MAX KADE INSTITUTE
FRIENDSNEWSLETTER
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Pandemics in the German-American Press

Antje Petty

The "grip," an old term for the flu similar to the German word "Grippe," threatens a city in this advertisement for "Peruna Brustreinigungsmittel" (Peruna chest cleanser). *Der Nordstern*, St. Cloud, Minnesota, January 1, 1914

INSIDE

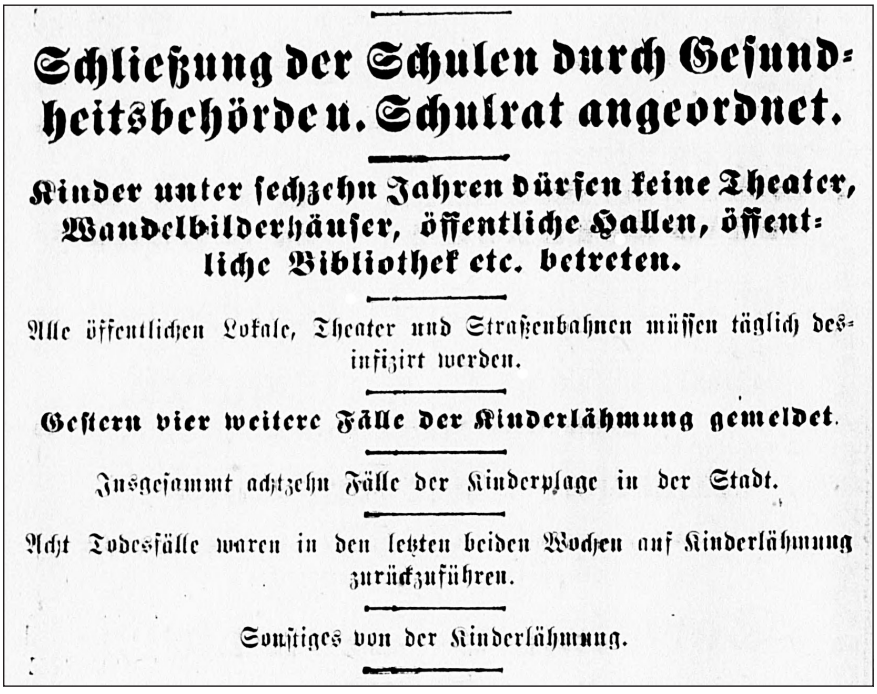
As we grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic it is easy to forget that outbreaks of infectious diseases are nothing new in human history. Cholera, polio, measles, whooping cough, the flu, and many other contagious diseases regularly made the rounds. By the second half of the nineteenth century, scientists began to understand these infections and how they were transmitted. Although the first successful vaccine—for smallpox—had been developed in 1796, those for other communicable diseases remained elusive. Equally lacking were effective treatments once someone was ill. Instead, people relied on social distancing measures and quarantines, resorted to traditional medicines, and tried out new "scientific" remedies that were widely advertised in dailies and weeklies.

America's German-language press, like all other newspapers, was quick to report on any epidemic in the world and, of course, especially in the United States. One example was polio. Starting in the summer of 1909 and lasting into the following year, nearly every issue of most German-Amer-

ican papers anxiously followed polio cases in Germany (where the disease had first appeared in Westphalia), and an outbreak in the U.S. that had started in Minnesota.

The coverage shows how mysterious this illness still was. On August 22, 1909, Milwaukee's *Der Sonntagsbote* reported: *In Winona, Minnesota, there has been an outbreak of paralysis among the children. Doctors assume that the reason for the epidemic is the inhaling of street dust.* On December 3, the *Nord Stern***,** published in La Crosse, Wisconsin, included a special section called "Neues aus der Heilkunde" [News from medical science] quoting at length a Professor Krause in Bonn, Germany, regarding his recent discoveries about polio: *Acute polio is an infectious childhood disease. It seems to be a disease of the warmer months.*[…] *We still do not know how the disease spreads. But, since it hardly ever appears on remote, isolated farmsteads, and since often several children in one family are affected, there is probably now secondary transmission through vermin. In Westphalia (as well as in Sweden) an unexplained dying of young chickens at the time of a polio outbreak has been observed.* Interestingly this article is preceded by an editorial statement that reads: *Articles in this section are educational and interesting; their contents and conclusions, however, often do not represent the views of the state health official.*

In 1917, when a cluster of polio patients was found in Davenport, Iowa, public health officials quickly ordered all patients to be quarantined and called for extra hygiene measures and social distancing. All of this was heartily supported by the local German-American paper, *Der tägliche Demokrat*. On Wednesday, September 5, 1917, *Der Demokrat* carried the following headlines on its front page: *All Schools in Davenport are Closed. Closing has been ordered by the Health Administration and the Superintendent.*



Schließung der Schulen durch Gesundheitsbehörden. Schulrat angeordnet.

Kinder unter sechzehn Jahren dürfen keine Theater, Wandelbilderhäuser, öffentliche Hallen, öffentliche Bibliothek etc. betreten.

Alle öffentlichen Lokale, Theater und Straßenbahnen müssen täglich desinfizirt werden.

Gestern vier weitere Fälle der Kinderlähmung gemeldet.

Insgesammt achtzehn Fälle der Kinderpfage in der Stadt.

Acht Todesfälle waren in den letzten beiden Wochen auf Kinderlähmung zurückzuführen.

Sonstiges von der Kinderlähmung.

Announcement of school closures and other measures to combat the spread of polio in Davenport, Iowa. *Der tägliche Demokrat*, Davenport, Iowa, September 5, 1917

Children under sixteen are not allowed to visit theaters, cinemas, public gathering places, the public library, etc.
All public places, theaters, and street cars will be disinfected daily.
Eight deaths as the result of polio in the last two weeks.

The headlines introduced a lengthy article about the impact the disease had on the city and listed by name all children who had died. Quoting Dr. C. E. Rosenow, a polio specialist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, the article proclaimed: *Polio is the most dangerous childhood disease there is. Therefore it is up to the parents to be as vigilant as possible.* […] *It is highly recommended to keep children at home and not let them have any contact with other children.* […] *Furthermore: sterilize milk all the time; that means to heat it to the boiling point.* […] *Let children gargle two or three times a day with water with a spoonful of salt or baking soda. Adults should gargle with the same solution. It is also highly advisable that the children visit a dentist.* ***It has been found that in every case of polio, the child had bad teeth or infected tonsils.*** [Bold in the original].

Twenty-five years earlier, America was gripped by the fear of a different pandemic: cholera. In the summer of 1892, cholera had broken out across Europe, including in the port city of Hamburg, Germany. In his article "'Knocking out the Cholera': Cholera, Class, and Quarantines in New York City, 1892" (*Bulletin of the History of Medicine,* Vol. 69, No. 3 [Fall 1995], pp. 420–457), Howard Markel writes: "By mid-August 1892, several ships originating from the cholera-infected port of Hamburg were headed toward New York. […] What ensued [in America]

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Dear Friends and Readers!

It is a truism that these past several weeks have been unlike anything every one of us has ever experienced, professionally and personally. We at MKI, like most UW–Madison staff, have been working from home, grateful for the speedy Internet connections and access to at least our electronic resources. But we are eagerly looking forward to being able to rejoin one another in person in the University Club, welcome patrons to our library and archive, and especially get back on the road and resume our outreach programming.

