



2-8. Intersection of Schiller and Second streets, Hermann, ca. 1885.

early in 1848, one of many Kotzebue plays the group performed. As the society matured, it offered more ambitious performances, as Schiller's *Die Rauber*. The venture was so successful that a brick theater was built, and until its activities ended because of the Civil War, the society was the center of social activities.

Musical activities began with the town's founding. A *Musik-Chor mit Blech Instrumenten* was formed in 1839 and a *Hermann Männerchor* five years later. A brass band was piously named the *Apostel Band*. About 1852 a two-story brick *Musik Halle* was built. By 1878 it had been outgrown and the impressive three-story *Concert Hall*, with its gable end facing First Street, was constructed to house the community's expanding cultural activities. Intellectual thought was encouraged by *Der Verein Freier Männer*, formed in 1852 under the leadership of Eduard Mühl, the newspaper publisher. Its purposes, according to Bek, were "to stimulate independence of thought to encourage fearless investigation, to hold up as beacon lights liberty, truth and justice; to teach right living by precept and example." Mühl's ideals were perhaps too intense even for the sober intellectuals of Hermann, for the society did not survive his death in 1854. Later a *Turnverein* flourished for many years.

Folk customs also lingered well into this century. On *Fastnacht* (Shrove Tuesday), masked young people in fancy dress went from house to house begging *Fastnacht* cakes—doughnuts without holes—and other sweets. The *Maifest* was once celebrated by school children parading to the picnic ground. There they danced around a Maypole and played various games including *Topfkloppen*, in which a blindfolded child was given a pole and if he succeeded in breaking a pottery jar would win a prize. Today the *Maifest* continues but has become a community festival. The harvest festival, *Erntefest*, included a parade of wagons, each decorated to represent some particular crop. One, long remembered, symbolized the local wine industry with *Bacchus* astride a wine cask, surrounded by maidens. *Schützenfeste* were held each fall. There

Fig. 2-11

Fig. 2-12

Figs. 2-13,  
2-14



9-47. Erholung Society theater building, Second and Market streets, Hermann, built before 1860. After the society disbanded in 1866, the altered structure served as a residence. The chimneys with the connecting parapet have been reconstructed and may not follow the original design; the porch is also a twentieth-century addition.

windows and a cast-iron balcony above the center entrance. In 1878 the larger Concert Hall was built, with shops on the first floor and a large hall occupying the second floor. This handsome brick structure with its ornamental gable on Front Street lacks its original cast-iron balcony, but the decorative legend "Concert Hall," with the symbol of the lyre and music which was painted on the brickwork, could be seen in 1971.

Hermann's wine industry was started soon after the settlement of the town, but not until after long experimentation with various types of grapes were varieties found suitable to the local soil and climate. By 1865 the wine industry had become so lucrative that local vintners excavated massive caves for storing and aging their wines.<sup>20</sup> Generally these wine cellars were barrel vaulted with brick or stone. Many residents who produced only a limited quantity of wine built wine cellars as subbasements to their homes. The larger cellars were built into the hillsides, as at the Stone Hill Wine Company, where they extended from the ground-floor press room in the main building down through a succession of levels to a building at the lower side of the hill. These cellars were of various sizes: the "shipping cellar," which was "arched like a tunnel" was built in 1861 and enlarged in 1882 to 20 feet by 102 feet, but the cellar that held the twelve "apostle" casks was much wider, being 80 feet by 60 feet, with its vault supported by an arcade in the center. The sure skill with which these and other wine cellars were built in the community shows how familiar the masons were with this very specialized work.

20. The design, construction, and cost of a large wine cellar built at Hermann about 1865 for George Husmann is described by Husmann in his *The Cultivation of the Native Grape and Manufacture of American Wines*, pp. 133-35. The Husmann cellar was designed

to be "100 feet long, by 18½ feet wide inside, and 12 feet high under the middle of the arch. This will be divided into two compartments. . . . This cellar will, at the present rates of work, cost about \$6,000."

Figs. 9-48 to  
9-56