



MAX KADE INSTITUTE

# FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 31 No 2 • Spring 2022

## The Luxembourg Presence in Wisconsin

Mark Loudon



Luxembourg Fest Parade, Belgium, WI, 2019. Source: Wikimedia Commons

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On Saturday, June 29, 1901, residents of Ozaukee County, Wisconsin, and surrounding areas gathered to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone for a new county courthouse that still today graces the skyline of Port Washington. After a festive parade through the city, a formal ceremony was held that featured speeches by Port Washington's mayor, Gottlieb Biedermann (1850–1928), and the mayors of Milwaukee and Sheboygan, David Stuart Rose (1856–1932) and Fred Dennett (1849–1920). Another address was delivered by the Hon-

orable Henry Fink (1840–1925), a former member of the Wisconsin Assembly, US Marshal, and Collector of Internal Revenue for the First District of Wisconsin.

These four addresses were complemented by the recitation of a poem written to mark the occasion by Nicholas E. Becker (1840–1920), Chairman of the Town of Fredonia, Ozaukee County, and a former state assemblyman. The composition of a special work to dedicate a public building was not a unique event, but

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## Greetings Friends and Readers!

The year 2022 is off to a great start for us at the Max Kade Institute. We are excited to welcome our new administrative manager, Randi Ramsden, who is profiled on page 10 of this newsletter. Although we did not specifically seek a colleague with expertise in German, Randi's background as a person born and educated in Germany is a wonderful additional asset, as is her professional experience at the Wisconsin Historical Society. We are so glad to have you on the MKI team, Randi!

As the pandemic recedes, we are eager to once again sponsor in-person programming. This season's highlight will be our April 18–19 symposium, "Nineteenth-Century Echoes: German Settlers and Explorers in South America," the program for which is on page 3. This symposium brings scholars to Madison from across the US, Germany, and Brazil for an event that expands the purview of MKI's work beyond North America. We are grateful for the support of two University units with whom we are collaborating for the first time, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies Pro-

gram, as well as our longtime campus partners, the Center for German and European Studies; the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic+; and the UW–Madison Anonymous Fund. We warmly invite our Friends to join us for what promises to be an enjoyable experience.

Right after "Nineteenth-Century Echoes," Antje Petty, Kevin Kurdylo, and I—along with several of our symposium's participants—will head to the University of Iowa in Iowa City for the 46th Annual Symposium of the Society for German-American Studies (SGAS). Organized by Antje, University of Iowa Professor of German Glenn Ehrstine, and me, this will be the first in-person SGAS symposium in three years. Of special note will be the presentation of this year's SGAS Outstanding Achievement Award to longtime MKI Friend and Board Member, Karyl Rommelfanger, who will deliver a lecture on the symposium's first evening. Congratulations, Karyl! Thirty symposium presentations spread out over a day and a half will be followed on Saturday by an excursion to the Amana Colonies, site of the symposium banquet in the evening. We would enjoy welcoming MKI Friends to Iowa City, April 21–23. More information about the symposium can be found at [sgas.org](http://sgas.org).

A silver lining of the pandemic has been our ability to offer virtual events, including monthly lectures. The majority of our virtual lectures are available to view online at MKI's YouTube channel.

Another virtual initiative undertaken this year is a weekly MKI *Kurrent* Transcription group. MKI Friend and Friends Board member, Maria Sturm, from the German Society of Pennsylvania (GSP) in Philadelphia, introduced us to a similar group at the GSP's Horner Library. Maria, who is a historian by training and a native German speaker, leads a small group to transcribe documents from the MKI Archives written in *Kurrent*, the old German script. The work of the transcription group helps advance our efforts to make German-language materials accessible to researchers. The group's first project is a collection of letters written in the 1930s and 1940s by Anna Jagow Seifert to her son Lester (Smoky) Seifert, who later became a professor of Germanic linguistics at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and was a pioneer in the study (and audio-recording!) of German heritage speakers in America. Thank you, Maria, for your leadership!

Emerging from the past two years, we find we have much to be grateful for, especially the generous support that you, our Friends, have continued to extend to us. We are optimistic that, after two postponements, we will be able to see each other in person again at our MKI Friends Annual Meeting in Port Washington and Grafton in Ozaukee County. Let's hope that the third time is indeed a charm!

With gratitude,  
Mark

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies is published three times a year at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Submissions are invited and should be sent to:

Kevin Kurdylo  
Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies  
432 East Campus Mall, UW–Madison, Madison, WI 53706–1407  
Phone: (608) 262–7546  
[mki@library.wisc.edu](mailto:mki@library.wisc.edu)  
[mki.wisc.edu](http://mki.wisc.edu)

# Nineteenth-Century Echoes: German Settlers and Explorers in South America

APRIL 18–19, 2022

Pyle Center Auditorium, 702 Langdon Street, Madison

**Free and Open to the Public / No Registration Required**

## PROGRAM

### MONDAY, April 18, 2022

- 9:00 – 9:50 **Welcome**
- 10:00 – 10:50 **Walter Kamphoefner**, Texas A&M University: “Germans in the Americas: Contrasts and Commonalities, North and South”
- 11:00 – 11:50 **Sandra Rebok**, Independent Scholar: “German Naturalists in South America: Alexander von Humboldt, Eduard Otto, and Fritz Müller”
- Lunch Break
- 1:30 – 2:20 **Göz Kaufmann**, Albert Ludwig University, Freiburg, Germany: “Edelgund or Celinha: How Naming Practices Among Pomeranians in Brazil Are Influenced by Their Multiple Identities”
- 2:30 – 3:20 **Katharina Löschner**, Ruprecht Karl University, Heidelberg, Germany: “Uruguay’s German Language Press, 1880–1913”
- 3:30 – 4:20 **Patrick Wolf-Farré**, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany: “The German Speakers of Chile: from ‘Language Islands’ to ‘Minority’”

