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**The Cultural Influence of 19th Century German
Immigration to the USA on their Descendants
in the 21st Century Using the
Example of Dubois County, Indiana**

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Foreword

Ever since a young age I have been in contact with US-Americans. My father organized student exchange programs on the German side for decades - initially between Wasserburg am Inn and Vincennes (Indiana), and later between Kelheim and Effingham (Illinois) - and we often had Americans as guests in our home. I often got to talk to them and learn about the American way of life, their culture and views.

My first visit to the United States of America in 2017 as a 17-year-old student increased my interest in the *land of unlimited opportunity*, so that further visits to the USA, especially to the states of Indiana and Illinois, followed in 2018 and 2022. The lecture *America and Germany: Transatlantic Cultural Relations and Production*, which I attended in the winter semester 2021/2022, held by Prof. Dr. Fitz, enabled me to significantly expand and deepen my knowledge in this area. During my study abroad program at Muskingum University in Ohio in 2022, I gained valuable impressions and experiences in many respects.

While I was in the Midwest, numerous Americans told me about their German ancestors, which sparked my interest in German immigration. These stories and the traces of the German past that I was able to recognize in place names, find in cemeteries and experience in cultural life, particularly in Dubois County in the state of Indiana, led to my decision to write my bachelor's thesis on this topic. A visit to the Immigrant Museum on Ellis Island in New York City solidified this intention.

When I asked Prof. Dr. Karsten Fitz, holder of the Chair of American Studies/Cultural and Media Studies, whether it would be possible to write a bachelor's thesis in his department on the cultural influence of German immigration in Dubois County, he agreed to the project, much to my delight. For this, and for supervising my thesis, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Fitz.

During my research, I was aided by many people to whom I am deeply indebted. On the American side, I would first like to thank the former president of Vincennes Sister Cities International, Mr. Al Baldwin, and his wife Kathy, who have offered their support in many ways. I would like to express my sincere thanks to them for providing free accommodation and meals in their house in Jasper, Dubois County, on several occasions

and for providing me with a car. The discussions with the historian Heiko F. Muehr (University of California, Berkeley; previously for many years at Indiana University Bloomington) and his extensive historical knowledge, especially on German immigration in Dubois County, were very helpful to me. For this I owe him my heartfelt thanks. I would also like to thank the former Vice Dean of Indiana University/Purdue University Indianapolis, Prof. em. Dr. Giles Hoyt (German Department), who has done a lot of research on German immigrants in Indiana. Moreover, I would also like to acknowledge the help of Patti Goepfrich (editor of the Jasper Deutscher Verein's newsletter) and Landen Weidenbenner (President of the Jasper Deutscher Verein). Many thanks to all the people who filled out my questionnaire and allowed me to interview them, as well as to all the other helpful Americans who cannot be named individually here.

1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives of the thesis, central research question and central thesis

The United States of America is made up of more immigrants than almost any other nation. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the United States was the main destination for German emigrants and in the period from 1850 to 1890 they made up the largest national immigrant group. The majority of Germans settled in the Midwest. Such ethnic colonies also existed in the south of the state of Indiana. In Dubois County¹, located in southern Indiana, German immigrants made up the largest number of the foreign-born population in the 19th century.

In the 2022 American Community Survey for Dubois County, 21.226 of the 43.584 residents named a *German Heritage* (U.S. Census Bureau). This high figure raises the central question whether the German heritage of the Americans in this county still plays a role today and if so, which one.

The central question of this bachelor thesis is whether the effects of German descent on the cultural life of Americans and visible traces of German immigration in Dubois County can still be documented in the 21st century, despite the effects of the assimilation process of German immigrants, the phases of cultural suppression during the two world wars and the steady dissolution of ethnic identity within immigrant groups.

1.2 Structure of the thesis and concretizing research questions

Chapter 2 begins with a brief overview of the causes of German emigration to the USA. Subsequently, the German immigration process based on the numerical development and geographical distribution of immigrants in the United States of America, the state of Indiana and Dubois County will be described.

Chapter 3 examines aspects of the social development of German immigrants in the study area. The questions addressed here are whether and for how long the ethnic identity persisted in the society of the country of immigration and whether the assimilation process

¹ The area of Dubois County (a county is roughly comparable to the German administrative unit Landkreis) is 427,3 square miles (U.S. Census Bureau). The county seat is the town of Jasper. The population of Dubois County in 2022 was 43.584 (U.S. Census Bureau).

or the two world wars with phases of cultural suppression led to a dissolution of the former German identity.

Chapter 4 analyses how many Americans in Dubois County named a German ancestry using data from the U.S. Census Bureau from the 21st century. The analysis of data gathered through a self-designed survey of Americans of German descent allows statements about the significance of this ancestry.

Chapter 5 focuses on whether and how German ancestry is reflected in the current cultural life and consciousness of Americans in Dubois County. Based on this research, it will be discussed why this sense of ethnic belonging and interest in German ancestry persists today and whether traces of German settlement activity can still be found in the study area today and to what extent the German language is used up to the present time.

1.3 Working method and methodology

In addition to the review of the current state of research and an in-depth literature analysis, the aggregated census data and specific evaluations of the U.S. Census Bureau, such as the data on *Ancestry Reporting* as part of the American Community Survey, serve as an important material basis for determining the history of the ethnic composition in Dubois County and provide current information on ethnic origin at county level.

Furthermore, extensive research was to provide information about German-related activities in Dubois County, a survey of Americans of German descent was carried out using a self-designed questionnaire on the topic of the cultural influence of German immigration with a total of ten questions, designed to confirm the respondents' German-American heritage, demographics, connection to Dubois County and to inquire about the cultural influences they have due to their German ethnic background and the sense of belonging they still have to it.

Six interviews were conducted with Americans of German descent to gather additional insight into life in Dubois County, the personal experiences and the opinions German-Americans hold. Two interviews were conducted with experts in the field of German-American studies to gain further expertise on previous research and methods used to gather data. During site visits in 2022 and 2023, Dubois County was explored for relics of the German past to identify and localize phenomena shaped by the German immigrants.

2. German immigration to the United States of America, Indiana and Dubois County

In order to better understand Dubois County's current majority German ethnic composition and the potential cultural impact it may have, the following chapter examines how and why Germans immigrated to the United States and later chose to settle in Dubois County.

2.1 Causes of the German emigration to the USA

German emigration overseas began in the 17th century. By the 19th century, it developed into a mass movement, which was primarily bound to North America until its end in the early 20th century (Bade, “Die deutsche überseeische Massenauswanderung” 264).

19th century Germany, in which most low-skilled workers did not get the chance to live a prosperous life, saw high amounts of emigration towards other countries (Lang 132). These emigrants were leaving their homeland due to demographic and economic reasons caused by the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society, while being drawn in by the idealistic depiction of the prosperous *New World* as a contradictory portrayal to their current life (Bade, “From Emigration to Immigration“ 512).

Although there are many factors that caused the mass emigration, nevertheless it is certain that most emigrants left their homeland hoping to improve their standard of living in the USA (Nagler 61). Farmers were looking for a larger farm, day laborers for their own land, the craftsmen for independence and better business, the workers for higher wages (Helbich et al. 27).

The *push factors*, such as political persecution and mandatory service and *pull factors* like improved economic opportunities differ across periods and locations, as there are various personal reasons for migration. Regional or local factors in both the areas of origin and destination can have additional impact on immigration. During the secession wars in the USA from 1861-1865, favorable treatment of migrants was hindered by authorities while advancements in transportation and communication facilitated it (Leib and Mertins 108).

2.2 Numerical development of German immigration

In the state of Indiana, Germans were the most significant ethnic group in terms of numbers in both the 19th and 20th centuries. From 1850 to 1990, the German-born population always made up the highest proportion of Indiana's foreign-born population; in the period from 1850 to 1900, this proportion was always above 50 percent (calculations from McBirney and Taylor 648). German immigration had its peak between 1820 and 1880: Around seven million Germans emigrated to the United States of America, more than from any other country.

