secession was a topic of great concern to native-born voters during the Presidential campaign of 1860, nativism was the key issue among the German-born. In fact, the election was called the most critical decision for Richmond's German-Americans, because of its implications for nativist policy and the foreign-born, since the state and local elections of 1855 when the Know Nothings were at the height of their popularity. For the 1860 sectional crisis, the *Anzeiger* blamed Northern fanatics and Southern demagogues. It warned its readers that they should remember, when casting their votes for President, the support that the Democratic party had provided to them, in 1855, in their opposition to the nativist Know Nothings. The *Anzeiger* argued that the Republican party was counting on the German-Americans of the North to vote Lincoln to victory and urged its readers to mark their ballots unlike those of their Northern countrymen:

German voters, show yourselves worthy of the trust that Virginia's Democrats place in you, as they fight shoulder to shoulder with you against your mortal enemy.

That "mortal enemy" was the nativists. The question, repeated the *Anzeiger*, was this: "Do you want your vote to count for or against the Know Nothings?" The newspaper then endorsed John C. Breckinridge for President. Constitutional Unionist Bell was called a Know Nothing. Douglas was mentioned as a possibility, but rejected on the basis that voting for Douglas would make the nativist Bell more likely to win Virginia. Closing its endorsement, the *Anzeiger* recommended to "each German who loves his new Fatherland" and "the Southern people together" that they should vote for the secessionist Breckinridge. In Richmond, Bell won 56% of the vote, with both Breckinridge and

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<sup>40</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 202.

Douglas trailing far behind.<sup>41</sup> Richmond had voted for a compromise to the secession crisis. However, to Richmond's German-American voters, the issue of nativism mattered more than that of secession.<sup>42</sup>

The future of slavery was mentioned in the *Anzeiger* during the election campaign. The newspaper named abolitionists in the North as enemies of the Union, because they threatened the rights of the Southern states.<sup>43</sup> Even after Lincoln's victory in the Presidential election, the *Anzeiger*, still hoping for reconciliation, reported that if the Northern states would repeal their fugitive slave laws, Southern Unionists would be encouraged to oppose the secessionists and secession would be defeated.<sup>44</sup> The *Anzeiger's* editor, like so many of Virginia's native-born citizens and voters, was initially unwilling to advocate secession. Though the *Anzeiger* did not initially endorse secession, it remained supportive of the South. In the midst of the crisis, the newspaper celebrated acts of German-American patriotism towards the South. It did not celebrate patriotism towards the North. In December 1860, the *Anzeiger* inspired Secessionist sympathy among its readership by reporting, according to the German language newspaper in Charleston, that the first shot saluting the secession of South Carolina was fired by two German-American artillerymen.<sup>45</sup> The *Anzeiger* could not ignore such an excellent opportunity to call attention to German-American patriotism.

To discuss the secession crisis, Richmond's German-Americans held a meeting at Simon Steinlein's establishment, Monticello Hall. Chairing the meeting was German-born Hermann L. Wiegand, the Turner Society leader and an acknowledged Unionist.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Presidential Election Returns, Virginia, 1860, Election record 279, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

<sup>42</sup> *Anzeiger*, 6 Nov. 1860.

<sup>43</sup> *Anzeiger*, 6 Nov. 1860.

<sup>44</sup> *Anzeiger*, 30 Nov. and 1 Dec. 1860 in Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 44.

<sup>45</sup> *Anzeiger*, 6 Dec. 1860.

<sup>46</sup> Hermann L. Wiegand failed in the fancy goods business in Richmond in the early 1850s and began a millinery business "attended mostly by his wife." By 1858, his wealth was substantial enough to

Addressing the assembly in German was O. Jennings Wise, a native-born moderate who would later become a secessionist. Wise was the editor of the *Enquirer* and the son of the former governor who had been such a friend to the foreign-born. O. Jennings Wise had studied law in Germany and served as attaché to Prussia. He was also thought a friend of the German-American community. During the meeting, neither Wiegand nor Wise must have been able to persuade the assembly, since the meeting passed no resolutions. Richmond's German-Americans were willing to discuss the issues of the day but would not speak their political opinions, in support of either Unionism or Secessionism, with one united voice.<sup>47</sup>

On February 4, 1861, Richmond elected its delegates to the state's Secession Convention: one Secessionist and two Unionists.<sup>48</sup> That day, the *Anzeiger* had endorsed the Unionist ticket and favored referring the Convention's resolutions to a referendum. At the same time, in opposition to the *Anzeiger*, a German-language Secessionist leaflet circulated through the community. Regardless of its readers' sympathies, as previously mentioned, the *Anzeiger* still warned all German-born residents who were not citizens, and who therefore did not have the right to vote, to stay away from the polls. German-born naturalized citizens were reminded to take their citizenship papers with them, to avoid problems with election officials, and not to provoke unrest. After voting, the *Anzeiger* suggested that voters quickly leave the polling areas because any congregation of German-Americans around the polls would be unfavorably regarded by the native-born.<sup>49</sup> Most of all, the *Anzeiger's* editor did not want the native-born to lash out at the German-American community during such a time of tension.

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have lent money to another German-American man. H. L. Wigand, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 250, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection and John Marxhausen, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 350, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>47</sup> Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 69-70 and Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 220.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas, *The Confederate State of Richmond*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Anzeiger*, 2 and 4 Feb. 1861.

At the same time that the *Anzeiger* supported the Unionist ticket, it sought a legal interpretation from the state attorney general for the German-American community's political guidance. The attorney general argued for the right of a state to secede, comparing it to the right of a person to emigrate. Just as the German-American had broken bonds with his or her country of birth to acquire new rights in the United States, the attorney general argued that Virginia's secession would end its residents' loyalties towards the United States. Whether a foreigner was naturalized or not, he asserted, the duty to country was granted by state of residence. The attorney general reminded naturalized persons that, in their oaths of citizenship, they had sworn loyalty to the Constitution and jettisoned their allegiances to foreign governments. They should look to America, not to Europe, for the nation that deserved their loyalties.<sup>50</sup>

By February 1861, the splits of opinion within Richmond's German-American community also emerged in the press. Herrmann Schuricht's small, two year-old newspaper, the *Virginische Zeitung*, came under financial and political pressure. To maintain his journalistic platform, Schuricht decided to merge with O. Jennings Wise's much larger *Enquirer*. As a condition of the merger, Schuricht stipulated that he not be forced to argue in support of slavery and that all pieces written by non-German-Americans, and printed in the German-language pages of the *Enquirer*, be signed by their Anglo-American authors. In the pages allotted to him in the *Enquirer*, Schuricht competed with the *Anzeiger* for the city's German-American readership. He attacked the *Anzeiger*'s moderate viewpoints. The *Anzeiger* promptly counterattacked. It called Schuricht a buffoon for his sympathy towards blacks and for changing his position from Unionist to Secessionist practically overnight.<sup>51</sup>

The German-American community continued to be rocked by conflict within its ranks, since both Secessionists and Unionists could be found within it.<sup>52</sup> Many of

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<sup>50</sup> *Anzeiger*, 4 Feb. 1861.

<sup>51</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 40; *Anzeiger*, 6 Feb. 1861.

<sup>52</sup> *Anzeiger*, 28 Mar. 1861.

Richmond's most recently immigrated Germans were among those who had the greatest reluctance when Virginia's Convention voted to secede on April 17.<sup>53</sup> Secession damaged the businesses of many of the city's German-Americans. The disruption caused by secession temporarily halted Philip Rahm's production at Eagle Iron Works.<sup>54</sup> It also made it much more difficult, if not impossible for some, to procure goods from suppliers in the North. One German-American barkeeper advertised that, since he could no longer procure beer from the North, his bar would shut down. At the same time, he announced that he looked forward to celebrating the recognition of the Confederacy by the North with one day of free beer for all.<sup>55</sup> Of course, the crisis to come would affect more than just the flow of iron and beer in Richmond.

### **Fleeing North**

Many of the city's foreign-born, especially those who were not citizens and were thus not as much assimilated as others, sold their property and moved to the North. Some even returned to Europe. On the trip north, at least one Richmond resident was "robbed of a considerable amount of specie and jewelry by Mosby's Guerillas."<sup>56</sup> Once they reached Northern lines, some among the refugees enlisted in the Union army.<sup>57</sup> One German-American resident of Richmond recalled how so many, "especially foreigners who through bribery managed to get a passport, sold all their belongings and went over the border." However, many others "stayed because work was easy to find and paid well."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 71.

<sup>54</sup> P. Rahm, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 388, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>55</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 141.

<sup>56</sup> Lewis Hyman, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 102, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>57</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 89.

<sup>58</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 142, 151.

Throughout the war, the provost marshal of Washington, D.C. picked up many of the refugees from Richmond's German-American community. One included Fred Appelius, who had lived in Richmond since 1841. Another was Gottfried Honegger, a Swiss-born watchmaker and a ten-year resident of Richmond. Louis Engel, a bartender, wanted only to return to Germany. Charles Lohnert had been a liquor dealer for twenty-seven years in Richmond. George Zander and Julius Wohlgemuth had served in Richmond's Nineteenth Virginia Militia, Company H but fled north in 1864.<sup>59</sup>

Many traveled to Alexandria, Virginia, where a substantial German-American population coalesced. In Alexandria, they reinforced an already existing German-American community, with a church, a synagogue, a school, a newspaper, a social club, and musical and singing societies.<sup>60</sup>

At the same time as German-Americans departed Richmond, immigrants from throughout the South, both native and foreign-born, replaced them in numbers many times greater. As capital of the Confederacy, Richmond attracted job seekers, military personnel, and government officials, as well as their families. City boardinghouses filled their beds, and many homeowners rented a room or two to the newcomers.<sup>61</sup> The German-Americans who remained in Richmond profited by selling goods, food, drink, and rooms to the newcomers.

## Under Arms

In Richmond in 1861, many of the city's German-Americans, like many among the native-born, were confident that the war would be short. Other German-born men and women prepared for the worst, remembering their own experiences or that of their

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<sup>59</sup> Refugees and Rebel Deserters, Provost Marshal Washington, 1864, Book 299, National Archives, Washington in Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 223.

<sup>60</sup> Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 103-4 and Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 222.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas, *The Confederate State of Richmond*, 46-47.

parents during wartime in Europe, and stockpiled food.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, scores of the city's German-American men volunteered willingly for Confederate service at the start of the war.

Many of Richmond's German-Americans, combined with German-Americans of other towns and counties of Virginia, volunteered for Confederate service within weeks of the initiation of hostilities. In Virginia, two companies composed almost entirely of German-Americans entered Confederate service. Most of their men came from Richmond. The Virginia (German) Rifles entered service as Company K, First Virginia Regiment. The Marion Rifles were attached to the Fifteenth Virginia Regiment as its Company K. Both companies were one-year volunteers. Several of the city's other German-Americans enlisted in predominantly native-born companies.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, a German Infirmary Company was formed in March 1862 to treat wounded soldiers during battle.<sup>64</sup> Later, Company H, Nineteenth Virginia Militia, reorganized as the German Home Guard in October 1863, was formed and served both in the field and to guard prisons. Finally, Company M, Nineteenth Virginia Militia was also organized in 1863 and was composed of many of the members of Richmond's German Singing Society.<sup>65</sup>

Other German-born men fighting for the Confederacy included Heros von Borcke and Justus Scheibert, who came from Prussia to gain military experience. Both gained the respect of native-born society due to their patriotism towards the Confederacy. In addition, Borcke and Scheibert, as members of upper class Prussian society, felt comfortable among the Confederacy's elites and were thus able to obtain their respect.

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<sup>62</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 141 and Charles August Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, trans. Cary Coleman, Mss2H3932a1, 2, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.

<sup>63</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 71-75 and Confederate Military Service Records, First Regiment Virginia Infantry.

<sup>64</sup> *Enquirer*, 4 March 1862; *Anzeiger*, 29 Mar. 1862.

<sup>65</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 75-79 and Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 222.

Unlike these two, another German-born soldier, E. von Buchholz, had resided in Richmond before the war. In the 1850s, Buchholz had served as a member of Governor Wise's staff and continued to serve Wise, after he was appointed a Confederate general, by organizing his brigade's artillery and supply functions. Later, Buchholz was transferred to Richmond to work in the state's ordinance department.<sup>66</sup>

A more infamous German-born character was "Count" B. Estván, who settled in Richmond several years before the war. He posed as a European "country noblemen" but lived upon the incomes of his wife and his sister-in-law, who were both teachers. When the war began, he petitioned the Confederate War Department to supply a regiment of lancers, who he claimed to have recruited in North Carolina. With his requisitions in tow, he traveled to North Carolina. There, he sold the equipment and disappeared. In Washington, D.C., he reappeared as a deserter, dressed in his Confederate colonel's uniform, and was received by President Lincoln. Much publicity was made of Estván's treachery towards the Confederacy.<sup>67</sup>

Estván's actions contributed to the Unionist reputation of the Confederacy's German-born, as did those German-Americans who fled northward. In contrast, Richmond's German-American men, who responded to the Confederacy's call to arms at the start of the war, were examples of those German-Americans who patriotically supported the Southern nation soon after its birth. Thus, Richmond's German-Americans did not react to secession and the war in unison but were divided in political sentiment.

Throughout the war, they responded to the crisis and its associated nativist pressures differently, depending upon individual circumstances and outlook. Many of those who were already strongly sympathetic towards the Confederacy offered no excuses for Confederate nativism and, while enduring nativist attacks, remained devoted to the Confederacy. Others, whose sympathies were not rock solid, became disenchanted

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<sup>66</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 82-84, 86.

<sup>67</sup> When he returned to Vienna, Austria, the authorities charged Estván with criminal activity. Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 88-89.

for the cause of the new nation as they were threatened time and again by nativists in the uniform of Confederate soldiers or in the office of Confederate Congressmen. Finally, those who were already Unionists had their political beliefs affirmed by the nativism of native-born Confederates. Thus, individuals' reactions to nativism depended upon individual political orientations. And to a great extent, nativism shaped changes in German-American political sentiments.

## **Chapter IV**

### **A Personal Introduction to the War: Wartime Richmond and Charles Hennighausen**

In many respects, but of course not all, the wartime experiences of Charles Hennighausen were similar to the experiences of Richmond's other German-Americans, at least of those that did not flee northward. Of all Richmond's German-Americans, Hennighausen left one of the most complete accounts, that is extant, of an individual's wartime experiences. His story serves as a personal introduction to the more varied experiences of Richmond's German-Americans during the Civil War. In the analysis of the political, social, and cultural scene in Richmond that follows, history on the level of personal experience cannot be forgotten.

