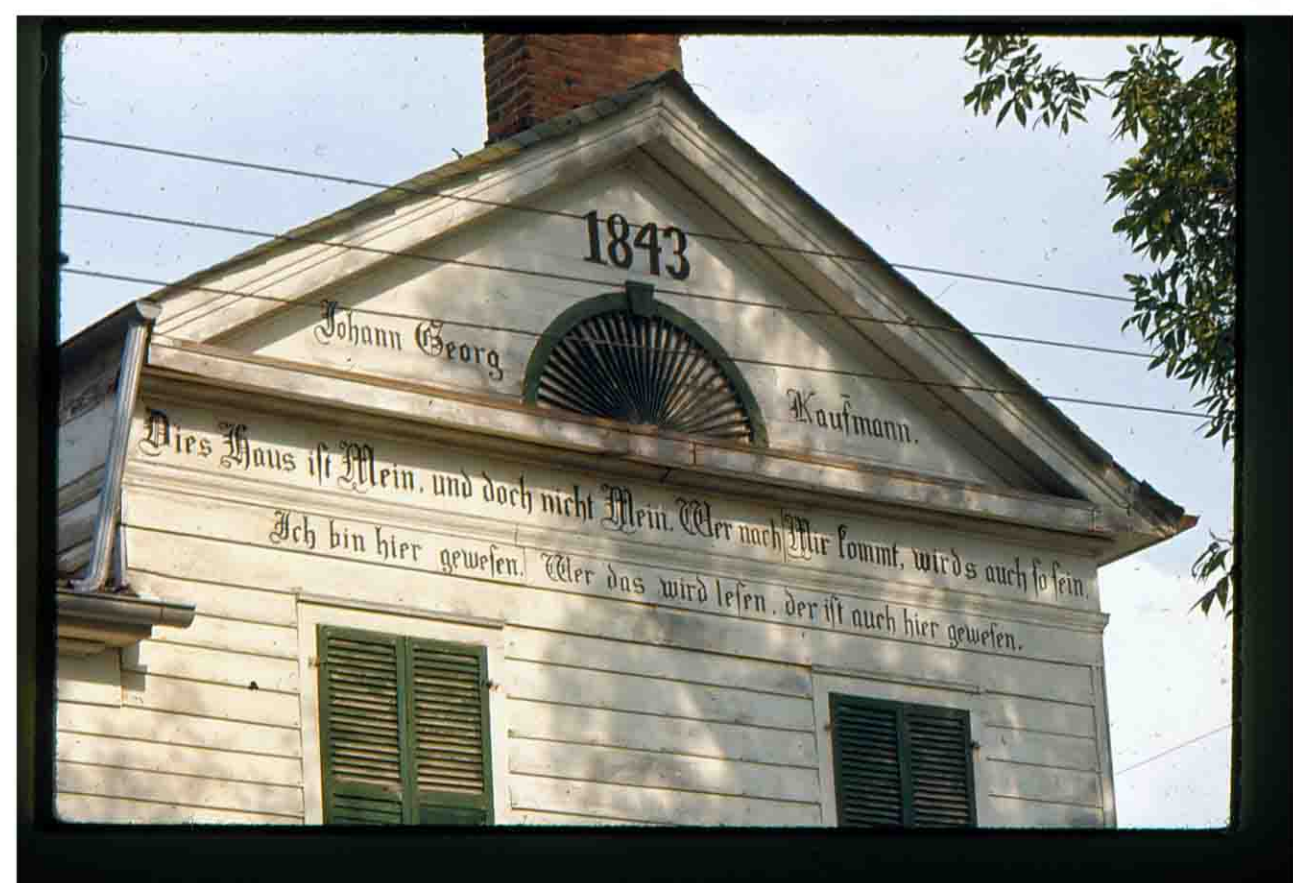


HOPE FOR A *Better* LIFE : GERMANS

A New Rhine Valley

The lure of a country with ample inexpensive land would be a great draw for many German speaking people. Anyone who has seen the Rhine River Valley, flanked with bluffs on either side, can imagine why Nauvoo would have such appeal. A place with the opportunity to own land would surely offer the opportunity to practice vocations, crafts, and trades.

