Julius Otto Kaiser: The Early Years

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ABSTRACT
Julius Otto Kaiser (1868–1927) was a special librarian and indexer who, at the turn of the twentieth century, designed an innovative, category-based indexing system known as “systematic indexing.” Although he is regarded as a pioneer of indexing and classification, little is known about his life. This essay seeks to fill in some gaps in Kaiser’s biography by reviewing what is known of his life prior to his entry into information work: namely, his birth, childhood, and education in Germany; his early career as a musician and teacher in Australia; and his sojourn as a teacher in Chile. It is argued that Kaiser’s early experiences equipped him with linguistic skills and a commercial outlook that smoothed his path into the world of business information and left traces in his thought about indexing and information work.

INTRODUCTION
Julius Otto Kaiser (1868–1927) was a special librarian and indexer active in the United States and Great Britain in the final half-decade of the nineteenth century and the first two-and-half decades of the twentieth century. To present-day students of classification and indexing, he is known as the creator of an innovative system of alphabetical subject indexing, which he named “systematic indexing” (SI) (Kaiser, 1911, 1926). Designing SI to facilitate the indexing, on cards, of individual items of information embedded within journal articles and other documentary units of commercial and technical literature, he based it on two methodological precepts: namely that (1) all the index terms in an indexing vocabulary are to be assigned to one of three general classes of terms—terms for concretes, terms for countries, and terms for processes—and, (2) once sorted into
these classes, terms should be combined, by means of stringent syntactic rules, into compound index terms, or “statements,” formulated in such a way that a term for a concrete or a country always precedes a term for a process (Kaiser, 1911, §§ 21, 73, 302, 305, 574; Svenonius, 1978, 138; 2000, pp. 6, 173–174). These two precepts have come to form the basis for the present-day valorization of SI as a historically significant indexing system and Kaiser as a pioneer of subject indexing. Some latter-day commentators have lauded him as the first writer on indexing to work out a fully articulated and explicit “grammar and logic” for the treatment of compound index terms in an alphabetical subject indexing system (Metcalfe, 1957, p. 235; cf. pp. 25 & 76; Olding, 1966, p. 141; cf. Rodríguez, 1981, pp. 329–330). Others have noted that his use of a limited set of classes to partition an indexing vocabulary and to create consistently structured indexing statements bears a strong resemblance to the utilization of categories in facet analysis and faceted classification (e.g., Sales & Guimarães, 2010, pp. 25 & 28; Straioto & Guimarães, 2004, pp. 111–116; Vlasák, 1967, pp. 152–156); indeed, one has gone so far as to characterize him as “the originator of faceted indexing” (Svenonius, 1978, p. 134).

Despite the fact that Kaiser is considered to be a significant figure in the history of indexing, very little is known about his life. To date, only one scholar—John Metcalfe, the historically-minded doyen of classification and cataloging theory in Australia from the 1950s to the 1970s and an ardent, though hardly uncritical, admirer of Kaiser—has unearthed information about his works and days. Drawing upon a single obituary notice and sporadic references in Kaiser’s own works, Metcalfe (1957, pp. 75–76, 234–235; 1959, pp. 297–298; 1976, pp. 175–177) established a basic chronological framework for, and a summary outline of, Kaiser’s life and career. From him, we learn that Kaiser was born in 1868 in Germany and spent part of his young manhood in Australia and Chile; that shortly after moving to the United States of America in 1896, he began his career as a librarian and indexer at the Philadelphia Commercial Museum, where he first developed the idea of SI; that, from 1899 until the First World War, he lived in Great Britain, where he worked as librarian and indexer for the British Westinghouse Company, Joseph Chamberlain’s Tariff Commission, Vickers Ltd., and the Nobel Explosives Company, and published two monographs on card systems and indexing; and that, after the outbreak of the Great War, he was compelled to return to the United States, where, settling in New York, he was employed for a number of years as a literature searcher at the Engineering Societies Library and as an indexer on the Engineering Index before taking up an appointment as a library consultant for the Hercules Powder Company in New Jersey, where he died in 1927.

This bare list of places and dates allows one to form certain general impressions about the general course of Kaiser’s life and career. For one thing, it indicates that he led a decidedly peripatetic existence: at various
stages of his life, he resided, for substantial periods of time on four of the six habitable continents. For another, the list of his employers shows that he carried out his work as librarian and indexer primarily for institutions involved in commercial or technical activities. Yet once these basic patterns have been taken into account, many questions remain. What was Kaiser’s familial, educational, and social background? What can be learned about his experiences in the different places where lived and worked? To what extent did his background and experiences shape his ideas about indexing and the indexing system that he created?

An adequate answer to the foregoing questions would require a full-scale biography of Kaiser as well as a detailed exposition of SI, the interest of which is not, by any means, exhausted by the category system briefly limned above. The aim of this paper is decidedly more modest. Here, I should like to explore aspects of the first and second questions by giving an account of Kaiser’s formative years in Germany, Australia, and Chile. At first blush, this may seem like a curious choice of theme, for this early phase of Kaiser’s life played out before he entered upon his informational career: it may thus seem to bear, at best, only an indirect relation to an understanding of his work as a librarian and indexer. There is, nevertheless, good reason to attend to it: after all, a person’s family background, the kind of education he or she receives, and his or her experiences in young adulthood inevitably leave traces in his or her outlook, whether these take the form of abiding habits and character traits, inherited perspectives on the world, or, contrariwise, beliefs and values formed in reaction, or even rebellion, to the milieu of one’s upbringing. A consideration of Kaiser’s early years, then, promises to yield some insight into the making of the sensibility of the man who designed SI.

To be sure, any investigation of a biographical nature is constrained by the sources upon which it can draw. In the case of Kaiser, the documentary base on which to reconstruct this phase of his life is quite exiguous: two obituary notices (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928; Hercules Powder Company, 1927), a handful of administrative documents, miscellaneous directory entries and newspaper advertisements, and an isolated series of press items make up the sum total of primary sources of information relating to his early years. Unpromising as the sparseness of this material may initially seem, a careful reading of the available sources in light of ancillary information about the places in which Kaiser lived and the kinds of institutions with he was associated allows us to form at least a general impression of his background and activities during his early years. As we shall see, there is reason to believe that his education in Germany and his experiences as an immigrant in Australia equipped him with personal resources and an outlook that would stand him in good stead in his later work as an indexer of commercial literature and theoretician of indexing.
It is a privilege and pleasure to offer this study as an *hommage* to Boyd Rayward, whose own background and interests have motivated the choice of theme. Three considerations, in particular, have come into play. First, as the author of the standard scholarly biography of Kaiser’s better-known contemporary Paul Otlet (1868–1944), Boyd is keenly aware of the ways in which attention to the details of a historical personage’s life can enhance understanding of the forces that helped to shape his or her thought and to condition his or her deeds (Rayward, 1975; 1991). Second, inasmuch as Boyd is a sometime student, colleague, and conversation partner of Metcalfe (Rayward, in Doust and Rayward, 1976, pp. 16–18), it seems appropriate to present a topic that builds upon the foundations laid by his erstwhile teacher. Finally, as an Australian, Boyd may find it interesting to read about Kaiser’s sojourn Down Under and the part that it played in his biographical trajectory. With these considerations in mind, I present this essay to Boyd as an expression of gratitude for his inspiring tutelage and extend to him all best wishes *ad multos annos felices atque fructiferos*.

