

German American History
ORGANIZERS OF NAVIGATION

In the interest of navigation the services of FERDINAND RUDOLF HASSLER and of JULIUS ERASMUS HILGARD have proven of the greatest value. While the former was professor of mathematics at the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, he directed the attention of the Government to the necessity of a correct survey of the coasts of the United States as essential for the safety of commerce and navigation. In compliance with his recommendation a special office, the Coast Survey, was established, with professor Hassler as the head. He remained in office from 1807 to 1843. Hilgard was one of his successors, resigning in 1885. To the Coast Survey the commercial world is indebted for splendid charts, the value of which to navigation cannot be over-estimated.

The ancestor of the Cramp family was JOHANN GEORG KRAMPF, a native of Baden, who arrived in America at the end of the 17th century and made his home on the banks of the Delaware River. Here the members of his family, the name of which changed to Cramp, took to shipbuilding, which occupation they have continued for several generations. Under the management of William Cramp and Charles Henry Cramp the ship and engine-building enterprise has grown to a very extensive organization.

The American history of the Herreshoffs begins with KARL FRIEDRICH HERRESHOFF, a native of Minden, an accomplished engineer, who in 1800 arrived in Providence, Rhode Island, where he married the daughter of the shipbuilder John Brown. Their son as well as their grandsons devoted themselves to naval architecture and made a specialty of fast steam- and sailing yachts and of torpedo vessels of high speed. The most interesting figure of the family is JOHN B. HERRESHOFF, who in his fifteenth year became totally blind. In spite of this handicap he brought the business he had inherited to great prosperity. He also made the models for several of those fast sailing yachts, which defended the "America Cup" against the English.

A name well known to the commercial world was that of THOMAS ECKERT, also a man of German descent. In 1852 he supervised the construction of a telegraph line from Pittsburgh to Chicago, and was superintendent until it became a part of the Western Union Telegraph Company. During the Civil War he was general superintendent of military telegraphy and reached the rank of brigadier-general. He became assistant secretary of war in 1864. After having been appointed in 1866 as general superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph Company, he became, in 1881, president and general manager of this concern and also director of the American Telegraph and Cable Company and several railways, among them the Union Pacific Railroad. The brilliant record of General Eckert assures him a permanent place in the ranks of those who faithfully served the Union.

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