While there is no substitute for connecting with our patrons and supporters in person, we have adapted to the situation in a number of ways. I invite you to check out our "While We Are Hausbound" postings that highlight some of the gems we have in our collections. Even under normal circumstances we encourage people to visit our website and learn more about what we do. Though many of us are having more than our fill of screen time, please do "stop by" when you have a chance. A good starting point is our Library and Archives Catalog page.

The current situation is also reflected in this newsletter, which we are able to share with you in electronic form only. Normally, we have to limit the number of pages we produce in each issue, but without that limitation, we decided to make this a double issue, which some readers may notice is labeled "Volume 29 2/3, Spring/Summer 2020." In the past, our newsletters have appeared as fall, winter, and spring issues, with the spring issue being numbered 1. We've now decided to follow the academic calendar, so going forward our three issues per year will appear in the fall (no. 1), spring (no. 2), and summer (no. 3).

In terms of the content of this issue, Antje Petty's lead article on pandemics in the German-American press is timely, of course. More generally, though, this article exemplifies what we aim to do in all our work, which is to make sense of our present world through a deeper understanding of the past, especially as that past was expressed in the words of people who spoke languages other than English.

Thank you, our Friends, for your support. We wish you all the best of health and look forward to seeing you again soon!
—Mark

Antje Petty Receives Award

The Max Kade Institute is pleased to announce that our Associate Director, Antje Petty, was selected by the UW–Madison College of Letters and Science to receive an L&S Academic Staff Mid-Career Award for 2019–20. This award is given each year to just three or four recipients from among hundreds of academic staff in the College who have distinguished themselves as "outstanding leaders with substantial professional competency and the promise of continuing contributions." The award comes with $3,000 and a plaque that will be presented at a formal ceremony later this year. Congratulations, Antje!

German-American Art in Oshkosh: Gustav Behncke

Alan Lareau

The German-American painter Gustav Behncke was born in Hamburg, Germany, on October 2, 1852, the son of Jürgen and Ida Reifer Behncke. Jürgen was a painter of religious themes, and young Gustav learned the craft from him. At fourteen, he ran away from home for a year and had adventures as a sailor on the North Sea and the Baltic. When he returned, his father, who hated the military, helped him to flee the country to England and escape the draft and the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71. In 1872, Gustav shipped to America from Liverpool, arriving in New York on June 24 at the age of 20.

In 1874, Behncke joined a group of some thirty prospectors from across the country to venture forth to the Black Hills of South Dakota. Named the Gordon Party after their leader, they erected a stockade of some six or seven cabins and set out to mine gold, but lived in constant conflict with the Sioux, whose land it was. The federal government captured the group, removed them as trespassers in the Indian territory, and sent them as prisoners to Fort Laramie in Wyoming, from where they followed the Mormon Trail to Utah. Behncke later related that he had buried a stash of gold nuggets and remembered the exact location of his cache, hoping to return one day to retrieve it. By 1933, he was believed to be the last surviving member of the famed Gordon Stockade party.

Behncke then went to Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he began to work as a painter-decorator, and migrated to Oshkosh in 1877, where he established himself as a prominent craftsman and artist for the next six decades, decorating the homes of Oshkosh lumber barons as well as churches across the state of Wisconsin, and painting large canvases. In 1879, he married Ida Heiss, the daughter of Bavarian immigrants to nearby Nekimi; they had four children, one of whom died in infancy. Behncke became a US citizen by naturalization on May 27, 1911. He enjoyed many adventures around the world, was marked by his experiences in the American West and his youthful seafaring days, and loved boating and fishing. He died at the age of 84 on the morning of January 21, 1937, in Oshkosh.

In the Oshkosh Business Directory of the *Northwestern,* Gustav Behncke was listed as a fresco painter and designer; city directories recorded him as an artist and as a painter-contractor. In the days before

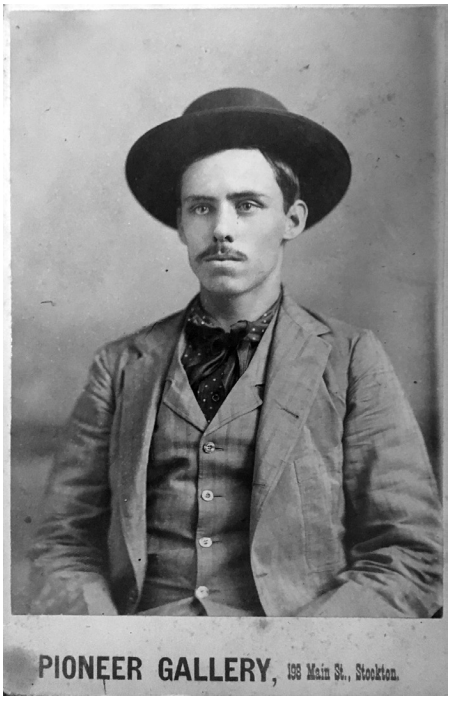


Image courtesy of Sue Beulen

Gustav Behncke as a prospector

Image courtesy of Merrie Kay Gonyo

Gustav Behncke in front of his studio

wallpaper was ubiquitous, he was known to decorate walls with large paintings and to create wrap-around murals, but above all, he specialized in decorative painting on walls and ceilings—scrolls, vines, birds, and flowers. A characteristic example of Behncke's ornamental work was the dining hall at the Northern State Hospital, preserved only in a photograph held by the Oshkosh Public Museum (OPM 1935.35.1).

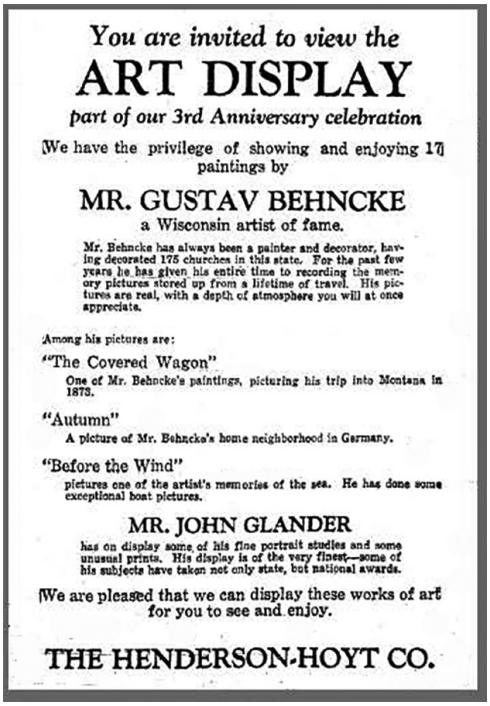
Together with artist J. Frank Waldo, Behncke created the interior painting in the Moses Hooper House (1883), now known as the Oviatt House on the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh (UWO) campus. After its use as a private residence, the house, designed by the famed Oshkosh architect William Waters, became the first campus dormitory of the Oshkosh State Normal School, and then served as the Chancellor's residence in the 1930s until 1990. The structure now houses the Honors College. Only a portion of the dining room mural survives; originally this painting surrounded the entire dining room, but later parts of it were painted over—two Chancellor's wives complained that the mural was dark and overpowering. The remaining fragment of this mural, which was attributed to Behncke, was removed in the 1970s and is now stored in the UWO University Archives.

