

# BALTIMORE GASLIGHT

Newsletter of the Baltimore City Historical Society

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## Merchant Hecht Kept Watch - I

By Michael J. Lisicky

For almost 160 years, the Hecht family operated retail establishments throughout Baltimore. Samuel Hecht Jr. laid the groundwork for the Hecht Company retail empire when he opened his first store in Fell's Point in 1857. But it was Samuel's older brother, Simeon, who helped fund Samuel's original store. Simeon came to America from Germany in 1844 and became a successful retail and wholesale merchant. By 1860, East Baltimore had more than 10 Hecht family businesses, most funded with Simeon's fortune. However, as the country found its way back together after the Civil War, Simeon was no longer the figure he once was in the Hecht family and his floundering businesses reflected that status.

In 1904, Simeon Hecht's son hand-wrote his father's story. These memoirs, long stored at the Jewish Museum of Maryland here, give new light to life in Baltimore, especially Fell's Point, during the mid-1800s. Hecht details his family's early business dealings and does not hold back his feelings toward certain family members. Hecht also details immigration during the 1850s. Simeon pungently describes the waves of German, Irish and Jewish immigrants that settled in East Baltimore.

A remaining mystery of these memoirs is which of Simeon's sons actually wrote them. Simeon and his wife Henrietta had 10 children. Two of his sons would have been of the proper age but neither attached his name. In checks of dates and addresses, inconsistencies occur. But these recollections offer important documentation of the times in which Hecht's grew to 80 locations, from Baltimore to Norfolk to Wilmington, NC to Nashville, TN. The *(Continued on Page 5)*

### Learning Center Talks

The Society's third lecture series, Baltimore History Evenings initiated by President Michael Franch, will begin on the third Thursday of January, the 20th, and continue on third Thursdays through June. They are at the Village Learning Place at 2521 St. Paul Street, The Learning Center co-sponsors the series, which is free, with refreshments at 7PM and the speaker at 7:30.



Photo by Lew Diuguid

*Gay Street entrance to Zion, less familiar than from garden on City Hall side.*

## Zion, Keeper of the Flame

By Don Torres

When we see Zion Church today, bordered by Holliday, Lexington, and Gay Streets, we view a church in the heart of an urban center, Interstate 83 at the perimeter, office buildings and The Block two blocks away. But in 1755, colonial Baltimore Town was a mere settlement, 26 years old, filling no particular need and growing little. For the British colony of Maryland, Annapolis was the major port and seat of government, home to wealthy English merchants and land owners.

Yet for the poor German immigrants of the early 1700s, Annapolis held no promise. Many instead migrated north, and others south from Pennsylvania to Baltimore Town, where there was more opportunity. Among these early Germans were craftsmen who saw in the Jones Falls, Gwynns Falls, and Patapsco River sources of power for mills.

As the population of German Christians grew, the group known as Evangelicals in Germany, but Lutherans in America, desired a church of their own. Lutherans had worshiped at St. Paul's Protestant-Episcopal Church, Saratoga and Charles Streets, but St. Paul's became unhappy with the "bad reputation and conduct" of some of the itinerant German preachers *(Continued on Page 3)*

## Society to Honor Mayor, 11 Others at Zion Oct. 30

The Baltimore City Historical Society will host its 10th Annual Mayor's Reception on Saturday, October 30, from noon to 2PM at the Zion Lutheran Church, 400 East Lexington Street. Following lunch in the historic church of the city's ethnic German community, founded in 1750--see adjacent article and others throughout this issue--the Society will honor 11 for their recording of Baltimore's history or their contributions to it. Tickets are \$30 and can be ordered through use of the coupon on Page 6. Parking is available at the lot next to the church's main entrance on Gay Street.

The authors of recent publications to be recognized include Loyola University Professor Jack Breihan, co-editor of "From Mobtown to Charm City: New Perspectives on Baltimore History," concerning the suburban development of Baltimore during and after World War II; journalist Antero Pietila for his "Not in My Neighborhood—How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City"; and the Maryland Historical Society's Senior Reference Librarian Francis P. O'Neill, whose index of obituaries and marriages in *The Sun* is indispensable for genealogists.

