Hermann Hill Three Mile Walk

Take the north sidewalk, past the flower cutting garden and forest of gongs. Follow the gravel path through the woods, which will become pavement in about 100 yards. Continue to W. 4th St. Turn right (east) and walk downhill to Jefferson St. Turn left (north) into St. George Cemetery.

A. Before entering St. George Cemetery, take a moment to view the Missouri River bottoms. Imagine a time when the river flowed from bluff to bluff. Hermann residents had the opportunity to witness this during the floods of 1993 and 1995. As you walk through the cemetery, notice the old iron crosses, somewhat unique for a German community that prided itself on stone and brick. The first Roman Catholic cemeteries in the area used wooden and wrought iron crosses. Local blacksmiths made the iron crosses, a generations-old tradition brought here by the Germans. In the Protestant cemeteries, the earliest gravestones were made of cotton rock and sandstone cut by local artisans. A number of these, dating from the 1850s, can be seen in the Hermann City Cemetery on East Hill.

As you exit the cemetery, take a quick right, then a left, into the alley. Follow the alley and at the first intersection turn left (north). Continue to W. 2nd Street and turn right (east). Stop at the corner of Mozart St. (As you walk along W. 2nd St., imagine what this part of town must have looked like in the early years when it was covered in grapevines.)

B. Notice the churches on your left and right. Churches show the vitality of the religious culture of the area. Like the churches of their German homeland, churches of the early settlements were built on hills, and their steeples can be seen from miles around. Two examples are St. George Catholic Church, circa 1850 (on the right) and St. Paul United Church of Christ, circa 1846 (on the left). Notice too, that the steeple on St. George Church is on the side of the building. The original church was built on the top of the hill facing north. When it was time to enlarge the church, the only way to build was onto the west side of the old church. The congregation chose to keep the original steeple where it was rather than erect one at the new entrance to the church.

Continue east on W. 2nd St. for 1/2 block to the Strehly House on the right.

C. The Strehly House is one of several buildings which comprise Deutschheim State Historic Site. Deutschheim, meaning "German home", is the German cultural museum for Missouri managed by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department. Tours of the Strehly House, Pommer-Gentner House (on Market St.), and adjacent gardens are offered daily. Tour information is available at the site office at 107 W. 2nd St. Take time to read about Deutschheim on the signs in front of each building.

Continue east to Market St. Turn left (north). In the middle of the block on the left is the Pommer-Gentner House. Continue north to the corner of West 1st Street.
D. This is the future site of the Pilot House, which was dismantled and removed from across the street to make way for the new Missouri River Bridge. (The new bridge will be constructed to the west of the current bridge and will feature wider traffic lanes, a pedestrian/bicycle lane, overlooks, and period lighting.) The Pilot House is a memorial to the river men who contributed to making Hermann the busiest port on the Missouri River. Many families were supported by men who worked on steamboats, constructed boats, and handled river freight. (For a complete history of the Port of Hermann, visit the River Room in the Hermann Museum at the German School.)

Cross Market Street. Then cross E. 1st Street and walk east to the courthouse.

E. The Gasconade County Courthouse was constructed from 1896-1898. It is thought to be the only courthouse in the United States erected by private funds. Charles D. Eitzen, the city's benefactor, willed the sum of $50,000 to the county government for the building. It was constructed of 400,000 bricks fired in the Vallet brickyard just east of Hermann. To give it a fine gloss and uniform color, the bricks were brushed with beer that was produced in the former Kropp Brewery (now Hermannhof Winery). Good vinegar would have served the same purpose, but as long as beer was cheaper, and readily available, the latter was used. While the courthouse was being treated, no workmen were permitted to indulge in the beer. Fire damaged the building in 1905. The present dome was reconstructed to somewhat different specifications than the original. (Take a few minutes to visit the courthouse, and view the lovely paintings and mural by local artists.)

