

# Max Kade Institute

## FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

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## Defining Tensions: A Fresh Look at Germans in Wisconsin

In the past century and a half, German immigrants to Wisconsin have gone from being seen as an alien group, sometimes a threat to Anglo-American values, to becoming a major part of Wisconsin's dominant culture, and things German have become even stereotypical of Wisconsin's image. The conference "Defining Tensions" provides a forum for almost two dozen scholars to examine this remarkable transformation.

In addition to featured talks on the German roots of Wisconsin's Free Thinkers (Eckhart Pilick, editor, *Freie Religion*) and on the broader significance of Wisconsin German-American history (John Holzhueter, State Historical Society), sessions will be dedicated to a variety of social and political issues. Almost one-third of the presenters are coming from Germany, including Heike Bungert, historian from the University of Cologne, who will speak on the importance of German-American festivals in Milwaukee from 1870-1920. Anke Ortlepp, also from Cologne, will look at the social, cultural and political importance of Milwaukee's women's organizations. Other papers deal with more troubling times and issues, including one by Harry Anderson (Milwaukee Co. Historical Society) on a Milwaukee Nazi propagandist and another by Brent Peterson challenging notions of ethnicity among German-Americans.

There will also be sessions on German-language authors who lived and wrote in Wisconsin (with a paper on noted feminist Mathilde Franziske Anneke) and the long, rich life of the German language in the state. One of those, by Garry Davis of UW-Milwaukee, is on the use of German today in Milwaukee German-American clubs and organizations, while another, by Mike Lind of UW-Madison, will discuss the survival of a Pomeranian dialect, still heard today in communities in Marathon and Lincoln Counties.

### [Conference Program](#)

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## [MKI Fall Lectures](#)

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### Crossing New Boundaries: "Concepts of Regionalism"

By Steven R. Geiger

The Max Kade Institute is cooperating in a research initiative, developed at the University of Cologne, with a number of German and American scholars looking at the importance of "region" in Europe and North America. Below you can read descriptions of the two projects students and staff at the MKI are currently working on.

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#### **Language & Region: Immigrant Language and Community Structure in the American Midwest, by Steven Geiger, Michael Lind and Joseph Salmons**

A major issue in contemporary European social and political thought is "subsidiarity", a policy fostering regionalization in various spheres. In the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, the United States saw dramatic restructuring in the opposite direction, namely toward increasingly centralized structures, not only in government but in other economic and social spheres. This process had drastic consequences for the immigrant-language communities of the American Midwest. A classic study of American community structure (Warren 1978) treats this as a shift from horizontal (local) social organization to vertical (regional or national) ones. We argue that Warren's framework provides insight into the eventual decline and loss of immigrant languages as regional culture increasingly came under the control of national-level institutions. Today, some question whether a "new regionalism" will have concrete effects. Historically, we argue that the loss of old regional culture had massive impact on immigrant communities.

Despite the long and rich tradition of research in dialects and the more recent work in sociolinguistics, the relationship between language and region has been surprisingly neglected. In recent times, theoretical linguistic geography has been closely associated with sociolinguistics, where many scholars have explored how linguistic innovations spread across physical and social space. Earlier approaches correlate patterns of language change and broad social classes, while Network Theory more recently brings insight into how change moves at the most local level, from one individual to another. We aim to contribute a different piece of the puzzle: The role of regional social structures in language change. In the Midwest, a large, interconnected set of German-American communities maintained German and then shifted to English in closely parallel ways. The notion of "region" plays a set of roles throughout this historical process, from the regional identities imported by each group from Europe to nascent regional identity as *Midwestern* German-Americans.

Massive immigration of German speakers to Wisconsin from before 1848 until the late 19th c. led to the creation of German-speaking islands across the state. In the decades after statehood, Wisconsin had over 250,000 German-born residents (comprising over 15% of the population), with American-born German speakers pushing the total to an estimated 500,000 around 1900. Often several generations in such communities spoke German in the home and beyond. Now, those groups have largely adopted English, so that aside from Old Order Amish and recent immigrants few speak German regularly: Over 60,000 reported German as their home language in the 1990 US Census. In the last century, a range of social institutions religious, educational, social, political conducted business in German; today almost all have switched to English. Previous analyses see this shift in terms of failed radication or extirpation, attributing the shift throughout the United States to factors connected overwhelmingly to the particular ethnic group or language. Such accounts often appeal to anti-German sentiment before and during the First World War era (anti-foreign language laws, etc.), a lack of cultural and political unity among German-Americans, and the range of dialects (instead of a relatively uniform standard language). Such accounts are at best incomplete, however, and fail to reveal the roots of the shift. Indeed, such stories are poorly situated in broader social, historical or linguistic theories.

Our project breaks with these traditional accounts to suggest that the shift was driven by changes sweeping American society in the late 19th century, changes almost entirely external to and independent of German-speaking communities.

This relies on Warren's seminal theory of community structure, which proposes a 'Great Change' in American community structure, from the late 19th to the middle of the 20th century. He defines this change as one in which connections among various local institutions ('horizontal ties') give way to ties between a given institution and its regional, state or national counterpart ('vertical ties'). For example, before the Great Change, local schools were more closely connected to local religious, political and other institutions; after the Change, they were more closely connected to a state board of education. This systematic verticalization of power and authority weakened local ties almost everywhere in American society, including in most minority language communities, thereby unraveling a social fabric indispensable for language maintenance. The change Warren posits for these communities exemplifies a kind of social setting which typically leads to linguistic change. These forces drove the loss of local institutional support for German in Wisconsin and the switch to English as a spoken language.

We argue that 'verticalization' ultimately results in a shift to English. Another side of this same process is a renegotiation of ethnicity. Immigrant historians have moved beyond earlier simple notions of assimilation or acculturation to think in terms of "ethnic persistence and transformation" (Conzen 1990) in ways that help us understand how German-Americans saw themselves before and during the shift. Conzen's view has been paraphrased this way: "the endurance and strength of the ethnic subsociety rose in proportion to its ability directly and indirectly to create its own effective institutions." Such institutions were firmly planted in Wisconsin during the mid-19th century and supported German, but then began to lose their distinctive character. As Conzen has argued generally, these institutions are not simply washed away in a flood of Anglo-American culture, but contribute to the dominant culture on many fronts and persist in significant ways. Indeed, German-Americans have become a major part of Wisconsin's dominant culture. Our analysis, then, appears consistent with recent work in immigrant history. We will, in the course of the project, explore connections to models from other fields, like Paasi's notion of the "institutionalization of regions" (1986 and more recent works).

