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**From *Freischärler* in Baden to American Patriot:
Wendelin Bührle—a Common Soldier
in Two Struggles for Freedom**

Writing some four decades after the unsuccessful attempt to establish a democratic, free and unified Germany in the turbulent period of 1848-49, M. J. Becker expressed the view in his book *The Germans of 1849 in America* that:

a few years more, and the last exile of '49 will have found refuge in that great asylum where extradition laws are unknown, and where, as I hope, he will not be compelled to serve a probationary term prior to his full admission to citizenship. But his children and his children's children will live on, assimilated, absorbed and Americanized; unmindful of their origin and indifferent to their descent.¹

Perhaps Becker intended his words to be taken positively, meaning that the descendants of the refugees of the German Revolution of 1848-49 in America would in the course of a couple of generations be fully integrated into American democracy and society and no longer live under the despotic conditions their ancestors endured in Europe. Or, is Becker resigned to the fact that the progeny of the refugees will one day forget the reasons why their ancestors were forced to flee their homeland and the circumstances with which they were confronted after arrival in the New World—a nation on the verge of a bloody civil war over the very issues of human freedom and individual dignity?

This investigation into the life and historical context of the emigration from Baden and involvement in the American Civil War of one common soldier in the revolutionary citizens' militia (*Bürgerwehr*) of Baden in 1848-49 is dedicated to the memory of all such men and women who were only able to realize their dreams of freedom and democracy in their adopted homeland of America and in

their own small way contributed to the cultural and social fabric of American society. In examining the fragmentary information of one such individual's life, we are also able to see how the experience of participation in the fight to preserve the Union enabled thousands of such German immigrants to become fully integrated into American society. It also sheds light on the amazing phenomenon of the rapid assimilation of these Germans in the pre-World War I era.

The important figures of the 1848-49 Revolution who emigrated to the United States, beginning with Friedrich Hecker in 1848, whether they contributed to or were active in political or cultural life, journalism, the military, science or education, have been treated in a number of major studies. Names such as Carl Schurz, Franz Sigel, Friedrich Kapp, Christian Essellen, Carl Heinzen, Lorenz Brentano, Julius Froebel, Heinrich Boernstein, Carl Daenzer, Emil Praetorius cannot be unfamiliar to students of nineteenth-century American political and social history. Their achievements in the New World testify to their determination and spirit in the face of extreme adversity and persecution for their views in their German homeland. But in addition to the several dozen of the forty-eighters who achieved some degree of prominence in America there were thousands of common men and women who just as passionately participated in the ill-fated attempt to establish a democratic form of government in Germany; who bled and died in the struggles against the regional forces of the German Federation and especially against Prussian regulars; who ultimately could not remain in Europe and whose only hope lay in emigration to distant America.

When Wendelin Buehrle² died on 12 December 1914 in the home of his son Fred Buehrle in Jefferson City, Missouri, few may have recalled the events that led to his decision to emigrate from his native Baden over sixty years before. His life since arriving in the United States in 1852, had in most respects followed the typical path of the mid-nineteenth-century immigrant from Germany. But several published accounts suggest that his life was intertwined with tumultuous historical events on two continents. A 1903 feature in the *Kansas City Star* of 18 February describes in some detail Wendelin's brother Fredolin and the birthday salute fired by a group of cannons led by the Buehrle brothers on Lincoln's birthday (12 February) at the state capitol in Jefferson City. The article includes the following information on Wendelin:

He was born in Baden, Germany, June 28, 1828, and if he lives until next June he will be 75 years old. He, too, has had his share of war, its fortunes and reverses. He fought under Colonel Albert Siegel³ in 1848-9 in the war against Prussia and after coming to this country

with his brother was sergeant in a company of "home guards" in the stirring times of '61.

Another article from a St. Louis newspaper in 1912 reveals more about his immigration to the New World. The *Daily Globe Democrat* of 25 August reported that Wendelin Buehrle:

served in the German revolution of 1848, and came to [t]his country in [the] company of the late Dr. Emil Pretorius of the St. Louis Westliche Post and Dr. Carl Daenzer, who founded the St. Louis Zeitung. Wendall Buehrle celebrated his eighty-fourth birthday last June.

A similar hint at Wendelin's involvement in the revolution in Baden in 1848-49 is found in the biography of his then prominent son Fred Buehrle in the *History of Jefferson City* published in 1938:

[Wendelin Buehrle], a native of Baden, Germany, came to Jefferson City in 1858 from Fort Wayne, Indiana. In Germany in the 1840s he served under Siegel in the revolt against a despotic government, and was obliged to leave Germany as were many others who became leading citizens of America Jefferson City . . . was his home for the remainder of his life. He was a Union soldier, serving in the Home Guards in the Civil War.

His role as a soldier in both the revolutionary uprisings in Baden and in the Union Army in the American Civil War are noted repeatedly. In all these reports Buehrle is placed together with well-known figures of the 1848-49 revolution such as Daenzer, Praetorius and Sigel. Why was Wendelin obliged to emigrate in 1852? What more can we learn of his participation in these historical struggles?