Hennighausen was born in Hesse, Germany on March 7, 1835. Blonde hair, with gray eyes, and of average height, Charles as a youth obtained a position in a government tax office. His older brother George could not find work in Germany and, since he was of legal age, was worried about conscription. This worry was what prompted them to get "the Emigration fear." In July 1852, Charles and George arrived in New York City. Following his brother to Baltimore, Charles worked in that city as a jeweler, then a confectioner, and then a barber. While he lived in Baltimore, the Know Nothing crisis was at its height. From Baltimore, he moved to Washington for one year and finally to Richmond in November 1858.<sup>1</sup>

At war's beginning, Charles Hennighausen believed, like so many others, that the war would be short, lasting through only two or three major battles. He served in the German-American Marion Rifle Company, Fifteenth Virginia Regiment, Company K, while his other brother, Louis, served in the Union army.<sup>2</sup> In camp, Charles was glad that

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<sup>1</sup> Charles August Hennighausen, papers, Mss2H3932b4, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 2 and Confederate Service Records, Fifteen Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K.

his company included several German-Americans who were excellent singers. He also found conditions harsh and noted that “old German soldiers in our company would rather have had five years of German service than one year” of Confederate service. Thirst, hunger, long marches, the elements, disease, and bombardments from Union artillery wore down the determination of both Anglo and German-American soldiers. Because of those German-American singers, who entertained foreign and native-born soldiers alike, conflict between foreign and native-born companies was lessened and the spirits of both groups were raised.<sup>3</sup> As evidence of the Marion Rifles’ isolation from their familiar ethnic community in Richmond, Hennighausen remarked that “we had been so buried in the woods that we saw no white woman for a good quarter of a year and seldom a man who wasn’t wearing a uniform.”<sup>4</sup>

Insulting them greatly, the Marion Rifles were mistaken at least once for Union soldiers. On the night of June 5, 1861, the Fifteenth Virginia Regiment marched to Williamsburg from Yorktown. Since it was raining, the German-American company attempted to seek shelter in the college buildings, but native-born soldiers refused them entry. This generated hard feelings among the Marion Rifles. While the rain poured down, a woman called to several of the German-American soldiers from a window, “Are you Northern or Southern troops?” Perhaps it was their language that raised the woman’s doubts as to their identity. Nevertheless, once they revealed their identity, they were invited in, fed, and remained for several days. Also expressing their gratitude, the soldiers told their host family that, if they were in Germany, all public buildings would have been opened to the soldiers. The man of the house consoled them and told them, though the government had not been able to provide for their needs, all would turn out well for them in the end. Their bitterness, caused by the earlier unwillingness of their

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<sup>3</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 3-6 and Manarin, *15th Virginia Infantry*, 10-12.

<sup>4</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 7.

native-born comrades to shelter them, had lessened somewhat as they departed Williamsburg.<sup>5</sup>

In 1862, under pressure from the Union army's advance upon Richmond, as the men of the Marion Rifles marched up the Yorktown peninsula in retreat, their dissatisfaction with the army once again peaked. They felt that they were returning "back among civilized people after a year-long absence."<sup>6</sup> On May 17, 1862, one day after the expiration of his one-year enlistment term, Hennighausen asked his colonel for a discharge on the grounds of not only the expiration of his term of service but also his non-domiciled status, allowing him exemption from service with the regular army. Hennighausen was not the only one of the Marion Rifles who wanted to leave the army. Like him, the other men of the "company disbanded after our year of service was out—all but three" being foreign citizens. Hennighausen was not officially discharged until July 12, 1862.<sup>7</sup> He was again a civilian. By July, Hennighausen had entered the retail business.<sup>8</sup>

More than a year later, as the foreign-born increasingly came under pressure to join the militia, Hennighausen enlisted in the German-American Company H of the Nineteenth Virginia Militia. To avoid the draft, Hennighausen obtained a certificate testifying that he had never taken an oath either to the United States or to the Confederacy and that his status as a non-domiciled resident was due to his foreign birth. To buttress his position, in his efforts to remain outside the regular army, he obtained an additional certificate that showed him to be a member of the militia. Thus, his position as a foreign-born man fulfilling his legal obligations to his country was well documented by

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<sup>5</sup> Hennighausen, papers, Mss2H3932b.

<sup>6</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> Hennighausen, papers, Mss2H3932b and Mss2H3932b4, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 8. Hennighausen's occupation was recorded in his military records as salesman, as of 12 July 1862. Confederate Service Records, Fifteen Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K.

the legal papers that, like his countrymen, he probably carried on his person to avoid being grabbed by conscription officers.<sup>9</sup>

Such papers were essential to the movement of German-Americans around the city. Soldiers patrolled the streets and often stopped individuals for questioning. Those without papers, either consuls' passports, passes from the city's provost marshal, or exemption papers, were arrested and, if they could not prove their cases, enrolled in the army.<sup>10</sup> Hennighausen was continually stopped by conscription officers.<sup>11</sup>

In the Nineteenth Virginia Militia, as a Second Lieutenant, Hennighausen often commanded his company as it served guard duty at Richmond's Libby Prison, frequently for five to six weeks at a time "without relief." The men guarded the prison in six-hour shifts, with two hours on and four hours off. He recalled how "our men did well their onerous duties." Periodically, the company was ordered to the front lines outside the city.<sup>12</sup> During these times, he closed his store and was robbed at least once because he had no one to watch it.<sup>13</sup> Remembering such an occasion, Hennighausen told of enduring a nighttime bombardment:

Here and there one awakes and stares around with a wild look until his position becomes clear to him again and he pulls his blanket close around his shivering body [lying on top of the mud] to find sleep again if possible. Up to the knees full of mud, face and hands dirty, damp to the skin, they make sorrowful faces in their sleep and thank God when day dawns. And all this a few miles from their home where a very warm bed stands waiting for them, where dear ones are in anxiety for their father, son or brother.

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<sup>9</sup> Hennighausen, papers, Mss2H3932b.

<sup>10</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 97.

<sup>11</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Hennighausen, papers, Mss2H3932b4, 2 and Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 9.

Such strong attachment that the German-born felt towards their families encouraged them in their efforts to remain outside the regular army. As if the certificates attesting to his non-domiciled status and militia service were not sufficient, Hennighausen also acquired a third exemption certificate that granted him safe harbor from conscription due to his work making surgical instruments for the Confederate government. He never reentered the regular army.<sup>14</sup>

After the end of the war, Hennighausen thought himself to be too poor to visit Germany, though he longed for the “good beer and pretty girls” of Nuremberg. Making up his mind to remain in the United States, he looked forward to a prosperous future, when he would “become a solid citizen, marry and rest on” his “laurels.”<sup>15</sup>

The war had cut off all correspondence between him and his relatives in the North and in Europe. In a letter that he sent to Germany after the war ended, Hennighausen updated his family about his wartime experiences. While he devoted much of his letter to detailing the sense of pride that he felt as a result of his economic accomplishments prior to the war, he also emphasized to his family the military activities of Richmond’s German-American community during the war and the nativism directed against the German-born both previous to and during war.<sup>16</sup> The war had interfered with their economic plans, had altered the definition of patriotism to which German-Americans were expected to adhere, and had escalated the nativism directed against them. The fire of war had affected them deeply.

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<sup>14</sup> Hennighausen, papers, Mss2H3932b.

<sup>15</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 14.

<sup>16</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1.

## Chapter V

### Enduring the Fire

The Confederate Congress, on March 11, 1861, unanimously passed a Constitution that, in its Article I, Section II, prohibited foreign-born non-citizens from voting in any state or national election. Thus, the newborn nation established, at its highest level of authority, a record for restricting the rights of its foreign-born residents. Ironically, in the nation that was founded to guarantee its member states greater independence from federal control, the issue of the foreign-born's influence in elections was thought so critical as to require inclusion in the federal Constitution. In contrast, the Constitution of the United States allowed each state to define its own voting qualifications. In this respect, in the Constitution establishing the Confederate States of America, the ideal of states' rights was abridged to further a nativist agenda. This Constitutional provision foreshadowed the suspicion and hostility that was directed against the foreign-born in the Confederacy.

From the days when the new nation was formed until the war's final year, the debates in and bills passed by Congress continually targeted the foreign-born for prejudicial treatment. While Congress was not entirely nativist and several Congressmen repeatedly spoke and acted in support of the Confederacy's foreign-born, it was not sufficient to soothe Richmond's German-American community, which regarded Congress as a threat. As an example of German-American wariness towards Congress, on April 30, 1864, the *Richmonder Anzeiger* declared that Congress should reverse its long-standing belief that the foreign-born were shirking their duty to serve the Confederacy.<sup>1</sup> Time and again, throughout its existence, the Confederate Congress passed laws that, though designed to require from the foreign-born their loyalty to nation, assumed their disloyalty.

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<sup>1</sup> *Anzeiger*, 30 Apr. 1864.

Thus, Richmond's German-Americans faced an enemy that was much more threatening to them, in proximity and power, than that represented by the armies of the North. Just as both the South and the North conceived of the war as a struggle to secure their freedoms, Richmond's German-Americans confronted the forces of nativism around them and waged their own struggle for freedom. It was a struggle enveloped by the clouds of war. That the nativist enemy arrayed against them happened to be Confederate government officials, Confederate soldiers, and other supporters of the Confederacy only made the struggle of the German-born more difficult. By coming to grips with these nativists, German-Americans found themselves opposing so many Confederates. The Confederacy's German-Americans were cast as traitors to the nation in its fight for survival.

### **“Be Driven Away from the South Forever”**

#### *Nativism in Government*

As a new nation carved from an older one, the Confederacy was composed of a citizenry of untested patriotism. Its native-born citizens had not been born upon its sovereign soil but upon that of the United States. Immigrants were even more suspect. They had not made the Confederacy their destination. Many had entered the United States via Northern ports and had lived for years in the North before migrating to the South.

To purify its citizenry so that only those who professed loyalty to it remained, the Confederate Congress resolved, on August 8, 1861, that all males fourteen years or older who were citizens or residents of the United States and did not become citizens of the Confederate States would be subject to arrest, imprisonment, and deportation. Those who wished to shed their alien status could take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy, and those who did not wish to do so were guaranteed a period of safety to leave.

Mandatory deportations were slated to begin within a few weeks.<sup>2</sup> If those who chose not to become citizens did not depart within this time span, they would be treated as “alien enemies” and would be subject to arrest, imprisonment, and forced deportation. If they returned after their deportations, they would again be treated as alien enemies and dealt with harshly. Judges were empowered to order their arrests and dispose of them via imprisonment or deportation.<sup>3</sup>

On August 14, 1861, President Davis issued the required proclamation, officially initiating a campaign against foreigners in the Confederacy. Officers of the Confederacy were directed, starting in forty days, to round up aliens for interrogation and, if they were found to be alien enemies, to imprison or deport them. With this act, the Confederacy mobilized to rid itself of its Unionists and many of its foreign-born.<sup>4</sup>

Partly because of these efforts, the Confederacy’s foreign-born grew increasingly insecure and made their dissatisfaction known. On August 22, Congress passed a provision that guaranteed, to its non-citizens serving in the military, legal protections equal to its citizens. Foreign-born soldiers were told that they could be naturalized if they pledged to support the laws of their state and the Confederacy and if they renounced their allegiance to all other governments as well as the Catholic pope.<sup>5</sup> Not interested in Confederate citizenship, a substantial number of Richmond’s German-Americans fled the Confederacy during the war’s first months. In part, they left as a result of Davis’ proclamation.<sup>6</sup>

When the forty-day safe period expired, the position of the foreign-born in the South declined considerably. Many of those who had not departed on a timely basis, but

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<sup>2</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900), Ser. 2, Vol. 2, 1368-70, 1390.

<sup>3</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 2, Vol. 2, 1368-70, 1390.

<sup>4</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 2, Vol. 2, 1368-70, 1390.

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 1, 993-94. This oath was parallel to that required by the United States.

<sup>6</sup> Lange, “The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World,” 151.

who were in the process of doing so, were harassed as they left. In Richmond, Secretary of War Judah Benjamin informed General Huger, commanding at the port city of Norfolk, Virginia, that alien enemies who had been issued passes to depart the Confederacy would be traveling through his area of authority. Most came from Virginia and the Carolinas. Regardless of their passes, Huger was directed to stop any individuals who, he might think, would pose a danger to the Confederacy if allowed to depart.<sup>7</sup>

When Huger recognized that a number of the foreign-born remained near Norfolk, and were circulating through the lines with passes, he resolved to send away all that he could and to keep within the Confederacy all who remained. He described them as “a disaffected and troublesome population, most of whom are idle and would be liable to turn against” the Confederacy if it was “in any danger of a defeat.” With the support of the Secretary of War, Huger issued a proclamation calling for all alien enemies to register their names, within one week, for boarding a ship that would be their last chance to depart. After that time, “all alien enemies or other suspected persons” were to be arrested and imprisoned.<sup>8</sup>

Some German-Americans were reluctant to swear an oath to the Confederacy. Such an act would renounce all other allegiances. The oath required by the Confederacy was similar to that taken when applying for naturalization, though it did not gain for them the rights and privileges of citizenship.<sup>9</sup> While a steady stream of the German-born had earlier applied in Richmond’s court for U.S. citizenship, at least until a few days before the secession of Virginia, few if any appeared in the same Confederate court during the war.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, most all of Richmond’s German-born took the oath.<sup>11</sup> The city’s employers were encouraged to hire only those foreign-born workers who had taken it.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, Vol. 51, Part 2, 311-12.

<sup>8</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, Vol. 51, Part 2, 348 and Ser. 2, Vol. 2, 1390.

<sup>9</sup> Hustings Court Minutes, Richmond City, 1860-61.

<sup>10</sup> Hustings Court Minutes, Richmond City, 1 April 1861-13 Sept. 1861 and 12 May 1862-15 July 1862.

By October 31, 1861, the War Department warned General Huger that the policy of the Confederacy had progressed to the point where it could no longer tolerate lingering alien enemies. Huger was told that “if they have not availed themselves of this liberal policy they certainly have no one to blame except themselves, and if they still hope to leave the Confederacy at pleasure they abuse the generosity which has been shown them.” Alien enemies were to be treated as prisoners of war—arrested and transported to Richmond.<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, the Confederacy’s foreign-born experienced a hostile environment as the nation entered the winter of 1861-62. Congress passed a bill that would have prevented any foreign-born person from becoming a citizen of the Confederacy. On February 4, President Davis vetoed this repeal of the naturalization laws. In his statement to Congress, Davis defended immigrants’ rights by arguing that those immigrants who were aiding the Confederacy did so because they intended to become citizens. Davis appealed to the need to encourage the Confederacy’s foreign-born soldiers and workers and reasoned that repealing naturalization would set back the Confederate war effort. In a legal argument, Davis asserted that, since the Confederate Constitution empowered the federal government to keep voting rights out of the hands of its foreign-born non-citizens, the federal government had also been given, implicitly, the power to regulate naturalization. Eliminating the naturalization process, Davis argued, would cast “a legislative stigma” on those foreign-born who were assisting the Confederacy in military or civilian service. Finally, he professed support for naturalization because he considered any immigration to be useful to the nation. He reasoned that only those people who were sympathetic to the Confederacy would immigrate. The President did not defend the Confederacy’s foreign-born unconditionally but balanced the concerns of nativists with

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<sup>11</sup> German-born George P. Loehr claimed to be the only man released from his fire company for refusing to take the oath. Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, U. S. Court of Claims, Record group 123, Box 594, National Archives, Washington and Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 70.

<sup>12</sup> *Cornhill Magazine*, Old Series, Vol. VII (Jan.-June 1863): 102.

<sup>13</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, Vol. 51, Part 2, 365-66.

the Confederacy's need for foreign-born soldiers and workers. In Davis, the Confederacy's foreign-born population had an ally, though he was one conditioned by the necessities of war.<sup>14</sup>

Richmond's foreign-born had another major ally, one who supported the foreign-born, except for the Catholics among them. The *Enquirer* often defended the foreign-born by urging the Confederacy to concentrate its efforts upon fighting the Union army and not the German and Irish-born people in both the North and the South. After all, it argued, the German and Irish-born in the North might become convinced that the Confederacy was an enemy to them and would rally in support of the Union army. Addressing Southern nativists in particular, the *Enquirer* continued that, unless the pressure against the foreign-born abated, those foreign-born in the Confederacy would be led "to think, perhaps you mean them to, as you take no great care to distinguish them from others" in the North that they are the enemy. The *Enquirer* also spoke to the movement to repeal naturalization laws and stated that the driving away of the foreign-born would only weaken the Confederacy and strengthen the North. In its own editorial, the *Anzeiger* supplemented the *Enquirer's* argument by stating that the foreign-born in the North were being exploited by Northern abolitionists. The North's foreign-born had only become enemies of the Confederacy because of Republican rhetoric. The *Anzeiger* articulated its opposition to the movement to repeal naturalization in the Confederacy. The mere discussion of such a topic, it reasoned, only encouraged nativist feelings in the Confederacy. Summing up its argument, the *Anzeiger* urged the Confederacy to concentrate its efforts on opposing the Union armies, not the foreign-born in the Confederacy and in the North.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, judging from the rhetoric used in this article, the city's German-born believed themselves to be objects of nativist attacks.

