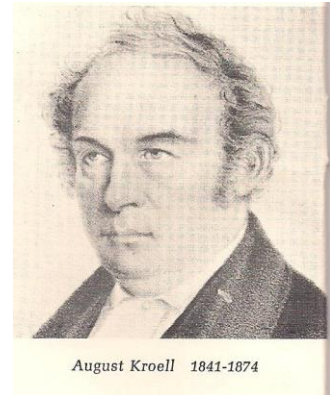


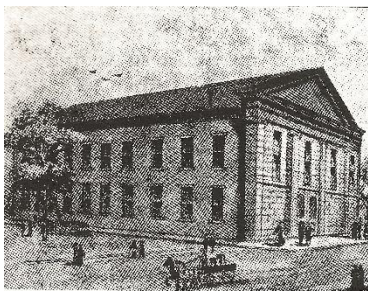
The Rev. August Kroell

The Rev. August Kroell became the minister of German St. John's Church in 1841 and remained at St John's until his death in 1874. He was the son of Ludwig Kroell, a farmer in Rohrbach, Grand Duchy of Hessian. August's parents wanted him to be educated plus avoid military service. They sent him to Buedingen to attend the gymnasium (the most advanced of the three types of German secondary schools) to study theology. In 1826 August passed his exam and entered University of Giessen, known as a rationalist university, for classes in philology and theology. After graduating in 1831 at age 25, he was appointed to the vicarage under Count Isenburg Buedingen. Rev. Kroell realized that since he wasn't from an aristocratic family, he could never rise to a higher level. He concluded if he wanted to achieve more, immigrating to the United States was the solution.



In 1834 August Kroell led 200 emigrants to Bremen, Germany, where they departed for a 6-week voyage to Baltimore, Maryland. The group had planned to go to Missouri but due to disagreements, only 75 people continued. Kroell and the group walked across the mountains to Wheeling, West Virginia, where they took a steamboat to St. Louis. Kroell and his friend, Dr. Bruehl, began farming in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri. After the death of Dr. Bruehl in 1838, Kroell gave up farming and became the minister of a small German Protestant church in Louisville, Kentucky. He stayed there only one and a half years. In 1841, Kroell was invited to give a sermon at German St. John's Church located on Sixth Street in Cincinnati, where he stayed for over 30 years.

To provide context for the growth of St. John's during Rev. Kroell's ministry, consider events in Germany and Cincinnati at that time. When the congregation was first organized, about 5% of Cincinnati's population was German. With the introduction of steamboats on the Ohio River, immigration increased. By 1850, German-born people made up about 25% of Cincinnati's population. During the 1830s there were revolutions in Europe against conservative kings and governments. Failed revolutions caused increases in immigration. The goal of the 1848-1849 revolution was to create a unified Germany with a republican form of government. This failed revolution was led by educated and liberal thinkers who emigrated to Cincinnati and other parts of the US.



St. John's congregation remained at the church on 6th Street (picture on the left) until 1866. Because of Rev. Kroell's liberal views, he attracted many new members, including those who supported the failed 1848-49 revolution. The congregation outgrew the 6th Street building. Since the German community was moving to the area called Over the Rhine, the congregation decided on a new building at 12th and Elm Streets.

As a result of the cholera epidemic in 1849, Rev. Kroell helped found the German Protestant Orphans Home, now Beechwood Acres. On July 21, 1851, the first 10 orphans entered the orphanage, located in Mt. Auburn. The cover of *The Journal of the General Protestant Orphan Home* dated August 1939 has a picture of a bronze bust of Rev. Kroell. The bust was located in the hall outside the home's administrative offices. In that article, Rev. Kroell is "generally credited as being the founder" of the home.

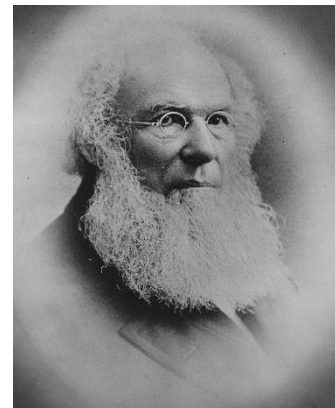
1849 was a busy year for Rev. Kroell. He established *Die Protestantischen Zeitblätter*, a German Protestant newspaper, to encourage a united German Protestant spirit in Cincinnati. The newspaper was published weekly, providing information for “thinking Christians...” from “a liberal, humanist Christian perspective.”

In 1869 Rev. Kroell published a hymn book for use by the congregation. The paragraphs below appear in the preface and have been translated from German. Since these are his words, they indicate his religious viewpoint.

One of the fundamental principals of this church is: “Acknowledge the truth—it sets you free.” And the counsel of the Master is “Hold to my word, and you will recognize the truth.” His teaching however, is in brief this: God is your Father, his nature and being is Love, you are his children, therefore your life ought to be one of love. To love God above all things, and your neighbor as yourself—this is religion, this is eternal life. In the spirit of this teaching, we have selected hymns for this book.

It is self-understood that no hymn has been included, which is in contradiction with that spirit. Excluded, therefore, is that theology of the traditional churches, which begins with the wrath of God and the sinful nature of man, and ends with the bloody atonement and the everlasting damnation of all those who do not believe thus. Such a theology is a sin and a crime against the religion of Jesus, and heaven and earth cry out and witness: ‘It is not true.’

Rev. Kroell died in Cincinnati in 1874 and was survived by his wife, Henrietta, and five children. It is estimated that 185 carriages were in his funeral procession. Several churches had no service that day in Rev. Kroell’s honor. He’s buried at the Walnut Hills Cemetery originally named The Second German Protestant Cemetery. For 30 days, St. John’s was draped in black, and the men wore black arm-bands in honor of Rev. Kroell, also known as Papa Kroell.



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