

Vereinsnachrichten

Founded in 1783 and Incorporated by Act of the General Assembly of Maryland

Chapter 100, February 3, 1818

January 2021, Issue 120

President's Message-Shelley Arnold



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The purpose of the German Society of Maryland is to preserve and promote the German heritage, language and traditions through educational, social and benevolent programs; and to develop the unity and continuity of the German American community in the State of Maryland

Why should I be a member? Why pay dues? It is quite simple. Your dues payment helps GSM achieve its mission of preserving, collecting and sharing Maryland's German American History and heritage. It helps us sustain our goals of providing scholarships to high school and college students and sending one worthy student on the study trip of a lifetime (thanks to Gerhard Meinzer, this goal is achieved annually). It also helps to organize culturally beneficial activities for the community.

GSM produces a quarterly newsletter that focuses on Maryland's German-American history, heritage and the pioneers that led the way. The newsletter is chocked full of articles about our heritage, history, holidays, upcoming events and more.

Our Facebook page keeps you up to date on events, as well as what is happening in Germany. You may also find us on InstaGram and Twitter.

The membership fee for the GSM is quite low. You pay \$25.00 and you are a member. You may include a

spouse or partner for no additional fees. We also provide a discount to teachers of German. Their dues are \$15.00 per year. You can become a lifetime member for \$250.00. The dues payment amounts to less than 7 cents per day. Don't forget if your child(ren) are school age, their membership is free. We just need the child's name, school and email address.

As we prepare for the upcoming year, we have several events in the planning stages, including our Anniversary Dinner, our Annual Membership meeting, another attempt at 'German Day at the Ballpark', not to mention a series of seminars related to the German experience in Maryland, hopefully coming Fall of 2021. This will also be the year that our General Stricker monument will be unveiled and celebrated.

My challenge to you is not just pay your dues, but get others involved. Bring in one new member, give one of your children or close friends a gift membership. I have three adult children and make this part of their Christmas gift each year. Please also consider giving over and

above by donating to one of our special funds: the Education Fund and/or the Newsletter Fund. Dues and donations may be sent to our office at 2300 York Road, Suite 209, Timonium, MD. 21093 or may be done online at <https://germansociety-md.com/contact-us/>.

The GSM has been around a long time, since 1783, and we want to be around another couple hundred years. With your help, your membership, your involvement, we can do just that.

Why are you a member? Why not?



Unser Kalender

January 27	Executive Committee Meeting	7:00 pm Zoom
February 11-16	Fasching	
February 25	Executive Committee Meeting	TBD
March 25	Executive Committee Meeting	TBD
April 9	Annual Meeting –Zion	TBD
April 28	Board of Directors Meeting	TBD

Publication Dates:

January-March: Deadline 12/15
 April-June: Deadline 3/15
 July-September: Deadline 6/15
 October-December: Deadline 9/15

Links:

German Society Website:
www.germansociety-md.com
Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein:
www.md-germans.org
German Marylanders:
www.germanmarylanders.org
German American Radio:
germanamericanradio.com



Baltimore City Historical Society Names Past President Brigitte Fessenden and her husband, Nicholas Fessenden, honorees of their 2020 ‘Living History Awards’.

Do you have a story, photo or memory of Lexington Market?

Brigitte and Nick led the effort that resulted in the opening of the *Baltimore Immigration Museum* in 2016. Located in Locust Point in the historic Immigrant House, where thousands of newly-arrived European immigrants found temporary housing and assistance during 1904-15, the Baltimore Immigration Memorial, Inc. operates the museum. Brigitte is President, and Nick is the Treasurer of the organization.



In their professional lives, Nick taught History at Friends School (1972-2010) and at various local colleges. Brigitte was a historic preservation planner for Baltimore’s Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (1993-2010). Together,

they combined his historic and pedagogical background and her interest in Baltimore’s immigration history, to tell the little-known story of Baltimore’s role as America’s third largest port of entry from 1830 to 1914. They continuously support students, teachers, researchers, family historians, and anyone they can with their vast knowledge of this important part of Baltimore’s history.

You can learn more about the museum and their visiting hours during COVID at <http://www.immigrationbaltimore.org/>

Congratulations!

If you have a memory of Lexington Market, had friends or family who worked there, or any stories you’d like to share about the market, the Peale would LOVE to hear from you as part of a brand new public history project documenting the market. There are several ways you can contribute to this public history project.

All stories will be preserved in the Peale’s “Baltimore Stories” collection for sharing on the Peale’s website and Sound Cloud. Stories will also be shared with project partners for potential use in the new Lexington Market!

For more information or ways to share go to: <https://www.thepealecenter.org/lexington-market-public-history-initiative/>

Celebrating the 237th Anniversary of the German Society of Maryland

While COVID prevented the GSM from having their 237th Anniversary dinner, it did not stop a group of the Society’s directors from meeting for a Luncheon on November 7th.

It is important historically, after 237 years, to show that we are still very active and engaged and not going to let a virus prevent us from meeting and remembering. The first Anniversary Dinner was held in 1817 and was held to honor and mark our founding in 1783.

We met at Prost Restaurant in Aberdeen Maryland on Novem-



ber 7th, a day which can only be described as beautiful. Who would have thought that we could enjoy

lunch in the large Biergarten. The food was wonderful and the company even better.

Eighteen of our directors met and followed all COVID guidelines including masks, social distancing and hand cleansing.

