

Eau Claire, Wisconsin: The White Pine Rush, Immigration, and a Century of Change

William G. Thiel



Images in this article courtesy of the Chippewa Valley Museum.

Eau Claire, Wisconsin, 1882.

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On Saturday, May 4, the Friends of the Max Kade Institute will hold their annual meeting in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. For event details and registration information, see page 13.

Eau Claire, like many places in Wisconsin, was named by French explorers who investigated the area, perhaps in search of the route to the Pacific Ocean and the Orient. Meaning “clear water,” the name refers to the clear, blue Eau Claire River, which flows into the muddy

and brown Chippewa River in the city’s present-day downtown. The first set of rapids on the Chippewa, just above the confluence of the two rivers and 75 miles from where the Chippewa flows into the Mississippi, signaled the end point of navigation for steamboats.

Today Eau Claire is one of Wisconsin’s largest cities, with a metropolitan area (including Chippewa Falls) of some 120,000 people. It is

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Greetings, Friends and Readers!

It is definitely still winter. The Keystone House, to be sure, has a certain special charm when sun shines through the long icicles hanging from the roof, but this season always brings its share of problems. Right now we are longing to be able to open our doors and work on our back porch; we are looking forward to Spring!

We note with pride that our institutional home, the University of Wisconsin–Madison, was ranked second last summer on a list of the ten most innovative colleges in the nation for foreign language study (<http://www.thebestcolleges.org/10-most-innovative-colleges-for-foreign-language-study/>). This ranking points to some “pretty amazing language-learning resources” at the UW, and we believe that the MKI may be one of them. After all, the MKI’s area of interest is playing an increasing role in both undergraduate- and graduate-level courses in the German Department, and Ph.D. dissertations are written on German-American topics, too.

We at the MKI are working on a broad and interdisciplinary range of topics, including immigration studies, German culture in America, German languages in America, German-American literature, and more. This spring, for example, we are featuring two lectures on very different subjects—Mark’s March 21 presentation entitled “Introducing the Pennsylvania Dutch Documentation Project” and Cora Lee’s April 18 presentation entitled “Managing the Mississippi:

German Engineering, POWs, and the Mississippi River Basin Model.” Mark your calendars, and look for announcements of additional events!

The MKI is also taking part in activities elsewhere in the state. First comes the second annual Germany Under Glass, sponsored by the German American Societies, Inc., and Milwaukee County Parks, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on March 2 at the Mitchell Park Domes in Milwaukee. There are extras to enjoy that day, too, including German musicians and dance groups, German treats at the Domes cafe, German dishes from Mader’s Restaurant, pretzel-making demonstrations, a G-scale train show under the title “The Circus Comes to Town” and, of course, the beauties of the Horticultural Conservatory.

On May 4th, the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the MKI will be held in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls, with a full day of activities, including a pre-program workshop, lectures, a museum tour, and a dinner. See page 13 for details, and, if you can, please join us there. This promises to be an outstanding event, and we are eager to extend the MKI’s reach, strengthening—or establishing—our ties to that part of the state.

And finally, the MKI is appearing, as usual, on the conference programs of nationally known organizations. From May 9 to 12, Antje Petty and Cora Lee will attend and give presentations at the Annual Symposium of the Society for German-American

Studies in New Orleans. The MKI will also be represented at the annual conference of the German Studies Association in October in Denver, where Cora Lee will take part in a seminar with a paper on “Literary Globalization in the Milwaukee German Theater.”

In addition, of course, we will be at Milwaukee’s German Fest, which takes place July 25 to 28. Mark the dates on your calendar: we hope to see you there!

Best wishes to all of you. Work hard, be successful, and stay in touch!
—Cora Lee and Mark

Mark your calendars!

Genealogy Class: Tracing Your German-American Roots

Saturday, March 2, 9am–noon

UW-Memorial LIBRARY, room 126

A collaboration of the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Max Kade Institute, this class will help you identify locations of records and will offer research strategies for using these records to uncover your German ancestors both here and in the old country.

Instructors: Lori Bessler, Reference Librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library and Archives, and Antje Petty, Assistant Director at the Max Kade Institute.

Registration: Contact Lori Bessler at 608-264-6519 or email: AskLibrary@wisconsinhistory.org

\$35 for Friends of the Max Kade Institute members, \$40 for non-members.

