

# CURRICULUM GUIDE

## German American Hoosiers and German Culture in Indianapolis

*by Bob Guernsey and Jane Hedeem*

for the Indiana Historical Society Indiana Experience

### You Are There 1914 *The Violin Maker Upstairs*



INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Cover Image: “Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Conrath in the Violin Shop ” (Indiana Historical Society, Digital Image Collections, Item ID: P0404\_FOLDER1\_MR\_AND\_MRS\_CONRATH)

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## Introduction

This lesson coordinates with the You Are There 1914: *The Violin Maker Upstairs* component of the *Indiana Experience* at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center in Indianapolis. In this experience, visitors are invited to step back in time to 1914 to visit the re-created workshop of stringed instrument maker Joseph Conrath. In his shop, located at 39 Virginia Avenue in Indianapolis, Conrath repaired and crafted stringed instruments, such as violins, violas, guitars, mandolins, banjos, and cellos. As a luthier, or stringed instrument maker, Conrath served the many musicians who participated in Indianapolis's vibrant cultural scene of the early 1900s. New instruments and instrument repair were in demand due to the number of orchestras and musical societies that called Indianapolis home at the time. Though Conrath could not play any of the instruments he made, his skills as a carpenter and singer helped him produce instruments that looked and sounded beautiful.

Conrath was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, to immigrant parents. His mother was German and his father came from Alsace-Lorraine, a region that had passed between Germany and France for many years. In 1914 Alsace-Lorraine was once again a battleground between French and German soldiers. The Conrath family moved to Indianapolis around 1887 and on June 11, 1896, Conrath married Amelia Bush, whose family was also German. Being a part of the city's large German American population, the Conraths might have participated in German cultural societies, such as the Turnverein (a gymnastics and cultural society) or the Mannerchor (a music society). They may have read German-language newspapers or attended one of the city's German churches.

As Hoosiers with close ties to Germany, the Conraths and other German Americans kept tabs on the events in Europe. World War I erupted in Europe after the June 28, 1914, assassination by a Serbian nationalist of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Germany, an ally of Austria-Hungary, declared war on Serbia and its allies. President Woodrow Wilson kept America out of the war until April 1917, when the United

States joined the Allied powers of Serbia, Russia, France, and Great Britain in declaring war on the Central powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Leading up to and after America's entry into the war, there was growing anti-German sentiment in the United States.

This curriculum is intended to provide historical context for German American life and culture in Indianapolis in the 1910s. The materials may be used to prepare students for a visit to You Are There 1914: *The Violin Maker Upstairs* or as a follow-up lesson. The historical context and themes are relevant to classroom instruction even if a History Center visit is not possible. The You Are There 1914: *The Violin Maker Upstairs* experience will remain open through September 3, 2011.

## Overview/Description

In this lesson, students will discover some of the many ways German American Hoosiers have influenced our lives by searching on the Internet and interpreting historic photographs.

## Grade Level

Elementary (grade 4) and middle/intermediate school (grades 6 and 8)

## Academic Standards

- Indiana Standards (as of March 2010)
  - Grade 4, Social Studies 4.1.12—Describe the transformation of Indiana through immigration and through developments in agriculture, industry, and transportation and Social Studies 4.1.18—Research and describe the contributions of important Indiana artists and writers to the state's cultural landscape. (Individuals, Society, and Culture)
  - Grade 6, Social Studies 6.1.23—Form research questions and use a variety of information resources to obtain, evaluate, and present data on people, cultures, and developments in Europe and the Americas.
  - Grade 8, Social Studies 8.1.25—Give examples of how immigration affected American

culture in the decades before and after the Civil War, including growth of industrial sites in the North; religious differences; tensions between middle-class and working-class people, particularly in the Northeast; and intensification of cultural differences between the North and the South and Social Studies 8.1.31—Obtain historical data from a variety of sources to compare and contrast examples of art, music, and literature during the nineteenth century and explain how these reflect American culture during this time period.

- National Standards  
National Council for the Social Studies, *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (Washington D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1994)
  - I Culture
    - Compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns.
    - Explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture.

## Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Notable German immigrants to Indiana

## Background/Historical Context

After settling in to new lives in America, German-born Hoosiers made a point of maintaining cultural ties to their homeland. Many German immigrants to Indiana settled in Indianapolis, creating a micro-society where German cultural traditions flourished. By 1849 the area bounded by New York, Market, East, and Noble (now College) streets was known as “Germantown.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Giles R. Holt, “Germans,” in *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience*, Robert M. Taylor Jr. and Connie A. McBirney, eds. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996), 158.

For immigrants that came during the first wave of German influx into the state (1816–48), cultural maintenance was often accomplished through membership in a religious community. Churches not only served as places of worship but also provided cultural support for new immigrants by offering counseling, schools, help for immigrants in need, and a place for socializing with other people of German heritage. Churches were an enclave where the German language could be freely spoken and the culture freely practiced.<sup>2</sup>

By 1910 there were several German congregations in Indianapolis, the majority of which were Lutheran, Catholic, or Methodist. The close association of immigrants with a particular congregation led to a denominational division among German Hoosiers. Catholics, Lutherans, and Methodists were sometimes bitter rivals.

Many of the German immigrants who arrived in Indiana between 1848 and 1861 were highly educated intellectuals. They were also social and political liberals who tended not to associate with religious institutions. This group had a great appreciation for the arts and domestic life and found it very important to maintain their German heritage and values and pass them along to the next generation.

One way that Hoosiers of German heritage stayed connected to German culture was through German-language newspapers. There were several German-language periodicals produced in Indianapolis, including the *Indiana Volksblatt und Telegraph*, the *Indiana Freie Presse*, the *Tribüne*, the *Telegraph*, the *Spottvogel*, *Die Glocke*, and *Die Freie Press von Indiana*.<sup>3</sup> These publications helped German American Hoosiers retain their native language.

In addition, a public school system heavily influenced by German Americans helped German immigrants maintain ties to the culture of their homeland. Germans brought with them the concept of the kindergarten and vocational educa-

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2. Ibid., 153.

3. Ibid., 164.

tion. In 1888, with the help of many German Americans on the school board, Indianapolis established its first vocational training department at Shortridge High School. The department grew quickly and was so successful at providing job training that by 1894 the city had an entire high school devoted to vocational training—the Manual Training High School (later Emmerich Manual Technical High School). The new school opened under the leadership of German immigrant Charles E. Emmerich.<sup>4</sup>

German-language instruction was common in public schools and sometimes the only language of instruction in private schools until World War I created a backlash against Germans. According to scholar Giles R. Hoyt, “Schools provided language and culture maintenance as well as an introduction into general American life. Indiana’s public schools still left a great deal to be desired, lagging behind other Midwestern states—ninth out of ten in literacy and seventh in terms of money spent per pupil at the end of the nineteenth century. Many German Americans felt the need for maintaining their own parochial schools where the German language was used. In the cities German was taught along with English. In many of the parochial schools German was the main medium of instruction.”<sup>5</sup> This held true until a 1919 law banned the teaching of German in all public schools in Indiana.

However, it was the *verein* (club or association) that took on the most importance in maintaining and disseminating German culture in America.<sup>6</sup> Two types of *vereins* were common: the *vereindeutsche* (German culture-oriented organizations) and the *kirchendeutsche* (church-oriented organizations). The “Forty Eighters,” a nickname for the wave of German immigrants who arrived in 1848, mainly joined *vereindeutsche*.<sup>7</sup> The first German *verein* established in Indianapolis was the *Turngemeinde* (Turner Society). This club, which opened in 1851, followed the teachings of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, who founded the Turner

movement in the early 1800s to train German youth for war against France. He used exercise and gymnastics to strengthen students’ bodies and instill in them a sense of nationalism. In 1813, after the war against France, Jahn and the Turners began to advocate democratic reforms in the German government. Jahn believed these reforms should be brought about through nonviolent means, though some of his students disagreed and took up arms in the 1848 revolution in Germany. This led to a split in the Turners.<sup>8</sup>

When the 1848 revolution failed, several Turners who had fought in it fled to the United States, where they established their own Turner societies. The American Turner societies served not only as centers of physical education, where members could use the parallel bars, rings, balance beam, horse, and the horizontal bar (all invented by Jahn), but also as political organizations advocating liberal reforms. The Turners advocated for rights for immigrants, the abolition of slavery, and later opposed Prohibition.<sup>9</sup>

