



#### WHAT'S INSIDE:

Directors' Corner.  
Page 2

Friend's Profile:  
Mary and Peter Monkmeyer.  
Page 3

Highlights of recent library  
acquisitions.  
Page 5

Speaking of Language:  
What's in a German name?  
Page 6

German influences on Wis-  
consin English.  
Page 7

Collection  
Feature:  
Let's go to  
the World's  
Fair!  
Page 10



Calendar of events.  
Page 12

Book Review: *German-  
Speaking Officers in the  
U.S. Colored Troops,  
1863-1867.*  
Page 13

Genealogy Corner: Passen-  
ger lists and ship manifests.  
Page 15

# Max Kade Institute Friends Newsletter

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 1 • SPRING 2005

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON, 901 UNIVERSITY BAY DR., MADISON, WI 53705

## Investigating the emigration experience: New German initiatives

By Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Co-Director



**Bremerhaven in the nineteenth century,  
for many emigrants, the last German city before departure**

News reports from Germany confirm substantial and growing support for undertakings to commemorate the migration of Europeans to America. First among these is the German Emigration Center in Bremen (Deutsches Auswandererhaus Bremen), which has been under construction since July 2004 and is scheduled to open in August 2005. A tour at the Center will enable visitors to experience what emigrants were subjected to, including the atmosphere in the U.S. Castle Garden or Ellis Island Registration Hall. A special exhibition area concerns itself with worldwide migration and present-day international migration regulations, and another area will help visitors to find out more about their ancestors. Anyone with documentation about emigrants who left through Bremen, such as stories, letters, pictures, etc., is urged to share it with others through the Center. Future plans include special exhibits, cultural events, and conferences. For information, see: <http://www.dah-Bremerhaven.de>.

Continued on Page 4

## Spring forward: Activities, improvements, and fundraising

By Mark L. Loudon and Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Co-Directors

The spring semester is now in full swing and all of us at MKI and CSUMC are as busy as ever. In February we sponsored our first lecture of the calendar year, titled "Are You Coming With? German Influences on Wisconsin English," which showcased research by Jennifer Mercer, a graduate student in German, Tom Purnell, a member of the Linguistics faculty, and CSUMC Co-Director Joe Salmons. The attendance at this lecture exceeded the capacity of the room, which is always a good sign! Another German department grad student, Andrea Menz, reports about this lecture elsewhere in this newsletter.

Two more MKI-sponsored events are happening this spring; (1) a lecture on March 10 on the Milwaukee artist F. W. Heine by Tom Lidtke of the West Bend Art Museum and Samuel Scheibler of the Goethe House Wisconsin; and (2) a workshop on April 9 on reading the old German script by longtime MKI Friend, Karyl Rommelfanger from Manitowoc. Check out our calendar for times and locations. And capping off our spring will be the

annual meeting and banquet to be held at the Pyle Center on May 12. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as can attend!

If you have been by the Keystone House recently, you may have noticed that it has received some much-needed cosmetic improvements, most notably a fresh coat of paint and repairs to the outside railings. And we received funds to replace the carpeting in our reception area from the College of Letters and Science. Even though it is difficult to imagine MKI being located anywhere other than in the charming old farmhouse on the western edge of campus, we are hoping to move in the next few years to a more central location on campus. Our present space for all our staff, as well as our library and archives, is very limited, so we are working with the College to find a more suitable location. We will keep you posted on any developments on this front.

This spring we are also making plans to undertake a major endowment campaign to support the MKI librarian/archivist position. As you may know, the bulk of our core staff salaries for both MKI and CSUMC is presently covered mainly through a combination of endowment income and grants. In order to maintain our current level of activity in research and outreach, it is imperative that we secure our financial base by enlisting the support of several key players, both within and outside the University. Over just the last five years, MKI and CSUMC have written grants bringing in over \$1.3 million dollars, an unusually high sum for units in the humanities. Since these grants are typically project-based, however, it is a challenge to continue to cover basic operating expenses, especially staff salaries. Nevertheless, we remain determined to build on our past success in fundraising, and we look forward to working closely with the Friends and the UW Foundation as we move toward a very bright future.

Mark and Cora Lee

### Max Kade Institute

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World Wide Web at:  
<http://csumc.wisc.edu/mki>

## Mary and Peter Monkmeier: MKI friends and neighbors

By Antje Petty, MKI Assistant Director

Friends have become interested in the Max Kade Institute for a number of different reasons. Mary and Peter Monkmeier first heard about MKI when the Institute moved into their neighborhood. Not only that, as long time residents of Shorewood Hills, they live in a house previously owned by Mrs. Winterble, who had also owned the Keystone House, home of the Institute.

But Mary and Peter's interest in things German and German-American runs deeper than simply living "next door." When the two met as students at Cornell University in 1955, they both already had profound connections with Germany. Peter, after all, was born in Berlin. In 1937, at the age of six, he fled Nazi Germany with his Christian father, Jewish mother, and her parents. Peter credits the Roosevelt administration and its embassy in Berlin for actively helping families like his to escape clandestinely. Of his childhood in Germany and the political times, Peter remembers little. Not until much later, for example, did he realize that his mother's brother (Heinz Neumann, a communist who was later executed in Stalin's purges) had been a prominent member of the resistance movement.