The group very much enjoyed the day and even discussed the possibility of having a similar event a few times each year, visiting the German restaurants in the state. We are considering a possible bi-monthly Stammtisch. Look for details in 2021, when hopefully the virus will be under control.

Welcome New Members



*Daniel Freedenberg
Bobby & Susie Goll*

COVID UPDATE (as of November 27, 2020)

	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Recovered	Active
USA	13,475,009	271,136	7,948,659	5,252,214
Germany	1,033,002	16,255	711,000	305,747
Austria	275,661	3,018	210,697	61,946
Switzerland	318,290	4,597	222,100	91,593
Worldwide	62,233,963	1,453,897	42,988,291	*17,686,599 99.4% mild .06% Critical

To see a listing with the above information on a U.S. state by state basis go to:

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>



I was in my mid-30's before I knew of the existence of my great

aunt Ruth. My grandmother, Elsbeth Perlitz Knüppel, known to us as "Oma", told me the Nazis had killed her sister Ruth. That was all she knew and the details, if known at all, were subsequently lost to the passage of time. Years were to pass before I had the time, opportunity, and determination to pursue the untold story of Ruth Rosa Luise Mühlmann.

"The men, women, and children murdered in the so-called euthanasia program are among the most invisible of the 6 million."

All I knew at the beginning of my research in 2017 was that Ruth had contracted Scarlet Fever at the age of two and that it had affected her intellectual development. This intellectual disability would be the deciding factor for the Nazi's decision to include her in their secret euthanasia program, Aktion T4. The name T4 came from the building where the euthanasia program was planned out, in a villa seized from a Jewish family, located at Tiergartenstraße 4 in Berlin. (There exists a memorial to all the euthanasia victims of Nazi Socialism at the site today.) Luckily, my friend Will Prunka, an amateur WWII history expert, agreed to help me research. Once we had the permission of Tante

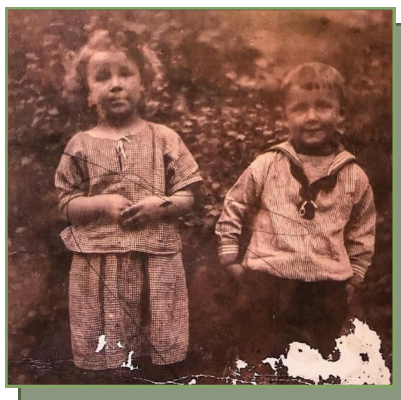
The Story of 'Ruth'

By Ilka Knüppel

Ruth's closest living relatives, Henry Knüppel and Helen Knüppel Foster (my father and my aunt) we began our journey.

Originally we began our search at well-known Holocaust resource sites, archives, and museums. We found that most places had very little to almost nothing on Aktion T4. Eventually, through various records obtained from German State Archives, Neinstedt Hospital, and the gracious and helpful staff at the Gedenkstätte für Opfer der NS – "Euthanasie" Bernburg, we were able to reconstruct Ruth's journey.

Ruth was born on July 11, 1920 to Emma Perlitz Mühlmann and Paul Mühlmann in Magdeburg, Germany. Ruth would be joined by two brothers, Heinz, born in 1922, and Günter, born in 1929. Emma's oldest daughter, Elsbeth, immigrated to the United States in 1930 when she was 18 years old.



Ruth & her Brother Heinz –1923

On April 9, 1931, at age 10, Ruth was admitted as a patient at Neinstedter Anstalten based upon a recommendation from the Youth Welfare Office. In a letter



Ruth 1935

written by her father, Ruth was sent to Neinstedt so that she could obtain an education. In 1934 when Paul found out Ruth was no longer attending classes, he brought her home to Walbecker Straße 37 in Magdeburg.

However, on May 11, 1935, for reasons unknown, Ruth's mother readmitted her to Neinstedt. Ruth's family would visit her as captured in this picture from August 1935.

Ruth remained at Neinstedt until she was suddenly moved to Altscherbitz Psychiatry Hospital on Jan. 29, 1941. Although a record of her transfer exists, no reason is given as to why Ruth was transferred. Aktion T4 had been in effect since Sept. 1, 1939 with the objective of granting 'merciful deaths' to disabled persons who were considered 'useless eaters' and a drain on Germany's economy. T4 authorities were transferring patients to different hospitals, and not notifying

families for days or even weeks, in an attempt at a ‘shell game’ to protect the secrecy of their program. From the beginning of T4, too many families became suspicious of patients from the same town, who were otherwise healthy, dying on the same exact date from unverifiable illnesses.

From Altscherbitz, Ruth was transferred eight weeks later to Bernburg State Sanatorium and Mental Hospital. Bernburg was one of six Euthanasia Killing Centers established under Aktion T4. All 74 people that arrived with Ruth in Bernburg on March 31, 1941, were killed the day they arrived in the gas chamber. Ruth’s parents were informed by letter that she had died, but the letter contained another date, April 19, and another location, Hadamar Hospital [another euthanasia center]. At Bernburg, all the bodies were burned in one of two cremation ovens. Some families were offered ashes and the remaining ashes were dumped in a trash pit outside of town.

“Euthanasia was the first chapter of the Holocaust.”