While the MKI team will focus on the broad Wisconsin and Midwestern picture of historical language maintenance and shift among German-Americans as a whole, Geiger and Lind will undertake case studies of two communities with different relationships to regional identity from both European and American perspectives. Geiger is working with German speakers in Sheboygan Co., speakers of a dialect relatively close to Standard German. Lind, as discussed in earlier issues of the Newsletter, is working with a Pomeranian-speaking community in central Wisconsin. While that part of the state has a diverse population (Native American and Hmong, as well as various European immigrant groups), the Pomeranians are by far the largest German-speaking group. In addition to a well-developed sense of regional identity brought from Europe, this group speaks a dialect extremely far removed from Modern Standard German.

This project will provide a new model for how and when and why minority language communities abandon their languages for a majority tongue. This kind of reverse subsidiarity builds most directly on Warren's verticalization, but ties in closely with other disciplines and a variety of other topics, like Midwestern regionalism and the reinvention of ethnicity among German-Americans. The overall project aims for a balance of broad theoretical focus and Midwestern-small regional empirical orientation.

### Works Cited

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**An examination of the works of Friedrich Glauser, Meinrad Inglin, Meinrad Lienert and Robert Walser, by K. Julia Karolle**

Each time they speak or write, Swiss Germans locate themselves in a social and linguistic space vis-à-vis international

Standard German, Swiss multilingualism and their own local dialects. The act of locating oneself is more complicated for Swiss German authors, for while Swiss Germans habitually speak dialect and feel most comfortable in that code, their high literature is in Standard German, the official written language.

Several Swiss German authors of the 1920s and 30s, unwilling to write exclusively in either High German or Swiss German, responded by creating their own regional literary language out of dialectal and standard German. The Swiss authors Friedrich Glauser, Meinrad Inglin, Meinrad Lienert and Robert Walser positioned themselves along a broad spectrum of strategies of linguistic resistance and assimilation, in which they respond to Swiss nationalism and German imperialism. By examining language choice within these works, I analyze how these Swiss German authors were unwriting and rewriting their ethnic, regional and national identities within the polylingual Swiss state and in relation to Germany .

To offer two examples, Robert Walser shifted from dialect to standard language over time, indicating his changing view of cultural and regional identification, while Friedrich Glauser constantly positioned Swiss-German and High German against each other, problematizing register (the continuum between standard language and dialect), standardization and authority. In general, all of the authors developed and expressed concepts of region and regionalism by writing themselves as inhabitants of a specific area, as cosmopolitans, or even as translators of one culture into another .

Swiss scholarship inevitably deals with the struggle between New High German and the Swiss-German dialect, but there is little research on the literary aspects of this linguistic and sociolinguistic problem. My research shows how each of the authors mentioned here has found different ways of marking his works as distinctly Swiss. Those individual solutions, in the context of the dialect debate, offer new insight into Swiss national and regional linguistic identity .

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## Remembering Frank Gross

By Mary Devitt

A beloved friend of the Max Kade Institute, Dr. Frank R. Gross, passed away last year on July 16. This October 20th, on what would have been his 93rd birthday, we want to remember him and his contributions to the Max Kade Institute.

Born in Württemberg, Germany in 1905, he went on to receive his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering at the University of Darmstadt. While there, he developed a keen interest in the sport of soaring, and designed and built the *Darmstadt I*, a single-seat wooden glider, and later, the *Darmstadt II*, both which were prize-winning designs and which set records throughout Europe.

In 1929, he emigrated to America, and began building gliders for an American market. He ended up in Akron, Ohio, where he built the *Akron Condor*, the nation's first high-powered sail plane, which set the American distance record of 15.75 miles. His lifelong dedication to the craft left an indelible mark on the development of soaring.

Frank returned to Germany in 1930 to marry his college sweetheart, Herta Kamerer. The ominous situation in Germany at that time motivated them to return to the U.S.-- even at the height of the Great Depression -- and back to Akron, where they raised four children. Herta wrote diligently to their families back in Germany, chronicling life in a new country, experiences of their growing family and of Frank's growing business successes. It was because of those letters that we made his acquaintance. He visited the Institute in 1993 with his son, Mark Gross, to inquire about having Herta's letters translated for his children and grandchildren. Patricia Reaves, a staff member of the MKI, took on the translations, which she would send back to Frank Gross to edit, so concerned was he that Herta's true voice be heard.

Throughout these years, Frank Gross sent contributions to the Max Kade Institute, in memory of Herta, and wrote that he would like to donate the letters themselves, if they would be of interest. Indeed they were, in part because these letters document twenty years of an immigrant family's experience, from 1930 until Herta's death in 1950.

Throughout his life, Frank Gross took the initiative to give back to others in the areas that were important to him, such as funding programs to train young pilots and a scholarship fund for children of employees of the Frank R. Gross Company, and on his death, to the Max Kade Institute, a bequest of \$50,000 for the long-range future of the Institute.

With gratitude, we wish to acknowledge the generosity of Frank Gross. His memory lives on.

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## **German Playgroup started**

Monika Vohmann has begun a German playgroup for infants, toddlers, preschool children and their parents. The purpose of the group is to foster early language skills and provide an interactive German-speaking environment for parents and their children interested in learning about German language and culture. The Friends of the MKI will provide materials such as German books and games, as well as coffee and juice. While the parents include native and non-native speakers of German, the only requirement for "German School" is that strictly German be spoken. German cultural events and/or more structured lessons in language and culture could be arranged in the future, if interest warrants. The play days are currently scheduled for Saturdays from 10am to 12 noon, subject to change according to the needs of the participants. Meetings will be held at the Max Kade Institute, located at 901 University Bay Drive in Madison. Anyone who wishes to join in order to be immersed in German language and culture is welcome. Contact the Max Kade Institute at 608-262-7546 for more information.

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## **Breaking news! New Electronic List for German- American and German-Canadian Studies**

The Chair of German-Canadian Studies (University of Winnipeg) and the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies (University of Wisconsin-Madison) are pleased to announce the creation of a new electronic list for scholarly discussion of German-American and German- Canadian Studies.