**German Origins: Stuttgart and Environs, 1868–1886**

On 18 May 1867, Johann Jakob Käser (henceforth, Käser), aged 28, married Karoline Wilhelmine Völker, a little over six years his junior, in Stuttgart, the capital and royal residence city of the southwestern German Kingdom of Württemberg (Voelker, 1984). Born in the town of Esslingen am Neckar, some nine miles to the southeast of Stuttgart, but with familial roots in the hamlet of Birkach, about five miles to the south of the bustling capital city, Johann was a *Schreiner*—a joiner or cabinetmaker—by trade. Karoline’s family apparently hailed from the village of Roigheim, located some thirty-three miles to the north of Stuttgart, where her father made his living as a stonemason (Voelker, 1984). Both husband and wife, then, came from a modest social background rooted in the milieu of craftsmanship or skilled labor. Otherwise, apart from the fact that, like most of their compatriots, the Käisers belonged to the Evangelical—i.e., Lutheran—confession, little is known of their life within the urban setting where they made their conjugal home.

Less than a year after their marriage, on 10 March 1868, Karoline Käser bore Johann a son, whom they named Julius Otto. Over the next half-decade, he would be joined by four siblings: three brothers—August Theodor (1869), Hermann Theodor (1870), and Albert Emil Oskar (1873)—and a sister, apparently named Wilhelmine (1872). Whatever joy his parents felt at the increase of their brood was tempered by sorrow, for, as was frequently the case in those days, not all of their progeny reached maturity: both August Theodor and Wilhelmine died in their infancy. From 1873 on, the family numbered five members, and so young Julius grew up in the company of his parents and two younger brothers.
Available documentary evidence does not yield any information about the ambience of the Käser household nor does it afford glimpses into the inner dynamics of its family life. It is likely, though, that music played a prominent role therein, for, as we shall see, two of the sons would develop into accomplished musicians.

More can be said about Julius’s formal education, for one of the obituary notices chronicling his life enumerates the places where he received his schooling: “the Pfander, Burger, and Continuation Schools at Stuttgart” (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928). From this bare list of institutional names, it is possible to reconstruct, albeit in very rough outline, a picture of the course of studies through which he would have passed and so to get a sense of the social expectations for his future that his attendance at these schools represented. The first-named of these, the Pfander School, was evidently a primary school, although it is unclear whether it was a Volksschule (a public elementary school) or an Elementarschule (a preparatory elementary school for children groomed for higher-level schooling). Whatever the case may have been, this school, which Julius most likely entered at the age of six or seven, would have imparted the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and provided elementary religious instruction.

The next step in young Julius’s educational cursus was the Burger School—more precisely, the Bürgerschule, or “Citizens’ School.” Attended by students between the ages of eight and fourteen, this institution occupied an intermediate position in the highly stratified school system of the Kingdom of Württemberg. Above it stood the lower grades of Gymnasia, Realgymnasia, and Realschulen—classically-oriented, mixed-subject, and scientifically-oriented high schools, respectively—attendance at which served as a stepping stone to further education at a university or polytechnical institute; beneath it were situated the higher grades of the Volksschulen, attended by the general mass of the population not destined for higher education (Bird, 1884, pp. 9 & 89; Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1877b, p. IL, § 99; 1884, p. 274). The Bürgerschule’s course of studies was, in essence, a streamlined and simplified version of that provided in the lower grades of Stuttgart’s Realschule, including instruction in mathematics, science, German language, geography, history, drawing, and gymnastics, as well as facultative French lessons (Bird, 1884, p. 89; Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1884, p. 272). The Bürgerschule thus offered its students the opportunity to obtain a somewhat more substantial education in elementary science, mathematics, and other “modern” subjects deemed to be appropriate general background for a career in the skilled trades or commerce than they would have received in the Volksschule (Bird, 1884, p. 9; Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1884, p. 272). In later life, Julius would manifest ability in, and a penchant for, mathematics, especially geometry (Hercules Powder
Company, 1927): it may well be that the seeds for his interest were sown during his school days in Stuttgart.

The age of fourteen was a significant one for children in Württemberg, for it marked the upper age limit for compulsory education: upon successfully passing their examinations for that year, they were eligible to leave school and seek employment (Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1884, p. 273; Sarwey, 1883, vol. 1, p. 220). For students in the high schools, the prospects of a place at a university or polytechnic and the promise of a reduction in obligatory military service provided incentive to prolong their education at these institutions for periods extending from a single year to an additional four years or more (Bird, 1884, pp. 32–33, 62–63). A different set of options awaited students at the Volksschule and the Bürgerschule. It was expected either that they would go on to attend one of Württemberg’s highly renowned trade schools, such as, for example, the Baugewerkschule, which provided specialized training in technical subjects appropriate for a career in lower-level construction engineering, mechanical work, or one of the craft trades (Bird, 1884, pp. 84–86; Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1877b, p. XLVI, § 84; 1884, p. 269), or that they would enter directly into the workforce as apprentice laborers or tradesmen. Even in the latter case, however, the young worker was not entirely absolved of educational obligations, for he was required to attend, on a part-time basis, evening or Sunday afternoon classes in technical subjects applicable to his chosen occupation until he had reached the age of eighteen (Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1884, pp. 273–274; Sarwey, 1883, vol. 1, p. 220). Such courses were typically taught at a Fortbildungsschule, or continuation school (Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1884, p. 269).

As the enumeration of schools in his obituary makes clear, Julius took the second route and attended a Fortbildungsschule. In the 1870s and 1880s, a male Stuttgarter could study at two schools of this type. One of them, the gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule, or trades continuation school, offered courses in technical drawing, modeling, handwriting, commercial correspondence and business writing, arithmetic, elementary and descriptive geometry, bookkeeping, machine operation, physics, chemistry, geography and history, and French (Gugler, 1878, pp. 494–495; Königliche Commission für die gewerblichen Fortbildungsschulen, 1873, pp. 40–41, table 1, no. 1.a-b; Nagel, 1877, pp. 129–130); the other, the kaufmännische Fortbildungsschule, or commercial continuation school, provided instruction in “commercial correspondence in German, French, and English; Italian, shorthand, bookkeeping, commercial arithmetic and commercial geography” (Bird, 1884, p. 87; cf. Gugler, 1878, p. 527; Königliche Commission für die gewerblichen Fortbildungsschulen, 1873, pp. 40–41, table 1, no. 1.e). Although the two schools shared the same building and overlapped in some of the subjects taught, they were administratively distinct and dif-
ferred markedly in their policies regarding curricular matters: the kaufmännische Fortbildungsschule prescribed a set course of studies for its students, whereas students at the gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule could take as many—or as few—classes as fit their vocational needs (Gugler, 1878, pp. 494–495, 524 with n. *, 527; Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1884, p. 269; Nagel, 1877, p. 128). On the available evidence, it is impossible to determine which of these schools Julius attended, though one may well suspect that the lower rate of tuition at the gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule and its relatively flexible regimen would have made it a more practical choice for a young man of his background. Whether he feasted on the full course set out in the kaufmännische Fortbildungsschule or, perhaps more likely, sampled selected offerings from the curricular “smorgasbord” of the gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule, this phase of his formal education would have been oriented almost exclusively toward the acquisition of knowledge for use in the workaday world of the small trades or business. To what extent he supplemented these occupationally focused studies by independent reading or additional instruction is unknown, though, for reasons that shall presently become clear, it seems highly likely that he received musical training of some sort.