Peter does, however, recall his family's journey to America: taking the train across Europe to Hanover, Cologne, Brussels, Paris, and Le Havre, and then aboard the *SS Manhattan* to New York. He also distinctly remembers having seen the Statue of Liberty—but then again maybe he didn't, as he was

later told that the ship arrived in New York well before dawn. His family settled in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan, where his parents established *monkmeier press photo service*, and Peter attended local schools. He continued to speak German at home and learned English quickly. When

his grade school class performed a play about the American Revolution, Peter—the new immigrant kid—got the role of George Washington, which he says "made my parents explode with delight."

In 1952, Peter went back to Germany with the American army for a two-year stay in Hanau. Other visits would follow—the next one being a Fulbright scholarship to Karlsruhe. By then Peter was a newlywed and brought Mary along. Mary, too, had lived in Germany before. After receiving an A.B. in music from Oberlin College, she spent a year as a *Familienmutter* in a German boarding school near Heidelberg.

Mary considers this year one of the most significant of her life. At first struggling with the language, she eventually learned it perfectly and—to bring some variety to her *Familienmutter* existence—began to teach English as a substitute teacher. At Cornell, she decided to pursue an M.A. in Education. For her student teaching project, Mary taught German to a class of fifth graders. Finding few resources in foreign language acquisition available for this age group, Mary developed her own.



Mary and Peter Monkmeier

Continued on Page 14

### The Friends of the Max Kade Institute Board of Directors

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Another project is underway in Hamburg. In December 2004, the Hamburg Senate approved 6,000,000 euros for a new Emigration Museum, a joint public-private undertaking, and in the middle of February 2005, plans were announced to begin construction in September of this year. A central part of the new museum will be the small Elbe River island called Ballinstadt, an “emigrant city” dating from 1901—a kind of Ellis Island on the European side. Originally a cluster of buildings, its creation was initiated by and named after Albert

Ballin, General Manager of the German shipping company HAPAG, who wanted to provide local accommodations for emigrants waiting for their departure for the New World. One wing of the only original

building on this site will be renovated as a sleeping pavilion (its original function), while the other wing will be an authentic dining hall. Further buildings will house exhibits and research facilities, where visitors will have access to passenger lists, and a long-range goal is to add a genealogical research center. The opening of the Ballinstadt Emigration Museum is planned for 2007. For information, see: <http://www.ballinstadt.com>.

Ballinstadt will join another major emigration museum complex in the Hamburg area, which consists of the Hapag (railroad) Terminal in Cuxhaven, built in 1900–1902, and the Steubenhöft quay complex, built in 1911–1913. These historic sites are open throughout the year, offering visitors a wide array of tours, exhibits, and historical materials. Research facilities there include an emigrant data-

base called “CUXAUS,” through which one may research online approximately 6700 data entries for emigrants from the Hamburg area from 1830 to 1930. The Steubenhöft is the only historical European passenger ship quay still in operation, with cruise ships such as the *Maxim Gorki*, the *Berlin*, and the *Deutschland* departing for destinations throughout the world. For information, see: <http://www.hapag-halle-cuxhaven.de>. This Web site contains a number of useful links for those interested in further pursuit of emigration history.

A final item concerns a reality television film,

“Beaufort 8—The Emigrant Ship of 1855,” which is currently under production for Caligari Films of Munich and German pubcaster WDR and will be shown on German



**The historic Steubenhöft terminal at Cuxhaven**

prime-time television (ARD) in May 2005, with international distribution to follow. The film chronicles the perilous sixty-eight day transatlantic crossing by sailing vessel of a group of fifteen Germans plus a show production crew. Undertaken between October and December 2004, the trip from Bremerhaven to New York was made under authentic conditions of 1855; by comparison, other modern reality shows seem tame. In an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter*, Caligari producer Tilman Schonecker stated: “. . . this program has particular relevance now, when politically, Europe and America seem so separate. This is a reminder of how close we actually are—of what millions of Europeans were willing to endure in order to reach the land of opportunity and dreams.”

These recent and major undertakings on the other side of the Atlantic will contribute crucial new assistance to Americans looking for their European roots, spark additional enthusiasm for this field of inquiry, and certainly lead to further events, projects, and initiatives.



Modern technology on the *Beaufort 8* “Emigrant Ship of 1855,”  
for the reality television production

## Highlights of recent library acquisitions

By Kevin M. Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

The MKI Library continues to grow due to a large donation of books and newspapers made by the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center. We also are grateful to the following individuals for their donations to the Library: Dr. Donald C. Goertz; Marita Ritsche; Jennifer Ward; and Prof. Philip E. Webber of Pella, Iowa. Below are selected items from the most recent acquisitions. To view the complete list of new acquisitions, please see: <http://csumc.wisc.edu/mki/Library/NewAcqs/2005/Spring05.htm>.

- [Heymann, Robert.] *Der Bund der Sieben*. Blaue Bücher, 20. Berlin: Verlag moderner Lektüre (M. Lehmann), n.d. 32 pp., ill.

Story of the detective Pat Conner, who operates in America. Story begins: “In der Wohnung des Meister-Detektivs Pat Conner in Brooklyn, der Seitenstadt New Yorks, erschien mittags gegen zwölf Uhr ein Beamter der Sicherheitsabteilung.”

Donated by Sheboygan County Historical Research Center.

- Krez, Konrad. *Aus Wisconsin. Gedichte*. Zweite vermehrte und veränderte Auflage. Milwaukee: Brumder,

1895. vi, 192 pp.

Donated by Sheboygan County Historical Research Center; also taped in is a newspaper clipping of “Die Brautfahrt” by Konrad Krez.

- Mayer, Friedrich. “Aus den Erlebnissen eines Achtundvierzigers in Amerika.” *Deutsch-Amerikanischer Jugendfreund*, vol. 25, no. 1, Januar 1914, pp. 8-10, 12.

