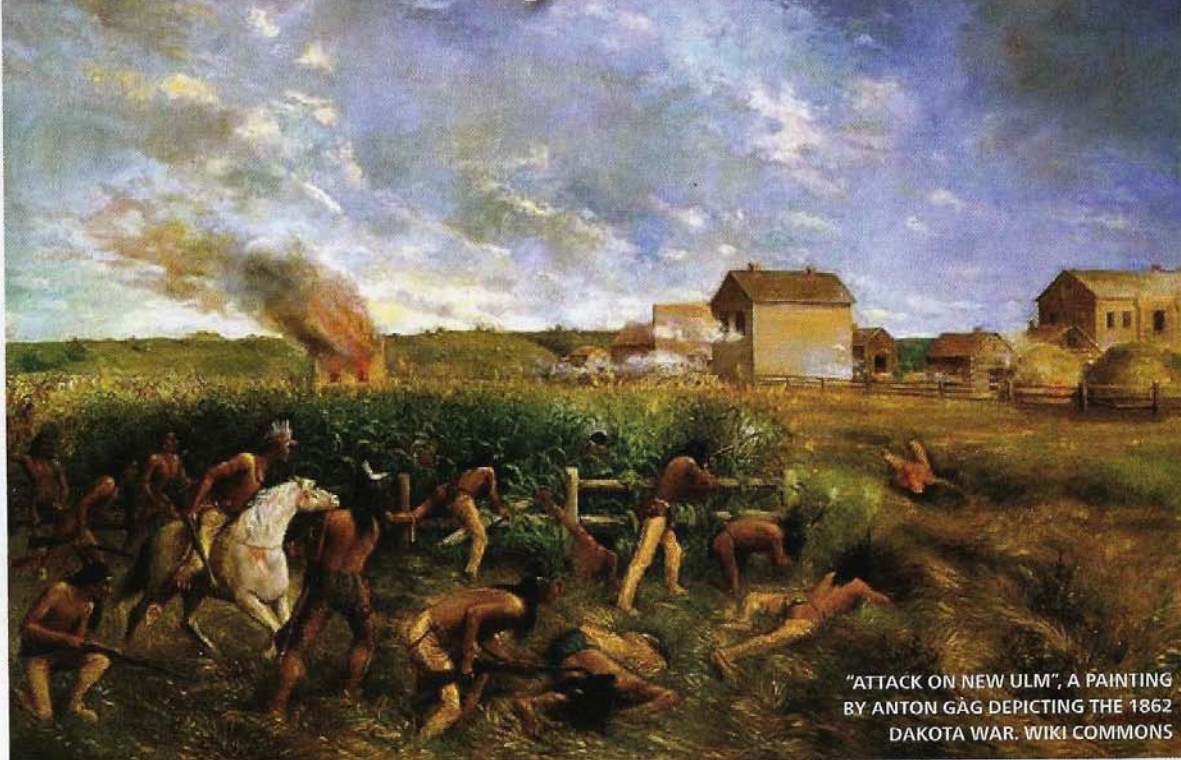


New Ulm, Minnesota



"ATTACK ON NEW ULM", A PAINTING
BY ANTON GÄG DEPICTING THE 1862
DAKOTA WAR. WIKI COMMONS

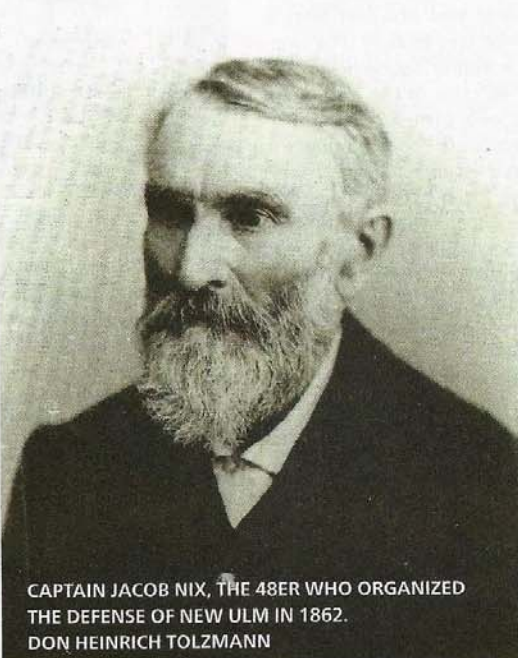
The town is full of German heritage and continues to be a German Oasis in the west.

