Pietist & Pioneer

Ludwig Eduard Nollau
1810–1869
Ludwig Eduard Nollau arrived in America in 1837 with the intention of converting Native Americans to Christianity. Born into a middle-class family that had experienced much death and a community that had suffered through war and disaster, he became familiar with human suffering at an early age.

Nollau was a deeply orthodox Christian who was schooled in Pietism, a movement within German Protestantism that stressed a warm and living faith in Jesus Christ as the crucified Son of God. He was acquainted with members of Herrnhut, the influential Pietist colony near his home town of Reichenbach, Saxony. His struggle with personal sinfulness followed by a conversion experience are emblematic of the Pietist spiritual journey. His call to be a missionary reflects the Pietist concern for living out one’s faith by spreading the Gospel and doing works of mercy and love.

The Pietist impulse to unite all true Christians prepared the ground for the creation of denominations uniting Lutheran and Reformed churches beginning with the Evangelical Church of the Prussian Union in 1817. Nollau worked to establish and promote a united Evangelical Church in the U.S.

Originally aspiring to be a civil servant, Nollau also had an early desire to be a missionary. He applied to the Rhenish Missionary Society in Barmen after his religious conversion. The Society’s Pietist foundations made it an ecumenical venture supported by Lutheran, Reformed and Free Church congregations.

Nollau came to St. Louis in 1837, just as an immense wave of German immigrants began arriving in the area. Instead of converting “heathen,” he found himself instead a pioneer pastoring the yet largely unorganized and scattered Germans on the western American frontier.

A practical man, he was the living embodiment of the phrases “faith active in love” and “by their works you shall know them.” Where he saw a need, he acted to fill it, whether it was to preach the Gospel, organize immigrant churches, establish a denomination, or care for the sick and needy. His achievements reflected of his own administrative abilities, boundless energy, a deep devotion to God, and his love of humanity.

2010 marks the 200th anniversary of birth of Ludwig Eduard Nollau. The Archives at Eden takes this opportunity to remember his major accomplishments and honor the man who became a pioneering founder of what is now the United Church of Christ.
1810

**JULY 1** Ludwig Eduard (Louis Edward) Nollau is born on July 1, 1810 in Reichenbach, a small town in eastern Saxony in Upper Lusatia. His parents are Friedrich Ephraim Nollau (1768-1826) and his second wife, Ernestine Juliane Auguste Wehle (1781-1813). His father is a doctor, merchant, town councilman, royal postal administrator, and municipal judge, giving the family an elevated social position.

**JULY 9** Nollau is baptized in St. John’s Church in Reichenbach.

1813

**MAY 3** Nollau’s mother dies in childbirth.

**NOVEMBER 11** Nollau’s father marries Christiane Juliane Eschke (1874-1847), the stepmother whom Nollau held in high esteem.

1817—1823

Nollau attends the local grammar school.

1823

Nollau entered secondary school in the neighboring town of Görlitz.

1824

Nollau is removed from school to help with his father’s official duties.

1826

**JULY 18** Nollau’s father dies.

Nollau enters the Prussian military at Glogau, an opportunity that would give him the necessary training and contacts to gain a civil service position. He later administers the Militia Brigade Office in Erfurt.

1827

**OCTOBER 28** Nollau’s stepmother dies.

1830

**JULY 1** Nollau has a definitive conversion experience.
1832
After unsuccessfully applying to the Berlin Mission Society, Nollau is accepted by the Rhenish Missionary Society (Rheinische Missions-Gesellschaft) in Barmen.

1836
Tillman Nies and Phillip Jakob Heyer are sent as missionaries to the Flathead Indians in Oregon. They reach St. Charles, Missouri in November, where they are to stay until the wagon train leaves the next spring. Heyer leaves the Society to become the pastor of a local congregation.

1837
Nollau is completes his training and is ordained.

AUGUST 9 Nollau departs from Bremerhaven for St. Charles where is he to join Niess as Heyer’s replacement.