Decade	Total immigration	German immigration	In % to total immigration
1820-1829	128.502	5.753	4,5
1830-1839	538.831	124.726	23,2
1840-1849	1.427.337	385.434	27,0
1850-1859	2.814.554	976.072	34,7
1860-1869	2.081.261	723.734	34,8
1870-1879	2.742.173	751.734	27,4
1880-1889	5.248.568	751.769	27,5
1890-1899	3.694.294	1.445.181	15,7
1900-1909	8.202.388	579.072	4,0
1910-1919	6.347.380	328.722	2,7
1920-1929	4.295.510	174.227	9,0
1930-1939	6.99.375	386.634	17,0
1940-1949	856.608	119.107	13,7
1950-1959	2.499.268	117.506	23,1
1960-1969	3.231.749	576.905	6,5
1970-1979	3.874.877	77.142	1,99
1980-1989	6.244.379	85.752	1,37
1990-1999	9.775.398	92.207	0,94
2000-2009	10.299.430	122.373	1,18
2010-2019	10.633.466	62.527	0,58
2020-2022	2.456.713	12.808	0,52

Tab. 1. Total immigration and German immigration to the United States between 1820 and 2022 (United States 6-10).

This corresponds to a share of around 15 percent of the total immigration to the USA. The second largest contingent during this time was Italy with 5.3 million (10.9 percent), followed by Great Britain with 4.9 million (10.0 percent) and Ireland with 4.7 million (9.7 percent) and Austria-Hungary with 4.3 million (8.9 percent) (Cordasco 242).

The data of German immigration displayed in table one clearly demonstrates drops, for example during the economic depression in the 1930s and during the Second World War.

2.3 Geographical distribution of German immigrants

After immigrating to the United States, German immigrants were mostly settled in large cities, although many of them had rural origins. In 1850, just less than 8 percent of the U.S. population lived in the eight largest cities, but almost 30 percent of all Germans worldwide lived in America (Helbich et al. 19). As most Germans used the cities only as a stopover, urbanization declined until 1890. Staying true to their roots, they migrated inland to fulfill their dream of land ownership. This explains why most German immigrants settled in the rural areas of the Midwest (Kamphoefner, “300 Jahre Deutsche in den USA” 172).

Through this movement of German immigrants away from the cities of the east coast, a settlement pattern called the *German belt* formed. Recorded in 1890, it reached from New York all the way out to Nebraska and primarily focused on the Midwest states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin (Helbich et al. 20). Another reason for settlement in this region were the similar geographic conditions to the settlers’ European countries of emigration, but the climate was subject to greater fluctuations in temperature due to the flat nature of the Midwest (Helbich et al. 19).

2.4 German immigration to Dubois County, Indiana

Cincinnati, located in the neighboring state of Ohio, served as the main point of departure for the German settlers who came to the state (Stanton 63). In 1850, Indiana’s settlement was primarily concentrated to the south, following the state’s general migration pattern of moving from south to north (Hoyt 152). Immigrants arrived through the key transportation routes like the natural waterways of the Wabash, Ohio and Whitewater rivers (Rose 623).

A further advantage of settling in southern Indiana was its lower soil fertility. This meant that land could be acquired more easily in the southern part of the state, as it was cheaper there than in comparison to the northern part of the state. This made it possible for more immigrants to buy their own



Fig. 1. Location of Dubois County in Indiana (MapSof.net).

farms (Dehne 33). In 1850, Dubois County was the county with the highest share of German immigrant population not only in Indiana, but also in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin (Rose 623).

Dubois County was significantly influenced by its geographical isolation from major transportation routes, forcing the settlers to travel there by foot or carriage. The county itself lacked access to navigable rivers (Wilson 103-104) and turnpikes (Dehne 43). Although the railroad connecting Vincennes to Terre Haute, Chicago and Evansville was already completed in 1854 (Greene 353), the first train passed through Jasper only 25 years later on February 14th, 1879 (Wilson 148).

The isolated beginnings allowed for the development of clear settlement patterns within the county which illustrate a division between the north and the south. American settlers primarily occupied the northern parts by 1802. German immigrants arrived later to colonize the remote southern parts, to “settle down in the heart of the wilderness to remain” (Wilson 102). The first land sale in Ferdinand Township, laying to the very south of Dubois County, only took place in 1834. This vast gap documents the remoteness and spatial isolation of the county’s southern primary forest area (Dehne 40). In the following decades immigration began to rise, especially after the first German settlements were formed. In 1850, 1,603 Germans lived in Dubois County. The year 1860 marked the highest level of German immigration in Dubois County with 2,641 immigrants. In the period from 1870 to 1900, the German population in Dubois almost halved (see fig. 2).

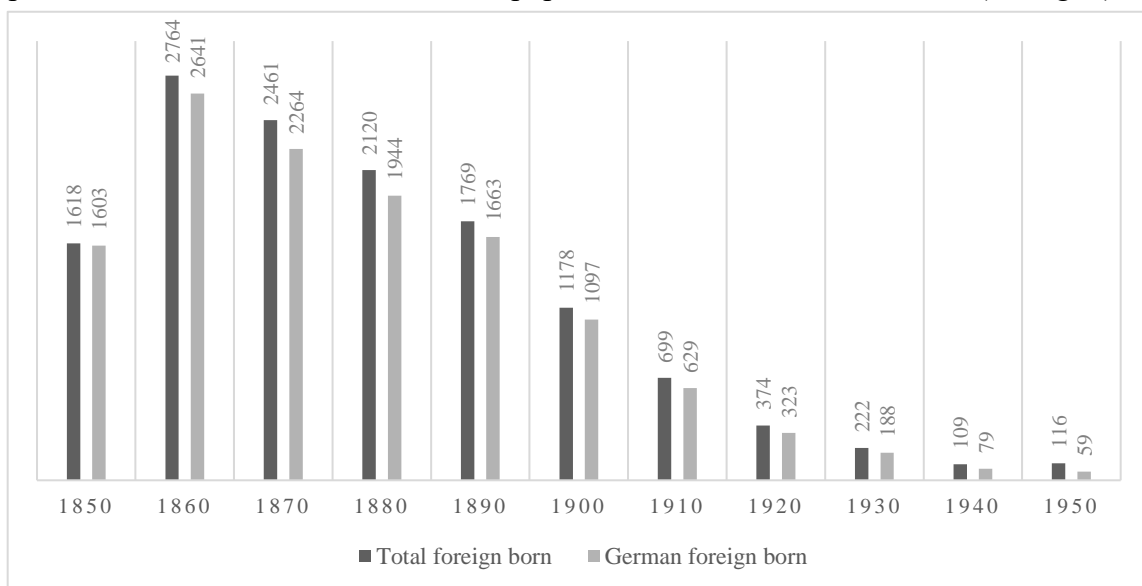


Fig. 2. Foreign-born and German foreign-born population in Dubois County between 1850 to 1950 (Manson et al.).

3. Societal changes within the German ethnic groups in Dubois County during the 19th and 20th centuries

3.1 Development of the German ethnic identity

Ethnic identity is a complex phenomenon within society. Within scientific literature, there are several definitions of the concept. According to Maehler (46), ethnic identity is defined in terms of the interaction between exploration of and commitment to a given cultural background. For Aboud (32), ethnic identity is the sense of oneself as a member of an ethnic group and the possession of attributes common to that group.

In order to trace the continuity and persistence of German ethnic identity through historical data, determinable factors of ethnic identity were used. Among those are mother tongue, uniform denominational affiliation and national origin (Schulte 27) as well as marriage behavior as a proof of continuing assimilation (Peach 219). According to the criteria of language, religious life and marriage behavior, the following chapter analyzes how the ethnic identity of German immigrants in Dubois County developed between the 19th and the 20th century.

Preservation of the German language

19th century German immigrants, who were only able to speak German, continued to do so in their new communities in Dubois County and therefore taught their children German as a first language (Niehaus 211). According to Muehr (6), teaching German as a first language was an important way of preserving traditions and values to Catholic German-Americans and conservative Lutheran parents, so that the population in the rural German parts of Dubois County considered German more important than English.

The significance of German remained high until the beginning of the First World War, as there were around nine million inhabitants with German as their native language in the United States during that time (Adams, "Deutsche im Schmelztiegel der USA" 26). In the following years, the now prevalent anti-German sentiment caused a removal of the German language from public life. By 1919, the McCray Act was passed as a direct response to the American war-era *superpatriotism* (Ramsey 288). All German instructions were removed from schools in Indiana. Breaking the law could result in a fine or even jail

time (Ramsey 299). Thus, the number of children who learned German as their first language before starting school declined steadily after the Second World War.