Activity at Turner societies decreased with the onset of the Civil War, since many members left to join the military. The societies experienced resurgence, however, following the end of the war. The Turners reemerged with an increased emphasis on physical education. Turnfests (athletic competitions) were reestablished following the Civil War to promote physical fitness and to raise awareness about the Turners.<sup>10</sup>

The twentieth century was a tumultuous one for Turner societies. World War I brought an era of suspicion against German Americans and German cultural practices. Turners downplayed their German connection during World War I in order to escape the hostility of Americans who felt Turners were loyal to the German government since they advocated American neutrality. During

8. Gregory H. Mobley, “Historical Note,” in “American Turners Records, 1853–2004 Mss 030” (Indianapolis: Indiana University–Purdue University of Indianapolis University Library, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, 2002), 2–4.

9. *Ibid.*, 4.

10. *Ibid.*, 6.

4. *Ibid.*, 165.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, 160.

7. *Ibid.*

World War I, the Turners renamed themselves the American Gymnastic Union.<sup>11</sup>

Since beer and spirits played an important role in club activities, as well as in German social life, Prohibition was a difficult time for Turner societies. Membership fell, forcing some Turner societies to close.<sup>12</sup>

The Turners' struggles continued during World War II, as renewed suspicion against Germans resulted in a withdrawal of public support. There was a revival for the societies in the postwar years, as they downplayed their political activities and concentrated once again on social and athletic services, but membership has continued to decline since the 1960s.<sup>13</sup>

## Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about the lives of seven prominent Hoosiers of German descent and their contributions.
- Interpret historic photographs of Indianapolis Turner Society activities.

## Time Required

One forty-five-minute class period

## Materials Required

- Pencil and paper
- “German American Hoosiers” Student Handout found on page seven of this lesson.
- Copies of the following images from the Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections as shown on pages eight through thirteen of this lesson.
  - “Exercise Class at the Independent Turnv-

erein,” 1914 (Indiana Historical Society, W. H. Bass Photo Company Collection, Digital Image Collections, Item ID: P0130\_P\_BOX24\_FOLDER4\_35649)

- “Independent Turnverein, interior, 1914 (Bass #35632)” (Indiana Historical Society, W. H. Bass Photo Company Collections, Digital Image Collection, Item ID: folder198\_doc81.jpg)
- “Independent Turnverein, interior, 1914 (Bass #35634)” (Indiana Historical Society, W. H. Bass Photo Company Collections, Digital Image Collection, Item ID: folder198\_doc83.jpg)
- “Independent Turnverein, interior, 1914 (Bass #35727)” (Indiana Historical Society, W. H. Bass Photo Company Collections, Digital Image Collection, Item ID: folder198\_doc94.jpg)
- “Independent Turnverein, interior, 1914 (Bass #216675F)” (Indiana Historical Society, W. H. Bass Photo Company Collection, Digital Image Collections, Item ID: folder198\_doc98.jpg)
- “Independent Turnverein, interior, 1914 (Bass #216676F)” (Indiana Historical Society, W. H. Bass Photo Company Collection, Digital Image Collections, Item ID: folder198\_doc99.jpg)

## Teacher’s Instructional Plan

### Introduction

German Americans, including those from Indiana, became involved in many areas of business, from making cigars and music to construction, banking, and auto making. The first activity focuses on identification of the contributions made by a few notable German Americans from Indiana. The second activity encourages students to examine historic photographs and identify the various social activities that took place at a German American turnverein in Indianapolis.

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11. Ibid., 6.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 7.

# ACTIVITY 1

## Notable German American Hoosiers

### Procedure

Give each student a copy of the “German American Hoosiers” Student Handout and ask them to match each person to their area of contribution. Students may use the Internet to research these individuals and their accomplishments.

### “German American Hoosiers” Student Handout Answer Key

1. Charles E. Emmerich  
*B. Educator*
2. Bernard Vonnegut  
*H. Architect of Shortridge High School*
3. Studebaker Brothers  
*G. Carriage and automakers*
4. Herman Hulman Sr.  
*A. Businessman from Terre Haute*
5. Otto Frenzel  
*D. President of Merchants National Bank*
6. Theodore Dreiser  
*E. Author*
7. Paul Dresser  
*F. Songwriter*
8. John A. Hook  
*C. Druggist*
9. Bruno Schmitz and Rudolf Schwarz  
*I. Created Soldiers and Sailors Monument*

# ACTIVITY 2

## Photo Analysis

### Procedure

Discuss the history of the Turners and their contributions to American society with the class using the background information provided on pages two through four and other sources described in the Additional Resources section on pages five and six.

