



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FAMILY OF WILLIAM C.E. AND BESSIE K. BECKER

William C.E. and Bessie K. Becker in a photograph from the late 1930s.

Becker family gift will benefit the Special Collections Department and its users

St. Louis County Library is pleased to announce the receipt of a large donation for its Special Collections Genealogy Department. The children and grandchildren of William C.E. and Bessie K. Becker have made a substantial donation to obtain new material for the library's already large collection.

The family members expressed their wish to put the gift to use for the immediate betterment of Special Collections and its genealogical researchers.

“We are immensely grateful to receive such a generous gift,” said Special Collections' Manager Joyce Loving. “The William C.E. and Bessie K. Becker Collection will include materials that will greatly expand the opportunity for our patrons to find the answers they need. This will be a lasting tribute to the family and an enduring gift to the genealogical community.”

Library Foundation Board President Maurice Quiroga expressing the Board's gratitude for the gift, noted, “This is a wonderful opportunity to put these funds to use immediately to acquire additional materials that further enhance the caliber of genealogical research offered by the library. We greatly appreciate this donation.”

St. Louis County Library has one of the largest genealogical collections of materials in the country, attracting researchers from across the Midwest and the nation. The gift from the Beckers' family further secures the Library's national reputation as a genealogical hub.

More information about Mr. and Mrs. Becker and plans for the gift's use will appear in the next issue of PastPorts.



Genealogy PROGRAMS

**MAY
2014**

**PROGRAMS ARE FREE
AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

Registration is not required.

**Call 314-994-3300
for more information.**

Programs take place at:

**St. Louis County Library
Headquarters**

1640 S. Lindbergh Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri, 63131.

St. Louis Genealogical Society General Meeting Tuesday, May 13, 7:00 p.m.

Headquarters Auditorium

A Shape in Time and Space: Tracking the Necked Discoid Gravemarker



Featured speaker: Michael McNerney

The necked discoid gravemarker is unique in that it has a vaguely human shape. Take a look at the distribution of this style from Italy to Oklahoma, including stops in Spain, England, Ireland, Southeastern U.S., and Missouri. There are family names on most of the markers that will be of interest to the genealogist.

St. Louis Genealogical Society Jewish Special Interest Group Wednesday, May 21, 7:00 p.m.

Headquarters Auditorium

Jewish Genetic Traits

Because Jewish people tended to marry within their own ethnic group, some of their genetic mutations are unique. It is important to be aware of those that are life-threatening.

**Featured Speaker: Dr. Khateriaa Pyrtell, Genetic Counselor,
Washington University School of Medicine**



St. Louis County **Library**

Program sites are accessible. Upon two weeks' notice, accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities. Call 314-994-3300. www.slcl.org



“A Tour of St. Louis” guides readers through the city in 1878

J. A. Dacus. and James W. Buel. *A Tour of St. Louis; or the Inside Life of a Great City*. St. Louis: Western Publishing Company, Jones & Griffin, 1878. R 977.866 D119T.

Among the books about St. Louis in the library’s collection, “A Tour of St. Louis; or the Inside Life of a Great City” stands out by providing a snapshot of the city and a colorful look at many of its citizens at the time it was written. “There are social developments here as well as elsewhere, a description of which is not always pleasant, and yet such an omission would leave the work incomplete as an account of the actual condition of the people at the present time,” wrote the publishers. “It was the purpose of the publishers to present true pictures of the phases of metropolitan life encountered in our times.” The authors, described as “Members of the

St. Louis Press,” produced a text that was part history, part civic and commercial promotion, part guide book, and part sensational description of the seamier side of urban life. Promotion of the activities of industrialist Thomas Allen, to whom the book is dedicated, figures prominently. Many engraved illustrations accompany the text. An index listing businesses, institutions, personal names and subjects



The Eclipse Speed Buggy manufactured by Eugene Papin & Co. (see page 4).



Special Collections Department presented with StLGS Special Award

St. Louis Genealogical Society (StLGS) President Fran Behrman presented the Special Collections Department with a Special Award at the society’s annual Family History Conference on April 26. “This our way of saying thank you for your continued support of StLGS, your outstanding contribution to the genealogical community, and your welcoming and generous assistance to your patrons on a daily basis,” wrote Ms. Behrman in a letter notifying the staff. The Special Award is chosen and presented at the discretion of the society’s president. Staff members were thrilled to receive a standing ovation from conference attendees when the award was presented.

