Max Kade Institute
Friends Newsletter

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

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Collection Feature

Gifts from the Past: Items Found between the Pages of German-American Books

by Kevin M. Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

A researcher seeking to trace his or her family history would feel blessed to find something in a German-language book handed down within the family. Oftentimes the most desired discovery would be a list of family members, a handwritten letter or poem, perhaps some photographs, or—wonder of wonders—the name of the town from which one's ancestors came. Other than such valuable information (or possibly large amounts of legal tender), what else might one find within the pages of a book? All kinds of items are used to mark one's place or point to significant sections, and there is also the venerable tradition of pressing flowers and leaves between the pages of thick books.

One million-mark bill, 1923.

A pressed four-leaf clover.

A few months ago MKI Friend Jacob Martens donated two books that contain a fair number of items kept between the pages. One is a *Neue Illustrirte Familien Bibel*, published 1875 in St. Louis by the St. Louis Bibel Publications-Compagnie, and the other is *In der neuen Heimath. Geschichtliche Mittheilungen über die deutschen Einwanderer in allen Theilen der Union*, edited by Anton Eichhoff

Continued on page 3

Director's Corner

by Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director

Summer is here, and we rejoice! The new season should bring a somewhat slower pace, at least in theory, and we would like to sit back and catch up a little. Rest and relaxation are not quite what we get, however, as activity in the Keystone House does not let up. Our library and archives continue to attract visitors, we get ready for German Fest, we produce the summer Newsletter, and we are busy with plans for the coming academic year. Despite the fact that we are a little short on staff in the summer months, we are in business, just as always.

The academic year is a time for us to take stock of what we have finished, but we also look forward to what we have ahead. Please join us for the MKI 25th Anniversary Kick-Off event on October 23 with a lecture by Frank Trommler, Professor Emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania; attend our three-part lecture series on the German-American experience in October and November; come to West Bend on November 1 for an international symposium on the Milwaukee painter Friedrich

Continued on page 6

Max Kade Institute

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Notes from the Board

by Donald D. Zamzow

As I stand in an elevator shortly after arriving in Pila (formerly Schneidemühl), a man greets me in German. I return the greeting and ask, "Kast du ok Platt snacken?" upon which he answers, "Joa! Von wo kömmst do hin?" "Von Amerika, oawe min öllen sinn frühe von Hinterpommern ut wanderd." ("Can you speak Low German, too?" "Yes! Where are you from?" "From America, all my ancestors emigrated from Eastern Pomerania a long time ago.") The elevator reaches the ground floor and we proceed to the dining room for dinner. We are traveling on a "Roots" tour of Germany and Poland. As my wife and I get up to leave the dining room, we are suddenly surrounded by a dozen or so people all wanting to speak Plattdüütsch with these strange Platt-speaking Americans. We felt like some kind of specimens. The group was from Lower Saxony, also on tour, and for us, their Low German dialect was very easy to understand. For the next 15 minutes or so no standard German or English was heard. There is an inexplicable feeling of familiarity that results when one speaks with total strangers in a common dialect. It's as if you were speaking with neighbors whom you've known for years even though you've never before met.

Earlier in the tour, we were being interviewed for Bremen radio by a Platt-speaking reporter who had been alerted that we were in town. Then in Greifswald, a school teacher also interviewed us. She was looking for emigration stories for her 12- to 13-year-old students who were fascinated by the exodus of so many people from Germany over the years. In the process, we also spoke a little Platt, and to our amazement, she informed us that Platt had recently been introduced at the Kindergarten level in Greifswald.

This summer the Norddeutscher Rundfunk (German Public Television), will come to Wausau to produce a new episode of the series "Die Welt op Platt," to be called "Wisconsin op Platt." Designed to be viewed by the north German TV audience, this program will represent a kind of family reunion for our dialect.

Continued on page 12

Collection Feature continued from page 1

Photo found in the family Bible.

and published in 1884 in New York by E. Steiger & Co. Jacob did not have any information on the previous owners of these books, so let's take a look at what we have to see if we can deduce anything about them.

The massive weight of a family Bible makes it the perfect instrument for pressing foliage, and this one served that function. Scattered throughout its pages I found fern fronds, an oak leaf, a fan-shaped leaf that could be from a catalpa, and other small, reddish leaves. However, there is absolutely no writing anywhere. The pages provided to document one's family are left blank—no indication of marriages, births, or deaths. However, a few photographs can still be seen in the windows at the back of the book (pages, interestingly, labeled—in English—for "Family Portraits"). Possibly there once were photos in nearly all of the sixteen available windows, but only three remain now. On the back of each photo is the name of the photographer, which provides us with at least one clue about the original owner of this Bible—two bear the imprint "Photographie von Jac. Patotzka, Minden" and the third reads "J. Hülsenbeck, Minden." A good guess would be that the folks in these photos lived in or near Minden, in North Rhine-Westphalia, and that the owner of this Bible also came from that region. One woman seems to appear in all three photos: in one she is standing alone, in the second seated with her husband, and in the third, well, look at the picture accompanying this article to see how her family has grown!

Family photo found in the Bible.

The only other item found within the pages of this Bible that has a name upon it is a death notice for Joh. Gottfried Kaufmann, who died at the age of 70 years, 7 months, and 29 days on January 25, 1892, in Waverly, Iowa. Described in the notice as a beloved husband, father, and grandfather, we can only wonder if Joh. Gottfried is the older man in the group photograph.

