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2023
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*The mission of the German American Heritage Center is to
preserve and enrich for present and future generations
knowledge of the German immigrant experience and its
impact on American culture.*

W I L L K O M M E N

Dear members and friends,

Happy Spring Everyone!

Springtime is my absolute favorite time of the year. Everything from plants to animals seems to come alive and active again. The same energy that can be felt outdoors can also be felt at the GAHC! This Spring we have a huge offering of activities, programs, and exhibits for everyone to come to enjoy. I am particularly looking forward to Eiermarkt and Best of the Wurst in the coming months.

With all of the upcoming activities, it is important for us to remember that we, as an organization, cannot operate without the tremendous effort put forth by our staff and volunteers. In the past few months, we have experienced the loss of a few of our dedicated volunteers within the GAHC family. Our deepest condolences go out to the families of Ruth Reynolds, Clara Mortiboy, and George Straetker. These individuals have made a lasting impact upon our organization and are deeply missed.

We look forward to seeing many members and visitors at the GAHC very soon. If you would like to volunteer at the Center or for special events, please reach out to a member of our staff and they would be happy to answer your questions.

Beste Wünsche,
Daniel Cabage

Daniel Cabage



Cover Image: 1904 Hohner Accordion, On loan from from the Brown County Historical Society, New Ulm, Minnesota. This accordion is thought to have been used by Henry Knees (1871-1937). He was the son of pioneer settlers of Brown County, Minnesota.

Neighbors to the North

GERMAN INFLUENCE IN NEW ULM, MINNESOTA

Ninety miles southwest of Minneapolis lies a unique city which has been named “the most German town in America.” New Ulm, Minnesota is a city of charm and tradition, which comes from its German heritage. The city was founded in 1854 by the Chicago Land Company, an Association of German Americans. The group traveled from Chicago and settled in the vicinity of present-day New Ulm. A couple years later, due to widespread violence against German immigrants, the Turners or Turnverein —the most important secular German-American organization in the country—authorized the creation of a colonization society. Led by Wilhelm Pfander, this colony hoped to establish a new community based on Turner ideals. After searching several sites on the frontier, they joined with the Chicago settlers to found New Ulm. Over the years, German heritage has continued to be a main element of the city’s culture.

Perhaps some of the most interesting pieces on display in this new exhibition are the four Anton Gág paintings on loan from the Brown County Historical Society in New Ulm. Anton Gág was a German Bohemian or “Sudeten” German immigrant who came to the United States when he was 14 years old. He lived in New Ulm for most of his adult life and is most well known for his paintings and the work of his daughter Wanda Gág. Anton Gág’s subjects included still lifes, landscapes, murals, and he also had a photography studio. His most famous work is *Attack on New Ulm* which was displayed in the Minnesota State Capitol until 2016. The decision was made to remove the painting from display since it is not original to the building and represents a single painful moment in the complex story of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.



Anton Gág
New Ulm Battle, 1902.
On loan from the Brown
County Historical Society,
New Ulm, Minnesota.

A similar painting depicting the same event but from a different point of view is on display at the German American Heritage Center and Museum. *New Ulm Battle*, though small, has a big history behind it. Anton Gág was commissioned to paint a battle scene of the U.S.-Dakota War by Charles Silverson of the Eagle Flour Mill in New Ulm. In 1862, when the war broke out, the flour mill was destroyed by fire along with most other of the buildings in town. Forty years after the battle, in 1902, Anton Gág was hired to do a painting of this event. Silverson wanted to have it painted on an old flour barrel from the flour mill. Anton Gág agreed, and used the head of a flour barrel as his canvas. The image is similar to many of his other battle paintings, but this one is seen from the defender’s point of view.

Other artifacts from the Brown County Historical Society and the German American Heritage Center and Museum are on display to showcase the connections between the two cities. This exhibition will be on display in the first floor gallery through July 30th, 2023.

Companion Program

Virtual Lecture: **Preserving German Heritage in New Ulm, Minnesota**

Sunday, April 16th, 2023 | 2:00 pm CST | FREE for members, \$5 for non-members

Register on [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) | Recording available afterwards

Easter Traditions in Germany

Visitors to Germany are apt to see many familiar sights if they time their trip during the Easter season. Home gardens are beautiful sights with crocus, daffodils, tulips, and hyacinth flowers. In many households twigs are cut from cherry trees and placed in vases with water to force indoor blooms. This process begins prior to Easter so that an "Easter tree" or large bouquet will be green and ready for the big day. The branches are decorated with hollow colored eggs and small painted figurines featuring bunnies, chicks, ducks, and lambs. In recent years many families also decorate an outdoor landscape tree or a large bush with garlands and plastic eggs, vying for the most stunning display. Small towns and villages also show their spring spirit by decorating fountains or other similar monuments in the town square.

