



# Eric Braeden

**From Bredenbek to Hollywood:  
The Legacy of 1848, Through Today**

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Joachim Reppmann and Erhard Böttcher, Editors



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*Eric Braeden, from Bredenk, in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein, and Gitta Reppmann in Santa Monica, CA. Eric is a German-American Hollywood star whose original name is Hans-Jörg Gudegast; he lives in Pacific Palisades, CA (known as "Weimar am Pazifik" since 1933). Across from his house is the elegant villa where Thomas Mann, a German literature Nobel laureate from Schleswig-Holstein, had spent his years in exile during the Second World War. Braeden has appeared in over 120 TV productions and films, including "Titanic" (1997). Beginning in 1980, he has made daily appearances on US TV, as well as in 28 other countries world-wide with "The Young and the Restless," and in 1989 he founded the "German-American Cultural Society." In 2007, Eric became only the second German actor (after Marlene Dietrich) to receive a Star in the Hollywood Walk of Fame.*



*Eric Braeden and Gitta Reppmann, Santa Monica, CA, 1999.  
When Hans takes my spouse out for dinner to his favorite Italian Restaurant,  
they tell me to enjoy myself at the nearest hamburger diner.*



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**From Bredenbek to Hollywood:  
The Legacy of 1848, Through Today**

Gitta & Dale  
*Tatiana Marie and Oksana*  
*Johanna, Julia, Maja, Alexander, and Leonard*

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*Editors & Danke*



## **Dedication**

*Americans and many people around the globe know me from television and movies. But most folks don't know that I come from another, completely different world—Bredenbek, Germany.*

*Amerikaner und viele Menschen weltweit kennen mich aus Fernsehshows und Filmen. Aber längst nicht alle wissen, dass ich aus Bredenbek (zwischen Rendsburg und Kiel) komme.*

— **Eric Braeden, Pacific Palisades, California;**  
**born Hans-Jörg Gudogast, in Bredenbek, State of**  
**Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.**



## Introduction

Eric Braeden, our dear Hollywood friend and longtime star of the famous CBS show *The Young and the Restless*, showed up at our doorstep in Germany in 2014. Eric and I share a love of our German home state of Schleswig-Holstein, where we were both born, I in Flensburg on the Danish-German border and Eric (born as Hans-Jörg Gudegast) in Bredenbek. This village is located near the Kiel Canal, south of Denmark, and north of Hamburg. The Kiel Canal connects the North Sea / Atlantic to the west; with the Baltic Sea to the east.

Over half a century after immigrating to the United States, Eric Braeden was made an honorary citizen of Bredenbek, where we met for the first time in 1989.

According to the Nielsen ratings, Braeden has the highest Q score in daytime television, which has made him instantly recognizable around the world. Each day, 120 million people in thirty countries enjoy the dramatic exploits of Victor Newman, the character portrayed by Braeden. Ironically, however, *The Young and the Restless* is not broadcast in Germany. Among the show's legion of fans are leading figures from the fields of entertainment, sports, and politics, including Aretha Franklin, Wayne Gretzky, and former Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura, who agreed to appear on *The Young and the Restless* in a cameo role only if he could share screen time with Braeden.

Besides putting his own indelible stamp on the role of Victor Newman for the last three decades, Eric has continued to make appearances on weekly TV series (he has appeared in over 120 of them), in made-for-TV movies, and in films. In 1997, he played John Jacob Astor IV in *Titanic*, the top grossing film of all time. Having enjoyed great success in all of these formats, Braeden continues to feel that daytime drama is the hardest medium there is: "Try learning thirty to forty pages of dialogue a day and then doing it in one or two takes."

Intensely loyal to both his family (his wife of nearly fifty years, Dale; his screenwriter son, Christian Gudegast; and his beloved granddaughters, Tatiana Marie and Oksana) and friends, Braeden is thought-provokingly candid, competitive, never content to rest on his laurels, intense,

and empathetic to those who have unjustly received the short end of the stick; these are the signature traits of the man born as Hans-Jörg Gudegast. Part patriot, humanitarian, and sportsman, Braeden always pursues his interests with dogged determination and professionalism.

Asked how he has managed so well in a profession with astronomical odds against success, Braeden smiles, his eyes crinkling at the corners. "I grew up tough," he says. "I'll fight you to the last—I'll never give up." It is precisely this trait—that of never giving up, of triumphing over long odds through the sheer force of one's will—that we will pay tribute to at our upcoming conference by honoring the lives of European, especially Schleswig-Holstein German democratic revolutionaries from 1848 known as Forty-Eighters in America: ***The Legacy of 1848, Through Today - Conference, Northfield, MN, March 30 - April 2, 2017***

In 2014, during his visit to Germany, Eric celebrated the 750th birthday of Bredenkamp, and we played a long-planned tennis game in Flensburg, my hometown, on the border with Denmark. Although sixteen years younger than Eric, I was completely out of my depth competing against this athletic star of TV and movies. The final score: an utterly humiliating 6-1 and 6-0 defeat, leaving my self-esteem in tatters.

During Eric's visit to his homeland, we had the pleasure of escorting him on a visit to the home of Emil Nolde, the famous Expressionist painter. In the photo we are in the tiny town of Seebüll with Dr. Astrid Becker, the capable manager of the *superb* Nolde Museum:



Braeden's moving address, "Thoughts on being German," received a standing ovation from the scholars, historians, and his fans in Denison, Iowa, at the Donna Reed Theatre for the Performing Arts (formerly the German Opera House of Denison) during our German-American *Legacy of 1848, Through Today Conference, 2009*; Braeden's address is reproduced here beginning on page 39.

Although Germany will always remain his cherished *Vaterland*, America has been his beloved "Motherland" since 1959. Since that time he has made many transatlantic trips. In the spirit of German-American friendship, we invite you to enjoy an entertaining and informative booklet, *Eric Braeden: From Bredenbek to Hollywood*.

*Emil Nolde's world-famous self-portrait:*



Emil Nolde, \* 1867 as *Hans Emil Hansen* in the village of Nolde, today Denmark; † 1956 in Seebüll, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany; movingly portrayed in one of the important post-war novels, *German Lesson*, by Siegfried Lenz of Hamburg.



# Eric Braeden

by Scott C. Christiansen

## **Grim memories of World War II and its aftermath**

TV and film star Eric Braeden was born as Hans-Jörg Gudogast in Bredenbek, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, on April 3, 1941. Bredenbek, whose name is formed from the Low German words *breden* (flat) and *bek* (creek), is located about eleven miles east of the port city of Kiel, the state of Schleswig-Holstein's capital. Ironically, almost forty years after immigrating to the United States, Eric Braeden was made an honorary citizen of the village he'd been born in fifty-seven years earlier.

Although only a very young child at the time, Braeden has vivid recollections of World War II's horrors. Nearby Kiel was one of the major naval bases and shipbuilding centers of the German Reich. The city's status as a naval port and submarine production site resulted in frequent and heavy bombing raids by the Allies. "I remember images of bomb attacks, the noise of planes approaching, bombs falling, and anti-aircraft guns shooting back," says Braeden. "I remember clinging to whatever adult was close by in shelters. You would come out and find families crying, animals screaming. There were bombings every night and day. I saw buildings collapse, animals in flames, and people dying in the street." Although Hamburg was located almost seventy miles south of the Braeden home, Eric recalls the horizon glowing a fiery red when the great city was firebombed. "It is those images that make me have absolute loathing for people who think problems can be solved through fighting."

Eric's father Wilhelm was Bredenbek's mayor, and like most Germans of his day, was a Nazi Party member. "Everyone, ninety percent, were members," recalls Eric. "He (Braeden's father) had serious doubts about what was going on. He helped three Jewish families escape to Denmark, including our family dentist."

Braeden's uncle was imprisoned by the *Gestapo* "because he had enough foresight to be against Hitler. He ridiculed him at the beginning. There were enormous conflicts within families."

The grim reality of war didn't end for Eric with Germany's surrender on May 7, 1945. The images of playing in the rubble and the recollections of children who died when they accidentally set off unexploded bombs remain with him to this day. German children in that era grew up all too quickly, and in Eric's case, the process was accelerated when his father, who'd been imprisoned by the British for a year following the war, died suddenly of a heart attack when Eric was only twelve. "Though my father was not in the war, many people we knew were killed. That affected him greatly . . . I believe the war played a major role (in his death)."

Remembering his father's passing still brings tears to Braeden's eyes. "It was the greatest loss of my life, you know. His sudden death destroyed my world. Not only were we plunged into poverty, but my sense of justice and injustice, fairness and unfairness—ideals that my father had instilled in me—were also destroyed. I was a very angry kid; I got into fights with other kids, threw tomatoes at the Allied tanks as they rolled into town, and never understood why my father had left us. From that time on, I was on my own."

### **Athletics: an important emotional and physical outlet**

After his father's death, Eric's mother Mathilde turned to factory work to support her four sons. Life was difficult for the Gudegast family, but athletics provided an important emotional and physical outlet for Eric, who played soccer, ice hockey, and excelled in track and field. By registering victories in the discus, javelin, and shot put, he helped his Rendsburger TSV team win the National German Youth Championship in 1958.

Looking back on a life filled with athletic pursuits and achievement (Braeden has played high-level soccer, boxed in the ghettos of Los

Angeles, played tennis with a “Who’s Who” list of Hollywood celebrities and tennis professionals, and rigorously worked out twice a day for much of his life), Eric says: “In sport, you learn to compete. You learn how to perform under pressure. When the coach says ‘Do it,’ you do it. You learn how to come back from defeat by not repeating your mistakes. On the other hand, for the athlete, it’s all about winning and losing. Life is not as clear cut. It’s a little more ambiguous. That’s why many athletes have difficulty with life. Playing a sport offers some interesting lessons to the participant.”

### **The land of opportunity and adventure**

After graduating from high school, where he’d learned British English, Eric decided to immigrate to the United States, which he saw as not only “a land of opportunity” but also as “the land of adventure, the land of cowboys and Indians.” Interestingly, Hollywood played a minor role in the future actor’s desire to emigrate, though Clark Gable was an early hero. Once in America, Braeden was drawn to the “figures of cultural revolution, such as Brando, Presley, and Louis Armstrong.”

Like many immigrants, Eric still vividly recalls seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time as his ocean liner approached New York City. Arriving with but fifty dollars in his pocket, the eighteen-year-old ate his first meal in America—a hamburger and a milk shake—at the Empire State Building.

After a short time in New York, Braeden traveled by bus to Galveston, Texas. There, a cousin who was a doctor teaching at the University of Texas, helped him land a job as a translator. After pursuing this endeavor for two months, his cousin connected him with a German expatriate rancher. Eric soon boarded a Greyhound bus bound for Florence, Montana, to become a ranch hand. At last, he would no longer be living a dream through the Wild West novels of Karl May that he and every other German boy had read. Instead, he’d be working on the range as an honest-to-goodness cowboy.

“August Hermberg picked me up in a brand new Chevy,” recalls Braeden. “I’ll never forget that new car—I was very impressed with that Chevy. All I wanted to do was drive cars. So, August Hermberg drove me out to the ranch where I met the rest of the family and the foreman. The next morning about five or five-thirty I got up, had breakfast, and was assigned a horse. We fixed fences and we baled hay.” Having grown up in an agricultural area, Eric was used to hard work. “I earned my living as soon as I was old enough to carry things.”

### **University life: hard work, sleep deprivation, and a budding interest in acting**

Thanks to a partial track scholarship, he enrolled at Montana State University (now the University of Montana). Sleep was at a premium in Missoula, as Eric not only studied and attended classes, but also worked the night shift at Bonner’s lumber mill from six P.M. until two in the morning to help meet his college expenses. With his academic studies, the job at the mill, ROTC drills, and the time he devoted to the track team, Eric slept only four or five hours a night, first at a rented room near campus and later at the Sigma Phi Epsilon house.

Looking back, he wishes he’d had more time to study. “I was enormously curious, intellectually, but I was exhausted and had no time to do anything. The luxury of having your living expenses paid for and just studying—my God, I used to dream of that.” Despite the long hours and hard work, however, Eric was happy. “I was welcomed everywhere here with open arms.”

While attending Montana State University, Braeden considered a career in politics and international diplomacy, but was drawn to theater, especially dark plays showing conflicted characters. “I was fascinated by the idea that actors could live another life than the ones they were in,” he says. Nevertheless, Eric’s only acting experience at the university came when friends convinced him to try out for *The Cherry Orchard*. After winning a role, however, he was forced to turn it down after learning of the extensive rehearsal schedule.

