The German Invasion of Morton, IL
(And why we’re thankful for it)

i.e.

The Tidal Wave of German-Speaking Anabaptist Immigrants to Morton, Illinois in the Late 19th Century

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The Lure of Tazewell County

Illinois was virtually given away. In the 1800s, Illinois was divvied up and sold to settlers as low as $2.64 per acre (around $80/acre in today’s currency). In the eastern states were starting to feel crowded in some places, and the cheap and very productive Illinois farmland was strong incentive to move to the "western" state of Illinois.

But even though land was cheap, it was far more costly to settle than we can imagine. Tazewell County’s first settler was Vermont native William Blanchard, Jr., who served five years in the War of 1812 before starting West with a few other veterans from the war. They went from Detroit to Ft. Wayne, “whence they journeyed in a canoe to Vincennes, thence to St. Louis. From there they came up the Illinois in a keel boat [rowed] by a fishing crew, and landed at Peoria in the spring of 1819. Crossing the river, they found a cleared spot, and with wood tools put in a patch of corn & potatoes.”

Traveling by foot, horse, wagon, canoe, and boat was not easy to say the least. One early settler wrote “With one four-horse wagon, one three-horse wagon, and a one-horse carryall… we started for …Tazewell County, Illinois. Traveling west, we [were] on the road seven weeks, camping in our tent and wagons.” Another wrote “We had to ride around many swamps and were often at a loss to know how to cross streams, for at that time there were few bridges.”

Another tells about trying to cross icy rivers in winter, getting separated from their animals, getting pursued by wolves and trying to build a fire with nothing but wet wood.

One early settler of the county, Uriah H. Crosby, came from Ohio “when those only with strong determination and nerves of steel cared to come. A thousand miles on foot, with rifle and knapsack, with sore feet and scanty rations.”

After Blanchard first came to Tazewell County in 1819, the Dillons came next in the early 1820s, settling in log cabins in the Mackinaw River area, not far from the present village of Dillon. Those first years were difficult. “The methods of farming were crude. Machinery had not yet made its appearance. Corn, the main crop, was planted by hand, and hoed. Prairie fires sometimes broke out, burning fences, fields of corn, and stacks of hay. Markets were few and far away. There were no railroads. Early farmers had one hundred and twenty miles to the nearest mill which was in Indiana. Grain had to be hauled to Chicago which meant a two weeks' trip. The settlers were forced to live a self-sustaining type of life. They subsisted on game, milk and cornflower. They made their own shoes. To purchase the necessities of life meant a long trip over territory without roads. Diseases were common… The light was furnished by the home-made tallow candle and snuffed by improvised nippers. The day of the spinning wheel was past, but the cloth was purchased and made up into dresses for the women and clothing for the men.”

There were various Indian settlements nearby, including “many…wigwams [and] many ladders setting up against trees in which [Indians] had cut holes to catch coons and get honey.”

Soon after those first few settlers, hundreds of others started arriving. After a few years, the first mill and post office were started in the county (in 1825). The first store came in 1826, and the first woolen factory came in 1832. In 1837, settlers in Tremont started making the county’s first ploughs. Pekin soon became the largest settlement in the area, since it was right on the river. By around 1840, Tazewell County had a population of about 7000 people helping to improve the area and ease the difficulty of pioneer life.

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2 Weber, ibid.
3 Weber, ibid.
4 History of Tazewell County Illinois; together with sketches...; Chas. C. Chapman & Co., 1879.
5 Tazewell County Illinois by John Drury, 1954
6 Weber, ibid.
7 History of Tazewell, ibid.
8 In 1872 Pekin had the 2nd most railroad lines in the state behind Chicago (1872 Tazewell County Atlas)
9 Weber writes “The present generation should not be unappreciative of what these early settlers accomplished. Had it not been for their courageous sacrifices it would be impossible to have the present blessings.”
English Roots

According to the 1872 Tazewell County Atlas, the vast majority of Tazewell County’s founding fathers were adventurous Americans who moved from the East Coast, Kentucky, Ohio, etc. Most had English surnames, including James Phillips who was “lineally descended from some of the best blood in England” according to the Atlas, and alive for every one of America’s presidents up until that time “including the immortal Washington.” These 1872 illustrations give a little bit of that English flavor. The top left one is the homestead of Morton’s William A. Moore, the top right one shows the favorite English game of croquet, and the bottom one shows Morton’s first large elementary school at the site of the later Jefferson School with its New England style architecture.

The first worship service held in Tazewell county was held by the famous Methodist circuit-riding preacher Peter Cartwright in a grove on Dillon creek in Elm Grove in September 1827.¹⁰

Cartwright, like all Methodist circuit-riding preachers of the time, traveled countless miles on horseback each year through all kinds of weather and danger to preach to settlers, baptize converts, distribute Christian literature, and a multitude of other pastoral tasks. The above Harper's Weekly cover was inspired by circuit-riders like Cartwright.

Cartwright was a dynamic preacher of orthodox doctrine - albeit unorthodox methods. On one occasion as he was riding his circuit, he led a camp meeting near the town of Marietta. When “a great crowd of rabble and rowdies ...armed with dirks, clubs, knives, and horsewhips” tried to break up the service, Cartwright began to fight them himself. He was joined in the scuffle by other “friends of law and order...[until] order was finally restored [with] thirty of the ruffians [being] captured.”¹¹

¹⁰ History of Tazewell, ibid. Cartwright was married in Tazewell county a month later according to the 1879 History of Tazewell Cty
¹¹ Sweet, W.W., The Rise of Methodism in the West; being the Journal of the Western Conference 1810-1811, 1920, pp 30-31
Another time, as Cartwright was boarding a ferry, he heard the ferryman cursing and swearing that if he ever met Peter Cartwright he would drown him in the river. The story continues in this 1856 Brooklyn Daily Eagle article:

Cartwright felt it his duty to make himself known and assert his principles; but he wanted to be sure of fair play. So when he reached the middle of the stream, he threw the horse's bridle over a stake of the boat, and told the ferryman to lay down his pole. "What for?" said the ferryman. "Well, you have just now been using my name 'improper;' you said if I ever came this way you'd drown me in the river. Now you've got a chance to do it." Is your name Pete Cartwright?" said the ferryman. "My name is Peter Cartwright," said the preacher. Down drops the pole and at it go preacher and ferryman. They grapple for a minute, but Cartwright is remarkably agile, as well as athletic, and in a trice he has the ferryman, with one hand by the nape of the neck, and with the other by the seat of his trousers, and, whirling him over the side of the boat, plunges him under the tide—his astonished companions looking on from the shore—fair play being secured by the distance. Twice and thrice the preacher susses the poor ferryman under, saying as he does so, "I baptize thee (k'splash) in the name of the devil (k'splash), whose child thou art (k'splash);" then lifting him up, dripping with water and gasping for breath, Cartwright asks him. "Did you ever pray?"