Among the many Oshkosh houses whose interiors Behncke painted were the homes of lumberman Leander Choate, hardware dealer William Hay, the Pratts, the Waites, the Roes, and the Ellsworths, as well as that of millowner and mayor Philetus H. Sawyer. Most of the houses he worked in are no longer standing.

Historical sources consistently report that Gustav Behncke painted interior decorations in 175 churches across Wisconsin, but unfortunately there are no records on which churches these were and where or if any of his work, a hundred years old or more, survives. In 1929, he was said to be "one of the foremost church decorators in the state." He is reported to have decorated the interior of Oshkosh's first opera house in 1882, and in 1887, Gustav Behncke and Horace H. Harmon provided frescoes for the circuit court room. Behind the judge's bench stood a goddess of justice, while the ceiling displayed the Ten Commandments and court rolls, a book of laws for the state of Wisconsin, and the word "order." Behncke was also known to provide theatrical decorations and to decorate shop windows.

Decorations in the Odd Fellows Hall, now the Algoma Club above Manila Resto on Algoma Boulevard, have been credited to Behncke. Two murals and six panels survive there. Only one mural appears to be signed, with a scrawled "G.B.," and this attribution may not be authentic.

Over twenty-five of Gustav Behncke's often monumental paintings are on view or in public holdings throughout the city of Oshkosh. His favorite themes are nautical images (reflecting his own seafaring experiences and his love of sailing), alongside Western scenes, Native American tableaux, and religious motifs. Besides the two paintings in the collection of the Oshkosh Public Library, *The Pioneers* (also called *The Coming of the Pioneers* and donated by the family in 1946) and *Speaking at Sea* (donated in 1968), one can



You are invited to view the

ART DISPLAY

part of our 3rd Anniversary celebration

We have the privilege of showing and enjoying 17 paintings by

MR. GUSTAV BEHNCKE

a Wisconsin artist of fame.

Mr. Behncke has always been a painter and decorator, having decorated 175 churches in this state. For the past few years he has given his entire time to recording the memory pictures stored up from a lifetime of travel. His pictures are real, with a depth of atmosphere you will at once appreciate.

Among his pictures are:

"The Covered Wagon"

One of Mr. Behncke's paintings, picturing his trip into Montana in 1873.

"Autumn"

A picture of Mr. Behncke's home neighborhood in Germany.

"Before the Wind"

pictures one of the artist's memories of the sea. He has done some exceptional boat pictures.

MR. JOHN GLANDER

has on display some of his fine portrait studies and some unusual prints. His display is of the very finest—some of his subjects have taken not only state, but national awards.

We are pleased that we can display these works of art for you to see and enjoy.

THE HENDERSON-HOYT CO.

Manitowoc Herald News, May 12, 1930

find the following examples.

Greatly beloved are two paintings in the Chapel of Riverside Cemetery: the *Resurrection,* over the altar, and the *Crucifixion,* over the doorway. (The artist himself donated the former in 1930, and his widow gave the latter, which was his last painting, in 1942.) The *Resurrection* has suffered water damage and is in need of restoration. Gustav Behncke, his wife, children, and their descendants, are buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Six large Behncke canvases hang in the ground floor lounge of the Oshkosh Masonic Temple. They include a Native American image entitled *A Dying Race,* a Russian sled ride with wolves, a Western landscape with prospectors, and a patriotic image of a naval encounter, *Europe's First Recognition of the American Flag, 1788.* Behncke was himself a Mason, one of his lodge's oldest members at his death.

Over the fireplace in the main lounge of the lakeside event venue The Waters

Photo by Alan Lareau

***Good-Bye: Fishing Boats off the Cornish Coast*, by Gustav Behncke**

hangs a marine scene entitled *The Return of the Mayflower,* donated in 1932 by the artist to what was then the American Legion (of which Behncke was a member). Almost 90 years later, the picture is still there. It has been cleaned and now has pride of place in the restored and renamed landmark building by architect William Waters.

For many years, a nautical painting hung beside the main stairway in the Oshkosh State Teacher's College, now UW–Oshkosh. Presumably this was in Dempsey Hall; the painting is now in storage.

Another nautical scene, entitled *Good-Bye: Fishing Boats off the Cornish Coast,* hangs in the Lounge in Parish Hall of Trinity Episcopal Church, where Gustav and his wife were members of the congregation. A further painting owned by the Church, Behncke's copy of the iconic *Christ in Gethsemane* by Heinrich Hoffmann, was donated to the Oshkosh Public Museum around 2000.

Fifteen additional paintings are now held by the Oshkosh Public Museum, including landscapes, nautical scenes, and four Native American images. All are currently in storage, though some have been exhibited in the past.

Many other works by Behncke are held by his descendants and in private collections. One painting, *Ducks,* is in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

One painting by Behncke's father, Jürgen Behncke (1803–?), from whom Gustav learned his trade, is also in the collection of the Oshkosh Public Museum.

The painterly talent was passed on to the third generation in Gustav's son, Nile Behncke (1892–1954), who was also an accomplished painter; his watercolors are found throughout Oshkosh, including in the collection of the Oshkosh Public Library. Nile was the first director of the Oshkosh Public Museum (from 1924 to 1954); his wife, Ethel, was Art Director at Oshkosh State Teacher's College and herself an artist.

Alan Lareau is a retired Professor of German in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh, and a member of the MKI Friends Board of Directors.

Photo by Alan Lareau

Descendants of Gustav Behncke with a mural removed from his daughter's home on Washington Avenue, showing the type of vegetative motifs for which he was known.

A New Database of Emigrants from Thuringia

Astrid Adler

The Trost family, emigrants from Thuringia, whose names are included in the database. Undated

A lifelong resident of Thuringia, Germany, I have been collecting historical facts about emigration in the 19th century from the present-day state of Thuringia for over ten years. I have now expanded my project by creating a database of emigrants from the region. The aim is to build a record of Thuringia's emigrants, to determine each individual's town of origin, and to provide additional information on each person. Included so far has been information from the territories of the former Grand Duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, the Duchy of Saxe-Meiningen, parts of Hesse-Nassau, Bavaria, and the Kingdom of Prussia. Currently almost 6,000 emigrants are registered in the database, and more are added continuously. Ultimately, the names of 60,000 to 100,000 Thuringian emigrants will have been entered.

What is unique about this database? There are many genealogical databases available, but most are based on transcripts of ship passenger lists, American censuses, and similar sources. Often these documents contain errors. Personal and place names were not always properly written down or were abbreviated. Rarely was a small hamlet recorded, rather the name of the nearest town or the duchy was given. For instance, emigrants who originated in Thuringia, Eisenach, Weimar, Sachsen-Weimar, Sachsen-Meiningen or just Sachsen (Saxony), were all listed as having come from Thuringia. Frequently the place of origin is simply given as "Germany." This is where the new database comes in.

Emigrants mostly traveled in groups with family members or acquaintances from the same place or from neighboring towns. Working with ship passenger manifests, I was able to match family names common in this region with the ship lists to help determine an emigrant's origin. By association, emigrants who were previously unknown could be identified.