Lecture

Introducing the Pennsylvania Dutch Documentation Project

Thursday, March 21, 7pm

UW-Memorial UNION

Presenter: Mark Loudon, Professor of German at UW–Madison and MKI Co-Director

Unlike virtually all other heritage languages spoken in the United States, Pennsylvania Dutch is thriving today, despite the fact that it is neither promoted institutionally nor supported through immigration from abroad. Currently used by 250,000–300,000 speakers in the U.S. and Canada, it is estimated that

Pennsylvania Dutch will be spoken by over one million people by mid-century. This presentation will introduce the Pennsylvania Dutch Documentation Project (PDDP), a new undertaking by the Max Kade Institute to document and disseminate information about Pennsylvania Dutch and its speakers for the benefit of scholars and the general public.

Lecture

Managing the Mississippi: German Engineering, POWs, and the Mississippi River Basin Model

Thursday, April 18, 7pm

UW-Memorial UNION

Presenter: Cora Lee Kluge, Professor of German at UW–Madison and MKI Co-Director

Flood control became a priority in the U.S. following the catastrophic floods of major rivers during the 1920s and 1930s; and American civil engineers, enthusiastic about work being done in Germany, promoted the construction of laboratories where river hydraulics could be

studied. The most ambitious project was the construction of a 200-acre outdoor working model of the Mississippi River basin that replicated 15,000 miles of the river and its major tributaries, easily the largest hydraulic scale model ever made in this country. The original manpower was provided between 1943 and 1946 by German POWs held at Camp Clinton in Mississippi, a detention site established specifically to help build the Mississippi River Basin Model. This illustrated presentation tells the story of these prisoners-of-war and the role they played in solving problems of flood management in America.

Friends of the Max Kade Institute

Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 4, Eau Claire, WI

For details and registration information see page 13.

Board of Directors, Friends of the Max Kade Institute

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situated just to the south of Wisconsin's famed Northwoods, perched between a landscape of moraines, boreal forests, and lakes to its north, and oak openings, forests, and scattered prairies of the Driftless Area to its south. Although pockets of good soils are found in its vicinity and are sprinkled throughout the region, it is as an agricultural district not as productive as the areas heavily settled by German immigrant farmers in eastern and southern Wisconsin.

What attracted settlers to the area was the majestic White Pine (*pinus strobus*), and Eau Claire's fortunes became closely tied to the meteoric rise of the timber industry in the nineteenth century, as well as its equally rapid demise in the early twentieth century. One of the premier White Pine forests stood in the 150 mile-long Chippewa River Valley. Eau Claire and neighboring Chippewa Falls, as well as Menomonie and other smaller communities like Rice Lake and Ladysmith, were the sites of huge lumber mills. The Chippewa River also served as the conduit by which the logs were floated to mills and the finished product was taken to market, at least until railroads pierced the hinterlands. Once the timber in the Chippewa Valley was exhausted, however, the big companies and their capital left, and the city languished, its only remaining major industry being the Gillette Rubber Company (later Uniroyal).

By then, the Eau Claire region had become home to European immigrants from many different nations, who had come with the timber boom. Foremost among them were



Germania Singing Society, Eau Claire, 1904.

Norwegians, but a sizeable number of Germans had also settled the area, including farmers in the vicinity of Augusta and Fall Creek. Some were second-generation German Americans, who had migrated north and west from east-central Wisconsin. Clark, Taylor, and Barron Counties received their share of German immigrants. Others settled in northern and central Buffalo County, while Alma, the county seat, boasted a large Swiss-German population.

Chippewa County also welcomed many German farmers, and Chippewa Falls, Bloomer, and other communities were full of German immigrants, including perhaps the most recognizable German family in the region, the Leinenkugels. In 1867, Jacob Leinenkugel—who in 1845 had immigrated with his family to Wisconsin from Meckenheim, Germany—opened a brewery that supplied the workers in the local timber industry and eventually became one

of Wisconsin's largest breweries.

The city of Eau Claire itself attracted German laborers, tradesmen, and merchants. One of them was Hermann Schlegelmilch who owned the leading hardware store in town. Schlegelmilch had been born in 1830 in Suhl, Thuringia, where he learned the gun-maker craft in the city's famed rifle factory. In 1853 he immigrated to America, settling in Eau Claire in 1860, where he established a gun shop and hardware store at 217 South Barstow. His store was the first brick building built in the city and one of the few that withstood a fire that devastated Eau Claire in 1869. Much of Schlegelmilch's trade was with farmers, who would travel all day by wagon to Eau Claire. The historic Schlegelmilch family home, built in 1871 on Lake and Farwell Streets in Eau Claire, is now open to the public as one of the Chippewa Valley Museum's historic sites.

Over the years, a small German

community established itself in and around Eau Claire. In 1875, sixty German-Catholic families separated from the “English” Catholic Church in town and founded the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A year earlier, St. John German Evangelical Lutheran Church had been founded, and in 1886 the German Evangelical Association opened its doors. Several German-language newspapers—most of them weeklies—were published in Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, of which *Der Herold* existed the longest—from 1880 until about 1915. From the beginning, like in all other German-American communities, German immigrants in Eau Claire founded clubs, including a *Schützenverein* (shooting society), *Turnverein* (gymnastics club), and the *Germania* singing society.

