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"All We Ask Is Justice": German-American Reactions to the Battle of Chancellorsville

On 5 May 1863, the readers of the *New York Times* awoke to find a full account of what had just happened at a small Virginia hamlet called Chancellorsville. The promising spring campaign of Major General Joseph Hooker, commander of the Army of the Potomac, had come to naught. Disappointed, the northern population would want to know why yet another Federal thrust to Richmond had failed, and L. L. Crounse, the paper's correspondent with the army, supplied them that information:

> But to the disgrace of the Eleventh Corps be it said that the division of General Schurz, which was the first assailed, almost instantly gave way. Threats, entreaties and orders of commanders were of no avail. Thousands of these cowards threw down their guns and soon streamed down the road toward headquarters .... General Howard, with all his daring and resolution and vigor, could not stem the tide of the retreating and cowardly poltroons.[1]

Cowards, poltroons, rascals, damned Dutch—these were the words used to describe the men of the half-German Eleventh Corps in the northern English-language press. Crounse was not the only journalist to send in a report. L. A. Hendricks, correspondent of the *New York Herald*, was hardly more sympathetic. His story also appeared on 5 May, claiming "the disastrous and disgraceful giving way of General Schurz's division of Gen. Howard's corps (Sigel's old corps) completely changed the fortunes of the day. The men, I am told, fled like so many sheep before a pack of wolves, and the enemy rushed up, taking possession of the abandoned line." T. M. Cook, also of the *Herald*, complained that the German regiments "broke in confusion ... and fled from the field in panic, nearly effecting the total demoralization of the entire army," and another eyewitness exclaimed that "the flying Germans came dashing over the field in crowds." Horace Greeley's *New-York Daily Tribune* was the harshest of all. Greeley called for "swift justice" to "overtake the regiments that broke," suggesting that "if it be deemed too rigid to shoot them all, they may at least be decimated and then dissolved."[2]

In a matter of days, the stories published by the major New York City newspapers were copied, quoted, and paraphrased all over the rest of the North. The reason for the most recent Federal defeat had to be made known, especially after the high hopes that had accompanied this campaign. A scapegoat was necessary. The Hartford *Evening Press* argued the Germans "ran without fighting at all," and labeled this "an inexcusable piece of cowardice." The Philadelphia *Public Ledger* claimed the "losses sustained by the [Eleventh] corps, either in killed or captured, could not have been great—they ran too fast for that." The Philadelphia *Inquirer* called the corps' performance "unaccountable

and inexcusable," exclaiming that "its position ought to have been held, and *somebody* (emphasis orig.) is to blame for this disgraceful affair." Echoing the words of the other papers, which also exonerated Hooker for the defeat, the *Inquirer* added that only "the superb generalship of the Commanding General" saved the Army of the Potomac from utter disaster. Corps commander Oliver Otis Howard had likewise performed brilliantly, the paper reported, and was not culpable for the debacle that befell his men.[3]

The abuse heaped upon the Eleventh Corps, bad enough in the press, was positively scorching within the Army of the Potomac itself. Although Hooker came under some fire for mismanaging the battle, especially by high-ranking officers, nearly everyone else criticized the Germans. Colonel Robert McAllister of the 11th New Jersey told his wife the Germans "were panic-stricken and perfectly worthless. But our brave boys heeded them not and treated them with perfect contempt." Private Abram P. Smith of the 76th New York lamented that the Germans "broke and ran in the most cowardly manner," pushing aside "the brave regiments" in "cowardly waves," and a soldier in the 4th Ohio wrote his son "every Dutchman was making for the river . . . trying to save his own cowardly body." Within Captain Hubert Dilger's own Ohio German battery, Private Darwin Cody claimed the German infantry supporting his artillery had all "run without firing gun." Cody blamed the loss of some of the battery's horses and cannon on Germans: "I say dam [*sic*] the Dutch!" French-American Colonel Regis DeTrobriand probably best summed up the general mood in the rest of the army: "The Eleventh Corps was the object of a general hue and cry, nobody stopping to ask if there were not some extenuating circumstances."[4]

Anglo-Americans in the Army of the Potomac and at home strongly blamed the German-born element of the Eleventh Corps for the Union defeat at Chancellorsville in May 1863. In so doing, they found an easy scapegoat and an excuse with which to ease their consciences. With an identifiable foreign element upon which they could pin the badge of disgrace, the morale of the Anglo-American soldiers in the army and their loved ones at home would quickly recover. That of German-Americans, both in and out of the army, would not.[5]

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The events of 2 May 1863 that created this "general hue and cry" against the Germans of the Eleventh Corps are important in a purely military sense because they influenced the course of the battle and its operational aftershocks. Other historians have dealt with this aspect of Chancellorsville, however fleetingly, and a detailed recounting of the actions of the German regiments in the Corps would provide little that challenges their interpretations, most of which do exonerate the military performance of the Germans. Yet the social and psychological results of the battle for the German-Americans of the North have remained relatively unexplored, and are even more interesting and significant. How did German immigrants react to the nativist backlash following Chancellorsville, and how did it alter their ethnic identity? How did it affect their thinking regarding assimilation? This essay grapples with these primary questions. It also provides a glimpse into how German-America remembered the Civil War as a whole, and contends that, at least partly because of the prejudice they encountered during the conflict, German immigrants tended to recollect it as Germans first and Americans second. This, it might be argued, calls into question the idea of the

Civil War as a catalyst for Americanization, a theory once popular among Civil War and ethnic scholars, but one increasingly challenged by research in original German-language records.

Historians have been quick to characterize the nature of the rout of the Eleventh Corps at Chancellorsville and have even spilled considerable ink on the reactions of non-Germans to the defeat. How the Germans responded to their critics, however, has gone almost completely undocumented. As the ones deemed the guilty party in the affair—let alone as the country's largest ethnic group—the opinions, statements, and public actions of the North's German-Americans should have been analyzed before, but even the best known historical defender of the Germans, Augustus Hamlin, never really delved into the *aftermath* of Chancellorsville. Instead, he focused on the performance of the German regiments during the battle, accurately concluding that they had fought as well as could be expected under the circumstances, and, in many instances, had fought with courage. Likewise, the self-appointed chronicler of German-America in the Civil War, Wilhelm Kaufmann, surprisingly failed to mention anything substantial about what happened afterwards in his fileopietistic 1911 history. Ella Lonn, long considered "the source" for information on ethnics in the war, spent very little time indeed on German reactions to the nativistic backlash in her 1951 study, characterizing them instead with sweeping generalizations. More recently, William Burton, in his analysis of the North's ethnic regiments, limited his discussion of the battle to a page and said nothing about the resulting fallout. The two most respected modern historians of the battle, Stephen Sears and Ernest Furgurson, also leave us in the dark regarding German-American reactions. Only Wolfgang Helbich and Walter Kamphoefner, in their collection of edited Civil War letters and in one very recent article, touch upon the fact that Chancellorsville was a major event for the nation's German-born citizens. Yet their analysis of the meaning of the battle is necessarily limited by the scopes of their studies.[6]

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In May 1863 the Eleventh Corps was identified by both German and non-German soldiers and civilians as "the German Corps" of the Army of the Potomac. Even though only a little more than 50 percent of the corps was ethnically Teutonic, public attacks against it in the press were viewed as attacks against the Germans. Nearly all of Ludwig Blenker's earlier "German Division" had been absorbed into the command, and Franz Sigel, symbol of German-America, had led its precursor, the First Corps of Pope's Army of Virginia, in the summer of 1862. Sigel had then actually commanded the corps for several months before his resignation in February 1863, and Carl Schurz, that other highly visible spokesman for the Germans, served as its next leader before Oliver Otis Howard, a Westpoint-trained, teetotaling, and evangelizing New Englander, took over. Most of the newly-raised German regiments of 1862 from both the East and the Midwest had been assigned to the corps, such as the much publicized 26th Wisconsin, 82nd Illinois, and 119th New York. Taken together, these actions ingrained in the northern public's psyche the idea that the Eleventh Corps was a German organization. Colonel Patrick R. Guiney of the 9th Massachusetts wrote on 7 May 1863, "we would have gained a great victory were it not for the cowardice of the 11th Corps—a German corps which was formerly commanded by Sigel but now by Howard of Maine. The Dutch Corps ran." Even Second Lieutenant Oscar D. Ladley of the 75th Ohio, an

Anglo-American regiment attached to the Eleventh Corps, remarked that "the 11th Corps is composed principally of New York dutch." The famous poet William Cullen Bryant also described the Eleventh Corps as an ethnic command. Writing to President Abraham Lincoln about the chances of restoring Sigel to command of the Corps, Bryant claimed "it [the Eleventh Corps] is composed of German soldiering . . . ."[7]

It was with this sort of mindset that both the northern Anglo- and German-American populations waited anxiously for reports from the Virginia wilderness in the spring of 1863. When news broke of the defeat at Chancellorsville and the Eleventh Corps received the blame, most in the North automatically thought of the Germans.