Children in Germany also hunt eggs hidden in the yard by the Easter Rabbit, and enjoy the same chocolate treats known in the United States. In some areas older children compete in games such as "Eiertrüllen" featuring colored hardboiled eggs. A player tries to throw his egg as far as possible without breaking it. Players with a cracked egg may eat their egg but are eliminated for the next round. The winner is the player who throws his egg the longest distance still intact.

In northern Germany the custom of Easter Fires can still be found. This takes place on the evening before Easter, when neighbors or a community gather around a large bonfire, celebrating with drinks and food from the grill. This is an ancient tradition from pre-Christian times when such fires were lit in order to turn out the winter and welcome spring.

Many Protestant churches in Germany also hold Confirmation rites near Easter, typically following religious instruction for several weeks at age 14. After the church service there is always a festive meal at home, where grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and close friends come for the event, adding their special wishes and blessings for the youngster, who typically receives many gifts. It's still common in smaller towns and villages in Germany for those who were confirmed together to meet at regular intervals through their adult years for reunions, much like high school class reunions in the United States.



Left: *Easter fountain in Heiligenstadt in Oberfranken*, Reinhold Möller, 2007.
Right: *Osterstrauß (Easter Bouquet)*, 2008.

los desconocidos: THE MIGRANT QUILT PROJECT

This summer, the German American Heritage Center & Museum is excited to bring a special exhibition to the Quad Cities. *Los Desconocidos: The Migrant Quilt Project* is traveling around the state of Iowa in 2023 and 2024 as part of a collaboration between the German American Heritage Center & Museum, Luther College in Decorah, the Witter Gallery in Storm Lake, the Museum of Danish America in Elkhorn, and the Clay County Heritage Center in Spencer.

Founded in Tucson in the mid-2000s, the Migrant Quilt Project memorializes the stories of migrants who have died seeking refuge in the United States. It is a collaborative effort between artists, quilt makers, and activists to express compassion for migrants from Mexico and Central America who died in the Southern Arizona deserts on their way to create better lives for themselves and their families. Materials used in the quilts were collected at migrant layup sites used for rest and shelter on established trails in the Sonoran Desert. The quilts are created to encourage compassion and inspire support for humane changes in border policies.

These quilts are carefully handcrafted by materials found in the borderlands which belonged to migrants who were desperate to find better living conditions in the United States. Many of these travelers do not make it safely and their lives tragically end during their journey.

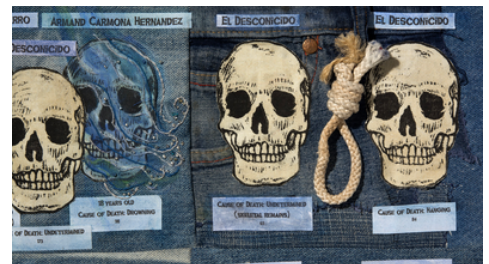
This exhibition will be on view in the 3rd floor gallery from May 30th - August 27th, 2023.

Companion Program

Virtual Lecture: **Activist Quilting**

Sunday, June 4th, 2023 | 2:00 pm CST | FREE for members and non-members

Register on [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) to receive Zoom access.



Desconocido translates to "stranger" or "unknown"

Best of the Wurst 2023



On Father's Day weekend, what is better than a beer and a brat? Join us in the backyard of the German American Heritage Center, where there will be grills galore as local vendors cook up their best brats to be voted on by you. With live entertainment provided by the Guttenberg Band, this event is sure to be a great time. There will also be delicious German and American beer and activities for both kids and adults.



Saturday, June 17th
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
\$5, kids under 12 are FREE

If you're interested in volunteering with us, please email Jessica at jessica@gahc.org

Trip to Namibia, Africa



Windhoek, Namibia, Gabriel Nashixwa, 2018.

The German American Heritage Center is planning to host a trip to Namibia in 2024. Why Africa? Namibia was once colonized by Germany and continues to have a rich German tradition. In addition to viewing the German heritage, efforts will be made to see wildlife and the unique landscape of Namibia.