U.S. Census data from the region shows that in 1850, only 24 Germans lived in Chippewa County, 13 in St. Croix County, and one in La Pointe County, which lies along Lake Superior. Ten years later there were 218

Germans in Chippewa County, 168 in Eau Claire County (a new county carved out of Chippewa County in 1856), 1504 in Buffalo County, 297 in Dunn, 85 in Clark, 13 in La Pointe, 163 in Pepin, 276 in Pierce, 115 in St. Croix, and 107 in Trempealeau Counties. These Germans came from many different places in German-speaking Europe. The 1860 U.S. Census of Buffalo County reports the following places of origin for its German settlers: Prussia, Baden, Bavaria, Hanover, Württemberg, Hesse, Saxony, Bohemia, Mecklenburg, Hesse-Darmstadt, Holstein, Hamburg, Nassau, Lübeck, Oldenburg, Rudolstadt, Tirol, Switzerland, Austria, and Luxembourg. In the later twentieth century, Amish and Mennonites moved to the “farm belt” east of Eau Claire, becoming the most recent groups with German heritage to arrive in the area.

Although a thriving German community existed in the area since the days of earliest settlement, the German presence in Eau Claire was



Hermann and Augusta Schlegelmilch, 1869.

much smaller than the Norwegian, and the Germans as a group were less prominent here than in Marathon County or in east-central and southern Wisconsin. Perhaps for this reason, the Chippewa Valley Germans more quickly became assimilated into the society at large. 🇺🇸

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Schlegelmilch Business Building, Eau Claire.

From Germany to America in Search of a Farm: Reinhold Liebau's 1887 Diary

Antje Petty



Images in this article are courtesy of Steve Loken.

The Liebau family farm near Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, ca. 1897.

On August 11, 1887, Reinhold Liebau (1848–1919), 39 years old, married, and the father of four children, left his hometown of Leulitz in Saxony to travel to America. His destination was the small rural community of Volney, Iowa, where he wanted to check out a farm he intended to purchase. We do not know how Liebau found out about the Iowa farm, but in the end he acquired a different property in the town of Hallie near Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. With the purchase contract signed, Liebau returned to Germany where he prepared his family for emigration the following spring.

For the nearly three months of his journey, Reinhold Liebau kept a daily diary. In 1992, the diary was discovered in the home of his granddaugh-

ter and was given to her son Steve Loken. In the following years, Steve's wife Jean transcribed the diary from the old German script into modern German type, and Jean's mother Ingrid Middleton translated it into English. The complete translation can be found online: <http://www.sjloken.com/LiebauDiary.htm>

The diary itself does not provide information about the reasons for Liebau's emigration plans, but shortly before his death Liebau submitted a manuscript concerning his life story to a nationwide "Americanization" study¹ funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, parts of which were published in 1921.² Earlier, he had contributed to a publication about the history of Eau Claire County.³ In these texts, Liebau describes how he grew up

on a small farm, lost his parents at age 18, served in the army for three years, and worked as a musician and in other trades. The loss of a small inheritance in the failure of a business he had founded seems to have been a factor motivating him to emigrate.

I longed all the time for my first profession, farming; but there was no prospect at all to become independent, because one acre of good land costed [sic] from \$400 to \$500. It happened occasionally at that time that I saw some papers and pamphlets, printed in America, the contents of which were quite inviting for emigrants. The prospects were painted in the brightest colors.[...] Finally we decided if three quarters of the reports we read in those papers and pamphlets were exaggerated and only one quarter the truth, still the prospect would be invit-

ing. So we resolved to emigrate. We thought it advisable I should go alone first and look around somewhat.⁴

Liebau recorded his trip in great detail. Once in Volney, he learned that the farm he had intended to purchase was not the only one for sale. Three decades after the first settlers had cultivated and settled the Midwestern landscape, many of the original farmers were no longer physically capable of tending their land, did not have family members who wanted to succeed them, or simply longed to return to their European homelands. A severe drought that hit the American Midwest in 1887 provided additional incentive to sell. While he stayed with the elderly German couple whose farm he came to purchase, Liebau looked at other properties nearby and realized that “his” farm might not be the best he could find. Although his time and money were limited, he took one more trip: to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to visit a fellow Saxon who had told him about farms for sale in his neighborhood. The following diary excerpts describe Liebau’s visit to the Chippewa Valley and his impulsive purchase of a farm there.