BY DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN

If you are looking for a place to spend the rest of your life in a town, which is almost completely German; where you will find all the amenities of life; and where there is an enjoyable, pleasant and sociable lifestyle, then you couldn't find a better place than New Ulm." So wrote J.H. Strasser in his history of the town: *New Ulm in Wort und Bild* (1892).

A recent visitor's guide to New Ulm notes that the German heritage "is evident in the architecture, and especially in the neatness and care visible in the trim yards and well-kept houses and store fronts". Due to plans of its founders, "it has a precise layout of streets and parks, which provide a variety of recreational opportunities".

Located in Brown County in southwest Minnesota, New Ulm was founded in 1854 by the Chicago Landverein, and its members



CAPTAIN JACOB NIX, THE 48ER WHO ORGANIZED
THE DEFENSE OF NEW ULM IN 1862.
DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN

were followed by those of another German-American settlement society, the Turner Settlement Society of Cincinnati. More immigrants came from Germany, as well as German-Bohemians from Austria-Hungary.

Early on various suggestions were made for the name of the town such as Germania, Nibelungen, and Teutonia, but agreement finally settled on the name of New Ulm. Strasser (1855-1914) appropriately called the town "a German oasis" in the West. He ought to know, as he was publisher and editor of the town's German newspaper, the *New Ulm Post*. However, even an oasis can get hit by a storm, as New Ulm was in 1862 and 1917.

The first one came during the *Indianeraufstand* (Indian uprising) of 1862, when the town faced attack by the Dakota Sioux



THE BROWN COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MUSEUM.
NEW ULM CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

Indians. Originally called the Sioux Uprising, this conflict is now generally known as the U.S.-Dakota War. Fortunately, a veteran of the 1848 Revolution in Germany, Captain Jacob Nix (1822-97), was on hand to get the town's defense organized. A historical marker notes: "His military know-how helped Nix hastily organize for battle by barricading three downtown blocks. In the heat of the 1st Battle of New Ulm (Aug. 19), Captain Nix had a finger shot off but continued to lead the barricaded settlers in repulsing a fierce Dakota attack." It also noted that Nix "personified the spirit of the German Forty-Eighters: For liberty by word and deed in the Old Country and in the New!"

During World War I, New Ulm faced another storm as a result of an anti-war rally held in July 1917 two months after the U.S. had declared war against Germany. Critical comments were made by various speakers regarding the legitimacy of the war, and which were better left unsaid given the anti-German spirit of the time. Unfortunately, this caused questions to be raised in the press about the town's patriotism. Ultimately, this caused the governor of Minnesota to remove the mayor, Dr. Louis A. Fritsche, and city attorney, Albert Pfaender, from office.

However, both were above reproach, and had merely voiced concerns that many German-Americans had about the war. Not surprisingly, soldiers from New Ulm did their duty, and served patriotically in the armed services. In 1920, Fritsche was re-elected mayor, and one of his first actions was to reappoint Pfaender as city attorney, righting the wrong that had been done to these highly respected officials.