My Oma’s last visit home. Ruth is second from the left-1935

Hitler secretly ordered an end to Aktion T4 on August 24, 1941. However, the lessons learned by the perpetrators of Aktion T4 were subsequently used in concen-

tration camps in the implementation of ‘The Final Solution’. Edwin Lambert, the man who built the gas chamber at Bernburg, was hired to design the gas chamber at Treblinka Extermination Camp. Irmfried Eberl, the director at Bernburg was promoted to director of Treblinka.

Bernburg has established a memorial in the original gas chamber and associated rooms in which the public and school chil-

dren come to learn about Aktion T4. 300,000 people died in Hitler’s secret euthanasia programs. Since there were no survivors of Aktion T4, and the families dared not speak out due to fear of retribution or shame, the victims were almost forgotten. Holocaust researcher Suzanne Knittel sums it up perfectly: since the victims were unable to tell their stories, we have to be “vicarious witnesses” and give voice

to these silent and silenced victims of the Holocaust.

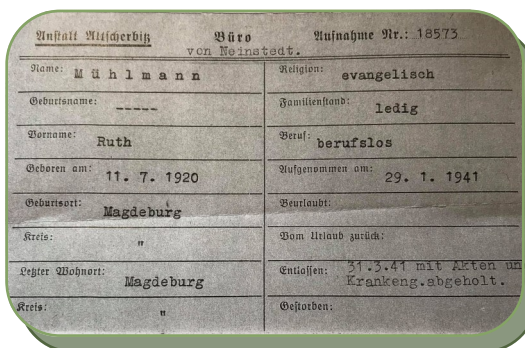
In November 2021, Ruth’s family will gather at Walbecker Straße 37 for the installation of her memorial *Stolpersteine*. Will and I are hoping to have our book, *Finding Ruth: Aktion T4 and a Personal Untold Story of the Holocaust*, published in 2022.

[Finding Ruth: Aktion T-4 and a Personal Untold Story of the Holocaust.](#)

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About the Author: Ilka Knüppel earned her Masters Degree in Near Eastern Archaeology from Towson University in 2017 and her undergraduate degree in Political Science from UMBC in 1986. Ilka is a Certified Archaeological Technician. She has published numerous articles on archaeology and is President of the Natural History Society of Maryland’s Archaeology Club. Ilka has expanded her research into Holocaust Archaeology focusing on the Aktion T4. She traveled to Germany with co-author Will Prunka in January 2020 to obtain more research on her topic, the story of her Great Aunt and Aktion T4. Ilka has worked for the federal government for over 30 years. She grew up in western Howard County, Maryland and currently resides in Baltimore. She has one son and is soon to be Oma. If you are interested in her archaeology research, follow her on Twitter at IlkannaJones.



Document from Altscherbitz showing arrival and transfer of Ruth

Pride and Prejudice: German POWs in Maryland

By Reiner Prochaska



Fourteen years ago, quite by accident, I learned from an acquaintance that during the final year of the Second World War, over 300 German soldiers had been incarcerated in a prisoner-of-war camp in Frederick, Maryland. “My father used to tell me,” she remembered, “about the prisoner who killed himself.”

This detail, more than the fact that Germans had been imprisoned in America, struck me as inconceivable. To have survived the war and have landed in the relative safety of an American camp—only to take one’s life—made little sense. In my quest for an explanation, I bought *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*—the book by Dr. Arnold Krammer, who was a professor of history and the eminent scholar on German POWs in America. It was the first step in my twelve-year journey of researching and writing a story that took several detours: two screenplays titled, respectively, *Court of Honor* and *The Tears of Valour*. In 2016, it became a stage play, titled *Class A Captives*. In 2018, it finally found a home when, as a novel titled *Cap-*

tives it was published by The Permanent Press.

While much of the information I gathered for more than a decade never made its way into my novel, it helped me understand the impact German prisoners-of-war ultimately made on the solution to the agricultural problems the United States faced near the end of the war.

It is interesting that, originally, a large percentage of German prisoners in the United States had been captured by the British in Northern Africa. London had been lobbying Washington for some time for assistance in accommodating the large numbers of German prisoners. An island nation—isolated in the Atlantic and often cut off from international supplies by German U-boats—Britain was understandably reluctant to add enemy soldiers to its own population. Churchill’s government assumed that its ally, America, possessed the space and the resources to absorb some of the pressure of incarcerating—and feeding—captive German soldiers. Initially, Roosevelt did not share Churchill’s enthusiasm for this solution. Finally, in August 1942, after months of diplomatic efforts, Washington agreed to accept 50,000 enemy prisoners from Britain. Hastily, tent cities were erected and abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps camps converted to accommodate the steady influx of German soldiers.

By May 1945, almost 426,000 German prisoners-of-war inhabited roughly 700 camps across the United States. Initially, the reac-

tion of the local residents surrounding the camps was less than enthusiastic. Excerpts from the Richard Leberz World War II Letters Collection provide a compelling glimpse into the attitudes of Frederick, Maryland, residents. In a 1944 letter, a Mrs. B.O. Thomas speculates that the POWs are “the Nazi Youth as some of them are very young.” She admits that “it will take us older people a long time to overcome our distrust—if we ever do.” The same year, Patsy Heffelfinger confesses that, “if every one of [the POWs] accidentally slit their throats I’d inwardly feel a sense of relief.”