### TUESDAY, April 19, 2022

- 9:00 – 9:50 **Mark L. Loudon**, University of Wisconsin–Madison: “Language Maintenance Among Mennonites in South and North America”
- 10:00 – 10:50 **H. Glenn Penny**, University of Iowa: “Being German in South America During the Interwar Period: 1919–1939”
- 11:00 – 11:50 **Karen Pupp Spinassé**, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Porto Alegre, Brazil: “Language and Society in Focus: German-Speaking Brazilians in the 21st Century”
- Lunch Break
- 1:30 – 2:50 **ROUNDTABLE**  
**“Echoes Heard in the Twenty-First Century”**  
Walter Kamphoefner, Göz Kaufmann, Katharina Löschner, Mark L. Loudon, H. Glenn Penny, Karen Pupp Spinassé, Sandra Rebok, Patrick Wolf-Farré  
Reflecting on the presentations in this Symposium, presenters will gather with the audience to discuss questions of (minority) identities in German-speaking South-America and global connections today.

This symposium is cosponsored by the **UW–Madison’s Center for German and European Studies**; the **Department of German, Nordic, Slavic+**; the **Department of Spanish and Portuguese**; the **Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies Program**, and by the **Friends of the Max Kade Institute**.

It is made possible through the generous financial support of the **UW–Madison Anonymous Fund** and significant financial contributions by our cosponsors.

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the language of the poem was: Luxembourgish, Becker's native tongue.

A copy handwritten and signed by Becker of "Fir de Grondstên zum Neie Courthaus a Port Washington, den 29. Brochmont 1901" (For the Cornerstone for the New Courthouse in Port Washington, June 29, 1901) was one of several items placed in a time capsule inserted into the cornerstone. The text of "Fir de Grondstên" was printed on July 10, 1901, in the German-language *Luxemburger Gazette* (Dubuque, Iowa) and is given here in English translation.

*It is not by chance that we have been  
brought together today,  
It is an important and meaningful  
matter;*

*The cornerstone is being laid for this  
imposing edifice,  
A stone that in the future will bear  
witness to this day.*

*This building is to be a place where  
justice is pronounced;  
Many a judge's expression will be  
uttered here;  
These words should be proper and  
always just,  
And the judgment should be firm, as  
the building itself.*

*The whole edifice and the people  
gathered here  
Speak to the unity of our South and  
North;  
So may it always remain, it should  
never be different:  
That is our wish, which should endure  
forever.*

*As the stones for the building are  
joined with mortar  
So that the walls will be able to stand  
firmly for years,*

*This building, in unity and peace,  
unites*

*All citizens of this county, that they  
may live in harmony.*

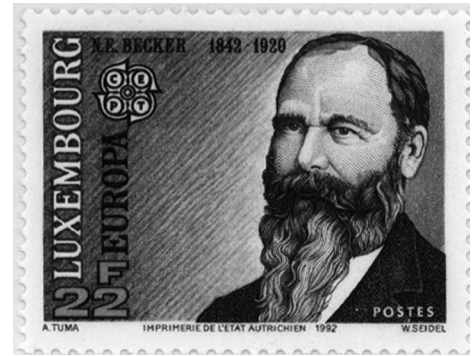
*What we place today into this corner-  
stone,  
Should tell after hundreds of years to  
posterity*

*What we in our day planned and  
achieved.*

*May the cornerstone bear this building  
for centuries!*

Becker's poem in Luxembourgish was by no means the only Germanic element of the festivities on that summer day in 1901. Music was provided by two German bands, one from Cedarburg and the other from Port Washington and founded by Martin Zimmermann (1853–1927), a German-born tavern owner and musician. Henry Fink from Milwaukee was also a native German and Mayor Biedermann hailed from Thalwil, Canton Zurich, Switzerland. Among the various community groups represented in the parade was one comprised of German veterans, likely men who had fought in the Civil War. And the ceremony was closed with a volley provided by the Deutscher Landwehr Männer Verein (German Militiamen's Club).

The participants in the courthouse dedication ceremony were part of a diverse ethnic tapestry in Wisconsin at the turn of the 20th century that—especially in the eastern part of the state—had a strongly Germanic character. The Luxembourg presence in what became the Badger State goes back to the 1840s, when immigrants from German-speaking Central Europe began settling here. They originated in the Moselle Franconian dia-



Commemorative stamp from the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg honoring Nicholas E. Becker, 1992

lect area, at the center of which is the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Only about a decade before Luxembourgers started immigrating to Wisconsin, a sizeable portion of the grand duchy's territory was ceded to the new Kingdom of Belgium, what is today the Province of Luxembourg. The eastern edge of Moselle Franconia was located in Rhenish Prussia, now part of the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate. A smaller number of Moselle Franconian speakers lived in the Moselle department of the Lorraine region in France.

For many years, Luxembourgish was regarded as a dialect of German. Its status was elevated in 1984, when it was officially designated the grand duchy's national language and one of its three official languages, the other two being French and German. Although Luxembourgish and German share a common linguistic ancestry, French has long played an important role in public life in Luxembourg. Proper names of prominent Luxembourgers like Jean-Claude Juncker, a former prime minister and President of the European Community, are an expression of the significance of French in Luxembourg society.

