

4-1-1994

A Remarkable Immigrant: The Story of Hans Reimer Claussen

Richard Lord Acton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest>

Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Acton, Richard L. "A Remarkable Immigrant: The Story of Hans Reimer Claussen." *The Palimpsest* 75 (1994), 87-101.
Available at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest/vol75/iss2/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the State Historical Society of Iowa at Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Palimpsest by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

A REMARKABLE IMMIGRANT



PUTNAM MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND NATURAL SCIENCE, DAVENPORT, IOWA

Hans Reimer Claussen, from an 1848 lithograph.

THE STORY OF HANS REIMER CLAUSSEN

BY RICHARD, LORD ACTON

A YOUNG LAW STUDENT from Davenport, Iowa, toured Europe in 1877. A highlight of his trip came in his ancestral Germany. Years later he recalled: "In Frankfurt I visited St. Paul's church, in which in Germany's revolutionary days the Frankfurt Parliament held its sessions. Here I found the seat, and for a few moments occupied the seat, which my venerable friend H.R. Claussen had occupied while a member of that important and historic body."

The youth's action symbolized the respect many Davenport German Americans had for Hans Reimer Claussen, who lived a remarkable life in Europe and America. During the 1840s Claussen was a leading politician in his native Schleswig-Holstein, and became a member of the all-German Frankfurt Parliament. Forced to flee after the collapse of the 1848 revolution, Claussen immigrated to Davenport, where he spent the rest of his life as a distinguished lawyer and political leader of the

local German-American community. In politics he battled against nativism, prohibition, Sabbatarianism, and woman suffrage. Few immigrants to Iowa have played such a part on two continents as Hans Reimer Claussen.

Claussen was born in February 1804 in the German-speaking duchy of Holstein. As a boy, he worked on his father's farm. He studied law at the University of Kiel and, after admission to the bar in 1830, practiced law near Heide in Holstein. Two years later he married Annina Rahbek, daughter of an officer in the Danish War Department and niece of a famous Danish poet. Annina's father had died when she was an infant, and her German mother had taken the child back to her own hometown of Heide. There, on her nineteenth birthday, Annina married Claussen. The couple had four children. Two died as babies, but two thrived—a daughter, Elfriede, and a son, Ernst.

In 1834 the Claussens moved to Kiel, the main city of Holstein. There Claussen prac-

ticed as a lawyer in the supreme court and taught law at the university. He wrote many legal articles, and his treatise on an aspect of Roman law excited much discussion among German university professors. Intellectualism, law, and education were always important in his life, but gradually he turned to politics at a time of great political unrest in Schleswig-Holstein.

The history of Schleswig-Holstein is notorious for its complexity. The British statesman Lord Palmerston said that the history of Schleswig-Holstein was so complicated that only three men had ever understood it fully: one was Prince Albert, who was dead; the second was a professor who had become insane; the third was Palmerston himself, but he'd forgotten it. The twin duchies of Schleswig-Holstein were at the extreme north of Germany. Although most of the population was German-speaking, the duchies had been ruled since 1460 by the King of Denmark.

Germany in the 1830s and 1840s was a loose confederation of a multitude of states with absolute monarchs. A rising tide of German nationalism marked those decades. Claussen, who throughout the 1840s was a member of the Holstein Estates (or legislature), belonged to the German Party, which sought to join the German Confederation.

Matters came to a head after Paris broke out in revolt against the French king early in 1848, and revolution spread across Europe. The revolutionary atmosphere pervaded Schleswig-Holstein, and at an excited meeting their combined legislatures drew up five demands of the King of Denmark. The most important demands were a separate constitution for Schleswig-Holstein, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press. Claussen and four other delegates were sent to Copenhagen to put their grievances before the King of Denmark.

When the five men arrived in Copenhagen, the Danish people regarded them as criminals guilty of high treason. Claussen recalled how he and his fellow delegates were kept "in a kind of respectable confinement and had been compelled . . . to accept against their will the hospitality of a rich merchant. [The merchant] watched the doings of the delegates closely, and never allowed them to go out with-

out his company and a guard surrounding them."

As the delegates drove to the palace to see the king, a mob of infuriated Danes surrounded their coaches and tried to overturn them. But cooler heads thwarted the crowd's efforts, and the delegation reached the palace in safety. The king rejected the demands of Claussen and the others, and a Danish man-of-war took them back to Kiel.

On their arrival in Schleswig-Holstein, Claussen and his colleagues found a full-scale revolution had broken out against Denmark. With the approval of the provisional government of Schleswig-Holstein, Claussen journeyed to Prussia and other German states, where he succeeded in obtaining armed assistance for the revolt.

Meanwhile revolution had spread throughout the German Confederation, and a parliament from all the German states met at Frankfurt. Holstein elected Claussen to the Frankfurt Parliament, and during its lengthy deliberations, he was among the group of radical members. Eventually the parliament drew up a constitution for a united Germany based on universal male suffrage with freedom of speech and the press. The parliament offered the German crown to the King of Prussia, but he turned it down.

The Frankfurt Parliament then broke up, but a rump of members, including Claussen, retired to Stuttgart and continued deliberating. Finally royal troops prevented the members from meeting, which spelled the end of the parliament. The tide of revolution receded, and the Danes regained control of Schleswig-Holstein. In 1852 the King of Denmark published a general amnesty for the rebels in the duchies. However, he issued a decree that banished the twenty-one most important revolutionary leaders—including Hans Reimer Claussen.