FALL Nollau arrives in St. Charles to find Niess ill. He begins ministering to local German immigrants.

SPRING Niess’s condition grows worse, preventing the missionaries from joining the wagon train west.

1838
SEPTEMBER Niess dies; the Rhenish Mission Society abandons its mission to Native Americans.

1840
OCTOBER Nollau sends invitations to area German Protestant clergymen to discuss creating an organization for mutual support. Five pastors respond.

OCTOBER 14 The German Evangelical Church Society of the West is formed at St. John’s Church, Gravois Settlement (now Mehlville), Missouri

1842
Nollau travels to Germany to meet with officials at the Rhenish Mission Society. He marries Luise Wipperman in Bremen.

JUNE 18 The Nollaus’s ship arrives in New Orleans. The couple proceed to St. Louis where Louis resumes pastorate at Gravois Settlement.
1844

**OCTOBER 30** Luise dies in childbirth at Gravois Settlement. She and the couple's stillborn child are buried in St. John’s Cemetery.

1845

Nollau writes a defense in response to intense criticism of the Kirchenverein published in *Der Lutheraner* by Lutheran leader C.F.W. Walther.

Nollau resigns his pastorate at Gravois Settlement and returns to Germany and the Rhenish Mission Society.

**OCTOBER 26** Nollau marries Anna Meta Wilkens in Germany.

**OCTOBER 30** The newly married couple travels to Western Cape, South Africa where Nollau serves mission stations at Stellenbosch and Worcester. When he arrives, he finds well organized Christian communities that operate like normal parish churches.

1847

**DECEMBER 8** Son Ernst Louise, is born in Stellenbosch, South Africa.

1849

**JUNE 24** Son Gottlieb Christian, is born in Worcester, South Africa.

Personal dissatisfaction and disruptions caused by revolutions in Germany cause Nollau to resign. Nollau returns to Gravois Settlement with his family and resumes his pastorate.

1850

**SEPTEMBER 17** Son Louis George is born at Gravois Settlement.

1851

**DECEMBER 8** Son Johannes Heinrich is born at Gravois Settlement.

1852

Nollau accepts a call to St. Peter’s Church in St. Louis.
1853
DECEMBER 3 Daughter Anna Marie Elisabeth is born in St. Louis.

1854
JUNE 20 Son Christian Gottlieb dies in St. Louis.

1855
DECEMBER 17 Son Adolph Wilhelm Gottlieb is born in St. Louis.

1856
SEPTEMBER 7 Son Adolph Wilhelm Gottlieb dies in St. Louis.

1857
Nollau establishes Good Samaritan Hospital and the German Protestant Orphans Home.

1860
Nollau resigns pastorate to devote himself full time to the hospital and orphans home.

1869
FEBRUARY 20 Nollau dies from cancer in St. Louis.
Places of activity
Map from J. Thomas Scharf, History of Saint Louis City and County from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day, 1883

St. Louis & St. Louis County
Lebenslauf  spiritual autobiography of Ludwig Edward Nollau

In an excerpt from his application to the Rhenish Mission Society written in July 1832, Nollau relates in his own words his early years leading up to his conversion experience.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, I, a poor pardoned sinner, dare to tell of the grace and mercy of the Lord, which I have thus far experienced in rich measure.

I was born on July 1, 1810 in Reichenbach, a small city the Prussian Upper Lusatia. Mein father died 6 years ago and my mother has been dead for 19 years. I have still living a step mother and 6 siblings.