Classes at a Fortbildungsschule were intended for members of the working population, and so it is likely that, in his fourteenth year or shortly thereafter, Julius entered, in some way, into the world of work. What sort of job he would have taken on is not known. He may well have followed in his father’s footsteps and begun training as an apprentice joiner. However, sons did not always take up paternal occupations, and one cannot exclude the possibility that he intended to pursue some other line of work. In the early 1880s, Stuttgart would have provided a rich environment for making such a choice. Located in a valley surrounded by forested hills and vineyards, it had transformed itself from a relatively small and picturesque royal city with a population of some 61,340 in 1861 into a regionally important industrial center and commercial entrepôt, the inhabitants of which numbered 117,303 in 1880 (Catlin, 1884, p. 412; 1885, p. 554). Its factories and workshops were renowned for the manufacture of a variety of products as diverse as paints and chemicals; jewelry; tin ware; optical and scientific instruments; carriages; furniture; musical instruments; toys; corsets; silk, linen, cotton, and woolen goods; drugs; sugar; confectionery goods; and chocolate (Andree, 1877, p. 478; Führer durch Stuttgart und Umgebung, [1884], pp. 12–13; Stuttgart, 1886, p. 333). Stuttgart also boasted a vibrant commercial life. Home to a stock exchange and several annual market fairs, it was, among other things, a regional center for publishing and a focal point for the book trade in southern Germany (Andree, 1877, pp. 478–479; Führer durch Stuttgart und Umgebung, [1884], pp. 14–16, 19; Stuttgart, 1886, pp. 333–334). It also had a number of institutions aimed at fostering interest in manufacture and trade, such as a
state-sponsored industrial museum known as the *Musterlager*, or sample-warehouse (later rebaptized as the *Landes-gewerbemuseum*) (Andree, 1877, pp. 476–477; Führer durch Stuttgart und Umgebungen, [1884], p. 13; Vischer, 1875, pp. 225–244; Wagner, 1887), and the similarly named, but distinct, *Export-Musterlager*, a subscription-supported export agency-cum-permanent trade exposition with a filial branch in the northern German city of Hamburg (Murray, 1886, pp. 16–17; Renouard, 1896, pp. 455–458; Vansittart, in Consuls’ Reports, 1886). Here, then, was no lack of opportunity for young men with a modicum of ambition to find a niche in a trade.

By the mid-1880s, Johann and Karoline Kaeser had relocated their family to Johann’s ancestral village of Birkach, a hamlet of approximately 1,000 souls lying a few miles distant from the bustling city. This move, which placed the Kaezers in a semirural community populated primarily by small tradesmen, industrial workers, and day laborers (Dittmann, 2007, pp. 55–56), need not have entailed a rupture of Julius’s occupational or educational ties with Stuttgart. Throughout the nineteenth, and even into the early twentieth, century, many Birkachers made the daily five-mile trek by foot to the nearby city for the purposes of work (pp. 55–56, 57): it is perfectly possible that he joined their ranks. However, one must also reckon with the possibility that he may have received on-the-job training closer to his village home.

By the middle of the 1880s, the horizon of expectations for Julius’s future began to take on a definite shape. His educational background destined him for a career in the small trades. Such an occupational track portended a constant round of unremitting work, for young, wage-earning tradesmen typically put in ten- or eleven-hour days, six days a week (Barron, 1886, p. 197): through application and thrift, they could aspire, in time, to set up their own business and secure a place within the ranks of the independently employed master artisans, small shopkeepers, and merchants who then formed the *Mittelstand*, or lower middle class, of German society (Crossick & Haupt, 1995, pp. 134–136). The earlier stages of a workman’s or tradesman’s career, however, generally tended not to proceed in a straightforward arc, for impinging upon the imperatives of making a living were the obligations of citizenship. All able-bodied young male citizens of Württemberg, as in other German states, were legally bound to fulfill a period of compulsory military service. This obligation was a heavy one, entailing a commitment of no less than twelve years: three continuous years of full-time active duty in the standing army; four years in the reserve forces of the same; and five years as a reservist in the *Landwehr*, or national militia force (Sarwey, 1883, p. 226). Young men became eligible for military service on their eighteenth birthday, though they did not have to enter upon active duty—the most onerous and, from the occupational point of view, most disruptive portion of their service—until the beginning of the calendar year in which they celebrated their
twenty-first birthday (Sarwey, p. 226). For Julius, then, the future held out the prospect of time in the barracks, followed by years in the workplace establishing himself in a trade in order to attain a position comparable to, or perhaps slightly better than, that of his father. One may well wonder whether he faced this with anticipation, equanimity, resignation, apprehension, or a mixture of these and other sentiments.

Whatever Julius's expectations for his future may have been, his Lebenslauf would take a different turn, for, not long before he reached his eighteenth birthday, his parents decided that the family would emigrate from Württemberg. The historical record does not disclose their motives for taking this step and one can only speculate on their rationale for doing so. Economic considerations, a perennial factor in international migration, may well have lain back of the decision. Certainly, economic conditions in Württemberg during the mid-1880s were not entirely propitious ones for the lower classes of that German state. In a report on the commercial lay of the land in the kingdom for the year 1885, the British Consul at Stuttgart painted a decidedly unpromising picture:

The most important industries of Württemberg suffer from severe depression, attributed principally to over-production, brought about by an ever-increasing competition. The principal feature of the year 1885 has been the realisation of moderate gains in return for great industry and exertion. Manufacturers in almost all branches, if not carrying on business at a loss, have had to content themselves with a bare margin of profit.

German farmers, in general, complain of the steadily increasing competition from all parts which they meet with nowadays, particularly from America, Russia, and Australia. The reduced buying power, and the increasing deteriorated condition of the country population as well as of the trading classes, is, in a general degree, observable everywhere. This is chiefly the case with those occupied in small and retail businesses, who deal with the country population, and who for the most part depend upon the various industries in connection therewith. (Vansittart, in Consuls’ Reports, 1886)

Inasmuch as the Kaesers were a family of fairly modest means,¹⁴ the challenges of maintaining their standard of living in such a precarious economic climate may well have induced them to seek their fortune abroad. However, in the absence of any direct documentary evidence, it would surely be rash to draw any firm conclusions on this score: it may well be that other reasons, less readily discernible from a historical distance, provided the impetus for their decision to leave their natal land.

Unlike the overwhelming majority of German emigrants in the 1870s and 1880s, the Kaesers opted not to go to the United States of America, but selected Australia as their destination.¹⁵ This choice can best be explained as a result of personal connections. Karoline Kaeser’s elder brother, Johann Christian Völker (or, Voelker), had emigrated in 1861
to the Colony of Queensland, where, after a long stint as an agricultural laborer, he established himself as a successful fruit grower and orchard operator at Ormiston, an agricultural settlement approximately fifteen miles to the east of Brisbane (Voelker, 1984). Epistolary reports of his antipodean experiences may well have inspired his sister and her husband to entertain thoughts of Australia as a new home, while knowledge of his presence there would have offered them assurance that they would not be entirely on their own in their new surroundings. The conditions under which the Kaesers came to Australia provide a further clue that personal connections played an important role in their choice of destination. They emigrated to Queensland as free nominated immigrants.16 Such a status, which accorded an immigrant free passage from London to Queensland, could be obtained only if a native or naturalized Queenslander requested it from the colonial authorities and paid a deposit on the immigrant’s behalf (Corkhill, 1992, p. 72, with n. 4; Pain & Woolcock, 1889, p. 872, §§ 9–10 & 878–879; Woolcock, 1986, p. 19). Given these requirements, it is evident that only prior contacts with a person already residing permanently in Queensland could have secured the Kaesers their status as free nominated immigrants: whether this person was Voelker, as seems most likely, or some other acquaintance is unknown.

