Max Kade Institute
Friends Newsletter

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WHAT'S INSIDE:

Conference explores tales of immigration

By Nicole Saylor, CSUMC Archivist

Stories of contact with other cultures are at the heart of the immigrant experience. These narratives can cultivate a sense of cultural identity, but they can also be a means of control or exclusion. They are a lens into the teller's values and biases, and may reveal the "truth" but not necessarily the facts. Stories can help sustain a dying language, and provide a critical perspective on U.S. immigration's impact not only on those who encountered the newcomers but on those who stayed behind.

Kathrin Pöge-Alder speaks on how immigrant storytellers treat traditional German folktales.

Storytellers, linguists, folklorists, historians, and community members convened Nov. 11–13, 2004 to explore these threads and much more during a three-day conference, "Tales of Contact and Change: Traditional Stories of Immigration," at the Pyle Center on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus. The event—a blend of panels, scholarly presentations, and evening story concerts—was co-sponsored by the Max Kade Institute and the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures. More than sixty people signed in at the event, coming from Madison; the Wisconsin communities of Mequon, Onalaska, Summit Lake, and Sussex; and as far away as California and Germany.

The event kicked off Thursday night with a conference reception prior to a provocative keynote address by Jack Zipes. A professor at the University of Minnesota, an internationally recognized

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MKI resources attracting researchers

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

We are looking back on a fall semester of hard work and success. The exterior of the Keystone House was repaired and brightened with a new coat of paint, and some of the carpet inside was replaced. Workstations throughout the house have continued to hum with activity, signaling that ongoing projects are progressing. In November the conference on "Tales of Contact and Change: Traditional Stories of Immigration" (sponsored by the MKI and the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures) took place and was well received. Financial support for the conference came from the Wisconsin Humanities Council with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin, and the Friends of the Max Kade Institute with funds from the Federal Republic of Germany/Consulate General Chicago. And, finally, a new MKI publication appeared and is available in bookstores: *German Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich (Madison: MKI, 2004). On the whole, as we take stock at year's end, we feel that we should be very pleased.

It is satisfying to note that the MKI's library and archive holdings have been attracting visitors from other parts of the United States and from abroad. Since the summer, visitors from Germany have included: (1) Bernadette Friedrichs, a master's degree candidate in History at the University of Mainz and a student of Professor Helmut Schmahl, who came in June and in November to do research on the Forty-eighters; (2) Dr. Ulrike Brenning, a writer, documentary filmmaker, and television journalist from Hannover, who teaches interdisciplinary media studies in both Hannover and Göttingen, and who came to the UW in the fall as a Brittingham Visiting Scholar; (3) Dr. Dieter H. Lange, a retired art history professor from Hannover, who is doing research on Gustav Blöde; (4) Dr. Holger Kersten, a professor of American Studies at the University of Magdeburg, who participated in the November conference; and (5) Dr. Helmut Schmahl, a long-time friend and fellow inhabitant of the MKI, who now teaches American history at the University of Mainz and who also took part in the conference. We are happy to welcome these and other visitors who come to use our resources, and we thank them both for their interest and for spreading word about the MKI and our work here when they return to their home bases.

Please visit our Web site (http://csumc.wisc.edu/mki) to stay on top of announcements and activities at the MKI. Click on "News & Events" to find information about our American Languages digitization project, new publications, forthcoming events, and new library acquisitions, as well as to visit our Newsletter Archive. Also please note that the MKI library can now again be searched online.

Finally, we look forward to seeing you during the spring semester, and in the meanwhile, we wish all of you the best for the holiday season and energy and happiness to meet the challenges of the year ahead.

Cora Lee and Mark

Max Kade Institute

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Family letters inspired Ritsche to write novel

By Antje Petty, MKI Assistant Director

It all began with a shoebox Marita Ritsche received one day from her sister: a box filled with letters written to their father, Theodor Ritsche, who had passed away. Theodor had left his hometown of Daisendorf near Meersburg on Lake Constance, Germany, in 1923 for a new life in the American Midwest. For Marita, reading the letters began a process of deeper interest in the life of her father, research into the experiences of German Americans after WWI, and a wish to share her father's story with a wider audience, which ultimately led her to the Max Kade Institute.

Marita Ritsche

Her work resulted in *Cross Currents—In the Wake of the Great War* (Prinstar, 2005), a creative nonfictional account woven around her eighteen-year-old father's journey. The story begins in "The Old Country" with Theodor Ritsche's train ride across Germany in August 1923. "Across the Big Pond" continues with a re ection on that unlikely community of emigrants on an ocean liner who have little more than destination and hope in common. In "The New Country," we experience the final leg of Theodor's journey in September as he takes another train ride, this time across the Midwest to Eden Valley, Minnesota, where he has to face the realities of beginning the new life of a stranger in a foreign land.

Says Marita: "I did not want to write a chronological account of my father's life, because this would have made for a boring read. Using the tools of creative non-fiction allowed me to describe the essence of the person my father was and the times he lived in." Marita is already working on a sequel about the next stage in Theodor Ritsche's life: the making of a successful furniture manufacturer, businessman, and family man.

Even though Marita grew up with her German-speaking father and a mother of German heritage, she did not learn German at home. In high school she studied Spanish and became a Spanish teacher, working in Wisconsin schools for twenty-three years. Marita credits her late husband, UW–Milwaukee geography professor Robert Reich for awakening her first interest in German language, culture, and literature. She learned the language when the family stayed in Germany for sabbaticals in the sixties and early seventies and eventually decided to get a master's degree in Germanics.

Now in her retirement Marita is busier than ever. In addition to writing books and researching German-American history, she is involved in global awareness projects, international peace and justice, ecology and the environment, and remains an active participant in the Wisconsin Association of Foreign Language Teachers. Her commitment to teaching and lifelong learning extends to her involvement in the Unitarian Church North in Mequon, WI, where at present she is Adult Religious Education Co-Chair. The church was built in 1987 in the style of the nineteenth-century octagonal Clausing barns in Ozaukee County.