"Pray?" said the ferryman, "no." "Then it's time you did," said the preacher. "Say, 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'" "D—d if I do," said the ferryman. K'splash—goes the poor man under the tide again. "Will you now?" said the preacher. "No—I—won't," said the strangled ferryman. K'splash—under the water again. "Will you pray, now?" said the preacher. "I'll do anything," gasped the ferryman. "Say 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'" "Our Father which art in Heaven," said the ferryman, and followed him through the prayer. "Now let me up," said the ferryman. "Not y'," said the preacher. "You must promise me three things; first, that you will repeat that prayer every morning and night as long as you live; secondly, that you will hear every Methodist preacher who comes within five miles of this same ferry; and thirdly, that you will put every Methodist preacher over this ferry free of expense. Do you promise?" "I promise," said the ferryman, and resumed his pole. Cartwright went on his way, and that ferryman not long after became a convert, and in time quite a shining light in the Church.

Cartwright and fellow Methodist preacher William Brown braved the elements to help establish Methodist congregations in almost every township in Tazewell County by the 1830s.

William Brown and his wife had a remarkable influence on the education of Morton. They started Morton's first school in their home in 1828 and even after a schoolhouse was later built, Mrs. William Brown continued to teach—all the way until 1870! (Their granddaughter, Lettie Brown, is the namesake for the school now located in Morton's Hyde Park.)

In addition to the Methodists, there were other Christian groups active in the county at this time: the Baptists, Congregationalists (Presbyterians), Quakers, Christian churches, and the Amish Mennonites. All of these denominations except the last had roots in England or Scotland, and were English-speaking congregations.

English-speaking immigrants were the fabric of the earliest days of Tazewell county. They not only ran most of the churches, they owned the majority of the land, and ran the local governments. However, the ethnicity of the area was about to radically change.

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12 Roth, 26.
13 History of Tazewell County 1879, ibid.
14 The original members of Morton’s Congregational Church, for example, included Mrs. W. W. Campbell and the Crosbys. (Ibid.)
Morton Explodes

Tazewell county’s population grew to around 28,000 by 1872, but nearly half of them had swelled the river town of Pekin. In contrast, Morton was about two city blocks with 150 residents (see the map to the right).  

Morton’s original triangular shape had been laid out by James M. Campbell in 1850, and Harvey Campbell had proposed its name in honor of Governor Morton of Massachusetts. Below is an 1872 illustration of James Campbell’s homestead. It was located in what is now downtown Morton at the intersection of Jefferson & Main streets.

Over the next nearly 40 years, Tazewell county would continue to experience growth (~22%), but Morton would particularly explode in size. The map below shows the expanded city in 1910-- more than 30 times the size it was in 1872! What happened?!

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15 Roth, 60. Also, according to the 1872 Tazewell County Atlas, Pekin had ~12000 residents and the City of Pekin was roughly 64 times larger by land area than Morton.
16 History of Tazewell 1879.
The Germans Invade

Although most of the earliest pioneers of Tazewell County were relocated Americans, there were a considerable number of foreign immigrants listed among the early pioneers, including men & women from England, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, and France. German Nicholas Frederick of Sand Prairie was complimented for using his influence to “induce other good and useful German citizens to come and settle in Tazewell county.” And Germans definitely came.

To put it into perspective what a massive cultural shift the area experienced, in 1910, Morton's population was about 1000, perhaps 1400 if the wider area is considered. Morton Apostolic Christian Church could seat 750 at this time in the building pictured at right (notice its labeled “Amish church”!) and it would be upgraded to a new brick building in 1913 to seat 100018

This megachurch of its day only held services in German for years. By 1909 they were holding one service in German and another in English every Sunday. About sixteen miles east of Morton (near Congerville) was Joseph Yoder's Amish Mennonite church. This congregation had 400 members already by 1872, and they worshiped only in the German language.

The English-speaking congregations in the county at this time had 30-60 regular attenders, so the Mennonite church was ten times bigger than those and the Apostolic Christian was around 20 times larger. Those two congregations alone basically drew as much as half of their local townships to attend them! Morton was particularly lopsided. The two largest English-speaking churches there at the time (the Methodists and the Congregationalists) combined in 1913 with only 42 members total to become the Morton Federated Church. These historic English-speaking churches whose great-grandparents helped buy, build, govern, and develop Morton now were utterly overrun by German-speaking Anabaptists.

As other English-speaking Christians came to Morton over the next decade, they had exceedingly few other English-speaking believers to worship with. “we can safely assume that the [Morton Federated] Church continued to be the English language community of faith for area Christians... In 1925 Morton Federated Church became Morton Community Church because members came from a variety of denominational backgrounds extending beyond Congregational and Methodist.” Although this group was small they continued to make large contributions to Morton, including fueling the underground railroad and beginning the Morton Public Library.

C. Henry Smith documented the dominance of Anabaptists in central IL at this time. By 1909 there were ten Amish congregations totaling about 1100 “made up almost exclusively of the descendants of the early immigrants,” around a thousand more “Stuckey Amish [Amish Mennonite] in twelve congregations,” and “several thousand” of the “New Amish” Apostolic Christians. Government estimates for Tazewell County were that by 1919 almost 1/3 of the entire county was German. (Approximately 10,000 out of 34,000)

17 In 1910 Tazewell County was ~34000 and Pekin was about 10K and Morton was about 1000. So perhaps the wider Morton Township was roughly 1400 people in 1910. (figures from Population of States & Counties of the US: 1790-1990 & population.us)
18 Klopfenstein, Perry. Marching to Zion.
19 Smith, ibid.
21 Roth, p. 22: “In 1879 the Mennonites in central Illinois from the Dillon Creek and Morton settlements decided to build the Pleasant Grove Mennonite Church south of Morton on the grounds donated by Joseph and Catherine Ropp. Services were conducted in German until Bishop Samuel Gerber initiated the change to preach in English. [He] served as minister of Pleasant Grove from 1897-1929.” Surely this was the case for other local congregations as well.
22 Charles C. Chapman & Co. ibid.
24 Ibid.
26 Population of States & Counties of the US: 1790-1990
Advertisements like the one on the right from 1916 were common. Pekin had a completely German newspaper, the Freie Presse, which started in 1876 and had a circulation of about 2200 in 1919.\textsuperscript{28} According to one reviewer, it was exactly “what the large, intellectual and cultured German element of the county demand — a first-class literary, newsy journal.”\textsuperscript{29} Also, from the early 1900s until about 1916, a section of the Morton News was printed completely in German.\textsuperscript{30}

The photograph below is the earliest known photograph of the town of Morton. It is taken from the water tower in 1898 and it “clearly pinpoints the Rapp Brick & Tile Works; Roberts, Moschel and Mosiman Elevator; Beyer Electric and its tall smokestack; Beyer Implement Company; and Mathis (Hauter/Roth) Grain Elevator. On Main Street are seen the roofs of Witzig’s Clothing, the Morton House Hotel, Lilienthal’s Men’s Haberdashery, the Mathis office and lumber yard, and many residences”\textsuperscript{31} Notice how most of the names in the above list are German names. Imagine how it felt for the early English-speaking Morton residents to be surrounded by Germans within a generation or two.

