

Muss i denn Tours & Cargo Trips

Utopia

Revisiting a German State in America
A Traveling Exhibition

Ausstellungsreise auf den Spuren
einer deutschen Republik in den USA

PRESS RELEASE

Historic Baltimore Immigrant House re-opens for 1 day

Where: Baltimore Immigration Memorial Garden in Locust Point, at the bottom of Hull Street at water's edge (meeting point) and at the nearby Immigrant House on Beason Street

When: Monday, September 1, 2014 – Labor Day - 5 pm to 8 pm

Why: Millions of immigrants arrived at the port of Baltimore longing for a better life. This evening commemorates the anonymous people by which the Baltimoreans are welcoming one person.

Who: On the occasion of the arrival of the traveling exhibition "Utopia – Revisiting a German State in America", the Baltimore Immigration Memorial, the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, the German-American Heritage Museum and the Traveling Summer Republic invite to spend three hours with a totally unknown woman immigrant from Germany, Esther Steinbrecher.

How: At the Immigration Memorial in Locus Point artist Esther Steinbrecher will arrive from Germany. She is accompanying the Utopia exhibit with her temporary travel agency "Muss i denn Tours & Cargo Trips". In her luggage she brings a lot of mysterious objects, strange satellites sent from overseas.



Esther Steinbrecher in the Utopia exhibition in Giessen, Germany. A visitor delivers an object



An object from Germany to be unpacked in Baltimore

After a welcome ceremony for Esther Steinbrecher, the participants accompany her to the Immigrant House on Beason Street, where she intends to spend the night.

*Re-opening of the Immigrant House for 1 day
September 1st, 2014
We welcome our immigrant!*

While having an improvised dinner, immigrant Esther Steinbrecher will tell stories of her former travel agency activities and show a video of these “Emigration on Trial” adventure travels in Germany.

Steinbrecher will open her luggage and bring out objects she has been given in Germany by exhibit visitors. She tells the stories of these items, now gone from Germany forever. Steinbrecher is in search for godparents for them in the US. At the same time, Americans can deliver objects to her and she will return with them to Germany searching for godparents there.

Immigrant Esther Steinbrecher will stay the night in the unimproved Immigrant House, while the participants leave and wish her a “Good night, sleep tight, and don’t let the bed bugs bite.”

The exhibit “Utopia – Revisiting a German State in America” will be on display at the German-American Heritage Museum in Washington DC from September 6 to October 25, 2014. Utopia tells the unique story of the Giessen Emigration Society. Its 500 members crossed the Atlantic Ocean in hopes of founding a model democratic German State in the U.S.. Half of the Society reached the port of Baltimore on July 24, 1834.

www.gahmusa.org

www.utopia-exhibit.net



The owners and Executive Board members of the Immigrant House Museum plan to renovate the first floor and install an Immigration History exhibit to be opened by the end of this year.

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Fee for the dinner and refreshments: none

Immigrant House

UTOPIA

Revisiting a German State in America. A traveling exhibition

6 September to 25 October 2014
German-American Heritage Museum
719 6th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001
phone (202) 465-5000
schuermann@gahmusa.org
www.gahmusa.org - www.utopia-exhibit.net



Five-hundred people left their homeland together, in order to live together in their Utopia. They came from all over Germany, all led by that one idea. The Giessen Emigration Society crosses the Atlantic Ocean in 1834 to found a model democratic German State in the USA – what later became a State of Germans in Missouri.

The exhibit is in both German and English and tells the amazing story of these early immigrants, what they thought, the challenges they faced, and the nativism they endured. It shares the history of the Society founder Friedrich Muench and his work as a writer and as a statesman, to continue the Society's original effort. It explores the impact that the Germans had on Missouri's involvement in the Civil War and their anti-slavery movement. The visitor not only becomes involved in what these early emigrants faced, but what it means to be an immigrant in the United States today. The utopian ideal is explored, and participants invited to share their ideas of what Utopia means today and to their future. Another unusual concept that is found in the exhibit is its' own archives, where everyone is invited to read the thousands of pages of research collected and used in the exhibit, the accompanying book and documentary.

The exhibition moves as our Utopians once did, from Giessen and Bremen in Germany to Washington D.C. and St. Louis, Missouri – and from there onwards. Whoever checks in may come as well – in thoughts, by train, truck or ship.

The "Traveling Summer Republic", a transatlantic collection of artists, creators, and scholars, generates a meeting of the minds with these travelers. After eight years they are bringing together their work and findings to create a world of discovery for people of all ages through video installations, texts, archives, footage, and photographs. Here is an invitation to a journey – through German and American states at turning points – of revolution and upheaval; along private, social, and philosophical adventures, through their motives, and the highs and lows of a bold vision. It is a journey through past and present Utopia.

UTOPIA deals with being on the road and indeed actually travels, as well – in many boxes within a cargo container. The Traveling Summer Republic transforms the emigrants' search into concrete experiences, and the team's every arrival and farewell becomes a public event. The exhibits are unpacked, the travel trunks become the architecture, the doors to the past are opened: Come stay a while and explore! Childhood dreams, rebellions, and lifelong friendship await you in pictures, sounds, and writings. Freedom, equality, and brotherhood, religion and assassinations are all to found. Crossing the Atlantic, winegrowing, and slavery are examined as well. Old documents from the Utopians and recent interviews with the descendents are shared. At the end of every visit the trunks become still, the wallpaper rolled up, the books are closed. Everything is packed up and stowed away. And onwards!