I was already as a child very headstrong and ill mannered. My parent's sincere admonitions bore little fruit in me, although from the seeds sown in my heart by my God-fearing step-mother, through God's grace, began to germinate little by little. Oh, how much heartache and work I caused to my good parents. I was so obsturate, that I paid attention neither to their pleas or their punishments. Above all, however, I transgressed severely against God at a very early age. The Lord granted me as a child many aptitudes for learning and an outspokenness, which brought much favor from my teachers. During celebrations, I was usually chosen to give a speech. At the age of 13, I came to the secondary school in Görlitz, where I unfortunately became more acquainted with the world. The poison of sin seeped even further into my heart. I did not much use the abilities I had been given, since I was not very diligent. Contrarily, I learned much evil, and falsehood was the sin I loved the most. When I praised my Lord and Savior with renewed faith at my confirmation, he tangibly pressed upon my heart. I felt, that I was leading a sinful life, longed for freedom, but did not know the way to salvation. I asked God, as well as I knew how, to make me a good person, but at the same time I wanted dearly to hold on to sin. I often undertook, now and then, to be better, but remained an unconverted sinner.

In 1824 I left secondary school and assisted my father in his official dealings. My foolishness loomed even larger. I heeded not the pleas and chastisements of my grieved parents, and lived in open sin. O, how many reasons I have to pray: Lord, think not on the sins of my youth! The example of my dear stepmother awakened in me the desire to be godly, but I considered it too difficult. To go through the narrow gate to heaven appeared to me impossible. By my own strength it clearly would not be possible. When I was 16, the Lord wanted to draw me to himself once again. An acquaintance at the time persuaded me to play one of my jokes on some true Christians, but it awakened in me the desire to get to know them. I had become acquainted with an elderly, true Christian among the Moravians, and the Lord turned my heart a completely different way. I heard much about grace and conversion to Christ, and He knocked on my door that I might open my heart. He wooed me by the sensation of his nearness and gave me blessed hours—but I would not allow myself the forgiveness of sins and a new heart. I had the external appearance of a Christian, but inside remained nothing but dead bones. I was awakened from sin's slumber, but not yet converted. I felt, however, the longing for conversion and wished others to have, that which I wanted to be. I took it upon myself to become a missionary without once being familiar with holy things, and not being the least qualified.
What was worse is that I fell asleep again. But now—give merciful God eternal thanks—was that I knew well what I lacked. I was not rooted in Jesus Christ. I was indeed awakened, but it still remained, that I had not yet placed myself in faith under the cross of Jesus. I had not yet been granted the grace the forgiveness of my sins from His wounds and a new, born-again heart by true repentance. Hence I had also no power to stamp out sin. After the Lord granted me his presence again, I gradually returned to travel the broad path of eternal damnation with the rest of the crowd. The merciful Savior, however, did not wish the loss of a sinner and had clearly left a blessing in my heart through his visitation of grace. My foolishness had lessoned over the years. I laid aside open sin and began to live honorably in the world. I felt sorrow that I could not be blessed in this condition, and bid the Lord on my knees sometimes to have mercy on me. And if I lamented very sorrowfully, I would feel lighter in my heart, for the Lord knocked that I should open to him. I had become acquainted with something of the right path through associations with Christians and knew that I was a child of Hell if I did not become converted, but a break through did not come. Had the Lord of the vineyard uprooted such a bad, barren tree such as me, I would surely be suffering the anguish of Hell. But he let me remain to see if I would yet bring forth fruit.

After my father's death I applied myself to the military, as I had the inclination to obtain qualifications for civil service. I entered the Royal 6th Infantry Regiment in Glogau in the fall of 1826. My dear stepmother's departing words: Have God before your eyes and in your heart, etc., Tobias 4:6. Her motherly love, which she demonstrated through all my errors, and her written reminders to hold fast to God, often moved me to tears. I asked God, to let me become a good person, so that my family could have rejoice for me. I longed for something better. Affliction drove me often to prayer, and with many tears I often begged God to have mercy on me. The Lord had thus begun his work in me, and the Holy Spirit worked on my conversion! Someone recommended a someone to pray with, which is what I had wished for. It was a great blessing, that I felt sorrow for sin.