The list, which will be part of H-Net, provides a moderated forum for electronic discussion of topics across an array of academic disciplines relevant to German-speaking immigrants in North America from the 17th c. to the present. Such subjects include history, geography, ethnic and immigrant studies, linguistics, literary and cultural studies. Topics up for discussion will include the invention/transformation of ethnicity and national identities among German-Americans and German-Canadians, patterns of maintenance and change in language and culture, and related issues. Contributions on German immigration and immigrants to any part of the western hemisphere are welcome. At the same time, the list will stress the value of comparative and cross-border ethnic studies, especially with a regional orientation (e.g. the Northern Great Plains or Upper Midwest) which straddle international borders. Details will be available soon on the MKI's web page. If you have further questions, please contact the list owners, Angelika Sauer (sauer@UWinnipeg.ca) or Joe Salmons (jsalmons@facstaff.wisc.edu).

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## **Landskroner Emigration to the American Midwest**

by Edward G. Langer

Beginning in the early 1850s, many families left their ancestral villages in the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia in the Austrian Empire to start new lives. Some moved to the German-speaking cities and towns of the Austrian Empire or the German principalities. Others traveled to distant countries such as the Russian Empire, South Africa or America. This is the story of some of these emigrants from the district of Landskron, Bohemia who decided to make new lives for themselves in the Midwestern United States, in particular in the state of Wisconsin.

## The Old World

The district of Landskron (Czech: Lanskronek) is named after the town of Landskron. The town and district of Landskron are about 80 miles south of present day Wrocław (Breslau) and about 115 miles north of the then-capital of the Austrian Empire, Vienna.

The district consisted of the town of Landskron and forty-two bordering villages.<sup>1</sup> In the 1850s, the town of Landskron had about 5,000 inhabitants and was connected by rail to the rest of the Austrian Empire. Second in importance to the town of Landskron was Ermná (Böhmisches Rothwasser), a Czech village of about 3,000 inhabitants. Historically, Ermná had market rights not granted to the other villages. Ermná's lower half was mostly Catholic and its upper half mostly Protestant. (In 1936, it was split into two villages - Dolní Ermná and Horní Ermná). The other forty-one villages in the district varied in size from a few hundred people to about 1,500 inhabitants. Roads connected the villages to the town of Landskron. Three-quarters of these villages were predominantly German, and the majority of both ethnic groups were of the Roman Catholic faith.

The inhabitants of these villages, both Czech and German, were divided into three broad social groups - the "large farmers" (German: Bauer, Czech: sedláci), the "small farmers" (Feldgärtner or zahradni i) and the day laborers (Tagelöhner or podruzi). The "large farmers" generally had farms over ten hectares (a hectare is 2.471 acres). They usually owned horses, cows and numerous smaller farm animals. These farmers were engaging in commercial farming and were able to ship produce to market in nearby towns. The "small farmers" had only a few hectares. They usually had a few cows and a number of smaller farm animals. The day laborers worked for small or large farmers as field laborers, stable hands and kitchen and house servants. In addition, some worked as weavers, carpenters, coopers or blacksmiths. Some of the day laborers, called "cottagers" (Häusler or chalupni i), owned a small house with enough land for a small garden and a few small farm animals such as goats. Most of the area's population consisted of day laborers scratching out a marginal existence.

Typical of the Landskroner village of the era was Ober Johnsdorf (Horní Tesovec), located just north of the town of Landskron. Ober Johnsdorf contained about 1,000 inhabitants in the 1850s, most of them German-speaking but with a significant Czech-speaking minority. The neighboring villages to the north, Ermná and Nepomuky (Nepomuk), were predominantly Czech. The other nearby villages, Jokelsdorf (Jakubovice), Michelsdorf (Ostrov), and Nieder Johnsdorf (Dolní Tesovec), were predominantly German. Ober Johnsdorf was comprised of 1,108 hectares, or about four and one-quarter sections of land, or 2,738 acres. The average landholding in Ober Johnsdorf was about seven and a half hectares, with over half the farms smaller than five hectares. Only a dozen farms had more than 20 hectares. Since the town of Landskron was three miles distant, excess grain from Ober Johnsdorf was likely transported by horse or ox-cart for shipment by rail to the cities of the Austrian Empire. Apart from farming, Ober Johnsdorf in the early 1850s had no church and only a basic school. For church services and any advanced schooling, Ober Johnsdorf's villagers traveled to Landskron-town. Given the limited educational opportunities available at the time, many of Ober Johnsdorf's inhabitants had only primitive reading and writing skills.

In sharp contrast to farming in America, Landskron-district farmsteads were not separate from its villages. Farm buildings were located on both sides of a road, and farm fields stretched straight back from the buildings until they bordered another village's farms. Farms might also end at the woods or at an untillable hill. Generally, farmers in Ober Johnsdorf cultivated contiguous fields, unlike the practice in other areas of Europe. It could, however, be a considerable distance from the farm buildings to each farm's property limits. Also, farmland that was wooded or low provided natural barriers separating tillable parcels within the farm.

Ober Johnsdorf's farm buildings also had a distinctive configuration. Generally, the living quarters were physically connected to the farm buildings. More elaborate farmsteads were set up in a U-shape or square with a courtyard in the middle. The latter square form probably developed to provide some protection against thieves and foreign soldiers, and it also allowed the farmer to secure his animals and harvested crops from animals.

## 1848 - Year of Revolution

Until 1848, the people of the district of Landskron were still subject to feudal restrictions limiting their ability to move and requiring them to provide certain services to the local ruling class. As was typical of the time, a Landskroner's social position was determined more by birth than by personal accomplishments. In 1848, revolutions rocked much of Europe. When the Revolution of 1848 began in the Austrian Empire, the landless peasants hoped there would be a land reform that would give them land. Unfortunately for them, the land reforms that followed the Revolution only vested full title to land to the farmers who already had a limited title to land. These farmers received title free of feudal restrictions, which was a great benefit to them. The key benefit to the landless of the Revolution was receiving the right to emigrate from the Empire. Within a few years, they started to avail themselves of this right.