Once the decision had been taken, emigration seems to have proceeded without complications. In late February of 1886, the Kaesers temporarily moved back to Stuttgart, doubtless to make arrangements for their impending voyage, and, in the middle of March, only days after Julius’s eighteenth birthday, Johann Kaeser received the Entlassungsurkunde, or document of discharge, that formally released him and his family from Württemberger citizenship and thus represented official permission to emigrate.17 Almost two months later, on 12 May, the family departed from London aboard the steamer Duke of Westminster, and, after a voyage of almost two months that took them into the Mediterranean, through the Suez canal and into the Gulf of Aden, across the Indian Ocean to Batavia (today, Jakarta) in Indonesia and thence, via Timor and the Torres Straits to a path along the northeast coast of Australia, they arrived at Brisbane on 6 July 1886.18 The small but rapidly growing capital city of Queensland and its hinterlands would come to form the center of gravity of the family’s life and work in its new home.19

COMING OF AGE DOWN UNDER: BRISBANE AND TOOOWOOMBA, 1886–1892
Although little is known about the Kaesers’ first years on Australian soil, sufficient evidence survives to show that Julius soon began charting a new course for his life. For one thing, his new environment required that he develop a good working knowledge of the English language. He also continued his education, studying “under private tuition” in Brisbane
(American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928; Hercules Powder Company, 1927): it is regrettable that extant sources do not specify either what subject(s) he studied or from whom he received instruction. Most significantly, he quickly set about making the transition from student to instructor, for he began working as “a teacher of languages and music” (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928). We are fortunate that contemporary documents allow us to catch a glimpse of how this process unfolded.

On 28 August 1886, a little under two months after the Kaesers had arrived in Queensland, the Brisbane Liedertafel, a recently established men’s choral society, presented a concert featuring both group singing and a series of soloists.20 According to a report in the Brisbane Courier (hereafter, Courier), at that time the city’s chief daily newspaper, “the novelty of the evening was a solo on the zither by Herr Kaser, who skillfully played Beethoven’s ‘Funeral March.’ He was recalled, and substituted [sci., played as an encore—TMD] a pretty waltz, the Anglicised name of which is ‘A compliment to a friend.’”21 The performance of “Herr Kaser”—none other than Julius—on a quintessentially south German instrument little known to many of his Australian listeners evidently aroused considerable interest, for, only three days after this concert, the following announcement appeared among the Courier’s classified advertisements under the rubric of educational notices:

HERR JULIUS KASER, PROFESSOR OF THE ZITHER, Begs to announce to the Musical Public of Brisbane that he is prepared to give Lessons on the abovenamed Instrument, which has become of late so popular in Europe. Herr Kaser is also open to accept engagements for concerts, &c.22

This primly, yet self-confidently, phrased statement set forth an agenda that Julius would follow over the next few years, as he endeavored to make his mark on the musical life of Brisbane as an amateur performer and to carve out for himself a career as a private teacher, first of music and then of language.

As notices in the Courier, its weekly counterpart The Queenslander, and its rival, the Queensland Figaro and Punch reveal, between 1886 and 1889, Julius took part in a number of public recitals, concerts, and revues in Brisbane, becoming something of a fixture in the local musical scene.23 As one might expect, some of his performances took place under the aegis of the local German community: for instance, he contributed a zither solo to a revue organized by its leaders and held at the Brisbane Town Hall to celebrate Kaiser Wilhelm I’s 90th birthday in March of 1887.24 However, he did not, by any means, confine himself to the sphere of Deutschtum alone. Indeed, many, perhaps most, of his public engagements—at least those recorded in the press—appear to have been in anglophone circles. For
example, he participated in a matinee concert held in Brisbane’s Theatre Royale to benefit the North Brisbane Benevolent Society\textsuperscript{25} and took part in at least one further concert with the Brisbane Liedertafel;\textsuperscript{26} however, his primary venues appear to have been recitals sponsored by churches in central Brisbane, such as the Trinity Anglican Church, Fortitude Valley, and All Saints Anglican Church.\textsuperscript{27} Julius’s performances appear to have been, for the most part, well received. According to reviewers, his performances were frequently greeted with loud applause and encores, and one reporter admiringly noted the “remarkable skill” with which he negotiated difficult pieces;\textsuperscript{28} more critical opinions, though, were not lacking.\textsuperscript{29} In addition to these appearances in the public eye, Julius made himself available to play at “private musical assemblies”;\textsuperscript{30} how great a demand there was for his services is unknown.

Alongside his activities as a performer on the amateur stage, Julius sought to make his living as a freelance teacher. From 1887 until 1890, The Queensland Directory listed him—initially as Julius Käser and, later, as Julius Kaiser—among the teachers of music active in Brisbane, with the added annotation that his specialty was the zither (Pugh’s Almanac and Queensland Directory, 1887, p. 34; 1888, p. 35; 1889, p. 38; 1890, p. 40). Tersely worded announcements placed in the educational section of the Courier’s classified advertisements in 1887 and 1888 shed a little more light on his activities:

HERR JULIUS KASER, Professor of the Zither and Teacher of German, RECEIVES PUPILS at Adelaide-street. (Opposite Stewart and Hemmant.)\textsuperscript{31}

HERR JULIUS KASER gives Lessons on Zither, Bow-Zither, Guitar, and German. For terms apply Adelaide-street, opposite Stewart & Hemmant.\textsuperscript{32}

GERMAN CLASSES commencing 15th September. Apply HERR JULIUS KASER, Adelaide-street, opposite Stewart and Hemmant’s.\textsuperscript{33}

These advertisements indicate that Julius had expanded his teaching repertoire beyond the musical instruction he had initially envisaged to include language classes as well: they also reveal that the quarters in which he held his lessons were located on one of Brisbane’s primary streets, across from a well-known dry goods warehouse constituting one of the city’s commercial landmarks.\textsuperscript{34} Whether he was able to support himself solely on the basis of his teaching and musical performances or whether he had to seek out additional work to make ends meet is unknown: at any rate, his obituarists—doubtlessly following his own lead—considered teaching of music and languages to be his primary occupation between 1887 and 1891 (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928).

In 1891, a few years after his initial foray into the world of private teaching, Julius’s pursuit of pedagogical work led him to Toowoomba,
the chief town of the Darling Downs, a major agricultural and pastoral district, which lay some 100 miles to the west of Brisbane (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928; Levey, 1892, pp. 85, 381–382). Numbering a little over 7,000 inhabitants at the time—10,000 if one counted its rural hinterlands—and a center of German settlement in Queensland (Tampke, 2006, p. 87), Toowoomba boasted several educational establishments, one of which, the Downs School, was a relatively new private school for boys, founded in late 1889 or early 1890 by a pair of local schoolmasters, Eric von Schultze and Joseph Arthur Baxendell. This partnership proved short-lived, for, by the end of 1890, the two men had parted company, with Baxendell taking over sole headmastership of the school.

Operating the Downs School (or, as it was sometimes called, the Downs Grammar School) as a boarding school that also accepted day pupils, Baxendell prospered in his educational enterprise, for enrollments increased rapidly: apparently needing assistance in covering the full spectrum of subjects in the curriculum of his growing school, he engaged Julius as second master in 1891. Operating the Downs School as a boarding school that also accepted day pupils, Baxendell prospered in his educational enterprise, for enrollments increased rapidly: apparently needing assistance in covering the full spectrum of subjects in the curriculum of his growing school, he engaged Julius as second master in 1891.

