

Max Kade Institute

FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

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Speakers of Platt Attend Third Biennial American Plattdüütsch Konferenz: Keep On Snakken!

by Laurie M. Bowman and Clark Mitchell

The Third Biennial American Plattdüütsch Konferenz took place in Wausau, Wisconsin on the weekend of October 22-24, 1999. The Pommerscher Verein of Central Wisconsin sponsored the event, in cooperation with the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies. This Konferenz took place in the wake of a declaration earlier this year by the European Union that Platt is a separate language independent of High German. As a minority language, Platt will have concrete governmental support in education, broadcast, and print media.

Many flavors of Platt were represented at the Konferenz, from East Frisian to Schleswig-Holstein Platt to Mecklenburg Platt. The setting for the Konferenz was appropriate, given the fact that central Wisconsin is home to one of the largest Platt-speaking populations in North America. However, participation was not limited to Wisconsin speakers of Platt; visitors from as far away as Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, and even Schleswig-Holstein, Germany were represented.

The talks ranged in content from the academic, such as Michael Lind's presentation of the results of his fieldwork with central Wisconsin Platt speakers and William "Kaiser Bill" Keel's discussion of Low German dialects in Kansas and Missouri, to the cultural, such as Pastor Michael Zamzow's discussion of the Platt-speaking reformer Dr. Pomeranus, who played a key role in the Reformation of the 16th century. Participants also got the opportunity to hear Platt "up close and personal" in the form of story-telling, songs, and demonstrations of several varieties of Platt from Wisconsin and beyond. Another talk by Dr. Joseph Salmons and Steve Geiger of the University of Wisconsin described the process of preserving recorded samples of Wisconsin Platt encompassing over half a century of research. The importance of teaching a new generation of speakers was addressed by Don Zamzow, who demonstrated his pedagogical techniques with his two grandchildren.

On Friday night, we had a first-hand taste of Platt culture at a dinner-dance at the Rib River Ballroom celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Pommerscher Verein. After a bountiful German feast, these two twenty-something graduate students were dismayed to discover that their skill and energy at polka dancing were far inferior to those of the seasoned Platt-speakers. After stumbling once around the dance floor and imperiling the toes of the real polka dancers,

we relegated ourselves to tapping our toes to the sounds of Jerry Schneider and his Orchestra and singing along to some traditional Platt favorites.

The remainder of the weekend was filled with additional opportunities for Platt speakers to get to know one another, visit information booths, tour the area, and even attend a Plattdüütsch Gottesdeenst on Sunday morning. More than just a forum for academic discourse, the Third Biennial American Plattdüütsch Konferenz offered participants the chance to forge new friendships within and across individual dialects and to secure Platt's future both as a language of heritage and as a means of preserving the rich culture of its speakers. Clearly Platt is alive, and in the words of one presenter, will continue to flourish so long as people keep "snakken."

Upcoming Workshops

The Max Kade Institute is happy to announce two upcoming workshops in German-American studies. Both are open to the public. All those interested are encouraged to call the Institute at (608) 262-7546 if they would like to register or have any questions regarding them.

Immigration to Integration: A Study of German Identity in Wisconsin Art April 8, 2000, West Bend Art Museum

The first of these workshops is designed for art teachers, German teachers, historians, art collectors, museum docents, and anyone interested in learning about the significant contributions to Wisconsin art with a special focus on the German-American artists of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The scheduled speakers are:

Thomas Lidtke
Director, West Bend Art Museum

Prof. Emeritus Wm. Gerdts
City Univ. of New York Graduate School

Prof. James Dennis
UW-Madison

German Close to Home: Using Authentic Local Materials in the Language Classroom April 7-8, 2000, UW-Madison

The purpose of this workshop is to give teachers the opportunity to explore and use documents in German (letters, diaries, newspaper articles, etc.) in their classroom teaching. It will also help them find sources of documents near their schools that may be available for use. The presenters are:

Joseph Salmons
Director, Max Kade Institute

Prof. Charles James
UW-Madison

Karyl Rommelfanger
German language teacher, Manitowoc, WI

Braucher's Progress: A Preliminary Reevaluation of Pennsylvania German

Folk Medicine

by Dennis Boyer

A decade long effort to study and understand Pennsylvania German folk medicine practices has provided me with a trove of information and some glimmers of insight. From the outset of my project, Mary Devitt has been both encouraging and helpful in opening Max Kade Institute resources to my task.