Elias Molee and the dream of an international language

By Mark L. Louden, MKI Co-Director

Today, there are approximately 6,000 languages spoken around the world, yet shockingly, it is estimated that by the turn of the next century, at least half—yes, half— of these will be extinct, meaning that they will no longer be used by speakers who acquired them natively as children. The crisis of language endangerment has garnered a lot of attention from us linguists, who are doing what we can to offset this tragic loss of cultural diversity by supporting efforts to promote maintenance of threatened languages, and at the very least document them for future generations. Most endangered languages are spoken by small minority populations, often indigenous peoples, who are shifting to majority languages such as English, Spanish, and Portuguese in the Americas; Russian in the vast expanse of central and northern Asia; and Chinese in the People's Republic.

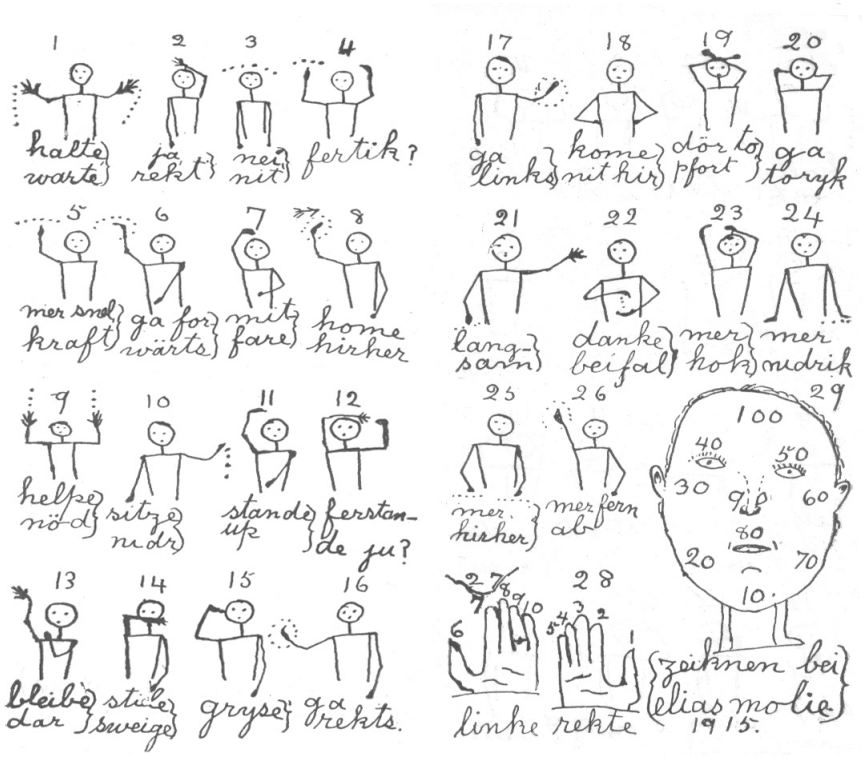
Elias Molee (1839-1928)

While some observers are inclined to view the growing dominance of fewer, numerically superior supraregional languages as a positive sign of breaking down barriers to communication among diverse peoples—the "good side" of globalization—linguists and others would prefer it if we could have our cake and eat it too by being bi- or multilingual. In the German-speaking world, Swiss Germans and Luxembourgers show how it is possible and desirable to preserve linguistic varieties of limited communicative range (e.g., Swiss German, Luxembourgish) while also teaching children to speak international languages like Standard German, French, and English. The cultural heritages of smaller communities are thereby preserved but not at the expense of isolating their members from the rest of the "global village."

Some supporters of bilingualism have gone one step further, by attempting to actually create new languages that can serve as auxiliary forms of international communication. The most famous and successful of these "planned languages" is Esperanto, created in 1887 by a Polish Jewish eye doctor, Ludwig L. Zamenhof (1859–1917). It was Zamenhof's dream to develop a culturally neutral language that would be easily learned by children and adults, in much the same way that, say, mathematics is universal. The grammar of Esperanto is refreshingly simple—only sixteen basic, exceptionless rules. Its vocabulary is drawn mainly from the Romance, Germanic, and Slavic languages, not for reasons of European chauvinism but for the practical fact that most people who would need to communicate internationally are likely to already be familiar with a language from one of these branches of the Indo-European family. While Esperanto never achieved the universal stature Zamenhof hoped it would, it is spoken by perhaps as many as two million people today, including some who have acquired it natively as children.

Among the literally dozens of different planned languages proposed over the last century and a half is the brain child of a fascinating Norwegian American from Wisconsin, Elias Molee. Born in Muskego (near Milwaukee)

in 1845 to immigrants from Norway (the family name was originally Mølie), Molee devoted much of his life to the creation of a language that was an amalgamation of English, German, Dutch, and the Scandinavian languages, which he called variously "Germanik English," "Saxon English," "nu tutonish," "alt(e)utonish," or simply "tutonish." (The latter three monikers represent his decision around the turn of the century to avoid all capital letters in writing for reasons of orthographic simplicity.) In a quirky pamphlet he wrote in 1919 titled *molee's wandering, an autobiography with many surprising adventures and doings*, Molee tells fascinating stories of growing up in mid-nineteenth-century Wisconsin. Here is part of how he was inspired to later develop a "Teutonic international language" (The spelling and punctuation follow the original, with the exception of letters I have added where Molee employed shorthand forms for high-frequency words like *and* and *the*.) He begins by talking about picking plums with neighbor children.



Molee also developed an inventory of 100 hand signals in conjunction with alteutonic.

"... when mrs. adams saw us, molee's children, she let henry [a]n[d] mary go with us. they took a little home made basket with them. we waved our tin pails with 1 hand and made motion with the other, saying 'kom pluck plum.' henry and mary followed us. half way between our homes was a large thicket of the best and sweetest plums, i have ever seen or tasted. torgrim tveito soon cried out to the rest, 'kom her te me' (come here to me). the other children repeated those words over and over again, as is natural to young boys and girls 'kom her te me.'