Friday, Oct 14

We traveled along this river [the Chippewa] until 7:45 when we entered the city of Eau Claire. The station at which I got off was in the center of the city. At first sight it gave the impression of a much larger city, because as I could see there were houses up on the hill, and many steeples towered over the city.

The next thing I did was to inquire of some railroad workers that were nearby, as to the whereabouts of the



Reinhold and Maria Liebau with their children Paul, Selma, Eduard, and Anna, before emigrating to Wisconsin, ca. 1886.

farm belonging to my fellow countryman. They had not the slightest idea, but one of them took me to a nearby hotel. The owner was also German and had business with many nearby farmers, perhaps he would be familiar with the one I’m looking for. Sadly this was not the case, but I met another German who had the time and the desire to help me. He led me to several large stores that do business with many farmers. [...] An older storekeeper, who was my last hope, would not be back for several hours, so I used that time to look around the city.

The streets were not paved, so traffic moved quite deeply in sand. The sidewalks were boardwalks. I noticed some horse-drawn trolley car lines, and a lot of bridges (a new one under construction) spanning several branches of the river, because two rivers merge here, the Chippewa and the Eau Claire Rivers. The city had water and electric lights and a population of about 17,000 to 18,000. Here, too, were many sawmills and other specialized

factories, as well as many stores and merchants, but also many saloons. Now, since we [had] crossed the Mississippi, I am in the state of Wisconsin, where there are a lot of saloons, and not, like in Iowa, illegal. I now met the aforementioned storekeeper, and he really was able to give me information about the sought after farm. This meant by noontime I was able to start walking towards my destination. [...]

As I became worried about being on the wrong path, I decided to ask at the next farm. The owner was again a German, a friendly man, from whom I learned I was again way off the path. Before he would let me continue, he insisted I have a meal with them. [...]

An evangelical Pastor and his wife from Eau Claire were visiting and I spent another hour in friendly conversation with them about American lifestyles. The Pastor particularly advised me against buying a farm here, but to go into the rural area and stake out land free from the government. He said the land here is being used

up and in a matter of years, trying to cultivate it would not be rewarding. I think I have to admit this is true because up to this point, I [had] walked in several inches of sand. I had seen only a few fields, and they had been in poor condition. Nevertheless the whole area was covered with bushes, even if sturdy trees were seldom seen. I did see quite a few oaks and other hardwoods. Yet, when I consider the splendid milk cows I've seen, there must be enough green fodder growing here to be able to raise such good looking animals. [...]

[In the afternoon, Liebau reached the farm of his countryman]. Because of all the sand, the land didn't really appeal to me. Yet, I found that in spite of the dry summer and the sand, there was a pretty good harvest, even though I would not have thought that possible. Wheat and rye [were] scarce, not because of the unfavorable weather, but because of [...] insects who demolish everything. Oats, corn

and potatoes produced a satisfactory harvest. The potatoes particularly were very good and mealy, in contrast to the ones in Volney, which, with very few exceptions, were extremely watery. I had first planned to leave here tomorrow and begin the trip homeward. But I let [myself be convinced] to stay until Sunday so that, together with my friend, we could inspect several farms, which were for sale in the neighborhood. He would like to have a German countryman nearby, with whom he could have business discussions. Most of the Germans here were of a different age than he. [...]

Sunday, Oct 16

Late morning, my countryman and I went out into the neighborhood to inspect several farms. It was easy to see in all of them, that houses, tools and fields had been neglected. Even the fencing gave a poor impression, because it was either broken down, or even missing entirely. The buildings

were neither wind nor rain proof, and because it rained often today, we could see water entering through the roof. The costly tools and machines were out in the open depreciating with the weather. The cultivating tools were left outside all winter, "so they would be handy in the spring," said the people. We also saw plows and harrows so overgrown with grass that they were hard to find. The cattle herd was also very defective. On 120 acres of land there were often only 2 or 3 cows and as many pigs. However, there were two horses on the premises.

Our wandering took us out of the woods, and we found ourselves on the open prairie, on which not a single tree could be seen for miles. Finally, we came to a farm, which even from a distance stood out from the others. [...] I was astounded to learn that a bachelor of advanced age worked all this land and kept this house by himself. I'd really like to know what he was asking for this property, which made such a favorable impression on us. [...]

[Later that day, Liebau joined his friend at a party at a neighbor's house.] In a short while the host, a Frenchman, invited me to look over his property. [...] Because he did not speak German, and my English has not really become fluent, the father-in-law joined us to act as interpreter, so that we could both understand our conversation.