## **“The river of no return”**

Life changed radically for the young immigrant after meeting fellow student Bob McKinnon. “He was one of those Hemingway-esque characters, a tough guy, and very bright,” says Braeden. McKinnon had come up with the idea of taking a fifteen-foot, forty-horsepower motorboat up the length of the Salmon River and back again. After getting Johnson Motors to sponsor the endeavor, Life magazine began showing interest in the project. Only one thing was holding McKinnon back: he couldn’t convince anyone to accompany him on the dangerous journey. After describing his plan to Braeden, Eric responded, “What’s the upshot?” McKinnon informed him that the two would make a documentary and take it to California. “I’m in!” said Eric. Years later, Braeden is able to chuckle at his youthful naiveté, recalling that at the time, McKinnon’s plan “meant adventure, and no one had ever done it before.” In hindsight, the invitation for a boat trip up and down the Salmon River meant far more than adventure; it helped forge a four-decade career as an award-winning actor.

Braeden and McKinnon put in near Lewiston, Idaho, attended by the press and local officials. “The Chamber of Commerce people said, ‘Do you know what you’re getting into? Because people have died doing this stuff.’ And I said, ‘Let’s go!’ At that age, you don’t register.”

At first, Eric felt like he was on vacation. “I said, ‘This is nothing’—until I heard a certain noise, and it became more cacophonous as we came around the turn. I said, ‘What the hell is that?’ Well, it was the first rapid. It was a rather spectacular moment, and had I had a chance to get out of it then, I probably would have. But my pure male ego said, ‘No, I’m not going to give in. If he’s not going to turn around, I’m not either.’”

A professional cameraman documented the trip, but missed the most exciting segments including the three times Braeden found himself close to death. “When you get past the rapids and you think you’re over the hump, that’s when it gets dangerous. Once you get through the washing machine, then you hit the rocks. I barely survived that thing.”

By the time Braeden and McKinnon reached shore, they'd missed the Life magazine deadline, but had finished their documentary, *The Riverbusters*. They also had the satisfaction of knowing they'd become the first men to survive a trip from the source to the mouth of the infamous "river of no return" and back again.

### **The beginning of a love affair with California Playing for a Jewish soccer team**

After traveling to Los Angeles, the two showed their film on various talk shows and were taken around by a public relations man from J. Walter Thompson. Eventually, McKinnon returned to Montana because of family obligations. Braeden, enamored with southern California and with five hundred dollars from Johnson Motors in his pocket, stayed on, became a naturalized citizen, and began studying political science at Santa Monica College. To make ends meet, he parked cars, moved furniture, and earned ten dollars a game playing soccer for La Scala, an upscale restaurant where he also bussed tables.

During his time at Santa Monica College, Braeden had the opportunity of viewing *Mein Kampf*, a Swedish documentary about the horrors of Nazi Germany. After this experience, his *Weltanschauung* began to crystallize. "It was the beginning of an enormous odyssey for me," recalls Braeden. At about the same time, Eric joined the Maccabees, a local semipro soccer team comprised of mostly Jewish members—the team uniform featured a Star of David on the shirt—some of whom had survived the Nazi concentration camps. "It was by coincidence, not out of guilt," however, that Eric had joined a Jewish team. Nevertheless, his membership on the Maccabees gave him a first-hand glimpse of prejudices against not only Jews but Germans. He still recalls one game in which an opposing player, in a moment of anger, growled at him, "You Nazi! You Jew!"

## **The die is cast Learning his craft**

While still in school, Braeden heard that German actors were being sought for TV and film work, and decided to hire an agent. The year was 1961, and for the twenty-year-old native of Bredenbek, Schleswig-Holstein, the young man with the handsome visage and accented English, the die had been cast. Hans-Jörg Gudegast would now be doing something he'd thought about since his early teens; he'd be acting.

His first role was in the film *Operation Eichmann*. In the same year, Eric played the Prince of Wales in Sartre's *Kean*, the premier production of the Santa Monica Playhouse. After making his television debut on a 1963 episode of *Combat (The Sniper)*, he followed that up with a role on the Kraft Suspense Theater.

Two years later, the young German immigrant made his mark on Broadway, appearing in *The Great Indoors* with Curt Jürgens, Geraldine Page, and a man who would become one of his lifelong friends, Clarence Williams III. Looking back on his Broadway debut, Braeden remembered how scared he'd been on opening night. "Having played as much sports as I have, I know what it means to hear the starter's gun. But there is nothing like the fear of opening night. I opened the curtain a little bit, and I saw Otto Preminger, Anne Bancroft, Mel Brooks ... I thought, 'What the hell am I doing here?' I kept running up and down the stairs backstage. I drank two brandies. Nothing helped. I contemplated running out the stage door into the dark streets of New York. Afterwards, there was this extraordinary ritual at Sardi's. We walked in and everyone applauded. Two ladies called me over to talk to me, and it was Viveca Lindfors and Lillian Gish!"

Although never studying acting formally, Braeden doesn't view it as a loss. At the suggestion of Geraldine Page (with whom he appeared in *The Great Indoors*), Eric attended a Lee Strasberg acting class, but walked away with a decidedly negative opinion of acting teachers. "They're very powerful, taking advantage of the most vulnerable." Instead, Braeden opted to learn his craft by working with such luminaries as Marlon Brando, Dennis Hopper, Bette Davis, and James Earl Jones. The actor he most admired was Brando, who starred in 1965's *Moriturus*,

a film in which Braeden also appeared. On the other hand, he feels Sir Laurence Olivier and Sir John Gielgud were both overrated, and that in general, Americans “are just bamboozled by the British. Marlon Brando acted rings around John Gielgud.”

**Objective and balanced:  
understanding the history of your homeland  
without being defined by it**

Eric returned to Germany to visit his family in 1964. During the visit, his mother, “an apolitical housewife,” showed him the remnants of a concentration camp at a nearby town. “She didn’t know about it then, and she thought Dad didn’t either . . . I’m convinced he had doubts but didn’t really want to know.” This concentration camp visit was another part of the “enormous odyssey” that had begun with Eric’s viewing of *Mein Kampf*, an odyssey eventually giving him an objective and balanced view of who he was, what Germany had been, and who the Jews were.

Reflecting on Hitler’s regime, Braeden has noted that “After all is said and done, what you generally can’t escape is the extent and degree of its viciousness and racist attitude. There’s no getting around the fact that it happened. If there’s anything to the saying that the sins of the father are visited on the sons, this is such a case, and I have to live with that.” At the same time, Braeden came to realize the importance of maintaining a “sense of what it was like then, rather than viewing it only with the righteous indignation of twenty-twenty hindsight.” “Someone can become obsessed because of frequent reminders of the excesses of Nazi Germany. Unless you have a strong sense of self and history, you succumb to one of two reactions: You become very hostile and defensive, or you become guilt-ridden and overly apologetic.” Realizing that psychiatrists’ couches were full of Germans of his generation, Braeden worked hard to understand his homeland’s history without letting it define him.

## **A growing résumé Marrying his college sweetheart**

Only a few short years into his career, Braeden landed the role of Captain Hans Dietrich on *The Rat Patrol*, a prime time TV series featuring an Allied commando team sent to harass Rommel's *Afrika Korps* during World War II. This role not only changed Eric's life, but to some degree, how Americans viewed German soldiers. Resisting producer pressure to play the stereotypical sinister Nazi with an eye patch, Braeden helped create a relationship between himself and the team's head (Christopher George) characterized by respectful enmity. By series' end, Dietrich, the honorable German officer and the Patrol's main opponent, was shown as an anti-Nazi, who although a cunning adversary, never bought into the Nazi mentality.

During the filming of *The Rat Patrol*, Eric married his college sweetheart Dale Russell on October 8, 1966. Soon the couple will celebrate their *Goldene Hochzeit*. "She went to a Catholic school," Braeden says, and "was well-educated, very steeped in European literature . . . so there was an affinity." Dale was also no stranger to the acting profession, as her sister was the actress Sigrid Valdis, who had a recurring part on *Hogan's Heroes*. In 1970, when Sigrid and *Hogan's Heroes* star Bob Crane wed on the series' set, Eric and Dale served as their witnesses.

After *The Rat Patrol* and supporting roles in several movies (*Dayton's Devils* and *100 Rifles*), a television film (*Honeymoon with a Stranger*), and a number of TV series appearances (*The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Blue Light*, *Combat*, *Twelve O'clock High*, *Garrison's Gorillas*, and *Hawaii Five-O*), Braeden landed the starring role in Universal's *Colossus: The Forbin Project*. Eric still admires the movie for its prescient view of computers, noting that the film "was way ahead of its time."

## **Hans-Jörg Gudegast becomes Eric Braeden**

Colossus: The Forbin Project was also groundbreaking in another way, marking the first time a German actor had been hired to play an American in a major Hollywood movie. Hollywood was only ready to go so far, however, and *studio chief Lew Wasserman pressed Eric (who was still using his given name of Hans-Jörg Gudegast) to change his name, telling him no actor with a German name would star in American films. As a result, Hans-Jörg Gudegast reluctantly became Eric Braeden, Eric being a family name and Braeden paying homage to his hometown of Bredenbek.* Years later, Eric recalled the decision to change his name as a painful one, only made easier by choosing a name he could still readily identify with.

### **Tired of being typecast as the “bad guy,”**

#### **Eric infuses the role of a lifetime with his own indelible stamp**

During the next decade, Braeden worked continuously in television (both in weekly series including *The Mary Tyler Moore Show, Wonder Woman, Gunsmoke, Vegas, CHiPs, How the West Was Won, Cannon, Barbary Coast, Matt Helm, Barnaby Jones, The F.B.I., Banacek, Kolchak: The Night Stalker, O’Hara, Hawaii Five-O, Switch, and Kojak* and in made-for-TV movies including *The Aliens Are Coming, The Power Within, Happily Ever After, Code Name: Diamond Head, Death Scream, Death Race, The Judge and Jake Wyler, and The Mask of Sheba*); on Broadway; in Los Angeles area theater; and in feature films such as *Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo, The Adulteress, The Ultimate Chase, Lady Ice, Escape From The Planet of the Apes, and Honeymoon with a Stranger*. In addition to all these acting roles, Eric also found time to help his soccer team (the Maccabees) win the 1972-73 National Soccer Championship.

By 1980, Eric had tired of being typecast as the “bad guy.” Friend and tennis partner Dabney Coleman encouraged him to try the soap opera route. “Dabney had done a soap and told me I’d love it,” recalls Braeden. After being offered the role of self-made magnate Victor Newman on

*The Young and the Restless*, Braeden signed a three-month contract. His character immediately resonated with audiences, and Eric reluctantly signed on for another hitch. And then another. “I wanted to leave after the first year. I didn’t like it all all.” After feeling “emptied out” from playing bad guys for so many years, Braeden yearned for the chance to develop a more multifaceted character. Victor Newman, as written to that point, “was only a bad guy, devoid of humanity.”

Fortunately, the producer and head writer listened, giving Victor Newman a tragic past and some real emotional depth, at times drawing on events in Braeden’s own life, including childhood traumas such as his father’s death. After reading the new scripts, Eric instinctively realized he wanted to stay and flesh out Victor Newman’s character. “I think there was an enormous need in me as a German actor to show that we have feelings just like anyone else, that we have enormous conflicts just like anyone else, that we are very emotional people. I think that because of the dehumanizing effect of playing nothing but bad guys—and often, as it was in the very early parts, Nazis—there was an enormous need to connect with something in my work that had warmth, empathy, commiseration, that conveyed more positive feelings. I’m eternally grateful to this medium and specifically this soap for having given me that chance.”

“I’m part of this industry, and I love it. But [we must come to grips with] the myths that we perpetuate . . . That’s why I love what I do now—it deals on a daily basis with problems that are all human. For the first time I feel I’m playing a character that is not a caricature—either a good guy or a villain. Daytime TV affords me the opportunity to create a character who is not a cardboard caricature of good and evil.”

Braeden’s talent and love for the role—a role he’s now played for almost four decades—has been recognized many times and in many ways over the years. He was nominated for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series in 1987, 1990, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2004, winning the coveted daytime Emmy award in 1998. He’s also been nominated eleven times for the Soap Opera Digest Outstanding Leading Actor Award, winning three times. In 1997, he received the Soap Opera Update Award as Lead Actor in a Daytime Drama Series and was paid tribute to as the Most Popular Daytime Actor at the People’s

Choice Awards in 1998. Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi awarded Eric the Italian television industry's highest honor in 1995; in 1998, he was honored at the thirty-eighth annual Monte Carlo Television Festival; and in 2007, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the nationally renowned Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters in Los Angeles. On July 20, 2007, he became only the second German-born actor to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. (Marlene Dietrich received her star in 1960.) Attended by hundreds of fans and friends, Braeden recalls the event as "a very, very deeply moving moment."