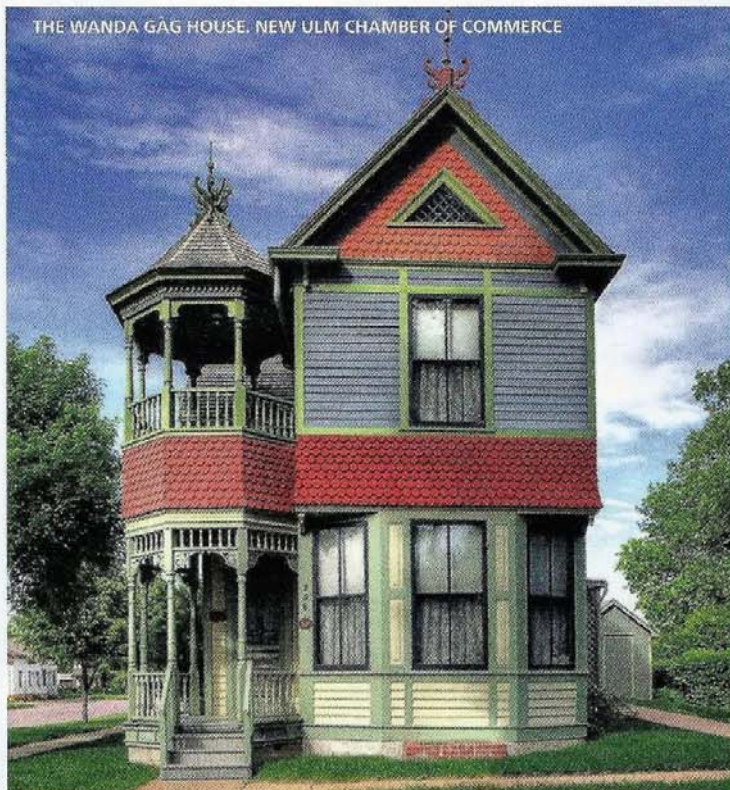
Due to the rise of the Third Reich in the 1930s, it was an



THE HERMANN MONUMENT.
ALLAN R. GEBHARD



THE BEER WAGON AT SCHELL'S BREWERY. DON BORSTAD



THE WANDA GAG HOUSE, NEW ULM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

entirely different case when it came to World War II. Like elsewhere, those of German descent strongly supported the war effort, and served honorably in the armed forces. In October 1941, Gerhart Seger, vice-president of the German-American Congress for Democracy, spoke at meetings in New Ulm, strongly condemning Nazi Germany. Here and elsewhere, his views best reflected those of German-Americans regarding the Third Reich. Seger (1896-1967), a former member of the Reichstag, had emigrated to the U.S. in 1934 due to his opposition to the regime, and moved to New York where he edited the *Neue Volks-Zeitung*, an anti-Nazi paper.

Since World War II much has been done to preserve and promote the German heritage of the town, and according to the U.S. Census 66 percent of its residents claim at least some German ancestry. Today, its population numbers almost 14,000. For visitors New Ulm offers a wealth of opportunities to enjoy its German heritage, from historic sites to various festivities. It would be impossible to cover all the points of interest, but several are worth taking note of for those planning a visit:

Hermann Monument: Overlooking the town from Hermann Heights Park, is a 102-foot statue honoring an early Germanic leader, Arminius (18/17BC-21AD), whose name was Germanized to Hermann by Martin Luther. In 9 A.D. Hermann's army defeated three Roman legions at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, a historic battle that stopped Rome from conquering Germania. Dedicated in 1897, the monument was modeled after the Hermannsdenkmal near Detmold in North-Rhine Westphalia. In 2000, it was designated as a national symbol of German heritage by the U.S. Congress. Visitors can take the staircase up to an observation platform for an excellent view of the city of New Ulm. Each September the HermannFest is sponsored by the Hermann Monument Society in the park surrounding the monument. The monument is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Martin Luther College: Located directly across the street from the Hermann Monument is this liberal arts college, which was founded in 1884, and is operated by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. An impressive statue of Martin Luther stands at the center of the campus that is noted for its older and more recent architecture. Old Main, for example, was built in the Gothic Revival style, and is on



GERMAN MUSIC IS EVER PRESENT AT THE VICTORIAN BLAST. NEW ULM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

the National Register of Historic Places. The college has an annual concert in its Chapel of the Christ, which features a majestic organ. German is one of several languages that are part of the college's curriculum.