### **Early Emigration - 1851-1857**

By the mid-1800s, improved food and sanitary conditions had caused such a population explosion that only limited opportunities remained for young people, and people were crammed into small one-room houses. It is estimated that in Horní ermná there were twenty-six houses holding ten or more occupants, and four Silar families with a total of twenty-one people lived in one house in Nepomuky. There was little virgin land in the area, and subdividing the existing farms would have made them unprofitable. There was little local industry to provide work for the excess farm population. This lack of opportunity was a main reason why many individuals and families who had roots in this area stretching back hundreds of years decided to emigrate.

Another reason was to escape the effects of imperial wars. The Austrian Empire was involved in frequent wars, resulting in increasing taxes and the drafting of young men sent to fight in distant locations.

By the 1850s, numerous sources encouraged European peoples to emigrate to America. "How-to-emigrate" books extolled America's virtues, especially the freedom and cheap land available in America.<sup>2</sup> Rail and shipping interests made emigration sound very attractive in an attempt to increase their business. American states, such as Wisconsin, sent agents to European ports to encourage emigrants to settle in their states. The following table shows the numbers of people who legally emigrated from Bohemia from 1850 through 1868<sup>3</sup>:

Emigration from Bohemia began slowly as word spread that it was legal to emigrate. (It has been suggested that the official statistics should be doubled to account for illegal emigration and recordkeeping defects). Once word spread that emigration was possible, there was an early rush to emigrate, peaking in 1854. The departure of these emigrants undoubtedly improved the economic chances of those who remained behind, causing emigration to taper off. It dipped sharply in 1859 for two reasons: news of America's economic crisis, the Panic of 1857, had filtered back by then and diminished America's economic appeal, and the Austrian Empire's war with Italy in 1859 curtailed emigration opportunities. Emigration slowed in the early 1860s due to the impact of the American Civil War, but peaked again in 1867, following the Austrian Empire's humiliating loss in the Austro-Prussian War.

The first sizeable emigration from the district of Landskron occurred in 1851 and consisted of Czech Protestant day laborers primarily from the villages of ermná and Nepomuky. These emigrants had little to lose by emigrating, given their low social status in Landskron-district -- they were poor, Czech speakers in an empire with a German ruling class, and Protestants in a country where the ruling class was ardently Catholic. When these poor Czech Protestants of the Landskron district began to explore the possibility of leaving the District of Landskron, the Austrian Government encouraged them to move to the Banat region of Hungary in search of a better life. It was in the Austrian government's best interest to move these people to an underdeveloped part of the Austrian Empire where their efforts might add to the national wealth and keep them available for military service. However, after the prospective emigrants received correspondence from Joseph Bergman, a Protestant minister, extolling life in Texas, they decided to emigrate there. On November 6, 1851, about seventy-four Czechs started on their trip to America. The fact that over one-fifth of the total legal emigration in 1851 was from Landskron suggests how bad conditions were in Northeast Bohemia. The emigrants traveled by train from Ústí nad Orlicí (Wildenschwert) to Hamburg. They sailed from Hamburg to Liverpool, Great Britain and then transferred to the sailing vessel *Maria* for the long trip to New Orleans, Louisiana. In New Orleans, they transferred to a third ship to travel to Galveston, Texas. Then they took a fourth schooner to Houston. After traveling for three to four months, fewer than half of the emigrants reached their final destination, the Cat Spring area in Austin County, Texas. The others had died along the way, of illness caused by poor food, limited water supplies and poor living conditions on the long journey. The surviving emigrants sent a number of letters home relating their ordeal,

and one emigrant recommended traveling by ship directly to Galveston even though it would be more expensive. When a second group of about eighty-five Czech Protestants left their homes for Texas on about October 9, 1853, they followed that advice and boarded the *Suwa* from Bremerhaven, which took them directly to Galveston.<sup>4</sup> In later years, many other Czech Protestants from the district of Landskron emigrated to Texas. They were joined by some Czech and German Catholics from the district of Landskron. Some of the Czech Catholics who settled in Pierce County, Wisconsin, first traveled to Texas before settling in Wisconsin. There is however, no cluster of Landskroner emigrants in Texas of any size, as is the case in Wisconsin. These Texas emigrants assimilated into preexisting German or Czech communities.

When the first poor German Catholics applied for passports in 1852, they said they were going to Texas. For unknown reasons, they changed their minds and went to Wisconsin instead. Since they left so soon after the Czech Protestants, it is clear that the tragic journey of the *Maria* was not a likely basis for their altered plans. There are three possible reasons why these people chose Wisconsin as their final destination. First, they may have learned about the climatic difference between Texas and Wisconsin and decided that the Wisconsin climate was more favorable. Writers in the 1850s wrote glowingly of life in Wisconsin, emphasizing the good farmland available and a climate similar to central Europe's. Second, they may have learned that Wisconsin granted liberal voting rights to emigrants. One of the first things many emigrants did after arrival in the United States was to apply for citizenship, which suggests the right to vote was important to them. Finally, just as the Protestants went to Texas at the behest of a Protestant minister, the Catholics may have gone to Wisconsin at the urging of their Catholic priests. In the early 1850s, John Martin Henni, a German-speaking Swiss, was the Bishop in Milwaukee. It is likely that some of the Catholic clergy in the Landskron area had learned of the presence of a German-speaking bishop in Milwaukee through the fundraising activities of the Leopoldine Society, a Viennese missionary society. A Landskroner priest would logically encourage his flock to go to a state where there was a German-speaking Bishop to see to their spiritual interests.

The primary destination of the German Catholic emigrants was the Watertown, Wisconsin area. In the early 1850s, Watertown, with about 5,000 inhabitants, was one of the largest cities in Wisconsin. The area's abundant rich, rolling farmland, some of which had been partially cleared by earlier settlers, would have appealed to Landskroners wanting to farm their own land in America. With statehood in 1848, southern Wisconsin was no longer considered part of the western frontier. Railroads were starting to connect the major towns in the state, and farmers were able to sell their surplus product on the market.

Watertown was also a center of German immigration. As such, the Landskron emigrants would have found in the Watertown area German-speaking immigrants from the Austrian Empire, Bavaria, Prussia and other German-speaking lands, in addition to those Landskron-district families that had emigrated in earlier years. Watertown had a German Catholic parish (Saint Henry's) founded in 1853, a German newspaper, the *Anzeiger*, and a brewery.