During the interview with Dubois County resident and German-American Patti Goepfrich on 29 Feb. 2024, she recounted that her father, born in 1927, had to be taught English when he went to elementary school as he only spoke German. He was almost part of the last generation (1930 until 1949) of German-Americans in Dubois County for whom German was the first language (Freeouf 37). The use of German survived longest in the all-German denominations in Dubois County. Up until 1960, church service in St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haysville was held in German (Muehr 12).

Despite the exterior factors caused by two world wars, German language use could prevail substantially longer in Dubois County than in other places in Indiana. This was due to the demographic and geographical makeup of the county which fostered this isolation. As the number of German speakers was substantial enough, it was possible for them to stay within their own ethnic group and continue their language use in an uninterrupted manner (Dehne 84). Furthermore, Dubois County lays far away from major transportation routes within a forest area, favoring the survival of Old-World characteristics (Muehr 6).

Religious life

Faith and religion were a main part of the daily life of German immigrants, serving as a way to bond together and cope with the challenges posed by settling in the new world. Most of those immigrants practiced Catholicism and Lutheranism (Tagore 31). In the 19th century, Catholics had to face the discrimination of the *Know-Nothingism* movement, which had strong nativist ideals and was anti-Catholic in all the United States apart from the south (Wittke 489).

In the interview of 22 Feb. 2024, Heiko Muehr described how Dubois County was predominantly Catholic in the first few decades after German settlement, so that it seemed almost foreign to non-German out of state visitors. Traditional religious festivals with procession were celebrated in Dubois County (Muehr 7). They were also accompanied by German brass band music (Niehaus 121) in order to stay true to the old-world traditions many of the immigrants still lived by in the 19th century, contrary to their ancestors today.

Marriage behavior

Similar to their religious behaviors, German immigrants stayed among their own social group, causing out of group marriage rates to stay low (Dehne 81). 28 percent of children born in America to German fathers and 14 percent of those born to German mothers were from *mixed marriages* in the early 1900s (Kamphoefner, “300 Jahre Deutsche in den USA” 173). People in rural areas were less likely to be married outside their own ethnic group than the population in the cities (Kamphoefner, “'Entwurzelt' oder 'verpflanzt'?” 34). During that time period, Germans wanted to maintain their ethnic identity through conscious endogamy (Dehne 81).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, religious boundaries began to decline after 1950 and the general mobility inside the county was higher due to the wider availability of transport. As time progressed, the debate against marriage outside the German ethnic group faded away. During the interviews held in 2024, there were no remainders of any limitation in marriage, as is reflected by the sentiment in the general American population towards interracial marriage, which rose from 4 percent in 1954 to 94 percent in 2021 (McCarthy).

3.2 The course of assimilation of the German settlers

The process of settlers turning towards a new ethnic identity is one that can be seen all over the United States. In Dubois County a similar effect took place over the past few decades in which younger German-Americans related less towards their heritage than previous generations. This process already took part during both world wars and was accelerated though not caused by them (Helbich et al 28).

Furthermore, religious differences were overcome. Venturing outside of one’s own group became the norm, so that the progression from small ethnic groups into a common society could take place (Lenz 11). This process of immigrants slowly being introduced and accustomed to their new country of residence was defined as *acculturation* by Han (198). Generations following the initial settlers did consider themselves as Americans, as they did not have a direct connection to their ancestors’ country of origin, even if they spoke the German language (Niehaus 145).

The ethnic community was responsible for the endogamous marriage relationships, the ethnically homogeneous church congregations and the preservation of the German language in Dubois County until the 20th century. Yet, the ethnic community was unable to permanently halt either the acculturation or the assimilation of the group and the individual (Dehne 84-85). What prevails is the focus on economic success that most German immigrants had and which is still present when one examines the county today.

Therefore, it was of need form many to learn the English language, as it allowed them to succeed more easily in their new life through better employment and business opportunities and allowed them to take part in broader society, adding another cause for the decline of German language use (Adams, "The German-Americans" 26).

4. The German ancestry of the Dubois County population in the 21st century

To show the German ethnic composition of Dubois County in the 21st century, the following chapter examines data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Subsequently, proprietary survey data was used to analyze the importance that Dubois County residents still place on their ethnicity.

4.1 Information on ancestry in the United States

The U.S. Census is a nationwide survey conducted every ten years by the United States Census Bureau, a principal agency of the U.S. Federal Statistical System. The primary goal of the Census is to count every resident in the United States. It is a reliable provider of data on ancestry as it contains the question of “What is this person’s ancestry or ethnic origin?” (Brittingham and de la Cruz 1). In the 2000 census year, the number of Americans who claimed to be descended from Germans was 42.8 million. Compared to the population of 281 million Americans at the time, they were the largest immigrant group (Brittingham and de la Cruz 3).

The analysis of the American Community Survey for Dubois County in 2022 shows that out of 43.584 total residents, 21.226 or 48 percent indicated *German heritage* (U.S. Census Bureau). This means that almost half of the American population in Dubois County had German family roots therefore still being by far the largest ethnic group. As the indication during the American Community Survey is based on ethnic self-identification, the question rises which relevance German ancestry still holds today.

4.2 The importance of German ancestry for the descendants

The American Community Survey does not include questions about the personal relevance towards one’s ethnic background. As part of the bachelor thesis, the *Survey on the cultural influence of German immigration* was developed. The questionnaire consists of a total of ten questions (see appendix) and was published in the Deutscher Verein newsletter *Die Zeitung* in March of 2024 with a request for participation and was open until May of 2024. All 35 participants affirmed that they were of German descent (see question no. 3 in the questionnaire) and stated that they were currently or had previously been residents of Dubois County (see question no. 1 in the appendix).

To gain some insight into the importance of the German ancestry to themselves, the question “How important is a sense of belonging to your German ethnic group?” was asked. The participants were able to select their assessments on a rating scale with five options. 40 percent of respondents stated that their German ancestry was “extremely important” to them, 31 percent stated it was “very important”. For 23 percent it was “relatively important” and for 6 percent “somewhat important”. None of the participants marked it as “not at all important” (see question no. 4 in the appendix).

Due to the qualitative nature of the survey, it cannot be representative for all German-Americans in Dubois County. Still, it does give an indication about the positive community sentiment towards their German roots. This claim of importance is also supported by the phenomenon that many German-Americans rediscover their roots and travel to Germany to meet their relatives (Niehaus 214), which regularly takes place in Dubois County.

During the interview on 29 Feb. 2024, German-American Patti Goepfrich talks about her first travel to Germany together with her parents to meet her relatives in Pfaffenweiler, which is Jasper’s sister city today. Originally only planning to be there for a few days, she prolonged her stay for another three weeks. Since then, she has returned six more times to the small village of 2.500 inhabitants, not only because of her fascination for experiencing her ancestors’ culture and land, but also because for her, “it is family”. During the interview, she displayed a remarkable sense of pride towards her German heritage, as well as memorabilia and décor like the German and American flag in her yard.



Fig. 3. Goepfrich, Patti. “German and American flags in Dubois County yard.” Received by Leopold Schaffner, 02 Mar. 2024.

5. The influence of German ancestry in contemporary cultural life in Dubois County

The information on the high percentage of German ancestry and its reported significance for many of Dubois County's residents raises the central question of whether and, if so, how German ancestry makes itself felt in the current cultural life and consciousness of Americans in Dubois County. This examination in the next chapter includes research on organizations, events, language and traces in the landscape like architecture, preservation efforts and religious sites.

5.1 Reflecting on the past through present activities and organizations with a German connection

Since the 1970s, Americans have shown a growing interest in their German ancestry and origins (Muehr 13). One explanation for this phenomenon is that in America, the 1970s were again characterized more strongly by so-called value conservatism. After the upheavals and activities of the 1960s, society returned to idealistic values and sought identity. This period also saw the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the United States of America (1976), which certainly contributed to the historical recollection (Lenz 9).