The project began as a tribute to someone who influenced me greatly in my Pennsylvania youth. The mentor in question lived almost to the century mark and was the respected matriarch of a large brood. She was also a practitioner of a wide range of folk medicine arts and some called her a braucher.

A modest memorium in study form could have simply cataloged her eclectic practices drawn from Braucherei or Pow-Wow ("white magic"), faith healing, herbalism, and even a bit of Hexerei ("black magic"). Perhaps, I thought, a sidebar mention of the current remnants of this arcane and virtually dead art would nicely garnish my personal tribute and hint at the cultural context.

One could say that my initial attitude was as patronizing as some of the dismissive academic and folklore research on these subjects. A bit of probing brought many surprises. First, the dead art proved amazingly resilient, with sturdy pockets of adherents still at large. Second, the practices still existed in a dynamic and adaptive state, with modern elements of nutrition, medical science, and New Age spirituality further hybridizing the ancient customs. Third, the tragedy of the mistreatment of this subject loomed large as it became clear to me that hundreds of practitioners passed away in the middle part of this century without anyone undertaking a systematic study of individual practices.

Suddenly, the project enlarged and became complex. There were recent medical findings about alternative remedies and the roles of faith and spirituality to take into account. Crude surveys might yet chart the extent and nature of current Brauchers and those of the recent past. Ethnobotany could be consulted for fresh knowledge about herbal cures. And, significantly, much newly accessible information about cross-cultural shamanism practices became available.

The anguish of losing part of our cultural patrimony would be lessened if it could be chalked up to the broader culture's melting pot tendencies to homogenize and neutralize. But it must be confessed that Pennsylvania Germans visited this little bit of folklife disparagement upon themselves. Clergy of all denominations waged a war against Braucherei from the pulpit that lasted from the time of Jefferson to the New Deal. Even the cautious *Mennonite Encyclopedia* as recently as the 1982 edition remarked that "[P]owwowing is frowned upon officially, but is still practiced in a few culturally retarded communities."

Folklorists also made sport of Braucherei and Pow-Wow. Much of the material recorded about such practices during this century is written in the vein of the sophisticated humorist having fun at the expense of the country bumpkin. As a result, much of the information gathered was shallow and extremely unsympathetic. Such treatment today would raise questions about racism and chauvinism if incorporated into anthropological field practices in Africa or South America.

Fortunately, just as the critical mass of practitioners was ebbing away, Barbara Reimensnyder in the late 1970s and early 1980s undertook an impressive study that demonstrated the continued vitality of the practices at that late date within one limited area (See: Barbara Reimensnyder, *Powwowing in Union County: A Study of Pennsylvania German Folk Medicine in Context*, doctoral dissertation, reprint by AMS Press, N.Y. 1982). She brought the practices to life in a way that is missing from the prior jesting folklore treatment. She understood, efficacy questions aside, that Braucherei was as much a part of the culture as storytelling and folk art.

Aside from disparagement from the churches and treatment as comedic material by folklorists, my preliminary examination of the context of over 40 Braucher practices suggests that the treatment of Braucherei suffers from one overriding analytical flaw. This flaw is the assumption that Braucherei practices center on, and indeed flow from, an early 19th century book entitled Hohman's *Long Lost Friend*. The thin volume is little more than a book of "spells" and cures which purport to derive from lost books of Moses, the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, and other arcania.

My look at Braucher practices suggests that not all Brauchers used the *Long Lost Friend*. Many dismissed it as a serious aid to Braucherei practice. Some ridiculed it as the tool of charlatans. Only a few relied on it exclusively. Except for this last category, most were able to see that Hohman's work lacked the ritual context and oral tradition foundation that generally accompanies folk medicine. Even if Hohman's practices came to typify Braucherei in the 19th and 20th centuries, (a major misassumption based on what I have seen), it leaves open the question of the nature of Braucherei prior to its publication.