By 1910, Morton was overflowing with German surnames. Others have uncovered the hometowns of a great number of these families,\textsuperscript{32} and I was surprised to find that they are almost all within a ~175 mile diameter circle on the border of France, Germany, and Switzerland (see picture at right).\textsuperscript{33}

Why did hundreds of people from the same small area travel over 5000 miles over land and sea to settle in tiny little Morton, Illinois? To answer that question, let’s first turn to what was brewing in Germany at the time.

\textsuperscript{27} Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda; Report and Hearings of the Subcommittee on the Judiciary United States Senate, Washington Government Printing Office, 1919, p 1368.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} History of Tazewell County 1879.
\textsuperscript{30} Roth, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{31} Roth, p 57.
\textsuperscript{32} Especially Hannah M. Koch, Genealogies of Three Large Families: Getz, Koch, & Wick, but also Harry Weber, Centennial History of the Mennonites of Central Illinois, Donald and Ruthie Roth in their Pictoral History, as well as online cemetery records.
\textsuperscript{33} The only one not in this circle was from Berlin. The majority were from the south central part of the map above.
German Angst

“During the 1600s and 1700s, wars ravaged Germany. Marching armies trampled down fields of grain, stole cattle, and burned down farmsteads. In their wake, famines spread over the land. Taxes, levied to pay for the war, added to the people's plight. So, over 100,000 Germans migrated to the English colonies in North America [in those two centuries]. They formed the largest non-English-speaking community in colonial North America.”

But what started as a trickle in colonial times became a gushing river in the 1800s. Germany continued to endure wars – the early 1800s brought Napoleon’s wars and the mid-1800s brought the German Wars of Unification. In addition to the uncertainties and hardships of being in a war-torn land, Germans found less and less land available and affordable to farm.

America, on the other hand, had more land than she knew what to do with. Americans actually started running advertisements in German newspapers to entice Germans to buy and settle American soil, and it worked. Usually adventuresome young men would make the journey first. When they were able to purchase cheap land and start a farm, they would send letters to the rest of their family encouraging them to join them, and many would come.

In fact, as Germans found America to be what they hoped for, more and more came. The exponential process ended up bringing 5.5 million Germans to U.S. soil from 1820-1920, which was the highest of any European ethnic group. In the 19th century, Germans started at least 672,000 family farms in America totaling over 100,000,000 acres.

Most Germans came in the last half of the 19th century and settled in the northern part of the country from Pennsylvania to Wisconsin. These immigrants infused the north with beer and brats, as well as German language and culture. Most were Lutheran or Catholic with a strong work ethic.

But even though many Germans came to America to better themselves and escape war and economic hardship, why did so many come from such a small area of Europe to such a small place like Morton?

First, the group that came to Morton not only shared a common area of origination, they shared a common language – they spoke Alemannic (Western Upper German) dialects. The shades of blue in the map below show the area that most Mortonites emigrated from. It is the borderlands of France, Germany, and Switzerland:

But Morton’s German-speaking immigrants shared much much more than just the same language. It is to that that we now turn.

34 http://www.anabaptists.org/clp/cle.html
Anabaptists in Europe

The German speakers who immigrated to Morton were part of a larger group called Anabaptists. Anabaptists were Christians who believed that the Bible was the ultimate authority and that men can only be saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. They insisted that true faith in Jesus is not just a mental belief but that it transforms your life and brings about a spiritual rebirth of integrity and love. In that, they agreed with most Protestants.

However, they strongly objected to how most Protestants mixed church and state. Anabaptists were saddened by how many people in the state churches had been baptized as babies yet were not living transformed lives, and they feared for their souls. Therefore they insisted that a person must be born again before being properly baptized. This is why they insisted that even those who were baptized as babies needed to be re-baptized when they came to personal repentance and faith. They took Jesus’ words to “turn the other cheek” to heart and so refused to fight in armies or wars. They took James’ words to “do not swear” very literally, and refused to swear oaths of honesty in court.

These distinctives were motivated by a seemingly unquenchable zeal for authentic Christianity. One historian wrote that “Anabaptists pursued religious idealism in a vigorous, radical, uncompromising manner, …[and] attempted more than any other group in the Reformation to renew unadulterated original Christianity.” Their goal was not just to reform the church, but to restore it to the New Testament ideal.

Anabaptists sprang up all over Europe as part of the continuing grassroots movement of the Protestant Reformation. Since it was a dynamic grassroots movement, no fellowship was quite the same. Some were more Calvinistic, some more Arminian. Some had charismatic elements. Some insisted on literal foot washing ceremonies. Many eventually organized into various fellowships or denominations.

The most effective organizer of Anabaptists was a converted Roman Catholic priest named Menno Simons (1496-1561) who helped bring together “many scattered and confused Anabaptist elements into a common movement.” The Mennonite church draws their name from him. But many other groups with different names come from this same original European stock (Brethren, Apostolic, Baptist, Free, Amish, Hutterites, etc).

Anabaptists greatly emphasized humility and simplicity. They even intentionally dressed plainly, as the pictures below show. The right picture intends to contrast how much they stood out among their contemporaries in France. Notice the contrast between the Anabaptists’ dark clothing and the bright ornamented clothing of their peers.

In their quest for humility and simplicity, many Anabaptists were farmers. In fact, they were so skilled, they were sought out by the French populace to write and teach about farming. In fact, one ruler in the German Palatinate in 1684 actually asked Swiss Anabaptist to leave their country and settle his province to help his local economy (as long as they did not recruit or accept others into their fellowship). Another time, Anabaptists were allowed a special allowance to not serve in the military because of their humble request and widely known integrity and kindness.

But this kind of appreciation was rare. Most of the time, the Anabaptists’ unique distinctives and refusal to serve in the military put them at odds with the state. Unfortunately, the pages of history reveal that they were more persecuted than praised. It is to the depths of that persecution that we now turn.

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36 Anabaptist means “re-baptizer.” It was the derogatory name given to them by those who scorned them.
37 Schrag, Martin H The European History of the Swiss Mennonites from Volhynia 1956
38 Ibid.
39 C. Henry Smith, The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the 18th Century (Norristown, Pa.: Pennsylvania-German Society, 1929), 30-31
Hunted and Slaughtered (16th & 17th centuries)

It seems unbelievable that such simple humble people would be hunted and slaughtered, but Europe at this time was *cuius region, eius religio* ("whose region, his religion") - i.e., the religion of the ruler was the enforced religion of the region. Protestants and Catholics were the major contenders, but minority religions and denominations were in a particularly perilous position. They were considered illegal and persecuted fiercely by both Catholics and Protestants.