The property consisted of 120 acres, a third of which was a wooded area of about 15–20 year growth, although many trees were much older. Two thirds were field and meadows, which seemed to be in good condition. Like all farmers, his land also suffered from the past year's drought. Because he



Winter in Wisconsin, Reinhold Liebau, ca. 1912.



Reinhold Liebau and his son Paul, Eau Claire, ca. 1917.

had no food for his cattle, he had long ago sold half of it. A good amount of wheat and rye was harvested because a stand of woods separated his land from that of his neighbor whose crops were infested with insects. They had caused much damage. His oats and potato harvest was satisfactory in view of the existing conditions, and the corn was doing well and promised to be sufficient. As for buildings, besides the very pretty house, there were a large number of others, independently standing, for example: stalls for horses and cows, pig sty, barns for grain and corn, another barn, shed for wagons, a hen house, etc. All were made of wood, but are in good condition, and in some cases newly built. Animals consisted of two 4 to 6 year old horses, five cows, two calves, four pigs, aged 4 months and a good many chickens. Among other tools and equipment, I noticed a strong wagon, a lighter one on springs, two sleds, two plows, one corn plow, two pair of harrows, an extirpator, a sowing machine, a thresher and other specialized small tools.

The owner came to this country

35 years ago as a common laborer. Twenty years ago he bought this land in its primitive state and little by little turned it into its present condition. His children had no interest in farming and most of them were too young. He married very late in life and now at 55 years of age, must do all the work alone, in spite of no longer feeling strong enough. He's asking \$3,500, but because this was too high a price for me, he came down to \$3,000, which I finally accepted on his terms. They were that he would sell the grain, corn and potatoes, leaving only enough for next spring's seeds and enough feed until the next harvest. The closing would take place next year about the middle of March. We all ate together and did not make the guests aware of our decisions because two of them had also offered me their properties. Tomorrow morning I would return and then we can draw up a contract.

Monday, Oct 17

Together with my countryman and his father-in-law we returned to the neighbor, where my friend wrote the terms of the contract to purchase. I paid a \$25 deposit and signed the contract with a copy for the owner and one for me. For the price of \$3000 I had purchased the property with livestock and inventory as noted on the abovementioned contract. Only the furniture and household goods were exempt, although we [would discuss] the purchase of these at closing in return for suitable compensation. After that and the heartiest farewells from the whole family, I was able to embark on my homeward trip today. My friend drove me with my baggage to Eau Claire's railroad station about noon. I had left some of my things,

particularly work clothes, in his house for safe keeping. With the hope of a reunion next spring, we separated at the depot.

On November 2, Liebau arrived back home in Saxony, and the following spring he and his family moved to Wisconsin. However, the farm that had looked so promising in October turned out to be much more problematic: By and by I found out my place was a so-called "run-out farm." The former owner worked in the winter time in the logging camps where he earned cash wages and took to farming only as a side line. On the 120 acres available land, only about 50 were under cultivation. He raised everything [...] but did not care to give the land anything back and so finally the land refused to give continually good crops. [...] My harvests were the poorest among the poor in the whole neighborhood. In those circumstances I got aware that not even a quarter of the fine reports I had read in Germany was true. But what could be done? I was here and could not go back.⁵

Eventually, Liebau succeeded in farming, learned English, became a U.S. citizen, and held various elected positions in the county, such as school commissioner, road commissioner, and town- and county supervisor. He was also an active participant in Eau Claire's German community, where among other things he served as musical director of the Germania singing society. 🎵

NOTES

¹This study was done under the title of Studies in Methods of Americanization, Division of Treatment of Immigrant Heritages.

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The *Deutscher Klub* of Wausau-Merrill, Wisconsin, 1965–2010

Pamela Tesch

In 1973, my family moved from Germany to Wausau, Wisconsin, and from one day to the next, my childhood world had changed. There were so many new things to get used to, like the English language and Wisconsin foods. But when my parents took me along to the *Deutscher Klub Wausau-Merrill*, I found what I had been missing: German-speaking kids, *Milka* chocolate, *Haribo* candy, and *Kuchen*! Kids like me joined in the *Weihnachtsfeier* and the annual *Picknick*. There were also *Oktoberfest*, *Fasching*, *Filmabend*, *Liederkranz*, and many other events and programs.

Music was an integral part of the events at the Club and of its members throughout the community. Every year, students from Merrill High School under the leadership of their German teacher Bill Storm (now retired) performed traditional Bavarian folk dances at *Oktoberfest* and *Fasching*; Anni Koski, our family friend, moderated the “*Deutsche Stunde*,” a radio show broadcasting German hits on WXCO and later WRIG at noon on Sundays; and local polka legend, Jerry Goetsch, and the Jerry Goetsch Orchestra presented a show on WSAU-TV which featured German singing and German Club members dancing in *Dirndls* and *Lederhosen*. Through music, dancing, song, and celebration, the club members kept the German language and the connection to Germany alive.

