

# Max Kade Institute Friends Newsletter

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 2 • SUMMER 2005

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

## Mary Fritz's four square garden: German-American gardening practices in Missouri's Rhineland

By Deborah A. Bailey  
Folk Arts Specialist  
Missouri Folk Arts Program



Mary Fritz and Deb Bailey in the garden.

In the 1830s, the Midwest experienced extensive German immigration to both urban and rural areas. Missouri was no exception to this trend. By 1860, Germans represented the largest immigrant population in Missouri and as late as a 1996 survey, thirty-six percent of Missourians still claimed German heritage. There were two large areas overwhelmingly settled by Germans in the nineteenth century, emanating in divergent directions from St. Louis. German immigrants settled west and south along the Missouri River Valley, in an area known as Missouri's Rhineland, as well as in the Mississippi Hills region. Although geographically distinct, these two regions share certain characteristics—hilly scenic countryside and a type of soil known as “loess”

Continued on page 4



### WHAT'S INSIDE:

Directors' Corner. Page 2

Actor puts his knowledge of German to good use. Page 3

Within the pages of a Milwaukee artist's diaries. Page 5

*New Feature:*  
Pages from the Past. Page 6



Swiss Turner Hall in Monroe, Wisconsin. Page 7

“Almost Beyond Description”: Debbie Kmetz speaks at MKI Friends Annual Dinner. Page 8

The MKI Board of Directors. Page 9

Collection Feature:  
A child's alphabet book. Page 10



Genealogy Corner:  
Gazetteers and maps. Page 15

## Changes, continuities, and plans

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

It has been a good academic year, and as it draws to a close, we would like first of all to express our thanks and good wishes to several MKI associates who are leaving for other opportunities: Leng Lee, Kirk Martinson, and Dave LeClair, who have been working in our sound lab with the digitization project. Leng is graduating and will enter graduate school here in the field of social work; Kirk will continue his graduate studies in the German Department as a teaching assistant; and Dave is completing a teaching certificate. At the same time, we welcome Hope Hague, who is now our office support staff. Several of the Keystone House folks will have some time off this summer, but we are nevertheless in business as usual.

There is changing of the guard in the MKI Friends organization, too. Robert Bolz, Karyl Rommelfanger, and Jeanne Schueller were warmly thanked at the annual dinner for their years of service on the Friends Board. Newly elected members are Hans Werner Bernet of Monroe, Fran Luebke of Brookfield, and Tom Lidtke of West

Bend; and Board member Rose Marie Barber was elected to a second three-year term. Once again, our gratitude goes out to the retiring Board members and our heartiest welcome to the new ones!

The MKI has been participating in activities to strengthen ties between the sister-states of Wisconsin and Hessen. Ed Langer and Mark Louden attended a meeting of the Hessen-Wisconsin Society, which was chaired by MKI Friends Board member Jim Klauser, and Mark attended a dinner at Governor Doyle's residence in honor of Hessen's Ministerpräsident Roland Koch. Cora Lee Kluge represented the MKI on a steering committee to choose finalists for the Hessen-Wisconsin Writers Exchange, and the Hessen Literary Society has now selected Fond du Lac writer Paula Sergi to spend three months in Hessen as Wisconsin's cultural ambassador.

During the past year, Mark Louden's and Antje Petty's numerous outreach presentations have given the MKI and our field of interest broad visibility. Their wide range of topics has included German Emigration to Wisconsin, German Language in Wisconsin, Languages of Wisconsin, The Amish, and Yiddish in America. And more is yet to come in the summer: (1) In June, Ruth Olson and Antje Petty will provide the program for the UW Alumni Association's "Alumni College in Door County: Wisconsin Heritage and Folklore"; and (2) July 29–31, the MKI will participate in the German Fest in Milwaukee, providing an audio and visual display on "The German Language in America." We are looking for persons willing to serve at our German Fest booth—please contact Kevin Kurdylo at [kkurdylo@wisc.edu](mailto:kkurdylo@wisc.edu) if you can help. Please note also the Pommerntag in Mequon on June 26 and the one-week course June 27 to July 1 on Wisconsin's art history being offered by the West Bend Art Museum. For details check our Web site at <http://mki.wisc.edu>.

As we look forward, we can report on plans for a new MKI poster entitled "How German Is

Continued on page 12

### Max Kade Institute

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies is published quarterly at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The Newsletter is edited and produced by Kevin Kurdylo with the assistance of the Newsletter Committee of the Board of Directors and is printed by Great Graphics, Inc. The Newsletter appears quarterly in March, June, September, and December. Submissions are invited and should be sent directly to:

Max Kade Institute  
for German-American Studies  
901 University Bay Drive  
Madison, WI 53705

Phone: (608) 262-7546 Fax: (608) 265-4640  
Any submissions via e-mail may be directed to  
[kkurdylo@wisc.edu](mailto:kkurdylo@wisc.edu)

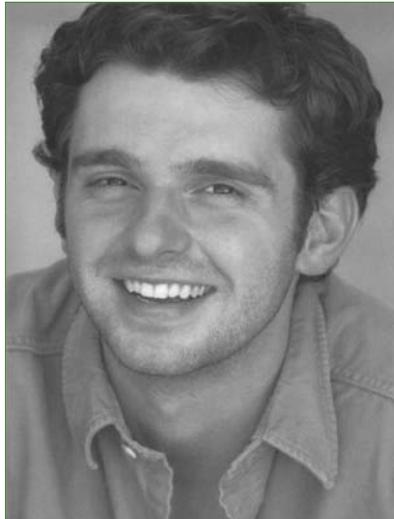
Visit the Max Kade Institute on the  
World Wide Web at:  
<http://mki.wisc.edu>