In the summer of 1830, on my birthday, my heart was very moved, especially in church. The sermon pressed against my heart. I received the great desire to follow Jesus and heard with rapture his invitation to me—but nobody told me how a poor, troubled sinner with a repentant heart could flee to Jesus Christ, nor how one should ask the Holy Spirit for forgiveness of sin and a new heart. By God's Spirit I was driven to seek out some true Christians and also began reading spiritual books, including the blessed Wolterdorff Liederpsalmen. I had previously read The Imitation of Christ, but only with worldly eyes. In this book, however, I found what my heart sought. I found the way to the Sin-Savior, Jesus Christ, who shed his very blood on the cross for all sinners, and for me, also. It is true that I could not believe right away that he would receive me and grant me forgiveness of sins and grace, for I felt at first what I really was. The scales fell from my eyes. The Lord let me look into my thoroughly corrupted heart, and I saw that it was worse than I had first thought. But it could remain so no more. I recognized such a heart in me. I fell on my knees and cried, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! My acquaintances noticed right away a change in me and were aware of that I had come under the influence of true Christians, who were despised by the world. They warned me not to become insane. But such blessed insanity is what I sought.

After I had prayed for forgiveness and grace day and night for about a week, heavenly comfort came into my heart. I felt the Lord's grace and was assured of the forgiveness of my sins. The heavy weight of sin was gone from my heart and drowned in the Blood of the Lamb of God, who bore my sins. Through his wounds, I, also, was healed. With forgiveness came life and blessing to a newborn heart. And so I shared a measure of the pain of Him who loved us unto death, and through his inestimable love and mercy was converted to him. At once I began a new life, a life from God. Twenty years I had served the world, twenty years had lived without God and was a slave to Satan. And now—a child of God, one redeemed by Jesus Christ, an heir of eternal blessedness through grace!
When Nollau arrived in Missouri in 1837, a handful of German pastors were already working among fledgling immigrant congregations. Most pastors served more than one congregation or preaching station at a time. The newly-arrived clergymen encountered many challenges. Among them were:

- **Radical Free-Thinkers**
  German rationalists (Free-Thinkers) had settled in the St. Louis area in the 1830s. Their radical anti-clerical views were published in *Anzeiger des Westens*, a German-language newspaper published in St. Louis. Commentary often featured vehement personal attacks.

- **“Old Lutheran” Saxons**
  A group of conservative “Old Lutheran” had arrived in St. Louis from Saxony in 1839. While Nollau and other missionary clergy favored an organization that united Lutheran and Reformed Christians, the Saxon Lutherans considered union with the Reformed a heresy.

- **Geographical isolation**
  The missionary pastors worked in what was then the western frontier. They were isolated from established American Lutheran and Reformed denominations by geography and culture.

In October 1840, Nollau sent an invitation to local German Protestant clergy to meet at Gravois Settlement with the intent of creating an organization for mutual support. Five men responded, resulting in the formation of the Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenverein des Westens (German Evangelical Church Society of the West) on October 15 at Gravois Settlement. Signers of the bylaws were:

- Hermann Garleichs, Femme Osage, Missouri
- Philipp Heyer, St. Charles, Missouri
- Georg Wall, St. Louis
- Karl Daubert, Quincy, Illinois
- Johann Jakob Riess, Centerville, Illinois
- Ludwig Nollau, Gravois Settlement, Missouri

Not able to be present but signing later:

- Joseph Rieger, from Alton, Illinois
- Johannes Gerber, Madison, Indiana,

From the beginning, the Kirchenverein endorsed a union of Lutheran and Reformed denominations as had been established in Prussia and other German states beginning in 1817. Such a confessional position would remain unique in American Protestantism.

Originally founded as a pastors’ association, the *Kirchenverein* developed into the Evangelical Synod of North America. It merged with the Reformed Church in 1934 to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church, which in turn merged with the Congregational Christian Churches in 1957 to become the present-day United Church of Christ.
We recognize the Evangelical Church as that communion which acknowledges the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the Word of God and as the sole and infallible rule of faith and in the symbolic books of the Lutheran and the Reformed Church, the most important being: the Augsburg Confession, Luther’s and the Heidelberg Catechisms, in so far as they agree; but where they disagree, we adhere strictly to the passages of Holy Scriptures bearing on the subject, and avail ourselves of the liberty of conscience prevailing in the Evangelical Church.