When Luxembourgers came to Wisconsin in the 19th century, their



literacy was dominated not by French but German, as publications such as the *Luxemburger Gazette* mentioned earlier attest. Essentially all immigrants to Wisconsin from Germanic Central Europe spoke regional dialects that were often not mutually intelligible with one another. While their Yankee neighbors were inclined to view them all as “Germans,” Central European immigrants and their descendants identified with their ancestral regions, referring to themselves as, for example, Pomeranians, Hessians, Bavarians, and Luxembourgers. Swiss and Austrian German speakers were of course part of the mix as well. Despite considerable linguistic and cultural differences, the shared knowledge of standard German connected Germanic-speaking immigrants with one another.

Luxembourgers settled in many parts of Wisconsin, but most made their homes in Ozaukee County, arriving through Port Washington. Writing in 1889, Nicholas Gonner (1835–1892), a chronicler of Luxembourg-American history and editor of the *Luxemburg Gazette*, shared these impressions of the community on Lake Michigan:

*Characterized by the industrious and enterprising nature of its people, the town has a splendid harbor and rich surrounding farm land which contributes to thriving business and an air of prosperity. The locality has a distinct flavor of Luxembourg. Were this not evident from the shop signs, it would be from the chatter of children in the streets. On noting the identities of candidates elected to public office, one would think this is a commune*

*in the Grand Duchy. As another example, one can cite the membership of the fire-fighting brigade, which is made up almost entirely of Luxembourgers. Additionally, since 1855, the town has had in the Port Washington Zeitung a German newspaper whose shop counts among its “graduates” the former member of Congress, P. V. Deuster, as well as Michel Kraus, editor of the Milwaukee Journal, and N. Jaquinet, the owner of the Minneapolis Herold.*

Wisconsin Luxembourgers were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, thus churches were at the figurative and literal heart of their communities. Outside of Port Washington, three villages that formed around Catholic congregations demarcated the center of the Luxembourg settlement in rural Ozaukee County. The oldest, founded in 1845, was Holy Cross (*Hëlleg Kreiz*), which today is an unincorporated locality situated southwest of the town of Belgium, so named for settlers who came from the Province of Luxembourg. In his description of Holy Cross in 1889, Nicholas Gonner noted that

*[t]his parish numbers 142 German families, among which are counted 119 of Luxembourg origin. The pastor since 1880 has been Rev. W. J. Frantz, himself a Luxembourger. He has written us that the 23 non-Luxembourg families, made up of people from [Rhenish-] Prussia, Bavaria, and Darmstadt, also speak Luxembourgish fluently.*


In 1847, two years after Holy Cross was founded, the second of the three Luxembourg congregations, St.

Nicholas (*Neklôs*), was established in Dacada. Though located in Sheboygan County, most of St. Nicholas’s parishioners lived in Ozaukee County. The third church-centered community was St.-Mary-on-the-Lake, known informally as Lake Church (*Le’iker Kirch*) for its proximity to Lake Michigan.

In a history of Luxembourgers in America, Roger Kriebs underscored the importance of these three rural Ozaukee County communities.

*In earlier times, on special occasions such as Corpus Christi, cannon salutes were sounded from church to church. When the “Le’iker” heard the cannons from “Hëlleg Kreiz” and then the boom sounded from “Neklôs,” everyone knew that the Luxembourgers were coming together and observing a festival. The only non-Luxembourg celebration that was similarly opened with a cannon salute was the Fourth of July. This concession was made in recognition of the new homeland. Otherwise the triangle-rampart [Dreieckswall] around the Luxembourg settlements of Ozaukee County was invincible. Already from the outside each of the three churches looked like a fortress.*

The cannons of Holy Cross, St. Nicholas, and Lake Church have long been silent, however the Luxembourg heritage is celebrated today in Belgium, Wisconsin. In 2004 the Luxembourg American Cultural Society (LACS) was founded there, followed five years later by the construction of a Cultural Center, with generous support from the Grand Duchy (<https://www.lacs.lu/>). The LACS sponsors an impressive array of programming,

its signature event being the annual Luxembourg Fest, which is billed as the “world’s largest Luxembourg family reunion.” Although Luxembourgish is no longer widely spoken in Ozaukee County, LACS members can participate in a monthly *Lëtze-buergesch Klass* and learn a little of the language that Nicholas Becker and thousands of other Wisconsin-ites spoke generations ago. 

*The poem to the right is Becker’s most well-known. It was set to music by one of his sons, Jacob (1872–1948). A recording of Jacob Becker singing “Zur Erenneronk” made by Helene Stratman-Thomas in 1946 is accessible on the MKI website: <https://language.mki.wisc.edu/german-american-dialect-recordings/field-recording-by-helene-stratman-thomas-of-jacob-becker-1946-belgium-ozaukee-co-poem-by-jacobs-father-nicholas-e-becker-1840-1920/>.*

#### Sources

Ensch, Jean, Jean-Claude Muller, and Robert E. Owen (eds), *Luxembourgers in the New World*, translation and reedition of *Die Luxemburger in der Neuen Welt* (1889) by Nicholas Gonner, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg, 1987. Quoted material from pp. 135 and 137.  
Krieps, Roger, *Luxemburger in Amerika*, Luxembourg City, 1962. Quoted material from p. 78.

I am grateful to Prof. Peter Gilles (University of Luxembourg) for assistance with the translation of Becker’s “Fir de Grondstên.”