"The Spirit of This Corps Is Broken"

Major General Oliver O. Howard never came close to admitting his culpability in the disaster which befell his corps. In his official report, issued a week after the battle, he blamed the rout of the Eleventh Corps on the density of the wilderness, which shielded the enemy from detection, the absence of his reserve brigade under Brigadier General Francis Barlow when the Confederates attacked, and a poorly-defined "panic produced by the enemy's reverse fire." He said nothing about the multitude of warnings he and brigade commander Charles Devens received from various scouts, nor a word about the valor of his troops. A few officers received some credit, such as Captain Dilger of the First Ohio Light Artillery, and Howard vaguely admitted that "a part of General Schimmelfennig's and a part of [Colonel] Krzyzanowski's brigades moved gradually back to the north of the Plank Road and kept up their fire." Absolutely nothing addressed the specious accusations directed towards his men. On 10 May he issued a General Order obviously meant to uplift the spirits of his troops, but the timing of this dispatch, as well as the tone that it adopted, could not have inspired many at all:

> As your commanding general, I cannot fail to notice a feeling of depression on the part of a portion of this corps. Some obloquy has been cast upon us on account of the affair of Saturday, May 2. I believe that such a disaster might have happened to any other corps of this army, and do not distrust my command. Every officer who failed to do his duty by not keeping his men together, and not rallying them when broken, is conscious of it, and must profit from the past.[8]

Howard clearly failed to understand that his German soldiers did believe they "rallied" and fought, and did not blame themselves or their regimental officers, but were crestfallen by the aspersions cast upon them by the Anglo-American press and the rest of the army. He was completely misguided in gauging the feelings of the Germans under his command at the time, and only worsened his plummeting reputation with them by issuing two unpopular orders. The first, dated 12 May, demanded the wearing of the crescent badge on all caps (many of which no longer bore them). By itself, this order was harmless. Following it, however, came the infamous ban on lager beer for all enlisted men.[9]

This order created incredible dissatisfaction. Practically every major German-language newspaper reported it and the soldiers' reactions. A private in the 26th Wisconsin wrote a letter back home that was prominently reprinted in nearly all the

major papers: "We have become Temperance men against our will," he complained. "The beer is gone forever, "and now it's all water-drinking for us . . . This General Howard is a pure Puritan, who not once will find an order good enough to sign on Sunday. Honestly a worse exchange the 11th Corps could not have made. 'If we only still had our Sigel!' is the correct and universal complaint." The Philadelphia *Freie Presse* claimed that the 11th Corps was now "completely demoralized." Captain Howell of the 153d Pennsylvania, a regiment that suffered relatively few losses in the fighting on 2 May, was still not upbeat when he wrote his wife on 10 May that "our last movement did not amount to much and our 11th corp has to bear all the blame . . . I suppose it will be investigated and the blame be putt [*sic*] where it belongs."[10]

Howell was mild in his description of the despondency that descended over the Germans of the Eleventh Corps. Soldiers in other regiments, especially those that had fought hard and suffered heavy losses, were far more crestfallen. Adam Muenzenberger of the 26th Wisconsin wrote of his regiment's return to its old camp at Brooke's Station: "When we reached our camp again, and pitched our tents, we saw only misery. One-third of the tents in the camp were empty. And why? Because those who had occupied them were no more. Where are they? Dead! In the hospitals. Captured by the rebels. That is the worst thing that could happen to a regiment that was once so excellent." Muenzenberger's comrade, Frederick Winkler, declared on 7 May that "the army, at least our corps, is demoralized; officers talk of resigning and a spirit of depression and lack of confidence manifests itself everywhere; this may be, and I hope is, transitory." The *depth* of the demoralization would improve as the men of the 26th and other hard-fighting regiments came to terms with their losses and put time between themselves and the events of 2 May, but it would not vanish because of the prejudicial criticisms lodged against the Germans from within and without the army. Large numbers of officers from the German regiments resigned and asked for leaves of absence after the battle, beginning just days afterward and continuing through early June. These actions were not simply the result of losing so many comrades—they had to do with indignance. Officers in the 26th Wisconsin resigned wholesale, but found their resignations unaccepted. In the 119th New York, four company-grade officers resigned and six received a leave of absence. In the 58th New York, the major and three lieutenants tendered their resignations and four other officers went on leave. The 82nd Illinois lost five officers who requested transfers out of the Army of the Potomac and four more resigned, whereas the lieutenant colonel, a captain, and four lieutenants resigned in the 68th New York.[11]

Colonel William H. Jacobs of the 26th Wisconsin went home on a leave of absence but then wrote to his division commander, Carl Schurz, asking to resign. Schurz was adamant in his response. "Whoever fights for a great cause has to consider that one's steadfastness will be crucially tested," he wrote, continuing, "Whoever does not pass the test has no right to claim manliness." He chided Jacobs for wanting to resign now, arguing that "to do such a move after a defeat and to give 'reluctance' as the reason for doing so" would prove to the Germans' critics that they were right. "Even the most disheartened of your men thinks more manly," he said, admitting that "the spirit of your men is definitely better than at the time you left." Apparently, Jacobs wanted to resign as an example of how to counter false charges of cowardice. Schurz was quick to deny the request. "I cannot allow that a colonel serves his men as an example of demoralization." Jacobs ended up staying with his regiment, but the numbers of requests for leave from other officers became so unmanageable that on 27 May Howard issued an order

explaining that no further leaves of absence would be granted except for medical reasons and "special circumstances."[12]

By mid-June the demoralization of the majority of the German officers in the Eleventh Corps continued unabated. The Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund* printed a letter from a correspondent who visited the camp of the corps. He claimed that a "comprehensive bitterness against Howard is evident that borders on insubordination—as expected, morale is quite depressed, especially among the officers, who without exception feel offended and outraged in the aftermath of the strenuous denunciations from the American press." However, the mood among the troops "is much improved than after the infamous affair at Chancellorsville." Music had re-entered the lives of the German rank and file and raised their spirits. "Lusty singing" could be heard at night in the camp of the 82nd Illinois, and even more so in the 26th Wisconsin. A letter from an officer in the 82nd to Colonel Friedrich Hecker, recovering in a hospital from his battle wound, supported the correspondent's story. "The change of camp has made a good impression on the men," he wrote. "Instead of living in the middle of many abandoned and empty huts of the old camp which, of course, makes us reflect on the fate of our former comrades, we now live on a beautiful vacant hill." The enlisted men of the 27th Pennsylvania also had regained much of their morale, but still complained about "dirty Virginia water" and the loss of "cognacs, brandies, etc. to higher authorities" who confiscated them.[13]

Despite the improved morale among the men of some of the German regiments as early as mid-May, an ongoing mood of depression still lingered, and Carl Schurz correctly ascertained that the reason lay in the inability of the German soldiers to feel vindicated. Their honor had been badly impugned, their ethnicity lampooned, and, indeed, their status as men questioned by the torrent of invective ushering from Anglo-Americans. As long as the affronting allegations from the English-language press and the non-Germans of the army went publicly unrepudiated, the German soldiers would continue to feel despondent and, he feared, be unreliable troops. Singled out for blame for the defeat in certain newspapers, Schurz also keenly felt the sting of nativism and embarked on a month-long letter-writing campaign seeking justice for both himself and his fellow Germans.

No official investigation was ever launched into the disaster at Chancellorsville, and that bothered Schurz to no end.[14] As early as 7 May he began to bombard Howard, Hooker, and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton with continual protests about the treatment he and his men were receiving in the press and the army, and requests to publish the "truth" about what had happened.

On 12 May Schurz wrote a nineteen-paged report (the bulk of which would later become his official report in the *Official Records*) to Howard discussing in detail the actions of his Third Division during the entire campaign, offering substantial evidence that he and his troops fought as well as they could have. The majority of the report covered the deployment and action of the various regiments under Schurz's command (most of which were ethnically German), and carefully explained the general's own whereabouts and decision-making on 2 May. But in the last two pages the general wrote frankly about his growing exasperation with the nativist press coverage and concern about his men's state of morale: "In closing this report I beg leave to make one additional remark. The 11th Corps, and by error or malice especially the 3d Division, have been held up to the whole country as a band of cowards. My division has been

made responsible for the defeat of the 11th Corps and the 11th Corps for the failure of the campaign." There was the crux of the whole issue—Schurz clearly expressed the truth of the situation facing himself and his fellow Germans, and knew it, pressing his point further: "Preposterous as this is yet we have been overwhelmed by the Army and the Press with abuse and insult beyond measure. We have borne as much as human nature can endure." Here was another very pointed, and very accurate statement. Schurz was aware that the odium now attached to his corps and especially his division was emanating both from the rest of the army *and* the Anglo-American press. And he and his men could not take any more of it without serious ramifications. "These men are no cowards. I have seen most of them fight before this, and they fought as bravely as any," the German declared.[15]

Howard would not allow Schurz to publish his report, most likely because the corps commander did not want to be upstaged—or implicated. So Schurz did what any disgruntled subordinate would do in the same situation: he went over his superior's head. Schurz went to see Army Commander Joseph Hooker sometime between 12 and 15 May and asked permission to make the report public. Hooker said he had "no authority" to permit its publication, but that the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, might allow it.

Despite this less than favorable meeting with Hooker, Schurz nonetheless wrote him on 17 May, again asking for the army commander's blessing, this time in the form of an endorsement when the request to Stanton was officially passed back to Hooker for his approval. Schurz prophesied that "the battle of Chancellorsville is not a thing, that happened yesterday in order to be forgotten tomorrow. It will fill a prominent page in the history of this Republic, on which every incident and the conduct of every commander and every command ought to be presented in their true light. This, you will admit, is no matter of small moment." Then he touched upon a more emotional note, just as he had with Howard:

> You may believe me, General, when I say that the spirit of this corps is broken, and something must be done to revive it, or the corps will lose its efficiency. Too much humiliation destroys the morale of men . . . The bad effect produced upon the men by the sad occurrences of the 2nd May and of the obloquy to which we have been and still are subjected, will be in some measure obliterated by a fair and complete exposition before the country of the real facts in the case . . . . Every private in this command knows and appreciates them as well, that it would be looked upon as the grossest injustice, if they were ignored in official publications. Permit me to suggest that it would have an excellent effect upon the troops if you in your report would notice those whose conduct on that occasion would justly entitle them to credit or at least to an exemption from blame and reproach.

Schurz ended his starkly-written letter by asking again for the publication of his report, apologizing if anything in it "might seem objectionable," and claiming that it only purported "to protect the honor of those, whose past career and whose conduct on this sad occasion deserve regard." If Stanton did not grant his request, Schurz spared no words about his next action: "I should [then] find myself under the disagreeable necessity of asking for a court of inquiry."[16]

In the end, Schurz never was permitted to publish his detailed report nor granted a court of enquiry. Its official publication would have too easily exonerated the Germans and by fiat indicted Howard and Hooker for the disaster on 2 May. The Anglo-American high command could not allow that.