Begins: “Ich kam als junger Pfarrer nach Jackson. Mein Gemeindlein war recht klein, es galt neue Glieder herbeizuziehen.” Mentions the presidential election of 1896; Mayer heard Theodore Roosevelt and Karl Schurz speak. Recounting a conversation with a man from his home village, we learn about his Civil War service and the execution of the four alleged co-conspirators of John Wilkes Booth.

- [Münch, Paul Georg.] *Hindenburg's Einmarsch in London*. Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1916. 205 pp.

Fictional account of a successful German invasion of England.

## What's in a German name? Part I

By Mark L. Loudon, MKI Co-Director

When we MKI staffers travel across the state for outreach events, we typically bring samples of our publications, including copies of the Friends newsletter and some of the books we publish. Inevitably, the publication that attracts the most interest is the *Dictionary of German Names*, a translation of Hans Bahlow's classic German reference work made by Edda Gentry. Nearly everyone is curious about where his or her family name "comes from," and understandably so: family names are an important link to our family history.

Today the practice of having at least two names, a given and a family name, has become the norm in most parts of the world, especially Europe. But in earlier times, when most people rarely moved far from where they were born, surnames regularly passed from father (or mother) to child were less common. To be sure, because of the relatively small pool of proper names

parents gave to their children, individuals with the same first name had to be distinguished from one another somehow. Imagine going into a small German village not that long ago and calling out "Anna"; half the females within earshot would probably have turned around.

People therefore came up with various ways of distinguishing between individuals who shared a given name. In the German-speaking world, as in many other language areas, there were five major

types of "second" name that eventually became the family names we are familiar with today. Worldwide, one of the most common of these is the practice of identifying someone by their father's (or less commonly, their mother's) given name, e.g., Johnson, Larsen, MacDonald, Fitzgerald, Ivanovich, *ben* Gurion, *bin* Laden, etc. Interestingly, patronymic-derived family names are not common in Germany today. In fact, of the 100 most frequent surnames in Germany today, only two are patronymic: *Peters* (from "*Peters-sohn*") and *Hansen*, which is ultimately of Danish origin.

The exception is with German Jews, e.g., *Mendelssohn*.

The bulk of German family names derive from the four other most common sources, namely geographic origins, house names, occupations, and nicknames. Examples of these include: *Bayer* 'Bavarian', *Holstein*; *Adler*, *Lamm* 'one who

lived in the house with the sign of the eagle/lamb'; *Meyer* '(hereditary tenant) farmer', *Zimmermann* 'carpenter'; *Kluge* 'wise one', *Krause* 'curly-headed one'.

When German-speakers have moved abroad, they frequently adapt the spelling and/or pronunciation of their names in ways appropriate for their new language environment. An example here is my wife's last name, *Schueller*. Her an-



**The most frequently occurring family names in selected cities, about 1938**



# German influences on Wisconsin English

By Andrea Menz

As part of its lecture series, the MKI welcomed a crowd of more than fifty guests to the Memorial Union on Wednesday, February 9, for a presentation entitled “‘Are You Coming With?’ German Influences on Wisconsin English” by Jennifer Mercer, Joe Salmons, Tom Purnell (UW-Madison, Dept. of Linguistics), and Dilara Tepeli (University of Bonn).

Mercer, a graduate student in the UW-Madison Department of German and a native Wisconsinite, opened the presentation by giving some background on German immigration to Wisconsin, explaining that it occurred primarily in three major waves between 1845 and 1890. These immigrants settled throughout the entire state, but in especially high numbers in the eastern part. By the turn of the century, 35% of Wisconsin’s population was German, and 500,000 Wisconsin residents were native speakers of German.

The sheer number of German speakers in the state understandably left their mark on Wisconsin culture and language. Mercer gave several examples of possible influences of the German language on Wisconsin English, and American English in general. She began by discussing single word borrowings from German, moving from words like *gesund-heit* (‘bless you’) and *kaputt* (‘broken’), which are generally recognized by speakers of all forms of American English, to borrowings which are more limited in their geographic scope to the Upper Midwest, such as *sauerkraut* (‘pickled cabbage’) and *klatsch* (‘informal social gathering’), and finally to expressions such as *fersteh* and *siehst du* (both meaning ‘do you understand?’), which are attested relatively widely in Wisconsin, especially

among older speakers, but are generally not recognized elsewhere. She then explored some ways in which German seems to have affected Wisconsin English word order and choice in phrases like *Are you coming with?* (compare to German *Kommst du mit?* and Standard American English *Are you coming along?*) and *Come here once!* (German *Komm mal her!*, Standard American English *Just come here!*).

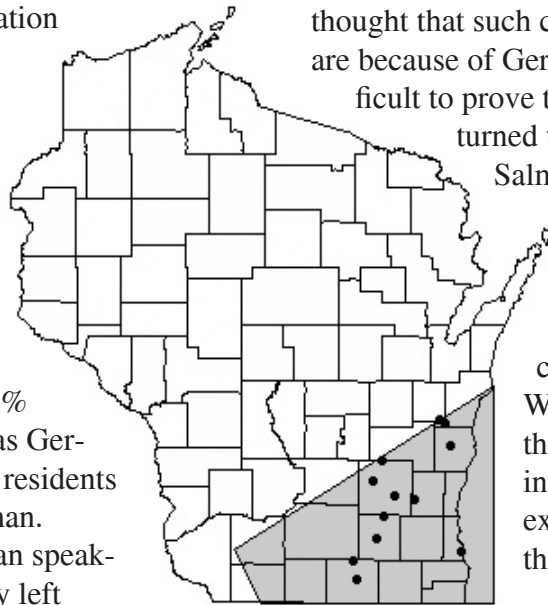
Mercer explained that although it is commonly thought that such changes in Wisconsin English are because of German influence, it is quite difficult to prove this scientifically. She then

turned the presentation over to Joseph Salmons, Professor of German and Co-director of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures at the UW-Madison, who described a study they conducted starting in Watertown, Wisconsin, that investigates the process of final devoicing in Wisconsin English. Salmons explained that final devoicing is the change from d to t, z to s, etc.