Schell's Brewery: This second oldest family-owned brewery in the U.S. was founded in 1856 by August Schell, an immigrant from the Black Forest region, and is well known for its fine brews, ranging from Pilsner to Oktoberfest. The family home, a beautiful 19th century Victorian era mansion, is surrounded by a garden, and with the brewery, is on the National Register of Historic Places. The brewery features tours, a Biergarten, a gift shop and an interesting Museum of Brewing. Two festivals take place on the brewery's grounds: Bockfest, the oldest such festival in the country, and Oktoberfest.

Domeier's German Store: Opened in 1934 by Agatha Domeier, the store has all kinds of interesting German items:



DR. LOUIS A. FRITSCH. FIND A GRAVE

cuckoo clocks, music boxes, books, maps, flags, cards, music, foods, candies, Christmas ornaments, hats, decorations, etc. In November and December, it features a Weihnachtsmarkt and in the spring an Ostermarkt. "Like an enchanted corner of the Black Forest...spirited straight from the Old Country," as described in local advertisements, this store is a must-see place in New Ulm.

Turner Hall: Above the bar on a shelf in Turner Hall there is a bust of Turnvater Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852), founding father of the Turner movement in Germany. The Turner motto is a "sound mind in a sound body," as the goal is to keep mentally and physically fit. New Ulm acquired a reputation as a "Turnerstadt," or Turner town, due to the prominent role the Turnverein has played. Aside from gymnastics, Turner Hall has offered social, cultural, and educational programs and activities, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Lunch and dinner



DOMIEIER'S GERMAN STORE, KYLE KRENZ

are served in the Rathskeller surrounded by murals of sites in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. During the Civil War a number of Turners served honorably in various units of the Union Army.

Brown County Historical Society Museum: Located in a German Renaissance style brick building that was once a post office, this museum is filled with fascinating exhibits such as "Becoming Brown County: The Land and its People". Of particular interest is the third-floor exhibit on "Never Shall I forget — Brown County and the U.S.-Dakota War", which covers the frontier war of 1862, and how the town successfully survived two attacks. The Research Library provides a wealth of historical materials, and Darla Gebhard, Research Librarian and expert on local history, can provide visitors with information about them. Books on local history are available in the gift shop.

German Heritage Book Collection: This collection was established in 2000 thanks to the efforts of Denny Warta, an active promoter of the town's German heritage, and is located at the New Ulm Public Library. Its website notes: "This collection of about 100 books is devoted not to German history per se, but more precisely to German-American history. Begun in 2000, this still small collection is nonetheless noteworthy in its attempts to collect materials on this focused topic... It is believed to be the only such specialized German-American history collection in a public library in the United States... While scholars find the collection of note, so do genealogists and anyone interested in German-American history. All of the materials circulate and may be borrowed locally or through interlibrary loan."

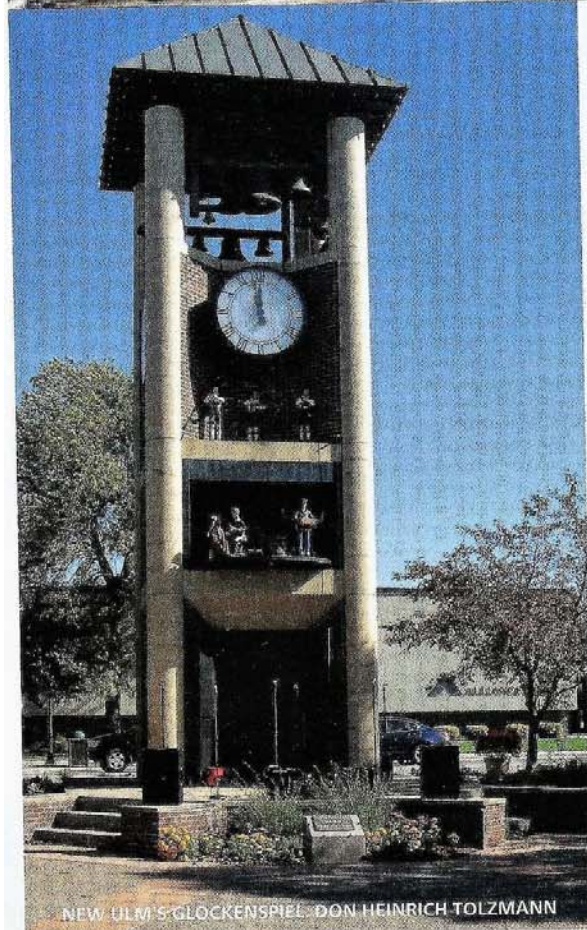
German-Bohemian Immigrant Monument: This monument carries the following inscription: "It was erected in 1991 by the German-Bohemian Heritage Society to honor the German-Bohemian immigrants who had the courage and foresight to come to this country...Inscribed in granite slabs around the base of the monument are over 350 im-