Little is known of Julius’s time as a teacher at the Downs School. The school’s curriculum consisted of English and composition; arithmetic and algebra; science; physical and political geography; history; classical languages; modern languages, namely French and German; bookkeeping; and drawing. Furthermore, inasmuch as Baxendell was a keen sportsman and a firm believer in the maxim mens sana in corpore sano, athletic activities, such as swimming and rugby, formed an integral part of its educational program. Although the sources at our disposal do not record which classes fell to Julius’s responsibility, there can be no doubt that he was charged with providing tuition in German: it is also likely that he was called upon to impart whatever musical instruction the school may have offered. The education he had received at the Bürgerschule and Fortbildungsschule would also have fitted him to teach subjects such as drawing, arithmetic, bookkeeping, and, perhaps, French; however, Baxendell’s own pedagogical expertise lay in such commercially oriented subjects as well and, as headmaster, he may well have preferred to take these classes for his own. Inasmuch as Baxendell oversaw physical education at the school, it is unclear to what extent Julius was drawn into its sporting activities. Interestingly, in the final months of 1891, the Downs School established a school library, initially a modest collection consisting of “upwards of forty volumes.” Extant sources do not inform us whether Baxendell himself took charge of setting up the library or whether he delegated this task to his second master: if the latter was the case, this may well have given Julius a first, miniscule exposure to the tasks associated with the organization and maintenance of a library.

Whatever Julius’s duties at the Downs School may have been, he appears to have carried them out diligently and faithfully. Such, at least, was the opinion of Baxendell, who, at an assembly held just before the Christmas
holidays in 1891, “expressed his appreciation of the services rendered by the second master, Herr Julius Kaser, and the untiring energy and interest that gentleman took in the school.” Yet, for all his efforts at the Downs School, Julius’s tenure there proved to be short-lived. In 1892, after about a year’s service, he left the school, Toowoomba, Queensland, and, indeed, Australia altogether, betaking himself to the South American country of Chile (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928). What constellation of factors led him to pull up stakes and depart for a distant land lying beyond the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean is unknown.

The move from Australia was not without personal consequences for Julius, for it entailed a considerable—and, as it turned out, permanent—geographical separation from other members of his family, all of whom had struck roots in Queensland and would live out their days there. Sometime in the 1890s, his father, Johann Kaeser, abandoned his original métier of joinery and, like his brother-in-law, became a gardener: having settled in the coastal town of Sandgate some thirteen miles to the northeast of Brisbane (Levey, 1892, p. 332), he acquired a small freehold property there and worked the soil until his death at the age of seventy-seven in 1916. Karoline, who occupied herself with what were then called “home duties,” outlived her husband by nine years, dying at Sandgate a few months after having attained her eightieth year. Hermann Theodor, the second oldest of the three surviving Kaeser children, followed in the footsteps of his father and took up gardening as his livelihood. Residing with his parents while they were alive, the lifelong bachelor lived quietly at Sandgate until 1940, when he died at the age of sixty-nine. Julius’s other brother, Albert Emil Oscar, took a markedly different path. Like Julius, he was a talented musician, playing several instruments, among them the zither (Schuster, n. d.). Balancing his strong musical interests with the need to make a living, Albert moved from Sandgate to Brisbane and, in 1906, opened Kaeser’s Music Store, where he sold instruments and other pieces of music-related apparatus well into the 1950s (Corkhill, 1992, p. 243). However, much of his time and energy appear to have been devoted to performing with various local musical groups: from 1917 on, he held the position of conductor for several civic and amateur bands and orchestras, presiding, over the next several decades, at numerous concerts around Brisbane (Albert Kaeser, 1928; Corkhill, 1992, p. 243). Achieving considerable local repute for his contributions to Brisbane’s musical life, Albert, who, like his brothers, never married, lived to the ripe old age of ninety-five, dying in 1968 (Corkhill, 1992, p. 243). Whether Julius ever came to know about ulterior developments in the lives of his parents and siblings after his departure for South America is uncertain: there is no evidence that he ever set foot in Australia again and, over time, he appears to have lost contact with his family altogether.
INTERLUDE IN CHILE, 1892–1896, AND A NEW BEGINNING

In Chile, Julius settled in Viña del Mar, a town located on the Pacific coast about five miles to the north of the great seaport of Valparaíso (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928). Favored by a pleasant climate, located in a scenic environment marked by lush vegetation, and possessing beaches developed for recreational purposes, Viña del Mar was well known as a tourist resort and summer retreat for well-heeled Chileños: indeed, its picturesque appearance and various amenities gained it the reputation as the “Chilean Versailles,” despite the fact that it was also increasingly becoming a home to industrial installations, including a sugar refinery and a factory for heavy machinery (Castagneto, 2010, pp. 17–19, 66, 71–75, 154–138). Here, Julius continued along the same occupational path that he had initiated in Australia, working as a schoolteacher at two private schools, first as the “senior master” of the Instituto Inglés from 1892 to 1893 and, then, as the “principal” of the Colegio Miramar from 1893 to 1896 (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1928).

Although nothing is known about the size, curricula, or organization of these schools, the titles of “senior master” and “principal” suggest that he played an important role in them: otherwise, available sources are, for the most part, silent as to what he did, said, or thought during his time in the Chilean Versailles.48 What is clear is that this period of his life brought with it one lasting change. By his own account, it was around 1893 that Julius definitively altered the spelling of his surname, which had oscillated between “Käser/Kaeser” and “Kaiser” in Australia, from the former to the latter form.49 His reasons for making this change are unknown. Nevertheless, it appears to have held some sort of personal meaning for him, for, in subsequent years, he insisted on the spelling “Kaiser,” going so far as formally to declare the change to authorities in Germany and, later, in Great Britain.50 Whatever the underlying motivation may have been, Julius Otto Kaeser would henceforth present himself to the world as Julius Otto Kaiser.

The climacteric of Kaiser’s life came in 1896, when he undertook another major shift in residence, moving from Viña del Mar to Philadelphia in the eastern United States of America. This geographical transplantation was accompanied by a change in career, for he found employment at the recently founded Philadelphia Commercial Museum, an institution that sought to promote American overseas trade by providing all interested American businessmen up-to-date information about foreign markets (Philadelphia Commercial Museum, 1899; Wilson, 1899): there he worked as a translator and as the librarian at its Bureau of Information, which maintained a home-grown card index to the literature in its collections (A Commercial Museum, 1897; American Society of Mechanical Engineering, 1928; Philadelphia Commercial Museum, 1897, pp. 17 & 67). Shortly after Kaiser had embarked upon this work, he became dissatisfied
with the form of indexing then in use at the Bureau and sought to find a way to ameliorate it. Initially considering the Dewey Decimal Classification as a possible basis for indexing, he found it wanting and so took it upon himself to find his own solution (Kaiser, 1926, p. 20, §§ 1–3). By 1897, only about a year after his entry into information work, he had developed the essentials of the method of SI, which would make his reputation and, in the fullness of time, secure him a place in the annals of subject indexing (Kaiser, 1911, § 20).

Kaiser’s Early Years: Their Biographical Significance and Aftereffects

As the foregoing account of Kaiser’s childhood, young manhood, and early career as a musician and teacher indicates, our current picture of his early years is obviously partial and incomplete. There is much about this period of his life that requires further investigation and clarification—if, indeed, the relevant sources are still extant and remain to be discovered in German, Australian, or Chilean archives. Even so, it is possible to form at least a general sense of the trajectory of his early Lebenslaufbahn and to draw some tentative conclusions about its traces on his later career and thought.