One historian writes that, in the 1500s, “Anabaptism was made a capital crime. Prices were set on the heads of Anabaptists. To give them food and shelter was a made a crime. …In Catholic countries the Anabaptists, as a rule, were executed by burning at the stake; in Lutheran and Zwinglian states, Anabaptists were generally executed by beheading or drowning. … Thousands sealed their faith with their blood. When all efforts to halt the movement proved vain, the authorities resorted to desperate measures. Armed executioners and mounted soldiers were sent in companies through the land to hunt down the Anabaptists and kill them on the spot without trial or sentence.”

Another wrote that “severe persecution continued into the 17th century. Some Anabaptists were sent to the sea as galley slaves - and few came back alive. Others were imprisoned or branded on the forehead. Because Anabaptists were married in their own congregations and not by state-church pastors, their marriages were considered invalid and children were prohibited from inheriting from their parents.”

“At one Anabaptist museum in Austria, visitors can see the chains with which Anabaptist women were shackled to their homes. Without their husbands’ consent, these women had accepted the Anabaptist message and were baptized. Yet, in these instances, the women were allowed to live, since their husbands needed them to raise their children and tend to their homes. But they would do so in chains.”

The records of one Swiss canton detail that Anabaptists were excluded from all employment and all their legal contracts (including wills and deeds) were deemed invalid. Heavy fines were given for sheltering or feeding Anabaptists, and rewards were offered to those who found and arrested them. Anabaptists were also tortured. Besides whipping and torturing on the rack, some Anabaptists were “dunked repeatedly in a cold river, inducing near-hyperthermia to draw out a recantation.” Others were “put in stocks…over several days in a prison courtyard. The victim could suffer permanent physical damage from being exposed to the elements overnight.”

When authorities tried to arrest Dutch Anabaptist Dirk Willems, he ran for his life. After crossing a frozen pond, “he realized that his pursuer had fallen through the ice and into the freezing water. Turning back to save the drowning officer, Dirk dragged him safely to shore. The man wanted to release Dirk, but [another] reminded him that he was under oath to deliver criminals to justice. Dirk was...tortured in an unsuccessful effort to make him renounce his faith. [Then he] was burned at the stake near his hometown on 16 May 1569 “...enduring it with great steadfastness.”

Here are two etchings of Anabaptist burnings from the 16th century. The right one depicts the burnt corpses of the Anabaptists being removed with a pitchfork (notice the priest and church ominously in the background).
Relocation and Development (18th-19th centuries)

Not surprisingly, Anabaptists started relocating to any safer place they could find. Many went to Alsace in the northeast part of present-day France and many went to the German Palatinate in the southwest part of today’s Germany. 45 Earlier Anabaptist congregations in South Germany had been wiped out by persecution, but by the 17th century, the Palatinate was a relatively safe place for Mennonites to live. An edict of toleration issued in 1664 allowed them to worship in homes (not dedicated church buildings) but they were not allowed to baptize. In addition, Mennonites were required to pay an annual tax for the privilege of toleration. Immigrants to this area include Swiss Mennonites, Hutterites from Moravia and Dutch Mennonites, as well as other refugees.46 Southwest Germany was a hotspot for refugees, especially spiritual refugees like Anabaptists. The only Anabaptists left in Switzerland by 1700 were concentrated in the northwest part of the country (especially the Emmental area). 47

In other words, Anabaptists were systematically pushed into a small area at the intersection of France, Germany, and Switzerland – the exact area previously mentioned from which virtually all of Morton’s German-speaking population came. These borderlands provided a reasonably safe place for Anabaptists to settle, grow, and develop as a movement.

One Swiss Anabaptist who relocated to Alsace in the late 1600s was Jakob Amman. He was an uneducated tailor who became an ordained Anabaptist minister by 1693. He was one of two selected by a ministerial committee to sort out a disagreement within the Anabaptists of the region, headed by how strictly church discipline was to be practiced. Differences and tempers were strong, and soon led to a split in the churches. 48 Virtually all of the Alsace Anabaptists agreed with Amman that in situations of church discipline, believers should not even eat with the sinner being disciplined even in their homes and other social situation. They became known as Amish churches, 49 while their opponents, who practiced church discipline only in regard to church communion, became known as Swiss Mennonites. To the right is a drawing of Amman above the valley where he lived in Alsace:

Another Swiss Anabaptist who relocated to Alsace nearly 140 years later was Samuel Froehlich. After becoming a vocal Anabaptist in the early 1800s, Froehlich was “expelled from the state church… and eventually banished from Switzerland and forced to leave behind his wife and family. During this separation his wife was fined because their marriage was not recognized by the established church. Many others in the movement were also fined for illegal assembly, imprisoned for proselytizing and persecuted for refusing to bear arms in the military. Only after years of forced separation was he reunited with his family when his wife was able to legally immigrate to Strassbourg [Alsace] and join him in exile.”50 While he was exiled in Alsace he continued to travel and preach and baptize new converts, which led to 110 congregations being established within 35 years. 51 Others called his group the New Anabaptists or the New Amish.52

All of these closely related Anabaptist groups had large numbers immigrate to America, “beginning in 1683 when the first Mennonites came to Germantown, [Pennsylvania,] settling near Quakers.”53 William Penn’s commitment to religious freedom was a long-awaited blessing for many Anabaptists.

Nineteenth century German-speaking Anabaptists would come first to Pennsylvania as well, but find that it was already quite populated. So these Germans would set out for the American frontier – but following a different route than most German speakers (who settled the northern U.S.). These German Anabaptists moved on from Pennsylvania to buy low-price land in Ohio and then later in Illinois. “Frequently they would first land in Pennsylvania, remain a few years, and then proceed westward to Illinois, or perhaps spend some time in Butler County, Ohio, before coming.” 54 This became a well-worn path for generations of Anabaptists – including the ones who settled Morton.

45 Lois Barret, Part II: Anabaptist Europe in the Seventeenth Century
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakob_Ammann
49 Hostetler, John A. Annotated Bibliography on the Amish. Scottsdale, 1951, an exhaustive bibliography of publications in North America by or about the Amish of all groups. accessed at http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Amish_Mennonites
50 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Heinrich_Fr%C3%B6hlich
51 Ibid.
52 Weber, ibid
53 Barret, ibid.
54 Weber, ibid
Local Examples

One interesting example of this migration pattern is the Ropp family of Tazewell County. Christian Ropp wrote: "My father lived in upper [southern] Alsace … since he had heard many favorable reports of America, he thought it might be better for himself and children to emigrate to America, than to see his sons drafted into the army, for he had at that time six sons. …" After we reached Philadelphia, my father hired a team to take us to Lancaster County. After we had gone thirty or thirty-five miles, we stopped over with an old Amishman by the name of Zuck. Here we remained a number of days to arrange our affairs. Then my father bought a horse, and after setting up the wagon which we had brought with us, we started out again, for my father wished to go to Butler County, Ohio….

"When we came within six miles of Lancaster, we met a Mennonite by the name of John Konig who was plowing along the roadside. When he saw my father, he knew him by his clothing as well as his beard, for at that time no one except our people wore beards.