My initial efforts to explore the remnants of Braucherei and look at its historical roots have been hampered somewhat by my distance from Pennsylvania. An annual trip for such purposes reduces my work to a snail's pace. But my early findings suggest a number of areas worthy of further examination:

Gender Differentiation: The fact that I found and heard of more women than men might be explained by longevity. But the differences between male and female practice were substantial. Men relied more on Hohman and were likely to charge fees and hold themselves forth as healers to the public. Women's practices were eclectic, holistic, and generally performed as community service in a very low key way.

Historic Roots: A few sources cited practices derived from Hildegard of Bingen or ascribed to ancient Druids. There were enough tantalizing tidbits suggestive of pre-Christian shamanic practices to merit exploration of the practices of the Germanic tribes and the Celtic tribes they absorbed.

Frontier Experience: The extent of interaction between Brauchers and Lenni Lenape (Delaware) medicine men is unclear. Much of the historical record about contact between Pennsylvania Germans and Indians was kept by clergy, who disapproved strongly of Indian spirituality. In a number of pockets, such as the Oley Valley, there is evidence of prolonged contact. My sources suggest it was common for Brauchers to claim part Indian heritage. A few could even document it. The question of how such contact, or even intermarriage, would influence Braucherei is difficult given the lack of 18th century records on this subject.

Other Influences: Sources and evidence suggest that Braucherei was also shaped subtly by other melting pot experiences in North America. Aside from likely interactions with the Lenni Lenape, Shawnee, Conestoga, and Iroquois, there are many other non-Indian groups which added both specific practices and oral tradition. Chief among them: African slaves, Jewish peddlers, Roma (Gypsies), and aged Scot-Irish women in Appalachia.

Modern Transitions: Evidence suggests that Braucherei is not an entirely lost art. A few elderly practitioners cling to undistilled tradition. An expanding group incorporate Braucherei elements into other healing practices. Among dispersed Anabaptist groups there are various categories of "healing touch", "faith healing", and "energy realignment" which have at least some connection to Braucherei traditions.

Future efforts in this area will be based on my supposition that Braucherei is a remnant form of shamanism, filtered through the Christian Middle Ages, shaped by frontier interaction with American Indians and other groups, and today augmented by a variety of spiritual practices. My ultimate goal is to document what remains to be documented and reconstruct, insofar as possible, the core rituals and practices of this form of shamanism.

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The author is a folklorist and author of five books on Wisconsin subjects.

**In the Studio of the Master:
Sophie Charlotte Gaebler, a Lisztianerin from Watertown in Weimar
(Continued from Vol. 8 No. 2 of the Friends Newsletter)**

by Max Gaebler

This is the story of Sophie Gaebler, a noted music teacher in Milwaukee who during her visit to Germany as a young woman became a student of the celebrated musician Franz Liszt. In this part of the story, Aunt Sophie recounts her meeting with Liszt and the time she spent as his pupil.

Music was the primary focus of her venture. And she couldn't have gone to a better place than Weimar. "Here," she wrote, "I'm right in the midst of music. On Monday I heard d'Albert. He plays gloriously." Eugene d'Albert was her own contemporary, but he already had a considerable reputation. He lived until 1934, and his recordings are still available.

It was at the d'Albert concert, incidentally, that Aunt Sophie first laid eyes on Liszt. She sat right back of him at the concert, which was in October, 1884. And it was Liszt who had given Weimar its place on the musical map of Europe, a place then noted also for its excellent conservatory. Aunt Sophie writes of a man who had said to her uncle "that Weimar has quite a reputation because of Liszt. But there's no one like Mrs. von Milde at any other conservatory." It was in November that Aunt Sophie met Mrs. von Milde and arranged for voice lessons with her. "When I spoke the name Beust she seemed very happily surprised. I told her that yesterday I had had a letter from Mrs. von Oeslsnitz in which she wrote me that she had known Mrs. von Milde as an 18-year-old girl and had heard her in *Tannhäuser*."