Also found between the pages are two elaborate cut-outs, one of a cherub with wings, whose hands are missing, and the other of a heron silhouette standing among reeds and cat-tails. The detailed cutting around the heron figure would indicate a certain degree of patience and a steady hand.

Earlier I mentioned the possibility of finding money within the pages of a book. This Bible does indeed contain many paper bills, but none that are legal currency. We have a pre-inflationary 1910 German 100-mark note and a 1914 Darlehenskassenschein for five marks, and then the inflationary bills: 100 marks (1920), 10,000 marks (1922), 50,000 marks (1922), 100,000 marks (1923), 1,000,000 marks (1923), and 100,000,000 marks (1923). Then we have a 1924 ten-Reichsmark bill issued by the Reichsbankdirektorium Berlin during the Weimar Republic. Strangely enough,

Continued on page 8

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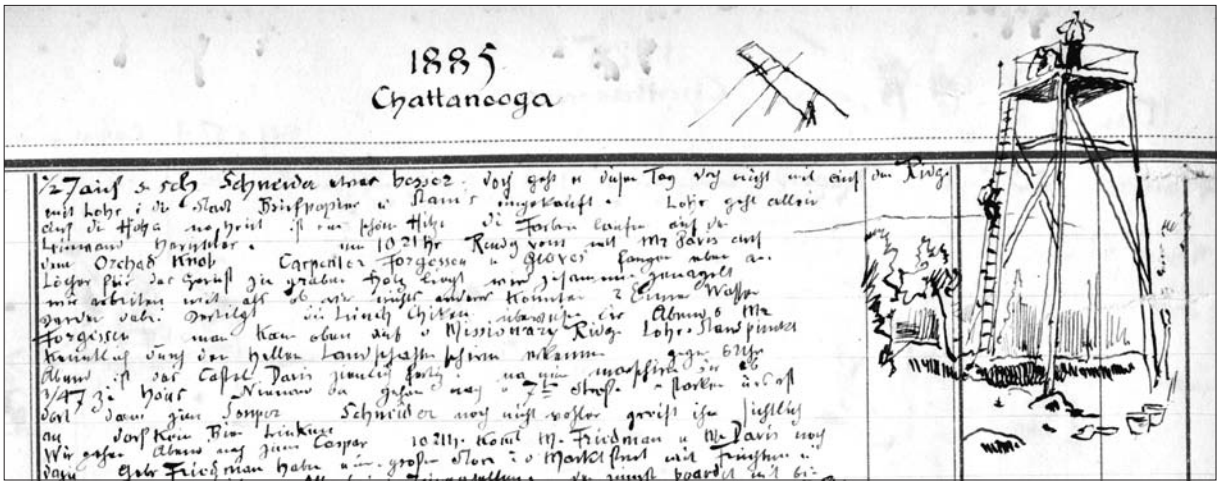
The Friedrich Wilhelm Heine Diaries: Unlocking the Story of American Cyclorama Painting

by Antje Petty, MKI Assistant Director

In the second half of the nineteenth century there were two huge circular buildings that dominated the Milwaukee skyline. Located on Wells and Cedar (now Kilbourn) Streets, these were the two studios where some of the most famous cycloramas were created. Called "the earliest forms of virtual reality" or the "IMAXes of the nineteenth century," these gigantic 360-degree installations frequently covered close to 15,000 square feet of painted canvas. They had become fixtures in major cities throughout the world, who were still living, and restaged events before they were painted. The result was often so realistic that veterans felt transported back to the actual battle, while children and others who had not seen a battle got a close-up experience and an immediate education that would not have been possible in any other way. From 1870 until 1900 (when they were displaced by the advent of the motion picture), the giant installations could be viewed in specially built buildings in many European and American cities,



Portion of an 1885 Heine diary entry. Note his miniscule handwriting and his sketch of a tower for attaining the desired perspective to study the Battle of Chattanooga in the Civil War.

depicting landscapes, historical, religious, or mythological events. In the United States the most frequent motifs were Civil War battle scenes. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the war was still very much on people's minds, even if they hadn't lived through it. Now there was a new way to "experience" some of the significant battles. Enormous diorama displays in front of the paintings, which were enhanced by sound effects and lighting, created an experience that made the viewer—standing at the center of the installation on a raised platform—feel as if s/he were part of the depicted event.

The paintings were done in an elaborate process by highly qualified artists and at great expense. To achieve maximum historic accuracy, artists traveled to the actual battle sites, consulted with battle veterans and the more popular panoramas traveled from town to town. Tragically, most of the original paintings were dismantled and discarded a century ago, few photos or other records exist, and the art form itself has largely been forgotten.

In recent years, however, cycloramas have received renewed attention throughout the world. In some places a few of the remaining nineteenth-century panoramas have been restored (for example the "Gettysburg Cyclorama" which will reopen to the public in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in September), and in other communities—especially in Europe and Asia—entirely new cycloramas have been built, using nineteenth-century panorama techniques combined with modern digital technology.

Continued on page 5

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Upcoming Events

The German-American Experience

A three-part MKI lecture series held in conjunction with the Wisconsin Alumni Association

Please join us for the following three public lectures in fall, 2008:

October 15: The German Immigration Experience—A General Survey, by Cora Lee Kluge

November 12: Language in German Immigrant Communities, by Joseph Salmons

November 19: Dutchman Bands and Dialect Songs, by James Leary

All lectures will be on Wednesdays and will begin at 6:30 p.m.
Additional information will appear in the fall Continuing Studies catalog.

