

From Ohio History Central; see: <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=592>

*"Numerous Ohioans are descended from German ancestors. Today, German Ohioans continue to enhance Ohio's cultural and social landscape."*

*During the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, millions of immigrants migrated to the United States of America, hoping to live the American Dream. Before the American Civil War, most immigrants arrived in the United States from Great Britain, Germany, and Ireland. By the 1880s, the home countries of immigrants began to change. Many of the new immigrants to arrive in the United States came from Eastern European countries, like Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, rather than from Western European countries, like Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany.*

*In 1860, 328,249 immigrants lived in Ohio. These people accounted for fourteen percent of the state's population. By 1900, the number of immigrants in Ohio rose to 458,734, but the percentage of the population that was foreign-born declined to eleven percent. Most of these immigrants in 1900 came from Germany, Great Britain, and Ireland, yet a growing number of Eastern Europeans were also migrating to the state.*

**People of German heritage were among the earliest white settlers of Ohio. Many migrated from Pennsylvania during the late 1700s and the early 1800s along Zane's Trace. Others came later to help build the numerous canals constructed during the 1820s and 1830s. They established communities across the state and were especially well represented in modern-day Columbiana County, Hamilton County, Stark County, Portage County, Jefferson County, Auglaize County, Perry County, Fairfield County, and Mercer County.**

**Numerous German communities arose in Ohio.** The frontier trading post community of Fort Loramie became a predominantly German community. The German immigrants referred to the town as Berlin. They did this to help remind them of their earlier Ohio home of New Berlin, and in honor of the capital of Germany, which is Berlin. In 1800, Germans helped found Lancaster, Ohio. Signs in this community were printed in both English and German. By 1809, a German language newspaper, *Der Ohio Adler*, began to be published. Cincinnati and Cleveland Germans also established their own German-language newspapers. In Cleveland, the first such newspaper, *Germania*, began publication in 1846. Like many other Americans during the late 1700s and the early 1800s, the German immigrants viewed Ohio as a land of opportunity, but they also sought to maintain many aspects of their traditional culture.

**Beginning in the 1830s, large numbers of Germans began to settle in Cincinnati.** During this period, Cincinnati was becoming a major American pork-processing center. Many Germans lived in the area of Cincinnati known as Over-the-Rhine. Like Lancaster and other German communities, Over-the-Rhine emerged as an important center of German immigrant culture. The neighborhood had its own churches, clubs, and German-language newspapers. The German immigrants were not always fully accepted by other residents of Cincinnati. Some people felt threatened by the Germans and blamed them for many of the city's problems. Anti-German sentiment led to violence in 1855. A mob tried to invade the German neighborhood, but armed German-American militia units pushed it back.

*Because of violent episodes like the one that occurred in Cincinnati in 1855, German immigrants tended to establish their own communities. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many native-born Americans feared outsiders. Some of these people objected to the immigrants' religious and cultural beliefs, while others believed that the*

foreigners would corrupt the morals of United States citizens. These people also contended that the quality of life within the United States would decline, as there were not enough jobs to employ the millions of people migrating to America. Many native-born Americans hoped either to limit immigration or to force foreigners to convert to American customs and beliefs. It would take several generations before the immigrants became truly accepted by the vast majority of white Ohioans.

In 1900, 204,160 native-born Germans resided in Ohio. Hundreds of thousands of other Ohioans boasted German ancestry. Despite the large number of German Ohioans, during World War I, many Ohioans of German ancestry faced anti-German sentiment once again. Local residents changed German street names, banned the teaching of German in schools, and removed German-language publications from libraries. Residents of New Berlin changed their city's name to North Canton in support of the war effort. German Americans faced more discrimination during World War II but not at the level experienced during the First World War.

Throughout the twentieth century, the number of new German immigrants to Ohio began to decline. In 1920, 111,893 native-born Germans lived in Ohio, still making them the largest foreign-born populace in the state. By 1940, the number of native-born Germans in Ohio fell to just over sixty-six thousand people. Following World War II, a small number of German immigrants continued to come to Ohio, but for the most part, this migration has paled in comparison to earlier ones. For example, in 1980, only 9,435 Cleveland residents were native-born Germans. In 1900, approximately forty thousand native-born Germans had resided in this same city.

At the start of the twenty-first century, **German culture and institutions continue to thrive in Ohio.** In the last several years, **Over-the-Rhine in Cincinnati** has experienced a revitalization, as residents try to reconnect the community with its German history. **In Columbus, German Village** has been reborn with numerous businesses that reflect the community's German ties. German social organizations also thrive in these two cities as well as in Cleveland."