"In 1833 we left for Ohio. There were four of us, I and Andrew and Jacob, and Christian Lehman. We had a horse and covered wagon. The journey was tedious. We were on our way seventeen days, and at one time came near being robbed, but by the help of Divine Providence we escaped. We finally reached Ohio, where we found all well; and we rejoiced greatly. But since [the price of] land was high here, and hearing that land was still cheap in Illinois and that eight families from Germany had already settled there… We arrived in Woodford County at the home of Peter Engel." 55

These pictures of early Mortonites Joseph Hauter (1826-1907, left) and Daniel Habecker (-1912, right) give you an idea of what the initial Tazewell County Anabaptists looked like 56:

One historian wrote that the Anabaptists of central Illinois in the mid 1800s were just like the Old Order Amish of 1909 – the men used “hooks and eyes” and wore “beards and long hair.” Their clothes were “homemade and cut after a pattern common generations ago..., suspenderless.” The women wore “the plain tight-fitting dress, with the cape and apron, and the old fashioned bonnet.”

The most incredible story of Tazewell County Anabaptist immigration is the story of Andreas Braun’s cluster of believers in Bavaria, Germany. German legal records from 1850-1852 give us surprisingly detailed records of this small group of Anabaptists who were not allowed to hold church meetings in their homes. They give a humble and respectful explanation of their faith and petition the authorities (first local, then royal) to be granted authorization to keep holding services. Their petitions are not granted, and they are forced to stop meeting (or else be banished). Their heartfelt and Bible-filled letters are in Appendix 1. 57 Soon after the ruling, several of the members immigrated to Tazewell County, including Kasper Koch and Michael Reuter.

55 Weber, ibid.
56 Roth, 24-25
57 Koch, ibid.
Anabaptists in Tazewell County

Starting in 1829, large numbers of German-speaking Amish settled between Peoria and Bloomington. They came from Alsace-Lorraine, Hesse, the Palatinate, Bavaria, Baden and Switzerland (the same exact places circled in the map above). 58 “By 1840 the settlement extended along Black Partridge Creek from Spring Bay to Metamora; — along Ten Mile Creek from Peoria to Washington; — along Dillon Creek, the Mackinaw River …and Rock Creek. …For several years [they] formed but one congregation, and all-day services were held on alternate Sundays in private houses in each locality in turn. A lunch was served at the noon hour. It was not an uncommon thing for members to drive [their horse] fifteen or twenty miles to attend church. As the colony grew, separate congregations were organized,” including the 1837 congregation at Dillon Creek. 59

“Church services consisted of a Sunday morning sermon once or twice a month in some home or barn. German or ‘Pennsylvania Dutch’ was the sole language of pulpit and conversation…. The men …wore clean ‘overall’ trousers with coat to match, and leather boots. The women wore large bonnets, capes, and long dresses, …often black. In many cases the prayer head covering, white or black, was worn constantly. It was a bonnet in shape, …having black or white ribbons which were looped under the chin. This garb…was considered a religious necessity.” 60 The picture on the right is of the first Amish church that was built in the area (just south of Congerville). 61

“A group of Mennonites came to Butler County from Hesse, Germany in 1832 [and joined the Amish there]. Some of the family names were Jutzi, Hooley, Kinsinger, Nofsinger, Brenneman, Kennel, Gingerich, Sommer. Since these Hessian [Mennonites] were more liberal—they wore buttons on their clothes and made use of musical instruments—they soon disagreed with the Amish. A definite division was created in 1835, the Amish being led by Preacher Jacob Augspurger and the Hessians by "Apostle" Peter Nafziger. Both groups furnished settlers for central Illinois.” 62

This would be just the beginning of Amish church splits in America. A series of churchwide conferences were held beginning in 1862 to discuss various controversies in the Amish church including “‘Shall baptism be administered in a flowing stream (creek or river) or in the house?’, …Is it permissible for a member to accept teamster service under military control? Is it permissible for a former member who has joined the army, been wounded, and now again rejoined the church, to receive a pension offered by the government? Can a member participate in the erection of a memorial monument to the soldiers? All these questions were answered in the negative.

All political activity, too, was either prohibited or discouraged. The holding of any public office, either judicial or under military supervision, which necessitated the use of force, attending political meetings and pole raisings, and even voting were discouraged as being unseemly for a nonresistant people. Unequal yoking with the world in business and social relations, too, was forbidden. Among the business contacts tabooed were holding bank stock and managing a store, post office, or express office. Levi Miller of Holmes County, Ohio, in the initial session of 1862, listed among other threatening innovations that were objectionable to many— lightning rods, lotteries, likenesses (photographs), insurance, and big meetinghouses.” 63

However, not all Amish agreed about all of these prohibitions. For example, the Amish meeting house pictured above had been erected nine years before the conference deemed them a “threatening innovation.” The conferences served to sufficiently highlight the differences such that many local Amish congregations decided to split away from the Amish church. At first they called themselves Amish Mennonite, and then later just Mennonite. This was true of First Mennonite of Morton, who helped form the Western Amish Mennonite Conference in the 1870s and officially merged with the Mennonite Church conferences west of Indiana in 1920.

To make matters worse for the struggling Amish church, Samuel Froehlich’s “New Amish” movement was just picking up steam.

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58 Weber, ibid. 
59 Weber, ibid. 
60 Weber, ibid. 
61 The Mennonites of America, C. Henry Smith, A. M., Ph. D. Published by the Author, Chicago: 1909 
62 Weber, ibid. 
The “New Amish”: A Frustrated Perspective

In 1909, C. Henry Smith wrote about the New Amish and his words were quoted almost verbatim in 1931 by Harry Weber of the Mennonite Publishing House: “The inactivity and apparent lifelessness of the Amish congregations in Illinois made them fertile soil for a new movement propagated by some zealous leader. This movement came in the form of the New Amish … called by themselves the Apostolic Christian Church … The New Amish originated in Switzerland in 1832. Samuel Froehlich, a theological student, was excluded from the State Church of Switzerland. Beginning to organize a church of his own, he visited the Emmenthal [Amish] congregation, where he met Christian Baumgartner and Samuel Gerber. The latter, who had been recently installed as an Emmenthal minister, was ambitious to play a prominent part in his group. Accusing his fellow ministers of a lack of religious zeal and an absence of spiritual life, he introduced a series of innovations in his charge contrary to the rules of the church. Thus the soil was well prepared for a division. Froehlich, who had a small following of State Church members in Aargau, was soon compelled to leave the Emmenthal owing to pressure from the police officials. He sent a representative, however, … a disciple of his, George Steiger...

Steiger took advantage of the local quarrel and invited the disaffected to join the Froehlich following. Gerber, Baumgartner, and others, who had already been celebrating the communion service among themselves every Sunday, hesitated to accept the invitation, because Steiger now declared their old faith to be a dead faith, and consequently all who joined the new movement would need to submit to rebaptism by immersion. This was rather humiliating to men who had all along assumed a superior piety among their fellows. They finally submitted, however, and in the course of a few months Steiger won over about sixty members from the Emmenthal churches, including about equal numbers from the Mennonite and State churches.