But the real guardian of her musical education was Prof. Carl Müller-Hartung, who in 1872 had founded the Weimar Conservatory (officially the Ducal Orchestral School, later renamed the Franz Liszt Hochschule für Musik). Aunt Sophie writes in August: "If I want to go to Liszt next summer, I can't be traveling around. There is a whole crowd of Liszt's pupils who all go to his house at a certain time. Then he has them play while he gives directions, but he never accepts a single penny for his instruction. But one has to be introduced to him by the right person." For Aunt Sophie Prof. Müller-Hartung proved to be the right person.

Her concern about "traveling around" was not mere idle talk. There are references to several relatives who extended quite insistent invitations, all eager to meet this young lady from the American branch of their family. She could easily have spent all her time enjoying the hospitality of these people and seeing a good deal more of Germany in the process, but she clearly kept her attention focused on her primary purpose in being there.

Liszt was in the habit, as we have noted, of dividing his time between Weimar, Rome and Budapest. Aunt Sophie wrote on Oct. 5, 1884, that Liszt would be leaving Weimar on the 16th. Little could she have realized that when he returned for the summer of 1885, the summer when she herself would be among his pupils, it would be his very last time. In 1886 he had an unusually taxing, though personally rewarding travel schedule, and he died on July 31 of that year without ever again having really taken up residence in Weimar.

When Liszt departed Weimar in October 1884, Aunt Sophie had seen him at the concert we have already mentioned, but she had not yet met him. She was busily engaged in studying piano with Prof. Müller-Hartung and voice with Mrs. von Milde. Though her uncle reported to her parents that "we're delighted at how well things are going for Sophie," there were surely frustrations along the way. At one point she asked her vocal teacher whether she was improving. Mrs. von Milde had her sing a song by Brodsky, after which she said it was "*Nähmädchenart*." Prof. Müller-Hartung was kinder, but his criticism was no less frank. "At the lesson before the last," Aunt Sophie wrote on Feb. 1, 1885, "I cried. He was so strict. I played the cadenzas by Reinecke, which require a great deal of interpretation, which is what I most lack. I play so mechanically. He said I was only playing notes. It all has to come to life. He stroked my chin and said: 'If I said to you, dear young lady, please play this and that, thus and so, then I wouldn't accomplish much. Do it my way and I'll bring things along, I'll get you going.'" She adds optimistically, "He thinks my technique is very good." And she did manage to take French on Mondays and Italian on Thursdays.

Two weeks later she reports: "Finally the big news. At Easter, I have to play the great A-minor Fugue of Bach for my examination." Mrs. von Milde also held a recital for her students, at which Aunt Sophie and another young woman sang Mendelssohn's duet "Ich harrete des Herrn."

But the really big news came in her April 25 letter: "Before I go to bed I simply must let you know how happy I am. I'm terribly excited. Just imagine! Liszt shook my hand. But it happened completely naturally. I gathered up all my

courage, just as I did that time with Joachim.... Since he is really very old, I was always afraid I'd never reach my goal. But I did want to have some contact with him. Miss Schnobel (who, at eighteen, was Liszt's youngest pupil) had classes with me with the Professor until Easter, when she left. She's been studying with Liszt a whole year and while she was attending the conservatory, which isn't permitted, and on account of which the Professor was quite annoyed.... She has taken a liking to me and would be delighted if I were to go with her to Liszt for instruction.... She went to see the master and invited him to come to the concert (at which she was to perform), and he promised he'd come. Of course we thought he'd never show up, but all of a sudden there was Liszt next to us. Someone had ushered him down front. Schnobel had taken me to the front row, so I stood up with her.... He sat next to Schnobel, who was the singer, then came Mrs. Schnobel and then I. I kept looking at him with his beautiful thick white hair. Since you had written that I couldn't imagine how important it would be to have some connection with the master, I went right away yesterday to Prof. Müller-Hartung at his house to ask his advice. He said, 'Yes indeed, you should go there and introduce yourself.... But I would recommend that you leave the conservatory, because he doesn't like it.' He did not try to hang onto me but gave me complete permission to go to Liszt. He said I was far, far more advanced than Schnobel and played much better than she. So I have his report, which is worth a lot to me even if I don't get to study with Liszt."