"in this way we learned to understand one another more and more from day to day. 1 day we caught hold of 1 or 2 english words from henry and mary adams. at another time, 1 or 2 words from otto and emma shumaker in low german, sometimes they learned 1, 2 or 3 words from the tveit[o] or the molee children in norwegian. as the norwegian and german children were the most numerous, the new union language leaned largely towards the teutonic side with very few latin words.

"we added to our stock of words from day to day, week to week and month to month, until we children had a new and complete language of our own make, sufficient for all our needs. it was a wonderful speech. it must be confessed, but we could, after a surprisingly short time speak it as easily and u-ently, as our own mother tongues.

"father called our home-made union tongue, in jest, 'tutitu.' we adopted that name for our new language. . . . after we had learned the tutitu union language, we children liked it so well that we spoke it at home even among ourselves. we also used it as interpreters between our parents. when mrs. adams or mrs. shumaker came to our house, they always took along with them henry or mary

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Elias Molee continued from Page 5

or otto or emma, and sometimes both, they were all very anxious to visit their neighbor's children, where they could speak the easy 'tutitu,' . . . mrs. adams told henry in english what she wanted and henry told it to me, in tutitu and i explained it to mother in norwegian. . . . in this way tutitu became an international speech, a go-between among different peoples and tongues. at last our parents began to understand tutitu also, but they could not speak it, for want of practice."

Molee's anecdotes here clearly illustrate the natural linguistic facility of children, not to mention their refreshing ignorance of (adult) ethnic lines of division. As an adult, though, Molee's plans for a pan-Germanic language had a distinct tone of chauvinism about them. In one of his several short books on the topic, *Tutonish: An International Teutonic Tongue*, Molee describes his crusade as "an educational and business proposition for the welfare and safety of the whole Teutonic race." His mention later of the "danger of Russia" clearly speaks to an age-old fear on the part of some Western and Northern Europeans of "Slavonic" (read: Russian) expansionism, a fear that to some extent underlies tensions between East and West in post-Cold War Europe today.

So what did Molee's "Teutonic union tongue" look like? As in Esperanto, the grammar was intended to be as simple as possible, avoiding the morphological complexities (e.g., verb conjugations, noun cases) of existing languages like Standard German. As a sample, here is the Lord's Prayer in tutonish. Following German spelling practice, <ie> is pronounced like English "ee" and <ei> like "eye."

du lord'on bied

vio fadr hu bi in hevn; holirn bi dauo nam;
dauo reik kom, dauo vil bi dun an erd, as it bi in hevn;
giv vi dis dag vio dagli bred, and fergiv vi vio shuld,
as vi fergiv vio shuldrs; lied vi not intu fersieku,
but befrie vi from ievl, fyr dauo bi du reik, and du
makt and du herlinu fyr ever. amen.

Molee's "wandering" led him away from Wisconsin for most of his life. After high school, he had initial plans to become a minister, which took him to Luther College, where he became a student of the great American Scandinavianist, Rasmus B. Anderson. Molee followed Anderson to Albion Academy in southeastern Dane County, WI, where he received a bachelor's degree, and finally, briefly, to the University of Wisconsin (where Anderson founded the nation's first Scandinavian studies department). Molee eventually moved westward again, marrying and divorcing in Minnesota, and finally ending up in Washington State, where, as a sometime land speculator, he succeeded in attracting Norwegians from the Midwest and Europe to settle in the Palouse region, near LaCrosse, WA. Molee himself did not stay in this community long, moving instead to Tacoma. Modest revenue from speculation there enabled him to travel, in 1909, to Norway, where he made contacts with sympathetic academics, founded "the first alteutonic union language society," and even gained an audience with King Haakon VII, with whom he claimed to chat, seated on a "costly cushion chair," in alteutonic!

Molee returned to Washington, where he continued his quixotic efforts on behalf of a "union tongue" until September 28, 1928, when he died in a Tacoma residential hotel, the victim of a self-in icted gunshot wound.

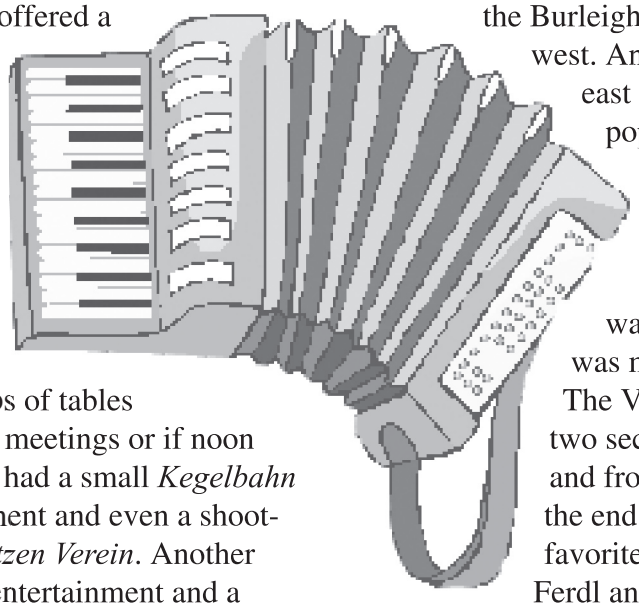
I am grateful to Dr. Marvin G. Slind, professor of history at Luther College, for kindly providing me with a copy of his article, "elias molee and 'alteutonic': A Norwegian-American's 'Universal Language'," *to appear in* Norwegian-American Studies*, edited by the Norwegian-American Historical Association. The photograph of Molee, which I obtained from that article, was furnished to Dr. Slind by Molee's great-nephew, Monte Holm of Moses Lake, WA, to whom I am also, indirectly, grateful. The image of Molee's hand signals is taken from the last pages of his 1919* wandering*. For an excellent online reference on planned languages, see http://www.rickharrison.com/language/bibliography.html. If you want to see the* Lord's Prayer *in Esperanto, log on to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord's_Prayer#Esperanto.*

Milwaukee's German-American taverns in the 1940s

Memories of Elfrieda Bergmann Haese

In earlier days Milwaukee was often questioned about what seemed like an inordinate number of taverns. Along the main streets there was one on every corner with a little *Kneipe* [a smaller bar, usually without tables], tucked into the middle of the block.