Those who had witnessed Schurz's performance at Chancellorsville never doubted his personal courage. Howard himself published letters in both the Anglo-American and German-language press refuting the allegations that Schurz had led his men in running away, and Friedrich Hecker, recovering in Washington from his wound, wrote that "Schurz led the regiments in the retreat to good defensive positions" and "stood like a man in the rain of bullets and did his duty as soldier and general." But these protests to the contrary could not begin to remove the stain of cowardice that had by now so embedded itself in the Anglo-American public's image of Schurz and his Germans. "I fights mit Sigel und runs mit Schurz" became the snide taunt in and out of the army.[17]

The outrage Schurz forced himself to stifle, however unhappily, exploded in his subordinate, Brigadier General Alexander Schimmelfennig. Schimmelfennig had been in the thick of the fight on 2 May, rallying his brigade from the double blow of the fleeing refugees from Devens' First Division—who crashed into the forming ranks of their comrades of the Third Division—and the rebel onslaught, and had assisted Schurz in reorganizing much of the division for a stand near the Wilderness Church. Thanks to timely reports from various scouts, Schimmelfennig had expected the Confederate flank attack and witnessed firsthand the courage of the German soldiers under the difficult conditions in which they fought. Colonel Hecker wrote in his letter that Schimmelfennig had been "in the middle of his troops and did his utmost." It had not been enough, however, and Schimmelfennig was so depressed after the battle that he remained alone in his tent for days, refusing to talk to anyone, even his favorite aide, the German nobleman Baron Otto von Fritsch.[18]

One day Fritsch "scratched on his tent," entered, and confronted Schimmelfennig with the bad news being printed in the northern press. "Just what I expected," the General said. "Bring me all the papers tomorrow," he told Fritsch, and commenced to read them aloud in his tent one night, adding several expletives in German as he progressed. He rode to see Schurz, then Howard, lambasted them with his invective, and then assembled his staff and proceeded to defame the northern press, Howard, Hooker, and their staff officers. "It was an astonishingly good oratorical effort," von Fritsch wrote. Schimmelfennig then followed up his speech with a scathing official report on 10 May to his immediate superior, Schurz, which more than any other extant letter or report clearly explained the Germans' sense of betrayal.[19]

> General, the officers and men of this brigade of your division, filled with indignation, come to me, with newspapers in their hands, and ask if such be the rewards they may expect for the sufferings they have endured and the bravery they have displayed . . . . It would seem a nest of vipers had but waited for an auspicious moment to spit out their poisonous slanders upon this heretofore honored corps.

Schimmelfennig continued, stating that the accusations in the northern press were bad enough, but could be singly dealt with, as they were "but emanations from the prurient imaginations of those who would live by dipping their pens in the blood

of the slain." However, the official dispatches and letters leaked to the public "dated 'headquarters of General Hooker,' and signed by responsible names," compounded the problem immensely. A detailed account of his brigade's performance at Chancellorsville followed, and then Schimmelfennig added a concluding paragraph:

> General, I am an old soldier. To this hour I have been proud to command the brave men of this brigade; but I am sure that unless these infamous falsehoods be retracted and reparations made, their good-will and soldierly spirit will be broken, and I shall no longer be at the head of the same brave men whom I have had heretofore the honor to lead. In the name of truth and common honesty; in the name of the good cause of our country, I ask, therefore, for satisfaction. If our superior officers be not sufficiently in possession of the facts, I demand an investigation; if they are, I demand that the miserable penny-a-liners who have slandered the division be excluded, by a public order, from our lines, and that the names of the originators of these slanders be made known to me and my brigade, that they may be held responsible for their acts.[20]

Schimmelfennig felt a lot more than depression as he wrote these lines. His language reveals a sense of betrayal, and no doubt this reflected the mood of his troops. Like Schurz, he cried out for justice for his men. Although his report was filed early and the mood of at least some of the German rank and file of the Eleventh Corps would recover in the weeks ahead, Schimmelfennig probably represented the overall feeling extant in the corps during May 1863. It was not one that boded good things for the future. There was only one possible way to help heal the pain until another battle came along: turn inward, internalize, and seek solace and vindication among other Germans. The German-language press would prove mightily useful in this regard, even though it did little to change the attitudes of Anglo-Americans by virtue of its foreign language.

"For the Idiocy of the Commanding Generals the Poor Corps Must Take the Fall"

The German-American press, normally bitterly divided by partisan and regional differences, united on the subject of Chancellorsville. Newspapers in both the eastern and western theatres of operation expressed outrage at the depictions of the Eleventh Corps and its German soldiers in the Anglo-American press and quickly attempted to disprove the allegations, defend the courage of the soldiers, and place the blame for the defeat where it supposedly belonged. Subtle differences in what was reported, the tone of the editorials, and the breadth of coverage were evident among the papers, and were due in part to the political and geographic diversity of the German-American communities from which they hailed, but an unmistakable sense of ethnic solidarity shone forth in the months after the battle. The German immigrants of the Civil War-era would never unify, and the editors of the major newspapers were partly responsible for that, but the outrage over Chancellorsville and the resulting nativistic attacks brought them closer together than they had ever been before.

As the Eleventh Corps retreated northward with the rest of the Army of the Potomac and reoccupied its old camps, the officers of the German regiments found time to dispatch lists of the dead, wounded, and missing to the major German-language newspapers. These lists appeared side by side with the early editorials reporting the first

nativist attacks lodged against the Germans. The irony was not lost on the German editors. One of the first themes they argued, and one which was lost on the Anglo-American newspapers, was the fact that the numbers of dead and wounded throughout the German regiments indicated that some of them, at the very least, held their ground and fought. There was no way they all could have run or they would not have suffered such casualties. As the Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund* maintained, "the dead and wounded of the late battle show they (the German regiments) did not fall back without a fight." Of course, the Germans lost hundreds as prisoners, but the sacrifice in blood clearly evident from the published casualty lists made allegations of German cowardice appear blind, untruthful, and disrespectful to the German dead.[21]

It struck many German-Americans as especially ungrateful that the English-language papers would so quickly and enthusiastically blame the Germans for the Chancellorsville defeat when they had more than proved their mettle earlier and elsewhere in the war. Editor Friedrich Thomas of the Philadelphia *Freie Presse* recounted the martial deeds of German soldiers up to Chancellorsville, observing that "the German names which appear in the 'dead and wounded' lists of every major battle of this war show how bravely their namesakes fought . . . . Have we not sent able generals and a hundred thousand German soldiers into the field?" The Germans had fought well on numerous fields before and including Chancellorsville, and their spilled blood alone should have silenced any rumors of cowardice. The *Louisville Anzeiger*, *Milwaukee Seebote*, and Highland, Illinois *Highland Bote* all agreed. Regardless of partisan affiliation or geographic location, however, it would take more than the recounting of past valor for the editors to refute the criticisms lodged against the Germans.[22]

Many editors tried to prove to their readers that the reports in the Anglo-American press were false, that the accusations of cowardice were founded on pure fantasy, and that the German regiments had fought as well as could be expected under the circumstances. They used all manner of official reports, letters from soldiers in the field, and even concocted evidence in their editorials—anything that could be construed as excusing the German soldiers from the calumnies heaped upon them. A sense of desperation pervaded some of these stories, whereas others were straightforward and reported the facts as truthfully as possible. On 12 May the *Philadelphia Demokrat* printed in full a letter from Adolph von Steinwehr, who commanded the Eleventh Corps' Second Division. Steinwehr's letter explained the dispositions of his division on 2 May, praised the stand of Colonel Adolphus Buschbeck's brigade (composed of over 50% German soldiery), and attempted to exonerate at least his portion of the corps from criticism. It was reprinted by many newspapers after the *Demokrat*'s initial publication. "Despite their limited strength, [the second brigade] most decisively resisted the enemy," von Steinwehr wrote. "Colonel Buschbeck showed such an extraordinary bravery and prudence that he can rightfully claim the thanks of the government." The Cincinnati *Wöchentlicher Volksfreund* expressed relief that some of the truth had finally come out, stating that von Steinwehr's letter "fulfills our expectation, that our view will be substantiated through further news." In Illinois, the wounded Friedrich Hecker and his 82nd Illinois were singled out for praise by the *Belleviller-Zeitung* for displaying "great bravery" and suffering heavy losses, indicating that Illinois Germans had nothing to fear from nativist accusations.[23]

Lieutenant Colonel Louis Schirmer, Chief of Artillery for the Eleventh Corps, also wrote a letter defending the role of the corps artillery on 2 May. The New York

City German-language press picked up his report and extolled it as evidence that their soldiers had fought well at Chancellorsville. The batteries of Captains Michael Wiedrich and Hubert Dilger retreated only at the last possible moments, Schirmer claimed, and conducted their retreats well. "These captains then repeatedly took position with their batteries and directed a fearful destruction on the ranks of the storming rebels." At one point in the battle, "18 guns fired uninterruptedly and attempted to halt the advancing masses of the enemy, which they partially did," but the deadly holes in the grey ranks were repeatedly filled, and the infantry defending the artillery was forced to retreat. The artillery then had to withdraw, Schirmer explained. In closing, the artillery chief observed that "the artillery comported itself bravely and damaged the enemy's ranks so severely that they are completely shattered. The battlefield was bedecked with dead and wounded rebels and this compensates our losses." In a final stab at those who belittled the Eleventh Corps, Schirmer added, "that the Eleventh Corps fell back is not due to the men, but instead to their deployment and the lack of decisiveness of certain officers of high rank."[24]

Franz Sigel's absence at Chancellorsville became one of the favorite whipping boys for the German-language press. Again, this theme was universal among the newspapers regardless of political affiliation and geographic location, and kept being offered as a reason for the German soldiers' less than stellar performance. Ironically, however, by so doing the editors unconsciously gave a sort of tacit acknowledgment that the Eleventh Corps could have fought better. And there was certainly no guarantee that an Eleventh Corps led by Sigel would have succeeded where Howard failed, although it is likely that Sigel would have paid more attention to reports from German scouts who discovered Jackson's flank march. At the time, German-Americans focused on what could have been as a salve for what actually occurred.