But it was another three months before Professor Müller-Hartung actually accomplished the introduction. "Yesterday at eleven," Aunt Sophie wrote on July 31, "we went together to Liszt, and it came off splendidly. There were still several men there, and he was in the mellowest of moods. The Professor told him that he was bringing him a young lady from America who would like very much to attend his classes and to profit from his teaching. Then Liszt took me by both hands and said: 'Of course, of course, etc.' I must sit down on the sofa (it's delightfully comfortable in his chambers), the men stood and talked. He kept turning around and smiling at me. Then he said to me that I could come the next day at four o'clock. He put his hands down so that I couldn't kiss them (both times, when we came and when we left). I thought this very considerate of him. He was still remarkably sprightly -- wonderfully so. Professor left with me and talked very kindly with me. He said I must just take courage; there were many who couldn't do as much as I for example, Schnobel, who was a favorite of Liszt, but who couldn't do half so much as I. He found it quite natural that my father should want me to study with Liszt. I told him that I hoped he didn't think I was evaluating myself too highly. He replied: 'On the contrary, you underrate yourself.' So there you have the guarantee that I'm not conceited."

The next day she went for the first time as pupil. She writes: "Today I went with Schnobel to Liszt and was introduced to several people by her. Then Prof. Müller-Hartung arrived, too. Silote [sic] and Friedheim were there, and the famous violinist Zenkrah, who is staying here just now. Altogether there must have been some twenty people. He got up and shook my hand twice. One person played something of Beethoven's, and then Variations by Brahms were played by a young woman who had already been playing for Bülow for four weeks. It was splendid like the finest concert. A lady from Chicago played a piece by Chopin elegantly. An American by the name of Day played an awfully long and terribly difficult piece by Reubke, a composer new to me (Julius Reubke was an organ pupil of Liszt who died in 1854 at the tragically early age of twenty-four); but it was splendid. Liszt told him he was a truly first-rate player. What one learns there just by listening is worth infinitely much."

After another session, not long afterward, she writes: "As the group was leaving, it eventually came my turn to say good-bye. I asked him whether on Monday I might play the Fantasy and Fugue by Bach. 'The Fugue,' he said, 'absolutely.' I repeated my name. Then he made a gesture with his hand and said, 'Bach is indeed at home here.' In my joy I said, 'That will be the happiest day of my life when I am allowed to play before the master of all times,' and, I kissed his hand. He complimented me most courteously and kissed me on the forehead. This was no small matter; I had surely laid it on thick enough! And he deserves to be so honored.... You'll be thinking, 'Well! The lessons are starting out well.'"

They did indeed go well. On Aug. 3 Aunt Sophie wrote her parents: "Today I played for Liszt for the first time, and I can be very pleased with the result when I consider what a fantastic place he has in music. He's heard the Fantasy and Fugue of Bach so unbelievably often that he always asks jokingly whether the Moonlight Sonata is going to be played too. He called on me first today. I began, eager to do it just right, and ended the first run diminuendo. Then he stopped me: 'The old masters are tired of tender caresses' (he was referring to Bach), and then he played the beginning for me. He placed his hand on his heart and added: 'Ah! But old men were amorous once!' Then he made an appropriate face and everybody laughed." Then, as if she were afraid her parents would miss the point, she adds: "That was a bit of irony on my playing the beginning too delicately. I didn't have to play all of the Fantasy; he turned to the Fugue and said I

should spend two marks to buy the Bülow edition. I played the Fugue pretty well, except that sometimes when I should have been playing more slowly he beat the time on my shoulder. As we left he said something to everyone. To me he said: 'That wasn't bad at all I mistreated you a little, but that won't do any harm it was well meant.' I felt I could be very satisfied with that. To someone who played the Appassionata (a woman already in her 30's) he said: 'You don't need to trouble me with that; you should learn it at home if you can't manage it. Why do you come to me with something you could really have spared me?'.... Then Liszt played a bit from the Appassionata gloriously; it's astonishing what technique the old man still has. I wouldn't have dared to dream what has fallen to my lot. I'm still Fortune's favorite."