To confirm the validity of my findings I match them with local church records. Once a month I visit the Archive of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Central Germany in Eisenach. As a result, I have been able to determine the exact origin, dates of birth and baptism, names of parents and godparents, and other important facts. In the database,

information from the church books is marked with a code that includes the year of birth or baptism and the sequential entry number found in the church registry. For instance, the code "B-1832-16" directs the researcher back to an entry in the birth registry for the 16th child born in the year 1832. In the event that Thuringian church records are ever made available online, descendants will be able to use this code to easily find the entries they are looking for. Vice versa, by using the database, it is possible to identify people from one home region on the same ship list.

An additional resource is the local newspapers in which emigrants had to publish their intent to emigrate before they received the state's permission to leave. People traveling together were often found in the same announcement. The database can be searched to create a list of "Intent to Emigrate" announcements from a given time period, or a list of emigrants from a particular town.

In addition to materials available online, church records, and "Intent to Emigrate" announcements, the database collects information from compilations undertaken by local historians and genealogists, articles from historical newspapers, and records from the Thuringia State Archives in Weimar. Finally, many books, brochures, and chronicles covering local and regional history have been published, though only in the German language. Frequently they mention those who emigrated, information that also will be included in the database.

For instance, a ship list from August 1854 includes families and single travelers whose origin is listed as "Germany." These people were traveling in groups on a journey organized by a travel agent, and were not all from one village or town. By going through the "Intent to Emigrate" announcements between January and August 1854 in my database, I was able to work out the names of travelers and establish that they came from towns such as Tiefenort, Kieselbach, Lengsfeld, Dermbach, and Kaltennordheim.

Combined, these sources provide a great deal of insight into the emigrants and their family relations. In contrast to many American records, the spelling of names can be assumed to be correct.

At this point, the database includes the following categories:

- Surname (maiden name)
- First name
- Date of birth and baptism
- Names of the emigrant's parents
- Religion
- Date and place of death and burial
- Sources (e.g. passenger manifests, daily newspapers, other sources)
- Date of the "Intent to Emigrate" announcement in the local press or registries, with information about accompanying persons
- Date of departure and name of port city
- Arrival date and port city
- Profession, according to German sources and shipping manifest upon arrival
- Name of the ship

The database is a work in progress and is updated in regular intervals. Not all records are complete yet and many more names will eventually be added. The number of people and the place names are published on www.tiefenort-emigrants.de. However, the database is not searchable online. Interested parties are invited to send inquiries to Astrid Adler at http://www.tiefenort-emigrants.de/contact.html. A small processing fee will be charged for each request.

Astrid Adler is a local historian and genealogist who lives in Tiefenort, Thuringia, Germany. She is the author of two books on emigration from Thuringia: Our Ancestors Were German *(2016) and* Goodbye Forever–Life Beyond Germany *(2017). In 2019, she was honored with the Historian Award of the Urkrostitzer Jahresring in Central Germany.*

Friends Annual Meeting and New Board of Directors

Antje Petty

To everybody's great regret, the Friends had to cancel the 2020 Annual Meeting because of the COVID-19 pandemic and "Safer at Home" restrictions in Wisconsin. This was the first time in the history of our organization that we had to cancel an annual meeting event. Now we look forward to offering this year's program in 2021. Mark your calendars for SUNDAY, May 2, 2021 in Port Washington and Grafton.

In the meantime, members of the Friends were invited to take part in the annual business meeting which was held virtually on April 30, 2020. A big "Thank You" to everybody who joined us online and on the phone! Participants received the annual reports from the MKI Director and Associate Director, as well as from the Friend's Treasurer and President. They also voted to adopt revisions to the Friends of the Max Kade Institute By-Laws.

One annual order of business is the election of new members to the Friends Board of Directors. It is with sadness and profound gratitude that we say goodbye to two of our current Board members: Fran Luebke and James Kleinschmidt. Fran had to step down after reaching the two-term limit. She has been a tireless supporter and the engine behind many of the Friends' endeavors. Jim graciously joined the Board on short notice in the fall of 2019 to fill a vacancy and threw himself right into the Friends' ongoing projects. Recently retired, he and his wife Linda moved to Oregon state this spring. Thank you, Fran and Jim, for all you have done for the MKI and the Friends. We will miss your contributions and humor on the Board, but hope that we will still see you at our events. Stay in touch!

John Pustejovsky

The Friends elected four members to the 2020–2023 Board of Directors. We are very happy that Joshua Brown and Kay Gruling have agreed to serve a second three-year term, and we are delighted that John Pustejovsky and Pamela Tesch will rejoin the Board for a first term.

John Pustejovsky lives in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, and was a Board member from 2013 until 2019. Having grown up in Houston, Texas, in a family of Moravian background (his parents spoke Czech), John became interested in the German language in high school. He has been a professor at Marquette University since 1982, where he has taught German language and literature, and served as college and department administrator. John has been recognized by the university and professional organizations for excellence in teaching. His most successful courses have dealt with post-World War II short stories, German lyric poetry, and the theme of resistance and witness in German literature. All these topics urge students to understand literature as the lived experience of others, call-

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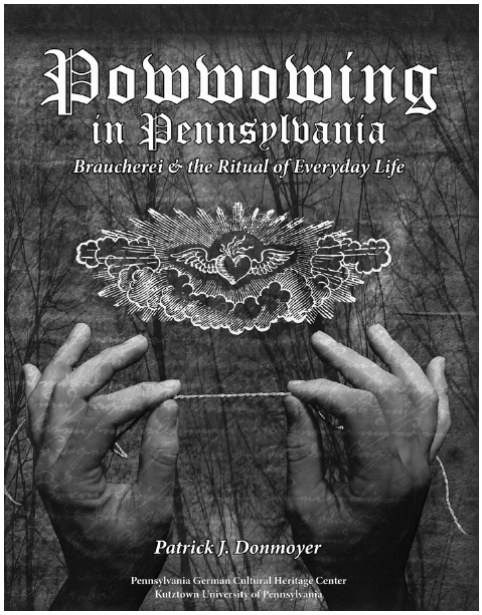
Powwowing: Healing Rituals of the Pennsylvania Dutch

Dennis Boyer



Powwowing in Pennsylvania: Braucherei and the Ritual of Everyday Life by Patrick J. Donmoyer, Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, 343 pp.

Seldom has a book's subtitle conveyed so much with so few words: "the ritual of everyday life." With those words author Patrick J. Donmoyer lets readers know that his is an exploration of healing traditions rooted the cultural context of neighborhoods and communities. He focuses here on what the Pennsylvania German term *Braucherei* came to represent in North America as powwowing, an integrated system of ceremonies, prayers, blessings, cures, and many other folkways by which Pennsylvania Germans made sense of life.

Donmoyer's framing of that context is deep and sympathetic. He paints on the broad canvas of the social conditions and ethical values that shaped not only the healing systems of Pennsylvania German life, but also served to unify disparate German-speaking groups into a new identity formed in a new land.

It would be easy—perhaps even natural—for such a work to tack toward the esoteric or the anthropological. But Donmoyer keeps us focused on what powwowing meant (and means) to real people in real community settings. The historical roots are set forth to help us understand how many religious and mystical currents in Europe came to provide the seeds for further adaptations in North America. He has given us the most fully integrated picture of these practices that has ever been compiled. And, as my Berks County, PA, grandmother would say, "naegscht am dapeet!" (in the nick of time).