To begin the activity, distribute copies of the Turner society photographs from the Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections showing pool tables, dining hall, gymnastic equipment, and a swimming pool. Reproductions of these images are provided on pages eight through thirteen of this lesson.

For each of photograph, have students provide written or oral responses to these questions: What activity do you think was to take place? What evidence is there for this?

### Evaluation and Assessment

For a satisfactory performance, students should be able to match 80 percent of the German American Hoosiers on the handout with their area of endeavor. In addition, students should be able to identify 90 percent of the activities in the Turner photo analysis activity.

### Suggested Modifications

Ask students to write a list of ten to twelve words they feel are German in origin. They could then check with a dictionary to verify their origins.

Replace the student handout of German American Hoosiers with a list of eight to ten German words. A German-English dictionary may be used to find meanings. Simple examples for younger students could be: pretzel, stein, sauerkraut, fest, blitz, kindergarten, iceberg, and weiner.

### Publications

Metzner, Henry. *History of the American Turners*. 4th ed. Louisville, KY: National Council of the American Turners, 1989.

Pumray, Eric L., and Katja Rampelmann. *Research Guide to the Turner Movement in the United States*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996.

Taylor, Robert M. Jr. and Connie A. McBirney eds. *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience*. 1996. Reprint, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2009.

## Web sites

American Turners. "American Turners: A Sound Mind in a Sound Body." Accessed April 2, 2010. <http://www.americanturners.com/>.

Describes the mission and activities of this organization, which still encourages families to maintain an active lifestyle.

Indiana German Heritage Society. "Indiana's German Heritage." Accessed April 2, 2010. <http://www.ighs.org/heritage.htm>.

Provides a sampling of German heritage activities from across the state.

IUPUI Max Kade German American Center in conjunction with Society for German American Studies. "IUPUI Max Kade German American Center Home Page." Accessed April 2, 2010. <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/kade/>.

Numerous Web links to German American Studies topics.

IUPUI University Library. "German Language Resources, Culture." Accessed April 2, 2010. [http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/subjectareas/german/germ\\_culture](http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/subjectareas/german/germ_culture).

Resources, some in German, and links for further research on German culture.

IUPUI University Library. "Shaping the Circle: German Americans in Indianapolis 1840–1918." Accessed April 2, 2010. <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/static/exhibits/circle/home.html>.

A digital exhibit on the influence that German Americans have had on music, architecture, and physical education in Indianapolis, as well as the cultural conflict faced by German Americans and how they overcame it.

IUPUI University Library, Program of Digital Scholarship. "German Americans." Accessed April 2, 2010. [http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections?filter0=132&filter1=\\*\\*ALL\\*\\*&colleciton\\_submit=Go](http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections?filter0=132&filter1=**ALL**&colleciton_submit=Go).

The library's collection includes excellent resources on the American Turners.

Zeitgeist Publishing. "German Life: Culture, History, Travel." Accessed April 2, 2010. <http://www.germanlife.com/>.

An online magazine with current information on Germany and German life.

## “German American Hoosiers” Student Handout

Match the following Hoosiers to the area in which they are best associated:

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|---|--|
| 1. ___ Charles E. Emmerich              | A. Businessman from Terre Haute          |
| 2. ___ Bernard Vonnegut                 | B. Educator                              |
| 3. ___ Studebaker Brothers              | C. Druggist                              |
| 4. ___ Herman Hulman Sr.                | D. President of Merchants National Bank  |
| 5. ___ Otto Frenzel                     | E. Author                                |
| 6. ___ Theodore Dreiser                 | F. Songwriter                            |
| 7. ___ Paul Dresser                     | G. Carriage and automakers               |
| 8. ___ John A. Hook                     | H. Architect of Shortridge High School   |
| 9. ___ Bruno Schmitz and Rudolf Schwarz | I. Created Soldiers and Sailors Monument |



“Exercise Class at the Independent Turnverein,” 1914 (Indiana Historical Society, W. H. Bass Photo Company Collection, Digital Image Collections, Item ID P0130\_P\_BOX24\_FOLDER4\_35649)



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