Into the Woods and Back Again:
An Environmental Kin Study of German Settler Ecologies in the Upper Midwest

By

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Abstract –

Forests in the United States have long been and continue to be contested places of cultural identity. Lumbering and European settlement in the forests of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan radically and violently disrupted Indigenous ecological relationships to their homelands. Yet the Menominee Nation of Wisconsin has a developed a world-renowned forestry program that supports their self-determination across multiple domains. This dissertation examines the genealogy of natural resource conservation in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest, specifically the connections between national identity, Indigenous self-determination and the implementation of forestry. This is a comparative landscape ethnography of German modes of monumentality: the Endres Chapel at Indian Lake County Park, Wisconsin; the Hermann Monument in New Ulm, Minnesota; and the implementation of forestry in the cutover region of the Northwoods. I analyze how histories of place and belonging intersect with forestry in practice today. The Endres chapel outside of Madison, Wisconsin instantiates familial narratives of settler belonging to these Indigenous homelands; the Hermann the German statue in New Ulm, Minnesota as an embodiment of German nationalism in the U.S.; and lastly the implementation of German Scientific Forestry responds to the ecological devastation of the Cutover to maintain settlers' symbolic and material claims to Indigenous homelands.

The Dedicatory Exercises **–**

Re-kind-ling my ecological sensibilities begins with an acknowledgement of the ground beneath my feet, which is shaped by the principles of Apēkon Ahkīhih and Gastfreundschaft – a Menominee invitation of diplomacy and insurgent indigeneity and a German obligation to visitors. They both point out that when you accept an invitation, it is a responsibility to show respect to your hosts and their ways; and to be a good host in your own turn. Some of the invitations that have been gracefully extended to me; and for which I'm eternally grateful:

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Vielen herzlichen Dank an meine Ahnen und Vorfahren. Ohne die Familien Endres, Kalscheur, Hellenbrand, sowie die Schmeckebiers und Sterlings mütterlicherseits, wäre diese Arbeit nicht nötig, aber auch nicht möglich. Much of the genealogical work was already done in the 1970s. Of all those relatives who have passed on, my grandmother Carol (Kalscheur) Hellenbrand left many notes, sketches and traces in the family genealogy books - I only followed her signposts to string together that part of the story.

Lastly, thanks to all the relatives from those families who are still with us, most especially of all Tom Hellenbrand, my grandfather, and my immediate family: Jack, Alexandra and Matthew. Dahoam isch wo es seids – you are each bright lights in dark places, when it seems all other lights have gone out.

Table of Contents

Gains are H(e)ard/t work

Genesis and Genocide

Life is a skill, a craft, an art
One we must learn
One we maintain with practice
Otherwise, we lose it

Gains are hard work

Genesis and Genocide

The haunting continues,
The shadows catch and they don't let go
Sometimes you can't see them,
But you aren't ever free from them

Gains are heart work

Genesis and Genocide

Gains we have lost
To the final embrace
Gains we have made
Because creation is healing

Gains, Gains
Ich habe auch andere Genen

Genesen meine Genossen

Ins Nichts blickte ich
zum ersten mal
als 6-jähriges Kind
als ich die Schatten an der Wand sah
In Buchenwald

Genesen meine Genossen

In einem Buchenwald liegt mein Herz
Von tiefen Wurzeln umschlagen
Es schlägt Treppen aus dem Nichts
dass ich meine Arbeit leisten kann
Brücken über das Nichts bauen

Genesen meine Genossen

Einen Wald aus Büchern werde ich pflanzen
Wo, mit Wort und Klang
Blätter langsam zu Boden fallen
Um aufgehoben, aufgenommen
Zusammen gebunden zu werden
Verbunden

Genesen meine Genossen
Healing my companions

To put, to find
Joy in again
Life always finds a way

Life is a skill, a craft, an art
One we must learn

And one we practice
When we have a heart that can hear
That will open
To let other hearts be heard

Carrying these stories is
Hard work
Carrying these stories is
Heart work

The title of this is intentionally complicated. It captures a variety of (nearly) homophonic words in English and in German: Heart, Heard, Hard/Hart, Herd.

This piece is about gains that we make, the growing that we do as a result of hard, difficult, challenging work. It is also that achieving those gains comes from the heart, that common core, the center of our intention. We see this in the etymological proximity of Herd (oven, cognate with English hearth, the source of heat for a home, space of welcome and care)

This came out of the TOLI satellite seminar “Honoring Resilience” in St. cloud MN where we discussed the U.S.-Dakota War, the expulsion of the Dakota and how American

genocide mirrors the Holocaust. We visited sites of deep power that had been shadowed by sorrow. We talked about places of beginning like Bdote, the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers; and that this place of storied beginnings is also the location of the concentration camp under Fort Snelling. In honoring the Dakota resilience we thought with, learned and acquainted ourselves with the stories and practices that Dakota still practice, like all indigenous peoples, to continue - survivance or collective continuance.

This also brought me back to some thoughts of my own story, to my origin stories. An event that brought me to "looking into the abyss."[1] When we look into the abyss and are transformed by it . My look into the abyss happened when I was six years old and saw an exhibit called "Shadows on the Wall" at the Buchenwald concentration camp outside of Weimar, Germany. Some readers may know of the camp from Elie Wiesel's "Night" - he was liberated from Buchenwald at the end of his journey through that darkness.

Here, I intentionally put genesis and genocide together as a confluence of places of meaning and then it switches to consider this same kind of etymological relation from the German side. I use that same three letter construction, G-e-n (pronounced like English "gain"), to consider another way that combination functions for me as a German language learner: genesen meine Genossen - healing, my companions. This is a way for me to consider and think through the abyss. Our look into nothing, the void, shows the depth of healing work that needs to be done - and that it is something that we can only do in solidarity (Genosse is also Comrade in the Marxist sense). We share parts of our journeys, and that defines our ways towards healing and the stories that we as educators, teachers, learners - as people - carry out of that chasm. They're

[1] Diana Wagner, "I See You: Primary Source Photographs, Personal Narrative, and Remembrance," in *Becoming a Holocaust Educator: Purposeful Pedagogy through Inquiry*, ed. Jennifer Lemberg and Alexander Pope (Teachers College Press, 2021), 73–83.

difficult to carry. They're hard to carry and those stories weigh heavily on our hearts. And yet it's because we have a heart that we can carry them and that we have to.

I. Where Many Paths and Errands Meet: An Introduction to my Autochthony Story

This project began by stepping into the woods – both literally and metaphorically – and it has been quite the adventure. What follows is my version of *There and Back Again*, the journey Bilbo Baggins goes on his with Gandalf and the dwarves. Bilbo's tale, like mine, is about a journey beyond the limits of our own experiences and the changes we encounter by the time we return to the point of its beginning. Through my engagement with Indigenous Studies, my research has been about unpacking the many layers of story that I carry with me as a German Wisconsinite. This project is a family affair – as an environmental kin study it outlines my encounter with German settler narratives of belonging on and in Indigenous homelands. The dissertation itself is composed of pieces that are currently in various stages of publication and they cover many of the overlaps between the modes of monumentality that I discuss. While each piece has its own introduction, here I want to tell the story of the story and lay out the framework that comes through my methodological musings on "working from home" – the theory of knowledge for how to look at what I call in this project "German modes of monumentality" and contextualizing them as part of throughscapes in the Upper Midwest region. For me, this is a way of considering the many paths and the many errands that converge in my story. The relations that I have built and continue to cultivate through my academic and personal work have shaped my understanding of autochthony (being from or of a place), the forms it takes, and why it matters. In its arc from the personal to the inter- and transnational, this project relies on two guiding principles for what I have come to call re-kind-ling ecological sensibilities: an obligation to care

and a responsibility to change. Developing a collective ability to respond to social, political and ecological changes rests on how well we attend to, and care for, all of our relations.

In my case, this has a few prerequisites: I need to do my homework and elucidate my own enmeshment in the stories of this place and this land. I am a German Wisconsinite and this project is, in a way, an extended form positionality statement to unpack what that means. As I encountered protocols for introducing oneself in Indigenous communities (in order starting with oneself, one's family, clan and lastly land), I learned that I needed to be able to unpack the stories and relations that brought me here to Wisconsin and to the history of forestry. Indigenous protocols of introduction provide a snapshot of the speaker's autochthony story - they contextualize the speaker by the place, relations and stories that have shaped who they are. My autochthony story begins in South Tyrol.

I first learned about "autochthony" and scholarship on its many, often problematic, manifestations as an undergraduate, but I had been thinking about and with autochthony for a while before then. I really started to get curious about the complexities of identity, belonging and place in 2011, when I was 16 and my family lived for a long stretch of time in Germany (Bruchhausen - a village outside of Karlsruhe). My mother had a sabbatical and wanted to visit a castle with medieval frescoes in what felt like a really random place - Rodenegg, South Tyrol. When we got there, it was strange: technically speaking, we were traveling in Italy, but people there spoke a lot of German. From my time in Germany and learning German, things seemed really familiar and yet it was still named Italy. On a day hike, we took a cable car up to it towards the top of a mountain. As we rounded a bend in the path, we saw an abandoned structure in the distance. It seemed isolated and dwarfed by the surrounding mountains. Although it looked like it had a story to tell, we had to keep walking; I could not stop to listen. That farmstead's

unheard story has accompanied me ever since. What would it tell? Something about the traditions of the German speaking farmers that drove their herds through these mountain valleys, perhaps? Maybe resistance to "Italianization" under Mussolini? Or simply a local family history? Embedded in its walls are the stories of people moving through and interacting with their cultural and natural environments.

Even though the remnants of this farmstead have now been cleared from the land, it remains a beacon for me. The old Rosshütte on the Plose was my invitation to be curious about the stories that people and communities tell about themselves. Stories grow from memory and shape identity. My encounter with that farmstead formed my ideas of stewardship that have carried through to the works before you. That farmstead was there when I returned in 2016 with Annemarie Regensburger's "*Was trägt*" in mind.[1] The last lines of the poem offer an insight into the complex identity politics that are at work in the contemporary geography of her home in Tyrol:

> *Was isches wirklig*
> *dejs uan sagn lasst*
> *Da*
> *bin ih derhuem?"*

The poet asks her readers to consider what carries them, holds them together, and binds them to others—and the poem indicates that there are real, material, and concrete—*wirklig*—things that facilitate the work of creating a home for oneself.

At the same time, I was first coming to know about the Menominee Nation of Wisconsin. I had already been fascinated by what I had experienced and learned was a strange fascination that Germans had with their forested landscapes. I took my first ever forest history class that year, in addition to classes on silviculture, forest restoration and land management. I was

[1] Annemarie Regensburger, *Mittlt durch giahn: dreißig Jahre Dialektlyrik* (Haymon Verlag, 2014), 136.

interested in learning more about how the story of this connection had been told. I wanted to learn how to read these stories from the land; and I wanted to learn how to offer my hands in writing some of the next chapters. That's when I first read Thomas Davis' *Sustaining the Forest, the People, and the Spirit*, where he describes the central role that maintaining the forest plays for sustaining Menominee identity and sovereignty.

To learn that there was a Native Nation in Wisconsin that was practicing forestry to maintain their connection to their homelands into the future was a moment of revelation. It was certainly one of those all-too-common experiences of learning about one of the many Native Nations that I had never heard of in my own schooling. It was not only that – what struck me in that revelation, and stuck with me, was that some crucial parts of my own story are very much intertwined with the Menominee. My ancestors on my father's side came from Germany and settled in Wisconsin. They are part of the cultural landscape that was written over the homelands of the Ho-Chunk, Menominee and Anishinaabeg and has drastically altered the ecological relationships of this land. Thus my reading of Regensburger has since been shaped by my encounter with Indigenous Studies. Through the last years, my experience learning, teaching, and participating in Indigenous scholarly and community spaces has transformed my understanding of the importance of all of these concepts especially when it comes to how I as a German Wisconsinite, someone descended from the Germans who settled the state in the 19th century, relate to these Indigenous homelands.

This dissertation examines my relationships to this land through three modes of monumentality that German settlers inscribed onto the Indigenous lands of the Upper Midwest: the sacred, the secular, and the ecological. Each of these modes are instantiated in infrastructures of autochthony – that is real, material monuments that embody stories of a collective German

past in the present of their respective places. The Endres Chapel at Indian Lake County Park marks a German geography of the sacred; the Hermann monument in New Ulm, MN is a secular instantiation of German ethno-nationalism; and the implementation of forestry across the Northwoods intervenes in the ecological relationships that Indigenous peoples had long cared for. As monuments they inscribe these stories on the landscapes and are supposed to inform the trajectories of the future; futures that are supposedly devoid of Indigenous presence.

This is not and will not be the case. The Menominee use of the term autochthony in the College of Menominee Nation - Sustainable Development Institute model is a robust invitation of insurgent indigeneity.[2] It opens up radical possibilities for practicing what I call an "Other-wise" autochthony – one that is aware of and attuned to more-than-human relations – and for building towards what Potawatomi philosopher Kyle Whyte calls collective continuance. The pieces that make up this dissertation are collectively the story of how I personally sit, stand, and move in relation to Indigenous futurities. Because autochthony matters - it describes a bundle of relationships that shape, inform, contour our collective daily lives. Social, political, cultural, ecological - autochthony carries all of these dimensions. And that all in relation to more-than-human beings that dwell on the same ball of space-rock that we do. Autochthony, especially when it is other-wise attuned (as the Menominee articulate and Indigenous peoples have always known) matters for telling rich stories of place that extend our horizons of care and inquiry. Places and their stories demand certain responsibilities; each of us holds different obligations to carry these stories or make the continued carrying of these stories possible. The articles in this dissertation take the Menominee invitation from their sustainable development model to examine

[2] Ikaika Ramones, "'Insurgent Indigeneity': A New Threshold of Indigenous Politics," *American Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (September 2024): 567–90.

latent settler claims to autochthony across the geographies and environmental histories of German settlement in the Upper Midwest.

Methodological Musings on Working from Home

As an environmental kin study, this project is framed by the idea of working from home – and as many scholars have pointed out "home," or German "Heimat," is a complex topic.[3] In my own personal story, and especially as an approach to research, this contains an inherent tension: my ancestors settled in what is for now known as the United States. Their presence and my own in this place is predicated on the genocidal removal of Indigenous peoples and erasure of their historic and ongoing presence. As a settler, to claim any place as "home" for me to ground my work is really messy. My father's family settled in Middleton, Wisconsin, my mother's in Cooperstown, New York, and I myself was born in State College, Pennsylvania – my ancestors left their homelands. And claiming anywhere in the U.S. as "home" is fraught with the possibility of further settler colonial re-inscription.

Throughout the following articles, I draw primarily on Kyle Whyte, Chris Caldwell and Marie Schaefer's definition of Settler-Colonialism as "a form of oppression in which settlers *permanently* and *ecologically* inscribe homelands of their own over Indigenous homelands."[4] This definition highlights that settler colonialism targets relations with more-than-humans, as settlers are interested in replacing Indigenous homelands with their own. This includes the stories settlers tell, narrating their belonging to these lands. This is why I consider forestry a

[3] I take up this discussion in my piece for the Journal of Austrian Studies, ""Vom Brenner Bis Salurn, Vom Vinschgau Bis Nach Osttirol:" Contemporary Südtiroler Musicians and the Sound of Autochthony," *Journal of Austrian Studies* 58, no. 1 (2025).

[4] Kyle Whyte, Chris Caldwell, and Marie Schaefer, "Indigenous Lessons about Sustainability Are Not Just for 'All Humanity,'" in *Sustainability: Approaches to Environmental Justice and Social Power*, ed. Julie Sze (NYU Press, 2018), 158.

"monument" along with the Endres Chapel and Hermann the German: they are vessels for carrying the stories of settler ecological relations and values. They assert claims to Indigenous homelands through cultural narratives of nationhood and belonging. And these are claims about autochthony. The word itself comes from the Greek auto – self and chthonos – soil and it has been used in a variety of contexts as a way of excluding non-citizens from certain rights. This was especially true in French West Africa and managed to circle its way back into identitarian discourses in Europe in the last quarter century. For me to "work from home" means addressing the latent settler coloniality of even claiming a place as home: my own settler identity is situated in scales of coloniality that also have material and ecological manifestations on Indigenous lands.

Indigenous scholars, thinkers and communities have shared number of resources for non-Indigenous people to "take this in, unlearn, relearn, and make safe spaces where equitable resources and intentionally transformative and sustainable practices endure beyond our lifetimes."[5] Indigenous paradigms, such as those articulated in Shawn Wilson's *Research is Ceremony* and Nicole Bowman's "Lunape Seven Directions Medicine Wheel," take apart the European philosophical ideas about knowledge and put them in conversation with a diversity of Indigenous worldviews. In the Euro-Western philosophical tradition, a knowledge system consists of four parts: 1. Ontology - how we are or the world is (what is real?); 2. Epistemology - how we know what is or know that the world is that way; 3. Methodology - how we learn more about what is and how it is; 4. Axiology- ethics and morals that guide further questions about what is worth learning more about, which questions are worth asking and what is right to do to gain those new insights.

[5] Nicole Bowman, "Continuing the Evaluation Journey: Sharing the Lunaape Seven Directions Medicine Wheel (7DMW^{TM}) Model," *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 39, no. 2 (December 1, 2024): 245.

Bowman developed an Indigenous model based on her experiences with the Medicine Wheel, using the four cardinal directions. While these correspond to the four central elements of Euro-Western paradigms, Bowman names the parts of the Medicine Wheel differently

1 – Eastern Door (ontology), being in and having good relations

2 – Southern Door (epistemology), having a good, open mind

3 – Western Door (methodology), doing good work

4 – Northern Door (axiology), ethically, being committed to a good journey.

The last drives the research process forward - holding a commitment to a good journey means improving relations, opening further to do better, deeper work. These interacting dimensions spiral forward, helping those who follow it develop good, meaningful questions, and go about answering them in a good way.

The first three alone are insufficient. Axiology is the engine that drives the whole process - it is how we articulate questions about purpose and intention. I see this as an important step beyond Veracini's "Kill the settler in him."[6] An ontological "Killing" would not be the end of settler identity. Veracini's "Killing" only reiterates the violence of Richard Henry Pratt (even as he does so purposefully) and places focus on ontology - our being settler or Indigenous (even as he recognizes aspects of relational practice involved in differentiating those positions). Instead, I put emphasis on the axiological distinctions: the difference in intention to settle/dominate or to cultivate the skills of improving relations across modalities. Becoming a good guest is an axiological transformation. The intention to cultivate good relationships leads to being different in the world. This is the inner work or internal cultivation that is the seventh direction in

[6] Lorenzo Veracini, "Decolonizing Settler Colonialism: Kill the Settler in Him and Save the Man," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 41, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 1–18.

Bowman's Lunape Seven Directions Medicine Wheel. Bowman offers this model also to non-Indigenous allies, because "Seventh Direction work helps all of us to show up differently to cultivate ourselves as a more responsive instrument" for the work that needs to be done.[7] We don't just start being different - our being adjusts gradually. How we do differently (methodology) first comes from awareness and knowing (epistemology) then intending change (axiology). Critique starts with ontology. feeling, being and seeing that something is not right (axiologically askew/mis- or unaligned). We hone our awareness of (epistemology) and analyze (methodology) this "being as not right" so that we can eventually come to the underlying alignment issue (axiology). Once there, we need to cultivate skills to maintain a correct alignment (new methodology). This includes maintaining awareness of (new epistemology) the changes and impacts (new ontology) that ripple outward and are produced by this process. A journey of a thousand miles begins with the ground beneath your feet. We only take that first step after we set the intention to do so. The question becomes how well we can follow through on that intention.[8]

Following the invitations of Indigenous scholars and communities, settlers have a life-long journey to reckon with our history and the role our ancestors played in the atrocities, genocide and violence of colonization. To become welcome guests in Indigenous homelands requires building relationships through relationships through proper protocols.[9] My work

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[7] "Continuing the Evaluation Journey," 250.

[8] "One change can make a big difference. Daringly we can start working toward learning the origin stories of self, organizations, communities, and governments. This will help us individually and collectively begin to learn, heal, unlearn, and braid together the collective traumas we have suffered as benefactors and/or victims of oppressive systems and policies. This moves us to learn, relearn, and experience a more authentic, reciprocal, and sustainable way forward," *Ibid*, 260.

[9] Jessica Hernandez, *Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes through Indigenous Science* (North Atlantic Books, 2022), 285.

therefore responds to the invitations inherent in the Menominee principle of *apēkon ahkīhih* and German *Gastfreundschaft*.

Apēkon ahkīhih is a Menominee phrase meaning to "sit down upon," often in reference to territory. The phrase describes a central concept of Menominee diplomacy as they negotiated how to share their homelands with other Indigenous peoples displaced after European arrival in North America. In allowing other nations to "sit down upon" the land, the Menominee invited them to share space and further negotiate the use of other resources (hunting/fishing grounds, agricultural sites, maple and wild rice harvesting, etc.) based on the quality of relationships that these new arrivals showed as guests. *Apēkon ahkīhih* expresses Menominee reciprocity in interactions with other Nations, acknowledging the responsibilities of a host in relation to their guest.

This parallels the German idea of *Gastfreundschaft*. This term, translated as hospitality, expresses being a good host through strengthening and maintaining relationships beyond the self. To be friendly towards one's guests, literally a "guest-friend," requires participating in and ensuring the success of reciprocal relations. The host has a responsibility to display friendliness towards a guest, or even taking in and caring for them. The host becomes the caregiver for a guest, responsible for redistributing goods and organizing the fundamental activities of livelihood that acknowledge the asymmetries between host and guest. Both have a responsibility to each other, as the provider and the one requesting and accepting provision. The one who possesses space, shelter and food is expected to care for the un-possessing, who will in turn provide for and enrich the home which they have entered. *Gastfreundschaft* is at its core a term for being generous, to fulfill the reciprocal responsibilities that extending an invitation, and accepting one in return, entail. As a descendant of German settlers in Wisconsin who engages

with Indigenous Studies and works with Menominee communities, I share the responsibilities of *apēkon ahkīhih* and *Gastfreundschft*. Becoming a good guest means both receiving and offering these invitations genuinely and respectfully.

This informs my methodology as an environmental kin study. An environmental kin study is a radical alternative to the conventional case study in Environmental History. Anja Kanngieser and Zoe Todd (Métis) describe this as a method for applying listening and attuning so scholars can attend to damages of dominant historical narratives that continue to elide ethical responsibilities to communities and Land. The conventional case study approach alienates knowledge from its place. The case study "is designed to travel—to be applied in future litigation, policy, and debate in contexts far removed from the initial incident."[10] This dis-placed mobility makes the experiences of people and place universally accessible without being attentive to how the process of inquiry is situated displaces knowledge production from the particular relational context through which it emerged. An Environmental Kin Study instead seeks to "reposition or *re-place* case studies" by "cultivating a close and generous attention" to people and their more-than-human relations.[11] This requires attunement to perceive networks of kin relation more holistically and reckon with how a researcher moves into and through place.

Attunement allows us to peel back the palimpsestic layers of place. As Mathews puts it: the "[t]races of [peoples, trees and other nonhumans'] past relationships are visible in the forms of trees, areas of forest" and the structural changes that humans have enacted.[12] As the traces,

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[10] Anja Kanngieser and Zoe Todd, "3. FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CASE STUDY TO ENVIRONMENTAL KIN STUDY," *History and Theory* 59, no. 3 (September 2020): 387.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] "Landscapes and Throughscapes in Italian Forest Worlds: Thinking Dramatically about the Anthropocene," *Cultural Anthropology* 33, no. 3 (August 21, 2018): 386.

patterns and even stories about a landscape layer atop one another, they coalesce into what Matthews calls 'throughscapes.' In their layering, however, these collections of traces are always not quite discernable in their entirety: they "overlap with each other but have different histories, organizations, and temporalities" and are therefore "always unstable in relation to the details and textures that they only partially contain."[13] Comprehending the multiple histories and landscape patterns that constitute the entangled layers of these throughscapes offers a look at the ecologies of converging paths.

What I do in each of these articles generally follows Bowman's Medicine Wheel by peeling back some of the layers of sedimentation that have accrued in my family's story and the story of our relatives as Germans in America and later as German-Americans. Ontologically, this means analyzing existing relations of settler colonialism and how my family, direct and indirect relatives through the *Kulturgemeinschaft*, are a part of it. This leads me to ask questions about attunement – epistemologically, how are the best ways for me, given my position, to hear, read and be with the stories of this land and the many peoples who dwell in it. The articles that follow are what I call place palimpsests - they are the products of engaging the multiple entangled layers of story that contribute to their respective throughscapes. And this always circles back to, axiologically, the way that these stories are used to uphold claims of belonging or autochthony

Bowman's framework does not use autochthony to translate her Indigenous paradigm into Western terms. The College of Menominee Nation Sustainable Development Institute, however, places autochthony as the engine for their Indigenous knowledge system. In their model, autochthony sits at the heart of 6 other dimensions that incorporate the epistemological and methodological: figuring out the balance between these 6 dimensions is always calibrated

[13] *Ibid*, 392.

towards what it means to be Menominee today in relation to Menominee homelands, ancestors and the generations that will make up the Menominee Nation into the future.[14] The Menominee model places the connection to place, and being from this place specifically, as the axiological engine at the heart of Menominee ideas of sustainability.

I look to Menominee ways because they're who I work with and for in my work, especially as it pertains to forestry. If autochthony matters for Menominee sustainability, then settler colonialism intervenes by attempting to erase and uproot Menominee and other Indigenous peoples, and thereby foreclose on their ability to sustain their relationships to homelands. Settlers, then, are after autochthony. They want it, desperately, especially because they are giving up their own connections to the homelands they are leaving. My project accepts the offering of Menominee to ask how does autochthony function as an axiological engine for German-ness in Indigenous homelands? I follow the path outlined above using Bowman's Medicine Wheel to understand how my own story is connected to Germans in America and the ecological changes they brought with them. My project is an environmental kin study of modes of monumentality that inscribe German settler ecologies over Indigenous homelands. These monuments carry and refract ecological (relational) values onto the lands that settlers claim. Monuments like the Endres Chapel, Hermann the German and Forestry are symbolic representations and material manifestations of intent - whose memories matter and why.

The Road Ahead: Attuning to Throughscapes and German Modes of Monumentality

This project traces stories across the homelands of the Hochungara, Omāēqnemenaewok, Anishinaabeg and the Santee Dakota, members of the Očeti Šakowin. These peoples have

[14] Michael J. Dockry et al., "Sustainable Development Education, Practice, and Research: An Indigenous Model of Sustainable Development at the College of Menominee Nation, Keshena, WI, USA," *Sustainability Science* 11, no. 1 (January 2016): 127–38.

dwelled in and maintained relations to these places since Time Immemorial. They each have many uncountable layers that shape their stories of and in this place – systems of governance, relations and territories were and are constantly overlapping and reforming. The stories of these Nations in the present are not limited to their political diplomatic and sovereign Nation-to-Nation relations with the U.S. My pieces tend to start with treaties because they set up the colonial situation that the largest number of German immigrants come into, and that's important for how German-Americans have told the story of their involvement in American settler colonialism.

These treaties were after land and the resources that it contained. More specifically, starting in 1837 treaties with the Dakota, Ojibwe and Menominee were expressly about gaining access to the vast timber resources of Wisconsin and Minnesota. While settlers had already been stealing Indigenous timber resources, these treaties legally allowed logging activities to expand in earnest. The advent of railroads heralded the large-scale exploitation and extraction of what is known regionally as "the cutover." Driven by settler population growth across the mid-continent, timber extraction accelerated from the 1850s through the 1890s. Lumbering activity peaks in Wisconsin around 1900 and Minnesota follows about a decade or two later.

Americans were largely interested in converting the expansive forests of the Northwoods into agricultural fields - this would make it possible to expand the territory of Euro-American settlement. Much of this land was promoted to Germans. The University of Wisconsin Agricultural college, for example, produced "A handbook for the homeseeker" in 1896 to solicit new arrivals from Europe, especially Norwegians and Germans. By this time Germans had arrived in the US by the thousands. What began as a small trickle with religious minorities in the 17th and 18th centuries ballooned through mid and late 19th as treaties opened the legal floodgates for settler expansion. As Historian Glenn Penny notes, Germans went everywhere and they

brought a lot of things with them. Importantly – cultural and intellectual ideas that were associated with improvement at environmental stewardship. And they bring with them many cultural forms fall under the term *Kulturgemeinschaft*, or the German cultural community. It's a term for the translocative cultural forms that Germans extend beyond their zone of autochthony – their homelands in central Europe. These ethnic Germans then mark these indigenous landscapes with recognizable cultural forms to claim and assert their belonging in this place.

Settler colonialism is about autochthonic inscriptions –it is about removing Indigenous presence so that settlers can claim that they belong to these lands. And Germans have had some pretty direct impacts on Indigenous peoples and their homelands. Each of these three major modes of monumentality, the personal piety of the sacred, the ethno-nationalist sentiments of the secular, and forestry's silvicultural intervention of the ecological, demonstrate how autochthony functions as an axiological engine for German-ness in Indigenous homelands. To quote from Hofkaplan Müller of the Ludwigs-Missionverein that sponsored Catholic missionaries in Wisconsin, their work would be a decoration of the German fatherland in westernmost America ("eine Zierde des deutschen Vaterlandes im weitesten Westen von Amerika"). Monuments pierce through the multiple dimensions of throughscapes They are nodes of contemporaneous presence, accretions of memory that persist through multiple layers even as the context around them shifts. The relation between German settler narratives of belonging and their physical manifestations as monuments similarly intersect with (and attempt to write over) markers of Indigenous presence. The modes of monumentality and the throughscapes they inhabit appear in the following order:

1 Why Autochthony Matters for Care-Full Forestry:

- This first piece lays out autochthony as the basis for comparison between Menominee Forestry and German Scientific Forestry as the first, introductory step. While their forms (such as in methods of production, for example) often appear similar, they differ tremendously in their underlying intentions and axiological underpinnings. Forestry has always been central to nation-state building from its development in German-speaking central Europe, making it also an important component of American settler colonialism. The Menominee Nation, on the other hand, employs forestry to maintain sovereignty, to connect to their ancestors/ancestral homelands, and to care for more-than-human relations. This article will be submitted to Resistance: A Journal of Radical Environmental Humanities as part of a special issue in development with co-panelists from the "Poetics and Politics of Care: Socio-ecological Interdependencies in More-Than-Human Worlds" panel at World Congress of Environmental History 2024.

2 Between Piety and Pride: Memorializing Personal Piety and National Sentiment in the German Midwest:

- This second piece introduces the other two modes of monumentality of this environmental kin study. The Endres Chapel at Indian Lake County Park (WI) and Hermann the German in New Ulm (MN) each memorialize the removal of Indigenous peoples (Ho-Chunk in WI and Dakota in MN) and layer a German memoryscape over their homelands. The chapel is an example of how German geographies of the sacred are transferred to the Indigenous landscapes of Wisconsin, while Hermann the German enforces a secularized myth of the German nation for settlers in Minnesota. This piece is forthcoming in a special

issue of the Middle West Review on "The German Midwest," to be published fall 2025.

3 Narratives of Belonging: Arminius and Autochthony between the Minnesota Prairie and German Forests:

- The third chapter further develops the cultural linkages of the *Kulturgemeinschaft* and the Hermann story to New Ulm. Here, we situate the many stories about Arminius/Hermann as a German autochthony story by examining the Netflix series *Barbarians.* The series resonates with German norsetalgia and indianthusiasm because it leaves the broader implications of this story outside of Germany unaddressed, especially how the Hermann the German Monument in New Ulm stands in direct relation to the U.S.-Dakota War. This piece has been published as: Hellenbrand, Ryan, and Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand. "Narratives of Belonging: Arminius and Autochthony between the Minnesota Prairie and German Forests." In *Studies in Medievalism*, edited by Karl Fugelso, 34:149–73. Boydell and Brewer, 2025.

4 A Tale of Two Forests: Forestry, Settler Place-Making and the German *Kulturgemeinschaft* in the Northwoods:

- The final piece considers the extension of the *Kulturgemeinschaft* in its intellectual and ecological dimension through the Paul Bunyan State Forest in Minnesota. The Paul Bunyan State Forest borders the Leech Lake Ojibwe Reservation and nearly co-terminus Chippewa National Forest. As a starting point, this chapter connects the Hermann Monument in New Ulm and Scientific

> Forestry as components of the German *Kulturgemeinschaft* in the Upper Midwest by considering how they inscribe Indigenous homelands with settler belonging. Hermann the German's emplacement and the ethno-nationalist underpinnings of German scientific forestry, articulated expressly by Wisconsin State Forester E.M. Griffith, assert a German "woodland identity." Forests thereby become central material and symbolic arenas for American settler colonialism. This is a chapter in an edited volume being submitted to the University of Minnesota Press by Dr. Kasey Keeler.

Each section is also separated by an introductory poem that I call the *Leitgedichte*, or "Leading Poems." For me, this exercise has been a form of autoethnographic fieldnote taking. These are personal reflections on the specific content of the sections that have accumulated in doing this work. They were inspired by the people and places that appear in the place palimpsests and throughscapes that make up this project. As a method, these came from the deep personal and narrative work that is central The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights (TOLI) pedagogy and which has greatly shaped my own practice as an instructor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies. They are part of my offering towards developing a deeper, care-fuller relationship with the places that matter to us.