## The benefits of learning German: UW-Madison German student lands role in WWII History Channel film

By Charles James, Professor of German, UW-Madison

John W. Baumgaertner is a 2001 graduate of the UW–Madison with a double major in German and Communication Arts. Those of us who knew him in German plays remember especially his roles as “Nyffenschwander” in *Der Meteor* (1999) and as “Klotz-George” in *Peter Squenz* (2001). Both roles highlighted his talents as a comedian and as a language learner. Since leaving Madison he has been living in Los Angeles, where he has used his talents in both areas to secure roles in television and films, most notably in the two-hour docudrama “Shot from the Sky” for the History Channel, in which he plays a German-speaking American Air Force officer named Benjamin Sharp who was imprisoned in a concentration camp instead of a POW camp.

One day the concentration camp is bombed by the Allies. When a lieutenant in the German air force, or *Luftwaffe*, comes to the camp to inspect the damage, John’s character risks speaking out, hoping that the German lieutenant will treat them in accordance with the Geneva Convention and have the officers moved to a POW camp. John’s character approaches the German officer and blurts out: “Ich heiße Benjamin Sharp. Ich bin Leutnant der US Army Air Corps. Ich bin einer der 168 alliierten Flieger, die hier gegen die Regeln der Genfer Konvention festgehalten werden! Wir sind Flieger, genau wie Sie. In Amerika werden unsere Kriegsgefangenen mit



John Baumgaertner

Respekt behandelt. Das ist kein Ort für Kriegsgefangene, es ist ein Ort des SCHRECKENS!”

In the last three sentences Benjamin Sharp says, “We are pilots, just like you. In America our prisoners of war are treated with respect. This is not a place for prisoners of war—it is a place of

HORROR!” John confesses he is not sure how much of this speech actually made it to the final cut. He also remarks that “the best part about this character is that, since he was an American, any accent or grammar problems I had could be attributed to the fact that the character speaks German as a second language as well. Lucky me!”

John’s interest in languages started when he was in high school in La Crosse, Wisconsin. He says he was always fascinated by the sounds of other languages; this fascination intensified when he had the opportunity to go to Bavaria for the first time in 1993. He lived with a family in Amberg where the host mother spoke no English, and thus was forced to immerse himself in the language while many of his classmates hung out with English-speakers. After high school he went first to Winona State University in Minnesota before transferring to the UW–Madison. From 1993 to 2001 he worked summers at Concordia College’s German-language immersion camp, *Waldsee*, where he learned that language is not just words and structures, but also

Continued on page 14

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

Rose Marie Barber, Milwaukee

Hans Werner Berner, Monroe

Charles James, Madison

Jim Klauser, Pewaukee

Cora Lee Kluge (ex officio), Madison

Ed Langer (President), Hales Corners

Tom Lidtke, West Bend

Mark Loudon (ex officio), Milwaukee

Fran Luebke, Brookfield

Bob Luening (Treasurer), Madison

Antje Petty (ex officio), Madison

William Thiel, Eau Claire

Ted E. Wedemeyer, Milwaukee

Don Zamzow, Wausau

that is well suited for fruit trees and grape vines. These areas today remain heavily populated by the descendants of the nineteenth-century immigrants.

German-speaking immigrants who settled in Missouri came from different regions of what is today the country of Germany. All brought traditions of music, vernacular architecture, patterns of agricultural and livestock land use, religious customs, and food ways—including gardening practices—from their home regions. The importance of gardens in German immigrant life stayed constant no matter what the region of origin, and remains an enduring feature of German-American life in Missouri. The Missouri Rhineland is particularly known for its active garden clubs, garden tours, heirloom plants, and many avid gardeners.

I first was introduced to Mary Fritz of rural Berger, Missouri, by Joan Treis, then President of the nearby Hermann Missouri Garden Club. I quickly ascertained that Mary was a woman unanimously recognized by her peers in the area as a “master gardener.” Mary plants several types of gardens every year, but her four square garden is the one that is personally most important to her.

The four square garden is a gardening method that was transported to the Midwest by German-speaking immigrants. Scattered reports of the four square garden extend from Pennsylvania German areas across the central Midwest including the Hermann, Missouri, area. While German heritage museums are reviving four square gardens based on historical documents and photos, there is little information about living practitioners, except for the statement that the German gardening practices are dying out.

Mary is a living twenty-first century practitioner of this gardening form. Of Swiss-German descent, she learned the German planting styles and methods while growing up in a large farming family in Illinois. She explains, “My mother taught us many of these practices that she in turn had learned from *her* mother and we worked the gardens alongside her. We relied on our garden for subsistence but it was always amazingly beautiful, too. Until she passed away at eighty-two, she planted beautiful gardens in this manner every year.”

Mary’s garden retains the soil preparation (lots of

compost), planting methods, and aesthetics that characterized nineteenth-century German immigrant gardens. Even today it is distinct from those of Anglo counterparts who migrated to Missouri from the South and settled the surrounding areas. Their gardening practices, for example, separate the practical vegetable garden from the decorative flower garden. But, the four square garden combines function with beauty. The garden is laid out in four geometric squares of plantings separated by pathways and all surrounded by a picket fence. The fence is, of course, both ornamental and practical. As Mary observes, “The picket fence around the garden stopped those pesky turtles from eat-



**The beneficial orb spider eats many troublesome insects in the garden.**

ing my beans and the deer from munching on the melons.” Each of the four squares is planted with a mixture of flowers, herbs, and vegetables, along with favorite small fruits such as strawberries and rhubarb. The plantings in each of the squares are positioned extremely close together in tight parallel rows in raised beds.