We know next to nothing about the first twenty years of Wendelin's life. He was born in Kappel on the Rhine in the Grand Duchy of Baden in June 1828 and probably baptized on 5 July of that year according to village and church records.⁴ His father Zyprian was a weaver and day laborer. The Bührles had been home weavers since at least the seventeenth century in the village of Kappel.⁵ That Wendelin's father was the first in that family to be recorded as both *Weber und Tagelöhner* in the civil records of the village is telling. The weavers throughout Germany were particularly impacted by the changing patterns of industrial production. The plight of such German home weavers

during the 1840s is depicted in Gerhart Hauptmann's drama *Die Weber* (1892) in which the Silesian home weavers struggle against their exploiters. Additionally, the crop failures and potato rot of 1846 and 1847 increased the economic distress effecting especially the poorer classes. By the time the historical events of 1847-48 forced Wendelin and countless others into a radical change in their way of life, he had lost both father and mother and was alone at age nineteen with an older sister Ursula and a younger twelve-year-old brother Fredolin (Fridolin).⁶

Baden had been one of the most liberal regions of the German Federation since the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and fertile ground for the ideas of the French Revolution. It was no surprise that the first foreshadowing of the revolutionary upheavals to come was signaled by the popular assembly held in Offenburg on 17 September 1847, a mere fifteen miles from Wendelin's home in Kappel. The Offenburg Declaration published after that meeting was a clear warning to governmental authorities and the nobility that public frustration with the old order and the demands for democratic reforms, freedom of the press and the right of citizens to bear arms were nearing the boiling point.

In the aftermath of the February 1848 upheavals in Paris, the liberals and the radicals in Baden demanded action. As was the case in most of the thirty-nine German states, reform-minded "March ministers" were appointed to appease popular demand for change. The call for a national assembly of the German states in Frankfurt to determine the political future of Germany seemed to offer some hope for peaceful change. The grand duke of Baden acceded to numerous requests for reform including the establishment of a citizens' militia (*Bürgerwehr*) in the villages and cities of Baden. Many towns proceeded to enlist and arm a group citizens and democratically elect officers for their units. The village archives for Kappel maintained in the district seat of Ettenheim document the formation of a citizens' militia and the popular election of officers on 9 April 1848.⁷ In these difficult to decipher handwritten records, the name Bührle occurs frequently. As far as can be ascertained, these are relatives—male cousins and uncles—of Wendelin. From the village history of Kappel, we also know that the mayor and clerk and many of the leading citizens were active supporters of the radical republicans. A *Volksverein* was established in Kappel to debate the political issues of the day and to promote the revolutionary ideals.⁸

When it appeared at the end of the *Vorparlament* in Frankfurt at the beginning of April 1848 that the radical republican element would not prevail, hostilities erupted in Baden. Determined to force the issue of a German republic by popular uprising, Friedrich Hecker attempted to march with three columns of revolutionaries from the southernmost district of Baden, the *Seekreis*, on the established powers. Starting from Konstanz on Lake Constance on 13 April, the

Forderungen des deutschen Volkes.

Allgemeine Volksbewaffnung mit freier Wahl der Offiziere.

Ein deutsches Parlament, frei gewählt durch das Volk. Jeder deutsche Mann, sobald er das 21ste Jahr erreicht hat, ist wahlfähig als Urwähler und wählbar zum Wahlmann. Auf je 1000 Seelen wird ein Wahlmann ernannt, auf je 100,000 Seelen ein Abgeordneter zum Parlament. Jeder Deutsche, ohne Rücksicht auf Rang, Stand, Vermögen und Religion kann Mitglied dieses Parlaments werden, sobald er das 25ste Lebensjahr zurückgelegt hat. Das Parlament wird seinen Sitz in Frankfurt haben und seine Geschäfts-Ordnung selbst entwerfen.

Unbedingte Pressefreiheit.

Vollständige Religions-, Gewissens- und Lehrfreiheit.

Volksthümliche Rechtspflege mit Schwurgerichten.

Allgemeines deutsches Staatsbürger-Recht.

Gerechte Besteuerung nach dem Einkommen.

Wohlstand, Bildung und Unterricht für Alle.

Schutz und Gewährleistung der Arbeit.

Ausgleichung des Mißverhältnisses von Kapital und Arbeit.

Volksthümliche und billige Staats-Verwaltung.

Verantwortlichkeit aller Minister und Staatsbeamten.

Abschaffung aller Vorrechte.

Eigenhändige Namensunterschrift der Stimmgeber.

Nachdem hiemit auf dem 1. April 1848 die
Stimmgeber des Ortes Kappel, im Kanton Solothurn
zusammengekommen sind, und die Gemeinde
verordnet, dass die Angelegenheiten
des Ortes geregelt werden.

Als Hauptmann wurde gewählt
Paul Küster

Als Oberleutnant
Johann Künzler

Als Oberrichter wurde gewählt
Kasper Künzler

Als Leutnant
Künzler

Als Leutnant
Künzler

Als Leutnant
Künzler

Als Leutnant
Künzler

Als Leutnant
Künzler

Als Leutnant
Künzler

mit beifolgender Liste

marchers attempted to converge on Freiburg from where they planned proceed to the ducal capital of Karlsruhe. After a number of skirmishes in the southern Black Forest and in and around Freiburg between 20 and 27 April, the revolutionaries were forced to flee with their commanders Hecker, Gustav Struve and Franz Sigel to nearby Switzerland. When all was already lost a German workers legion from Paris crossed the Rhine from France under the command of the poet Georg Herwegh and was quickly dispersed by government forces. Significantly, members of the Kappel citizens' militia were involved in the skirmishes in and around nearby Freiburg.⁹ Thus Wendelin and his fellow citizens had their first taste of armed insurrection, albeit unsuccessful.