StLGS President Fran Behrman (left) with Special Collections Department Manager Joyce Loving and Assistant Manager Scott Holl

appears at the end of this article. The book is available in the Special Collections Department at call no. R 977.866 D119T and online at the [Internet Archive website](https://archive.org/details/tourofstlouisori00dacu) <https://archive.org/details/tourofstlouisori00dacu>.

The book begins with a history of the city, a discussion of commercial activities in general, and an essay predicting a great future for St. Louis as “the greatest city on either continent in the next fifty years.” Short descriptions of public and social institutions, the arts and culture, educational institutions, parks, the new Eads Bridge, Union Station, and

the railroad tunnel follow. The section is capped by a biographical essay extolling the achievements of Thomas Allen. Further chapters lauding St. Louis as a railroad hub and commercial center include descriptions of companies dealing in various industries and trades. A typical entry features the Eugene Papin & Co., manufacturer of carriages and buggies:

“There is no article made by human hand conducive of more genuine enjoyment, or more healthful and exhilarating pleasure than a perfectly made carriage or buggy.

THIS MONTH IN SAINT LOUIS HISTORY

May 17, 1849 The Great Fire

The year 1849 was a time of great tragedy and devastation for the city of St. Louis. Not only had the city been in the grips of a cholera epidemic since the beginning of the year, spring brought the worst fire the city had experienced.

“The Great Fire” started on May 17 when the steamboat *White Cloud* caught fire. After burning through its moorings, it floated down the levee, spreading fire to 23 other steamboats, which were destroyed within a half hour. Stiff northeast wind propelled the fire across the levee, gained momentum, and destroyed approximately 400 businesses and homes.

The first warning bell sounded at 10 p.m. on May 17, and the fire raged on until 7 a.m. the following day. Water supplies were depleted early, and the volunteer fire departments were helpless against this monstrous fire. The newspaper offices were destroyed, and the telegraph office was forced to relocate to the east side of the river. Material loss was estimated at more than \$5 million and thousands of people were left homeless and unemployed. The fire was believed to be the act of “incendiary” (arson).

The cholera epidemic combined with the Great Fire led to the outward expansion of the city as St. Louisans moved



away from the ravaged riverfront and its disease-carrying waters.

For further reading

Edwards, Edward. *History of the Volunteer Fire Department of St. Louis*. St. Louis: Veteran Volunteer Firemen's Historical Society, 1906. R 977.866 E26H.

Gill, McCune. *The St. Louis Story*, Vol. 1. Hopkinsville, Kentucky: Historical Record Association, 1952. R 977.866 G475S.

History of the St. Louis Fire Department. St. Louis: Central Publishing Company, 1914. R 614.84 H673.

Hyde, William and Howard L. Conard. *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, Vol. 2, pp.775-776. New York: Southern History Company, 1899. R 977.866 H995E.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Saint Louis City and County from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day*. Vol. 1, pp. 819-821. Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1883. R 977.866 S311H.

Wilson, Laura. *The Great Fire of 1849 in St. Louis*. St. Louis: 1938. R 977.866 W749G.



“A Kerry Patch Residence” from “Life Among the Lowly.”

Skimming over the gentle undulations of the road, with every nerve in repose for the keen appreciation of the effects, is only a step removed from flying; while the swift luxurious motion is far more pleasurable than a siesta on the thick and lazy clouds....The representative manufacturers of top and open buggies in the Mississippi Valley is Eugene Papin & Co., whose factory is at Nos. 900 to 908 Clark Avenue.”

Oddly, an entire chapter is devoted to the resort town of Hot Spring, Arkansas, but the authors explain the connection. “By rail Hot Springs is about four hundred miles from St. Louis, but the fact that this great invalid resort can only be reached from the North, comfortably and expeditiously, by way of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern, emi-

nently a St. Louis railroad, the Springs at once become a well defined adjunct to our city.” The railroad was owned by Thomas Allen, who naturally stood to gain by such promotion of the resort. The text provides an interesting description of the resort area and the healing properties of its waters. “The curative virtues of the great thermal waters of the Hot Springs valley cannot be exaggerated...The diseases for the cure of which the Springs are specially recommended are rheumatism, catarrh, scrofula, the worst cases of syphilis, gout, paralysis, female troubles, including sterility, gravel, ulceration, asthma, neuralgia, and all the eutaneous diseases.”

