

By counting through the Murray Township U.S. census for 1880, I have determined that Irish immigrants were in the majority. Second to them were the Germans. One of the problems in understanding the German immigration is that they were not all from the same country. When the Holy Roman Empire disbanded in 1806, central Europe, from Denmark south to the tip of the Italian "boot," contained many territories. Some of them were only a few square miles, others were much larger. In what is now called Germany, there existed the Grand Duchy of Baden, the Kingdom of Bavaria, the Electorate of Hesse, the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, the Duchy of Nassau, and the Kingdom of Prussia as well as others. Prussia was by far the largest and, through diplomacy and war, managed to persuade many of them to join together. However, when early immigrants from Germany came to this country, many of the little territories were still legitimate entities, so when the census taker came calling in 1880 and asked for their country of origin, they rarely named Germany.

Prussia led the list of homelands of those coming to Livermore. Its ruler, Frederick William IV, insisted on ruling Prussia by "divine right." He strictly monitored the press, took away many previously won civil liberties, and drafted thousands of young men into his army. Samuel Levy at age 19 fled from the draft in his native village of Miloslaw (now in Poland) to the United States. Here in the Livermore area about 1871, he peddled merchandise from a

Do You Remember?



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German Immigration to Livermore

wagon that was fitted with shelves and drawers like a store. When he had saved enough money, he built a two-story building at the southwest corner of First and J Streets, where he ran a general merchandise business.

Rostock was an important port on the Baltic Sea in Prussia. The Schrader family left in 1851 when Frederick "Fred" Schrader was ten years old. Perhaps they had older sons to protect from the draft, or maybe they were just thinking ahead for Fred's benefit. The family settled in Illinois and after learning his trade, Fred traveled around, settling in Livermore about 1887. Eventually, he bought property and opened his blacksmith shop, now the location of Blacksmith Square.

In 1866, Prussia fought against the Danes and won the two Danish territories closest to Prussia—the Duchy of Schleswig and the Duchy of Holstein. Many immigrants came to Livermore



Cecilie Lodge #10, April 3, 1910 in front of Odd Fellows Hall, Livermore.

from Holstein. The parents of Henry Mohr came here from Holstein in the 1850s, when Holstein was still a part of Denmark, so perhaps they should be considered Danes rather than Germans. They immigrated to Mt. Eden Township and acquired land. Their farm prospered. So many friends and relatives followed them from the old country that the area

was called "Little Copenhagen." Henry inherited 685 acres in Pleasanton when his parents died. He raised grain and sugar beets there. He also ran cattle and had a Holstein dairy herd. In 1910 he had 50 horses in his stable and was known for his breeding of Clydesdale and Shire draft horses.

Many of these men and their wives banded together



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to form local branch #13 of the Sons of Hermann (Order der Hermann's Sohnes) in 1887. The matching Cecilie Lodge #10 was organized for women about the same time. Hermann was an early German folk hero who, with his army, defeated three invading Roman legions. There is an enormous statue of him near Detwald, Germany. The Sons of Hermann's motto was "Friendship, Love and Loyalty." The organization began selling life insurance to its members in 1875.

Carl Wente immigrated to the U.S. because of the primogeniture laws still in effect in the Kingdom of Hanover. He had an older brother who would inherit all the land of their parents. So Carl came to California sometime in the 1870s looking for opportunities. He worked as a cellarman for Charles Krug in Napa County. There he gained knowledge in the winery industry and later met his future wife, Barbara Trautwein. They married and came to Livermore in 1883, where Carl eventually bought a 30-acre vineyard. In 1912 Barbara was the outgoing president of the Cecilie Lodge in 1912.

In 1897 the treasurer of the Sons of Hermann was Wendell Jordan, who was born in the Kingdom of Bavaria. He had come

to Livermore in 1874 and took over the running of the Livermore Brewery. His ad in the Herald said, "Beer delivered by the keg, or bottled, throughout the township." Fred Schrader built a "splendid" new brewery wagon for Jordan's business. By 1882 the brewery capacity was 400 barrels per year. Jordan helped to organize Livermore's Fire Department and acted as foreman for more than 20 years. He also served as a town trustee for six years, including two years as mayor.

Herman Goecken was a native of Aurich in the Kingdom of Saxony. He came to San Francisco in 1876 and to Livermore two years later. The family had a home and business in San Francisco as well as a ranch up on the Old Altamont Road. Southern Pacific built a railroad spur to Goecken's ranch so that he could easily ship horses, cattle, and hay to his San Francisco business. In 1906 the earthquake caught the family in the city, and they swiftly hitched up horses to their wagons, salvaged their furniture and personal belongings, and moved the family to Livermore. Their San Francisco home and business burned down, but they were safe. It took them three days to drive the wagons to Livermore.

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