Despite Davis' efforts, the issue of repealing the naturalization laws remained alive. On April 25, 1863, naturalization was again a concern for Richmond's German-

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<sup>14</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 1, 908.

<sup>15</sup> *Anzeiger*, 27 Jun. 1863. The *Enquirer* article appeared as a reprint in the *Anzeiger*.

Americans. The *Anzeiger* printed an unusual English language editorial against the nativist movement that was again gathering steam in Congress. It termed the repeal of naturalization “untimely, unjust, disastrous, and disgraceful” and predicted that it would only strengthen the North. In terms that a Southern-born citizen might understand, the writer asserted that the nation should adhere to the Constitution as established by George Washington and had “nothing to fear from the influence of foreigners whatsoever, if she is only true to herself.” All people, whether native or foreign-born, discovered to be aiding the enemy should leave the Confederacy, so the writer argued:

Let every citizen of the South come forward, and swear upon the Bible, upon the constitution, or upon his very life, that he will never trade with a Yankee or with the Yankees...and let every citizen, upon prove [sic] that he broke his oath be driven away from the sunny South forever, and let his name—no matter where borne—be stricken out from the list of our citizens, but let honor, intelligence and true love of constitutional liberty—and not the place of birth—give a right to Southern citizenship. Then, we can truly say, that Columbus, who was I suppose, a Foreigner, gave us a land for all honest men, that we mean to keep despotism away, that we are fighting for justice, self-government and independence, and that we offer a home for religion and an asyl [sic] for the oppressed.

In April 1863 and throughout the remainder of the war, Richmond’s German-Americans did not regard the Confederacy to be a safe harbor for the foreign-born. They fervently opposed the elimination of naturalization. They hoped for the day when the Confederacy would support its residents, native and foreign-born alike.<sup>16</sup>

Richmond’s German-Americans believed that naturalization was a fundamental right and that all white citizens should be treated equally. They looked jealously upon Anglo-Americans who held citizenship, free from nativist attacks. In the winter of 1862-63, they felt slighted and angered, against both the North and the South, when Lincoln

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<sup>16</sup> *Anzeiger*, 25 Apr. 1863.

called blacks “American citizens of African ancestry.”<sup>17</sup> In 1864, German-American racism against blacks again mixed with their concerns over naturalization when word reached Richmond of the North’s enrollment of blacks in its military.<sup>18</sup> At the same time that the future prospects of foreign-born citizens within the Confederacy was in doubt, much to the displeasure of Richmond’s German-Americans, blacks were gaining status in the North.

The city’s German-born felt themselves discriminated against due to their foreign places of birth. The *Anzeiger*, arguing that loyalties ran the same among the foreign-born as they did among the native-born, challenged the native-born citizenry to endure the same level of scrutiny, that the foreign-born were being subjected to, in order to expose more of those among the native-born who were disloyal toward the Confederacy. To make its point that Unionists were found among both groups, the *Anzeiger* periodically featured articles on native-born Unionists when such individuals had their political sympathies exposed. Likewise, the *Anzeiger*’s editorials denounced “the Southern Yankees,” not identifying Unionists according to their places of birth but according to their region of residence and their political sympathies.<sup>19</sup>

Returning to 1862, another group of emigrants waited in Norfolk to leave the Confederacy. General Huger, on March 17, asked his superiors for instructions and recommended that the refugees’ departures be prevented. In the response that he received, Huger was ordered to decline their requests for passes and disperse them.<sup>20</sup>

More threatening to the Confederacy than fleeing refugees was the network of German-American revolutionaries who were thought to be organized in Richmond. On March 2, German-American Chas. J. Muller was arrested, along with several other

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<sup>17</sup> *Anzeiger*, 3 Jan. 1863.

<sup>18</sup> *Anzeiger*, 19 Mar. 1864.

<sup>19</sup> *Anzeiger*, 25 Apr. and 22 Aug. 1863.

<sup>20</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, Vol. 51, Part 2, 505-6.

native-born men, and accused of treason.<sup>21</sup> The *Richmond Examiner*, which tended to be more nativist than the city's other newspapers, reported that Muller was the leader of the secret German republican societies of Richmond. The newspaper continued that some members of these German-American groups, rejoicing over recent Confederate military misfortunes, had boasted that they were hiding thousands of weapons and an abundance of ammunition and "that the men were enrolled who would use them on the first approach of the Yankee army."<sup>22</sup> The case against Muller probably had little merit. The reported cache of weapons probably did not exist and the alleged conspiracy has never been uncovered by historians. More likely, Muller was probably arrested for exhibiting liberal political activism, similar to that expressed by the short-lived radical Free-thinking Society or the still liberal but more conservative Turner Society. The Turner Society was raided four days later. Two men were arrested.<sup>23</sup>

Also arrested was the city's most prominent native-born Unionist, John Botts, who was called "the recognized leader of all the disaffected, all the low Germans of the red republican, Carl Schurz school, and of the vile remnant of the Union party." In a single sentence, the *Examiner* linked Richmond's German-Americans with German-American Republicans of the North and with Unionist sympathizers within the Confederacy.<sup>24</sup> A more damning indictment of German-American patriotism towards the Confederacy could not have been made.

In the next days and weeks, continuing until early summer, the Union army advanced up the Yorktown peninsula to threaten Richmond. During this time, additional accusations of disloyalty spread. Foreign-born men not in the army were pressured to take up arms to defend the city. Because the Confederacy could not obtain adequate military manpower, of either native or foreign birth, Congress enacted conscription on

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<sup>21</sup> *Dispatch*, 3 April 1862.

<sup>22</sup> *Richmond Examiner*, 3 March 1862 in *New York Herald*, 7 March 1862.

<sup>23</sup> *Dispatch*, 7 March 1862 and *Enquirer*, 7 March 1862.

<sup>24</sup> *Examiner*, 3 March 1862 in *New York Herald*, 7 March 1862. Carl Schurz was a leading German-born revolutionary, a Forty-Eighter, and a Republican in the North.

April 16, 1862. All white men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five years, not legally exempt, were subject to enlistment.<sup>25</sup> Exemptions were given to those who fit any one of several categories, including, among others, Confederate officeholders, those employed in Confederate government work, postal carriers, transportation and iron workers, printers, teachers, factory managers, and the non-domiciled foreign-born.<sup>26</sup> Still, if many German-Americans were willing to serve at war's start, many of these same men had soured on Confederate service by the spring of 1862.<sup>27</sup>

In April and May, the men who had responded to the call to arms at the beginning of the war reached the end of their one-year terms of enlistment. At the same time that the Confederacy enacted conscription, the Confederate government changed its acceptance of the military service of its foreign-born. The War Department, authorized by an act of Congress, ruled that the non-domiciled foreign-born were exempt from conscription. Essentially, the Confederacy gave, to the foreign-born, an opportunity to obtain legal exemption from conscription.<sup>28</sup> Because naturalization would subject them to the draft, the German-born were further discouraged from seeking Confederate citizenship. Even for those foreign-born who were willing to serve but did not wish to become domiciled residents of the Confederacy, military service was not an option. The War Department expressed its disapproval of these soldiers by discharging them.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, in light of the Confederacy's hard-line stance towards its foreign-born, the ranks of the Marion Rifles and the Virginia Rifles dissolved away. As the men of these companies marched toward Richmond, the attraction of their homes and the justifications given to them by the expirations of their terms of service and by their exempt status, since many of them were non-domiciled foreign-born, proved too strong. Staff officers

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<sup>25</sup> C.S.A Congress, *The Statutes at Large of the Confederate States of America*, I Congress, I Session, Chapt. 31, (Richmond: R. M. Smith, 1862), 29-32.

<sup>26</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 1, 1081, 1123.

<sup>27</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 90-91.

<sup>28</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 1, 1081, 1123, and 1127.

<sup>29</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 2, 239.

“made difficulties” for them and tried to hold them in the army. The men of the Marion Rifles, believing their action justified, almost all deserted in one night—the night that their one-year terms of enlistment expired.<sup>30</sup> A similar story occurred with the Virginia Rifles.<sup>31</sup> On April 17, 1862, as the German-Americans in the Virginia Rifles marched through the city in their redeployment from their camp near Manassas to the Yorktown Peninsula, the *Anzeiger* warned them that their departures from the army, to rejoin their families and friends in the city, would result in their being classified as deserters. In early May, Colonel Moore, commanding the Virginia Rifles’ First Virginia Regiment, demanded that those men absent without leave should return to their company or be punished. An army detail had already been assigned to Richmond in order to round up the deserters.<sup>32</sup> Only forty-four in the Virginia Rifle Company were still present for duty.<sup>33</sup> Within the next few months, almost all of the German-born soldiers of the Marion and Virginia Rifle Companies received discharges as a consequence of their non-domiciled status. Others were simply discharged after these companies had been disbanded.<sup>34</sup>

With this change in the foreign-born’s enrollment in, exposure to, and opportunities for military service in the spring of 1862, the legal status of the foreign-born within the Confederacy had changed. Previously, many of the non-citizen foreign-born were regarded as “residents” and permitted to serve in the military. Under the new

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<sup>30</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 6; Hennighausen, papers, Mss2H3932b4, 2; and Confederate Service Records, Fifteenth Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K.

<sup>31</sup> Confederate Service Records, First Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K.

<sup>32</sup> *Anzeiger*, 17 April and 3 May 1862.

<sup>33</sup> Wallace, *1st Virginia Infantry*, 26.

<sup>34</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 6-7 and Confederate Service Records, First Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K and Fifteenth Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K,

standard, a stricter interpretation of “domicile” and thus what made one a “permanent resident” was established.<sup>35</sup>

Domicile was a legal term defined by an individual’s intention to remain permanently within the Confederacy and to abandon domicile abroad. It was able to be acquired in less than a year of residence or may not have been obtained even after a twenty-year period of residence. It was decided by several factors. If an individual living in the Confederacy intended to return to his country of birth, then that resident was not considered domiciled in the Confederate States. To determine whether a person had not established permanent residence, and still might intend to depart from the Confederacy, the individual’s personal testimony was confirmed or denied through an examination of other evidence, such as the individual’s citizenship status, exercise of the rights of citizenship, marital status, and ownership of property. The statements of neighbors also assisted in the determination. If a man was determined as having a domicile in the Confederacy, he was subject to conscription.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, if a foreign-born man wished to remain outside the regular army, he did all he could to gain the support of his foreign consul and his neighbors.

In deciding whether to become a domiciled resident, a German-born man had to balance his economic interests with his concerns regarding military service. On March 31, 1862, the Virginia legislature passed a law that allowed only those who at least intended to become Confederate citizens to be issued government licenses, of which

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<sup>35</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 1, 1127.

<sup>36</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 1, 1123, 1127. The standard to establish domicile, for purposes of naturalization, had been five years within the country under the law of the United States, and the Confederate States adopted this as their benchmark as well. However, domicile was interpreted by the Confederate War Department according to a different standard. Bromwell, *Immigration to the United States*, 189 and U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 2, 164, 463.

liquor licenses were of critical importance to several of Richmond's German-born bar owners.<sup>37</sup> For some, the cost of claiming non-domiciled status was high.

Also included in the category of the non-domiciled, who were exempt from conscription, were many of the Northern-born men who lived in Richmond. Along with Northerners and other men similarly born abroad, approximately three hundred of Richmond's German-American men managed to have their names listed in the provost marshal's Register of Arrests, a list maintained of those who had proved their exempt status. Most all of these men had obtained their status by the spring of 1862. Many of them had obtained papers from German foreign consul Edward de Voss, who testified to their non-domiciled status.<sup>38</sup> It was fortunate for these men that Voss was a man who had standing within the city. He had acquired great wealth, from tobacco exports, and was highly respected by the native-born.<sup>39</sup> His signature on these papers was respected in most cases. To avoid being enlisted illegally by conscription officers, many foreign-born men made sure to carry the papers on their persons at all times.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, all "the foreign born inhabitants and especially such that kept away from the army were objects of suspicion and all possible influence was urged to force them into service."<sup>41</sup> Despite their papers, Confederate officers sometimes conscripted the non-domiciled foreign-born. When brought to the attention of higher authorities within the War Department, these men were usually discharged. Nevertheless, the War Department often found enrolling officers to have gone beyond the boundaries of the law

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<sup>37</sup> *Dispatch*, 2 April 1862. During most of the war, liquor licenses made little difference, since martial law prohibited alcohol sales in Richmond.

<sup>38</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 91.

<sup>39</sup> Ed. Wm. De Voss & Co., Virginia, Vol. 43, p. 62, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>40</sup> Included among these men were William Flegenheimer, Henry Bodecker, and Henry Schad who were all listed as citizens of "Germany", though the united German nation did not yet exist. Others were named as from Prussia, Switzerland, and Austria. Register of Arrests, Provost Marshal General's Office, Richmond, Va., 1862-64, Record group 109, Chapt. IX, Vol. 244, National Archives, Washington and Exemption Book, Bureau of Conscription, Feb.-Mar. 1864, Record group 109, Chapt. I, Vol. 244, National Archives, Washington.

<sup>41</sup> Herrmann Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 91.

and to have rounded up the non-domiciled foreign-born for military service. They were turned into soldiers before their cases were heard. No wonder why conscription officers were so universally feared by Richmond's civilian German-American men.<sup>42</sup>

In spite of the federal government's saving the non-domiciled foreign-born from conscription, several states adopted no such policy. Richmond's German-Americans feared that it might be only a matter of time until Virginia adopted the policy of states like Georgia. There, on July 17, 1863, the foreign-born were deemed, if "living under the protection of our Government and laws, . . . bound to defend his domicile, and liable to be drafted by the State." Almost a year later, the governor of Georgia, increasingly frustrated by the unwillingness of the foreign-born to enlist in state service, ordered all foreign-born men who had not volunteered for service to leave the state within ten days. However, after the Prussian consul protested the governor's action, the Confederate federal government intervened and, while not directly challenging the state government's authority, responded by pointing out that the foreign-born had the right to challenge their expulsions in court. All foreign-born men displaced by state action were invited to apply for work in government factories. For those who still wished to emigrate, the federal government instructed its officers to facilitate their travel. As with other issues, the Confederate federal and state governments were at odds over the issue of conscripting the foreign-born. That the federal government supported their right to have their day in court did little to calm the fears of Richmond's German-Americans that they would be conscripted by the state.<sup>43</sup>

Likewise, in Virginia, in late 1863, when the Confederacy was becoming increasingly desperate for manpower, the governor issued a call for men to serve in the militia for the purpose of local defense and to guard prisoners. Foreigners exempt from regular army conscription were nonetheless required to enlist in the militia. In

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<sup>42</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 2, 84, 463.

<sup>43</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 2, 641-42; Ser. 1, Vol. 52, Part 2, 714-15; Ser. 4, Vol. 3, 669-70.

Richmond, militiamen served in and around the city, often on a part-time but sometimes on a full-time basis. These men, including the German-American Company H, Nineteenth Virginia Militia, pursued their civilian work when not on duty. They also gained the privilege of drawing rations from government stocks at regulated prices. Enlisting in the militia was a compromise solution for the many foreign-born men who wanted to further shield themselves from the conscription officer while maintaining their residence and civilian employment.<sup>44</sup>

During the war, the threat of conscription was a continual worry. In early 1864, the Confederate government announced to Richmond's foreign-born that they would be conscripted, regardless of their prior status, unless they could provide papers proving their exemption from the draft. To confirm consuls' certifications of their domicile, the foreign-born were required to submit evidence of their property holdings and the birth countries of their children.<sup>45</sup> The army, Congress, state government, and the provost marshal were all regarded warily by Richmond's German-Americans. However, these were not the only threats arrayed against them.