Learn more:

THURSDAY, JUNE 15TH, 6 PM
NAMIBIA INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION
FREE. RSVP on [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Dank dem Deutschen: Andreas Stihl and His Corporation



A RECURRING FEATURE IN WHICH WE HIGHLIGHT AN INVENTION OR COMPANY WITH GERMAN ROOTS.

Does your garage or garden shed feature an implement with bright orange colors and the imprint of Stihl? Most likely it is a chainsaw or a trimmer, edger or blower. The brand is well known and very successful in the United States. Its origin and company headquarters are firmly rooted in Germany, where it is still a private corporation with family members in key positions. Located in Waiblingen near Stuttgart, Stihl also has an American subsidiary in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The 2,000 employees there are part of approximately 18,000 workers worldwide. That number includes Stihl-owned suppliers in Austria and China. Stihl is the world's best-selling brand of chainsaws and is the only one to make its own saw chains and guide bars.

Andreas Stihl designed and hand built his first chainsaw in 1926. It was electric powered and weighed over 100 pounds. Initial growth came in very small steps because the old two-man saws had a long and successful tradition, and manpower was readily available during the Depression years, so the demand for power saws was weak. That changed in 1930 when Stihl created and sold the first chainsaw that could be operated by one person. By 1931, the company was the first in Europe to export chainsaws to the United States and the Soviet Union.

During World War II, the company was relocated after severe bomb damage in 1943-1944. Andreas Stihl was arrested by the Allies and was detained for three years due to the use of slave laborers. After this detention, Stihl was released and his company was returned. Due to the heavy reconstruction needs after the war years, the company grew steadily and became the largest chainsaw manufacturing firm in the world by 1971. It expanded to Brazil with a factory to manufacture forestry products and further developed its line to include home use equipment for gardeners and landscapers. If you own a Stihl tool you are no doubt thankful for Andreas Stihl and his company. Truly, his products are a cut above the rest!

Gift Shop Contraband

Do these look like hardened criminals to you?

Well, it may interest you to know that one of our big Christmas orders that Joan placed in October was stopped due to suspicious contents.

Joan had communicated back and forth with the USPS Inspection Service and Criminal Investigation Service Center, urging them to open the package. She had a hunch it was the incense used in these toy smokers that was causing alarm.

The USPS did end up opening the package and finally sending the shipment in February 2023. So be sure to check out the gift shop for these long awaited holiday items.



In memory of those we have lost

We have had a hard spring, losing three people who were near and dear to the heart and soul of the German American Heritage Center and Museum. They were volunteers, employees, and donors. They each cared about the organization and gave in their own way, whether financially or with their time and talents.



From left: George Straetker, Ruth Reynolds, Clara Mortiboy

There have been many members that donated in honor of Ruth, Clara, and George.

Some gifts are still coming in. If you would like to give to the German American Heritage Center and Museum, you can make a donation in their name. All donations given in memoriam are placed into endowment accounts to ensure a bright future for the organization and to credit the legacy of those being remembered. For questions, contact Brian Allen at brian@gahc.org

Ruth Reynolds (1926 - 2023)

Members and friends of the German American Heritage Center were saddened to learn of the passing of Ruth Reynolds on February 6, 2023. Ruth came to our organization as a paid Administrative Assistant in 2001 and served in that role until 2011. Many may be unaware that she continued in that capacity until 2015 without pay, donating her skills and talents in a myriad of ways. Also in 2015, she earned the Legacy of Leadership Award at the German American Heritage Center.

Having served professionally as Deputy Scott County Auditor, a Davenport City Alderwoman and Mayor pro tem in her working years, she brought a wealth of deep local knowledge to the GAHC; she parlayed that knowledge and her many positive personal contacts to help make things happen on our corner. Unfailingly kind and helpful, Ruth was beloved by members, staff, volunteers, and visitors. She always had a useful suggestion, an encouraging word and a cheerful smile to all who graced our door. In recent years she was an inspiration to her fellow residents in senior living by marking 2 miles every day in the corridors with her walker, keeping fit and spreading good will. The German American Heritage Center honors her memory and will forever be thankful for all the contributions she made to our growth and development.