This traditional mode of planting is not haphazard and in fact is a fine example of a nineteenth-century organic gardening technique. Plants are placed together in a way that maximizes the beneficial relationships between herbs, vegetables, fruits, and flowers. For example, dill is planted

# Remarkable discoveries in the heart of Milwaukee: The diaries of Friedrich Wilhelm Heine

By Kevin M. Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

In a presentation on March 10, 2005, Dr. Samuel Scheibler, a cultural anthropologist associated with both the Milwaukee School of Engineering and the Goethe House of Wisconsin, and Tom Lidtke, Executive Director of the West Bend Art Museum, revealed how recent efforts to translate the diaries of Milwaukee panorama painter Friedrich Wilhelm Heine are yielding new insights into the vibrant regional art scene of nineteenth-century Wisconsin.

Lidtke provided background on the art of the panorama, a term first popularized by Scottish painter Robert Barker in 1792 to describe his scenes of Edinburgh shown on a cylindrical surface. A panorama is a painting depicted in a wide, all-encompassing view, often in 360 degrees. Most often panoramas represent monumental religious scenes or historical events, with battles being particularly popular subjects. Ideally, viewers enter the panorama from a recessed entryway or tunnel to heighten the effect as they come up to the painting and into the “center of the action.” A variant on the panorama is the cyclorama, which incorporates three-dimensional props set in front of the painting to enhance

the illusion of perspective. Traditionally, the viewing of a panorama or cyclorama was a thought-provoking experience; viewers could linger to observe details and to understand the historical event or myth depicted. The panorama art form reached its zenith in the United States during the 1880s and 1890s, but faded with the initial rise of motion pictures. However, panorama paintings are currently enjoying popularity in across the globe in such countries as China, Russia, Tokyo, the People’s Republic of Vietnam, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Less well-known today is that Milwaukee was once the mecca, or more appropriately, *die Heimat* of panorama painting in the United States, a reputation it held from the 1880s until the early 1900s. One reason this rich Wisconsin heritage has

been overlooked was the lack of access to primary source material on the subject. But this all changed with the rediscovery of Heine’s diaries.

“Imagine discovering that a dusty old still life of sunflowers you thought was painted by your aunt was actually a Van Gogh,” Dr. Samuel Scheibler proposed as he began his presentation on the highly detailed diaries of F. W. Heine. This is what it was like to “rediscover” the diaries, which had been stored for years in a cardboard box beneath a table in the Milwaukee County Historical Soci-

**Heine insisted on historical, geographical, botanical, zoological, and anthropological accuracy in his paintings, and the same perfectionism is evident in his diaries.**

ety. Written in minuscule old German script between 1887 and 1921, these fifteen diaries contain meticulous details about Heine’s life as an artist in Germany and his life among German Americans in eastern Wisconsin. Within these pages he reveals his thoughts and feelings about art, his fellow artists and competitors, and contemporary Wisconsin society and politics; he even notes Milwaukee’s weather day by day. Throughout the diaries one also finds remarkable sketches

and drawings that later became studies and eventually larger, panoramic works of art.

Born in Leipzig in 1845, Heine originally came to the U.S. to study Native Americans for his paintings. He fell in love with Milwaukee, where he had “all the comforts of home”; people spoke his language, and he could enjoy familiar food and drink. After travels to the American Southwest and Mexico, he returned to Milwaukee and decided to stay. He helped to establish a school of panorama painting that attracted artists nationally and internationally. Heine insisted on historical, geographical, botanical, zoological, and anthropological accuracy in his paintings, and the same perfectionism is evident in his diaries.

# The future of the German element in the United States (1869), part I

Translated by Mark L. Loudon, MKI Co-Director

*In this article, the writer spares no praise for German-American immigrants, especially those who settled in rural Wisconsin. Note that these newcomers are compared to "Americans," presumably English-speaking "Yankees" whose ancestors had been in the U.S. already for some time. The ethnic stereotypes promoted here were not unusual in the early German-American press.*

December 1, 1869, Easton (PA) *Correspondent und Demokrat*, p. 1; repr. from the Cincinnati *Volksfreund*

Within twenty years there will be several states in the Union in which the Germans will have the numerical and intellectual majority. That will undoubtedly be true of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Nebraska. In the first of these states, the German element could well assume a dominant role if it were ambitious and united. The capital [*sic*] of this state, Milwaukee, is populated mainly by Germans, who are of high intelligence and lead in politics, just as they set the social tone and have a strong influence in commerce. In Milwaukee, in the absence of any real German chauvinism, everything seems to follow a German-American standard to which the Americans have grown accustomed and with which they seem to be comfortable.

In the interior of the state there are cities that are more German still and in which it is even difficult for new arrivals to learn English. There are fewer than half a dozen American towns in the state, and even there the Germans are starting to stream in. Since German craftsmen and workers live frugally in order to acquire a homestead and save money, they put down deep roots everywhere, more so than the Americans, whose families have too many needs and who typically live beyond their means. The Americans do not know what it means to start small and work their way up slowly like the

Germans do. They are more speculators than savers. This is why German farmers are so successful in the Northwest. Owning fertile land has enabled them to become quite well off.