The cannon on the front lawn of the courthouse played an important role in the history of Hermann. On the afternoon of Oct. 4, 1864, Confederate General Marmaduke's army made an appearance on the hills on the east side of town. A small militia company used the cannon to ward off Marmaduke's advance. Our gunners first fired on the intruders from the riverfront as they entered town around the bluff to the east. They then pulled the cannon to the hill where St. George Catholic Church stands and fired at the Confederates on the opposite hill, and from there they went into the vineyards at Stone Hill Winery and kept shooting until their ammunition ran out. The Confederates assumed that all of the western hills in town were fortified and checked their advance for more than an hour. Marmaduke sent several of his men out on horseback to find their attackers. What they discovered were a group of old men firing a beat up cannon. They threw the cannon into the river, but it was later retrieved by several local citizens.

Walk east to the intersection of Schiller St. Turn left (north) at Good Buys, and continue to Patrick's on the Waterfront.

F. The building that is now Simon's on the Waterfront was erected in 1867 as the St. Charles Wine Hall. The name is still partially visible on the north outside wall. Notice that the original cast iron balcony with a grape design is still in place. From 1890-1923 it was used as Hermann's high school. The first floor was the school's gymnasium. There were 4-inch upright steel poles in the gym supporting the second floor classrooms. It is said that Hermann's basketball teams had a home-court advantage because they knew how to dodge the poles! Simon's is a great night spot with weekend entertainment, and the adjoining restaurant serves lunch and dinner.

Walk north to the end of the sidewalk and read about the Iron Landing on the commemorative marker. Then continue east on Wharf St.
G. The three story brick building at 206 Wharf St. was constructed in the 1840s. Part of the lot was sold to Charles Eitzen, Hermann’s benefactor. He was a steamboat agent and ran a store at this location, making a fortune trading in iron ore and white pine lumber that was hauled from southern Missouri along the Old Iron Road. In later years the building served as a Masonic Hall. Currently it is a private residence.

H. The clapboard and brick building at 210 Wharf St. is the former Leimer Hotel. It was constructed in 1840, and was Hermann’s first hotel. It operated as a hotel for 30 years until business declined when the White House Hotel was constructed down the street. During the 1870s it housed the office of the local newspaper. It is currently used as apartment residences.

I. The Eitzen Home at 214 Wharf St. was built in 1855 by Charles Eitzen. This elegant home has a six-foot wide staircase because, it is said, Mr. Eitzen liked to carry his children upstairs to bed and did not want their head or feet to bump the wall or banister.

In the middle of the block, cross the railroad tracks and stroll along the Missouri River in the Riverfront Park.

J. The Riverfront Park was a new addition to Hermann in the 1990s, and is a popular spot to hold local events or just to take a casual stroll along the banks of the Missouri River.

Activity on the Missouri River at Hermann dates to 1819, well before the first German settlers arrived here. From 1836 to 1875, our “mountain pilots”, as the steamboat captains were called, were privileged characters and at the top of one of the highest paid professions in America. They received from $6,000 to $8,000 for a 2,300-mile trip to Fort Benton, Montana that lasted from 3 1/2 months to 6 months, and an eight-day trip from St. Louis to Omaha often earned them $1,000.

The worst boating disaster at the port of Hermann occurred at the wharf in 1843 when the steamer Big Hatchie blew up and killed some 70 people, mostly German immigrants seeking new homes in the Far West. Some 40 of these unfortunate people are buried on the top of the hill in the city cemetery in unmarked graves. At the time of the disaster, the Leimer Hotel (across Wharf St.) was converted to a hospital for a short time.

The first steam ferry boat at Hermann was the W.A. Knapp. In 1864, during the Civil War, this boat took most of the women and children up to Graf’s Island, where they stayed while General Sterling Price’s army went west through Hermann, burning railroad bridges and shooting up everything that did not strike their fancy. Before the steamer Knapp operated at Hermann, there was a hand-powered ferry boat business here.

In about 1880, the Hermann Ferry and Packet Company was started, and it operated out of Hermann on the Missouri, Osage, and Gasconade rivers. This little steamboat company was perhaps the most successful ever organized. At times it paid as much as 200 percent on its investment, and during the more than half century of its existence, it never lost a boat or damaged a cargo.

From 1845 until the early 1900s, it was river traffic that kept Hermann on the map. Historians believe that our city should go down in history as being the most successful river town on the
Missouri. Some 40 steam and gasoline boats and some 30 barges were built here, and Hermann sent more boat men out on our rivers than any other place between St. Louis and Fort Benton.