The National Assembly of the German States began its deliberations in Frankfurt on 18 May 1848 and the summer of 1848 passed without further clashes in the German southwest. A major crisis developed in September 1848, however, over the issue of Prussia's decision to end the conflict concerning Danish control of Schleswig-Holstein without consulting the assembly. When the assembly first rejected the Prussian armistice with Denmark and then two weeks later reversed itself, violent demonstrations erupted in Frankfurt. Two members of the assembly were murdered by the unruly mob. The assembly was forced to call upon Prussian and Austrian troops to protect it from the demonstrators. In this atmosphere, a restless Gustav Struve in Swiss exile decided it was time to complete what had been begun in Baden the past April. Crossing the Rhine to Lörrach, he proclaimed the establishment of a German republic on 21 September 1848. The march of the revolutionary forces under Struve—perhaps a few hundred—began moving north paralleling the Rhine toward Freiburg.

Throughout Baden members of the citizens' militias sprang into action. At six locations the recently constructed single rail line between Karlsruhe and the southern part of Baden was severed to prevent government troops from rapidly deploying to the south. Again, the *Bürgerwehr* of Kappel participated in cutting the rail line between Karlsruhe and Freiburg at Orschweier, a couple of miles east of Kappel.¹⁰ However, by 24 September the second armed insurrection in Baden was over and its leader Struve and his wife Amalie headed for imprisonment. As documented in the Kappel village archives, the district government in Ettenheim ordered the mayor of Kappel to confiscate all private weapons and ammunition, including two sabers, on 4 October 1848 for shipment to the capital of Karlsruhe because of their treasonous participation in this brief uprising.¹¹ Several members of the militia from Kappel with the surname Bührle were found guilty of treason in conjunction with Struve's putsch attempt.¹²

Deutsche Republik!

Wohlstand, Bildung, Freiheit für Alle.

Im Namen des deutschen Volkes verfügt die provisorische Regierung Deutschlands wie folgt:

- Art. 1. Sämmtliche auf dem Grund und Boden haftende mittelalterliche Lasten, so wie sämmtliche mittelalterliche persönliche Dienste, Zehnten, Gülten, Frohnden, und welchen Namen sie sonst tragen, sind ohne alle Entschädigung sofort abgeschafft. Alle Ablösungsschuldigkeiten für solche Lasten werden ebenfalls getilgt.
- Art. 2. Sämmtliche bisher an den Staat, die Kirche und die adeligen Grundherren bezahlten Abgaben hören von diesem Tage auf; eine das Einkommen des Unbemittelten nicht berührende progressive Einkommensteuer tritt an die Stellen sämmtlicher bisherigen Abgaben; nur die an den Grenzen Deutschlands erhobenen Zölle bleiben für's Erste bestehen.
- Art. 3. Sämmtliches Grundeigenthum des Staats, der Kirche und der auf Seite der Fürsten kämpfenden Staatsbürger geht provisorisch, unter Vorbehalt späterer Ausgleichungen, an die Gemeinden über, in deren Gemarkung es liegt.
- Art. 4. Um alle in den vorstehenden Artikeln enthaltenen Erleichterungen zu sichern, wird eine allgemeine Erhebung des Volkes angeordnet.

Alle weisungsfähigen Männer von vollendetem achtzehntem bis zum vollendeten vierzigsten Jahre ergreifen die Waffen zur Rettung des bedrohten Vaterlandes.

Von heute an herrscht das Kriegsgesetz, bis das deutsche Volk seine Freiheit errungen haben wird.

Im Namen der provisorischen Regierung Deutschlands

G. Struve.

Der Schriftführer:

Karl Blind.

Hauptquartier Ertach am ersten Tag der deutschen Republik, am einundzwanzigsten September 1848.

Struve's proclamation of a German republic, 21 September 1848 (*Flugblätter der Revolution*).

During the winter of 1848-49, the assembly in Frankfurt completed its work on both a German bill of rights (December 1848) and a German constitution which established a new German empire under the king of Prussia (March 1849). Many of the German states were prepared to accept the new constitution, including Baden. But without the support of the larger states such as Prussia, Saxony and Bavaria the attempt to establish a united Germany was doomed. When the Prussian king rejected the imperial crown from the national assembly in April 1849, several of the more radical elements attempted to establish a German republic in the provinces, such as in Saxony and in the Bavarian Rhenish-Palatinate.

In Baden, once again, a meeting of all *Volksvereine* was called for 12 May 1849 in Offenburg, where a number of revolutionary demands were addressed to the government in Karlsruhe. At the same time in the nearby Rastatt fortress, where Struve was in prison, members of the regular army of Baden began to fraternize with members of the *Bürgerwehr*. Soon the soldiers mutinied against their officers declaring their support for the new German constitution. The Offenburg assembly demanded a new government and a constitutional assembly and elected Lorenz Brentano to lead a delegation to Karlsruhe, where street demonstrations were on the verge of becoming violent. In the midst of all this commotion Grand Duke Leopold felt he could no longer remain in Karlsruhe

Grossh. Erz. Herz
 Karlsruhe 4. Okt. 1848
 Die Zusammenkunft der Bürgerwehr
 der Bürgerwehr sind ungesetzlich
 die in Karlsruhe sind nicht als Anwalt
 und vom 2. d. M. 1848. Infolgedessen
 die Waffen der Bürgerwehr zu
 zu verschieben und von der Militärs
 verschieben der Waffen und auch
 auf die in Karlsruhe zu
 verschieben.
 Kappel

On 4 October 1848, the mayor of Kappel is ordered to send the confiscated weapons of the local militia to Karlsruhe after the militia destroyed the rail line near Kappel during the Struve uprising in late September 1848 (Gemeinde-Archiv, Kappel).

and fled with his immediate family and government officials on the night of 13 May to Alsace. Under Brentano, a people's state committee took over the business of running the grand duchy calling for popular elections to revise the constitution of Baden. Meanwhile the grand duke had already appealed to Frederick William of Prussia for federation troops to restore his government in Baden.