### **"You don't become an actor for security."**

In spite of his long and impressive acting résumé, Braeden is well aware of the acting profession's inherent vulnerability. "Any actor who walks around feeling secure is a stupid actor," he says. "Especially in daytime. New producers or writers come in, and they might not like your character. No matter how popular you are, or think you are, 'Victor dies' is a possibility. 'Victor leaves town' another possibility. You don't become an actor for security. I can always leave in a moment's notice if I have to. I can be told 'We want you to leave.' It's one reason I don't decorate my dressing room."

### **Pushing the envelope: the actor becomes a producer**

A few years ago, the Emmy Award-winning actor took a five-week break from his long-running stint on *The Young and the Restless* to star in a film near and dear to his heart: *The Man Who Came Back*. This marked the first occasion where Braeden also wore the executive producer's hat, thereby fulfilling a long thwarted dream. The movie also allowed Braeden to act in a western, a genre that's always held particular allure for a boy who grew up reading Karl May's Wild West novels and watching post-World War II westerns.

Set shortly after Reconstruction in the South, *The Man Who Came Back* is based on the Thibodaux Massacre, America's second bloodiest

labor strike. The movie begins after the Civil War on a Louisiana plantation, where recently freed slaves are worked relentlessly but paid only minimum wages. Often paid only in “script”—worthless money accepted only at the plantation’s overpriced store—the former slaves soon become indebted to the plantation’s owners. Because of Louisiana law at the time, they couldn’t leave the land until their debts had been paid. In an attempt to gain real freedom and escape the slavery now perpetuated by economic means, the workers strike. This leads to a massive retaliation by the town’s most powerful men including a corrupt sheriff (Armand Assante), the preacher (Al Hayter), and power-hungry Billy Duke (James Patrick Stuart) and his vigilante group of thugs. The white ranch overseer, Reese Paxton (Eric Braeden), steps in demanding justice for his workers. This action incurs Duke’s wrath and results in Paxton being falsely accused of murder. Despite assistance from a Yankee attorney (played by Billy Zane, one of Eric’s *Titanic* co-stars), Civil War veteran and gentle family man Paxton is convicted by Billy Duke’s father, a corrupt judge played by George Kennedy (who played Braeden’s father in a guest appearance on *The Young and the Restless*). After being forced to watch his son’s murder and the gang rape and murder of his wife while on his way to prison, being beaten within inches of his life, and having endured merciless emotional torture, the broken Paxton is incarcerated in a hellhole of a prison. He eventually escapes and “comes back” to exact revenge by any means necessary on all who had a hand in destroying his life.

Righting wrongs and working against abuses of power are two of the defining traits of both Eric Braeden and Reese Paxton. “I’m drawn to characters who have a wellspring of anger and the need to get even with those in power who abuse that power and hurt innocent people,” Braeden says. “That’s something I’m comfortable playing. I can nail that.”

The role of Reese Paxton was both emotionally and physically demanding for the then sixty-six-year-old Braeden. Director Glen Pitre felt that as an actor, Eric’s biggest challenge in *The Man Who Came Back*—a challenge that Braeden was more than up to—was to suggest the primal urge for revenge while not becoming a monster.

Despite the rigors of the role itself, however, perhaps the biggest challenge Eric faced was getting the movie made. The nine-year labor of love was made on a budget of only two-and-one-half million dollars, peanuts by today's Hollywood standards. Braeden employed a number of strategies to keep the costs down. Filming was done in digital. Instead of using fronts or computer generated imagery to make up for what they didn't have, they shot the film at a Texas town constructed by John Wayne in 1959 for *The Alamo*, thereby giving the set an authentic feel rarely seen in films today. The Texas group "Women in Film" was instrumental in finding intact nineteenth-century structures that could be used in filming but left undisturbed when production had finished. About fifteen million dollars in advertising costs were saved by taking the film straight to DVD after its debut in three cities. Lastly, Braeden's long career and the many friendships he'd formed over the years enabled him to attract an all-star cast willing to work for low salaries. The cast's buy-in was "a labor of love," Braeden added. "The actors all came because they loved the story and they wanted to help. It was heartwarming to have that kind of support from my fellow actors, one of the most heartwarming and encouraging and touching things I've ever experienced in my career."

### **A kinship forged from convictions**

Eric Braeden's long and illustrious professional career, as impressive as it is, is but one facet of a man who is straightforward, direct—some might even say blunt—yet at the same time, richly nuanced in so many ways. Having lived in America for over half a century, Braeden has a fervent love for his adopted country. "This is a country of immigrants, and has always been hospitable and open to new citizens." He believes the United States is continually in the process of renewing itself, and feels his home state of California exemplifies this strength. "I love this state. I love L.A. I love the spirit in California, which epitomizes the American spirit. People here are always seeking new ways to do things in refreshingly unpretentious ways."

Having known a good deal of deprivation early in his life, Eric is "deeply appreciative of everything" he has. He prizes the values embodied in hard work, community responsibility, and the great diversi-

ty of American culture. Explaining his kinship with his fellow citizens, Braeden observes, “America is about people with convictions.” Not content to sit on the sidelines, Eric takes a very active interest in politics and helps rally support for those he feels will best serve the needs of his adopted country both at the present and in the perilous times to come.

Braeden has warmly embraced the beliefs and democratic principles espoused by America’s founding fathers. “Nazi Germany would not have existed had we had a democracy. Had Germany remained a democracy, we wouldn’t be talking about the Holocaust. We wouldn’t be talking about any of this.”

**Like the Forty-Eighters we honor at this conference**—immigrants who were shocked slavery could exist in a country ostensibly embracing the ideas embodied in the Constitution and Declaration of Independence—Braeden, too, faced similar disillusioning moments. “I came here in 1959. I took the Greyhound bus from New York to Galveston, Texas, to the South, and I thought I had landed in a full democracy and here I see signs for ‘Whites Only,’ for ‘Coloreds only,’ and the separation was stark.”

### **The complexity of a German-American’s inherent duality**

As a German-American who embraces the best of both cultures, Braeden has devoted much of his time to strengthening the ties between the German and American peoples, and his efforts in this regard have been honored on many occasions. In 1989, he was named to the German-American Advisory Board of the German-American Heritage Foundation (along with such notables as Dr. Henry Kissinger, General Alexander Haig, tennis star Steffi Graf, and former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volker), the only actor so honored. Today, he continues in that capacity along with several other distinguished individuals including Dr. Joachim “Yogi” Reppmann, one of the organizers of The Legacy of 1848—Henry Finner Conference.

In 1990, the United German-American Committee of the USA (now also known as the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA) presented Braeden with the Distinguished German-American of the Year Award. This award is given to an American of German-speaking ancestry who has made significant contributions in building America and who has positively fostered German-American relations in the United States and abroad. *The Legacy of 1848, Through Today Conference*, Denison, IA, 2009, was proud to have two winners of this prestigious award—Eric Braeden and Don Heinrich Tolzmann—as featured speakers.

Braeden has been awarded the *Federal Medal of Honor* from Germany's President on two separate occasions, been invited to the White House by President Reagan to celebrate German-American Heritage Day, and received the *Ellis Island Medal of Honor* in 2007. This award, which was established in 1986 to pay tribute to the immigrant experience and individual achievement, is awarded to American citizens from various ethnic backgrounds. The honorees must have shown outstanding qualities in their personal and professional lives, while maintaining the richness of their particular heritage. *The Ellis Island Medal of Honor* is recognized by the United States House of Representatives and the Senate, and as such, the names of all winners such as Eric Braeden are listed in the Congressional Record.

Yet, as much as Eric Braeden fosters German-American relations and as much as he is a loyal American citizen, he will also always be a German. Having a deep appreciation of, respect for, and loyalty to both countries is an inherent part of the man's complexity.

### **Learning from history Building bridges**

Throughout his adult life, Eric Braeden the humanitarian and activist has worked very hard building bridges between the citizens of Germany and the United States; promoting a positive, realistic, and balanced image of German-Americans; and advancing German-Jewish dialogue. In furtherance of these objectives, he co-founded the German-Amer-

ican Cultural Society in 1990. The society's mission statement echoes sentiments and aspirations undoubtedly shared by all who attend this conference:

*Since the creation of these United States and the formation of Germany, a web of individual experiences and group activities have woven a pattern of contacts between our two nations. Unfortunately, these linkages have often been obscured by forgetfulness or lack of general knowledge, conflicting interests, and the trauma of Nazism.*

*It is the mission of the German-American Cultural Society to identify those past links, to encourage exploration of connections and conflicts, and promote discussion and understanding of the ties which connect us in our past, our present, and in our future.*

*Our goals are threefold:*

*1. The Society seeks to bring back to awareness the many profound contributions made to American society by immigrants of German ancestry through identification of individuals, ideas, and historic developments which joined us from the earliest days of our republic.*

*2. Most importantly, we act to encourage dialogue between Jews and Germans, both of whose lives have been forever affected by the tragic period of Nazi oppression.*

*3. Finally, the Society seeks to develop further awareness and understanding of all aspects of German culture, past and present, and the events which will affect the future of our two nations. We believe that through increased awareness, communication, and understanding of our joint cultural, social, and economic heritage, we can promote a better future for us all.*

Having lived in the United States for many years as a German-American, Braeden is very sensitive to the fact that many Americans continue to hold stereotypical views of Germans as a cold, heartless people stained by the Nazis and the Holocaust. "I've listened for over fifty years to vilification of where I come from. The concept of Germany is usually synonymous with that twelve-year period (surrounding World War II). I've always been deeply, deeply upset and angered by that, but it's a kind of impotent anger, because what happened, happened. We are trying to have open dialogues between Germans and Jews. You openly

talk to each other and discover what we have in common as human beings, not what differentiates us from a religious point of view. We've talked about whether normal relations are possible, about German and Jewish contributions in America, present-day Germany, the consequences of reunification. What it really boils down to is this: Jews must not make the same mistake that was made about them. They were collectively and dismissively called 'The Jews.' Don't collectively and dismissively call us 'The Germans.'"

### **The courage of his convictions: The realization that complex problems cannot be fixed with simple solutions**

Braeden chooses not to sit on the sidelines simply railing against past injustices, but rather, to take an active role in making things better today and in the future. An active supporter of Israel, Braeden joined Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at the Annual Tourism Conference in Israel in 2004. "In such difficult times, it is important that people demonstrate solidarity, and that is the reason I am here: To tell you that our hearts are with you, and to tell people throughout the world not to fear visiting Israel. Everyone in the world must know that there are warm and welcoming people here, and that Israel is a most beautiful country. I feel safe here, and I hope the fact I am here will motivate others to visit."

Three days later, a suicide bomber blew up the No. 14 bus just around the corner from Braeden's hotel, killing eight people. Unfazed, Eric continued his visit, and stopped at a local hospital to offer condolences to those wounded in the blast.

In 2005, he joined Ariel Sharon, Elie Weisel, the prime ministers of Poland and Hungary, and twenty thousand Christians and Jews for "The March of the Living," an annual memorial march from Auschwitz to Birkenau. Eric has also been invited to speak in Israel on several occasions by former Prime Minister Sharon and current President Shimon Peres.

Braeden's outspoken support of Israel and frequent visits there speak volumes about the man. At a time when many celebrities who've been outspoken about their support of Israel in the past have become too fearful or concerned over political ramifications to show their support or visit, Eric has not only talked the talk, but walked the walk. Although supporting Israel, Braeden comprehends the complexity of the Israeli-Palestine situation and rebels against the idea that exceedingly complex problems can have simplistic solutions. "I can only observe from the outside and I can only tell you that as a German of my generation it is—I feel it a moral imperative to support Israel because I don't think Israel would have existed in the state that it exists now without the Holocaust, without the excesses of anti-Semitism in Germany. So as a German, I feel a moral imperative to support Israel. Do I understand the Palestinian plight? Absolutely. It's an extraordinarily difficult situation. Do I understand the fear of Jews in Israel to not grant the right of return because they fear that then within a short period of time the Palestinians would constitute the majority in their country? So do I understand the visceral fear on the part of Jews in Israel to say we need a state of our own after the experiences of anti-Semitism in Europe? You bet. And not only the anti-Semitism in Europe but in other parts of the world, obviously, including in America. So I understand all that, but I also have to be blind not to understand the plight of the Palestinians. It's just a very difficult question."

\* \* \* \* \*

*This biographical sketch was written by Scott C. Christiansen. Scott is the author of "The Soul of Schleswig-Holstein: An Iowan's insight into his ancestral homeland". Please see book review, Appendix 7, page 77; or order via Printing on Demand: [www.LuLu.com](http://www.LuLu.com)*

**Video:** YouTube —"**Forty-Eighters and Friends**" (democratic 1848er revolutionaries from Schleswig-Holstein in the USA) - Travis Bockenstedt, a video artist, Wartburg College, IA, produced this educational 30-minute documentation from Scott C. Christiansen & Yogi Reppmann in English for Deutsche Welle TV, Germany's International Broadcaster: [www.Moin-Moin.us](http://www.Moin-Moin.us) (Videos).