### *Rhetorical Fire*

Nativism also flared within the Confederacy's popular culture, in part, because "Confederates seemed fully convinced" that a host of "foreign mercenaries" serving in the Union army threatened them.<sup>46</sup> The campaign waged against the foreign-born in the Confederacy was not prosecuted by the government alone. Rhetorical fire from all quarters was directed at the Northern enemy and sometimes also burned against the Confederacy's Northern and European-born residents. Such fire was found, for example, in the poetry of the South.

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<sup>44</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 100-1.

<sup>45</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 177.

<sup>46</sup> Lonn, "Reconciliation between the North and the South," 16.

Poetry was both a tribute to Confederate soldiers and an inspiration for those on the home front. Portraying an enemy that threatened Southern women, homes, and ideals, Confederate poetry was meant to excite patriotic fervor within its audience. The more debased the enemy could be depicted in poetry, the greater the threat, the better the nation could be united in opposition to the North. For example, one poet portrayed Union soldiers as a “vandal-like enemy . . . fired by lust” and as despoilers of the land and rapists of Southern women.<sup>47</sup> The German-born in the Union army were depicted as men to be feared. One English visitor insisted that the Confederate citizenry, though they might have reconciled with the North earlier in the war, appeared by 1863 to be willing to fight until victory was achieved. Their devotion to their nation was due, in part, to stories of “the nameless and hideous atrocities of their [the North’s] German mercenaries in Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Northern Alabama, and Northern Virginia.”<sup>48</sup>

References to the enemy’s soldiers included terms such as “Northern ‘Hessians,’” “filthy Dutch,” “the foul German dragon,” “the scum of Europe,” “felon race,” “the hosts of the West,” “lepers of the nation,” hired “legions,” “hireling band,” “base hirelings,” “felon” and “degenerate hordes,” “a ravenous pack,” and “wretches.” Characterizing Northern soldiers in racial terms meant that, since race is hereditary, German-Americans living in the South were brothers and sisters to the so-called “scum of Europe” fighting for the North. Poetry thus romanticized the struggle by pitting the South’s “cavalier” against the North’s mercenary “Hessians.”<sup>49</sup> One poem, published in Richmond, referred to the Union army that operated in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley as:

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<sup>47</sup> A. B. Meek, “What the Bugles Say,” in *War Songs of the South* (Richmond, Va.: West & Johnston, 1862), 40, Confederate Imprints, reel 105, no. 3154.

<sup>48</sup> W. C. Corsan, *Two Months in the Confederate States: An Englishman’s Travels Through the South*, Benjamin H. Trask, ed. (London: Richard Bentley, 1863; reprint, Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 135.

<sup>49</sup> Ada Rose, “Nil Desperandum,” in *Songs and Ballads of the Southern People, 1861-65*, ed. Frank Moore (New York: Burt Franklin, 1886; reprint, New York: Lenox Hill Pub. & Dist. Co., 1971), 159; Anonymous in “Not Doubtful of Your Fatherland,” in *War Poetry of the South*, William Gilmore Simms, ed. (New York: Arno Press, 1972; reprint, New York: Richardson & Company, 1866), 439-40; Henry C. Alexander, “Lines to the Tyrant,” in *War Songs of the South*; B. F. Porter, “The Marseilles Hymn,” in *War Songs of the South*; “Southern Border Song,” in *War Songs of the South*; E. P. Birch,

A heterogeneous mass of Dutch,  
 With a few wild Irish diggers,  
 But the most they did on that campaign,  
 Was to steal a few lame niggers.<sup>50</sup>

That the battle was against a despised horde of immigrants, not their former native-born countrymen in the North, made the war easier for some Southerners to rationalize. In much of the Confederate poetry written during the war, defenders of the South were upholding the traditional ideals of their forefathers and protecting the ground upon which they were born. In contrast, many poems, but of course not all, described the Northern armies as consisting of greedy immigrants who waged war for the pay and plunder that could supply their basic needs and ravenous desires. Attracted by the lure of good pay in the army, many Northern soldiers were thought to have emigrated from Europe. Such foreign-born men were portrayed as the enemy's strength.<sup>51</sup> Testifying to this perception, Austrian military observer Fitzgerald Ross sat in a Virginia tavern, in occupied Union territory, as one Southerner forcefully exclaimed, "Them Dutch and Irishmen fight for them now, sir! No Yankee is ever killed in battle, sir—not at least to speak of."<sup>52</sup>

Richmond's English language newspapers were of course not immune from the rhetoric of nativism. The *Richmond Dispatch* introduced one article, a reprint from the German-American Chicago *Staats Zeitung*, with the inflammatory title "Germans on the Rampage." The *Staats Zeitung* denounced Lincoln for his "cowardice" and upheld the more aggressive war initiatives of German-Americans Franz Sigel and Frederick Kapp. In Richmond's German-American community, many probably thought that this reprint

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"Yankee Doodle's Ride to Richmond," in *War Songs of the South*; and "The Brigand Brigade," in *War Songs of the South*.

<sup>50</sup> Abram. *A Military Poem, by a Young Rebelle, Esq., of the Army* (Richmond, Va.: MacFarlane & Furgusson, 1863), 16, Confederate Imprints, reel 105, no. 3152.

<sup>51</sup> *Dispatch*, 1 June 1863 and *Fun for the Camp: A Comic Medley* (Columbia, S.C.: n.p., n.d.), Confederate Imprints, reel 104, no. 3124.

<sup>52</sup> Fitzgerald Ross, *Cities and Camps of the Confederate States*, Richard Barksdale Harwell, ed. (reprint, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 13.

further endangered their status in the Confederacy. As early as August 1861, the *Anzeiger* reported that a local English language newspaper, that it did not name, had disparaged the German-born of the North by calling them “Hessians.” That so many of the Confederacy’s prisoners were such “Hessians,” the English language newspaper asserted, showed the lack of courage in the Germans and their willingness to run in battle. Responding to this accusation, the *Anzeiger* stated that all Union soldiers lacked courage. Cowardice was not an attribute of only the German-born among the Union forces. Nevertheless, though the *Anzeiger* defended the reputation of the German-born of the North, it still claimed that German-American patriotism towards the Confederacy was strong. Disassociating the German-Americans of the South from those of the North, the *Anzeiger* referred to the people of the Confederacy as one “Volk,” united.<sup>53</sup>

As the *Anzeiger* continued on the defensive, much of the poetry of the Confederacy also continued to be nativist. One poem’s first stanza issued a siren call to those who were flagging in their determination to continue the fight:

Warning you how very near  
The Northern “Hessians” are,<sup>54</sup>

Another poet featured several stanzas on the Revolution, when “the King sent over hireling hordes, Briton, Hessian, Scot,” and juxtaposed them against several stanzas that called for Southern men to come to their nation’s defense.<sup>55</sup> The Hessian metaphor was particularly effective. The long-standing hatred for the Hessian mercenaries who had fought for the British in the Revolution was given new life due to the fact that many Union soldiers were German-born and that bounties were offered to encourage Union enlistments. In addition to comparing the Union army to the Hessian mercenary troops of the Revolution, antagonism towards Germans was further encouraged by the depiction of

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<sup>53</sup> *Dispatch*, 15 July 1863 and *Anzeiger*, 5 Aug. 1861 and 4 April 1863.

<sup>54</sup> Ada Rose, “Nil Desperandum,” in *Songs and Ballads of the Southern People*, 158.

<sup>55</sup> John W. Overall, “The Right above the Wrong,” in *War Songs of the South*, 179.

Union troops as largely composed of drunken, angry Germans. For example, in the following poem, the Union army was marching its way towards Richmond:

While the beer-drinking Germans,  
From Neckar and Rhine,  
With Minnie and Yager,  
Come on with a swagger,  
Full of fury and lager,<sup>56</sup>

Opposing this foreign-born invading army were the Southern people, who were depicted in poetry as almost exclusively native-born. Another poem titled “Southrons” referred to Confederate war casualties in terms that excluded the foreign-born among them:

Though their corpses [sic] strew the earth,  
That smiled upon their birth,<sup>57</sup>

The native-born were expected to defend their homeland. The foreign-born were not. For example, one poem implied that disloyalty was expected from the foreign-born living in the South but that a native-born traitor was especially despicable:

And the man that could succor her enemies *now*,  
Even though on her soil he were born,  
Is so base, so inhuman, so false and so vile,  
That Virginia disowns him with scorn!<sup>58</sup>

Finally, through negative identification, by contrasting patriotic Southerners with the foreign-born hireling band, nationalism was invoked in the following stanza:

Not doubtful of your fatherland,  
Or of the God who gave it;  
On Southrons! ‘gainst the hireling band  
That struggle to enslave it;

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<sup>56</sup> John R. Thompson, “On to Richmond,” originally in the *Richmond Whig*, in *War Songs of the South*, 112.

<sup>57</sup> Catharine M. Warfield, “Southrons,” in *Songs and Ballads of the Southern People*, 156.

<sup>58</sup> Anonymous originally in the *Richmond Examiner*, “To the Tories of Virginia,” in *Songs and Ballads of the Southern People*, 52.

Ring boldly out  
Your battle-shout,  
Charge fiercely 'gainst these felon hordes<sup>59</sup>

and in the following lines of the same poem:

And what the foe, the felon race,  
That seek your subjugation?  
The scum of Europe, her disgrace,  
The lepers of the nation.  
And what the spoil  
That tempts their toil,  
The bait that goads them on to fight?  
Lust, crime, and blood,  
Each fiendish mood  
That prompts and follows appetite.<sup>60</sup>

The theme of German soldiers sent to the American South in order to repress and enslave the population was a fear that had taken root prior to the Civil War. In Richmond, in 1860, one local historian had described the Hessians fighting for the British as “troops that were sold by their prince . . . to fight the battles of despotism.” He continued that many of the Hessians had deserted and had “obtained freedom in the land they were sent to enslave.” The myth that hordes of Germans, hired with the Union’s wealth, would sweep a wrath of destruction and enslavement upon the Confederacy resonated in Richmond.<sup>61</sup>

Still, this Richmond author’s book also supported the possibility that a German-born man could become accepted, but only after forsaking his former country. It recounted that a Hessian sutler with the British army, Joseph Darmstadt, had settled in Richmond only after renouncing his foreign allegiance and soon circulated among the

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<sup>59</sup> Anonymous originally in the *Charleston Mercury*, “Not Doubtful of Your Fatherland,” in *Songs and Ballads of the Southern People*, 439.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>61</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 149.

upper levels of Richmond society.<sup>62</sup> A few of the German-born in the Confederacy were also viewed in a similar positive manner. Heros von Borcke, a Prussian soldier of fortune, was the most celebrated of the Confederacy's German-born soldiers, partly because of his noble birthright and refined behavior. Eventually, his military exploits were celebrated by the upper echelons of Richmond society. The Confederate Congress unanimously passed a resolution in appreciation of his service. Initially, Borcke had been hindered in his requests for an officer's appointment due to his foreign status.<sup>63</sup> Even after he had become more accepted, he remained sensitive to what made him different from his uniformed Confederate comrades.

Borcke recalled that he was once mistaken for a Union soldier because of his German accent. One time, while riding through the woods, Borcke came upon another man on horseback.

"Halt!" Borcke cried, "To which regiment do you belong?"

"8<sup>th</sup> Illinois," the unidentified rider replied.

Alerted to the presence of the enemy, Borcke spurred his horse, rode toward the man, thrust his pistol into the man's breast, and made him his prisoner. Later, escorting his prisoner, Borcke returned to camp. When the prisoner recognized that he had been taken to a Confederate camp, he revealed that he was actually a Confederate soldier even though he wore a Union uniform. Explaining his deception, he said that he had recognized Borcke's German accent and assumed that he was confronted with a German-born Union soldier. After receiving this information, Borcke threatened to shoot his prisoner unless given an apology. He did not appreciate being called a Yankee. Borcke had proudly become a Confederate cavalier, despite his foreign birth, and greatly valued his personal honor.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Heros Von Borcke, *Colonel Heros von Borcke's Journal, 26 April-8 October 1862*, trans. Stuart Wright (n.p.: Palaeman Press, 1981), 62, 80, 120, 181 and *Enquirer*, 8 Jan. 1864.

<sup>64</sup> Borcke, *Colonel Heros von Borcke's Journal*, 95.

In spite of such occasional embarrassing situations, Borcke fit well with Southern society. He kept a black servant, William, through his war service. He earned a promotion for his skill and courage in battle and was often toasted by his commanding officer, General J. E. B. Stuart. In contrast, he never fit well with most of the South's other German-born. As evidence of this, once, when he visited a German-American hotel in Frederick, Maryland, Borcke remembered that he was soon surrounded by "fellow countrymen" who "soon were drinking to me with their wretched beer and nearly killing me with the dense clouds of smoke from their pipes and with all their questions. . . . I soon broke away from all of this and was exceedingly glad." The men who had annoyed Borcke were likely the more common type among the German-born of the South. Borcke was not one of their kind.<sup>65</sup>

Such men of more common birth formed the overwhelming majority of German-born immigrants who continued to disembark in Northern ports throughout the war. As the *Examiner* reported the arrival of 155,223 immigrants in New York during 1863, the idea that the foreign-born composed a majority of the Union armies was made more believable for many Confederates.<sup>66</sup> The South's population was so limited, yet the North appeared capable of tapping into an unlimited pool of immigrant soldiers.

One German-born man could not understand why so many of the North's German-Americans were sacrificing themselves "since no true Yankee went to war."<sup>67</sup> This statement implied that the foreign-born were the backbone of the Union army. The myth that the Union armies were filled almost entirely with the foreign-born had therefore infected Richmond's German-Americans as well. The reputed words of Robert E. Lee also supported the image of the German-born as the foundation of the Union army. One German-born Confederate claimed, after the war, that Lee had stated, "Take

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 62, 80, 120, 181.

<sup>66</sup> *Examiner*, 7 Jan. 1864.

<sup>67</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 202.

out the Dutch [from the Union army] and we will whip the Yankees easily.”<sup>68</sup> After the war, another German-born resident of Richmond bitterly regretted that those who had fought in Germany for their freedom in the 1848 revolutions had later fought against the Confederacy to rob it of “freedom and . . . states rights.”<sup>69</sup>

Wishing that their ethnic counterparts of the North would end their opposition to the Confederacy, another German-American, whose letter appeared in a November 1862 issue of the *Anzeiger*, called on all of the North’s German-Americans to press for peace.<sup>70</sup> Suggesting how such appeals for peace might be instigated, the same writer, in another letter in April 1863, called for the Confederacy to open the Mississippi River to free navigation and thereby encourage the sympathies of the many immigrants who resided in the upper Midwestern states. This action, he reasoned, would end both German and Irish-born support for the Union.<sup>71</sup>

Already, many of the North’s German-Americans opposed the Union war effort.<sup>72</sup> Others, including many of the thousands who had enrolled in military service, avidly supported the Union and deemed it to be fighting for principles similar to those of the German liberal revolutions of 1848.<sup>73</sup> Despite these conflicting opinions, the words of the pro-war German-Americans of the North were heard most loudly by Confederate nativists. In Richmond, nativists exploited these words, to full effect, in their attacks upon the Confederacy’s German-American community.

As the nativists’ rhetorical fire pounded against them, German-Americans holding Confederate sympathies probably reconsidered their feelings toward their new nation. That some Confederates were depicting German-Americans as the antithetical enemies of

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<sup>68</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 89.

<sup>69</sup> Lange, “The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World,” 144.

<sup>70</sup> *Anzeiger*, 15 November 1862.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 April 1863.

<sup>72</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 493.

<sup>73</sup> Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848*, 255-56.

Southern whites must have impacted negatively upon German-American enthusiasm towards the Confederacy. Richmond's German-Americans desperately tried to convince the native-born that German-Americans of the South were different from those German-Americans opposing them in the North. Nevertheless, German-Americans of both the South and the North were still identified by some as one united group—the enemy.