Ernst und Ehrlich, Eigentlich

Wer bin ich eigentlich? Who am I?

Perhaps the better question is how,
Oder wie?

Ernst
Mit fülle
Die Fülle des Lebens
da Sehen
Ihre Ebben und Flute
Das Leben selbst
mit Fülle begegnen
dass die Wellen einen
nicht mitreißen
Und immer volles geben
Wenn's wirklich
Wichtig ist

Zuverlässig
Meiner Treue Schwur
Ich bin immer
Im hellen Lichte
Dem Schein der Feier
Und der Freude
Ich bin immer da
Im Dunklen
Wenn du beängstigt
Denkst, dass du aus dem Loch
Da nit aussa kommst
Wo du mich brauchst
Wann
Mag kommen was
will
Ich bin immer da

Ehrlich
I carry my heart on my sleeve
I can't hide it
I have no skill in deception
I don't want to hide it
I have a soft warmth to share
I won't hide it

Bodenständig
Selbständig
My roots are deep
My roots are strong
I can stand by myself
Eigenständig
When the way is steep
When the journey long
I can stand on my own
Bodenständig
This ground beneath my feet
I cherish

Wer bin ich eigentlich?
Who am I?
Own-like
As if on my own?
As if that were really any way to be

This is part of my self-reckoning, literally. As a settler scholar of German descent in America, who am I to be doing this work? Who is this "I" that came to do this work?

This is an understanding of myself as earnest/serious (ernst), honest (ehrlich) dependable and loyal (zuverlässig) and grounded (bodenständig). This last is how I understand the central theme in all my work - autochthony. In the sense of *bodenständig,* the grounding is quite literally the result of standing on the ground. As you'll see through my discussions about autochthony, I think it's the most relevant translation, although it's also a complex one - the most famous German intellectual to make use of the term autochthony/bodenständig is Martin Heidegger. He was a Nazi and mobilized it to support their genocidal ideological and political interests. In the work of attuning to Indigenous "grounded normativities," I think the principle is worth revisiting and reclaiming, especially as an ongoing process to engage critically with word history and terminology.

Autochthony as bodenständig, from my experience and how I relate to German and Indigenous Studies, have shaped my understanding of care for the landscape. Playing with all of these themes in the above, it's not so much who I am but how I am, how I show up for relatives, friends - through relations in my life and how I articulate and express my intentions towards others and the places we each call home. Ultimately, I don't think we can understand "eigentlich," the way the world actually works, as anything other than a recognition of relationality. In a real direct etymological translation, the word would be "own-like" as if on my own. But being alone is not really a way to be - being is always in relation and our relations are always becoming.

II. Why Autochthony Matters for Care-Full Forestry

Forests in the United States have long been and continue to be contested places of cultural identity. The dispossession of Indigenous peoples was only part of settlers' larger attempt to erase Indigenous homelands from the American landscape. In the Upper Midwest, this included the denuding of forest lands, known as the Cutover, to make way for the expanding encroachment of Euro-American farmers. The advent of conservation in the aftermath of the Cutover brought German Scientific Forestry to the region to restore the lost forests. The implementation of Scientific Forestry, following the model of German practice and theory, represented an inflection point in the Euro-American relationship to these lands. Rather than solely taking resources from these lands and the peoples who had been removed from them, scientific forest management institutionalized the conservation of natural resources as a key component of national identity. Settler claims to autochthony, an authentic and deeply rooted belonging, inhere to and are advanced by forestry. Forestry is not only about the material conditions of forest ecosystems, but is also a practice of affirming identity and belonging into the future. The evolution of forest management in Wisconsin and the Menominee Nation offers an important comparison in forest care. In the United States, forestry entitles settlers to maintain their presence on Indigenous lands. For the Menominee Nation, however, cultivating care-full[16] relationships through forestry provides avenues for collective continuance.

Here, I analyze the ambivalence between these territorial claims by comparing the differing axiological intentions behind German Scientific Forestry and Menominee Forestry. Both Menominee and German Scientific Forestry are articulated through caring for forests, but

[16] I use "care-full" to emphasize that care emanates outward from a grounding point/autochthonic center and fills the interactive space of human relationality. Maintaining this fullness (or awareness of it) is central to implementing ethics of care in natural resource management and environmental governance.

their goals, and the resulting ecological consequences, are largely at odds. In the settler-colonial context of the U.S., German Scientific Forestry is a means to inscribe and maintain settler belonging – caring for forests as a cultivated crop could ensure the sustainability of forests and the socio-political structures this resource upholds. The Menominee, however, have resisted settler colonialism through history by caring for their forests, including adopting active forest management. From staving off removal and allotment policies in the nineteenth century to surviving the termination of their sovereign relationship with the United States in the twentieth, Menominee forestry is a driving force behind Indigenous forest stewardship today. The concrete practices of forest management are often the same: the conditions of a tree species' regeneration and growth, such as disturbance interval, nutrient requirements or desired soil moisture is not determined by human cultural systems. The goals that guide the implementation of those practices, however, are embedded in such systems; systems which are in turn framed by the obligations that belonging to a place entails and the consequences of not fulfilling these responsibilities.

For the Menominee Nation, forest management is linked to autochthony. The College of Menominee Nation (CMN) Sustainable Development Model articulates autochthony as central to sustaining Menominee lifeways, sovereignty and relations with the more-than-human beings that also inhabit their ancestral territories. Menominee Forestry is one method for cultivating care-full relations and practicing collective continuance.[17] Menominee forestry contributes to mutual flourishing even as it must navigate the constraints of settler colonialism. German Scientific Forestry, as a knowledge system, similarly has roots in autochthony. However, German

[17] Kyle Whyte, "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do for Indigenous Peoples?," in *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability*, by Melissa K. Nelson and Dan Shilling, New Directions in Sustainability and Society (Cambridge university press, 2018), 69.

nationalist desires that shaped the development of this knowledge system infuse its implementation as an integral part of U.S. settler colonialism. Euro-Americans and the institutions they have instantiated in the U.S. see forests as perpetually both seeding and being seeded with settler life. German Scientific Forestry contributes to the ongoing settler-colonial oppression that Indigenous communities experience in the present.

This paper considers the rooting of forestry in a nationalist past and it's branching towards self-determined Indigenous futures. I begin by situating this methodologically as "working from home" – as a German Wisconsinite who engages with Indigenous Studies, I engage the throughscapes of this region by first attuning to Indigenous grounded normativities. I then turn to how Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems, specifically the College of Menominee Nation Sustainable Development Model, deploy autochthony as an axiological engine. The commitment to place is the driving ethical frame for Menominee conceptions of sustainability. I employ this lens to assess how autochthony similarly functions as an axiological engine for German Scientific Forestry. Two historical case studies are the core of my throughscape analysis – how the State of Wisconsin's forestry program claimed to care for forest resources by implementing German Scientific Forestry; simultaneously, the Menominee Nation asserted their care for the forest to retain their sovereignty. I close by considering how Menominee Forestry is a practice of re-kind-ling ecological sensibilities that expands the horizons of care through its other-wise autochthony.

1. "Working from Home:" Attuning to Indigenous Grounded Normativities

Land-relations form the basis of Indigenous ethical frames and knowledge production, therefore questions of home and belonging become particularly salient. "Working from home" harbors a number of complications. Especially in Native American and Indigenous Studies,

working in one's "home" community requires researchers to engage with variable aspects that shape insider/outsider positionality.[18] As a settler scholar in environmental studies, my positionality is defined entirely by settler colonialism. My claim to "home" (as place, inclusive of Land-relations and community) is shaped by the legacies of the communities to which I belong, namely Germans who settled in Wisconsin. My ancestors and their relatives, direct and indirect attempted to remedy the place-less-ness of their diaspora by inscribing their autochthony and claiming Indigenous places as their own.[19] While I grew up outside of Wisconsin, my family regularly returned to visit family and I have called Wisconsin home for the last six years as a graduate student at the UW-Madison. My research on German modes of monumentality in the upper Midwest is a part of unpacking how my own story is entangled in the layers of story that make up Wisconsin.

This requires me to consider how I relate to Indigenous conceptions of place and the more-than-human relations that constitute it. Attuning to Indigenous grounded normativities of this Land is one way that I can work towards becoming a good guest in this place.[20] Attunement offers a method for attending to the damages of dominant historical narratives that continue to elide ethical responsibilities to communities and Land[21] by "cultivating a close and generous

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[18] A 2009 special issue of American Indian Quarterly took this as a guiding question to explore what this looks like for Indigenous scholars. *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 33, 4, 2009.

[19] Ryan Hellenbrand, "Between Piety and Pride: Memorializing Personal Piety and National Sentiment in the German Midwest," *Middle West Review*, 2025.

[20] Hernandez distinguishes between settlers, unwelcome guests, and welcome guests. Settlers are non-Indigenous persons that embody whiteness. Guests are displaced Indigenous peoples who no longer reside in the homelands of their ancestors; to be welcomed or not in another Indigenous peoples' land requires building relationships through proper protocols. *Fresh Banana Leaves*, 1–4. For settlers, this is a life-long journey to reckon with our history and the role our ancestors played in the atrocities, genocide and violence of colonization.

[21] Capitalizing Land here and elsewhere follows the practice of Indigenous scholars to denote that these ideas emerged from within specific relational contexts. This is juxtaposed to lowercase land, nature,

attention"[22] to people and their more-than-human relations. It is a process of reckoning with how a researcher moves into and through place.

German settlement intervenes in layers of Indigenous histories of Wisconsin. Settler presence in Indigenous lands thus contributes to what anthropologist Andrew Mathews calls a "throughscape." Throughscapes are the collections of traces of past relationships between people and places that remain visible in various landscape forms.[23] For Mathews, what distinguishes throughscapes is how "multiple histories and landscape patterns…that exist in partial relation to each other and that overlap with each other but have different histories, organizations, and temporalities" come together, even as they "are always unstable in relation to the details and textures that they only partially contain."[24] The "throughscapes" concept offers an entry to consider how the various patterns that result from the palimpsestic layering of stories in a landscape shift both in their internal cohesion and in their relation to other landscape phenomena.

Similarly, German Scientific Forestry adds German intellectual and cultural layers to Wisconsin throughscapes. Forest management intervenes to transform Indigenous ecologies into settler homelands. German Scientific Forestry is a knowledge system whose implementation and dissemination is predicated on settler entitlements to Land. It decontextualizes relationships that make up Land – transforming "a complex set of relations to one consisting of only a few relevant

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science etc. which are abstracted from those specific contexts for (supposed) generalizability. Max Liboiron, *Pollution Is Colonialism* Duke University Press, 2021), 6.

[22] Kanngieser and Todd, "3. FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CASE STUDY TO ENVIRONMENTAL KIN STUDY," 390.

[23] Mathews, "Landscapes and Throughscapes in Italian Forest Worlds," 386.

[24] *Ibid*, 392.

factors" – i.e. trees are reduced to timber and their plant and fungal associates are disregarded entirely.[25] This knowledge work serves as the intellectual basis of making land a set of managerial rather than reciprocal relations. Because the management of natural resources plans far into the future, research done in and through colonial relations is claiming settler entitlement to Indigenous land and thus futures.[26]

From an Indigenous perspective, however, connections to Land are embedded in various peoples' histories. Abstracting knowledge away from place justifies colonialism by disrupting and eliding Indigenous place-thought.[27] Indigenous histories relate how the reproduction of culture, territory and individual life are bound in reciprocal relationships with consenting more-than-humans since Land is "full of thought, desire, contemplation and will."[28] Reliance on and reciprocal responsibility to more-than-humans becomes ritualized through governance structures such as matrilineal organizing and clan systems. Such knowledge is then repeated through stories that disseminate essential knowledge and skills to perpetuate communal relationships with more-than-human entities.[29] This produces "grounded normativity" - the ways that place-based practices and their associated knowledges generate ethical frameworks that are the basis of

[25] *Pollution Is Colonialism*, 47–48.

[26] *Ibid*, 65-68.

[27] Vanessa Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought & Agency amongst Humans and Non-Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman Go on a European World Tour!)," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2, no. 1 (2013): 31. See also Leanne Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*, Indigenous Americas (University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

[28] "Indigenous Place-Thought," 23.

[29] *As We Have Always Done*.

Indigenous political systems, economies, and ideas of nationhood.[30]

English-language terms like 'place-thought' and 'grounded normativity' only gesture towards fuller, richer Indigenous conceptions. Indigenous languages themselves carry different worldviews and attendant implications for how to enact relationships. Language carries ceremony, responsibilities and knowledge that are all important to those communities in order to express and live out their collective continuance. For Simpson, Nishnaabewin - the procedures for living a Nishnaabe life - is more specific to her, her people and her Land (Nishnaabewaking). "Grounded normativity" and "place-thought" simply provide a convenient referent to a pan-Indigenous principle. Translation, however, is a practice of never just – it is always more than. Indigenous peoples always "use the language of colonizers to mean things that exceed colonial worldviews."[31] Translation offers a moment of cross-cultural exchange that allows for building solidarities across, yet attentive to, difference. Kimmerer expresses the opportunity that translation provides as "the grammar of animacy." Animacy is encoded in multiple Indigenous grammars, folding their co-constitution with Land into morphology and syntax. In relation to English, however, Kimmerer concludes that animacy is more about spirit - the ways in which the speaker sees the world and chooses to relate to the other beings who inhabit it. [32] More meaningful than the words themselves are the intentions behind them and the ability to fulfill the obligations animate relationality entails. Indigenous deployments of English-language terminology, then can be practices of what Ramones calls "insurgent Indigeneity." For Ramones,

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[30] *Ibid*, 27. See also Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Glen Coulthard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Grounded Normativity / Place-Based Solidarity," *American Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2016): 249–55.

[31] *Pollution Is Colonialism*, 48.

[32] *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Milkweed Editions, 2013), 48–59.

this "intentionally go[es] outside resurgent pockets and provid[es] a more expansive political platform that does not just link with other movements but integrates them into a formation" to "not only to sustain resurgence but also to extend outward focus to proactively overthrow the systems that foreclose upon resurgence."[33]

Indigenous grounded normativities provide the axiological engine that turns "ethics of care" into "practices for cultivating care-full relations." The Menominee Nation articulate their grounded normativity in the Sustainable Development Model using the term autochthony. Menominee have their own words for the ideas encapsulated by "autochthony," words that are never just, but always more than what English can ever express. Their use of this particular term allows me as a non-Menominee to engage with the Menominee world. In the next section, I examine how Menominee Nation places autochthony as the axiological (ethical) engine behind their ecological knowledge system, informing sustainability and forest management practices. Importantly, their use of the term makes it possible to examine autochthony as an axiological engine across knowledge systems, namely how it similarly functions for German Scientific Forestry.

2. Autochthony as Axiological Engine in Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems

Dismissing Indigenous knowledges and modes of knowledge production claims settler belonging on these lands. Settler colonialism seeks to disrupt the connection between grounded normativity and its expression through cultural forms that include environmental management strategies. Such practices carry and transmit the governance value of Indigenous ecological knowledge systems. Land-relations, the literal ground, are the source that drives actions by

[33] Ramones, "Insurgent Indigeneity: A New Threshold of Indigenous Politics," *American Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (September 2024): 575–77.

human persons who intend to maintain good relations into the future. This is the basis for the Menominee Sustainable Development Model which places "autochthony" at the center. Autochthony is the grounding aspect of grounded normativity, which informs concrete practices for participating in (or from a settler perspective, altering) ecological relationships. Autochthony matters then for applying environmental governance - it serves as the axiological engine of Menominee grounded normativity as they articulate an invitation of "insurgent Indigeneity."

Grounded normativities provide the ethical and political frame for Indigenous knowledge systems. Knowledge systems, understood here as the protocols for learning more and engaging respectfully with those who know more, "contain insights, conservation and environmental governance strategies, methods of analysis, and decision-making processes" that are the accumulation of intergenerational memories and experiences in adapting to a specific place.[34] Such systems are integral to Indigenous community planning and resource management – they ensure that "new ideas are mindful of the past, cognizant of the present and suitable for the future."[35] Indigenous knowledges are living and dynamic, and inherently tied to the ability of Indigenous communities to reproduce this knowledge, their culture and the conditions that enable their continued existence.

These systems of knowledge and the governance value that they transmit is tied to Land - the "unique entity that is the combined living spirit of plants, animals, air, water, humans, histories, and events" recognized by Indigenous peoples/communities.[36] Place and Land are

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[34] "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do for Indigenous Peoples?," 59.

[35] Theodore S. Jojola, "Indigenous Planning and Resource Management," in *Trusteeship in Change: Toward Tribal Autonomy in Resource Management*, ed. Imre Sutton and Richmond L. Clow (Univ. Press of Colorado, 2001), 307.

[36] *Pollution Is Colonialism*, 7.

correlational in that they emphasize how relationships between human and more-than-human beings are co-constitutive. Settler colonialism targets this totality of relations to replace it with settler relations "characterized by conquest and genocide that grant colonialists and settlers access to Indigenous Land and its ability to produce value for settler and colonial desires and futures."[37]

Federal policies, from treaties to legislation, make Resources out of land, sanctifying their extraction and the extermination of Indigenous peoples that rely on them. The abstraction of real entities (Indigenous peoples and their Lands) for purposes of analysis and governance reduces the complex relationships between these entities into that of natural resources and human use.[38] Natural resource management, as the application of environmental governance, provides the tools to maintain the inscription of settler ecologies on Indigenous lands by colonizing in advance of presumed settler futures.[39]

Indigenous knowledges, their contribution to environmental governance and self-determination are all key components of collective continuance. Collective continuance is a "community's capacity to adapt in ways sufficient for its members' livelihoods to flourish into the future," and represents "a way of understanding Indigenous governance as a community's aptitude for making adjustments to current or predicted changes."[40] Collective continuance offers an understanding of the intertwined relationships between the governance value and mean-

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[37] *Ibid*, 9.

[38] *Ibid*, 11. See also Clint Carroll, *Roots of Our Renewal: Ethnobotany and Cherokee Environmental Governance* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Whyte, Caldwell, and Schaefer, "Indigenous Lessons about Sustainability Are Not Just for 'All Humanity.'"

[39] *Pollution Is Colonialism*, 66.

[40] "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do for Indigenous Peoples?," 69.

making of Indigenous knowledges.

The Menominee Nation articulates the deep connection between knowledge and governance in their sustainable development model created by the College of Menominee Nation - Sustainable Development Institute. This model was "based on the experience of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and their profound sense of place and relationship with the land that has allowed their community to recognize and balance the tensions among model dimensions through time."[41] These dimensions are: 1) land and sovereignty; 2) natural environment (which includes human beings); 3) institutions; 4) technology; 5) economics; and 6) human perception, activity, and behavior.[42] The model "identifies Menominee autochthony as a core cultural value and key component of the model" in order to understand the fluctuations between its different constituent parts through time;[43] that is, it conceptualizes sustainability through Menominee grounded normativity. Autochthony is the grounding point from which care emanates outward to fill the interactive space of human relationality. Situating the Menominees' intergenerational connection to Land at the heart of this model emphasizes the importance of maintaining care-full relations to inform natural resource management. The Menominee sustainable development model deploys "ethics of care" by applying "practices of cultivating care-full relations." The commitment to place and how more-than-human relatives are central to Menominee continuance embedded in their articulation of autochthony as the engine for implementing sustainability by navigating dynamic tensions across the six domains.

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[41] Dockry et al., "Sustainable Development Education, Practice, and Research: An Indigenous Model of Sustainable Development at the College of Menominee Nation, Keshena, WI, USA," *Sustainability Science* 11, no. 1 (January 2016): 127.

[42] *Ibid*, 129.

[43] *Ibid*, 131.

Building from Whyte's formulation, I conceptualize collective continuance as having three layers that align to produce mutual flourishing: an internal layer, and two different degrees of external layers. The internal layer, is within the community/Nation itself and includes their grounded normativity as the epicenter, the source from which resurgence and continuance emanate. This extends outward into the first external layer, which encompasses intertribal/international partnerships. As a Nation's grounded normativity and Indigenous experiences resonate with other Nations, this provides the basis for establishing and maintaining pan-Indigenous solidarities against settler colonialism. These extend further to the second external degree or layer, which is the space for activating affinities with non-Indigenous allies. These can be individuals, communities, organizations, etc. who support, contribute to and participate in "insurgent Indigeneity" - an extension "outside these zones and traditional focuses of resurgence to infiltrate conventionally non-Indigenous spaces."[44] Collective continuance "can be achieved when societies exhibit strong relationships in which the parties to the relationships (i.e., the relatives) see themselves as having reciprocal responsibilities to one another."[45] Using the term autochthony then opens an invitation for non-Menominee (and non-Indigenous) people to interact with the Menominee model to understand their reciprocal responsibilities and build stronger relationships of trust.

This is despite the terms' history to denote belonging in a wide variety of colonial contexts. The term refers directly to soil (chthonos) – the literal earth that enables life to thrive – to describe the quality and duration of a people's relationships to particular places. It appears to

[44] "Insurgent Indigeneity," 577.

[45] "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do for Indigenous Peoples?," 69.

"represent the most authentic form of belonging"[46] and often shares a common usage as the term "indigenous" to refer to a sense of "supposed primo-occupancy and cultural specificity as a basis for specific rights."[47] Autochthony differs from "indigenous" in that it is "often linked either to controlling access to a resource or territory or to maintaining cultural specificity, leading in many cases to demands for self-determination."[48] Autochthony emphasizes the particular socio-environmental context of a person's heritage as a way to naturalize one's privilege to certain rights in a national context, therefore excluding others from those same rights.[49] Canessa, for example, distinguishes between "claims against the state" by Indigenous peoples and "claims on the state" by majoritarian assertions of autochthony. Indigenous peoples make "claims against the state" to counter the various forms of ongoing marginalization and oppression that constrain relations with their ancestral homelands; conversely, "claims on the state" are brought by citizens for greater protection against racialized Others who are perceived as threatening the established social and cultural order.[50] Through this frame, autochthony encompasses a sense of primordial belonging, rooted in soil/Land, while Indigeneity refers to this sense of place as the basis for transnational solidarity for collectives, Nations and peoples whose relations to Land have been

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[46] Peter Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 2. The term has historical origins in classical Greece, where Athenians claimed their autochthony lent them a certain propensity for democracy, different from other ancient Greek cities with populations of immigrants and foreigners.

[47] Quentin Gausset, Justin Kenrick, and Robert Gibb, "Indigeneity and Autochthony: A Couple of False Twins?: Indigeneity and Autochthony," *Social Anthropology* 19, no. 2 (May 2011): 138.

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] See for example Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging*; Zenker, "Autochthony, Ethnicity, Indigeneity and Nationalism"; Canessa, "Indigenous Conflict in Bolivia Explored through an African Lens"; Sharma, *Home Rule*; Sharma, "Postcolonialism as the Governmentality of Immigration Controls."

[50] "Indigenous Conflict in Bolivia Explored through an African Lens: Towards a Comparative Analysis of Indigeneity," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60, no. 2 (April 2018): 326–27.

the target of colonization and imperialism.

This distinction is important for the Menominee Nation as they employ autochthony in their sustainable development model. It is precisely because the Menominees' experience, like that of other Native Nations, is not defined solely by colonialism that they ground their principles of sustainability in autochthony. Placing autochthony at the center of their model affirms pre-contact histories and lives of the Menominee people as the basis for their struggles for self-determination rather than their experience as an oppressed minority. Following Canessa, centering Menominee autochthony makes claims on a Menominee system of governance and adapts Menominee social and cultural systems (such as the Menominee clan system) for the present. This is in contrast to their claims against the state structures of the U.S. to which they have recourse as a sovereign Indigenous Nation. The Menominee, from treaty-making onward, were recognized as a sovereign nation. And despite attempts by the federal government to make it otherwise, the Menominee have maintained their self-determination through commitment to their autochthony.

Considering Menominee autochthony and the importance of tending to forest resources for their collective continuance requires examining how settler claims to autochthony inhere to and are advanced by forestry. German Scientific Forestry is a key intersecting element in the throughscapes of Wisconsin forests that was and is still used to inscribe settler ecologies.

As the preceding has shown, Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems emphasize relationality, reciprocity and responsibility for collective continuance as they revolve around autochthony. But autochthony is no less a part of German Scientific Forestry. The development and institutionalization of scientific forestry coincided with German nationalism in the nineteenth century. The *Forstklassiker* (fathers of scientific forestry) developed a science and

program (knowledge system) that fused national memory and economic success through forests. Forestry became a field intimately connected to the perception of German-ness as natural resources management converged with nation-state building. Foresters advocated this position as they developed propaganda to elevate the status of their profession.

This makes forestry an autochthonic infrastructure—a system for claiming and maintaining autochthony. And this new scientific forestry became one of the most profound intellectual exports of the German-speaking world. Such a system was precisely what American intellectuals and elites sought to implement on Indigenous homelands. The supposed German cultural affinity for and connection to forests remains central for asserting settler claims to autochthony. This presents us with two models of place-making: German Scientific Forestry and Menominee Forestry. In the following section, I contextualize two stories as part of Wisconsin's forest throughscapes: Gottlob König's *Schillers Weidspruch* and the famous Menominee quote about reservation forests attributed to Chief Oshkosh. Both stories convey autochthony as axiological engine for Forestry and environmental governance from both settler (German scientific) and Menominee perspectives.

3. Autochthony and Forestry: Two Models of Place-Making Amongst the Trees

In the context of North America, settler claims to autochthony are attempts to erase Indigenous peoples longstanding ecological relationships to place and more-than-human beings. Settler-ecological relationships are made culturally meaningful to narrate and affirm their efforts to re-place Indigenous peoples—even as said attempts remain incomplete.[51] Settler narratives of belonging sediment cultural attachments over Indigenous homelands that justify the need for

[51] Veracini calls attention to the differentiation between settler colonialism's "logic of elimination" and "elimination" per se. The logic and *attempt* to eliminate remains in dialectical tension with Indigenous agency, sovereignty and resurgence. "Decolonizing Settler Colonialism," 4.

institutions like forestry.[52] Land becomes a collection of Resources that can be extracted into the future.[53] Simultaneously, establishing such institutions provides the means to anchor these narratives permanently in place. The implementation of German scientific forestry codifies the ecological values that substantiate settler narratives of belonging. Settler colonialism, then in its ecological dimensions is about autochthonic inscriptions and forestry is one of its primary infrastructures.

3.1 "German" (Scientific) Forestry?

Implementing forestry was necessary because the very fate of the American nation was at stake. Forestry could address two dialectically related processes: namely, the desire to extinguish Indigenous relationships to their homelands, while simultaneously establishing meaningful ecological relationships for settlers to uphold their own claims to autochthony. The Forestry of the German-speaking states was enticing for nineteenth century American because it had developed institutions of education and enforcement of forest reserve boundaries that were fundamental to the existence of Germany as a nation-state.[54] A crucial element then, of what appealed to Americans at that time was using forestry to build up a governing apparatus - to institute laws and policies to preserve forests for their economic potential in the future, not just the immediate present.

In nineteenth-century Germany, forestry was not only about building the infrastructure

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[52] Kyle Whyte, "Settler Colonialism, Ecology, and Environmental Injustice," in *Indigenous Resurgence: Decolonialization and Movements for Environmental Justice*, ed. Jaskiran Dhillon (Berghahn Books, 2022), 140–43.

[53] Resources are an anticipatory, colonial relation to land, where humans can intervene through management to guarantee settler futures. *Pollution Is Colonialism*, 62–65.

[54] John Aston Warder, first president of the AFA in 1975, attended the 1973 International Exhibition in Vienna to see the German model.

of statehood – it was also bound up in cultural processes depicting forests as national heritage in order to situate German national identity in the forests themselves.[55] Organizing woodlands through forestry was fundamentally about structuring particular ecologies of nationhood – scientific management shaped forests to reflect the supposed characteristics of the people that emerged and evolved from them, while also maintaining and reserving forests in a state of productivity. Implementing forestry in Germany provided a crucial fusion between the conception of a German Nation, with common (hi)story and common cause into the future, and a unified German State that would guide and enforce these commonalities. Sylvan metaphors and the associations they evoked were a key component of the national romanticisms of the 1820s and 1830s that culminated in the failed 1848 revolutions.

As an outgrowth of the French Revolution in 1789, intellectuals like the brothers Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm or Georg Hegel, wanted to show the development the German *Volk* (people) as a historical entity seeking to emerge on the stage of European history in its modernity. Each people was supposed to have its own unique place in the constellation of emerging states. Recreating the linguistic and literary history of a German *Volk* made this national past accessible to a broad public.[56] The people of a nation are connected to each other through time and space as inheritors of particular histories. German intellectuals around 1800 repeatedly expressed enthusiasm for the texts that they hoped would lead them to a sense of nation-hood and common culture growing out of a shared and illustrious past. One crucial text at

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[55] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Vintage Books, 1996); Thomas M. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945* (Harvard University Press, 2004); Jeffrey K. Wilson, *The German Forest: Nature, Identity, and the Contestation of a National Symbol, 1871-1914* (University of Toronto Press, 2016).

[56] Ryan Hellenbrand and Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand, "Narratives of Belonging: Arminius and Autochthony between the Minnesota Prairie and German Forests," in *Studies in Medievalism*, ed. Karl Fugelso, vol. 34 (Boydell and Brewer, 2025), 149–73.

the heart of this past was *Germania* by the Roman author Tacitus. German historians of the time pointed to this work because it foregrounds forests as the source of German distinctiveness.[57] Tacitus described the peoples living beyond Roman territories as barbarian tribes standing in the way of Roman conquest and the spread of civilization. These "noble savages" contrasted with Roman civilization because their sense of honor and duty were grounded in their sylvan home. Tacitus' story about the *germani* aligned with depictions of another character from German national myth: Hermann the Cherusker. Hermann (Arminius) was famed for doing the impossible: standing up to the Romans. In 9 A.D., he led Germanic forces to a victory over Roman legions in the *Teutoburger Wald* and his triumph was frequently used to symbolize a German nation overcoming Roman imperialism.[58] Many Romantic artists, poets and philosophers used this legendary figure to depict how the organic nature of trees and forests was reflected in the evolution of the *Volk* and its Nation; arboreal longevity and rootedness became symbols of a nation formed by the recirculating vitality between people and (forested) land.

The depictions of a German nation emerging from the woods were also mobilized by politicians and those trying to build institutions of the state. The *Forstklassiker* – the "fathers of scientific forestry" – were contemporaries of the Grimms. These six men (Heinrich Cotta, Gottlob König, Georg Hartig, Wilhelm Pfeil, Johann Hundeshagen, Carl Heyer) are famous for codifying the science of forestry and its applications. They published numerous works on measuring forest growth; assessing forest value for taxation and sale; and the importance of

[57] What many historians have identified as the *Sonderweg* – the "special path" that Germans took to modernity as distinct from the other European nations, that consequently resulted in the development of National Socialism. See *The German Forest*.

[58] *Landscape and Memory*. Following the unification of the German Empire, the Prussians built a monument at the supposed site of the battle. A Replica was later built (1897) in New Ulm, Minnesota for Germans and their descendants to connect to that history and heritage in the Midwest. See also "Narratives of Belonging"; "Between Piety and Pride."

policing forest reserves. They then built the educational institutions to disseminate new knowledge and practices.[59] Forests were intellectualized in both their economic terms, to develop the household of Nature,[60] and their cultural relevance to develop the identity of the social household that Nature supports.

This convergence is readily visible in a short text from 1814 entitled *Schillers Weidspruch* (Schiller's Adage from the Meadow). This two-paragraph piece appeared in the second issue of *Sylvan: Ein Jahrbuch für Forstmänner, Jäger und Jagdfreunde*, a new yearbook for those working in forests. The story relates how the great poet of the Weimarer Klassik, Friedrich Schiller, took a stroll through the forests near Ilmenau, a small city in Thuringia. These forests had recently been severely cutover, according to the story, and Schiller, by chance, came across a forester with maps of forest stands strewn about before him and plans for harvesting and re-planting. The cuts were already projected in two rounds of 120 years (each marked with a date), with the goal to transition to a pure conifer forest by 2050. The lofty poet, attentive and silent, observes these materials of the man organizing the forest and in particular the dates of these far-off years. After requesting a short explanation on the purpose of this work, he exclaims: "No! - By God, I thought of you hunters as very awful people, whose deeds did not rise above

[59] Ekkehard Schwartz, *Gottlob König: 1779 - 1849: ein Leben für Wald und Landschaft*, ed. Maria Wagner and Michael Kolbe, 2. Aufl (Kessel, 2010).