After these chaotic developments, on 28 May 1849 the revolutionary state committee in Baden ordered the formation of a people's militia of 25,000 soldiers (*Volkswehr des oberrheinischen Kriegsbundes*, allied with the revolutionary army of the Bavarian Rhenish-Palatinate) to defend Baden against the imminent threat of invasion. Single males between the ages of eighteen and thirty were called to arms in defense of the fatherland, with firearms or, where these were lacking, with scythes.¹³ Wendelin, now nearly twenty-one, became involved as did thousands of others in the ill-fated defense measures undertaken to repel the invasion by the military might of the German Confederation, largely Prussian regulars, in mid-June 1849—admittedly in response to the plea of their own Grand Duke Leopold.

Despite heroic attempts by such *Freischärler* and members of the regular army in Baden to stop the Prussians at the Neckar River near Heidelberg and at a temporary setback for the Prussians at Waghäusel on 21 June, the *Volkswehr* was enveloped by the Prussians—together with Confederation troops from Hesse and Mecklenburg numbering some 60,000—and was forced to beat a hasty, albeit organized and successful, retreat to the Murg River at Rastatt, leaving the capital of Karlsruhe to fall into Prussian hands on 23 June. Along the Murg several units held their ground bravely against the Prussians in fighting on 29 and 30 June, but were finally forced to fall back or seek refuge in the nearby fortress at Rastatt. Over the course of the next couple of weeks the Prussians swept through the remaining districts of Baden, compelling both the revolutionary government and its army to flee to the haven offered by the Swiss Confederation by mid-July. The resistance of over 5,000 troops who remained besieged in the fortress at Rastatt finally dissolved on 23 July 1849.

The Prussians ruthlessly executed several dozen of the revolutionary leaders at Rastatt and Freiburg over the next several weeks. Hundreds of others were imprisoned in the casemates of Rastatt fortress after being disarmed, including a number of the citizens of Kappel who were among the defenders of the fortress.¹⁴ In August 1849 the entire village government of Kappel was dissolved by district authorities for its support of the insurrection.¹⁵ Arrests and trials and prison terms or forced exile became the rule of the day for those who participated in the unsuccessful attempt to establish a German republic. Many were forced to pay fines in lieu of prison terms which had the effect of

impoverishing them and their families. The occupation of Baden by Prussian troops continued until 1851. Martial law in Baden was not lifted until 9 September 1852, nearly six months after the death of Grand Duke Leopold. Until 1862, when a general amnesty for those still imprisoned was issued, repercussions of the revolution were still felt in Baden.¹⁶ A cradle song of that era popular in Baden is telling:

Schlaf mein Kind, schlaf leis,
Dadrauß da geht der Preuß.
Deinen Vater hat er umgebracht,
Deine Mutter hat er arm gemacht,
Und wer nicht schläft in stiller Ruh',
Dem drückt der Preuß die Augen zu.¹⁷

Can it be any wonder that in the course of the 1850s, nearly 80,000 citizens of Baden emigrated to the United States?¹⁸ Some may have initially hoped to regroup and return and make a successful effort to establish democracy in Germany. However, sooner or later they realized that this would not happen—at least not in the near future. They then turned their efforts toward helping their newly adopted homeland in preserving national unity and rejecting the forces of slavery in a new struggle for human liberty. Many would give their allegiance to the newly established Republican Party. Many would soon find themselves in the service of another army fighting for freedom and democracy in the great American Civil War.

After the end of the Prussian occupation of Baden in 1851, Wendelin decided or was forced to join the many thousands in the great emigration of the 1850s. Landing in New York on 28 April 1852, with his brother Fredolin, he set out for the American Midwest, settling eventually in Fort Wayne, Indiana. By the mid-1850s he had established himself there as a bricklayer and whitewasher. He had married Margaretha Bodenschatz, also a recent immigrant from the German southwest and started a family. After a fire destroyed his home and business, he moved with his family to Jefferson City, Missouri, in the spring of 1857, together with his bachelor brother Fredolin.¹⁹ In August 1859 the two brothers from Baden became naturalized citizens of the United States, renouncing all allegiance to the grand duke of Baden.²⁰ The 1860 Census enumerates both brothers in Jefferson City: Fred still a bachelor living in a boarding house for German immigrants—now the historic Lohman House—and Wendelin (spelled “Wonderly”) living with his wife and three young children.²¹