at the ends of words that was made (in)famous by the Saturday Night Live sketch in which Illinois residents discuss ‘da Bear[s]’ with an ‘s’ sound rather than ‘z’ at the end. This process is a regular part of the sound system

of German but not of English, which is why the distinction between English words like *bed* and *bet* often disappears when pronounced with a strong German accent.

Salmons described how he, Mercer, Purnell, and Tepeli had made recordings in Watertown and analyzed these and previous recordings of Standard American English, Wisconsin English, and



**Recordings made of speakers from select sites within the “region of German domination” provide evidence for changes over the last 100 years in the way consonants have been produced.**

## Annual Meeting and Dinner Make your Reservation Now!

The Friends of MKI Annual meeting will be held on Thursday, May 12 at the Memorial Union on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison.

We will begin with the business meeting at 4 p.m., followed by a reception at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., and our after-dinner guest speaker, Debbie Kmetz.

For further information and to register, please contact Antje Petty: [apetty@wisc.edu](mailto:apetty@wisc.edu) or 608-262-7546 or visit the MKI Web page.

Bring a friend — Make a Friend!

Dinner purchase includes free 2005 membership for new Friends!

## Events Calendar

Join us for these upcoming spring events!

For details, please check our Web site: <http://mki.wisc.edu> or contact Antje Petty at [apetty@wisc.edu](mailto:apetty@wisc.edu) or 608-262-7546.

**The Diaries of Milwaukee Panorama Painter Frederick Wilhelm Heine.** Tom Lidtke (West Bend Art Museum) and Dr. Samuel Scheibler (Goethe House of Wisconsin) will give a talk on a Wisconsin German painter and his diaries at 6 p.m., Thursday, **March 10**, at the Memorial Union, UW–Madison. Free and open to the public.

**Old German Script Workshop.** Karyl Rommelfanger, German teacher from Manitowoc, will teach the basics for reading the old German handwritten script. Bring your own documents and unlock their secrets! Saturday, **April 9**, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., **Union South**, UW–Madison. **Registration Required!** Fee: \$25 for members of the Friends of the MKI and students; \$35 for non-members.

**“Yodel-Ay-Eee-Oo! The Secret History of Yodeling Around the World.”** Bart Plantenga (novelist, non-fiction writer and radio DJ now in Amsterdam) with Bruce Bollerud, yodeler. Thursday, **April 14**, 7:30 p.m., at First Methodist Church, 203 Wisconsin Avenue (just off the Capitol Square). Free and open to the public.

***The Future of Folk, April 14-23, 2005***, is a co-operative production of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures and the Center for the Humanities at UW–Madison, featuring folklorists, scholars, writers, musicians, artists and other partners in a public exploration of the role of traditional culture in today’s world. Free and open to the public! For schedule and venues check: <http://www.humanities.wisc.edu/programs/fof.html>

### *Looking Ahead to Summer*

Sunday, **June 26th** is **Pommerntag** in Mequon, Wisconsin! Visitors from all over the U.S. and beyond attend the annual outdoor festival where people of Pomeranian German descent celebrate their ethnic heritage. Come to Mequon City Park (11333 N. Cedarburg Rd.) from noon to six p.m. and sample Pomeranian *Kirschsuppe* (cold cherry soup) and other foods while enjoying the Alte Kameraden Band and the Pommersche Tanzdeel Freistadt. The general public is cordially invited! Sponsored by Pommerscher Verein Freistadt, <http://pommerschervereinfreistadt.com>



# German names continued from Page 6

cestors came to Ozaukee County, WI, from the Eifel region of western Germany, where the name was spelled *Schüller* and pronounced like “Schiller.” After arriving in Wisconsin, the Schüllers of course had to do something with the umlaut, so the vowel was rewritten as “ue.” Schüllers elsewhere, though, like the ancestors of the evangelist Robert Schuller, just dropped the umlaut entirely. As long as the Midwestern Schuellers lived in heavily German-ethnic areas, the pronunciation remained “Schiller,” but over time later generations have adopted the spelling pronunciation “shoo-ler.” Not surprisingly, in places like Wisconsin, more German family names that originally were written with umlauted vowels retain their dialectal rather than spelling pronunciation. Many residents of our state would, for example, be inclined to pronounce the name of the current prime minister of Germany, Gerhard Schröder, to rhyme with “raider” and not “loader.”

On the topic of name changes, it is appropriate to mention here that there is a widespread urban legend afoot, what genealogist Dick Eastman calls the “myth of Ellis Island name changes.” Many family histories include a story of an immigrant ancestor arriving at Ellis Island and met by a U.S. official who arbitrarily altered the spelling of the immigrant’s surname for lack of knowledge of the immigrant’s native language. In fact, as Eastman points out, such name changes were very unlikely to occur, mainly because each immigrant had to present paper documentation of his or her identity that had been prepared in the country of origin. Besides that, the Immigration Service employed interpreters for most non-English languages, further reducing the likelihood that anything would get lost or changed in translation.