Philadelphia Germans were told emphatically that Sigel's presence at Chancellorsville would have changed events for the better. The *Freie Presse* argued on 7 May that

> had General Sigel not arrived at his unlucky decision to relinquish the command of the 11th Corps, had this seasoned and beloved leader still stood at the peak of the German division, the scenes which the Know-Nothingism is now using to resurrect the almost-dead hate against the Germans would certainly not have occurred.That is the conviction of the majority of the Germans.[25]

The *Highland Bote* agreed that Sigel's absence created the defeat, which in turn spawned the resurge of nativism. The "bigots, witch-burners, temperance men, and Know-Nothings that hate the German population from the bottom of their soul" had been silenced up to this point in the war because the Germans "had sent equal, if not better officers and soldiers as the Americans" into the service. But now the Germans' enemies had "their much wished-for opportunity to attack the 'cowardly Dutchmen.'" The editor bemoaned the lost Sigel, but wondered "what kind of spectacle would have been made" if the Eleventh Corps had still retreated under his command. "The old German-haters are and remain still German-haters!" The Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund* claimed that the end result of the disaster at Chancellorsville should be the reinstatement of Sigel—"The Stonewall Jackson of the North"—at the head of his German troops. Under

the leadership of Sigel once again, the Eleventh Corps might soon avenge the attacks against its honor. More ominously, the New York *Criminalzeitung und Belletristisches Journal* remarked that "it is still in question" whether "the old [German] regiments will quickly reorganize" without Sigel in charge of the corps. "The situation will probably be strongly helped if Sigel once again takes over the 11th Corps."[26]

Private Ernst Damkoehler of the 26th Wisconsin combined both the "numbers of casualties" argument with the yearning for Sigel, and added elements of yet another major German-American defensive argument when he wrote his wife about the battle: "The number of dead and wounded are sure evidence how the Regiment stood up and even though the whole Corps which had covered the retreat last summer at Bull Run under Sigel and saved the whole army from being imprisoned, and lost its good name through the stupidity of a General, Howard, the regiment is well respected." Whether Damkoehler really checked to find out others' opinions of the 26th is unknown, but it is probable he was being optimistic in his assessment of his regiment's post-Chancellorsville reputation among non-Germans. Nonetheless, he did speak for the vast majority of northern Germans in his criticism of Howard. That criticism would become one of the keystones of the German-language press's response to Chancellorsville.[27]

The Philadelphia *Freie Presse* printed a letter from an indignant soldier of the 74th Pennsylvania on 18 May that solidly put the onus of the disaster on the non-Geman commanders of the Eleventh Corps. "Whoever had the bad luck to blame the 11th Corps the newspapers will make blush with shame and compare with our point of view. We soldiers know that it is the fault of Corps commander Howard and then First Division commander Devens. The first division was poorly deployed, therefore completely misaligned [for the coming attack] and broke up our division [Third] in its flight." A visitor to the camps of the German regiments in the week after Chancellorsville wrote in his diary that the men told him, "'We will again be sacrificed in the next battle because of the incompetence of the native generals,'" and complained that Howard believed in winning battles "with prayers and bible-reading." Louis Schleiter of the 74th joined in the attack on the corps commander, claiming that he not only failed to heed warnings from his staff about the impending Confederate attack, refused Carl Schurz's request to realign his division in expectation of it, and generally "proved utterly incompetent in his duties," but also displayed notable cowardice. Witnessing the disorder of Schimmelfennig's brigade as fleeing elements from the First Division slammed into it, Howard reportedly yelled, "Stand, boys, and do not disgrace me entirely!" and then wheeled his horse and galloped to the rear. The *Milwaukee Herold*, operating on reports from its field correspondent, stated the issue quite plainly: "The main person to blame is the commander of the 11th Corps, General Howard."[28]

The *Pittsburger Demokrat* agreed: "For the idiocy of the commanding generals the poor Corps must now take the fall. Hooker and especially General Howard are at fault. Both received several reports that the enemy had marched to our right flank and concentrated there great masses of troops, but nothing was done, we stayed where we were, even our reserve artillery was not once brought into position. It remains just like the old song, 'What matters the lion's courage of the soldier, with Generals that are not worth a shot of gunpowder—and yet they would have been worth that.'" Sergeant Karl Wickesberg of the 26th Wisconsin spared even fewer words condemning the corps commander. "In time the truth will come out," he wrote bitterly, "It was all General Howard's fault. General Schurz was going to give us reinforcements and give us some

cannons to help us. But that coward, I cannot call him by another name, said he was going to try it first with what we have here. He is a Yankee, and that is why he wanted to have us slaughtered, because most of us are Germans. He better not come into the thick of battle a second time, then he won't escape."[29]

The German-Americans of the North were outraged at being made the scapegoats of the Chancellorsville campaign. They and their friends, sons, brothers, and relatives had spilled ample blood in defense of the Union, and instead of receiving sympathy for their sacrifices, got back the equivalent of a spit in the face. Their favorite leader, Franz Sigel, had not been permitted to be with them, and Germans maintained that had he been in command of the Eleventh Corps the battle would have ended differently. The editorials which appeared in the German-language newspapers, as well as the contents of private letters, argued that the Germans had indeed fought as well as possible and not all run like cowards. Most importantly, northern Germans united in condemning the resurge of nativism which was displayed by the Anglo-American press, and roundly blamed Howard and the non-German leadership of the Eleventh Corps for the debacle. The Germans were defending themselves from the nativistic prejudice that they perceived had been resurrected by the Chancellorsville defeat. As they continued to do so, they grew more and more indignant and increasingly affronted. By the time of the Gettysburg campaign, the North's German-American citizens were so affected by this perception that they strongly questioned their place as an ethnic group within greater American society.

"Let Us Organize in Defence of our Common Honor"

The post-Chancellorsville nativism prompted the Germans of the North, at least in the East, to temporarily halt on the road to Americanization, more aware than ever of their own ethnicity and girded by an irrepressible resolve to defend it. The war would drag onward, Germans from around the country would continue to support the Union in the field and at home, and would ultimately amalgamate with the greater American population. But they would do so on their own terms and in their own time, because to rashly assimilate now meant to accept all the negative qualities of Anglo-Americans that had been made so apparent by the aftermath of Chancellorsville. Many began to ask themselves what, exactly, becoming an American would garner them if Americans were themselves so bigoted. Germans' enthusiasm for the war—and consequently for Americanization—was irrevocably altered.

The Chicago *Illinois Staatszeitung* was unabashed in expounding the issue of ethnic prejudice at hand. Its 7 May issue clearly blamed *New York Times* correspondent L. L. Crounse for slandering the Germans and instigating ethnic tensions out of Republican zeal. "The correspondent of the N. Y. Times looks to create the impression in his nativistic, abolitionistic perfidy and rage as if the German sections of the Corps performed especially bad, and the American ones rather well." Another Democratic German paper, the Cincinnati *Wöchentlicher Volksfreund*, attacked the Know-Nothing rhetoric of both the *Times* and the *New-York Tribune*, claiming that "the Republican Party is transforming with amazing alacrity into a pure Know-Nothing Party." Yet the fact that these New York papers and their correspondents were Republican was only a small part of the problem.[30]

Since the Anglo-American journalists had made such a stark and negative

distinction between Americans and Germans, the editors of the Chicago *Illinois Staatszeitung* and Pittsburgh *Demokrat* followed their lead, specifically referring to the "American parts" of the Eleventh Corps, the "American officers and men" of the Army of the Potomac, and the "American newspapers" that attacked the Germans. They unequivocally intended their readers to see the clear-cut difference between Americans and Germans. They also did not classify German-speakers as German-Americans, or, as Teddy Roosevelt would later put it, "hyphenated Americans"; rather, the editors of these two important newspapers considered them Germans and those who spoke English as Americans. These certainly were not the words of men who wanted their readers to become any more American than they already were. If the Americans so despised us now, the editorials insinuated, why bother becoming more like them? Additionally, the Americans, by sinking so low as to falsely accuse German soldiers of single-handedly losing the battle of Chancellorsville, and by flinging ethnic epithets, had proven just how vulgar they really were. The Germans, editor Georg Ripper of the *Demokrat* claimed, would not follow such a base example. "We will not imitate the evil example of the Times correspondent, we make no malicious differences between the nationalities; the above parallels clearly show how groundless overall and stupid it is to make the Germans especially responsible for the sorry shame of the Eleventh Corps of the Army of the Potomac."[31]

Other German papers agreed with the *Staatszeitung* and the *Demokrat*. The Republican Cleveland *Wächter am Erie* called the preoccupation of the Anglo-American press with purported German cowardice "stinking nativism." The Republican Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund*, arch-rival of Ripper's organ, echoed his words in its 9 May editorial, attacking the "stupidity of the N. Y. Times correspondent for reactivating nativism" and blaming the other Anglo-American newspapers for reprinting the *Times* version of the battle verbatim. The Philadelphia *Freie Presse* reprinted Carl Schurz's official complaints and requests for a court of inquiry on 12 May, in order to clear his name and take a stab "at the insidious traitor's band in the North," who were "overjoyed at the opportunity to blame Gen. Schurz for incompetence and even cowardliness." Thus it appeared that the accusers of the Germans were now portrayed not only as prejudiced liars, but also deadly enemies to the country.[32]

Speaking for all northern Germans, the *Freie Presse* issued a warning to its readers and German-Americans in general on 29 May. The anti-German attacks in the Anglo-American press had not abated, the morale of German soldiers in the Eleventh Corps had bottomed-out, and "what did it all mean?" editor Thomas asked. "Is it stupidity or cunning calculation? Why now are only the Germans singled out?" Waxing sarcastic, he continued, "do they wish that the Germans in our armies are forced home, in order to weaken the courage of our arms? What is it then?"[33]