The first group of German Catholic emigrants left Landskron in the spring of 1852. This group sailed from Bremen in April, 1852 for Quebec City in Canada. They arrived in the United States at Buffalo, New York in July of 1852 and then in southern Wisconsin by mid-July. Although there are no ship manifests for this group, other sources indicate this group included at least the following: the John Doubrawa family from the village of Rathsdorf (Skuhrov), the Anton Fiebiger family from the village of Jokelsdorf (Jakubovice), the Joseph Pfeifer and Franz Langer families from the village of Michelsdorf (Ostrov), the Franz Veit family from Knappendorf (Knapovec), and Adolph Bartosch with his wife Amalia and her children from a prior marriage to John Gregor. (Franz Langer's grandson was William Langer, Governor and U.S. Senator from North Dakota).

John Doubrawa and Joseph Pfeifer both bought land on July 14, 1852 near present-day Waterloo, Wisconsin, just west of Watertown. They also applied for citizenship that day, as did Adolph Bartosch and Franz Veit. From this humble beginning sprang the Island community outside of Waterloo, Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup>

The second group of Landskroner emigrants to southern Wisconsin arrived later in 1852. The records of the *Jason*, which arrived in New York on December 7, 1852, from Bremen, show about sixty people from the Landskron district on board: the Johann Blaschka and Johann Klecker families of Hertersdorf (Horní Hou ovec), the Ignatz Yelg, Wenzel Blaschka and Johann Blaschka families of Tschernowier ( ernovír), the Joseph Veit family and Anton Wawrauscheck, Philip Zimprich and Ludwig Zimprich of Knappendorf (Knapovec), the Anton Fiebiger family of Jokelsdorf

(Jakubovice), the Johann Fischer family of Riebzig (Rybník), the Joseph Zimprich family of Rathsdorf (Skuhrov) and the Wenzel Fuchs family of Hilbetten (Hylváty). Also on board were the following persons, whose place of origin may be the district of Landskron: the Wenzel Blaska and Anton Kobliz families, Barbara Detterer and Franz Meidner. The *Jason* added significantly to the nucleus of the Landskroner community on the Island.

On January 10, 1853, the *Johanna* arrived in New York from Bremen with seven families of thirty-two people from the Landskron district: the John Huebel, Johann Langer and John Stangler families of Rudelsdorf (Rudoltice), the Franz Pirkl, Franz Haubenschild and Johann Haubenschild families of Triebitz (T ebovice), and the Josef Rössler family of Michelsdorf (Ostrov). Also on board was the Franz Gilg family of Nikl (Mikule ) in the neighboring county of Zwittau (Svitavy). A number of these families joined the *Jason* group near Waterloo, Wisconsin.

The number of Landskroner emigrants on these vessels was undoubtedly more than 100 people. Thus, approximately one-quarter of the total legal emigration from Bohemia in 1852 was from Landskron.

On June 17, 1853, the *Oldenburg* arrived in New York from Bremen, with 103 passengers from Bohemia whose stated destination was Wisconsin. The emigrants from the district of Landskron were the following: the Johann Meitner and Johann Schöberle families, Vincenz Klecker and Franz Schöberle of Ober Johnsdorf (Horní T esavec), the Franz Hampel, Josef Jirschele and Josef Arnold families of Rathsdorf (Skuhrov), the Franz Langer, Ignatz Huebl, and Bernhard Leschinger families of Rudelsdorf (Rudoltice), the Franz Fischer, Johann Plotz and Engelbert Habermann families of Riebzig (Rybník), the Johann Smetana and Johann Kuckera families of Tschernowier ( ernovír), the Franz Foltin family of Königsberg (Královec), and the Anton Kristl family of Michelsdorf (Ostrov). Two other families were from neighboring districts: the Wenzel Scholla family of P ívrat (P schiwrat) and the Joseph Pospischel family of Litomysl (Leitomischl). The other families from Bohemia were the Nicholas Dank, Johann Czernin, Johann Strilesky, and Arnold Patsch families. The Johann Meitner, Johann Schöberle, Franz Hampel and Franz Langer families, along with Vincenz Klecker and Franz Schöberle, provided the nucleus of the Landskroner community of Watertown. A number of these other families joined the Waterloo community.

Ship records indicate that emigration to America was not a solitary affair by a single individual or a single family. Rather, emigrants tended to travel with others from their home district to America where they often found fellow countrymen awaiting them.

### **Emigration between 1857 and 1865**

In 1857, a financial crisis, the Panic of 1857, gripped America. The panic severely disrupted the nation's economy. Nearly every railroad project in Wisconsin came to a halt. The city of Watertown, which had issued railroad bonds, was involved in litigation involving these bonds until 1889 when the United States Supreme Court issued an opinion in the city's favor.<sup>6</sup> Watertown, which grew quickly from its founding in the late 1830s to become Wisconsin's second largest city, virtually stopped growing, reducing its need for emigrant labor. Following the overall pattern of emigration from Bohemia, emigration from Landskron slipped to a relatively low level during this period.

The onset of the American Civil War in 1861 further discouraged emigration. Although the war improved the economy of the North and thus emigrants' job prospects, individuals contemplating emigration from Landskron presumably thought twice before coming to America.

### **Emigration after 1865**

The catalyst for the second big push of emigrants from Landskron was a war that broke out in June, 1866 between the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia over whether a unified Germany was to be created, what lands would be included in the new nation and which country would be the leading force of the new German nation.<sup>7</sup> The Italians were a key ally of the Prussians, forcing the Austrians to fight on two fronts. Prussian General Moltke, who had learned crucial lessons on the use of telegraph and railroads from the American Civil War, was able to quickly move hundreds of thousands of Prussian troops into Bohemia. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Austrian troops marched into Bohemia to meet them. Part of the Austrian army was quartered in the Landskron area, and other parts of the Austrian army marched through the area. At one point, 120,000 troops were in the Landskron area.

On July 3, 1866, the Imperial Austrian army and the Prussian army met northwest of Hradec Králové (Königgrätz), about 40 miles from Landskron. (The Battle of Königgrätz is also referred to as the Battle of Sadowa). The Prussian army was better equipped than the Austrian army, and its breech-loading "needle-guns" enabled them to fire from the prone position at the standing Austrian infantry, which used muzzle-loaders. The Prussian victory was sudden and complete.