The Germans have worked their way up on what were originally land-grant tracts and have done better than their American counterparts, who in many cases started off with more money and livestock. Despite privations and scorn, the German farmers first cultivated the land, then built stables and barns and eventually comfortable homes for themselves. Rather than working large expanses of land, they have carefully tended smaller acreages and sought to secure them from storms. German farmers generally experience fewer crop losses due to weather than the Americans, because they cultivate their land more carefully. The Germans' reports of success draw hundreds and thousands of relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors from the old country. Immense sums of money are sent annually to poor relatives and friends in Germany.

There are also a number of relatively well off families who come over and buy out American land owners in order to be close to their fellow Germans. German farmers are very tied to their property and sell only as much as they absolutely have to, and then only reluctantly and not for a low price. In Wisconsin there are entire counties of 30,000 to 50,000 inhabitants in which most are Germans and only few Americans; the latter have either grown accustomed to the German presence or are anxious to sell their land to move away and be among their own people. We are familiar with a few counties in that state that just a few years ago had been mainly American and in which most of the land has now been sold to Germans. In these areas visitors notice the following: the solid stone, brick, or half-timber houses, which often have tile roofs; the roomy, well-insulated stables; the large barns covered with straw or thatch; the carefully

# Where old and new worlds meet: The Swiss Turner Hall of Monroe, Wisconsin

By Deborah Krauss Smith  
Director, Monroe Swiss Singers

In early 1845, scouts from the canton Glarus in Switzerland arrived in south-central Wisconsin in search of a place for their impoverished fellow citizens to relocate. They found the area's gently rolling hillsides reminiscent of the *Vaterland*, and later that same year about 200 Swiss emigrated to what is now northern Green County and established a settlement known as New Glarus.

Although New Glarus is the actual Swiss colony in Green County, large numbers of Swiss primarily from the German-speaking regions of Switzerland steadily continued to emigrate until the mid-1950s to all parts of Green County, particularly the Monroe area in the southern part of the county. While the influence of the Swiss throughout the area is still strongly felt and seen yet today, one of Green County's most visible and still viable Swiss establishments is the Turner Hall of Monroe.

Although there are many German Turner (gymnast) Halls throughout the country, the Turner Hall of Monroe is believed to be the only one of Swiss origin left in the United States. Established in 1868 by Swiss and Germans who immigrated to the Monroe area, the original structure burned to the ground on Labor Day of 1936. The present building, a Swiss Emmental-style chalet designed by German architect Max Hamisch and completed in 1938 on the same site, has been listed on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places since 1982. Its authentically Old World interior, including a Ratskeller restaurant and Grand Hall

with stage, houses many irreplaceable paintings, documents of local Swiss history, Swiss artifacts, and outstanding examples of *Bauernmalerei* (Swiss folk painting). In 1952, a small bowling facility and gym were added to the 1938 structure.

Long known as a place "Where Old and New Worlds Meet," the Turner Hall was not only a

place for immigrants to practice gymnastics and preserve their Swiss traditions, it also became a center for community activities and was known as the "opera house" in its early years. Everything from political rallies, professional boxing matches, and dairy and cheesemaking conventions, to Turnfests, Swiss vocal concerts, Jass playing (Swiss card game), dances, musicals, movies, and plays have been part of

Turner Hall's rich and diverse history. In 1874, a group of young Swiss and German men sabotaged a meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, causing the fledgling organization to write an article for the local paper condemning their behavior. Susan B. Anthony lectured at the Turner Hall on women's rights in 1877. In 1904, then-Governor Robert M. La Follette spoke to a standing-room-only crowd, as did presidential-hopefuls William Jennings Bryan in 1921 and John F. Kennedy in 1960. In 1903, a local chapter of the *Ge-genseitige Unterstutzungs Gesellschaft Germania* (G.U.G.G.) was established at Turner Hall and was active through much of the century.

Vaudeville comedian Eddie Foy appeared at



**Turner Hall of Monroe, listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.**

## Personal accounts of Wisconsin history: Debbie Kmetz speaks at MKI Annual Dinner

By Stacey Erdman, MKI Project Assistant

The MKI Friends Annual Dinner was held on Thursday, May 12, at the Memorial Union. After a reception and catered meal, we were treated to a talk by local history specialist Debbie Kmetz. Ms. Kmetz, who at one time hosted *Wisconsin Stories* on Wisconsin Public Television, entertained all in attendance with a presentation titled “Almost Beyond Description.” Relying on published and unpublished primary sources, the presentation detailed a selection of firsthand accounts of settlers and residents of Wisconsin from 1766 to the 1950s. The dozen or so accounts provide an enlightening and unadulterated view of the history of the state.

Ms. Kmetz began by reading some passages from a historical study on German immigrant Jacob Baumgartner, written in 1920 by Joseph Schaefer. Baumgartner lived near Fennimore and worked as a dyer, but decided he would like to try his hand at farming instead. He saved enough money to purchase land and animals, but not enough for a wagon to transport him to his new property. Not discouraged, he built one himself out of wood and spare materials he had, and headed westward. When he rolled through Madison, people ridiculed his peculiar wagon, but he continued undaunted. His pluck and determination served him well and he became a successful farmer. In addition to his diaries and farm records, Mr. Baumgartner contributed an autobiographical letter to a time capsule in 1876, which was opened in 1976.

The first writings of an English-speaking person in Wisconsin come from 1766 by an English surveyor named Jonathan Carver. Carver was traveling through the state while trying to find the Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean. His journals detail his travels on the “Ouisconsin River,” and his encoun-

ters with Native people like those in present day Sauk City. He found the village quite “civilized,” with large houses and ample opportunities for trading. The “Carver’s Tract” of land was named for Jonathan Carver.