[60] Richard Hölzl, "Historicizing Sustainability: German Scientific Forestry in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Science as Culture* 19, no. 4 (December 2010): 431–60. The conception of "economy" in its contemporary form emerged from the cameral sciences of the early modern period. This shifted productivity from the individual home to the nation, and that this national home can operate under similar rules to sustain its prosperity. In what would become Germany, this was associated with the term *Wirtschaft*, which today occupies the same semantic field as "economy," but can also be used to describe management activities (i.e., *Forstwirtschaft* – the management of a forest, or *bewirtschaften* – to manage a resource). See Keith Tribe, *The Economy of the Word: Language, History, and Economics*, (Oxford University Press, 2015); Paul Warde, *The Invention of Sustainability: Nature and Destiny, c. 1500-1870* (Cambridge University Press, 2018); Timothy Mitchell, "Economy," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies, Third Edition*, ed. Glenn Hendler and Bruce Burgett (NYU Press, 2020), 97–100.

the killing of wild animals. - But you are great: - You work unknown, unrewarded, free from the Tyranny of Egoism, and still the fruit of your silent diligence ripens for the following world. – Hero and Poet earn conceited Fame. Truly, I wish to be a hunter!"[61]

Gottlob König (1779-1849), the author of this piece was one of the first students of Heinrich Cotta, the most prominent of the *Forstklassiker*. By the time König published this piece, he had been Chief Forester at Ruhla in Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach for two years and was building his own teaching career.[62] In his works, he was known for advocating for two primary transitions: firstly, from *Mittelwald* (coppice with standards) to *Hochwald* (timber producing forests); and secondly from deciduous to coniferous forests.[63] It comes as no surprise then, that the unnamed forester in this anecdote is making precisely such plans. That the plans are also envisioned out to 2050 is indicative of the *Forstwissenschaft* that König and the other *Forstklassiker* are known for codifying and teaching. Although the term *Forstwissenschaft* was first used in the 1750s to describe a systematic, deep knowledge of the forest, König and the other *Forstklassiker* were the first to establish schools dedicated to forests (and their management) as the core subject.[64] Their writings helped to define the field by applying scientific principles to understanding forest spaces. What distinguished the trained foresters from their predecessors and subordinate forest staff was the ability to assess the best path to sustained revenue into the future.

This text, however, goes beyond merely valorizing the capacity of a learned forester to

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[61] König, "Schillers Weidspruch." All translations from German are my own.

[62] König taught geometry at Cotta's *Forstlehranstalt* in Zillbach until 1811. König created his own school in 1813. *Gottlob König*.

[63] *Ibid*, 53. See also *The Invention of Sustainability*, 208.

[64] *The Invention of Sustainability*, 196.

ensure the perpetuity of state control over a forest. By relating a tale of unknown veracity, six years after Schiller's death, König was attempting to achieve cultural relevance for the forestry profession. Here, the Poet would surrender his lofty, conceited position to become a forester and hunter. This text thus elevates forestry to a culture-bearing practice, of the caliber of establishing a national literary tradition. Unlike the wide popularity and acclaim of the Poet, however, the Forester is a nondescript figure that is part of the landscape, as it is only Chance (*das Ungefähr*) that leads Schiller to the forester. It is through his closeness to the woods, a core feature of the rural German landscape, that the forester achieves a popular legitimacy for the educated political classes.[65] Yet his attachment to place is not a hindrance to his larger mission to control and shape the transformation of the forest. The training of the forester and his service to the enlightened ideals of an objective, scientific resource management raises him above the uneducated and morally suspect masses that hold onto backwards traditions of exploiting the woods.[66] The forester, with his scientifically developed tables and charts, sits at the interface between an idealized rural landscape and the need to feed the larger economies of urbanizing states and principalities.

Furthermore, the art of cultivating forests establishes the futurity of the planner and his descendants, whether by blood or profession. The long planning horizons that are described in this piece – of multiple hundreds of years and thinking in the generation times for trees – grounds this work in an ethos of responsibility to the future. Schiller perceives in the forester,

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[65] In Germany as elsewhere, the Forester is a deeply contested figure because he represents state authority, educated paternalism and the enclosure of common lands. See Paul Warde, *Ecology, Economy and State Formation in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Hölzl, "Historicizing Sustainability."

[66] See *Ecology, Economy and State Formation in Early Modern Germany*; Joachim Radkau, *Nature and Power: A Global History of the Environment*, 1st English ed (German Historical Institute ; Cambridge University Press, 2008); *The Invention of Sustainability*.

whose work is meant to build the public good, a freedom from the tyrannical and aristocratic selfishness that led to the explosive 1789 revolution in France. Control and management of the forests represented a new stage in the evolution of the *Volk* that emerged from the dark woods that the Roman author Tacitus described in his *Germania*. Forestry raises the mythical Germanic connection to forests from barbarism to the level of a national *Kultur* to rival the other powers of Europe. The story of *Schillers Weidspruch* thus encapsulates precisely the way that forestry is a practice of managing culture, ecology and the Nation's relationship to its place.

The ideals professed for forest management in *Schillers Weidspruch* have had direct implications for forests around the world. Students from other European nations attended the schools established by the *Forstklassiker*. They began implementing those practices in their own homelands and were inspired to create schools based on these principles. As revealed through *Schillers Weidspruch*, the entanglements of culture, nationhood and nature are woven together into an effort to garner support for the implementation of forestry in the formation of states. Cotta once famously said "*Nur der Staat wirtschaftet für die Ewigkeit*" – only the state plans for eternity.[67] What the *Forstklassiker* did was fit the ethos of responsibility, embodied by caring for woodlands/managing forests, into the epistemic frame of Western Science and located responsibility for enforcing this within the governance of the state – codifying and passing down specific ways of knowing and enforcing this ethos. German foresters had worked diligently to fuse the Nation (as the imagined community with a common story and a common cause) with the State (structuring governance through institutions) through the methods of forestry. And this new scientific forestry became one of the most profound intellectual exports of the German-speaking world.

[67] *The Invention of Sustainability*, 219. Although this too is a never just translation – *(be)wirtschaften* can also mean to manage or economize.

In the latter part of the nineteenth Century, Germans and their ideas came into contact with the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. German foresters like Bernhard Fernow and Carl Schenck departed their homelands for the U.S. to build the government and educational institutions that would enforce these values on forests across the continent. The Americans interested in forestry were after this same sense of connecting the national character of the U.S. to forest spaces. By the middle and late 1800s, American intellectuals realized they could not exploit forests to extinction – this would fundamentally undermine the settler project. Forestry is a method to maintain settler entitlements to and presence on Indigenous land. In the U.S., forestry would replicate the process of building a nation-state, a settler state whose aspirations for longevity were reified through the actual practices of forestry.

Griffith, State Forestry and Indigenous Lands

German Scientific Forestry comes to Indigenous homelands in Wisconsin through Edward Merriam Griffith, a forester hired under the state's first comprehensive forestry law. By the time Griffith arrived, the ink was dry on the treaties that established the contemporary reservations of Native Nations in Wisconsin. Griffith, however, played a significant role in maintaining this dispossession through forestry. Griffith advocated for the State to have some degree of power in managing Native forest lands and timber, as these were also essential to promoting forestry across the Wisconsin landscape.

Griffith claims jurisdiction over the timber resources on some of the lands that make up reservations in Wisconsin. The contemporary boundaries of the Menominee, Lac Du Flambeau, Lac Courte Oreille and La Pointe (Bad River) reservations were established by treaties in 1854. Prior to those treaties, however, the U.S. had granted Wisconsin title to all "swamp lands" in the state's territory in 1850. Griffith wanted to assure that any financial benefit

that accrues from the forests on those lands goes to the State Board of Forestry. Griffith was also involved in the cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Interior and U.S. Forest Service, seeing it as the "the interest of the state" that Native communities follow forestry regulations carefully. In the case of Menominee Nation, Griffith noted that the benefits of conservative cutting accrue to the whole Nation since their reservation had not yet been allotted. The Nation as a whole manages the logging and sale of timber products. Additionally, the forests on the reservation remain "the finest in the state" as railroads were only recently beginning to expand the opportunities for timber extraction. Proper forestry methods would then provide the conditions for reproducing the next generation of valuable forest species. However, he claims that it is difficult "to make Indians cut as carefully as they should." While he notes that progress is being made in this direction, much work remains to be done to assimilate the Menominee forests into the state's and the nation's forestry programs. While Griffith acknowledges Indigenous interests, he does so to a limited extent. He still subordinates them to the goals and objectives of the state's forestry program. [68]

This paternalism continues into other aspects of Griffith's engagement with the issue of forest management on reservation lands. While Griffith acknowledges the federal government's jurisdiction, Griffith claims that the state holds title to 16,376 acres on the reservation, which he proposes should become part of the state forest reserve and managed in cooperation between the state forestry department and U.S. Forest Service.[69] Griffith spent time November 1909 to January 1910 guiding the marking crews as part of the cooperative management between BIA and USFS. However, by December 1910, Griffith expressed his

[68] State Board of Forestry. *First annual report of the state forester of Wisconsin, 1906,* 20-24.

[69] State Board of Forestry. *Report of the state forester of Wisconsin for 1907 and 1908*, 106.

frustration with the federal officials' forestry practices. Ultimately, the Department of Interior and the Forest Service disagreed on appropriate forestry methods (clear cutting vs. selective cutting). The Department of Interior managers held that the selective harvest was inefficient and ineffective. This disagreement on forest management led to the abrogation of the cooperative agreement and Griffith severed his association with the project.

Griffith's advocacy for state and federal cooperation on Native lands continued throughout his tenure. He continually reiterated that much of the land on the existing reservations was not suitable for agriculture, but they neighbor the state's forest reserve. The state should therefore urge the federal government to establish a cooperative forestry management between the state and federal forest reserves.[70] Griffith's claims about Native peoples and their land, alongside his ongoing engagement directly with reservation communities shows that implementing forestry is a distinct mode of settler-colonial relationality. Although Griffith suggests that the benefits of careful forestry management should accrue to Indigenous communities, the implementation of these methods elide and erase their relationships to those forests, writing over them with settler-national claims.

3.2 Menominee Forestry

Wisconsin is part of the Menominee Nation's forested homelands – the Menominee origin story places their beginnings on the Menominee River which flows into the Green Bay of Lake Michigan. German Scientific Forestry came to Wisconsin in the wake of the Cutover through Griffith who had trained in Germany and under German foresters Fernow and Schenck in the US. For the Menominee, like other Native Nations in Wisconsin, American encroachment accelerated after the early decades of the nineteenth century. Through a series of treaties between

[70] State Board of Forestry. *Report of the state forester of Wisconsin for 1911 and 1912*, 10.

1831 and 1854 the United States reduced the Menominee land-base, and later Federal policies also affected the forest resource and its management. In each instance, however, the Menominee asserted their sovereignty through the care-full relations they strove to maintain with their forest. Their current reservation is still located in the Menominee ancestral territories and mostly comprised of actively managed forests.

The Menominee made their first treaty with the U.S. to reaffirm peaceful relations between the two nations in the aftermath of the War of 1812; the Menominee did not cede any land.[71] This relationship quickly changed as early as 1820, when the Menominee were asked to cede land for the removal of New York Nations (Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee and Brothertown). This contentious process was finally completed and affirmed in the Treaty with the Menominee of 1831, which defined the boundaries of Menominee territory and created initial reservations for the New York Nations.[72] A treaty in 1836 further reduced Menominee territory; between corrupt Indian agents and the continuing encroachment of white settlers, the Menominee faced considerable constraints on their livelihoods. The continual decline of the Menominee land base led the Green Bay agent to suggest that they remove to lands to west of the Mississippi.

The U.S. negotiated another treaty in 1848 as Wisconsin was becoming a state and territorial governors sought to extinguish the Menominee's remaining claims to land in Wisconsin.[73] This treaty created the Crow Wing reservation for the Menominee in territory ceded by the Ojibwe in

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[71] David Beck, *Siege and Survival: History of the Menominee Indians, 1634-1856* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 87.

[72] Carol Cornelius, *A History in Indigenous Voices: Menominee, Ho-Chunk, Oneida, Stockbridge, and Brothertown Interactions in the Removal Era*, 1st ed (Wisconsin Historical Society, 2023).

[73] *Siege and Survival*.

what is now called Minnesota (adjacent to the Ho-Chunks' Long Prairie reservation). Importantly, however, the treaty included a stipulation that a delegation of Menominee would have an opportunity to visit the proposed reservation before consenting to removal.[74] After visiting the proposed reservation, Menominee leaders told the American officials that it would be unsuitable: they would be without many of the resources (i.e. more-than-human relations, medicines and foods) they were accustomed to and it was located right in between the feuding Anishinaabe and Dakota.

The centrality of maintaining relations to the forest is frequently attributed to Chief Oshkosh, who was a delegate to the negotiations of the 1848 treaty. A key resource, of which the Menominee had a veritable treasure trove, was timber. The Menominee, and other Indigenous peoples', traditional ecological management produced mature pine stands, which were coveted by logging interests.[75] Oshkosh is credited with seeing this as an opportunity to adapt to the new conditions while maintaining cultural continuities. He famously said:

> "Start with the rising sun and work toward the setting sun, but take only the mature trees, the sick trees, and the trees that have fallen. When you reach the end of the reservation, turn and cut from the setting sun to the rising sun, and the trees will last forever."

Oshkosh here articulates the concern for maintaining the communal value of the forest resources. Caring for the forest that had long cared for them would allow the Menominee people to continue to thrive into the future indefinitely. While the actual source is unknown,[76] that the

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[74] *Ibid*.

[75] Michelle M. Steen-Adams, Nancy Langston, and David J. Mladenoff, "White Pine in the Northern Forests: An Ecological and Management History of White Pine on the Bad River Reservation of Wisconsin," *Environmental History* 12, no. 3 (July 1, 2007): 614–48; Cristina Thomsen, Hal Neumann, and John F. Schuttler, *The Forests of the Menominee: Forest Resource Management on the Menominee Indian Reservation 1854-1992* (Heritage Research Center, Ltd., 1999).

[76] *Forests of the Menominee*.

Menominee read it back to Oshkosh is significant. This story places care for the forest as a part of their autochthony at a critical moment in Menominee history. It situates Menominee sustainability and collective continuance in the treaty period to maintain relations in their ancestral homelands. Though the foresight of Oshkosh and the other negotiators, the Menominee were able to postpone their removal long enough that they could retain a reservation in their homelands through the 1854 Treaty of Wolf River.[77]

The ethic attributed to Oshkosh, that Menominee autochthony was constituted by caring relationships with the forest, was central to Menominee activism during later Federal Indian Policies as well, allowing the Menominee to maintain control of the reservation. Following the treaty-making era, the Menominee are able to prevent loggers from getting wide-spread access to their timber resources. Commercial logging, however, begins to take off on the reservation in the 1880s. At the time, the Ojibwe Nations with extensive resources across Wisconsin (Lac du Flambeau, Bad River, Lac Courte Oreilles) and Minnesota (Mille Lacs, Leech Lake and White Earth) were targeted for allotment under the Dawes Act to privatize their resources, making them available for white loggers.

The Menominee, however, are able to stave off this break up of tribal lands. A number of bills were introduced in Congress to allot the Menominee reservation and in fact the Menominee initially requested allotment in numerous petitions. They saw private ownership as an avenue for maintaining their homeland since timber speculators could not take all their timber at once.[78]

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[77] The current extent of the Menominee Reservation is the result of one last treaty with the Stockbridge-Munsee to create a reservation for them as well in 1856

[78] *Siege and Survival*. While some consider this an internalization of the individualistic ethos, this mirrors Ho-Chunk articulations of citizenship during the same period. See Stephen Kantrowitz, *Citizens of a Stolen Land: A Ho-Chunk History of the Ninteenth-Century United States* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2023).

Chiefs Neopit and Mahchakeniew told federal officials that they were in favor of allotment as long as they could retain control over the forest.[79] The Menominee would be willing to sell timber – but not the land it stood on. In 1888 Neopit and Mahchakeniew led a delegation to Washington to oppose legislation that would have allowed loggers access to the Menominee forests. They believed that the tribe would best benefit economically if the Menominee could exploit their own timber.[80] Menominee activism eventually led to the passage of the US's first sustained yield harvest limit: in 1890 Congress passed legislation allowing the Menominee to log up to 20 million combined feet of timber (standing green as well as dead and down). The legislation also stipulated that Menominee should be employed for the work and the benefits (revenue) should accrue to the Nation.[81] This was the first time the Menominee were allowed to harvest green timber on a regular basis without the mandate to clear land for farming.[82]

The Menominee forest thus remained a tribally owned resource through the cutover period and into the 20th century. Despite increasing pressures on forest resources in Wisconsin, the Menominee found some stability through their forest management: they wrote a new Tribal constitution that created a Business Committee to control the annual logging and they began building capital for their federal treasury account.[83] The Menominee found an ally in Robert La Follette who was influential in passing the 1890 sustained yield harvest limit. LaFollette recognized that the Menominee had cared for their forests. He believed that training them to take

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[79] *Ibid*, 51.

[80] Wisconsin's powerful timber lobby also helped in this case by not pushing for allotment, seeing instead "an advantage in keeping the reservation timberlands intact." David R. M. Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination: History of the Menominee Indians since 1854* (University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 51.

[81] *Forests of the Menominee*.

[82] *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 55.

[83] *Ibid*, 63.

over management would allow them to be self-reliant and ensure that the forest would perpetuate itself.[84] As Governor of Wisconsin (1901-1906), LaFollette was responsible for passing the state's first comprehensive forestry law in 1903 and hiring E.M. Griffith. In 1906 he returned to national politics when he became a Senator and wrote further legislation that recognized the importance of the forest for the Menominee as a Nation.

In 1905 a large windstorm put the 1890 harvest limits to the test. Officials estimated thirty-five million board feet had blown down with up to two hundred million more feet of green timber remained standing.[85] Between the downed timber and the damaged trees that should be logged for the health of the forest, the Menominee would easily exceed their annual limit. The Menominee advocated for additional legislation aimed at conserving and managing reservation timber so that the forest would serve as a perpetual source of employment and income. Two new laws in 1906 and 1908 raised harvest limits for salvage and also provided for the creation of a tribally owned sawmill.[86] Unfortunately, federal agents and forestry officials argued over the most effective plan for logging the blown-down timber. State Forester Griffith urged that all this timber be cut at once by bid to contractors. Griffith's solution would avoid the problem of waste by selling all the blowdown and any interspersed standing timber, but it would also diminish the tribal resource.[87] The Menominee Business Committee opposed this plan, because it left out Menominee loggers. The Menominee wanted more than the value of the timber; they desired also the work and its control. The 1908 law authorized the use of up to three sawmills on the

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[84] *Ibid*

[85] *Forests of the Menominee.*

[86] *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 66.

[87] *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, *Forests of the Menominee.*

reservation for commercial purposes. It reflected a shift from agriculture to lumbering as the federally defined basis of the Menominee economy by requiring the federal government to manage the Menominee forest on a sustained yield basis. It also stipulated that Menominee be trained in both the logging and milling operations, so that the tribe would eventually run both.

The LaFollette Laws instigated a series of agency conflicts over management of the Menominee forest through the early twentieth century. The arguments over how to effectively log the blown-down timber lasted at least until after 1909, by which point the timber that had not been salvaged had lost its value after rotting in the forest. The 1908 LaFollette Act finally gave the tribe the leverage it needed to gain control of its timber resources, the Menominee actually won the battles both to maintain control of their timber and to preserve their forest while logging it over the long run.

Despite this, Federal officials pushed for and implemented clearcutting without regard for Menominee concerns about regeneration and sustainability/sustained productivity. Federal clearcuts through the 1920s often exceeded the 20 million board feet annual limit.[88] This mismanagement provided the basis for the Menominee to sue the Bureau of Indian affairs through the Indian Court of Claims in 1935. After over a decade of litigation, the Court of Claims awarded the Menominee an $8.5 million judgement in 1951, ruling that the LaFollette Act of 1908 required the "federal government to manage the Menominee forest on a basis that would preserve rather than diminish its value."[89] This judgement provided rhetorical fuel for anti-sovereignty advocates during the height of the Cold War as the US began pursuing a policy of Termination. Policy makers and federal officials sought to withdraw supervision and abrogate

[88] Ronald L. Trosper, "Indigenous Influence on Forest Management on the Menominee Indian Reservation," *Forest Ecology and Management* 249, no. 1–2 (September 2007): 135.

[89] *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 135.

all responsibilities to Tribes that were deemed to have reached a level of self-sufficiency that they could be "cut loose from federal wardship."[90] The Menominee communal management of their forest was a prime target as it had supported a variety of services such as a hospital and an electrical company. The sawmill and lumbering actives provided employment for a large portion of the reservation population during the year[91].

Tribal ownership and operation of the mill was threatened when the U.S. terminated the Menominee Nation's sovereign status with the Menominee Termination Act in 1954. The law created a dual form of governance for the Menominee: it established a corporation, Menominee Enterprises Incorporated, which held all title to and rights to manage tribal property, and a new County for civil administration.[92] The reservation thus reverted to state jurisdiction and became reliant on a non-existent tax base to support programs and services that were originally funded by federal monies. This led to a further loss of land as it was taken out of trust and sold to build a source of revenue.[93] While MEI held title to the land and timber resources, management was in practice done under the supervision of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The state passed a law granting the WDNR authority to administer timber harvests in conjunction with MEI. This included such areas as forest protection and development, evaluating management practices and especially fire suppression.[94]

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[90] *Ibid*, 142.

[91] *Ibid*, 134

[92] *Forests of the Menominee,* 206; *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 147.

[93] Michael Dockry and Kyle Whyte, "Improving on Nature: The Legend Lake Development, Menominee Resistance, and the Ecological Dynamics of Settler Colonialism," *The American Indian Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (2021): 95–120.

[94] *Forests of the Menominee*, 207.

Through much activism and creativity, the Menominee remained in their homelands and sustained relationships with the more-than-humans that had enabled them to thrive there, especially the forest. Following much advocacy around the social and economic consequences of termination, the Menominee Nation's federal status was restored in 1973. Throughout their history of engaging with the U.S, the Menominee demonstrated a tradition of adaptation. The Menominee continued to maintain care-full relations with their forest despite state management. This tradition carries on in the College of Menominee Nation's Sustainable Development Institute, which developed the Sustainable Development model as a contemporary articulation of the Menominee Ecological Knowledge System. This model, with autochthony at the center of six dynamically interacting dimensions, also finds expression in contemporary management of the forest resource through the Menominee Tribal Enterprises Management Plan.

4. Contemporary Menominee Forest Management's Other-Wise Autochthony

In their forest management, the Menominee assert an "other-wise" autochthony that foregrounds intentional, care-full and sustained awareness of more-than-human relations and the practices to maintain them. The forest management plan emphasizes "that economic gain and sustainability are compatible" and that "creativity and imagination in the application of sound silviculture will best achieve both goals in the long run."[95] Because of the funding crisis instigated by Termination, forestry under state supervision had quickly turned into a harvest management program, with a focus on liquidating timber assets. Foresters managed for quality and quantity of sawtimber through "purely volume control and with no regard for future conditions of stands and other non-timber resources. Typical forest management is focused

[95] Menominee Tribal Enterprises, "Menominee Tribal Enterprises Forest Management Plan (2012-2027)," 2012, 56, https://www.mtewood.com/Content/files/ForestManagementPlan.pdf.

primarily on the production of quality and quantity of sawtimber" and not concerned with the future development of the forest in a holistic sense.[96] To rectify this, Menominee Tribal Enterprises applies the Menominee Ecological Knowledge System in their forest management. In practice, this includes implementing the habitat classification system and increased emphasis on forest development (including shelterwood management and harvest scheduling) to produce a healthier forest.[97]

The forest management plans of 1961 and 1968 incorporated the Menominee Ecological Knowledge System and laid the foundation for the post-restoration forestry program. The 1961 forest management plan put in place a Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) system and compartment organization of management still in use today. The CFI provided a comprehensive appraisal of the forest. Data would be used to systematically determine the methods for accomplishing economically sound and silvicuturally desirable goals, and provide a base for measuring the degree of success of the methods employed. For the Menominee, this was the basis for maintaining the sustained yield principles. Among the fundamental goals set forth in the 1961 Plan were the need to reduce overstocking and improve understocked stands for increased growth and maximum return. By 1964, MEI and state foresters had established 950 permanent study plots to collect data on tree diameter, age, species, and potential risk factors. The desire to more accurately mange the forest in economically viable and ecologically sustainable methods led to the creation of a compartment type forest management strategy in the 1968 management plan. The vision was to create a method for area control with a volume check limit. This would change the scale of harvest units, especially reducing the issues with harvesting

[96] *Ibid*, 15.

[97] *Forests of the Menominee*, 260.

small, economically marginal units. Whenever possible, foresters used waterways, road and other geographic features to determine compartment boundaries.

The Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI), initially set up during termination, was enhanced with more plots following restoration. The data collected through the CFI provides the basis for strategic level planning (long-term, across multiple cutting cycles). The results are then implemented by determining where on the forest treatments will occur. This includes setting compartment level harvest volumes and the harvest scheduling at the stand level (near term, single cutting cycle).[98]

The habitat classification system is a method for assessing site productivity. This system was developed in 1984 as a means to guide forest planning that included other more-than-human-relations. Habitat types classify eleven understory plant associations as indicators of site quality. Site types ranging from dry, nutrient poor sites to moist, nutrient rich sites are then matched to tree species, or cover types.[99] It is based on the primary limiting gradients of nutrient richness and moisture. This classification system rests on the associations of understory plants rather than the currently dominant tree species in the canopy. Understory associations indicate which forest cover types will have the greatest potential on a given site. This avoids the trap of conventional forestry, which often made planning decisions based on current site conditions and with the goal to maintain the current species composition.[100] This ignores past historical events and activities that shaped forest cover without altering underlying site conditions.[101] Using the

[98] "MTE Forest Management Plan," 25–26.

[99] *Forests of the Menominee*, 248.

[100] "MTE Forest Management Plan," 41.

[101] MTE recognizes 13 forest cover types. *Ibid*, 37.

habitat classification system, foresters can attune their management to improve and increase forest productivity while also considering surrounding landscape components.

The habitat classification system gave direction to the evolution of silvicultural prescriptions. Aligning habitat types with the silvics (the conditions of reproduction and grown) for individual species led to re-working the harvest scheduling system to plan for stand transitions. While there are a variety of even-aged and uneven-aged management tactics, increased implementation of shelterwood is especially important for the culturally significant species of white pine (*Pinus strobus*), northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*) and their associates. White pine and Northern Red Oak are both moderately tolerant of shade and require disturbance for successful establishment to reach canopy-building size. The preferred prescription for such stands is shelterwood. Shelterwood is a gradual transition through removal of the overstory and creating favorable conditions for regeneration from a seed source. Thinning is a form of intermediate stand improvement that selectively removes non-canopy trees to open space for target trees to develop further.[102] The shelterwood prescription also provides an opportunity for natural regeneration that can be followed by planting if necessary to support the successful regeneration of the desired species.

A central method of forest development implemented in tandem with shelterwood cutting is prescribed fire. Many of the shade-intolerant species, such as white pine only became dominant cover types on their current sites following intermittent, broad area/acreage disturbance like fire. Forest development uses a diversity of tactics and methods including herbicide and mechanical treatments, but the return of fire is one of the most important. The Menominee engaged their relationship with fire throughout history to maintain open stand structures for

[102] *Ibid*, 49-51.

travel and hunting; or to enhance production of certain foods and medicines. The fire suppression of the 20th century (following implementation of German Scientific Forestry under Griffith and the BIA) altered the ecological landscape challenging MTE "with the task of 'relearning' how to apply fire onto the landscape" in the present.[103] Fire was, and is becoming again, a community cultural activity. Prescribed burning is cultural activity that provides a transgenerational connection between Menominee and their more-than-human relations.

The reapplication of fire, returning it to the landscape as a part of shelterwood management that itself is informed by the habitat classification system, emphasizes the more-than-human relations that are essential to Menominee's Ecological Knowledge System. The whole system connects cultural considerations (such as archaeology and historic preservation) with "non-timber forest products/ecosystem services" like maple syrup/sugar, water/fish relatives, hunting, berry picking, and (connected to berries) fires as relative. Most importantly, this is all centered on Menominee autochthony: Chapter 8 of the MTE forest management plan on Cultural Resources begins with the creation and clan system stories.[104] Forest management in its contemporary forms is still about collective self-determination: resurgence through connecting the Menominee today with their ancestors, homelands, more-than-human relations and creating avenues for continuance.

5. Re-Kind-ling Ecological Sensibilities. Extending Care-Full Relations from the Ground beneath our Feet

Settler colonialism seeks to disrupt Menominee Land-relations. Displacement from ancestral homelands, and ecological transformations caused by settlement disrupted the

[103] *Ibid*, 90-94.

[104] *Ibid*, 102-112.

cohesiveness of Indigenous relationships to Land. Revitalizing traditional lifeways and culture are part of forestry activities that foster "renewed relationships of respect, responsibility and reciprocity." (Kimmerer, 2011, p. 258). To engage with Indigenous communities in this process requires awareness of the autochthonic dimensions of settler colonialism – The College of Menominee Nation's Sustainable Development model calls attention to the debts that settlers owe to earn the opportunity to become welcome guests.

I bring these together for myself as a settler in this space as "re-kind-ling ecological sensibilities." Re-Kind-ling Ecological Sensibility is about cultivating the respectful acknowledgement of difference from the ground up in order to sustain care-full and trust-worthy relationships; it is a systematic appreciation to maintain care-full awareness across and between throughscapes. Re-kind-ling centers the relationship with fire: whether we name it fire or ishkotawe, the relation with this being requires full awareness and attention; it can either take or sustain life depending on the intention. This formulation therefore also foregrounds kindness, bringing care and healing as the intention for practice instead of destruction. And as one attuned to German language, this formulation puts the Kind/child, the human bundle of experiences as younger relative, full of curiosity and exuberance, as the carrier for that care. The focus is then ecological because it tends to the systems of relationality we are a part of and how that shapes our understanding of the places we dwell in. Sensibilities refer to the many ways we attune to those relational systems and situate our embodied selves within them. This includes practices that extend our awareness of throughscapes. Re-Kind-ling Ecological sensibility is a process of learning from each other and is a pre-requisite for other-wise autochthony.

The College of Menominee Nation – Sustainable Development Institute places Menominee autochthony in the center of their sustainable development model. The model

articulates the importance of caring for forest resources for Menominee collective continuance. This demands examining how settler claims to autochthony inhere to and are advanced by forestry. Forestry is an autochthonic infrastructure that informs how both Indigenous peoples in Wisconsin and settlers articulate caring for the woods through forestry.

The programmatic activities of forestry, for MTE and Euro-American institutions both exhibit autochthony as an axiological engine for forest management and sustainability (to sustain a material and symbolic anchor for the imagined community of their nation). However, the work of Menominee forestry staff extends from Menominee grounded normativity - their work makes it possible for the Menominee people of today to connect to their homelands, their ancestors and ensure that there is a place for future generations of Menominee to flourish into the future. This is axiologically different from German Scientific Forestry which is used to assert a settler claim to autochthony and the natural resources of Indigenous homelands. Processes and strategies for decision-making about forest ecologies can and must consider the way that practices on the ground actively attempt to replace and foreclose on Indigenous relations to place.

Forestry and silvicultural practices implement caring relations, although what settlers and Menominee care about is different. Settler desires for autochthony are implemented through forestry to claim Indigenous homelands; for the Menominee and other Native Nations, forestry offers a method for maintaining sovereignty and ensuring continuance in the face of settler colonial oppression. In the context of the U.S., it is imperative that natural resources management and governance efforts attend to the historical environmental injustices perpetrated against Indigenous peoples and Lands by also contributing to the restoration of Indigenous lifeways. This requires taking seriously and engaging with the systems of Indigenous knowledge. Context-driven, Landed knowledge contributes to the resurgence and collective continuance of

Indigenous peoples and their communities.[105] Care-full forestry, driven by autochthony, creates avenues for continuance: it is a systematic appreciation to maintain care-full awareness across and between throughscapes. MTE puts it best: "The ability to adapt silvicultural systems to address multiple objectives is limited only by one's imagination and creativity, making the practice of sustainable forestry both an art and a science."[106] Menominee autochthony and grounded normativity provide the basis for a beautifully broad imagination, and attendant horizon of care.

[105] "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do for Indigenous Peoples?," 71.

[106] "MTE Forest Management Plan," 36.

Minge Ahne Jedisch

„Ich habe keine Ahnung“
One of our first phrases as German learners
Literally, „I have no idea“
Ahnung- ahnen- Ahnen
ähneln- ähnlich - Ähnlichkeit
Ahnenerbe
Mahnen Mahnung Mahnmal
It’s more than an idea
We have no sense for
Nor relation to
“Ich habe keine Ahnung”
To admit you have no connection to or experience with
So you can be sensitive and attentive to its state or situation
You have to learn, to see, to sense to be
In relation
ahnen is to have a sense for
the Ahnen themselves
still present, sense-able and sensible in your everyday

Esch
Ryan
Dr Pap
Jack
Opa
Tom
Ur-um
Dorothy
Ur-ur-opa
Ludwig
Ur-ur-ur-opa
Mathias
Ur-ur-ur-ur-opa
Johann

Esch
Ryan
Dr Pap
Jack
Um
Carol
Ur-um
Catherine
Ur-ur-Opa
Nicholaus
Ur-ur-ur-Opa
Nicholaus
Ur-ur-ur-ur-Opa
Peter

Minge Ahne,
Urahne
von dene isch blos ahne kann

Tätste misch verston
Wenn isch esu jet schwaade,
Leev Johann
Vür dinger Kappelle ston
im Sonnelechte baade?