***Join us on Sunday, May 16, for the Friends of MKI Annual meeting in Port Washington and Grafton and learn more about the Luxembourg heritage of Wisconsin! See page 11 for more information.***

#### “Zur Erenneronk” (In Remembrance)

Nicholas E. Becker

*Dedicated to the Old Settlers of Town 12*

Gather round, boys, it’s evening in winter,  
Whoever can’t see clearly should bring a lantern,  
Let’s talk about that time  
That lies fifty long years behind us.

Let us tell of what we have achieved,  
What we built for ourselves, what we took on for ourselves.  
We didn’t have much when we came to this country,  
But strength—that we had—and industry and common sense.

We had no houses, no stables, and no barns,  
Livestock and feed were hard to come by,  
We had no beds, no chairs, and no tables,  
And the land we bought was all bush.

We set to work, quite brave and strong,  
With clearing and burning everyone was busy,  
Houses were built and fences made,  
Boundaries between neighbors marked by notches in trees and paths.

It was hard to clear and burn,  
With the smoke in the fields and our hands worked raw.  
Few complained, everyone had zest,  
Everyone’s breast was filled with hope.

And when we had a house, a stable, and a barn,  
When we had schools, churches, and other buildings,  
And potatoes and bread, and also meat on the table,  
We forgot our sufferings, and our hope was renewed.

We carved out roads—crude though they may have been—  
To bring the crops to the mills, and then to bring the meal home,  
And if one happened to get stuck in thick mud,  
One could comfort oneself with a sip from the bottle.

Now we have beautiful lands, houses, and barns,  
Maybe some money in the bank, and perhaps even papers,  
We’ve overcome much trouble and suffering  
And thank God that we are doing so well today.

To be sure, some of us have died,  
Perhaps one here and there didn’t succeed, failed,  
Yet everyone who is still with us  
Utters the Lord’s Prayer that the dead may find peace.

# A Young German-Jewish Immigrant in Civil War America: The Memoirs of David Lepman

Antje Petty

In 1925, eighty-four-year-old David Lepman wrote down the story of his youth. On fifteen densely typed pages, Lepman describes his childhood in Germany, his immigration to America at the age of 14, and his experiences as a soldier in the American Civil War. Lepman was born David Liebmann the night of September 1-2, 1841, to Isak Liebmann and his wife Sara, nee Wallerstein, in Hechingen, Swabia, a town in the small independent principality of Hohenzollern. In 1850, Hohenzollern became part of the Kingdom of Prussia and is today located in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. At the time of Lepman's birth, about 5,000 people lived in Hechingen. Most were Catholic, but a quarter of the population was Jewish like the Liebmann family. In the early 1850s, motivated by the unsuccessful uprisings of 1848/49 in Prussia and other German states, as well as the shifting economic landscape of industrialization, many in Hechingen and all over southwest Germany decided to emigrate to America. Among these migrants

were members of the Jewish community like David Lepman's older brothers and, in 1855, Lepman himself.

After first joining his brothers in Illinois, Lepman moved to New York to finish an apprenticeship as a watch maker. There he joined the recently founded New York *Turnverein*. Lepman was also one of the earliest students at New York's Cooper Institute (Cooper Union). Founded in 1859 by wealthy businessman Peter Cooper (himself a laborer's child with only a year of formal education), the Institute strove to provide free higher education "to all who were eager to acquire knowledge," regardless of socioeconomic background, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Lepman learned English at Cooper and also listened to many speakers who were invited there, including abolitionists such as Horace Greeley. In his memoirs, Lepman credits his experiences at Cooper as instrumental to his becoming a steadfast Republican.

In 1861, when President Lincoln issued a call for volunteers to fight for the Union, Lepman was eager to enlist. Together with his friends

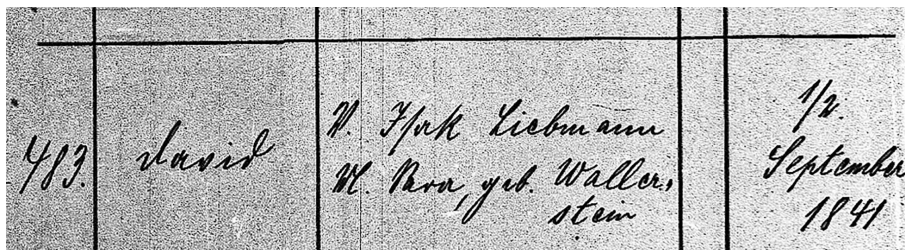


David Lepman, undated

from the *Turnverein*, he joined the 20th New York Volunteer Regiment, also called the "Turner Rifles." His harrowing experiences in two years on the front are at the center of his memoirs.

After mustering out in 1863, Lepman briefly returned to New York, but eventually settled in Lanark, Illinois, and later in Chicago. He was successful in various occupations, first repairing and selling watches, clocks, and jewelry, and later running businesses in Chicago, including a millinery and a featherbed operation.

The following are excerpts from his memoirs written in English. We thank Fran Loeb Luebke for sharing them with the Max Kade Institute, and Nancy Lepman McKlveen for



Birth record from the "Verzeichnis der israelitischen Gemeinde Hechingen ueber die Geburten vom Jahre 1800 bis 1905" (Registry of births in the Israelite community of Hechingen, 1800-1905), Baden-Württemberg State Archives Stuttgart, <http://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=1-445287>



providing additional family information.