After the Austrian loss, some Austrian troops retreated through the Landskron area, followed closely by Prussian troops. A skirmish occurred near the villages of Rudelsdorf (Rudoltice) and Thomigsdorf (Dámňikov). The encroaching armies destroyed crops and confiscated the villagers' food as well. The Prussians occupied Landskron, and 10 to 20 soldiers took up residence in Landskroner homes. Grain was confiscated by the Prussian army and some Landskroner farmers were even forced to haul their grain some distance to feed the Prussian troops and animals.

The war had a direct impact on who emigrated from Landskron. Previously, most of the emigrants were poor German Catholics and poor Czech Protestants. After the war, German Catholics with sizeable farms also began to emigrate. It is likely that these relatively rich German Catholics decided that they had enough of life in Europe after their farms were occupied by Prussian soldiers and their grain confiscated.<sup>8</sup> These later emigrants heard firsthand accounts of the virtues of life in America from fellow emigrating villagers, and probably realized that emigration really was not such a gamble. In addition to initiating emigration by some of the richer German Catholics, the war also sparked the onset of emigration by poor Czech Catholics. It is not known why the poor Czech Catholics did not emigrate en masse until after this war. Further research needs to be conducted to determine the relative living conditions of the poor Czech Catholics versus the poor Czech Protestants. Were living conditions better for the poor Czech Catholics than for the poor Czech Protestants? Did the departure of the poor Czech Protestants result in more opportunities for the poor Czech Catholics such that the poor Czech Catholics did not feel the need to emigrate until the war and the subsequent occupation by Prussians troops?

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> I refer to a town's name in the language spoken by the majority of its inhabitants in the 19th century. The name in parentheses is the name in the non-majority language, be it Czech or German.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Freeman, Samuel, *The Emigrant's Hand Book, and Guide to Wisconsin*. Milwaukee: Sentinel and Gazette Power Press Plant, 1851.

<sup>3</sup> apek, Thomas. *The echs (Bohemians) in America: A Study of Their National, Cultural, Political, Social, Economic and Religious Life*. Boston and New York: AMS Press, 1969, reprint of 1920.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on early emigration of Czech Protestants to Texas, see the works of Frantisek Silar, such as "The First Nepomuky and Cermna Emigrants to Texas," written in 1966 and translated by Calvin C. Chervenka, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Because the land they bought was a pocket of dry land in the middle of a marshy area, the area was commonly referred to as the "Island".

<sup>6</sup> See *Amy v. City of Watertown*, 130 U.S. 301 (1889), and *Amy v. City of Watertown*, 130 U.S. 320 (1889).

<sup>7</sup> In the mid-1850s, the territory that makes up present-day Germany consisted of numerous small principalities, dukedoms, free cities and other small states.

<sup>8</sup>For example, the *Chronik* of the village of Ober Johnsdorf reflects that Johann Langer of farm number 133 had grain confiscated by the Prussians on June 21, 1866 and July 8, 1866. The next spring he sold his farm and emigrated to Watertown.

### Fall German classes at MKI

This fall, Dr. Rosemarie K. Lester, retired German professor and native Berliner is offering an intermediate level German conversation class at the MKI. The class will include some reading and writing and a great deal of speaking practice and vocabulary building. Of course, there's also grammatical review as needed and a little *Deutsch mit Musik*. Most of the classroom materials are provided and for the extra ambitious, challenging outside reading is available.

### A Saturday in German(y)

This all-day seminar is designed to provide individuals who are proficient in German a chance to speak it in a congenial atmosphere while being immersed in German culture, . through slides, language games, conversation exercises, roleplaying, and discussion of topics chosen by participants.  
Prerequisite: four semesters of German

The class meets on Thursdays from 7:30 to 9 pm, for eight weeks, starting October 8, at the Max Kade Institute, 901 University Bay Drive.

or equivalent experience.

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# Defining Tensions: A fresh look at Germans in Wisconsin

October 15–17, 1998

Conference program

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**The Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies,**

with generous support from:

The Max Kade Foundation  
The Anonymous and Humanistic Funds  
Friends of the Max Kade Institute  
Department of German, UW

**Thursday, October 15, Unitarian Society (900 Univ. Bay Dr.)**

7:30 pm: Words of welcome

7:45 Opening address, moderator: Max Gaebler, Vice Pres., Friends of the MKI:  
Zur Geschichte der Freireligioesen in Vormärz und 48er Revolution  
Eckhart Pilick, editor *Freie Religion*

Songs of the 48 Revolution (Pia Oberacker, Sabine Groß)

**Friday, October 16, State Historical Society of Wisconsin Auditorium (816 State St.)**

9:00: *German-American Ethnicity and Identity*, moderator: Henry Geitz  
From *Kultur* to Cliche: German-Americans and Ethnicity  
Brent Peterson, Ripon College

Chronicling a Community: Milwaukee's Jews and the '*Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*'  
Steve Byers, UW-Milwaukee

Buffalo County's Pomeranian- Silesian- Kashubian- Badenser- and Swiss-Germans  
LaVern Rippley, St. Olaf's College

Transplanted but not Uprooted: Immigrants from Hesse-Darmstadt in Wisconsin  
Helmut Schmahl, Universität Mainz

11:40: *Lunch break*

1:30: *The German Language: Use, Maintenance & Loss*, moderator: Joseph Salmons

Bridging the gap: fixed expressions in 19th century letters of German immigrants  
Stephan Elspaß, Universität Münster

Michael Zimmers Kriegstagebuch aus dem 19. Jahrhundert: Sprachbeobachtungen an einem 'Privattext'

Jürgen Macha, Universität Münster

Assimilation or Separation? The maintenance of the German language in German-American organizations in Milwaukee

Garry W. Davis, UW-Milwaukee

Maintenance of the Pomeranian Dialect in Central Wisconsin

Michael C. Lind, UW-Madison

4:20: **Coffee Break**

4:50: **German-American Literature**, moderator: Cora Lee Nollendorfs

The Representation of African-American Speech in the Literary Works of Mathilde Franziska Anneke

Cordelia Scharpf, UW-Madison

Wisconsin History as reflected in the works of A. F. W. Grimm

William E. Petig, Stanford University

7:00: **Reception**, Max Kade Institute, 901 University Bay Dr.