Of particular interest to those at the talk, was the portion concerning Pomeranian immigrants to the Jackson, Wisconsin, area. Ms. Kmetz read passages from the compact that the Lutheran



**Debbie Kmetz speaking  
at the Annual Dinner.**

congregation had drawn up before embarking on their journey to the New World. The members pooled their resources by placing their money into a wooden box. A fund was established for those without the means to pay for their passage so that they might emigrate as well. They were to repay this debt when God allowed them to do so. The group, led by Rev. Kindermann, set up Kirchhayn parish, the second oldest Lutheran congregation in the state. The members were reportedly happy about their move, as is shown by a passage from a letter from one of the parishioners to family back in Prussia: “I thank God for guiding us to this place.” The settlers built a log church, a parsonage,

a school, and their own homes, and were able to clear the land to make it suitable for farming. This particular settler was also happy to report that “everyone who works a farm is called a farmer, whether they have 40 or 4000 acres.”

Ms. Kmetz also sang one of the versions of a traditional nineteenth-century Scottish folk song, “The Pinery Boy.” The song reveals the sorrow of a woman searching for her lost husband, only to find that he has been killed in a job-related accident. Over 100 versions of the song have been collected from Scotland, England, Canada, and the

Digital imaging allows Heine's tiny script to be magnified so that the diaries can be transliterated, indexed, and eventually translated and published. New insights into history and art history are being gleaned from the diaries' pages all the time. One such finding is a hitherto unsuspected connection between opera and art in Milwaukee: Heine apparently painted large backgrounds for the opera *Don Juan*. These paintings, alas, have so far not been found, but there is a hint in the diaries that some may have been sold to a circus!

The diaries are an extraordinary treasure, providing a window into an exciting time for Wisconsin regional art and artists, but there is still much to learn. Researchers estimate there were at least two dozen artists working on panorama paintings in Milwaukee at various times, including women artists, but in some cases we don't even know their names. More information may be found as work continues on the Heine diaries.

Sadly, very few examples of panorama and cyclorama paintings still exist intact in the United States; all too often the large canvases were cut up and sold as individual paintings, and some even ended up as background sets in Hollywood movies. Recently it was discovered that the Wisconsin Historical Society has in its visual materials collection several paintings of Civil War soldiers thought to be studies for panoramas, large group photos of many of the painters, and stereocards by H. H. Bennett of cycloramas on exhibit in the late 1800s. These include Bennett's photographs of the *Storming of Missionary Ridge* (Chattanooga, TN) cyclorama, designed by August Lohr and F. W. Heine of Milwaukee's American Panorama Company, which can be viewed at: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/libraryarchives/hhbennett>. In addition, "panorama maniacs" can search the location of existing panorama and cyclorama paintings worldwide at <http://www.panoramapainting.com/>, the official Web site of the International Panorama Conference.

## The 2005-2006 MKI Friends Board of Directors

At the May 12 annual meeting, Friends got together and learned about activities at the Max Kade Institute, and also heard about the many ways the Friends themselves have made a difference. We—Friends and everybody else at MKI—are grateful for the contributions of three Directors who left the Board at the end of this term: Bob Bolz, Karyl Rommelfanger, and Jeanne Schueller.

Bob has been on the Board for six years and most recently served as Vice President. In addition to his VP duties, Bob has tirelessly promoted MKI in the community and was instrumental in establishing many new connections for the Institute. MKI staff very much enjoyed and appreciated his staying in touch with the Keystone House, coming out to meet new personnel, and participating in many of the Institute's outreach events.

Karyl is also leaving after completing her second three-year term. As Secretary of the Board, she regularly made the long trip from Manitowoc to Madison. Lending her incredible expertise as a German teacher, local historian, and expert on German soldiers in the Civil War, Karyl contributed articles to the Newsletter, held old-German script workshops, and actively supported MKI's programs for K-12 teachers and students.

Jeanne is leaving the Board after a three-year term. Jeanne has been a formidable connection to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and its German program. She has worked with the Institute on educational outreach activities, especially those concerning professional development for German teachers. A big "thank-you" to all three Directors!

The Friends elected three new Board Directors—Hans Werner Bernet, Monroe; Tom Lidtke, West Bend; and Fran Luebke, Brookfield—and re-elected Rose Marie Barber, Milwaukee, to a second term. Following the annual meeting, the Board elected new officers: Ed Langer will continue as the Friends President, Fran Luebke was elected Vice President, Bob Luening continues to be Treasurer, and Charles James was elected Secretary. We are very excited about the 2005-2006 Board of Directors and appreciate their commitment and support of the Friends and the Max Kade Institute.

# Learning letters and more: A German-language alphabet book

By Kevin Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

Summer arrives, the sun shines, temperatures rise, and nature beckons us outside. Almost makes us feel like kids again, wanting to run and play. But it's a working day, and so, here in the dim recesses of the Max Kade Library, I resort to opening the pages of a children's book—*Das A. B. C. in Bildern*—to see what the German-American youngsters of yesteryear were reading as they learned their letters, perhaps on some drizzly summer day.

