



GERMANS IN ANN ARBOR



ANN ARBOR ORGAN WORKS, 1888

ANN ARBOR ORGAN WORKS 1870s



ALLMENDINGER'S
FACTORY IN 1907.
HE ADDED PIANOS
IN 1895.

MICHIGAN'S FIRST GERMAN CONGREGATION WAS ORGANIZED IN 1833 WEST OF TOWN BY PASTOR FRIEDRICH SCHMID. IN 1845, ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF WASHINGTON AND FIRST STREETS, THE CONGREGATION BUILT THIS CHURCH FROM WHICH BOTH BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH TRACE THEIR LINEAGE.



David Allmendinger founded the Ann Arbor Organ Works in 1872 in his home (building on right) on the northwest corner of Washington and First Streets. Allmendinger's reed organs and pianos were sold all over the country until displaced by phonographs for home entertainment.

Germans, mainly from Swabia in southwest Germany, had been settling in Ann Arbor since 1829 when the first Allmendinger arrived. German immigration to the area continued into the twentieth century.

Settling on farms or in town, mainly on the west side, many practiced trades learned in the old country such as brewing, tanning, blacksmithing, carpentry, and masonry.

German-owned businesses in the nineteenth century included the Germania Hotel (building on your left), the Western Brewery, Keck Furniture Factory, Krause Tannery, Walker Carriage Factory, and Central Mills. By 1880 one Ann Arborite in nine was German-born; many more were of German descent. German

was commonly spoken on the street. People heard preaching in German, read local German newspapers, and sent their children to German schools.

David Allmendinger's home had formerly been the residence of tanner and leather merchant Jacob Weil, part of a small community of German-speaking Jews who arrived in Ann Arbor in the 1840s. The first Jewish services in Michigan were held in Ann Arbor in 1845. Weil was active in politics, serving several terms as alderman.

THE 1890S SIGN ON WHAT HAD BEEN BUILT AS JOHN J. WAGNER JR.'S CARRIAGE AND BLACKSMITH SHOP ON THE CORNER OF ASHLEY POINTS ACROSS WASHINGTON STREET TO MICHAEL STAEBLER'S AMERICAN HOTEL (ORIGINALLY THE GERMANIA). THE STAEBLERS RAN OTHER BUSINESSES NEARBY: GROCERIES, COAL, BICYCLES, AND AUTOS. THE AWNING SHADES OSWALD DIETZ'S SALOON, THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF SALOONS TO OCCUPY THIS SPACE FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS.



MICHAEL STAEBLER (RIGHT) IN FRONT OF HIS COAL OFFICE AND BICYCLE SHOP IN THE AMERICAN HOTEL, BEFORE 1910