The average German soldier was a nationalist but not a fanatical ideologue (Krammer 148). Some prisoners were professional soldiers; others were wartime conscripts. While some were members of the Nazi Party, most were not. The United States government, in order to facilitate an efficient and peaceful administration of each camp, separated POWs based on their nationalities and perceived political proclivities: Austrians from Germans and Nazis from anti-Nazis. Camp Frederick, for example, was a “Class A Captives” camp. That suggested that the inmates were anti-Nazis and willing to work.

What seemed a good idea in theory, however, was not always accomplished in practice. Populations with diverse political ideologies existed in most camps, and the Nazis frequently established themselves as the self-appointed executive and judicial forces. Since German-speaking guards were rarely

available—multilingual soldiers were quickly absorbed by military intelligence units—American camp commanders frequently preferred the efficiency with which the Nazi prisoners ran their camps to the relative lack of order in camps comprised of democratic and communist prisoners. An estimated “5 to 10 percent of personnel in practically every camp were fanatics who controlled the activities of all other prisoners” (Krammer 167). The hardline Nazis occasionally convened so-called “kangaroo courts” to penalize their fellow POWs who did not conform to Nazi expectations. Dr. Krammer points out that, “where threats and beatings failed, the execution and forced suicides of random anti-Nazis succeeded” (170).

The political conditions in the camps were not a secret; journalists publicly acknowledged them. James H. Powers, the Boston Globe’s Foreign Editor asserted that, “50 percent of the German noncoms definitely support Hitler and his government. They are, in reality, a police force in the camp...where persecution of anti-Nazis is thorough and violent” (Krammer 164).

In November 1944, German Private Friedrich Schlitz wrote to his American commander at Camp Campbell, Kentucky:

I am told that you don’t like anti-Nazis, but I appeal to your fairness...I acknowledge that a snappy behavior looks nice, machine-like. You feel it is like a good running motor, smooth and dependable. But it is all a façade... Those who are your enemies are respected. Those who had to fight against you as they had no other choice, and who flocked

to you for protection, who work for your victory, which means their victory, these are contempted! WHY? (Krammer 165)

At Camp Grant in Illinois, a group of Nazis attempted to murder 42 suspected anti-Nazis “by burning down their locked barrack in the middle of the night” (Krammer 173). Most other politically motivated killings were more subtle, such as the murder of Werner Dreschler, who was found hanged in a barrack washroom. Consequently, many of them were ruled suicides. Ultimately, it is impossible even to estimate how many prisoners died at the hands of fervent Nazis. A French study of the POW experience in the United States claims 167 as the precise number of clandestine executions (Krammer 173), but—with victims and most perpetrators long dead now—we will never know.

What we do know, however, is that many POWs viewed their incarceration in America as a positive experience. Prisoners were treated—and fed—well. They enjoyed recreational opportunities—playing soccer, performing music and theater, building model planes, and watching American movies. Some took correspondence courses at American universities. At Camp Trinidad, Colorado, Rüdiger von Wechmar, who would later become chief of Bureau of the United Press in Bonn—as well as President of the United Nations General Assembly—studied journalism at the University of Minnesota.

But, more than anything, the German prisoners enjoyed a sense of purpose because they helped save harvests in many rural communities

across the United States in 1944. Although Frederick residents were skeptical about having German prisoners in their community, the Frederick County Agricultural Cooperative Association, under the leadership of James H. Grove Jr., managed to raise \$20,000 (almost \$300,000 if adjusted for inflation) to convert the abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps camp into a tent city that could accommodate as many as 400 prisoners at a time. Significant financial donations from local manufacturers, farmers, fruit growers, canners, and the University of Maryland proved a shrewd investment at a time when American men served in the U.S. military abroad and local economies relied heavily on the prisoner labor. The POWs were paid 40 cents per hour for agricultural and 50 cents per hour for industrial work. They were permitted to keep 80 cents of their daily pay while the balance was paid to the U.S. Treasury.

Regardless of the state in which they were incarcerated, POWs were used primarily to harvest crops. In Louisiana, they planted and harvested rice and cotton, as well as 246,000 acres of sugarcane (Krammer 88). They gathered more than 1,075,000 stacks of peanuts on 50,000 acres in Georgia and harvested over 4,890,000 bushels of potatoes in Maine in 1945; “in New York State, they harvested and helped process over 2 million tons of fruits and vegetables” (Krammer 89). Often, they worked alongside the Americans whose harvests they saved.

The interaction with the American population in their daily work (aside from formal reeducation efforts by the U.S. Government) pro-

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KRIMSKRAM

New German dictionary edition stirs debate about language

The latest edition of the Duden, the preeminent dictionary of the German language, contains 3,000 new words. Language purists are rattled — and some politicians also feel threatened by the changes.

The latest (28th) edition of Duden has just been published and encompasses some 148,000 keywords. It includes 3,000 new words, while editors chose to remove 300 terms which were deemed outdated. Duden editors have also proved to again be up-to-date on current developments, be it in choosing to include words such as: bee-friendly, flight shame, hate speech, Geisterspiel (sports match played behind closed doors), binge watching, cisgender and lockdown. The new terms in Duden are a reflection of the latest social developments, like climate change, the coronavirus pandemic, social media, racism and equality.