Donmoyer might disagree with me about my sense of urgency, as he correctly points out that powwowing continues to adapt and sparks pockets of "revival" here and there. Yet how many would today hear the answer of my grandmother when I asked how common powwowing was when she was a young woman? Her answer: "Almost every township had someone who could 'work' on some problems."

Donmoyer is very gracious in acknowledging those who came before and took the time to preserve important accounts and materials. I'm rather well-known for my peevishness and exasperation at those who came before and did not ask some of the key questions that might have found answers at an earlier date. His greater patience found paydirt in the "unofficial student" status he attained as he worked with the late Professor Don Yoder in sorting out Yoder's incredible collection of materials on this topic.

Some of us will continue to lament that powwowing was not studied more intensely in the times when hundreds, if not thousands, of sources could have brought experience and direct knowledge to bear. Elderly practitioners fade from the scene, memories about the use of ritual objects erode, and deeper meanings of dialect terms prove more elusive. Those who remember Grandmother's powwows become grandparents themselves. But it is also possible to recognize that this book would not be easy to write fifty years from now. Thanks to Patrick, we have it now!

Dennis Boyer is the author of Once Upon a Hex: A Spiritual Ecology of the Pennsylvania Germans.

[Editor's note: additional information and images can be viewed at this online exhbition: https://glencairnmuseum.org/newsletter/2017/3/2/powwowing-in-pennsylvania]

Continued from page 2

was a political struggle among federal, state, and local public health officials, all of whom wanted control over managing the public health. At the center of this event was the imposition of strict quarantine over the Port of New York" [p. 422].

At the time, most ships from Hamburg carried hundreds of Eastern European immigrants, among them many Russian Jews. At first glance, the illness seemed to afflict only the poorest passengers, and local health officials tended to focus their inspections and imposition of quarantine on steerage travelers. One of the hardest hit was the "aging, slow moving" *Moravia*, which arrived on August 30, 1892, with German, Russian, and French immigrants on board. Twenty-two passengers, mostly Russian Jews, had died during the journey, and many more were sick.

In addition to class prejudice, the deaths among poor immigrants fed into existing nativist and especially anti-Jewish-immigrant sentiments. American papers hyped the issue. *The New York Times* reported on the danger of "ignorant Russian Jews" on its front page on August 29, 1892. And around the same time, *Judge Magazine* published a cartoon "depicting a Russian Jew (complete with a hooked nose, traditional fur-lined cap, forelocks, and beard) and a German immigrant walking into the U.S. Immigration Office, arm-in-arm with a shrouded skeleton labeled 'Cholera'" [ibid., p. 430].

On the federal level, President Benjamin Harrison tried to stem the flow of immigrants by issuing an executive order that required all ships with steerage passengers to be quarantined for twenty days. The idea was that shipping companies would not be able to afford such a delay and would only run luxury liners carrying wealthy passengers.

Before the order could take full effect, though, the Hamburg Line ships *Rugia* and *Normannia* arrived in New York on September 3 with cholera on board**.** The front page of *The Evening World* of Brooklyn, New York, announced: *EXTRA! TWO MORE PEST SHIPS. Again It's the Hamburg Line's Ships and Immigrants***.** "The *Normannia*, built in 1890, was a sleek, five-hundred-foot steamship that could sail across the Atlantic in only six and a half days. On this voyage, she carried 300 crew members, 482 immigrants in a cramped steerage compartment, and 573 first- and second-class cabin passengers" [ibid., p. 440]. Five passengers had died during the journey, including two Germans in the first and second classes, which prompted the New York Health Officer to order an unspecified detention of ALL passengers. Before the ship was released two weeks later, fifty-three more people had succumbed to cholera.

The detained cabin passengers, among them many prominent Americans returning from travel in Europe, were not pleased. They complained about their confinement, treatment, and subpar food, and their reports were eagerly printed in the New York papers and magazines such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Week*. When, on September 11th, the authorities finally agreed to transfer the cabin passengers via the small harbor boat *Cepheus* to a hastily arranged quarantine station on Fire Island, the boat was greeted by a mob of local residents with muskets, guns, and rifles. They were determined to prevent the passengers from the "pest ship" from landing, forcing the first and second class passengers to stay on the transfer boat for two days before the impasse was broken.

EXTRA.

TWO MORE PEST SHIPS.

Cholera Deaths on Normannia and Rugia.

Bodies of Nine Passengers Thrown Into the Sea.

NEW CASE ON MORAVIA.

Living Victims of the Scourge on Three Ships.

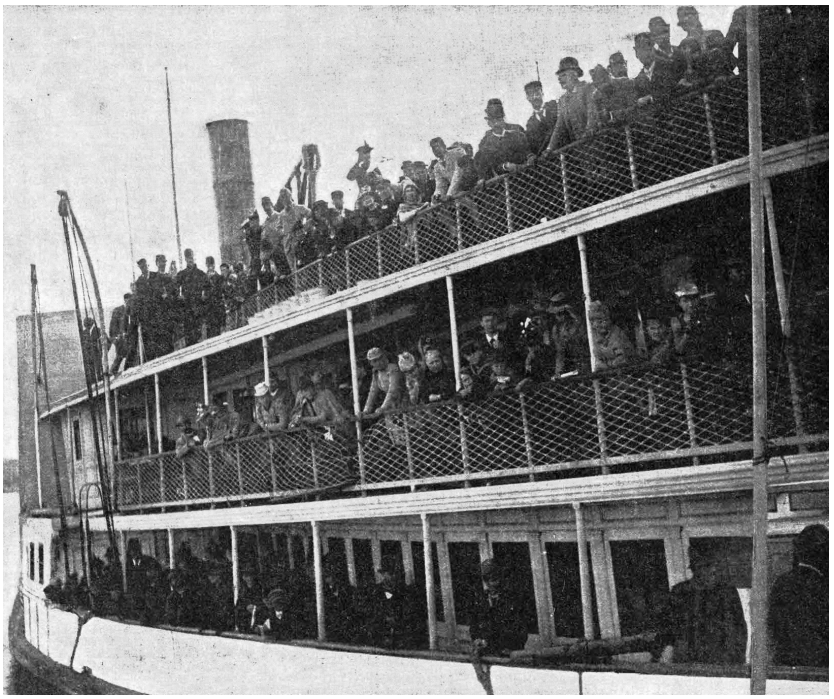
Again It's the Hamburg Line's Ships and Immigrants.

Over 1,400 Immigrants Detained and May Be Infected.

Health Officers Still Think They Can Keep Out the Plague.

The Evening World, **New York, NY, Brooklyn Edition, September 3, 1892**

As Howard Markel points out, "only rarely, however, were objections to neglecting the needs of detained steerage passengers voiced in the native-born American press" [ibid. 448]. Concern about the situation of poor immigrants on the *Normannia*



"The imprisoned *Normannia* passengers on the *Cepheus* off the wharf at Fire Island," *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 36, September, 1892

and other ships in quarantine could be found mainly in the immigrant press, especially Yiddish-language newspapers.

Throughout the summer of 1892, the German-American press covered the cholera pandemic as it moved from Asia to Russia, Eastern Europe, and finally to Germany. At that point, cholera became front-page news, especially regarding the situation in Hamburg. When the disease started to threaten America, German-language papers covered it with trepidation. There was great concern for the health of all Americans, but the reporting lacked the sensationalism and focus on "Hamburg as the source of the scourge" that prevailed in English-language papers. On September 3, for example, Baltimore's *Der Deutsche Correspondent* covered the fate of the *Moravia* in great detail, reporting the names of the deceased passengers, restrictions placed on the ship, political reactions, etc. Rather than pointing out possible negligence on the part of the Hamburg shipping line, it sympathized with the company.