Reading through newspaper clip-



Herald photo by Rob Orcutt

Ethnic UNICEF

Children collecting money for the United Nations Children's Fund, known as UNICEF, wear ethnic costumes from several countries that belong to the international forum. Pictured here (from left) are, in Arabic clothes, Anna Luna Karkar, the daughter of Jack and Waltrud Karkar, 601 McIndoe St.; in Polish clothes, Jennifer Kordus, the daughter of Gary and Lynn

Kordus, 2409 Oakwood Blvd.; in German attire, Suzie Geiger, daughter of Dennis and Stefanie Geiger, 526 Nina Ave.; and in Mexican clothes, Adam Jefferson, son of Randy Jefferson and Anne Sivright, 403 Broadway. Answering the door is Mrs. Gerald Viste, 515 McIndoe St. Youngsters will be soliciting donations for UNICEF on Halloween.

pings from the *Wausau Daily Herald* (October 1979–February 1980), which my mother, Stefanie Geiger, had collected, I was reminded of the many things my parents and the other Club members did to create the sense of an international community in Wausau. In one *Daily Herald* photo, four children (including my sister Susi) dressed in Arabic, Polish, German, and Mexican ethnic costumes

are collecting money for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

A second photo shows Franklin Elementary School students caroling along with their teacher (and former Friends of the MKI Board of Directors member), Sue Stoddard. In yet another photo, my mother is teaching German to a group of Franklin School students in the FLES program (Foreign Language in the Elemen-



Volunteer learning, volunteer teaching

Learning a foreign language isn't so hard when you really want to, students at Franklin School learned this year. This group of fourth and fifth graders are learning German from Mrs. Stefanie Geiger, 526 Nina Ave., Wausau, one of a group of parents who met before regular classes with students who wanted to learn another language.

Although the regular classes ended Friday, these students will be able to practice what they learned because they have pen pals in Germany, thanks to an arrangement between Mrs. Geiger and her sister, a teacher in Germany.

—Herald photo by Bob Radunz

tary Schools) that was organized by Professor Frank Pierce (now retired) of UW-Marathon County. In the photo entitled "Ready for *Fasching*" my brother, Steve, holds a poster for the German *Mardi Gras* costume ball (page 12).

Beginning as a small gathering of German friends, the Wausau-Merrill German Club was founded in 1965 by President Manfred Schubach and eleven others in consultation with the German General Consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany in Chicago and other German clubs in Wisconsin. Over the first four years, the membership grew to 80 and eventually peaked at over 140 members. In an unpublished document entitled "A

Short History of the *Deutscher Klub, Wausau-Merrill*," the objectives of the club were outlined as follows:

"The purposes of the organization are to form within the community a close knitted group of people in order to socialize, form friendships, and—for mutual benefit and enjoyment—stage and foster social meetings and affairs; to strive for individual and group participation in civic affairs, to become good law-abiding Americans, and to promote and encourage application for American citizenship; to uphold the German language, culture, customs; and to support local and state-wide programs with the same aims."¹

As the decades passed and no

significant numbers of new German-speaking immigrants came to the Wausau-Merrill area, membership in the German Club declined until it was eventually dissolved in April 2010. Fortunately, there are still other German organizations in the area. One of note is the *Pommerscher Verein Central Wisconsin*, which continues to carry on the traditions of immigrants from the "Prussian Provinces of Pomerania, West and East Prussia, and Posen."

For 45 years, the post-war German-American immigrants of Wausau-Merrill and their *Deutscher Klub* added many rich experiences to the

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Ready for Fasching

The Wausau-Merrill German Club will host a Fasching, a German Mardi Gras costume ball, Saturday from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. in the Rothschild Pavilion. Music will be provided by Jerry Goetsch. There will be door prizes and prizes for costumes. German fare — brats, sauerkraut, potato salad and German beer — will be sold. Tickets may be purchased at Jerry's Music, Tornow's IGA, Priscilla's Beauty Shop and from members of the German Club. The proceeds will go to study projects and trips for students of German at Wausau, Schofield and Merrill high schools. Club members (from left) Erika Lerch, 1225 Merrill Ave., Wausau, a golden member, Stefanie Geiger, 526 Nina Ave., Wausau, corresponding secretary, and her son Steven, 3, anticipate the event.

—Herald photo by Rob Orcutt

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multicultural society of the region. I am glad I had the opportunity to grow up with these experiences, while at the same time becoming accustomed to new American ways, learning English,—and starting to appreciate Wisconsin foods. 🍷

Pamela Tesch holds a Ph.D. in German from the UW–Madison. She currently teaches German at University of Wisconsin–Waukesha Continuing Education.