The new sect early developed an air of superior sanctity and a spirit of exclusiveness. Salvation was possible only through the avenue of their church. All others belonged to the "world," with whom there was to be no religious fellowship whatever. At first meetings were held every night after the supposedly apostolic example. Communion was administered every Sabbath morning, while religious services were held in the afternoon. To the government they owed no allegiance except to pay their taxes, and naturally they could hold no civil office... "Salute no man by the way" [Lk 10:4] was observed literally, especially when they met members of the church from which they had withdrawn. They bitterly denounced the old church and ridiculed its ministers as "Babblers and Preachers of a dead faith."

The first of these Neu Taufer [translated “new baptizers”] or New Amish... came to Ohio from Switzerland in 1846, where they secured a small following among their countrymen in the Wayne County [Swiss] Mennonite settlement. In 1852, several appeared among the Amish in Lewis County, New York, where they caused the usual disturbance... and won over to their faith some of the Verklers and Fahrneys and others. From here one of the Verklers and Benedict Weyeneth, one of the leaders from Switzerland... began proselyting among... some of their kinsmen in the Amish settlement in Woodford County, Illinois, where they secured a few more disgruntled church members for their faith. ...Their first converts were Joseph Graybill, who became their first minister in Illinois; John and Joseph Verkler, cousins of their name-sake from New York; Peter Engel, one of the earliest settlers of Woodford County [and son of the Mennonite bishop Christian Engel who organized the first church of any denomination in the county64], and others who had been more or less dissatisfied with the church and thus fell an easy prey to the proselyting zeal of the strangers. A small following was also gained in the Dillon Creek settlement...

...The growth for many years was slow. By 1877 there were only eighty-nine members in the United States and the membership would have remained insignificant had not a large number of immigrants from Switzerland within recent years been added....Now there are a number of large congregations in central Illinois...perhaps several thousand members.

64 C. Henry Smith, The Mennonites of America, 1909, p. 244 ff.
...The first organized congregation was drawn out of the Partridge Amish church. The first building was erected between Roanoke & Eureka.... Some of these church houses are splendid brick structures. ...They have had a schism in their ranks....[SEE APPENDIX 2] They have no church literature, except that occasionally one of the sermons is put into typewritten form and passed around. In doctrine and practice this sect has been influenced somewhat by the fact that many of its earliest adherents came from the ranks of the Amish. They are thoroughly non-resistant, and have nothing to do with civil government, in dress they are extremely plain, but as a result of Swiss influence the women are permitted to wear plain hats instead of bonnets. In doctrine, however, they differ in several respects from the Amish. They baptize by immersion and observe the practice of feetwashing, although not in connection with the communion service. They are very exclusive and have as little business and social relation with others as possible. Religious associations with other churches they forbid. They resent any suggestion of Mennonite connections and strenuously deny any relation to that body. They are opposed to having their history recorded. The historian finds it impossible to gather any information from them. They are forbidden by the rules of their organization to listen to preaching, praying, offering grace at meals, or any other religious exercise performed by one not of their faith. For that reason they never attend the funeral services of even their nearest relatives or friends if such service is in charge of a "foreigner."...

They make free use of the ban in their religious discipline (the expulsion of a member from church for failing to obey some doctrine of that church [and] "shunning" - ostracism of the excommunicated...) This shunning is carried to the extent of refusing to talk, eat or transact business with the "sinner," even including domestic relations of husband and wife. Ideally it is supposed to be an act of love to bring the erring one to his senses but frequently it becomes a form of punishment. Jacob Amman's insistence upon a more strict observance of the practice caused the Amish split. The New Amish have inherited and retained the practice with the Jacob Amman intensity. ...Frequently the ban completely disrupts the domestic relations of the family. Husband and wife are not even permitted to eat at the same table when one or the other has been excommunicated. The practice has worked havoc in a number of families in central Illinois. Several notorious cases have given the New Amish within recent years considerable notoriety, and have called forth a great deal of unfavorable criticism throughout the State.65 However it should be said that these unfortunate cases do not fairly characterize the normal life of the group which is as happy and successful as that of their neighbors if not more so.

The church activity consists of an all-day, but no evening, Sunday service. Both the English and German languages are used. ...Dinner is served at the church. Many adults who have been reared in the church continue to attend although they do not join. They have no Sunday schools.66

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65 "the most notorious case was that of Samuel Moser who because of strained family relations was led to brutally murder his wife & 3 children several years ago. This case and several others similar to it have given the New Amish considerable notoriety." Smith, p. 246
66 Weber, ibid (with some original details restored from C. Henry Smith's 1909 account)
67 Roth, Morton: A Pictoral History, p 158.
68 C. Henry Smith, 244 ff. Birth control and higher education added from https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_Christian_Church
As mentioned earlier, the immigration of so many Germans to central Illinois in such a short amount of time had to be very difficult for the pioneers. In fact, one researcher pointed out that “Anglo-Americans felt that the spread of the German language was un-American and would disrupt the American way of life...[so] several institutional efforts to eliminate the German language were made. Opposition of allowing the German language to assimilate in the United States were championed through the enactment of laws in school... in states such as Wisconsin, Illinois, Louisiana, and Iowa.”

But even though the transition was difficult for Anglo-Americans, it was especially difficult for the immigrants. Giving up their country, language, friends, and many family – almost everything they knew and loved – had to have been excruciating. Because of the weight of all the changes, some German immigrants refused to learn English altogether.

Most followed the typical pattern of immigrants all over the world – the first generation learned enough of the language to get by, the second generation really started to fully integrate, and the churches adapted after a few generations.

It was hard on everyone. But there are many reasons it was good for everyone and good for America to go through it. The Germans brought with them an incredible amount of financial capital, gifts, ingenuity, work ethic, and character. “Although the German immigrants came to America to improve their lives, they simultaneously and inadvertently contributed to the success of American business as well... [By] generating profits from their plots and reinvesting, the Germans were... only accelerating capitalism.” Also, by “their diversified farming, extensive cultivation of land, [as well as]...maur[ing] the fields and carefully root[ing] out stumps and stones, the Germans contributed to preserving the soil.” All of this is particularly true for Morton, as others have documented in detail.

Of course the Germans eventually did learn English and fully integrate into American society. And Americans learned to accept and integrate some of German culture as well (think frankfurters, sauerkraut, pretzels, bratwurst, and Christmas trees!).

There are so many reasons for us to give thanks for God bringing so many German Anabaptists to central Illinois in the 19th century. As Ruthie Roth has said, “one of the most important reasons for the success of Morton is [that]...it's definitely a Christian community. God has been so good and I think that this Christian influence has been so important to the development of Morton and has drawn so many wonderful giving generous people... - really dedicated Christians that really want to...help other people. In such a fine community as Morton... we want to celebrate the past but create a wonderful future under the direction of God and his help.”