Neighborhood taverns played a significant role in German immigrant life in the 1940s and continued to do so into the 1950s as a new surge of post-war immigrants came to Milwaukee. Taverns still play a part in Milwaukee life but the roles have changed with the times and many of the buildings have turned to other uses.



The neighborhood tavern offered a wide variety of activities to both recent and established residents; it was a place where you were welcome and everyone not only knew your name but how to pronounce it. Most were long and rather narrow with either a meeting hall in the back or groups of tables that could be rearranged for meetings or if noon lunches were served. A few had a small *Kegelbahn* [bowling alley] in the basement and even a shooting range for the local *Schützen Verein*. Another role was Saturday evening entertainment and a Sunday gathering spot for families Lunches were served to neighboring brewery or other factory workers and checks were cashed on payday.

They also served as rehearsal halls for dance and theater groups, *Gesangvereine*, sports clubs such as the Fisch und Jagd Klub, a wrestling club, and various *Vergnügungs* clubs. These were small groups with a common interest in getting together to socialize. The Austrian Klub Edelweiss, the Silesian, the Bayerischer Vergnügungs Verein, and so on, to name a few.

Following is a short but more detailed description of some of these roles.

Tavern "Routes"

Routes were defined by neighborhoods. The 3rd Street route usually began at Kuchler's on 3rd just south of Vine. It was a favorite entertainment spot where they also served lunches to Schlitz brewery workers and held weekly meetings. From there you continued one block west to Schwartz's on 4th St., over to North Ave. and one block west to Schoegler's on 5th, and to 3rd to work your way back home. I have only given you one version of the 3rd St. route, but there were many other options available. If you turned north to Center St. there was the Center St. walk and five or so blocks the Burleigh St. tour, which headed west. And so it went, north, south, east or west. It was a densely populated city of sociable people who gathered for recreation, conversation, and a good time.

Another popular "tour" was along Vliet Street, which was more Austrian and Swiss. The Vliet tour was broken into two sections, from 3rd to 27th and from 27th to 50th, which was the end of the streetcar line. My favorites along that route included Ferdl and Mitzie's, where a husband and wife duo sang and yodeled to his zither accompaniment. Another was the Swiss Club, which featured a singing bartender and Al Mueller, one of Milwaukee's famous zither players. One could also enjoy the (to me) quaint Swiss dialect, the handsome young gymnasts, and one of the regulars, a woman who smoked cigars.

The Vliet St. tour ended at 50th St. at Binter's Bar, which was known as Binter's Garten because of the variety and abundance of plants in its front windows. Because of the distance involved, these routes were usually covered over a few weekends. These extended "tours" were usually begun or

Milwaukee taverns continued from Page 7

ended by streetcar.

A Miscellaneous Sampler

The Blue Eagle, across the street from Jefferson Hall, was known for its liver dumpling soup . . . Karl and Gretchen, this couple had traveled as professional *Schuhplattler* and offered a complete alpine show . . . Tiroler Hans, songs from Tirol with guitar . . . Wiener Toni, songs in the Viennese style and dialect . . . Triangle Inn, rehearsal hall for a Bavarian dance group . . . The Schwabenhof on 12th St. . . . The Vergnügungs Club on Vliet . . . The Stadt München, and so forth.

Women bar owners were not that uncommon. Those known to me worked at Die Lustige Wirtin on Van Buren and State (my grandmother), Mariechen's on 3rd near Center, and Mathilda's on Center near 3rd.

Saturday Entertainment

Many of the bar owners were talented entertainers and either sang, danced, yodeled, or played an instrument. If the proprietor was not able to provide the entertainment the customers were more than happy to do so. It was not unusual for a customer to enter with an instrument in hand. Zithers, guitars, violins, accordions, button boxes, and cornets were often heard. With all the male choruses around, there was always a group of singers gathered around one end of the bar or the other. Each group had its "star." You could always count on a top tenor, bass, or baritone to be present and sing a solo, accompanied by the "house band." If word got out that "der" bass or "der" jodeler, (no names needed) or any other favorite was going to be at a particular tavern, everyone headed over that way and business boomed. I can remember many a bartender beaming as he began linking up the glasses in anticipation of the rush when my dad (der basso profundo) walked in. It was a vibrant, enriching environment. People of all ages joined together in G*emütlichkeit* and good conversation.

Culinary Delights

House specialties were available, usually on the house and came with the cover charge, which was just opening the door and walking in. Some of the delights offered were pickled eggs in a jar, sour herring, raw beef and onions, head cheese (commonly known as *Sülze*), pickled pigs feet, and, if you hit it right, there might even be goulash left over from noon lunches. With a little noshing along the way and the walks in between, you usually arrived home in fairly steady condition, helped along by the fact that overindulgence was frowned upon in the neighborhood bars.

Sunday Afternoon

Sunday was family day. After church Dad got to go the tavern for a little *Frühschoppen*, a morning or lunchtime drink. This was also known as "free schluppen" in Milwaukee because the first drink was on the house. In the meantime, Mama got to go home with the children and prepare dinner, serve dinner, and do the dishes before the family returned to the tavern for an afternoon with friends and neighbors. Hence the phrase, "Kinder, Kirche und Küche."

Schoegler's, on the corner of 5th and North Ave., was a popular neighborhood gathering spot for families. It was large enough for booths along two sides where the ladies could knit, crochet, and tend to baby as they drank a glass of wine or engage in a lively *Kaffee Klatsch*. It was not unusual for baby to be safely tucked out of the way under the booth at mother's feet in a sturdy cardboard box in a cozy little nest of hand-knit blankets, crochet trimmed pillows, and a little bonnet for protection from the dreaded "draft."