In the [New York] *offices of the Hamburg-America Packet-Steamship Company, there is now little doubt that despite all pre-departure efforts and precautions, the disease found its way across the ocean.* […] *The following scenes have been observed all day long: concerned citizens show up, full of questions about their family and friends who are on board the unfortunate steamer. But the agents can offer no help. They themselves don't have access to the ship anymore. Over and over again, all night long, the Company sent agents on boats to the* Moravia, *but their efforts were futile. With apprehension we now await the arrival of the three other great steamers, the* Rugia, Wieland, *and* Bohemia. [all owned by the Hamburg-America Line]. *The first one is due today with 400 passengers from the cholera-infested regions on board.* […] *All together there are 2385 people on their way from Hamburg: 671 cabin- and 1714 steerage passengers.*

This paragraph was immediately followed by one carrying the headline, *Danger of Introducing the Contagion from Canada*, as well as columns on companies from other countries that also carried emigrants from "cholera infested regions." While mostly refraining from directly naming the origin of these emigrants, the German-American papers still subtly suggested that it was "Durchreisende" (travelers in transit) who had brought cholera onto the German ships rather than pointing out that the disease had a foothold in Hamburg itself. The *Freie Presse für Texas* (San Antonio) on September 5 fully supported President Harrison's moratorium on steerage passengers, but it also suggested:

In Germany one should learn from the American president's order and close the Reich's eastern and southern borders to prevent further introduction of cholera from Russia. It would have been preferable if measures such as these had been taken much earlier. […] *The danger is so great that a complete halt to immigration for the duration of the pandemic is justified.*

In addition to reporting on the events of the pandemic itself, many German-American newspapers ran long articles about cholera in general and its impact in Germany and America. Frequently, the same article was reprinted over the course of a few weeks in different papers.

One could read about "Die Wanderung der Cholera" (The Migration of Cholera), a history of cholera pandemics over the previous 200 years; "Kolik und Cholera Morbus," a description of symptoms; as well as articles on German politics and the German economy in times of cholera and reports on the latest scientific discoveries.

With a good dose of ethnic pride, many newspapers reported on the work of the eminent German immunologist Dr. Robert Koch and his successful isolation of the cholera bacillus. The *Freie Presse für Texas* (September 19, 1892), for example, applauded the New York Harbor Commissioner's decision to quarantine all passengers of the *Normannia* as based on science rather than politics.

One cannot give high enough praise to Dr. William Jenkins, Harbor Medical Officer in New York, for his efforts to prevent the importation of the cholera plague and to stop its disastrous spread. His actions were prudent, no matter what the shipping companies and the business world and all those who don't like the quarantine say.

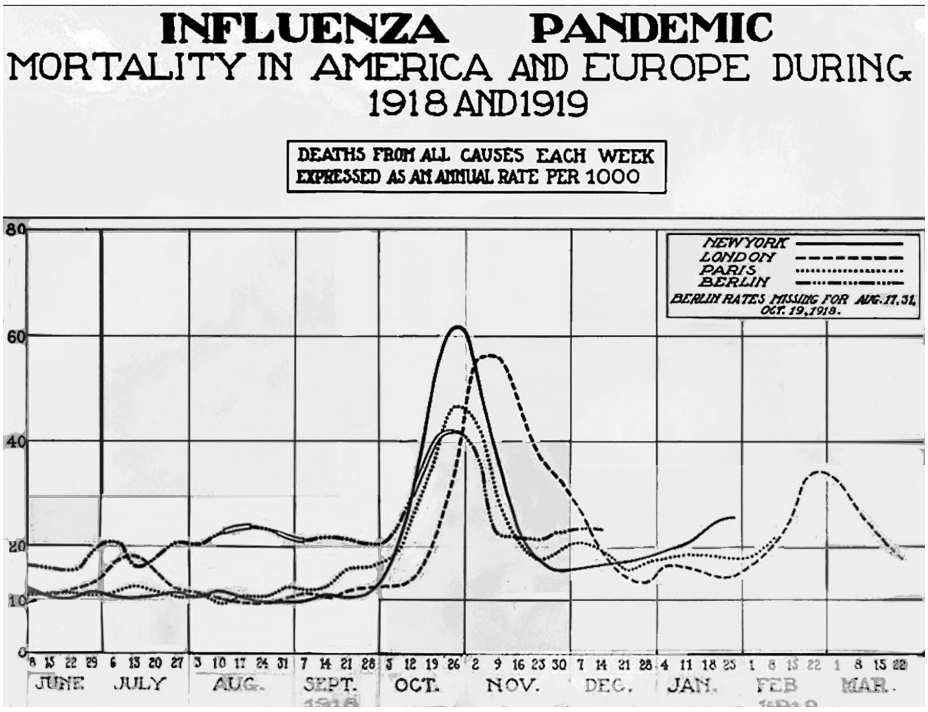
The endorsement was embedded in a lengthy article on Dr. Koch titled "Vom Cholerabazillus – Professor Koch der berühmte Entdecker desselben." (The cholera bacillus – Professor Koch, its famous discoverer).

In the end, efforts to prevent the spread of cholera in America in 1892 were successful. Aside from the casualties on the arriving ships and in quarantine stations on New York islands, only ten people in New York City itself died.

The outcome of the "Spanish flu" pandemic of 1918–1919 was of course much different. Over 50 million people died of the disease around the world, including 675,000 in the United States. To make matters worse, the flu appeared in the middle of a world war. For the German-American press, reporting on the pandemic thus came with additional challenges. After the United States' entry into the war in April 1917, anti-German sentiment in the country made publishing in German difficult, especially after the Trading with the Enemy Act of June 1917 and other regulations prohibited the mailing of non-English print matter without a certified English translation. Many German-language papers, especially the smaller ones, were unable to comply with this rule and had to close their businesses.

Those who continued publishing tried hard to maintain their ethnic German identity while also showing their steadfast American patriotism. Although the Spanish flu was named for a country neutral in the war, German Americans still feared that something bad coming from Europe would be blamed on them. On September 19, 1918, the *Detroiter Abendpost* featured an article with the (sarcastic?) headline *Spanish Influenza Is Spreading — Of Course, The Germans Disseminated Germs — The Government Has No Serum To Prevent The Spread* — […]. Right under this header (and nowhere else on the page), one finds the statement: *True translation filed with the postmaster at Detroit on Sept. 19th as required by the act of October 6th.*

The flu, of course, had been around before. As with the cholera epidemic of 1892, one now finds many articles in the German-American press that describe the disease in general, report on previous outbreaks or discuss possible treatments. At the same time, the German-American papers



"Spanish Flu Death Chart," created by the National Museum of Health and Medicine, ca. 1920

diligently adhere to the American guidelines and largely follow the same narrative as the English-language papers.