There is a lot more to say about what has happened to German names after they have been transplanted in the U.S., so I will follow up this article with a second part to appear in our summer newsletter.

Sources: dtv-Atlas Namenkunde, by Konrad Kunze (1998); Dick Eastman’s article can be accessed at <http://www.ancestry.com/learn/library/article>.

# Acquisitions continued from Page 5

• Ritsche, Marita E. *Cross Currents: In the Wake of the Great War*. Milwaukee, WI: Trans uency Press, 2005. 243 pp., ill.

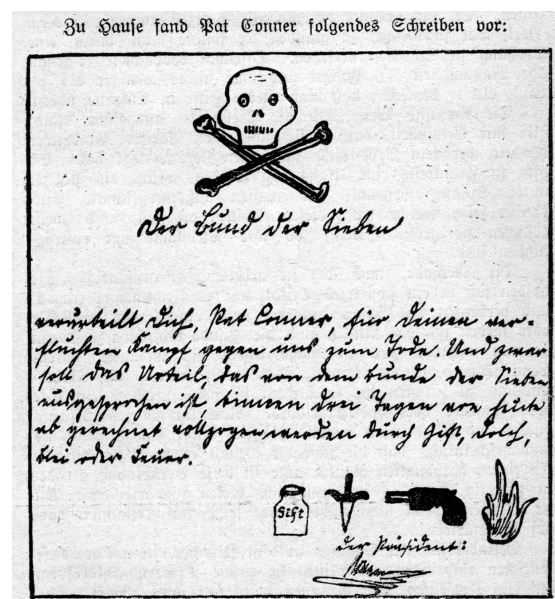
Combining a readable narrative style with historical fact, this novel follows the experiences of a closely-knit family as its two youngest sons leave post-World War I Meersburg am Bodensee for America. Written in English but sprinkled with German phrases, the tale reveals motivations for leaving the homeland, recounts adventures on the Atlantic crossing, and details the confusion and surprises encountered as the travelers arrive in America and head for Minnesota.

Donated by Marita Ritsche, 2005.

• Voigt, Anna. *Vergissmeinnicht! Ein Strauss geistlicher Gedankenblüthen*. Chicago: North American Publishing Co., 1896. 348 pp., frontispiece.

Poet is from Plymouth, Wisconsin. Poems are grouped into sections: Vaterlands-Lieder (includes poems about both Germany and America), Feld und Wald, Herbst-Lieder, Lenz-Lieder, Winter-Lieder, Abendgedanken, Nachtgedanken, Das Dasein Gottes, Glaube und Zuversicht, Klage und Trost, Vergänglichkeit, Unsterblichkeit, An den Gräbern, Im Krankheit und Heimsuchung, Auf der Reise des Lebens, and Vermischten Inhalts.

Donated by Sheboygan County Historical Research Center.



A threatening note to Detective Pat Conner from Der Bund der Sieben.

# Let's go to the fair!

## The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition

By Kevin Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

This Collection Feature focuses on two German-language souvenir books rich in photographs, engravings, and drawings that depict the glory of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Originally promoted as a celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus' landing in America, the Exposition was actually held a year later than planned. Opening on May 1, 1893, the Exposition ran for six months and attracted 27,539,000 visitors—almost half of the total number of people then living in the United States.

Certainly many German-speaking Americans were in attendance, and while they undoubtedly enjoyed all the attractions the Exposition had to offer, perhaps a few sights may have been of special interest.

Looking among the pages of the two books—*Das Columbische Weltausstellungs-Album* (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1893) and *Die verschwundene weisse Stadt. Eine*

*Sammlung photographischer Aufnahmen auf der Columbischen Welt-Ausstellung* (Chicago: Peacock Publishing Company, 1893)—we can imagine the sights that might have thrilled a German-American family from, say, Milwaukee.

Right from the start, the overall appearance of the Exposition site enchanted most visitors; surrounded by the magnificent Court of Honor buildings constructed in a Beaux Arts style with white columns and gilded domes glittering in the sunlight, our German-speaking Milwaukeeans could easily imagine the so-called “White City” to be a utopian world of progress and pleasure. And of course the giant Fer-

ris Wheel on the Midway would have caught their eyes: this 250-foot high steel structure had thirty cars carrying sixty persons each. “Diese grosse Ingenieurthat ist für die Columbische Ausstellung, was der Eiffel-Thurm für die Pariser Ausstellung war. . . . Zur Nachtzeit wird es von 3000 elektrischen Glühlämpchen illuminirt” (This great engineering feat is for the Columbian Exposition what the Eiffel Tower was for the Paris Exposition. . . . at night it is illuminated by 3,000 small electric lamps).

Perhaps our visitors would have gravitated to exhibitions from their homeland. Within the exhibit

known as *Das deutsche Dorf* “war manches ausgestellt, welches Bewunderung und Interesse nicht nur der Deutschen, sondern aller Besucher beanspruchte. Im deutschen Dorf wurden Erinnerungen an die alte Heimath wachgerufen, während der Amerikaner beschloss, das schöne deutsche Vaterland so bald wie möglich zu

besuchen” (much was exhibited that claimed the admiration and interest not only of Germans, but of all visitors. The German village evoked memories of the old homeland [for the emigrant], while it made the American visitor decide to visit the beautiful German native country as soon as possible). Within the German village one could view accurate reconstructions of dwellings from regions such as the Black Forest, Westphalia, and Bavaria; listen to military bands and an orchestra play; and visit the Deutsche Museum, which held exhibits of wax figures dressed in “die Trachten der ältesten Perioden



A view of the White City



der Deutschen Geschichte. . .als auch die unter den verschiedenen Gewerben gebräuchlichen Trachten” (traditional outfits from the oldest periods of German history. . .as well as from various customary trades) and displayed a large collection of antique German weapons and suits of armor.