### *Identifying the German-born Enemy*

Just as Borcke was identified as German by his accent, the native-born of the South identified the South's German-Americans by their appearance, speech, and habits. One Anglo-American recalled that he could recognize that a man “was a German to look at him and from his talk.”<sup>74</sup> A German-born Confederate soldier noticed how, in Williamsburg, Virginia, he and his ethnic comrades “were soon conspicuous” due to their German speech and songs.<sup>75</sup> In Richmond, singing and playing musical instruments were habits for which German-Americans were well known, sometimes too well.<sup>76</sup> In one case, prior to the start of the war, nativists complained when they thought that German-Americans were overindulging in one of their Sabbath-day musical celebrations.<sup>77</sup> For those who suspected Richmond's German-Americans to be Unionists, recognizing German-Americans by the characteristics that marked them was thought essential for them to be able to identify enemy sympathizers.

One of the stereotypical traits of Germans was their preference for lager beer.<sup>78</sup> The native-born identified lager beer as the drink of Germans and played up German-

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<sup>74</sup> Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, Record group 123, Case File 10359.

<sup>75</sup> Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 2-3.

<sup>76</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 53-54.

<sup>77</sup> Musician's diary, 27 Apr. 1856.

<sup>78</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 246.

Americans' overindulgence to portray them negatively.<sup>79</sup> Richmond's German-Americans were quite sensitive to depictions of them as drunks. For example, in 1863, the *Anzeiger* reported that the *Examiner* had named the consumption of lager beer, in addition to whisky, as a more influential contributor towards defeating the Confederacy than were the Union armies.<sup>80</sup> The *Examiner*'s accusation was probably interpreted to mean that German-Americans were brewing and providing the beer that was inebriating Confederate soldiers. The naming of lager beer, by the *Examiner*, was more than simply an attack against the consumption of alcohol. It was an attack against the patriotism of the city's German-Americans.

Richmond's German-Americans also began to be identified with draft dodging. Realizing that this image of their community would only negatively impact their status within the Confederacy, Richmond's German-Americans often argued to prove their Confederate loyalties. On March 29, 1862, the *Anzeiger*'s readers were advised that their Anglo-American neighbors held the belief that some among the foreign-born had unjustly obtained papers from their consuls in order to obtain exemptions from conscription. The *Anzeiger* warned that those who were suspected of such acts would be arrested.<sup>81</sup> By granting to the foreign-born an opportunity to avoid conscription, if they could prove their non-domiciled status, the Confederate government had established a legal avenue for the German-born to ensure their civilian status and had set the conditions under which the German-born were regarded as unpatriotic. The city's native-born, who as a group were subject to conscription, therefore viewed the German-born with suspicion, making the German-born more alienated from the Confederate citizenry.

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<sup>79</sup> John R. Thompson, "On to Richmond," originally in the *Richmond Whig*, in *War Songs of the South*, 112.

<sup>80</sup> *Anzeiger*, 24 Jan. 1863. The *Examiner*'s accusation against beer drinkers theoretically indicted several prominent Confederate leaders, who enjoyed the characteristically German drink. While his statement is unverified, one of Richmond's German-born bar owners claimed to have served beer to Robert E. Lee. Others that he named were Virginia's Governor Letcher and Heros von Borcke as well as other prominent Prussian military officers. Lager beer surely fuddled the heads of more than a few Confederate leaders. Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 172-73.

<sup>81</sup> *Anzeiger*, 29 Mar. 1862.

The city's German-Americans perceived the situation to be no better in the countryside. Many of the foreign-born, particularly German-Americans who lived in relative isolation amongst the native-born, were harassed and told to leave the Confederacy. One such incident occurred when "a band of masked men on horseback" confronted a German-American couple who ran a country store and called them "Abolitionists" for selling goods to blacks. The men told the couple to leave the Confederacy within three days or they would burn their home. When the harassers returned three nights later, the German-American woman had armed herself and drove them away. Following this confrontation, the couple abandoned their home and sought refuge in Richmond, where they had relatives.<sup>82</sup> While nativism was terrible in Richmond, it was worse outside the city, where the German-born had fewer ethnic neighbors to support them.

Another reason why the Confederacy's German-Americans were depicted as disloyal was that a large number of German-Americans in the North actively supported the Union. Alienating German-Americans of the South even further, many of them had not immigrated directly to the South but had initially disembarked in the North and, over the course of several years, had filtered their way southward. Their first contact with American culture had been in the North. When they came to the South, the Northern cultural baggage that they brought with them marked them as foreigners to Southern sensibilities. Even though Southern cities were already diverse environments when they moved into them, German-American immigrants broadened their diversity still further. Consequently, they were suspected by nativists who were uncomfortable with differences between German-Americans and themselves.<sup>83</sup> That German-Americans were known to have left relatives behind them in the North only further identified them as foreigners to Southern nativists.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 97-98.

<sup>83</sup> Mordecai, *Richmond, in By-Gone Days*, 246.

<sup>84</sup> Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, Record group 123, Case File 10359.

## Patriotism

Nevertheless, the myth that the Confederacy's German-Americans were unanimously Unionist did not destroy their patriotic sentiments. On February 22, 1862, the *Anzeiger* urged the Confederacy to go on the offensive. Stating that it wanted to refrain from discussing particular political opinions, the newspaper argued that the prosperity of all was intimately interconnected with the viability of the Confederacy. It called upon all to sacrifice for the good of the nation.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the *Anzeiger* recognized the diverse and obstinate political sentiments within the German-American community and, in this appeal, argued only in terms of German-American economic interests.

It made its argument at a time when German-American patriotic sentiment was becoming increasingly embattled by nativist attacks. A week before, the *Anzeiger* had featured an article that claimed that the South was losing the sympathies of the foreign-born to the North. Too many Southern-born nativists believed that the foreign-born had already demonstrated their capability for disloyalty by abandoning their native countries to live in the South. These nativists thought that immigrants deserved to be given only one right: to work in the Confederacy. By abandoning their allegiances to their countries of birth, immigrants had proven themselves unworthy of their new nation of residence. Immigrants did not deserve to be granted citizenship, so the *Anzeiger* had nativists arguing.<sup>86</sup>

In response to the nativists, the *Anzeiger* asserted that the Confederacy's fortunes would not suffer if it became more tolerant to its foreign-born. Rather, its success would be assured, since its foreign-born population would rally to the war effort. In particular, the *Anzeiger* urged other Southern newspapers to support the rights of the foreign-born,

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<sup>85</sup> *Anzeiger*, 22 Feb. 1862.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 Feb. 1862.

of both North and South, in order to secure their sympathies.<sup>87</sup> In other words, the Confederacy needed to assume the loyalty of its foreign-born, or at least not to assume any greater disloyalty on their part, to obtain the overwhelming support of the entire German-American population.

On March 29, the *Anzeiger* again considered the treatment of the foreign-born and concluded that the Confederacy was treating its foreign-born poorly compared to the North. By favoring the Confederacy's enemy in this respect, the *Anzeiger's* editor was making a serious accusation. Nevertheless, he was not arrested. Perhaps it was because he wrote optimistically, in the same article, that he looked forward to the day when the Confederacy might be strong enough to guarantee, to its foreign-born, their right to make trips outside of the Confederacy and to be able to return from abroad. The North's foreign-born enjoyed such a right. The foreign-born residents of the South did not.<sup>88</sup>

The *Anzeiger's* appeals did not convince nativists to cease suspecting the patriotism of Richmond's foreign-born. Nativists continued to blame the foreign-born for avoiding conscription and accused "German Jews and foreign adventurers" for the South's economic shortages and inflation.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, many among Richmond's German-American community served as soldiers and worked to produce the material that supplied the Confederate military. Such service and work were examples of German-American patriotism put into action.

### *Soldiers*

German-American soldiers from Richmond were called "unsere Vaterlandsverteidiger" (defenders of our Fatherland) in the *Anzeiger*.<sup>90</sup> At war's start,

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 29 Mar. 1862.

<sup>89</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 91-92.

<sup>90</sup> *Anzeiger*, 1 June 1861.

many of the German-American community were enthusiastic over the opportunity to prove their patriotism on the battlefield. The men of the Marion Rifle Company, and Richmond's German-American women who supported them, looked forward to their completion of the company's flag so "that this beautiful work could be carried immediately to battle."<sup>91</sup> Both the Virginia Rifle and the Marion Rifle Companies advertised for additional recruits in the war's first months.<sup>92</sup> The Virginia Rifles thereby became a full company. One hundred and twenty-one men were enrolled in the Virginia Rifle Company during the war. This was a large increase from its prewar membership level. In 1859, as a militia company, it had numbered only thirty-five.<sup>93</sup> The Marion Rifles had attracted seventy-five men when it was mustered into state service on May 16, 1861. Eighty-five soldiers in total served in this company.<sup>94</sup> Both companies were soon ordered into the field. On May 24, as the men of the Marion Rifle Company marched with those from its regiment's other companies to the city's steamboat landing, they were inspired as thousands of Richmond's residents cheered them amidst a patriotic display of flying flags and the music of bands.<sup>95</sup> The Marion Rifles were assigned to the Yorktown Peninsula to oppose a Union offensive against Richmond.<sup>96</sup> The Virginia Rifles served in northeastern Virginia and fought in the Battle of First Manassas, where it sustained one killed and three wounded.<sup>97</sup> After their countrymen had departed the city, the German-American community rallied to support its men. The Marion Rifle Company solicited the city's German-Americans to supply it with "kegs of beer and other delicacies."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 30 Apr. 1861.

<sup>93</sup> Manarin and Wallace, *Richmond Volunteers*, 188, 191-92.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 228-30.

<sup>95</sup> Louis H. Manarin, *15th Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg, Va.: H. E. Howard, 1990), 4-5 and Hennighausen, letter to mother and brother Wilhelm, 24 April 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 2.

<sup>96</sup> Manarin, *15th Virginia Infantry*, 16-17.

<sup>97</sup> Janet B. Hewett, ed., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Part II, Vol. 70 (Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing, 1998), 623.

<sup>98</sup> *Anzeiger*, 1 June 1860 [1861]. The *Anzeiger* mistakenly did not change its masthead to reflect the current year, in 1861.

By 1862, the situation changed. The effusive patriotism that had characterized the German-American community at the start of the war subsided. To encourage the flagging patriotism of the city's German-Americans, the *Anzeiger* continually printed editorials in support of the Confederacy.<sup>99</sup> Many German-born soldiers, though they had served under Confederate arms for a year, argued that they were not domiciled residents of the Confederacy. Claiming non-domiciled status, they successfully avoided conscription and a return to the regular army.<sup>100</sup> The *Anzeiger*, concerned that the German-American community's response to conscription would be to its own detriment, argued in March 1862 that the German-born were in fact serving dutifully in the militia. Interestingly, the wording of this article could be interpreted to have dual meaning. It also warned readers that they should enroll in the militia or become subject to conscription.<sup>101</sup>

In March 1862, Herrmann Schuricht, who served with the Fourteenth Virginia Cavalry Regiment, was attempting to organize a militia company by appealing to Richmond's German-American community. To support his enlistment efforts, he had even obtained the endorsement of former governor Henry Wise.<sup>102</sup> Schuricht must have had mixed success with his enlistments since he did not mention this company in his history of Richmond's German-Americans.

Though Richmond's German-Americans raised one infirmary and two militia companies during the war, many German-Americans believed that they owed a greater duty to others outside the military.<sup>103</sup> One German-born soldier stated that, during the harsh winter of 1862-63, he considered his highest duty to be caring for his family since he could not forecast an end to the war.<sup>104</sup> Other German-born men were similarly

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 22 Feb. 1862.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 28 Feb. 1863.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 15 Mar. 1862.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 29 Mar. 1862 and Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 78.

<sup>103</sup> For more on these companies, see the section of Chapter III entitled "Under Arms."

<sup>104</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 164.

fighting to remain outside the regular army. They sought to remain in Richmond with their families and in the secure familiarity of their homes and work.

Arguing that these men had a duty to serve their country, some among the native-born, including the *Enquirer*, favored enlisting all foreign-born men into military service. The *Anzeiger* printed a response to the *Enquirer* in English, an unusual act for the German language newspaper. It argued for sheltering the foreign-born from military service and asserted that the Confederacy needed their productive services more than it did their military services. The cloth and iron industries were mentioned as benefiting from foreign-born workers in particular. The writer continued that, as long as the German-born were “friendly” to the Confederacy, they should not be deported or conscripted. In addition, the article also stated that the foreigner-born should not be prevented from enlisting in the army if they chose to do so.<sup>105</sup> The German-born were arguing that they had the right to be free from an obligation to serve in the military.

#### *Avoiding the Draft and Securing a Detail*

In February 1863, a German-American contributor to the *Anzeiger* claimed that German-born immigrants came to the South to seek opportunities as agricultural laborers, skilled workers, shopkeepers, or industrialists. Soldiering was not included in this list. The writer stated that German-Americans supported the Confederacy even as they agitated for their rights, exemption from conscription among them. Therefore in order to earn their livings and shelter themselves from conscription, many of Richmond’s German-Americans worked in industries crucial to the war effort.<sup>106</sup> Others were detailed from the army to serve as workers in Richmond. As early as May 6, 1861, the soldiers of the First Virginia Regiment, including the Virginia Rifles, were required to

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<sup>105</sup> *Anzeiger*, 26 Mar. 1863.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 Feb. 1863.

submit an inventory of their skills. The intention behind this inquiry was that some of the men would be detached for work in war industries.<sup>107</sup>

Others who had entered the army often found themselves detailed to special duties in government work. Such German-American men detailed in Richmond included a grindstone maker, a cassion maker, machinists, finishers, laborers, harness makers, tanners, blacksmiths, woodworkers, and carpenters. However, the majority of the German-American men detailed from the army to work in Richmond labored in skilled positions in the iron works.<sup>108</sup>

Much to workers' disappointment, work in war industry did not shield them from militia duty. In December 1862, most of the workers, native and foreign-born, of the Tredegar Works in Richmond refused to continue to turn out for military exercises, for the purpose of local defense around Richmond. They were incensed that they had been exposed to military service. All but a small company participated in the strike. Two months before, in order to gain a tighter hold upon its workers, who were departing to the North, the management of Tredegar had supplied to the War Department a long list of men whom it considered subject to conscription. When the commandant of conscription at Camp Lee was slow to act on this list, management complained to the military that men continued to leave and that they could not hold them since they were not enrolled in the army. The men claimed exemption from military service either on the basis of their non-domiciled status or their work in war industry, but the War Department ruled that exemption only sheltered them from the regular army, not the militia. Acting to suppress the strike, conscription officers enrolled, in the regular army, all the men listed by Tredegar's management. This only accelerated workers' departures. Many foreign-born workers, most of whom held exemptions, left during this period. Too late, after so many workers had departed, management recognized its miscalculation. By July 1863,

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<sup>107</sup> Confederate Service Records, First Regiment Virginia Infantry.

<sup>108</sup> Enlisted Men Detailed, Ordnance Department, Richmond, Va., Jan.-Nov. 1864, Record group 109, Chapt. IV, Vol. 107. National Archives, Washington.

Tredegar retained only the manpower to work five iron furnaces, while twice that number lay idled. To correct this situation, management attempted to guarantee, for several of its foreign-born workers, exemption from both regular army and militia service. The attempt was in vain, since state and federal policy ruled that the foreign-born were liable for militia duty, though they may be exempted from regular army service.<sup>109</sup> Work in war industry thus provided only a partial shelter from regular army service.