Ferry boat business ceased in Hermann in about 1929, the year the Missouri River Bridge was completed. Prior to the construction of the bridge, ferries transported people across the river. In winter, when the river froze, they could walk from shore to shore. School children living north of the river often stayed with families in Hermann during the week to avoid daily river crossings.

*Leave the riverfront park, turn left (east) and stop at the White House Hotel.*

**K.** The White House Hotel was built in 1870. Of interest are the stone keystones above the windows, the woodwork under the eaves, and the widow's walk with its cast iron railing. Many dignitaries stayed here during the well known “German Day” celebrations and also the oratory meetings known as Chatauquas. One of the most notable Chautauqua speakers was William Jennings Bryan, who spoke in Hermann in July, 1922. Hotel rooms let for $4.00 per night, dinner was 50 cents. A sign in the lobby reads, “All guests without baggage are required to pay in advance.” A unique aspect of the hotel was its plumbing. Like other plumbing of the day, it was outdoors. But the configuration of the six-unit outhouse was most unusual, three up and three down!

*Turn right (south) at Gutenberg St. and walk to the corner of E. 1st St.*

**L.** The Festhalle was renovated in 1987 as part of Hermannhof Winery. It is used for festivals and special events.

One-half block east of the Festhalle is Hermannhof Winery. The winery building was constructed in the 1840s. From 1848-1852 it was a winery and brewery. Initially wine making was a small part of this successful Kropp's Brewery, which was producing 4,000 barrels of beer annually by 1888. Wine making began again in 1978 when Jim Dierberg restored the building and its stone cellars. The winery now produces many award-winning wines. It is open daily for tours of the cellars and wine tastings.

At the mouth of Frene Creek near the winery, the first German settlers spent the winter of 1837. They found a widow, Polly Phillips, in a one-room log cabin, and the Hensley family in another. These kind folks took in the 17 settlers and gave them shelter until they could construct their own housing the following spring.

On the southwest corner of E. 1st and Gutenberg is the Hermann Star Mills building, Hermann's skyscraper. The four and one-half story mill was constructed in 1860 at a cost of $40,000. It had a capacity of 160 barrels of flour per day. By the 1880s, the mill produced 240 barrels of flour per day. It currently houses Oncken's Machine Shop.

*Turn right (west) onto E. 1st St. and walk one block to Schiller St.*

**M.** Halfway down the block on the left is the Concert Hall, which dates to 1877. Until the mid-1990s when it underwent a major restoration, it was said to be the longest, continuously operating beer hall west of the Mississippi River. The two-story brick building had a tavern on the first floor and a large dance hall upstairs. The front of the building, which rises above the roof to form a
parapet, visibly displays the sign Concert Hall and the lyre and music symbol designating it as a hall for concerts. Four concerts were given each year, plus dramas and dances. The most notable dance held at this location was the Fat Man's Ball. In order to attend, men had to weigh from 200-329 pounds and women's weights were to be between 176-230 pounds. The beautifully restored Concert Hall is now a restaurant and bar, which also offers special entertainment and events many evenings.

At the corner, turn left (south), cross E. 1st St., and walk along the east side of Schiller St.

N. Just before you reach the corner of E. 2nd St., look at the sidewalk for an old concrete section that has “Peoples Bank” inscribed in it. Then look across the street and picture a big shade tree with a table and chairs beneath it. During Prohibition, every Monday three bootleggers met at the bank, cashed checks, and exchanged large bills for small ones so they could divide their profits. Imagine them sitting under that tree saying, “One for you, one for you, and one for you.” The entire town knew what was going on during this weekly ritual.

As you continue along Schiller St., notice the number of windows in the buildings on the west side of the street and at the corner of E. 3rd and Schiller. The number of windows in a home signified the family’s wealth; the more windows, the more well-to-do the family.

Stop at the corner of E. 4th St.

O. On the northeast corner of the intersection is the home of the Gasconade County Historical Society Archives and Records Center. The facility is open to the public Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. See signs for hours.