Hans-Jörg Gudegast

## Thoughts on Being German

*Speech by Eric Braeden, delivered at "The Legacy of 1848,  
Through Today Conference," Denison, Iowa, 2009*

When I accepted the invitation to speak at this conference, I began to ponder anew the question what is it like to be a German, or German-American? How do I define my Germanness? In personal terms I have early memories of bombings and fires, of having to frantically be carried into the basement, of fear that gripped everyone at the sound of approaching allied bomber squadrons who would inevitably unleash their destructive fury on cities and villages like mine, only to leave burning farms and screaming animals in flames in their wake. I have memories of being hoisted onto the shoulders of my teenage brother so that I could see the city of Hamburg aflame after one of those devastating fire bombings that left the city an inferno in which tens of thousands of civilians perished in one night. I have memories of thousands of homeless and hungry people descending like desperate vultures from devastated cities like Hamburg and Kiel, onto the countryside to frantically dig for any left over potatoes or kernels of wheat.

I have memories of Christmas Eve when my brothers and I had to recite poetry to the local Santa Claus and sing *O Tannenbaum* and *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* and only then could we turn to our presents, a pair of shoes perhaps, which would have to last to next Christmas. I have memories of makeshift ice-hockey games on frozen ponds and soccer games with pig bladders because we couldn't afford a real ball. Memories of a beloved father suddenly dying, of long bicycle excursions through a beautiful countryside, of hard work on farms and hard school benches, of teachers who had come back from the Russian front with no legs or one arm, and great bitterness. Memories of long hiking excursions on hot summer days, singing *Mein Vater war ein Wandersmann und mir liegt's auch im Blut*, of secret rendezvous and adolescent kisses with my first love, Rosely, on country lanes. Of my mother saying *Das können wir uns nicht leisten* when my brothers and I were coveting a pair of soccer shoes in the store window. Oh, when I think of my hard working proud mother and father, who experienced the two most cataclysmic and devastating wars in the history of mankind, and who each time had to start with nothing.

I remember *Tanzschule* and waltzing and doing the tango, and Elvis Presley, and Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, and I remember leaving it all behind, one day in May, when I was 18, while standing aboard the *Hanseatic* waving goodbye to my family while the orchestra was playing *Junge, komm bald wieder*. I remember the first sighting of the Statue of Liberty, the skyline of New York City, the sweltering heat, the frenetic hustle and bustle of white and black and brown skinned people, of taking the Greyhound Bus through Southern Cities, where they had separate toilets and drinking fountains for whites and blacks, and where a genteel Southern lady expressed her love for castles on the Rhine and *Apfelstrudel*, and asked me what I thought about Hitler, and I said, "I didn't – and I hadn't."

I remember fulfilling my childhood dreams of being a cowboy when I was in Montana and going to University there, and one day in a lecture on Philosophy being asked in front of the whole class, how it was possible that a country that had produced Goethe and Schiller and Beethoven and Schubert could produce Hitler and concentration camps? I was 18 then, and couldn't answer. I remember the experience that left an indelible mark on my brain, and heretofore-innocent German heart. It was in Los Angeles, in a movie theater, where I saw a documentary called *Mein Kampf*. I went to see it because its title promised something about Germany and I was homesick. It showed scenes of concentration camps, goose-stepping soldiers, of Hitler kissing babies, corpses piled high in makeshift mass graves in concentration camps, of dead German soldiers standing frozen in the wind and snow-swept steppes of Russia. It showed American soldiers liberating walking skeletons from camps. It was then that I had lost my innocence and no one was there to explain or quiet my deeply felt sense of anger, betrayal and shame. Had my beloved mother and father been a part of that? They just couldn't have been and yet I remembered sending a letter filled with anger and bitterness and inexplicable disappointment to my mother.

I remember later playing for a Jewish team called "Maccabees" and I fought hard for them, perhaps in the vain hope of atoning for the sins committed by some members of my parents' generation. I met Jews from Hamburg, a village in Hessen, Cologne, Jews who had left in the 1930's, and who seemed more German in their old-fashioned

ways and attitudes than I did. I met Jews who accepted me because I was too young, and Jews who did not accept me because I was German, and Jews who talked nostalgically of their favorite pre-war soccer teams: *Eintracht Frankfurt*, or *Dresden*, or *Hamburg*, or reminisced bitterly about the insidious ways of anti-Semitism. I met Germans who called me a traitor because I played for a Jewish team, and I remember an Israeli teammate who talked like a racist about blacks and was suspicious of me because I was German.

I remember my first agent in Hollywood, a Jew, who was kind-hearted and helpful, and gave me my first break in this tough business of acting. I recall Americans coming up to me when I played Captain Dietrich, on the *Rat Patrol*, saying, "I wish you Germans had won the war, we wouldn't have to worry about the damn Russians". I remember fighting with producers on how to play my role in the *Rat Patrol*. They wanted an eyepatch and a limp so as to perpetuate the stereotypical image of a German soldier. And I insisted on playing the Rommel-like figure as a human being, with dignity, because the German soldier of the *Afrika Korps* who came back from the blood-drenched vastness of the Sahara Desert was decent and brave and tough and fought for his country just like any other soldier. I remember a conversation with Curt Jürgens on the way to the theater in New York where I played his son in a Broadway Play, and he thought I should go back to Germany, because in America I would play nothing but those damn Nazi roles, and I said it may take me a while, but I was determined to help destroy that caricature. I was determined to show that we were human beings, with all the strengths and frailties, with all the feelings and thoughts of any human being.

I remember my son coming home from grade school one day and telling me that he had been called a Nazi, and asking me what that meant, and I remember my trying to explain something I had taken years to study and understand, to a little boy. I remember reading Shirer's *The Third Reich*, and Bullock's *Study in Tyranny*, and Speer's *Inside the Third Reich*, and the best book about that fateful period by Sebastian Haffner called *Anmerkungen zu Hitler*, anecdotes to Hitler. I remember Simon Wiesenthal, during an interview, saying that the actual perpetrators of atrocities numbered about a hundred thousand, and

Henry Kissinger saying under no circumstances is the post-war German generation to be held responsible for Auschwitz.

And then, 1989, the Berlin Wall (Iron Curtain) came down and Americans came up to me with genuine feelings in their hearts and congratulated me and it felt good to be German. And then my non-American friends from Europe and South America patted me on the shoulder, and spoke with admiration and respect of the German National Soccer Team, playing the World Cup in Italy. And then we became world champions. And it was almost all too good to be true. And then came some editorials in the newspapers about the renaissance of German power and a caricature of Helmut Kohl, as a new Hitler, and the many scathing remarks made by the cheap English press and character assassinations by Margaret Thatcher and her Cabinet, all warning of German power whilst bemoaning the loss of their own.

And as a German, I wanted to shout to the world "When will you ever stop talking about those damn 12 years? When will you ever give us credit for more than 60 peaceful Democratic years during which Germany has been an exemplary Democracy, a loyal ally of the Western alliance, an unwavering friend of both America and Israel, a patient initiator through its *Ostpolitik* with a Communist East, a country that has opened its arms to more politically disenfranchised, the persecuted and hungry, than any other except perhaps America? When will you ever talk about and acknowledge the untold contributions made by German immigrants who toiled for you, America, as carpenters, farmers, mechanics, longshoreman, doctors and nurses, coal miners, mechanists, lawyers, surgeons, generals and presidents, teachers and scientist, "when, I ask"?

Well, it will happen when we German immigrants and Americans of German descent start talking about it and when we start addressing the issues that concern us, when we have dialogue amongst ourselves and with those who mistrust us, when we open our hearts and extend our hands to each other and to those who were wronged by another generation, when we become aware of our profound contributions to the success in freedom and democracy that is America.

It will happen when we talk about the history of German immigrants in America, that they were part of the first migrations of Europeans to this continent: Peter Minuit, originally from the Rhineland, was director of the Dutch colony who bought Manhattan from Native Americans in 1626. By 1790 three quarters of the population of Pennsylvania was of German origin. As the United States spread westward, so did the German immigrants, mostly settling in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Nebraska and later in all Western states.

They tilled the soil and farmed the land and were in every conceivable profession and formed what is known as the heartland and backbone of America. During the American Revolutionary War, Benjamin Franklin recruited Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben and other Prussian officers to train American troops. Their organization of the Continental Army was critical to America's success in the War of Independence. **Later immigrants, disappointed with the unsuccessful democratic German Revolution of 1848 were instrumental in Abraham Lincoln's rise to the Presidency and fought for the Union and argued passionately against slavery. Carl Schurz was Lincoln's first ambassador to Spain, a brigadier general during the Civil War, a senator and finally Secretary of the Interior under President Hayes.** Publisher Johann Peter Zenger was the first to test the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of the press.

German-American Cartoonist, Thomas Nast, made the public aware of corruption in the 19th-century New York politics and created the figure of Uncle Sam, and the Democratic Donkey and the Republican Elephant, and the figure of Santa Claus. President Herbert Hoover was a descendant of an immigrant named Huber. Dwight D. Eisenhower, one of America's great heroes, traced his lineage back to Hans Eisenhauer, who came to America in 1741.

The covered wagon and the Kentucky Rifle that played so decisive a role in the conquest of the West were products of German craftsmen, and so were American cultural icons like blue jeans, and hot dogs and hamburgers and ketchup, and the beers of Miller and Anheuser-Busch brewing companies.

America's voyage to the moon and its entire rocket program was the result of the genius of Wernher von Braun and other German scientists. The skylines of Manhattan and Chicago were greatly influenced by architects Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Hannah Arendt and Paul Tillich, Albert Einstein and Henry Kissinger were refugees from Nazi Germany and left an indelible mark on American cultural and scientific life.

The publisher of the world's most influential newspaper, *The New York Times*, was Arthur Simon Ochs, son of German immigrants. Novelist John Steinbeck, business tycoons John Jacob Astor, John D. Rockefeller, John Wanamaker, George Steinbrenner and sports icon like Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig had German ancestors. According to the 1990 census, more Americans claim some German ancestry than any other.

When I reflect upon Germany, I am proud of what it has accomplished in the last 70 years. It has risen from the ashes of WWII, it has since 1949 passionately pursued a rapprochement with all its neighbors, so that together they could form a united Europe without the paroxysms of devastating wars, without borders and ethnic divisions, a Europe that is finally anchored in shared democratic values.

Its people have carried a disproportionate financial burden that was and is necessary to achieve this ever widening union and integration. My generation of Germans have a deeply felt desire to never go it alone again, to never allow anyone to curtail our democratic rights, because we all know if Germany had been a democracy between 33 and 45 none of what we are discussing tonight would have been an issue. It took America over 200 years to include all of its citizens in the democratic process. Only in 1965 were Americans of African descent elevated to full and equal citizenship. This belated emancipation took place, because our Constitution guarantees equal rights to everyone regardless of racial, ethnic or religious differences. Similarly, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), is the democratic underpinning of the Federal Republic of Germany, and we won't allow anyone to ever trample on those basic human rights again.

America has profited enormously from the contributions of German immigrants, and Germany is deeply grateful for the Berlin Airlift, the

Marshall Plan, the protection by millions of American GI's during the Cold War, the wisdom and courage of Presidents Reagan and Bush in facilitating the process of German reunification. I am proud to contribute to fostering and cementing the ties that bind our nations. I am forever deeply and proudly rooted in the cultures of both America and Germany. *Vielen Dank.*





## Hollywood Adventures

*Joey Kronzer, 20, Tennis Player from  
St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN*

The long-anticipated tennis rematch had finally arrived. Yogi versus Eric: part II. At a quarter past 4 on Saturday April 4th, 2015, Yogi and I walked onto court 1 of the *Riviera Tennis Club, Pacific Palisades, CA*, (near Hollywood) for what was sure to be a battle to end all battles—unless we were to lose, of course. Ten minutes into the match, down 0-3, it looked like there might have to be a third match before Yogi would be victorious. The point play was action-packed and filled with highlight reel quality shots, but between points the three native Germans were able trash-talk each other in their native tongue—or compliment me, I could never be sure. Eric and his doubles partner Phillip, a graduate of UCLA (University of California) were able to squeak out the win, finishing with a score of a highly contested 6-0, 6-0 match. Upon completion of the match, I was able to hit around with Eric for a period of time.



Eric Braeden and Joey Kronzer, Pacific Palisades, CA: They hope to play doubles again soon in Northfield, MN. (Hollywood star, Eric Braeden is from Bredenk, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.)