Confessional statement of the Kirchenverein as adopted in 1848

Carl E. Schneider, The German Church on the American Frontier
The organization of the Kirchenverein drew the ire of both the rationalist German press and the Saxon Lutherans. The irenic spirit of the group generally restrained them from engaging in controversy, and they declined to respond to the rationalists.

The criticism from the Saxon Lutherans was a different matter. Their leader, the Rev. C.F.W Walther began publishing scathing attacks against the “unionists” in Der Lutheraner magazine in 1845. In response, Nollau wrote, *Ein Wort für gute Sache der Union: Vertheidigung gegen die Angriffe des “Lutheraner” auf die Evangelische Kirche* (A Word on the Behalf of the Union: A Defense against the Assaults by “The Lutheran [Magazine]” against the Evangelical Church). Nollau defended the united stance of the Kirchenverein and pointed out Walther’s cruel and unchristian rhetoric. The tract also offers insight into Nollau’s own thinking about the nature of the Church.

How sad and disturbing it is to see such terms as “delusionary, false prophet, demagogue, betrayer of the Church, betrayer of the truth, abominable lone wolf, cruel wolves” repeatedly used in the “Lutheraner,” used especially in reference to Evangelical preachers and indeed to all who are seen as not being genuine Lutherans. For the faithful servant who strives like Paul to serve Lord, it is a small thing to be judged in this way such people; for it is the Lord who knows and judges all of us. But for one’s own sake one ought to hold back from such hereticizing and judging; for as practiced by the one-sided, narrow-minded Lutherans, these attacks are bound to strike some child of God, some true servant of the Lord who has been a blessing to many; they will strike some one who has already won the battle of faith and has received the true servant’s reward from the hand of the Great Shepherd. What a difference between the Apostles and the hunters of heretics in our own day. The Apostles excluded from the Church only those who taught fundamental error, and in many other cases had unending patience as they disciplined, taught and admonished. The hunters of heretics “like to cut down anything that goes the least bit against the rule and against the Church’s confession.”

*Excerpt from “Ein Wort für gute Sache der Union”*  
Translated by Charles R. Croissant
Die evangelische Kirche im Nord-amerikan.

(Seite 1)

Die bisherigen Artikel über den Kirchenverein des Nordamerikas haben darauf hingewiesen, dass die Kirche von ihren Mitglie

Herausgegeben von J. B. Walther.

Jahrgang 1.

St. Louis, Mo, den 9. Februar 1845.

No. 12.


Nollau would remain deeply involved in the life of the Kirchenverein until his death. Working with others on committees, he directly influenced the theological and liturgical publications that would form the basis of congregational life and raise the denominational consciousness of church members.
Pastors in the Kirchenverein were quite traditional in their use of liturgical forms and desired a common liturgy acceptable to all congregations. Nollau and other pastors were appointed in 1852 to study the matter and make a recommendation. After studying existing German and American Lutheran and Reformed liturgies, a draft was submitted for review in 1855. The Evangelische Agende, adopted in 1857, used traditional liturgical forms influenced strongly by those used by the Lutheran Church of Württemberg.

The book included three forms for Sunday morning worship, giving congregations flexibility to adapt the liturgy as best served them.
The need for a doctrinally sound hymnal for use in Evangelical congregations was first raised at the association conference in 1849. As with the development of the *Agende*, the appointed committee considered both existing American and German hymnals before commissioning its own.

The *Evangelisches Gesangbuch* finally appeared in December 1861. Besides 535 hymns, the book also included epistle and gospel lessons for the church year, the Passion of Christ harmonized from the gospels, and prayers.