The imposing structure across the street is the German School. The lots on which it stands were set aside in 1839 for school lots. The building was erected in 1871. Up to that time, German- and English-speaking schools were separate. When classes began in the German School, both languages were taught. Classes were held in the school until 1954. On the last day of the school year, the children would walk from here to the city park (traveling the route that you are about to take) for their May Picnic, where they played games and were served knackwurst and pink lemonade. This annual event was the forerunner of Hermann's popular Maifest, which began in 1952, and is always held the third weekend in May. In 1955, the German School was deeded to Historic Hermann. The organization maintains a museum that is filled with local treasures. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from April through October.

The clock tower on top of the school is not original to the building, but has been a Hermann landmark since 1890. Mrs. Christina Graf, widow of the publisher of the local newspaper who succeeded her husband as editor of the paper, was the driving force in obtaining the clock and tower. History shows that people would gather on the benches surrounding the school for their daily get-togethers. Apparently they didn't carry watches because someone was always in the newspaper office (Graf Printing) across the street asking, “Was is die Uhr?” The disruption caused Mrs. Graf to approach the town fathers, who agreed to erect the tower and clock. Funds for the project were received from benefit shows and private donations. The clock continues to keep time thanks to the efforts of a group of locals who take turns winding it. The inner workings of the clock can be viewed from the second floor of the German School.
Cross Schiller St. and go west on the north side of E. 4th St. (As you walk along E. 4th St., look up at the second stories of the buildings on both sides of the street. After years of renovation, many of these buildings lost their original charm, but some second-story facades have been beautifully maintained. These buildings represent typical European design, with businesses on the first floor and the shop owner residing on the upper floor.)

P. Notice the Showboat Theatre on the south side of E. 4th St. This former movie house is maintained by Historic Hermann. Live theatrical and musical productions are held here throughout the year. A schedule of performances is available at the Visitor Information Center at 312 Market St.

Q. Stop at the corner of E. 4th and Market streets. People often comment on the width of Market St. The original settlers had visions of creating a city that rivaled Philadelphia. With this optimism, they built their Market St. 10-feet wider than Market St. in Philadelphia.

Imagine a large, two-story Market House in the center of the intersection. It was used for approximately 50 years after its construction in 1856. The lower floors held eight stalls for butchers and provisioners, and the fire engine was housed here. A central passageway through the building allowed an average wagon to pass through. Market hours were from daybreak until 12 noon. The large second floor consisted of one large hall that served as city hall and for public meetings. In 1906, the city hall was relocated to the building that still stands in the center of Market St. at W. 2nd St. (two blocks north).

Cross Market St. Walk south one block to W. 5th St.

R. Sharp Corner Tavern has been a Hermann institution for many years. Before Highway 19 was constructed, W. 5th St. was the southern route into town. There was an extremely sharp curve at this location, where W. 5th joined Market St. Hence the name Sharp Corner Tavern.

Turn right (west) onto W. 5th St. Walk one block. Stop at the corner of Mozart St.

S. The two-story brick building with the green shutters on the north side of W. 5th St. was Hermann’s first school. It was built in 1839 as a one-room school house. The second story was added in 1852. The first teacher, Anton Hemme, taught all subjects to all grades, and earned $300 per year.

Just beyond the school is one of two of Hermann’s remaining reel houses. Reel houses were placed strategically throughout the city to hold fire-fighting equipment. En route to a fire, the men stopped at the reel house for hoses and other equipment needed to extinguish the blaze and hand-pulled the wagon that held 200 feet of hose to the fire.

Notice the staircase to the west of the reel house. It is actually a continuation of Mozart St. The stairs are an example of one of the complaints made by the early settlers against George Bayer. When he platted out the town, he did not allow for its hilly topography. On a map, it would have
appeared that Mozart street continues all the way to W. 4th St. at the top of the hill. However, it was impossible to build a street there, so instead a staircase was constructed.

The house on the southwest corner was built in 1892, and is a fine example of turn-of-the-(20th) century architecture.