But Claussen, realizing he had no future in his homeland, had already departed for a new life. In 1851, he set off with his family for America. His destination was a haven for many Schleswig-Holsteiners—Davenport, Iowa.

German immigration to Davenport had begun in 1836, and immigrants from Schleswig-Holstein first arrived in 1844. After

the failure of the 1848 revolution, a flood of German refugees known as the "Forty-eighters"—many from Schleswig-Holstein—fled to Davenport. One German immigrant, writing in 1851 about Davenport and its estimated 4,000 inhabitants, enthused: "One-third of the people are Germans, and in the country perhaps one half of the people are Germans. One hardly realizes that he is in America because everywhere you hear German spoken."

That same year, Davenport's German-language newspaper *Der Demokrat* was born. The arrival in 1852 of Claussen's future son-in-law, Christian Mueller—who had been a gymnastic instructor in Kiel—led to the founding in Davenport of the *Turnverein*, the Forty-eighters' quintessential organization. Similar groups were springing up in German-American communities across the Midwest. This political and gymnastic society believed in "a sound mind in a sound body" and "freedom, education and welfare for all." Soon the Davenport Turners had their own hall, where they drilled in uniforms of white duck, grey hats, and red neck-bands. Claussen's son, Ernst, was an early Turner, while Claussen himself was a frequent lecturer to the *Turnverein*.

The Forty-eighters set up a German literary

society with its own library and a German theater. They founded German schools, singing societies, and a rifle club. They started breweries and beer gardens. One historian has described Davenport and Scott County as "the new Schleswig-Holstein."

After arriving in Davenport in August 1851, Claussen—now aged forty-seven—set himself the herculean task of learning English and taking the Iowa bar examination. In just two years he achieved both goals and began to practice as a lawyer. He was soon writing legal articles for *Der Demokrat*.

From his earliest days in Davenport, Claussen encouraged other Germans to immigrate to Iowa. He contributed to newspapers in Schleswig-Holstein extolling the virtues of Iowa. For example, in June 1852 he praised the local freedom of the press: "Anyone who can feel pleasure at this development quickly feels at home and happy here." He also wrote a chapter on Iowa law in a German booklet for would-be immigrants. One German newcomer, on reaching Iowa in 1852, "spoke in glowing terms of the hearty reception he and his family had received at the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Claussen."

In 1855, Claussen turned in a new direction. Together with his son, Ernst, and son-in-law, Christian Mueller, he built a grist mill at Lyons

German immigrants in Davenport were quick to organize a local *Turnverein*, a political and gymnastic society that promoted "a sound mind in a sound body." Here, their 1857 Turner hall. Claussen was a frequent lecturer for the fraternal society.



SHS (IOWA CITY)



SHS (IOWA CITY)



near Clinton, some thirty miles upriver from Davenport. At first the venture was profitable, but grain prices collapsed at the end of the Crimean War. Claussen lost virtually all the money he had built up in Schleswig-Holstein. He left Lyons in 1858 and returned to Davenport to start again.

Now, at the age of fifty-four, Claussen hurled himself into his law practice. He proved most successful at finding clients among the German Americans of Scott County. A fellow lawyer recalled: "In a few years he had acquired both the practice and the reputation of an able lawyer. Many times I saw him in the court. He was stockily built, not above medium height, and very quiet in demeanor. His accent and appearance denoted his foreign origin. His clear and thoughtful expression showed he was a philosopher. His deep learning and high character gave him an excellent standing not only with members of the bar and courts, but with the community in general."

Outside the courtroom, Claussen spoke at the first recorded anti-temperance meeting in Iowa, held at Davenport in 1852. He gave a fiery speech championing the right of German Americans to drink alcohol—a cause they held dear. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, prohibition threatened the social culture of Iowans of German descent, as well as their economic interests in breweries. In 1862 a Canadian traveler gave a vivid description of the Davenport German community at play: "The population has a preponderating element of the German race, who carry with them, along with their love of lager [and] sour-kroust . . . their free and easy habits of Sunday afternoon diversion. At the 'Dutch Gardens,' as they call one place of amusement, I saw on Sunday afternoon several hundred people swigging lager on benches under the trees while listening to the strains of a fine band performing operatic selections. All ages and sexes were there. Six or seven

Jacob Eckhardt's saloon and the German sign above it are the backdrop for girls on their way to Schuetzen Park, a popular recreation center for German Americans in Davenport in the 1880s and 1890s.



SHS (IOWA CITY)

near Clinton, some thirty miles upriver from Davenport. At first the venture was profitable, but grain prices collapsed at the end of the Crimean War. Claussen lost virtually all the money he had built up in Schleswig-Holstein. He left Lyons in 1858 and returned to Davenport to start again.

Now, at the age of fifty-four, Claussen hurled himself into his law practice. He proved most successful at finding clients among the German Americans of Scott County. A fellow lawyer recalled: "In a few years he had acquired both the practice and the reputation of an able lawyer. Many times I saw him in the court. He was stockily built, not above medium height, and very quiet in demeanor. His accent and appearance denoted his foreign origin. His clear and thoughtful expression showed he was a philosopher. His deep learning and high character gave him an excellent standing not only with members of the bar and courts, but with the community in general."