On October 6th, 1987, U.S. President Ronald Reagan revived German-American Day, which had been abolished at the beginning of the First World War. Since then, there has been a declaration by the U.S. President on this holiday every year. This traditionally highlights the achievements and contributions of German immigrants in the USA.

In his proclamation of 6 Oct. 2023 President Joseph Biden made the following statement: "On German-American Day, we honor the over 40 million Americans who claim German heritage and the countless ways they have strengthened the diverse fabric of our Nation. [...] On this day – 340 years after the first German settlement was founded on American shores – let us celebrate the incredible legacy of generations of German Americans and the unbreakable bonds of friendship between our two countries. [...] I urge all Americans to celebrate the rich and varied history of German Americans and remember the many contributions they have made to our Nation" (Biden).

German-American Day has been enshrined in culture and law. The American head of state expressing his appreciation for the valuable contribution of German-Americans and their ancestors every year is proof of the political and social significance of German immigration right up to the present day. At the same time, the commemoration and recognition at the highest level of government promotes the recollection of the German origin of over 40 million Americans and the influence of their ancestors.

The results of surveying Americans in Dubois County in 2024, both through the standardized questionnaire and interviews, shows that participants still have great interest in their German roots. In response to question no. 5 (see appendix) on the cultural impact taken through German ancestry, 94 percent of the respondents to that question stated that their German descent does have a cultural impact on them.

Jasper Strassenfest

The County's most prevalent way of celebrating its German ancestry is the so-called Strassenfest which has been held in Jasper annually since 1978. According to Jasper Deutscher Verein officer Patti Goepfrich (interviewed 29 Feb. 2024), this four-day celebration of German culture is attended by over 35.000 visitors every year. If you put the number of visitors in relation to Dubois County's population, which in 2022 was 43.584 (U.S. Census Bureau), one can see the great local significance of that event. Among the responses gathered through the survey, the Strassenfest is mentioned as a token of pride for many. Respondent stated (survey question no. 10, see appendix): "Being from Jasper and celebrating the Strassenfest every summer is a big part of my childhood that is still going strong today" and "my family always went to the Strassenfest in Jasper every year".

The upcoming Strassenfest is held between August 1st and 4th 2024 under the motto "German flair on the square". The four days are packed with many attractions. Most of them are of traditional German origin, like a parade to the beer garden, beer stein holding contests, Hammerschlagen and heritage and music performances. Furthermore, the event offers a variety of different foods, ranging from German classics like Bratwurst, Pretzel and Apple Strudel (Jasper Strassenfest Committee).

Opening ceremonies set the stage for a couple of days full of German Heritage. Many visitors are dressed in Dirndl and Lederhosen during their time visiting the event (see fig. 4) and German flags and décor are displayed all around the Strassenfest (see fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Little Mister Strassenfest (Jasper Strassenfest Committee “Strassenfest Pageant”).



Fig. 4. The “Willkommen Stage” during the 45th Jasper Strassenfest (Jasper Strassenfest Committee “Opening Ceremonies 2024”).

The examination of the event shows that German cultural elements are still practiced in Dubois County, even though they have long disappeared from everyday life due to the assimilation of settlers into mainstream American culture. This assimilation is shown paradigmatically all over the event, ranging from new-found amalgamations of German and American cuisine like *Krautballs* and *Drei Fleisch Macho Nachos* and events named “Learn to Dance the Schuhplattler and Chicken Dance” (Jasper Strassenfest Committee “Booth Guide”). In 2024, the Strassenfest takes place for the 46th time and still grows in popularity, standing as a clear example of German cultural remnants that are still influencing Dubois County German-Americans today.

Jasper Deutscher Verein

After the 1970s had brought a wave of rekindled interest in German heritage to Dubois County, the Jasper Deutscher Verein was founded (interview with Matt Hilger, 21 Feb. 2024) in January 1980 with the goal of promoting, preserving and celebrating the “proud German heritage” in Jasper and the surrounding area (Goepfrich 2022).

Recurring activities include German Game Nights, where members meet to play card games like *Schafkopf* (Sheepshead) (Goepfrich 2023) or hosting a *Kaffeekränzchen* (coffee hour) as a German conversation group that is open to students and members of the community to learn and practice their spoken German (Goepfrich 2019). They are

strongly intertwined with the organization of the Strassenfest and the Sister Cities exchange program to Pfaffenweiler.

The Deutscher Verein has been a driving force behind promoting German Heritage in Dubois County. This happens through regular gatherings, events they organize and collaborations with groups like the Redevelop Old Jasper Action Coalition, which restores historical sites. One example is the Jasper City Mill, which was reconstructed once by immigrants from Pfaffenweiler in 1865 (City of Jasper).

Yet, results of the interviews of Deutscher Verein Members show how the club and its way of practicing German culture changed. In the 1980s, the members met first and foremost to preserve and practice German culture (interview with Matt Hilger 21 Feb. 2024). When asked about the Club's present and future, Patti Goepfrich reported that for younger participants, the club is an avenue to socialize. Some Dubois County residents are interested in participating even without having any German heritage themselves, being drawn in by the festivities of the Strassenfest and wearing Lederhosen as a costume.

There are still many dedicated members and supporters, but what they are dedicated to has changed over the years (interview with Patti Goepfrich 29 Feb. 2024). Those findings mirror the above-mentioned processes of cultural assimilation, but also show a way for the Deutscher Verein and its activities, events and objectives to persist in a newly adapted way. To what extent these festivities are linked to a return to the German ancestors or rather just have a connection to the well-known Munich Oktoberfest, which is attended by many Americans, can be the subject of further research.

Sister Cities

The town twinning between Jasper and the German town of Pfaffenweiler (Baden-Württemberg) was sealed in 1985. According to Prof. em. Dr. Giles Hoyt, Pfaffenweiler was chosen for a specific reason. Dr. Hoyt said that he found many similar last names looking through Pfaffenweiler and Jasper phone book records (interviewed 20 Feb. 2024). Of the many Pfaffenweiler residents who emigrated to North America around the year of 1850, over 200 people settled permanently in the small settlement of Jasper (Mahler). Numerous friendships have developed within the framework of partnership encounters. The main pillars of the relationship are the regular student exchanges between Faustgymnasium Staufen and Jasper High School, internships and study visits by young

tradespeople and students. Official visits and frequent trips by private individuals and relatives characterize the lively partnership. In 2022, the 35th anniversary of the partnership was celebrated in Pfaffenweiler, with over 20 guests from the sister city of Jasper (Mahler). The effects of the exchange program and the resulting intercultural interactions are reported by several respondents to question no. 10 (see appendix): “I grew up taking so many customs as "standard", but did not realize they were German until our son took part in the exchange program to Germany” and “We have an unusual story here in Jasper. Our sister city relationship helps keep it alive.” The exchange program between the cities enables many to come into contact directly with Germans, some even with their distant German relatives. Therefore, as one of the greatest benefactors of keeping the interest in German culture high, the exchange program helps to foster the survival of existing German cultural elements inside Dubois County through its intergenerational programs.

Ferdinand Christkindlmarkt

The annual Christkindlmarkt in Ferdinand in November is another example of the efforts in Dubois County to revive German traditions. The Bavarian-themed Christmas festival starts off with an opening night ceremony, highlighted by the arrival of the Christmas Angel on the steps of the Monastery Immaculate Conception. During the two-day festival, visitors have access to 200 booths spread across the town (Lynch).

Traditional German customs are also practiced in the private sphere, like the celebration of St. Nicklaus Day on December 6th and Christmas on Christmas Eve or the preparation of Springerle cookies at Christmas. Yet, this seems to be limited to the older generations in Dubois County, as none of the younger respondents to the survey seem to actively take part in those traditions, even though most of those traditions are closely related to Roman Catholicism.

5.2 Linguistic impact of German immigration

Dubois County German

Although German has long been replaced by English in everyday life, there are still Americans of German descent remaining in Dubois County who can speak the way their ancestors used to. This dialect, often referred to as Dubois County German, bears a very

close resemblance to southern and southwestern German dialects with direct English influences, which are mostly single words that are used as a substitute for German ones.

One example, as provided by Prof. em. Dr. Giles Hoyt during our interview on 2 Feb. 2024, was one of the stories about the fictional 19th century German-American Ed Meyer, as shown in the excerpt below.