Ovends lejt de Sunn
Sich lees op dä Hüjel,
Färv dr Himmel rut,
Orang,
purpur,
Wie Fürjlut,
Wenn dä Flamm nidderbrenne tut

Alles hät sing Stund
Alles hät sing Zick
Dinge es jekumme – und doch bes du jeblevve
Dinge Kappelle steiht noch he
Eine Ahnung vun dingem Levve

Se löd misch an, dä Sunn
Selvs Rast ze nemme,
Ming Kopp ob Dinge Schulter ze leje
Alles jeet irjendwann mol unger
Und kütt ernüert wigger op

Over the course of this project I have been thinking a lot about ancestry and my ancestors - the German word for which is Ahnen. As a verb, ahnen, also means to have a sense for or idea of. But that sense or idea is not quite fully graspable; it's there at the edge of our consciousness. This got me thinking in relation to Ahnung, or more importantly the phrase “keine Ahnung” - what we learn to say in German class when we have no clue or idea.

It's kind of telling I think that it's the same word that we use for our ancestors these people who are just on the edge of our consciousness in the present. We see and feel their presence through the marks that they've left in the land, in our homes, with other beings that

might still be here; marks that we can't ever read or know in their entirety. Theirs are stories we'll never hear, stories that are only passed on from one generation to the next - but they're always there somehow. This is part of understanding memorials, warnings against something emotional: M*ahn*mal - it's in there too. Again a sign of something that is on the edge of our consciousness, telling us that something might be dangerous here.

Part of this poem then is to outline the people who are part of my ancestry in relation to this structure going back to Johann Endres, the Chapel builder but also his brother who arrived at the same time and their story which I tell in this piece. There is then a small piece of personal reflection from an evening when I was there. I wrote it in the Cologne (Kölsch) dialect, although the Endres families spoke Mosel-Frankish. It is the dialect of my Kalscheur ancestors. They are similar and not too geographically distant, and Kölsch is also the first German dialect I engaged with on a deeper level.

III. Between Piety and Pride: Memorializing Personal Piety and National Sentiment in the German Midwest

Monuments are material manifestations of memory and thus make values visible. As German-speaking emigres arrived in the American Midwest, they inscribed the region with recognizable markers. Diverse articulations of German-ness, like placenames, village structures, and communal organizations, overlay a new German homeland over the territories of Indigenous peoples whom the United States had violently dispossessed. Such markers of place-attachment continue to resonate today. The Endres Chapel near Madison, Wisconsin and the Hermann monument in New Ulm, Minnesota are examples that underscore the multiple layers of German settler-colonial inscription. Both monuments show how cultural memory and the desire to belong are grafted onto the colonized landscape. Together, they constellate German-ness in the Midwest as it oscillates between personal piety and national pride through time.

The Hermann monument has become a hallmark of New Ulm. Commissioned by the Sons of Hermann, the statue instantiates a complex and multi-layered history of German settler identity in America. Hermann occupies a critical point in the memorial landscape of the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War. This monument to a Germanic chieftain from antiquity on the Minnesota prairie channels the mythic past of German nationhood for settlers to contend with Dakota peoples' long-standing presence. Hermann's vigilance over the Minnesota prairie extends settler colonial violence into the present. 255 miles away, an unassuming chapel peeks between gnarly oaks atop a hill near Madison, against the backdrop of successional growth. Built by Johann Endres in 1857, the chapel has become incorporated into a Dane County Park. Endres made the landscape he settled resemble the homelands he had left by placing this chapel here. Today, this fixture serves as a moral anchor for local families, imbuing this place with the memories of

establishing a new life in an unknown world. The chapel's presence belies the land's storied past, leaving unchallenged the forced removal and erasure of Ho-Chunk presence.

I analyze these two examples because they are part of my own story. The Endres chapel discussed here was built by my ancestor. While this chapel was his personal expression of piety, its continued presence at Indian Lake County Park attests to the enduring legacies of German migration that imbricate my family in American settler colonialism. Similarly, the Hermann monument underscores how German nationalist discourses transferred stories of mythic origins to the places settlers wanted to call their own. These examples map landmarks of the *Kulturgemeinschaft* (German transnational cultural community) onto the Midwest by extending German-ness to the edges of the American frontier. In both instances, German-ness sediments U.S. territoriality, even as German settlers retain cultural forms and narratives of belonging that distinguish the *Kulturgemeinschaft*.

Dispossession and Displacement: Carving a Place for Germans

The displacement of the Dakota and Ho-Chunk was the precondition for German settlement in this portion of the Midwest. The Ho-Chunk and Dakota had lived in these territories for uncounted generations. They share histories of removal that undergird the possibility of German arrival: Germans were the beneficiaries of federal policies of genocide and ethnic cleansing that attempted to erase Indigenous presence. The intertwined histories of Ho-Chunk and Dakota dispossession extend beyond the state boundaries of Wisconsin and Minnesota; their paths of memory are the counterpoint to which German settlers anchor their memorials of dispossession.

As American influence and territorial ambitions expanded into the region during the early nineteenth century, settlers invaded Ho-Chunk homelands. They occupied Ho-Chunk land,

violating the 1825 Treaty of Prairie du Chien. Squatters then implored the U.S. government to remove the Ho-Chunk. The first land cession treaty in 1829 formally transferred over one third of the Ho-Chunk territory.[1] Following the Black Hawk War in 1832, the Ho-Chunk were forced to negotiate a removal treaty because of their alleged involvement. The Ho-Chunk were forced to relinquish their remaining lands in Wisconsin in 1837 and all remaining Ho-Chunk in Wisconsin were supposed to remove within eight months.[2] As settlers continued encroaching westward, they forced the Ho-Chunk give up more territory. The Ho-Chunk signed another treaty in 1846, creating a reservation in central Minnesota, near the Mississippi headwaters. This new reservation placed the Ho-Chunk between the feuding Dakota and Ojibwe, and it lacked many of the resources they were accustomed to from further south.

Simultaneously, the U.S. dispossessed the Dakota of their ancestral territory in what is today known as Minnesota. The 1851 Treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota left the Dakota with a reservation 10 miles wide from Lake Traverse in the West, to the Little Cottonwood River. U.S. officials took the northern portion of this reservation in an 1858 treaty claiming that the Dakota had failed to adequately improve their reservation land. Money promised to the Dakota in exchange for these lands often did not reach them. Traders and Indian Agents used the distributed annuity payments to cover debts that Dakota had incurred. Together, encroaching settlers and the coercive interactions with U.S. agents shrunk Dakota territory and

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[1] Amy Lonetree, "Visualizing Native Survivance: Encounters with My Ho-Chunk Ancestors in the Family Photographs of Charles Van Schaick," in *People of the Big Voice: Photographs of Ho-Chunk Families by Charles Van Schaick, 1879-1942*, by Tom Jones et al. (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2014); Stephen Kantrowitz, *Citizens of a Stolen Land: A Ho-Chunk History of the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2023); Cathy Coats, *To Banish Forever: A Secret Society, the Ho-Chunk, and Ethnic Cleansing in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2024).

[2] The Ho-Chunk were led to believe they had eight years. Lonetree, "Visualizing Native Survivance."

constrained their ability to maintain traditional lifeways. The resulting despair and anger erupted in the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War.

The New Ulm settlement, where Hermann would come to stand, sat just outside this reservation's eastern edge and became a focal point of the fighting. On August 18th, news arrived in New Ulm of Dakota attacks on isolated farmsteads and settlements around Brown County. Anticipating that New Ulm would be the next target, German revolutionaries with military experience organized the defense of the town. On August 19th, a small group of Dakota warriors initially tested New Ulm's defenses. Four days later, however, a larger, more organized force returned after failing to take Fort Ridgely. The remaining townspeople and militia volunteers constructed barricades in the town center. The intense fighting left the town in ruins—most structures outside the barricades burned and nearly two thousand townspeople evacuated to St. Peter and Mankato further downriver.

Following these events, the U.S. Congress expelled the Dakota and their Ho-Chunk neighbors from Minnesota. In 1853, the Ho-Chunk had been able to negotiate for yet another reservation, not long after the Dakota began losing significant amounts of territory in 1851. The Ho-Chunk were able to select land just south of Mankato and they removed from Long Prairie to Blue Earth in 1855. As soon as they arrived, however, settlers sought their removal. After the U.S.-Dakota War, many Ho-Chunk were interred at the Fort Snelling concentration camp alongside Dakota prisoners. In early 1863, following a week of harsh conditions, the Ho-Chunk and Dakota arrived in Crow Creek, South Dakota. Many Ho-Chunk continued to return to their ancestral homelands in Wisconsin or joined other relatives in Nebraska.[3]

German Memoryscapes in the Midwest

[3] They received land from the Omaha who were previously removed there. *Ibid*.

Germans arriving in this colonized landscape created a memoryscape that sedimented the transformation of these Indigenous homelands into settler homelands. The German memoryscape, instantiated by the Endres Chapel and Hermann monument, writes layers of settler belonging over Indigenous paths of memory across the Midwest. Both monuments memorialize Germans' claim to Indigenous homelands which are not theirs, yet to which they desperately desire to belong. Monuments like these are infrastructures of settler memory that replace Indigenous presence and belie the violent histories of dispossession. Whyte calls this process of settler colonial remembrance "vicious sedimentation" - settlers ignore or seek to legitimate the violence that undergirds their presence. [4] Accretions of memories and artifacts construct an elaborate narrative, allowing only certain kinds of pasts to persist into the present. For example, signage summarizes the experiences that led Endres to build the chapel on his farm, situating him within the master narrative of the U.S. as a country of immigrants. And while the history of violence remains present in New Ulm,[5] the stories surrounding Hermann and his arrival on the Minnesota prairie have been sedimented into a general settler memory that ignores cultural resonances in German-speaking Europe.[6] Current historiography of German settlement in the US, and the Midwest specifically, does not engage critically with the imbrications of

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[4] Kyle Whyte, "Settler Colonialism, Ecology, and Environmental Injustice," in *Indigenous Resurgence: Decolonialization and Movements for Environmental Justice*, ed. Jaskiran Dhillon, NED-New edition, 1 (Berghahn Books, 2022), 15.

[5] This is due to commemorative endeavors of Dakota communities. See Angela Cavender Wilson, "Introduction: Manipi Hena Owas'in Wicunkiksuyapi (We Remember All Those Who Walked)," *The American Indian Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2004): 151–69; *DAKOTA 38 - Full Movie in HD* (SmoothFeather, 2012), https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=1pX6FBSUyQI; G. E. John and K. M. Carlson, "'Making Change' in the Memorial Landscape to the Dakota–US War of 1862: Remembrance, Healing and Justice through Affective Participation in the Dakota Commemorative March (DCM)," *Social & Cultural Geography* 17, no. 8 (November 16, 2016).

[6] Ryan Hellenbrand and Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand, "Narratives of Belonging: Arminius and Autochthony between the Minnesota Prairie and German Forests," in *Studies in Medievalism*, ed. Karl Fugelso, vol. 34 (Boydell and Brewer, 2025), 149–73.

Germans in American settler colonialism.[7] Germans were often not the first settler encounters for Indigenous peoples and many articulate how they came into a colonial situation built by American policies; however, this often serves to excuse German complicity.[8]

As these two monuments attest, however, Germans are part of sedimenting settler presence and permanence over Indigenous homelands. Together, they underscore how a German settler memoryscape contributes layers to American settler colonialism in the Midwest. Both are ways of presencing the stories of the past to sediment meaning and values in the landscape, and they create a memoryscape through multiple modalities and enactments.[9] The monuments themselves are conduits through which narratives circulate to sustain the past's presence on the landscape. While they fulfill a similar purpose, each monument remains a distinct mode of German settler monumentality. The Endres chapel is a sacred mode: Endres built it to show his gratitude and humility for the survival of his family in the "new world." The Hermann monument is a secular mode, refracting the origin story of unified Germanic tribes in New Ulm.. Germans in America employed both modes of monumentality to reach through time and space to their homelands. They are particularly German monuments as they evoke models from the homeland – the Endres chapel emulates central Europe's cultural landscape in its architecture and location; New Ulm's Hermann monument is a near exact replica of the 1875 monument

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[7] Emina Mušanović and Ashwin Manthripragada, "Unsettling Futurity," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 55, no. 4 (November 1, 2019): 398–414; H. Glenn Penny, *German History Unbound: From 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[8] Primary sources like Alexander Berghold's *Indianer-Rache, oder Die Schreckenstage von Neu-Ulm* and Jacob Nix's *Der Ausbruch der Sioux-Indianer* show they were, however, clearly aware of these policies and their consequences.

[9] "Past-presencing" describes how "people variously draw on, experience, negotiate, reconstruct, and perform the past in their ongoing lives." Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (London: Routledge, 2013), 234. See also Reuben Rose-Redwood et al., "Monumentality, Memoryscapes, and the Politics of Place," 2022, 451.

placed at Detmold following the unification of the German Empire. These co-occurring modes constellate a German memoryscape that sediments American settler colonialism as Germans in American become German-American.

Memorializing Personal Piety

Thousands of German settlers moved into the territories that Americans had forced the Ho-Chunk and Dakota from.[10] Both Wisconsin and Minnesota were heavily populated by Germans who altered and marked Indigenous lands to anchor meaningful settler relationships. The Endres Chapel is a local and personal example of how settler inscription unfolds for individual families by sanctifying settler claims to Indigenous lands.

Religious conversion was a central method for re-writing Indigenous stories of place. Catholic missionary work was central to making it possible for the many German settlers to make this land a home. The French Jesuits and their successors were particularly active in attempting to replace the storied landscapes of relationality that Indigenous peoples inhabited with one that was Christian.[11] Once the U.S. began exerting more influence in the Upper Midwest in the 1830s and 1840s, the Catholic church was one of the primary organizations supporting settlement as German-speaking central Europeans began arriving in large numbers. Missionaries established and serviced parishes throughout the south-central region of Wisconsin.[12] One such parish was the small village of Martinsville. Missionaries presided over

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[10] Johannes Strohschänk and William G. Thiel, *The Wisconsin Office of Emigration 1852 - 1855 and Its Impact on German Immigration to the State* (Madison, Wis: Univ. of Wisconsin, 2005); Heike Bungert, Cora Lee Kluge, and Robert Ostergren, eds., *Wisconsin German Land and Life* (Madison, Wis: Max Kade Inst. for German-American Studies, Univ. of Wisconsin, 2006).

[11] See Leavelle, *The Catholic Calumet: Colonial Conversions in French and Indian North America*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012)., especially Chapter 3, "Geographies."

[12] Heinrich Halder, "Die Wiltener Mission in den USA im 19. Jahrhundert" (Innsbruck, Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck, 1996).

small Masses held in German families' homes until the community constructed a church in 1850. Just over the hill, my ancestor Johann Endres settled and built a chapel as his own contribution to this German memoryscape.

Johann and his twin brother Peter were the oldest sons of Franz Endres.[13] Franz was a relatively successful farmer – he owned an equivalent of nearly 180 acres that included meadows, farm fields and timberland. The family, however, decided to seek new opportunities in Wisconsin. Franz sold all his property to fund the journey for himself, Johann, Peter and their immediate families in 1852. Within two years, Johann owned 160 acres where he farmed and kept some livestock. By 1860, Johann's 160 acres had an estimated value of $1,500, but 120 were considered unimproved and included a large hill. This is where he built the St. Mary of the Oaks chapel in 1857. He ostensibly built it following a local diphtheria epidemic. Family oral tradition recounts that Johann built his little chapel to fulfill a promise made in sincere prayer to the Blessed Mother if she would protect his family. His gratitude "stands as a Historical Monument to the people who settled there and of John Endres' character and beliefs." Regardless of the veracity of the story behind his intentions, Endres hauled wood and locally quarried stone to the top of a hill overlooking what is today still known to settlers as Indian Lake. The chapel is of a style common to their German homelands in the Mosel River valley; and like chapels in the old homeland, Endres built his at the top of a hill, reminiscent of other hilltop sites used for stations of the cross.

After Johann's death in 1869, the property remained in his direct family until 1923. The last private owner was John Marx, Jr. who bought the property in 1959. Throughout these transitions, the owners maintained the chapel. When Marx donated the chapel and one acre of

[13] Barbara Endres collected and self-published the following as the *Endres Family Genealogy*, 1975.

land surrounding it to Dane County as a park in 1963, he added a clause to the land deed stating, "That the one room chapel is to be kept up and maintained by... heirs and assigns forever."[14]

Monumental National Sentiments

In New Ulm, the Hermann monument demonstrates a secular mode of German monumentality. As a replica of the *Hermannsdenkmal* in Detmold, Germany, it advances settlers' belonging to the *Kulturgemeinschaft*. Many German revolutionaries and nationalist thinkers came to the U.S. in 1848. Upon arrival, many made new homes in the growing metropolitan centers of the Midwest. Organizations like the Sons of Hermann, however, insisted on the relevance of German heritage in the face of anti-immigrant hostilities. New Ulm was founded in 1857 to maintain a secular, socialist German utopia on the American frontier - it would be a distinctly German enclave imbued with the idealism of 1848, anchored by deep roots in Germanic culture.

German settlers wanted to cultivate their new community at edges of U.S territory. At the time, the American frontier ran through the prairies along the Minnesota River valley. Following the U.S.-Dakota War, German New Ulmers needed to sediment their belonging to the land in America while simultaneously sustaining the connection to the *Kulturgemeinschaft* of the German nation. Julius Berndt, a land surveyor, architect, and militia volunteer suggested building a Hermann monument to accomplish this. Berndt belonged to The Order of the Sons of Hermann (O.d.H.S.), a German mutual aid society that supported the *Kulturgemeinschaft* in the US with explicit reference to Hermann and his values. As the first president of the local New Ulm Lodge No. 21 formed in 1881, Berndt proposed creating a Hermann Monument modeled after the one in Germany.

[14] Rose Ann Blau, "Chapel Museum, Historic Site St. Mary of the Oaks," June 23, 2002.

By replicating the Detmold Monument, Berndt and other New Ulm O.d.H.S. members wanted to show how they too embodied the Germanic values that had been attributed to Arminius. Arminius appears in Tacitus's *Annals* as "the liberator of Germany" who defeated three Roman legions in the Teutoburger Forest. The reception of the Arminius story became central to articulating the virtues ascribed to Germans: loyalty, bravery, honesty and a sense of justice.[15] The mythic proportions of the Arminius story created a unifying and homogenizing cultural past for the *Kulturgemeinschaft* - to which the German New Ulmers continued to belong. Such an expression of German-ness would buttress their identity against Anglo-Americans and the Dakota that they had replaced. Berndt's plan went into motion in 1885. He and J.B. Velekanje sent letters to the O.d.H.S., framing the monument as a national endeavor – to be built by and for all Germans across America.[16] Velekanje wanted this monument for the "people which is still purely German" because it would hold watch and assure them of the German friendship and loyalty that Arminius had passed on to them. The presence of this hero, in monumental form, would strengthen them to maintain an unwavering, German watch over the frontier following the [17]U.S.-Dakota War.

The statue belies the violent displacement of Dakota from their homelands, reiterating the belief that the German settlers were victims of the Dakota's misplaced outrage. This narrative was rearticulated over the 12-year process of constructing the monument. In 1888, the New Ulm O.d.H.S. hosted an elaborate ceremony to lay the foundation stone for the structure on which

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[15] Hellenbrand and Sterling-Hellenbrand, "Narratives of Belonging."

[16] "Verhandlungen und Berichte der National Groß-Loge, O.d.H.S in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-America in 17. Convention versammelt am 1., 2., und 3. September 1885 zu Philadelphia, Penn." Milwaukee, 1885, 55.

[17] *Ibid*, 56.

Hermann would stand. The ceremony enacted a collective commemorative ritual connecting the German New Ulmers to the story of Arminius and the Germanic tribes. Albert Wolff of the Minnesota Volksblatt emphasized this connection to the *Kulturgemeinschaft*. He proclaimed the monument was a symbol of New Ulm's role in "the great army of the whole German brotherhood for the planting, cultivation and spread of Germans on the land of the American republic."[18] When Hermann finally arrived in 1897, New Ulm again hosted an elaborate celebration - this time in conjunction with the O.d.H.S. National Convention. National O.d.H.S. president Julius Schuerze lauded the Germans who had come to the American frontier "as poor people, but with thrift and energy converted large tracts of wilderness into beautiful fields and gardens."[19] Anglo-Americans also celebrated the efforts of the Germans in New Ulm, consciously incorporating them into the American, settler collective. At the dedication, Minnesota Governor David Clough leaned on a long tradition of Anglo-Saxonism, linking Arminius/Hermann to American republicanism, [20]He declared that "like the old German tribes…[o]ver divided nationalities we must hold the Hermann vision of a unity of race in a free government." For Clough, the Germans had defended not only New Ulm, but also the American frontier. Clough asserted that "a united and free people" had a fought for a "unity of race and language and free institutions in the old forests where Varus and the Roman legion were swept to destruction"[21] - and the Germans did the same in New Ulm.

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[18] "Festrede des Herrn Albert Wolff" *New Ulm Review*, June 27, 1888.

[19] "Taken by Storm," *New Ulm Review*, September 29, 1897.

[20] Sarah LaVoy-Brunette (Ojibwe) and Dusti C. Bridges, "Anglo-Saxonism and Indigenous Dispossession: Land-Grab Universities and the Emergence of Medieval Studies," *Speculum* 100, no. 1 (January 1, 2025): 46–78.

[21] "Taken by Storm."

Hermann's presence amplifies the valences of German nationalism in America. The monument instantiates narratives of belonging that strengthen the *Kulturgemeinschaft* and sediment German settler memory in the U.S. It remains a clear delineation of identity: the monument sacralizes a secular, national story to elevate the *Kulturgemeinschaft*'s supposed national character, inscribing Hermann's Germanic values onto Indigenous homelands.

Sedimenting the German Midwest in American Settler Colonialism

Both monuments, the Endres Chapel and Hermann, sediment the settler colonial legacies of Germans in the Midwest. German settlers thereby create a memoryscape that layers their own histories and cultural identities to reify narratives of replacement. Though they remain particularly German modes of monumentality, each becomes a potent manifestation of American settler colonialism. Their continuing presence signals the persistent presence of the stories they embody. The turn towards historic preservation in the late 1960s and the 1970s was an important moment for both monuments: in 1973, the Hermann monument was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); and only two years later, the Endres Chapel was incorporated into a Dane County Park.

The land the Endres Chapel stands on was first donated to Dane County in 1963, which included a stipulation that the county provide maintenance of and ongoing access to the structure. In 1975 the Dane County Parks Commission acquired additional acreage creating Indian Lake County Park. Clergy from St. Martin's and students from the village school continued to walk the four miles from Martinsville to the chapel for mass once per month. Local families regularly prayed the rosary on the way to the chapel (a practice that some still practice

today), and others climbed the hill to pray for rain during droughts.[22] In 1994, a Madison-based group, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, proposed removing the chapel from county property. The Foundation brought a complaint on behalf of a resident who was offended at the presence of a Catholic shrine at the park. Annie Gaylor, spokesperson for the organization, suggested the county "divest itself of this religious establishment" and replace it with something secular.[23] At the very least, so Gaylor, all religious symbols (crosses, altar, paintings and stained-glass windows) could be removed. Park Director Ken LePine responded that the chapel was a site of spiritual significance equal to Native American mounds, many of which are also under County Park management. Gaylor refuted LePine's comment, saying that no one is buried at the chapel and the historic marker outlining Endres' story is unhistoric because of its references to faith healing. County officials rearticulated that they would maintain the structure in compliance with the law. They cited the State Historical Review Board, maintaining that religious structures were included if they related to art, architecture or political thinking of a particular period.[24]

While memorials like the chapel represent the values of the people at the time of their construction, they also instantiate the ongoing sedimentation of settler narratives into memoryscapes. In response to Gaylor's statement, Presbyterian Reverend Richard Pritchard declared that "religious heritage is a basic, integral part of our American history" and "[t]o eliminate all references from public places" was an affront.[25] Reverend Pritchard's caustic

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[22] Blau, "Chapel Museum, Historic Site St. Mary of the Oaks," 4.

[23] Art Drake, "Indian Lake County Park chapel comes under fire," Waunakee Journal, August 1994, in Blau, 36–37.

[24] Gail Perry-Daniels. "Atheist: I got Death Threats," *The Capital Times*, Aug 11, 1994, in Blau, 40.

[25] William R. Wineke, "Pritchard right at home – again," *Wisconsin State Journal*, Aug 6, 1994, in Blau, 39.

response to Gaylor demonstrates Whyte's vicious sedimentation. The chapel is not equivalent to effigy and burial mounds; its presence on public land upholds the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their longstanding relationships to this land. Though the Endres chapel was not built to commemorate that dispossession directly, it still anchors a settler moral geography that is predicated on displacement.

Similarly, the City of New Ulm restored the Hermann monument in 1973, and NRHP designation provided an avenue for financial support. The city's nomination outlined the story of Arminius and the story of the Sons of Hermann in the U.S. Alluding to the defensive nature of the monument structure, the asset detail mentions the original intention for the dome to serve as a weapon depository within the monument.[26] This downplays, however, that German settlers should draw strength and literal defense from their ancient hero against Dakota reprisal. In 2000, the community again sought support to construct an interpretive center. This time New Ulm received a boost from Congress. A concurrent resolution passed unanimously to recognize the monument as a "national symbol of the contributions of Americans of German heritage."[27] Echoing governor Clough from 1897, Minnesota Senator Rod Grams claimed, "the story of Hermann the Cheruscan parallels that of the American Founding Fathers" and the monument was dedicated to honor "the spirit of freedom." Again, the direct connection to the U.S.-Dakota War remains largely hidden from the monument's incorporation into national history.

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[26] "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form." National Parks Service, September 26, 1973.

[27] Senate Concurrent Resolution 106 – Recognizing the Hermann Monument and Hermann Heights Park in New Ulm, Minnesota, as a National Symbol of the Contributions of Americans of German Heritage. S 106. 106th Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record 146, pt. 4: 5782–5783, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CRECB-2000-pt4/CRECB-2000- pt4-Pg5782/summary>, last accessed May 28, 2024.

Conclusion

These two German monuments remain standing today. Both are manifestations of a *Kulturgemeinschaft* – a German nation bound by historical and cultural continuity, yet not limited by geography. Being folded into American settler society, they reflect the social, cultural and political trends by which Germans in America became German-Americans. In their different modes of monumentality, they form a German component in the sedimentation of settler colonialism over Indigenous homelands of this region. The chapel's sacred mode is a recognizable symbol of religious confession that carries ethnic overtones, and Hermann's secular mode explicitly connects to the mythic origins of that nation. Collectively, they mark a claim to Indigenous homelands articulated through nineteenth century German values. Each carries those values, memorializing personal piety and national sentiments to layer the German Midwest over the violent removal of Ho-Chunk and Dakota from their homelands.

Verjüngung – Discipling

Die Verjüngung der Welt is more than a rejuvenation
More than a renewal of worldliness
It is a Jünger werden

Einer our youthfulness Gesellen
Rooting, Wachsen
Testing the depths
Die Verjüngung der Welt ist
Ein uns-der-Welt-Jünger-werden-Lassen
A discipling ourselves to the world

Ihre Stimme können wir hören
Wenn sie wellenschlagend stark
uns anschreit, überflutet
wenn sie durch Laubblätter
leise flüstert
Und jeden Ton dazwischen
Wenn wir in sie einilousnen

Ihre Kraft können wir erkennen
Wie aus jedem Feuerglut strahlt
ein Stück des lebenden
Universums
Kleine Funken der milliarden Explosionen
Die das Himmelszelt beleuchten
Wenn wir in sie einiluogen

Unsere Wurzeln können wir vertiefen
In diesen Boden sinken lassen
Verstärkern
Ernähren
Annähern
Der Möglichkeit der Veränderung
Mit offenem Herzen

Der Welt Jünger werden
Uns verjüngen
Means being ready to grow anew
There
Where we are

Here, I engage with the concept of *Verjüngung*. The word entered German vocabulary as a direct translation of "rejuvenate" - renewed youthfulness. It is also an important forestry word, translated into English forestry as "regeneration" – the next crop of trees. The former was a central concept for Novalis (Friedrich Hardenberg), one of the early German Romantics, in the lead up to the French Revolution (which in its ripple effects pushed revolutionaries that came to New Ulm in particular).

Novalis' talked about the "rejuvenation of the world" (Verjüngung der Welt) in his piece Christendom or Europe (Die Christenheit oder Europa). Novalis was a devote Catholic interested in reconnecting with the sacred, transcendent divinity of the world. The term resonates with my own experience growing up Catholic. Through my interactions with Indigenous conceptions of the world and in relation to Indigenous Studies, what his idea offers is this idea of "discipling" ourselves to the world as it is in its becoming.

I take this reconceptualization of *Verjüngung* here quite literally: in German: Jesus' apostles, his disciples, are his "Jünger," the people who follow him and his teachings closely. Being a disciple here is not about taking something blindly as fact and uncritically passing it along. This is different from "discipline" - that is about (uncritically) discipling oneself to the rigidity of a particular structure; a structure that deals epistemic violence to those upon who that structure is forced and to its adherents.

For me, Verjüngung is about becoming a disciple to the world. It is about the process of learning and testing the extent or the depth of our knowledge. By following a model in person and in practice that has shown us pathways to living well, we develop skills for exploring more depth that drives a continually unfolding process towards deeper understanding. "Discipling oneself to the world - Der Welt Jünger werden" is actually about recognizing those points of

contact and working with them. This again links to Novalis: he frames interacting with more-than-human beings as the respectful acknowledgement of asymmetries.[1]

Asymmetries are the basic principle that we can never know everything - there are people who know more than other people about different things. When we can acknowledge difference, we can acknowledge asymmetries and we can do so respectfully. That is, for me, the primary issue at stake in the Hermann the German monument as a response to the US Dakota War and the story of German settlement in New Ulm. The statue is actually a warning (Mahnmal) to what it looks like when we disciple ourselves to the wrong discipline. As the Dakota letter to the editor suggests, the Germans in New Ulm could have made different choices based on the histories that they're drawing from. They chose not to disciple themselves to a world of asymmetry that is complex, malleable, flexible, and adaptable. Instead they chose aligning themselves with the structures of violence and oppression that are American settler colonialism. To me, what Hermann the German actually stands for is the inability to be open to other possibilities.

[1] Kuzniar, Alice. "A Higher Language: Novalis on Communion with Animals." *The German Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (2003): 426-442.

IV. Narratives of Belonging: Arminius and Autochthony between the Minnesota Prairie and German Forests

The first season of *Barbaren* (*Barbarians*), premiered on Netflix in 2020.[1] The series is an original German-language production that dramatizes the legend of Arminius and his victory over the Romans in the year 9 CE. *Barbarians* joins a catalog of recent television series that celebrate a variety of national historical fictions, particularly those that have defined what we now know as Europe. Collectively, these series reveal that, in a supposedly post-national Europe, we continue to tell national histories – stories of place and of these places are still tied to national mythologies.[2]

In Netflix's retelling, the ancient story of Arminius resonates in the present as a narrative of belonging. The story itself follows the general arc of the familiar tale in which the Germanic tribes defeat the Roman legions led by Varus. The first season shows the brutal and exploitative Roman occupation of Germanic territory, the return of Arminius (Ari) to the lands from which he was taken as tribute when he was a child, and his eventual accession to the leadership of his tribe. Season one ends with the defeat of the Romans and the death of Varus. The second season, released in 2022, picks up one year later, focusing on the consequences of the battle as the Germanic tribes seek to keep the Romans at bay, even as more reinforcements arrive. Once again, despite military and personal challenges, the Germanic tribes persevere against a common (Roman) foe.

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[1] For ease of reference, we will refer to the series by its English title *Barbarians*.

[2] They represent stories of national origin "from before": notably the origins of England before the Norman invasion or before "an" England (*Vikings* or *Last Kingdom* or even *Vikings: Valhalla*, which began in 2022; the seeds of the Ottoman Empire before Osman (*Resurrection* or *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, 2014–19).

Barbarians underscores how the idea of autochthony resonates through the Arminius legend in German-language popular culture today. The concept lies arguably at the heart of the question that Ari asks of his people: who are we? In the episode called "Treason" (S1E5), Ari makes an impassioned speech to the Reiks about family and heritage. The episode is primarily named for Ari's actions to betray Varus: he refuses to take the other Reiks' children. At the Thing, Ari tells them how he was taught to forget his family, to despise his people, their way of life, their beliefs, and his roots – roots that they share. The Germanic peoples could not stand together, Ari says, and the Romans "ripped me from our soil because my father was alone."[3] A parallel scene occurs in the second season (S2E5 "Doomed"). With news of Romans arriving on the river, Ari's wife, Thusnelda, and their friend Folkwin are on their way to seek reinforcements from allied chieftain Marbod. When they make camp for the night, Folkwin asks Thusnelda why she married Ari; after all, she has always loved Folkwin. In answer, Thusnelda takes a handful of soil and presents it to Folkwin, who is not impressed: "That's dirt," he says. Thusnelda contradicts him. "No," she says. "This is us. Our ancestors. For me, it's about what was once here. And what is here today."[4] Thusnelda reiterates that this soil represents their connection to ancestors and future generations; it gives her purpose to fight against the Romans. This scene is a literal depiction of autochthony: the deep, potent, and elemental attachment to place. The soil becomes that locus for belonging, manifested in the social and cultural relationships that a people have with their territory.