Other attractions for German-speaking Americans might have been the German government building, the Austrian glass exhibit, the Swiss and German sections within the Manufactures Building (called *der Industrie-Palast*, or Palace of Industry, in the souvenir books), and the large and astonishing German ornamental wrought-iron gates displayed there.

On the Midway, German-Americans might have bought a treat at the Original Wiener Bäckerei and gazed appreciatively at a panoramic painting of the Swiss Alps. Billed as “the largest and most beautiful canvas in the world” by owner B. Henneberry & Sons and awarded a medal by the Exposition’s Jury of Fine Arts, the price of admission for this startling view was fifty cents. [For more on panoramic paintings, see the Events Calendar, p. 11.]

It is likely that our visitors from Milwaukee would have wanted to see the Wisconsin State Building, perhaps to compare it to the architectural offerings from other states and territories. Many of these buildings portrayed the history of the state they represented in the form of statuary and paintings, while others represented special industries, climatic conditions, or architectural styles. *Das Columbische Weltausstellungs-Album* actually has two drawings of “Das Wisconsin-Gebäude,” and *Die verschwundene weisse Stadt* has a photograph. Here is selection of what was written about the building:

“Das Wisconsin-Gebäude war ein verführerischer

Aufenthaltort für die müden Besucher. Seine breiten Verandas waren von einladender Kühle und Schattigkeit und das ganze Gebäude hatte einen anheimelnden und behaglichen Anblick. Es hatte, ausschliesslich der Vorhallen, eine Front von 90 Fuss und eine Tiefe von 50 Fuss, so dass kein

Mangel an Accommodation vorhanden war” (The Wisconsin Building was an alluring stopping place for tired visitors. Its wide verandas were invitingly cool and shady and the whole building had a homey and comfortable aspect. It had, excluding the vestibules, a front of ninety feet and a depth of fifty feet, so that there was no lack of space).

“Die Mauern des un-

teren Stockwerks sind aus Lake Superior braunem Sandstein und gepressten roten Menominee Ziegeln hergestellt. . . . Ueber dem Front-Eingang befand sich das von Fr. Eunice Winterbotham von Eau Claire modellirte Staats-Wappen” (The walls of the lower floor are made of Lake Superior brown

sandstone and pressed red Menominee clay bricks. . . . Over the front entrance was the state coat of arms, fashioned by Ms. Eunice Winterbotham of Eau Claire).

“Ein äusserst wohlthuender Anblick ist durch das harmonische Verschmelzen der für den äusseren Anstrich verwandten Farben erzielt worden. Das Gebäude hatte \$70,000 gekostet”

(An exceedingly pleasing appearance is obtained

through the harmonious merging of the colors used to paint the exterior. The building had cost \$70,000).

Among the works of art exhibited in the Wisconsin Building were two statues now to be found at the Wisconsin State Capitol building in Madison: *Forward*, created by Jean Pond Miner Coburn, and *The Genius of Wisconsin*, by Nellie Mears. But



**Panorama der Schweizer Alpen**



**Das Wisconsin-Gebäude**



what became of the Wisconsin Building itself, and the other magnificent structures of the Exposition? Almost all of the buildings that comprised the White City were designed to be temporary, constructed of a plaster-of-paris-like material called “staff.” Most of these buildings were reduced to ashes in a fire on July 3, 1894 or simply dismantled. Wisconsin’s building, however, differed from most of the others at the Exposition in that no staff was used in its construction; it also escaped from the grounds before the fire because of the efforts of J. C. Rogers, a successful banker and businessman from Wamego, Kansas. So impressed was he with the splendor of the Columbian Exposition, he purchased two complete buildings—the Wisconsin and Great Britain’s Victoria House—as well as decorative parts of other buildings, statues, numerous paintings, and much more. Dismantled and moved at the fair’s end, the Wisconsin building was reconstructed in Kansas City and served as a prestigious private gambling and men’s club. Alas, all things must pass, and the building was torn down in 1960 to make way for an interstate bypass. But the White City and its attractions live on in souvenir books such as the ones in our library. If you would like to view these or any other materials at the MKI Library, please contact Kevin Kurdylo at 262-7546 or [kkurdylo@wisc.edu](mailto:kkurdylo@wisc.edu).

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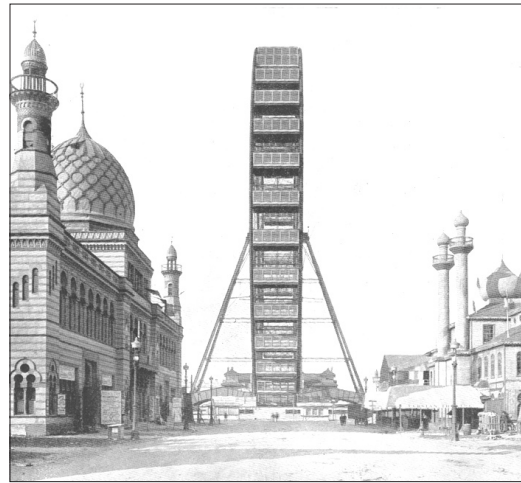
*Das Columbische Weltausstellungs-Album enthaltend Abbildungen des Platzes, der Haupt- und Staats-Gebäude, Statuen, architektonische Details, innere Ansichten, Scenen der Midway Plaisance und andere interessante Gegenstände.* Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1893, [422] pp., ill.