*Here in picturesque southern Germany, known to many as “Schwabenland,” is the small town of Hechingen where I was born, eighty-four years ago. When I first opened my eyes in this verdant nook, this village boasted a population of some five thousand inhabitants. It had a large Jewish congregation. In fact, [one of the largest synagogues] in Southern Germany had been built there. [...] The town itself is built on the lower land. [...] Almost at the very pinnacle of Mount Hohenzollern, a picturesque old fortress stands 2080 feet above sea level. It is called the castle of the Hohenzollerns and commands an excellent view of the entire country about. The town of Hechingen already boasted a kindergarten in my day. This had been established by the rich wife of the Prince of Hechingen. [...] My early school days were those of most boys. [...] Vacation times were spent gathering flowers up the Hohenzollern. Sometimes we went up the mountainsides botanizing with our teachers.*

*Although there was much space outside these little villages in Germany, the houses were built very closely together on very narrow and shallow lots. The streets were so narrow that only one horse and wagon coming from one direction could pass. In our village, the houses were of stucco. We had a corner lot,*

*so we had light from all sides. Each house accommodated two families, like the modern two-family flat, but unlike the modern flat, the big square stove was heated from outside. [...] Like Lincoln, as a small boy, after school I sawed the wood and cut it for fuel. Our kitchen had a brick floor. We smoked our own meats at the chimney. [...]*

*Of Father I know very little. Mother, nee Wallerstein, came from Buchau on [Lake] Federsee. [...] My father had been married twice. The four children of his first wife, with exception of Leah, were already in America at the time of his death. I was but eight years old, brother Moses a few years younger and sister Matilda three years old when this sad event occurred. That day, [...] father had left the house with my brother Lewis at four o'clock and walked to a neighboring town where there was a fair. The next we heard of him was the discovery of his dismembered body in the river. From Lewis, the following account had been gotten: Father, always a religious man, had stopped to pray, sending his son to order breakfast at the tavern. He had planned on then collecting some money on a bill [owed to] him. This account was with a forester, a man in the employ of the government. When my brother after [...] searching for his father all day, met some of the neighbors and recounted his tale, [...] three prominent Jewish leaders of the congregation*



“Israelite school and synagogue on Goldschmid Street,” photo ca. 1900. This was the oldest and largest of three synagogues in Hechingen at the turn of the 20th century. Source: [https://www.alemannia-judaica.de/hechingen\\_synagogue.htm](https://www.alemannia-judaica.de/hechingen_synagogue.htm)

*were called. They went to this village, investigated, and found evidence of foul play. It was only after telling the forester that the law would deal lightly with him, for the murdered was only an old Jew, that a confession was wrung from the murderer. [...]*

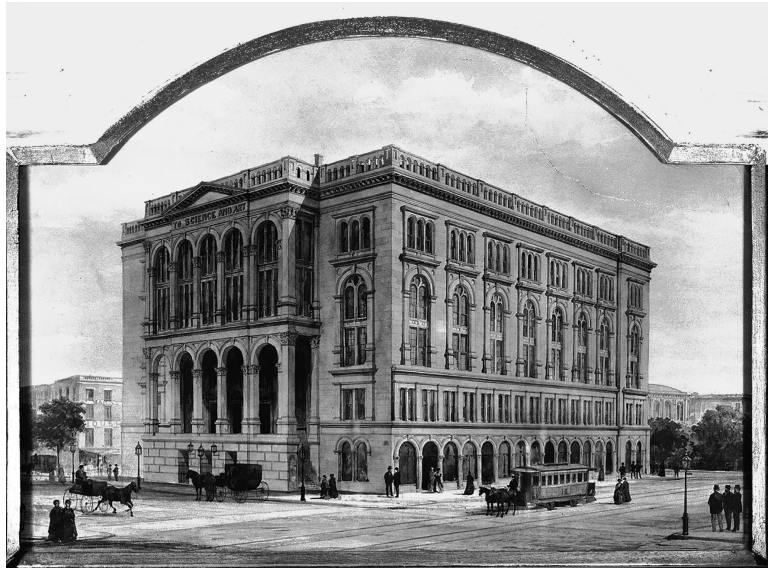
*Father had planned that I was to be a physician. Now all this was changed. [...] At ten years of age, I was helping my schoolmates with their lessons. At twelve years of age, I was tutoring and exchanging German lessons for French and English lessons. My guardian appointed by the court at father's death and mother then decided I should learn a trade. My brothers already in America had written of their hardships as*



peddlers and had advised a trade for me, who had always been a little fellow for my years. I was apprenticed to a watchmaker. I did not stay long, for in Europe of that day one paid to learn a trade [and] Germany restricted [its] apprentices. One had to get concession from the government to carry on any business.

I was anxious to join my brothers in America. By that time brothers Lewis and Moses had already joined Bernhardt and Henry. The spirit of adventure was strong within me. Bernhardt, the oldest brother, had been in the revolutionary army of 1848 and so was forced to leave Germany. He had opened a store in St. Mary's, Ohio. Brother Henry had gone overland to California and opened up a store there. [...] Moses had been peddling among the farmers in Illinois, helping often as a farmhand; Lewis had opened a store in Lanark, [Illinois]. With the [departure] of each child, poor mother was sick for days but I persisted in my entreaties and reluctantly, at the age of fourteen, I was permitted to embark for America.

David Lepman continues with a detailed account of his journey to America, his joy at reaching New York, his struggles to hang on to his meager possessions, and the challenges he faced trying to reach his brother in Mt. Carol, Illinois.