Outstanding Baltimore citizens will be honored for a variety of good works. Willa Bickam and Brendan Walsh will be recognized for the "hospitality" they extend at Viva House to poor and marginalized residents. Wayne Schaumburg is cited for his lectures and tours that have enlightened thousands on topics including architecture, the 1903 fire, and Green Mount Cemetery with its history by tombs. The Honorable J. Joseph Curran will be thanked for his half century of service as a Baltimore Delegate and State Senator and as Maryland's Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General.

Baltimoreans now deceased will be remembered for their contributions to City life: artist Ralph McGuire (1921-2005) for depiction of bustling industry; actress Verna Day-Jones (1924-2009) for roles in 45 plays over 50 years with Baltimore Arena Stage, and legislators Howard "Pete" Rawlings (1937-2003) and Rosalie Silber Abrams (1916-2009).

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## Editorial

### Where the Germans Went

As the Society is to hold its 10th Mayor's Reception October 30 at Zion Lutheran, mother church of the City's German community, The Gaslight posed this question: What has become of this once major ethnic stronghold? It was not just nostalgia for Haussner's Restaurant nor the old orange brick biergarten on Cathedral Street, where the taps flowed well beyond World War II. Indeed, the culture had survived the war. In 1940, about 90,000 Baltimoreans were ethnic Germans in a population then not far above today's 630,000 or so. Then what?

To start, the disappearance is far from complete. The durability of the German-speaking Zion is a rebuttal in itself. Organizations listed on Page 6 are proof of diverse extant ethnicity. Bernard A. Penner, a member of BCHS and the Zion, put that issue pungently in a joke: "What do you have with three Germans? Four clubs." The affiliations, we found, continue but tend more to intellectual motivation--genealogists, and our sorts, historians, instead of German speakers bonding with the homeland.

Much of the Germanic diminution reflects the same flight of whites generally and then blacks to the suburbs that began in the 1950s. A wartime build-up to nearly 1 million population fall away and cultural institutions diffused into the counties. Absent throughout was that past ethnic elixir, arrival of more German immigrants. Postwar Germany became a place that Germans no longer wished to leave, said Penner. His father Heinrich was pastor of Zion until his death in 1984 and was from Germany.

John Dausch, 64, is Roman Catholic but also takes an active role at Zion. His great-great-grandfather came here in 1835 from Strassburg. He relates dilution of German fervor in part to 1950s classrooms having begun to teach "homogenized history."

Haussner's still was crowded when its second generation moved on. Eichenkranz, alone in the City, still offers German beer with sauerbraten. But no draft. No demand.

Maryland Historical Society

### Baltimoreans Read in German

By Judith Armold

Locust Point was, after the revolutionary fever that swept Europe in the late 1840s, the landing for large numbers of German immigrants. Many moved on to burgeoning German communities in the West, but others stayed--including Freidrich Raine in 1840. At 19, he joined his father and brother, who had already set up a print shop and two short-lived journals here.

Raine established one of earliest German-language newspapers, *Der Deutsche Correspondent*, in 1841. It first appeared weekly, then semi-weekly or tri-weekly, until it became a daily for a short time in 1844 and then consistently so in 1847, as the influx of German immigrants reached heights. The paper continued as a prominent resource for the German community until 1918.

By the 1860s, Raine found that his many civic and governmental interests made it difficult to continue control of the newspaper, and his brother Eduard began to take over management. In 1868, Governor Oden Bowie made Freidrich part of his staff with the title "Colonel." That year, Raine was elected to the City Council and was a member of Maryland's electoral college.

Raine was strongly committed to the German-American community, and it is said that his efforts were responsible for the German language being introduced as a subject in city schools. In April 1885, President Grover Cleveland appointed Raine consul general in Berlin, where he remained for four years. In May 1891, Baltimore celebrated concurrently Raine's 70th birthday and the 50th anniversary of *Der Deutsche Correspondent*.