Other contributions

When Nollau returned to the U.S. in 1849, he became secretary of the *Kirchenverein*, an office he held until his death. He was also a member of the board of directors of the Evangelical Preacher's Seminary founded in 1850 (later Eden Seminary), and served on the Kirchenverein's board of educational oversight.
Congregations

Congregations Nollau served in the vicinity of present day Mehlville, 1838 – 1852

St. John’s Church, Gravois Settlement (Mehlville)

A congregation had been meeting at Gravois Settlement as early as 1835. Johann G. Büttner and G.W. Wall traveled from St. Louis to hold services in a schoolhouse.

Nollau took over in 1838 and set up residence in the community, although he continued to preach in other locations as well. The congregation built a parsonage and a log church in 1839. Nollau continued to serve the congregation until 1852, interrupted in 1842–1843 by his trip to Germany, and 1845–1850 when he served the Rhenish Mission Society in other fields. St. John’s continues to exist as a congregation of the United Church of Christ.

German Evangelical Congregation of Des Peres (St. Paul’s Lutheran Church)

Germans immigrants organized a congregation and built a log church near the intersection of the present day Manchester and Ballas Roads by 1840. Nollau served the congregation until he left for Germany in 1842. The original congregation would later become St. Paul’s Lutheran Church and join the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Divisions produced two additional congregations.

St. Paul’s German Evangelical Church, Stratman (Creve Coeur)

In 1841, some families who lived some miles north of the log church separated to build their own church nearer to their farms. This congregation continues to exist today as St. Paul’s Evangelical Free Church at Warson and Olive Street Roads in Creve Coeur.

Zion Church

A doctrinal dispute in 1846 caused Pastor Johann Wettle and some members to separate and form what would become Zion German Evangelical Church north of Manchester Road on Ballas Road. The congregation remains in its original location as Parkway United Church of Christ.

St. James Church, Jefferson County

Not much is known about this congregation, which was located south of the Meramec River. Nollau served the congregation as early as 1841.

St. Paul’s German Evangelical Church, Mattese Creek (Oakville)

Nollau organized this congregation in 1844 and served it until 1852. St. Paul’s continues to exist as a congregation of the United Church of Christ.

St. Peter’s Church

Nollau accepts a call to St. Peter’s Church, St. Louis in 1852. Once installed, he not only had to tend to the duties demanded of a large and prominent urban congregation, but he also contended with dissatisfaction and dissension among its members. In the course of his tenure, he was able to bring stability to the congregation through sound preaching, orthodox liturgy and effective pastoral practice.

The founding of St. Peter’s Church in the City of St. Louis dates from 1843, when the Rev. G.W. Wall and a group of members left Holy Ghost Church and formed the German Evangelical Congregation of St. Louis. After meeting at Benton school on 6th St. near Locust, the congregation built two identical churches. One at Jackson and Soulard Streets (now 3rd St. and Lafayette Ave.) became the South Church. The other at 14th and Carr Streets became the North Church. Both churches functioned as a single congregation in two locations until becoming independent in 1848. The South Church became St. Marcus Church, while the North Church became St. Peter’s.

The congregation relocated to St. Louis and Warne Avenues in 1915 and established a chapel location in Ferguson in 1957. The city location closed in 1972, but St. Peter’s remains an active congregation of the United Church of Christ at the Ferguson location.
The hospital and orphans home are two of Nollau’s outstanding and very personal achievements. Both projects resulted from his compassionate concern for people and utilized his talent for organization and administration. Nollau founded both institutions during his pastorate at St. Peter’s, but they soon would demand all of his energy and devotion.