Tredegar's battalion, like so many other militia units composed of Richmond's German-Americans, served in the fortifications surrounding Richmond from March 1864 until the end of the war. For weeks at a time, or during the night when they worked during the day, militia service was a tiring obligation.<sup>110</sup> One Tredegar manager complained that "mechanics will not work & soldier both." Beginning in the spring of 1864, when the Union army initiated its offensive against Richmond, scores of skilled workers, German-born among them, deserted to the enemy lines nearby. Under Northern protection, these workers had finally secured the shelter from military service that the Confederacy had failed to provide them.<sup>111</sup>

Other German-American men who were not Tredegar workers served in the militia as well. For example, in 1864, attracting those German-born who were required to serve in the militia, a second German-American militia company was organized by Schuricht.<sup>112</sup> Fifty-five men enrolled.<sup>113</sup> The reason why Schuricht had greater success in this, his second, effort to organize a militia company was that, by late in the war, in contrast to earlier, more German-born were forced to enter military service, at least as soldiers in the militia. Thus, the Confederacy gained, from the German-born in

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<sup>109</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 2, 240 and Dew, *Ironmaker to the Confederacy*, 243-45.

<sup>110</sup> Dew, *Ironmaker to the Confederacy*, 246-47.

<sup>111</sup> Gorgas to G. W. Rains, 30 Oct. 1864, Rains Papers, UNC; quoted in Charles B. Dew, *Ironmaker to the Confederacy: Joseph R. Anderson and the Tredegar Iron Works* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), 247.

<sup>112</sup> *Anzeiger*, 9 April 1864.

<sup>113</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 78-79.

Richmond, their service in two areas of vital interest to its war effort. The same men who were enrolled in the militia were also often workers in war industries.

### *Workers*

President Davis, in a September 19, 1864 letter sent to state governors, argued that “men who are employed in manufacturing and preparing munitions of war and military supplies are as effectively engaged in the defense of the country” as men who are soldiers. Additionally, Davis defended the rights of the foreign-born who produced items for civilian use: “Those aliens even who are laboring elsewhere than in the service of the Government are efficiently aiding our cause by services of great value in furnishing to our people many necessary articles, such as shoes, clothing, machinery, agricultural implements, and the like, which it is now so difficult to obtain from abroad.” Composing a large portion of Richmond’s skilled workers, many German-Americans either had entered the war already working in jobs essential to the war effort or had transferred to such occupations.<sup>114</sup>

In Richmond, the German-born performed much of the work that was most essential to sustain the Confederacy’s struggle for survival. Perhaps the most widely known work was that done by the lithography firm of two German-born men, Hoyer & Ludwig. They produced the Confederacy’s treasury notes, bonds, stocks, and postage stamps.<sup>115</sup> German-born Peter Sorg’s bakers were contracted to supply bread to the army.<sup>116</sup> Largely German, English, and Irish-born were the 105 male and 25 female employees of Crenshaw Woolen Company, a manufacturer of cloth used for military uniforms. The *Enquirer* described the Crenshaw mill as second in importance only to

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<sup>114</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 3, 671.

<sup>115</sup> Richard Cecil Todd, *Confederate Finance* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1954), 93-94, 96 and August Dietz, *The Postal Service of the Confederate States of America* (Richmond: Dietz Printing Company, 1929), 95-96.

<sup>116</sup> Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 221-22.

Richmond's iron works.<sup>117</sup> Working in the mill was German-American Charles Lindner. He had been detailed from the Virginia Rifles. After a lieutenant of the Rifles ordered him to return to the company, Crenshaw petitioned the army in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a discharge for his worker, who remained at the mill while enrolled in the regular army.<sup>118</sup> In these and other jobs spread throughout the city's business enterprises, German-Americans worked in and around Richmond to supply the goods of war.

Even work behind the lines in war industry was not safe. In March 1863, an accidental explosion at Richmond's Government Laboratory, which manufactured ammunition for the military, caused the deaths of thirty-four workers, including thirty-two girls and women. Twenty-nine others were injured. The explosion demolished the building. Its sides blew out, and its roof collapsed. Few escaped uninjured. Many of the Laboratory's workers were foreign-born, including several German-Americans. In fact, the young woman who was blamed for setting off the explosion, by mishandling a friction primer, was Irish-born. Among the dead was German-American Adelina Myers, a girl of twelve or thirteen years old. Though Adelina was born in Virginia, she was the daughter of Jacob and Henrieta Myers, from Holland and Bavaria, respectively.<sup>119</sup> Though Adelina belonged to two groups, women and the foreign-born, that were, during the war, and are even today often overlooked for their patriotic contributions to the Confederate war effort, she was as much a casualty of the war as the soldier who fell on the battlefield.

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<sup>117</sup> *Enquirer*, 17 October 1861.

<sup>118</sup> Confederate Service Records, First Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K, Charles Lindner and Wallace, 1<sup>st</sup> *Virginia Infantry*, 103.

<sup>119</sup> *Whig*, 14 and 16 Mar. 1863 and U.S. Census manuscripts, City of Richmond and City of Portsmouth, 1860.

## Disloyalty

At the other end of the spectrum were those German-Americans who were not sympathetic towards the Confederacy. In charge of combating disloyalty within the Confederate capital was General John Winder, who commanded the Department of Henrico throughout most of the war. With “small, searching eyes, a beaked nose, and white bristly hair, which suggests the unapproachable porcupine,” General Winder deployed scores of detectives and had the city encircled with two rings of guards. It was little exaggeration that Richmond had “ears for every whisper” and the inhabitants were closely watched.<sup>120</sup> Even Herrmann Schuricht, one of the most active of the German-American community’s Confederate sympathizers, accused Winder to have administered his forces in Richmond “in an almost savage manner.” Schuricht continued, “He organized a secret police force of men, who for the most part ought rather to have been put under police patrol, and a detestable system of espionage and denunciation was inaugurated.”<sup>121</sup>

Winder’s “reign of terror” resulted in the arrests of several German-Americans. They were imprisoned and often kept for several months until their cases were fully investigated.<sup>122</sup> Thus, it was no surprise that Richmond’s German-Americans dreaded charges of Unionism against them even more than they disliked conscription. In August 1862, one foreign correspondent noted that the native and the foreign-born, the German-born in particular, were confined in Richmond’s prison, Castle Godwin, on charges of Unionism. Some of these prisoners were purportedly taken, “seated on their coffins,” to the city’s fairgrounds and hanged.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> *Cornhill Magazine*, Old Series, Vol. VII (Jan.-June 1863): 100.

<sup>121</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 96-97.

<sup>122</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 96-97.

<sup>123</sup> The fact that the report singled out the German-born as targets of imprisonment and harsh punishment indicates the climate that surrounded them. While the reporter testified to the persecution of German-Americans, the reporter’s words were also chosen to stimulate readers’ interest and to relate the situation in colorful language. *Cornhill Magazine*, Old Series, Vol. VII (Jan.-June 1863): 100 and *Anzeiger*, 26 Apr. 1862 and 3 May 1862.

While German-Americans were certainly not executed in Richmond in great numbers, if at all, several were imprisoned by the city's provost marshal. This occurred particularly in March 1862. During this period that was so critical in altering the political sentiments of the city's German-Americans, martial law was declared, a military guard was appointed to suppress Unionists, and judicial proceedings were suspended in Richmond.<sup>124</sup> German-Americans were arrested on charges of treason and disloyalty. In March 1862, these included Hermann L. Wiegand, Daniel Bitter, and Chas. J. Muller, whose case was discussed previously.<sup>125</sup> Wiegand was a leader of the Turner Society. Daniel Bitter was the manager of the social and drinking establishment, Monticello Hall, which the Turners had been using as their headquarters and which the Free-thinking Society had used in the early 1850s.<sup>126</sup> After his arrest, Bitter was reported to be "very bitter in his denunciations of President Davis."<sup>127</sup> In their search of the Turner Society's belongings, the provost marshal's men confiscated two Union flags, one of which was "a magnificent silk Union flag, entirely new," with only thirteen stars "and manufactured from the very finest and costliest material." Also noted in the hall was a figure of a goddess "painted on the wall, with Union colors and shield, with the words underneath of 'Hats off!'"<sup>128</sup> Wiegand, Bitter, and Muller were arrested during a time when the Confederate government turned unfavorably against the foreign-born, as seen in its positions on naturalization and military service issues. Often, such political prisoners as these three men were held until their cases were investigated and were not released until they had taken an oath of loyalty to the Confederacy.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *Enquirer*, 4 March 1862.

<sup>125</sup> *Dispatch*, 3 April 1862.

<sup>126</sup> *Enquirer*, 7 March 1862 and Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 36.

<sup>127</sup> *Enquirer*, 7 March 1862.

<sup>128</sup> *Dispatch*, 7 March 1862 and *Enquirer*, 7 March 1862.

<sup>129</sup> *Anzeiger*, 3 May 1862 and 26 Apr. 1862 and Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 96-97.

The officers of the Virginia Rifle Company endured a similar confinement in Castle Godwin, because they and their men had left the company after the end of their one-year terms of enlistment before they had been discharged. These included Captain Frederick W. Hagemayer.<sup>130</sup> His successor in command of the company, Second Lieutenant William Pfaff, as well as First Lieutenant Hermann Paul and Second Lieutenant Cletus Baumann, were also fellow prisoners with Hagemayer in Castle Godwin.<sup>131</sup> All four men were recorded as deserting on April 21, 1862, one year to the day following their enrollment for one year in Confederate service.<sup>132</sup> The imprisonment of these leaders further discouraged German-American patriotism towards the Confederacy. Though the men were eventually released, the suspicion against the German-born in Richmond continued.

### *Unionist Sentiment*

In the war's third year, hoping to find evidence of German-American disloyalty, the provost marshal's men again confiscated the records of the Turner Society. Because these materials were written in German, the investigators could not understand their meaning and so retained a translator, who obtained sufficient evidence to arrest Hermann L. Wiegand once again. This time, his prison was Castle Thunder.<sup>133</sup>

During the investigation, a wryly-humorous outcome resulted from the poor work of the provost marshal's translator. The Turners' secretary had recorded, in the minutes, his frustration with one member's wordiness. He wrote "H . . . schwatzte Blech," which literally translates as "H talked sheet metal." Colloquially, though, these words translate as "H spoke nonsense." The government's translator failed to recognize the two meanings in the translation and interpreted these words as "H talked about sheet-iron."

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<sup>130</sup> *Dispatch*, 14 August 1862.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 August 1862.

<sup>132</sup> Confederate Service Records, First Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K.

<sup>133</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 96-97.

Due to the translator's error, the Turner Society was deemed to be plotting to sabotage Richmond's iron industry. "H" was probably Turner leader Hermann L. Wiegand, who Schuricht identified as imprisoned in Castle Thunder, where "H" was also held. Probably, Schuricht knew Wiegand to be "H" but hide his identity, in his history of Virginia's German-Americans, because he did not want to expose Wiegand to embarrassment, for the lack of support that he had generated among the Turners. At the time that Schuricht wrote his book, Wiegand had a reputation as one of Richmond's most prominent German-American leaders. If "H" was in fact Wiegand, this would indicate that the other Turner Society members had been less than enamoured with Wiegand's brand of Unionism and liberalism. Regardless of who "H" was, the investigation of the Turners caused many of its members, who did not want trouble from the provost marshal, to withdrawal from the organization.<sup>134</sup>

Likewise, since they wanted to avoid harassment, many German-Americans aided Northerners in secret. One German-American Confederate soldier remembered when, while on guard duty at Richmond's Libby Prison, he recognized an acquaintance among the Northern soldiers held captive there. Confidentially, he arranged for gifts of bread and tobacco to be given to this prisoner, a German-American from New York.<sup>135</sup>

Unlike the previous example, many Southerners who were disloyal to the Confederacy did not usually identify themselves with the Northern people. Instead, these Southerners, native and foreign-born alike, felt a sense of loyalty to the Union. They disagreed with policies that Confederate state and federal governments were imposing upon the South. To these people, the act of Congress that ordered the deportation of "alien enemies" was an early example of such intolerance among Confederate leaders.<sup>136</sup> Because of the nativism that confronted them, within government especially, many of Richmond's German-Americans believed that the standing of their community within the

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 96-97, 140, 184.

<sup>135</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 163.

<sup>136</sup> Frank W. Klingberg, *The Southern Claims Commission* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 13-14.

Confederacy was in peril. The Unionists among them probably considered their Unionism justified as they witnessed nativist efforts.

Unfortunately, the records regarding specific acts of German-American Unionism are scarce. The records left by the Southern Claims Commission (SCC) are regarded as one of the best resources for studies of Unionism in the Confederacy, though they encompass only a handful of Richmond's German-Americans. While more Unionists than these were certainly found within Richmond's German-American community, the SCC files testify more to the tendency of the native-born to single out German-Americans as disloyal to the Confederacy than to support a judgment of the relative loyalty or disloyalty of individual German-Americans or the German-American community overall.

The SCC was established by Congress in 1871 to deal with Southern Unionists who had filed claims to be reimbursed for goods seized or destroyed as a result of actions of Union military forces during the war. In total, 22,298 cases were filed. One of the reasons why few German-born filed claims was that claimants were required to hold U.S. citizenship in addition to proving their loyalty to the Union.<sup>137</sup> In addition, most claims originated from rural districts, where Union quartermasters and scavenging soldiers seized food, fence rails, and fodder. Because of this tendency, urban areas like Richmond are accordingly underrepresented in the records. However, what the records fail to provide in quantity, they make up for in quality. The SCC files provide rich literary testimony of both the personal history of German-Americans and the Unionist sentiments of the German-American and the Anglo-American communities. For the purposes of this study, they are rich veins of first-hand testimony that, though they have been neglected for almost a century, are beginning to attract the attention of both social and military historians.

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<sup>137</sup> In addition to 22,298 cases, the SCC also received the testimony of approximately 220,000 witnesses. Gary B. Mills, *Southern Loyalists in the Civil War: The Southern Claims Commission* (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1994), ix-x.

Admittedly, many claimants likely exaggerated their Unionism. To ensure fairness, agents of the SCC investigated each claim by searching the Confederate records confiscated at the end of the war and by interviewing witnesses in the community.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, to support their statements of Unionism, claimants frequently called one or more witnesses to corroborate them. As an example, one claimant, Christopher Gerhardt, was caught in a lie when records proving his employment in Confederate war industry were uncovered. For cases like this one, in which the claimant was demonstrated to have lied, the records can still serve as valid historical evidence. One needs to be diligently skeptical and judicious in selecting among them.

German-born George P. Loehr, a farmer, claimed to be one of the South's Unionists. Loehr immigrated to the United States in 1854 and, since 1855, made his home in Richmond and later in surrounding Henrico County. When the war began, he had only been a naturalized citizen for a year. In the community, Loehr had a reputation for being a Unionist and frequently conversed with his neighbors, Henry Leonhäuser, H. Kirchoff, and John C. Selle, on political topics. He claimed to have made no secret of his Unionism. Confirming this, German-born tailor and dairy farmer Michael Amrhein also spoke with him, often at church on Sundays.<sup>139</sup>

In contrast, Loehr's neighbor, H. Kirchoff, spoke of his politics less publicly. Also a Unionist, Kirchoff made sure to relate his feelings to only a few of his German-American neighbors.<sup>140</sup>

During the secession debate, Loehr opposed leaving the Union and claimed to have voted against the adoption of the secession ordinance. If true, Loehr was one of only three men in the city to have voted against secession.<sup>141</sup> More likely, Loehr was

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<sup>138</sup> Of the 22,298 claims filed, only 7,092 were granted. *Ibid.*, x-xi.

<sup>139</sup> Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, Record group 123, Box 594; Census manuscript, 1860 Federal Census.

<sup>140</sup> Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, Record group 123, Box 594.