But it wasn't all just luck. She was practicing ten hours a day. On Aug. 18 she writes that she's gone through thoroughly with Prof. Müller-Hartung the piece she's to play for Liszt the next day. "I seem to be holding my own with Liszt," she writes. "Before I could offer my hand as we were leaving, he kissed me on the forehead. You'll think the lessons consist only of kissing. One hears wonderful music there.... Tomorrow," she continues, "I'm going at 3:30, when only a few are there. Then I'm not so anxious and get to play sooner." She speaks of a young woman who is "a first-rate pianist but unbearably conceited" who also came early and asked Liszt whether she might play for him today. He looked at her music and agreed. But as she was making herself ready to begin, he noticed Aunt Sophie's music for Schumann's Fantasy and said, 'Let's start with this; it's a superb piece.' The other woman had already played this Fantasy there, so it was uncomfortable for me to have her listening to it. But I really wasn't very nervous I had achieved my purpose; I wanted to play first. It always makes a big difference if one selects a piece he likes I really learned a lot from him today. I had to repeat a lot, he played little passages for me, now and then saying 'very good, very good' and once 'superb' (perhaps he meant the piece itself).

"But at the end of the first part he said I had played it very well and should even play it again so that he might listen to it again. The second part I should play the next time. If he already wants to hear someone again at the next class, it's a sign that you've pleased him very much.... Today," she adds, "Anna Zenkrah played again a wonderful, lovely sonata."

The following week she reports that Arthur Friedheim, "whom many consider better than d'Albert," had "played magnificently." Speaking of the very special and almost magical quality of those summer lessons with Liszt, Sacheverell Sitwell notes, that "many of his pupils, and not the least talented among them, were a prey to the affectations of the adolescent. At any moment, for instance, one might pass by Arthur Friedheim, who, we are assured by a contemporary, 'in his street dress, with a bronze-velvet cloak, great soft felt hat, and gold medallion portrait of Liszt worn as a scarfpin, looked the typical musician.'"

Noted musicians were always coming through, and hearing such people informally was one of the great privileges of studying with Liszt. At the end of August Aunt Sophie writes that "Davidov [a great cellist, Director of the Conservatory at St. Petersburg] played the cello at Liszt's and he himself accompanied him. We listened from down in the garden. It was the D-major sonata of Rubinstein's they were playing. At the final chord the master played E instead of D down in the bass but didn't repeat it. That can happen, and if one doesn't see the player one hears it all much more clearly. The cellist played magnificently. We had a special class yesterday to hear him, and today we meet as usual."

By this time Aunt Sophie had already settled on Sept. 6 for her return trip to America. She wasn't even waiting for Liszt's departure from Weimar, which could ordinarily be expected in October. She had been in Germany for more than fifteen months, and there were abundant reasons for her to return home. In any case, she adds in her letter of Aug. 28 "Whether I get to go to Liszt a few more times really doesn't make much difference, for we go every other day and he is always so kind as to invite us for Sunday, too.... I'm much more self-confident now; I don't know whether or not that makes me a true Lisztianerin."

She harbored no such doubts when she arrived home or, for that matter, the rest of her life. Having had access to the charmed circle around the master for those few weeks in the summer of 1885 transformed her career. She may have learned more, and her musicianship may have profited more from her year with Prof. Müller-Hartung and Mrs. von Milde; but for the rest of her long life, she was indelibly marked as one of those favored young musicians whose understanding of themselves and of their art had been shaped by their experience with this remarkable genius.