The editor then suggested what he believed was the true motivation behind American nativist attacks: the German language. Emphasizing, like Georg Ripper of the *Pittsburger Demokrat*, the differences between Germans and Americans by clearly terming those who read German papers as German and those who did not as American, Thomas claimed the actual "separateness" of the German language made Germans everywhere appear completely unlike "Americans" as well as incomprehensible to them. So long as the German press existed, Americans would never understand the Germans, because "the Americans don't understand German; moreover, they also don't know what the Germans want, and it really doesn't matter what is said, whether we remain quiet

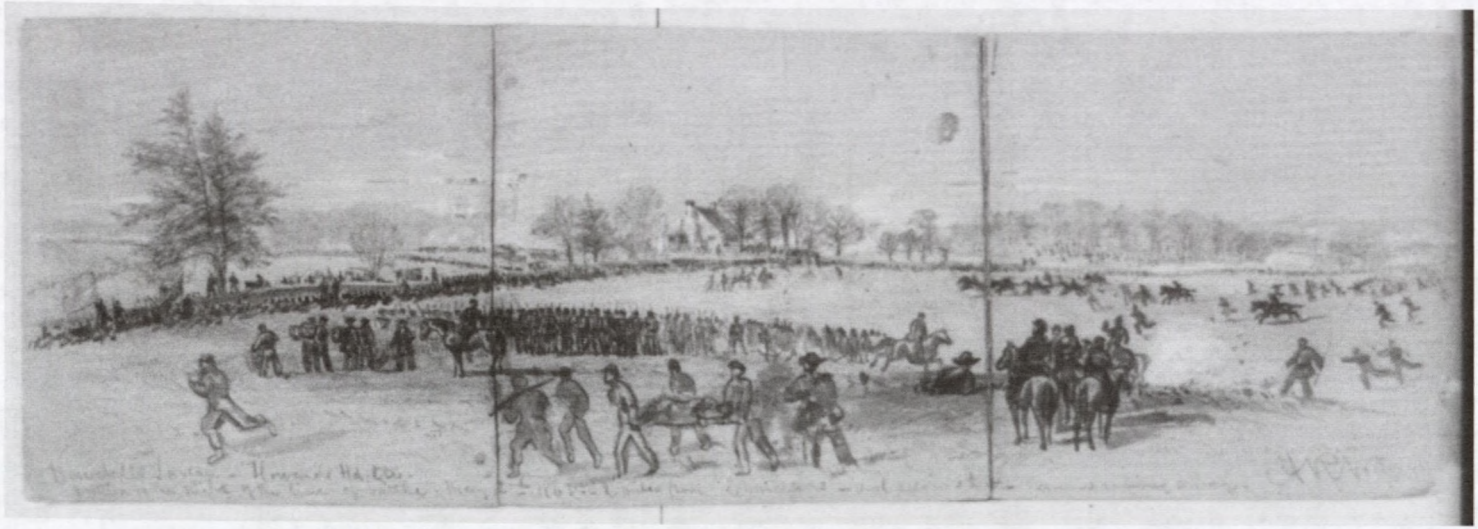

Fig. 1. Sketch by Alfred R. Waud on 2 May 1863 during the Battle of Chancellorsville showing Howard's headquarters (Dowdall's Tavern) and the "Buschbeck Line" forming up in front of it at about 6:30 pm. Note the refugees from the shattered First and Third Divisions streaming back from the right as well as the order and discipline of the regiments in this final defensive line of the Eleventh Corps.

or whether we continue in a language that they cannot read. The German newspapers are for the Americans so many empty sheets of paper." Rhetorically asking what could be done to help the situation, the editor threw up his hands in despair. The German press would continue to print in German, and "hence the result is the same: because one doesn't understand us, he mistrusts, despises, and encroaches upon us. And that will last as long as the Germans neglect to make themselves understandable to Americans through the press." Thomas clearly believed the Germans were caught in a vicious circle, one which spawned nativist hate and misunderstanding. Just as importantly, they were unable, or unwilling, to leave the circle (i.e., the German language) behind because it was integral to their ethnic identity.[34]

In some German-language newspapers, warnings began to appear in the editorial sections about the nativist threat. Reports circulated that wounded Eleventh Corps soldiers had been struck down in the streets of Washington simply because they were Germans and therefore "cowards." Fear that the temperance movement would gain momentum from the recent Anglo-American criticism grew rife. Indeed, the old nativists of the 1850s were frequently enmeshed with the temperance cause, so it was easy in this atmosphere of anxiety and despair to link the two together. After reporting an account of an anti-German editorial in a local American paper that accused Schurz's soldiers of being drunk at Chancellorsville, the *Highland Bote* of 22 May announced:

Germans Watch Out!

> The Know-Nothings and Temperance men left us alone for a while because they needed us Germans for voting and fighting. Now the humbug is back again . . . . We must pay attention when [the local towns of] Lebanon and Greenville already belong to the Temperance men; it is high time the local German element unifies a little. Otherwise we will be spied upon, criticized, and labeled "traitors" right and left, during which time the enemy of our race (the Know-Nothings and Temperance men) will wait for an opportunity to grind us under foot.[35]

Less than a week later, on 4 June, the Philadelphia *Freie Presse* reported yet another slander against Germans. Word leaked out that the officers of the Anglo-American 25th, 55th, and 75th Ohio of McLean's brigade in Devens's First Division wished their regiments to be formally separated from the rest of the Eleventh Corps and had put that request in writing. This action was not motivated from "mistrust of our commanding general, but instead the unsoldierly character of the German troops with which we have been forced to serve, and with whom we must undeservedly share the blame." Under the headline, "New Nativistic Attacks Against the German Volunteers," the editor responded, "We can scarcely hold this news to be true." "Despite the energetic protest" of the 107th Ohio, a predominantly German regiment which refused to sign the petition of the other Ohio regiments, "it appears the will of nativism got its way. From Washington it is reported the German regiments will be detached from the 11th Army Corps and attached to Heintzelmann's Corps." If this exchange takes place as a "punishment," "without a military investigation" of the performance of the Germans in the last campaign, it would be seen by Germans as "a new, indeed egregious insult, which a tenacious nativism can hurl in the face of German honor." The proposed transfer

never occurred, but the readers of Thomas's paper had probably reached the limit of their tolerance. It was time to quit refuting each new ethnic barb individually in each newspaper, clinging to a forlorn hope that the prejudice would simply go away. The time had come to organize formally against the American assault.[36]

In Washington, D.C., leading Germans from around the North, representing various local German-American political societies, held a forum in late June to create a blanket organization to coordinate and unify the efforts of the local groups. Many of the delegates were minor forty-eighters and more than a few were federal bureaucrats working in the capital. They believed that in order to address the virulent rebirth of nativism, Germans needed to be nationally unified to meet the threat head-on. Only through political unity could the Germans then exercise the necessary strength, as one, distinct voting bloc, that would force the hand of any major political party espousing anti-German philosophies. In this way, nativism could be contained and ultimately defeated.

The delegates unanimously voted to form a pan-North American German National Committee, which would be based in Washington, coordinate the political activities of the local "chapters," represent the national interests of Germans across the North, and agitate to stifle the anti-German prejudice sweeping the country. "The need for a German-American Organization is unquestionably before us," declared chairman Dr. C. F. Schmidt. "The ignominy, which was recently piled with lies and perfidy upon the German regiments and their leaders in the 11th Army Corps, is a new stimulus for an organization which alone promises us protection and power." The official address of the convention, signed by over thirty delegates, was reprinted in German newspapers throughout the North, and included strong words of indignation towards the federal government, the two political parties, the Union leagues, and especially the American press. Yet the delegates claimed "we are far from the thought of wanting to build a German-nativistic party. We wish as Germans to organize only on the grounds of equality and brotherhood as American citizens." They even went so far as to extend the olive branch to Anglo-Americans but insisted that all Germans must persevere to achieve the goals of the national organization. Espousing a political philosophy described as "the radical middle," the German leaders proclaimed "through a pan-German organization we will raise ourselves at least to a balance of power in the decision-making process of all important political questions."[37]

On 2 June a great German-American rally was held in the Cooper Institute in New York City specifically to denounce the charges made against the Germans in the Eleventh Corps and to demand satisfaction from the Anglo-American press. It was the largest assembly of Germans yet witnessed in the United States. Thousands, primarily from the eastern states, attended, and the audience reflected the diversity of the German-American population: old forty-eighters, filled with fiery indignance at the stain on German honor, crippled German veterans who demanded justice for their dead comrades, fearful widows who had lost their husbands in the war. Presided over by the famous forty-eighter Friedrich Kapp, the rally was chaired by noted insurance mogul Hugo Wesendonck and included speeches by Brigadier General Leopold von Gilsa (of the Eleventh Corps), Charles Goepp (another forty-eighter), and Kapp himself. Those present adopted nine resolutions that defended the Germans of the Eleventh Corps, explained the rout, thanked Germans soldiers for their prior service, blamed Howard,

Hooker, and Halleck for the disaster, asked for Sigel's reinstatement, and lamented the resurgence of nativism.

Wesendonck opened the meeting by saying "this meeting is no political demonstration . . . . It has been called and is supported by men of all parties, and is emphatically a German demonstration." Recounting many of the principal German-American defensive arguments, he quickly turned to attacking the criticism of the Anglo-American newspapers. "Never in my life have I felt so indignant," Wesendonck continued, "as when I read these reports. Never has such a flood of insult been poured upon brave soldiers. Never have any reports contained more falsehoods and baser calumnies." Why did they continue, even "to this day," he asked? "They are not meant to disparage the German soldier only, they are aimed at the German population of the United States generally, nay, they are flung at the German nationality everywhere. It is our duty to rebuke these columniators, and to hurl these slanders back into the teeth of their fabricators."