“St. Louis has been boastful of her beauties and charms that make her in reality an attractive residence city. With characteristic modesty she has pushed herself into importance by a quiet industry, felt far and near, as evinced by the universal applause she has won as a city of solid wealth and healthy enlargement.” So begins the chapter, “Beauties of St. Louis,” describing the more pleasant city neighborhoods and the emerging suburbs. The owners of some homes are mentioned by name, and the grander houses receive brief descriptions. Despite the city’s beauty, the authors conceded that dust and air pollution were still disagreeable. Coal smoke could actually have some health benefits, they claimed, but, “Until better times come to reduce municipal debts, we must bear the pain of dust from our macadamized streets and endure the expense of watering carts to allay the nuisance that it is.”

“Summer Pastimes” provides a description of how St. Louisians coped with hot, humid summers. “The rich and the pretentious go to Saratoga, Newport, Far Rockaway, Long Branch, Cape May, Rye Beach, and Niagara, The well-to-do-and-sensible go to the lakes of Wisconsin and Minnesota, or to the mountains of Colorado and Utah; or perchance to the ancient seats of arts and culture in Europe.” How did the other 475,000 city residents with less means survive? According to the authors, through pleasant afternoons spent in city parks and the outlying countryside:

“Sunday is the great festival day of our people. In the summer-time, the gardens and parks of the city and the suburban groves are thronged by innumerable multitudes, in-



A bucolic scene included in “Summer Pastimes.” Bodemann’s Grove was located on the northeast corner of Grand Blvd. and Wyoming St., according to the 1878 St. Louis City Directory.

cluding all ages, sexes and nationalities. Music, dancing, ball games and other amusements are indulged in with a zest which shows the intensity of the pleasure realized from them by the participants.”

Or, citizens could choose the beer garden:

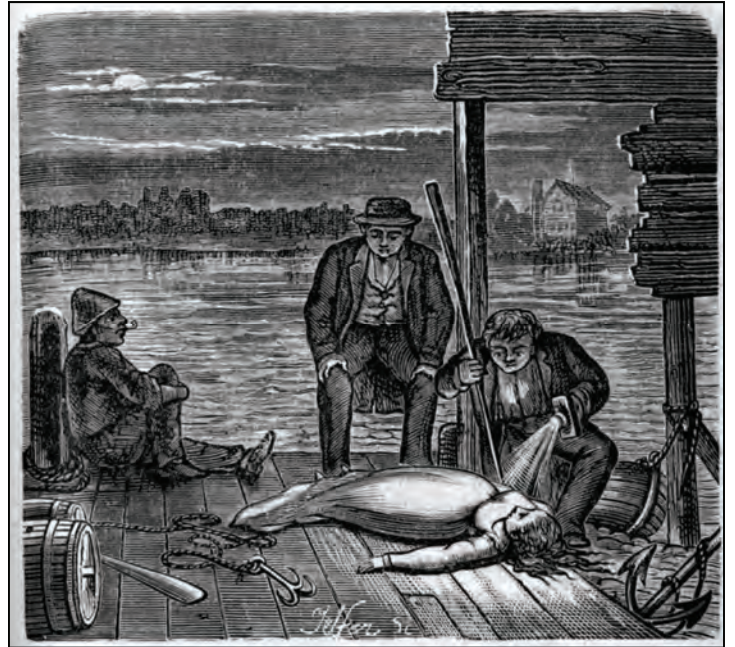
“One of the peculiarities of German customs is that of visiting places of public resort *en familie*, that is, the parents always insist upon having the companionship of their children. It is often the case that a family consisting of husband and wife and a half a dozen children may be observed seated at a table sipping fresh, foaming beer, and eating pretzels. There is a freedom of intercourse and withal, a refined politeness among even the lower classes of the children of the Fatherland...”

After a short detour through the fire and police departments, the last third of the book describes the darker and

perhaps more titillating aspects of urban life. The activities of petty criminals, thieves, “street arabs,” tenement dwellers, astrologers, vagabonds, grave robbers, “dandies and damsels,” street vendors, ordinary citizens involved in “clandestine depravity,” murderers, gamblers, and drunks are all paraded through the book’s pages for the reader’s benefit. Although the descriptions are surely sensational, stereotyped, exaggerated, and indicative of the attitudes of the day, they reveal much about urban life at that time.

A detailed account of this section’s many interesting stories is beyond the scope of this article. However, the chapter, “Night in the Streets,” gives some indication of what daily life might have been like in St. Louis in 1878. The following excerpts describe the street life on Franklin Avenue (now Dr. Martin Luther King Drive) in the evening hours:

“Franklin Avenue is a thoroughfare which presents a great number of peculiar characteristics of the social development



Two plates published in the chapter, “Social Undercurrents.” Left, “The Happy Home”; right: “The Wages of Sin.”

in metropolitan life than any other street in the city—perhaps in any city... From Fourth Street to Leffingwell Avenue, a distance of two miles, Franklin Avenue is lined with shops, and stores, and saloons, and from early in the evening until the hour of midnight it is thronged by people of all ages, sexes, and conditions. It seems to be the great thoroughfare of the masses in going from the business quarters, downtown, to the resident districts in the West End...