Although he is a man of dominating presence and fame, he struck me remarkably humane. Never at any point throughout our hitting session did I feel he was looking at me with anything but mutual respect; if anything I believe Eric was actually looking up to me. To have a man as powerful and famous as Eric Braeden respect my talents and appreciate my time in a genuine fashion meant the world to me. I had not personally met anyone I would consider to be famous before then, but I doubt any stars I meet in the future will be as excited to meet me as Eric was. It reminds me of the things that truly matter in life: not a big house or fancy cars, but people. Money may come and go, but the relationships we form with others are forever. There is no doubt I have begun life-long friendships with both Eric and Yogi, my friends from northern Germany.

I met Yogi at a tennis doubles clinic in the basement of the Skoglund Field House, St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN, in the closing months of 2014. Being a member of the St. Olaf tennis team, I was one of the instructors assigned to teach a court of doubles; little did I know, I was about to form a friendship that would propel a remarkable journey leading halfway across the country to meet a movie star. Upon completion of the clinic, Yogi was quick to inform me that he enjoyed my teaching style and passion for the game we both cherish—a compliment I accepted with pride coming from a retired professor. After sharing some initial details about our lives we discovered a mutual love for not only the game of tennis, but for history, neuroscience and conducting research. Yogi gave me his business card as an opportunity to conduct research together and learn from each other.

Unfortunately, we met at a hectic time for me in my first semester of junior year: a time filled with papers and exams, which did not allow me the leisure to begin another research project. A few weeks later, after a round of midterms, I found Yogi's business card on my desk and decided to take a chance. Within a week of emailing him for the first time, we had planned a lunch to discuss our future together as a research team. Yogi, being a freelance historian, was working on multiple projects at the time, but the one that caught my eye was a project about a series of post World War II work camp diaries and the rich story that went along with them. Yogi and a few dedicated college students were able to translate the Barbour Diaries—belonging to the parents

of current St. Olaf professor John Barbour—into German, such that we could write a personal, bilingual story about the German work camps just after World War II. Helping with the layout design of the Barbour Diaries, I knew Yogi and I were going to be able to accomplish much together in the future. (Please see appendix 10, p. 83)

Having known Yogi for only a few months, his invitation to play tennis in California with a Hollywood star friend of his was startling at first. But the more and more we were able to discuss its possibility, the more comfortable and excited I became. One day I received an email from Yogi saying he had talked to Eric Braeden and we would fly out to California at the end of my spring break to play if we so chose. And that's exactly what we did. We would fly out on a Friday, play tennis on Saturday and return to Minnesota on Sunday. We met up on Thursday night to have one last practice before our big match and to test the recording equipment—this was to record our seemingly inevitable triumph, which we forgot to do. We were feeling confident, we were feeling excited, and we were feeling ready for the trip of a lifetime—who goes all the way across the country to play one tennis match and then flies home? That sounds like a unique trip to me. After being treated lovingly by Yogi's wife Gitta, we departed for the Minneapolis airport. After parking our car, we boarded a shuttle only to find my middle school physical education teacher on his way to start his vacation as well!

Yogi and I had no problems in catching our plane from Minneapolis to LAX airport; we even had time to meet a few new people along the way. I remember taking off on our way to Los Angeles, and it wasn't until the plane began to gain speed on the runway that I registered our trip was actually happening. One of the best characteristics I can say about Yogi is his dreamer's mindset. He is constantly coming up with projects and plans that would be interesting to research or fun to take part in. But this was the moment that it hit me: we are doing this. We are taking his dreams and making them realities. This once again opened my mind to the possibilities of all that we may accomplish together. I have been blessed to be friends with one who isn't afraid of rejection, nor to dream big and to put his name on the line. In this sense, Yogi has taught me more about the importance and application of networking than days of staring at my social media websites ever: a subject he has mastered and one that I still must learn. It's always

funny to recall that our relationship started with me as the teacher, but now I am often the one learning. Having landed safely at LAX, I recall walking off the plane, shaking Yogi's hand and saying, "We made it!"



Eric's Birthday Party at his favorite Italian Restaurant with his closest German-American friends, April 4,



Pacific Ocean at Santa Monica, CA.



Eric Braeden as John Jacob Astor IV in *Titanic*.



Carl Schurz Monument in New York City. The NYC Parks Department website explains: "This impressive monument to soldier, statesman and journalist Carl Schurz is the result of a collaboration between the distinguished sculptor Karl Bitter (1867–1915) and renowned architect Henry Bacon (1866–1924). Built in 1913, the monument consists of a full standing bronze portrait of Schurz in the center of a granite exedra (curved bench) with carved reliefs framed by two ornamental bronze luminaries. The entire monument is located within a large brick-paved plaza projecting from the promontory at Morningside Drive and West 116th Street."

## **Appendix 1**

### **The Legacy of 1848: Carl Schurz**

*Transplanted Ideas & Values in America's  
Past and Present*

The "Forty-Eighters" were a relatively small number of individuals who emigrated from Europe in the late 1840s and early 1850s after fighting unsuccessfully with both pen and sword for liberty, democracy, and national unity. Many of the German Forty-Eighters immigrated to the United States; a large number from the present-day state of Schleswig-Holstein chose Scott County, Iowa as their adopted home on the Mississippi (west of Chicago). After settling in America, these unique and talented individuals provided an intellectual transfusion affecting not only their fellow German immigrants, but also the political and social history of the United States during one of its most critical periods.

Many of the Forty-Eighters left lasting marks in the fields of politics, education, business, journalism, the arts, and the military. Carl Schurz, perhaps the best-known of the German Forty-Eighters who settled in America, achieved great success in no less than four of these areas. During his long and illustrious career, he was a young ambassador to Spain for President Lincoln, a general during the Civil War, a United States senator, and Secretary of the Interior under President Rutherford B. Hayes. During his long and illustrious journalistic career, he served as chief editor of the *Detroit Post*, editor and co-proprietor of the *Westliche Post* in St. Louis, editor-in-chief and one of the proprietors of the *New York Evening Post*, and as an editorial writer for *Harper's Weekly*. Noted for his high principles, moral conscience, and avoidance of political partisanship, Schurz, like many of his fellow Forty-Eighters, can still teach us much with regard to dealing with the problems that confront us all today. (His wife helped found the US kindergarten system.)

The significance of the legacy of 1848er Carl Schurz has become more timely. With the steady increase of immigration to the United States and the ongoing refugee crisis in Germany, it has become ever more important to establish the proper framework for the absorption and integration of newcomers. Schurz's solution - assimilation with the

retention of the newcomers' ethnic heritage - is as valid today as it was when he articulated it in the nineteenth century. The fusion of ethnic identities and American / German values is of the greatest importance, and Carl Schurz's life is a worthy paradigm for all immigrants to emulate.

Sadly, the extensive and extremely significant legacy of the extraordinary immigrant group known as the "Forty-Eighters" is largely unfamiliar to most Europeans and Americans.



## **Appendix 2**

### **The Legacy of 1848: Trailblazers of Democracy, An International Conference on the Forty-Eighters in the USA March 30 – April 2, 2017 Northfield, Minnesota**

Northfield/Flensburg. Once again the German and European rebels and freedom fighters who immigrated to the USA as a result of the democratic 1848 Revolution will be the focus of a trans-Atlantic conference. "The Legacy of 1848" (Das Vermächtnis von 1848) will be held in Northfield, Minnesota (50 miles/80 km south of Minneapolis) from March 30 to April 2, 2017.

According to the conference organizers, historians Dr. Joachim (Yogi) Reppmann of Northfield and Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann of Cincinnati, Ohio, the "Forty Eighters" may not have been successful revolutionaries in Europe, but they were "likely the most remarkable immigrants who ever arrived in America."

The Forty-Eighters were action-oriented individuals whose democratic ideals led them to oppose the political status quo of their time. Many immigrated to America and built successful lives for themselves and their families. Some became politically active and then supported the Union cause in the Civil War (1861 - 1865). Carl Schurz, for example, was a general in the Union Army, a U.S. Senator, Minister to Spain and Secretary of the Interior. But today few are aware of the contribution these men made to America.

Another focus of the conference is "The Role of Religion in the German-American Experience". According to conference organizer Don Heinrich Tolzmann, "2017 represents an important anniversary date: the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the 200th anniversary of the Wartburg-Fest, and the 200th anniversary of the Prussian Union of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, all of which will be taken into consideration as they relate to our focus on "The Legacy of 1848."

In addition to immigration history, the program in Northfield will feature family history topics as well.

*Please submit papers or proposals by January 2017 to:*

Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann, Cincinnati

dhtolzmann@yahoo.com - [www.donheinrichtolzmann.net](http://www.donheinrichtolzmann.net)

or to:

Dr. Joachim (Yogi) Reppmann, Northfield, MN

yogireppmann@gmail.com - [www.moin-moin.us](http://www.moin-moin.us)

103 Orchard St N ; Northfield, MN, 55057 -

H.: +1-507-664-1064



## **Appendix 3**

### **Call for Action**

#### *The Folly of Freedom without Social Responsibility*

In democracies, freedom is often viewed as a license for carte-blanche pursuit of egoistic interests. Nowhere was this demonstrated more forcefully in recent years than in the financial arena where unscrupulous members of banks, investment houses, and insurance companies engaged in behavior so egregiously self-serving and short-sighted as to precipitate a worldwide financial crisis. Through naked corruption and irresponsible speculation, a small group of individuals amassed huge profits at the expense of clients who had placed their trust in them. In essence, free market capitalism benefiting society as a whole was replaced by a rigged market enriching only a few.

The financial crisis resulted from a widespread cancer of moral irresponsibility. This cancer will continue to grow until there is a radical awakening of the world's conscience and a collective understanding that freedom is unsustainable if we are only responsible to ourselves. Conscientious, civic-minded people should consider the prevailing aversion to constructive politics and the resulting apathy as a call to arms to search for lasting solutions that benefit all.

Enduring solutions do not require the individual to give up his cultural identity. They do require an acknowledgment that the concept of freedom is meaningless without social responsibility. These two basic tenets are the yin and yang of any civilized society. One without the other is meaningless and unsustainable. Laws must reflect the democratic values of human dignity, free speech, help to those in need, respectful and civil dialog among people of diverse backgrounds, gender equality, and a government that is neutral in religious and philosophical matters, as long as these do not undermine its very existence.

The guiding principles on which to base any constitution are not new. They can be found in the ideas of the European Enlightenment of the 18th century, concepts which form the bedrock of America's Constitution and the Basic Law of the German Republic.

The fight for political freedom was a powerful motive for many of the almost 500,000 men and women who left Germany and Europe between 1848 and 1850 to immigrate to America. Following the failed democratic revolutions in their home country, these “Forty-Eighters” took a stand in their new country for freedom from unjustified and unwarranted governmental intrusion and state-sanctioned discrimination. These courageous individuals can serve as role models as we seek a new path. In our search for new answers, we can draw inspiration from their conviction that each of us is imbued with inherent moral values that we must exemplify in both our public and private lives.

© Kaupp, Reppmann



## Appendix 4

### Stoltenberg Institute & Yearbook

The Stoltenberg Institute of German-American Forty-Eighter Studies is a forum for Euro-Atlantic discourse. The Institute is named in honor of Dr. Gerhard Stoltenberg (1929-2001), who served as Minister-President of the state of Schleswig-Holstein. An advisory board for the new institute has also been formed: chaired by Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann, Cincinnati, Ohio ([www.donheinrichtolzmann.net](http://www.donheinrichtolzmann.net)), its members include Henry Kissinger, Eric Braeden, Walter Pfaeffle, and others prominent in the fields of German-American Studies and U.S.-German relations.

America's intellectual vitality goes back in part to an amazing group of immigrants, following the failed democratic European revolutions of 1848, the "Forty-Eighters." The Stoltenberg Institute's unique approach to linking descendants of Forty-Eighters who settled in Iowa, (e.g. 'Christian Mueller'), with their ancestors in Schleswig-Holstein is an inspiring example of building transatlantic bridges. Most recently, its uncanny ability to make history come alive was showcased in the video "Forty-Eighters and Friends." Please check it out at [www.Moin-Moin.us](http://www.Moin-Moin.us) (menu *Videos-English*).

The Steuben Society of America's History Award, 2014, has been presented to the Institute for its research on the 1848 movement's democratic impact in Germany and the USA. Continuing with its long-held goals of both bringing the Forty-Eighters' remarkable accomplishments to the world's attention and fostering German-American friendship, the Institute is already planning several projects for the coming years.

#### THE STOLTENBERG INSTITUTE IN A NUTSHELL

**Mission:** To preserve the history of European 1848er immigrants by actively collecting, preserving, interpreting, and presenting documents, artifacts and scholarly research and by promoting public involvement in and appreciation of this heritage through educational programming and community outreach.

**Vision:** To be a transatlantic heritage center espousing the Forty-Eighters' conviction that we all embody moral values that should be publicly expressed, thereby making a meaningful contribution towards solving the myriad of challenges confronting the Western world.