MKI 25th Anniversary Kick-Off

Thursday, October 23, at 6:30 p.m.
in the Memorial Union,
UW–Madison

Guest speaker: Prof. Emeritus Frank Trommler,
University of Pennsylvania.

Reception to follow.

F. W. Heine and the World of Cyclorama Paintings

Saturday, November 1

A symposium at the Museum of Wisconsin Art,
West Bend

Open to the public, registration required.

Further details to follow.

Capstone Event for our 25th Anniversary Celebration
April 2–4, 2009

International symposium on German-American Studies
Keynote speech, conference lectures, and banquet
Events will take place in Lowell Center and the Memorial Union
Watch for additional information!

Projects at MKI continued from page 4

Unfortunately in the United States we still know very little about our once so ubiquitous panoramas, their related infrastructure, and their impact on the arts, culture, and entertainment. This is partly because many of the most prominent American panorama artists—especially those in Milwaukee—were immigrants who had trained in the famous art schools of their time in Europe, especially in Germany. One of them was *Friedrich Wilhelm Heine*, who was already an accomplished artist famous for his depictions of battle scenes from the Franco-Prussian War when he was recruited by the *American Panorama Company*. He later opened the Heine Art School in Milwaukee and became well known for his many oils and watercolors.

And—in an amazing stroke of luck for posterity—Heine also recorded every day of his life. Over the course of 45 years (1877–1921), he jotted down in great detail every thing he did and experienced, frequently annotating his words with drawings and sketches. Housed in the Milwaukee County Historical Society, the diaries offer an unparalleled glimpse into the unique national and international aspects of the panorama schools, the life of an immigrant artist, the city of Milwaukee and its German-speaking citizenry, and the many

Continued on page 6

Projects at MKI continued from page 5

places visited by Heine to create studies for panorama paintings, such as Jerusalem and San Francisco. The problem is that the content of the diaries is largely inaccessible to American readers today: not only did Heine write in German, but he used a nineteenth-century version of Old German Script that even most native speakers of German cannot read. Further complicating any attempt at unlocking the diaries' content is the fact that Heine wrote only for himself with no other audience in mind, using his own system of abbreviations and cryptic phrases. At the same time, it is precisely the personal nature of his notes that provide us today with uniquely unfiltered and honest information and make the diaries such an invaluable resource.

Now MKI is working with the Milwaukee County Historical Society and the Museum of Wisconsin Art in West Bend to make the diaries accessible to scholars and the public alike. First, experts trained in the old German script will transcribe the text into modern type, and then selected passages will be translated into English. This will be a long, arduous, and expensive process. Our first priority is to secure financial support for the transcription project. So far transcriptions of a few weeks of diary entries from the year 1885 already have yielded very exciting results. In great detail we learn about Heine's immigration to America, his impressions of Milwaukee and Chicago, his struggles with the English language, the beginnings of the *American Panorama Company*, the production of the great "Missionary Ridge" panorama, etc. If this small sample already tells us so much, what will 45 years of entries hold?

Curious to learn more about this project and the great cycloramas? Join us on **November 1** at the **Museum of Wisconsin Art in West Bend, Wisconsin** for a one-day symposium. We will share the latest on the Heine diaries project and illuminate Milwaukee's German panorama history. In addition, prominent guest speakers from the United States and Germany will discuss magnificent panoramas past and present, and there will be a tour of the Museum's collection of paintings by panorama artists. Stay tuned for more details in the fall newsletter or contact MKI!

Director's Corner continued from page 2

Wilhelm Heine and ninteenth-century panorama painting, and reserve April 2–4 for our major conference and banquet highlighting the many aspects of German-American Studies.

The coming year promises to be one to remember. We are looking forward to seeing you soon, and in the meanwhile, we wish you all the best!
—Cora Lee

The 2008-2009 Friends Board of Directors

by Antje Petty, MKI Assistant Director

At the Friends' Annual Meeting on May 17 new members to the Board of Directors were elected. Hans Bernet, Tom Lidtke, and Fran Luebke were elected for a second term. JoAnn Tiedemann decided not run for a second term, and Betsy Greene (Madison) was elected in her stead to a first term. We are very grateful for everything JoAnn has done for the Friends and the MKI during her tenure on the Board. Her ideas and initiatives have laid the crucial groundwork for many objectives and tasks facing the Friends in the coming year. Thank you, JoAnn!

Also, at a brief Board meeting new officers were elected. After four years, Ed Langer stepped down from the Presidency. During his time as President Ed led the Friends with energy and enthusiasm, stirring the organization in new directions and, most importantly, broadening the Friends geographic reach. Thanks to Ed's initiative, annual meetings have been held in West Bend, New Glarus, and Wausau, and members have been actively recruited outside of South-Central Wisconsin. Greg Smith stepped down as Treasurer. He has done a fantastic job keeping the Friends' books and finances last year. Thank you both very much, Ed and Greg!

New officers are Karyl Rommelfanger—President, Don Zamzow—Vice President, Fran Luebke—Secretary, Peter Arvedson—Treasurer, and Peter Monkmeyer—Assistant to the Treasurer.