**Walk on the west side of Mozart St. to W. 6th St. Cross W. 6th St. and go right (west) one block to Washington St. (At the corner of West 6th and Mozart St., notice how close to the street the homes were built. The early settlers built their homes close to the front of their property to leave as much space as possible at the rear for gardens and vineyards. In the early days, residents were encouraged to contribute grapes to the wine industry. In later years, alleys were constructed between the streets, decreasing the size of the lots.**

As you walk along W. 6th St., notice that many homes have standing seam tin roofs. These roofs were popular in their day because they were very economical. Can you imagine what these buildings would have sounded like during a rain or hail storm before insulation was used? Even today, homeowners are replacing their old roofs with a newer version of the standing seam roof.

**Cross Washington St. Walk south. Stop at the corner of W. 7th St.**

### T.
The brick building facing W. 7th St. was once the Klinge Hotel. It was built about 1850. The building was a popular hotel and boarding house for farmers who hauled their goods to Hermann in horse-drawn wagons to sell at the Market House. Notice that there are no windows at the end of the hotel building. This is because it was patterned after the row houses in Germany, which did not have windows at the ends because they were built so close together. The farmers boarded their horses in the stable, the white and red clapboard building facing Washington St.

**Continue south on Washington St. to the corner of Stark Blvd.**

### U.
On the west side of Washington St. just before you reach Stark Blvd. is the former Stark Mansion. Built in 1885 by George Stark, a former owner of Stone Hill Winery, it was commonly called the "wine castle". The home is thought to have been designed by the same architect who designed the Governor's Mansion in Jefferson City, Missouri. It has served as a medical clinic and the Workman hospital. George Stark was mentioned earlier as the man who purchased the rooster for St. Paul church. You can see the rooster from the sidewalk in front of the home. The building is currently a private residence.

The large white house on the southwest corner of Stark Blvd. was built around 1900 by George Stark as a wedding gift for his daughter. It is now the Europa Restaurant, which features continental cuisine.

Take a look across Washington St. to the upper level of the city park. This is the area where the school children held their May Picnic. Just inside the stone archway is a bust of Charles Eitzen, the liberal and public-spirited citizen who is closely associated with much of the early progress of the town. He proved to be one of Missouri's largest philanthropists.
The brick building at the rear of the park is the Rotunda. It is an eight-sided building, one of the few remaining in the state of Missouri. It was erected in 1864 by the Gasconade County Agricultural Association, and was used for agricultural and wine exhibitions. In 1951, the building was restored by the Brush & Palette Club, and has since been used for plays, pageants, and exhibitions.

The Bandstand also was built about the same time. While it is no longer used for concerts, it represents the important part music has played since Hermann was founded. Since the first music-loving settlers arrived here, Hermann has always had a band. The Music-Chor Blech Instrumenten (meaning choral group with band instruments) was formed in 1839, less than two years after the first settlers arrived. Later groups included the Apostel Band and the Enterprise Military Band. Since 1946, Hermann has had a large city band, one of only five city bands remaining in the state of Missouri. Other popular musical groups include the Hungry Five Band and the Loehnig German Band. Both groups play at festivals, parades and many special events. They play for audiences in the United States and abroad.

**V.** The third house on the right (#329) is Hermann’s only known Sears-Roebuck house, ordered from the catalog and delivered in bundles for assembly. Constructed around 1925, the estimated original cost was about $1,000. Every piece was numbered, and Rohlfing Brothers construction assembled the structure.

*Walk to the end of the block. Turn left (south) onto Goethe St. Walk to W. 12th St., and turn right (west). Continue to Stone Hill Highway, and turn left up the hill.*

**W.** You are now at Stone Hill Winery. Founded in 1847, it is the oldest winery in Missouri. It has the largest series of arched underground cellars in North America. By the early 1900s, Stone Hill was the second largest winery in the United States, producing 1,250,000 gallons of wine a year. During Prohibition and continuing for 44 years, commercial mushrooms were grown in the cellars. The Held family purchased and reopened the winery in 1965, and it currently produces more than 200,000 gallons of wine annually, and is among the top five most-awarded wineries in the U.S. Tours of the wine cellars and samples of their award-winning wines are offered daily. The large red structure on top of the hill is the former stable and carriage house which is now the Vintage Restaurant.