By 1914, Germans made up 20 percent of the city's population. During World War I, a law required foreign-language newspapers to file with the Postmaster General English translations of articles and editorials pertaining to the war. *Correspondent* was proud to be one of the first to receive an exemption, but it did not save the paper from falling victim to anti-German sentiment. Raine's niece Annie "suspended" publication in 1918.

The original newspaper never resumed publication, but two German-language successors continued, with difficulty, until WWII. A last version closed in 1978, according to *The Sun*. The Maryland Historical Society holds perhaps the most complete collection of *Der Deutsche Correspondent*, which it has been digitizing and making more readily available.

### Where Have the Germans Gone?

By Tom Cripps

Early in the past century, my parents and a couple of uncles and aunts spent childhoods in the Allgemeine Deutsche Waisenhaus Baltimore--The General German Orphan Asylum of Baltimore--their entry into the city's Deutsche Kultur that included their own newspaper, a brand new Baltimore Symphony and its German conductor, Gustav Strube; a Polytechnic Institute in which kids were expected to read German; several breweries, shooting clubs, choral groups--Sangerbunde--and a Gemeinschaft, a sense of community, that supported hospitals and asylums. Their skills were legendary: mechanic, machinist, or foundryman in steel mill or machine shop.

In April 1936, they proudly filled Thames Street when the German armored cruiser, Emden, docked at Recreation Pier at the foot of Broadway. My parents took this 4-year-old to strut the decks--I was snapped wearing a sailor's cap as I sat on a rail. A group of Baltimore's Jews picketed our doings. They clearly knew more than my parents about the worsening plight of Jews in Germany.

My parents' childhood in the Waisenhaus marinated them in that culture. "Our crowd" were alumni of the asylum. We learned German nursery rhymes and spoke a family pidgin German. We ate in Haussner's and, in summer, ate crabs under paper lanterns in Benkert's Park. Then 1940, on a gray autumn day we visited the Light Street side of the harbor, a jumble of old piers and sheds where mostly bay ships unloaded. We stared at the blackened ship and saw the end of our child's view of Germany.

What would the Germans do? Far from driving them under ground, they rushed to the colors. My father became an air raid warden and donated blood to the Red Cross in amounts that gave our mother pause. We "went out" less--like everyone else. Some Sundays, we visited the Waisenhaus in its new address in Catonsville and brought an orphan home to dinner.

The war changed things, not by itself, but together with other forces at work, such as an American culture that made assimilation easy. Our taste in language took a hand. Compared with, say, the "romance" languages, Italian or Spanish--German was hard to learn and to say, harsh to the ear. As the century wore on, American kids took "easy" Spanish and French, dropping German.

H.L. Mencken was right when he wrote in 1928, "The melting pot has swallowed up the German-Americans as no other group."

## Jewish Migrants' Germanism Lost Fervor in Troubled Times

By Jay Merwin

Through the mid-20th century, German identity was a powerful current running through Jewish identity in Baltimore.

Jewish life here dates to the 18th century, but the first significant immigration of Jews came in the 1830s to '60s, almost entirely from Germany. A second wave, from the 1880s through 1920 and coming mostly from Eastern Europe and Russia, tended to reinforce cultural distinctions between the German identity of Baltimore's existing Jewish families and the new arrivals from very different cultures. A third wave, like the first, was German--Jews fleeing the rise of Nazism in the 1930s.

Among the rich material available in the library and bookstore of the Jewish Museum of Maryland at 15 Lloyd Street, three provide the basis of this article: "The Making of An American Jewish Community: The History of Baltimore Jewry from 1773 to 1920," by Isaac M. Fine; "Uncommon Threads: Threads That Wove the Fabric of Baltimore Jewish Life," by Philip Kahn Jr., and "Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933-1945," essays published by the Museum.