To read more see <https://www.dw.com/en/new-german-dictionary-edition-stirs-debate-about-language/a-54548841>

Fehmarnbelt Tunnel will be the world's longest immersed tunnel

After years of planning, work has finally begun on the world's longest immersed tunnel. It will be buried 40 meters (.02 mile) beneath the Baltic Sea. The Fehmarnbelt Tunnel will link Denmark and Germany. It is scheduled to open in 2029. The tunnel will be 11.1 miles long and is budgeted at 7 billion Euro (8.2 Billion US dollars)

To read more see: www.cnn.com/travel/article/fehmarbelt-tunnel-denmark-germany-spc-intl/index.html

Recycling in Germany

While we Americans have recently been introduced to the recycling bins, our German counterparts are quite compulsive, almost obsessed with recycling. The Embassy, in its 'Germany In USA' did an excellent 'Survival Guide' for those travelling to Germany. The article will help you avoid the deer in the headlights look as you peruse the multiple recycling bins.

See <http://germanyinusa.com/2020/08/26/recycling-in-germany-2/>. In this article there is a brief definition of the Pfandsystem. What is the Pfandsystem? Most Germans are conscientious about recycling – and the German Pfandsystem makes it easy.

Since 2003, Germany has had a system (the Pfandsystem or “deposit system”) that regulates the sale and return of plastic and glass bottles and aluminum cans. When someone buys a bottled beverage, they pay a deposit on that bottle (for example, 15 extra cents). If, however, they bring that empty bottle to a return station (often located in supermarkets), they get that money back. Imagine how much money you could get back if you return 50 empty bottles! This is why you sometimes see individuals voluntarily collecting used bottles in Germany.

Yad Vashem honors German pastor for standing up for Jews

In 1938, he chose to preach against the violence towards Jewish people.

"Pastor Julius von Jan risked everything when he spoke out against the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany. He has now been honored for this as

"Righteous among the Nations."

Unlike so many others, Julius von Jan chose not to look away in silence when a wave of pogroms across Germany left hundreds of Jews dead while thousands of synagogues, cemeteries, businesses, and other properties were destroyed, defiled, plundered or torched. Many "ordinary" people took part in the violence that erupted on the evening of November 9, 1938 — and that is often trivialized with the term "Kristallnacht" (The Night of Broken Glass.) In the days that followed, it was impossible to overlook the devastating impact that it had on Jewish life.

World War Two had not yet begun. But the Nazis had already taken over every aspect of life in Germany. Violence was widespread. The first concentration camps were in operation. And the persecution of the Jews was systematic.

To read more, see: <https://www.dw.com/en/nazis-anti-semitism-yad-vashem-righteous-of-the-nations/a-55275706>

Rebuilding of Lexington Market brings back a flood of Memories

Read Jacques Kelly's excellent article on the new renovation efforts for Lexington Market and the call from local historical societies for memories and stories about the market.

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-kelly-lexington-market-20200905-mdrjv4iz4bf5thgszz3fxbuwtq-story.html>

The Redemptor

Last issue I wrote about our 237th Anniversary celebration. One of the many functions served by the German Society in the early days, was to assist German immigrants adjust to their new country.

Some German immigrants were ‘redemptioners’, others were free immigrants. What is a Redemptioner? A redemptioner was a person that had been persuaded to come to North America. They were promised that their conditions would improve. Many took the bait and planned a trip to America. Unfortunately, they did not have the means for their passage. They then chose to ‘bind’ themselves to pay for the passage. They would arrange passage and the owners and captains of the ships would take them to the United States. They would sign a contract, which made them responsible for repayment. Initially there were no contracts, however, too many of the early redemptioners would disembark to collect funds from relatives and never make payment. A redemptioner was one who travelled to the US and in exchange for their fare, was held in



‘bondage’ or ‘servitude’ for a set number of years.

There were not many, if any at all, German redemptioners during the early years of immigra-

tion. Early German immigration was organized and arranged with a leader. In fact, up until the Revolutionary War, most were from England. It is not known when the first German redemptioner arrived in Maryland, but most assume that it was after the War of Independence. Prior to that time redemptioners were primarily English, Irish and Scottish.

When the potential profit was realized, shippers made an all-out effort to fill their cargo holds with humans...it became big business. Around 1817 when Germany was hit with famine and the economic conditions became almost unbearable, many Germans turned to America, the land of opportunity. About 60,000 persons in 1817-1818 left, mostly from the Rheinland. Wiki reports that more than half of the 18th

and 19th century redemptioners were from German speaking countries.

The first shippers were the Dutch. The Dutch slave traders that had for years worked the black slave trade found that the white slave trade could be just as financially beneficial. The Dutch were not alone. There were trade agreements on both sides with London and Rotterdam having agreements with Philadelphia and Baltimore. Agents would travel to German speaking countries and offer passage...money was not required. All they had to do was sign on the dotted line and passage would be taken from their wages.

Soon, traders learned to ‘work the system’. They would carry younger redemptioners, which were bound out as soon as the ship docked. They also over-stocked. This was a way to make allowances for those not bound out due to illness, death, etc. The fares were padded to absorb the sometime long layovers, where redemptioners stayed on board.

There are documented reports of redemptioners that were worked to death, starved and were provided little clothing and shelter. Upon arrival, the redemptioner could not pick their master and families were often split up, husband and wife to one family and children to another or husband and wife separated. They

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FREE STUDENT MEMBERSHIPS

We encourage all students from first grade through university level to become student members of our Society. Email their name, grade or level, and name of the school to the Society at german@germansociety-md.com and stating that you wish to become a student member. This is FREE. **NO ANNUAL DUES WITH VALID EMAIL ADDRESS!**

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were often punished severely for minor offenses.

