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## FIRST CHRISTMAS TREES IN AMERICA

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- Wooster, Ohio, 1848*, August Imgard, a tailor from Wetzler, Hussia, has long been credited with being the initiator of custom in U.S.
- Richmond, Va., 1846*, August Bodeker, druggist.
- Williamsburg, Va., 1845*, Dr. Charles Frederick Ernest Minnegerode, native of Hussia, professor of Latin and Greek at the College of William and Mary, erected tree in home of Judge Beverly Tucker.
- Rochester, New York, 1840 & 1847*, In Lutheran Churches, the latter tree at a pageant, admission 25 cents, children half price.
- New York City, 1843*, Advertisement in New York Tribune "Christmas Trees" and decorations.
- Philadelphia, Pa., 1842*, Presbyterian Minister Theodore Ledyard Cuyler, at celebration and boys school, adorned with coats of arms and fancy ribands (sic).
- Fort Motte, S.C., 1839*, on Cheves Plantation. Tree was decorated with fruits, sugar plums, candies and cakes, brilliantly lighted with candles (not anything new, novel or strange).
- Cincinnati, Ohio, 1835*, mentioned in memoirs of Krausnick family.
- Philadelphia, Pa. 1834*, Doctor Constantin Hering and teacher Frederick Knerr brought trees from the Jersey sight followed by laughing, shouting and stone throwing boys.
- Belleville, Ill., 1833*, Gustave Koerner, jurist, political advisor to Abraham Lincoln, one-time ambassador to Spain. "We had a Christmas Tree, of course . . . the top of a young sassafras tree, dressed with ribbons and bits of colored paper, wax candles, little red apples and nuts and all sorts of confectionary. Perhaps first lighted tree on banks of Mississippi."
- Cambridge, Mass., 1832*, introduced by Charles Follen, Hessian, first professor of German at Harvard University. Tree is mentioned in biography written by wife Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, and Harriet Martineau: *Retrospect of Western Travel*, London 1838, vol. II, pp. 178,179. 7 dozen wax papers, gilded egg cups, paper cornucopiae filled with comfits, lozenges and barley sugar."
- Cleveland, Ohio, 1851*, Pastor Henry C. Schwan almost lost his pulpit for having a Christmas tree in Church.
- Fort Dearborn (Chicago), 1804*, Captain John Whistler, 1756-1829. Story cannot be verified, unless Whistler had custom from Hessians on whose side he fought in Revolutinary War.

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### *Did the Hessians have the Christmas Tree?*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in his world renowned novel: *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 1774, writes under date of December 20, 1772, Wetzlar (in the heart of Hussia): Lotte was decorating tree with wax candles, sweetmeats and apples.

Submitted by  
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AT YOUR SIDE  
THERE WERE GERMANS TOO

by

K O N R A D K R E Z

Not as burdens to these shores we throng,  
From our cherished German Fatherland.  
Indeed, we have brought so much along,  
Unknown to you, yet by our hand.  
And when from the dense forestal shields,  
and the open wilderness you  
wreath'd your vast and verdant fields,  
At your side there were Germans too.

So much of that which in earlier days  
you brought here from across the sea,  
We taught you how to prepare, and ways  
to produce more goods, yes, 'twas we.  
Dare not forget this, deny it n'er —  
Say not that we did not so do,  
For a thousand forges witness bear:  
At your side there were Germans too.

And though your art and your sciences now  
bring their strength and power to this land,  
Their fame rests still on the German brow,  
'Twas mostly done by German hand,  
And when from your songs melodies ring  
memories of hearts once so true,  
'Tis known to me, in the songs you sing  
is much put there by Germans too!

Thus, with great pride on this soil we stand,  
Which from the wilds our strength brought claim,  
Ever wonder then, what kind of land,  
'twould be if n'er a German came!  
And so we declared in Lincoln's day,  
And that day freedom's horn first blew —  
Yes, we dare undeniably say:  
At your side there were Germans too!

Translated from the German original by Dr. Robert E. Ward, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.