There were tables in the middle for the children to run around or hide under. The tops were used for coloring books and games if they got too rambunctious and were told to settle down. Other tables were taken by the Schafskopf players, who for the most part showed a remarkable tolerance for the little rascals. Of course the usual group of singers was at the far end of the bar and Pa Schoegler could always be counted on for a few songs on the accordion or button box.

Lots of conversation, neighborhood gossip, local news, *Verein* updates, a little home-spun philosophy were also the order of the day. My mother once made the suggestion that we subscribe to the German newspaper. My dad's reply was typical and tongue-in-cheek, "Na ja, spar das Geld [save the money], for what do we need the newspaper? We hear all the news bei Schoegler on Sunday."

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Luxembourg-American cultural center in Ozaukee County

By Antje Petty, MKI Assistant Director

In 1845 Johann Weyker, a farmer born in Oberpallen, Luxembourg, was one of the first settlers to arrive in Port Washington, Wisconsin. He later became the first settler in the Town of Belgium. Before long several dozen families from his home region in Luxembourg had followed him to America, turning this part of Ozaukee County into one of the largest, and to this day most active, Luxembourg communities in the United States.

Almost 150 years after the arrival of those first Luxembourg settlers, their descendants came together and founded the Luxembourg-American Cultural Society in order to preserve knowledge of Luxembourg culture and heritage in America and to foster ongoing relationships between the people of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the United States. Their first project, a unique collaboration between Luxembourg Americans and their country of origin, is already well on the way: the new Luxembourg-American Cultural Center to be built in Ozaukee County. On October 26th, 2004, François Biltgen, Minister of Culture for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, headed a delegation to Port Washington and Belgium to sign a contract of collaboration in a ceremony that marked the official kick-off of the project.

The Mamer-Hansen barn near Port Washington

The Cultural Center will be built in two phases and will eventually house a museum, research center, and social/education center. Plans call for the museum to open in 2007 when the Grand Duchy will have the honor of being European Cultural Capital for a year, with that year's topic being emigration. The museum will be housed in the Mamer-Hansen stone barn, donated by Trudy and Theodore Muszynski, descendants of the Hansen family. Built in 1872, it is the last stone barn displaying Luxembourgish architecture in northern Ozaukee County. Presently located on the family farm near Port Washington, the barn will be dismantled and rebuilt on the site of the new Cultural Center. The museum will provide an opportunity to learn about emigration from Luxembourg and settlement in the United States, Luxembourg folklore and culture, the contributions of Luxembourg Americans to American society, and the history and society of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg today.

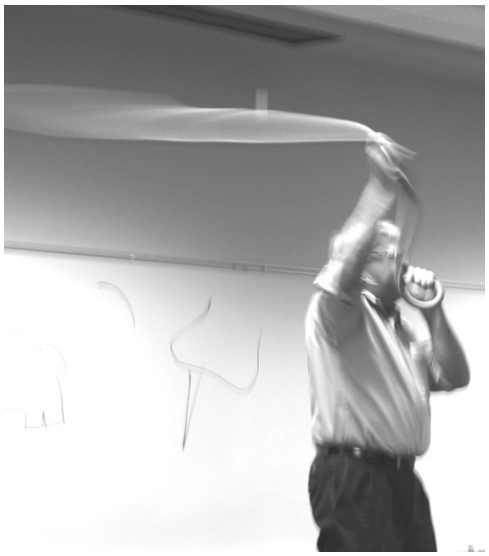
In the following years the museum will be expanded into a true cultural center by adding research facilities, rooms for educational purposes, as well as meeting rooms open to the general community. A large garden will be created as an outdoor meeting area and museum. In the long term, planners envision additions of retail and apartment space to create a center that will be an active part of a living community rather than just a museum presenting history and culture frozen in time. The Luxembourg government hopes that the center will renew Luxembourgers' interest in things American and build new relationships between the two countries, especially among youth. To this goal the Duchy will provide not only financial support but also exhibits and programming.

By connecting past and present, young and old, Americans with the Luxembourg of today and Wisconsin with the heritage of its fellow Luxembourg-Americans citizen, this project will not only be a source of pride for Luxembourg Americans, but an opportunity for local and global cultural exchange and understanding. As such, the concepts behind the planned Luxembourg-American Cultural Center in Ozaukee County might serve as inspiration to other heritage groups in this state.

Conference continued from Page 1

scholar on children's literature, and an active storyteller in public schools, Zipes' keynote address was titled "To Be or Not To Be Eaten: The Survival of Traditional Storytelling." He began by noting how folklore is filled with tales of those who eat or beat their children, including fathers, giants, trolls, sorcerers, mothers, witches, and enchantresses. Why do the halls of traditional storytelling reverberate with the tread of the esh-eating ogre? Why are adults characterized as being so cruel to children, many times their very own esh and blood? Could it have a relationship to how, in these days of war and brutality, when our national story is clouded by hysteria and our societal fabric is shredded by political and religious forces, we find ourselves once again destroying our young?

Zipes insists that traditional storytelling has been cultivated to bring about a cultural identity and foster a sense of community, but it has also been used to blind people to the realities of social and political conditions and to maintain conservative religions and the status quo in communities and nation-states. He calls for a critical analysis of all traditional tales, for us to be wary of tales that perpetuate racism, war, and other evils. Stories should be documented and preserved, but not transmitted purely for the sake of tradition if that tradition has not been critically examined, he said.



Larry Johnson's stories included a wide range of props.

Friday morning sessions focused on the use of storytelling in language and dialect preservation. Most non-English languages spoken in the U.S. are showing signs of erosion. Stories provide the much-needed cultural context that helps sustain language use. MKI Co-Director Mark Louden, the panel moderator, said that renewed interest in ethnic stories, as expressed in such forms as Klezmer music or Yiddish literature, provide a gateway to language interest. Yet only recently have linguists begun to see the importance of cultural context in language preservation, said Rand Valentine, associate professor of Linguistics and American Indian Studies at UW–Madison.