The master wanted to squeeze as much from the redemptioner as possible in the specific term of years. It was common that both the black slaves and the redemptioners share quarters, etc. This led to many intermarried slaves giving birth to bi-racial or as it was called then, mulatto children. This was not acceptable at that time in our history. The Maryland Assembly responded by passing a law that the mulatto children would be as their fathers, slaves for life. Also, this law made it clear that if any white women intermarry with black slaves, the women will serve the master of such slave during the life of her husband. This was contrary to the doctrine of *partus sequitur ventrum* incorporated into state law, by which children followed the legal status of their mother at the time of birth. It is reported that many masters married their redemptioners (Irish, German, etc.) to their black slaves, thus making the mothers and their children slaves for life. Once the legislature learned of the abuse of this new law, it was withdrawn.

The harshness of their existence can be seen in laws regulating redemptioners, including:

- ◆ The redemptioner could be whipped by the master (no more than 10 lashes per offence).
- ◆ For every day's absence from work, the master could add ten days to his/her servitude.

There are several histories of redemptioners. One of the most famous is the 'Lost German Slave Girl', Sally Müller. This is a story of a family that emigrated and the mother and youngest child perished at sea. The remainder of the family



was sold to a sugar cane plantation owner. Sally was only three at the time of passage. They travelled with other family members. After arrival at the plantation, both the father and the oldest son perished, leaving only Sally and her sister Dorothea. The story goes that Sally was sold into slavery as a black slave and it wasn't until twenty three years later, another family member recognized her in a coffee house. The other sister, Dorothea was never found. This tragic story led to a law suit and several cases in the New Orleans court system, eventually Sally winning her

freedom. There is a book, 'The Lost German Slave Girl: The Extraordinary True Story of Sally Miller and Her Fight for Freedom in Old New Orleans', by John Bailey, available at Amazon.

The problem of redemptioners and the poor treatment of immigrants was a widespread situation and certainly Maryland was not immune. The impetus to the formation of several societies, such as ours, was due to immigrant mistreatment. The first indication of this is in a letter written in 1783 indicating that 'A society for the aid of the Germans, not speaking the language of the country, was formed'. The Philadelphia Society was the first. There are some conflicting dates in determining second, either South Carolina or Maryland, but we are going to go with Maryland.

Serious activity from the society was prompted by an event in 1817 at the Annapolis harbor. It was at this time that a ship, the 'Johanna' carrying about 300 men, women and children became stuck in the Annapolis harbor. The ship was under the command of Capt. H.H. Bleeker and most passengers were on board as redemptioners. It was a dangerous journey in the middle of winter. In Baltimore, at that time in February 1817, the temperatures fluctuated between 4 and 5 degrees above 0. In fact, it was one of the coldest winters recorded. The

Continued on page –14–

Help the German Society be more efficient and save paper. If you have an email address and would like to receive your 'Vereinsnachrichten' via email, send an email to Lynette Dean at german@germansociety-md.com
This action alone saves paper and postage costs.

Join the German Society of Maryland

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Spouse (Optional): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Referred by: _____

“I hereby apply to be a member of the German Society of Maryland”

Annual dues \$25.00. Spouse included at no extra cost..

I wish my newsletter to be sent via email at the above email address:

I wish my newsletter to be sent through US postage at the above postal address:

Lifetime Membership: \$250.00

Mail to:

The German Society of Maryland
2300 York Road, Suite 209
Timonium Maryland 21093



**Margarete
'Gretel'
Kramer**

On September 25, 2020 Margaret “Gretel” Kramer passed away. She was the

beloved wife of the late Karl H. Kramer, Sr.; devoted mother of Karl H. Kramer, Jr. and his wife Linda M. Kramer, Michael W. Kramer, and the late Hans Peter Kramer, Henry Kramer, and Ingrid Parisio; cherished grandmother

of Philip, Kristopher and Erik Kramer, Tisha Kramer, and Heather Winters; also survived by many loving nieces and nephews. Gretel was very involved with the German Society of Maryland where she served as an official with the Ladies Auxiliary.

Gretel was laid to rest on October 3rd at the Gardens of Faith Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Zion Church of the City of Baltimore, 400 E. Lexington St. Baltimore, MD 21202

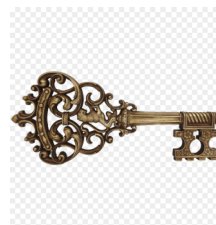
Read the story from the Sunpaper published November 25, 2020, ‘Move over, collards; make room for sauerkraut. Black Marylanders have made the German specialty their own.

See:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/food-drink/bs-fe-sauerkraut-black-marylanders-20201125-e4fy6a2fbrehbesoyif7n34mkm-story.html>

WE HAVE A NEW ADDRESS

The German Society of Maryland
2300 York Road, Suite 209
Timonium, Maryland 21093



Please make note of our new address...we do not want to miss anything you send us!

.....and the results are in!

First and foremost I wish to thank everyone for their participation in our recent membership survey. The survey was sent on September 1st and again October 5th and was closed on October 17, 2020. The survey was sent to 357 members, those which we had an email address. It was also published in the newsletter and we did receive several mailed copies with responses. In total, we received 154 responses, which is a pretty good return. I spoke to several other organizations who indicated anything over 15% is a good response. Ours was about 43%.