*Das A. B. C. in Bildern* was copyrighted in 1905 by the New York firm of McLoughlin Bros., Inc. While well-known for their pioneering use of color printing technologies in children's books, particularly between 1858 and 1920, McLoughlin's catalogue of German-language books seems quite small. It would be interesting to learn more about these rare German-language titles and why the company chose to publish the few they did. This particular alphabet book is in poor condition,



with all its pages separated from the cover, making me think that many a young hand has turned them throughout the years. The illustrations feature children at play with animals or toys, and reveal to us the clothing, pastimes,



playthings, pets, and ways of life of an earlier time. The verses that accompany each letter often impart a moral message, as was common in such works. Inside the front cover is a display of all the capital letters in German *Fraktur*. In the center of these letters is an illustration of a young girl playing with her “Pretty Village” toy houses. There is no particular correlation between the illustration and any of the letters, and the fact that the box top has the words “Pretty Village” in English makes one wonder if these illustrations are simply being re-used from an English-language ABC book for this German version.

The first page jumps right in, providing us with verses and illustrations for both the letters A and B. The *Fraktur* letters are shown in capital and lowercase. “A” stands for both Anton and *Angel* (fishing rod), and the illustration shows an idyllic scene where barefoot young Anton sits at the water's edge, intent on catching a fish, enjoying what is likely a lovely summer's day. Ah, the simple joys of childhood!



But wait! What's happening here with the letter B? Bertha, her face showing extreme distress, her doll cast forgotten upon the ground, rings a bell to call for help. Another girl peers into a well while a boy runs in a confused panic. The verse reads: "Brunnen sind kein Spielort, Bertha,/ Hättest du das stets bedacht,/ Wär' dein Kätzchen nicht gefallen/ In den tiefen Wasserschacht." (Wells are no place to play, Bertha/ If you had always kept that in mind,/ Then your kitten would not have fallen/ Into the deep water shaft.) Indeed, it is not always fun and games in childhood, and here we are learning that there can be drastic consequences to our actions or lack of forethought. Good thing Bertha has that bell, though. Or are bells sometimes kept by wells for just such accidents?

But the message given for the letter H is rather



Hans hat mit dem harten Hammer  
Auf den Finger sich geschlagen,  
Und nun fängt er sogleich an  
Laut zu weinen und zu klagen.  
Wer keinen Schmerz  
vertragen kann,  
Hans, der ist ja gar  
kein Mann.

H h

harsh. Here Hans has hit himself with a hammer, and he begins to weep and moan. "Wer keinen Schmerz vertragen kann," we are told, "Hans, der ist ja gar kein Mann."

If those who cannot endure the pain of whacking their fingers with hammers aren't men, then I suppose I'll be eternally a little boy.

The verses for Q and R are interesting in different ways. "Q" stands for Quinta, who doesn't wish to share her toys. Her friend calls her a *Querkopf*, or a contrary girl, and gives her the helpful advice, "Zänkische Kinder kann niemand vertragen." (No one can stand quarrelsome children.)

Her friend has obviously read and absorbed all the lessons in her alphabet books and is now ready for a career in child psychology.

Q q

Quinta, du Querkopf,  
Laß dir eins sagen:  
"Zänkische Kinder  
kann niemand  
vertragen."



"Regen, Regen, geh' doch fort,  
Fall' an einem ander'n Ort.  
Draußen machst du alles naß  
Und verdirbst mir jeden Spaß.  
Regen, nein, ich mag dich nicht,"  
Ganz verdrossen  
Robert spricht.

R r

R has Robert, "ganz verdrossen" or utterly annoyed, pressed up against the rainy windowpane and chanting a childhood favorite, "Regen, Regen, geh' doch fort,/ Fall' an einem ander'n Ort./ Draußen machst du alles nass/ Und verdirbst mir jeden Spass./ Regen, nein, ich mag dich nicht."

Finally, I wanted to compare two images of snowmen, one paired with the verse for the letter F from our New York-published children's book, and the other from *Die Kinderharfe*, published in Germany. Our German-American Fränzchen greets his



Fahneschwingend grüßt  
das Fränzchen,  
Guter Schneemann, dich;  
Auf den kahlen Kopf  
setzt Flora  
Dir den Hut noch mütterlich.  
Nun kriegst du keinen  
Schnupfen,  
Schneemann, bedanke Dich.

F f

snowman with an American flag while sister Flora sets a soft and warm hat upon its head. The German snowman has a decidedly Prussian and militaristic bent, complete with bristling moustache, epaulets, wooden bayonet, and a metal pot for a hat. This was just a happenstance discovery of images, and in no way is it meant to imply any generalized judgment upon the youth of any nation, in any era.

Our thanks to the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center for donating *Das A. B. C. in Bildern*. Look for some color images from the book on-line at: <<http://csumc.wisc.edu/mki/Library/NewAcqs/NewAcqs.htm>>.

### Other sources consulted

Brief History of the McLoughlin Bros. @ URL <http://americanantiquarian.org/cl/mbhistory.htm>

From A to Z: An Exhibition of ABC Books Selected from the John O. C. McCrillis Collection @ <http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/library/watsonson/AtoZ.htm>



United States; the place names in the song usually change, as does the occupation of the husband, depending on where the song is from. In the version Ms. Kmetz sang, the husband was a raftsman on the Wisconsin River.

One of the more recent accounts read by Ms. Kmetz concerned the “Angel on Snowshoes,” Dr.

Kate Newcomb, a country doctor from Woodruff. Dr. Kate, as she was known, was famous for her dedication to her patients and her ability to reach their homes even in the harshest of blizzards. She longed for a hospital in the Woodruff-Minocqua area. A local school decided to collect a million pennies to help her, but it wasn’t enough. Some friends got Dr. Kate to the studios in California where *This Is Your Life* was taped. The show garnered a lot of publicity, and when people from all over the country sent donations of pennies for the hospital, it was finally built. One of the MKI Friends, Karol Rommelfanger, remembered sending in money for the project, and another remembered going to see the completed hospital.



