

People on the Move

Grade Level: 4 and 5

Objective: I can write a paper to describe how the needs and wants of the early German settlers caused them to relocate to Mount Prospect.

Common Core: Language Arts: CCSS:ELA – Literacy. RL.4.1 – 5.1; RI.4.1-5.1; RI.4.3-5.3; W.4.2-5.2; W.4.9-5.9

Students (or teacher) should choose one of the passages about German settlers and read it for background information.

Within the context of the paper, students should:

- Explain where the group started, their route (transportation), and their destination.
- Use examples from the text to explain how they reached their decision to leave Germany.
- Use examples from the text to tell what happened when they arrived here in the United States.

Option: This can be done as a class discussion rather than a formal paper.

Extension: Create a map that shows the following...

- The starting location labeled with a proper name.
- The destination labeled with a proper name.
- The route.
- Geographic features that affected their route labeled with a proper name.
- A title and captions and/or symbols that explain/describe the movement.

Activity adapted from Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In 1848 Karl and Johanna arrived in Elk Grove Township. They had been born over three thousand miles away, in Hanover, Germany. To get to Elk Grove they had traveled on boats, in carriages and on foot. They came much further than the Yankees, and from a very different land. Why did they travel so far? When they got here, what did they find and how did they change it?

People like Karl and Johanna left Europe for many reasons. One reason was that Karl wanted to own his own farm rather than work for someone else. Many people who were born in Hanover did not expect that they would ever be able to own their own land. This was not because Karl was poor. It was because there was a different system of land ownership in Germany. In Europe the nobility owned most of the land. Whatever an ordinary family owned would go to the oldest son when the father died. The rest of the family would have to work for him or move away. Many believed they would never own land in Europe.

But this was not the only reason Karl left Europe. Karl belonged to a religious group called Lutherans. The Lutherans had existed in Germany for many years, but by the 1840s many smaller Lutheran groups with different beliefs had formed. Powerful parts of the Lutheran Church disliked some of the smaller groups. The group that Karl belonged to began to see its freedoms disappearing. This was another reason that people like Karl and Johanna believed they could find a better place to live.

This explains why the young couple wanted to leave Europe, but it doesn't explain why they moved to the United States, and why they chose Elk Grove. America was famous for having lots of land and offering freedom to Europeans who moved there. This is probably why they went through the difficult trip to America. The boat voyage that people took across the ocean was a long and hard trip.

After this long journey, they would have landed on the East Coast of America. From there they had to take boats and wagons for a thousand miles to get to Elk Grove. At any point along this trip they could have stopped, and they would have found just as much freedom. So why did they keep going?

They kept going because friends and relatives from their home in Europe had come before them, and were in Elk Grove. Before people decided to leave, they read letters from friends. These letters talked about how much land there was in Elk Grove and how easy it was to get it. They also heard talk of the freedom in America. In the United States there are laws against the government interfering with a religion. This is called the separation between church and state. The problems German Lutherans were having at home with land and religion, combined with the attraction of what they had heard about America, pushed and pulled them toward moving. They chose Elk Grove because they knew people in the area who could speak their language, give them advice and help them.

When people move from one country or area to another it is called migrating, or immigration. Migrating to be close to people that you know from your homeland is called chain migration. Chain migration led to neighborhoods made up of people who were all from the same country. In Mount Prospect, that was Germany. People still come to America, and for that matter, to Mount Prospect, and pick places to live for these reasons.

When the immigrants from Germany got to Elk Grove, they found a world that was very different from the land they had left. In the area of Europe where they had lived, the cities were centuries old and had hundreds of years of history. Here they found farms in the middle of a prairie. The towns were small crossroads, and the nearest city measured its age in decades, not centuries. Illinois had been founded in 1818; Cook County wasn't created until 1821. The entire

country was less than a hundred years old. In this strange New World they also found more land than they had ever imagined.

So we know why these early settlers of Mount Prospect left their homes and why they came to Mount Prospect. But what did they do when they got here? How did they change their environment? How was what they did different from what the Yankees had done? Karl and Johanna bought a farm from a Yankee settler. They were not the first people to clear the land or plant crops.

What Karl, Johanna and their neighbors did differently was to begin to develop a community. The German settlers came with the intention of preserving their traditions and beliefs. They built a Lutheran church, Saint John, in 1848. In 1895 they opened the first school, Central School. It still stands in Mount Prospect, although it has been moved from its original spot. The settlers used these organizations to form a community.

While the settlers were creating communities, there was a country developing around them. Karl and Johanna started farming in the 1840s. By the end of the 1850s, they had farmed through many changes in America. There had been a gold rush in California, the country had expanded west, and the Civil War approached. Communities like Mount Prospect were affected by these changes. Soldiers and supplies moving through the community would have made an impression on the immigrant founders of Mount Prospect, who might have sold supplies to the soldiers as they passed through.

The main thing affecting the residents of Mount Prospect was the spread of the railroads. It was because there was a railroad in Mount Prospect that soldiers would have passed through. Railroads were popping up everywhere in the 1850s. Many people believed they could become rich by investing in a railroad. Some people did. Many others lost their money. Once the railroad came into the area, things began to change. When Karl and Johanna bought their farm there was no easy way for them to sell what they raised. Before cars and trains, it was hard to get to Chicago. Because they lived so far out, they had to raise a little bit of many things so they would have what they needed.

Imagine if you lived really far away from the supermarket. What if it took four hours to get to the market and just as long to get back? If that were true, you would not go to the market every week. You would try to do as many things as you could at home so that you did not need to go to the market. That's what the early settlers did. This changed with the coming of the train. When it first arrived there was no station in Mount Prospect, but at least the farmers could travel to nearby towns and catch the train. This made it easier to get to Chicago and to other farming communities along the line. It changed the way the settlers lived.

