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## The Demographic Characteristics of 1860 New Ulm, Minnesota, Germans

JOHN J. HICKEY\* and FREDRIC R. STEINHAUSER\*\*

**ABSTRACT**—Demand for an increase in ethnically oriented course materials led to this study of the 1860 New Ulm (Minnesota) German community as an example of ethnic migration and community establishment. The New Ulm German community was defined for the purposes of this study as the 598 German-born adult migrants living in New Ulm and its functionally connected area in 1860. Detailed information concerning the specific places of origin, migratory routes and sequences of intervening stops, and organizational networks of support was collected. A series of maps and graphs represents the migration patterns.

The story of the foundation of the settlement of New Ulm, Minnesota, has been written in at least a half dozen books and articles. (See Tyler and Johnson). There is a fair amount of disagreement in detail between these histories though the rudimentary outline is fairly consistent. What emerges is an account of the establishment of an ethnic community on what were then the frontiers of settlement.

The German settlement of New Ulm arose out of the turbulent atmosphere of contending cultures prevailing in America in the 1850's. On the one hand was the Nativist movement which found its supporters from among the dominant Anglo-Saxon, Protestant population of the nation. Nativism had as its focal issue the violent opposition to further immigration to the United States of either Irish "Papists" or German "Anarchists". On the other hand, there was the "Germanism" or extreme pride in German culture of many German immigrants. When these two social forces came into contact friction was bound to develop.

It was in response to nativist friction and to the perceived threat to German cultural values that two organizations dedicated to the promotion of German settlement schemes were founded. The Chicago Land Society was founded in 1853 by F. Beinhorn and the Turner Settlement Association was established at Cincinnati in 1856 by W. Pfaender. The two organizations were to coalesce in the latter half of the 1850's in the settlement of New Ulm. The goal of settlement in Pfaender's words was the protection of the German workman from the "prejudices and arrogance of the Native Americans which becomes more crass from day to day". The settlement was to provide the German settler with the advantage that the insane, degrading, mortifying attempts of our Anglo-American taskmasters to restrict us could not operate, that we would have the opportunity to enjoy the rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution and to become happy and blessed after our own fashion.

The concern in this study has been to add some flesh to the bare bones of the story of the foundation of the town of New Ulm. In order to accomplish this end, the authors formulated a set of questions concerning specific characteristics of the founding population and of their migration experience. Archival resources in both the United States and Germany were utilized in the attempt to answer a few primary, factual questions which had not previously been addressed in the literature. Specific queries were concerned with the provisions of information concerning:

1. the demographic characteristics of the population at the time of settlement
2. the specific places of origin of the German born adult founding population
3. the sequence of migrations and routes taken to New Ulm
4. the extent of the influences of land societies in the bringing about of settlement.

### Demographic Characteristics and Migration Patterns

One query had to do with the demographic characteristics of the German born adult population of New Ulm Township and adjacent, functionally related areas. In 1860 Brown County in southern Minnesota was on the settlement frontier and had a population of only 2,339. Of this total 1,357 or 58 percent were foreign born. Many among the American born population of the county were children born to foreign immigrants in Minnesota or in various states in which the parents had resided prior to migrating to Brown County.

An age-sex pyramid for Brown County in 1860 (Figure 1) shows some interesting features of that group. The pyramid is characteristic of the population of a newly developing area. An interesting feature is the relative balance between males and females, especially in the 20-60 age bracket. The study group shows a similar balance among male and female adults of German origin (338 males to 260 females). The proportions are a peculiarity of the German immigrants of the Nineteenth century in general. For example, during the period from 1846-1860 German immigrant groups averaged

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TABLE 1

State	Total			X	Age in 1860		Age on Arrival at New Ulm*		
	N	M	F		XM	XF	N/X	N/XM	N/XF
Baden	37	24	13	33.95	36	30.15	14/31.75	13/33.69	
Bavaria	66	32	34	33.65	38.32	32.5	14/31.57	11/33.27	
Bahemia	44	22	22	37.7	34.88	37.09			
Braunschweig	9	6	3	29	31.67	23.67	5/24.2		
Hanover	31	16	15	32.06	34.06	29.93	10/30.6	3/30.5	
Hesse	26	16	10	34.65	39	27.2	7/40.29	6/38.17	
Holstein	9	5	4	34.11	34.8	32			
Luxemburg	9	5	4	29.89	33.6	25.25			
Mexklenburg	58	34	24	36.24	38.71	32.75	17/33.76	13/35.31	
Nassau	9	6	3	37.22	30.83	40.3**			
Oldenburg	6	5	1	34.67	34	38			
Prussia	160	92	68	35.99	36.79	34.90	37/30.35	28/31.43	9/27
Saxony	33	20	13	33.09	32	34.92	16/27.81	14/27.43	
Wurtemberg	100	58	42	34.72	34.38	35.19	29/29.83	27/	
Total	598	338	260	34.95	33.55	36.03	155/31.27		

\*Data reported for categories containing more than 5 members only.

