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**“Symposium on the Shared History of Germans and African Americans in Missouri” with a reception, speakers, drama, and exhibit at Lincoln University**

**Jefferson City, MO** – The Deutschheim Verein and Lincoln University will present “Symposium on the Shared History of Germans and African Americans” during Black History Month on Saturday, February 17, 2024 from 2 to 4 in Martin Luther King Hall-Pawley Theater at 812 East Dunklin St. The Symposium will mark the first time in Jefferson City that scholars and actors will explore and celebrate the historic relationships between Germans and African Americans. **The Symposium and reception are free to the public.**

A public reception will precede the Symposium from 1:30 to 2 with a “Taste of African American Appetizers and German Desserts.” Skillets Catering, formerly the Blue Skillet, owned by Phillipia Rome, will provide fresh, homemade African American appetizers including fried chicken, mac & cheese, collard greens, black eyed peas and cornbread. Linda Walker Stevens of Hermann, former President of the Deutschheim Verein, will provide authentic German Springerle and Lebkuchen cookies. Stevens is the author of “What Wondrous Life: The World of George Husmann.” Husmann is known as the father of the Missouri wine industry and was a member of the committee that wrote the ordinance abolishing slavery in the state.

The Symposium program includes: a) highly regarded scholars and historians; b) *Two Worlds: One America*, a short dramatic adaptation from the play *An Amazing Story: German Abolitionists of Missouri*; and an exhibit by the Lincoln University archivist. Speakers include Dr. Gary Kremer, Executive Director of the Missouri State Historical Society; Dr. John Wright, author of 12 books on African American history in Missouri; and Dr. Sydney Norton, editor of the recently released *Fighting for a Free Missouri: German Immigrants, African Americans, and the Issue of Slavery* (University of Missouri Press). Cecilia Nadal, sociologist, playwright, and the organizer of the Symposium, will join the speakers on the panel. She has toured this event throughout Missouri since 2019 in collaboration with local partners. All four speakers have contributed chapters to Norton’s anthology, *Fighting for a Free Missouri*.

*Two Worlds: One America* is a 20-minute dramatic presentation written by Cecilia Nadal and Lee Patton Chiles that celebrates Judge Arnold Krekel, well-known German abolitionist and resident of Jefferson City, and members of the 62<sup>nd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Infantry. This presentation is partially adapted from Nadal's original 3-act play, *An Amazing Story: German Abolitionists of Missouri*. Dick Dalton, former professor at Lincoln University and actor, will play the role of Judge Arnold Krekel. Marquise Jackson, a teacher and actor, will portray a fictional member of the 62<sup>nd</sup> regiment of the Colored Infantry. Evann De-Bose, singer, actress and teacher, joins the ensemble as singer and narrator. Nada Vaughn, director, recently received the Arts for Life Award for "Best Director of a Drama" for her production of Charles Fuller's "A Soldiers Play." Vaughn frequently directs plays for Clayton Community Theater. Costume design is by Michele Siler, well-known for her work with New Jewish Theater and Gitana Productions.

University archivist Mark Schleer, Jefferson City native whose German immigrant great grandfather employed several Lincoln students in his hardware store during the late 1860s, is spearheading an exhibit at the Symposium. The exhibit focuses on the 62<sup>nd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> Colored Infantry regiments that founded Lincoln Institute (later to become Lincoln University), and Judge Arnold Krekel, a founding member of the school's Board of Trustees. Krekel taught history and law at Lincoln for 10 years free of charge and remained a Board member for 22 years!

Lincoln University became a reality as a result of the alliance between the members of the 62<sup>nd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> Colored Infantry regiments and collaborative support from abolitionists—one of the most prominent being Judge Arnold Krekel, a German immigrant and abolitionist who presided over the Emancipation Convention ending slavery in Missouri.

No reservations are needed for this event.

### **Two opportunities from sponsors of the Symposium**

#### **Tell Your Story**

The Deutschheim Verein invites residents from Jefferson City to help us find inspirational stories between Germans and African Americans as far back as the Civil War period or as recently as 2023. You can submit those stories and see more details on our website at [deutschheimverein.org/shared-history/](https://deutschheimverein.org/shared-history/) (see Share Your Story) or send email to [info@gitana-inc.org](mailto:info@gitana-inc.org).

## Capital City Culture

Missouri River Regional Library invites you on February 6, 2024 (6:30 -7:30) to join renowned, motivational storyteller/oral cultural historian-Brother John, as he visits Jefferson City, Missouri, to discover and celebrate its rich African American History. Brother John explores the people and sites such as “The Foote,” the founders and creation of the prestigious Lincoln University and more. Through storytelling and music, Brother John brings out parallel connections on how in Missouri’s capital city, African American experience relates to the rest of our community neighbors throughout the state and beyond. This event will take place at Missouri River Library’s Art Gallery (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) For ages 12 and up.

## About the Deutschheim Verein

The Deutschheim Verein in Hermann is dedicated to the preservation of the culture and heritage of the Germans who migrated to Missouri in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Deutschheim Verein supports the mission and programs of the Deutschheim State Historic Site in Hermann and engage in strategic collaborations to share German history in Missouri with diverse audiences.

Support and/or collaborations for this program comes from the following organizations:



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**Attention Press**: Interviews and photography may be arranged and we would be happy to share stories that we have collected from across the State of Missouri between German Americans and African Americans.