Outside the courtroom, Claussen spoke at the first recorded anti-temperance meeting in Iowa, held at Davenport in 1852. He gave a fiery speech championing the right of German Americans to drink alcohol—a cause they held dear. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, prohibition threatened the social culture of Iowans of German descent, as well as their economic interests in breweries. In 1862 a Canadian traveler gave a vivid description of the Davenport German community at play: "The population has a preponderating element of the German race, who carry with them, along with their love of lager [and] sour-kroust . . . their free and easy habits of Sunday afternoon diversion. At the 'Dutch Gardens,' as they call one place of amusement, I saw on Sunday afternoon several hundred people swigging lager on benches under the trees while listening to the strains of a fine band performing operatic selections. All ages and sexes were there. Six or seven

Jacob Eckhardt's saloon and the German sign above it are the backdrop for girls on their way to Schuetzen Park, a popular recreation center for German Americans in Davenport in the 1880s and 1890s.



PUTNAM MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND NATURAL SCIENCE, DAVENPORT, IOWA

Adelbert Riepe's pharmacy displays an American flag in the right window and German song lyrics in the left. Claussen died the year this photo was taken—1894. German Americans in Davenport would continue to publicly celebrate their heritage until World War I brought anti-German hysteria.

attendant imps of boys ran frantically hither and thither with handfuls of lager mugs. Three sweating bartenders handed liquor over the counter. . . . Towards evening, the performance was to wind up for the day with a dance—and then to open again in the evening for an amateur dramatic performance.” During his many years in Iowa, Claussen fought politically for the German Americans’ personal freedom to drink alcohol, and to enjoy dancing and other entertainments on Sundays.

Claussen originally supported the anti-slavery Free Soil party (he considered slavery “a sin and a crime”) and inevitably he became a member of the Republican Party upon its formation in 1856. He was elected a justice of the peace for Davenport on the Republican ticket in 1858 and again two years later.

As president of the German Republican Club of Scott County, Claussen in 1858 wrote an open letter to the Republican candidate for Congress, William Vandever. This letter, signed by a host of German-American Republicans, demanded to know if Vandever supported the anti-immigrant “Know Nothing” point of view. In particular, did he favor a longer probation for foreigners as a precondition to citizenship, and an extended period before naturalized citizens could vote? Claussen’s letter forced Vandever publicly to disown these nativist policies.

Two years later, Claussen’s influence was more widely demonstrated. On March 7, 1860, he called a meeting of the German Republican Club in Davenport to condemn Edward Bates of Missouri, who was then a prominent contender for the Republican presidential nomination (which ultimately went to Abraham Lincoln).

The club endorsed lengthy resolutions drawn up by Claussen. The resolutions stressed that Bates could not be regarded as a Republican given his political history: he had revealed anti-immigrant, nativist tendencies; he had recently supported a pro-slavery candidate for Congress; and he had said he would “cheerfully execute the fugitive slave law.” Therefore, Bates “has shown himself to be an appeaser and supporter of the plans and measures of the Pro-Slavery Know Nothings and a

disprover and opponent of Republican principles.”

Three weeks later, Claussen wrote to Iowa’s U.S. senator James Harlan: “We sent [our anti-Bates resolutions] to every prominent German in the Union, and have found general approbation among the German republicans.” The German-language newspapers of Milwaukee and St. Louis reprinted the Davenport resolutions. The *Chicago Tribune* and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* commented on the resolutions, and the German Republicans of Cincinnati endorsed them. Claussen’s efforts played a major part in destroying the Bates candidacy.

When the Civil War came, Claussen’s son, Ernst—who as a teenager had fought in the Schleswig-Holstein revolt—was one of the first men in Davenport to respond to Lincoln’s call for volunteers by joining the three-month regiment, the First Iowa Infantry. Claussen continued his legal practice, expanding it in 1862 by taking Ernst—now back from the war—into partnership. The following year, when the First National Bank opened its doors in Davenport, Claussen was one of the prime movers in the enterprise and served as a director from 1865 to 1870.

After the war, Claussen entered state politics. In 1867 he stood in Scott County as Republican candidate for the state senate. He chose an unfortunate year. In Scott County, the Democrats, conservative Republicans, and anti-prohibitionists united in the People’s Party, whose main platform was opposition to prohibition. The Republican Party remained officially neutral on prohibition and left the matter to each candidate’s discretion. The German Americans regarded the People’s Party as the hope of the opponents of temperance, and went over to it in droves.

In vain did Claussen write to the *Davenport Gazette*. “I agree with the . . . repeal of the prohibitory liquor law.” In vain did he challenge his opponent to a public debate. The People’s Party won all ten offices contested in Scott County. Claussen plunged to defeat, receiving 1,806 votes to his opponent’s 2,500 votes.

By 1869, when Claussen again tried for the state senate, the political map in Scott County had completely changed. The previous year,



In 1870 Claussen took his seat as a Republican senator to the Thirteenth General Assembly, pictured here outside the temporary capitol in Des Moines.

Ulysses S. Grant had won the presidency for the Republicans, and Scott County had elected all its Republican candidates. In 1869, the People's Party had collapsed and the Democrats in Scott County fought a lackluster campaign. The German Americans had returned to the Republican Party, which made a clean sweep of the county. Claussen won a four-year senate term with 2,306 votes—a majority of 523 votes.

During the 1870 legislative session, Senator Claussen made a forceful but unsuccessful stand against a bill that prohibited the sale of wine and beer, but left to each county the decision whether to enforce the law locally. Claussen, in a minority report of the

Committee on Suppression of Intemperance, argued powerfully that the bill was unconstitutional, citing as a precedent an Iowa Supreme Court decision on a similar law of 1857. (He was proved right—in 1871, the Supreme Court of Iowa struck down the law.) Among other objections, Claussen urged that the law “would be very injurious to the farmers raising barley, and to the brewers, having invested large capital in breweries.”