NOTES

¹Manfred Schubach. "Correspondence of the *Deutscher Klub, Wausau-Merrill*." September 1965–February 1971. MS. Max Kade Institute Library Collection, Madison, WI.

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²E. Park and Herbert A. Miller; "Old World Traits Transplanted," *Americanization Studies*, Vol. 3 (New York and London: Robert Harper Brothers, 1921), case #63, pp. 87–90.

³Judge William F. Bailey, *History of Eau Claire County, Wisconsin* (Chicago, 1914).

⁴Park and Miller, 87.

⁵Park and Miller, 89.

Friends of the Max Kade Institute Annual Meeting, May 4, in Eau Claire, Wisconsin

You are invited to an event-filled day in Wisconsin's beautiful Chippewa Valley that includes a pre-program workshop on reading the Old German Script; a tour of the renowned Chippewa Valley Museum in Chippewa Falls, and two fascinating presentations on mid-nineteenth century immigration to Wisconsin and Amish and Mennonite communities in neighboring Clark County.

For those who would like to stay overnight in Eau Claire, rooms have been reserved at a special rate in a local hotel. More information may be found at mki.wisc.edu

PROGRAM

At the Chippewa Valley Museum

10:00–12:00: **Pre-Program Workshop:** Reading the Old German Script (Johannes Strohschänk, Professor of German at UW–Eau Claire). 12:00–1:00: **Registration** (light lunch buffet). 1:00–2:00: **Presentation:** “Mid-Nineteenth Century German Immigration to Wisconsin” (Johannes Strohschänk and William Thiel, Lawyer and Eau Claire historian). 2:00–3:00: **Annual Meeting.** 3:00–4:00: Break (visit the historic Ice Cream Parlor) [Board of Directors Meeting: election of officers]. 3:30–4:30: **Guided Museum Tour.** 4:30–5:00: Drive to the UW–Eau Claire campus.

At the McIntyre Library at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire:

5:00–5:30: Opportunity to visit the new University Student Center.
5:30–6:30: **Dinner** at the McIntyre

Library. 6:30– 7:30: **Presentation:** “Negotiating Plainness among Amish and Mennonites in Clark County, Wisconsin” (Joshua Brown, Assistant Professor of German at UW–Eau Claire).

INFORMATION

Registration details, lodging information, and directions can be found online: mki.wisc.edu.

**If you have questions, please call
MKI at 608-262-7546 or e-mail
Antje Petty at apetty@wisc.edu**

Bring a friend — Make a Friend!

Dinner purchase includes 2013 Friends of MKI membership for *new* Friends.

The program is generously co-sponsored by the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire's College of Arts and Sciences and the departments of Foreign Languages, History, English, Geography, and Anthropology.



The award-winning Chippewa Valley Museum maintains exhibits about the Ojibwe Indians, European settlement, and more.