<sup>141</sup> Vote on the Ordinance of Secession, Richmond City, 24 May 1861, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

lying to support his monetary claim with the SCC. Supporting this interpretation, Loehr's fellow German-born Unionist Amrhein doubted that Loehr ever voted against secession. Amrhein, though a Unionist, claimed to have refrained from casting his own vote against secession.<sup>142</sup>

Perhaps, Loehr's vote succumbed to the same fate as that of Virginia Unionist and New Jersey native, Silas E. Mills, who was told by some secessionist men that, unless he voted for the secession ordinance, he "would be 'sent for.'" As a result, Mills abstained from voting. Later, in 1864, Mills and his family were arrested and held for several hours by Confederate forces after a party of Union soldiers was seen visiting their home. Mills attributed the arrest to the fact that he was from the North and therefore a foreigner in the Confederacy.<sup>143</sup>

Returning to Loehr, he was the only one released from the local fire brigade for his refusal to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. While in the city, Loehr was twice arrested by conscription officers. The first time, he was kept under arrest one night and released the next day after an examining board gave him a certificate of physical disability for his limp, which he made more pronounced when under the gaze of the conscription officers. The second arrest also resulted in a quick release.<sup>144</sup>

Further evidence of Loehr's disloyalty was when, in 1864, he hid a Confederate deserter from the authorities for six months as the armies battled outside the beleaguered city. During one battle, in the fall of 1864, Loehr left Richmond and went into hiding in a cornfield as Confederate troops retreated past him. It was probably during this time when he was paid by the Union army to bury two Union soldiers for \$10 in wages. A

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<sup>142</sup> Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, Record group 123, Box 594.

<sup>143</sup> Settled Case Files for Claims Approved, U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Record group 217, Box 384, Case 21281, National Archives, Washington.

<sup>144</sup> Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, Record group 123, Box 594.

few weeks later, Loehr's farm was occupied by Union forces. Again, Loehr was arrested, this time by Union forces, though he was quickly released.<sup>145</sup>

Finding that he and his family were secure inside Union lines, they moved to Philadelphia. In that city, Loehr worked as a shoemaker where he met a fellow churchgoer from Richmond, John C. Selle, a shoemaker who had unknowingly followed Loehr from Richmond. Both were employed by the same shoemaker. After the war had ended, not willing to continue living in the North, Loehr returned to Richmond in June 1865.<sup>146</sup>

Like Loehr, Christopher Gerhardt was another German-born man who claimed to be a Unionist. According to his testimony, Gerhardt was as reliably pro-Union "like the sun when she go up." Born in Frankfurt, Gerhardt emigrated to the United States with his family, in 1848, because he had "lost so much" in Germany. He moved first to Baltimore, where he worked for three years as a tinsmith—a trade he had practiced in Germany. He later relocated to Richmond and was naturalized a citizen of the United States in 1852.<sup>147</sup>

In Richmond, Gerhardt resumed his work as a tinsmith and prospered economically, hiring another German-American to work under him. In early 1861, Gerhard purchased a sizable farm five miles outside the city, possibly with the aid of a five thousand dollar inheritance left by his wife's uncle. To work the farm, he hired four male slaves. He sold his farm produce in the city to supplement his earnings as a tinsmith.<sup>148</sup>

During the war, under contract to the Confederate government, Gerhardt manufactured two thousand tin cartridge boxes for the Confederate army in spite of a

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<sup>145</sup> Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, Record group 123, Box 594.

<sup>146</sup> Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, Record group 123, Box 594.

<sup>147</sup> Disallowed Claims, U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Record group 233, Office 0975, Report 2.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

crippled hand. To assist him in this work, in late 1861, Gerhardt had obtained the discharge of his eldest son, age twenty-two, who was then serving in the First Virginia Regiment, Company I, to assist him in completing the contract. Though he stated that he kept his political opinions to himself, refusing to converse about politics with his friends and neighbors, Gerhardt claimed to have informed his slaves that the war's outcome would free them. Thus, even during the war, Gerhardt continued to hire slaves.<sup>149</sup>

Nativism was a continual worry for even a relatively assimilated German-born man like Gerhardt. During the war, one time during the day and another at night, Confederate soldiers came to his house and threatened to shoot him for being "a damned Yankee." As a result, Gerhardt complained to a Confederate general, whose men were encamped upon Gerhardt's farm. However, the general gave him no relief. The general said that he would do nothing and, Gerhardt recounts, merely "sat at my table & ate some eggs." Gerhardt might have gladly served more eggs to the general in exchange for a guarantee of safety from nativist threats.<sup>150</sup>

Near Petersburg, Virginia, German-born Richard Buren kept his Unionist sentiments quiet when secession came.<sup>151</sup> Though a resident near Petersburg, Buren's case fills the void left by the lack of records describing the experiences of Richmond's other German-American Unionists. The cases of Buren and another German-born man, Ziegler, who lived near Lynchburg, Virginia, illustrate the aid that Southern Unionists rendered to the war effort and exemplify the rewards that they were given for their efforts.

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<sup>149</sup> It is worth noting that Christopher Gerhardt's son, Charles C. Gerhardt, was a member of the predominantly Anglo-American Company I and not the German-American Company K, First Virginia Regiment. Disallowed Claims, U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Record group 233, Office 0975, Report 2.

<sup>150</sup> In his hearing before the Commission, Gerhardt caught lying, to hide his work for the Confederate government on the cartridge boxes. His claim was disallowed. Nevertheless, Gerhardt's other testimony supports the argument that nativism was a leading worry within the German-American community. Disallowed Claims, U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Record group 233, Office 0975, Report 2.

Even though Buren claimed to have articulated his Unionism to only like-minded individuals, he obtained a reputation in the community during the war. Naturalized since the early 1840s, Buren regarded his oath of naturalization to the United States as preventing him from siding with the Confederacy. Though he owned a sizable farm eight miles east of Petersburg, he believed slavery to be an injustice. During the war, despite his policy of secretiveness, he nursed Union soldiers who lay in nearby hospitals and assisted several civilian refugees to cross the nearby Appomattox River in order to reach Union lines. One of Buren's Anglo-American Unionist neighbors testified that he had assisted at least two other Anglo-American men to flee northward.<sup>152</sup>

When the Union army came to his farm, and erected fortifications, they secured from him not only wood, fodder, and animals but also obtained the services of his son, Henry C. Buren, then fourteen years old. Henry, perhaps due to his characteristically German cooking skills, served as cook for Major Von Schilling, of the Third Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery. However, holding Unionist sentiments and German-American ethnicity did not otherwise protect the Buren's family from other hungry Union soldiers. Many of their animals were shot and eaten by passing men in blue.<sup>153</sup>

Living near Lynchburg, Virginia, German-born Augustus Ziegler also attributed his oath of naturalization, taken in the early 1850s, for maintaining his loyalty to the Union. Again, though he voted for the Unionist delegate to represent him in the state secession convention, Ziegler abstained from the secession plebiscite. Also a farm owner, Ziegler spoke freely with a male slave that he had hired. Ziegler told the slave that secession would ruin the country, especially the people of the South. To another black man, he spoke freely against secession. Saying that God cursed slavery and that the country could not prosper until slavery ended, Ziegler told other slaves that the defeat of the Confederacy would mean their emancipation. Though two black witnesses

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<sup>151</sup> Settled Case Files for Claims Approved, U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Record group 217, Box 384, Prince George County, Va., Case 15673.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

verified Ziegler's Unionist sentiments, exhibited in conversations with them, they also stated that few whites could identify Ziegler as a Unionist.<sup>154</sup>

At times, Ziegler was willing to oppose Confederate authority. He refused to sell anything to the Confederate military. He told some of his neighbors that, if their rights were ever violated by Confederate authorities, they should go enlist in the Union army. He also discouraged them from enlisting in the Confederate army. Perhaps interpreting Ziegler's political sentiments from his actions, several men threatened to confiscate his property and send him "to Yankeedom." He "told them to do it." "There," he said, at least he "could get something to eat." Ziegler believed that he was protecting his teenage son by forbidding him from attending any meetings that supported the Confederacy. Once, he came to his son's aid, proving him underage, and safeguarded him from conscription. In his actions to defend his son, retain his own property, and express his scorn for the Confederate economy, Ziegler was not unusual.<sup>155</sup>

On April 6, 1864, Ziegler was forced to reveal his sentiments publicly. A sheriff had notified him that he was being conscripted. While he had served in the army in Germany, and therefore said that he had no fear of service, he would not go. The next day, he was taken to the courthouse by two armed guards and forced into service. For a year, he served near Lynchburg in the militia. One time, though he might have captured several Union stragglers, he let them escape, telling one Union soldier to run or he would be captured by other Confederates nearby.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Disallowed Claims, U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Record group 233, Office 886, Report 7. Ziegler's claim was disallowed because he failed to support adequately his Unionism. Likely, this was because he was unable to obtain whites to vouch for him, although he did have black witnesses.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. Confederate service records, Third Virginia Reserves, Company B.

Despite giving this aid, Ziegler was harshly paid for his Unionism. After searching his house, Union soldiers confiscated two of his horses, burned his fences, and carried away three barrels of vinegar and several pounds of butter.<sup>157</sup>

As exhibited by his public denunciations of the Confederacy, Ziegler appears to have been more Unionist than the three claimants from Richmond and Petersburg. However, equally as notable is that these four men, Loehr, Gerhardt, Buren, and Ziegler, were the only SCC claimants from large Virginia urban areas whose names were obviously German. Judging by the testimony of the witnesses appearing in three of these four cases, with the exception of Ziegler's, German-American Unionists in Virginia made efforts to act discretely. Those Unionist sympathizers within the German-American community were reluctant to share unpopular political viewpoints with more than a few trusted confidants known to hold similar sentiments.

Still, that a segment of the German-American community was Unionist or that the German-American community was blamed by the native-born as Unionist does not prove that a majority of the Confederacy's German-Americans held such views. Many among the native-born accused Richmond's German-American community of being disloyal, even traitorous, towards the Confederate cause. However, more than a few examples of Unionism, desertion, war profiteering, and political divisiveness existed among Anglo-Americans as well. The thousands of SCC claims, most all of which were filed by the Confederacy's native-born, speak to the Unionist sentiments among them.<sup>158</sup>

Like the native-born, Richmond's German-born held wide-ranging political sentiments. A significant number among the German-born joined the Confederate war effort, or at least did their best to cope quietly with the times, to keep civil war among the Southern urban populace from occurring. In order for the Confederate nation to have

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<sup>157</sup> Disallowed Claims, U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Record group 233, Office 886, Report 7.

<sup>158</sup> Klingberg, *The Southern Claims Commission*, 165.

continued its fight for survival, the support of its foreign-born workers and soldiers was essential.

### *Unionist Underground*

Despite the relative calm within the city, a segment of the German-American community was active in the Unionist underground, which included both Anglo and German-Americans. German-born Frederick William E. Lohmann was a participant in the underground for three and a quarter years.<sup>159</sup> Like so many other German-Americans who pursued a range of occupations, Lohmann had worked as a carpenter, grocer, and restaurant operator after he moved to Richmond with his Prussian-born parents in the early 1840s.<sup>160</sup> He was a former lieutenant in the Virginia Rifles. He resigned his position on December 27, 1861. Later, he enrolled in the First Virginia Reserves, Company A.<sup>161</sup> In 1862, Lohmann received a large amount of Confederate money from a prominent native-born Richmond merchant and was told to distribute it among “the families of deserving and necessitous Union men in Richmond.” In May 1863, Lohmann served as a guide to Union cavalry during a raid staged near Richmond. In conjunction with a native-born man, he smuggled Union soldiers across the lines to safety and often returned with a contraband wagonload of Northern goods to sell. For a fee, Lohmann also smuggled Unionist sympathizers and Confederate deserters. By May 1863, they had helped transport twenty-eight families through the lines.<sup>162</sup> He was suspected by the authorities, twice arrested, and held only for a short time.<sup>163</sup> On January 20, 1865, Lohmann’s luck ran out when he was arrested, charged with smuggling individuals

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<sup>159</sup> Meriwether Stuart, “Samuel Ruth and General R. E. Lee: Disloyalty and the Line of Supply to Fredericksburg, 1862-1863,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 71: 103.

<sup>160</sup> Meriwether Stuart, “Colonel Ulric Dahlgren and Richmond’s Union Underground,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 74, no. 2 (April 1964): 183-84.

<sup>161</sup> *Dispatch*, 23 Jan. 1865 and Confederate service records, First Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company K.

<sup>162</sup> Stuart, “Colonel Ulric Dahlgren and Richmond’s Union Underground,” 163, 187.

<sup>163</sup> Stuart, “Samuel Ruth and General R. E. Lee,” 105.

through Confederate lines, and held in Richmond's Castle Thunder until the end of the war.<sup>164</sup> Lohmann's Unionism, clandestine during the war, was fully exposed when, on April 27, he was appointed a detective for the Union provost marshal in Richmond.<sup>165</sup>

But what became more famous than smuggled men and goods was Lohmann's role in the exhumation and reburial of the body of Union Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, who was killed, in March 1864, in the midst of a daring and purportedly brutal raid upon Richmond. His body was removed from the field by Confederate forces and buried in Richmond. In the middle of the night, Lohmann, his brother John, and a native-born man quietly entered Oakwood Cemetery and exhumed Dahlgren's body, which they intended to remove, protecting it from further mutilation. They transported the corpse, for burial, to the farm of a Scottish-American outside the city.<sup>166</sup> After the war, when their actions were exposed, they were the subjects of much discussion in Richmond and certainly contributed to the disloyal reputation of the city's German-American community.<sup>167</sup> One of Richmond's German-born Confederate sympathizers condemned Lohmann as an example of "how a German can become a bad character."<sup>168</sup>

### *Still Under Fire at War's Close*

At times, like the Confederacy's other residents, the city's German-Americans were severely tested by the hardships of the war. During the struggle to cope with the adversity surrounding them, they comforted themselves with the hope that their community would flower out of ruins.<sup>169</sup> The many who did not depart the Confederacy

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<sup>164</sup> *Dispatch*, 23 Jan. 1865 and Stuart, "Samuel Ruth and General R. E. Lee," 103.

<sup>165</sup> Stuart, "Colonel Ulric Dahlgren and Richmond's Union Underground," 182-83, 187, 189.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 152, 163, 175.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>168</sup> Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 226-27, 291 in Kimball, "Place and Perception," 348.

<sup>169</sup> *Anzeiger*, 14 Mar. 1863.

endured. Among those who remained were soldiers and workers, who were much needed as a result of flagging Confederate fortunes.

In the September 19, 1864 letter, discussed previously, that President Davis sent to state governors, Davis appeared extremely concerned that too much pressure was being exerted against the foreign-born to the detriment of the Confederate cause. The non-domiciled foreign-born who were serving the Confederacy as workers, Davis assured the governors, were valuable even though many were not enrolled in military service. Several state governors, including the governor of Virginia, had called for the non-domiciled foreign-born to enlist in state military service or depart from their soil. Davis attempted to persuade the governors that the effect of their pronouncements was to cause badly needed foreign-born workers in Confederate factories to quit their work and seek permission to emigrate. If these foreign-born workers were forced to depart, Davis stated that they would have to be replaced by men obtained from the regular army. He also told the governors that the Confederate government had induced skilled workers to emigrate to the Confederacy from Europe and had given them, under contract, immunity from military service. To allay these workers' concerns regarding their military duties, Davis asked the governors to issue proclamations that those foreign-born workers engaged in military contracts would be protected from military service.<sup>170</sup>

Unlike when he defended the naturalization laws in 1862, Davis gently worded his appeal to avoid a states' rights fight over the issue. He tried by force of argument alone to win his case. While Davis argued that sound policy required the Confederacy to encourage rather than prohibit the foreign-born from living and working in the Confederacy, he also stated that his recommendation was limited to wartime only. After the war was concluded, he held open the option to pursue a stricter policy on immigrants.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> U. S. Secretary of War, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 4, Vol. 3, 670-71.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

Despite Davis' efforts, the concerns of some within the Confederate government continued to mount that too much pressure was being exerted against the foreign-born. The Chief of Niter and Mining worried about the disparity in equipment and supplies between the Union and Confederate armies. On October 1, 1864, he recommended that immediate action be taken to encourage and protect war industry workers from conscription or expulsion. Hundreds of war industry workers, many of whom were foreign-born, had already quit their work and migrated to the North. Meanwhile, the Confederate government continued to scour Europe for skilled workers to replace them.<sup>172</sup>

In Richmond, in the capital of the Confederacy and in a community with a substantial German-American population, the German-born were probably more fortunate than elsewhere in the Confederacy. They were sheltered, to some extent, by their numbers and by the importance of their work. They also had Davis to guard over them.