Pennsylvanian Charles Goepp then rose to accentuate the "national blunder" that was made in accusing the Germans. The North needed them now more than ever, he asserted. But since the battle of Chancellorsville, the time had come "to set forth our estimate of the value of our active adhesion to the Union cause." In essence, the Germans were necessary for northern victory. "Without one word of invidious comparison, we do insist that the American people stand in need of the military knowledge of the German immigrants. Without a tinge of bitterness we say, that they have not, by their actions, manifested a sense of the full extent of that necessity." Goepp then ended on an ominous note:

> So hasty has been the cry of slander against the German rank and file, that the criminal shortcomings of the high officers have passed unnoticed, and are likely to be repeated and repeated, until the command ceases to be useful to the country . . . . Soldiers cannot fight under the conviction that they are predestined to be the scapegoat of the imbecility of their commanders. If the Eleventh Corps is left under this ban, it will be betrayed, and slaughtered, and broken in engagement after engagement, until not a man of it will be left to bear the designation of the "cowardly Dutchman."[38]

Following Goepp, Friedrich Kapp took the stand to thunderous applause. "All we ask is justice," he proclaimed. "We desire to be no more, but we will be no less, than Americans; we mean to be weighed in the scale of our actions and our merits." He mentioned the slanders of the American press again, agreeing with his fellow speakers that Germans would no longer endure such insults. Reiterating Goepp's argument that the Americans were blind to the martial attributes of the Germans, he continued, "But it pains me still more to see, even at this late day, the Americans are so entirely unaware of the momentous sacrifices yet to be made" and still "are carried away by a paltry national conceit" aimed at Germans. "If this ebullition of ill feeling were a crime only, it would be of little use to protest against it. But it is worse, it is a blunder. It must inevitably chill the enthusiasm of the German population, and retard, if not prevent the reenlistment of the soldiers whose terms are just expiring." Kapp recalled that German volunteers "enlisted readily" before Chancellorsville, but now, "of those regiments which have just returned, not fifty men have reenlisted, in spite of liberal bounties and promises." Why

was that? "I never knew a soldier who was willing to fight the enemy in front, when his comrades, or the people for whom he fights, stand ready to stab him from behind." Raising his voice for a climactic ending, Kapp issued a universal appeal to all Germans: "Let us organize in defence of our common honor." The cheers and applause following his speech reverberated out into the New York evening.[39]

The rally at the Cooper Institute in New York was duplicated on a smaller scale in several other northern cities with sizeable German-American populations. Philadelphia, for instance, witnessed its own version on 13 June in the Turnerhalle "to answer the infamous calumnies that have been spread about the German regiments of the Eleventh Corps." Two Philadelphia officers in the 29th New York gave speeches to a packed house, as did the editors of both the major German-American daily newspapers and other respected dignitaries from the German community. Many of the primary arguments emphasized in New York were repeated, but the issue of a resurgent nativism took center stage. "Nativism, which was believed dead, only hid itself, and jumped at the first opportunity to air its hate through slanders," one delegate declared, and "the government owes the Germans a restoration of their honor through the publication of official reports." The well-attended rally closed with the adoption of resolutions demanding these reports, thanking German soldiers for their efforts thus far in the war, calling for the sacking of incompetent generals, and praising the bravery of the German soldiers at Chancellorsville. The meeting ended "with three hurrahs for the 11th Army Corps."[40]

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The German-Americans of the North were strongly affected by the battle of Chancellorsville and the Anglo-American response to it. Nativist attacks in the English-language press, especially, wreaked havoc with German trust and morale. Soldiers, civilians, and newspapermen alike rallied to the defense of the German troops accused of cowardice, carefully refuting the slanderous criticism in the American papers. Yet the shock and outrage at these accusations changed into a bitter sense of betrayal, and later into a realization that the best defense against nativism lay in unity. Germans from throughout the northern states shed their previous differences and joined together in a real attempt to present a common defense against American prejudice. There was no doubt in the minds of German immigrants at this time who was a German and who an American. Articles appeared in German-language newspapers starkly distinguishing the difference between Germans and Americans in the Chancellorsville affair, and several national meetings occurred in which German patriotism and virtue were held up against American slander and military failure. The German-Americans of the North had clearly experienced a severe jolt on the road to Americanization. Chancellorsville forced them first to defend themselves, and then look to one another for solace and support. They would continue looking inward after Gettysburg, and indeed well into the postwar period.

Years after the last accusations of "cowardly Dutchmen" disappeared from the Anglo-American newspapers, the memory of Chancellorsville and its resultant nativism remained strong among German-Americans, especially veterans of the battle. In postwar histories written in German, German-language literary and historical journals, private letters, and even in English-language veterans' publications, the sting of prejudice was

evident for decades to come. Certain Anglo-American histories and accounts of the battle enhanced the perception among Germans that nativism still lingered. The ghost of 2 May 1863 would not die and kept reminding Germans that they had a stigma attached to themselves, one that constantly needed countering. In so doing they kept revisiting and strengthening their own ethnic identity.

William Vocke, a former officer in the German 24th Illinois Infantry who had demanded redress about prejudicial anti-German comments appearing in the western newspapers in 1863, toned down his defensive invective only a little by 1896, when he delivered a speech to Illinois veterans. The indignance and outrage at the post-Chancellorsville nativism persisted in him over thirty years after the battle. Even though his regiment was hundreds of miles away from the Virginia wilderness at the time, Vocke still smarted under the obloquy cast upon his countrymen. Providing the popular name "Schneider" to represent German-America, Vocke said that "the cowardly slander of Schneider's men occasioned by the disaster at Chancellorsville seems to have created at the time a perfect 'Schneiderphobia,' not only in the press of the country, but also in the Army of the Potomac . . . ." Vocke turned the tables on the nativists, calling them "cowards" for being so base as to criticize the Germans, and proceeded to poke holes in their inaccurate recollections and accusations. Only recently was the truth coming out thanks to the efforts of authors such as Theodore Dodge and Abner Doubleday. But "the prejudice which was created against Schneider's great army on account of the unmerited abuse and the base charge that his men were to blame for the defeat at Chancellorsville is deep-seated and far-reaching." Unfortunately, anti-German nativism was still not dead, because "we experience it among Grand Army men even at this date." These men were and are "prompted by blind race-prejudice," and amounted to nothing more than "the most unpatriotic wretches."[41]

That sort of prejudice was one reason the German veterans from the eastern ethnic regiments were not scattered throughout "mixed" Grand Army of the Republic posts (GAR), but were instead concentrated in a few entirely ethnic ones. Much like African-American veterans of the Union army, who had also experienced extreme prejudice during the war and formed their own posts composed exclusively of former black soldiers, German-American veterans throughout the postwar North created all-German posts. Not all German veterans belonged to such organizations, but it appears that those who served in ethnic regiments tended to cluster together just like they did in the war. The John Koltes Post 228 in Philadelphia, for example, was composed almost entirely of German veterans from the German 27th, 73d, 74th, 75th, and 98th Pennsylvania and the 29th New York. Five of those regiments served in the Eleventh Corps and each was present at Chancellorsville. The 75th Pennsylvania had a thriving veterans organization which was determined to disseminate the story of the regiment to the greater public, and had "a reputation of being the best organized regtl. Vet. Ass. In the state of Penna.," according to former Sergeant Hermann Nachtigall, secretary of the association. In a private letter to Augustus Hamlin, the only author to strongly defend the Eleventh Corps after the war, Nachtigall wrote that "the episode of Chancellorsville very frequently forms the topic of conversation among [the men] . . . . Although numerous essays have since been written about that terrible conflict and disaster . . . yet the stigma still remains, and very frequently the phrase is heard, 'I fights mit Sigel and runs mit Howard' and I am sorry to say that one frequently has to hear slurs thrown even by men who call themselves Comrades—and Comrades, too, of the G.A.R. It seems to me that

Fig. 2. 1888 Tipton photo of the 74th Pennsylvania monument at Gettysburg with inscription "German Regiment." Twenty-five years after the battle the ethnic pride of the German-born veterans was still evident for all to see.

the government should take measures to set matters right before the whole country."[42]

Unfortunately, the government took no such measures, and Anglo-American prejudice, although generally muted in the decades after the Civil War, combined with painful German-American memories of wartime nativism to create a reluctance among German immigrants, especially those who had endured the "fiery trial," to fully assimilate into greater American society. This reluctance—joined with a predilection among most German-Americans toward a "culturally pluralistic" weltanschauung in which things German were lavishly praised—was no better illustrated than in an article that appeared in the November 1883 issue of *Der Deutsche Pionier,* a Cincinnati-based historical, news, and literary journal for German-Americans.[43] Entitled, "The Assimilation of the Germans," the article's main theme questioned the need for Germans to quickly Americanize. About half-way through, the author, "J. G.," included these thoughts:

> We fought in the war of the rebellion on your side; our part of the population sent a full delegation to the ranks of the Union army, and we fought bravely together. We mourn together and take pride together when we honor the dead, who fell in defense of us both, and our combined means have erected soldiers homes for the crippled heroes of the war . . . .
>
> But must we all go the same way? Just as the individual has certain personal characteristics that make him unique, so it goes with peoples and nations. So it is with the Anglo-Americans and so it is with the Germans. Must everyone live exactly like everyone else, and is the existence of our nation threatened when we do not spend our days in the same manner? Must we citizens of German background go to 'Camp Meetings,' 'Women's Crusades,' 'Prize Boxing Matches,' 'Sit-Down [Temperance] Tourneys,' 'Minstrel Shows', or listen to the religious-political babble of a preacher in the joyless and dusty halls of a Presbyterian church? . . . .
>
> You do not need to participate in our excursions, picnics, and theatre shows on Sundays. You do not need to drink our beer and our wine, or to sing our songs. It is not necessary that you learn the beautiful German language, so that we can understand each other. But do not force men, who are proud of their American citizenship and their sincerity and honesty, to become hypocrites . . . .[44]

If these words are to be taken at face value, it appears that their experiences in the Civil War as a whole had not hastened German immigrants' assimilation into greater American society. Certainly, Germans were proud that they had fought hard to preserve the Union, but that fact did not predicate jumping into the melting pot. To do so would be to be to accept the old nativists on their own terms. The ghost of Chancellorsville still lingered, casting doubt on the virtue of Americanization. It would not be a leap of faith to assert that that fearful specter heightened the Germans' consciousness of their

ethnic identity and provided a firm foundation for the postwar flowering of a culturally pluralistic German-America.