“Einmol hat de Ed Meyer a solche schobliche Wage g'hat. Und jedesmol, wo er rund das rechte Eck g'gange ist, ist das linke vornest Wagerad abg'falle. Und es hat de Ed so verzornt. Er hat net g'wisst, was tue. So ein Sonntagmorge ist de Ed in d'Kirch g'gange. Er ist rum das linke Eck g'komme wieder und uf einmol sind alle vier Wageruede-sie sind abg'falle. Und es hat de Ed so verdammt falsch g'macht. Er ist ab de Wage g'jumpt und hat die Haend uf die Hifte getan und hat amol gebrummell und geknunt und hat g'sagt, "God damn!"” (Reichmann 220).

“Once Ed Meyer had a very delapidated wagon. And each time he went around the right corner, the left front wheel fell off. It made Ed very angry. He didn't know what to do. So one Sunday morning Ed went to church. He came around the left corner again. Then suddenly all four wagon wheels fell off. It made him damned mad. He jumped off the wagon, put his hands on his hips, grumbled and growled and said, "God damn!"” (Reichmann 220-21).

During the interview on 24 Apr. 2024, German-American Johann Bieker was able to converse in the Dubois County German dialect, just the way he still talks to his four siblings. As Dubois County German found its origins in the 19th century, it is extraordinary that there are still speakers of the dialect today. This sets Johann Bieker apart as one of the last proprietors being linguistically influenced through German immigration in such a distinct manner. When one looks at the recent linguistic developments in the county, one finds that these are characterized through slow language death and the total shift to the dominant English language (Nützel 60).

It is quite certain that listening to Dubois County German will soon be a thing of the past, as so far, the dialect has solely survived through oral transmission (Interview with Prof. em. Dr. Giles Hoyt 02 Feb. 2024). The general trend in the United States of moving away from speaking German at home is reflected by Johann Bieker's recounts. Its usage declined by 43,6 percent between 1980 and 2019 (Dietrich, Hernandez 3). Bieker's dialect has not been transmitted to his descendants. Following generations in Dubois County did study German in High School, but Bieker recounts many occasions where his now teen-age grandkids listen to his way of speaking German, correcting it as “wrong” due to its pronunciation and vocabulary.

German language ability in Dubois County today

General German language ability remains present in Dubois County. In the survey on the cultural influence of German immigration, 66 percent out of the 35 participants stated that they could speak German to any degree (see question no. 8). The eleven participants born between 1950 and 1960 mostly picked up the language from their grandparents who were still fluent speakers at that point. That group was also the one with the most advanced German skills, two participants were still fluent, while younger participants had a lesser knowledge of German.

Due to its limited sample size, the result of the survey about the German language skills of Americans of German descent cannot be representative, yet it provides important clues about the remaining linguistic impact German immigration has on language use in Dubois County, as the German language knowledge is still high. A factor leading to that is the general interest in German ancestry some Dubois County natives like Darren Patterson (interviewed 21 Mar. 2024) have, who studied German in University due to that reason.

For the six participants, whose language skills are not at least at an intermediate level, it stands out that even they still use certain German words. Those elements have a high likelihood of having been bequeathed to them through the generations before them. Examples of that were also provided through the interviews. During the interview with Abby Goforth (11 Mar. 2024), she reported that within her family, it is common to call someone with messy hair a *Strubbelkopf*. Ron and Don Flick (interviewed 01 Mar. 2024) both also were told the word while they were growing up by their German-American dad, alongside many other expressions like quit *rutsching* around, meaning to sit still.

As language and culture are closely intertwined, the gradual disappearance of Dubois County German does reflect how the modern generations of German-Americans are influenced through their ancestry in a different manner. This shows a shift away from traditionalism and the old ways towards a modern iteration of what it means to be German-American. This new way is driven through the activities some take part in, like joining the Strassenfest in Lederhosen and maintaining some knowledge of German through formal education, exchange programs or travel and less through the direct impact of German ancestry on their daily lives, which are now distinctly American through cultural assimilation.

5.3 German traces in the cultural landscape of the present day

Although the usage of the German language and the ethnic German communities of Dubois County disintegrated after the First World War, relics going back to the German immigrants have survived in the cultural landscape up to the present day.

German culinary influences

Question no. 6 in the survey (see appendix) has participants specify in which way, if any at all, their German roots have an influence on their lives today. The answers of the 35 participants were categorized into their overarching topics to show the most relevant transmitted cultural elements. 57 percent of the participants specify that German culinary traditions were transmitted to them.

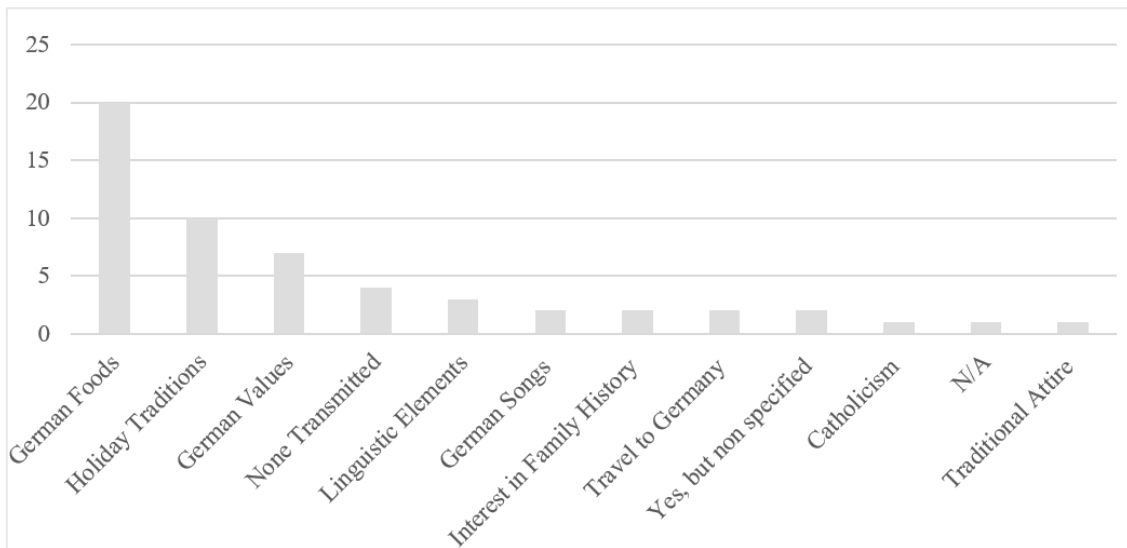


Fig. 6. Transmitted German cultural elements in Dubois County German-American families. Own survey in February 2024, number of participants: 35.

This figure underlines the culinary impact that German immigration still has on the area and the food choices people in Dubois County prefer to make. In response to question no.6, one participant reports (see appendix): “Saturday breakfasts were typically made by my dad and we would typically have Leberwurst (Lewawascht) and Apfelbutter (Latweig/Laadvech) with toast aside from eggs and bacon.”, showing a blend of German and American cuisine.



Fig. 7. Bieker, Johann. “Schnitzelbank.” Received by Leopold Schaffner, 14 Jun. 2024.

The most successful and well-known one in Dubois County is the Schnitzelbank in Jasper, Indiana. Since 1971, the owners have offered German food, not only to locals but also to visitors from all over the state. The restaurant's décor is distinctively German, they even have their own Glockenspiel. The menu consists of mostly German dishes. Some are made with a distinctive American twist, others are described as "old world style" (Schnitzelbank). Today, the Schnitzelbank is a central part of the community's cultural landscape, serving as a place for visitors to explore German food and for locals to foster a sense of cultural pride and ethnic belonging through the restaurant's offerings of wine from Pfaffenweiler or foods like pickled turnip, traditional to Dubois County German-Americans since they first arrived in the county.