Despite the nativist sentiments of others, Davis and some government leaders within the Confederacy held onto their beliefs that the foreign-born were essential to the success of the Confederate cause. In the fall of 1864, an opportunity arose for the Confederate government to nurture German-American patriotism towards it. The *Anzeiger* had "difficulties" and its editors discontinued publication. Within a short time, the Confederate government purchased the paper and resumed its publication. German-born George A. Peple, a former state topographical engineer and Confederate navy professor, was named as editor, by the government, under the Anglo pseudonym "G. A. Wallace, Editor and Proprietor." Wanting the *Anzeiger's* published patriotic appeals to the German-American community to continue, the government, in buying the newspaper, had recognized the openness of Richmond's German-American community towards supporting its efforts.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., Ser. 4, Vol. 3, 696.

<sup>173</sup> Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 222.

In addition to defending the Confederacy, Richmond's German-Americans were fighting for their freedoms. They sought to protect the rights of the foreign-born. Whether they were Confederate or Unionist sympathizers, German-Americans as a group united behind this effort. By opposing nativism, to their own misfortune, German-Americans found themselves opposing so many Confederates and protesting so many nativist Confederate sentiments and policies.

Symbolic of the nativism that lashed fiercely against Richmond's German-born, a real storm destroyed their St. John's Church on May 1, 1864.<sup>174</sup> The last year of the war affected Richmond's German-American community harshly. Its members served dutifully in the militia on the lines outside the besieged city and in war industries inside the city. Enduring the shortages and sacrifices of wartime Richmond, like their native-born neighbors, the city's German-Americans also suffered amidst the so many nativists who surrounded them.

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<sup>174</sup> *Fest-Programm zum 65. Jubiläum der Deutschen Ev. St. Johannes Gemeinde*, n.p.

## Epilogue

Richmond fell to the Union army on April 3, 1865. Foreign-born militiamen, the German-born prominent among them, were blamed, by the native-born general commanding the withdrawal of the Confederate army, for the city's destruction. The militia "dispersed (being mostly foreigners)" and therefore created an opportunity for "a mob of both sexes and all colors" to plunder and "set fire to some buildings" in the city.<sup>1</sup> The Crenshaw Woolen Company's mill was looted and burned. The Tredegar Iron Works was spared from the mob only by an armed band of workers, the German-born most likely among them.<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, on the morning that Richmond fell, it was a second generation German-American, General Godfrey Weitzel, who led the first Union forces to occupy the city. The city's German-Americans, even the Confederate sympathizers among them, were proud that a fellow German-American had restored order to the city. In particular, they celebrated Weitzel for ordering his white soldiers to enter the city first, thereby "saving" the city from his black troops. Black soldiers marching in front of the Union column were told to wait as Weitzel's white soldiers passed them from behind. Quickly organizing his men to fight the fires, Weitzel restored order out of the chaos. Afterwards, Weitzel was overheard apologizing for the delay in fighting the fires, "I did not want to scare the population with my black troops." He continued, "Had I known the city would be burned, I would have come four hours earlier." Nevertheless, though fires in the city had worsened during the delay, many white residents of the city were thankful that it had

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<sup>1</sup> Report of General R. S. Ewell to General R. E. Lee, 20 Dec. 1865, Southern Historical Society Papers, Vol. 13, 249. The cause of the fires, whether they had been set by rioters or had spread from fires set by Confederate forces to prevent the capture of goods by the Union army, is open to debate. Thomas, *The Confederate State of Richmond*, 196.

<sup>2</sup> General R. S. Ewell, Southern Historical Society Papers, Vol. 13, 249.

been this German-American in command of the men who marched into Richmond that day.<sup>3</sup>

Though fire had severely damaged the city, many of Richmond's residents were relieved when the conflict had ended. For one German-American, the war had resulted in the failure of his grocery business, souring him upon America. In May 1865, he was planning his return to Europe.<sup>4</sup> Another German-American man, I. E. Grohnwald, epitomized the economy's conversion from wartime to peacetime production. He literally represented the economy's change from guns to butter. At the close of the war, Grohnwald ended his work as a gunsmith and opened a grocery.<sup>5</sup> Still another German-born man visited the North shortly after the end of the war. There, his "friends and old acquaintances deluged" him with kindness. Among them once again, he soon felt sorry for his "thoughts . . . the past four years" on war issues. Although he had expected to recover his health while visiting his family in Baltimore, he soon became physically ill after consuming "the beer and luxurious foods" which had long been unfamiliar to him.<sup>6</sup>

Peace at last overwhelmed the conflict that had raged in and outside of Richmond. The discord of nativism soon faded. In fact, after the war, Virginia established a board to promote immigration. This board appointed an agent who would distribute, throughout Germany, ten thousand copies of a pamphlet encouraging immigration to Virginia.<sup>7</sup> The pamphlet openly stated that Virginia needed "future white citizens" to supplant its blacks, who were "threatened with total destruction."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 103 and Lange, "The Changed Name of the Shoemaker of the Old and New World," 195.

<sup>4</sup> Jno. M. Lyneman, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 252, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>5</sup> I. E. Grohnwald, *Virginia*, Vol. 43, p. 249, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection.

<sup>6</sup> Hennighausen, letter to brother, Lewis, 25 May 1865, Mss2H3932a1, 10-11.

<sup>7</sup> Bunzl, "Immigrants in Richmond After the Civil War," 6, 48-49.

<sup>8</sup> Gasper Tochman, *Virginia: a brief memoir for the information of Europeans desirous of emigrating to the new world* (Richmond: Wm. A. R. Nye, 1868), 14 in Bunzl, "Immigrants in Richmond After the Civil War," 48.

In the postwar period, as Southern state governments turned to embrace white immigration, European-born immigrants turned away from the South. Immigration dropped off precipitously from pre-war levels due to the depressed economy and the unsettled political and racial conditions in the South.<sup>9</sup> Many Southern whites enviously eyed the flows of Northern European immigrants who were streaming into Northern and Western states.

Southern whites, especially those desiring increased immigration, altered their racial views and more favorably regarded German-born immigrants. In October 1868, an article in *De Bow's Review* featured the new racial identity that was being constructed by Southern whites. People of the "Gothic race" were proclaimed as "the one that should inhabit this continent, and the only one." The "Gothic race" was defined to include the descendants of Northern Europeans, those people of Britain, Scandinavia, and Germany. Presenting further his racist argument, the article's author declared that the Gothic people live in opposition to the ideals held by those of the "negro" and "Chinese" races and concluded that "immigration from the North of Europe is what we need."<sup>10</sup>

Under the political conditions of Reconstruction, Southern whites accepted the German-born into their ethnic group. In the years after the end of the Civil War and after black emancipation, white immigrants had become more desirable. The fires of war had been replaced by the challenge of race relations. The German-born were no longer considered the enemy. They had become the ally of the South's native-born whites.

Nevertheless, despite their post-war acceptance, the South's German-Americans would remain known, in the history of the South, as disloyal towards the Confederacy, if they were remembered at all. Even among most German-American historians, little attention, if any at all, is paid to the participation of German-Americans in the Confederate war effort. Other historians have pursued a similar interpretation. In a

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<sup>9</sup> Rousey, "Aliens in the WASP Nest," 162.

<sup>10</sup> *Norfolk Journal*, "The Gothic, African and Chinese Races," Norfolk, Va., reprinted in *De Bow's Review* 5, no. 10 (October 1868), 943-44.

speech entitled “The Old South,” former Confederate General D. H. Hill, born in South Carolina, paid tribute to the “Irish troops in our service” but did not mention the Confederate service of the German-born. Instead, he characterized the German-born as only among the many Union soldiers who were “inhabitants of the far-off isles of the sea.”<sup>11</sup> More recently, in the 1950s, the noted Civil War historian Bell Irvin Wiley was appalled when he heard “an author whose history has a decidedly Southern slant” assert “very positively . . . that ‘the majority of Yankee soldiers were foreign hirelings.’” Wiley attributed this Southern impression of Union armies, as largely composed of foreign mercenaries, to the degree that their speech stood out among native-born Union soldiers and to a theory held by some Southerners regarding the overwhelming enrollment of the foreign-born in the Union armies. Wiley parodied the adherents of this theory in writing that the Northern-born “had no love of fighting, suh, and if he had, he couldn’t have whipped us; so in keeping with his scheming, cowardly nature, he took his filthy wealth, much of it ill-gotten from his less maternalistic brothers in the South, and hired a horde of hungry foreigners to face the bullets for him, while he stayed at home and fattened his bank roll with war profits.”<sup>12</sup>

Instead, in contrast to the implications of these interpretations, this study finds that the political sentiments of Richmond’s German-Americans toward the Confederacy were quite similar to their Southern-born white neighbors in one respect. Both Richmond’s German-Americans and Southern-born whites held wide-ranging degrees of patriotism towards the Confederacy and became less enthusiastic as the war continued.<sup>13</sup> Some of Richmond’s German-Americans were avid Unionists. Others were devoted Confederates who persevered in the face of nativists’ attacks. A third group, whose patriotism lay between the extremes of these two positions, was less politically

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<sup>11</sup> D. H. Hill, “The Old South,” an address by Lt. Gen. D. H. Hill, on Memorial Day, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1887 at Baltimore before the Society of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States in the State of Maryland, Southern Historical Society Papers, Vol. XVI, 438.

<sup>12</sup> Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank* (n.p.: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1952; reprint, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1971), 306-7, 428, n. 51.

<sup>13</sup> Blair, *Virginia’s Private War*, 127, 146-47.

determined in their political sentiments and coped, often in war-related work or in military service, to endure both the hardships of the war and the nativism directed against them.

During Reconstruction, some of Richmond's German-Americans became Democrats and others Republicans. One analysis concluded that the German-born composed one-sixth, or approximately twenty-two, of Richmond's Republican "scalawag leaders" (i.e., those who were Southern-born or had lived in Richmond before or during the Civil War).<sup>14</sup> The unreconstructed Confederate, Herrmann Schuricht, stated, "A comparatively small number of Germans was connected with the Republicans." Their leader was Hermann L. Wiegand. In opposition to them were the adherents of the parties that would eventually coalesce into the Democrats. Schuricht continued, "The majority of German citizens of Richmond counted to the moderate Democrats." Foremost among them was George A. Peple, formerly appointed by the Confederate government as editor of the *Anzeiger*.<sup>15</sup>

On June 5, 1868, Peple led a meeting of the city's German-Americans of all political persuasions. They adopted several resolutions. However, the German-American Republicans in attendance voted against several of them. One resolution condemned "the military rule since 1864." Another deplored "the unlimited favors bestowed on the negro element." As Schuricht remembered, "not one in the large assembly was an advocate of slavery." Though most of the city's German-Americans had not advocated slavery, another resolution stated:

We are proud to be of German descent and we reject with indignation as an insult to be placed on equal political and social footing with the negroes just extracted from the mire of slavery. We consider it as sacrificing the nation, to force the white population of the South under the rule of a half-civilized and inferior race.

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<sup>14</sup> Michael B. Chesson, *Richmond After the War, 1865-1890* (Richmond, Va.: Virginia State Library, 1981), 107.

<sup>15</sup> Schuricht, *The German Element in Virginia*, Vol. II, 136.

The assembly unanimously adopted this last resolution. Though they agreed that individuals were entitled to “certain inalienable rights,” they considered it “a crime against civilization to expose them to the danger of negro rule.”<sup>16</sup> Many of the city’s German-Americans supported the Conservative party, which had been formed after the war by former members of the Democratic and Whig parties in order to oppose the Republican party and black political empowerment.<sup>17</sup> In 1870, a German language broadside circulated throughout the city; it favored the Conservative ticket in the coming elections and asked that bitterness left over from the Civil War end. The broadside admitted that the German-born had some Republican political leanings but argued that the political rule of blacks and Republicans should be opposed. It also stated that blacks had the right to earn their livings and become educated but questioned their ability to govern. Finally, it cited blacks’ opposition to fund state immigration efforts as evidence of their political ineptitude.<sup>18</sup> Reluctant to empower blacks politically, Richmond’s German-Americans were almost entirely united in their racial sentiments.

Still, division persisted among Richmond’s German-American community. The German National Republican Club was formed in 1870 to oppose the German Conservative Club, which had organized a few years before.<sup>19</sup> The German Republicans’ organizational meeting, attended by only thirteen, elected as temporary president a German-American who had served in a Confederate militia company during the war. The *Dispatch* commented that the newly elected president was, the night of his election, introduced to a large gathering of Republicans, both black and white, as “a man...who had now repented of his sins, and had come to ask forgiveness from God and his

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>17</sup> Chesson, *Richmond After the War*), 106.

<sup>18</sup> “Aufruf an die deutschen Adoptiv-Buerger der Stadt Richmond” (Richmond: *Täglicher Anzeiger*, 1870), Valentine Museum, Richmond, Va.; in Bunzl, “Immigrants in Richmond After the Civil War,” 92-93.

<sup>19</sup> Bunzl, “Immigrants in Richmond After the Civil War,” 91-92.

audience” for his service as a Confederate soldier.<sup>20</sup> Like their native-born white neighbors, the city’s German-Americans sought to bury the conflicts created during the Civil War.

Older divisions among Richmond’s German-Americans healed while new divisions became more prominent. As their white neighbors’ nativism ebbed and the hard feelings engendered by the war faded, racial issues and political power struggles rose in importance as factors that continued to divide Richmond’s German-American community.

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<sup>20</sup> *Dispatch*, 12 July 1867.

**Table 1**

German-born Population in Slave Cities			
<u>City</u>	Year		Percentage
	<u>1850</u>	<u>1860</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Memphis	341	1,412	314%
Mobile	513	1,276	149%
St. Louis	22,340	50,510	126%
Richmond	740	1,623	119%
Savannah	383	771	101%
Louisville	7,357	13,374	82%
New Orleans	11,220	19,752	76%
Baltimore	19,274	32,613	69%
Charleston	1,789	1,944	9%

Sources: Superintendent of the Census, *Statistical View of the United States* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854), 399;  
Superintendent of the Census, *Statistics of the United States* (Washington: GPO, 1866), lviii.

**Table 2**

Foreign-born as a Percentage of Total Free Population in Slave States		
<u>State</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Rural</u>
Missouri	61	7
Louisiana	44	7
Kentucky	37	4
Tennessee	37	1
Georgia	33	1
Alabama	30	n.a.
Maryland	28	7
South Carolina	26	1
Virginia	20	2

Source: Superintendent of the Census, *Statistics of the United States* (Washington: GPO, 1866), lviii.

**Table 3**

City of Richmond			
Population			
<u>Population</u>	<u>Year</u>		<u>Percentage</u>
	<u>1850</u>	<u>1860</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Total	27,570	37,910	38
Free	17,643	26,211	49
Slave	9,927	11,699	18
White	15,274	23,635	55
Black	12,296	14,275	16
Slave black	9,927	11,699	18
Free black	2,369	2,576	9
Foreign-born white	2,102	4,956	136
Irish-born white	685	2,244	228
German-born white	740	1,623	119
Other foreign-born white	677	1,089	61
Native-born white	13,172	18,679	42

Sources: Superintendent of the Census, *Statistical View of the United States* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854), 398-99;  
 Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington: GPO, 1866), xxxii, lviii, 519.

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