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Fort Belvoir, Virginia

Notes

[1] *New York Times*, 5 May 1863. The fact that Carl Schurz was singled out here for blame reflects the fact that he was viewed by many as the new leader of the army's Germans after the departure of Franz Sigel in February 1863. After Chancellorsville, the northern public identified Schurz with all things German, especially within the Army of the Potomac, just as they had with Sigel, and any defamation aimed against Schurz was also aimed against his German troops. Stephen Engle states that "Schurz commanded a division of Germans who were forced to retreat during the battle . . . and the label "Flying Dutchman" which had previously been applied to Sigel's military blunders, now applied to Schurz's exploits." James S. Pula, *The Sigel Regiment: A History of the Twenty-Sixth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, 1862-1865* (Campbell, CA: Savas Publishing Company, 1998), 119; Stephen D. Engle, *Yankee Dutchman: The Life of Franz Sigel* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1993), xiii, 157, 160-61.

[2] *New York Herald*, 5, 6, 7 May 1863; *New-York Daily Tribune*, 6 May 1863.

[3] Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, 6 and 7 May 1863; New York *Evening Post*, 5 May 1863; Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, 6 May 1863; Philadelphia *Inquirer*, 6, 7, and 9 May 1863; *Weekly Pittsburgh Gazette*, 6 May 1863; *Hartford Evening Press*, 13 May 1863; *Chicago Tribune*, 6 and 7 May 1863; *Pittsburgh Post*, 6 and 8 May, 1863; *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 23 May 1863. Although the bitterness of the invective in the Anglo-American papers drained away by the end of May, unveiled aspersions and ethnic lampooning continued throughout the summer of 1863.

[4] Carol Reardon, "The Valiant Rearguard: Hancock's Division at Chancellorsville," in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *Chancellorsville: The Battle and its Aftermath* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 171; James Biddle to wife, 9 May 1863, James Biddle Civil War Letters, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Colonel Robert McAllister, 11th NJ, to Ellen McAllister, May 1863, in James I. Robertson, ed., *The Civil War Letters of General Robert McAllister* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 301; Abram P. Smith, *History of the Seventy-Sixth Regiment New York Volunteers* (Cortland, NY: Truair, Smith, and Miles, Printers, 1867), 218; "Laird" to "my dear boy, 10 May 1863, George S. Lester papers, Louisiana State University Dept. of Archives and Manuscripts; Darwin Cody to parents, 9 May 1863, Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park Archives; Stephen W. Sears, *Chancellorsville* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 433; DeTrobriand quoted in Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 594.

[5] For the purposes of this study, the term "German-American" or "German" indicates a person or persons either born in any of the nineteenth-century German states or their immediate offspring, i.e., sons and daughters, then living in the United States. Most of these individuals arrived in the 1840s and 1850s, clustering together in ethnic neighborhoods in the great cities of the North (New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Cleveland all contained "little Germanies") or in small farming communities in the Midwest. The term does not refer to the Pennsylvania Dutch, or the "Pennsylvania Germans," who were descendants of the colonial-era Germanic immigrations and who considered themselves Americans "with a difference." The appellation "Anglo-American" refers to a person or persons born in the United States and descended mainly from colonial-era English or Scots-Irish colonists. As the most "foreign" of the country's ethnic groups in the Civil War era, German-Americans made an easy target for nativists, and not only because of their foreign language and customs. As the German-born began to see themselves as a distinct, quasi-separate group within greater American society, started breaking down the old barriers of German state particularism, class, and religion, and agitated for looser naturalization and anti-temperance legislation, many non-Germans perceived a threat. This trend toward a more unified German-America—tentative as it was in the antebellum period—nonetheless alarmed many Anglo-American Whigs and northern Democrats, who coalesced briefly in a political coalition devoted, among other issues, to stricter naturalization laws, temperance, and a xenophobic world view. In the mid-1850s, the nativistic Know-Nothing or American Party challenged the Democrats for supremacy in national and state leadership, and was only replaced by the Republican Party, which absorbed many of its constituents, because the Know Nothings split over the slavery controversy. Disdain and prejudice for immigrants was therefore only a few notches below preservation of the Union and hatred of slavery in the minds of many in the Republican-dominated North in the early 1860s. See Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (1938, reprint Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1963); Dale T. Knobel, *"America for the Americans:" The Nativist Movement in the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996); Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1986). For good examples of the development of the little Germanies and a pan-German-American spirit in the antebellum period, see Stan Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845-80* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), and Kathleen Neils Conzen,

"German-Americans and the Invention of Ethnicity" in Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, eds., *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred Year History*, vol. 1: *Immigration, Language, Ethnicity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

[6] Augustus Choate Hamlin, *The Battle of Chancellorsville* (Bangor, ME, 1896), 34-47, 66-78, and especially 154-66; Wilhelm Kaufmann, *The Germans in the American Civil War* (1911; reprint Carlisle, PA: John Kallmann Books, 1999); Ella Lonn; *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, previously cited; William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Regiments*, 2d ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998); Ernest B. Furgurson, *Chancellorsville: The Souls of the Brave* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993); Stephen W. Sears *Chancellorsville*, previously cited. Furgurson devotes 11 out of 350 pages of text to the actual fighting done by the Eleventh Corps and Sears allocates 9 out of 449 pages. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter Kamphoefner, eds., *Deutsche im Amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg: Briefe von Front und Farm, 1861-1865* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), is an excellent collection of edited letters written by German immigrants, both soldiers and civilians, during the Civil War era, but the editors' analysis of the criticality of Chancellorsville is scant. Helbich deals with the battle a bit more in "German-Born Union Soldiers: Motivation, Ethnicity, and 'Americanization,'" in Helbich and Kamphoefner, eds., *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective* (Madison, WI: Max Kade Institute, 2004), 295-325. In both of these works, however, Helbich is more interested in the effect of the war overall on German immigrant soldiers (drawing his evidence primarily from individual soldiers' letters) rather than examining the greater significance of Chancellorsville for them and their families at home. I believe Chancellorsville was *the* key event in the war for the North's German-Americans, its reverberations evident well into the postwar period.

[7] Patrick R. Guiney to "My Dear Jennie," 7 May 1863, reprinted in Christian G. Samito, ed. *Commanding Boston's Irish Ninth: The Civil War Letters of Colonel Patrick R. Guiney, Ninth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 187-88; Oscar D. Ladley to "Dear Mother and Sisters," 8 May 1863, reprinted in Carl M. Becker and Ritchie Thomas, eds., *Hearth and Knapsack: The Ladley Letters, 1857-1880* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1988, 121-22; William C. Bryant to Lincoln, 11 May 1863, reprinted in Roy Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* 9 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 6:216.

[8] United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901) I, vol. 25, 630-31. Hereafter cited as "O.R."

[9] 45th New York Infantry Letter, Order, and Index Book, RG 94, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA). Whether or not the ban on beer was intended as a punishment is unknown, but based on the timing and Howard's evangelizing personality, this is a possibility.

[10] Howard's ban on lager beer editorialized and Wisconsin soldier's letter reprinted in the Philadelphia *Freie Presse*, 11 May 1863 and the *Pittsburger Demokrat* 8 May 1863; Theodore Howell to "Dearest Wife," 10 May 1863 (Lehigh County Historical Society). All translations from the original German are mine unless otherwise indicated.

[11] Muenzenberger quoted in Pula, *The Sigel Regiment*, 135; Frederick Winkler letter, 7 May 1863, in Frederick C. Winkler, *Letters of Frederick C. Winkler, 1862-1865*, ed. and trans. by William K. Winkler, 1963 (privately published), 50-1; 119th New York Infantry Regimental Letter and Order Book, 58th New York Infantry Regimental Order Book, 82nd Illinois Infantry Consolidated Morning Report, Letter, and Order Book, all in RG 94, NARA; Register of Letters Received Relating to Leaves of Absence, Resignations, and Furloughs, 11th A.C. 1863, RG 393, pt. 2, entries #5317 and #5322, NARA.

[12] Carl Schurz to "dear Jacobs," 11 June 1863, container 4, Carl Schurz Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (hereafter LOC); 119th New York Infantry Regimental Letter and Order Book, RG 94, NARA.

[13] Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier* 17 June 1863; Rudolph Mueller to Friedrich Hecker, 18 May 1863, available at http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/419/mueller.html; *Philadelphia Demokrat*, 19 May 1863.

[14] The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War held hearings on the battle in late 1863, and cross-examined Hooker, Hancock, Couch, Pleasonton, Sickles, and other high-ranking officers in the Army of the Potomac, but failed to question Howard, and refused Carl Schurz's request to be heard. The Committee never publicly blamed the defeat on the Germans of the Eleventh Corps, but the testimony of these officers indicted the corps for the disaster in no uncertain terms. See the *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War*, vol. 4 (reprint: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1999), 12, 66, 85, 30-1, 35-36, 45, 127, and 141.

[15] Schurz to Howard, 12 May 1863, Carl Schurz Papers, Container 4, LOC.

[16] Schurz to Hooker, 17 May 1863, ibid.

[17] See the *New York Herald*, 11 May 1863 and the *New-Yorker Staatszeitung*, 12 May 1863 for examples of Howard letters exonerating Schurz; Hecker letter reprinted in Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier*, 22 May 1863; Hans Trefousse, *Carl Schurz: A Biography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 135. Schurz remained extremely sensitive to any allegations of cowardice, both regarding himself and his troops, for the rest of the war. He even threatened fellow division commander, Adolph von Steinwehr, with a court martial because von Steinwehr delivered a farewell address to the departing 29th New York which insinuated that von Steinwehr's first brigade (of which the 29th was a part) was the only 11th Corps brigade to hold firm "while all around were in wild flight." Schurz thought this impugned the valor of the regiments in his division. An angry exchange of letters between the two generals resulted. See Schurz to von Steinwehr, 16 June 1863 and von Steinwehr to Schurz, 16 June 1863, both in Schurz Papers, Container 4, LOC.