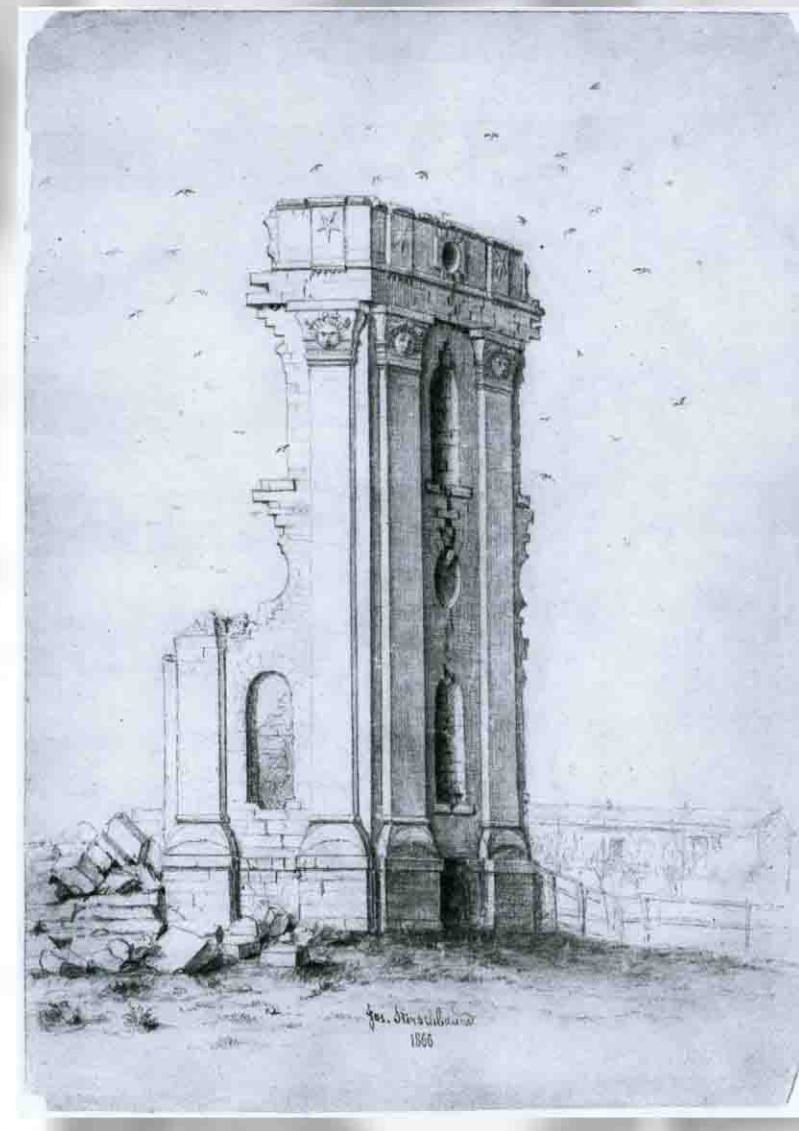


"This house is mine and yet not mine. Who comes after me shall find the same."
A German inscription on a Mormon-built Nauvoo house

Coolidge House with "House Painting" as often seen in German cities - the words should not be translated literally but are an idiom suggesting that life is constantly changing - a fitting theme for Journey Stories
Courtesy Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.



Cutting ice and storing it through the summer was an important occupation before the days of refrigeration - both the Kraus and Schenk families operated ice houses
Courtesy of Nauvoo Historical Society



Kirschbaum sketch of Nauvoo Temple ruin
Courtesy of Jacki Powell, Nauvoo, Illinois and Judy Hast, Sebewing, Michigan

Brief History:

