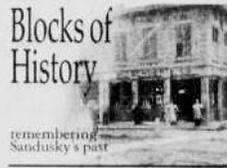


# Hancock Street was old 'German corner'

Walter E. Platte wrote an interesting article about Hessen Cassel or Hessekassel, a nickname given to a section of Sandusky around Hancock and Monroe Streets. As Mr. Platte said, most of the people in this area were German, speaking the language and establishing their businesses close to relatives and friends. The name Hessekassel is readily found on a map of Germany but no one seems to know why this particular name was picked for the area.

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remembering Sandusky's past

## Hessekassel

paying jobs for all comers. These work-hungry, ambitious immigrants came to Ohio by the tens of thousands in the last decades of the 19th century. By 1890 the German-speaking immigrants had become a major force in Sandusky, finally outnumbering descendants of the earlier English settlers. Locally they formed

singing societies, concert orchestras, guilds, gymnastic societies and ethnic newspapers. The early German immigrants were craftsmen, people who opened small businesses and congregated in German neighborhoods. Their language and heritage were precious to them until the two World Wars devastated German cultural interests.

The German Reformed Church, built in 1854 at the southeast corner of Hancock and Jefferson streets, counted as its members a large number of the oldest German pioneer families. South of the church, at the



Register photo/TIM FLECK



Register photo/TIM FLECK  
**ABOVE:** The public parking lot and playground at Hancock and East Monroe streets today.  
**LEFT:** Bender's Grocery occupies the same corner in this 1904 photo.

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photo/FOLLETT HOUSE MUSEUM

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## Hancock Street was old 'German corner'

Walter F. Platte wrote an interesting article about Hessen Cassel or Hessekassel, a nickname given to a section of Sandusky around **Hancock and Monroe Streets**. As Mr. Platte said, most of the people in this area were German, speaking the language and establishing their businesses close to relatives and friends. The name Hessekassel is readily found on a map of Germany but no one seems to know why this particular name was picked for the area. The Germans who came to Sandusky in the past were lured by the desire for freedom from despotic rulers and tales of good paying jobs for all comers. These work-hungry, ambitious immigrants came to Ohio by the tens of thousands in the last decades of the 19th century.

By 1890 the German-speaking immigrants had become a major force in Sandusky, finally outnumbering descendants of the earlier English settlers. Locally they formed singing societies, concert orchestras, guilds, gymnastic societies and ethnic newspapers. The early German immigrants were craftsmen, people who opened small businesses and congregated in German neighborhoods. Their language and heritage were precious to them until the two World Wars devastated German cultural interests.

The German Reformed Church, built in 1854 at the **southeast corner of Hancock and Jefferson streets**, counted as its members a large number of the oldest German pioneer families. South of the church, at the southeast corner of Madison Street, Dr. Tilden erected a store building in 1868. John Rieger purchased it in 1883 and greatly enlarged it to three stores. Various business occupied these stores through the years including an A&P store; O-P Craft; Russell Flower Shop; Kelly & Hoffman, Seeds; and grocery, meat and dry goods stores. Apartments were upstairs. On the same east side of the street at 612 Hancock was the Cockerill Music and Jewelry Store and at 628 was the Wagner Harness Shop. The stone flat-iron block was built on the corner of Elm and Monroe Streets in 1909 by the Kuebelier-Stang families. William Spiegel had a barbershop on the first floor. The Social Seven Benefit Club was located here with their hall on the top floor. Their dances were very popular and later this hall served a number of dancing schools.

Across Monroe Street, on the **southeast corner of Hancock**, was a saloon owned by Fred Schaubert. Next is a three-story building erected by Charles Ross in 1878 for his hardware store, 708 Hancock Street. 714 was Saxer's Barber Shop and 718 Hancock was Martin Murschel's Meat Market. The Knotty Pine Bar at 728 Hancock St. used to be the Dry Goods, Gents Furnishings and Millinery Shop of the Fox family who lived in the back. The name Fox may still be seen on the north side of the building. 912 Hancock was the C. C. Margard Meat Market which in the 1930s belonged to George Knapp. The J. P. Welter Grocery and Saloon on

the southeast corner of Hancock and Neil Streets continued as a grocery for over 60 years. Weier Bros. Waste Material Dealers, were at 920-922 Hancock and Hoffman Coal and Feed Company was in the brick building still standing on the northwest corner of Scott and Hancock.

Now we will consider the **west side of Hancock**, beginning with 623 which is a brick house built by George Gemke, a plasterer, in 1856 and sold the same year to John Fisher, who built Fisher Hall on the corner of Wayne and Water. By the 1890s, this was the home of Daniel and Sara White who established White's Conservatory on the premises with a greenhouse next door. This business was continued for at least 25 years. Two frame buildings were to the south, where the H & S Bakery was later built. Herman Heier's Shoe Repair Shop was in one building and Mrs. William Brehm's Dry Goods Store in the other. On the northwest corner was the Lewis Biehl Drug Store. The building was modernized by Harry J. Fisher who named it Fisher Drug about 1940. Later when it was owned by Earl McGookey further improvements were made and the business continues with James Buderer as proprietor. There is a parking lot back of the store where once the Biehl home was connected to the drug store.

**Across the street on the southwest corner** was the M.J. Bender & Co. Grocery, Flour and Feed Store. Later the Otto Ice Cream and Dairy Store was located here for years. For even more years, the John C. Klee Plumbing and Heating Co. was in the south part of the building. Hessekassel was self-sufficient. There were more businesses not mentioned here, interspersed with homes well maintained by the thrifty Germans. The area is now home to many businesses, including CR Music Exchange, First Gear, Fisher Drug and Knotty Pine Bar. The CAC building and the 710 Hancock Street property have been cleared and is now the Hancock Street Public Parking Lot and part of the Monroe Elementary School playground.

This text is taken from. "From the Widow's Walk" by Helen Hansen and Virginia Steinemann. "From the Widow's Walk," volumes I & II and "At Home in Early Sandusky", also by Helen Hansen, are available in the gift shops of the Follett House and the Sandusky Library. Maureen Mork contributed to this story.