German place names in Dubois County

Indiana is home to a significant number of German place names, reflecting the extensive influence of German settlers in the region. A total of 59 German settlement names, 23 German-named townships, and three German-named counties can be found throughout the state. German place names are present in 62 percent of Indiana's counties, highlighting the widespread presence of German heritage (Dehne 89). In some American states, the number of German place names is above average. In addition to Indiana, these include Pennsylvania, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Texas, Ohio and Missouri (Rippley and Schmeissner 12). In Dubois County, notable German place names include Ferdinand, Bretzville, Schnellville and Kellerville. Most of these German towns were established in the 19th century and remained unchanged, surviving various historical events, including the two World Wars. Despite the persistence of German place names in the cultural landscape, many Americans, and even some residents of these towns, may not be aware of their German origins when they encounter names like Ferdinand (Dehne 88). The enduring presence of these names is a testament to the lasting impact of German settlers in Indiana, preserving a piece of the state's cultural and historical heritage (Dehne 89).

Churches and Cemeteries

The cultural landscape of Dubois County also prominently displays the German heritage through its churches and cemeteries. These structures are among the most visible signs of the area's ethnic background. The church steeples rising from the villages not only serve as focal points of the communities but also evoke the imagery of church-centered villages typical of the German peasantry, reminiscent of the Old World (Muehr 8).

A prime example of a German Catholic community with a strong ethnic identity were the Catholics in Ferdinand Township (Niehaus 149) and the nuns at the Monastery Immaculate Conception. The Benedictine monastery of The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand was founded in 1867 and still operates today. Throughout the years, it has grown into one of the largest Benedictine Communities in the United States (Monastery Immaculate Conception). Religion was also a factor of division among the residents of Dubois County, as the interactions of Catholic and Protestant settlers were limited until the 1950s (Dehne 82). Nowadays the times of religious separation are long gone, but the pride many take in their faith has remained. When looking at the historical tour provided by the town of Ferdinand itself, one can tell that the 41 historical sites are mostly of German origin and still are among the main cultural attractions in town (Visit Dubois County).

In addition to these churches, the German heritage is also reflected in the cemeteries of Dubois County. The tombstones bear German names, serving as lasting testaments to the area's German roots. These inscriptions not only honor the deceased but also preserve the language and cultural expressions of the German community (Dehne 88).



Fig. 8. Bieker, Johann. "German-American Tombstone." Received by Leopold Schaffner, 15 Jun. 2024.

Modern Architectural Traces

According to Ron Flick, interviewed 01 Mar. 2024, the last houses built by German-born Americans go back to the late 1880s. Some of them are still used as homes today, recognizable by their brick and stucco façades and their German inscriptions. Even though the times of German-built log cabins and brick houses are long gone, you can still see modern buildings (see fig. 9) which are strongly influenced by German architecture.

Many of them were built after the 1970s wave of Americans returning to their German roots and are an interesting way of some German-Americans honoring their heritage, as they are scattered around the county.



Fig. 9. Bieker, Johann. "Dubois County Tire." Received by Leopold Schaffner, 15 Jun. 2024.

One of the survey's participants states in response to question no. 10 (see appendix): "Until I lived outside of Jasper for 12 years, I did not realize how much German influence is present in the Jasper Community". This statement highlights the fact that German style architecture might not even be perceived as something not typically American to some, which leads to the conclusion that, as most residents are of German ancestry, those buildings are nothing out of the ordinary for them.

This normality is also reflected by the businesses, as despite the extraordinary appearance of their buildings, none of them seem to advertise why they chose this type of German architecture. But this trend of taking inspiration from German architecture is by no means spread across all buildings in Dubois County. The overarching findings in the conducted log-form interviews (see appendix) reflect as well, that especially the older generation still has a stronger connection to anything which is German, whereas for younger generations this connection is less palpable.

One architectural example of that process is Meny's True Value Hardware store, located on 2805 Newton Street in Jasper, which once had a German half-timbered style façade (see fig. 10). When



Fig. 10. Flick, Ron. "Meny's True Value Hardware store." Received by Leopold Schaffner, 31 Mar. 2024.

retracing the state of the building throughout the years using Google Street View, one can tell that the state of the building steadily declined. Between 2016 and 2018, it was replaced by a typical façade made from red corrugated iron, reflecting the True Value hardware store red brand colors. Some members in the community are in favor of changing the building code to *re-Germanize* architecture, as seen in one of the responses to question no. 10 (see appendix): "German Catholic residents in Dubois County (particularly and especially in Jasper) are very proud of their heritage and try to keep it alive in some of the design elements on buildings". Nevertheless, there is not enough support in the general community for such a change (interview with Ron Flick, 01 Mar. 2024). So those architectural traces remain, being of high importance to some and just a part of everyday life for the vast majority of inhabitants of the mostly ancestral German Dubois County.

German American Bank

In the year 1910 (Ferdinand Historical Society 108), during a period where Dubois County's economic base was still centered around the many small family farms (Jordan 48), the German American Bank was founded in Jasper. Over the following decades, it grew to be a part of German American Bancorp holdings as its flagship bank. During that time, the bank's capital stock grew from its original 40,000 USD in 1910 (Brynildssen 178) to approximately 6 billion USD today (German American Bancorp Inc.), highlighting the success of the bank and proving the trust that customers put in the bank.

Named by its founding members after Jasper's rich German heritage (Brynildssen 178), the bank remained a compelling example of the county's adhesion to its ethnic roots, as the name German American consisted, even though this was not entirely undisputed. In the 1993 paper on the social construction of reality in an ethnic community, on page seven Sabine D. Jordan reports of an interview with Mr. Leo Beckmann, once president of the German American Bank in the early 1960s. Leo Beckmann talks about pressures to change the bank's name during and right after the First and Second World War. The Board of Trustees held on to the original name and it remained until now, "reaffirming the identity of the county's residents during times when the word German would have been a liability in other less uniform settings" (Jordan 53). Those ethnically uniform settings refer to the still commonly shared and transmitted virtues of the county's German-American population, like a strong work ethic (survey question no. 6, see appendix), frugality and the ideal of taking care of their own people by reinvesting into the community (interview with Matt Hilger, 21 Feb. 2024). Over 200 years after the first immigrants had arrived in Dubois County, *Germanness* is still a factor that is actively used by banks and other businesses to gain economic advantages (interview with Prof. em. Dr. Giles Hoyt, 02 Feb. 2024). This effect of German immigration on how some organizations advertise and conduct their business, shows a clear cultural impact caused by German immigration.



Fig. 11. "German American Bank."
Own picture 2023.

6. Conclusion

Based on the large number of German immigrants in the 19th century, this study investigated whether the German origin of Americans in Dubois County in the State of Indiana still plays a role today and if so, which one. The central thesis that the effects of German descent on the cultural life of Americans can still be seen in the 21st century and visible traces of German immigration in Dubois County can be documented, even though of German immigration peaked in the 19th century and German-American immigrants underwent the 20th century assimilation process.

As the evaluation of the American Community Survey from 2022 showed, almost half of the American population in Dubois County stated that they had German family roots. The evaluation of the self-administered questionnaire revealed that the vast majority of Americans surveyed assigned a very or extremely important role to their German ancestry. Most Americans expressed great interest in their German roots in the interviews and some expressed pride in their German ancestry. These results demonstrate a clear commitment to German ancestry and a strong identification with their ancestors. Almost all respondents affirmed that their German ancestry has a cultural influence on them.

This cultural influence of German immigration can be seen in the many events, activities and organizations with a German connection that have regularly taken place in Dubois County since the late 1970s. The knowledge of German words documented in interviews, in some cases even the ability to speak German and the documented visible traces of the German past in Dubois County can also be traced back to German immigration in the 19th century. With the results presented in the thesis, the central question formulated in the introduction regarding the cultural influence of German immigration up to the present day could be affirmed.

The central thesis of whether German heritage in this county still plays a role today could be verified, as German cultural influence is still detectable within Dubois County, the amount of influence is higher in some areas like activities, organizations and visible traces and lower in others like language and actions during daily life.

The cultural influence of the German immigrants who settled in Dubois County in the 19th century is both a prerequisite and a consequence of the activities of the German-

Americans in Dubois County in the late 20th and present 21st centuries. The rural remoteness of the German settlements, the resulting slower process of acculturation and assimilation of the German immigrants and the therefore longer existence of the ethnic colony play a significant role in this. This long-standing connection with German ancestors, their language and traditions have also fostered the memory of the past, so that the activities and traditions with a German connection in Dubois County show the special variety and diversity and the significance of the German origin that is so clearly pronounced in the county.