The very next year found these two new Americans in one of the most critical locations for the initial period of the American Civil War. The Missouri

state government under newly elected Governor Claiborne Jackson in Jefferson City made no secret of its sympathy for the secessionist Southern states. However, rather than risking an open break with the federal government, Jackson issued a call for a state convention to decide the issue of Missouri's future relationship with the other states. The surprisingly pro-Union state convention met first in Jefferson City on 28 February 1861, but adjourned immediately to the Mercantile Library in St. Louis, because the atmosphere in the state capital was so hostile, i.e., pro-secessionist. On the same day as Lincoln's first inauguration, 4 March 1861, the convention adopted a resolution that Missouri should remain in the Union.²²

The pro-Unionists in St. Louis, among them Congressman Francis P. Blair and Captain Nathaniel Lyon of the regular federal army decided to organize home guards to thwart any attempt by Governor Jackson to lead Missouri into the Southern camp. The volunteers were largely German immigrants drilling in Turner Halls such as the three battalions of the *Schwarzes Jägercorps*. After the outbreak of hostilities with the attack on Fort Sumter on 12 April, the situation in Missouri rapidly developed into a confrontation between Jackson and Lincoln. Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion, including four regiments from Missouri. Jackson instead called the state legislature into session to provide for Missouri's defense and to maintain her neutrality, characterizing Lincoln's call for troops as illegal, unconstitutional, revolutionary, inhuman and even diabolical. Jackson proclaimed: "Not a man will the state of Missouri furnish to carry out this unholy crusade."²³

Blair and Lyon in St. Louis were able to form five regiments of volunteers by the beginning of May, largely drawn from the Turner home guards and, except for the 1st Regiment commanded by Blair, commanded by exiled forty-eighters, including Franz Sigel of Baden and the Austrian Heinrich Boernstein. Among the soldiers in the ranks were Friedrich Hecker and his son Arthur.²⁴

Meanwhile the governor was organizing the Missouri State Guard which was to field a division in each of the nine congressional districts. But the governor sorely needed weapons and ammunition for his troops. In addition to the poorly stocked armory in Jefferson City, the pro-Southern state forces captured the federal arsenal in Liberty, Missouri, on 20 April. Lyon felt that the 60,000 weapons in the federal arsenal at St. Louis were endangered, especially after the State Guard established "Camp Jackson" on the western edge of St. Louis and openly received shipments of supplies from the Confederacy via steamboat from Louisiana. On 10 May, without the knowledge of his commander General William Harney, who was in Washington, DC, for consultations, Lyon took four of his "German" regiments to Camp Jackson and forced the State Guard to surrender. While removing the captives through St.

Louis to the arsenal, onlookers taunted the German troops. Shots were fired, and in the aftermath somewhere between twelve and thirty persons were killed, including several of the soldiers.

In response to this incident, panic broke out in the state capital of Jefferson City. The state legislature was in session the evening of 10 May when the report was shouted in the chamber that "Frank Blair, Captain Lyon and the Dutch have seized Camp Jackson." After midnight, bells were rung throughout Jefferson City: A report—erroneous as it turned out—had been received that Lyon with 2,000 troops was en route and intended to capture the governor, the legislature and all state officials.²⁵ On 12 May Sterling Price, a former governor and Mexican War hero, was named commander of the Missouri State Guard and Governor Jackson proclaimed "dictator" in order to put down rebellion and repel invasion.

The tense atmosphere was calmed a bit when General Harney returned to St. Louis and attempted to reach a compromise with state officials. While condoning Lyon's action on 10 May, he recognized that the state of Missouri was responsible for maintaining order within its borders. He also issued a request to Lincoln's secretary of war, Simon Cameron, on 15 May "that an additional regiment, consisting exclusively of Irishmen, should be raised in St. Louis. It will at once settle matters in Saint Louis, and do away with the prejudice against the Government troops, which consist almost exclusively of Germans."²⁶ On 21 May, Harney met with Price in St. Louis and hammered out an agreement in an attempt to restore "peace and good order to the people of the state."

Behind the scenes, Blair had already conspired to have Harney replaced by Lyon. The orders relieving him of command were issued on 16 May, but Harney was not given them until 30 May.²⁷ Harney was thus forced to relinquish his command which he did on 31 May with Nathaniel Lyon immediately assuming command of the federal forces in the Department of the West. Jackson and Price then met with Lyon at the Planters House in St. Louis on 11 June to determine if Lyon intended to adhere to the Price-Harney agreement of 21 May. Lyon could not satisfy the state officials and broke off the meeting with the remark "This means war!" Price and Jackson returned to Jefferson City by train that evening, cutting telegraph lines and destroying the railroad bridges over the Gasconade and Osage rivers to prevent pursuit.²⁸

The rumors in the capital city of 10 May became reality a month later. On 13 June General Nathaniel Lyon embarked by steamboat to capture the governor or run him and the state militia out of Missouri. Arriving in Jefferson City on the afternoon of 15 June with several largely German regiments from St. Louis, Lyon ordered Colonel Heinrich Boernstein to organize a Home Guard to protect the state capital and the communication and rail lines serving that

important city. Lyon proceeded on toward Boonville on 17 June where after a brief skirmish, the Missouri state forces under Jackson and Price began to withdraw toward the south, pursued by the Federals.²⁹

When volunteers were mustered by Boernstein on 17 June 1861 for the Home Guard in Jefferson City, thirty-three-year-old Wendelin Buehrle was among them.³⁰ The Home Guard was on active duty for the next three months during which the security of the state capital was far from certain. In July the state convention met there and replaced the entire state government, naming Hamilton Gamble governor. The remainder of the original state government under Jackson meeting on the run at various locations throughout southern Missouri, eventually voted to secede and join the Confederacy in the fall of 1861. Meanwhile Union forces suffered two major defeats in western Missouri: the loss of a major battle at Wilson's Creek south of Springfield on 10 August, in which Lyon was killed and Franz Sigel accused of cowardice, and the surrender of Mulligan's Irish Brigade at the Battle of Lexington to Price's Southerners on 20 September. Despite a Confederate victory on the Missouri River at Lexington, threatening to cut Jefferson City off from Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, Price's overextended army was forced to withdraw to Arkansas in late September. Thus, the immediate threat to Jefferson City was removed.



