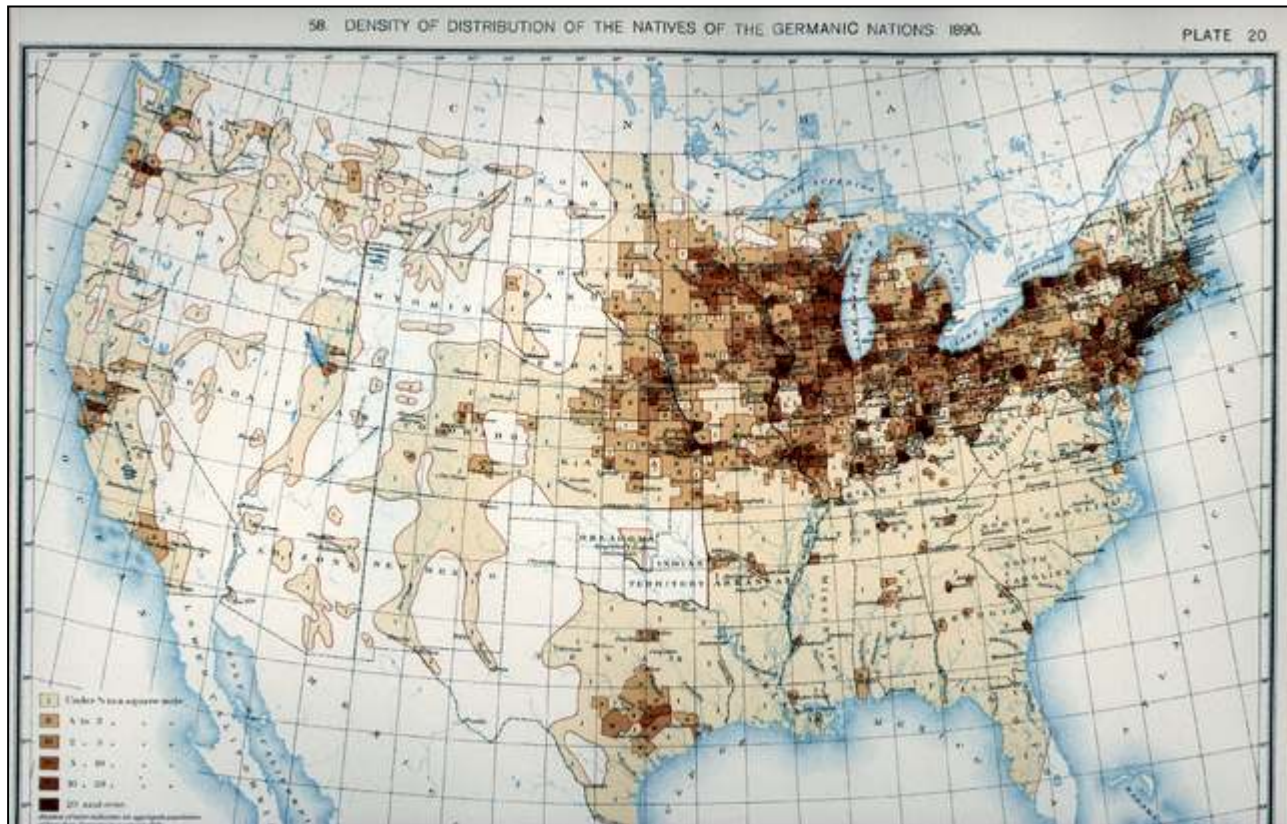


THE HOMMERDINGS

Where European-Born German-Speakers Settled in the United States



The map above shows the distribution of European-born German-speakers based on the 1890 census.

The different shades of brown indicate varying densities of persons born in German-speaking territories: the darkest color shows 20 individuals or more per square mile, the lightest color shows less than 1/2 per square mile, and no color at all shows a total aggregate population of fewer than two persons per square mile. The map does not reveal information about the proportion of Germans vis-à-vis other groups, and a greater density of Germans in some areas may be largely a sign of a greater total population density there. Nevertheless, what one understands at a glance is that German-born immigrants were concentrated in cities as well as in the countryside from New York City in the east to Minnesota

in the west and from the Great Lakes region south to the Ohio River. But there were also other German areas, including parts of Texas, California, and the state of Washington.

It is estimated that between 1800 and the present over seven million German-speakers emigrated to the U.S., the majority of whom arrived between about 1840 and 1914, with the peak period coming in the early 1880s. In the nineteenth century many of these immigrants settled in the states of the Upper Midwest, an area known to this day as America's "German Belt."