Other speakers explored the immigrant voice in literature. Holger Kersten, professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Magdeburg, spoke on the popular yet little-researched phenomenon of German-American literary dialect that appeared in a range of publications and on the stage through the nineteenth century. Typically written by Americans with no German background, Kersten sought to reframe this "dialect writing"—formerly equated with racism and negative stereotyping—as creative and imaginative word play. Helmut Schmahl, associate professor of history at the University of Mainz, examined German-language literature of Pomeranian immigrants for what it reveals about cultural contact and change. He spoke on Albert Friedrich Grimm (pen name Alfred Ira), one of the most prolific authors in Wisconsin in the late 1800s. Grimm´s novels, most of which were never translated into English, have been mostly overlooked by scholars. Schmahl's examination revealed that Ira's books offer a portrayal of the immigrant experience as seen through his oftentimes unattering depictions of members of other ethnic groups, including Yankees, Irish, and Jews.

Not all stories focused on cultural contact from the immigrants' point of view. At least two scholars offered lesser-known perspectives on U.S. immigration stories. Teresa Schenck, professor of American Indian Studies and Life Sciences Communication at UW–Madison, gave a revealing and at times humorous account of Ojibwe, Ho Chunk, and Cree Indian stories of their first contact with Europeans. In contrast to Eurocentric accounts, Native Americans were intrigued by European tools, but not in awe of the newcomers. In fact, a fair amount of suspicion accompanied these

exchanges, some recorded as early as 1633. Ships were described as moving islands with clouds (sails), and large trees (masts), and the people were scurrying around like bears. The Europeans' gift of bread was considered stale while the wine was reminiscent of blood. Christoph Schmitt, a researcher at the Institut für Volkskunde (Wossidlo-Archiv) in Rostock (Mecklenburg, Germany), explored the story within the story of *Jürnjakob Swehn, der Amerikafahrer*, published in 1917. Author Johannes Gillhoff (1861–1930) provides the most prominent example of a novel compiled from letters written by Mecklenburg emigrants. The author used Swehn's life to interpret the effects of emigration for a German readership composed of people who never emigrated.

Saturday's sessions focused on stories as a vehicle to teach children skills and help them build content knowledge. Madison elementary school teacher Mark Wagler, moderator for the morning panel on children learning from stories, said he centers his curriculum around stories, whether it's teaching students how to tell fairytales or having the children become ethnographers at home or on "cultural tours" across the state. John Berquist, who works with Chicago youth in the After School Matters Program, shared compelling examples of students' written work, current slang, and a video of inner-city children acting out Little Red Riding In the 'Hood.

The two evening story concerts offered conference-goers a chance to hear stories from both professional tellers as well as amateurs. Storytellers on Friday night offered personal anecdotes about cultural contact. Included were Jeffrey Lewis, a UW–Madison professor of Human Development and Family Studies, who talked about the mixed messages parents send when trying to prepare an African-American child for the realities of a racially divided world, and Madison resident Mai Zong Vue, who used stories about her Hmong grandmother's U.S. culture shock as a measure of how far the family had come from the refugee camps in Thailand to life in Wisconsin.

The second evening focused on humor in stories. Among the storytellers were Berquist, who regaled the audience with Minnesota Iron Range stories and accordion music, and Elfriede Haese, the daughter and granddaughter of Milwaukee tavern owners, who told of her grandmother (with biceps like grapefruits) who ran neighborhood bars in downtown Milwaukee.

For more complete information on the conference, be sure to check the MKI Web site (http://csumc.wisc.edu/mki) soon.

Events Calendar

Join us for these upcoming spring events!
For details, please check our Web site:
http://mki.wisc.edu or contact Antje
Petty at apetty@wisc.edu or 608-262-7546

"Are you coming with?" German In uences on Wisconsin English, a presentation by Jennifer Mercer, Joseph Salmons, Tom Purnell (UW–Madison, Department of Linguistics) and Dilara Tepeli (University of Bonn) at 6 p.m, Wednesday, **February 9,** at the Memorial Union, UW–Madison.

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

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

Looking Ahead to Summer

A New Perspective–Wisconsin Regional Art History. A one-week course on Wisconsin's rich art history offered by the West Bend Art Museum. Based on the museum's collection, which includes artists from German-speaking countries who settled in Wisconsin or were first-generation Wisconsin artists of German heritage. Open to the public. Graduate credit available through St. Thomas University in Minnesota. Please contact Tom Lidtke at the WBAM for further details: 262-334-9638, or visit the Museum's Web site: www.wbartmuseum.com

Sehen Sie Amerika! Photographic portfolios in German

By Kevin Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

We're all aware how books can allow a reader to travel to far-away places without having to leave home. I recently came across two travel guides rich in photographs—one published in Akron, Ohio, and the other in Hamburg—that provide a way for folks to explore the North American continent within their pages.

Both books are very similar, but there are a few differences. The Ohio book is called *Kreuz und Quer durch Amerika. John L. Stoddard's berühmtes Werk "The Beauties of the Western Hemisphere." (Die Schönheiten der neuen Welt.) Mit deutschem Text. Eine Sammlung seltener photographischer Ansichten aus allen Theilen Amerikas.* The Hamburg publication is *Quer durch Amerika: Photographische Originalaufnahmen der berühmtsten Naturwunder und Sehenswürdigkeiten von Nordamerika*. Rough translations for these titles would be *Here and There throughout America. . . A Collection of Exceptional Photographic Views from All Parts of America* and *All across America: Original Photographic Images of North America's Most Famous Natural Wonders and Sights Worth Seeing*.