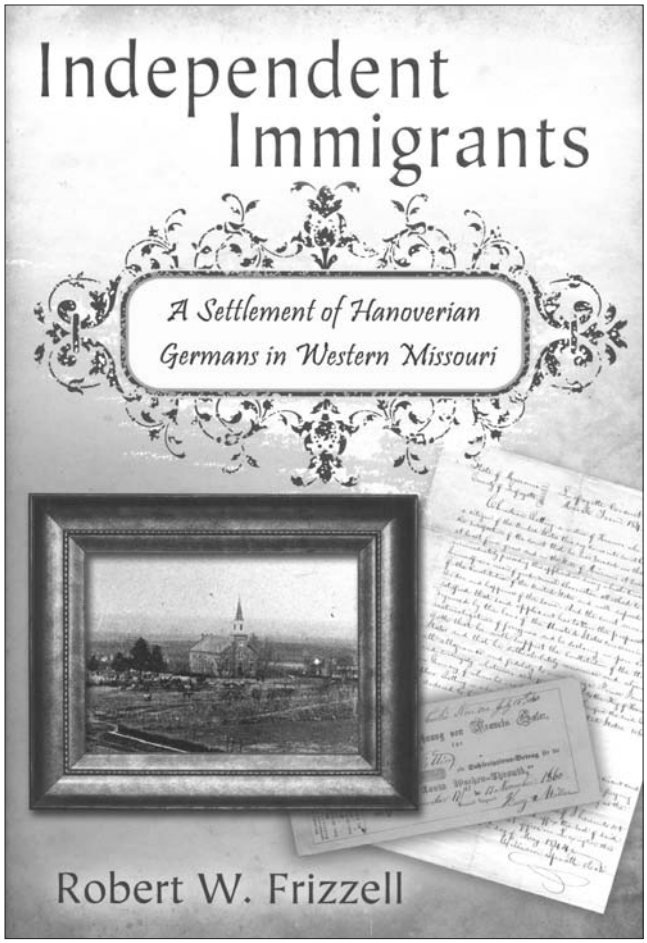
Book Review

Tracing the German Settlers of Missouri: Publications of the University of Missouri Press

by Antje Petty, MKI Assistant Director

Independent Immigrants: A Settlement of Hanovarian Germans in Western Missouri, by Robert W. Frizzell (2007).
The Arts and Architecture of German Settlements in Missouri: A Survey of a Vanishing Culture, by Charles van Ravenswaay, reprint with a new introduction by Adolf E. Schroeder (2007).

There are different ways to uncover the story of a place and its people. As history is preserved in so many different forms, we find narratives and memories, structures and objects, cultural expressions and landscapes that change over time. The authors of the two books discussed here take different yet overlapping approaches to tracing the history of early German settlements in selected counties in Missouri.



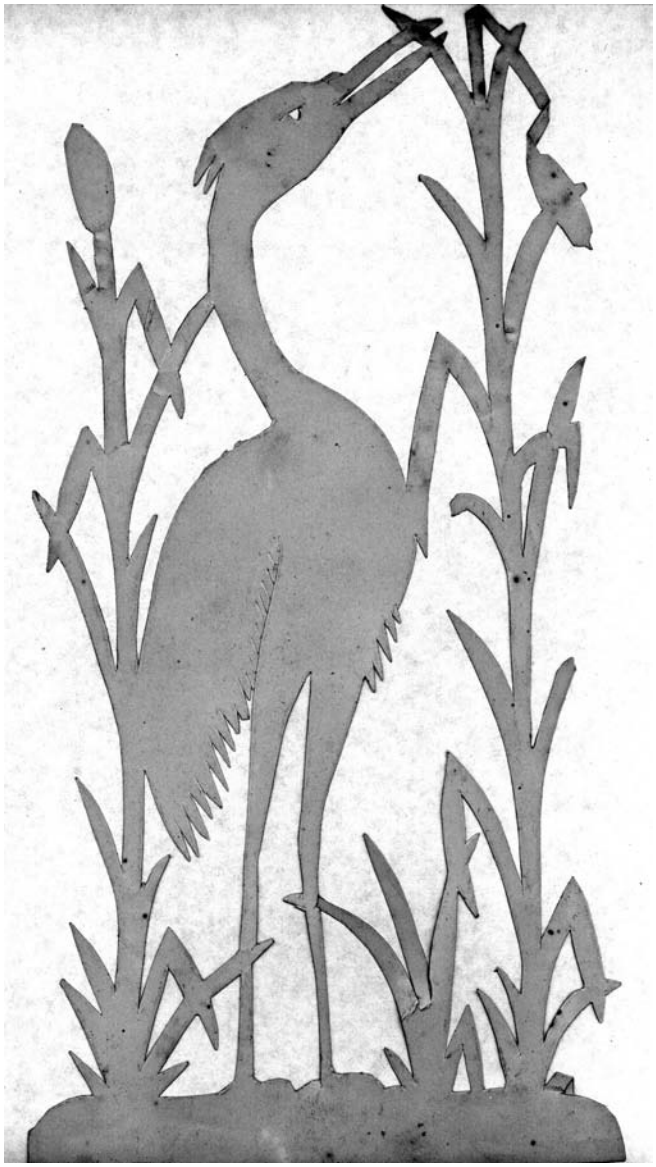
For Robert W. Frizzell, Director of Libraries at Northwest Missouri State University, learning more about German immigrants from Hanover to Freedom Township/ Lafayette County in Western Missouri (just east of Kansas City) is a personal endeavor: his own family hails from Concordia, a town that lies at the center of the Hanovarian settlement. Not as well known as the German settlements in the "German Rhineland" on the lower Missouri River west of St. Louis, this area nevertheless has its unique place in the German-American history of Missouri. Frizzell traces the Freedom Township settlers back to the rural community of Esperke, County Neustadt in the Kingdom of Hanover; he examines their struggle to succeed in agriculture, their efforts to build a community and to preserve and develop a culture of their own. The story he presents is both representative of German immigration to America in the middle of the nineteenth century and at the same time profoundly unique, as this one-time somewhat arbitrary choice of location shaped the fate of the settlement for generations to come.