“It is not an aristocratic shop-street, and yet a vast amount of business is transacted in it. Aristocratic people in public affect to despise the fabrics from Franklin Avenue stores, while they quietly drop in and patronize them in private... At 7 o’clock p.m. the sidewalks of Franklin Avenue bear a constant stream of humanity. From 7 to 8 o’clock the larger proportion of the people met on the street are mechanics, and artisans, and laborers, sewing girls, saleswomen, and women employed in down-town factories, with an intermixture of boarding-house keepers out to drive a bargain.

“At 9 o’clock, and from that time till past 10, another class, or, rather, other classes, take possession of the street. These are the young clerks, and, in fact, the large nondescript element always found domiciled in the city, who seem to have nothing in particular to do and plenty of time to saun-

ter on the streets. The female portion of the great surging throngs who travel on Franklin Avenue are equally as nondescript as the male portion. Some of them are belated saleswomen; another large section of them are servant girls, who resort thither to indulge in little flirtations with the troops of the *hobble-de-hoys* always to be found sauntering on the streets...

“By 11 o’clock the crowds of hoydenish servant girls and many girls of more social pretensions, and their “fellows,” have mostly withdrawn, and the street, though by no means deserted, yet presents a less thronged appearance.

“Below Fifteenth Street the stranger will meet many very well-dressed and decent-appearing women after the hour named above. These are ‘street-walkers’ of a better class than encountered on Sixth and Seventh streets...

“After 12 o’clock only a few women are met on the Avenue. These are mostly walking to the west, and are, in the most instances, young girls, in pairs, who are returning to the homes they have disgraced, after keeping engagements with their “friends” in some down-town lodging-house...

“Many of the down-town saloons are all night houses.



Plate depicting St. Louis Hospital in the section titled “Charitable and Reformatory.”

Weird, strange places—mere dens some of them are—and these are patronized by some of the worst scoundrels in America. The dives of this character are generally to be found in the neighborhoods of bagnios, steamboat landings,

railway depots, and the principal market-places.

“The wayfarer at 3 o’clock in the morning would do well to avoid these places. A stranger would be almost certain to be knocked on the head by the thieves and pickpockets who make these “all-night houses” their headquarters.”

After describing in great detail such corruption, the authors end with “The Bright Side,” a discussion of the many noble institutions that work to provide relief to the “seething cauldrons of misery, of woe, poverty, vice and crime.” After a general survey of charitable work, the book covers institutions for the insane, orphanages, institutions for the poor, the Four Courts, and finally the St. Louis journalistic press.

In 1878, “A Tour of St. Louis” offered its readers an overview of the many institutions, businesses and industries that ennobled city life, as well as the “darker” element that provided opportunities for reform. Today it is an interesting source for information about many businesses and institutions, as well as an insight into social attitudes of the time.

Index to “A Tour of St. Louis; or the Inside Life of a Great City”

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HOLIDAY CLOSING

**Monday, May 26
 Memorial Day**

All St. Louis County Library locations will be closed.

NEW IN THE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT



View the list of new books on the web

A list of new books received during the previous month now appears on the [library's website](#). View the list by clicking on the graphic, left, or by typing the URL into your browser:

<<http://tinyurl.com/ktha6fr>>.

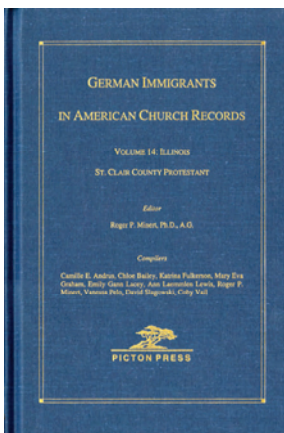
Looking for a specific state, or county ?

Books pertaining to specific states (and counties within states) begin with the same call number. [A chart of Dewey Decimal numbers for states and counties is posted on the library website](#) <<http://tinyurl.com/oqy8xp8>>. Other subjects are also grouped by call number. For example, family histories begin with 929.2. Materials for Scotland begin with 941 and those for Germany begin with 943.

To find new titles on the book list, note the Dewey Decimal Number for the state / county or subject you are interested in. Scroll through the book list until you find items beginning with that call number.