Born into a lower middle-class family in a German state, Kaiser received his primary and secondary education within a strictly regimented educational system in which the kind of school that one attended largely determined one’s occupational horizons and station in life. As we have seen, the schools in which he was educated—most notably, the Fortbildungsschule, a part-time school for students who had already begun to earn a living, the curriculum of which was devoted primarily to commercial or technical subjects—predestined him for life as an artisan, a laborer, or, possibly, a small businessman, once he had completed the compulsory military service required of male German citizens. Emigration to Australia at the age of eighteen freed him from the burden of military service. It also thrust him into a society where there was greater scope for occupational mobility than there had been in his homeland. The course of action that Kaiser took at this juncture is revealing. Rather than continue to pursue work in the small trades for which he had been trained, he struck out on a new occupational cursus. In doing so, he fell back upon resources that his German background—he was, after all, was known as “Herr Julius Käser” in Brisbane—provided him in the largely anglophone Australian cultural setting. Trading on the fact that he could play a folk instrument widely known in his native land but still considered to be quite novel in Brisbane, he almost immediately sought to parlay his skill on the zither into a livelihood by proclaiming his availability as a music instructor: in due course, apparently mindful that he possessed a native speaker’s knowledge of a commercially useful language spoken by a small but socially significant
ethnic minority in Queensland, he undertook to offer instruction in this as well. His work as a freelance teacher of music and German served as a stepping-stone into the world of school teaching, which he pursued first in Queensland and later in Chile. These efforts to make his way into what was for him a new occupation on the basis of a highly personal constellation of skills rather than on that of formal pedagogical training or qualifications betokened a mixture of resourcefulness, initiative, opportunism, adaptability, and a sense of his own individual powers. Nor should one overlook the significance of Kaiser’s appearances as a musical soloist in venues around Brisbane. To perform as a soloist was to present himself to the public as an individual artist and to place his own personal stamp upon the pieces that he was playing: here, too, a tendency towards a personal ethos of individualism can perhaps be discerned.

Kaiser’s formal education for the trades, his work as a freelance teacher of music and German in Australia, and his tenure as a schoolmaster in Chile obviously did not lead in a teleological arc toward a career as librarian and indexer, even if, as Metcalfe (1976, p. 177) noted, “the teacher turned librarian” was not an uncommon phenomenon “then and later.” Nevertheless, they did set the stage for his later career in information work. For one thing, Kaiser’s education and his experience of living in three different countries, in each of which a different majority language was spoken, afforded him the opportunity to learn at least four of the major commercial languages—German, English, Spanish, and French—of the day. This polyglottic capacity apparently provided his entrée into work at the Philadelphia Commercial Museum, where the Bureau of Information and its library had to deal with correspondence and business literature from around the world and where, accordingly, a knowledge of languages was a highly prized skill (Philadelphia Commercial Museum, 1899, p. 128; Wilson, 1899, p. 117). For another, his experiences seem to have smoothed his path into the realm of business information. Metcalfe (1976, p. 176) wondered how a teacher of music and languages was able to orient himself within the field of commercial indexing as rapidly as Kaiser appears to have done, concluding that “either he had commercial experience in South America which gave him an informed commercial viewpoint, or he very quickly absorbed and rationalized a commercial viewpoint in the museum.” Now, Kaiser’s rapid adaptation to the work at the Bureau suggests that he did, indeed, have an “informed commercial viewpoint” when he began work there. The reasons for this are not far to seek. On one hand, the kind of secondary education that he received at the Fortbildungsschule was oriented toward subjects likely to give one a tradesman’s or small businessman’s perspective on the world. On the other, one should not underestimate the business-related aspects of being a self-employed instructor of music, as Kaiser was in Australia, or the prin-
principal of a private school, as he was in Chile. This kind of work demanded a certain measure of entrepreneurship and an ability to position oneself in an educational market. It was no accident that Kaiser sought to market himself as a teacher of the zither and German in Brisbane or that he taught at the Instituto Inglés—that is to say, the “English Institute”—in Viña del Mar. In each case, he presented himself as somebody possessing skill or knowledge in a subject, knowledge of which was relatively uncommon in the setting where he lived: in other words, in both places, he discovered a niche in the local educational market and sought to exploit it. In short, although there is no evidence that Kaiser gained commercial experience in South America as a businessman producing or peddling material commodities, it is apparent that both his education in Stuttgart and his work as a teacher in Australia provided him with some opportunity to develop “an informed commercial viewpoint,” which he would further refine and consolidate during his tenure at the Philadelphia Commercial Museum.

Finally, one may well wonder whether Kaiser’s experiences prior to entry into special librarianship and indexing left their imprint upon his conceptualization of his indexing system and information work in general. Although this is a theme that cannot be fully explored here for lack of space, I should like to suggest that at least one significant connection can be made between his early experience and his mature thought. Kaiser designed SI to be a customizable indexing system so that the structure and contents of a given special library’s card index would correspond to the particular informational needs of the business organization that the library was serving: indeed, in his writings, he consistently emphasized the importance of accommodating the “individual requirements” of a business not only in card indexing but in document classification as well (e.g., Kaiser, 1908, § 76; 1911, §§ 7, 15, 97, 249, 312, 418–419, 642; 1926, p. 26, § 20). This insistence on configuring indexes and document classifications to the individual needs of the organizations for which they were created can, of course, be construed as an early manifestation of a view widely held by special librarians working in company libraries (Black, 2007, p. 184) and, accordingly, as part of a broader pattern of what might be called the professional ideology of business librarianship.

For Kaiser, however, matters seem to have gone deeper than that. To his mind, the individuality of a business qua corporation was an expression of the individuality of the businessman who directed it. On this view, the customization of indexing made the right kind of information readily accessible to individual businessmen so that they could “turn it to account” (Kaiser, 1911, § 297). Yet, Kaiser maintained, it was not enough for the businessman to have this information at his fingertips; he had to put it to use creatively in a manner that reflected his own individuality. In his words,
Information is useful, but the degree of its usefulness is very largely dependent on our powers of turning it to account. That the right kind and quantity of it is an important asset cannot be questioned, but the secret of its application, its successful exploitation, lies within us. (§ 5)

Our knowledge or information may be more or less public property and therefore not generally confined to ourselves, but our enterprise, our energy is something peculiarly our own, it is individual or special. . . . Our individuality is our greatest asset. (§ 23)

Kaiser’s appreciation of the individuality of a business, his belief in the need to customize its indexing and classification to its individual requirements, and his insistence on the need of the businessman to apply his own individual powers to exploiting the information at his disposal can doubtless be interpreted as an expression of the entrepreneurial business culture of his day. Yet, in his strong valorization of individuality in business and in the organization of information for business purposes, one may perhaps also discern traces of values formed during his own early career when he had to rely on his own skills and enterprise to make his way as a performer and freelance teacher of music and German in Brisbane. In this way, at least, the experiences of Julius Otto Kaeser, the young German musician and teacher Down Under, seem to have informed the thought of Julius Otto Kaiser, the special librarian, indexer, and creator of SI.