### **Saturday, October 17, State Historical Society of Wisconsin Auditorium**

9:30: **The broader context**, moderator: Mary Devitt

Reflections on Wisconsin German-American History

John O. Holzhueter, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

10:20: **Public life**

Political Debates or Coffee and Kuchen? German-American women's Vereinskultur in Milwaukee, 1870-1920

Anke Ortlepp, Universität Köln

Bringing Gemütlichkeit and Kultur to the Americans:

The Festivals of German-Americans in Milwaukee, 1870-1920

Heike Bungert, Universität Köln

"There was a confusion of the foreign and the American":

Swiss public memory before the Great War

Steven Hoelscher, Louisiana State University

Another Tale of Two Cities: Davenport and Milwaukee

William Roba, Scott Community College

1:00: **Lunch break**

3:00: **Social and Political Tensions**, moderator: James P. Danky

Wisconsin Justice by Lynching, 1855:

Anglo-American and German-American Problems and Perspectives  
Cora Lee Nollendorfs, UW-Madison

Ernst Goerner: Nazi Propagandist from Milwaukee  
Harry H. Anderson, Milwaukee County Historical Society

4:30: *Concluding discussion*

**ROOMS HAVE BEEN RESERVED AT THE FOLLOWING HOTELS:**

Best Western InnTowner  
2424 University Avenue  
Madison, 53705  
608-233-8778  
\$109 flat rate

Ivy Inn Hotel  
2355 University Ave.  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-233-9717  
\$69 flat rate

Short Course Dorms  
Humphrey and Jorns Halls  
608-262-2270  
range from \$12-22 per night

Caveat: Rooms will be scarce this weekend. Please reserve as soon as possible.

**Conference registration:**

In order to help us with planning, we request that you register as soon as possible. Send your name, address and, if possible, email address to the MKI (address below), along with registration, if applicable (checks payable to the Friends of the Max Kade Institute.)

**Free registration.**

## Archival Information

### Fall 1998 MKI lectures

#### READING IMMIGRANT HISTORY BY THE BOOKS: (A statewide series of lectures)

August 11 7:00 pm	Marathon County Museum, 410 McIndoe St., Wausau, Marathon Co. Hist. Soc.
August 25	Sheboygan County Museum, 3110 Erie Avenue, Sheboygan Co. Hist. Society
August 27 4:30 pm	Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
August 31	Mayville Senior Center, Mayville Historical Society
October 6 7 pm	UW-Stevens Point, Anderson Room, UWSP University Center
October 11 2 pm	Marathon County, Rib River Ballroom, Marathon

In addition to these talks and our conference, we will also have our regular MKI Lecture Series. Dates and titles are just now being firmed up, we can tell you that speakers and topics will include:

Sept. 16 7 pm	MKI	Philip Bohlman University of Chicago	<a href="#"><u>"Diaspora, Utopia, Widerstand -- Musik in der imaginären Gemeinde der deutschen Modernität"</u></a>
Wed. Oct. 5 7 pm	Memorial Union	Elliot Shore Bryn Mawr College	<a href="#"><u>"The Mysteries of Philadelphia"</u></a> (On 19th c. German-American mystery novels)
Friday Oct. 30 3.30 pm	Elvehjem Museum 800 State St.	Christopher Wickham Univ. of Texas-San Antonio	<a href="#"><u>"Image and Homage: The Native American in 19th Century German Painting"</u></a>
Thursday Dec. 10 2.30 pm	Memorial Union	Frank Zeidler former mayor of Milwaukee, Socialist Party	Aspects of the German Influence on Wisconsin Politics

## Archival Information

### Coming in the Spring 1999:

- **Professor Hartmut Keil**, German Historical Institute:  
[German-American Immigrants and the Abolition of Slavery](#)  
 This talk will be cosponsored by the Center for the History of Print Culture in Modern America.
  
  - German Dialects in the Midwest -- Mini-Conference:  
**Speakers will include:** *Steve Geiger (UW): Hessian Dialect in Sheboygan County*  
*Phil Webber (Central College, Iowa): East Frisian in Iowa*  
*Joe Salmons (UW): How and why German speakers switched to English in Wisconsin*
  
  - **James P. Leary**: "ACH YA!: Wisconsin's German American Music"  
 Wednesday, April 28, at 7 pm.
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## Abstracts:

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### READING IMMIGRANT HISTORY BY THE BOOKS; (A statewide series of lectures)

**Introduction.** Since statehood, Wisconsin has undergone tremendous changes in its ethnic makeup as well as in how ethnic groups here have seen themselves and how others have seen them. Few examples of this are as striking as the transformation of German-speaking immigrants from a distinctly foreign element into a major component of this state's dominant culture. The development and subsequent decline of German-language publishing provides an important illustration of this change. The year of statehood, 1848, coincides with a revolution in Germany that brought a wave of notable journalists and authors to this state, at a time when German immigration to Wisconsin was already increasing rapidly.

**Historical significance of the German-language press.** At the turn of the century almost one hundred newspapers were being published in the German language in Wisconsin (four of them daily) and, over a span of more than a century, several hundred additional newspapers have been published in German from Kenosha to Superior and from Marinette to Platteville. The state also had large publishing houses and Milwaukee was a leading national center for German publishing. German books have been published in Wisconsin since as early as 1844. While book publishing included many religious works, the record shows a far more complex picture, with many technical and scientific works, a range of political writings and popular literature as well as belles lettres and musical scores.

From the mid 19th century to the present, we have seen a historical dynamic in Wisconsin imprints. Early on, there were particularly large numbers of travel reports, guides for newcomers, etc. Soon, though, the broad range of materials alluded to above was being produced. Eventually, as language shift from German to English progressed throughout the community, the focus narrowed to more organizational and institutional histories and fewer works of general interest.

Second, the decline of publishing in German and general shift from German to English have traditionally been tied to the wave of anti-German sentiment prior to World War I. While that view has proven simplistic, xenophobia, nativism, anti-foreign language campaigns and related legislation all had their impact. The history of these tensions offers lessons for understanding contemporary intolerance toward immigrants and minority languages in this country. For example, popular and academic debates about immigration and English-only laws inevitably appeal to widely divergent historical interpretations of previous immigration and language laws. Beyond such concerns with direct impacts on immigrants, many of the burning questions in the German press remain important down to the present, for example the role of parochial schools. This project offers people an opportunity to look at the evidence on these important questions. In short, German-language publishing offers a valuable thread to trace through Wisconsin's history, with important ties to

the present.