Books with call numbers **not beginning with "R"** are listed in Dewey Decimal order first, followed by those beginning with "R" (denoting "Reference" books that may be used only in the library). Book titles can be selected from the online list and emailed, printed, or saved to a file. An additional feature for library card holders is the ability to login to their library accounts and save titles to a customized list. [You can also download the list as a PDF from the library's website](#) <<http://tinyurl.com/okz4vvs>>.

For more information about viewing the new book list online, exporting records, and saving items to a customized list, call (314) 994-3300 or ask a librarian when visiting any St. Louis County Library branch.



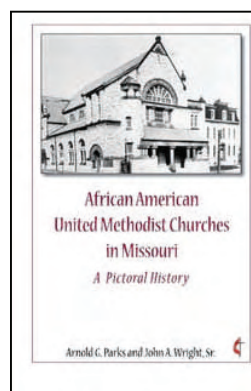
German Immigrants in American Church Records, Vol. 14, Illinois, St. Clair County Protestant

Roger Minert, ed.

Picton Press, 2013; 537 pp.
R 929.3089 G373

Church records often hold the key to finding a German ancestor's place of origin—if you can find the records and decipher them. Roger Minert and his team have been examining German-American Protestant Church records for such evidence and publishing the results. The volumes are arranged geographically. Names and places of origin are listed by church in each volume. Vol. 14 is the latest volume and covers congregations in St. Clair County, Ill.

NEW TITLES ADDED IN APRIL: 265

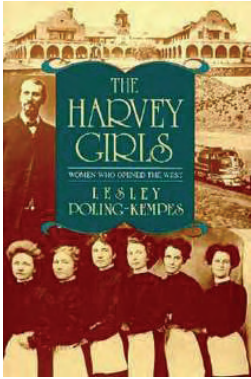


African American United Methodist Churches in Missouri

by Arnold G. Parks and John A. Wright, Sr.

Parthenon Press, 2012; 277 pp.
R 977.8 P252A

This pictorial history of the African American United Methodist Church in Missouri traces the development of churches from the 1840s to the present. Includes a description of the 35 churches still open, those now closed, and those which were only in existence for a brief period of time. Includes a description of the now-defunct Central West Conference.—*Adapted from publisher's website*



The Harvey Girls: Women Who Opened the West

by **Lesley Poling-Kempes**
Marlowe & Co., 1991; 252 pp.
R 979 P768H.

“The Harvey Girls” is the story of the pioneering women who worked as waitresses at Fred Harvey’s restaurants along the Atchison, Topeka

& Santa Fe Railway from the 1880s through the 1950s. At a time when there were “no ladies west of Dodge City and no women west of Albuquerque,” these 100,000 young women, between the ages of eighteen and thirty, left comfortable homes in the East and Midwest to work in what was then the Wild West. They came as waitresses, but when their contracts were up many stayed and settled, building new lives in the struggling cattle and mining communities.—*Publisher’s website*

PastPorts is published monthly by the St. Louis County Library Special Collections Department, located on Tier 5 of the Headquarters location.

[Current and past issues can be downloaded from the web <http://www.slcl.org/pastports>.](http://www.slcl.org/pastports)

Contact the Special Collections Department

Special Collections Department
 St. Louis County Library
 1640 S. Lindbergh Blvd
 St. Louis, MO 63131

Phone: 314-994-3300, ext. 2070
 Email: scollections@slcl.org
 Website: <http://www.slcl.org>

Tours

Tours of the Special Collections Department are conducted on the first Wednesday and third Saturday of the month at 10:30 a.m. No registration is required. Group tours are gladly arranged with advance notice by calling the Special Collections Department at 314-994-3300, ext. 2070.

CLASSES

Classes are free and open to the public, but registration is required. ☎ Call (314) 994-3300 to register. Space is limited.

MAY

Introduction to HeritageQuest and Fold3

Thursday, May 22, 2 p.m.

Headquarters Computer Lab

Larry Franke, instructor

Registration is now open.

JUNE

Genealogical Research: Getting the Most out of the Special Collections Department

Wednesday, June 4, 2 p.m.

Headquarters East Room

Larry Franke, instructor

Registration opens May 7.

Introduction to Ancestry Library Edition

Thursday, June 12, 2 p.m.

Headquarters Computer Lab

Larry Franke, instructor

Registration opens May 15.

History and Genealogy in Newspapers

Wednesday, June 25, 2 p.m.

Headquarters Computer Lab

Larry Franke, instructor

Registration opens May 28.