COLONEL BUEHRLE AND HIS SQUAD OF VETERANS.

The squad of cannoneers led by the Buehrle brothers, Fred extreme right and Wendelin second from right, at the capitol in Jefferson City on Lincoln's Birthday, 12 February 1903, as depicted in the *Kansas City Star*, 18 February 1903.



Fred Buehrle (on left) and Wendelin Buehrle in uniform with G.A.R. insignia, ca. 1890.

When Wendelin and the other soldiers of the Home Guard were discharged on 1 October, after Charles Frémont took over the reorganization of Union forces in the Western theatre, they had served their state and country well. The final report of the unit lists two killed in action, two died of wounds, two died of disease, and several missing in action. The important railroad line linking the capital to St. Louis in the east and to Tipton in the west had been kept open despite frequent skirmishes with Southern partisans. The Guards had also begun building fortifications necessary to protect the capital city from attack. Wendelin Buehrle and the Germans of the "Münchberg"—the German neighborhood in the southwest of Jefferson City—had done their duty for their adopted homeland.

Wendelin was also mustered into the 42d Enrolled Missouri Militia when it was organized in August 1862 to defend the state capital and surrounding counties.³¹ Many of the same German immigrants living in Jefferson City who had served in the Home Guard are recorded for this unit as well, including the regimental surgeon and one-time mayor of Jefferson City, Dr. Bernhard Bruns. Wendelin served on active duty in this unit until November 1863 rising to the rank of sergeant prior to his discharge. The 42d had much the same responsibilities as had the Home Guard of 1861, keeping in mind that Southern sympathizers and partisans roamed central Missouri throughout the Civil War.

In the immediate postwar years, Wendelin and his brother Fred were concerned with putting the memories of the Civil War behind them and reestablishing their family lives. Missourians had fought with passion on both sides and it would take decades for those wounds to even begin to heal. By the 1880s, Union veterans of the war began forming units of the Grand Army of the Republic in Missouri. Fred Buehrle was a charter member of the James A. Garfield Post of the G.A.R. founded in Jefferson City in 1883.³² Wendelin, too, joined the post as did a number of other Union veterans of German descent. By the 1890s the two Buehrle brothers had created a squad of cannoneers from these German veterans who over the next two decades became fixtures for all manner of patriotic occasions. They are best remembered for firing salutes using the brass cannon captured during the Mexican War and displayed on the capitol grounds at Jefferson City until the capitol was destroyed by fire in 1911. Whether it was Lincoln's birthday, the Fourth of July, or perhaps a Republican electoral victory, "Colonel" Fred and his brother Wendelin were on hand to fire the cannon. A recent feature in the Jefferson City *Senior Times* recounts how the two Buehrle brothers on the Fourth of July

would don their elegant Union Army uniforms with their now shiny brass buttons and buckles, and with their medals jingling, ride their

horse and buggy into town where they were joined by a squad of their fellow veterans. This group of veterans were the survivors of the company of dauntless men who protected Jefferson City after Governor Jackson fled the state, and they formed the honor guard for the day At sunrise, to mark the beginning of the festivities, these gentlemen were given the honor of firing off the old Mexican [War] cannon that sat on the grounds of the old Statehouse. Courage was needed for this task because it was a cantankerous old war relic that already had blown off the hand of one careless operator. The belching of that old cannon could be heard for miles around.³³

The experience of participating in the American Civil War—on the winning side—offered thousands of German immigrants such as Wendelin and his brother nearly total acceptance as patriotic Americans. They had in effect “paid their dues” to their adopted homeland and could in the evening of their lives be seen as superpatriots and not as foreign immigrants. The German immigrants of their generation were spared the discrimination fostered by Know-Nothingism before the Civil War and the anti-German hysteria which would soon sweep the American nation with its entry into World War I in April 1917.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, Wendelin experienced several of life’s personal tragedies. Several of his children died in infancy; his wife Margaretha died in 1872, perhaps in childbirth, at age forty-four. His oldest daughter, also named Margaretha died shortly after the birth of her fourth child in 1888, only seven years after her marriage to the son of a prosperous Swiss-German farmer in Jefferson City. Wendelin spent his remaining years in the household of his only son, knowing that the generations of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren would experience the benefits of truly assimilated and acculturated Americans.

Wendelin’s service to his adopted country and in the German revolution of 1848-49 was memorialized in announcements of his death on 12 December 1914 in the German and English-language newspapers in Jefferson City. The local post of the Grand Army of the Republic provided an honor guard to accompany his body from the German Evangelical Church to his final resting place in the church’s cemetery. This final gesture by his comrades in arms was a fitting tribute to a simple man from Baden who was willing to risk his life as a common soldier in struggles for liberty on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Appendix

Obituaries for Wendelin Buehrle

1. *Jefferson City Daily Democrat-Tribune*, 12 December 1914: "Wendell Buehrle Dead."