**Public Presentations.** With the support of the Wisconsin Humanities Council, the Max Kade Institute is able to arrange with community groups, colleges and universities around the state to visit and talk about this project, to interpret and discuss the significance of these books with the people of Wisconsin. Relevant materials will be available on the web for reference. These sessions will provide an opportunity to talk about the history of German publishing in the state and what it shows us about immigration and patterns of accommodation among German-Americans, beginning with the examples sketched above. We will focus to an extent on publications produced in each community we visit. (Each community on our schedule had newspapers and most had book publishing in German.) All presentations will include basic history of foreign-language publishing in Wisconsin and importance of foreign-language publications for new immigrants (information about economics, law, politics, technical and scientific works). We will in particular sketch examples of how the German press treated key events in state history and look at the demise of German-language publishing in the community. We will bring copies of books, newspapers and other materials published in the community.

**Presenters.** Joseph Salmons is Professor of German and Director of the Max Kade Institute. He has written on the linguistics and history of the German-speaking communities in the US and edited *The German Language in America* (1993). He is currently working on a book for a general audience on the social history of the German language in Wisconsin. Dr. Louis Pitschmann is Associate Director of the General Library System at UW-Madison and specializes in Collection Development and Preservation. He has published on the role of German-American publications in higher education and scholarly research.

This project is funded in part by a grant from The Wisconsin Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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"Diaspora, Utopia, Widerstand -- Musik in der imaginären Gemeinde der deutschen Modernität"

**Philip V. Bohlman**  
Associate Professor of Musik und Jewish Studies  
University of Chicago

**This lecture is in German, abstracts both in German and English follow:**

Schwerpunkt des Vortrags ist die identitätsstiftende Rolle der Musik in der Vorstellung und in der Konstruierung der deutschen Modernität. Im Gegensatz zum gewöhnlichen Standort des Deutschen im mythologischen Zentrum der Modernität befinden sich die Fallbeispiele des Vortrags an der Peripherie, und zwar in den aus Mitteleuropa stammenden Musiklandschaften Israels und Amerikas. Es handelt sich nicht nur um eine kulturelle Erbschaft der Immigrantengeneration, sondern auch um die Phantasie der Modernität sowie ihre Repräsentation durch die Musik als kennzeichnender Mittelpunkt der deutschen Geschichte. In vergleichender Weise werden drei Formen der imaginären Gemeinde geschildert, die die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie, sowie zwischen Vergangenheit und Modernität, darlegen - Diaspora, Utopia und Widerstand. In diesem Sinne bezieht sich der ethnomusikologischen Ansatz des Vortrags auf die frühere Vorstellung des Deutschen an der umstrittenen Grenze der Modernität, vor allem auf Johann Gottfried Herders "Stimmen der Völker in Liedern" und *Volkslieder* (1778/1779). Der Vortrag wird von zahlreichen Musikbeispielen und von einer bunten Auswahl von Abbildungen illustriert.

**Diaspora, Utopia, Resistance: Music in the Imagined Community of German Modernity**

This lecture examines the ways in which music is fundamental to the imagination and construction of German modernity. Whereas cultural Germanness usually occupies a central position in the teleology of modern history, this lecture shifts its focus to case studies at the peripheries, specifically the music cultures of immigrants from Central Europe who have settled in Israel and the United States. Music in these cultures, however, is not simply an inheritance

from the Old World, it comes to play a powerful role in the fantasy that fuels the building of new worlds, remaining nonetheless one of the most meaningful links to a Germanness that connects old to new. Diaspora, utopia, and resistance, as well as the musics that underlie them, emerge as the processes that articulate the contested domain between center and periphery, past and modernity.

Methodologically, this lecture revisits an earlier historical moment of extensive theorizing about German modernity, particularly the musical works of Johann Gottfried Herder, *Voices of the People in Songs and Folk Songs* (1778 and 1779). A rich variety of musical and visual examples will illustrate the lecture.

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## "The Mysteries of Philadelphia"

by **Elliot Shore**

**Constance A. Jones Director of Libraries and Professor of History**  
**Bryn Mawr College**

The *Mysteries of Philadelphia* is an anonymously written novel that probably appeared in a newspaper and was later published in parts in Philadelphia in 1850. All we have are the first 75 pages and a tantalizing extract published in a Freidenker paper in Wisconsin a few years later. The talk will focus on German Philadelphia in 1850, the possible authors of the novel and will draw some comparisons to the other, similar novels published in the United States in German in that period.

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## "Image and Homage: The Native American in 19th Century German Painting"

by **Christopher Wickham**

**Univ. of Texas-San Antonio**

The German fascination with American Indians is reflected nowhere more completely than in painting. During the 19th century, travelers, explorers, settlers, and immigrants recorded their experiences and articulated their fantasies in oils, water-colors, pencil sketches, and studies in various graphic media. This presentation attempts an evaluation of some of this large body of work and analyzes specific paintings according to a set of aesthetic, economic, and historical criteria. Paintings by Bodmer, Rindisbacher, Moellhausen, Wimar, Petri, Kurz, Schussele, Krieghoff, and Bierstadt will illustrate the thesis that the German portrayal of Native Americans in the 19th century can usefully be considered as comprising three distinct groupings.

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## German-American Immigrants and the Abolition of Slavery

by **Hartmut Keil**

**German Historical Institute**

The relationship between immigrants and African Americans has been described as dominated by racial antagonism and violence, a perspective largely gained by studying Irish immigrants who had a similar socio-economic status and competed for the same jobs in the labor market as, African Americans. This presentation questions the applicability of this model to the second largest immigrant group, i.e. the Germans, arriving, before the Civil War. German immigrants also subscribed to the ideology of nineteenth-century racism, yet theirs often found different and less confrontational expression. The lecture will isolate the specific issue of mutual intellectual traditions and a common philosophical heritage that may account for sympathy for abolitionism and antislavery sentiment among parts of the German immigrant population. It is suggested that European and American Enlightenment thought evolved not in isolation, but through an intense exchange of ideas that crossed the Atlantic in both directions. Attention will be focused on intellectuals like Alexander von Humboldt who had substantial impact on German immigrants; on the journalist Otilie Assing who became closely involved in the abolitionist cause and whose reports reached important intellectual circles in Germany; and on the German-American press.

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**Archival Information**  
**These events occurred in 1998**