In a notable speech on the bill, Claussen portrayed prohibition as a movement out of step with American and European culture: “[The error] is certainly not with the three hundred millions of Europeans. . . . The error cannot be with the thirty millions of

Americans, but with the four millions who are in favor of prohibition." He urged that prohibition was unenforceable, and had been a complete failure in Massachusetts. Furthermore, wine "is highly praised in the Bible," and even had a positive medicinal value: "The people would not be half so sick here if they would drink wine."

When Claussen's time ran out, the other senators called, "Go on," and he said: "I know your minds are made up, and I have not the assumption to suppose that what I say will change you, but the German population expect their views to be presented." Claussen ended forcefully: "The advocates of a strict prohibitory law . . . want to make the State more moral and extricate vice. . . . I hate vice just as much as any Senator here, but should you wish to accomplish that purpose and deprive us of our liberty and our property? We

are not here to legislate in order to make the people moral by our laws. We are here to protect life and liberty, and to advance the educational interests of our State."

The German Americans loved their Sunday pleasures and loathed the "Act for the Observance of the Sabbath"—the so-called "Sabbath Law"—passed in 1857. This law forbade, among other things, dancing, shooting, hunting, fishing, buying, selling, or doing any but essential work on a Sunday. The penalty was a fine of between \$1 and \$5, and the 1870 House of Representatives passed a bill increasing the penalty to between \$5 and \$100. Claussen as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee introduced a minority report opposing the bill, and moved that the bill be postponed indefinitely.

Claussen argued in his report that the Sabbath Law was unconstitutional because it

SHS (IOWA CITY) SOUVENIR PROGRAM, 18TH NATIONAL SÄNGERFEST OF THE SAENGERBUND OF THE NORTH-WEST (1898)

Unter den Linden,

Otto H. Lahrmann,



Restaurant and Refreshment Rooms,

Meals and Sandwiches at all hours.

Best of Wines, Liquors and Cigars Kept on Hand.

S. E. Cor. Third and Scott Streets,

Opp. Turner Hall., Davenport.

J. F. Gorman. W. H. Harrison.

THE

HOTEL:....

DOWNNS

SITUATED IN THE BUSINESS CENTER.

Heated by Steam. Lighted by Electricity. Newly Furnished.

DAVENPORT, IOWA.



MR. FRED KOCH, Baritone,
OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS.

Pabst Hauptquartier....



.....Sample Room

Jacobsen & Norgordt, Prop.

OPEN DAY AND NIGHT

Telephone 172

N. W. Cor. Second and Scott, Davenport

Deutsches Dorf,

v. a. v. Sanger Halle,

Bier Garten

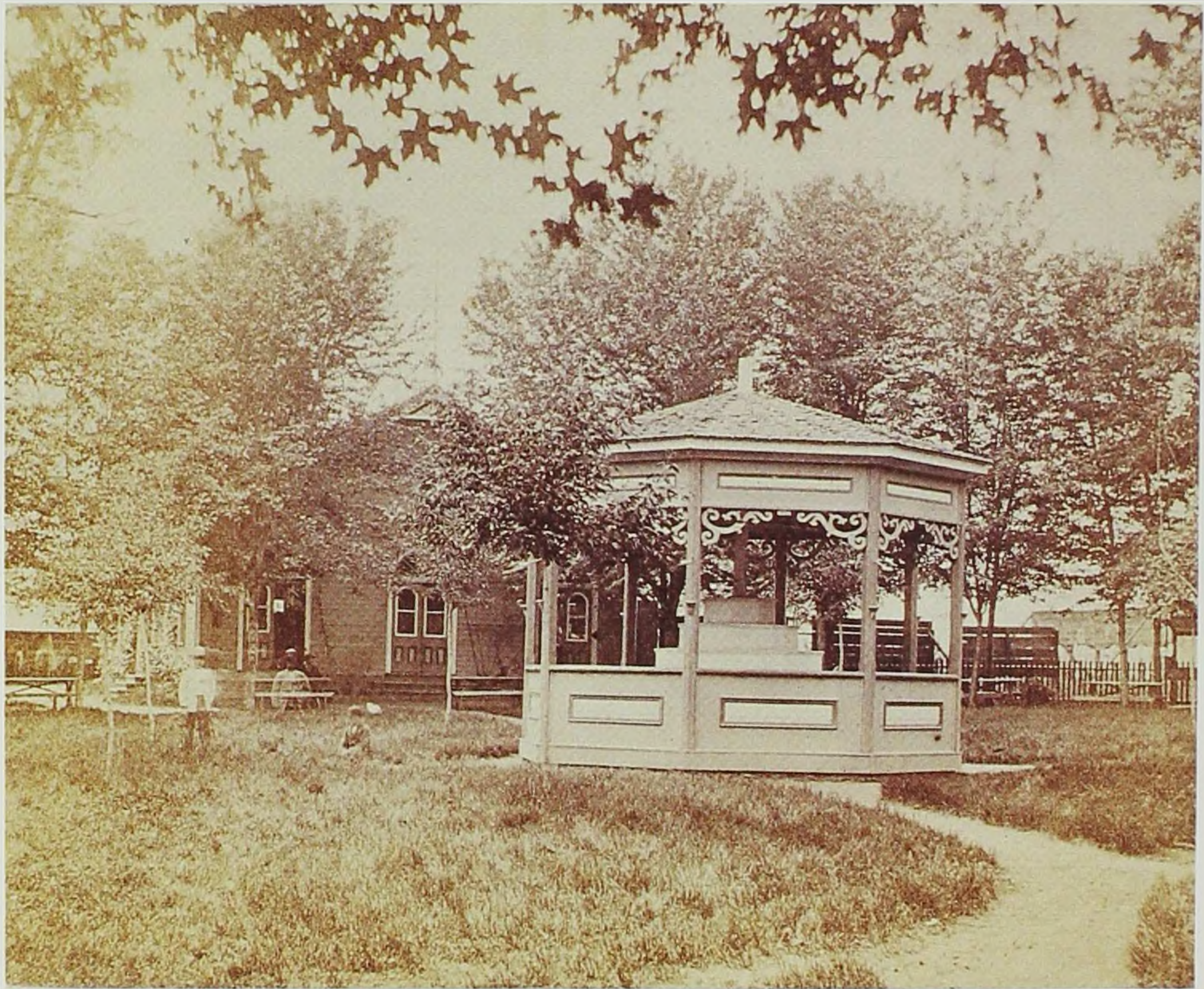
Die feinsten....

