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# Presidential Documents

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Title 3—

Proclamation 6834 of October 6, 1995

The President

German-American Day, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

## A Proclamation

Since the earliest days of the settlement of North America, immigrants from Germany have enriched our Nation with their industry, culture, and participation in public life. Over a quarter of all Americans can trace their ancestry back to German roots, but more important than numbers are the motives that led so many Germans to make a new beginning across the Atlantic. America's unparalleled freedoms and opportunities drew the first German immigrants to our shores and have long inspired the tremendous contributions that German Americans have made to our heritage.

In 1681, William Penn invited German Pietists from the Rhine valley to settle in the Quaker colony he had founded, and these Germans were among the first of many who would immigrate to America in search of religious freedom. This Nation also welcomed Germans in search of civic liberty, and their idealism strengthened what was best in their adopted country. As publisher of the *New York Weekly Journal* in the 1700s, Johann Peter Zenger became one of the founders of the free press. Carl Schurz, a political dissident and close ally of Abraham Lincoln, served as a Union General during the Civil War, fighting to end the oppression of slavery. And German names figured prominently in the social and labor reform movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the course of 300 years of German emigration to this great land, German Americans have attained prominence in all areas of our national life. Like Baron von Steuben in Revolutionary times and General Eisenhower in World War II, many Americans of German descent have served in our military with honor and distinction. In the sciences, Albert Michelson and Hans Bethe immeasurably increased our understanding of the universe. The painters Albert Bierstadt and modernist Josef Albers have enhanced our artistic traditions, and composers such as Oscar Hammerstein have added their important influences to American music.

Yet even these many distinguished names cannot begin to summarize all the gifts that German Americans have brought to our Nation's history. While parts of the Midwest, Pennsylvania, and Texas still proudly bear the stamp of the large German populations of the last century, it is their widespread assimilation and far-reaching activities that have earned German Americans a distinguished reputation in all regions of the United States and in all walks of life.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 6, 1995, as German-American Day. I encourage Americans everywhere to recognize and celebrate the contributions that millions of people of German ancestry have made to our Nation's liberty, democracy, and prosperity.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

*William Clinton*

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