The story begins in July 1837 when one Friedrich Dierking, his extended family, and some others from the Esperke region decide to leave for a better life in America. Frizzell surmises that this group, like many others at the time, was influenced by the 1829 publication *Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nordamerikas* (Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America) by Gottfried Duden. [See the spring 2008 issue of the MKI Newsletter for more on Duden and his travels to Missouri.]

When the Dierking party arrived, the frontier had moved more than a hundred miles west of Duden's property, and they purchased land in Lafayette County. Soon, other immigrants followed, and by 1870 the area's residents numbered over 2000, the vast majority—in typical chain-migration fash-

Continued on page 10

Collection Feature continued from page 3



Cut-out figure found in the Bible.

there are also three bills from a Monopoly game within the Bible, with values of 100, 200, and 1,000. Perhaps this was a statement being made by one of the Bible's owners on the worth of the mark?

There are two other items of interest stashed away in this Bible: one is a clipping from a German-language newspaper concerning diphtheria, which begins, "Recently I brought [learned?] a new treatment for this rightfully-feared illness from a German newspaper. Since then a kind reader in Columbus, Nebraska, sent me a clipping from a newspaper featuring another cure, which I am glad to publish here." The article goes on to explain how Herr R. Münch in Leipzig successfully treated his seven-year-old daughter's diphtheria using "rectified oil of turpentine." The article, which has no visible date, mentions at the end that Herr Münch received a 10,000-mark prize from Kaiserin Augusta for discovering the remedy. Augusta had the title Empress from 1888-1921, which helps us to date this article. Did the Bible's owner have a child suffering from diphtheria? Did someone place the article within its pages as a form of prayer or protection?

From this rather sober concept, we come to the final item of mention, a rather bawdy piece of humor in German that, since it appears to be an often-reproduced photocopy, cannot possibly be very old. In the form of a letter from a husband to his wife, it details the reasons why—although the man made 365 attempts to engage in marital bliss over the previous year—he was successful only thirty-six times. The reasons for failure range from her being too cold, too hot, or too tired; to headaches, backaches, and "technical reasons." Naturally, even the thirty-six successful instances are discounted as being bereft of pleasure for various reasons. Interestingly, one can search on the Internet and find copies of the letter "Meine liebe Ehefrau," along with the wife's response to "Mein lieber Ehemann."

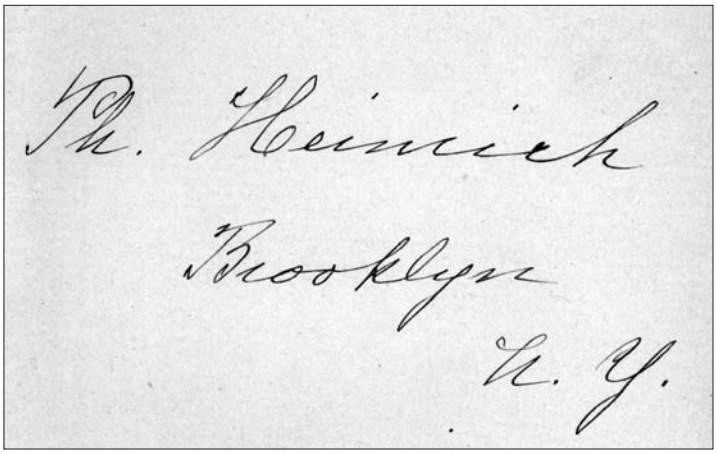
So, we can't say anything for certain about the owners of the Bible except that at least one family member kept it from sometime after 1875 until probably in the 1960s. These people may have come from Minden, Germany, and—if the name was Kaufmann—may have settled in Iowa. One of the children may have suffered from diphtheria. One family member engaged in paper cut-outs as a hobby. The family either was in Germany during the inflationary years or received examples of money from relatives or friends still living there. And finally, someone had a sense of humor, even more so

German [?] Monopoly money.

Woodcut of a stag hunt sent with Christmas greetings.

since they chose a Bible to save that particular item!

The second book, about the history of German immigrants in all parts of the Union, contains fewer items and an even less-definite picture of its owner or owners. The name Th. Heinrich of Brooklyn, N.Y. was inscribed on the first blank page. This is a rather ambiguous name, as it could be a first and middle name, or Heinrich might be a family name. Confusion is compounded with the discovery of a slip of paper upon which the following is written: "Herrn Heinrich Müller, Waldemarstr. 27C, 650 Bad Kreuznach." There is also a bookmark depicting a stag hunt woodcut, on the back of which is written, in English: "Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year to Tony & Mrs. Hausen from their friend Danny."