Getranke und Cigarren stets an hand.

Ice Cream und Frucht.

Reelle Bedienung, Emil E. Beyer.

The mix of music and beer gardens survives in this page from a souvenir program for the 1898 *Saengerfest* (or singing festival) in Davenport. A baritone's portrait is surrounded by advertisements for a "bier garten" and other businesses catering to German Americans—reminiscent of an 1862 observer's account of "several hundred people swigging lager. . . while listening to the strains of a fine band playing operatic selections."



SHSI (IOWA CITY); HUEBINGER BROS., ALBUM OF DAVENPORT AND VICINITY (1897)

Davenport's Schuetzen Park was privately owned and run by the *Schuetzen Gesellschaft* (or shooting society). Streetcars carried passengers there to enjoy Sunday recreations and to hear German band concerts in the music pavilion. Claussen fought to protect lowans' rights to enjoy such pleasures on Sundays.

was a law respecting the establishment of religion. He further urged that the Sabbath Law was "impracticable, inoperative and contrary to the notions of a greater portion of Christians." This last point was the nub of his argument. "Nearly all the European Christians on the continent go in the morning to church, but in the afternoon they enjoy and resort to places of amusements. . . . There is dancing on Sunday afternoon and in the evening." Claussen concluded: "There is nowhere any good reason for a provision that an act, innocent in itself, shall become criminal by every seventh revolution of the earth around its axis." The Senate voted that

Claussen's report be printed, and took no further action on the bill.

In May 1871 Claussen retired from his legal practice, and the Scott County bar gave a fine banquet in his honor, where a letter from Iowa Supreme Court Justice John F. Dillon was read. Justice Dillon wrote that Claussen had a "natural keen unperverted and ever active sense of Justice and Right. . . . His great knowledge of the civil law is a fountain to which, as he knows, I have often resorted."

The next day, Claussen and his wife departed for a six-month visit to Europe. He had been free to go back to Schleswig-Holstein—from which he had been banished in 1852—

since the Prussians and Austrians had ended Danish rule in 1864. As Bismarck had just unified Germany, Claussen now set out for the united Germany he had dreamed of in his youth. He heard Bismarck speak in the Berlin Parliament, and he visited Schleswig-Holstein. Yet it was to Davenport and America that he returned as home in time for the 1872 legislative session.

Although he was liberal in most causes, Claussen opposed woman suffrage, as did the Davenport Turners generally. Claussen had unsuccessfully voted against an 1870 Senate resolution to give the vote to women and, in January 1872, was reported as "working and writing letters in opposition to female suffrage." The Senate by a majority of two opposed the passage of this second resolution, thus preventing a constitutional amendment being put to a public referendum.

In the Senate debate on the subject, Claussen gave a major speech. "The old gentleman's eye kindles with a peculiar fire as he delivers a labored speech," reported a Dubuque newspaper. He listed three broad reasons for denying women the vote: "The particular interest of the females does not require Female Suffrage. . . . There is no natural right to Female Suffrage [and]. . . . The same is against public welfare."

Claussen developed his theme: "The women, generally, have deeper feelings, more intensive tenderness, a finer taste, and a nicer sense of propriety, than the rougher male sex. All these qualities make them excellent wives and mothers." He concluded: "We should leave the government . . . in the hands of men. The women have their sphere in domestic life. . . . Would it not satisfy the highest ambition of an American lady to be the mother of a second Washington?"

Claussen's views were typical of nineteenth-century males: women should concern themselves with the home, children, and cooking. A further reason for Claussen's stance may have been that—like so many German Americans—he believed if women had the vote they would ensure the triumph of the temperance movement, long supported by women reformers. Certainly on every aspect of women's rights other than the vote, Claussen was a progressive.

During the adjourned session of the legislature in 1873, he voted with the majority on measures to reform married women's property, inheritance, and other legal rights.

A glimpse of Claussen's home life suggests that his own wife, Annina, was far from kitchen-bound and enjoyed intellectual discussion. In the summer of 1872, Claussen offered to help a young German American, Charles Ficke of Davenport, with his law studies. Years later, Ficke recalled: "Those were glorious hours which I thereafter spent in Mr. Claussen's company on Sunday mornings. . . . When we had finished our discussions of legal subjects he would talk to me on a variety of other subjects most interestingly. . . . Often Mrs. Claussen would join us in these conversations."