The Cooper Union's Foundation Building in New York City, ca. 1871  
Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ny0359.photos.120070p/>

In Mt. Carol, a true village, I stayed for a year or so. There I made myself as useful as possible, helping with the chores for a while. Water had to be carried from a well a great distance from the house. The road abounded with rattlesnakes. It was said that brother Moses had so keen a knowledge of these snakes as he peddled through Illinois and Iowa that he could smell them from a distance. Bernhardt had opened a store in Sabula, Iowa. One of the duties assigned to me those days was to take messages from the Mt. Carol store to the store in Sabula. The railroads had not yet been built. From Sabula I had to walk. [...] We went down the river by boat in summer. In winter, we had to be careful crossing the ice because of the air holes. [...]

My brothers decided that I ought to continue my apprenticeship as a watchmaker, the trade I had started to learn while in Germany. Twice a year brother Bernhardt went to New York to buy goods. On one of these visits, he hunted up a watchmaker, who agreed to take me on. So back again to New York I went as an apprentice at four dollars a week. I was then around fifteen years of age.

New York at the time offered as a haven to immigrants, Cooper Institute. Being alone in the city after a good hard day's work, I spent my lonely evenings within its friendly portals. Here I studied English. There were no circulating books in those days [...] and I had to stay in the library to read [the books]. At the Open Forum I heard the speeches of the abolitionist

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## Randi Ramsden Joins the Max Kade Institute

**W**e are delighted to welcome Randi Ramsden to the Max Kade Institute. Randi joined the MKI staff in February. As the new administrative manager, she oversees the operational aspects of the institute and serves as a liaison to the Friends of the Max Kade Institute and MKI patrons. Originally from Germany, Randi moved to Madison in 2016 where she began working at the Wisconsin Historical Society. As a project librarian and manager of the Wisconsin National Digital Newspaper Program, she was in charge of the digitization of historic Wisconsin newspapers (including some German-language titles) and taught workshops on using digital and analog newspaper collections for research projects across the state.

Her research interests include U.S. newspaper history in general and more specifically the history of German-language newspapers in America. She is also interested in U.S. culinary history and the digital humanities. Randi continues her research, some of which has been published in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* and on the National Endowment for the Humanities Blog. Randi studied American history, literature, and political science in Germany and at the UW–Madison, and received her master's degree in American Studies from the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz. She is looking forward to being a part of MKI and,



Randi Ramsden with Lake Monona behind her

thereby contributing to and supporting MKI's research, preservation, and outreach mission.

When Randi is not busy working or being a history sleuth, she enjoys spending time with her husband and toddler, preferably outside in, on, or by Madison's beautiful lakes.

WELCOME, RANDI! 🍷

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

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# FRIENDS OF THE MAX KADE INSTITUTE ANNUAL MEETING 2022

## Port Washington and Grafton, Ozaukee County

### Sunday, May 15, 2022

Third time is a charm! We could not meet in 2020 and in 2021, but this year, the Friends of the Max Kade Institute will hold their Annual Meeting in Ozaukee County, a center of German and Luxembourg immigration in the 1850s and 1860s. We will explore the maritime history of Port Washington, a beautiful Lake Michigan harbor town where many immigrants first set foot on Wisconsin soil. In rotating groups, we will enjoy a self-guided tour of the Exploreum, the town's new maritime museum; we will be guided through the historic Light Station and Museum; and we will visit the Port Washington Historical Society to see their exhibits and hear a presentation about the town's early settler families from German-speaking Europe. Afterward, we will drive to the Milwaukee Ale House in nearby Grafton for the annual business meeting and dinner, followed by a presentation by MKI Director Mark Loudon on "Luxembourgers in Wisconsin."

#### PROGRAM

11:30 – 12:00	<b>Registration at Port Washington</b> Exploreum, 118 N Franklin St, Port Washington
12:00 – 3:30	Tours of the Port Washington Exploreum, Light Station, and Historical Society (in three rotating groups)
3:30 – 4:00	<b>Drive to Milwaukee Ale House</b> in Grafton, 1208 13th Ave, Grafton
4:00 – 5:00	Friends Annual Business Meeting (snacks & cash bar)
5:00 – 5:30	Socializing; meeting of new Board of Directors (election of officers)
5:30 – 6:30	Dinner
6:30 – 7:30	Lecture by Mark Loudon



#### Locations / Addresses

- **Exploreum:** 118 N Franklin St, Port Washington (parking behind building)
- **Historical Society:** 205 N Franklin St, Port Washington (across from Exploreum, street parking or parking behind Exploreum)
- **Light Station:** 311 Johnson St, Port Washington (street parking)
- **Milwaukee Ale House in Grafton:** 1208 13th Ave, Grafton (street parking and parking lot across the street)

#### COST

**All three tours together/ per person:** \$8

**Dinner/ per person** (see choices on registration form): \$44

**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED by Friday, April 29, 2022!**

**Please register online at:** <https://mkifriends.org/annual-meetings/>

#### BRING A FRIEND – MAKE A FRIEND

Dinner purchase includes Friends of the MKI membership for the year 2022 for *new* Friends.

**Questions? Contact Antje Petty:** [apetty@wisc.edu](mailto:apetty@wisc.edu)



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leaders. Horace Greeley and [Wendell] Phillips spoke often. I was influenced and became a staunch Republican. [...]

Civil War ensued. At the first call of the President for seventy-five thousand men, I, with my fellow Turner Society members, responded. We constituted the Twentieth New York Turner Regiment. As acting corresponding secretary, it [fell] to me to report on the various experiences we encountered during those first two disastrous years of battle. Unfortunately, those letters and records which I sent to the Society from the battlefield are lost.