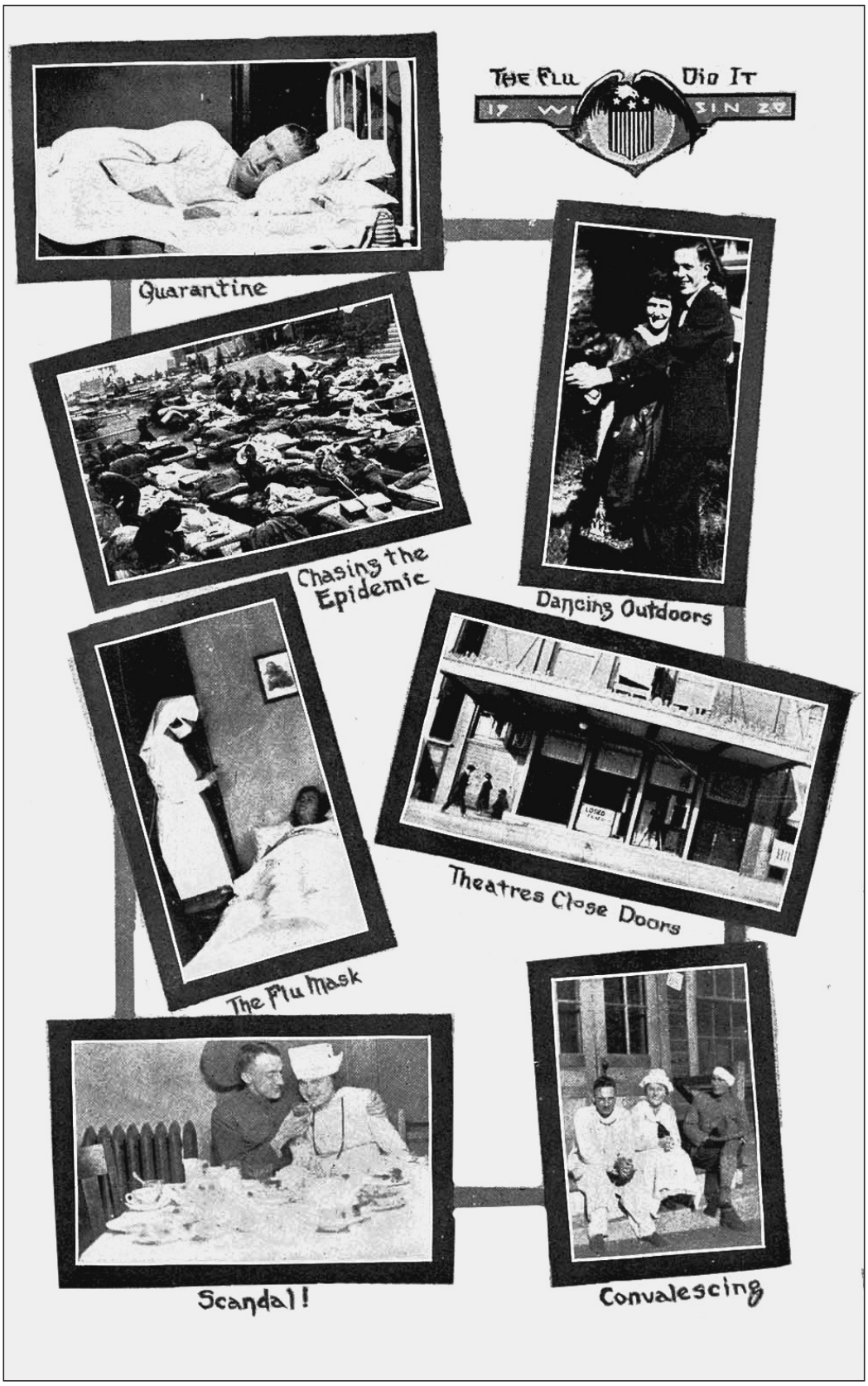
For example, on October 11, 1918, after more than 400 people had been sickened by the disease in Detroit, the *Detroiter Abendpost* published in German a full-page public announcement by the Detroit Commissioner of Health explaining the disease and suggesting preventive measures that focused on hygiene and social distancing. It concluded with: *Finally, do not be afraid! There is no better preventive medicine than a healthy body and a strong will. Grief, sorrow, and exhaustion lower the defenses of the body and are absolutely dangerous.* Just one week later, on October 19, the *Detroiter Abendpost* lists the names, ages, and addresses of over 200 people for whom *Begräbnisscheine* (funeral permits) were issued that day. For nearly everyone the cause of death was listed as influenza or pneumonia.

Often, the war in Europe and the influenza pandemic were reported side by side, and at the height of the epidemic they converged. On November 8, 1918, the *New Ulm Post* (Minnesota), like many other papers that day, jumped the gun by reporting the end of the war with a front page headline *Armistice with Germany Declared — Mayor Eibner Sends Congratulatory Telegram to the President — News Greeted With Joy — Bands Are Playing — People Parade Around Town.* The page is shared with an article about the latest group of draftees from the area: *Sheriff Julius finds himself in a dilemma. He is not able to fulfill the military's order to train 29 men by November 11. They are supposed to be sent to Fort Riley in Texas. He has only 27 men, many of whom are sick. The order stipulates that only healthy white men may be included* […] *But influenza has intervened. Eight of the above are already sick, and it is possible that during training exercises even more will be unable to follow the call to duty.*

That same day, the La Crosse, Wisconsin, *Nord Stern* in its "local news" section also mentions the departure of 71 local recruits to Camp Wadsworth in South Carolina. Right next to it are death notices for local men who died in France, including *the son of Mrs. Phebe Shuman, 1717 Main Street, Major Frank L. Shuman, who succumbed to influenza in France*, as well as local residents who had died of the flu, including *the one-week old son of Louis Schmidt who had passed away a week before his son*, and *eighty-year old Henry Muscovitz, who was born in Germany, but came to America over 60 years ago, and was a loyal reader of this paper.*

Also on November 8, the *Hermanner Volksblatt* (Hermann, Missouri) features a detailed article on its front page headlined *Four Hermann Boys in Six-Day Argonne Battle — 3 Were Injured, One Died — Rain and Storms Added to the Horror of Battle — Milton Blust Reports on the Brave Boys of the 138th Missouri.* Directly following Mr. Blust's article are obituaries for *Two Cousins* [who] *Succumbed to Influenza — William and Louis Reinholz, age 33, died after a short illness and are buried on the same day*, as well as two other community members.

It took two to three months before papers reported cautiously that the influenza wave might begin to subside. On January 17, 1919, the *Hermanner Volksblatt* wrote: *The influenza has largely left our region, and we hope that it will stay away in the future.* […] *The Richwoods School will soon open for instruction again after it had been closed for several weeks because of the influenza outbreak.* There was another, smaller wave of influenza to come that summer, but by 1920 the pandemic had run its course. Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, the University of Wisconsin–Madison graduation class of 1920 put together a more light hearted collage of flu-related photos that had been taken on campus, choosing the title "The Flu Did It" (see following page).



Page from *The Liberty Badger,* Class of 1920 University of Wisconsin Yearbook

A Pennsylvania Dutch Voice During the 1918–19 Flu Epidemic

Mark Louden

After reading a draft of Antje Petty's article on the coverage of pandemics in the German-American press over a century ago, I was intrigued to research how the influenza pandemic of 1918–19 was discussed among the Pennsylvania Dutch. At that time, many local newspapers serving readers in the Dutch Country of southeastern Pennsylvania still carried "dialect columns," articles written by and for Pennsylvania Dutch speakers that addressed a range of topics of interest to them. Most were written in a humorous vein, yet their function was not merely to entertain; they served as a vehicle for expressing opinions on a range of topics, especially politics. Dialect columnists, many of whom were among the most popular writers in the newspapers for which they wrote, were astute observers of the local culture of which they were a part, as well as American society more broadly. Since Pennsylvania Dutch dialect columns were almost never translated into English, their content is the written equivalent of private conversations.