**Good Samaritan Hospital (Barmhertziger-Samariter Krankenhaus)**

In 1856, a widow at St. Peter’s Church began caring for a German girl with typhoid fever. The girl’s parents had died during the trip to America. The incident revealed to Nollau the need for medical care among the flood of German immigrants arriving in the city who were often denied services at the City Hospital. Nollau was rented a seven-room building on Carr St. near 16th St., near St. Peter's Church, in February 1857. Although the hospital primarily served German immigrants, it accepted patients regardless of creed, race, nationality, or color. Many patients were charitable cases. Its non-sectarian character drew broad support, including donors outside the German community. It was never meant to be a proselytizing agency but a house of refuge.

A new hospital opened at Pratt (now Jefferson) Ave. and Dayton St. with a capacity of 200 beds in March 1861. The hospital was taken over by the U.S. Army 1861-1863 for use as a military hospital during the Civil War. After his death, Nollau’s brother-in-law Johann Georg Michael Kroenlein took over administration of the hospital. Kroenlein’s wife was Nollau’s stepsister, Luise Wilhelmine.

The hospital changed its mission and became Good Samaritan Home for the Aged in 1905. The home was moved to Washington and Taylor in 1938. A new facility was built at 5200 S. Broadway on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River in 1957. The changing nature of elder care and the limitations of the physical plant forced the home to close in 2002.

**German Protestant Orphans Home (Deutsche Protestantische Waisenheimat)**

The founding of an orphans home occurred in a similar manner to that of the hospital. Nollau took two orphans into his own home in 1857 and soon began taking in others. When the parsonage became too small, space in Good Samaritan Hospital, followed by a house next to the new hospital on Jefferson Ave.

By 1860, 22 orphans had been received. More space was needed, but the outbreak of the Civil War prevented construction of a new facility. Finally in 1866, the orphanage was relocated to a farm nine miles west of the city on St. Charles Rock Road. As with the hospital, the orphanage remained non-denominational, although strongly supported by the Kirchenverein.

Later known as the Evangelical Children’s Home, the institution continues to operate at 8240 St. Charles Rock Road as Every Child’s Hope. It continues to provide a variety of services to children and their families.
Nollau’s family

First wife: Anna Louise Wippermann
On his first trip back to Germany after arriving in the U.S., Nollau married his first wife, Anna Louise Wippermann, born on December 19, 1817 in Germany. They were married in 1842 in Bremen.

Anna Louise died in childbirth in Gravois Settlement (now Mehlville), Missouri on October 30, 1844. Their son, Carl Christian, was stillborn. Both are buried at St. John’s United Church of Christ Cemetery in Mehlville.

Second wife: Anne Meta Margaretha Wilkens
Nollau married Anne Meta Margaretha Wilkens on October 26, 1846 in Bremen. She was the sister of Minnette (Wilkens) Rieger, the wife of Nollau’s colleague and friend Joseph Rieger. Meta was born on January 3, 1819 in Bremen and died on April 14, 1897 in St. Louis.

The union produced six children, two of which died before adulthood. Two sons would go on to become pastors in the German Evangelical Synod of North America, and their daughter would also marry a pastor.

Ernst Louis Nicolaus,
Born: December 8, 1847 in Stellenbosch, South Africa
Died: September 23, 1909 in Sappington, Missouri
Married: Johanna Augusta Bierbaum on April 21, 1872 in St. Louis
Profession: Farmer

Gottlieb Christian Joseph
Born: June 24, 1849 in Worcester, South Africa
Died: July 21, 1854 in Gravois Settlement (Mehlville), Missouri

Louis George Nollau
Born: September 17, 1850 in Gravois Settlement (Mehlville), Missouri
Died: August 3, 1912 in St. Louis
Married: Lydia L. Mueller on September 13, 1877 in St. Louis
Profession: Pastor; served congregations in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, and Kentucky

Johannes Heinrich Nollau
Born: December 3, 1853 in St. Louis
Died: January 19, 1917 in St. Louis
Married: Wilhelmine Louise Kuhlenhoelter, September 5, 1878 in Quincy, Illinois
Profession: Pastor; served congregations in Michigan, Illinois, and Missouri