The idea that any one person or group of people could be rooted in the soil of a particular place is fraught in the German context. Yet the writers/directors of *Barbarians* stepped explicitly

[3] 30:33–30:38

[4] 38:00–39:14

into this arena, noting: "German nationalists, including the Nazis, have used the battle as an ideological rallying point – a supposed foundational moment for German civilization and proof of their superior pedigree and fighting skills." The *Barbarians*' creators faced the dilemma of how to depict the period for a broad audience without giving "oxygen to extremists."[5] *Barbarians* seeks to reclaim a German "indigenous" past, fighting against Roman imperialism, connecting to the land and to pre-Christian spiritualities in ways that escape the cultural baggage of Nazism.[6] The story of Arminius has been mobilized to propagate the idea that the Germans were a "noble tribal people with a clear connection to the forests and lands of Central Europe" and they had "suffered at the hands of an expansive, colonial civilization."[7] Unfortunately, while they critique previous appropriations of Arminius' story, the creators of *Barbarians* seem unable to avoid some of the same pitfalls. In the next section, we will outline the problematic underpinnings of this performance. The idea of a singular German cultural essence – one that can be analyzed, mapped, and governed – has its roots in the early nineteenth century, providing a foundation for the "greater German cultural community" (or *Kulturgemeinschaft*) that would grow to encompass Germans in the Midwest.[8] In the section after that, we describe how the

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[5] Thomas Rogers, "Reclaiming, on Netflix, an Ancient Battle Beloved of Germany's Far Right," *The New York Times*, Wednesday, October 28, 2020, <https://advance-lexis-com.proxy006.nclive.org/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615G-5RG1-DXY4-X0HV-00000-00&context=1516831>, last accessed May 28, 2024.

[6] Throughout this essay, we apply the term "indigenous" to Germans' imagined sense of their own indigeneity. The term "Indigenous" refers to Native peoples of North America; the terms "*Indian*" or "Indianer" will refer to images that non-Indigenous people have constructed of the former. See "Introduction," in *Indianthusiasm: Indigenous Responses*, ed. Hartmut Lutz, Florentine Strzelczyk, and Renae Watchman, Indigenous Studies Series (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2020), 12.

[7] H. Glenn Penny, "Not Playing Indian: Surrogate Indigeneity and the German Hobbyist Scene," in *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences*, ed. H. Glenn Penny and Laura R. Graham (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 169–205, esp. 182–83.

[8] The greater German cultural community encompasses all ethnic Germans living outside of the contemporary nation state of Germany. H. Glenn Penny, *German History Unbound from 1750 to the*

narrative of Hermann refracts Germanic medieval traces through the nationalizing and racializing prisms of nineteenth-century medievalisms to articulate a German settler-colonial identity opposed to Indigenous (and non-German) Others that persists in the present. In the following section we will discuss the Hermann statue in New Ulm as a manifestation of nineteenth-century medievalism in a web of multi-valent tribalisms through which multiple affinity groups with shared heritage can articulate expressions of belonging (see Fig. 1). The Germans in New Ulm form one such group, for example, defining themselves through a common understanding of Germanness and thereby connecting themselves to Germans in Europe or other Germans in the United States. Settlers form a group defined by colonial encroachment into Indigenous places and spaces. Settlers then demarcated themselves from Indigenous communities, which they tended to see as homogenous. Indigenous communities, however, referred to themselves as human collectives that share relational geographies through cultural practices and diplomatic allegiances.[9] New Ulm's Hermann statue instantiates the complex history of exiling Dakota from their homelands. Finally, we will return to *Barbarians* as a twenty-first-century story unable to escape the imbricated legacies of nineteenth-century medievalisms that still sometimes deeply undergird the narratives of belonging we continue to tell.

Barbarians Past and Present: Norsetalgia, Autochthony, and Germanness

Present (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), vii. German identity thereby gains an "aggregate" and fluid quality, based on various cultures, customs, languages, and states (5).

[9] Očeti Šakowin (Seven Council Fires), for example, describes the seven major divisions – "council fires" – of the Dakota, each with a distinct but similar culture that stretched from contemporary Wisconsin westward across the Northern Great Plains: the Mdewakanton, Wahpekute, Wahpeton, and Sisseton are referred to as the Santee or Eastern Dakota; the Yankton and Yanktonai are referred to as the Western Dakota or often as the Nakota; and the Teton are called Lakota. The historic alliance of these divisions has also been known variously over time as the Sioux or the Great Sioux Nation. Today, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota tribal governments and communities are located in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Montana in the United States, and Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan in Canada.

Barbarians articulates German preoccupations with indigeneity and autochthony. These preoccupations manifest variously as Indianthusiasm (and particularly *Indian* hobbyism) and Norsestalgia; both concepts are relevant to our later discussion of New Ulm. The term "Norsetalgia" has been used to describe Germanic-inflected nostalgia for aspects of peoplehood such as sacred history, geography, and ritual. Nostalgia itself often drives the development of narratives to inscribe identities in places where communities wish to celebrate roots. An imagined past, often enacted through "invented tradition," frequently provides the "comforting collective script" for stories that bind ("glue") a community together.[10] In imagining their own tribal past, observes Frank Usbeck, German nationalists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "romanticized ancient Germanic life and constructed notions about the essence of Germanness, and eventually of the Nordic race."[11] The reception of Tacitus during this period connected with stadial theories that situated forest dwellers in a prior stage of evolutionary development. This "woodland ethnicity" was the basis for conceiving of a common experience or even heritage shared by American Indians and Germans/Nordics that became the "fellow tribesman" motif.[12] Germans could see remnants of their own indigenous past as a diversity of connected tribes in the medieval source materials. Norsetalgia, in this way, offered the ideological ground to claim a German indigenous experience. Their quasi-indigenous experience,

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[10] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 42.

[11] Frank Usbeck, *Fellow Tribesmen: The Image of Native Americans, National Identity, and Nazi Ideology in Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 56.

[12] Usbeck, *Fellow Tribesmen*, 13. This tribalism held out even in the imperial period, as Penny notes, since "it was common for Germans to envision their state as first and foremost an aggregate of tribes (Stämme) […] [and] tribes (defined in a variety of ways, e.g., as regional, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural groups) were often evoked during political debates at the national and regional level" (Penny, "Not Playing Indian," 184).

evidenced by the Arminius story, provides the foundation for differentiating the German nation from the British, French, and Anglo-American.[13]

Norsestalgia encompasses the ways that the Germanic tribes themselves are perceived through medievalism in the present. The German obsession with *Indians* (*Indianer*) similarly functions as a cultural space to locate German anxieties about place and belonging; Indianthusiam captures that fascination with American Indians as these anxieties about autochthony are transposed through the appropriation of Indigenous clothing, languages, and cultural practices. Over the past 200 years, Germans have envisioned a parallel experience of resisting imperialism and colonialism. The appropriation of Indigenous cultural practices and language morphs into Indianthusiasm/hobbyism as the material manifestations of these anxieties. Hartmut Lutz coined the neologism "Indianthusiasm" as a term to capture the convergence of "essentializing bioracial" and "cultural ethnic" identity into stereotypes that historicize and relegate *Indians* to the past. Indianthusiasm finds its most recognizable form in hobbyism, the clubs and groups that set up camps with tipis and dress in what they have researched to be historically authentic Native dress. Describing this as a German "surrogate Indigeneity," Penny articulates the way that hobbyists deploy performance of a romanticized pre-reservation past and its presumed authentic indigeneity. Hobbyism and the performance of *Indian*ness serve as a surrogate for the Germans own lost Indigeneity, as it is more difficult (visually at least) to connect to Nazi ideologies of racial superiority that are more explicitly recognizable in, for example, revivalisms of pre-Christian Germanic heathenism/paganism.[14] Hobbyists themselves

[13] The Germans' own indigenous experience would supposedly enable them to be "better, kinder, and more just colonizers than other European nations if they were just granted that opportunity" (Lutz, Strelczyk, and Watchman, "Introduction," 14).

[14] See Stefanie von Schnurbein, *Norse Revival* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

draw the arc from their current activities back to Tacitus since his depiction of Arminius as a unifier clears a path for "the sensational national history of Germany that dominates the discourse on German character and identity."[15]

While *Barbarians* is not *Indian* hobbyism, it clearly offers a performance of German indigeneity. In that sense, it exemplifies Norsetalgia. While the material forms of each may be different, the cultural anxieties and processes at work that underpin them are the same: regardless of whether the performance is expressed in the coded symbology of central European Germanic culture or these codes are transposed by appropriating someone else's Indigenous culture. For this reason, it is also important to trace other valences through the reception of Arminius as it meets the revival of Siegfried through the work of nineteenth-century German philologists and intellectuals. These valences expand, and the figures conflate, through the articulation of German(ic) medievalisms in text and image that then permeate the *Kulturgemeinschaft* and find expression in the Hermann statue in New Ulm.

As an expression of German "heritage" on the Minnesota prairie, the Hermann monument leverages medievalism and nostalgia through the dynamics of settler-colonial inscription. Kyle Whyte, Chris Caldwell, and Marie Schaefer define settler colonialism as "a form of oppression in which settlers make place for themselves by permanently and ecologically inscrib[ing] homelands of their own onto Indigenous homelands." Territory becomes a meaningful homeland for settlers when they engrave and embed their "origin, religious, and cultural narratives, ways of life, and political and economic systems (e.g., property)" into the environmental dimensions of a

[15] Penny quotes an interview with one hobbyist who said "'If you really want to understand the German fascination with American Indians you have to read Tacitus'" (Penny, "Not Playing Indian," 183).

place.[16] Considering settler colonialism in terms of how settler-ecologies are actively inscribed offers a framework for understanding how cultural erasure and the appropriation of Indigenous homelands have been institutionalized and become self-perpetuating. Settler colonialism in its ecological dimensions is about autochthonic inscriptions; settler-ecological relationships are made culturally meaningful to narrate and affirm their efforts to re-place Indigenous peoples.[17] Hermann's presence in Minnesota underscores the complex process of autochthonic inscription for settlers to claim that place as their own.

Unconsciously, *Barbarians* participates in this complex process; in fact, it naively seeks to recenter German indigeneity while foregoing Indianthusiast hobbyism. It does not engage with the histories of Indianthusiasm in Germany as they are connected to the Arminius story through New Ulm. These histories are, however, are also part of a broader process of writing a group into the story of a place and of shaping the trajectories of how those stories continue to unfold. Hermann the German's presence in New Ulm grafts "traces" of the medieval onto the colonized landscape to express German American settler-colonial identity.[18] The emplacement of a Germanic past for German settlers who have displaced American Indians becomes an expression of autochthony that, we argue, employs medievalism broadly to drive the process of heritage-

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[16] Kyle Whyte, Chris Caldwell, and Marie Schaefer, "Indigenous Lessons about Sustainability Are Not Just for 'All Humanity'," in *Sustainability: Approaches to Environmental Justice and Social Power*, ed. Julie Sze (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 149–79 (158).

[17] Zenker, "Autochthony, ethnicity, indigeneity and nationalism." See also M. J. Dockry, K. Hall, W. Van Lopik, et al. "Sustainable Development Education, Practice, and Research: An Indigenous Model of Sustainable Development at the College of Menominee Nation, Keshena, WI, USA," *Sustain Science* 11 (2016): 127–38.

[18] These medievalisms allow their adherents to create a past that reflects their desires and to build an identity through a relationship with history that shapes a present from a past as it was but also as it might have been. See Tison Pugh and Angela Jane Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2013), 10.

making. Before we discuss New Ulm, then, we will briefly discuss key strands of German medievalism that contributed to the statue's creation.

Arminius, Meet Siegfried: Medievalism and the Construction of Germanness in the Nineteenth Century

In 1895, the *New York Times* reported on the planned monument in New Ulm and offered a short history of the Sons of Hermann.[19] The organization, says the article, aims to "foster German customs and German benevolence" on the American continent. The language of the article describes the "new world" organization in terms reminiscent of "old world" chivalry. The Hermann statue forms a nexus at which nostalgia, cultural memory, and the desire to belong coalesce around traces of the premodern past. These traces create interlocking narratives that connect a German past to a German American present, thus contributing to the broader *Kulturgemeinschaft* (cultural community) that transcended geography for German diaspora communities.[20] In his oration celebrating the groundbreaking for the Hermann monument in New Ulm, Albert Wolff (editor-in-chief of the *Minnesota Volksblatt*) further articulates the monument's significance for the *Kulturgemeinschaft* as a "symbol for the full accomplishments of our nation, which we sought for ourselves and humanity in the nearly two thousand years since Armin was born." The statue will exude the "un-tamed rawness of Germanic primordial power today, in which the German people now stand, in shining grandeur as the foremost of the

[19] Anyone who is "versed in the German language" and who is of "good character" and "sound body" can become a member, regardless of religious and political affiliations. However, "loyalty to the American Government is positively demanded." "Die Hermann's Soehne, An Order with An Honorable Record for Benevolence," <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1895/05/19/102513979.pdf>, last accessed May 28, 2024.

[20] The term *Kulturgemeinschaft* describes a community that Penny calls "unbounded" because affinity can be preserved through time and space. Traveling or migrating did not require "relinquishing a connection to Germanness" (Penny, *German History Unbound*, 20).

Culture-nations of the world."[21] Vigilantly standing watch over the German pioneer city of New Ulm, says Wolff, Hermann will serve as a bulwark for the preservation of the Germanness as it was and is, and as the beacon for German culture in America.[22] The rhetoric surrounding the origins of the Hermann statue demonstrates how the *Kulturgemeinschaft* could adopt and maintain narratives of its past to shape its present; in this case, for Wolff and his German American contemporaries, the story of Hermann is further undergirded by the German nationalist medievalisms that one can trace through the philological and literary endeavors of the Grimms and their contemporaries.[23]

Arminius is certainly not medieval. It was Tacitus, writing his *Annals* in the first century, who had praised "the liberator of Germany" that "threw down the challenge to the Roman nation" and battled bravely in a war "without defeat."[24] This liberator figure captured the imagination of Ulrich von Hutten and other German humanists in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, contributing to a nascent national consciousness that the Humanists continue to cultivate and expand.[25] The popularity of Hermann/Arminius increases significantly in nineteenth-century intellectual circles buttressed by the enthusiastic embrace of Germanic medieval literature, especially the *Lay of the Nibelungs*, a work that German intellectuals wanted to celebrate as a or

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[21] "Festrede des Herrn Albert Wolff, gehalten bei der Grundsteinlegung des Hermanns Denkmals in New Ulm, am 24. Juni 1888," *New Ulm Review*, June 27, 1888.

[22] "Festrede des Herrn Albert Wolff."

[23] This is the premise of Jakob Norberg in *The Brothers Grimm and the Making of German Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[24] Tacitus, *The Annals*, trans. A. J. Woodman with Introduction and Notes (Cambridge: Hackett, 2004), 82.

[25] Hans Kloft, "Die Idee einer deutschen Nation zu Beginn der frühen Neuzeit. Überlegungen zur Germania des Tacitus und zum Arminius Ulrichs von Hutten," in *Arminius und die Varusschlacht. Geschicht-Mythos-Literatur*, ed. Rainer Wiegels and Winfried Woesler (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1995), 196–210, esp. 208.

the German national epic.[26] Siegfried shared virtues that Tacitus had ascribed to Germans and that Germans espoused: loyalty, bravery, honesty, a sense of justice.[27] These were the virtues that Hutten had praised in Arminius in the fifteenth century, starting the Germanic hero on the path toward the idea of a German nation. Heinrich Heine, in his 1840 poem "Deutschland," compared Germany to the young Siegfried who kills the dragon to possess the treasure that includes the imperial insignia. Heine's Siegfried will wear a crown that makes him resemble a reawakened Barbarossa, returning from his long slumber to rule Germany again. Writing for Bismarck's seventieth birthday in 1885, Felix Dahn praises the unifier of Germany who will surpass Siegfried to stand beside the ancient forbear of them both: Armin, or Arminius. Both Hermann and Siegfried became symbols for the new German nation, wielding swords against Romans or dragons, defeating enemies real or fantastic.[28] Siegfried remains the mythological hero, whereas Hermann can embody the battle-ready and combat-tested military leader.[29] Not surprisingly, interest also developed in seeking proof that Siegfried, the hero of the *Lay of the Nibelungs*, derived from Arminius.[30]

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[26] Klaus von See, "Das Nibelungenlied – ein Nationalepos?" in *Die Nibelungen: ein deutscher Wahn, ein deutscher Alptraum; Studien und Dokumente zur Rezeption des Nibelungenstoffs im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Joachim Heinzle and Anneliese Waldschmidt (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), 43–110 (56). The Nibelungelied seems to have satisfied a "general cultural-nationalist desire for a deep vernacular past" (Norberg, *The Brothers Grimm*, 87).

[27] Edward Fichtner, "Constructing Sigfrid: History and Legend in the Making of a Hero," *Monatshefte* 107.3 (Fall 2015): 382–404.

[28] See Volker Gallé, "Der dunkle Siegfried: eine Heldenmutation im allzu langen 19. Jahrhundert," <http://www.nibelungenlied-gesellschaft.de/03_beitrag/galle/nlg-17_galle.html>, last accessed July 1, 2024.

[29] Daniela M. Sechtig, *Arminius vs. Siegfried: Die Entwickling des germanischen Helden in der deutschen Literatur* (Hamburg: Diplomica, 2008), 147.

[30] See Maike Oergel, *The Return of King Arthur and the Nibelungen: National Myth in Nineteenth-Century English and German Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 193–95. See also Busso Diekamp,

The traces of the medievalist past that adhere to the representation of Hermann also channeled visions of an imagined Germanic past, reinforced through the philological projects of the early nineteenth century. In their capacities as authors and editors of numerous German linguistic, cultural, and literary texts, the Grimms and their contemporaries employ their philological projects toward shaping a nationalist agenda grounded in the recovery of medieval narratives that gain new purpose.[31] Along with tales of Hermann and Siegfried, nineteenth-century German literature abounded in metaphors that drew upon images of soil and rootedness to describe the relationship of German-speakers to their common ideal nation – which did not exist in reality. In this context, the work by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm on folk tales reveals a focus on what Norberg calls "cultural particularity, or 'own-ness'." While the *Children's and Household Tales* might have hovered on the "periphery of a nationalist campaign," for example, the possibility of documenting "authentic folk life" was crucial to the "nationalist logic of ideas."[32] Such sentiments support a sense of Germanness, as the seeds of story allow the particularity of life to take root and nourish the eventual *Kulturgemeinschaft*. Vernacular literature could provide those hardy kernels of story from which a nation could grow its history. This history deepens roots, nourishes identity, and creates a home (*Heimat*) that can then migrate with travelers, all of whom receive their storied heritage as a "good angel" to have as a trusted

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"Siegfried und die Nibelungen in Kleinplastiken und Denkmälern," <http://www.nibelungenlied-gesellschaft.de/03_beitrag/diekamp/nlg16_diekamp.htm>, last accessed May 28, 2024.

[31] This is Anderson's "golden age of vernacularizing lexicographers, grammarians, philologists, and litterateurs" whose activities contributed to the shape of European nationalism. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 71.

[32] Norberg translates *Eigenthümlichkeit* as "own-ness," a term often invoked by Wilhelm Grimm (Norberg, *The Brothers Grimm*, 73–74). The term connotes a shift in the project of educating the nation, from a prior focus on the classical and universal to the native and the local. See Jakob Norberg, "German Literary Studies and the Nation," *The German Quarterly* 91.1 (Winter 2018): 1–17, esp. 3.

companion to accompany them wherever they go. Germanic values refracted through Renaissance Humanists like Ulrich von Hutten found expression in idealizations of Siegfried and other newly celebrated heroes, where the heroic Germanic values found in Tacitus became the values of the bourgeoisie: loyalty, chastity, morality, family. These values reverberated through the *Nibelungenlied* and the Arthurian romances of Hartmann von Aue and Wolfram von Eschenbach, reapplied to the social class that claimed the older literature as part of an illustrious – unifying and homogenizing – cultural past. These virtues provided the backbone of the German Culture-Nation in which German diaspora communities also sought to participate/sought membership.[33]

This brings us back to the figure of Arminius, who offers a node around which these mythic German(ic) values in action can coalesce. The mythologization of Arminius that began with Tacitus was amplified by the re-discovery of Germanic language and culture in the "Middle" Ages, ensuring that both could be mobilized to undergird a distinct cultural identity: to establish Germanness, to effect a German nationalist tribalism. In the first half of the nineteenth century, for example, to be German was to be not French (considering Napoleon's occupation of the Rhineland) or not Danish (considering Prussian border conflicts in the 1840s).[34] This identity formation was also taking place among Germans in America, where the *Kulturgemeinschaft* further solidifies around a unifying idea of Germanness in opposition to non-Germans. In this way, the story of the Hermann monument in New Ulm represents a case-study of tribalisms in action. In New Ulm, this was central to the initial effort to create an ethnic enclave apart from Anglo-Americans. New Ulmers identification with Germanness then solidified against the

[33] von See, "Das Nibelungenlied – ein Nationalepos?" 65–67.

[34] Norberg, *The Brothers Grimm*, 45–48, esp. chapter 2.

Dakota in response to what the German settlers perceive as unjustified victimhood because they did not see themselves at fault for the colonial situation created by federal Indian policy.[35]
In the next section, we discuss how the multi-valent stories of Arminius – traveling from the Renaissance through nineteenth-century German medievalisms – become further enmeshed in the complex histories of US settler colonialism in Minnesota. New Ulm's Hermann monument grafts German settler belonging onto the colonized landscape. Between the foundation of the settlement in 1854 and the dedication of the monument in 1897, there are three main phases to consider: the creation of New Ulm; the Dakota responses to settler encroachment; and the German reaction. As an expression of the German *Kulturgemeinschaft*, the monument advances a settler claim to belonging, insisting on the importance and relevance of German heritage in the face of anti-immigrant hostilities from American nativists. Simultaneously, the statue belies the displacement of American Indians by German (and other European) immigrants; the violent dispossession of Dakota homelands that made land available ultimately led to the 1862 US-Dakota War.

Hermann in New Ulm: Imagining Germanness in the United States

The legacy of Hermann in Minnesota has a two-fold interface: the background that comes with those who emigrate from Germany, and the experiences they have in the United States. The conservative backlash to the revolutions of 1848 in Germany drove many nationalist thinkers across the Atlantic. These new arrivals were then confronted with Anglo-American nativism, which reinforced a need to hold on to a distinct Germanness. This Germanness is what organizations like the Turners and the Order of the Sons of Hermann (O.d.H.S.) sought to

[35] H. Glenn Penny, *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 70.

cultivate and maintain in a place like New Ulm, which was established with the intention to be a secular, socialist German utopia, imbued with the idealism of 1848 anchored by deep roots in Germanic culture.[36]

The Turners aimed to provide institutional and ritual supports to preserve the German heritage and culture.[37] After many members emigrated following the upheavals around 1848, they started new Turner groups (*Turnverein*) in the United States.[38] One of those immigrants, Wilhelm Pfaender, helped found the first American Turnverein in Cincinnati. In the face of anti-German violence across the Midwest, Pfaender outlined a vision for "practical Turnerism" in the United States that included the establishment of a frontier colony where Turners could collectively achieve their goal of a "secure existence."[39] This call led eventually to the creation of the Settlement Association of the Socialist Turner Society, which merged with the Chicago Landverein as the German Land Company in 1857.[40] In keeping with Turner ideals, the initial colonists in New Ulm "envisioned creating a cooperative socialist settlement" that would have "commonly held mills and industry" and would include "lots in the town, farmland, garden plots, and timber for all of the original members."[41] This vision imagined an ethnically distinct, German metropolis capable of housing and sustaining 70,000–100,000 residents.[42] The name

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[36] Penny, *Kindred by Choice*, 74.

[37] Norberg, *The Brothers Grimm*, 68–72.

[38] Penny, *Kindred by Choice*, 306 n19.

[39] "Praktische Turnerei," *Die Turnzeitung*, March 29, 1855.

[40] Alice F. Tyler, "William Pfaender and the Founding of New Ulm," *Minnesota History* 30.1 (March 1949): 24–35 (26–27).

[41] Penny, *Kindred by Choice*, 72.

[42] Stephan Fuchs, *German(ic) Toponyms in the American Midwest: A Study of Place, Identity and Heritage. Deutsche und verwandte Toponyme im Amerikanischen Mittelwesten* (Erlangen: Erlanger

"New Ulm" retained its connection to Ulm in Württemberg, the birthplace of many of the original settlers, and thus also to the homelands that would become unified Germany twenty years later.

This settlement took German settlers right to the heart of the federal government's attempts at territorial expansion. To understand Herman in New Ulm, it is imperative to understand the expansion into Dakota territory in some detail. Through a series of treaties between 1805 and 1858, the United States forced the Dakota to cede nearly all their ancestral territory in what is today known as Minnesota. While Europeans had engaged the Dakota in the fur trade since the mid-seventeenth century, the 1805 treaty marked the first Dakota cession of territory. At the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, Fort Snelling was built in 1819 as US influence expanded alongside the presence of settlers. The 1851 treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota ceded nearly all remaining lands in Minnesota and Iowa, nearly 35,000,000 acres, leaving the Dakota with a reservation that was ten miles wide on each side of the Minnesota River, from Lake Traverse in the West to the Little Cottonwood River just outside of New Ulm. US officials took a further portion of this reservation in 1858, claiming that the Dakota had failed to adequately adopt farming and thereby improve their reserved land. Money promised to the Dakota in exchange for these lands often did not reach them. Together, encroaching settlers and the coercive interactions with US agents shrunk Dakota territory and constrained their ability to maintain the traditional lifeways that had sustained them. The resulting despair and anger erupted in the 1862 US-Dakota War.

Geographische Arbeiten, 2013), 88. The Turners suggested various alternate names for this settlement during the merger with the Chicago Landverein, including Germania, Thusnelda, Nibelungen, and Hutten, but they ultimately chose not to rename the settlement for one of these distinctly nationalist figures.

The US-Dakota War lasted six weeks, from August 18 to September 26, 1862. New Ulm was a critical location early in the fighting. On August 17, four Dakota hunters killed a group of settlers near Acton (Meeker County). Instead of surrendering the hunters to the Americans, Dakota community leaders convinced the reluctant Mdwekanton chief Taoyateduta (Little Crow) to lead them against the encroaching settlers. Subsequently, the Dakota war party attacked traders and government officials at the Lower Sioux Agency, as well as some isolated farms and settlements.[43] Anticipating that New Ulm would be the next target, Brown County Sheriff Charles Roos appointed Jacob Nix to organize militias and defend the town. On August 19, a small group of Dakota warriors tested New Ulm's defenses. Four days later, a larger, more organized force returned with more than 600 Dakota warriors led by Chiefs Waŋbdiṭanka, Wabaṡa, and Makato. The intense fighting left most of the town in ruins, and nearly 2,000 townspeople evacuated to St. Peter and Mankato further downriver.[44]

By September 26, a series of US victories forced the Dakota war parties to flee westward. The fighting came to an end when the Dakota Peace Party had negotiated the release of numerous settlers held hostage. Colonel Sibley, leader of the US forces, tried nearly 400 Dakota suspected of participating in the violent attacks on settlers. These rushed trials resulted in a list of 303 men to be executed by hanging, which Sibley forwarded to President Abraham Lincoln.[45] These prisoners were taken to Mankato to await the president's confirmation. Lincoln commuted

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[43] *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, ed. Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988).

[44] Jacob Nix, *The Sioux Uprising in Minnesota, 1862: Jacob Nix's Eyewitness History*, ed. Don Heinrich Tolzmann, trans. Gretchen Steinhauser, Don Heinrich Tolzmann, and Eberhard Reichmann (Indianapolis, IN: NCSA Literatur, 2016).

[45] Angela Cavender Wilson, "Decolonizing the 1862 Death Marches," *The American Indian Quarterly* 28.1 (2004): 185–215, esp. 191.

264 of the sentences. After one more received a reprieve at the last minute, thirty-eight men were executed simultaneously on December 26. Two more men, Shakopee and Medicine Bottle, were captured and executed later for their alleged roles in the War. Additionally, nearly 1,700 women, children, and elders were removed from the Lower Sioux Agency and interred in a concentration camp at Fort Snelling until May 1863.[46] Acts of Congress in February and March 1863 abrogated, or revoked, all treaties between the US government and the eastern Dakota. As a result, all but a few protected groups of Dakota were exiled from Minnesota; the surviving 1,300 Dakota internees were expelled to the newly established Crow Creek reservation.

All these events, from the Turners' vision to the Dakota War, inform the desire of German New Ulmers to articulate their belonging both to the German *Kulturgemeinschaft* and to the land from which they had just driven the Dakota.[47] To assert their belonging, to bind the shared past they perceived to the land they now claimed, the Germans in America leaned on Arminius/Hermann. The Order of the Sons of Hermann was a uniquely American organization that, like the Turners, supported the *Kulturgemeinschaft* in US German communities, but with explicit reference to Hermann and his values.[48] The first lodge was founded in 1840 in New York in response to violence from the Know Nothings and other Anglo-American nativist groups. The name was ostensibly proposed when a speaker remarked: "We again need a

[46] Angela Cavender Wilson, "Introduction: Manipi Hena Owas'in Wicunkiksuyapi (We Remember All Those Who Walked)," *The American Indian Quarterly* 28.1 (2004): 151–69, esp. 152.

[47] Penny calls this a kind of "negative integration" in which the Germans – who had spent much time trying to define themselves against Anglophone Americans – now integrated more quickly into white Minnesota (*Kindred by Choice*, 86).

[48] The Order of the Sons of Hermann was one of more than 100 active German heritage organizations by the twentieth century. The Sons of Hermann sought to be a German national organization in the US, cultivating a bond of brotherhood open to all Germans.

Hermann under whose mighty guidance we may be enabled to trample upon our enemies."[49] Despite the upsurge in German arrivals through the 1840s, the organization expanded very slowly. Their reach was limited to New York before 1848, when the sixth individual lodge was established in Milwaukee. The lodge in Chicago, founded in 1852, was only the eighth. A National Grand Lodge was established in 1857, holding its first convention in Rochester, NY.[50] In 1870, Minnesota joined the rapidly increasing expansion of states that had sections of the Order. The first lodge was organized in St. Paul, followed quickly by a State Grand Lodge in 1871 to support the society's further growth throughout Minnesota. In 1881, New Ulm Lodge No. 21 was established with Julius Berndt as its first president. Born in 1832 in Silesia, Berndt emigrated to the United States in 1852 and came to Chicago. An architect and surveyor, he became the secretary for the Chicago Landverein and contributed to the initial mapping of the New Ulm settlement. Berndt was also present at both battles of New Ulm during the US-Dakota War.[51] The idea to create a Hermann Monument in the United States, and to build it in New Ulm specifically, was Berndt's brainchild.[52] In June 1885 he sent a letter to Minnesota State Grand Lodge President Henry Guthunz. The group in New Ulm was proactive, having "already acquired the necessary spot on one of New Ulm's loveliest hills […] with a marvelous view"

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[49] Albert Clark Stevens, *The Cyclopædia of Fraternities: A Compilation of Existing Authentic Information and the Results of Original Investigation as to More Than Six Hundred Secret Societies in the United States* (New York: E. B. Treat and Company, 1907), 282–83.

[50] By the turn of the twentieth century, however, Sons of Hermann lodges could be found across the country from coast to coast.

[51] *A History of Brown County, Minnesota: Its People, Industries and Institutions; with Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens and Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families*, ed. L. A. Fritsche (Indianapolis, IN: B. F. Bowen, 1916), 187.

[52] In his final report, Berndt vowed to "hold myself accountable for the care of my child and remain in friendship, love and fidelity the Monument-papa.". "Berichte und Verhandlungen der National-Groß-Loge des Ordens der Hermanns-Söhne. Einundzwanzigste Convention versammelt am 21., 22., 23. und 24sten September 1897 zu New Ulm, Minnesota," 94.

overlooking the Minnesota River valley; and they had already assembled a local committee to advocate for the monument. Berndt believed that this should be a national endeavor, spearheaded by the Order of the Sons of Hermann for all Germans in America. As an architect, he offered to start drafting his ideas for the structure that should replicate the one in Detmold (see Fig. 2).[53]

Guthunz responded positively to the idea, and representatives of the Minnesota State Lodge presented Berndt's letter to the seventeenth National Grand Lodge Convention in Philadelphia later that year. They also shared a supporting letter from fellow monument Committee member J. B. Velekanje. He advocated for New Ulm as the site for the monument because it remained an ethnic German settlement, "where German customs, German life and Germans free being" would be undisturbed by American nativism. Despite the attempts of other nationalities to "take this piece of land away," New Ulm remained the most German of German cities.[54] Velekanje emphasized one other main reason speaking for New Ulm as the location for such a monument:

> Despite the dark days that befell New Ulm in the year 1862 in the form of a gruesome Indian war, in which 516 of the city were mowed down and the best blood was lost; despite the dire grasshopper plague that followed the bloody war and brought 7 years of distress and misery to New Ulm and the surrounding settlements; despite all the devastation of the cyclone that wrecked and made a ruin of the slowly recovering city, New Ulm was not defeated, rather it arose like a phoenix from the ash, blood, misery and wreckage to one of the loveliest and most solid cities […] German endurance and German industriousness have brought about this rebirth.[55]

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[53] "Verhandlungen und Berichte der National Groß-Loge, O.d.H.S in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-America in 17. Convention versammelt am 1., 2., und 3. September 1885 zu Philadelphia, Penn." Milwaukee, 1885, 55.