The train also changed the economic system of the community, or how the community provided for itself. Farmers could now specialize, or choose only one or two crops, to raise. Then they could sell what they raised in the market and buy supplies they needed. This was more similar to the way your parents work, and then buy the clothes and food you need from other people without having to make the clothes or grow the food themselves.

German settlers in Mount Prospect found that it was easy to raise onions, beets and mushrooms, and keep dairy cows, while it was harder to raise corn and wheat. After the railroad came, some began to raise nothing but onions and mushrooms and sell them. People no longer raised food only for their families to eat, but to sell in the market. Because they could trade in the market, they could be more productive. They raised what they were really good at raising and didn't waste time with things that didn't grow well.

The railroads also changed the type of people who lived in the communities, and how the village looked. The person who actually decided to build a town here was a man named Ezra Eggleston. He bought most of the land that became downtown Mount Prospect. When he bought this land in 1874, there was no train station. There were no stores, no roads, and the area had no name; it was farmland with railroad tracks running through it. Ezra Eggleston bought the land very cheaply. He planned to build a train station, lay roads, and then divide the land up into small parcels to sell to different people. Before he could sell it, he had to have a name for the town, so he named the area Mount Prospect. He called it "Mount" because the land sits on some of the highest land in Cook County, and "Prospect" to proclaim that there were great prospects in this area.

Ezra planned to make lots of money doing this; however, he did not. In 1871, three years before Ezra started building, the "Chicago Fire" blazed through downtown. This one fire ruined more than one third of all the buildings in Chicago. Many people lost all their money. So when Ezra was trying to sell them new land, people in Chicago were just trying to rebuild what they had lost. Another problem was a big recession in 1873. This means that the businesses were selling fewer goods. Because of this, they had less money, and were paying fewer workers, who were then buying fewer goods. This was causing problems. People did not have money to spend, and Ezra was trying to sell them land. His plans did not work out.

Although Ezra was not very good at making money, he was able to create the town of Mount Prospect. He gave the town its name and built the first train station. He also laid the roads and divided the town into the city blocks that we all know today. A couple of years after Ezra left, other people began building stores and houses downtown, and the Village of Mount Prospect came to life. In 1880, the first store was built in Mount Prospect; in 1883, a blacksmith put up a shop; and in 1885, the first tavern opened and the first post office was set up. With all of this development, more people started to move to the area. The train now stopped at the new station in Mount Prospect. More people came through the area, and the train station became a center for activities. Mount Prospect was no longer farm fields with railroad tracks running through them.

Lesson III

"AUSWANDERUNG"

GERMAN-AMERICANS

Like other early settlers of the lands that became the United States of America, the pioneers of the Mount Prospect area wanted to be part of a free nation. This nation would be committed to the natural rights of its citizens, to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" as stated in the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution of the United States together with the Bill of Rights state the ideals of liberty and justice for which the people came to the Mount Prospect area. Every time we say the Pledge to the Flag we express our commitment to "liberty and justice for all." These are the same rights that we seek today through our government.

People who lived in Germany in the 1800's did not have the rights that Americans enjoyed. German laws forced men to join the army. Laws also decided whether people could or could not marry. Family farms or businesses could be inherited only by the oldest sons, which meant younger sons had little or nothing. Because of these laws, German farmers, shopkeepers, artisans, and others began to leave Germany in great numbers. They left places like Hanover, Baden, Bavaria, and Schaumburg for new lives in America. By the 1840's the number leaving was so great that a new word had to be made to describe what was happening.

Because the German people had no word for emigration, they used the word for *out* (*aus*) and *leaving* (*wanderung*) and combined them to make "auswanderung" (*aus-von-der-ung*), or wandering out.



Some Yankee pioneers who followed the Indians were land speculators, interested in making money through buying and selling land. By the mid-1840's these Yankees were ready to sell their land to immigrating Germans. Germans wanted to come to places where other people who spoke their language had already settled. Usually one member of a family would come here to look over an area. He would report back to the family in Germany and save enough money to help bring them here. Once here the family would, in turn, aid their former neighbors and townspeople in Germany by telling them of good land, promising to help them get loans, and offering to house the immigrants until they had built a house of their own. This is the way in which Elk Grove and other townships became German-American communities where English was rarely spoken.

The German pioneers who came to this country were helped by books written for them such as *The German in America*. This book explained the American Constitution, told about the lives of some great Americans and gave advice to the Germans about living in the new country. They took this advice and became citizens of the United States.

The story of Friedrich and Johanna (Katz) Busse's emigration to Elk Grove Township from Hanover, Germany, in 1848 was typical. They wanted a place where they could raise their family in a country without a king and without the constant threat of war. They wanted more freedom of choice. "The call of America, where he could choose his own farm, plant the crops he desired to grow, and give each of his six children an equal share in the opportunities of a new life, was too strong for him," the history of the Busse family states. These are some of the natural rights he hoped to get by coming to America.

When they arrived here in 1848, the Busse family had traveled on the same boat from Detroit with Schaumburg pioneer John Fasse and his fiance, Charlotte Kehe. The John Conrad Moehling family already owned land in Elk Grove Township in 1849. Christoph and Dorthae Wille and their son arrived in Elk Grove in 1853. They all sought a new life of liberty and justice.

Friedrich Busse was born in 1800 and his wife, Johanna Katz, in 1803 in the Germanic state of Hanover. Drafted into the army at the age of 21, Friedrich spent two years in an infantry regiment and realized that the poor economic and political climate in his homeland would not provide the opportunities that he wanted for his children, so he decided to emigrate to the United States.



***Preamble to
THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION***

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and *secure the blessings of liberty* to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

***Pledge of Allegiance to
THE FLAG OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with *liberty and justice for all.*