The German-Jewish heritage starts with prominent families, such as the Ettings and Cohens, who had settled here in the late 18th century and were committed to preservation of German culture. Solomon Etting, a businessman, was an incorporator of the German Society of Maryland in 1817 and its vice president for 20 years. Jacob Cohen, also a businessman and civic leader, was another founder. His brother, Benjamin, was treasurer, succeeded in the post by his son Isaac.

By the 1850s, as the city expanded, those of German heritage concentrated in "Little Germany" east of Jones Falls, Fine wrote. "Like the German Gentiles, the Jewish Germans spoke the language of their Vaterland; they brought up their children in this language; and they advertised their private as well as communal affairs in Baltimore's two German dailies . . . and German was all-important in their . . . intercourse with their non-Jewish German neighbors, with whom their relationship was friendly. For a long time this 'native tongue' remained an integral part of the curriculum of the Jewish schools."

The largely German identity of Baltimore's Jews did not shield them from discrimination and anti-Semitism, sometimes of a distinctly German origin. In but one instance, a local newspaper formed in 1860 made a specialty of reprinting anti-Semitic articles from Germany.

A second wave of Jewish immigration was much larger and caused cultural tensions within the community as the Jewish population expanded from about 10,000 in 1880 to 60,000 by 1918. These new arrivals tended to be poor, less educated and from cultures that seemed exotic to the Germans who had preceded them. The reaction in some cases was to emphasize German identity.

Kahn describes a culture shock among the established German Jews who "feared that their reputation would suffer because of the tendency of Christians to judge all Jews to be alike. A small group of well-to-do Baltimore German Jews responded more receptively to their arrival. . . . [T]his was the only section the Russian Jews could turn to for empathy and help."

The importance of such distinctions within the community began to wane as immigrants from the second wave found their way in American life and as the rise of Nazi Germany prompted Jews of all backgrounds toward common identity. The third wave in the 1930s was drawn mostly from the people of the middle classes and higher, now endangered by the Nazi ascent to power. As Deborah R. Weiner, a historian at the Jewish Museum, put it in an essay in the Library collection, "German Jews had embraced the liberal, modern culture that flowered in Germany in the first decades of the 20th century, but the Nazis obliterated this particular expression of German identity, and the refugees felt ambivalent, at best, about the cultural traditions they brought to their new homes."

For these refugees, preservation of German culture in Baltimore was less important. Weiner quotes a refugee who arrived in 1940 as saying, "My mother, in particular, wanted to put the past behind her. . . . There was a rule in our house: we were not permitted to talk any German." Modern developments, such as the radio, also hastened adoption of American culture.

By the mid-20th century, however, much of the German identity in Baltimore Jewish life had given way to a more common Jewish identity. Fine attributes this to three factors: working together in common Jewish causes wore away some of the cultural differences; as the Jewish population increased, cultural pedigree faded against common American and Jewish identity; most important, the Holocaust followed by the founding of Israel in 1948, "made people speak of the 'oneness of our community' and realize that 'our community knows no borders.'"

## Zion - Continued from page 1

conducting services and asked the Germans to leave. Then a German immigrant, wealthy and educated, Dr. Charles Frederick Wiesenthal, settled here. Born in Prussia in 1726 and reportedly one of Frederick the Great's physicians, he set out in 1755 to eliminate "quackery" in medicine, and also took an immediate interest in the German community. It is said that it was through his contact with the Lutheran Ministerium in Philadelphia that Baltimore Town's Evangelical Lutheran congregation received its first fulltime pastor, the Rev. John George Barger. Although there was no church building, he provided regular services in the homes of members.

As noted in a 1924 history of "Old Zion" by a later pastor, Julius K. Hofmann (served 1889-1928), Dr. Wiesenthal was was surgeon major of the First Maryland Battalion during the Revolutionary War. In 1784, he founded the German Society of Maryland on behalf of the Germans coming to this port as indentured servants, whose rights were often abused. He also founded the first medical school in Maryland.