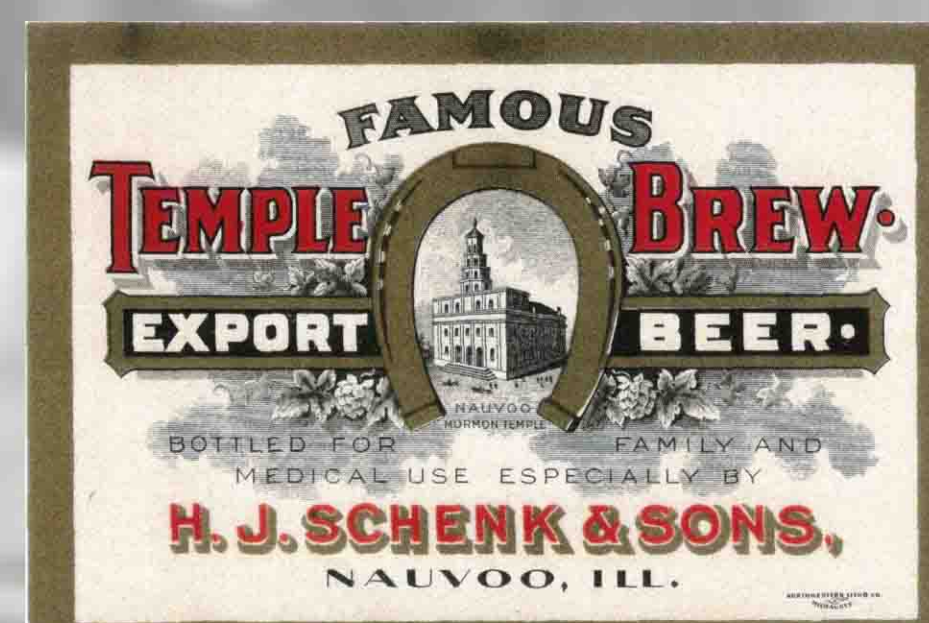
By the late 19th century, Nauvoo was considered the most German speaking town in Illinois. Mass was always in Latin, but the Catholic Priest sometimes preached his sermon in German. Until 1903, the Presbyterian Church alternated Sunday services between English and German. The Methodists had separate German and English speaking congregations until 1904. The Lutherans maintained separate congregations until 1915. Many of the schools were conducted in German. If it had not been for World War I and the "need" to downplay German heritage, you might be reading this presentation in German. While immigration is often driven by poverty, the Germans arriving in Illinois in the mid to late 1800's were solid middle class citizens well trained in trades and professions.

The Schenk Family

The Schenk family ran one of two breweries in Nauvoo. Their brewery began as a small enterprise on the river about 1849 but then moved to the bluff immediately northwest of the Mormon Temple site. Built of salvaged temple stone, the brewery became a major business in Nauvoo. Some of its buildings and the beer cellars became part of Nauvoo's blue cheese factory when it opened in 1937. One of the Schenk brothers ran a brewery in St. Joseph, Missouri, from 1900 until 1919. There are no traces today of the brewing industry in Nauvoo, but we should note the impact German Brewers had on the Midwest: Anheuser, Busch, Pabst, Schlitz, and Miller.



View of Schenk Brewery looking from behind
Courtesy of Larry Nichol, Nauvoo, Illinois