When Aunt Sophie arrived home in LaCrosse, she was serenaded, and her father had her grand piano put into shape for a musician with her credentials. Her first public appearance as Lisztianerin took place, appropriately, in Watertown,

where she had grown up and where her older brother [my grandfather, Max] still lived. It was clearly a triumphal return, as evidenced by this letter she sent her parents after the concert. "The bouquets came flying even before I had performed anything. After the *Lorelei* came two ... and Mr. Schoppe handed me a very big one in the name of the Club.... At the polka they simply wouldn't stop till I repeated part of it. For the *Lorelei* Max was turning pages for me. It affected him so much that he couldn't have turned any more if the piece had been longer." Aunt Sophie was never one to underestimate the emotional impact of music. Her satisfaction, however, was echoed by all three Watertown newspapers. "Watertowners will not soon forget this wonderful evening," observed *Der Weltbürger* in a front-page story; the *Gazette* and the *Republican* were equally enthusiastic.

Richard Hardege, violinist and composer, surely Watertown's premier musician in the last century, was deeply impressed. After the concert he said: "Sophie, you have become a great artist." At a party later that evening the Concordia Club, sponsor of the event, was toasted "*dreimal hoch*." Then Richard Hardege toasted the great master Liszt "*dreimal hoch*." And finally he toasted the pupil of Liszt, Miss Gaebler, "*dreimal hoch*." She still basked in similar salutes seven decades later.

Upcoming Events

Angelika Sauer, University of Winnipeg:

"Being 'German' in Western Canada: The German-Speaking Populations of the Canadian Prairie Provinces, 1880s to 1890s"

January 27th, 4:00 p.m., Max Kade Institute

Rev. Max Gaebler:

"Germany's Second Reformation: The German background of American Freethinkers."

March 1st, 7:00 p.m., Max Kade Institute

Third Annual Mini-Conference on German Dialects:

Steven H. Keiser, Ohio State University:

"Divergence, Drift and the Development of Midwestern Pennsylvania German"

Janet Fuller, Southern Illinois University:

"Variation in Pennsylvania German: Conservation, Innovation, and Fossilization among Beachy Mennonites"

April 1st, Max Kade Institute

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Season's Greetings! The Max Kade Institute has been engaged in many exciting and important activities throughout 1999. The year 2000 promises even more special activities and events for the Institute. Information about all of these things is found in the pages of the Newsletter.

If you are not already a member of the Friends of MKI, I encourage you to consider joining. In addition to the Newsletter you will receive notices of Institute events. An application for membership can be found on the back cover. For those of you who are already members please renew your membership for the year 2000. Perhaps you will consider becoming a Life Member this year.

A new fund has just been established and is called the Max Kade Institute Publication Fund. It was made possible by a very generous gift of \$500 from Ms. Rosemarie Blancke (the first President of the Friends of MKI) accompanied by a pledge of an additional \$1,000 for the MKI Publication Fund if

the Friends will match this amount by the end of this calendar year. With your added help we have the potential of a \$2,500 start for this fund. So please think about making a tax deductible contribution to this fund before year end. This would be over and above your regular membership contribution. The Publication Fund will enable the MKI to further its research and outreach missions.

We invite you to visit the Institute and participate in the many interesting and vital programs in which the Institute is involved.

Robert Luening

LECTURE NOTES

Harvey Jacobs: The Amish in Wisconsin

by Thor Templin

Amish have lived in Wisconsin since 1925, and as long as they have been here, they have been misunderstood. Wisconsin now boasts the fourth largest Amish population in America, behind Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio, and the number of Amish communities has nearly doubled in the last two decades. Many Amish are moving from their tradition settlements in the east to Wisconsin, largely due to urban sprawl and the increasing prices of farm land.

After working with a group of fellow scholars on the social impact of growth in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Harvey Jacobs began a research project to increase understanding of the Amish and break down many misconceptions about them. Jacobs, a professor in the Urban and Regional Planning Department and director of the Land Tenure Center at the UW-Madison, co-wrote *Amish Living: An Outreach Primer* with funding from UW-Extension's Cooperative Extension and the UW College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 1995. The *Primer* is being used as an educational tool for the neighbors of the Amish. Since that time Prof. Jacobs has been giving informative talks around the state. Recently he spoke by invitation of the MKI at the Pyle Center.

Prof. Jacobs discussed the main misconceptions about the Amish. His lecture lasted an hour, but the question and answer session that followed lasted an additional hour.