With Pastor Barger providing regular services to the growing number of Evangelical Lutherans, the congregation contracted to buy land for its first church, on Fish Street (now Saratoga) near Gay Street in 1771. A hallmark of Zion Church, use of German in services, was even then a major concern. Children of German immigrants were quickly absorbing the English language and culture. Many in the congregation therefore wanted specific wording in the deed to guarantee that Zion would be a perpetual "German Congregation" in language.

Dr. Wiesenthal disagreed with that addition and filed the deed in Annapolis, sidestepping the issue. Still, although "German" was not included in the wording, only Zion Church to this day continues to offer religious services in German. In 1785 the name "Zion" was first associated with the Church. By 1790, the first federal census of Baltimore reported 13,503, including English, Scotch-Irish, Irish, French, Germans, and 1,600 African Americans (80% slaves). Zion grew to 318 members in 1804 and a larger church near the present one in 1808.

Even as Zion thrived and the city grew rapidly after the Revolutionary War, the German vs. English language debate continued. In 1823, seven Zion members left to form the first English Lutheran congregation in Baltimore. Zion kept German-only services until WWI.

In the 1800s, fol (Continued on Page 4)

## Zion - Continued from page 3

Following the French Revolution, concepts of democracy and liberal ideas spread throughout Europe. German immigrants, generally more educated and liberal thinking, were less attuned to Zion's orthodoxy. In 1835 came a pastor who reflected the liberal view, Heinrich Scheib (serving 1835-1897). He attracted younger, recent immigrants with his intellectual preaching, as well as other German immigrants, 1840-70, who did not adhere to any particular creed.

Pastor Scheib's wife, Lisette, was also taking an active role, a rarity for women at that time. She understood the needs of women in modern society and their value in strengthening the work of the church. In 1868, Mrs. Scheib formed the Ladies' Aid Society (Frauenverein), following the model of the German Women's League in 1865. The Society continues to this day.

Through the 1850s, Scheib faced troubles brewing in Baltimore and the rest of the country—strong anti-immigrant sentiments and the North-South conflict leading up to the Civil War. Zion, being an all-German mostly immigrant church, was a target of attacks by political ruffians of the Know-Nothing Party, who disrupted church services. The church countered with efforts to educate the "native" Americans about contributions made by ethnic Germans and how Zion could preserve German language and traditions and also be a loyal part of America. Property disasters also befell: a flash flood in 1837 then a fire in 1840 that left only the walls standing. Scheib rallied the congregation and the rebuilt Church opened the same year.

During the Civil War, the pastor's balance guided the congregation through the conflict. While most were pro-Union, Scheib sympathized with the Confederacy, not for its stance on slavery but in recognition of its social order in contrast to the rowdiness often evident on the Northern side. In the late 1800s, church activities began to drop off, including the closing of the German/English "Scheib" school—which had enrolled 802 boys and girls, many from non-Zion families, in 1865. At 88, the renowned Scheib retired in 1897, having served Zion for 61 years.

In the early 1900s, under Pastor Julius K. Hofmann (serving 1889-1928), growth resumed, the congregation reaching 650 in 1908. Activities included youth and adult Sunday school and monthly family socials. The church collected a library in two languages.

The 1904 Great Baltimore Fire barely spared Zion. The downtown devastation and



Photo courtesy of Budeke's Paints  
*An inscription reads: "Bremen Steamship Parade South Broadway 1868. Opening of North German Lloyd Steamship Line between Baltimore and Bremen." The photo is ensconced in what 155 years ago was the sanctuary of the German Methodist Church at 418 South Broadway in Fell's Point. Today, under the Alpine A-frame sitting just behind the storefronts is a storeroom for Budeke's Paints, which has its own German heritage. The current president is L. Bryan Koerber, whose great-grandfather, George H. Budeke, born in Frankfurt, established the business on Broadway in 1868.*

a continuing move of families from the center city brought renewed discussion of whether Zion should move as well. The congregation was divided, but the decision was to stay. A year later, Zion celebrated its 150th anniversary, and in 1909 another renovation. In 1912, the large beautiful church hall, Adlersaal (Eagle Hall), was dedicated.

