

# Weekend's conference in Denison explores contributions of German immigrants



Eric Braeden

## Hollywood star Eric Braeden is keynote speaker on Saturday

By Gordon Wolf

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The contributions made by German immigrants to the United States will be the focus of “The Legacy of 1848 – Henry Finner Conference” this weekend in Denison.

Speakers for the conference are from Crawford County and from as far away as Germany.

The keynote speaker is Eric Braeden, star of the daytime television drama “The Young and the Restless” for 30 years. Braeden, who was born Hans-Jörg Gudegast in Bredenbek, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, is the president of the German-American Heritage Foundation.

Braeden and another speaker at the conference, Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann of Cincinnati, Ohio, have each received the Distinguished German-American of the Year award.

“The Legacy of 1848 – Henry Finner Conference” was coordinated by Dr. Joachim “Yogi” Reppmann and Dr. Tolzmann. Reppmann lives part of the year in Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein and during the winter in Northfield, Minnesota, where he served as a

professor of German at St. Olaf and Carlton colleges.

Reppmann became interested in the contributions of German immigrants from Schleswig-Holstein after coming to the United States for the first time in 1978 as an undergraduate student. He and fellow researcher Deitrich Eicke visited Kiel, Wisconsin, Flensburg, Minnesota, and Schleswig, Holstein, Davenport and Denison.

In Denison Reppmann learned about Henry Finnern, an 1891 immigrant from Schleswig-Holstein who was a success as a newspaper publisher, as Denison postmaster and as an Iowa House Representative.

Reppmann and his former student, Stuart Gorman, a former student of Reppmann's, recently published a biography of Finnern entitled, "Triumph of Will."

Finnern's youngest daughter, Norma, who lives in Loveland, Colorado, and members of her family will attend the conference.

In promoting the conference, Reppmann wrote the following about the contributions of the "1848ers" and Finnern:

"In 1848, a group of Schleswig-Holstein freedom fighters began fighting for liberty, democracy, and national unity in a war with Denmark. Unsuccessful in their struggle, many of these democratic revolutionaries immigrated to the United States, hoping to find the freedom they had fought for in vain in their homeland.

"These 1848ers provided an intellectual transfusion, which not only affected their fellow United States countrymen but also had a pronounced effect on the political and social history of America during one of its most critical periods-before and during the Civil War.

"The story of Henry Finnern, who came along subsequent to the 1848ers, is especially noteworthy. His hard work resulted in his eventual ownership of a Denison newspaper. Before the backdrop of his humble upbringing in a tiny German village in Schleswig-Holstein, he fought for equality and fairness in Denison.

"Perils he faced, choices he made, and the grit and determination he demonstrated are all too familiar to many today seeking to become part of the American dream."

"The Legacy of 1848 – Henry Finnern Conference" will take place at three different locations in Denison – at Cronk's Café on Friday, October 30; at Cronk's Café and the Donna Reed Center on Saturday, October 31; and at Zion Lutheran Church on Sunday, November 1.

The following is the final conference information:

Registration: For individuals unable to pre-register, on-site registration will be available from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Friday, October 30, and from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. on Saturday, October

31, at Cronk's Café. Participants are reminded to wear their registration badge to be admitted to the conference area. The local contact person in Denison is Suzi Barnes at 712-269-0098.

People may also contact Yogi Reppmann, 103 Orchard Street North, Northfield, MN 55057, Ph. 507-581-6734, e-mail [yogireppmann@yahoo.com](mailto:yogireppmann@yahoo.com) / or on the web at [www.moin-moin.us](http://www.moin-moin.us).

The registration fee is \$25 and includes a champagne reception on Friday. Meal costs are \$25 for Friday's banquet, \$20 for Saturday's lunch and \$35 for Saturday's dinner. Meals are optional to attending the conference.

## Schedule

Friday, October 30

4-6 p.m.: Champagne Reception at Cronk's Café, hosted by Gitta and Yogi Reppmann, Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein / Northfield, Minnesota

6:30-9 p.m.: Conference banquet at Cronk's Café with speakers Denison Mayor Nathan Mahrt (Quo vadis Germania Halle, Denison?) and Dr. Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann (Introduction to 1848er democratic revolutionaries and the life of Henry Finnern), and short videos including Norma Finnern interview (Loveland, CO), Art Rix interview (Manning), rededication of a Forty-eighter monument in Davenport, Iowa, on March 30, 2008, dedication of the Olshausen 1848 Memorial on June 5, 2009, in Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, and scenes from Eric Braeden's latest movie, "The Man Who Came Back"

Saturday, October 31

8:30-10 a.m.: The Forty-eighters session at Cronk's Restaurant. Speakers include Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann of Cincinnati, Ohio (Friedrich Hecker and the First U.S. Turnverein in Cincinnati, 1848), Pastor Klaus Lemke-Paetznick from Wilhelmshaven, Lower Saxony, Germany (The role of the church in 1848's struggle between the monarchy and democracy) and Yogi Reppmann (Journalists from Schleswig-Holstein, Germany in the United States: 1848 – 2006)

10-10:30 a.m.: Coffee break

10:30-11:45 a.m.: 1914-1918, Anti-German hysteria session at Cronk's Restaurant. Speakers include Dr. Tolzmann (The Hun Image of Germans during World War I), Yogi Reppmann (The Darkest Day – Henry Finnern in Denison), and Larry Grill of Schleswig (Schleswig, Iowa during World War I).

Noon-2 p.m.: Luncheon at Cronk's Restaurant. The speaker is Pastor Lemke-Paetznick (Frangor, non flector [I am broken, I am not deflected]). These Latin words were the life motto of famed Forty-eighter Theodor Olshausen, whose family gave Joseph Pulitzer his

start in the newspaper business.

After lunch the conference will move to the Donna Reed Center for the Performing Arts at the corner of Main Street and Broadway.

2:15-3:30 p.m.: Genealogy at Donna Reed Center. Speakers include Gant Lochmiller from Denison (Germanic Roots in Crawford County), Dr. Tolzmann (My Pomeranian Ancestors), Pastor Lemke-Paetznick (Church Records in Germany), and Dr. Eldon Knuth from Los Angeles, California, (Which immigrant to Iowa was behind Jürnjakob Swehn?- a German best-selling book since 1917)

3:30-4 p.m.: Break at Donna Reed Center

4-5:30 p.m.: Finnern Family Research in Germany and the United States, at the Donna Reed Center. Speakers include Finnern Family Genealogist Marcia Paulsen from Buffalo, Minnesota, and Scharlott Goettsch Blevins from Davenport.

The conference will move back to Cronk's Restaurant for Saturday night's dinner and keynote address.

6 -9 p.m.: Dinner and keynote address by Eric Braeden of Pacific Palisades, California. Braeden is an Emmy award-winner actor and president of the German-American Cultural Society. His topic will be "From Bredenbek, Schleswig-Holstein to Hollywood - My Life as a German-American."

Sunday, November 1

10:30 a.m.: Church service at Zion Lutheran Church, Denison. Pastors Kurt Kaiser and Klaus Lemke-Paetznick will conduct the service in the church attended by Henry Finnern. The topic will be "Henry Finnern: Bridge builder between the Spirit of 1848 and the Christian Spirit."

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