Furthermore, future research could be the transfer of the central thesis to other German settlement areas in the USA and a more in-depth comparative analysis with the county examined in this bachelor thesis to identify differences and their causes or determine similarities. There are limitations to the research conducted for this thesis due to the qualitative nature of the survey with 35 participants and the focus of effects taking place within the time period of the 21st century.

In discussions with the American academics, the German scholar Prof. Dr. Giles Hoyt and the historian Heiko F. Muehr, who have both conducted research on the German-Americans in Dubois County and in other regions in Indiana, expressed the assumption that Dubois County may have a unique feature here. This assumption could be investigated through comparing Dubois County to other counties in the United States which are similar in their German ethnic composition.

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Appendix

Interviews

As part of the bachelor thesis, open interviews were conducted with experts in the field of German-American studies as well as with German-Americans from Dubois County. The recordings and notes of these interviews were submitted to the Chair and the Examining Office when the thesis was submitted.

Interviewee	Date	Duration	Format
Prof. em. Dr. Giles Hoyt	02 Feb. 2024	1:12:30	Audio Recording
Matt Hilger	21 Feb. 2024	1:13:07	Audio Recording
Heiko Muehr	22 Feb. 2024	Not documented	Meeting minutes
Patti Goepfrich	29 Feb. 2024	1:56:59	Audio Recording
Ron and Don Flick	01 Mar. 2024	1:46:44	Audio Recording
Abby Goforth	11 Mar. 2024	0:46:13	Audio Recording
Darren Patterson	21 Mar. 2024	0:30:23	Audio Recording
Johann Bieker	24 Apr. 2024	1:16:27	Audio Recording

Questionnaire

The questionnaire *Survey on the cultural influence of German immigration* was held between 03 Mar. 2024 until 03 May 2024. It was open to Dubois County residents and 35 responses were gathered via Microsoft Forms and E-Mail.

Questions posed:

1. Are you currently or have you ever been a resident of Dubois County, Indiana? (Yes/No)
2. What age group are you? (20 and below, 21-35, 36-50, 51-65, 65 and above)
3. Are you an American citizen of German ancestry? (Yes/No)
4. How important is a sense of belonging to your German ethnic group? (1 (not at all important), 2 (somewhat important), 3 (relatively important), 4 (very important), 5 (extremely important))
5. Does the fact that you are of German descent have a cultural impact on you? (Yes/No)
6. Has your family passed on German-American traditions? (Provide an example if possible.) (open answer)
7. Which of your ancestors spoke German? (Provide an example if possible.)

8. Do you still speak any German? (Yes/No)

9. If so, on what level? Fluent, intermediate, basic, certain elements (numbers, greetings, descriptive nouns) or provide an example. (open answer)

10. If you have further comments on being German-American in Dubois County or want to mention anything else, feel free to do it here! (open answer)

Answers given:

1. Are you currently or have you ever been a resident of Dubois County, Indiana?
35 (100%), No 0 (0%)

2. What age group are you?

20 and below 0 (0%), 21-35 3 (9%), 36-50 5 (14%), 51-65 11 (31%), 65 and above 16 (46 %)

3. Are you an American citizen of German ancestry?

Yes 35 (100%), No 0 (0%)

4. How important is a sense of belonging to your German ethnic group?

1 (not at all important) 0 (0%), 2 (somewhat important) 2 (6%), 3 (relatively important) 8 (23%), 4 (very important) 11 (31%), 5 (extremely important) 14 (40%)

5. How important is a sense of belonging to your German ethnic group?

Yes 33 (94%), No 2 (6%)

6. Has your family passed on German-American traditions?

1	Yes. We celebrate St. Nicklaus Day on December 6 th and Christmas on Christmas Eve. We grew up eating Sauerkraut, Kuchen, Küchle, onion dressing (a bread and onion casserole/dressing served especially at Thanksgiving and Christmas). Other traditions as well, I am sure, and with more reflection could likely enumerate them.
2	Making Christmas cookies/Springerles each year and celebrating St. Nick each December.
3	Many types of food prepared at home, we sing or use phrases in German as part of our traditions.
4	No. Our family is very mixed. I rediscovered our roots and share with the family. I was in a summer program in college and traveled to Germany several times.
5	Eating German foods such as brats.
6	St Nicholas, gathering together as family.
7	Many home cooked meals have German influence. Our work ethic most certainly is due to German influence.
8	Food, holiday traditions, Catholicism.
9	Yes, especially regarding meals and recipes.
10	Advent Calendars and Gingerbread houses at Christmas time.
11	Work ethic, structure, organization, punctuality.

12	N/A
13	Attitudes, work ethics, foods.
14	<p>Yes.</p> <p>a) Santa comes overnight not Christmas Eve</p> <p>b) We have adventure calendars</p> <p>c) Easter Bunny would bring a few colored eggs on Palm Sunday</p> <p>d) Kneel aside parents' bed to pray the rosary during lent.</p> <p>e) strong work ethics</p> <p>f) cleanliness and neatness of home and property</p> <p>g) put rosary on wash line for a rain free wedding day</p> <p>h) passing bride's shoe around to guests at the wedding for honeymoon money</p> <p>i) bury a St. Joseph's (patron saint of carpenters) statue in yard of a house you want to sell</p> <p>j) hang socks on the Eve of St. Nicholas. We would get an orange, nuts, a few pieces of candy and a candy cane.</p> <p>k) we call meals - breakfast, dinner, supper</p>
15	<p>The German traditions passed down include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christmas Trees, Advent wreath 2. I was the person that reintroduced German Heritage Events back into the Jasper Strassenfest. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chocolate Game 2. Root Beer Mug Holding Contest 3. Schuhplattler Dance 4. Kinderchor 5. May Pole Dance 6. Bench Dance
16	Christmas traditions, cooking; caring about your home and place; traveling.
17	My dad has loved studying the genealogy of our family and how our ancestors came to America, which is always a fascinating story and makes me appreciate the history of our family as well as the families who immigrated to Dubois Co.
18	N/A
19	Food
20	Learned German dances and German folk songs as a kid, several Christmas traditions adopted from German culture.
21	I am actually a first-generation immigrant, so I still have a lot of habits like liking long walks, fresh air, bread, beer, white wine, cured meats, I call my parents in Germany once a week.
22	Yes.
23	My family always went to the Strassenfest in Jasper every year. Most traditions my immediate family partook in were more from the Amish/Mennonite side of things. In particular, Saturday breakfasts were typically made by my dad and we would typically have Leberwurst (Lewawascht) and Apfelbutter (Latweig/Laadvech) with toast aside from eggs and bacon.
24	My great great grandparents came here from Germany. It has been passed down to all of us to have a strong work ethic, you work hard for your money, take pride in your work, family and strong German, Catholic roots.
25	N/A
26	German foods.

27	Foods we eat and the meticulous way we had to keep our farm.
28	Yes, my father was a naturalized citizen of the U.S. from Germany. I still have cousins and family residing in Germany. I believe it is of the utmost importance to continue to foster the relationships with my family so as not to lose these ties in future generations.
29	Hard work, thrifty attitude, take care of your family, do things right the first time and have a good time.
30	N/A
31	Making Springerle cookies at Christmas. Celebrating St. Nicholas. A neat and orderly home.
32	Phrases, foods, culture.
33	Yes
34	No
35	German attire, types of food.

7. Which of your ancestors spoke German?

1	My mother, my maternal grandmother and grandfather and their ancestors who reach back to Germany. On my father's side, my great-grandmother spoke German and her ancestors reaching back to Germany.
2	Grandparents - my dad's parents.
3	Maternal grandparents and all sets of great-grandparents.
4	None. I was the first one in memory that learned to speak German.
5	Grandparents & great grandparents & parents.
6	My grandmother.
7	My parents and siblings all spoke German as we grew up on a farm in the local area. German was the language spoken during family gatherings and while visiting with cousins.
8	none
9	All four grandparents and my father who spoke only German until he was 6 years old.
10	My grandparents on both sides.
11	Grandparents and great-grandparents.
12	My grandfather.
13	From my parents back to the families who immigrated to USA.
14	My mother spoke only German as did her parents, grandparents, and all relatives. When she went to school, she had to learn English because it was war time and they didn't allow German to be spoken. Many of her family members learned English eventually but my great grandparents spoke only German. Of course, if they talked about things they didn't want the kids to hear, they spoke German. If there were a lot of relatives together, they only spoke their native German.
15	7. My mother and father both spoke German. My father only spoke German in his home then learned English at School
16	Parents and siblings.