In the first decade of the 1900s, 30 city churches offered services in German but by 1910 all had largely converted to English—except Zion. German immigration was again subsiding.

The founding of the German Empire in Europe raised the consciousness of Germans in America. In 1914, when war broke out in Europe, German-Americans and Zion supported the motherland. This angered many non-Germans, who generally supported the Allies. With America's entry against Germany, the Zion congregation led by Pastor Hofmann supported that cause; many congregants fought and many died.

The rise of Nazi Germany made the Church's stance on WW II largely clear-cut: 119 answered the call against Germany and Japan, and 5 died. The church donated an ambulance to the American Red Cross and

## Ranking German-American

Baltimore's most famous German American was also, perhaps, its most able writer in English: journalist H. L. Mencken. Evidence of his pro-German stance while still a young editor in World War I abounds. Vincent Fitzpatrick, keeper of the Mencken Room at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, in his book "H.L. Mencken," quotes the Sage of Baltimore: "England gave us Puritanism. Germany gave us Pilsner. Take your choice." The Sunpapers effectively silenced him for the duration. But Pulitzer Prize-winning book reviewer Jonathan Yardley, editor of a Mencken book, told attendees at the Pratt's Mencken Day on September 11 that "H.L. had a problem with Hitler." Still a German-phile, he saw Nazism as a perversion but wrote little about it.

Mencken, whose grandfather was born in Saxony, read German but "he could not speak the language fluently," said Fitzpatrick. Mencken attributed the diminution of ethnic Germans to the "melting pot"—they plunged in, shedding their difficult language and flaunting their appearance as look-alikes of the English. Mencken figures in a recent, poignant example of diminished German influence here. The Sun all through the Cold War maintained a news bureau in Bonn—a luxury for all but the wealthiest dailies and doubtless a nod in part to Mencken. That foreign bureau closed with the coming of The Sun's current domestic troubles.

blankets. As during WWI, the Parish House opened to servicemen on weekends, lodging 15,000. Zion returned to the Maryland Synod of the United Lutheran Church after many years of being independently Lutheran. It was a founder of the Central Churches of Baltimore, 12 downtown dedicated to Christian betterment.

In the 1968 riots following the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., armed soldiers occupied the church yard. It being Holy Week, Zion continued services and attendance held strong. The following year, the Children's Choir was created. In 1975, Zion became a Baltimore Historic Landmark. With installation of the Rev. H. J. Siegfried Otto (1985-99), a 20-year restoration began for the 250th anniversary in 2005.

Now, funds are being raised to restore the historic Moeller organ under Dr. Rev. Holger Roggelin. The Language School, formed to teach immigrants English, now serves German-Americans learning the language of their ancestors. Zion's pastors still must be born in Germany, and services for the membership of about 600 are still offered in German and English.

## Hecht - Continued from page 1

remaining stores were converted to Macy's locations in 2006, ending a local and regional retail era.

The Hecht son lays out four topics: the Hecht family, immigration, the Civil War, and Broadway in Fell's Point circa 1855. The latter two will be covered in Part II of this article in the spring issue.

Before immigrating to Baltimore, the Hecht family lived in the small Bavarian town of Langenschwarz in the province of Hesse-Nassau, described as a "ghetto of Jewish traders." Meyer Hecht and his wife Hannah (Bachrach) Langenschwarz had eight sons and one daughter. Meyer, a cattle dealer, was murdered in 1835. Son Asher immigrated to Baltimore in 1844, as did his brother Simeon.

Simeon stayed with Asher and his Uncle Ruben, the first two Hechts to settle in Baltimore, in their home on Aisquith Street, north of Orleans Street. He set out to be a dry goods peddler, working northeast of the city and in Fell's Point. In 1845, four more Hecht children arrived. Asher and his uncle Ruben opened the first family store in Baltimore in 1847, named Hecht-Asher & R. Goldenberg, dry goods dealer. That same year, Simeon Hecht sent for his mother Hannah. She arrived with sons Samuel and Ruben and daughter Eddel. Simeon married his first cousin, Henrietta Stern, in April 1848. They opened a small dry goods, notion and carpet store at the corner of Orleans and Eden Streets, naming it "Hecht's Red Post Store." Simeon's store succeeded and added wholesale and peddler supply lines in 1849.