In 2000, the Helds planted the vineyards on both sides of the driveway with Norton grapes, which are unique to this area of Missouri. These vineyards give one a sense of what this entire valley might have looked like prior to Prohibition when grapes flourished. We have created the same effect in the Norton vineyard on the east side of Hermann Hill Vineyard and Inn.

*At the top of the hill bear to your right, and follow Stone Hill Highway to W. 10th St. Turn left (west) and walk to the driveway leading to Hermann Hill Vineyard and Inn. (As you walk up the driveway, you will recognize many of the landmarks you passed on this tour. From here you get a good view of the Hermann City Cemetery.*
HISTORY OF HERMANN

Hermann was founded in 1836 by the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia. Concerned because of the English influence on their children and the loss of their German traditions and customs, the society had a grand vision of founding a city where German culture could flourish in the New World. In early spring of 1837, the settlement society sent a scouting committee to visit locations in the Midwest for their new city, which was the first planned community west of the Mississippi River.

They deputized George Bayer, a teacher, to lay claim to the land that is now Hermann because the geography reminded them of the Rhineland in Germany. Bayer purchased over 11,300 acres at a cost of about $15,600. The town was bordered by hills on three sides and the Missouri River to the north. Bayer was later appointed as General Agent for the new city at a salary of $600 per year.

The first group of settlers, nine adults and eight children, arrived in Hermann in December of 1837 on the last steamboat of the season from St. Charles, Missouri. Bayer started with the 17 settlers, but he became ill and was delayed many weeks in Pittsburgh. His delay in arriving caused problems because he was the only person with the authority to lay out and assign lots to people. Another group of colony members planned better. Instead of showing up in the wilderness in the middle of winter, they came as far as St. Louis, looked for temporary work, and waited for Bayer. They moved to Hermann in the spring of 1838, along with Bayer.

Developing their town was more difficult than the organizers had expected, in part because they asked too much from Bayer. He was to survey all the land, assign property to the colonists, furnish food for all the settlers, arrange for sawmills and gristmills to be built, and deal with complaints. And the settlers had many complaints. In fact, they complained so much that the Society lost confidence in Bayer and released him from his duties. His health had suffered under the demands placed on him, and Bayer died (some say of a broken heart) in March 1839 at the age of 39. He was buried in the remotest part of the Hermann Cemetery on East Hill, and it was declared that no one could be buried within 75 feet of his grave.

During Hermann's sesquicentennial celebration in 1986, a court of inquiry was formed to hear Bayer's case. It was determined that all the tasks that were assigned to him were impossible to carry out, and, therefore, he was exonerated.

Today, Hermann is a thriving community, although the Germans had hoped to build a city that could rival Philadelphia. We do have one claim to fame, however, and that is our Market Street is 10 feet wider than Market Street in Philadelphia.

Hermann has two official historic districts, which were designated in 1969; the area surrounding Stone Hill Winery and the part of town near the Missouri River. We have more than 110 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermann's population is approximately 2,750. Its main industries are tourism and agriculture.
HOW WE GOT OUR NAME

Hermann is named for Germany's national hero who, in 9 A.D., wanted to see his beloved Germany released from the rule of Rome. At the age of 25, Hermann (called Arminius by the Romans) was called to be the leader of the Germans to take on Varus, a Roman general who treated the Germans as slaves.

The Germans planned for a small and distant tribe to revolt, which Varus and his men set out to put down. Hermann's followers trailed an unsuspecting Varus and his troops through the dense Teutoburg Forest. Severe storms hampered the progress of the Roman troops, who moved slowly because they had to cut down trees and make bridges over raging streams as they marched. This gave the German soldiers time to position themselves around the Roman Army and attack it with arrows and javelins from every side. Although the 30,000 to 40,000 Romans fought desperately, they were forced to retreat. With the exception of only a few, the Romans were wiped out in what was the worst defeat ever to befall the Romans. It was considered one of the turning points in the history of Europe.

A huge statue of Hermann stands in Detmold, Germany, above the field where it is thought this battle was fought. It is a symbol for doing the seemingly impossible. Not unlike the task undertaken by our forefathers in the founding of Hermann.