Most of the photographs in both books are exactly the same, although the text beneath the images is unique in each book, and some photos appear in one book but not the other. The photos in *Quer durch Amerika* are organized from the east to the west coasts, as a visitor would see them coming to New York by ship, while *Kruez und Quer* is completely jumbled, having an image of Salt Lake City followed by the Banff Hotel in Alberta, Canada, and a view of *Der Garten der Götter* (The Garden of the Gods sandstone rock formations in Colorado) facing a street scene in Sitka, Alaska. Other images show Sandy Hook, New Jersey ("Das erste Stück Land, das den Reisenden bei seiner Ankunft in der Neuen Welt begrüsst" or "the first piece of land to greet the traveler upon his arrival in the New World"); the Statue of Liberty; views of Niagara Falls; "Das Schlachtfeld von Gettysburg, Pennsylvania"; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Colorado's Canyon of Lost Souls ("verlorenen Seelen"); Mexico City; Watkin's Glen in upstate New York; an opium den in San Francisco; and Unabhängigkeits-Halle (Independence Hall) in Philadelphia. All of these photographs are most likely the work of John L. Stoddard, a very well-traveled fellow indeed.

Some on-line snooping reveals that John Lawson Stoddard (1850–1931) was a nineteenth-century American who traveled all over the globe and created a public lecturing career out of presenting the experiences and photographs he acquired. His popular lectures were published in a ten-volume set in 1898, and were apparently sold by door-to-door salesmen as an encyclopedic source of stories and images of the places he had visited. While

it is unknown if Stoddard was of German-speaking descent, he is responsible for translating some works from German to English, especially poems and religious texts. In addition, he published *An American to Americans: John L. Stoddard, Noted Author-Traveler Tells the Truth about Germany and the War in Europe*. This was also published in German as *Offener Brief eines Amerikaners an seine Landsleute***.**

I decided to "stick close to home" and see what these books had to say about places of interest in Wisconsin. Only *Quer durch Amerika* offers a Wisconsin image, a scene of Milwaukee, with accompanying text.

So stark auch das Deutschtum in Amerika vertreten ist, so dürfte sich der Deutsche doch in keiner Stadt so lebhaft an die Heimat erinnert fühlen, wie in Milwaukee. Wie die "Königen der Seen," die Stadt Chicago, liegt auch Milwaukee am Michigan-See, und als grösste Stadt des Staates Wisconsin und einer der bedeutendsten Fabriks- und Handelplätze des Nordwestens ist sie in gewisser Beziehung auch eine Nebenbuhlerin von Chicago. Die Umgebung ist sehr hübsch. Ringsum Wald und Wasser, während die Stadt selbst sich durch ihr äusseres Bild von allen anderen Städten Nordamerikas unterscheidet. Man nennt Milwaukee die "Cream City," d.h. die Milchstadt, ein Name, den sie durch den hellen Anstrich der aus gelbweissem Ziegelstein gebauten Häuser erhalten hat. Dieser helle Anstrich widerspricht einigermassen dem Geschmacke der Amerikaner, die ihre Häuser zumeist in Rot, Grau, Grün und anderen dunklen Farben halten. Die helle Farbe der Bauten und der Stil derselben gibt ihr auch ein deutsches Gepräge, und um so mehr fühlt man sich in eine deutsche Stadt versetzt, als in Milwaukee, wo mehr als die Hälfte der Einwohner Deutsche sind, fast ausschliesslich Deutsch gesprochen wird, und sogar die Firmenschilder deutsche Aufschriften tragen.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

However strongly the German language and way of life is represented in America, there is no city that might so vividly remind a German of his homeland as Milwaukee. Like the "Queen of the Lake," Chicago, Milwaukee is also situated on Lake Michigan, and as the State of Wisconsin's largest city and one of the most important manufacturing and commercial centers in the northwest, in certain ways it is Chicago's rival. The environs are very beautiful. Surrounded by trees and water, while the city itself differs [distinguishes itself] in its outward appearance from all other North American cities. Milwaukee is called the "Cream City," i.e., the milk city, a name which it received due to its brightly painted houses built from yellowish-white brick. This colorful appearance to some extent contradicts the preferences of Americans, who mostly paint their houses in red, gray, green, and other dark colors. The bright color and style of the buildings also give the city a German character, and one feels all the more transported to a German city since in Milwaukee more than half of the inhabitants are German, German

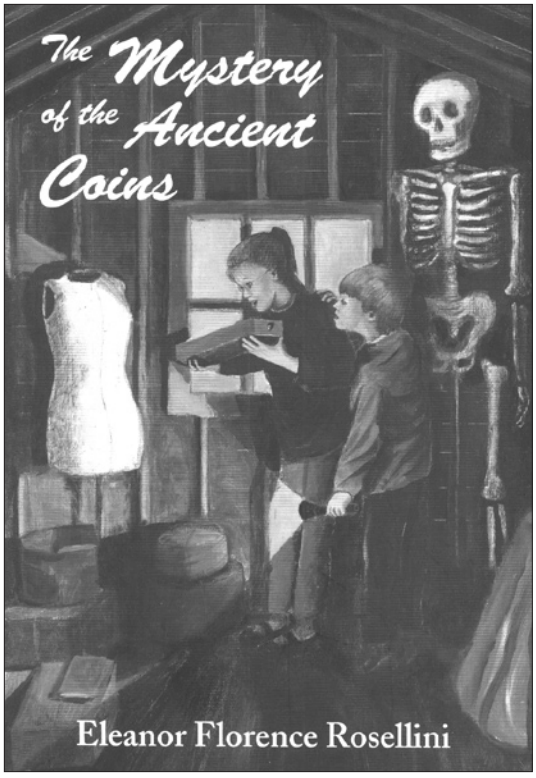
Continued on Page 15

Finding a German-American family's treasure in Milwaukee: A mystery novel for children

Reviewed by Antje Petty

The Mystery of the Ancient Coins
by Eleanor Florence Rosellini
Guild Press 2003

Word has gotten around that eleven-year-old Elizabeth Pollack and her eight-year-old brother Jonathan are ace detectives. Their second case takes them deep into the history of a Milwaukee German-American family. Five ancient gold rainbow cup coins, unearthed by a farmer in Germany had been passed down in the Obermeyer family for generations. But after the death of Wilhelm Obermeyer almost forty years ago the coins vanished without a trace.