**Karyl's childhood pennies helped build a hospital.**

Everyone in attendance enjoyed the meal and the talk, and we look forward to another successful event in 2006.

### Directors' Corner continued from page 2

American?” Supported by the German Consulate in Chicago, it will be available to schools, organizations, and individuals as an informational and educational resource. We have been having fun choosing what to include from the great wealth of materials available! In addition, we continue to work toward a major endowment campaign to support our unique and growing library and archives. We wish you all the best for your summer work and play. Do stay in touch!

Cora Lee and Mark

### Pages from the Past continued from page 6

cultivated acreage; and the well-fed livestock. Agriculture there is conducted in both German and American ways, and overall quite successfully. Nearly all the formerly wooded lands have become the property of Germans, more so than the prairie lands, owing to the Germans’ strong disinclination for shortages of lumber.

Monroe Turner Hall continued from page 7

Turner Hall in 1904 in Jerome Kern's musical "The Earl and the Girl." During the 1940s, big band names such as Eddie Howard, Art Kassel, the Blue Baron, Griff Williams, Lawrence Welk, Wayne King, and Guy Lombardo played for Turner Hall dances, where countless area people met their future spouses. Turner Hall still features weekly old-time Sunday afternoon dances with live polka bands and is often the site of wedding and anniversary dances.

The Monroe Harmonie, a men's choir of Swiss immigrants, was established at Turner Hall in 1891 and was, along with other Swiss vocal groups, a fixture in Monroe until the 1940s. The Turner Hall Swiss Club's Men Chorus followed later, and in 1963, the Monroe Swiss Singers mixed choir, which is still very active, was established. A young group of musicians from Switzerland, the legendary Moser Brothers, made their first appearance at Turner Hall in 1926 and became well known to Turner Hall audiences, as did other renowned Swiss musicians such as Rudy Burkhalter, Martha Bermet-Zumstein, Betty Kneubuehl Vetterli, and Geni Good and his Glarner Oberkramer.

Until the 1990s, Turner Hall had been synonymous with the teaching, practicing, and performing of gymnastics in Monroe. A Turner Hall gymnast, Marie (Blumer) Hoesly Herbert, competed in the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, Finland.

The Turner Hall of Monroe, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, continues to nurture Swiss traditions through its many heritage-related events and programming such as the Monroe Swiss Singers' annual Swissfest and the annual Christkindlmarkt, and serves as a venue for concerts, dances,

meetings, receptions, banquets, and a host of other community events. Its Ratskeller Restaurant offers charming Old World ambiance and outstanding authentic Swiss cuisine. The mission and government of Turner Hall is still very much the same as when it was first established in 1868. Currently, the Turner Hall of Monroe consists of four member organizations: the Monroe Swiss Singers, the New World Swiss Club, the Foreign-Type Cheesemakers Association, and the former Swiss-American Gymnastics Club. The newest group, the New World Swiss Club, was established in late 2003 primarily

as a support organization, providing those interested in preserving Swiss heritage or the Turner Hall a chance to do so. In recent years, the entire building has undergone loving renovation, with volunteers and sponsors working tirelessly to support and maintain this landmark gem and treasure of Swiss heritage.

Like many non-profits, Turner Hall depends largely on its membership and outside donations to survive, and it faces the



**Swiss immigrant history as it relates to Green County is preserved at Turner Hall in displays such as this one featuring the legendary Rudy Burkhalter. Photo by Michael Meier**

ongoing challenge of meeting its financial needs and goals. In 2002, Turner Hall came uncomfortably close to its demise, which would have been a terrible loss to the Swiss-American community both in Wisconsin and nationwide. With a change in leadership and renewed commitment to its original mission, the Turner Hall is currently undergoing restructuring and strategic planning to ensure that its doors will always remain open to the community and to those who embrace their Swiss roots or love of Swiss heritage, regardless of their birthplace or residence.

More information on Turner Hall, both past and present, is available at:

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

Profile continued from page 3

music and rhythm and, above all, theater.

After graduating from the UW in 2001, he started working for various media projects in Los Angeles. One of his contacts landed him a spot as a first-round “Average Joe” on the NBC reality series of the same name. He has made other contacts, working for film and stage companies as, for example, a director’s assistant to Randal Kleiser (famous for *Grease*, *Blue Lagoon*, and *Flight of the Navigator*), performing general clerical duties, but also gaining a good deal of insight along the way about how films are made.

One of the ways John found jobs in Hollywood was via the employment listserve “craigslist.org.” There he discovered that there was a need for film extras who speak other languages. Also, through his contacts in the acting company called The Groundlings, he was able to meet other German-speakers. They started meeting in the Red Lion Tavern and formed a group called the “Teutonophiles.” John is actively pursuing a career in the film industry, and he has already earned his Screen Actors Guild union card. In other words, we suspect we’ll be seeing more of John Baumgaertner on television and, who knows, perhaps in a multiplex near us sometime soon!



**A view of the garden and its picket fence.**

Four square garden continued from page 4

next to cabbage to attract a parasitic wasp that eats the destructive cabbage worm. Zinnias and marigolds are other examples of flowers that attract certain beneficial insects, repel others, and add bright color to the garden.