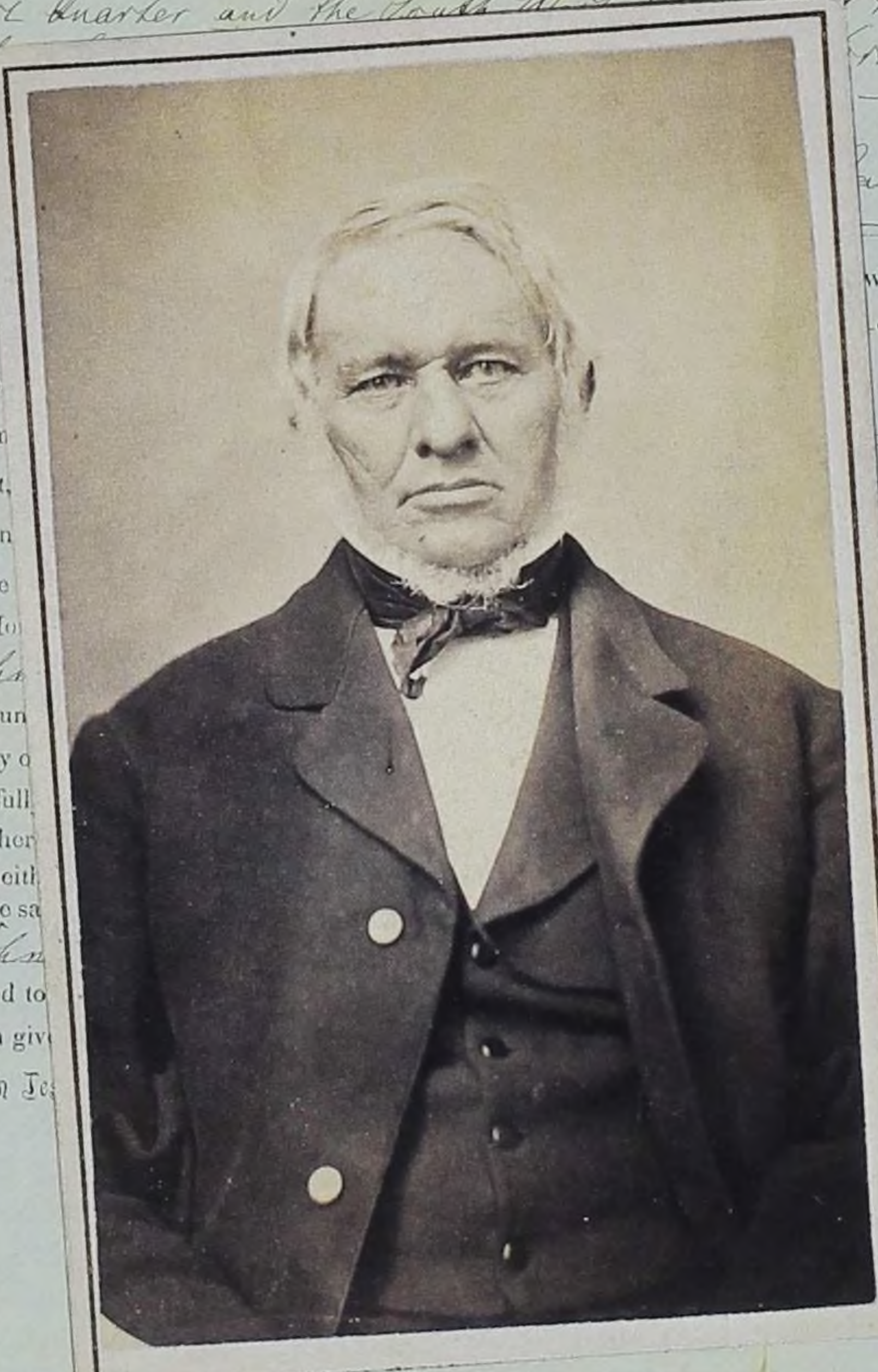
Now in his sixty-ninth year, Claussen was on the Senate judiciary committee, which had a crucial role in drafting the 1873 Code of Iowa. When the Senate decided to hold two sessions a day, Claussen asked to be excused from further service on the judiciary committee, saying that at his age participation in such an important committee and in two daily legislative sessions would be too much.

A few days later, the Senate unanimously asked Claussen to resume his place on the judiciary committee. The *Davenport Gazette* reported that Claussen "was visibly affected" by their confidence in him. To the *Davenport Democrat*, the honor came as no surprise. "This compliment was richly deserved by the white-haired philosopher of Scott [County]," the paper commented, "who has more legal knowledge under his frosty brow than half the lawyers of the State." Claussen once more took his place on the judiciary committee, and by all accounts played a major part in revising the Iowa Code.