Anna Marie Elisabeth
Born: December 17, 1855 in St. Louis
Died: September 7, 1856 in St. Louis

Adolph Wilhelm Gottlieb
Born: December 17, 1855 in St. Louis
Died: September 7, 1856 in St. Louis

Joseph Rieger wedding party, Germany, 1840
Nollau’s second wife, Meta Wilkens, is standing third from the left in the back row. Her sister, Henrietta, is the first woman standing on the left, and their mother, Anne Marie Wilkens, is the older woman seated in the center. Henrietta Wilkens married Joseph Rieger, seated on the left side of the photograph. Rieger, another original founder of the Kirchenverein, was Nollau’s colleague who arrived in St. Louis from the Basel Mission Society in 1836.

Photographic collection, Eden Archives

Two of Nollau’s sons, Louis George (left) and Johannes Heinrich
Photographic collection, Eden Archives
Three years before his death, Nollau was thrown from his wagon returning from a visit to the orphanage. Although not seriously injured, examination revealed a swelling in his chest that proved to be cancerous. Rejecting surgery, he sought other methods of treatment, but a hoped-for cure never came. Nollau passed away on the morning of February 20, 1869. After a funeral service at St. John’s German Evangelical Church, Nollau was buried in the Pastors Circle in St. John’s Evangelical Cemetery north of St. Louis on February 22.

“Zur Erinnerung an Pastor E.L. Nollau” (In Remembrance of E.L. Nollau) by Adolph Baltzer was a memoir about Nollau as well as a biography. Baltzer was president of the denomination at the time of Nollau’s death.

Eden Archives
Surely a good man had been taken from us. A faithful striver for Christendom, a faithful worker in the service of his Savior. We grieve the loss that has met us. With deep pain we feel the void it has left. But we are happy and thankful, that the grace of our God and Savior, which the deceased relied upon, bore him in faith and patience, nurtured him and gave him perseverance in the faith in the Son of God until the end. We praise the Lord, that He gave him to the Church and our Synod. Now, after troublesome, feverish and strife-stricken labor, God has granted him the reward of eternal rest before His throne. His memory will remain a blessing to us. His faithful course, his example of faith and love, shall remain with us. May it also be granted to us during our short time here to stay faithful to our Lord, to watch, to pray, to strive, to work, until we are rewarded with the rest that awaits the children of God.

Adolf Baltzer, “Erinnerung an Pastor E.L. Nollau”
Translation by Scott Holl
Evidence of Nollau in the Eden Archives

The Nollau Bible
An important artifact related to Ludwig E. Nollau in the Eden Archives is the Bible he brought with him from Germany. The Bible is signed and dated October 18, 1832, the year he began training as a missionary. It includes extensive notes in margins and on pages inserted in the book.

The Bible was restored in 2009 by Richard C. Baker, a book and paper conservator in St. Louis. Restoration was made possible through a grant from the Deaconess Foundation.

Photos by Scott Holl
Correspondence

The Archives collection includes a series of 29 letters Nollau wrote to his friend and colleague Joseph Rieger between 1838 and 1861, plus one letter written to the Rev. Simon Kuhlenhoelter in 1864.

In the 1930s, historian and Eden Seminary professor Carl E. Schneider collected extensive documentation from German archives related to mission societies and the Kirchenverein. Photostatic copies include a series of correspondence between Nollau and the Rhenish Mission Society.

Artifacts

The Archives has several other artifacts that reportedly were in Nollau’s possession, including the desk used by Nollau at Gravois Settlement and said to be present at the time the Kirchenverein was founded and a basket woven by the Nollaus from reeds brought back from South Africa.
Acknowledgements

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Sources

The following sources were consulted during the research for this exhibit:


Turnau, Julia. Diary, April 24–June 19, 1842. Typewritten manuscript and translation by Armin L. Saeger, Eden Archives. The translator notes that the original diary has been lost.


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St. Peter’s Evangelical Church, United Church of Christ: 150th Anniversary, 1843-199