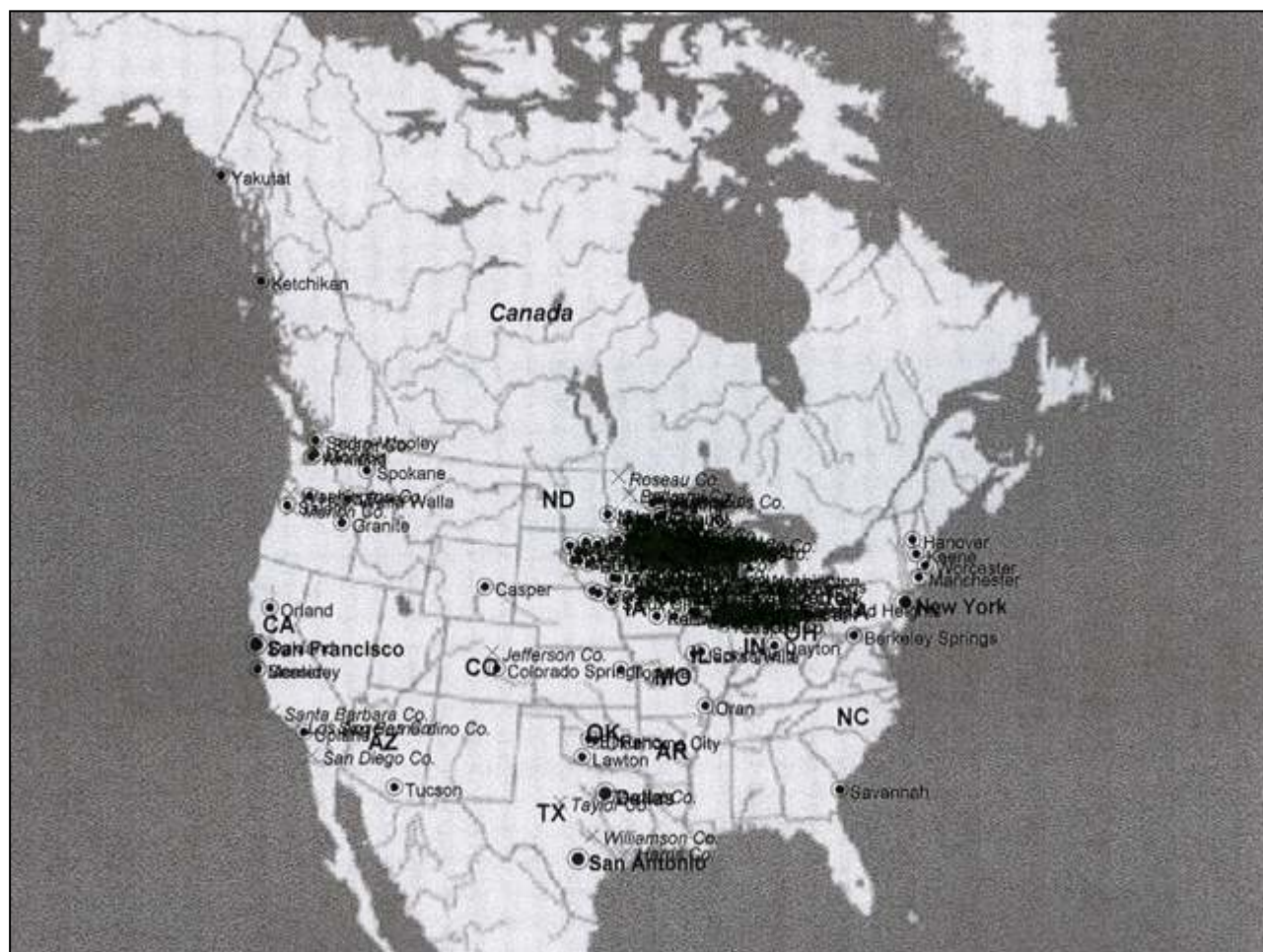
What motivated these seven million German-speakers to come to America? Most immigrants were attracted by the promise of financial security in the form of sufficient property that one could legally own and pass on to one's descendants. In the nineteenth century this meant one thing above all else for rural dwellers, including the majority of the German-speaking immigrants: **land."**

--This is an excerpt from an [excellent, all-encompassing website](#) of the Max Kade Institute in Wisconsin. This site will tell you all you ever wanted to know about being German-American, from the Amish to the Oscar Meyer Weinermobile!

--Also, check out J. Benninghouse's blog article, [German Americans: Speaking in Tongues](#)

Johann Peter Hommerdings' descendants have adhered closely to the above distribution map, settling in some of the map's darkest-brown areas--the Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin portion of the "German Belt."

The map below, extracted from R. Atwell's *Family Tree Maker* data on the Hommerding family, represents the sites where our ancestors were born and/or died in the United States.



As of January, 2010, ten generations and approximately 2600 of Johann Peter Hommerdings' descendants have lived or now live in the United States. They have fanned out to 28 states, from Alaska to Wyoming, and from coast to coast—even a few to Canada. Still, as the darkest portions of the map indicate, the majority of those 2600 people have stayed remarkably close to where the first Hommerding immigrants settled in the 19th century.

[Next--Jacob, Settling In Chicago, Illinois](#)

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