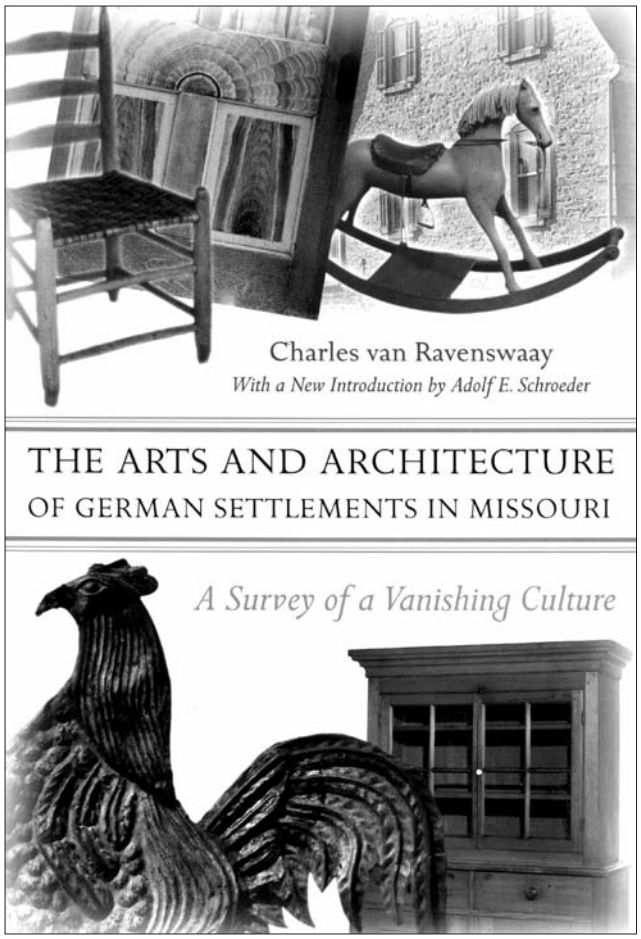
The one item of vegetation found pressed between the pages turns out to be a four-leaf clover, although, sadly, one petal has broken off. Perhaps the good luck has broken, too, for I cannot gather much information from the following items: an article in English from 1952 titled "Carl Schurz's Contribution Remembered"; an article in German about the nuclear submarine Nautilus's 1958 voyage in the waters of the North Pole; a 1960 article in German about General von Steuben, apparently from a German-American newspaper; an English-language article about the Devil's Dictionary of Ambrose Bierce (copyright 1961); and a 1962 clipping from a German newspaper about a zoo in Etelsen near Achim, founded by Alwin Trey. The last three items are undated: a clipping about the mistreatment of twelve Jewish citizens in Frankfurt; a small clipping about Frau Dora Riebeling who celebrated 50 years of running a lunch stand at the Deichtormarkt in Hamburg; and a typed version of the song, "La Paloma," with words by Albert Stadthagen. The variety of interests expressed by these items makes it difficult to infer much about the person or persons who collected them. That some express a pride in the accomplishments of German Americans is certainly fitting, given the subject of the book in which they were kept.

Picture from an article about the submarine Nautilus (1958).

I hope you have enjoyed this admittedly limited and conjectural view into the lives of these German-American book owners. Please continue to investigate and tell the stories of your ancestors, and please continue to donate German-language materials published in America to the Institute's library!

Book Reviews continued from page 7

ion—coming from the same corner of the Kingdom of Hanover. Frizzell analyses in great detail the socio-economic background of individual immigrants and the impact their personal standing in the Old World had on their success in the New. As it turns out, shaking off European social limitations was relatively easy on the frontier, but economic background made all the difference on the road to success. Those who—like Friedrich Dierking—had land and property to sell in Hanover, could immediately invest the proceeds in good, often improved land in Missouri. Others, who were not able to buy a viable piece of land in the New World right away, had to work for wages in St. Louis or on a neighbor's farm. On the whole, however, the new community did well growing hemp and selling it to cotton bailers in the South.



In one chapter, Frizzell describes the role of church and religion in the Hanoverian community. He notes correctly that this group was probably not motivated to emigrate for religious reasons. Once in America, however, churches were among the few institutions where immigrants could preserve their traditions and speak their languages undisturbed. The Hanoverians, once members of the official Lutheran state church of Hanover, faced many challenges in organizing and managing their fledgling churches or even deciding what denomination to join. At the same time, the largest group in the settlement—including the extended Dierking family—took advantage of another privilege of the New World: the freedom not to join any church at all.

While these experiences do not differ significantly from those of other German immigrants at the time, the Hanoverians of Lafayette County found themselves in a unique and problematic situation at the time of the Civil War. The property they had acquired more than two decades earlier lay in the region called "Little Dixie." The German immigrants had small hemp farms in the Southern part of Lafayette County, while large Anglo-American hemp plantations operating with slave labor were found in the Northern part. The German Americans' opposition to slavery on moral, political, and economic grounds had long been cause for disagreement between Anglos and Germans. Now the two groups found themselves on opposite sides in the war. When Western Missouri was occupied by Union troops, German settlers in particular suffered brutal attacks by guerilla groups, gangs, and insurgent Confederate troops. Frizzell includes in the appendix a number of hair-raising letters written by witnesses to those raids, which are published here in English translation for the first time.

After the Civil War, the Hanoverian settlement recovered economically, increased in population during the last big wave of German immigration in the 1880s, and established its first real town (Concordia). Its residents, however, remained somewhat isolated from their Anglo neighbors as well as from other German communities thriving in eastern Missouri. Today over 70 percent of the Freedom Township residents claim German ancestry, many still descending from the first Hanoverian families.