\*\*This figure is biased by the presence of a 66-year-old woman among the settlers.

60 percent male and 40 percent female—very close to the ratio for the study group. Among the Irish, for instance, immigrant populations were overwhelmingly male in composition. The German migration was thus identified as a "family migration".

Through the use of the 1860 U.S. manuscript census for the New Ulm area, obituaries in the newspaper files of the Brown County Historical Society, and various secondary sources, it was possible to put together a table which shows the age (in 1860), sex, place of origin, and age upon arrival in New Ulm of the members of the study group.

The age of settlers upon their arrival in New Ulm was computed for the 155 settlers for whom specific dates are known. The average age of the arriving settler was 31.27 years and many of these settlers came as heads of family units often containing several German-born or American-born children. The age for the entire study group can be computed for the year 1860, and the overall average for this date is 34.95 years (33.55 for males and 36.03 for females). The German born migrants to New Ulm can be typified, on the basis of such information, as being in their early 30's, married, with children; as having arrived in America in the early to mid-1850's and as having lived in one or several previous localities within the U.S.

Included in Table 1 and the map (Figure 2) are the places of origin for the 598 German-born settlers of New Ulm, as known with varying degrees of specificity. In most cases the records consulted (census manuscripts, naturalization records, and ship passenger lists) provided only the individuals' German state of origin. Figure 2 indicates the state of origin for all settlers. An interesting feature is the concentration of approximately 40 percent of the group in southwestern Germany for area of origin. This was the area of most intensive emigration during the period 1848-1854. The study was able to find documentary evidence of the place of origin localized down to the village level for only 12 percent of our study group.

#### Time of emigration uncertain

The year of emigration from Germany is known for less

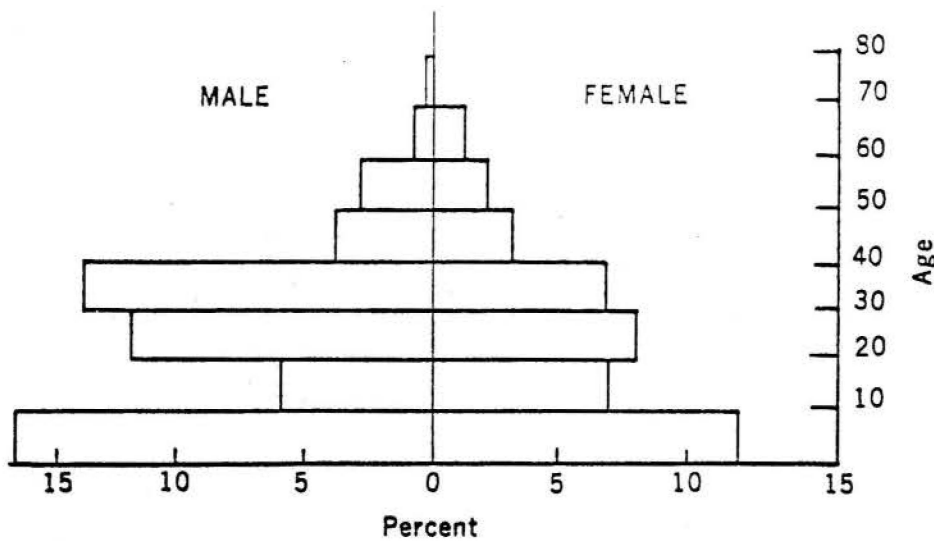
than 10 percent of our sample. It is probably coincidental but the pattern in this 10 percent sample for the years 1847-1854 is very similar to the overall pattern for German emigration as a whole. The number stay relatively constant for the period from 1847=1854 while in the years 1853-54 the number balloons by a factor of 5.

Little is known about ports of departure or ports of entry used by these migrants. There are indications that some members of the study group left Germany via Hamburg and Bremen, the two leading ports of departure. A very few seem to have left Europe via England which was not unusual for German emigrants at the time especially those leaving the German states illegally. There is no documentation of these ports of embarkation other than what was discovered in secondary sources.

As far as the ports of entry are concerned, there are some ship passenger lists containing names of members of the New Ulm community arriving in Baltimore. Sampling for these records at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. tends to show that most of the study group, like most immigrants to America at the time, arrived at New York.

Many of the New Ulm Germans had resided in other locations in the United States prior to moving to New Ulm, but according to available information, migrating directly from Germany to New Ulm was a rarity. It was possible to establish United States location immediately prior to moving to New Ulm for 190 of the original settlers. (Map figures 2 and 3). Ohio, Illinois and Wisconsin account for 81 percent of the total.