**Value of Education:** To share and advance European-American history by providing visitors and students with exhibits and programs that enlighten, inspire, challenge, and teach.

**Value of Research:** To increase our collective knowledge of the Forty-Eighters and their many contributions to a variety of facets of life in America.

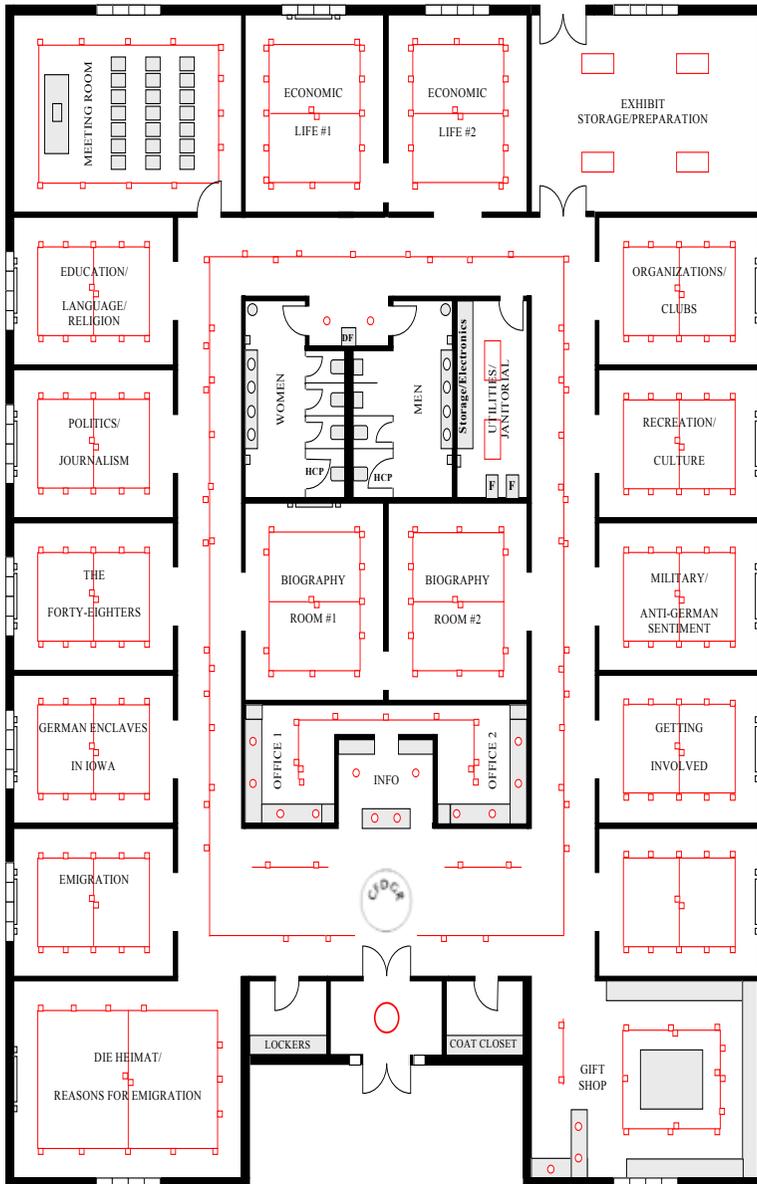
**Value of Preservation:** To preserve our collections of artifacts, archival papers, and research for the enjoyment and education of future generations.

**Value of Integrity:** To present historically accurate information and encourage the articulation of multiple viewpoints. Cooperation: To cooperate with other organizations with similar goals such as the Society for German American Studies; the University of Minnesota's German Studies Association and Center for German & European Studies; the German-American Heritage Center in Davenport, Iowa, and the German-American Heritage Museum in Washington, DC.

**Value of Fiscal Discipline:** To operate as a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that develops, budgets, and spends public contributions with maximum effectiveness within the parameters of our mission and vision.

*PS: We would be extremely grateful if a generous donor or donors could help us to realize our ambitious plans for the Stoltenberg Institute of Forty-Eighter Studies.*





**Future floor plan of the Stoltenberg Institute**  
(95.5 ft. wide by 120 ft. deep)

## Stoltenberg Yearbook



Yearbook 2016

# The Stoltenberg Institute

for German-American Forty-Eighter Studies

*The Stoltenberg Yearbook of Forty-Eighter Research aims to be an international forum for scholarly research and discourse on the Forty-Eighters. In October 2013 the Institute sponsored its first conference dealing with "The Legacy of 1848" at Wartburg College, organized by Joachim Reppmann, Executive Director of the Stoltenberg Institute; and Daniel Walther, Gerald Kleinfeld Distinguished Professor of German History at Wartburg College. Supporting the Institute and its first conference was its newly formed Advisory Committee, which I was invited to chair, and whose members include Henry Kissinger, Eric Braeden, Walter Pfaeffle, and others prominent in the fields of German-American Studies and U.S.-German relations.*  
Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann

*Some debts – like the one owed to a mentor whose faith changed the arc of your life – can't be paid with euros or dollars. Gerhard Stoltenberg was such a mentor for me. As a young student of history, Stoltenberg spent some time in the U.S. in 1953. There, he met the young Harvard history professor Henry Kissinger, and the two men established a close friendship.*

*Fast forward 25 years. Perhaps remembering what his own U.S. visit had meant, Stoltenberg, now Ministerpräsident of Schleswig-Holstein, gave money to send a poor student and his college buddy, Dietrich (Dee) Eicke, from Flensburg to the New World.*

*Some years later, and now a professor myself in Minnesota, I received a call from newspaper editor Stephan Richter who had just published Stoltenberg's latest book. He was hosting a book party for the author and asked me to produce a short video interview with Kissinger as a surprise. Speaking in his native German, "Heinz Alfred" Kissinger expressed his deep admiration for "Stolti," his German friend, historian, and colleague.*

*Watching the video, tears welled up in the eyes of the old politician, the man many thought would be Germany's next chancellor. Sadly, Stoltenberg died less than two years later (2001) with my "debt" to the great man still on the books. Gerhard Stoltenberg's faith in me changed my life; I will always do what I can to honor his.*                      Yogi Reppmann

*The Stoltenberg Yearbook 2016, Printing on Demand: [www.LuLu.com](http://www.LuLu.com)  
(130 pages, letter-size, less than \$5.00)*



# Appendix 5

## Thilde Peters: Forty-Eighter Love Story



Als Sohn eines Seltener Käseherren wurde Thilde Peters in Kolumbien geboren. Er war ein angesehener Anwalt in Amerika. Seine Frau Thilde schrieb über ihn: „Thilde Peters ist ein heiliger guter Mann und eine göttlich in seinen Gedanken.“



Als sie beide aber waren Thilde und Bleik Peters unheimlich. Nur langsam verlor sich die Distanz. Sie wurden Freunde. Zu einem Bekannten war die Distanz gebrochen.



Sie ist „eine hochgebildete und feinsinnige Dame“. Das schrieb einst die deutschsprachige Übersetzerin Johanna „der Dänemark“ über die Lyrikerin, Dramatikerin und Frauenrechtlerin Thilde Peters.

### Revolutionäre von 1848 veränderten die Neue Welt

Gelehrte 1848 ist vorgerückt ein Jahr der Möglichkeiten. Die Revolutionen haben die Welt verändert. Die „Achtundvierziger“ waren keine Kriege, sondern produktive Veränderungen. Diese der Menschheit zu klären. Die Revolutionen haben die Welt verändert. Die Revolutionen haben die Welt verändert.

Schleswig-Holsteinische Erhebung. In den 1840er Jahren lebte in Schleswig und Holstein ein Mann, der seine politischen und wirtschaftlichen Ansichten mit dem Königreich Dänemark. Auch auf der Insel Fünen hatte sich die Revolution von 1848 verankert. Die Revolutionen haben die Welt verändert.

Verfolgung. Aufgrund ihrer politischen Ansichten wurden sie verfolgt. Sie wurden in die USA emigriert. Sie wurden in die USA emigriert. Sie wurden in die USA emigriert.

# Ein Paar wie aus dem Bilderbuch

Eine Liebesgeschichte, bald als Film: Thilde und Bleik Peters wandern für ein neues Leben von Syll in die USA aus

VON CHRISTOPHER SCHMIDT

WELT Ein großer Liebesroman wird es. In diesem – über 100 Jahre nach seinem Tod. Die Filmemacherin Thilde Peters ist eine der größten Schriftstellerinnen der Welt. Sie hat die Welt verändert. Sie hat die Welt verändert.

Verwandte genannt. Bereits nach wenigen Monaten verließen sie sich heimlich. Der junge Thilde Peters ist ein Mann, der die Welt verändert. Er hat die Welt verändert.



Thilde Peters ist verlobt mit Angela Merkel oder Hillary Clinton.

1812 in Kolumbien geboren. Thilde Peters ist ein Mann, der die Welt verändert. Er hat die Welt verändert.

„Nachdem ich in New York angekommen bin, habe ich mich sofort für Politik, Literatur, Kunst und Kultur interessiert.“ Thilde Peters ist ein Mann, der die Welt verändert.

Thilde Peters ist ein Mann, der die Welt verändert. Er hat die Welt verändert.

„Ich bin sehr glücklich.“ Thilde Peters ist ein Mann, der die Welt verändert.

Thilde Peters ist ein Mann, der die Welt verändert. Er hat die Welt verändert.

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Thilde Peters ist ein Mann, der die Welt verändert. Er hat die Welt verändert.

Video (six minute teaser) Love Story Thilde Peters, www.Moin-Moin.us

## A Picture-Book Couple

Adapted from a newspaper report by Kristiane Backheuer

Kieler Nachrichten, January 4, 2016

*Would you believe in a love at first sight?  
Yes, I'm certain that it happens all the time.  
– The Beatles*

A couple from Sylt will soon become movie stars more than 100 years after their deaths. During his research, Dr. Joachim Reppmann, a historian from Flensburg, came across the story of Mathilde and Bleik Peters, who immigrated to Iowa in the middle of the 19th century. Now their love story will be made into a film.

The Filmwerkstatt Kiel of the Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein is providing a research scholarship for the love story. The pair serves as an example of the roughly 200,000 people who immigrated to America from Schleswig-Holstein between 1830 and 1930.

Joachim Reppmann spent nine months digging through archives in both America and on the island of Sylt; he was amazed by the Sylt emigrants from the beginning. "Thilde, as Mathilde was called, is comparable to Angela Merkel or Hillary Clinton," Reppmann reports enthusiastically. "Considering all the democratic revolutionaries of 1848, she was always a touch more brilliant than the best of the boys. She was a dream woman in a time when it was said that men make history."

In 1842, when Thilde was 12 years old, the Henningsen family moved to Egersund, the birthplace of her father. Today Egersund is located on the Danish side of the Flensburg Fjord, close to the summer residence of the Danish Queen in Gravenstein. The charming young lady had access to the court of the duke. Her mother died early, and soon her father married a girlfriend of Thilde's who was only a few years older. The stepmother's parents-in-law lived in Husum and were renting out a guest room to Bleik Peters, a visiting student from the island of Sylt.

In May 1846, during a visit to the town of famous author Theodor Storm on the North Sea, the fateful meeting took place; Thilde was 17 and Bleik 21. All at once the two were head over heels in love and became engaged in secret on June 22nd. Bleik recorded in writing: "We enjoyed many happy days until the family returned home." The engagement became formal nearly four years later, on March 28th, 1850, a few months before the Danish king defeated the Schleswig-Holstein liberation army near the village of Idstedt, to the south of Flensburg.

Bleik studied law from 1846 to 1850 in Kiel, Heidelberg, and Flensburg, where he passed the exam. In the meantime he took part in the freedom fight of the Schleswig-Holsteiners against Denmark. His very discrete correspondence with Thilde was difficult and infrequent during his time of studies and fighting, because Thilde's jealous father could not be allowed to know anything about it. In the middle of the war of 1848, the young woman—"surrounded by fanatic Danes"—experienced hard years of apprenticeship in housekeeping and bravely faced the Danish fighters standing in front of the house. From 1851 to 1854 Thilde repeatedly stayed in Keitum on the island of Sylt, in the "Old Frisian House" of her future parents-in-law. As Bleik later wrote, she won "all hearts by her kindness, modesty, and charm; it was no wonder that I fell deeply in love with her."

The politicization of the young revolutionary from Sylt turned into a life-changing step, such as was taken by thousands of Schleswig-Holsteiners. In 1852 Bleik traveled on the steamer "Indian Queen" to New York and from there to Iowa, the center of the Schleswig-Holstein emigration. "He had lost the prospect of finding his fortune in his old homeland," chroniclers wrote. For the time being, his fiancée Thilde stayed home. Bleik first became a farmer in Nebraska for a short period of time and later on a barkeeper in St. Louis.

