

German American History

EMINENT SCIENTISTS - PART II

The famous naturalist JOHANN LUDWIG RUDOLF AGASSIZ received his training at the universities of Zurich, Heidelberg and Munich. At the latter place he took his degree as doctor and became assistant of the famous naturalists Oken, Schelling, Döllinger, Spix and Martius. When the two last named scientists returned from their Brazilian tour, Agassiz was selected to describe the fishes, brought home from this expedition. By this work his name became so favorably known, that the king of Prussia in 1846 sent Agassiz to America, to investigate the natural history of the United States.

The lectures he delivered here made such deep impression, that the Harvard University offered him a professorship under the tempting conditions, that Agassiz accepted them and remained in America for the rest of his life. His many expeditions through North America, to the Gulf of Mexico and the Amazonas River form one of the most brilliant chapters in the history of American science. At Harvard the splendid Museum of Natural History, founded by him is a lasting monument to this brilliant scientist.

German naturalists participated also in many of the exploring expeditions sent out by the U.S. Government. EMIL BESSELS was in 1871 a member of the famous "Polaris Expedition" under Captain Francis Hall. After the leader's sudden death Bessels took charge of the expedition, which, after a terrific trip of 196 days on a huge block of ice, was saved by the steamer "Tigress." Bessels work about the "Polaris Expedition" appeared in three volumes.

To these able naturalists the names of many others could be added, as for instance of the paleontologist TIMOTHÄUS CONRAD, the biologist GEORGE EUGEN BEYER, the ornithologist HEINRICH NEHRLING, who wrote the splendid volume about the birds of North America. Furthermore, there are the entomologists GEORG H. HORN, HERMANN VON BÄHR, WILLIAM BEUTENMÜLLER, the geologist EUGEN W. HILGARD, GEORG FERDINAND BECKER, KARL SCHUCKERT and RUDOLF RÜDEMANN, the latter State geologist of New York.

Of German descent is also GEORGE FREDERICK KUNZ, gem expert and author of the books "Gems and Precious Stones or North America", "Investigations and Studies in Jade," and the "Book of the pearl," all of which were published in the most luxurious form.

In the wide field of archeology and ethnology a number of German American scientists have achieved most remarkable results. PHILIPP VALENTINI, KARL HERMANN BERENDT, GUSTAV BRÜHL and KARL RAU wrote splendid monographs and works.

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