The Arts and Architecture of German Settlements in Missouri by Charles van Ravenswaay deals

with settlements in the Eastern part of the state. As Adolf Schroeder tells it in his new introduction, van Ravenswaay's fascination with the topic began with a visit to Arrow Rock Old Tavern in Saline County when he was ten years old. Growing up in Booneville, Missouri, but not himself of German background, van Ravenswaay saw in the building's architecture and interior design "an afterglow of an earlier, historical time." He spent his life studying culture objects and local history, collecting ballads and stories, and became director of the Missouri Historical Society and later the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum in Greenville, Delaware.

This volume is a reprint of the 1977 first edition, which resulted from a 1960s survey sponsored by the Archives of American Art "to examine and identify the contributions to the architecture and the arts and crafts of the United States in the period of 1830 to 1860 made by the German colonies established in the period in the Missouri Valley." Van Ravenswaay had initiated the survey because he recognized "that in various places throughout the Middle West concentrations of various ethnic groups had created distinctive local cultures, and that the physical remains of these cultures should be studied and recorded before the living memory of them had disappeared, the buildings had been destroyed, and the objects produced there disassociated from their sources" (p. ix).

A German farmhand ready to rake hay, Copper County, Missouri, ca. 1895. From *The Arts and Architecture of German Settlements in Missouri*.

For the survey van Ravenswaay chose German settlements mostly in the counties on the lower Missouri River and to the west of St. Louis. What makes his work so extraordinary is the fact that he did not just take pictures and notes and study objects, but also tried to uncover the story behind the buildings, barns, furniture pieces, household items, and various other pieces of craftsmanship. He found out as much as he could about the craftsman who had made a given item, the owner of the object, and the community it grew out of, drawing on whatever documents he could find, studying letters, census data, and old newspapers, and conducting numerous interviews.

In fact, the first hundred pages of the book are a detailed account of the German settlers who came to the counties surveyed. They included the "Latin farmers," well educated people of means, who were inspired by the writings of Duden but often failed miserably in the harsh reality on the Missouri frontier; the members of emigration societies, who tried to create utopian communities in the New World; settlement societies of Germans who migrated from communities in the eastern United States; the "Ossagens," very poor families from the Osnabrück area, described by their contemporaries as "uneducated, dirty ruffians," but who in time turned out to be successful farmers; etc. Thus, by the time we read in the second part of the book about a specific building, for example, we are already familiar with its owner and builder, its history and occupants. An inanimate object has come to life.

In the second part of *The Arts and Architecture*, van Ravenswaay goes into great detail concerning the different German building styles, and in the third part he covers in equal detail various crafts and objects of domestic use, such as furniture, musical instruments, baskets, iron ware, or textiles. Both sections include a wealth of images. Van

Continued on page 12

Book Review continued from page 11

Ravenswaay concludes that German immigrants "seldom duplicated exactly what they had made in the old country […], but what they did make was more the product of the Old World than the New, a blending of various imported traditions with the demands of their particular American frontier," influenced heavily by American traditions whenever contact existed.

For example, many poorer early German settlers first built American-style log cabins, which were easy and cheap to construct in an area abundant with wood, but they added unique traditional touches, such as a center chimney, a centered front door, or a cellar. When more resources and skilled carpenters were available, some settlers built half-timber houses and barns such as were common in their regions of origin. The harsh weather conditions in Missouri, however, did not make it practical to expose the filling between the timber pieces, and most of these buildings were covered in the American style with weather boards, making them almost indistinguishable from Anglo houses. Especially in towns, skilled bricklayers or stone masons built buildings of brick and stone, often using Old World floor plans and ornamental designs. On the other hand, some building features very common in Germany were never introduced in Missouri. These include roof tiles, outdoor bake ovens, bake ovens built into kitchen fireplaces, elaborate indoor wall and ceiling paintings, or freestanding stone walls.

If functionality overrode beautification in Missouri-German buildings, this trend was even more evident in household objects. Many immigrant craftsmen had been well trained in Germany. For example, van Ravenswaay's survey found furniture makers skilled in making delicate and ornate cabinets in the popular German *Biedermeier* style. In Missouri, however, simple peasant and American styles were more popular, and those artisans who "could have made more sophisticated furniture adjusted to the fact that their chief market was among the families whose needs were as modest as their funds." On the other hand, certain valuable woods that were rare in Europe were abundantly available in Missouri, and simple furniture that would have been made of pine in Europe was now made of walnut or wild cherry. Overall, van Ravenswaay concludes that the area he studied is a microcosm of German regional designs of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century adjusted to the new Missouri environment, and that most Missouri-German examples presented a continuation of Germanic peasant styles. Differences in style and expression soon developed even between the communities in this small rural sample, leading to distinct local cultures.

Van Ravenswaay does not look at the buildings and objects in the Hanoverian settlements of Lafayette County, and Frizzell does not go as deeply into the stories of the German immigrants a few counties to the East, many of whom incidentally also came from the Kingdom of Hanover. Both books in their own way—and especially when read together—successfully convey the richness of rural Missouri history and the imprint left by early German immigrants on the region, its local culture, and landscape.

Notes from the Board continued from page 2

What's the point of all this? First, we realize that Platt still connects Germans and Americans. Low German is still spoken widely in Germany, although sadly the Eastern Pomeranian variety is disappearing. The same, unfortunately, must be said about the Platt speakers in Wisconsin. Thus, the linguistic work done at the Max Kade Institute is so important. The MKI's sound archive of dialect recordings might well be our only language link to the time when Platt was widely used in everyday life here in Wisconsin. We are grateful for the *German Words, American Voices* CD package compiled and edited by Mark Louden, and we hope that the facilities and resources of the Max Kade Institute in Madison will continue to be used in the future to document the history, culture, and language of Wisconsin's German immigrants, and the Low German speakers among them.