Schenk Beer label
Courtesy of Bob Kay Collection



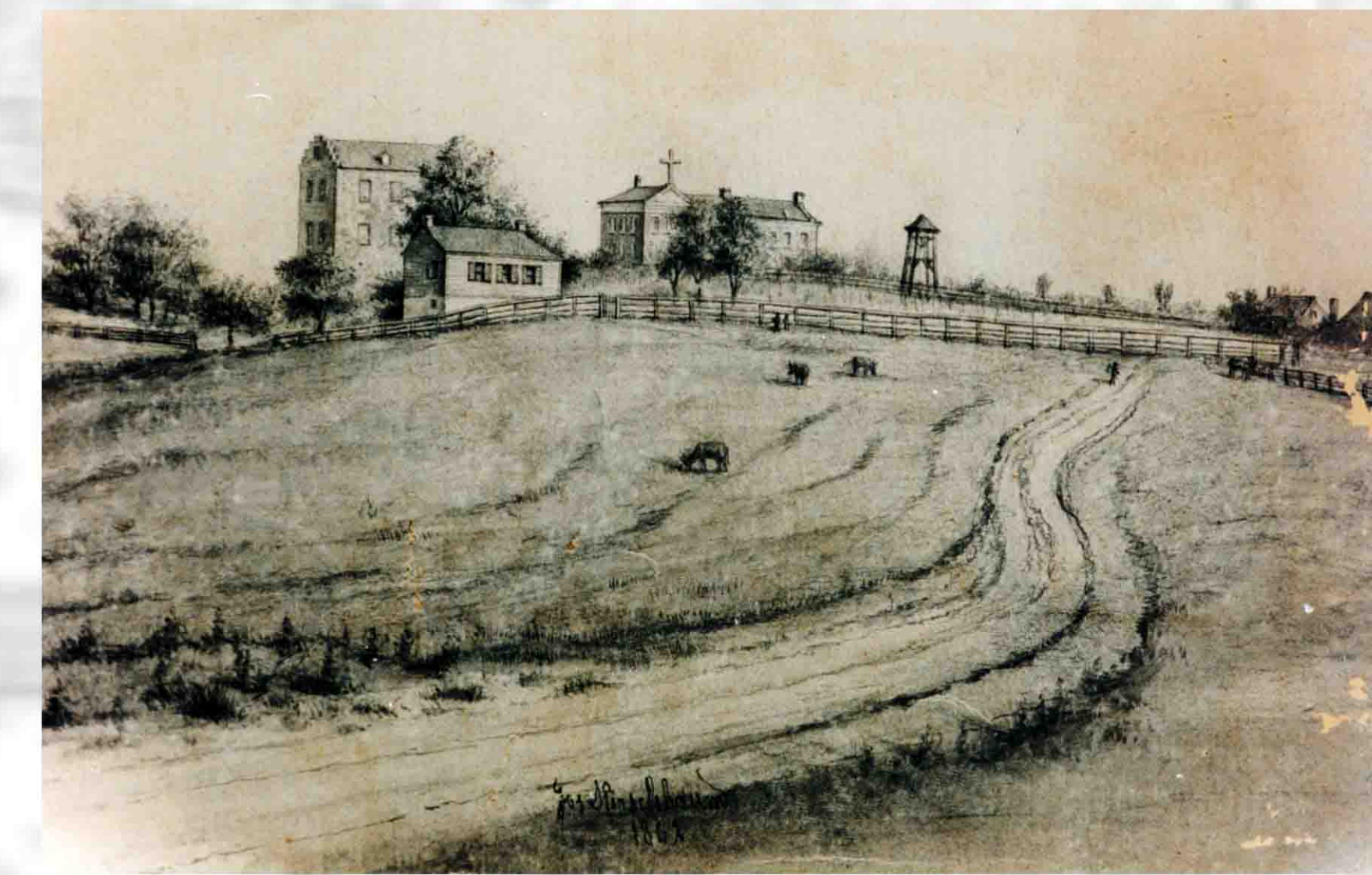
Schenk Brewery wagon ready to make deliveries
Courtesy of Larry Nichol, Nauvoo, Illinois

The Kirschbaum Family

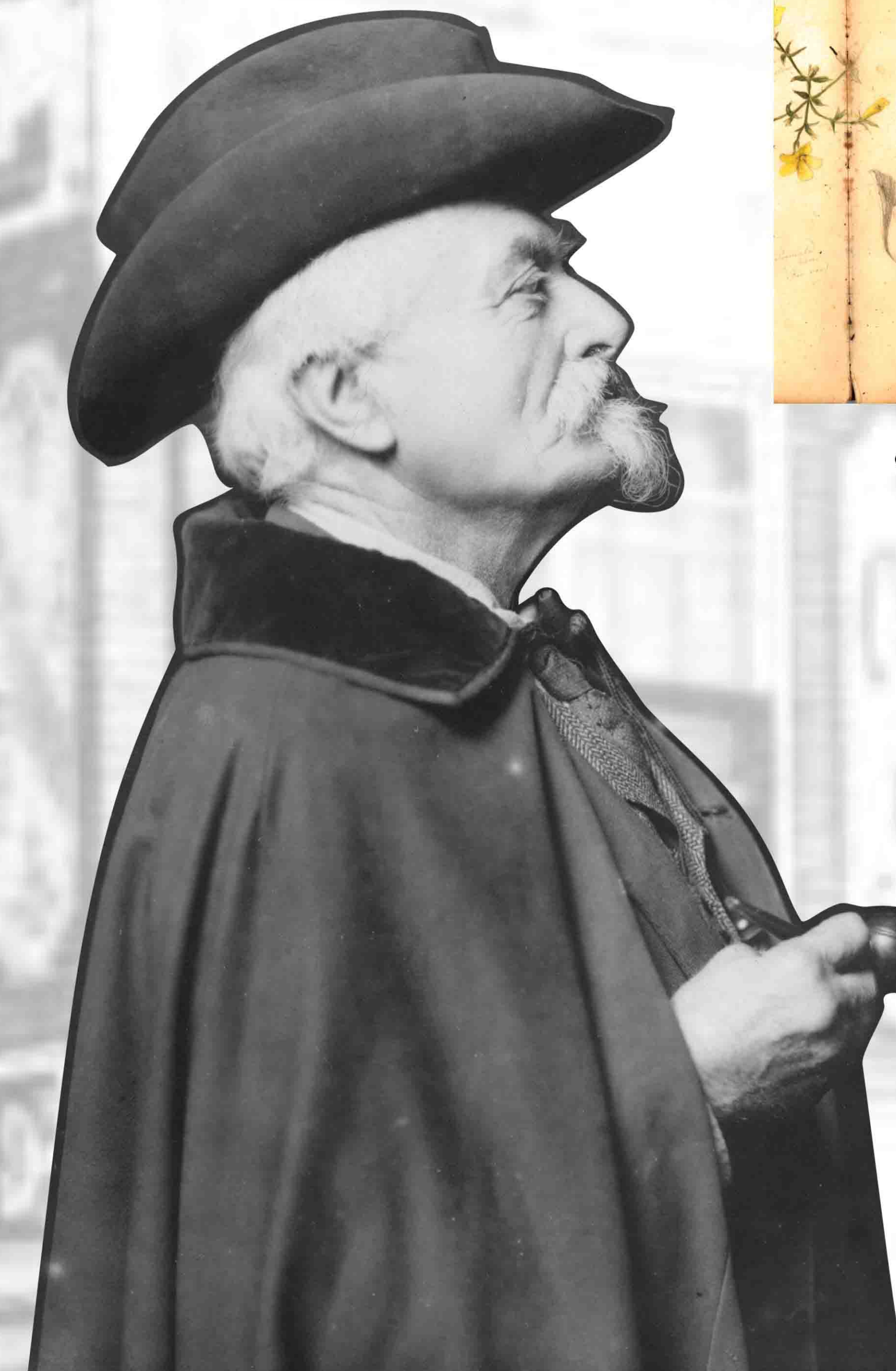
When the Kirschbaums arrived in Nauvoo in 1858, they purchased several acres of land, including Mormon homes built by the Weiler and Fischer families. Joseph Kirschbaum was an artist, musician, and horticulturist. Some of the best documentation of post-Mormon Nauvoo comes from the beautifully executed sketches he made. His gardens were the inspiration for his flower sketches, and the Catholic Sisters were almost daily recipients of bouquets of violets fresh from his garden. He had a tremendous tenor voice and not only sang with—and perhaps organized—the Catholic choir but also sang as he wandered through his gardens.