Simeon settled at 252 Canton Avenue (Fleet Street) and Hannah at 251 S. Bond Street (three doors north of Canton Avenue). It was customary for a Jew with a successful business to help family members start their own new enterprises. In 1855, Simeon supplied funding and stock for brother Samuel to start his new dry goods business on Broadway near Eastern Avenue. Samuel's business formed the basis for all future Hecht Co. chain stores. Simeon's funding of his siblings' businesses caused great strain on the family core. Simeon later referred to his brother Samuel as a "crook" with a "detestable character." Also in 1855, Simeon moved his business to the northeast corner of Canton and Register Streets. However, tension among family members--and between the northern and southern states--threatened Simeon's financial stability.

Like many Germans who immigrated to Baltimore, Simeon Hecht had left from Bremen,



Photo by Billy Calucci in "Fell's Point" by Jacqueline Greff Hecht's store on Broadway 60 years ago.

aboard a three-masted packet ship Konigen Augusta. The stormy voyage lasted 65 days. The ship docked at Henderson's Wharf, at the foot of Fell Street. The "new arrivals" were "literally dumped out at Henderson's Wharf, the majority having expended their last penny for passage across the Atlantic." Simeon recalled that many were taken in by residents of eastern Fell's Point, along Fell, Thames and Ann Streets.

Like many of Baltimore's most established retailers, Simeon Hecht eventually settled in East Baltimore, after first trying Old Town, a "neighborhood composed of native born people of American descent." By 1848, Hecht stated that the "great arrival of German and Irish emigration had just materialized." (Moses Hutzler, founder of Hutzler Brothers Co., immigrated in 1838 from the Bavarian village of Hagenbach. He eventually settled at the corner of Eastern Avenue and Exeter Street. In 1842, Har Sinai Congregation, America's oldest continuously reform congregation, held its services in Hutzler's home. Bernard Kohn, of Hochschild, Kohn & Co., emigrated from Mainek, Germany, in the 1850s. His wife Mathilde gave birth on their passage. The child died and was buried at sea. Other members of the Kohn family remained in Germany until the Nazi era, when the entire family managed to flee for Baltimore. Like Simeon Hecht, Max Hochschild was born in Hesse-Nassau. He came here in 1869, at age 14. Like some members of the Hecht family, Hochschild opened his first retailing enterprise on Gay Street in Old Town.)

Simeon said the discovery of gold in California enticed people to leave Germany in search of opportunity. Industrial improvements also attracted immigrants. By 1849, a large wave of Hebrew youths left Germany and settled in large numbers in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Forced military service and "Jew baiting" encouraged many young Jews to leave, he added. Many Jews originally settled in East Baltimore, espe-

cially around present-day Little Italy and Old Town.

Hecht said that by 1855 the "German and Irish element" made rapid progress and began to "assert itself in the labor, mercantile, and political world." Hecht called this "really remarkable and astounding." By 1863, Germans relaxed at summer resorts around Baltimore Street and Belair Road. "The German element held picnics, including dancing, bowling and rifle practice, beer was sold in large quantities, and lunches were carried in baskets." As the community grew, political groups expanded. Some became rowdy, especially during election time. Some of the more boisterous groups in East Baltimore included the Rough Skins, Blue Dicks, Double Pumps, Blood Tubs and Five Pointers.

By 1904, the "element" had changed in Fell's Point. The German mansions along Fell and Ann Streets were occupied by "Polish, Bohemian, and other Continental European semi-savages, interspersed occasionally with a number of Hurdy Gurdy, drinking saloons and third rate sailors' boarding homes."