[54] The New Ulm Chamber of Commerce still uses this slogan to attract tourists. "New Ulm 2024: The Official Guide." New Ulm Chamber of Commerce. n.d.

[55] "Verhandlungen und Berichte der National Groß-Loge, O.d.H.S in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-America in 17. Convention," 56.

For Velekanje, the trials of the New Ulm settlers during the US-Dakota War and its aftermath were challenges that only such a strongly German community could withstand. Only a community with a pure German heritage could express the national characteristics of industriousness and endurance to not just survive the tragedies but also recover to become such a beautiful city. Velekanje also notes that other citizens, not just O.d.H.S. members, were enthusiastic about the opportunity to place a memorial to "the one who laid the first foundation for a German nation" and whose Roman enemies even saw in him "spirited far more than a barbarian." Such a monument would watch over this pure German people in the assurance that German friendship and German fidelity provide (two words from the Order's motto).[56] Berndt and his fellow Sons of Hermann in New Ulm had already purchased the property for the monument at its current location; along with other locals, they were already calling it alternately "monument heights" or "Hermann Heights," intending to make it a park space once construction was completed.

Following the convention in which these letters were presented and deliberated, a long, slow process of fundraising began. Berndt maintained that the national nature of the monument meant that the project should be supported by all the member lodges and the National Grand Lodge. Over the next twelve years the monument would be completed, despite many tense debates.[57] The construction on the actual structure of the monument had begun by 1893, even

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[56] "Verhandlungen und Berichte der National Groß-Loge, O.d.H.S in den Vereinitgen Staaten von Nord-America in 17. Convention," 57.

[57] While the Hermann Monument in New Ulm tried to tell a German national story in America, it did not represent all German Americans. This is evident in the repeated protests of the Wisconsin State Lodge that ultimately ended with departure of the Wisconsin Germans from the national association before completion of the project. See "Berichte und Verhandlungen der National Groß-Loge des Ordens der Hermanns-Söhne. Zweiundzwanzigste Convention, versammelt am 17., 18., 19., 20., und 21sten September, 1901 zu San Antonio, Texas," 47.

though the funding question had not been fully resolved. Berndt, along with the other Sons of Hermann in New Ulm and Minnesota, organized two major events to display the grand importance of this monument. They held a ceremony for laying the cornerstone of the structure and the unveiling of the completed monument. These two events claim these Indigenous homelands for German settlers through ritualized performance. The symbols that Berndt and the others employ collectively presence the narrative of Hermann for all Germans in America.

On Sunday June 24, 1888, New Ulm hosted the Minnesota State Lodge Convention, including a ceremony to lay the cornerstone for the plinth on which Hermann would stand. The occasion coincided with the Turner Societies annual festival, leading the largest assembly of distinguished guests and general visitors the city had ever seen.[58] Among the dignitaries from the O.d.H.S. were National Grand President Conrad W. Walther, National Grand Secretary Heinrich Dietz, Illinois Grand President John Eich, and Wisconsin Grand President H. Opitz. The cornerstone ceremony included a procession through the city, led by Captains Burg, Nix, Groetsch, and Geib.[59] Julius Berndt even designed and constructed a triumphal arch that was placed on Centre Street.[60] This ceremony shows a merging of Arminius' story with the story of New Ulm; just as the Germanic tribes had triumphed against an invading force, so had the German New Ulmers. The march enacted a collective commemorative ritual that emphasized the centrality of Hermann's exploits for his descendants in the present. Two further aspects solidified

[58] "Festival Inauguration," *New Ulm Review*, June 27, 1888.

[59] "Festival Inauguration."

[60] Derham Groves, *Feng-Shui and Western Building Ceremonies* (Dumfriesshire: Tynron Press: 1991), 100.

this placemaking as distinctively German in the aftermath of the US-Dakota War: the location itself and the foundation deposits meant to encapsulate the spirit of the structure.[61]

The Sons of Hermann sited the monument on the bluff southwest of the city, overlooking the Minnesota River Valley. Berndt had selected this particular site for the monument because it was the location from which the Dakota launched their attacks on the town. Thus, the monument's presence represented how the events that occurred at this same place were central to the O.d.H.S. understanding of the German *Kulturgemeinschaft* in America.[62] At the groundbreaking ceremony, Wolff asserted that the future New Ulm monument fit in the grand historical narrative of Germans fighting for freedom. It would represent how, in both victory and defeat, the German people had defended themselves against imperial oppression: the Romans in the Teutoburger Wald, Napoleon near Leipzig in 1813, and again at the 1870 battle of Sedan, which ultimately decided the Franco-Prussian War.[63] For Wolff, Hermann would stand here as a protector of his descendants and symbol of their unity. Here, at the location from which Dakota had attacked the city, New Ulm should become the home to Hermann's Watch and so continue to provide the deeper roots for the further expansion of the Germans in America.[64] The National Grand Master Conrad W. Walther from Chicago followed Wolff and looked to the future, saying, "May future years, when all of us will have passed away, witness this monument as the

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[61] Groves, *Feng-Shui and Western Building Ceremonies*, 96.

[62] Groves suggests that this followed a longer Greek tradition of the omphalos (meaning "navel"), originally referring specifically to Delphi, but later used to describe any domed structure built on any geomantically divined centerpoint, of which the Hermann monument is a further example. (*Feng-Shui and Western Building Ceremonies*, 55).

[63] "Festrede des Herrn Albert Wolff."

[64] "Festrede des Herrn Albert Wolff."

center about which the Sons of Hermann a hundred-thousand strong will gather, ever a protector for the glorious, happy freedom of this country."[65]

The items placed in the foundation deposits reinforced the centrality of the Hermann monument, which would be the embodiment of this historical narrative in the present. Such deposits served as a symbolic sacrifice to imbue the structure with a spirit, and Julius Berndt and his co-organizers were deliberate in choosing their deposits.[66] Among assorted memorabilia from the Sons of Hermann themselves, a few items are particularly noteworthy: A badge in memory of the Celebration of Emperor Wilhelm's Birthday March 25, 1888; a Prussian dollar from 1848; Jacob Nix's own "die Hermannsschlacht" Poem, Wolff's Oration discussed previously, and, most importantly, a copy of Nix's *Ausbruch der Sioux-Indianer*.[67] This is Nix's own first-hand account of the battles around New Ulm. He wrote it to address the lack of discussion about New Ulm and the role the settlement played in the US-Dakota War. Anglo- American-/English-language histories seemed to leave out ethnic German settlement, aside from the decisive charge from Flandreau that ended the Second Battle on August 23.[68]

Nine years passed between the cornerstone ceremonies and the final construction of the monument in 1897. To mark the occasion, New Ulm hosted the Order's 21st National Convention, which included a dedication ceremony for the nearly completed monument. An estimated 10,000 people flocked to the town to witness the dedication.[69] Another elaborate

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[65] "Festrede des Herrn Albert Wolff."

[66] Groves, *Feng-Shui and Western Building Ceremonies*, 59–65.

[67] "Festival Inauguration."

[68] Nix, *The Sioux Uprising in Minnesota, 1862*, 12–17.

[69] "Taken by Storm," *New Ulm Review*, September 29, 1897.

ceremony, this included a parade that reporters estimated stretched for two miles through the city up to the monument. New Ulm's identity was on display with floats representing Columbia, Liberty, "Turnvater" Frederick Jahn, and Hermann and with a Roman chariot accompanied by a group dressed as ancient German warriors. The parade, with all the symbolic and historical figures, did more than commemorate Hermann's battle against the Romans again. It also re-actualized its legacy in relation to New Ulm and the US-Dakota War in the arc of US history. Two speakers at the dedication underscored this point specifically. Minnesota Governor David Marston Clough highlighted the Germanic legacy inherent in the institutions that undergird American liberty:

> The preservation by Hermann of the free institutions of Germany and the language of the people from Roman influence, preserved the spark of liberty which the Angles and Saxons and Jutes and the other Teutonic tribesmen later took with them to light their altar fires in Great Britain. Hence it is the free institutions and the love of liberty which our fathers bore hither from Great Britain, from Germany or from Holland, is in some way the embodiment of the freedom for which Hermann struggled in his conflict with Rome. ("Taken by Storm.")

Clough thereby incorporates the German New Ulmers, the Sons of Hermann, and German Americans at large into the generalized settler polity of the United States.[70]71 The monument returns "a unity of race in a free government, resting upon the suffrages of the common people" that Hermann fought for. This unity was lost when Hermann was killed and remains evident in the divided nationalities of their present. Clough insists that this monument "embody in this land

[70] Reginald Horsman addresses this larger context in *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

a loyalty to that old spirit of Hermann's effort" to defeat the "factions for tyranny and disorder" that stand in the way of winning "human brotherhood and freedom of equality" in America.[71]

In his speech, National Grand Lodge President Julius Schuetze said that this monument was not just "a mere likeness of the brave Teutonic warrior"; it is far more "a symbol of lofty aims and noble exertions" that Hermann and his descendants in the Order had achieved ("Taken by Storm"). For Schuetze, Bismarck was one of those descendants – a new Hermann. Schuetze hoped that Bismarck and his accomplishments would likewise be honored 2,000 years hence to "stand as an example of wisdom, patriotism – as the creator of a mighty empire that rose over the ruins of desolation." Like Bismarck's Germany, forged in war, New Ulm emerged from its battles victorious; thus, Schuetze repeats Velekanje's declaration from a decade before. Herman must stand here in New Ulm:

> Well might the stranger ask why this monument, fit by reason of its grandeur to adorn the finest park in the metropolis of America, should have been erected here in the far west. The question is quite in order. The answer is easy. In Germany you will find a monument to Hermann erected and dedicated during the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm, but not at Cologne, or Dresden or Munich. On the contrary, it adorns the little village of Detmold in the vicinity of which Hermann won his greatest battle. Now for similar reasons New Ulm has been selected as the site for this grand statue. Here thirty-five years ago the Germans waged war with the savage and bloodthirsty Indians. Here the German was compelled to defend his dear ones and his home against a cruel and inhumane enemy – the relentless Sioux […] here a battle was fought that in courage, character and results was much like the battle in the Teutoburg forest and makes New Ulm the ideal home for a monument to Hermann ("Taken by Storm").

The monument manifests deep cultural links to Arminius not just as a Roman resistance fighter or defender of liberty but as a representative of German(ic) culture and heritage while German settlers seek to define their place in the society of nineteenth-century America. The ceremonies

[71] "Taken by Storm."

surrounding the dedication solidify the shared experience of the moment into collective memory and history. Hermann's medievalist valences amplify the narratives of belonging that strengthen the *Kulturgemeinschaft* and reinforce German settler autochthony in the United States.

In New Ulm, the heroic narratives around Arminius and German nationalism intersect with and are incorporated by German settler stories. German settlers drew upon them, publicly representing them in a statue like the Hermann monument, to solidify their identity as heirs of a uniquely Germanic medieval legacy in the United States. These heroic settler stories are explicitly linked to the history of earlier displacement of Indigenous peoples by the German (and other European) immigrants. This is evident in the design and construction of the monument, where the dome room is "Romanesque in style and similar to the Norman 'keep' or 'place of defense' […] and originally it was planned as a weapon room in the monument."[72] Not only does the architectural style participate in the narrativization of German history, but it also speaks to the perceived threat the Dakota still posed to the settler project following the US-Dakota War. The design highlights the convergence of form and function to fortify the settlement both materially and figuratively.

A century later, to garner support for preserving the monument, Minnesota's congressional representatives rearticulated Governor Clough's claim that Hermann represents a pan-Germanic cultural affinity for freedom. In April 2000, the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks, Historic Preservation, and Recreation passed a resolution recognizing the Hermann Monument as a marker for the significant contributions of Americans of German heritage. This resolution offers just the most recent example of these links: "Whereas the story of Hermann the Cheruscan

[72] National Parks Service. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form." National Parks Service, September 26, 1973. This intent was also previously pub-lished in a description of the monument just one month before the cornerstone ceremony ("Hermann's Monument," *New Ulm Review*, May 23, 1888).

parallels that of the American Founding Fathers, because he was a freedom fighter who united ancient German tribes in order to shed the yoke of Roman tyranny and preserve freedom for the territory of present-day Germany."[73] By likening Hermann to the Founding Fathers, the resolution positions his battle against the tyranny of the Romans as parallel to the American Revolution. The implication is that the contemporary alliance between the United States and post-reunification Germany rests on the legacies of a shared struggle for democracy and freedom against foes ranging across the last two centuries from George III to twentieth-century communism.

Placing this monument of Hermann in New Ulm was fundamental to settler-placemaking in the United States. By placing markers of a European medievalist past, German settlers solidified their identity as heirs of that legacy on the lands they had taken. Their intentions are clear through the entire process of proposing, designing, and building the monument. This process has remained just as central into the present, in the monument's protected status on the National Register of Historic Places and the phrasing of the Congressional resolution, even as they explicitly elide the direct references to the US-Dakota War. Eliding the explicit connection between the Hermann narrative as part of US settler colonialism is, however, problematic not just for how American politicians in the present have engaged with the statue but for how contemporary Germans engage Hermann/Arminius narratives. Settler colonialism still echoes in recent popular retellings of the story.

Palimpsests of Place: Arminius and Different Narratives of Belonging

[73] SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 106 – RECOGNIZING THE HERMANN MONUMENT AND HERMANN HEIGHTS PARK IN NEW ULM, MINNESOTA, AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICANS OF GERMAN HERITAGE. S 106. 106th Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record 146, pt. 4: 5782–5783, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CRECB-2000-pt4/CRECB-2000- pt4-Pg5782/summary>, last accessed May 28, 2024.

The figure of Hermann monumentalized in New Ulm emerges at a valence point in German diaspora communities. It connects the communities of the upper Midwest to the medievalism of the earlier nineteenth century, through which the Grimms and their contemporaries cultivated – and could then export – their *Kulturgemeinschaft* abroad. This brings us back to the story of Arminius/Hermann and its articulation of Germanness in *Barbarians*. The ancient story of Arminius resonates again in the present as a narrative of belonging, even as it is interpreted anew.

Given the fraught history of Hermann and Arminius, *Barbarians* does attempt to complicate – and combat – the nationalist script. We see this in his name; he is "Ari," whose name becomes the Latin Arminius only after he is taken to Rome. The series also complicates the figure of Ari as a hero. When Ari is confronted with his Roman son Gaius, who has arrived with the reinforcements that came after Varus' defeat, Ari is forced to reckon with his position culturally between the Roman and Germanic worlds. Other characters also consistently call Ari's loyalty into question, as he seems to betray those he claims to love on multiple occasions: in season one, he betrays his foster-father Varus by leading the Germanic warriors against him; in season two, he supports one of his rivals (Marbod) as king. This latter action causes Ari's wife Thusnelda to accuse him of betraying her, his family, his tribe, and thousands of men who trusted him. Trying to counteract the ways in which Germanic culture and its symbols have been misappropriated, the series reaches back to an earlier age: before the Vikings, before the Anglo-Saxons, before Rome declined – and before problematic interpretations. *Barbarians* wants to reach back far enough to recontextualize or reimagine what "German" could mean in the present. It does not, however, delve into the complexity of forced or unforced migration and explore the hybridized identities hinted at through Ari and his Roman son Gaius. In the end, as we catch a

final glimpse of Ari watching the Roman retreat, the series just tells yet another heroic tale of autochthony like *Vikings* or *The Last Kingdom*, capitalizing on the popularity of these other series and participating in their medievalisms by association.

In the twenty-first century, however, reimaginings of Hermann/Arminius can and should engage with complicated (hi)stories that encompass multiple layers of placemaking. Ari's story isolates the Arminius narrative from its insistent resonances like the statue still standing in New Ulm. To re-tell the story of Arminius in a way that is critical of its historical and political usage, one must engage his legacy everywhere – not just in German or in Germany. If Hermann has been used as a way of infusing "unbound" German communities with a sense of Germanness, then a consequential and critical engagement of Hermann's legacy must follow the threads of his narratives back to the communities that made them. While *Barbarians*, for example, attempts to articulate this, it does not engage with how the Hermann monument evokes an imagined history of the Germans as progressing from their barbaric origins to a modern nation, and how these stories of Hermann are intentionally placed in the same geographic space of the US-Dakota War and the execution of Dakota in Mankato.

When the Sons of Hermann unveiled their statue on the prairie, they could insist on the importance and relevance of German heritage in the face of anti-immigrant hostilities on the part of American nativists; simultaneously, as a German immigrant community, they could express cultural ties to their new homeland and ethnic pride. However, they also advanced their own claim as immigrants and settlers to belonging in that place, where the United States had presumably erased the Dakota presence. Hermann is a representative of German autochthony – this nation's connection to the soil of a particular place. Emplacing a monument to the victors

rearticulates the displacement of those who were dispossessed and anchors that displacement ideologically through the cultural narratives that the figure of Hermann embodies.

This contrasts with the ways that Dakota commemorate the tragic events around 1862. In 2002, two years after the congressional resolution on the statue by the Senate subcommittee, Dakota communities organized a 150- mile walk commemorating these relatives, the first Manipi Hena Owasin Wicunkiksuyapi (We remember all those who walked).[74] Similarly, another group began the Dakota 38+2 Wokiksuye Ride in December of 2005 to commemorate the men who were hanged.[75] The riders set out from present-day reservations in South Dakota and arrived at Reconciliation Park in Mankato on December 26 to remember the event. Many of the riders belong to families of those executed. Hermann is not absent from these commemorative events. In fact, a Dakota writer compared their experiences to those of the Cherusci in a 2009 letter to the editor of the *New Ulm Journal*. Quoting the Governor's dedication speech, the author discusses how both peoples resisted colonization – that "[just] as the Chatti, the Cherusi, and the Marsi tribes fought against an invading imperial army, our People, the Dakota Oyate, fought against our own invading empire and defended our own way of life."

The author of this letter points out that the descendants of Hermann and the other Germanic tribes, who were present for this new battle, had already undergone their own assimilation and became "perpetrators of colonialism against those who should have been their relations in a common struggle." Despite this, the author opens the door for processing the deep wounds of the past and moving toward reconciliation. While it is an honor for Hermann to stand in this place,

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[74] Chris Mato Nunpa, "Dakota Commemorative March: Thoughts and Reactions," *American Indian Quarterly* 28.1/2 (2004): 216–37. Narratives of Belonging 171

[75] See https://thecirclenews.org/news/dakota-382-memorial-ride-and-reparations-in-the-homeland/ and https://www.mprnews.org/story/2022/12/26/ride-to-remember-dakota 382-riders-end-journey-in-mankato, last accessed May 28, 2024.

there is a sad irony that the surrounding, empty fields bear witness to the painful loss of land, genocide, and "betrayal of descendants of a far-away tribe." To close, the author encourages German New Ulmers to honor their own ancestors by standing with the Dakota: "It is up to you to also honor those ancestors and to continue their fight. Stand with us, as you stand with them, and forever resist the New Rome. In the Spirit of Hermann der Cherusker, In the Spirit of Taoyateduta."

The connection of Hermann/Arminius to Little Crow, the Dakota leader who was reluctant to go to war in 1862, opens the possibility for finding solidarity in a shared experience of colonization. The Dakota see the Hermann story as related to theirs; different choices are perhaps possible now. In *Barbarians*, Arminius' return reverberates with autochthonic overtones as Ari emerges from the forests of his origins to reinvigorate the roots that nourish a German identity. That identity reaches to New Ulm, where Hermann's ongoing presence etches settler claims to belonging prominently onto the landscape. The stories of German nationhood that he embodies contend with Indigenous peoples' long-standing relationships with their own homelands. Hermann imposes his vigilance over the same prairie across which Dakota continue to mourn, remember, and honor their ancestors. While the Wokiksuye ride and commemorative march are invitations for reconciliation, the statue remains unchanged, leaving Hermann's outstretched sword unchallenged to enforce the displacements of the past.

Veredelungsverletzungen – Grafting Pains

Ständig werden
Werden ständig
Stets hier stehen, auf diesem Boden
Diesem Boden ständig werden
Bodenständig werden

Wie ich hier zu stehen gekommen bin?
Die ist eine Geschichte –
    Eine der Verletzung
    Eine der Veredelung

A story of refining, enhancing, propogating
To make the old better – give it new life
New
But related – a continuation of a kind
Fortsetzung, Fortpflanzung
Old stock meets new branchings
Cutting, splicing,
Grafting
The encounter a space,

an opening	The scar remains
to rejection	rotted, diseased
to infection	roots, stock and all, compromised
	for all to see the grafting pains
an opening	The scar remains
for resilience	healthy, healed
for continuance	yet still discernable
	for all who know of grafting pains

von Wurzeln in die Frucht
stehe hier ständig
als Narbe
    alter Wunden
    alter Wunder

Meine Geschichte - eine Veredelungsverletzung

Veredeln: verletzen
in der Hoffnung, dass
es besser wird

This piece considers grafting, a common practice for fruit trees and various other kinds of plants, and the processes of growth. It can be painful and damaging, or result in vitality and resilience. Either way, grafting is about taking pieces from one place and setting them somewhere else in the effort that they'll grow, they'll make something whole again, or might connect and offer it new life. Some apple trees are still producing today that have been grafted to root stocks that are multiple hundreds of years old.

That the transposition always contains the two potential valences is then how I also think of each of these monuments: German-ness is grafted onto the Midwest and, in its various instantiations, has a lot of damage socially, ecologically, culturally etc.

And even when grafting is supposed to make things better, it always leaves a mark, a scar. That place of grafting is a site of encounter between the old and the new. And that moment is always an opportunity - there's an opening to infection and rejection or for resilience and continuance. In moments of rejection, grafting is something very painful, but in those moments of good alignment those marks are the signs of wonder at work.

V. A Tale of Two Forests: Forestry, Settler Place-Making and the German Kulturgemeinschaft in the Northwoods

The logging boom years was the best of times for timber barons like the Walker family, co-owners of the Red River Lumber Company. It was also the worst of times as the unprecedented cutover resulted in devastating ecological consequences for the northern forests across the Upper Midwest. From the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, across Wisconsin and into Minnesota, loggers violently axed the ecologies of the region long maintained by Indigenous peoples. In 1915, the Red River Lumber Company adjusted to declining timber availability by shifting operations to Westwood California. In an effort to market their products, now utilizing western sugar pine rather than the famous white pine of the Great Lakes, marketing director William Laughead employed the figure of Paul Bunyan to connect the ecologically and culturally disparate geographies of Minnesota and California.[1] The legendary lumberjack became the figure of the ongoing cutover of North American forests: the epitome of clearcutting to which loggers should aspire.

At the same time, T.B. Walker, the patriarch of the Red River Lumber family, was avidly engaged in discussions of government forest policy, conservation and scientific forestry, from the national to the state level. Paul Bunyan's legendary exploits would thus seem, at first glance, to stand in stark contrast to Walker's goals of conservation. Yet the existence of Paul Bunyan State Forest in northern Minnesota, on Red River Lumber Company's former land holdings, attests that Paul Bunyan's job was not logging alone. The Paul Bunyan State Forest neighbors the Chippewa National Forest and nearly coterminous reservation of the Leech Lake Band of

[1] Kinnear, "The Legend of Logging: Timber Industry Culture and the Rise of Paul Bunyan, 1870-1945."

Ojibwe.[2] State Forests, like National Forests, have a mandate to conserve and steward forest resources into the future through forestry—a systematic, professional and scientific management intervention. Forest conservation and forestry began gaining traction in the U.S. during the latter 19th and early 20th century, as predominantly wealthy, white American elites sought to curb the rampant destruction of forests brought about by unrestrained logging.[3] While this seems largely at odds with Paul Bunyan stories, naming a State Forest after the famous logger is in fact not as oxymoronic as it might seem. Tall tales about Paul Bunyan replace Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous histories of place, extending and anchoring settler claims to autochthony (to be of or from a place) in the Northwoods. While such tales function in a cultural and social register, forestry offered an avenue to manifest and implement settler desires to belong to Indigenous homelands in the wake of the cutover's environmental consequences.

The connection between forests and autochthony that Paul Bunyan represents across the Northwoods, including Minnesota, resonates with other manifestations of settler claims to autochthony. Forestry, as represented by Paul Bunyan State Forest, is a cultural and intellectual import from Germany. Scientific forestry originated in Germany and is deeply enmeshed in stories of nationalism that pervaded German-speaking central Europe during the mid-19th century. These stories accompanied and fueled the expansion of forestry around the globe, but particularly the cutover regions of the Upper Midwest. Edward Merriam Griffith, the first State Forester of Wisconsin explicitly refers to "the German element" to advocate for forestry across

[2] 90% of the Leech Lake reservation is within the boundaries of the CNF and covers about 45% of the CNF total area

[3] See for example Dorceta E. Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection* (Duke University Press, 2016); Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock* (Beacon Press, 2019).

the region. Implementing German Scientific Forestry is an extension of the German *Kulturgemeinschaft* (cultural community) as it spreads across the Upper Midwest. It connects to the stories of Germans who were also a crucial element of the settlement of southern Minnesota. Indeed, the city of New Ulm continues to lean into this settlement history with its Hermann monument, the presence of which articulates the imagined cultural affinity between Germans and forests.[4] Prefiguring the Paul Bunyan State Forest, this monument grafts German settler narratives of belonging onto the colonized landscape of the Upper Midwest, and specifically Minnesota.

Here, I examine the ways settler autochthony stories are articulated in forests and forestry. I tell the tale of two forests: one is the mythic forest of German nationalism embodied by the Hermann monument; the other is the real forest of the Northwoods, where conservation institutionalizes settler desires for autochthony. Forestry, as a knowledge system, works to sustain a connection to a mythic past through explicit ecological interventions. While the Hermann Monument is not in the Northwoods, the layered stories it carries speak to the centrality of forests in formations of American settler colonialism in the turn to the twentieth century. The Paul Bunyan State Forest's proximity to the Leech Lake Ojibwe reservation and Chippewa National Forest reveal the complexity and interwoven nature of myth and reality, of nostalgia and dispossession. Paul Bunyan is an American legend that reflects the same mythic connection to forests as Hermann. That a state forest is named after Paul Bunyan is an instantiation of the real ecological implications of German scientific forestry and the German *Kulturgemeinschaft* that seeded it.

I begin by outlining how forestry functions as a method of autochthonic inscription. In

[4] Hellenbrand and Sterling-Hellenbrand, "Narratives of Belonging."

the US, German foresters and Americans that they trained between 1872 and 1914 brought this method to the Upper Midwest in the wake of the cutover from the. Next, I turn to the coordination and implementation of forestry across the Lake States where German scientific forestry asserts settler claims to Indigenous homelands. Lastly, I situate these institutional genealogies as manifestations of Paul Bunyan's autochthony narratives.

I: Settler Autochthony and American Forests

Autochthony is central to understanding the intricacies of settler desires to belong to Indigenous lands, and specifically the role of forests in American settler colonialism. The term has been mobilized to denote belonging in a wide variety of contexts across time and space. [5] Autochthony narratives are used to describe the quality and duration of a people's relationships to particular places. In the context of North America, settler claims to autochthony are attempts to erase Indigenous peoples longstanding ecological relationships to place and more-than-human beings. The implementation of German Scientific Forestry codifies the ecological values that substantiate settler narratives of belonging. What makes autochthony such a powerful term is its reference to the soil – the literal earth that enables life to thrive – as the locus for belonging.[6] The component pieces of this compound noun from classical Greek are autos – self, and chthonos – soil; a combination that appears to "represent the most authentic form of belonging."[7] Autochthony often shares a common usage as the term "indigenous" to refer to a sense of

[5] Geschiere comprehensively outlines the term's historical development, from origins in classical Greece to French colonial uses in West Africa and the terms resurgence in European identitarian movements in the present. *The Perils of Belonging*, "Introduction."

[6] Autochthony is also used in geology and even ecology referring to species, particularly plants, as being of the soil of a certain place.

[7] Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging*, 2.

"supposed primo-occupancy and cultural specificity as a basis for specific rights."[8] However, autochthony differs in that it is "often linked either to controlling access to a resource or territory or to maintaining cultural specificity, leading in many cases to demands for self-determination."[9] Autochthony emphasizes the particular socio-environmental context of a person's heritage as a way to naturalize one's privilege to certain rights in a national context, therefore excluding others from those same rights.[10] Scholars delineate autochthony as a sense of primordial belonging, rooted in soil/land, whereas Indigeneity encompasses a globalized notion of the unique status of collectives, Nations and peoples whose land-relations have been the target of violent oppression resulting from colonization and imperialism.[11] Ultimately it's a rectangle and square kind of situation – all Indigenous peoples can be considered autochthonous, but not all

[8] Gausset, Kenrick, and Gibb, "Indigeneity and Autochthony," 138. In fact, '*autochtone'* is considered the French translation of 'Indigenous' in international politics: the UN officially translates the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People as the *Déclaration sur les droits des peuples autochtones* in French and the term is applied to First Nations in French-Canadian discourse.

[9] *Ibid*.

[10] See for example Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging*; Olaf Zenker, "Autochthony, Ethnicity, Indigeneity and Nationalism: Time-Honouring and State-Oriented Modes of Rooting Individual-Territory-Group Triads in a Globalizing World," *Critique of Anthropology* 31, no. 1 (March 2011): 63–81; Canessa, "Indigenous Conflict in Bolivia Explored through an African Lens"; Nandita Sharma, *Home Rule: National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants* (Duke University Press, 2020); Nandita Sharma, "Postcolonialism as the Governmentality of Immigration Controls," *European Journal of Social Theory*, September 28, 2024. Canessa distinguishes between "claims against the state" by Indigenous peoples and "claims on the state" by majoritarian assertions of autochthony. Indigenous peoples make "claims against the state" to counter the various forms of ongoing marginalization and oppression that constrain relations with their ancestral homelands; conversely, "claims on the state" are brought by citizens for greater protection against racialized Others who are perceived as threatening the established social and cultural order (326-327).

[11] Even as their experiences as Nations are certainly not defined solely by colonialism. This is why the College of Menominee Nations uses autochthony in their Sustainable Development Model (Dockry et al., "Sustainable Development Education, Practice, and Research."). Placing autochthony at the center of their model affirms pre-contact histories and lives of the Menominee people as the basis for their struggles for self-determination rather than their experience as an oppressed minority. Following Canessa, they can distinguish between 'claims on the state' and 'claims against the state'– centering Menominee autochthony makes claims on a Menominee system of governance, while it is simultaneously Indigenous through its claims against the state structures of the U.S.

claims of autochthony are equated with Indigeneity.

The deep, potent and elemental belonging to a place that autochthony expresses is what settlers are after – it is a crucial aspect of settler colonialism. Erasing past, and ignoring ongoing, Indigenous connections to land is intended to render these lands devoid of meaning in order for settlers to assert their own belonging. Whyte, Caldwell and Schaefer explicitly connect these dynamics to ecology, defining settler colonialism as "a form of oppression in which settlers *permanently* and *ecologically*" make new homes for themselves. By "ignor[ing] and eras[ing]…social identities and attachments to land, removing the footprints on the land that mark Indigenous cultural and economic activities" territory emerges "as a meaningful homeland for settlers" where the inscription of settler ecologies enables settlers to "exercise their own governance systems."[12] Settler colonialism in its ecological dimensions is about autochthonic inscriptions. Settlers' new relationships to these lands are written over the ecological relationships that Indigenous peoples had cultivated since time immemorial. Settler-ecological relationships are made culturally meaningful to narrate and affirm their efforts to re-place Indigenous peoples—even as said attempts remain incomplete.[13] Settler narratives of belonging sediment cultural attachments to Indigenous homelands that justify the need for institutions like forestry. Simultaneously, establishing such institutions provides the means to anchor these narratives permanently in place.

German settlers that arrived in the Midwest during the mid-nineteenth century are

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[12] Whyte, Caldwell, and Schaefer, "Indigenous Lessons about Sustainability Are Not Just for 'All Humanity,'" 168. Italics in original.