Although Claussen may have seen himself as slowing down, apparently his colleagues did not. "One of the most remarkable men of this Assembly is Senator Claussen," commented a fellow senator in 1872. "He is now seventy years old, with hair as white as the snow flake, and step and movement as elastic and quick as a young man of twenty . . . and although his speech is broken, and his delivery in English somewhat difficult, yet there are but few who

This Indenture, Made the 17th day of January A. D. 1854, between Claus Mohr and his wife Margaretha Friederica Mohr of Scott County, Iowa of the first part and Gustav Schrieger of Scott County, Iowa of the second part: Witnesseth: That the said parties of the first part for the consideration of Two Hundred and fourteen (214) Dollars, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do by these presents grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns forever, the following described tract of Real Estate, lying and being situated in the County of Scott, and State of Iowa, to wit: The South East Quarter of the South West Quarter and the South West Quarter of the South West Quarter of Section 34 of Range No Two (2) East of

the
having
two
pay
No
the prem
payment,
due, then
advertise
Court Ho
Scha
the amount
the party o
will be full
chaser ther
thereto, citi
The sa
Schri
requested to
is herein giv
In Tes



The said Claus Mohr a promissory note for the sum of
with interest at the rate of Ten (10) per cent per annum.
54
effect thereof the said parties of the first part hereby convey
in trust for the security of said
shall fail or refuse to pay said note when
as Trustee shall be authorized to
least twenty days, and sell the same at Public Auction at the
and tracts of such size as the said Gustav
first part, or so much thereof as shall be necessary to satisfy
and pay over the balance of the proceeds (if any there be) to
said Gustav Schrieger
uses aforesaid, or so much thereof as he may sell, to the pur-
their heirs or assigns from ever setting up any claim
e death, incapacity, or refusal of the said Gustav
the County Court of Scott County is hereby authorized and
shall be clothed with all the power and authority to act, that

In witness hands and Seals the date first above written.

Claus Mohr

Margaretha Friederica Mohr



STATE OF IOWA, }
Scott County, } SS:

Be it Remembered, That on the 17th day of January A. D. 1854; before the undersigned Hans Reimer Clausen a Notary Public in and for said County personally appeared Claus Mohr and his wife Margaretha Friederica Mohr to me personally known to be the identical persons whose names are affixed to the foregoing Deed as grantors and acknowledged the instrument to be their voluntary act and deed.

Witness my Hand and Notarial Seal the day and year above written.

Hans Reimer Clausen
Notary public

Opposite: Although few images exist of Claussen besides this undated carte-de-visite, he left his mark on Scott County and the state. Here, his signature appears on the bottom right of an 1854 deed. Within two years of his arrival in America, he had learned English and passed the Iowa bar exam. His understanding of the language and laws of both Germany and America surely made his services valuable to German emigrants in Scott County.

speak or write the English language with more purity."

Shocked by the corruption of President Grant's administration, Claussen in 1872 joined the break-away Liberal Republican movement and chaired a Davenport meeting supporting Horace Greeley for President. After Greeley's defeat, Claussen played no further part in national politics. He retired from the state senate in 1873.

During his years in the legislature, Claussen had primarily concentrated on opposing prohibition, Sabbath observance, and woman suffrage. But he also promoted causes such as immigration and education, continuing to serve on Davenport's board of education after retirement. He voted consistently for the abolition of capital punishment and remained a staunch champion of freedom of the press.

Always of a philosophical bent, Claussen was himself a keen student of Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, and others. He delivered at least seven lectures to the Davenport *Turnverein* on topics such as "The Moral System of Grecian Philosophers" and "Communism in Contradiction to Morality, Law, and Sound Politics."

In 1879, Claussen gave his last *Turnverein* lecture to a large audience at the German Theatre in Davenport. In it, he strongly criticized Bismarck's policies in Germany and looked to his adopted country for the future. The *Davenport Gazette* reported: "Mr. Claussen concluded with an eloquent reference to the United States as embodying the hopes of freedom loving people."

Claussen's life upon retirement from politics belonged to honored old age: honored at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Schleswig-Holstein revolt; honored on his golden wedding anniversary in 1882 by the Turners hoist-

ing the flag over their hall; honored on that day, too, by a large party, speeches, telegrams, a poem recited in German by his granddaughter, and the gift of a painting of Heide in Schleswig-Holstein, where the Claussens had married. A newspaper account of the occasion said: "The Doctor [Claussen] was very much touched by these many evidences of kind regard, and addressed the company, giving expression to the feelings of himself and his wife."

With the advancing years, Claussen showed his legal mind was as keen as ever. In 1882, a state constitutional amendment of prohibition was passed. Yet Claussen's fellow Forty-eighter, Theodor Gülich, now a Burlington editor and lawyer, alerted the governor that "it is the opinion of able jurists that the amendment will not stand a legal test." Claussen—who shared Gülich's hatred of prohibition—was undoubtedly one of these "able jurists." A fine constitutional lawyer with a keen eye, Claussen had noticed a key difference in language between the resolutions of prohibition in the House and the Senate of the Eighteenth General Assembly. The Nineteenth General Assembly agreed to the amendment passed by the previous House, but *not* that of the Senate. Because of this technicality—and to the great glee of the German Americans—the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that the prohibition amendment was unconstitutional.

The last years of Claussen's life were marked by bereavement. His daughter, Elfriede Mueller, died in 1883, and she was followed by his wife, Annina, in 1889. Three years later he lost his son, Ernst—himself a successful lawyer and seven times mayor of Davenport. Claussen

The Society for German-American Studies is sponsoring a Claussen biography and the Claussen Centennial Celebration and Conference, Sept. 30–Oct. 3, in Davenport, Iowa. Claussen's legacy, as well as music, literature, language, genealogy, and German-American relations, will be explored. Contact William Roba, Scott Community College, 500 Belmont Road, Bettendorf, Iowa, 52722 (319-359-7531).