Aged Resident Succumbs to Stroke of Paralysis at 10 O'Clock This Morning.
Was Born in Baden, Germany.
Has Been Almost Totally Blind for Some Years Survived by Two Children.

Wendell Buehrle, an aged resident of this city, died this morning at 10 o'clock at the home of his son, Fred Buehrle on Swift's Highway. The old man was very feeble, and had been almost totally blind for a number of years. He had a stroke of paralysis this morning, from which he never recovered. He was about 90 years of age, and is survived by two children, Fred, with whom he has been making his home for the past few years, and Mrs. Arthur [*sic*, Albert] Bassman, also of this city. His wife preceded him in death about 40 years, and since that time he has been making his home with his children.

Mr. Buehrle was born in Baden, Germany, and came to this country when a young man, 20 years of age. He settled in Fort Wayne, Ind., where he was engaged in the pottery business. He has been a resident of Jefferson City for more than 50 years and until his health failed him was engaged in stone masonry and plastering business.

He bore the distinction of having served through the Revolution in Germany under Gen. Franz Siegel, and many years later served under the same general in the Civil War in this country. He was repeatedly wounded during his service, but was still able to get about until yesterday. He will be buried by the Grand Army of the Republic post of this city in the National Cemetery.

Mr. Buehrle was well known and highly respected throughout Jefferson City and Cole county.

2. *The Daily Post* (Jefferson City, Missouri), 12 December 1914: "Wendell Buehrle Died This Morning."

Stroke of Paralysis Fatal to Veteran of Two Wars at 10 o'Clock Today.
Fought under Siegel Here and in Germany.
His Wife Preceded Him in Death 41 Years—Funeral Monday Afternoon.

Wendell Buehrle, veteran of two wars and one of the oldest residents of the county, died this morning at 10 o'clock from paralysis. He suffered a paralytic stroke at 4 o'clock this morning and never regained consciousness.

Mr. Buehrle has been in poor health for the past few years and was almost blind for a year previous to his death.

Mr. Buehrle was born in Kappel, Baden, Germany, 88 years ago. In 1857 he and his brother, Col. Fred Buehrle, came to this country together. Previous to coming here Mr. Buehrle served as a Freichaerler [*sic*, Freischärler] (volunteer) during the revolution in 1848 in Germany. Mr. Buehrle served under General Franz Siegel during that war and again served under him in the United States during the civil war. With him were M. Bosch, Henry Falk and C. Trotter. These men also served under General Siegel in Germany and later in the United States.

Buehrle joined company A home guards under Captain Peasner when the Civil war broke out.

His wife preceded him in death 41 years ago. Two children, Fred Buehrle of Swift's highway, and Mrs. Albert Bassmann, survive him.

Mr. Buehrle was known to practically everyone in Jefferson City. He was a stone mason by trade engaging in that work after the war.

The funeral will probably take place Monday afternoon from the Evangelical church. The G.A.R. will attend the funeral in a body.

3. *Missouri Volksfreund* (Jefferson City), 17 December 1914: "Alter Veteran zum letzten Appell gerufen."

Herr Wendelin Bührle, ein Veteran zweier Kriege, ist hier am Samstag Morgen um 10 Uhr im Alter von 88 Jahren an Altersgebrechlichkeiten gestorben. Schon seit mehreren Jahren war er bei schlechter Gesundheit und konnte zur Zeit seines Ablebens fast nicht mehr sehen.

Zu Kappel, Baden, Deutschland, geboren, kam er in Begleitung seines Bruders Col. Fred Bührle, in 1857 [*sic*, 1852] nach Amerika. Zuvor hatte er in Deutschland in 1848 als Freiwilliger im Kriege gedient und zwar unter General Franz Siegel. Während des Bürgerkrieges von 1860 bis 1864 [*sic*, 1861-63] diente er hier im Lande und zwar wiederum unter Franz Siegel. Dasselbe thaten auch die bereits gestorbenen Veteranen M. Bosch, Henry Falk und C. Trotter. Alle diese hatten in Deutschland unter Siegel gedient und hier im Bürgerkriege wiederum. Bührle trat den Home Guards unter Captain Peasner bei und diente bis zum Ende des Krieges. Er wurde mehrere Male verwundet.

Die Gattin ging dem Verstorbenen vor 41 Jahren voraus. Zwei Kinder, Fred Bührle an Swift's Highway, und Frau Albert Baßmann, überleben den Vater. Der Verstorbene war eine stadtbekannte Persönlichkeit und war ein Steinmaurer von Beruf.

Die Leiche wurde am Montag Nachmittag von der evang. Central-Kirche aus beerdigt. Die Mitglieder des G. A. R. Postens gaben dem verstorbenen Veteranen das letzte Ehrengelächte.

Die Leiche wurde im Friedhofe der evang. Central-Gemeinde zur letzten Ruhe gebettet. Die folgenden, alle Enkelsöhne des Verstorbenen, waren die Sargträger: Henry Schneider, Oscar Schneider, Henry Bührle, Fred Bührle, Arthur Baßmann und Wennie Baßmann.

Notes

¹ Tolzmann, Don Heinrich, ed., *The German-American Forty-Eighters: 1848-1998* (Indianapolis, IN: Max Kade German-American Center etc. [1998]), 94.

