

Social Studies Themes: Change

Lesson: *Traditions*

Grade Level: 1-4

Overview: Because Otto Toennies' ancestors came from Germany, his family celebrates the traditions of two countries, like many others in America today.

Approximate Duration: one class period

National Social Studies Standards: The History of the United States: Democratic Principles and Values and the People from Many Cultures who Contributed to its Cultural, Economic and Political Heritage http://www.educationworld.com/standards/national/soc_sci/us_history/k_4.shtml

Objective: Students will be able to understand the importance of traditions and ancestral diversity to the American citizen.

Procedure:

- Before reading the story, talk about the different holidays, celebrations and foods children enjoy. Tell them that a tradition is something that is done a certain way for many years. Ask them what family traditions they might have.
- Have a volunteer point to Germany on a map. Ask children to tell what they know about German traditions, holidays, celebrations, and foods. Record children's responses on chart paper and add to the lists as they read the story.

Assessment:

- Have children imagine they are Margaret Friederich. Have them tell what she might have told Otto about the history of her life.
- Ask children the following questions about Otto: Where does Otto's great grandmother Margaret Friederich come from? How did Otto's Great Grandfather Greg Eckert travel to Louisiana? What animals did the Eckerts use to help them with their work on the farm in Damiansville, Illinois? What country did the Eckert family come from before they lived in the United States? Where does Otto live today? What traditions does Otto and his family still celebrate that his ancestors also did?
- Have children pretend they are Otto Toennies. Have them take turns telling how they celebrate both German and American traditions.
- Ask children to draw a picture of Otto celebrating two traditions, one that is from Germany, and one from the United States.

Otto's German Ancestors

Margaret Friederich was born in Bamberg, Germany in an area known as Bavaria in the southern part of the country. She loved growing up in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, but she and her family longed to travel to the United States for more opportunities and the chance of a better life. When she was ten, her family decided to move to the United States. After weeks of travel, Margaret's family was eager to find a place to settle down. They decided to settle in a small town called Damiansville, Illinois and quickly found many other families that were also new to the United States, such as the Eckerts.

Daniel and Anne Eckert came to the U.S. from England and also found land in Illinois where they began their cattle and sheep farm. Their son, Greg, helped them on the farm and quickly became Damiansville's number one meat provider. The Eckerts befriended the Friederichs and welcomed them into their community. Greg and Margaret became great friends and eventually married.

The new Eckert family decided to leave Illinois and travel south to Louisiana to settle in New Orleans. The family opened a restaurant in the city, inspired by the German cuisine of Margaret's childhood. Many years later, Margaret welcomed a great grandson named Otto Toennies.

Throughout the years of her life, Margaret always tried to maintain her German heritage and continued to practice German traditions not only through the food at her successful restaurant, but during holidays and other celebrations. Like their ancestors, Otto's family lives in New Orleans and continues to run Margaret and Greg's German restaurant. The family also listens to Bavarian music at holidays, hosts a yearly Oktoberfest celebration, plays the accordion, and is planning a family vacation to Bamberg as a way to appreciate their German ancestry.