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69 Tagore, Amanda. *Irish and German Immigrants of the Nineteenth Century: Hardships, Improvements, and Success*, 2014

70 Ludden, Jennifer. *In Rural Wisconsin, German Reigned For Decades*, National Public Radio, April 1, 2009. "In 1910," says Joseph Salmons, a linguist at the University of Wisconsin, "a quarter of the population [of Wisconsin] told the census taker they spoke only German and didn't speak English — a quarter of the population." That fact stunned Salmons...he had no idea the language had thrived for so long. The year 1910 was already a full generation after the mass migration had dropped off, yet Salmons discovered not only that many in Hustisford [WI] and other farm towns were still bilingual, but that a sizeable portion was monolingual. "It turns out a lot of these people were born in Wisconsin," Salmons says. "And a fair number were born of parents born in Wisconsin. That is, these guys were not exactly killing themselves to learn English." "...it's almost as if they believe God spoke German."

71 See particularly Roth’s *Morton: A Pictoral History* for a short history of many of Morton’s most successful early businesses and notice the many German-speaking ancestries (the Rapp potteries, Witzig’s, etc).

Appendix 1: The Story of Andreas Braun

Schweinfurt, 1850

...Journey-man shoemaker Johann Andreas Braun, resident here appears with this petition: I am the fiance of Katherine Schmidt, who also is a member of this congregation, & both of us can no longer belong to the [state] Church; therefore we request the gracious intercession of the city council that we may be recognized as a “Christian Congregation” in Bavaria.

...14 persons, male and female, have united for a confession of faith which is founded entirely upon biblical principles... The undersigned members of the most holy faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Majesty— (who according to Jas. 2, 1 and 1 Cor. 5, 16, 17 is no respector of persons, but values and judges every person according to his inner worthiness before God)— follow this summons on the part of the honorable Government, to talk about ourselves and to tell what we are... To be sure, we are well known in respect to our outward station and life; but we are less known in respect to our inward stand and faith before God, and therefore bound to give account of the hope that is in us (Peter 3, 15-16) to everyone who asks us for the reason; most of all to the Government which should judge whether the citizens are beginning something which is disadvantageous to the welfare of the state. We gladly submit to such impartial examination since we are convinced that we are neither detrimental nor harmful to human society, but rather a blessing as children of the faith of Abraham. (1 Moses 12, 2-3; Gal. 3, 7-5. 29.)

Now in regard to our faith we say wholeheartedly with the Apostle Paul: "We confess that according to the way which is called a sect, we thus serve the God of the fathers, that, we believe all that is written in the Law and in the Prophets, casting our hope on God, which they also await, that the resurrection of the dead, the just and the unjust, will take place. But in this expectation we strive and practice to have a clear conscience toward God and men.” (Acts 24, 14-16.)

The characteristic feature of our faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord of Majesty, therefore consists in this that this faith of ours is not a mere matter of form, not mere learning, not mere confession before men, but permeates our whole heart, sanctifies our whole life as divine strength. We leave it to each and everyone to judge whether our faith in Jesus |Christ should be considered less (or inferior) than the usual faith of men just because our faith passes into our lives as a power of sanctification, in love to God and to man. The reason for our separation from the established church is also founded on this difference, not by our human volition, but through God’s grace and summons, because the faith which does not produce a new life through Christ is a different faith from the one which the Apostles of the Lord had taught. (Ephes. 4, 1 and the following) The strength of faith has been lost as well as the light of faith. (Matth. 5, I 3 -I 6 .)

But when we are asked whence our faith in Jesus Christ received this light and this strength, we answer briefly and truly; from the ‘baptism in Jesus Christ in which the promise of God to us was fulfilled, that he would give to those who believe in Jesus Christ and let themselves be baptized in His death His Holy Spirit, who makes it not only possible, but also easy to lead a new life according to Christ’s image (Rom. 6 ) a thing which is not possible to human endeavor. That is then no longer a barren command and a moral patchwork, but the product of God’s power; and thus all should be who call themselves after Christ and confess Him by word of mouth. (Timothy, 2-19.)

Now just as we are considered a sect on account of our baptism in Jesus Christ, and are despised and cast off by men as if by that we had invented something strange and new, when we merely obeyed the command and order of the Lord with all our heart (Rom. 6-17); thus we on our part also can no longer have any spiritual (or church) communion with those who despise us because of the truth of Jesus Christ and who cast us off as a sect (Timothy, 3-5), and whose faith is death and unproductive for bringing forth a holy, godly life, such as was in Christ Jesus and was made manifest. (Jas. 2-20 and the following, 1 John 1, 2-7). He who does not have the life of Jesus Christ. denies Christ Himself as the One who gained and brought back life from death. (John 2-22 and the following.)

The true baptism in Christ, of which there is only one just as there is only one true faith for salvation, therefore stands between two types or manifestations of belief; for in order to become partakers of Christ (Heb. 3-14) one must proceed from faith to faith, as the apostle says, (Rom. 1-17) "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith"; and still there is only one faith, just as the Father and the Son are One God. The first deed of faith, which must precede baptism and proceeds from the preaching of the Word of God, avails for the justification of the wicked sinner in the eyes of God (Rom. 3-22 and the following, 5-1; 10-4 and the following.) The other faith flows and results from the baptism of him who first believed, and gives the baptized one strength in Christ to do the will of God, and to overcome the world to sanctification for the day of deliverance. (Gal, 2-20; 5-6; 6-15; 1 Cor. 7-19; 1 John, 5-4 and the following.)
We have and embrace absolutely no other faith than the one which God’s Word teaches and gives us, in which we also find both the best precept and safest rule for establishing a congregation of such called believers, as was done at the time of the Apostles.

To be sure, in Schweinfurt and in general in Bavaria, there are as yet not many of us of that faith, nor do we use human means to persuade anyone thereto, but on the contrary we restrain those in whom we do not find divine manifestations of proceeding grace, repentance in God and faith in Jesus, and we exclude those who do not live according to their confession and in a way worthy of the Gospel; but we are united in one body and spirit of Christ with all the consecrated in the whole world, and not only with those who really live on earth, but also with those who have already preceded us beyond the grave to await with us the future revelation and glorification of the children of God. (Rom. 8-14-19.)

That is our confession of faith, whereby we are not concerned with art and wisdom but only with truth and conformity with God’s Holy Word and Will, and whence it also follows that we have adopted neither a new faith nor a new baptism (i.e., are neither sectarians nor anabaptists) but the age-old, original command which from the beginning we have had and received from God to obey. (John 2-7.24; 2 John. 6-10.)

We appeal to the toleration and public protection on the part of our highly respected Government which has been ordained by God, with the greater assurance since we are loyal and obedient subjects, having the honor to remain,


Schweinfurt, Oct. 5, 1852.

Royal-Bavarian Home Office for Church and School Affairs.