Lisicky is author of *"Hutzler's: Where Baltimore Shops."*

### Membership Application or Renewal, 2010-2011

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(For additional levels of support, see membership format [historicbaltimore.org](http://historicbaltimore.org).)

## Organizational Anchors Offset Generational Drift

By Catherine Evans

A rich array of German-American organizations is emblematic of the large population of German immigrants who settled here over 300 years. Besides Zion Lutheran Church, see Page 1, are these other groups, all with websites:

- *Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland*, founded in 1900, is an umbrella association of 12 organizations in the state, representing them on City, state and national levels. It strives for a closer union of citizens of German descent in promotion of the culture and language through gymnastics and soccer, cultural, educational, social and charitable endeavors. Its three-day Annual Festival is the oldest celebration

of ethnic pride in the state, held since 1900, in conjunction with the City's "Showcase of Nations." *Bürgerverein* means civic association. All of the organizations below are members.

- *Arion Gesangverein*, founded in 1850, is one of the oldest singing societies in the U.S. It promotes German music through concerts, festivals and evenings. *Gesangverein* means choral society. The members practice at Zion.

- Baltimore Kickers soccer club promotes



Photo by Judith Arnold  
Wagner, in Druid Hill Park, honors City singers of 1900.

the sport as well as the German language and culture. The Kickers support adult men's, girl's, and boy's teams. The club maintains a clubhouse with library at 26 South Broadway in Washington Hill.

- *Club Fidelitas* was organized in 1955 by men of German birth as a social organization of professionals and business proprietors. Original membership was limited to 25 but later expanded to 85. Its purpose is to promote fellowship and *Gemütlichkeit*--an abstract noun that has been adopted into English. It connotes belonging, social acceptance, cheerfulness, absence of anything hectic.

- *Deutsche Geselligkeit* was organized in 1935 to assist the less fortunate. Members are of German

heritage. *Geselligkeit* means sociability.

- The German Society of Maryland is one of the oldest institutions in America, organized in 1783 to protect and assist German-speaking immigrants. The current purpose is to preserve and promote the German language and traditions through educational, social and benevolent programs. The Society publishes a newsletter that announces its own and other German-American events and news from Germany. Its office is at 15 West Mount Vernon Place.

## German Cuisine

A fun place to find German food is the German Festival, yearly in July at Timonium Fairgrounds. If you have a yen for good German cuisine at other times, here are several restaurants and delis:

- *Eichenkranz*, meaning oak wreath, started as a German singing society in 1894. By 1939, it had incorporated and built its present facility at 611 Fagley Street in Highlandtown. The first floor was a full-service bar and restaurant and the second floor was a concert hall. Eventually, the building was sold to private owners, but the restaurant continues under owners Harold and Audrey Bowles since 1990.

- *Binkert's Meat Products*, at 8805 Philadelphia Road in Rosedale, manufactures and retails traditional sausages, lunch meats and salamis. It was founded in 1964 by immigrant Egon Binkert, a master butcher who had a dream to open his own place. It also carries imported German breads, mustards, sauerkraut and dry goods. Second-generation owners Sonya and Lothar Weber take pride in their use of natural meats. They will be serving at more than 50 Oktoberfests.

- *Mueller's Delicatessen*, at 7202 Harford Road in Hamilton, specializes in cold cuts and cheeses, sausages, breads, pickles, noodles, mustards, spices and cookies. Homemade *Sauerbraten* (sour beef) is available, as are Christmas specialties in season.

--Catherine Evans

### Mayor's Reception Tickets

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets (\$30 each) to attend the:

**10th Annual**

**Mayor's Reception and History Honors**

Saturday, October 30, 2010

Noon until 2PM

Zion Church of the City of Baltimore

400 E. Lexington St. (City Hall Plaza)

Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

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Address

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Send form with your check payable to **Baltimore City Historical Society** to BCHS, c/o Marion Carozza, 1601 Greenway, #205, Baltimore MD 21218.

The Baltimore City Historical Society Inc.  
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