Report of the 2008 Annual Meeting & Dinner of the Friends of the MKI

by Adam Woodis, MKI Project Assistant

On Saturday, May 17th, the bus left Milwaukee at 6:45 a.m. and pulled away from Madison at 8:30. On it were 29 Friends headed to Wausau for the Annual Meeting. To pass time on the way, Peter Monkmeyer led the group in singing traditional German songs. At the Historical Society in Wausau—situated in the beautiful Woodson House (acquired by the Historical Society in 1995), which was built in 1914 by the daughter and son-in-law of Cyrus Yawkey, whose magnificent home stands directly across McIndoe St.—we met up with approximately 70 other Friends and commenced the day's activities, beginning with the Annual Meeting of the Friends.

MKI Friends Dottie and Bob Luening on the bus to Wausau.

The events of the day were organized by the Pommerscher Verein of Central Wisconsin, in particular brothers Don and DuWayne Zamzow and Wausau Historical Society Librarian Gary Gisselman. The members of the Pommerscher Verein were dressed in the beautiful and elaborate traditional *Jamunder Tracht* (folk costume). These costumes—thanks to the inspiration of Wilma Giese—are in every way authentic; this includes the special fabric used to make them, which was hand-woven for them in Poland. The colors of the *Tracht* are all symbolic: red symbolizes the griffin (a mythological creature that is half lion, half eagle) that dominates the Verein's crest and stands for strength and speed, and also for the blood shed during the wars in Pomerania and the United States; green stands for the white pine forests and the farming in both Pomerania and Marathon County; black symbolizes the church as well as the plow; blue is for the Baltic Sea; the gold thread inlay stands for the sun (the rays of new life); and the women's jewelry is made of amber, which is found in abundance in Pomerania. The pride the members of the Pommerscher Verein have in their homeland is quite evident, and their renown stretches far beyond the borders of Marathon County and Wisconsin: they take occasional trips to Pomerania, where they have developed many connections, and they have been invited by the mayors of both New York City and Philadelphia to display their *Tracht* and talk about their heritage.

After the meeting, we embarked on a narrated tour of the area that began in Wausau. Originally called Big Bull Falls, the name was changed around 1850 to Wausau, which means "far-away place" in Ojibwa, the language spoken by the Chippewa Indians inhabiting the area at the time. On the tour of this beautiful city on the Wisconsin River in North-Central Wisconsin, we learned the history of German settlement in the area, which dates back to the 1850s, when the first Germans came to Marathon City, 12 miles west of Wausau. This first wave of settlers was comprised of both Catholics and Lutherans who, shortly after arriving here, built churches and established newspapers, and made their living mainly by farming

Continued on page 14

Annual Dinner continued from page 13

and in the lumber industry. The strong Catholic and Lutheran influence and their pride in their new home is still evident today in Wausau, where many streets are named after early Germans, Civil War generals, and U.S. presidents. St. Mary's German Catholic Church dominates Grand Ave., and St. Paul's United Church of Christ (orig. St. Paul's Evangelical Church)—the first non-denominational Protestant church in Wausau—stands tall on the corner of Washington and 5th Streets.

Dancing Pomeranians!

Central to the community is Marathon Park, which is located adjacent to the University of Wisconsin-Marathon County campus. The land for this park was donated to Wausau by August Kickbusch, a German immigrant who was elected the city's first mayor. German life in nineteenth-century Wausau revolved around church and social clubs such as the Schützenverein (sharpshooter's club), the Turnverein (gymnastics club), and the Deutscher Krieger Verein (Veterans of German Wars), some of which are still active today. Germans were also instrumental in reshaping Wausau's economy at the beginning of the twentieth century when the lumber industry began to decline.

After leaving Wausau, we traveled through areas of heavy German influence in Marathon County: Marathon City, Stettin, Little Chicago, Hamburg, and Berlin. We were told about the ginseng crops in Stettin (one of only two places in the United States to which the root is native), the red granite deposits in Marathon City, and the history of the Fromm Brothers' trade in fox and mink fur and the Maple Grove School (a.k.a. "Little Red Schoolhouse in the Woods") in Hamburg. We were also shown examples of traditional architecture, including the Pomeranian barn, with its distinctive forebay, and several German churches.

We spent the afternoon in the town of Berlin. After a tour of St. Paul's Lutheran Synod—where Mary Monkmeyer demonstrated the church's organ for us—we entered the Berlin Center. Informational displays about Marathon County culture and the history of the journey of the Pomeranian immigrants were set up in the gymnasium. Fresh local cheese curds and beer from the Bull Falls Brewery of Wausau were on hand, and we were treated to festive traditional dances by the Pommerscher Verein. After several hours of entertainment and conversation, we returned to Wausau.

The day concluded with dinner at Hereford & Hops in Wausau, during which newly-elected President of the Friends Karyl Rommelfanger regaled us with a story from her past to illustrate the importance of document preservation. She encour-

aged everyone to pass documents pertaining to family history on to the MKI so they may be interpreted and properly preserved. We also heard from Friends Treasurer Greg Smith, who spoke about the plans for next year's gathering in Beaver Dam, where the history of Hessian influence in Dodge County will be the theme. Everyone, agreeing that the day had been exceptional, lavished thanks on the members of the Pommerscher Verein and is looking forward to next year.

The Verein's banner.

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