



# Germans in Minnesota (People of Minnesota)

*Kathleen Neils Conzen*

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## **Germans in Minnesota (People of Minnesota)** Kathleen Neils Conzen

Minnesota is often associated with its Scandinavian heritage, but in fact Germans are the largest single immigrant group in Minnesota history and were the largest ancestry group in the 2000 census. Author Kathleen Neils Conzen tells the story of German Americans and their profound influence on Minnesota history and culture.

Conzen recounts their triumphs and struggles over the last 150 years in a clear and concise narrative. Landing in poverty, Germans transformed acres of wilderness into productive farms and brought to America their love of art, music, and sociability. Immigrants came to America intent on creating, in the words of one agent, "an earthly paradise of this Minnesota" and "a new Germany" soon rose in Stearns County. Conzen explores not only the well-known enclaves in Brown and Stearns Counties but also looks at the smaller communities of Winona, on the Iron Range, and along the North Shore, as well as in the Twin Cities.

In recent times, a renewed interest in German heritage can be seen in towns like New Ulm, home to the thirty-two-foot statue of Hermann the German, hero of the wars against the ancient Roman legions, and Heritagefest, the ethnic heritage festival that occurs every summer.

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