Ruth at Volunteer Recognition, 2013

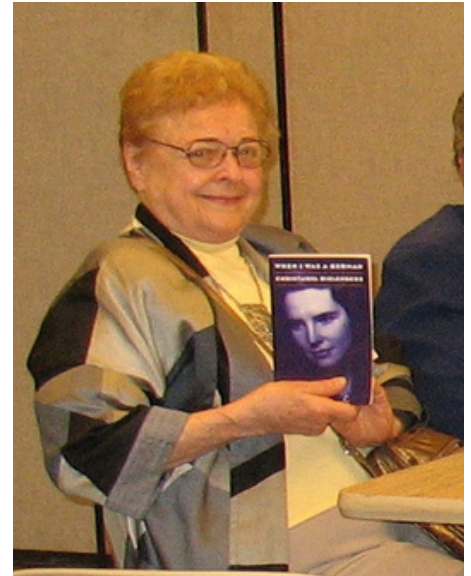
Clara Mortiboy (1928 - 2023)

Clara Mortiboy was not only a music educator and passionate genealogist; she was a Germanophile with eclectic tastes who read all types of books about German history, literature, and culture.

After a career as a music teacher in the Bettendorf and Davenport Community Schools, Clara continued to teach music in her home, even into her 90s. She embraced learning and always looked for ways to enrich her mind. When the German-American Heritage Reading Group was formed in 1999, Clara was at its inaugural meeting, and she continued to attend book discussions until last year.

Clara continued to do her own genealogy research but also took classes which taught people how to read German handwriting from the 18th and 19th centuries. It was her skill in reading handwritten documents which helped a great number of people discover specifics about their German heritage. She, Schar Blevins, and Nick Pitz translated baptismal, birth, death, and marriage records as well as legal documents and letters. Her knowledge of variant forms of German script made those translations easier or even possible.

When her husband was alive, they traveled the world extensively, setting foot on seven continents. Travel was another activity she loved because it involved learning. Clara loved talking about trips to various places but especially German-speaking Europe. She will be missed by all her friends from the GAHC, the Reading Group, and the many music students whose lives she enriched.



Clara at Book Discussion, 2009

George Straetker (1931 - 2023)



George at Volunteer Recognition, 2013

Members and friends of the German American Heritage Center were saddened to learn of the death of George Straetker, 92, on March 13. George led a colorful and inspirational life as a US Navy intelligence officer, a teacher of typing, business and economics at Pleasant Valley High School, and a business owner in real estate and insurance. In retirement he enjoyed subbing at PV and Davenport Central, rounding out his day with morning mass, a daily workout and reading the papers at the Davenport Library. George served several terms on the Board of Directors of the GAHC, retiring in 2015. He enjoyed coming to events and programs, which enriched his love of history and fed his curious nature about the world at large and all things German. He was a loyal life member of our organization, generous with his time, encouragement, and financial support. He and his wife, Doris, were honored with the Legacy of Leadership Award in 2020. His positive spirit and zest for life will be long remembered and he will be deeply missed.

memberships & memorials

JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31

WILLKOMMEN AN BORD

Klockau, David	Iowa City IA
Oettinger-Duffy, Darlene	Moline IL
Kalber, Steve/K.D.	Davenport IA
Meyers, Lee Anne	Los Angeles CA
Sallen, Ann	Bloomington IL
Donner-Ramsey Michele	Davenport IA
Glerum, Heather	North York ON
Reinhardt, Catherine	Davenport IA
Bill Schmidt	Seminole FL
Meierotto, John/Lori	Davenport IA
Hayden, Becky	Davenport IA



MEMORIALS

TERRY MAHON

Schmidt, Barbara

WALTER & LIESELOTTE MAYER

Chamberlain, Jr.,
Joseph and Barbara

CLARA MORTIBOY

Blevins, Schar
Hustedde, Michael/Hedy

RUTH REYNOLDS

Werner, Cal/Jill

Lowe, Jerry/Janet

Brown-Lowe

Darland, Jack/Carmen

Fiedler, Gloria

Finkenhoefer, Joan

Fogle, Betty

Hustedde, Michael/Hedy

JOHN K. SCHMIDT

Schmidt, Barbara

KARL UNGUREAN

Burrough, Don/Sue

GEORGE STRAETKER

Bauer, Wayland/Anne

Finkenhoefer, Joan

Frank, Stephen/Lynn

Gavin, Jane

Hingst, Carolyn

Hosford, Larry/Dianne

Hustedde, Michael/Hedy

Lowe, Jerry/Janet

Brown-Lowe

McFarlin, William/Judith

Puck, Marilyn

Rasmussen, Kurt/Lynette

Ray, Barbara

Tinsman, Margaret

Wohlford, Pat/Bill

IN HONOR OF:

CAL WERNER

Werner, Ann

DID YOU RENEW?