Then, in May 1854, Thilde followed her beloved fiancé, taking the steamer "Oder" from Hamburg to New York, where she arrived in July. There were detours via Detroit and Chicago, with the young woman experiencing both good and bad luck and finally reaching Davenport on the Mississippi on August 4th, 1854—with half a dollar in her purse. Thilde's first accommodations were with her mother-in-law's sister in the Ankerson family. On the very same day there was a reunion with

her fiancé Bleik, who had come rushing up from St. Louis. Only one day later, on August 5th, 1854, the blissfully happy couple married in the home of step-aunt Ankerson.

Thilde worked as a “caring housewife” and Bleik “outside their home to earn our daily bread.” In 1855, Thilde wrote about their first impressions in America: “My Peters is a dear good man and has a very friendly manner in his business dealings. We get up every morning at 5:30 a.m. and go to bed at 9 p.m.” In literary style, Thilde described her life, the advantages of the American freedoms, but also constraints in the church-oriented Midwest of the USA: “You don’t find everything as free as they say it is over there in Europe,” she said, but added: “we are living the German Way of Life completely.” She predicted that her father would be “very unhappy” in America.

Bleik’s work as a barkeeper in St. Louis was profitable; the couple lived in two rooms on the second floor. The move to Davenport was followed by their integration into civil society. In 1857 Bleik Peters became a notary public and started a successful legal career, rising to the position of justice of the peace. At the same time Thilde made a name for herself as poet, journalist, and president of the Davenport Women’s Society; she published many articles and poems in Davenport’s German-language daily “Der Demokrat.” The couple visited wonderful theater premieres, lavish balls, and inspiring lectures at the Turner Society of Davenport, with its motto “freedom, education, and well-being for all.” In 1863 they moved to their own house “on the bluff” above the Mississippi in Davenport; the address is still the same today: 824 West 7th Street. There they hosted many relatives, acquaintances, and friends. Several relatives on Thilde’s side followed her example and emigrated to America as well; only her father remained in Germany.

Thilde recognized that the political mind of her husband was unchanged. In the American Civil War (1861-1865) he clearly stood for the rights of the Negro, while Thilde, to the extent possible for her, became involved politically, socially, and as a volunteer in the community. As “a good citizen and patriot,” she supported Union soldiers and cared for the wounded. Bleik wrote: “She welcomed the returning warriors as cordially as she had welcomed returning Schleswig-Holsteiners near Düppel in 1849.”

Thilde's political and journalistic engagement is reflected in the attitude of self-determined women in the Germany of 1848/49, who worked in clubs and local institutions in active support of the men during the fight for freedom. Her strong interest in literature, arts, culture, and political developments was shaped by the Age of Enlightenment, and she maintained her intellectual perspective until her death. Davenport's German newspaper "Der Demokrat" called Thilde "a highly educated and sensitive lady." She possessed "a very good heart and has done a great deal of good; modest to the utmost degree herself, she has worked for the good of others solely for the purpose of being able to do good."

Bleik was President of the Schleswig-Holstein Forty-Eighters veterans' association in Davenport for many years. To their regret, the couple remained childless. Shortly before their golden wedding anniversary on March 23rd, 1903, Thilde Peters died of pneumonia at the age of 73. Bleik Peters said in his funeral oration: "To me, she was a wonderful companion, a humane and brave patriot in the old as in the new fatherland; she has completely fulfilled her human fate as a noble woman." In an obituary for his beloved spouse he emphasized: "Your whole life was a labor of love, a sacrifice of love, from beginning to end." In 1898, Bleik Peters had a leading role in commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Schleswig-Holstein Revolution in Davenport, Iowa. He died on April 28th, 1908 at the age of 83 years.



Thilde Peters

## Appendix 6

### **Carl Schurz, the best-known Forty-Eighter, on Immigration: A Timeless Concept**

Adapted from an article by Scott C. Christiansen

The significance of the legacy of Carl Schurz has become more timely. With the steady increase of immigration to the United States and Germany, it has become ever more important to establish the proper framework for the absorption of newcomers. Schurz's solution—assimilation with the retention of the newcomers' ethnic heritage—is as valid today as it was when he articulated it in the nineteenth century.

Although painting a complete portrait of this remarkable immigrant is beyond the scope of this text, readers wishing to familiarize themselves with the life of this great man would do well to read Hans Louis Trefousse's *Carl Schurz: A Biography*, the revised preface of which follows.

The motto of the United States, *E pluribus unum*—Out of Many, One—perfectly expresses the national commitment to a pluralistic society. While stressing the variegated origins of the American people, it also gives expression to their common beliefs, their commitment to the ideals shared by all the inhabitants of the United States. The fusion of ethnic identities and American values thus becomes of the utmost importance, and the example set by Carl Schurz might well be upheld today as a model for all immigrants.

Schurz also had an impact in another respect. While other nations pride themselves on their common, or presumed common, ethnicity or origin, thus framing their national pride about assumed hereditary traits binding the people, American nationalism has always rested upon the sharing of common ideals, the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Enlightenment. Again, Carl Schurz showed clearly how necessary it was, and presumably is, for newcomers to embrace these ideals. A firm believer in democracy, he not only became enamored of the American system, but also sought to popularize it among his German-American compatriots. Moreover, he attempted to

extend it and perfect its shortcomings. Thus he fought for the abolition of the institution of slavery before the Civil War and the reform of the patronage system and city governments afterward. In addition, he preached tolerance of all groups, the Blacks, the Jews, the Chinese, and even the Indians, though at first he had difficulty with the native Americans. And his unyielding opposition to imperialism, his conviction that the acquisition of overseas territories violated all American traditions, certainly tends to be in line with present-day thinking.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the Germans have also become more and more interested in Carl Schurz. Trying hard to overcome the legacy of their wartime history, they have been delighted to find role models like the great German-American to highlight their compatriots' good reputation in the past. Carl Schurz, an excellent example of a good German, a foe of bigotry, anti-Semitism, and totalitarian government, provides them with a great antidote to Hitler and all he stood for. The high regard in which Schurz is now held in his native country, where he has by no means been forgotten, is a testimony to the success of Germany's devotion to democracy since 1945.

Thus the great immigrant leader remains a figure of major consequence both in his adopted and in his native countries. His example cannot be forgotten, and his role in showing immigrants how to assimilate while maintaining their identity is as important today as it ever has been.

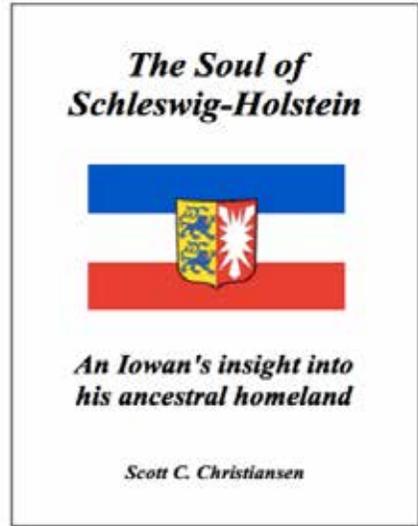
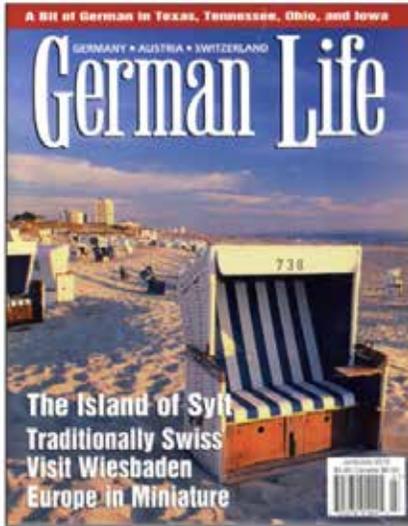


The influential Forty-Eighter Carl Schurz



## Appendix 7

**Scott C. Christiansen has written the most compelling coffee table book about Schleswig-Holstein, the German home state of Eric Braeden and Yogi Reppmann**



*The Soul of Schleswig-Holstein: An Iowan's Insight into His Ancestral Homeland* by Scott C. Christiansen (Up Ewig Ungedeelt Press, 2009) is an example of German-American family history at its best. The author is a descendant of a Forty-Eighter from Schleswig-Holstein, Jürgen Peter Ankerson, who settled in Davenport, Iowa, where he became president of a German-American Forty-Eighter organization, *Der Davenport'er Verein der Kampfgenossen der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Freiheitskriege, 1848-1850*. In this fascinating history, Christiansen explores not only his immigrant ancestor, but also the Forty-Eighters and their importance for Germany and America, placing his work in the context of an in-depth portrait of Schleswig-Holstein. Richly illustrated with almost eight hundred colored photographs and maps and with a detailed index (pp. 239-283), this book clearly demonstrates

the significance of the Forty-Eighters, as well as the importance of Schleswig-Holstein for the history of German immigration to America, especially for the state of Iowa. A beautifully written work, Christiansen also presents a perceptive exploration of the values of the German Forty-Eighters and their relevance for today.

Printed copy available: (printing on demand)  
[www.LuLu.com](http://www.LuLu.com)

*Don Heinrich Tolzmann, Book Review Editor of the informative magazine, **German Life**, has published widely on German and German-American topics, and serves as the Chairman, Advisory Board, Stoltenberg Institute of Forty-Eighter Studies. [www.DonHeinrichTolzmann.net](http://www.DonHeinrichTolzmann.net)*



## Appendix 8

In the spring of 2016, the two most influential German weekly news sources published valuable articles about the legacy of 1848 and the German Forty-Eighters in America:

**DIE ZEIT** (Benedikt Erenz) suggested to make March 18th a German National Day of Remembrance. On that day in 1848, Berlin citizens began their democratic revolution. Volker Schroeder and colleagues have been working on this important concept since 1978. [www.maerzrevolution.de](http://www.maerzrevolution.de)

**DER SPIEGEL** (Dirk Kurbjuweit) inspired the German Secretary of State, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, to support the creation of a Forty-Eighter Monument. The article suggests the monument be placed in front of the newly renovated Berlin City Castle/Humboldt Forum. (Please see p. 52 - impressive Carl Schurz Monument in New York City; the SPIEGEL and ZEIT article: [www.Moin-Moin.us](http://www.Moin-Moin.us) [menu '1848er Conference']).



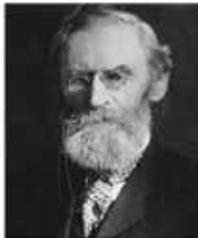
Hecker



Sigel



Struve



Schurz

### ERINNERUNG

#### Steinmeier und die Forty-Eighters

Bundesaußenminister Frank-Walter Steinmeier unterstützt die Idee, den sogenannten Forty-Eighters ein Denkmal zu errichten. Es geht dabei um frühe deutsche Demokraten wie Carl Schurz, Friedrich Hecker, Gustav Struve und Franz Sigel, die an der gescheiterten Revolution von 1848/49 beteiligt waren. Sie emigrierten danach in die USA und kämpften im Bürgerkrieg gegen die Sklavenerhaltung. Steinmeier: „Im historischen Gedächtnis vieler Menschen haben die Amerikaner, unterstützt von den Briten und Franzosen, 1945 die Demokratie nach Deutschland gebracht. Dabei gab es aber schon vor 1933 eine parlamentarische Erfahrungsbasis, die von den Akteuren 1848 hart erkämpft wurde. Deshalb ist das Denkmal für die sogenannten Forty-Eighters eine große Chance, an die wechselseitige Einflussnahme beim Aufbau stabiler Demokratien auf beiden Seiten des Ozeans zu erinnern.“ Dem Vorschlag für ein solches Denkmal in der Hauptstadt hätte der SPIEGEL in der **AUSGABE 14/2016** gemacht. Unter den Unterstützern, die sich daraufhin meldeten, sind der Schauspieler Ulrich Matthes und Erardo Cristoforo Rautenberg, der Generalstaatsanwalt von Brandenburg. Rautenberg hat bereits ein Konzept für eine Erinnerungstafel entwickelt. In der

*Der Spiegel*, April 23rd, 2016.

Detailed information: [www.moin-moin.us](http://www.moin-moin.us)



## Appendix 9

### Publications About 1848ers

Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Forty-Eighters, 150th Anniversary*, in: *German-Americana: Selected Essays*. (Milford, Ohio: Little Miami Pub. Co., 2009), pp. 25-28. Also: *The German-American Forty-Eighters: 1848-1998*. (Indianapolis, 1997). [www.DonHeinrichTolzmann.net](http://www.DonHeinrichTolzmann.net)

*Stoltenberg Yearbook 2016*, The Stoltenberg Institute for German-American Forty-Eighter Studies, Northfield, MN and Flensburg, SH, 2016. (Printing on Demand, 130 p., letter size, \$3.23: [www.LuLu.de](http://www.LuLu.de))

*Theodor Olshausen, 1802-1869 – Briefe an den Bruder Justus*, Ingo Reppmann, Joachim Reppmann, Hg., Flensburg, 2003, p. 181 - 201. (1989, a piece of good fortune: while visiting friends in Leipzig a few weeks before the peaceful revolution was to begin, Bernd Philipsen, Flensburg, and I went to the former Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Dienststelle Merseburg, where we discovered Theodor Olshausen's letters to his brother Justus, 1821-1869.)