[18] Philadelphia *Freie Presse*, 15 May 1863; Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier*, 22 May 1863; Alfred C. Raphelson, "Alexander Schimmelpfennig: A German-American Campaigner in the Civil War," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 87, no. 2 (April 1963): 168-70.

[19] Diary of Friedrich Otto Baron von Fritsch, unpublished manuscript written in 1903, LOC, MMC416, 183-84.

[20] O.R., I, vol. 25, 662-63.

[21] Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier*, 15 May 1863. For good examples of other newspapers reporting the casualties alongside the first reports from the Anglo-American press, see the *Philadelphia Demokrat*, 8 May 1863 and the losses of the 27th Pennsylvania, or the Cincinnati *Wöchentlicher Volksfreund*, 20 May 1863 and the losses of the 107th Ohio.

[22] Philadelphia *Freie Presse*, 15, 18, and 29 May 1863; Highland, Illinois *Highland Bote*, 15 May 1863. Also see the *Louisville Anzeiger*, 12 May 1863 and the Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier*, 8 May 1863. The *Milwaukee Seebote* was quoted in the other papers.

[23] *Philadelphia Demokrat*, 12 May 1863; Cincinnati *Wöchentlicher Volksfreund*, 20 May 1863; Belleville, Illinois *Belleviller-Zeitung*, 14 and 21 May 1863.

[24] *New-Yorker Staatszeitung*, 15 May 1863.

[25] Philadelphia *Freie Presse*, 7 May 1863. See Engle, *Yankee Dutchman*, 230-33, for a critique of Sigel's performance as a general in the Civil War.

[26] Highland, Illinois *Highland Bote*, 8 May 1863; Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier* 9 and 30 May 1863; New York *Criminalzeitung und Belletristisches Journal*, 15 and 22 May 1863. Also see the Boston *Pionier*, 20 May 1863. The anti-Halleck rhetoric in the *Freiheitsfreund* was reprinted from an editorial taken from the prominent *Illinois Staatszeitung* of a few days earlier. Another editorial in the *Higland Bote* on 29 May also originated with the *Staatszeitung* and offered hope that Sigel would be reinstated.

[27] Ernst Damkoehler to Mathilde Damkoehler, 10 May 1863, quoted in Pula, *The Sigel Regiment*, 141.

[28] Philadelphia *Freie Presse*, 18 May 1863; Friedrich Kapp, *Aus und über Amerika: Thatsachen und Erlebnisse*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Verlag von Julius Springer, 1876), 292; Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier*, 15 May 1863; *Milwaukee Herold* 23 May 1863.

[29] *Pittsburger Demokrat*, 16 May 1863; Karl Wickesberg, 26th Wisconsin, to family, 21 May 1863, quoted in Pula, *The Sigel Regiment*, 142.

[30] Chicago *Illinois Staatszeitung*, 7 May 1863; Cincinnati *Wöchentlicher Volkfreund*, 13 May 1863.

[31] *Pittsburger Demokrat*, 8, 9, and 10 May 1863; Chicago *Illinois Staatszeitung*, 7, 8, 9 May 1863.

[32] Cleveland *Wächter am Erie*, 30 May 1863; Pittsburgher *Freiheitsfreund und Courier*, 9 May 1863; Philadelphia *Freie Presse*, 12 May 1863.

[33] Philadelphia *Freie Presse*, 29 May 1863.

[34] Ibid. The editor specifically stated that the "morale of the troops is quite low."

[35] Heusinger, *Amerikanische Kriegsbilder*, 119; Highland, Illinois *Highland Bote*, 22 May 1863.

[36] Ibid., 4 June 1863. The remarks of the Ohio officers were reprinted at the top of the page, in German. Also see the Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier* on 6 and 7 June 1863 for similar sentiments about the Ohio troops' petition and proposed transfer of the German regiments. Unfortunately, I was unable to locate an English-language copy of the Ohio officers' petition, but evidence of it exists in the National Archives. A letter to the Assistant Adjutant General of the Eleventh Corps from the new colonel commanding the second brigade, first division on 19 May 1863 reads: "I have the honor to forward herewith a paper bearing the signatures of certain officers of the 25th, 55th, and 75th Ohio Regiments. Also a communication with accompanying resolutions from the 107th Ohio. I do this, in conformity with the wish expressed in the resolutions and in compliance with the request of the officers whose names are attached to the paper above named. I desire, however, to say that the paper was drawn before my connection with this Brigade and that it was circulated without my knowledge. It has my unqualified disapproval." (see "Letters Sent, May 1863-May 1864, Dept. of Florida, Entry #5364, RG 393, pt. 2, NARA).

[37] Philadelphia *Freie Presse* 23 June 1863; Boston *Pionier* 8 July 1863; Belleviller *Volksblatt*, 8 July 1863; Jörg Nagler, *Frémont contra Lincoln: Die deutsch-amerikanische Opposition in der Republikanischen Partei während des amerikanischen Buergerkrieges* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 122-23, 127. The Pittsburgh *Freiheitsfreund und Courier* of 24 and 25 June 1863 also carried coverage of the Washington meeting but did not reprint its proceedings verbatim. The "Washington Conference" as it became known in the German-American communities, soon came under fire by Democratic Germans as being too radical and too dominated by Republicans. The radical Missouri Germans, for their part, claimed it was not radical enough.

[38] "The Battle of Chancellorsville and the Eleventh Army Corps," (New York: G. B. Teubner, printer, 1863), 7, 8-12, 16, 19-20. The full texts of each major speech were published and distributed in both German and English pamphlets. Following the texts of the speeches was an "appendix" containing the letters of Schurz and Schimmelfennig previously mentioned, letters from other officers of the Eleventh Corps, reprints of the reports in the American press, and the set of resolutions unanimously passed by those at the rally.

[39] Ibid., 22-27.

[40] *Philadelphia Demokrat*, 13 June 1863.

[41] William Vocke, "Our German Soldiers," *Military Essays and Recollections,* vol. 3 (Chicago: Military Order of the Loyal Legion of Illinois, 1899), 350-7.

[42] Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 55, 272; Hermann Nachtigall to Augustus C. Hamlin, 28 January 1893, Augustus Hamlin Papers, bMS Am 1084 [temp. box 22, file N-O], Houghton Library, Harvard University. Post 8 in Philadelphia was also primarily composed of German-born veterans.

[43] Several scholars have previously pointed out that German-America from the 1870s to 1914 increasingly assumed a "culturally pluralistic" appearance. This belief structure, evident throughout the German-language press, German-American academic writings, and in German-American artistic endeavors, stressed at once the desirability and benefits of assimilation *and* the defense of German ethnicity. Leading proponents of this vision argued that American society owed much of its finer qualities to German immigrants and that

the country would continue benefiting only if the Germans were permitted to continue being German. See Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (New York: Macmillan, 1973); Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* 2d ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970); Werner Sollors, ed., *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Kathleen Neils Conzen, "German-Americans and the Invention of Ethnicity"; David L. Salvaterra, "Becoming American: Assimilation, Pluralism, and Ethnic Identity" in Timothy Walsh, ed., *Immigrant Americ: European Ethnicity in the United States* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), and more recently, Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). Wolfgang Helbich and Walter Kamphoefner are even more pointed than these scholars in their arguments regarding the Germans, assimilation, and the war; Helbich, especially, makes a strong case that the Civil War on the whole not only did not enhance Americanization but instead promoted an actual feeling of "separateness" among many German-born Union volunteers. See Helbich and Kamphoefner, *Deutsche im Amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg*, 82-84, and especially Helbich, "German-Born Union Soldiers," 295-325. I would not go so far as to say that a separatist movement arose in the postwar period because of Chancellorsville and the greater experience of the war, but would argue that the German cultural pluralists, such as Friedrich Lexow, received a mighty impetus from the nativism of the war years in their postwar quest for a culturally pluralistic pan-German-American identity. See the last chapter of my forthcoming book, *Chancellorsville and the Germans: Nativism, Ethnicity, and Civil War Memory* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

[43] *Der Deutsche Pionier* 15, no. 8 (November 1883): 330-31. For other examples of German-American literature both questioning the wisdom of quick assimilation and referring to the Civil War, see "General Adolph von Steinwehr, *Die Deutsche Pionier* 9, no. 1 (April 1877): 17-28; Friedrich Kapp, "Rede, gehalten am 19. Juli 1865 in Jones Wood, in New York, zum Schluss des neunten deutschen Sängerfestes," reprinted in *Deutsch-Amerikanische Monatshefte* (August 1865): 182-88; "Der Nativismus in den Staatschulen," in J. B. Stallo, *Reden, Abhandlungen und Briefe von J. B. Stallo* (New York: E. Steiger and Co., 1893): 193-96; Friedrich Lexow, "Die Deutschen in Amerika," *Deutsch-Amerikanisch Monatshefte* 3 (January 1866): 149-54; Address of Lieutenant T. Albert Steiger in "Dedication of Monument: 75th Regiment Infantry, Orchard Knob, November 14, 1897," Chickamauga and Chattanooga Battlefield Commission, *Pennsylvania at Chickamauga and Chattanooga: Ceremonies at the Dedications of the Monuments* (Harrisburg: William S. Ray, 1900), 167-185; and Address of Captain Paul F. Rohrbacker in "Dedication of Monument, 74th Regiment Infantry, 2 July 2 1888," in Gettysburg Battlefield Commission, *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg: Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments Erected by the Commonwealth*, vol. 1 (Harrisburg: William S. Ray, 1914), 427-30.