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*Die verschwundene weisse Stadt. Eine Sammlung photographischer Aufnahmen auf der Columbischen Welt-Ausstellung.* Chicago, Ill.: Peacock Publishing Company, 1893.

“The World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893.”

Paul V. Galvin Library Digital History Collection, Illinois Institute of Technology @ URL <http://columbus.gl.iit.edu/>



**The Ferris Wheel at the World's Fair**

### German influences continued from Page 7

German in order to identify the extent to which Watertown residents showed final devoicing. Fascinatingly, they found that young monolingual speakers of English in Watertown pronounce final consonants in some ways more like native speakers of Standard American English. Interestingly, however, an investigation of older, German-English bilingual speakers of Wisconsin English indicated that this tendency did not descend directly from German immigrants who spoke English with an accent. Salmons remarked that this dichotomy most likely means that the influence of the German sound system on Wisconsin English is not as direct as is often thought. Instead, German-like sound patterns like those seen in Watertown are probably the result of several factors, including multiple immigrant languages (e.g., Dutch and Polish as well as German) and sociolinguistic factors such as speakers trying to identify themselves with a particular community.

In a follow-up discussion with the audience, the presenters stressed that these findings are exciting for linguists, but also clearly indicate the need for further research on the impact of German-speaking peoples upon American culture and language.

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# The American Civil War and race in transatlantic perspective

Reviewed by Timothy L. Schroer

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Martin W. Oefe. *German-Speaking Officers in the U.S. Colored Troops, 1863-1867*. Foreword by John David Smith. New Perspectives on the History of the South Series. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004.

This book sets out to describe how German-speaking officers “felt and acted during their service” with African American troops during the American Civil War (p. xvi). Martin Oefe undertook exhaustive research in more than forty archives in the United States, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland to answer the question. The impressiveness of the research is matched by his careful interpretation of the evidence.

It is difficult to generalize about the people at the center of the inquiry. Oefe convincingly shows that German-speakers in the United States and in the officer corps of the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) represented a diverse group. They emigrated from European states that would be encompassed in the unified German Reich of 1871, but also from the Habsburg Empire and Switzerland. They included German-speaking Danes, Poles, and Hungarians. In the United States, both the Democratic and Republican parties found supporters among German-speaking immigrants, who divided on the question of the abolition of slavery. A similar diversity existed in German Americans’ attitudes toward African Americans, ranging from ardent white supremacists to proponents of radical racial egalitarianism. Oefe effectively conveys a description of German ethnics that is more complex than the conventional story that reduces the group to a few well-known participants in the revolutions of 1848.

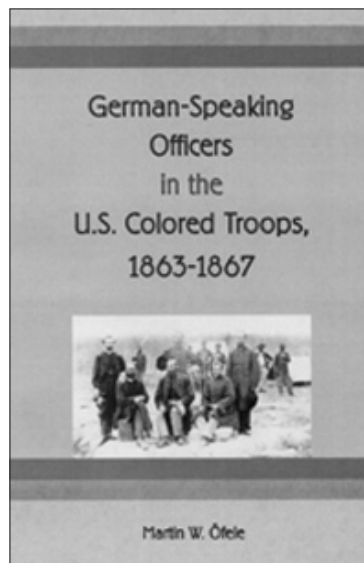
During the American Civil War, the Union moved haltingly to draw on the manpower reserves of

African Americans in what became a war of attrition against the Confederacy. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, the Union eventually formed the USCT in the spring of 1863. Army commanders held the conviction that black troops required leadership by white officers. The War Department decided to select officers for the USCT on the basis of an examination system rather than permitting state officials to appoint commanders and allowing enlisted

men to elect lower-ranking officers. The meritocratic system offered a unique opportunity for advancement in the officer corps of the USCT to German ethnics who often faced obstacles from Anglo-Americans in white units. On the other hand, service with African Americans carried a powerful stigma in white Northern society, which generally remained convinced of its racial superiority. Oefe has found that 265 German-speaking immigrants served as officers in the USCT during the war and Reconstruction.

The sources ultimately prove frustratingly meager in illuminating these men’s experiences in the USCT. Oefe, a careful historian, acknowledges gaps in the evidence. “Few sources,” he writes, “reveal anything about wartime interactions between black soldiers and Germans” (p. 29). Elsewhere he notes that “unfortunately not much evidence exists that tells about everyday relations between the immigrants and the black soldiers” (p. 159). Oefe wisely eschews speculation to fill the gaps, but effectively makes the most of his material in describing the outlooks of participants in this encounter.

While the reader may at times wish that the subjects of the history had left more revealing evidence, Oefe’s account of the service of German-speaking



Continued on Page 14

officers in the USCT illuminates at least two broad questions. First, what does that service tell us about the way German Americans came to find a place within American society? Second, does the story of German speakers in the USCT usefully expand the inquiry beyond national boundaries to a transatlantic history?