Each fall the soil is reworked, more compost is added, and the crops are rotated in the same pattern to a new square in order to check insect pests by controlling their food source. The close planting creates shade to hinder moisture loss and prevent weed growth; if the plants do not provide enough shade, mulch is applied, and the paths within the protective fencing allow the gardener to reach any part of the garden, while avoiding soil compaction within the plant beds. All of these gardening practices have proven to be scientifically sound today.

Four square gardens in their original form are still remembered by elderly residents in the Hermann area and several still plant their gardens mixing the herbs, vegetables, and flowers but without the four square pattern. Mary has interviewed these residents to learn from them what they plant and how they propagate these gardens. In order to continue the tradition in its full form, Mary has worked with Erin Carl (who grew up on a local century farm) for the last two years in a Missouri Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program funded by the National Endowment of the Arts and the Missouri Arts Council. As Mary remembers her late mother, who only recently passed away, she wants to pass on this tradition to younger German-American residents of the area. Mary recognizes the importance of four square gardening for the German heritage of Hermann and the surrounding area. She also appreciates how the practice “connects me to my family and my German ancestors” and “continually reminds me of the happiness I felt as a child growing and picking the crops with my family.”

*Deborah Bailey would like to hear from anyone who has memories of and/or still gardens in the four square manner, either in whole or in part. Please contact her at: Missouri Folk Arts Program, University of Missouri-Columbia, 155 McReynolds Hall, Columbia, Missouri 65211, (573) 882-3653, or BaileyDA@missouri.edu*

## Where “in Germany” did they come from? Gazetteers and maps

You know your ancestor came from “Germany.” You even found a place name on a birth certificate or in a letter. Locating this place today, however, could turn out to be a daunting task. German-speaking immigrants in the nineteenth century came from all over Europe: from places that might not exist anymore, might have a different name or different spelling, might not have been a “real” town to begin with, or even at the time of emigration might have been known under different names in different languages.

One of the most valuable resources for locating a place in nineteenth-century German-speaking Europe is available in the Max Kade Institute library: the *Vollständiges geographisch-topographisch-statistisches Orts-Lexikon* compiled by H. Rudolph. Published in installments beginning in 1859, it covers “Germany, Austria, and Prussia as well as those non-German countries in the Austrian and Prussian sphere.” The *Rudolph Orts-Lexikon* distinguishes itself from other gazetteers by its broad geographical reach as well as by its depth, as it includes not only cities, towns, and small villages but also estates, farms, churches, castles, “isolated houses,” and even “a few important ruins.”

Places are listed alphabetically in German, but also in other local languages, which may include Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Croatian, or Italian. A typical entry includes the place name, type of place (estate, village, etc.), administrative jurisdiction, location in reference to a nearby town or administrative seat, population, and sometimes the nearest post office or church. Furthermore, since the *Rudolph Orts-Lexikon* was created in the mid-nineteenth century, it captures a moment in time closer to the peak of German emigration than other gazetteers published in the twentieth century. If you would like to look up a place in the *Rudolph Orts-Lexikon*, visit the Institute during business hours or contact Antje Petty (apetty@wisc.edu). For those who would like to locate a place on a map, the 1883 *Atlas des Deutschen Reichs* by



Ludwig Ravenstein is a good place to start. This rare volume has been made available online by the University of Wisconsin–Madison Memorial Library: <<http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/ravenstein/>>.

The atlas covers Germany, the bordering portions of present-day Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, and Switzerland. Large scale maps (1: 850,000) and a thorough gazetteer of place-names makes it possible to locate even small towns and villages. A special feature is the inclusion of churches on all maps as well as one special map with an accompanying table giving statistics on religious denominations found throughout the German Empire. Other online resources include:

### Das genealogische Ortsverzeichnis:

<http://gov.genealogy.net/index.jsp>

A search for a place name (even just the beginning letters or phonetic spelling) will yield the exact geographic location, today’s region, administrative district, and neighboring towns.

### Shtetl Seeker – Town Search:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSeeker/loctown.htm>  
You can search for German and local names in Central and Eastern Europe, and will be directly linked to a MapQuest map.

**World Gazetteer:** <http://www.gazetteer.de/> or <http://www.world-gazetteer.com>

If you are looking for a town anywhere in the world today, search this alphabetical place index in Latin, Greek, Cyrillic, and Arabic scripts. You will receive population data, maps, census data, and more.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL  
THE FRIENDS OF THE MAX KADE INSTITUTE  
FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES**

I/We wish to become members or renew my/our membership with the Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, Inc., a tax-exempt organization.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to: Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies or Friends of the MKI. Mail this form and your check to the Friends of the Max Kade Institute, 901 University Bay Drive, Madison, WI 53705. THANK YOU!!!

<u>Membership Category (annual)*</u>		<u>Amount Enclosed</u>
_____ Individual (1 name & address)	@ \$30 per year	\$ _____
_____ K-12 Educator	@ \$20 per year	\$ _____
_____ Student	@ \$15 per year	\$ _____
_____ Family (2 names, same address)	@ \$50 per year	\$ _____
_____ Non-Profit organization	@ \$50 per year	\$ _____
_____ For-profit organization	@ \$100 per year	\$ _____
_____ Lifetime (Individual)	@ \$1000	\$ _____
_____ Lifetime (Family)	@ \$1500	\$ _____

\* Memberships received after November 1 of the current year will be credited for the full succeeding year.

FRIENDS OF THE MAX KADE INSTITUTE  
 FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES  
 901 University Bay Drive  
 Madison, WI 53705

Non-Profit Organization U. S. Postage PAID Madison, WI Permit No. 2704
---