After several weeks of drill exercises in New York, the regiment was shipped first to Fort Monroe, Virginia, and then to Hampton Roads, Camp Hamilton, and Newport News.

*The left wing of our regiment, Co. I., was sent to Newport News, a very strategic point. Our lieutenant colonel, our adjutant and our chaplain were all mounted; we were under a major who couldn't speak much English. Many of our officers were not fit, having secured their appointments through friendship to the governors. We disliked our captain heartily, feeling he was a coward, which afterward proved true, and we didn't know the roads while the opposing force knew them thoroughly. So, you see, we were handicapped. [...]* It

was while stationed at [Camp Hamilton] opposite Hotel Hygiene that President Lincoln appeared in a silk high hat on his head, a scotch plaid shawl of black and white wrapped around his shoulders, and a sad and bewhiskered countenance. We formed a line and presented arms.

Toward evening, when the view was obstructed because of the vapor arising from the water, we were placed on empty canal boats and taken over to Sewall's Point and employed as skirmishers. It was early dawn when we advanced on the Rebels, so close to their heels that the manure from the horses was still steaming. They tried to impede our progress by cutting down trees. We caught some men, among them some [Blacks] whom we brought into camp for questioning. When we shoved our muzzles into their faces, they just shook from fright.

The regiment moved on to Norfolk, where Lepman for the first time in his life saw the bursting of shells. They continued on to make their winter quarters in Fredericksburg, which meant several months of miserable cold and hunger. While stationed in Newport News, on May 8, 1862, Lepman witnessed the famous "Battle of the Ironclads," the Merrimack and the Monitor. In the following months, his regiment attempted to take Richmond, Virginia.

*You all have read in your histories of the slowness of our*

*General McClellan, and of our retreat from almost in front of Richmond. We were just four miles from Richmond when the rebels came out, set fire to the timber and we had to charge through these burning woods. [...] There was no room for us in the fortification. The roads we took were swampy. We built a bridge over the swamps where our pickets were stationed, and at night the bridge was taken. In the morning, hungry, we were again on the march when we passed through a cabbage and tomato farm. Here for the first time, I ate tomatoes. It was my breakfast.*

After Richmond, the regiment was involved in the Battle of Malvern Hill (July 1862) and suffered devastating losses at Antietam (September, 1862).

*General Lee invaded Maryland, and our army maneuvered to meet him. At Antietam, we fought Lee and drove him back into Virginia, but our General did not follow up his advantage and he was superseded then by General Burnside. [...] In attacking General Lee's position, we were badly defeated and had enormous losses. Then, General Burnside was relieved of the command. No sane man would have attempted to storm Lee's position. Whole lines of soldiers were killed and wounded around me. We had been exhausted first by crossing through the water and then marching two long miles over the plains. To add to that, we*

*were fired on from above and below.*

In late April 1963, after another uncomfortable period in winter quarters, the 20th New York set out for another brutal campaign, the Battle of Chancellorsville. On April 29, a day after they believed their two-year enlistment had officially ended, 200 men refused to go any further. They were quickly tried and convicted of mutiny and sentenced to hard labor. The remainder of the regiment participated in the battles of Chancellorsville and Salem Church, again suffering terrible casualties. In his memoirs, Lepman alludes to the last day of enlistment but does not specifically mention those who had refused to continue fighting. On June 1, 1963, the regiment was officially mustered out of service.

*On the twentieth day of April, General Hooker commenced his forward march to attack Lee, resulting in the battle of Chancellorsville. [...] As usual after a battle we experienced rainstorms, and that added to our misery on our retreat over the Rappahannock. On April 28th our enlistment expired, but we were still in battle on the third and fourth of May.*


*The 7th of May, our brigade formed in line and took leave of our companions, homeward [bound]. On the same train from Farmouth to Ackway Creek on the Potomac, were Lincoln and General Hallick. Seated in a freight car consulting with Hallick was the same sad face with the same attire, the high silk hat and the black*

*and white shawl which he had worn before, when I saw him mounted. He was as awkward then as when on horse-back he had stood before us.*

As it made its way back to New York, the regiment received celebratory honors. Turner societies in Washington and Baltimore entertained the veterans, and in New York they were escorted up Broadway by the State Militia.

*Back in New York once more, I was soon at my work bench with John W. Einhouse, my former boss. [...] Meanwhile my brother had been abroad. Mother had cautioned him against my remaining in a large city with its temptations and he induced me to go to Lanark [Illinois]. I was then in my twenties. Here in Lanark, I opened up as a watchmaker, although there were two already in town. [...] I attribute*

*my rapid success to the following incident: An old farmer in the neighborhood had been told by the other watchmakers his old clock could not be repaired. After spending hours of labor upon it, and about fifteen dollars' worth of material, I succeeded in making the clock as new. My charges were five dollars, but my reputation for good workmanship was established.*

When David Lepman died in October 1932, at the age of 91, papers such as the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Times* carried his obituary, remembering him as a Civil War veteran and retired manufacturer. David Lepman was survived by his wife Bertha Mayer Lepman, six children, ten grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. It is unclear when and why he changed his name from Liebmann to Lepman. 

## DAVID LEPMAN.

**Retired Chicago Manufacturer and Civil War Veteran.**

SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES.