17	My dad spoke basic German. I am not sure if his parents had a working knowledge of the language, but I believe his grandparents retained some working knowledge of it too.
18	N/A
19	Grandfather
20	Great-grandparents, grandparents spoke some German
21	All, my parents, my brother and my nieces still have German as their primary language
22	Both of my parents spoke fluent German.
23	On my mother's side (from Jasper/Dubois County), the last speakers of German were my great-grandmother and great-great-aunt/uncles; all of them had passed away by the year 2000. On my father's side (not from Dubois County but from nearby), they have spoken Pennsylvania Dutch at home and German in church all the way up through my father and his siblings, who still speak limited German to the present day.
24	My maternal grandparents, aunts and uncles spoke German. My mother knows some but did not speak it fluently. I took 4 years of German class in high school.
25	Great-grandparents
26	Grandmother
27	All of them
28	Father, grandfather & grandmother, great-grandparents, my cousins in Germany still do today.
29	I was born in 1942. By that time my parents stopped talking German around their children
30	Grandparents
31	A few great uncles would speak broken German from time to time.
32	Mother, grandparents. My mother used to speak to her mom in English on a shared party line, and when someone clicked in to listen, they transitioned mid-sentence to German so they wouldn't understand them!
33	Both parents spoke German as well as English, but grandparents on both sides spoke German as their first language.
34	Grandparents little
35	My parents, grandparents, and I.

8. Do you still speak any German? Yes 23 (66%), No 12 (34%)

9. If so, on what level? Fluent, intermediate, basic, certain elements (numbers, greetings, descriptive nouns) or provide an example.

1	I would say that I speak on an advanced intermediate level. I grew up around the language and knew the cadence and some words, learned the language (4 years) in high school, and went on and have a Bachelor's degree in Germanic Studies from Indiana University. I also studied for a year at the University of Hamburg. As a high school student I participated in the IU Honors Program for Foreign Language's 7-week program in Krefeld, (then West Germany) which was an immersive program. I love the mechanics of the language!
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	Unfortunately, I do not get to use the language much and do feel like I am losing words.
2	N/A
3	Only a few words commonly used in Jasper or by my family.
4	Between basic and intermediate. I understand much better than I can speak. I sound like a child. I took a private tour in German of the Pfaffenweiler museum and understood most of it.
5	N/A
6	None, unfortunately.
7	Basic
8	N/A
9	Very limited. I can get by in restaurants and hotels and driving in Germany.
10	Basic - took high school German and one semester in college.
11	Basic to intermediate.
12	Intermediate
13	Numbers, a few phrases
14	I did manage to pick up a few German words and expressions which I use sometimes with my siblings, cousins, my daughter and granddaughters.
15	Learned German in High School. About 3 years ago, took a German Class at the local college. Then studied with Duolingo ever since. For the past 2 years, visited Germany. Two years ago, I could pick up parts of conversations. Last year, was able to have an uncomplicated conversation with non-English speakers. My friend said that my German was much better. I got some of the grammar incorrect and mispronounced the words. But was able to have a 15-minute conversation.
16	fluent
17	Certain elements (numbers, greetings, some random words here and there).
18	N/A
19	N/A
20	Not fluent, mostly speak German while singing German songs
21	fluent, except when tired, native speaker
22	N/A
23	Ich bin nicht nur Deutschsprecher, sondern auch Deutschlehrer. Ich studierte Germanistik auf Bachelor und Master und würde sagen, ich kenne mich ziemlich gut mit der deutschen Sprache aus. :)
24	Even though I took 4 years of German class in high school, it was slightly different learning it in school than what my relatives spoke. I was more able to read and speak it while taking the class but didn't always understand what my relatives were saying to each other. Currently I still know basic words, phrases, greetings, numbers. Our 3 sons participated in the exchange program at Jasper High School, and all went to Germany and we hosted 5 German students over the years. I tried to relearn some words and phrases while talking with them.
25	N/A
26	N/A
27	Basic, but our cousins from Germany think we speak like our grandparents did.

28	Intermediate
29	N/A
30	Certain elements
31	While I took German (3 years) in High School and participated in the Exchange program, my fluency is very minimal.
32	Certain phrases, and rudimentary German. I am teaching my grandchildren to do the same.
33	Basic to intermediate. When we travel in Germany, my husband is better at picking up the vocabulary, but I am faster at picking up the content, so we help each other.
34	None
35	basic

10. If you have further comments on being German-American in Dubois County or want to mention anything else, feel free to do it here!

1	Please reach out to me at mowatcarolyn@gmail.com if you have further questions. Best of luck to you on your research!
2	N/A
3	Until I lived outside of Jasper for 12 years, I did not realize how much German influence is present in the Jasper Community. I grew up taking so many customs as "standard" but did not realize they were German until our son took part in the exchange program to Germany that they were often based in the German tradition.
4	We have an unusual story here in Jasper. Our sister city relationship helps keep it alive. We definitely do twist things that it becomes "German-American!". My father always replied when we asked that we were "Mutts."
5	I'm learning about my German heritage through being a member of the Jasper German Club.
6	Knowing where my ancestors came from (Wagshurst) and the hardships they endured to get here makes me wish I had paid more attention when my grandma spoke German and asked her more questions. I would still love to find relatives if there are any!
7	My great-grandmother and great-grandfather came to America in 1851. We celebrate our German heritage every 5 years with our most recent celebration having been September 2023 with approximately 280 relatives.
8	My Gramelspacher family's roots are in Bollschweil, Germany. We have visited the area many times with family members. We have continued close association with southern Germany.
9	We have a strong work ethic and are proud of our heritage.
10	Being from Jasper and celebrating the Strassenfest every summer is a big part of my childhood that is still going strong today.
11	I would be interested in an interview. My name is Darren Patterson.
12	I moved to our sister city of Pfaffenweiler for 6 months to make connections with the young adults there!
13	I feel it's important to keep future generations aware of how they are like they are. There's a great deal of pride in knowing and understanding one's ancestors.

14	N/A
15	N/A
16	N/A
17	I love that Dubois Co. celebrates its heritage with the partnership with our "sister city" (Pffaffenweiler) as well as the annual Strassenfest.
18	N/A
19	I was raised in Chicago, Illinois. Since moving to Dubois County 6 years ago I feel I have reconnected with my German heritage. Living in Jasper is a constant reminder of the strong work ethics of the German people.
20	N/A
21	It is nice that people don't get confused about the spelling of my surname around here.
22	The German work ethic and neatness is very important.
23	People often use the term "German" as shorthand for "German American" here, or - and this is an American thing at large and not limited to Dubois County - claim to be "German" (or whatever other European nationality/ethnicity) because their immigrant great-great...-grandparents were, even when they are several generations removed from speaking the language and have few or no links to the mother country. That's why I'm glad that Jasper/Dubois County has groups like the Deutscher Verein and our Sister Cities organization and Partnership Commission that promote those links and get people more involved in contemporary Germany and its modern culture. The awareness of Germany as a place that people still live in and German as a language that millions of people still speak today is growing!
24	German Catholic residents in Dubois County (particularly and especially in Jasper) are very proud of their heritage and try to keep it alive in some of the design elements on buildings, proud to promote and welcome people to the Schnitzelbank restaurant and Jasper people love to celebrate the heritage annually at the Strassenfest.
25	N/A
26	Would love to see more German-inspired architecture return to the county. The tudor style is not as common. Can only think of Schnitz and Dubois County Tire that have that design.
27	N/A
28	I think it is imperative that we continue to foster our ties to Germany!
29	I know my wife and I are happy to be of German origin.
30	N/A
31	N/A
32	Visitors to our area certainly feel the "strongness" of our German Heritage by the way people talk, express their opinions, and do everything with a lot of aggressiveness. Sometimes it works to a disadvantage.
33	We have participated in the Deutscher Verein and have hosted young workers from Germany for homestays three times.
34	N/A
35	N/A