The German-speaking immigrant officers, Oefeles shows, like their men in the USCT, generally regarded their service as an opportunity to validate their credentials as Americans to a skeptical northern society. German immigrants willingly paid the price of service with black troops, whom many of them scorned, in order to obtain advancement in the Union cause. A few German ethnics clearly embraced the goal of emancipation, and generally may have been willing to serve in the USCT because they were less deeply immersed in the prevailing racism than Anglo-Americans. The desire to aid in the fight for African American dignity, however, proved ultimately to be ephemeral. After the war's conclusion, the German-speaking officers "did not feel obligated to continue the fight for black freedom" (p. 227). Few German-speaking veterans broadcast their service in the USCT after the war. Over the long term, German-Americans successfully assimilated in the United States as they embraced the privileges of inclusion in white America. The memory of German immigrant service with African-American troops was generally downplayed as irrelevant to the more potent story of German-American sacrifice in the white Union Army.

Oefeles's book places the American Civil War in a transatlantic context. At the most basic level, he uses evidence from European archives to tell his story. More significantly, the study contextualizes the events of the 1860s in the United States within the history of the growth of European nationalism, the revolutions of 1848, and circulating ideas about race. These long-term historical currents shaped, and were reflected in, the biographies of a few remarkable men who became officers in the USCT. Ladislav Zsulavszki, for example, the nephew of the Hungarian national patriot Lajos Kossuth, fought in Italy as a member of Giuseppe Garibaldi's forces before becoming an officer commanding a regiment of African Americans. Zsulavszki seemed to regard

the war as a romantic adventure and an opportunity for African Americans to prove their dignity. Edelmiro Mayer was born in Argentina of German immigrant parents. He fought for Argentina before immigrating to the United States in 1861 to teach at West Point. He advocated abolition and joined the USCT in 1863. Following the war's conclusion, he moved on to Mexico in support of the Mexican Revolution. These examples testify to the existence of an international stratum of cosmopolitan nationalists. Curiously enough, they had a history of fighting for the advance of nationalism on several fronts, Hungarian, Italian, American, and Mexican. Their cases suggest that the American Civil War may be usefully viewed not only as a particularly American phenomenon, but also as a reflection of broader developments in world history.

#### Friends Profile continued from Page 3

After Peter joined the UW–Madison Civil Engineering faculty, the Monkmeyers and their three children spent leaves of absence in Hannover and Dresden, as well as Trondheim, Norway. Among the many notable experiences they had during these stays, visits to the former GDR in the late sixties and early seventies stand out, especially a Christmas vacation spent with friends in Wildenhain near Torgau in 1973.

With Peter now a professor emeritus and Mary having given up her part-ownership of Madison's *Booked for Murder* store, the two have even more time to travel. Mary also served for twenty-seven years as the organist at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and both are involved in their church and the community. Over the years, Mary and Peter have attended numerous MKI events. Always engaged in the German-American dialogue, they have generously opened their home to MKI visiting scholars on more than one occasion—as Friends *and* neighbors.



## Passenger lists and ship manifests

Tracing ancestors across the ocean to the old country is one of the biggest challenges facing many genealogists. As a result, ship passenger lists are often the first documents family historians turn to. The informational value of these lists, however, depends greatly on the time of a person's arrival in this country. Before 1820, no federal laws required ship passenger lists to be recorded. Even if you succeeded in finding your ancestor on a passenger list, the information might be minimal. Before 1890, lists usually included only the passengers' names, age, sex, occupation and nationality. After 1890 information such as marital status, last residence, final destination in the U.S., and—if going to join a relative—the relative's name and address were added. After 1906, a personal description and place of birth were also included.

Most ships carrying immigrants from German-speaking Europe left from Hamburg, Cuxhaven, and Bremen/Bremerhaven in Germany, Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Antwerp in Belgium or Le Havre in France. The most common ports of arrival in the United States were New York, Baltimore, Boston, Galveston, New Orleans and Philadelphia. Passenger arrival and departure lists from these ports are available in archives, published monographs, and increasingly online.

Even if you don't find your ancestor's first immigration journey to the United States, these online data bases might yield other interesting and useful information. For example, you might catch your ancestor on other ship journeys, including visits to the homeland. Looking at fellow-passenger names, you might find more relatives, including in-laws. Also, check the ship records for other passengers with the same destination, home town or U.S. contact address. Your ancestor might have traveled in a group, providing more clues.

Here are some online databases related to German-American immigration for you to explore at home:

Ellis Island, NY 1892–1924

<http://www.ellislandrecords.org/>

Search for passenger by name, year, origin, ship and other criteria. Photo images of manifests of all ships arriving in Ellis Island 1892–1924 online. Free sign-up required.

Galveston, TX 1846–1948

<http://www.tsm-elissa.org/immigration-main.htm>

Search by passenger name or ship. Records of passengers who first disembarked in Galveston only. Table format. Free sign-up required.

Hamburg, Germany 1890–1914 (1850–1934)

<http://www.linktoyourroots.hamburg.de/>

Search by passenger name, birth date, year of departure from Hamburg. Transcribed records are available online. Copies of ship manifests are available for a fee. The database so far includes the years 1890 to 1914, and will eventually expand to include 1850 to 1934.

Bremen & Bremerhaven, Germany 1920–1939

<http://db.genealogy.net/maus/gate/index.php?lang=en>

Search by last name for passengers who left Bremen/Bremerhaven between 1920 and 1939. Tables of ship names, days of departures, destination harbors and the last residence of the passengers can be called up, leading to transcriptions of the original passenger lists.

For a detailed overview of passenger lists available in archives and commercially go to:

- US Ports of Arrival 1820–1954  
<http://www.genesearch.com/ports.html>
- Ports of Departure  
<http://www.cyndislist.com/portsdepart.htm#General>  
or
- Find Your Roots in Germany—Passenger Lists  
<http://www.routes.de/linksammlung/frame.htm>

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