[13] O'Brien describes this process as "firsting and lasting" *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010). Similarly, Veracini calls attention to the differentiation between settler colonialism's "logic of elimination" and "elimination" per se. The logic and *attempt* to eliminate remains in dialectical tension with Indigenous agency, sovereignty and resurgence ("Decolonizing Settler Colonialism," 4.).

imbricated in the settler state-making project that is the United States. The largest influx of settlers from German-speaking Central Europe arrived following Anglo-American treaties with Indigenous peoples.[14] The search for a new or different *Heimat* (home) in the United States meant that Germans sought ways to affix their narratives to Indigenous homelands, even as they distinguished themselves from other European settlers. Migration from German-speaking central Europe to the American Midwest coincided with nationalist attempts to create a unified German identity. This assemblage of German people, culture and ideas abroad constitute what scholars call the *Kulturgemeinschaft* – the German cultural community. Even as Germans abroad constituted an "aggregate identity based on fluid sets of cultures, customs, languages, and states" their prolific movement back and forth across diverse geographies "did not require relinquishing a connection to Germanness or a sense of affinity with other Germans in what many recognized as an unbounded cultural community."[15] These polycentric and mobile communities shared a common language and certain related cultural forms that they replicated in other places. In the nation-building fervor of the 19th century, this was the source for defining a cohesive entity that could be called a German nation. This also included Germans in America, as the example of New Ulm demonstrates.

Forests were an essential component of this *Kulturgemeinschaft*. For many German settlers, forests were perceived as "an important source of collective identity, especially in times of social unrest and rapid change," much like that which had driven many to America in the first

[14] As Penny (*Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2013) and Musanovic and Manthripragada ("Unsettling Futurity," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 55, no. 4 (November 1, 2019): 398–414) point out, this later arrival has served as an excuse to defer German culpability in American settler colonialism.

[15] H. Glenn Penny, *German History Unbound: From 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 5–20.

place. [16] Forests fused national memory and economic success, since they "represented gradual, sensible economic growth in harmony with nature and the past."[17] The development and institutionalization of scientific forestry coincided with German nationalism in the 19th century. Forestry became a field intimately connected to the perception of German-ness as natural resources management converged with nation-state building. Foresters advocated this position as they developed propaganda to elevate the status of their profession.[18] German foresters had worked diligently to fuse the Nation (as the imagined community with a common story and a common cause) with the State (structuring governance through institutions) – for them, forestry was as culture-bearing as a national literature.[19] This makes forestry an autochthonic infrastructure—a system for claiming and maintaining autochthony. And this new scientific forestry became one of the most profound intellectual exports of the German-speaking world—such a system was precisely what American intellectuals and elites sought to implement on Indigenous homelands they settled. Forestry could accomplish two dialectically related processes: first, the desire of settlers to extinguish Indigenous relationships to their homelands; and second, the simultaneous establishment of meaningful ecological relationships for settlers to uphold their own claims to autochthony.

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[16] Timothy Bawden, "A Geographical Perspective on Nineteenth-Century German Immigration to Wisconsin," in *Wisconsin German Land and Life*, ed. Heike Bungert and Max Kade Institute for German American Studies (Madison, Wis: Max Kade Inst. for German-American Studies, Univ. of Wisconsin, 2006), 86.

[17] *Ibid*.

[18] See for example Radkau, *Nature and Power*; Hölzl, "Historicizing Sustainability"; David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany*, (W.W. Norton & Company, 2007).

[19] An example is Gottlob König's short piece "Schillers Weidspruch." König, considered one of the "fathers of scientific forestry," here describes how the famous author Friedrich Schiller supposedly praised the work of the forester as being greater than that of poet. König 1814 "Schillers Weidspruch." In *Sylvan: Ein Jahrbuch für Forstmänner, Jäger und Jagdfreunde*, pg. 153.

The intersecting histories of German settlers and German scientific forestry in the Upper Midwest underscores the autochthonic dimensions of settler colonialism where ideology and materiality converge in the landscape. Settlers claimed autochthony by emplacing their cultural narratives of belonging, represented by Hermann, and through the implementation of German scientific forestry in wake of the cutover. The supposed German cultural affinity for and connection to forests remains central for how they assert their claim to autochthony: forestry is imbricated with ethno-nationalist sentiments that German foresters and those they trained like E. M. Griffith propagated across the region.

II: Grafting Pains: Germans and Forests in Minnesota

The Northwoods have been popularized and imagined as America's version of northern Europe. While Minnesota has been called "America's Scandinavia," this marketing glosses over the fact that most nineteenth-century settlers to Minnesota were from what became Germany in 1871. Census records confirm ethnic Germans and their descendants were by far the largest single ethnic group in Minnesota through the twentieth century, and many continue to maintain connections to German cultural heritage today.[20] This is perhaps nowhere more aptly on display than New Ulm, in south central Minnesota, which city tourism brochures declare to be "the most German city in America."[21]

Central to New Ulm's German heritage and identity is the city's "Hermann the German" monument. This 102 foot tall monument grafts German settler autochthony onto the colonized landscape of south central Minnesota. As an expression of the trans-national German cultural community (*Kulturgemeinschaft*), the monument advances a settler claim to belonging, insisting

[20] Kathleen Conzen, *Germans in Minnesota* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009), 5.

[21] "New Ulm 2024: The Official Guide." New Ulm Chamber of Commerce. n.d.

on the importance and relevance of German heritage in the face of anti-immigrant hostilities from American nativists. Simultaneously, the statue belies the displacement of Native peoples by German (and other European) immigrants that led to the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War and the violent expulsion of Dakota from their homelands. The polyvalent legacy of Hermann in New Ulm resonates with the backgrounds of those who emigrated from Germany and what they experienced in the US. The revolutions of 1848 in Germany met with severe conservative backlash which drove many nationalist thinkers to the United States. Upon arrival, many made their new homes in the growing metropolitan centers of the Midwest, such as Cincinnati and Chicago. Here, however, these arrivals were confronted with Anglo-American nativism, which reinforced a need to hold on to a distinct German-ness. Organizations like the Turners and the Sons of Hermann sought to cultivate and maintain this German-ness in a place like New Ulm, which was established with the intention to be a secular, socialist German utopia, imbued with the idealism of 1848 anchored by deep roots in Germanic culture.[22]

"Hermann the German"' is a refiguration of Arminius, the Germanic chieftain credited with defeating the Romans in 9 CE in the Teutoburg Forest. German intellectuals from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries enthusiastically embraced the story as an origin for German unification. The mythologization of Arminius developed during a time of growing national sentiment—a figure around which to rally a definitive sense of German-ness. The Germanic hero of antiquity who challenged imperial Rome and prevailed became Hermann, defender of the German people, a symbol around which a community (the "Germans") could begin defining and imagining itself: Narratives accumulated in various forms over centuries to

[22] Penny, *Kindred by Choice*, 74.

define German-ness as a kind of "woodland ethnicity."[23] Many Romantic artists, poets, and philosophers used the story of Hermann to depict how the organic nature of trees and forests was reflected in the evolution of the German *Volk* (people) and its Nation.[24] Arboreal longevity and rootedness became symbols of a nation formed by the recirculating vitality between people and (forested) land, from sacred groves to scientifically managed pine plantations. Sylvan metaphors conceived of a German race or German people with a common (hi)story.

Arminius/Hermann embodied virtues that Tacitus had ascribed to Germans and that German nationalists of the nineteenth century espoused: loyalty, bravery, honesty, a sense of justice. Hermann became a symbol for forging a new German nation that evolved from its historic connection to forests. These national virtues (*Nationaltugenden*) were rooted in the forests that Arminius had defended.[25] As a replica of the monument erected in 1875 near Detmold, Germany, where the famous battle against the Romans supposedly took place, Hermann the German reinforces cultural links between Arminius, German homelands and German diaspora communities. His presence in New Ulm refracts the Germanic values celebrated as part of their sylvan national character onto the prairies of southern Minnesota. For nineteenth century Germans in Minnesota, the mythologization of Arminius that began with Tacitus was mobilized to establish and undergird cultural identity during a time of identity formation among Germans in America. Here, the *Kulturgemeinschaft* coalesces around a unifying idea of German-ness that was central to the initial effort to create an ethnic enclave apart from Anglo-Americans.

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[23] Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 116.

[24] Wilson, *The German Forest*; Hellenbrand and Sterling-Hellenbrand, "Narratives of Belonging."

[25] Wilson, *The German Forest*, 16–48.

German settlers wanted a place for their new community to thrive that was not in the urban centers of Anglo-American nativism; this meant heading to the edges of the United States and right to the heart of the federal government's attempts to expand its territory. At the time, the American frontier of settlement ran through the prairies along the Minnesota River valley. The U.S. had just dispossessed the Dakota of nearly all their ancestral territory in what is today known as Minnesota, leaving them with a reservation 10 miles wide from Lake Traverse in the West, to the Little Cottonwood River. U.S. officials took the northern portion of this reservation in a 1858 treaty claiming that the Dakota had failed to adequately adopt farming and thereby improve their reserved land. Together, encroaching settlers and the coercive interactions with U.S. agents shrunk Dakota territory and constrained their ability to maintain the traditional lifeways that had sustained them.[26] The resulting despair and anger erupted in the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War.

The New Ulm settlement was located just outside this reservation's eastern edge. As the largest settlement in such close proximity, it became a focal point of the fighting. On August 18th, news arrived in New Ulm of various Dakota attacks on isolated farmsteads and settlements around Brown County. Anticipating that New Ulm would be the next target, Sheriff Charles Roos turned to the German revolutionaries with military experience to organize the defense of the town.. On August 19th, a small group of Dakota warriors initially tested New Ulm's defenses. This small skirmish lasted only several hours. Four days later, however, a larger, more organized force returned after failing to take fort Ridgely. Militia volunteers and the remaining

[26] Angela Cavender Wilson, "Introduction: Manipi Hena Owas'in Wicunkiksuyapi (We Remember All Those Who Walked)," *The American Indian Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2004): 151–69; Angela Cavender Wilson, "Decolonizing the 1862 Death Marches," *The American Indian Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2004): 185–215.

townspeople, constructed barricades on a four block section of the central town. [27] In the wake of these events, the Dakota were forcefully expelled from the state boundaries of Minnesota[28]

New Ulmers' identification with German-ness solidified further in response to what they saw as unjust victimhood. The German settlers did not see themselves at fault for the colonial situation created by federal Indian policy.[29] Following the forced expulsion of the Dakota from the state boundaries of Minnesota, German New Ulmers sought to manifest their simultaneous belonging to the *Kulturgemeinschaft* of the German nation and to the land in America that they had driven the Dakota from. In 1885, Julius Berndt, a militia volunteer, architect and land surveyor suggested building a Hermann monument to accomplish this. Berndt belonged to The Order of the Sons of Hermann (O.d.H.S), a German mutual aid society that supported the *Kulturgemeinschaft* in the US with explicit reference to Hermann and his values.[30] Berndt was the first president of the local New Ulm Lodge No. 21 formed in 1881 and it was his idea to create a Hermann Monument modeled after the one in Detmold.

Hermann's presence amplifies the valences of German nationalism. The monument instantiates the narratives of belonging that strengthen the *Kulturgemeinschaft* and reinforce German settler autochthony in the U.S. Its emplacement in New Ulm remains a clear delineation

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[27] Jacob Nix, *The Sioux Uprising in Minnesota, 1862: Jacob Nix's Eyewitness History*, ed. Don Heinrich Tolzmann, trans. Gretchen Steinhauser, Don Heinrich Tolzmann, and Eberhard Reichmann, 2nd ed. (NCSA Literatur, 2016).

[28] This also included the Ho-Chunk from the Blue Earth Reservation near Mankato. See Kantrowitz, *Citizens of a Stolen Land*; Cathy Coats, *To Banish Forever: A Secret Society, the Ho-Chunk, and Ethnic Cleansing in Minnesota* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2024).

[29] Penny, *Kindred by Choice*, 70. Penny draws on primary accounts like Nix's and Alexander Berghold's *Indianerrache, oder die Schreckenstage von Neu-Ulm*, which became one of the most popular writings back home in German-speaking central Europe.

[30] Of the more than 100 German heritage organizations active in the U.S. by the 20th century, The Order of the Sons of Hermann stands out for their express focus on these values rather than a geographic region or political entity.

of identity: the relationship between the German settlers of New Ulm and the Dakota underscored the entire process, from beginning to end.[31] The monument reifies the *Kulturgemeinschaft* by inscribing Hermann's sylvan and Germanic values onto Indigenous homelands.

German Forestry Arrives in the U.S.

As a national symbol for the "contributions of Americans of German heritage,"[32] Hermann the German in New Ulm brings along attendant presumptions of a German cultural affinity for forest spaces. The historiography of forestry science and management further propagated this supposed cultural affinity to justify government intervention in the cutover regions of the United States. While the specifics of its implementation varied, forestry in general was brought to the US to help assuage fears that the closing frontier and the specter of wood shortage would undermine the material and cultural foundations of American civilization.[33] By institutionalizing the sustainable management of forests, the future of Euro-American settlers could be assured. German foresters, and those they trained, laid the foundation for the policies and practices of the U.S. Forest Service and state-level institutions that have left their mark on the forests of today. By the late nineteenth century, German foresters had well-established theories and methods. Their development of scientific forestry led other imperial powers to hire

[31] For more on the history of the monument and the resonances of the Arminius story in the present, see Hellenbrand and Sterling-Hellenbrand, "Narratives of Belonging."

[32] SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 106--RECOGNIZING THE HERMANN MONUMENT AND HERMANN HEIGHTS PARK IN NEW ULM, MINNESOTA, AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICANS OF GERMAN HERITAGE. S 106. 106th Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record 146, pt. 4: 5782-5783. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CRECB-2000-pt4/CRECB-2000-pt4-Pg5782/summary.

[33] See Jake Kosek, *Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico* (Duke University Press, 2006); Radkau, *Nature and Power*; Warde, *The Invention of Sustainability*.

Germans to manage forests around the globe. As foresters applied their profession in these colonial and imperial contexts, they established and maintained transnational networks that continued to disseminate forestry abroad. The development of the scientific field of forestry reinforced state-making in Germany; it was a system that built institutions of state power over forests and timber resources.[34] The imbrication of forestry in global imperialism is what enables the advent of forestry in the U.S. after some of the groundwork had been done by Americans concerned with the affairs of their forests.

The extensive logging across the Upper Midwest from the 1830s to 1910s was initially seen as a step in taming Indigenous homelands by transforming them into spaces for European agriculture. This logging, however, resulted in massive forest fires which returned frequently, making it difficult for settlers to maintain a living in the Northwoods. These fires also continuously prevented new forest growth from regenerating. These increasingly drastic consequences prompted a response by intellectuals and politicians. Men like George Perkins Marsh, Benjamin Hough and other contemporaries were concerned with the degradation of America's natural environments.

As early as the 1840's, Marsh was concerned with the degradation of America's natural environments. As a child he observed the impacts of human activity on his Vermont home as forests gave way to farm fields, and the quality of those systems began to erode. Later, Marsh served as a diplomat for the U.S. in Turkey and Italy. Here, Marsh witnessed what appeared to be the downward side of the developmental trajectory of civilization.[35] In 1873, physician and

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[34] Warde, *Ecology, Economy and State Formation in Early Modern Germany*; Hölzl, "Historicizing Sustainability."

[35] Marcus Hall, "The Provincial Nature of George Perkins Marsh," *Environment and History* 10, no. 2 (May 1, 2004): 191–204; T. Gregory Garvey, "The Civic Intent of George Perkins Marsh's Anthrocentric Environmentalism," *The New England Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (March 2009): 80–111; David Lowenthal,

statistician Benjamin Hough from New York gave his famous report, "On the Duty of Governments in the Preservation of Forests" to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science. Hough essentially reiterated Marsh's arguments from *Man and Nature* (1864) – that to prevent the irreparable environmental harm that would result in the decline of American civilization, the government must enforce moral economic restraint.[36]

This same year, following and taking up Hough's call for greater government action with regards to America's forests, John Aston Warder served as a representative for the U.S. at the International Exhibition in Vienna in 1873. Here, he saw the many ways Germans and others were instituting and policing forest reserves, making them legible and profitable to the respective state. After this journey, Warder established the American Forestry Association (AFA), becoming its first president at the inaugural meeting in 1875.[37] The goal of the AFA was to promote the type of forestry in the U.S. that Warder and others had seen in Vienna and coordinate policy-making to prevent the further destruction of America's forests. This was, however, not limited to just the material products that they had observed, but included the cultural and intellectual constellations that produced them in the first place.

As Warder, Hough and Marsh indicated, the institutions of education and enforcement of forest reserve boundaries were fundamental to the existence of Germany as a nation-state. Warder, during his visit to Vienna, experienced a newly unified Germany under Prussian rule. A crucial element then, of what appealed to Americans at that time was using forestry to build up a

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George Perkins Marsh: Prophet of Conservation (University of Washington Press, 2009).

[36] Uwe E Schmidt, "German Impact and Influences on American Forestry until World War II," *Journal of Forestry*, 2009, 9.

[37] *Ibid.*7; see also Andrew Denny Rodgers, *Bernhard Fernow: A Story of North American Forestry* (Princeton University Press, 1951).

governing apparatus; to institute laws and policies to preserve forests for their economic potential in the future, not just the immediate present. Forest conservation was also a moral imperative, with the very fate of the American nation at stake. Forestry could therefore address two dialectically related processes: namely, the desire to extinguish Indigenous relationships to their homelands, while simultaneously establishing meaningful ecological relationships for settlers to uphold their own claims to autochthony. In nineteenth-century Germany, forestry was simultaneously about building the infrastructure of statehood as it was also bound in the narratives and symbols that nationalize forest ecologies. These cultural processes depicted forests as national heritage in order to situate German national identity in the forests themselves.[38] Forestry in Germany grew to national and international prominence in conjunction with processes of nation-state building in the early nineteenth century. Implementing forestry in Germany provided a crucial fusion between the conception of a German Nation, with common (hi)story and common cause into the future, and a unified German State that would guide and enforce these commonalities.

The depictions of a German nation emerging from the woods were mobilized by politicians and those trying to build institutions of the state, elevating forestry to a culture-bearing practice. The forester, with his scientifically developed tables and charts, sits at the interface between an idealized rural landscape and the need to feed the larger economies of urbanizing states and principalities. Furthermore, the art of cultivating forests establishes the futurity of the planner and his descendants, whether by blood or profession. The long planning horizons ground an ethos of responsibility to the future. Forestry raises the mythical Germanic connection to forests from barbarism to the level of a national *Kultur* to rival the other powers of

[38] Schama, *Landscape and Memory*; Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature*; Wilson, *The German Forest*.

Europe.

The ideals professed for forest management have had direct implications for forests around the world. German foresters emigrated to the United States and helped establish forestry institutions as the foundations of American conservation were establishing themselves on the political and economic stage. In the 1870's, Bernhard Fernow was the only trained forester in the US having studied at the *Forstakademie* in Münden. He emigrated in 1876 and later became the 3rd Chief of the Division of Forestry (1886 to 1898), where he was fundamental in promoting a reserve system and advocating for forest management. [39] He oversaw many of the foundational endeavors that would lead to today's U.S. Forest Service by developing the scientific research and technical education branches of the Division's work. Another highly influential German-American forester was Carl Alwin Schenck. In 1895, he came to the U.S. and began management of the forests on the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina, where he took over forestry operations from Gifford Pinchot. [40]

Fernow and Schenck both recognized that the contextual nature of forestry would require America to develop its own forestry; but for both men, German methods and principles would be the means of ascertaining that context.[41] While there were plenty of American intellectuals, politicians and others interested in seeing American forestry develop, it would not have succeeded without the technical expertise and support of a forest governance apparatus. The work of Fernow and Schenck, along with other Germans like Filibert Roth, was essential to

[39] Rodgers, *Bernhard Fernow*.

[40] Brian Balogh, "Scientific Forestry and the Roots of the Modern American State," *Environmental History* 7, no. 2 (2002): 198–225; Carl Alwin Schenck, *Cradle of Forestry in America: The Biltmore Forest School, 1898-1913*, ed. Ovid Butler (Forest History Society, 2011).

[41] Rodgers, *Bernhard Fernow*, 73; Schenck, *Cradle of Forestry in America*.

getting forestry established firmly in the U.S. They are the country's first professionally trained foresters, and their advocacy led to the legislation, education and implementation of forestry across the country. Roth, for example, had accompanied Fernow to Cornell in 1903 to teach in the School of Forestry there. When the Cornell endeavor began to falter and Fernow moved to Pennsylvania, Roth took up the leadership of a new department of forestry at the University of Michigan in 1905. He was also simultaneously appointed to be Michigan's state forest warden.[42]

Additionally, Fernow and Schenck identified as German, which meant they came with a presumed cultural connection to the forests. By contributing to infrastructure that addressed market concerns and transportation issues, both Fernow and Schenck were developing the material manifestations that allowed the politics of culture and identity – stemming from these presumed cultural connections – to shape ecologies. Crucially, at the ideological level neither Fernow nor Schenck gave up on their personal identification with Germany as their '*Vaterland*.' Schenck eventually returned to Germany and lived out the remainder of his days there. And while Fernow only returned to Germany once, his sympathies were torn during World War I between his native home and the one he had by then made in Canada. He encouraged his students at the University of Toronto to enlist in military service, saying it was a citizen's duty; although unlike Schenck, he did not enlist himself.[43] Ultimately, foresters like Fernow and Schenck were trying to instill cultural values in their students through the work of forestry: forestry is not only for generating economic wealth through the production of timber and wood, but it is also crucial to producing an autochthonous relationship to this land. From Germany,

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[42] Rodgers, *Bernhard Fernow*, 328.

[43] Rodgers, 536. When taking his students to tour forests in Germany, Schenck used the opportunity to fulfill his training obligations as an enlisted member of the German military. Schenck, *Cradle of Forestry in America*.

forestry becomes a global export with a culturally embedded desire for – and sense of – belonging that converges with the German settlement of the Upper Midwest into a distinct aspect of settler colonialism.

III: Conserving Paul Bunyan's Home Turf: Forestry in the Upper Midwest

The inflection from cutover to conservation was the confluence of cultural and political trends in settler activities to shape the perception of forests in the U.S at the national level. The ability of lumbering to liquidate American forests reached its "full flowering" in the Northwoods of Wisconsin and Minnesota from the 1850s through to the 1910s; so too did the response to make forest policy.[44] Forestry provides a method to fuse national identity to the ecologies of a landscape. In the Northwoods, this establishes meaningful ecological relationships for settlers to uphold their claims to autochthony. These are reflected in the Hermann monument and forestry. The Hermann monument in New Ulm marks the presence of German autochthony stories locally in the Upper Midwest; and German foresters like Fernow and Schenck bring the ethno-nationalist/autochthonic underpinnings of forestry to the U.S. on a national level. Here, we return to the Upper Midwest and the implementation of German scientific forestry locally.

After the publication of Marsh's *Man and Nature* in 1864, many in the intellectual circles of the Upper Lake states were spurred to discuss the import of an impending timber shortage.[45] Wisconsin took the first action of any state in the U.S. to comprehensively assess their forest resources, forming an investigative commission in 1867 led by famed naturalist Increase

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[44] Thomas R. Cox, *The Lumberman's Frontier: Three Centuries of Land Use, Society, and Change in America's Forests* (Oregon State University Press, 2010), 149–89.

[45] Though the first regional concerns were articulated as early as 1854 with Lapham's "Forest Trees of Wisconsin," published in the *Transactions of the State Agricultural Society* (Carstenson 1958, 4).

Lapham.[46] After a three month flurry of research, the commission completed a report in August detailing the "evil consequences to the present and future inhabitants" that result from the "injurious effects of clearing the land of forests."[47] By drawing on the prevailing ideas about nature and the development of civilization, the commissioners made it abundantly evident that forest spaces are laden with cultural and moral value. For Lapham and his fellow commissioners, achieving the proper balance between fields and forests is what sets the Western and Central Europeans apart from other, "savage" peoples.[48]

Despite the extent of the report and the vigor with which the commissioners advocated for their position, it was not until after the devastating Phillips (WI) and Hinckley (MN) fires in 1894 that Wisconsin and Minnesota took further action. Both states passed laws in 1895 creating state fire warden positions to protect "life and property against forest fires."[49] Through this legislation, they empowered town supervisors to prevent fires from being set or getting out of control and to call up assistance to extinguish any fires.[50] In 1897, the Wisconsin law was updated to strengthen the ability of the state to protect its citizens and territory remains, however, largely unsuccessful as no reports appear to have been made, much less investigated further.[51]

Because of the ongoing concerns over timber resources and threats of fire, Wisconsin

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[46] See Fernow, *A Brief History of Forestry in Europe, the United States and Other Countries*, 1907

[47] Lapham, Knapp and Crocker, *Report on the disastrous effects of the destruction of forest trees, now going on so rapidly in the state of Wisconsin*. Madison, Wisconsin, 1867, 3.

[48] Ibid. Specifically, they are comparing the development of European civilization with American Indians and the inhabitants of the Orient, 4.

[49] Chapter 266, Laws of Wisconsin 1895. Chapter 196, General Laws of Minnesota 1895 closely resembles the Wisconsin law and passed just the day after.

[50] *Ibid*.

[51] Chapter 362, Laws of Wisconsin 1897. See also Carstenson 1958, 16.

once again took the lead, creating a commission to investigate the conditions of Wisconsin's forests and to devise a plan for organizing a forestry department and assess the suitability of lands for either agriculture or forestry.[52] They arranged with Bernhard Fernow (then still chief of the U.S. Division of Forestry) for Filibert Roth to survey the physical and economic conditions prevailing in northern Wisconsin. By committing resources to this investigation, the state of Wisconsin is the initial case for developing future cooperative programs between state and federal forest management agencies.[53] These two assessments taken together make up the first and most comprehensive accounting of the forest geography in northern Wisconsin as a whole.[54]

Roth spent three months traveling along the railways and wagon roads that crisscrossed the region as part of the first cooperative effort between a state and the Division of Forestry. [55] Although Fernow had long advocated that the Division provide technical assistance and develop the methodologies to understand the conditions of forests in the various states, the limited resources the U.S. Congress had appropriated for forestry during his tenure had prohibited developing such cooperation.[56] Roth's report therefore outlines the physiographic features of the landscape and specific characteristics of the timber trees, including details on the suitability of soils for forestry rather than agriculture. Ultimately, according to Roth, clearing for settlement, ongoing logging and most of all fires will tip the scales towards greater decay of existing stands

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[52] Carstenson, pg. 17-18.

[53] Fernow 1898, "Introduction" pg. 8. These efforts, as Fernow puts it, must rely on "a tolerably accurate knowledge of the forestry conditions and forestry interests."

[54] Lumber and railroad companies employed their own cruisers and woodsmen to assess standing timber, but this would not have been shared widely, nor would there have been the interest to survey the physiological conditions necessary for forest regeneration. See Kinnear, "Cruising for Pinelands."

[55]Fernow 1898, 7.

[56] See also Fernow's 1899 "Summary of Division of Forestry Works," 7-8.

and less forest reproduction in the future.

Roth leaves the details of the political strategizing on the advantages of having "poor, unproductive sand lands settled by poor and ignorant people" to the state's forestry commissioners.[57] Their portion of the report begins by outlining the devastating consequences of unbridled logging and the resulting fires. The commission calls on the state to apply forestry and prevent deteriorating the productivity of Wisconsin's northern lands. They emphasize that forestry is about both the direct financial return the state receives and the indirect benefits (of such environmental factors as climate, erosion control, etc.) that the "rational exploitation of forests" is able to provide and is "merely a particular form of agriculture."[58]

The commission's discussion is also wrapped up in the desires for particular kinds of settlers and settler-ecological relationships to take precedence on the Wisconsin landscape. Without state intervention, the lands will become inhospitable. The lands that are cutover and ravaged by fire are not going to attract permanent, agricultural settlers.[59] The commissioners maintained the preservation and restoration of forests was a matter of cultural dominance of northern Europeans/Germanic settlers. They claimed northern European nations, and their descendants in the U.S. supposedly owe their success to their desire for a higher standard of living for themselves and future generations. The commissioners believed this was epitomized in these nations' recognition of the need to manage forests. Productivity becomes the hallmark of

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[57] *Ibid*, pg. 45. Roth notes that communal or state ownership has been an essential economic safeguard for European states. and points to the example of Saxony for "those who are frightened at the mere idea of planting forests and who scorn European methods as impracticable in this country," 53.

[58] Wisconsin Forestry Commission *Report of the forestry commission of the state of Wisconsin*. Madison, Wisconsin: Democrat Printing Company, State Printer, 1898, 3-4.

[59] They decry the potential of these lands becoming "wildernesses of scrub, covered according to circumstances with crippled aspen, runts of jack pine, dwarf oak, or even merely coarse grass and sweet fern." *Ibid*, pg. 16-17.

civilizational achievement, not just agriculture itself. Developing the techniques to improve and manage forests allows these places to also be a productive component of the nation's developmental trajectory.

To do this, the state needs an appropriate apparatus through which to govern forest spaces. This newly created administrative body must first determine the "precise conditions" of state holdings, particularly to see if land would be better used for farmland. The data regarding the natural and economic conditions of each future forest tract will lead to the development of the forester's working plans to improve the forest: "Natural growth…fostered by all the means of the forester's art, while the undesirable species are gradually got rid of and their new growth prevented" which will eventually arrive at the "condition of cultivation such as is known in the forests of Prussia and Saxony."[60] This German method of management will allow the entire forest area to return a profit. As with the 1867 report, however, actual legislation on implementing forestry was not forthcoming following the investigations of this commission and their partnership with the Division of Forestry. The commissioners drafted a bill to establish a forestry department, but was never adopted and Wisconsin did not have its first comprehensive forestry law until 1903. [61]

This law created a position for someone to manage Wisconsin's forests. Stepping into that role in February 1904 was Edward Merriam Griffith. Griffith's training in German scientific forestry, and continued engagement with the network of German foresters in the U.S. shaped his attempt to make forestry work in Wisconsin. Griffith was born 1872 in Brooklyn, New York and, after attending private schools in the northeast, he began training/education as an engineer at the

[60] Wisconsin Forestry Commission 1898, 20.

[61] Carstenson 1958, 26.

Sheffield Scientific School at Yale beginning in 1895. During this time, Griffith began developing an interest in forestry and decided to travel abroad to pursue further training in this new specialty.[62] Griffith spent two years being trained in silviculture and forestry, returning to the U.S. in 1897. In the first year after his return, Griffith applied his learning under the tutelage of Carl Alwin Schenck at the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina as his second apprentice.[63] In 1898, Pinchot succeeded Bernhard Fernow as the Chief of the Division of Forestry and hired Griffith to do forest assessments and planning to promote woodland profitability with other private landowners and eventually (1900-1903) on federal Forest Reserves.

When Griffith first arrived in Wisconsin, he had much work ahead of him. He needed to take stock of the conditions on the new state forest reserve and try to consolidate the patchwork of parcels that constituted it; however, the law did not provide any legislative framework for the actual management of the forests themselves. Griffith immediately began working to improve it. In his first report as state forester, Griffith lauded the new 1905 law as "the first real and effective legislation" to implement forestry in Wisconsin.[64] According to this law, the state forester would be appointed by the non-political State Board of Forestry, had to be "technically trained" and then certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.[65] Griffith here codifies the

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[62] F.G. Wilson, *E.M. Griffith and the Early Story of Wisconsin Forestry (1903-1915)* (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 1982), 8. Study abroad, particularly for forestry, was especially common at Yale, including Gifford Pinchot, Henry Graves and others that Pinchot recruited into what would become the US Forest Service in 1905 (Balogh, "Scientific Forestry and the Roots of the Modern American State, 2002).

[63] *Ibid*. In his memoirs, Schenck fondly remembers Griffith for being "indefatigable in helping…to measure cordwood, to secure needed supplies, to correct [Schenck's] English, to survey auxiliary roads in the Biltmore Forest, and so on" (Schenck, *The Cradle of Forestry*, 43)

[64] Wisconsin. State Board of Forestry. *First annual report of the state forester of Wisconsin, 1906*. Madison, Wisconsin: Democrat Printing Company, State Printer.

[65] This legislation took effect just five months after Pinchot finalized the creation of the U.S. Forest

lessons he learned as an apprentice to Schenck. At Biltmore, Schenck emphasized that "conservative lumbering" was of utmost importance to sustained-yield management.[66]

As one of the first state level foresters, Griffith was also one of the leading voices for collaboration across the Great Lakes region. The frequently recurring forest fires that followed logging and railroad operations were one of the main issues that also reached across settler-territorial jurisdictions.[67] State, Federal and business representatives came together at the Lake States Forestry Conference from 1907-1910. Three of these were held between 1907 and 1910: at Saginaw, Michigan on November 13-14, 1907; at Madison, Wisconsin on December 9-10, 1908; and at St. Paul, Minnesota on December 6-7, 1910. Along with delegates from the U.S. states, Ontario and Quebec were represented. At these conferences Griffith had the opportunity to maintain his connections with Fernow and Roth.[68] Collectively, these conferences, which included representatives from lumber and railroad companies, drafted numerous proposals for bills that would apply fire protection measures across the region.

For Griffith, like many foresters, these infrastructural and jurisdictional developments are essential to prevent over-exploiting forests which was disastrous for the economic and social health of the state. Protecting and managing forests sustainably was the responsibility of civilized nations. To highlight this, Griffith regularly referred to "[t]he experience of the older countries in forestry" to show that forestry management is absolutely necessary to prevent great evils and that

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Service.