...the request made by the journeyman shoemaker Johann Andreas Braun of Schweinfurt and his comrades, for the recognition of the Christian baptizing congregation which the above-mentioned intends to establish as a private church organization... cannot be agreed to.

Wuerzburg, June 7, 1853.

In the Name of His Majesty the King.

...journey-man shoe-maker Andreas Braun of Schweinfurt, conducted a Mennonite service on the Ottelshahuser estate on Sunday May 29, without any authorization, wherefore this meeting was immediately closed by the above mentioned court acting upon notice which had been received previously, and an investigation was instigated against its leader.

The royal city commission is herewith informed of this matter for the proper supervision of Braun and his adherents...

Journeyman shoemaker Andreas Braun was informed... that he should discontinue everything relating to the sect in question from now on, and especially hold no more meetings.

Summoned: All members of the congregation in question for Monday, the 27th of this month 10:30 A. M.

June 27, 1853

Those who appeared were informed that the members... would have to be banished; Whereupon they declared: We request to postpone the banishment for 12 days yet, and after the expiration of this time, we will submit our declaration, whether we wish to appeal against the ordered banishment.
Schweinfurt, July 9, 1853.

The undersigned adherents of the dissolved baptizing congregation appear and declare themselves willing to discontinue their mutual gatherings from now on. They herewith point out: They give this declaration because they are forced to and have to discontinue their meeting...

Schweinfurt, Jan. 20, 1854.

To His Majesty, the King of Bavaria.

Our Honorable Sovereign.

In the Name of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Lord of all Lords, we turn to you as the highest and last resort on earth.

Through God's mercy we have learned to know the truth of that which our Lord Jesus spoke concerning the Kingdom of God, (Luk. 17-20-21) that it does not come with outer manifestations and show, but within in the spirit and hearts of the believers. Thus we have also experienced it in our own case, since we became converted to the faith of the Gospel and to obedience to the truth, and therefore we have withdrawn from public, churchly pomp, and have also submitted the reasons of our faith in doctrine and conduct in writing to the sovereign Home Office.

Thereupon our devotional periods were forbidden, under the allegation that they were of a political nature; and by the threat of many punishments and annoyances we have been faced with the alternative, either to deny our most holy faith or to emigrate for the sake of the same.

Now before we choose the latter, we take the liberty, as a last attempt to appear before Your Majesty with the humble request, whether it is your sovereign will and unalterable wish, that we should have to leave the country for the sake of our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not struggle against evil and oppression; we accept it as something permitted by God, if it has to be thus; only we did not want to let the reproach rest upon us that we had not done everything that might be useful thereto.

In this respect we have a precedent in the case of our fellow-believers in the Grand Duch Baden, who were also oppressed and persecuted by subordinate authorities; and when they applied directly to the ruler, help was granted them that they received the right to hold free meetings and enjoyment of civil rights.

Should we persuade ourselves that a similar thing would be denied us in Bavaria, just because we stand on the foundation of God’s Word and not on the statues of men? Yes, if it is true, that a person may no longer believe freely and without hindrance, in the Lord Jesus Christ, nor confess the Son of God without persecution, as happened formerly among the Jews and the Heathen, then we will gladly suffer because of that for God's sake. Who through His glory and power has called us for communion and imitation of the Lord Who was numbered among the evildoers, in Whom the Established Church pretends to believe. But if she believes in Him, why, then, does she persecute us for this, that we believe in Him with our whole heart, and confess Him as our Lord through the Holy Spirit? (1. Corinth. 12-3) If we are persecuted by the church for that reason, then we ought rightfully to separate from her. If we did some evil, then, the secular government would have the right to interfere by means of its authority; but if we do good, then we suffer for righteousness’ sake and are participants in the beatitudes of the Lord, (Gosp. St. Matth. 5-10-12).

But, with that, according to the admonition of the Apostle Paul (1 Tim. 2-2-3), we do not cease to pray to God for our esteemed sovereign and for all who have been placed in authority over us, that God may direct their hearts, that we, as loyal subjects, may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and respectability.

With this assurance we remain in deepest respect and submission to your Royal Majesty, devoted suppliants:

Michael Reuter Jr. citizen and farmer
His wife, Magdalena Reuter
Friedrich Buettner, citizen and farmer
His wife Dorothea Buettner, widow Maria Susanna Braun and daughter Ursula Margaretha Braun
Johann Andreas Braun, shoemaker, single
Widow Maria Schmidt and her children
Katharine Schmidt, single
Dorothea Schmidt, single
Sabina Schmidt, single
George Schmidt, locksmith, single
Widow Margaretha Goebel
Martin Luck, shoemaker, single
Josef Niedermeyer, tinker, single of Gerolzhofen
Konrad Belz and Kasper Koch, single estate owner in Ruegshof
Jakob Rassin, tenant of the royal domain Ottelmannshaeserhof and His wife Maria Rassin as well as their children.
Christian Hunsinger, single
David Hunsinger, single
Peter Neuschwanger, tenant in Herbstadt and his wife Veronika Neuschwanger
David Musselman, estate owner in Oberlauringen and his wife Christine Musselman
Barbara Hemmerich of Obbach, single
Barbara Mueller of Niederwerrn, single.

Munich, March 8, 1854.

Royal Bavarian Department of the Interior for Affairs of the Church and State

... the petition of Johann Andreas Braun of Schweinfurt and his comrades for recognition of their sect as a private organization cannot be granted... upon the most honorable decree of the Royal Majesty...

Appendix 2

C. Henry Smith mentioned a split in the Apostolic Christian Church in the early 1900s. Presumably he was referring to the group who now refer to themselves as the Nazarean Apostolic Christian Church. “As the church in America flourished, ... the Apostolic Christian Church developed somewhat independently from the churches in Europe, especially those in Eastern Europe. In the turmoil resulting from the wars and hardships in Europe, Nazareans from Eastern Europe immigrated to North America. The cultural customs they brought with them proved to be at odds with the existing culture in the American churches. Though many initially conformed to the new order in America, concerns and misunderstandings grew. Unfortunately, contention centered on these cultural differences, in particular the wearing of the mustache. The [Apostolic Christian Church of America] would not tolerate this practice, which was commonplace among those from the Balkans. The trouble grew until members were disciplined for refusing to shave. The European elders attempted to mediate and resolve the problems. In spite of their efforts, a division occurred. Since nearly all of the leadership of the American churches remained with the original order, the recent immigrant brethren, with the assistance of the European elders, labored to establish the brethren who had been separated.”

“In 1932 a second schism originated from a letter sent by elders in Europe asking for greater adherence to traditional teachings and practices. Those adhering to the request of the letter separated themselves from the Apostolic Christian Church of America and became known as the Christian Apostolic Church (later the German Apostolic Christian Church). The Apostolic Christian Church of America did not retain German language preaching. It is a common misconception that German language preaching was a primary issue in the division.”

73 http://www.acc-nazarean.org/our-history.html
74 https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_Christian_Church