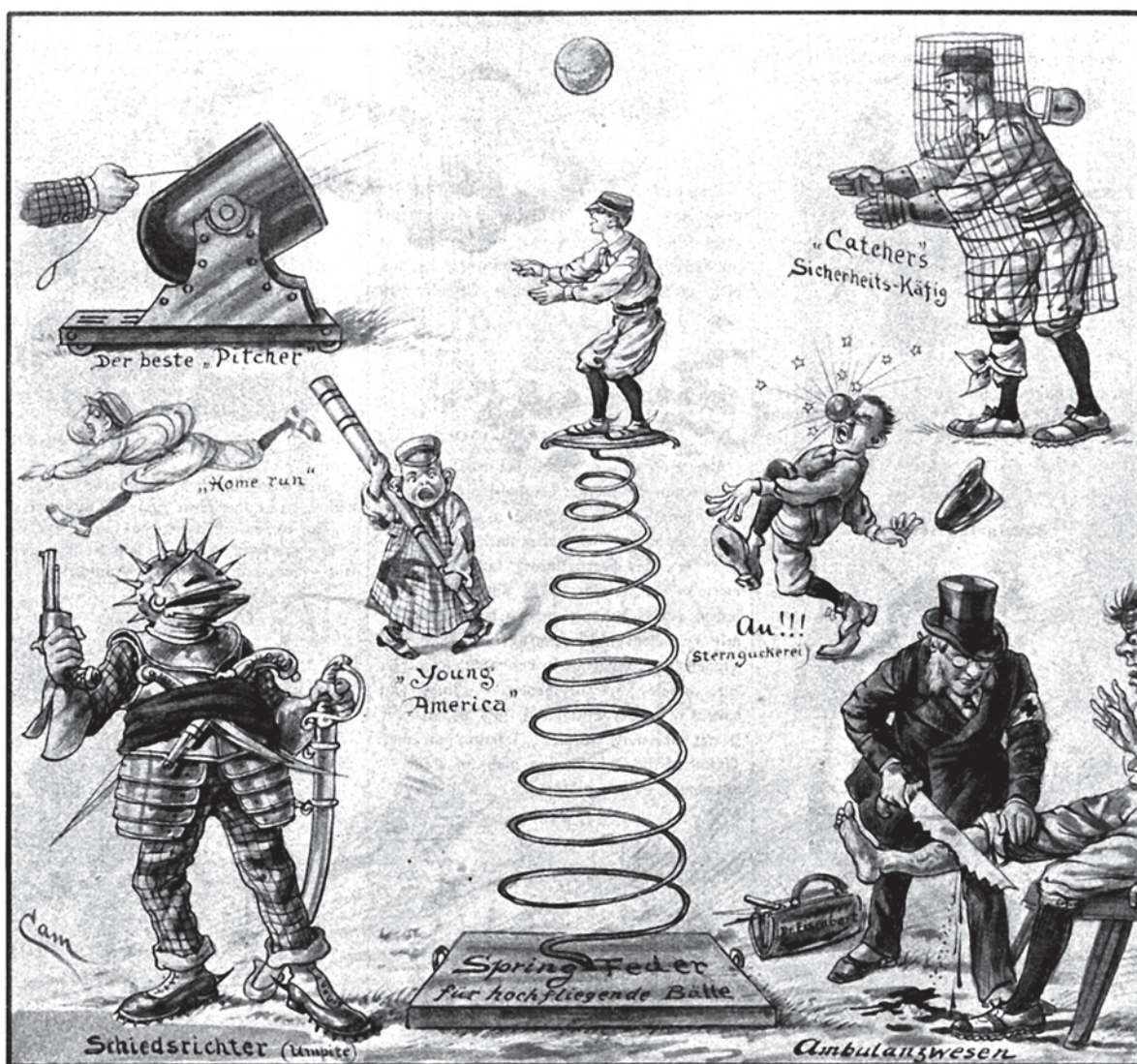
Innovations for the Baseball Season, from *Scherz und Ernst*, 1896



Chicago, Ill.

Sonntag, den 3. Mai 1896.

2. Jahrgang. No. 18.



Join the Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies

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☐ I am a new member ☐ I am a renewing member ☐ Check here to indicate address change☐ Student—\$15☐ Supporter—\$100☐ Individual—\$30☐ Patron—\$250☐ K-12 Educator—\$30☐ Lifetime, Individual—\$1,000☐ Family (one address)—\$50☐ Lifetime, Family—\$1,500Please make checks payable to the *Friends of the Max Kade Institute*, 901 University Bay Drive, Madison, WI 53705.


- *Friends of the Max Kade Institute* is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that supports the research, outreach, educational, and publishing activities of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies.
- Membership covers the calendar year (January–December). Payments received after November 1 of the current year will be credited for the full succeeding year.

Part of a donation of materials from the family of Dr. Henry A. Peters, Jr., is a run of *Scherz und Ernst* from the year 1896. *Scherz und Ernst* was a Sunday supplement to the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, featuring political and humorous cartoons, illustrations, jokes, and games. It was published from 1895 until 1900, according to our best information.

On the cover of this issue from May 1896 we find a zany celebration of the baseball season, with a number of innovations to help improve the game. In the center of the page is a spring to help catch high-flying balls, while the “best pitcher” is a cannon, certain to strike out (or down) the best hitter. The “catcher’s safety cage” should help prevent injuries, although the need for a padlock is a mystery. And the umpire is both heavily armed and armored, in case his calls are disputed. Stargazing occurs when a ball hits a player in the eye—let’s hope he doesn’t

require medical attention, as such care appears to be rather extreme. On the doctor’s satchel is the name “Dr. Eisenbart,” perhaps referring to the satirical song from the early 1800s about a doctor of the same name who could “make the blind walk and cause the lame to see again.” We’re not sure about the humor in the “home run,” and the image of “Young America” has also lost its meaning over the passage of time. If anyone has some information on those illustrations, do

enlighten us!

In the lower left appears the name “Cam,” an abbreviation of F. Cambensy, which is found spelled out on other covers. Some online investigation turned up a Frank H. Cambensy in the 1910 U.S. Census. Born in Germany in 1854, he immigrated in 1882 and died in Chicago in 1912. His occupations were given as artist and lithographer, so this could be our Cam. 

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies is published three times a year at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Submissions are invited and should be sent to:

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