Joseph Kirschbaum sketch of tulips
Courtesy of Mary Jo Schetz, Nauvoo, Illinois



Joseph Kirschbaum sketch of 1862 showing the Schenk Brewery and St. Patrick's Catholic Church (now Villa Marie)
Courtesy Betty Smith & Jeanne Parker, Nauvoo, Illinois



Joseph Kirschbaum (1829-1926) gifted artist and leading citizen of Nauvoo
Courtesy of Mary Jo Schetz, Nauvoo, Illinois



Early Post Card photo of the Hotel Nauvoo
Courtesy of Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.

The Oriental Hotel operated from 1895 until 1946 - purchased by the Kraus Family in 1946; it opened as the Hotel Nauvoo in 1948
Courtesy of Nauvoo Historical Society



Early photo of John A. Kraus Cafe - started in 1912, still operates today as Grandpa John's Cafe
Courtesy of Marilyn Kraus, Nauvoo, Illinois

The Kraus Family

While many businesses of German immigrants and their descendants flourished and faded, one family has served the Nauvoo community for almost a century with its entrepreneurial skills. John A. Kraus opened the Kraus Cafe and Confectionary (now known as Grandpa John's Café) in 1918. While you may not play billiards or do the "Lindy Hop" on the 1920s dance floor, you can still get a delicious ice cream cone. In 1946, John purchased the Oriental Hotel, and his son Elmer transformed it into the famous Hotel Nauvoo. Four generations of the Kraus family have served in the family's businesses in Nauvoo.

Of course, not every dream of every immigrant was fulfilled, but most German settlers found a way of life that was pleasing, and they stayed in the area. In the 1800s, the German family was nuclear. Inheritance laws allowed that a child inheriting the farm would also provide for his parents and unwed siblings. In Europe, many households included three generations. While not so rigidly practiced in America, the family was still important. In oral histories all of the above interviewed families spoke of their closeness even today. Patty Henson perhaps sums it up best, "And generations of his family [Joseph Kirschbaum] have lived here since. So he came here and stayed, raised a family and that family continues the legacy."

Background image of the Central Drug Store shows the extent of the German influence in the history of Nauvoo
Courtesy of Nauvoo Historical Society