Our first question asked members how long they have been part of the GSM. The largest category at 35% was those that had been members for 20+ years. The second largest was those that had been members 0-5 years.

The second question was probably the most telling of all. This question asked for age. The largest percentage of our members at 48.9% are over 70. Kudos to the longevity of this group, but on the obverse, this is more than ½ of our membership are in their golden years. Attrition alone could be cataclismic to our Society. That is why in my message this month, I asked all members to become involved and get the younger generation, those 30 and under, to be part of the Society. Give a gift membership, provide your children with a membership. Nurture interest in our heritage, the German culture, language and history. This is our responsibility now with so many schools curbing or eliminating Ger-

man language classes. This must be the direction of our Society.

Of those responding, 90.8% were German or of German ancestry. Their responses to our events and their attendance varied from 47% attending the Anniversary Dinner, 44% the Annual Meeting, 19% the German American Day in DC, 29% the AATG Awards Ceremony, 45% one of our picnics and 78% attending our booth at the German Festival. Another 39% went to other special events such as the opening for the Deutschland exhibit at the Maryland Historical Society, Our founding anniversary event, etc. As for the events they would like to see, some of the many responses included German cooking classes; German nights at the baseball games (which we will try again this year); beer tasting; German Christmas events demonstrating cultural traditions; events spotlighting specific areas of Germany; Oktoberfest; more activities for the youth such as video game competitions; Dinner Dances; Fasching; Language classes; a Weihnachtsfest with German carols, food, etc.;

Monthly meeting with speakers; Genealogy events; establish 'special interests groups'; perhaps regional members with meetings; German bands and speakers on subjects such as politics, the arts, diversity; any opportunity for members to get together. With the last suggestion in mind, we are going to look into establishing a bi-monthly Stammtisch where members can attend (payment for food, etc., will be on their own) but we can get together and enjoy each other company.

When asked for the GSM's greatest strengths the primary answer was our dedication to the German heritage, language and culture. The newsletter got several kudos as did the support for both the High School and College German students.

All in all, the survey was very telling and did provide your Board of Directors with food for thought and a specific direction for future endeavors. Again, we appreciate your willingness to respond and the responses you provided.

Dear Mrs. Arnold,
Wrapping up the disordered business of the last school year, I want to thank you and the German Society for the cash award recognizing my performance on the National German Exam. In addition, I would like to thank you for all that the GSM does to preserve and promote German language and culture in Maryland.

Sincerely,
Catherine Harper

Catherine Harper, one of our award-winning German students responds with her thanks to the GSM. The awards this year were not presented in assembly as in the past, but announced and mailed. Catherine is home-schooled by her parents, Stephen and Barbara Harper. She speaks fluent German.

There is always the light of hope. In these troubling times, we all need to 'keep the faith' and know that there is the Light of Hope. Thanks to Helga Collins-Lathe for sharing a poem that her friend Danny Bach shared with her. Enjoy 'Light of Hope'

Light of Hope

Life slows down for the second time
the consequences are fatal.
but there's no point in cursing wildly
to blame someone

because such angry behavior
will continue to divide humanity
will continue to plague humanity
in these truly dark days

Far too much is at stake
Cohesion that was a goal
not everyone has the same point of view
No, we don't have to either.

The situation is explosive as it seldom
Despite everything, values should apply
and we don't blame ourselves
it doesn't help if we tear ourselves apart.

Nobody thought that far
we all did that
what seemed right and necessary
it shaped everyone this year.

For those who have been hit hard
let's pray, let's hope
that these days pass quickly
and we see in better times

I personally believe in
that you can be strong together.
For change, healing, confidence,
light a light of hope with me.

Hoffnungslicht

Das Leben bremst, zum zweiten mal,
die Konsequenzen sind fatal.
doch bringt es nichts wie wild zu fluchen,
bei irgendwem die Schuld zu suchen

denn solch wütende Verhalten,
wird die Menschheit weiter spalten,
wird die Menschheit weiter plagen,
in diesen wahrhaft dunklen Tagen

Viel zu viel steht auf dem Spiel
Zusammenhalt das war ein Ziel
nicht jeder hat die gleiche Sicht
Nein, das müssen wir auch nicht.

Die Lage ist brisant wie selten,
trotz allem sollten Werte gelten,
und wir uns nicht die Schuld zuweisen,
es hilft nicht, wenn wir uns zerreißen.

Keiner hat soweit gedacht
wir haben alle das gemacht
was richtig schien und nötig war
es prägte jeden dieses Jahr.

Für alle, die es hart getroffen
lasst uns beten, lasst uns hoffen
dass diese Tage schnell vergeh'n
und wir in bess're Zeiten seh'n

Ich persönlich glaube dran,
dass man zusammen stark sein kann.
Für Wandel, Heilung, Zuversicht,
zünd' mit mir an ein Hoffnungslicht.



Continued from page 10—
Redemptioner great Chesapeake Bay was frozen from shore to shore. It took the ship 15 weeks from Amsterdam to Annapolis. The ship had run out of provisions and unfortunately, not knowing they would be icebound and excited about seeing the promised land, passengers began to

throw their bug infested, filthy bedding overboard. It wasn't long before the suffering and illness from cold and hunger began to take its toll. It was at this time that ads began to appear in the papers. This tragedy alone was a huge stimulus to reactivate a docile German Society in 1817.