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Notes
1. The few accounts of Kaiser’s life in the subsequent literature on his indexing system (Dousa, 2007, pp. 2–3; Sales, 2013, pp. 49–56; Svenonius, 1978, p. 134) are all dependent, either directly or indirectly, upon Metcalfe’s pioneering work.
4. Or was the original sequence “Otto Julius”? Such is the order that appears in the Kaeser family’s application for permission to emigrate in 1886 (Auswanderungen, Nr. 2018, Doc 1, p. [1–2]; Doc 2, p. [2], no. 3a), while a passenger list of the ship that transported the Kaesers to Australia in the same year, gives his first name as “Otto” (QSA, Item ID 18474, p. 256). These are the two earliest-dated documents mentioning Kaiser that I have found; all subsequent documents give “Julius” as his first name and, if they mention the name “Otto” at all, place it in second position. There are at least two possible ways to account for the inverted sequence. Either the original form of our personage’s name was “Otto Julius Kaeser,” which he altered to “Julius Otto Kaeser” in his eighteenth year, or
the latter was, from the very beginning, the correct form of the name, which, for some reason, was inverted in the documents from 1886. The answer to this small conundrum, which cannot be resolved here, is to be sought in records of Kaiser’s christening, which are probably to be found in the Lutheran parish registers housed in Landeskirchliches Archive in Stuttgart.

5. For the names of the Kaesers’ children, see UQFL17, “The Kaeser Family in Australia”: Wilhelmine’s name is listed there with a question mark. Note also QSA, Item 743132, copy of death certificate of Johann Jacob Kaeser, which indicates that he was father to two deceased children, albeit without naming them.

6. The nature of the educational institution lurking behind the name “Pfander School” is elusive. I have not found any allusion to the existence of a school of that name in the contemporary literature on education in Stuttgart that I have consulted. One should note, however, that, in the mid-1870s, a certain Herr Pfander served as the “elementary instructor” (Elementarlehrer) at the Stuttgarter Elementarschule (e.g., Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1877a, p. 241): it is just possible—though hardly provable—that Kaiser (or his obituarist) used the teacher’s name metonymically to refer to the school as a whole. At any rate, the fact that the name “Pfander School” occurs first in what appears to be a chronologically ordered list justifies the inference that it was an elementary school of some sort.

7. The age of seven was the lower bound for compulsory education and so the age at which most children entered the Volksschulen, while the course of studies in an Elementarschule typically began a year earlier at age six (Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1884, pp. 272 & 273; Sarwey, 1883, p. 220; Statistische Nachrichten über den Stand des Realschulwesens in Württemberg, 1880, p. 101).

8. More precisely, the Bürgerschule included an eight-year program that students entered at the age of six and left at that of fourteen: however, the first two years of this program (for children aged six to eight) were considered by contemporary educators to be equivalent to an Elementarschule, while the final six years (for those aged eight to fourteen) constituted the Bürgerschule proper (e.g., Statistische Nachrichten über den Stand des Realschulwesens in Württemberg, 1880, pp. 92 w. Anm. 35, & 101). If the Pfander School was indeed an Elementarschule, Julius most likely entered into the Bürgerschule sometime in or after his eighth year.

9. For a good summary description of the distinctions between Gymnasia, Realgymnasia, and Realschulen, as well as a tabular representation of the differences in their respective curricula, see Bird, 1884, pp. 29–30, 33–34.

10. An additional year’s work garnered the student a reduction in military service, while completion of four years with the successful passing of a leave-taking examination rendered him eligible for higher education.

11. There was also a separate track of Fortbildungsschulen for girls that offered courses such as drawing, handwriting, bookkeeping, languages, and home economics; see Gugler, 1878, pp. 528–529; Königlich Statistisch-Topographisches Bureau, 1884, p. 270; Königliche Commission für die Gewerblichen Fortbildungsschulen, 1873, pp. 32–33; 40–41, table 1, no. 1.d.

12. On tuition rates, see Gugler, 1878, p. 527; Nagel, 1877, pp. 129–130. A half-year’s study at the Kaufmännische Fortbildungsschule cost 25 marks, and a full year, 45 marks, if paid in full at the beginning of the year. By contrast, attendance at evening courses for any subject except French at the Gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule cost 10 marks per half-year, with French lessons requiring payment of 6 marks extra, while Sunday afternoon courses in technical drawing, composition, or bookkeeping cost only 4 marks per year. On the Kaesers’ economic status, see note 13, below.


14. The extant evidence for the economic condition of the Kaesers in the mid-1880s is both meager and difficult to interpret. In March 1886, when Johann Kaeser petitioned Württemberger emigration officials to obtain a document acknowledging his renunciation of citizenship, he declared that he would take with him 600 marks as his Vermögen, or monetary wealth (Auswanderungen, Nr. 2018, Doc. 1, p. [2] & Doc 2, p. [2], no. 9).

On the basis of similar declarations made by emigrants bound for the United States of
America, the Royal State Office of Statistics (Königliches Statistisches Landesamt) of Württemberg annually computed an average amount of marks exported per capita (each caput being either an unmarried immigrant or the head of a household), which it published in its statistical yearbook. For 1886, the year of Kaeser’s declaration, the average given is 428 marks per capita (Königliches Statistisches Landesamt, 1889, vol. 1, p. 49, II.7.c) for a population of emigrants the majority (77.3%) of whom were industrial or agricultural laborers. Against this figure, Johann Kaeser’s reported sum of 600 marks appears to be above average. If, however, one considers that the 600 marks was to cover five family members, the amount seems considerably less substantial. In terms of contemporary purchasing power, 600 marks would have amounted to approximately two-fifths of the sum necessary to cover the annual expenses of a debt-free working-class family of five, as estimated by a contemporary Stuttgarter labor-union leader who, interestingly enough, also happened to be a joiner (Kloss, cited in Catlin, 1885, p. 557). On balance, then, one gains the impression that, at least in the period leading up to their emigration, the Käsers were not particularly well off.

15. According to Walker (1964, p. 181), a million-and-a-half people emigrated from the German states between 1871 and 1885. Of those whose destinations were recorded, 95% settled in the United States, 2% moved to Brazil, 1% went to other Latin American countries such as Argentina and Chile, 1% set off for Australia, and 1% were distributed among Canada, African lands, and Asian countries.

16. QSA, Item 18474, p. 256
17. Auswanderungen, Nr. 2018 & 2115.
18. QSA, Item 18474, p. 241; cf. Woolcock, 1986, pp. 19 & 77, Map B. Pace Metcalfe (1976, p. 177), followed by Dousa (2007, p. 2), who dated Kaiser’s arrival in Australia to 1887. This errant dating is based on a statement in one of Kaiser’s obituaries (Hercules Powder Company, 1927) that he moved to Brisbane when he was nineteen years old. The passenger manifest for the Duke of Westminster, however, gives his age as eighteen (QSA, Item 18474, p. 256).

19. The population of Brisbane increased from “approximately 48,000 in 1881 to 104,000 in 1891” (Fitzgerald, 1982, p. 273). In 1886, the year of the Kaesers’ arrival, the population of the city (measured in a radius of 5 miles from the city center) stood at 73,649 (Luck, 1888, p. 9).

20. Despite its name, the Brisbane Liedertafel was not a German, but an anglophone, organization; see Austin, 1962, p. 1057; Brisbane Apollo Male Choir Inc., 2009.


Old Emperor—The Divine Right—At Finney, Isle’s, & Co.’s.—How Beautiful is Night.—Unprotected Women”.


30. *Brisbane Courier*, 11 October 1886, p. 4 (“Special advertisements”).


34. See *The Queenslander*, 28 March 1896, pp. 30S–31S (“Messrs. Stewart and Hemnant’s [sic] Warehouse and Factory.”); *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1888, p. 15. From late 1886 until early 1887, his teaching quarters were at the corner of Alice and George Streets (Pugh’s Almanac and Queensland Directory, 1887, p. 34), while from 1889 until at least 1890, he was based in Leichhardt Street (Pugh’s Almanac and Queensland Directory, 1890, p. 40), both locations being situated in the heart of central Brisbane.