As a religious order, the Amish trace themselves back to a common ancestor with the Mennonites as an Anabaptist form of Christianity where the adults rather than children are formally baptized. They are further related to the Quakers and other Pietist groups. The Amish broke away from the Mennonites in the 1600s when Jacob Ammann began a reformist split from the Mennonites. Many of these changes, such as the plain clothes, community discipline and the wearing of beards, have come to distinguish the Amish as a separate community.

The Amish believe in salvation not by individual deeds but rather by the deeds of the community, which explains their relative isolation and the lack of individualism. They do not allow outside technologies which could promote social-economic class distinction or individualism in the community. Their use of Pennsylvania German language provides them with a further filter against the outside world.

They have no churches, but rather services are held every other Sunday at the home of one of the members of the community. It is for this purpose that Amish homes must be large, because they have to hold the entire congregation. They have no clergy in the traditional sense: all of their religious positions (bishops, deacons, etc.) are elected.

Although they are originally an urban community, persecution forced them into their now familiar life of farming. The Amish have their own schools, where usually young, unmarried women of the community act as teachers and all grades meet in one schoolhouse. They allow their children to choose either their way of life or to live in the outside world - known to the Amish as the "English World"; during the "wilding years" the non-baptized youth are encouraged to explore the outside world, so that they fully understand what they will give up.

Every Amish community is slightly different from the next: some are more conservative, while others are more liberal in their acceptance of worldly technologies; for example, some Amish communities accept bicycles, while others see this as a type of individualism. Less these relative minor differences, the Amish see themselves as an entire community. Collective barn raisings often bring other Amish from out of state to help with the work. Amish newspapers circulate throughout the various Amish communities around the United States. Although most technology is shunned by the Amish, modern medicine is taken advantage of - and the Amish pay their bills in cash. Despite the many natural disasters and fires which often beset Midwest farms, the Amish do not have insurance; in this way, they show their faith that the community will work together in time of need.

The Amish, while always paying their taxes without complaint, hold no formal ties to government. Being pacifists, no Amish has ever served in the military. They rarely vote, and when they do, it is to defeat issues that could infringe upon their lifestyle. The Amish see the government as their protector from persecution, but they do not wish to have direct contact with the government or government agencies or officials. This has prompted some organizations to begin working with the Amish to improve their land management and preserve the surrounding environment. For instance, in the Kickapoo Valley, Trout Unlimited, under direction of Laura Hewitt, a UW graduate, has been working with the Amish to make these improvements.

Prof. Jacobs sees several areas of tension between the Amish and non-Amish in Wisconsin. The Amish have been victims of hate crimes, including arson and physical attacks. These attacks often result from misconceptions about the Amish and anger over the buying of farms from the established community. In the course of making these farms productive, the Amish have increased their property value as well as the value of their neighbors' farms - this has ultimately caused higher taxation. Some Amish communities have yet to adapt their farming methods, which worked well in the east, for the different soils in Wisconsin. As mentioned before, some groups working to preserve local resources, have begun working with the Amish to help them adapt their land use to the soils of Wisconsin.

Within the past few years, great steps have been taken in order to try to educate the public about the Amish to ease tensions. Prof. Jacobs work has been of prime importance in this effort.

German-American *Krabbelgruppe* at the Max Kade Institute!

by Pam Tesch

The German-American playgroup at the Max Kade Institute provides a pleasurable getaway for new parents with young children. Stephanie Tollefson, Monica Vohmann, and a friendly group of German-American parents and their little ones meet to play, talk, and teach their children German in a comfortable, non-structured environment. Some Saturday mornings, the toddlers venture to the Max Kade Institute to listen to German songs, hear German stories, or simply play together. During the summer, the group gathers at local parks for picnics. Most recently, the kids made lanterns and went trick-or-treating for Halloween. Last year, Stephanie hosted a holiday party for the tots with real *Lebkuchen*, which they patted and rolled with their own little hands!

If you would be interested in joining the German-American *Krabbelgruppe*, please call Stephanie Tollefson (278-9461) or Monica Vohmann (238-4154) for more information.