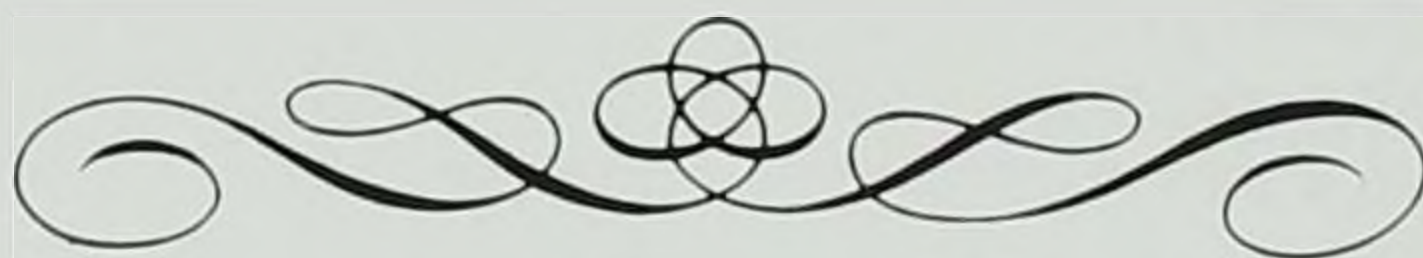
lived on another two years. In 1894 he died—aged ninety—at the home of his son-in-law, Christian Mueller.

Claussen had always had a Turner's attitude to life. He exercised regularly and had an iron constitution. One obituary described how "the remarkable manner in which he preserved his youthful vigor [had] enabled him to be about and greet his acquaintances upon the streets until recently." Claussen showed a streak of radicalism to the last: he had taken the unusual step of arranging to have his body cremated.

Perhaps the finest memorial to Claussen—demonstrating the pride Davenport felt in him—appeared the year after his death. The 1895 history of Scott County contained the King of Denmark's entire writ banishing

Claussen and the other leaders of the Schleswig-Holstein revolt. The writ printed in German took up three pages of the book.

Few immigrants, within two decades of arriving in a new country and learning a new language, could play a leading part in drafting the legal code of an American state. But Hans Reimer Claussen was an exceptional man. In Europe, Claussen had fought for Schleswig-Holstein and united Germany. In Iowa, as a prominent lawyer, legislator, and civic leader, he fought for the rights of individual clients and of an entire immigrant group. On his death, the *Davenport Democrat* saluted Claussen with the title bestowed on him by the local German-American community—"the patriarch of Davenport." □



NOTE ON SOURCES

I should like to thank Dr. Joachim Reppmann, German representative of the Society for German-American Studies, Susan Kuecker of the Masonic Library, Cedar Rapids, and as always, my wife, Patricia, for their invaluable advice.

General sources include: contemporary Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, and Schleswig-Holstein newspapers, and Scott County histories; *Des Moines Bulletin Legislative Supplement*, 1870; *Iowa Senate Journal*, 1870, 1872, 1873; biographical sketches of Claussen in: *The Western Life-Boat* (1873); *The United States Biographical Dictionary Iowa Volume* (Chicago, 1878); Edward H. Stiles, *Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Public Men of Early Iowa* (Des Moines, 1916); Hildegard Binder Johnson, "Hans Reimer Claussen," *The American-German Review* (June 1944); Thomas P. Christensen, "A German Forty-Eighter in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 26 (1945).

For Claussen in Europe: W. Carr, *Schleswig-Holstein 1815-1848* (Manchester, 1963); and Frank Eyck, *The Frankfurt Parliament 1848-49* (New York, 1968). For Claussen and Davenport: Augustus P. Richter, "A True History of Scott County," serialized in *Davenport Democrat and Leader*, 1920-1922; Charles August Ficke, *Memories of Fourscore Years* (Davenport, 1930); Theodore Schreiber, "Early German Pioneers of Scott County, Iowa," *American-German Review* (Dec. 1941); Hildegard Binder Johnson, "German Forty Eighters in Davenport" and "List of Lectures and Debates Given Before the Davenport

Turngenmeide," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* (IJHP) 44 (1946).

German-American political sources: all by F.I. Herriott, "Iowa and the First Nomination of Abraham Lincoln," *Annals of Iowa* 8 (1907-08), "The Conference of German-Republicans in the Deutsches Haus, Chicago, May 14-15, 1860," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* 35 (1928), and "A Forceful Influence" in Harry E. Downer, *Davenport and Scott County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1910); Carl Witke, *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America* (Philadelphia, 1952); Joachim Reppmann, "The Concept of Liberty and Idea of Democracy of the Schleswig-Holstein 'Forty Eighters' in the U.S.A." (unpublished essay).

Legal sources: *Revision of 1860; Code of Iowa 1873*; Dan Elbert Clark, "History of Liquor Legislation in Iowa 1861-1878," *IJHP* 6 (1908); *State v. Weir*, 33 Iowa 134; *Koehler & Lange v. Hill*, 60 Iowa 543.

Other sources include: Joseph Eiboeck, *Die Deutschen von Iowa und deren Errungenschaften* (Des Moines, 1900); Joseph S. Schick, *The Early Theatre in Eastern Iowa* (Chicago, 1939); *The History of the First National Bank in the United States* (Chicago, 1913); Carl N. Degler, *At Odds: Women and Family in America From the Revolution to the Present* (New York, 1989); and Louise R. Noun, *Strong-Minded Women* (Ames, 1969).

Annotations for this article are held in *Palimpsest* files, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.