35. *Brisbane Courier*, 21 June 1890, p. 8 (advertisement, s.v. “Educational.”). On the circumstances that led to the founding of the Downs School, see Winn, 2000, pp. 95, 101–103. According to Baxendell, the school was founded in 1889 (e.g., *The Queenslander*, 6 October 1900, p. 17S [“The Downs School”]): one should note, however, that both he and Von Schultze still held positions at another school until early February of 1890 (e.g., *The Queenslander*, 8 February 1890, p. 288). Thus, even if the groundwork for the school had been laid in late 1889, it did not begin operation until 1890.


37. Sixteen students had enrolled for the first term of the school’s existence in the spring of 1890 (*The Queenslander*, 6 October 1900, p. 17S [“The Downs School.”]); by the end of 1891, the number of students had more than doubled that of the previous year (*Brisbane Courier*, 21 December 1891, p. 6 [“The Downs Grammar School”]). Our sources don’t specify when, within 1891, Julius took up his duties there: most likely, this would have been at the beginning of one of the school quarters—that is to say, in early February (*Brisbane Courier*, 3 February 1891, p. 8 [advertisement, s.v. “Educational”]), late April (*Brisbane Courier*, 16 April 1891, p. 1 [advertisement, s.v. “Educational”]), late July (*Brisbane Courier*, 14 July 1891, p. 1 [advertisement, s.v. “Educational”]), or early October (*Brisbane Courier*, 30 September 1891, p. 1 [advertisement, s.v. “Educational”]).

38. On the curriculum, see *Brisbane Courier*, 21 December 1891, p. 6 (“The Downs Grammar School”); for Baxendell’s emphasis on sports, see *The Queenslander*, 6 October 1900, p. 17S (“The Downs School”).

39. At the Toowoomba Grammar School, where Baxendell had taught for the two years
previous to the foundation of the Downs School, he was responsible for the “modern school”—that is, the part of the curriculum, save for modern languages, oriented toward “mercantile education”; see, e.g., *The Queenslander*, 19 January 1889, p. 135 (advertisement s.v. “Educational”). Early advertisements for the Downs School refer to him as the “late mathematical master” at Toowoomba Grammar School (e.g., *Brisbane Courier*, 21 June 1890, p. 8 [advertisement s.v. “Educational”]).

42. The *terminus ante quem* for Julius’s departure from the Downs School is early October 1892, when Baxendell put out advertisements announcing an open position for a “RESIDENT MASTER . . . competent to teach German (*Brisbane Courier*, 5 October 1892, p. 1 [advertisement, s.v. “Situations Wanted or Vacant”])—apparently a replacement for Julius. Of course, it is possible that he may have left the school well before that month.

43. See, e.g., QSA, Item ID 882272, Naturalisation no. 10178; Australian Electoral Rolls, 1903, Queensland, Division of Moreton, Subdistrict of Sandgate, p. 7, no. 497; 1913, Queensland, District of Lilley, Subdivision of Nundah, p. 46, no. 2289; QSA, Item 743132, Copy of death certificate of Johann Jacob Kaeser & Inventory [of real estate] by Karoline Kaeser. Digital copies of the Australian Electoral Rolls cited here and in the subsequent notes are available at http://www.ancestry.com.

44. See, e.g., Australian Electoral Rolls, 1903, Queensland, Division of Moreton, Subdistrict of Sandgate, p. 7, no. 498; 1913, Queensland, District of Lilley, Subdivision of Nundah, p. 39, no. 2290; 1919, Queensland, District of Lilley, Subdivision of Nundah, p. 64, no. 3783; Queensland, District of Lilley, Subdivision of Nundah, p. 63, no. 3701; *Brisbane Courier*, 19 May 1925, p. 6 (“Funeral Notices”).
45. See NAA AI 1908/7878, Application for naturalization; Australian Electoral Rolls 1913, Queensland, Division of Lilley, Subdivision of Nundah, p. 39, no. 2289; 1919, Queensland, Division of Lilley, Subdivision of Nundah, p. 64, no. 3783; 1925, Queensland, Division of Lilley, Subdivision of Nundah, p. 62, no. 3700; *The Courier Mail*, 13 March 1940, p. 24 (“Funeral Notices”).

47. Our sources provide clear indications that, by the early 1920s, communications between Julius and members of his family had ceased entirely. In a legal document filed in the spring of 1922, his mother stated that she had been unaware of Kaiser’s whereabouts for a long time, noting that if he was still alive, he was most probably residing in the United States of America (QSA, ID 743132, Affidavit of Karoline Kaeser in support of application to dispense with sureties); after his death about five years later, the persons charged with dispensing with his effects could find “no trace . . . of any relatives” (Hercules Powder Company, 1927). How far back in time this rupture in communication extended is unknown.

48. It seems likely, though evidence is lacking, that Julius involved himself, in some way, in the musical life of the community, as he had done in Brisbane. At any rate, he appears to have commemorated his time there in musical fashion. In 1898, a waltz for piano entitled “Recuerdos de Mira Mar” [“Memories of Miramar”] was published in Berlin by a certain “Julio Kaiser” then resident in Philadelphia (Library of Congress, Office of Register of Copyrights, 1898, pp. 769 & 796): given that “Mira Mar” was the alternate name of a well-known beach in Viña del Mar that was also the namesake of the Colegio Miramar where Julius worked and that one of Kaiser’s obituarists noted that he had published several compositions over his lifetime (Hercules Powder Company, 1927), there is good reason to believe that this Julio Kaiser was our personage.

49. See UKNA, HO 144/832/143880, Memorial “A,” § 8, declared 20 June 1906. In this document, his application for British citizenship, Julius stated that he changed the spelling of his name in 1893. However, elsewhere in the application, he was surprisingly cavalier in his dating of events: for example, he asserted that his family arrived in Queensland in 1885, whereas the correct date was 1886, and claimed that his father had obtained British citizenship in 1889, whereas, in truth, he did so only three years later, in 1892 (QSA, Item ID 882272, Naturalisation no. 10178). Thus, the date of 1893 is best taken as an approximate one: nevertheless, it clearly suggests that the name change occurred sometime near the beginning of the period when Julius was living at Viña del Mar.
UKNA, HO 144/832/143880, Memorial “A,” § 8, declared 20 June 1906. From this document, we learn that, when he applied to register the name change at Stuttgart, the authorities there were unable to change the name legally because he had ceased to be a German citizen. As for the British authorities, they registered him as “Julius Otto Kaeser, known as Kaiser,” although he applied to them as “Julius Otto Kaiser (formerly Kaeser).”

References

I. Archival Sources and Their Abbreviations


Nr. 2018, Doc 1: Declaration of renunciation of Württemberger citizenship by Johann Jacob Kaeser with confirmation of eligibility by the Amtsoberamt, 11 March, 1886.


QSA = Queensland State Archives

Item 18474: Passenger list of Duke of Westminster, 6 July 1886


Item 882272: Naturalisation no. 10178 = Johann Jacob Kaeser, oath of allegiance, 9 July 1891.

NAA = National Archives of Australia


UKNA = National Archives, United Kingdom


UQFL = Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

UQFL17: Albert Emil Oscar Kaeser Papers, 1930–[1950?]. Consists of a scrapbook kept by Kaeser, accompanied by a sheet of paper, written after Kaeser’s death, apparently by a genealogical researcher, that lists the names and dates of “the Kaeser family in Australia.”

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