**CHICAGO, Nov. 1.**—David Lepman, 91 years old, a Civil War veteran and retired manufacturer, died in his sleep early today in his home here. Mr. Lepman had been in the millinery business in Chicago from 1880 until his retirement five years ago. Previously, he had been a manufacturer in Lanark, Ill., and New York. Mr. Lepman enlisted in the Twentieth New York Volunteers, Army of the Potomac. He served for four years, engaging in many battles.

Surviving Mr. Lepman are his widow, Mrs. Bertha Mayer Lepman, a sister of the late Levy Mayer, noted lawyer; six children, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was an uncle of Mrs. Abel Davis, wife of the Brigadier General.

Lepman's obituary, published November 2, 1932  
Source: *The New York Times*

## A Sweeping Narrative: Kamphoefner's *Germans in America*

Cora Lee Kluge

*Germans in America: A Concise History* by Walter D. Kamphoefner, Rowman & Littlefield, 2021, iii + 299 pages. \$38.00

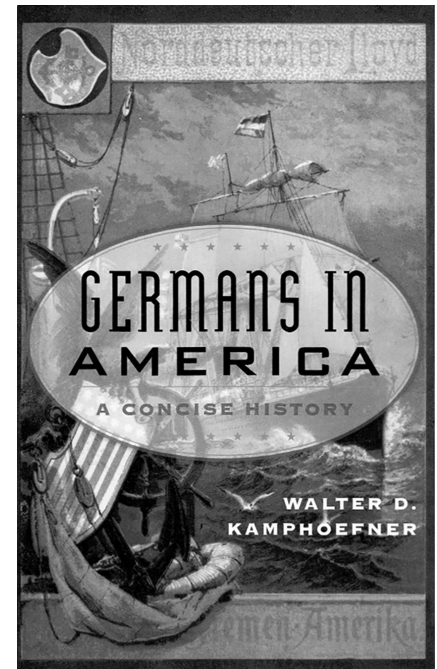
Walter D. Kamphoefner's new volume was published by Rowman & Littlefield as part of its American Ways series, whose goal is to "provide general readers and students with compelling introductions to America's social, cultural, political and economic history..." according to the company's website (rowman.com). The series, whose earliest titles appeared in 1993, currently includes 45 works on a wide variety of subjects, and two more *Making America's Public Lands: The Contested History of Conservation on Federal Lands* and *Hoops: A Cultural History of Basketball in America* will be released this spring. They are all moderately priced and available in several formats; and like the others, Kamphoefner's contribution is meant as a popular text for a lay readership.

In view of the enormous amount of material available, Kamphoefner found himself faced with a daunting task, but we would entrust the assignment to him, as he is one of the leading German-American historians. The result is neither the concise history of Germans in America promised in his subtitle nor a historical monograph, but rather a collection of independent chapters.

It is based in large part on research Kamphoefner did for previous publications; and, as he readily admits, his material comes disproportionately from the states of Missouri and Texas, where he has lived and taught.

After a 15-page first chapter on Germans in colonial and Revolutionary America, which is both densely written and also sketchy because of its brevity, Kamphoefner continues with nine chapters on the nineteenth century, which constitute the main part of his work. These chapters are as follows: "Sources and Causes of Nineteenth-Century Emigration"; "German Settlement Patterns in Nineteenth-Century America"; "Religion, Education, and Interethnic Concerns"; "German-Language Press and German Culture"; "German Niches in the American Economy"; "Women's Roles and Women's Work"; "Roles in the Civil War Era"; "Race, Culture and Politics in the Late Nineteenth Century"; and "The Radical Side of German America." The final two chapters are on the World War I era, and the post-World War I period. The material is presented thematically rather than chronologically, and this leads to some repetition and overlapping. German-language newspapers published in America, for example, are dealt with in the chapter on the German-language press and also in the chapter on the World War I era.

Immigrant letters, on which Kam-




phoefner is an authority, constitute one of his important sources. Thus in some sections of the text he focuses on the lived experience of everyday people, and he does an excellent job of providing the reader with an up-close perspective on individuals' lives and the problems they faced. In other sections, Kamphoefner presents an abundance of factual information, including names, dates, places, events, titles of publications, and more. To some extent, significant information is omitted, while far less essential details are included. Milwaukee's newspaper *Der Seebote*, for example, is mentioned, but the *Milwaukee-Herald*, which was published for nearly 100 years and had much larger



press runs, is not, nor is Milwaukee's well-known *Germania*.

The most bothersome aspect of Kamphoefner's work is the nearly total lack of documentation. There is a good deal of quoted material within the text, which is given in quotation marks, but not one single footnote. In addition, there is no bibliography, which has been replaced by a section entitled "A Note on Sources" that is small and very incomplete. Those who wish to trace the origin of Kamphoefner's material will be frustrated at every turn. The book's 13-page index, on the other hand, is an enigma of a different sort; and one wonders according to what principle various names or items were included or not included. One searches in vain, for example, for major German-American figures such as Francis Daniel Pastorius, the founder of the

first permanent German-American settlement, or the landscape painter Albert Bierstadt, although both of them are mentioned and discussed within the text. Why does one find beer in the index but not Frederick Pabst? Why Elvis Presley but not the German-American publisher George Brumder?

Despite such shortcomings, Kamphoefner's *Germans in America* makes interesting reading. Kamphoefner is a gifted storyteller whose voice and German-American background echo through every sentence. Unlike many historical texts, this one draws the reader in and brings to life the essence of what our immigrant ancestors experienced. Should this work be published again in a second edition, some of the organizational problems and problems with the documentation can perhaps be corrected. 

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