*North Germans in America, Freedom, Education, and Well-being for All! - Forty-Eighters from Schleswig-Holstein in the USA, 1847-1860*, Joachim Reppmann, Davenport, IA, 1999. (Freiheit, Bildung und Wohlstand für Alle! Schleswig-Holsteinische 1848er in den USA, 1847-1860, Joachim Reppmann, Flensburg, 1994.)

*Hans Reimer Claussen, 1804-1894, Eine Lebensskizze, A Sketch of His Life*, Joachim Reppmann, La Vem Rippley, Hg., Flensburg, 1994 (in German and English.)

*1848 – 1998: the 150th Anniversary of the Revolution, Friedrich Hedde – Schleswig-Holsteiner in Amerika*, Joachim Reppmann and Heinz-Werner Arens, Hg., Flensburg, 1998 (in German and English.)

*Turnvater Müller am Mississippi—the Legacy of 1848, Through Today*, 22 p. – Essay with informative colored maps, etc. in English, Danish, and German, Klaus Lemke-Paetznick & Joachim Reppmann, Flensburg 2013. (6 Euro, incl. Porto.)

*Der Wilde Westen beginnt in Flensburg - Über Amerikas Seele und die deutsch-amerikanische Freundschaft*, Joachim Reppmann, 48 S., Flensburg, 2013.

**Book Orders:** Christel Richter; Jungfernstieg 1a; 24960 Glücksburg; Germany; richterchristel@aol.com

**Videos:** YouTube—**“Forty-Eighters and Friends”** (democratic 1848ers in the USA) - Travis Bockenstedt, excellent video artist, Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, produced a 30-minute educational documentation in English for Deutsche Welle TV, Germany’s International Broadcaster.

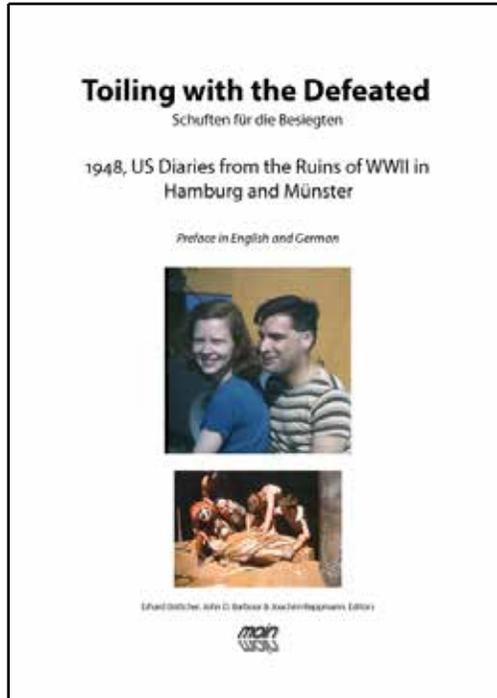
**“Holocaust Boxcar Headed for Minnesota—the Days after Hitler”**, six-minute teaser.

**“The Love Story of Thilde Peters”**, six-minute teaser.

[www.Moin-Moin.us](http://www.Moin-Moin.us) (menu: Videos)

## Appendix 10

### **Toiling with the Defeated: (*Schufden für die Besiegten*) 1948, US Diaries from the Ruins of WWII in Hamburg and Münster**



This book publishes the US diaries of Ian and Deane Barbour, Northfield, MN, who in 1948 participated in summer work camps in Münster and Hamburg. The young couple worked with American, Dutch, and German students to clear rubble from bombed buildings after WWII. These Christian groups also sought understanding and reconciliation between former enemies, and experienced moments of great honesty and emotional depth. "Toiling with the Defeated", *Schufden mit den Besiegten*, includes photographs, documents that explain the background of the church work camps. In Germany and Europe that summer there were 150 work camps with thousands of student volun-

teers from many countries. Extensive research about the work camps of 1948 was not successful. We hope that this publication encourages further engagement with these early friendship initiatives. Perhaps descendants of the participants own more documents..

Diaries are a special style of literature that highlight a broad range of individual experiences. Among the best known oeuvres of this category are books by worldwide known German authors such as Max Frisch, Thomas Mann and Walter Kempowski, moving accounts by once unknown people like the Jewish girl Anne Frank, and hoaxes like the disgraceful Hitler diaries by Konrad Kujau. And there are sober records reaching daylight after decades of being hidden that explain a certain historical period directly and simply.

Among such historical documents are the very personal diaries of Ian G. and Deane Barbour, from Northfield, Minnesota in the Midwest of the USA. This couple traveled to the defeated Germany in the summer of 1948 to help remove huge amounts of debris in Hamburg and Münster. In western and middle Europe that summer there were 150 work camps with thousands of student volunteers from many countries. The work camps were organized by Christian student organizations like the YMCA, Congregational Service Committee, and the American Friends Service Committee. Young people toiled for defeated Germans still scraping a living and hungry and nearly hopeless between mountains of ruins.

Deane and Ian Barbour were married in 1947 in the US capital, Washington. Deane studied theology, and Ian physics. Later in his life as a professor he became especially well-known for his publications about the dialogue of religion and science. It was for this reason that a foundation in Philadelphia honored Ian Barbour in 1999 with the Templeton Prize of \$1.2 million (the world's largest annual award given to an individual); most of the money was donated to a pertinent research center in Berkeley (California). Previous laureates were Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, Alexander Solschenizyn, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker and Desmond Tutu. Regarding the bitter quarrel between materialists and fundamentalists Barbour asserted: "There are many people believing both in God and in the theory of evolution."

During the time in German work camps food was modest: potatoes, carrots, porridge and bread. The young people got to know a huge range of human types: an incurable Nazi officer, a woman with strong faith, and many people who struggled with the great guilt felt by Germans. The Americans could not forget what they experienced every day: "Crippled humans on the streets, children,...., some begging for food." The couple especially remembered the farewell service in a university chapel between ruins, when the community sang: "Goin' to lay down my heavy load".

The couple raised four children. John D. Barbour, Professor at St. Olaf College in Northfield (Minnesota), the diaries of his parents considers a treasure. He passed a copy of them to the German historian of emigration, Dr. Joachim (Yogi) Reppmann.

We hope that this publication encourages further engagement with the US work camps of 1948. Perhaps there are descendants of the participants who own additional documents. One notable example is Jeanne Lohmann from Olympia (State of Washington), a poet who led a work camp in 1948 with her husband in Bremen and recently reported how she returned to America with the Barbour couple on the US troop carrier *Marine Tiger*.

Erhard Böttcher, John D. Barbour & Joachim Reppmann, Editors,  
**Toiling with the Defeated:** (*Schuften mit den Besiegten*)  
1948, US Diaries from the Ruins of WWII  
in Hamburg and Münster.  
(Printed Copy via Printing on Demand: [www.LuLu.com](http://www.LuLu.com))



## Appendix 11

### Holocaust Boxcar Headed for Minnesota

In autumn of 2015, after being abandoned for years in formerly communist East Germany, an 1899 boxcar used during the Holocaust to move Jews to concentration camps had begun a long journey half way around the world to the Fagen Fighters WWII Museum in Granite Falls, MN.

[www.fagenfightersWWIImuseum.org](http://www.fagenfightersWWIImuseum.org)

Diane Fagen, President of the museum, has teamed with German historian Joachim Reppmann of Flensburg, Germany to move this horrific reminder of the Holocaust. Joachim, or Yogi as he is known to friends and coworkers, found out about the abandoned boxcar from his uncle Peter Prass (of Gera, Germany) who spent 34 years working the railroads behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany and knew about the 19th century railcar hidden away in the Thuringian Forest near the city of Georgenthal (near the famous *Wartburg Castle*, where Luther had translated the Bible).

The boxcar was first used as a normal rail vehicle for merchandise but eventually carried victims identified by the Nazis for elimination as part of the deadly Holocaust machinery directed by SS commander Heinrich Himmler. The boxcar carried those persecuted by the Nazis: political resistance fighters, writers and actors, and of course European Jews to Auschwitz.

On Saturday, May 21, 2016, Fagen Fighters WWII Museum, Granite Falls, Minnesota, opened its *Holocaust Boxcar and POW Exhibit*, the most recent addition to its historical aviation displays. Special guest speakers at the event included Steve Hunegs, Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas; Charles Fodor, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor; and German historian Dr. Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann. Around 1000 visitors were in attendance.

Video (six-minute teaser), *Holocaust Boxcar Headed for Minnesota—  
The Days after Hitler*, [www.Moin-Moin.us](http://www.Moin-Moin.us)



The boxcar from 1899 near Georgenthal, Thuringia.



Grand Opening of the *Holocaust and POW Boxcar Exhibit*, on May 21st, 2016, Granite Falls, MN; note the embroidered map of Schleswig-Holstein from 1944 at the lower left.



Diane Fagen, left, President of the **Fagen Fighters WWII Museum** in Granite Falls, MN, in front of the restored Holocaust boxcar with her sister Mary Kollen. A large educational exhibit is a major component of the museum.



May 21st, 2016, Grand Opening in western Minnesota, Aaron and Traci Fagen with Yogi Reppmann.



Charles Fodor, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor, and Steve Hunegs, the executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council; Granite Falls, MN, on May 21st, 2016.



Approximately one thousand interested Americans attended the moving and educational mega-event.



*Gitta and Yogi Reppmann's gift of May 21st, 2016 to the Fagen Fighters WWII Museum:* Here is the story behind the gift. The map pictured above was embroidered by Käthe Benkwitz, who had been a head nurse south of Flensburg, and who gave us the map through a friend. Käthe died at the age of 92, having been married for only ONE day in her life; she and her husband had been married during WWII over the phone, and he was subsequently killed in action. Käthe never married again. In 1944 Käthe served as a nurse in France and cared for Field Marshall Erwin Rommel who was in a military hospital as a result of severe head injuries. On July 17th, 1944, weeks after D-Day, he had been traveling from the SS tank headquarters in France, when his driver lost control of the car and crashed into a tree following an attack by a Spitfire. As head nurse, Käthe was in charge of sitting at Rommel's bedside during the night. It was then that she embroidered the map of Schleswig-Holstein, her home state and ours. Because of Rommel's involvement in an attempt to assassinate Hitler, he was given the choice by Hitler of committing suicide and receiving a State Funeral, or of being executed. His only son, Manfred, fifteen years old at the time, learned of this choice minutes before his father's suicide.



## Editors

Erhard “Boeddee” Böttcher was born 1944 in Guben, State of Brandenburg (near today’s German-Polish border). He was raised as a refugee child in Flensburg. For 27 years he worked for the German Press Agency dpa, writing articles for newspapers throughout Germany. His transatlantic research was inspired by participating in trips organized by his friend Yogi Reppmann. After retiring from dpa in 2004 he lived for many years on Fuerteventura, one of the enchanting Canary Islands, and then returned to Schleswig-Holstein.

Joachim “Yogi” Reppmann, Ph.D., was born in Flensburg, northernmost German State of Schleswig-Holstein, in 1957. In 1984, he completed his masters thesis entitled *Transplanted Ideas: The Concept of Freedom and Democracy of the Schleswig-Holstein Forty-Eighters—Origins and Effects 1846-1856*. He has written several books on notable 1848er Schleswig-Holstein emigrants; and chaired several conferences on topics ranging from the Low German language to charismatic Forty-Eighter Hans Reimer Claussen (*Claussen Centennial*, 1994 in Davenport, IA).

Since 2010, the founding of the *German-American Heritage Museum, Washington, DC*, [www.gahmusa.org](http://www.gahmusa.org), Yogi has served on its Advisory Board. 2014, Steuben-History Award in NYC for the Stoltenberg Institute’s 1848er research.

[www.Moin-Moin.us](http://www.Moin-Moin.us)



*Danke*

*Ben Parsell*

*Georgine Malecha*

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Eric Braeden, a Hollywood star from Bredenbek, and historian Yogi Reppmann from Flensburg (both towns are located in the northernmost German State of Schleswig-Holstein); their friendship goes back to 1989: here, in 2014, after a tennis match in Flensburg, on the border with Denmark. Both are fascinated by the timeless concepts, ideas and values of a democratic revolution, *The Legacy of 1848, Through Today*.



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