To read more about the Redemptioners, the 'Ship Johanna' and the historic efforts by the German Society of Maryland and the accomplished law, An Act Relative to German and Swiss Redemptioners, read <https://www.germanmarylanders.org/miscellaneous-a-to-z/redemptioner>

Havre de Grace German Baker, Honored for dedication to Tradition

Bobby Goll, Sr. and Goll's Bakery honored for the families dedication to Tradition and the Havre de Grace Community



Eugene & Elsa Goll

On December 3rd, Bobby Goll Sr., who celebrated his 85th birthday last month, was honored for carrying on the tradition of his parents Eugene and Elsa Goll, who arrived in Havre de Grace on their honeymoon in 1930. Both from Stuttgart, they arrived in Philadelphia at the ages of 18 and 17. They married in Philly, but soon moved to Havre de Grace.

This was the beginning of the Great Depression but they followed their dream and opened their bakery. Both were

from German baker families. They knew the business better than they knew their new neighborhood. It was second nature and the bakery flourished. December 3rd is the official 90th birthday of the bakery.

The first bakery was located a few blocks from their current location, which is at 234 N. Washington Street. They even provided delivery services prior to the onset on WWII. The Goll's were blessed with four children. Three of those children moved on to careers that did not include the bakery, however, it was their son Bobby who caught the fever and passion of baking and maintained the bakery. The community of Havre de Grace love the man and the bakery. They have served that city for over 80 years.

Carrying on the tradition means more than just baking German pas-



tries, etc. They actually carry on the tradition using the same beautiful antique baking equipment purchased by Eugene and Elsa 'in the day', as well as all of the recipes that have been handed down.

Today, the tradition is being carried on by Bobby's daughter Susie Goll. The 90th Anniversary of the bakery on December 3rd will make it the first family business to make it 90 years in Havre de Grace.

The German Society of Maryland joined the celebration and presented Mr. Goll with an 'Honorary Membership'



Pride & Prejudice –Captives continued from page –7-

vided a new social and political perspective for the prisoners. A PMGO poll of over 22,000 departing prisoners indicated that roughly 74% of them “left with an appreciation of the value of democracy and a friendly attitude toward their captors” (Krammer 224). Friendships had been forged with the farmers for whom they worked. And despite the initial skepticism of local residents, the pride the German soldiers took in their work ethic endeared them to their captors.

In a letter to the owner of an orchard in Frederick, former POW Peter Muetzel wrote in 1948: “The friendliness of you and of all people of Frederick showed to me...makes me feel under an obligation to show you ...that I do remember you well.” Not surprising, Muetzel’s main wish for 1949 was that it would be “a year of peace and better understanding between all nations of the world.”

About the Author:

Reiner Prochaska was born in Ellwangen, Germany, and raised in the Stuttgart area. He moved to the United States in 1990. He is a writer and an actor living in Frederick, Maryland, since 1993. Reiner is the Artistic Director of Frederick Classical Ensemble and a member of Maryland Ensemble Theatre. He teaches writing and German at Towson University and acting at McDaniel College. He is a member of the German Society of Maryland

About the Book, ‘Captives’:

Frederick County, Maryland, September 1944. Florian Schneider, a code breaker for the German Army, is interned at POW Branch Camp 6. Many of his fellow inmates, most of them seasoned Afrika Korps veterans, mistrust the

taciturn soldier, whose rank belies his education and his excellent command of the English language. He is assigned to work on the farm of Vivian Klein, whose daughter, Mary, has moved back home for the remainder of the war while her husband is fighting in the Pacific. An unlikely, complicated romance ensues between Mary and Schneider. Once Schneider earns the trust of his peers by saving the life of Bernd Wagner, he dares to propose to them the impossible a plan for escape: After a performance of Coriolanus by the German soldiers for their American captors on New Year's Eve, a group of German soldiers



will steal a car and head for the New Jersey coast. Schneider knows that two spies enlisted to sabotage the Manhattan Project are scheduled to be delivered

via submarine to the coast off Maine around New Years Day 1945. Schneider believes in the slight chance that he and his fel-

low escapees may be able to radio the sub to pick them up off the East Coast. On New Years Eve, everything starts out as planned, but shortly after midnight, as the men are stealing a truck on Vivian Klein's Farm, Mary surprises them. Unwilling to harm Mary or jeopardize the escape, Schneider tells the men to leave without him. Without Schneider's language skills, they are captured trying to cross the Susquehanna Bridge, and Wagner is killed. Blaming Schneider for the failed escape, the men convene a Court of Honor to decide his fate.

The book is available from the publisher at:

<https://thepermanentpress.com/collections/back-list/products/captives>

or from Amazon (with expedited Prime shipping) at:

https://www.amazon.com/Captives-Reiner-Prochaska/dp/1579625762/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2UBQT55YTHS47&dchild=1&keywords=captives+by+reiner+prochaska&qid=1607389162&s=books&prefix=Captives%2Caps%2C150&sr=1-1

February 11-February 16, 2020

Fasching



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*Past newsletters are posted on our website, www.germansociety-md.com,
as is our history, *Pioneers in Service*'.*

*For more German-American happenings check the website for the
Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland at
www.md-germans.org or www.GermanMarylanders.org.*

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*Please submit articles or items of interest to
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