Mapping of the pattern of previous locations also indicates that German settlement of New Ulm was an organized venture. Associations of German immigrants, in this case the Chicago Land Society, the Cincinnati-based Turner society and associated Colonization Society of North America provided leadership, planning, collective financial strength and publicizing of the settlement venture. Although early records for these associations are spotty in their coverage, it is apparent that at least 60 of the New Ulm settlers were members of the Chicago Society and 51 of the Cincinnati group. Usually only males were members of these groups, so the numbers can be considered to account for more than one-third of all German



born residents of New Ulm in 1860.

**Nativism and the Search for Cultural Security**

New Ulm came into existence during the mid-1850's on the settlement frontier of Minnesota. The impetus for settlement and demographic characteristics of the early community reflect influences of social forces present in the broader environment - in Germany itself and in the United States. Large scale German emigration in the late 1840's and early 1850's was attributable, at least in part, to political, social, and economic unrest in Europe generally. Several influential members of the New Ulm community were political refugees who fled Europe because of their direct involvement in the 1848 revolution. Many of those early settlers were skilled craftsmen or merchants who were most active in as well as most affected by the upheavals.

Many of the New Ulm immigrants had lived in various places previously. Some, particularly those with "free thinking" beliefs, found an increasingly hostile environment in the United States, and at various times there was organized violence. The Germans, like so many immigrant groups before and after, developed institutions for mutual protection,

advancement, and the preservation of social and cultural values.

At New Ulm these institutions reacted to the hostility of the American population by establishment of an independent German settlement away from the influence of the broader society. This "German" community and the German character of the place, though with diminishing influence and emphasis, has persisted to the present.

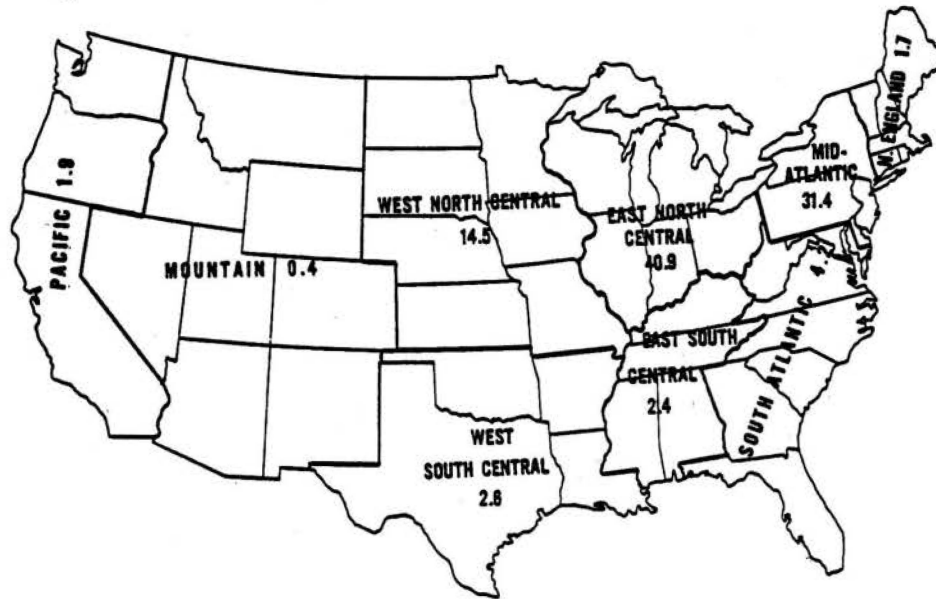
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Fig. 2 LOCATION IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO SETTLEMENT IN NEW ULM.



Fig. 3 - PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF GERMAN-BORN , BY CENSUS DIVISION: 1870.



## Smithsonian Institution Invites Proposals for Senior Research Abroad

The Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D.C., has notified the *Journal* of a program offering support for research by senior scientists in several disciplines in four Asiatic countries.

Grants are made through American institutions but are paid in local currencies of the host countries. Collaboration with institutions in those countries is required in some cases and is generally acceptable in all, according to the Smithsonian's announcement. Selections for awards are made by competitive, scientific review. The annual deadline for submission of proposals is November 1, but requests are accepted at all times since there may be long delay in processing the applications through more than one country.

The countries involved are Burma, Guinea, India and Pakistan.

The subject categories for investigation are:

**Anthropology, Archeology and related disciplines.**

**Systematic and Environmental Biology.**

**Astrophysics and Earth Sciences.**

**Museum Programs.**

Proposals should be directed to the Foreign Currency Program, Office of Fellowships and Grants, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 20560