[66] Schenck, *The Cradle of Forestry*.

[67] See for example Hayden L. Nelson, "Smoke from Their Fires: Or, Environment and Region in Canada and the Upper Midwest," *Middle West Review* 11, no. 1 (September 2024): 89–111, for how this has and continues to challenge concepts of the region.

[68] Fred G. Wilson, *E.M. Griffith*, 20.

it greatly promotes the general welfare of any country, and produces revenue besides.[69] Often citing German forestry in his lectures, presentations and training forest rangers, Griffith sought to establish better management based on what he had seen as a student in Germany. He claims that "Germany has achieved the greatest results of any nation in the management of forests and the production of forest crops," especially since the greater settlement density places such high demands on forest resources.[70] The dense settlement and the structure of German forestry institutions have enabled the development of a unique communal or town forest system. Wisconsin had just begun to implement a similar system by empowering the counties to establish woodlots and incentivizing reforestation through tax exemptions and inexpensive access to stock from the state nurseries.[71] Griffith then leans into the German settlement of Wisconsin stating that "The large German element in our population constitutes a favorable influence for forestry development," especially since "[s]everal of the great names in the history of forestry are those of our citizens of German birth or descent."[72] Here, Griffith assumes that the supposed cultural affinity of Germans for their forests will allow forestry to thrive across the Upper Midwest region, extending even to the whole of the United States. In other words, Griffith envisions a direct line of influence between the German cultural investments at the local level and the national advocacy to institute forestry across the country.

The dispossession of Indigenous peoples was the predicate for forestry to flourish in Wisconsin. By the time Griffith arrived in Wisconsin, the ink was dry on the treaties that

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[69] Memorandum for the Attorney General, 16.

[70] "Present Status of Forestry in Wisconsin," 3.

[71] *Ibid*, pg. 7

[72] *Ibid*.

established contemporary reservations. Griffith, however, played a significant role in maintaining this dispossession through forestry. His work emphasizes that the implementation of forestry structures the particular development of a national community and is a distinct mode of settler-colonial relationality. While farming was seen as the primary method of settler-ecological inscription, forestry offers the opportunity to establish a new relationship with the land and forests. By enforcing cultivation of the next generation of forests on reservations, the suppression of Indigenous ecologies continues to build the economic wealth of the state. Although Griffith offers that the benefits of careful forestry management should accrue to the Native communities, the implementation of these methods elide and erase their relationships to those forests, writing over them with settler-national claims.

IV: The Legendary Logger's Lasting Legacy: Paul Bunyan('s) State Forest

Forestry is a system and method for fusing national identity with the ecology of a landscape. The Upper Midwest is a region brought together by a shared history of German settlement and the implementation of forestry.[73] These converging strands, outlined in the proceeding sections, come together in the Paul Bunyan State Forest in Minnesota. Settler desires for autochthony fold German histories into broader aspects of American settler identity, where they fuse with narratives like those of Paul Bunyan, symbolically and materially. We see this play out in how Red River Lumber Company lands become Paul Bunyan State Forest in 1935.

T.B. Walker (1840-1928), the patriarch of the Red River Lumber Company, was born in Xenia, Ohio. After attending Baldwin University, Walker found employment selling grindstones to farmers for sharpening their implements. He eventually took a job as a surveyor in northern Minnesota. In the summer of 1862, his surveying crew arrived at Fort Ripley just before the

[73] Cox, *The Lumberman's Frontier*; Hellenbrand, "Between Piety and Pride."

outbreak of the U.S.-Dakota War. While there, the surveyors stood guard as there had been reports of Dakota coming north or Ojibwe from Leech Lake on the way to attack the fort. Although neither of these threats materialized, they remained at Fort Ripley for the duration of the war. Following the U.S.-Dakota War, Walker took a new job surveying land grants for the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company. Working on the government and railroad surveys provided Walker with his first look at the timber stands that he would later purchase.[74]

Walker became involved in multiple business partnerships following his time as a surveyor. While these initially focused on purchasing land and selling stumpage (cut logs), Walker and his partners began manufacturing lumber as well. In 1883, Walker organized the Red River Lumber Company with its first mill at Crookston, Minnesota (1883-1897); they later developed the town of Akeley around a company mill (named after his business partner since 1887, Healy Akeley). The mill at Akeley was only in operation from 1899 until 1915 when the company shifted focus completely to its California operations in Westwood. At this time, T.B. Walker also transferred all control over business management to his sons.[75]

While the Red River Lumber company was acquiring and cutting timber across the continent, Walker was engaged in ongoing discussions around forestry and conservation. Having initially declined an invitation to join the American Forestry Association in 1899, Walker joined after receiving a second invitation in 1902. Herman Chapman (superintendent of the University of Minnesota Northeast Experiment farm) requested he attend the AFA's annual meeting the following year in 1903 because they would hold a session on the "Chippewa Reservation."[76]

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[74] Walker, "Memories of the Early Life and Development of Minnesota."

[75] Tim Purdy, *Red River: The Early Years*, vol. 1, (Lahontan Images, 2011).

[76] Chapman, Herman. Letter to Thomas Barlow Walker. 1902.

Particularly as he began acquiring land in California, Walker became a strong advocate for conservation and forestry in private timberlands. Many were worried that Walker would repeat what he and other timber barons like Frederick Weyerhaeuser had done, namely cut and run. On a trip to view the company's land holdings out west, Walker gave assurances in a newspaper interview that he would not: "I will make my timber a perpetual resource. When I begin to manufacture lumber, my saws will cut timber only as fast as nature reproduces it."[77] Walker believed that the policy context in California (and the west coast states more generally) was very different from Minnesota. In the mountainous West, land could not be converted to agriculture as it could in Minnesota, and so the business calculus changed. Because this land would not be suitable for agriculture, Walker believed that his company's incentives were to preserve the sustainability of the forest resource. As a result, Walker said he as a private interest he could implement conservation far better than the federal government. Private ownership, with the right incentives and supports from the government, could "better protect the timber against destruction by fire, will handle the timber cutting to better advantage to the commonwealth, will make a more continuous or perpetual timber supply, and protect equally as well the water supply and rainfall."[78]

One of the conservation practices that Walker advocated for, especially in California was what he called "light burning." Walker and the Red River Lumber Company engaged in practices reminiscent of contemporary prescribed burning to reduce fuel loading and thereby prevent massive wildfires. Walker recalled from his younger years in Minnesota that "the commonly experienced fires that have customarily run through the forests are creeping fires that

[77] Purdy, *Red River: The Early Years*, 1:37.

[78] *Ibid*, 39.

burn the grass and leaves and kill most of the young trees, but do not reach sufficiently high up to make a general sweep through the branches of the large trees."[79] The increase in understory vegetation exacerbated other conditions that led to the destructive fires like in Hinckley. Walker criticized the U.S. Forest Service for only suppressing fires after they had broken loose, especially in the new forest reserves in the West. Given the impossibility of completely eliminating fire from the landscape, Walker sought to reduce the amount of combustible material. He had forest workers clearing around standing dead or deficient wood.[80] Further, he advocated that timber owners be supported in removing small trees that could function as ladder fuels.[81] Walker saw forest fire prevention as an opportunity to build cooperation between the various agencies and timberland owners. By acclimating to the conditions of the forests they sought to exploit, foresters and lumbermen could sustain a perpetual supply of timber.[82]

By the time the Red River Lumber Company transitioned fully to focus on the Westwood operations in 1915, Minnesota had only recently established a state forestry commission. The commission, created in 1911, was tasked with updating the fire warden system while also establishing and maintaining forest reserves.[83] Much of the forest acreage that would contribute to these state reserves (as in Michigan and Wisconsin) came from tax delinquent parcels. This was the case for Red River Lumber lands in Hubbard county after T.B. Walker left the management of the company to his sons. The youngest, Archie Walker, oversaw the shutdown of

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[79] Walker, Thomas B. "Forestry Unpublished."

[80] Walker, Letter to Cox, 17 Oct. 1908. At this point, RRLC had been doing this for nearly 6 years according to Walker.

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] Fire in California has a long Indigenous history. Walker is ultimately advocating that settlers use Indigenous practices to maintain presence and the ability to profit off of Indigenous land into the future.

[83] General Laws of Minnesota for 1911---*Ch. 125*, *151-160.*

the Akeley mill and started trying to sell company lands to settlers. When they could not entice settlers to try farming the cutover forest land, the Walkers allowed their holdings to go tax delinquent, thereby reverting to state ownership.

It was not until 1931, however, that then Commissioner of Forests Grover Coznet published a comprehensive policy recommendation for Minnesota. Coznet's program outlined eight primary reasons for developing state forest reserves: Land use, recreation, scenic beauty, timber supply, forest industries, protection forests, wild life, and weather. To accomplish this, Coznet requested that the state complete its land economic survey. In 1929, the state legislature appropriated $20,000 for each of two years for a land economic survey—an exhaustive inventory of the stock and resources at hand in the state. Such a survey would determine which lands would be appropriate for forestry and conservation, what future studies would be needed, and to redefine forest areas and less settled regions to promote economic development.[84] Additionally, the policy called for setting up a small permanent scientific investigation and research staff under the Commissioner of Forestry and Fire Prevention, while enlarging the personnel on staff at the University of Minnesota. The state and university could then collaboratively develop scientific and laboratory projects that would apply to general forestry problems of the state rather than leaving them to the department itself. Lastly, the policy outlined the existing and proposed state forests.

Clearly not enough money was appropriated to this purpose at the state level – the entire $40,000 appropriation for the land survey was used in surveying Hubbard County alone. However, this was sufficient to cover the area in which the Red River Lumber Company land that included the proposed Mantrap Valley State Forest. When the reserve on these lands was

[84] This mirrored the Wisconsin Land Economic Inventory or Bordner Survey ran officially 1929-1947.

formally established in 1935, however, the state legislature named it the Paul Bunyan State Forest. Paul Bunyan's logging legacy would continue on the property which included 53,760 acres. 39,040 of this was tax delinquent land that had transferred to the state, 11,740 was still privately owned and 2,940 acres was already state owned. Today, this still aligns predominantly with the area of the Paul Bunyan State Forest, which was officially established in 1935. The entire contemporary management area is 105,116 acres, straddling US 71 in Hubbard county, with the core area of the Southern Unit still making up the originally planned Mantrap Valley forest reserve. Currently 60,840 are actively managed for forestry. The renaming of Mantrap Valley to Paul Bunyan State Forest leans into the nostalgia of Red River Lumber Company's marketing, inviting recreationalists and visitors to envision the cutover landscape as merely one phase of a sustained settler presence.

Indeed, Paul Bunyan narratives glorify a time when Indigenous people were removed, dispossessed, and their lands, full of timber resources, were destroyed by logging, the very thing that made Paul Bunyan a household name. The Paul Bunyan State Forest's proximity to the Leech Lake Ojibwe Band of Ojibwe reservation and Chippewa National Forest reveal the complexity and interwoven nature of myth and reality, of nostalgia and dispossession. Formally established in 1908, the 1.6-million-acre Chippewa National Forest (CNF) lies nearly contiguous with the Leech Lake Reservation. Originally named the Minnesota National Forest, the CNF was the first national forest created "for the benefit of American Indian people." This complex dynamic is a result of the Morris Act, passed in 1902, that granted timber companies, like Red River, access to a substantial amount of timber across the state while "reserving" land for Ojibwe bands. From its conception, the Chippewa National Forest (CNF) has been imagined and

described as “co-managed.” This co-management has its roots in the federal government’s legal obligation, to the Leech Lake Ojibwe.

This then is the irony of the Paul Bunyan State Forest: it is named for an American legend, who is said to have literally cleared the path for settlement, while forest management now proposes to maintain the integrity of the forest. Logging and forestry have in many ways superseded Indigenous peoples access to land in the US. While today the importance of forests is well-recognized beyond the sale of timber, the underlying premise remains tied to resource extraction and economic development. Forestry strives to maintain forest spaces into perpetuity. Settlers are thereby able to maintain lifeways encapsulated in the Paul Bunyan narrative, while American Indians remain closed off from their traditional homelands. This makes the ethos of Paul Bunyan, not just his name, a permanent fixture of Minnesota’s forest geography.

In this way, the implementation of forestry at the inflection from cutover to conservation is an attempt to root settler claims to land deeper into the soil itself. Forestry renders the ecological relationships that compose forests, their soils, waters, wildlife and the trees themselves, as exploitable into the future. This sustained exploitation is in turn maintained by the symbolic presence of forests and forestry in narratives and representations of their importance to settler life. Forestry, with its roots in the nationalist movements of German-speaking Central Europe, is a practice where these material and symbolic dimensions converge. This practice still underpins co-management between Tribes, federal and state agencies in the Upper Midwest today. With the expanded visibility of legal responsibilities to uphold treaty rights, co-management is an adaptation; however, it only gestures towards Indigenous sovereignty while still presuming an ongoing settler presence. The Paul Bunyan State Forest reveals the intertwining of cultural narratives with ecological management practices – a fusion that asserts

and attempts to uphold settler claims to autochthony. Such entitlement to material relationships with these lands, and decision-making authority over them, continues to reify settler attempts at foreclosing on the self-determination of Indigenous futures.

Cardinal's Virtue

A white blanket lays across the fields
gently rustling as the chill breeze
sends sparkling snow-dust swirling sideways
down, up, all around
Across the way, stands of pine
needles extend from branches
extend from trunks
extend from Earth
offering a firm fluffy pillow to rest on
Against the stark white,
the deep green
a fleck of rosy-red, flittering about
A message it brings,
from the haven in the sky
where many weary feet have walked,
to check for the footsteps
they have left
not to follow the path
but to know
somewhen
somewhere
how to blaze a good trail

This was a poem that I wrote as the final assignment in my Menominee Language 1 class. The assignment was to consider predictors - phrases and idioms in Menominee that express how the actions or the appearance of particular beings or phenomena in the world are indicators that could predict something happening - they help us make sense of what to do next at a particular fork in the road. This also comes from my position as a settler in relation to Menominee Nation, Menominee language and Menominee forestry - because this way of listening to the messages that more-than-humans have come to share is not just Menominee or Indigenous; my family also has stories like these ourselves. One of them is this plaque that sits in my grandparent's house, that reads: "Cardinals visit from heaven above to bring well wishes from those that we love."

Cardinals are my grandmother's favorite bird, but I only really started paying attention to it once I moved in with Grandfather after she died and I got divorced. As I started living in that house, I saw this plaque every day and I paid more attention to when the Cardinals came back. Their presence comes ever earlier as part of a changing climate. To me, that's a predictor in the Menominee sense and that led me to this poem: the virtue of Cardinal is how that loving presence is part of guiding the way, showing us where to go next. It's not necessarily the exact path but it is an indication of how to blaze a good trail and to leave good marks for those that follow.

VI. The Ground Beneath our Feet: Centering Other-Wise Autochthony

The throughscapes presented in the preceding chapters show that autochthony is less a state of being and more a process of relationality. Whyte emphasizes trust as a quality of relationships that Indigenous Ecological Knowledge systems maintain. These knowledge systems cultivate skills where "each party or relative takes to heart the best interests of the other party or relative."[1] Trust develops "when people can be trusted to discharge particular responsibilities, leaving others to take up the many other responsibilities in the society."[2] The ecological dimensions of trust are "rooted in knowledge that certain members or groups of a society have in-depth knowledge of certain aspects of the ecosystem and that there are processes in place in a society to adequately vet and train knowledge bearers."[3] Importantly, developing a high level of trust supports the continuance of Indigenous societies.

This is true for the on-the-ground implementation of Indigenous natural resource governance, as the Menominee Sustainable Development Model, and other Indigenous resources like the Dibaginjigaadeg Anishinaabe Ezhitwaad - Tribal Climate Adaptation Menu point to. Practices of care-full relations emanate from Indigenous grounded normativities, generating knowledge systems to place humans in relation to more-than-human beings and Land. This means Menominee sustainability is grounded in an other-wise autochthony. Like other Indigenous conceptions of place and autochthony, they have always been attuned to, wise of these more-than-human relations, regardless of which actual ground is beneath their feet. Context-driven, landed knowledge contributes to the resurgence and collective continuance of

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[1] Whyte, "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do for Indigenous Peoples?," 69.

[2] Whyte, Caldwell, and Schaefer, "Indigenous Lessons about Sustainability Are Not Just for 'All Humanity,'" 161.

[3] *Ibid*, 162.

Indigenous peoples and their communities.[1] Collective continuance is defined by an Indigenous community's "capacity to adapt in ways sufficient for its members' livelihoods to flourish into the future;" which becomes realized "when societies exhibit strong relationships in which the parties to the relationship (i.e. the relatives) see themselves as having reciprocal responsibilities to one another."[4]

This builds on expansive ideas of ecological restoration that have been developed by Indigenous scholars and practitioners.. Robin Wall Kimmerer, for example, talks about "eco-cultural or reciprocal restoration" which fosters "renewed relationships of respect, responsibility and reciprocity."[5] Kimmerer thus broadens the scope of restoration and conservation beyond the classic scientific understanding of ecology. Such expanded goals include revitalizing Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) and language; developing place-based sustainable economies, and restoring traditional land management that benefits more-than-human relatives.[6]

Another formulation of this is Restor(y)ation, Restor(y)ing Indigenous lands and knowledges offer opportunities to develop ethical relationships for knowledge-seeking. Bearing these epistemological dimensions of settler colonialism in mind calls to attention the debts that settlers owe to even be offered the opportunity to become welcome guests.[7] Restor(y)ation is about bringing story, narrative and the socio-cultural-ecological values that they carry back to the

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[4] Whyte, "What Do Indigenous Knowledges Do for Indigenous Peoples?," 71.

[5] "Restoration and Reciprocity: The Contributions of Traditional Ecological Knowledge," in *Human Dimensions of Ecological Restoration: Integrating Science, Nature, and Culture*, ed. Dave Egan, Evan E. Hjerpe, and Jesse Abrams (Society for Ecological Restoration, 2011), 258.

[6] *Ibid*, 259

[7] Hernandez distinguishes between the positionalities of settler, unwelcome guests, and welcome guests. Settlers are those non-Indigenous persons that embody whiteness. Guests are those displaced Indigenous peoples who no longer reside in the homelands of their ancestors; to be welcomed or not in the other Indigenous peoples' land one resides on rests in the ability to build relationships through proper protocols. *Fresh Banana Leaves*, 1–4.

restoration practice (from planning to the implementation). Through eco-cultural restoration, the needs and desires of Indigenous communities are foregrounded in a way that fosters the responsibility of humans as embedded in relationships with more-than-humans rather than assuming full discretion in determining the trajectories of their evolution. Reciprocal restoration is fundamental to Indigenous self-determination and collective continuance.

These offerings of insurgent Indigeneity as they emanate to the outermost layer of collective continuance to include me. “Re-kind-ling ecological sensibilities” is my way of articulating Whyte’s “qualities of relationships for collective continuance.” Re-kind-ling is about developing a renewed degree of trust from that which was broken by settler colonialism, which is a necessary part of working with fire especially. I hyphenate the components here to emphasize bringing care (kindness, fullness, awareness) as the intention for practice. As one who is attuned through the German language, this also stems from the genuine curiosity of a child - *Kind* - to explore and learn about our ecologies with the flexibility of a child’s mind. Ecologies here, following Whyte, are the systems of relationships we are a part of and how they shape our understanding of the places we dwell and make a living in. And by sensibility, I mean the ways we attune to those relational systems and situate our embodied selves into them. This includes practices that are tactile, like prescribed fire, but also, other senses including sound, sight and language that extend our awareness of the stories Lands, waters and others have to tell.

My concept "Re-Kind-ling Ecological sensibility" considers ‘fire’ as care. Conventional restoration considers putting fire back on the land sufficient – it is not. And while critical retellings of fire suppression history and its legacies are important, that kind of restor(y)ation is still missing something. For me, Re-Kind-ling is about taking what it means to have a relative in fire, to heal with fire and to take that process to other relations and other places – it is a

systematic appreciation to maintain care-full awareness across and between throughscapes. Because if monuments pierce through layers of throughscapes, fire does something else – it prepares new ground for that other-wise autochthony to grow. Whether we name it Feuer (German) - ishkode (Ojibwemowin) - iskotawe (Menominee) - pej (Ho-Chunk), we all have a relation with this being and know that we need to be care-full when healing with it.

Translation is a practice of never just, always more than - it captures a moment of cross-cultural exchange that allows for building solidarities across, yet attentive to, difference. This is important because it provides a first step, a touch point, for non-Indigenous scholars (like myself) to begin engaging with Indigenous perspectives. Kimmerer expresses the opportunity that such an invitation provides as "the grammar of animacy."[8] Animacy is encoded in multiple Indigenous grammars, as part of their co-constitution in and with landscapes. While Kimmerer here articulates the many ways that animacy is encoded in the morphology and syntax of Bodewadmimwin, she concludes that it is more about spirit - the ways in which the speaker sees the world and chooses to relate to the other beings who inhabit it.

While animacy is not grammatically a part of English, that does not exclude or preclude the principle from being a part of the English language. It just means that things are differently animate. All languages show relationality through their grammar. Kimmerer takes up the thing-ness of English (having 70% nouns whereas it's the opposite in Potawatomi) in her piece.[4] While the ways in which science and colonialism have proceeded through English brings out the mechanistic, the atomizing, anatomizing aspects of nouns, it is important to consider their value. Nouns in the Germanic language family (including English) can be thought of as nexus points. Things are bundles of relationships, whole entities that can be in relation with each other. Noun-

[8] *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 48–59.

words can capture that if allowed to be understood that way. And all languages have words for nouns and words for verbs. They have actions - ways of moving through the world - and they also have ways of sitting in, being in, the world. Existing. Even in English those are verbs, those are actions that can be and are done by subjects. Subject, agency, animacy – in the end, as Kimmerer says, animacy is really about spirit.[95] More meaningful than the words themselves are the intentions behind them and the ability to fulfill the obligations that animate relationality entails. Language enables seeing and conceptualizing *spiritus*, the energy, vitality, life force that flows in, through and between beings. That's what language is; that's what language does. Through language we respire, we aspire, we inspire. Language is the breath that connects us to other beings, pasts and futures.

One example of where this is happening in the German-language context is at the intersections of dialect music and environmental activism. The language ideologies of German dialects are multilayered and complex, but their use for progressive environmental politics emphasizes that belonging stems from the intertwining evolution of the intimate interactions through which people imbue places with meaning. Dialect musicians like Roland Burkhardt (from the Kaiserstuhl in the Upper Rhine, famous for songs of the anti-nuclear protests in Wyhl), Bluatschink (the duo of Toni and Margit Knittel from the Lech valley in Tyrol), and Max von Milland (South Tyrol) challenge and broaden the notion of autochthony as a singular event—being born in a place—or as denoted by the language one speaks as one's mother tongue. Instead, they express through their music that autochthony comes from intentional interactions, by cultivating relationships with others and with a place. They use their regional dialects to engage the question of what it means to belong, portraying and enlivening the paradox of

[9] *Ibid*, 53.

autochthony through creative expression in a way that opens and facilitates a place for dialogue. While the comparison of all these musicians, how dialect literally gives voice to environmental concerns in the German-speaking world, and the opportunities for dialogue with Indigenous peoples will be part of my ongoing work, I want to turn briefly to the example of Max von Milland as a way that an other-wise autochthony resounds in contemporary German popular culture.

As his chosen stage-name suggests, the artist born as Maximilian Hilpold is originally from Milland, a village outside of Brixen in Südtirol. He is committed to singing in his *südtirolerisch* dialect to explore ideas of longing for home and belonging. Max von Milland engages the politics of autochthony explicitly in "Herz über Bluat," which takes up the challenges of far-right nationalism and anti-immigration sentiment. Here, he directly addresses the potential misuse, mislabeling, and false associations of dialect with strains of nationalism that also extol the cultural significance of linguistic regionalism.

The title and refrain are clear appropriations of the Nazi slogan "Blut und Boden" (blood and soil). Max inverts the fascist expression of autochthony, placing heart, as the source of love and care, above blood and genetic inheritance. He engages the nostalgia for some imagined, glorified past directly by articulating his willingness to lean into hard conversations, but making clear that he will not budge in his own commitments to a more inclusive community. The adamant statement of resistance embodied in this song is further enhanced by a simple evolution of the refrain throughout. In each of its three iterations, the subject changes. It evolves from "I am more than soil and blood" to a singular other "you" and then ultimately to the first-person plural "we," who are also "more than soil and blood." Each time the refrain also declares that "home to me/you/us" means that everyone belongs who feels love for it, not hate and rage.

Heart above blood." Here, then is the core of Max von Milland's message: that *Heimat*, home, is a physical place that is filled with the meaning born of care-full relationships and is not defined by the angry expulsion of differences.

Max von Milland carries this further by articulating an other-wise autochthony in "Eisack." He defines home through the connection to the flow of a river. Both the song and the album are named for the river that flows from the Brenner Pass through Brixen and on towards Bozen. Here Max von Milland describes his personal relationship to this body of water:

> Månchmal, wenn i am Ufer sitz
> wirkt der Fluss wia an Uhr de ständig tickt,
> wo Wåsser wia Zeit mit jedem Schlåg vergeaht.
> Månchmal, stell i mir dånn so vor,
> wås ålles so verflossen isch de Jåhr
> Seit i es erste Mål als Kind då wår
> Und so viel wås i erst iatzt versteah
>
> (Refrain)
> I woaß zwår nit wohin der Fluss fliaßt
> åber i woaß er fliaßt niamåls mehr zrugg
> wås Inn, Rhein und Isar, die Donau für di
> isch der Eisack für mi
>
> Månchmal wenn i am Ufer bin
> måch i mi nåckat und i spring,
> will in dem Moment verweilen
> bis i zrugg ans Ufer schwimm
> Jedes mål wenn i es Ufer nimmer find
> her i auf
> des Gefühl im Bauch
> des mi hoamwärts bring.
>
> ("Eisack")

The Eisack river serves as an anchor for Max's experience of place that also flows forward in time. By sitting on the shore and attuning to the flow of the water, he is invited into reflection.

Memories, past turning points, and the way that these shape Max's current state and future intentions are all part of the experience of having a relationship with this river. As the refrain says, he does not know where the river flows—only that it flows forward.

The second part of the refrain relates his individual experience to that of a larger imagined community. He identifies other rivers of Central Europe, each with their own prominent and prolific nationalist associations, and claims that the Eisack performs a somewhat similar function. The comparison to these other major rivers, however, is not about a rigid geopolitical nationalism. While the river is central to a regional and community experience, the insistent focus on how the river flows expresses a consciousness of change rather than a persistent attitude of stasis. The open awareness to change is grounded in the experience of memory. He expresses belonging as the river one grows up with—it both changes constantly and yet always remains a part of his experience. This duality invites a constant return to reflect on and evaluate those changes. "*Eisack"* expresses a different attitude toward change than songs that focus on mountains as symbols of the enduring. This is not to say that Max von Milland's other songs that depict mountain geographies do not offer similar associations; however, centering the river turns the audience away from overdetermined mountain symbolism. Mountains become easily transposed into an autochthonic stasis that materializes and concretizes into rigid social geopolitical boundaries. Such boundaries are then enforced as sacrosanct, assuming a permanence that will mystically outlast the dynamics of history. As *Eisack* shows, however, these boundaries are in fact much more malleable as people(s) move between places.

Engaging with flows, shifts, and changes comes from the direct and personal experience of relating to the river. The second stanza describes how even the intimate and visceral encounter of swimming naked in the river does not drown the feeling of home—the

connection to the land that makes up the shore. The "Gefühl im Bauch" that always brings him back homeward is more than a mythical connection to the landscape. Here, one can while away in the moment of flow, but that is not a loss of self. The sense of groundedness remains even as the water flows by. Being open to the flows of the river does not mean that he is untethered—in the same way that rivers still only exist in relation to their banks. While this "Gefühl" serves as an anchor, it is not a contradiction of his progressive articulations of belonging; rather, it represents an evolution, a maturing of his perspective through the political moments of the 2010s and early 2020s. Max von Milland's "Gefühl im Bauch" is formed by the experience of connecting to place and the people that inhabit it. These social and cultural relationships are themselves in flux; the river holds these memories and the knowledge that they will shift. By articulating belonging in relation to the river, Max von Milland asserts a crucial malleability to autochthony: he, like his dialect and the music he makes, is connected to and shaped by the stories of the land he was born to. Simultaneously, maintaining relationships with the land and people creates the possibility that others can also find and experience that feeling of belonging. Attunement to how water and land (flow and structure) interact acknowledges the desire for constancy while also accepting the necessity of change and adaptation.

Max von Milland's ability to perform outside of the Austro-Bavarian dialect region has evolved out of the commitment to dialect and place as grounding elements for his music. The deeper understanding of his own place is the starting point for creative engagements with other artists and other peoples. With his music, he rebukes extreme nationalism and shows that autochthony can and must be defined by attentively cultivating intimate relationships to others and place rather than through adherence to doctrinal notions of nationhood. His music opens a

way toward a progressive notion of place and belonging, insisting on an alternative *Heimat* concept built through people's dynamic and creative ability to (trans-)form their attachments.

To return to Regensburger's initial question, then, home/*Dahuam* is both place and affect. The interactions between people and the landscapes they inhabit and draw meaning from work to make home a place where one's stories matter. Feeling at home or belonging to a place is an affect of autochthony, when our practices of place-making enrich our experience and enliven all of our relationships. Autochthony is a narrative and expressive concept whereby people write themselves into their own pasts in order to validate their position in the arc of history and legitimize claims to shape its future trajectory.

The specific language one uses to write, craft and pass on these stories is not as important as the intention - regardless of language, animacy is always grammatically correct. Following Kimmerer's point about spirit, language enables seeing and conceptualizing *spiritus* - the energy and vitality that flows in, through and between beings. Through language we respire, we aspire, we inspire. Language is the breath that connects us to other beings, pasts and futures. Indigenous peoples have been practicing that since time immemorial, and Nations like the Menominee still express that through their forestry today. Settlers, regardless of heritage and language, need to relearn this. Monuments such as the Endres Chapel, Hermann the German and German Scientific Forestry inscribe settler claims to autochthony over Indigenous homelands. In closing, re-kind-ling my ecological sensibilities is a recognition of the ground beneath my feet, which is shaped by the principles of Apēkon Ahkīhih and Gastfreundschaft – the one, a Menominee invitation of diplomacy and insurgent indigeneity and the other a German obligation to visitors. They both articulate that when you accept an invitation, it is a responsibility to show respect to your hosts and their ways; and to be a good host in your own turn. Re-kind-ling

ecological sensibilities is about cultivating the respectful acknowledgement of difference from the ground up in order to sustain care-full and trust-worthy relationships. Only through cultivating the skills to transform our intentions and articulate that transformation can we arrive at a better way of being in relation to Land, more-than-human beings, other people, and ourselves.

I have arrived right back, where I in many ways began. “Home” is a place where you get that homecoming feeling - that you have arrived at something familiar even as it and you have changed. The places that are home for me are these places, peoples and stories that I’m committed to cultivating a deep relationship to. For me, that brings me back to the Alps and that old farmstead, the Rosshütte, at the top of the Plose. I connect to that place through German and my encounter with Indigenous Studies, especially after working as a summer intern at Menominee Tribal Enterprises. The following summer, I returned to Olga’s Table – her continuing legacy through the TOLI satellite seminars is a space for remembrance, reflection and collective continuance that infuses my pedagogy. And this came full circle back to Wisconsin – two of the most frequently offered translations of that place-name into English are “A gathering of waters” and “a good place to live.” both of these are proposed with a fair amount of liberal poetic licensing, however, they both point to the responsibility to be a good guest for the duration of my visit. Indigenous Studies has long held up a mirror for settlers to take a good, long look in with only one request: that we settlers be honest with what we see.

Hoamkemmen – That Homecoming Feeling

I’ve never been
To an
institutional
Homecoming

Boone, Madison,
Each beautiful in their way.
Each, in their way
Deeply troubled.
Each a home
But coming home, for me,
Has never meant these places.

Des Hoamkemmensgfühl?
I‘ kenn‘s
S‘isch der Drång,

Der mei Blikch
Zur Plose aufi ziegt,
Zu sechen wia
Das grau-griane Gletscherwåssr
Vom Hang oar fließt
Und durchs Eisacktal
Langsam schleicht
Wenn i aller Welt mit
Griaß enk
Begegne
Wenn i sanfter Liebe
Pfiat di
Meinen Abshied nimm

That homecoming feeling?
I know it –
It is the uplifting presence
Of the towering pines,
those gentle giants
That Menominee saved
From the loggers axe,
The free-flowing Wolf
As my co-workers –
Now friends, mentors –
Make their offerings,
Dance, sing, live
each new day.
Wāēwāēnen.

That homecoming feeling?
I know it –
It is the steadfast reassurance
Of all the wisdom around
This table,
To know that it has called
Us all
Here,
To know that we each
Have a place.

That homecoming feeling?
We all know it.
At the gathering of waters
I do my part to ensure
It remains
A good place to live.

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