THE BUST OF TURNVATER JAHN AT TURNER HALL, DENNY WARTA





OLD MAIN AT MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE. WIKIPEDIA



NEW ULM'S GLOCKENSPIEL. DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN

migrant family names. The first immigrants were farm settlers. As more and more arrived, and as they could all no longer farm, they settled in the city of New Ulm and some of the small communities to the west and north...The bronze statue that rests on top of the granite base was designed and sculpted by the renowned sculptor Leopold Hafner, a German-Bohemian who now lives near Passau, Germany." The German-Bohemian Heritage Society publishes a newsletter, and also maintains the GBHS Library-Resource Center in New Ulm.

Glockenspiel: Germans are known for punctuality, and a good place to check on time is at New Ulm's Glockenspiel, which was dedicated in 1980. It stands 45 feet tall and has a musical tower with 37 bronze bells and 12 animated figures. The Glockenspiel is in Schonlau Park, which honors Theodore H. and Clara K. Schonlau.

Guten Tag Haus: For visitors this is a good place for gift and souvenir items such as beer steins, smokers, nutcrackers, German foods, etc.

Way of the Cross: This shrine of the Catholic Diocese of New Ulm is one of the loveliest sites in town. Built on a hillside in 1904, it features fourteen stations, a grotto and the Lady of Sorrows Chapel. The statuary of each station came from the Bavarian Royal Academy of Art in Munich, and each station has inscriptions in German and English. The Way leads up the hill to a beautiful chapel behind which there is a painting of the city of Jerusalem. The Way of the Cross was initiated by Father Alexander Berghold with Sister Flavia of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. Berghold (1838-1907) served for many years as pastor of the Holy Trinity Church and was instrumental in the formation of other churches in southern Minnesota. His history of the U.S.-Dakota War is available in the gift shop of the Brown County Historical Society Museum.

Wanda Gág House: This is the childhood home of Wanda

Gåg (1893-1946), the author and artist who is well known for her best-selling book *Millions of Cats* (1928), which still is in print. Built in the Queen Anne architectural style in 1904, it was designed by her father, Anton Gåg (1859-1908), a German-Bohemian artist who completed several paintings dealing with the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War. One of Wanda's most interesting works about the German heritage was her book *Tales from Grimm* (1936), which she translated from German and illustrated.

Festivals: New Ulm has been called "the city of festivals," and several take place here such as Bock Fest in the winter, the Bavarian Blast in July, HermannFest in September, Oktoberfest and the German-American Day Parade in October.

Convention and Visitors Bureau: Probably the best place to begin a visit is at this place in downtown New Ulm. Here a visitor can get a copy of *New Ulm: The Official Guide*, which provides information on shopping, dining, lodging, and on many more places than can be mentioned here. For further information, visit www.newulm.com/visitors-community/.GL

Books about New Ulm:

A German Town: A History of New Ulm, Minnesota (2004), David J. Hoisington

The German-Bohemians: The Quiet Immigrants (1995), Lavern J. Rippley and Robert J. Paulson

Eight Days in August: The Accounts of the Casualties and Survivors in Brown County during the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 (2012), Darla Gebhard and John Isch

New Ulm, Minnesota: J.H. Strasser's History and Chronology (2003), Don Heinrich Tolzmann, ed.



THE GERMAN-BOHEMIAN IMMIGRANT MONUMENT
DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN

BELOW: NEW ULM'S OKTOBERFEST. NEW ULM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