As in *The Puzzle in the Portrait,* the first book in this mysteries series for children ages seven to twelve, Elizabeth and Jonathan will succeed where "real" detectives have failed because their eyes and ears are open to family history and family stories. They find clues in such heirlooms as a crazy quilt and a diary written in the old German script. Nobody has been able to read Grandma Johanna's journal, but Elizabeth and Jonathan unlock its secrets by finding Mr. Kruger, an old German immigrant who can still read the handwriting. The children listen carefully to the stories of "poor Uncle Rudy," Wilhelm Obermeyer's son who is in fact a millionaire, and old Miss Emily Kohler, who lives in a spooky Victorian house not far from Veterans Park. They learn about a family curse connected to the ancient coins, and things get even creepier when a man in a blue parka seems to follow the children wherever they go.

During their adventure Elizabeth and Jonathan experience the sights of southern Wisconsin when they stay with their grandfather in Williams Bay, visit an old clock maker in Walworth and spend their spring break in Milwaukee as guests of Uncle Rudy and Aunt Loraine. Here they not only stay in a luxurious hotel on Lake Michigan, visit the Public Library and the Public Museum, but also have Wienerschnitzel, dumplings and Apfelstrudel at a German-American restaurant.

The principle that guides Elizabeth and Jonathan through their mystery is also the main message of this book: the preciousness of memories and the importance of "memory keepers," as Rosellini calls all of us who pass on knowledge and skills of the past. Thus, it is not surprising that after the mystery has been solved and the coins have been found, the family elects to donate their grandmother's diary to the historical society. Says Aunt Loraine: "That old diary is like a time capsule. Johanna Obermeyer recorded all kinds of everyday things. How much things cost, what kind of remedies were used when people were sick. There are even some old family recipes."

Coming full circle, Rosellini encourages her young readers to become memory keepers themselves. The last chapter of the book has detailed suggestions on how to make your own time capsule: Start with a sturdy box or other container and fill it with things that tell about who you are, the world around you and how you imagine the future. Who knows, maybe *your* memories will one day be the key to unlocking a mystery!

Collection Feature continued from Page 13

is spoken almost exclusively, and even the shop signs bear German inscriptions.

The caption also notes that "eine Spezialität Milwaukees ist die Bierproduktion. Die Stadt hat die grössten Bierbrauereien in Amerika, sämtlich in deutschen Händen" (A specialty of Milwaukee is beer production. The city has the largest breweries in America, all owned by Germans). Of course, for many of us, this is already well-known!

If you'd like to tour other wonders of America with a German-language guide, call MKI to arrange to view this book: 262-7546, or e-mail the librarian at kkurdylo@wisc.edu.

Sources consulted

Quer durch Amerika: Photographische Originalaufnahmen der berühmtsten Naturwunder und Sehenswürdigkeiten von Nordamerika. Hamburg: Hansa-Verlag, n.d. [1905?] 192 pp., ill.

Stoddard, John L. *Kreuz und Quer durch Amerika. John L. Stoddard's berühmtes Werk "The Beauties of the Western Hemisphere." (Die Schönheiten der neuen Welt.)*. Akron, Ohio; New York; Chicago: Saalfield, 1901. Unpaginated, ill.

Travel-Related Books on Kolby Kirk's Pilgrimage Site: http://www.kahunna.net/books.shtml

Milwaukee taverns continued from Page 8

The German community was a strong presence in Milwaukee well into the mid 1950s. It began to diminish as the people prospered and left their duplexes and narrow lots behind for bigger yards and single houses in the empty areas to the north and northwest. There is much more to this little excerpt from the saga of the Germans in Milwaukee but I leave you now with many fond memories and a refrain from a popular tune of the 1940s:

"I wish I was back in Milwaukee,
Mit the G'schnetles, the pretzels und Bier."

Elfrieda Haese—a traditional storyteller from Milwaukee, WI—was a participant in MKI's recent conference, "*Tales of Contact and Change.*" *She is the author of* Evening Walks and Apple Pie: A Historical Walk for Children, *published in 2000.*

German-American Symposium in Bielefeld

Mark L. Louden, MKI Co-Director

Last month, October 21–23, CSUMC co-directors Joe Salmons and Jim Leary and I presented papers at a symposium titled "The German Presence in the U.S.A.," held at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Bielefeld. The main organizers were two professors from Bielefeld, Josef Raab (English department) and Jan Wirrer from German, whom some of our readers may remember from his visit to Wisconsin a few years ago. Jan is a specialist in Low German linguistics, and his doctoral student, Alexandra Jacob, is completing her dissertation on Pomeranian in Marathon County. In conjunction with the symposium, Alexandra curated an exceptional exhibit of materials pertaining to German immigration to North America that included original documents such as ship's logs and German-language books published in the United States. The presenters at the symposium came from a range of disciplines, including history, geography, political science, law, folklore, linguistics, education, and literature. While the "Americanization" of Germany has been a topic of research and popular discussion for some time, relatively less attention has been focused (in Germany) on the historical and modern impact of German immigrants on American society and culture. One interesting aspect of the German-American relationship addressed in a number of talks dealt with the stereotypes that non-German Americans have (had) of Germans. Jim Leary, for example, presented "'The Irish and the Dutch (They Don't Amount to Much)': German and Irish Stereotypes in Midwestern Folk Humor." Joe Salmons, together with Dilara Tepeli, a colleague from the University of Bonn, delivered a paper (in German) on the "German In uence on English," which included some of the exciting early results of a joint study underway on the impact of German on regional English in Wisconsin. (Joe and colleagues will present some of their findings here in Madison this coming February.) For a complete program of the symposium, log on to: http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/lili/personen/raab/_german_presence_04/.

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