Here I will focus on two articles written by Solomon DeLong (1849–1925), a successful Pennsylvania Dutch businessman and public servant who for the last twelve years of his life wrote a regular dialect column for the Allentown *Morning Call* under the pseudonym, "Obediah Grouthomel." In a tribute to him after his passing, the editors of the *Call* remembered him fondly. "He would sit with the village gatherings at country store, blacksmith shop, hotel, and other assembling places, absorbing the community lore, becoming a member in spirit of every group, all in preparation of a later intimate pen study of individuals and groups, particularly with respect to the lighter and brighter things of life. … [H]e and his confreres in their quietness and steadiness found such real pleasure as only the deliberate and the dreamers can ever realize. But he was unique in that he could translate that pleasure, that he could transmute those experiences for the enjoyment of all who could read his stories and philosophical observations in the dialect in which they were conceived and expressed" (*Morning Call*, February 2, 1925, p. 6).

The October 18, 1918, issue of the *Morning Call* was filled with stories of the miseries of the war in Europe and the serious threat posed by the flu. Obediah Grouthomel appears on page 8, in a column that is introduced by two rhyming lines, "Die saloons sin tzu / On account die "Flu." (The saloons are closed / On account

of the "flu."). The column begins in English translation as follows.

That's how it goes in America—things happen more quickly than an old goat can shake his tail. A week ago, on October 5, it was announced, "At twelve o'clock tonight the saloons must close and remain closed until the State Board of Health says that they may open again." This did not go over well with many folks. People who don't go to church or prayer meetings are totally lost, and many who do go to church and Sunday school don't know where to go to get out of the way at home. They used to go from the saloon to the movie theaters, but those are closed now, too. When they go to their club halls they find them just as dry as the Jordan River in August, so all they can do is drink water like crazy and go to bed.

DeLong goes on to recount several incidents of individuals – fully identified (I checked: they were actual residents of Allentown) – who in a panic stocked up on alcohol they bought from the saloons the last evening before they were shuttered. While the stories DeLong shares are humorous, he does appear to distance himself from what his readers would likely have considered questionable behavior. At the end of the anecdote that closes the column, DeLong has the last, cautious word.

C[…] R[…] said, "What is all this? The saloons are closed and the influenza is going around. The best medicine you can get for whooping cough or influenza is good whiskey. The saloons should all be open and people should be encouraged to drink all the whiskey they can get down, then the influenza would soon be driven away." "Well," I said, "that could be."

Almost one year later, on September 1, 1919, DeLong shares the story of another local person (again, named) that discusses the use of an alcoholic beverage for the treatment of the flu. By that fall, the pandemic had waned, but a new concern was, um, brewing: Prohibition. In January, the Eighteenth Amendment to the US Constitution outlawing "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors" had been ratified. It was to take effect in January 1920. For decades the temperance movement had been met with resistance among German and many other Americans, including the Pennsylvania Dutch. As the threat posed by influenza in Pennsylvania and across the country receded and the war to end all wars was coming to a close, Prohibition was on the minds of many of DeLong's readers. His column on p. 12 of the Sept. 1 issue of the *Morning Call* begins as follows.

With Prohibition in the air, cider is coming onto the market. Of course rich people have their cellars full of whiskey and don't need to bother with cider, but if the poor man wants to have something to fight the "flu," he'll have to stock up on cider.

Now here's P[…] G[…] from Weisenberg, who's making a business of bringing cider to sell at the market. He has a small farm in Weisenberg Township that's up in the mountains like Mauch Chunk [today, Jim Thorpe]. *The whiskey creek runs past his house, down through the valley, but it goes dry from time to time, and it looks now as if it will be completely dry about next January.*

It's claimed that the "flu" will come again next winter, and if there's no more whiskey here, one will need something else to fight it. Last winter, when the flu took so many people, P. brought his cider to the market and has testimonials by the dozen that it worked better than whiskey. He says that cider that is as pure as his, with a kick and little music worked in, is the best medicine one can get to fight the flu. He comes every week to the market on Allen St., and whoever wants to stock up on medicine had better buy some before long. P. is buying up apples because he doesn't have enough of his own to make cider for his many customers. He has been offered a farm for sale in the neighborhood, but has no use for it. He says, "What do I want with a farm like that? It doesn't have an apple orchard – the man doesn't keep pigs because he doesn't have any apples – plenty of dogs, but not a pig in the stall. The barn isn't finished – the chicken house is just half built, no pig stall – nothing is finished. What would I want with a farm like that – no apples, no pigs, nothing but dogs."

The substantial popularity of DeLong's Pennsylvania Dutch writings in the *Morning Call* over twelve years lay in his ability to connect with his readers on their level and in their beloved mother tongue. His tales of the interesting characters he came into contact with were entertaining, but respectful, even when he took them gently to task. Solomon DeLong and other Pennsylvania Dutch columnists offered their readers – their ethnic "confreres" – something that they could not hear in the rest of the newspaper: the sympathetic voice of one of their own.

Continued from page 9

ing forth attentiveness, wonder and humility.

This year, students in his translation workshop translated stories from the 1949 short story anthology *Tausend Gramm,* as well as stories by German writers with immigration backgrounds. John himself is currently translating the memoirs of a leading figure of the 1989 Peaceful Revolution in Germany: Christian Führer, Pastor of the Nikolaikirche in Leipzig. Known to colleagues and students as a fervent lover of poetry, John presently shares poems with his neighbors by chalking them on his driveway, adding new ones after every rain.

Pamela Tesch lives in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. She previously served on the Board from 2012 until 2018. Pam is a Lecturer at UW–Whitewater where she teaches German Phonetics. She also teaches Beginning and Intermediate German through UW–Milwaukee at Waukesha's Continuing Education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she had to quickly adjust to offer these courses online.

Pam has been very active in her local community. For the last 3 years, she has been involved in the Oconomowoc Festival of the Arts, serving as President-Elect and President, bringing art to the community with the support of many volunteers and artists, the city, and numerous local sponsors.

Pam's research interests continue to bring her back to UW–Madison and the Max Kade Institute. She is especially interested in historical research on literature from a feminist perspective (German literature around 1800), Medieval German literature and linguistics, and pedagogy with a focus on reading, listening, speaking, writing, and culture. In addition, she is interested in the experiences of German-American immigrants, genealogy, and in German-English translations. Pam's history with the Institute goes far back. As early as 1991, she taught German classes for the MKI and was a project assistant in 2000. Her personal experience of growing up in America as a bilingual child with a German mother also informs her interest in the Institute. Her father served with the United States Air Force in Germany when he met her mother, then a German citizen. Pam feels that the MKI has helped not only her but numerous undergraduate and graduate students find meaningful professional opportunities.

At the Max Kade Institute, we look forward to another exciting year of collaboration with our Friends and the Board of Directors. We are exceedingly grateful to all of you for investing so much of your time, energy, and resources, in our mission and work!

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