Many memberships come due at the beginning of each new year. Make sure you are up to date to keep your copy of the Infoblatt coming your way, as well as the many other benefits of memberships. If you know someone who may be interested in becoming a member, have them call, visit the website, or stop by the museum and we will get them registered as a new member!

\$25 Student or Youth Membership

\$35 Individual

\$45 Couple

\$55 Family or Grandparent

Never renew again- Join our cadre of Life Members who have given a generous gift to the Center. Half your life membership fee is put into our endowment fund, ensuring a future for the Center!

\$1000 Individual Life Membership

\$1500 Couple Life Membership



kalender of events

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SATURDAY 1ST. EIERMARKT SPRING CRAFT FAIR. 10am-2pm. Free admission. Many local vendors with handmade gifts, decorations, baked goods, and more!

SUNDAY 16TH. PRESERVING GERMAN HERITAGE IN NEW ULM VIRTUAL LECTURE. 2pm CST. Daniel Groebner speaks about the German heritage in New Ulm, MN. Recording will be available after the program. FREE members, \$5 non-members. Register at eventbrite.com

SATURDAY 22ND. SPRING GARDEN TOTEM WORKSHOP. 10am-3pm. Paint your own weather-proof spring lawn totem with Katey Geest. \$60 members, \$70 non-members. Spots are very limited. Register at eventbrite.com

SUNDAY 9TH. CLOSED EASTER.

We will be closed on Easter Sunday. Frohe Ostern!

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SATURDAY 6TH. VW CAR SHOW. 10am. Bi-state VW Club annual car show in the GAHC&M parking lot. FREE ADMISSION.

SUNDAY 7TH. BUS-EUM. 10am-6pm. Traveling mobile museum accompanied by students from the University of Erfurt in Thuringia. Featured display: *Heartland's Future: How Might We Live Together on a Changing Planet?* Presentations at 11am and 2pm. FREE ADMISSION ALL DAY. More details at www.gahc.org/events

SATURDAY 20TH. GAHC BOOK DISCUSSION. 10am. *Three Plays: The Weavers, Hannele, the Beaver Coat* by Gerhart Hauptmann. Free and open to the public. Learn more at www.gahc.org/bookdiscussion

TUESDAY 30TH. EXHIBITION OPENING: THE MIGRANT QUILT PROJECT. On loan from the Arizona Historical Society. Traveling memorial quilt exhibition around Iowa in 2023-2024. Open through August 27th, 2023. Learn more at www.gahc.org/exhibits

SATURDAY 20TH. FIRST DAY OF BLUE STAR MUSEUMS. Free admission for Blue Star Military families. Runs through September 4th, 2023.

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SUNDAY 4TH-11th. QUAD CITIES MUSEUM WEEK. FREE ADMISSION all week.

SUNDAY 4TH. RADICAL QUILTING VIRTUAL PRESENTATION. 2PM. Discussion about the importance of memorial quilting and similar projects with Julie Bowden. FREE for members and non-members. Register at eventbrite.com.

THURSDAY 15TH. NAMIBIA INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION. 6PM. Presentation about former German colony in Namibia and present day highlights. GAHC&M is hoping to offer a small group trip in 2024. FREE. RSVP on eventbrite.com

SATURDAY 17TH. BEST OF THE WURST. 11am-3pm. Sample local brats, purchase a variety of delicious food, enjoy an ice cold beer or pop, and vote for your favorite "wurst!" Featuring live music and various activities for kids and adults. Tickets are \$5 and will be available soon or at the door. Kids under 12 are free.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!
INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING FOR OUR SPECIAL EVENTS?
Contact info@gahc.org or call 563-322-8844. Volunteers at special events receive a t-shirt, meal and drink tickets, and more.

For full details of all our events visit gahc.org/events



GERMAN AMERICAN HERITAGE

center & museum

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GET INTO THE SWING OF SPRING BY SUPPORTING THE GAHC!



Help the GAHC bloom!
You can make a difference by giving through our biggest and most impactful fundraiser of the year, Birdies for Charity!
Bird # 1002

Use your phone's camera to scan this QR Code to visit the GAHC Birdies donation page!



Each year the John Deere Classic shares its profits by delivering a bonus check between 5-10% of the total raised for the charity.

100% of every pledge collected for GAHC goes directly to us! Send in your pledge form or donate online no later than Friday, June 16.

NEW THIS YEAR

April 10 - May 31
Buy your ticket to the John Deere Classic with the link on our website and the GAHC will receive \$10 for every ticket sold and a chance to earn \$1,000.