² The spelling of Wendelin Bührle's surname in the United States was more commonly Buehrle, as is the case for all of his descendants who continue that surname.

³ It is not clear whether Buehrle actually served under Albert Sigel (1827-84), the younger brother of Franz Sigel, or under Franz Sigel, or both. Various newspaper accounts connect Buehrle to both Franz and Albert in both 1848-49 in Baden as well as in the Civil War in Missouri. Albert

commanded a regiment in the Union forces in Missouri and later served as adjutant general for the state of Missouri (briefly mentioned in Stephan D. Engle, *Yankee Dutchman: The Life of Franz Sigel* [Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1993], 2, 247; see also Paul F. Guenther, "Albert Sigel: St. Louis German Poet," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 36 [1980]: 156-61).

⁴ Albert Köbele, *Dorfsippenbuch: Kappel am Rhein* (Grafenhausen: Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1955; rpt. 1991), 109, gives a date of birth of 5 July 1828. Family records use various dates in June 1828 for the birth date. The village record based on the parish register may be the baptismal record.

⁵ Köbele, 106-9.

⁶ Köbele, 109. The younger brother's name in Köbele is "Fridolin." In Missouri the name was spelled "Fredolin," and he became known simply as "Fred Buehrle."

⁷ "Protokoll über die Erwählung der fünf Offiziere zur Bürgerwehr abgehalten am 9. April 1848," Gemeinde-Archiv Kappel, Kriegs- und Militärsachen 1848-1849, file 9, folder 508.

⁸ Köbele, 54. See also Heinrich Raab, *Deutsche Revolutionäre in Baden 1848/49*, CD-ROM, prepared in conjunction with the exhibition "1848/49: Revolution der deutschen Demokraten in Baden," February to August 1998, Badisches, Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe, which mentions the existence of a *Volksverein* in Kappel as well as several Bührles from Kappel who were arrested by the authorities for revolutionary activities.

⁹ Köbele, 54, although the date indicated is April 1849 rather than April 1848 when the skirmishes at Freiburg occurred in conjunction with the *Heckerzug*.

¹⁰ See Raab, CD-ROM. A number of villagers from Kappel are charged with "treason" for participating in the Struve insurgency, including several Bührles related to Wendelin.

¹¹ "Die Zerstörung der Eisenbahn betr.," Bezirksamt Ettenheim an den Bürgermeister von Kappel, 4 Okt. 1848, Gemeinde-Archiv Kappel, Militärsachen 1848-1849, file 9, folder 508.

¹² Raab, CD-ROM.

¹³ Sonja-Maria Bauer, *Die verfassungsgebende Versammlung in der badischen Revolution von 1849: Darstellung und Dokumentation*, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien, vol. 94 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1991). See speeches and documents relating to establishment of a revolutionary militia in Baden in May 1848, *passim*.

¹⁴ Köbele, 54.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Baden: Land—Staat—Volk: 1806-1871*, ed. Kurt Andermann et al., Schriftenreihe der Gesellschaft für kulturhistorische Dokumentation, vol. 3 (Karlsruhe: Verlag der Gesellschaft für kulturhistorische Dokumentation, 1980).

¹⁷ Selig, Robert, "The German Revolution of 1848," *German Life* 4,5 (February/March 1998): 27, provides a translation of this "Badisches Wiegenlied" by Karl Ludwig Pfau.

¹⁸ *Baden: Land—Staat—Volk: 1806-1871*. See also Golo Mann, *Deutsche Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt a. M., 1992), 248f.

¹⁹ Ford, James E., *A History of Jefferson City, Missouri's State Capital, and of Cole County* (Jefferson City, MO: The New Day Press, 1938), 390.

²⁰ Naturalization Records for Cole County, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri.

²¹ 1860 U.S. Census, microfilm record of the original enumeration for Jefferson Township, Cole County, Missouri for 1860, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri.

²² Dino A. Brugione, *The Civil War in Missouri: As Seen from the Capital City* (Jefferson City, MO: Summers Publishing, 1987), 11-14.

²³ Brugione, 15.

²⁴ *Missouri bleibt in der Union* (Universität Oldenburg, 1998) [article on-line]; available from <http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/nausa/1848/48s2.htm>; Internet, accessed 2 April 1998.

²⁵ Brugione, 26.

²⁶ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, ser. 1, vol. 3, *Operations in Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, and Indian Territory, April-November 1861* (Washington DC: GPO, 1885; rpt. 1985), 373.

²⁷ Ibid, 381.

²⁸ Brugione, 30-32.

²⁹ Brugione, 34-36.

³⁰ "Civil War Service Records, Union Army," microfilm, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri.

³¹ Ibid. For limited information on the service of the 42d Enrolled Missouri Militia, see also *Missouri Volunteer Forces in the Civil War with Federal Service (Union)* [article on-line] (Springfield, MO: Missouri Commandery, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the US, 1998); available at <http://www.usmo.com/~momollus/MOVLDFED.HTM>; Internet, accessed 15 January 1999.

³² *History of Cole, Moniteau, Morgan, Benton, Miller, Maries and Osage Counties, Missouri* (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889), 294-95.

³³ Phyllis Von Der Bruegge, "An Independence Day Salute to Our Ancestors," *Jefferson City Senior Times* 2,9 (July 1998): 11.

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