

# Max Kade Institute Friends Newsletter

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—MADISON, 901 UNIVERSITY BAY DR., MADISON, WI 53705

## Remembering Frank P. Zeidler, Former Mayor of Milwaukee and Friend of the MKI

By Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director



Agnes and Frank Zeidler at the 2003 MKI  
Annual Meeting and Dinner.

Frank P. Zeidler, who served from 1948 to 1960 as mayor of Milwaukee, died on July 7, 2006 at the age of 93. He was the last of twelve Socialist Milwaukee mayors, and the last Socialist to serve as mayor of a major American city. During his years in office, he worked tirelessly on behalf of urban renewal, public housing, and improvement of city services—and all without borrowing money to repay city loans. He fought for city expansion through annexation of suburbs, nearly doubling the land area of the city, and led efforts toward construction of the new expressway system, while at the same time combating urban sprawl. With his death, the city of Milwaukee and the state of Wisconsin have lost one of their finest sons.

Zeidler's years as mayor of Milwaukee were only part of his story. He chose not to run for a fourth term, largely because of his health. He

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## Turning Corners: Summer into Fall

By Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director

*Greetings, Friends and Readers!*

Fall has come; we are looking back on a good summer and forward to a full academic year. The summer highlight was the Milwaukee German Fest exhibit we co-sponsored the end of July with the West Bend Art Museum. We gave out 500 "How German is American?" posters, so we know we had interested visitors! Our fall offerings have included a double lecture September 14 by Kristine Horner and Kevin Wester about Wisconsin Luxembourgers, and two lectures on October 1 at the West Bend Art Museum on the German-American art connection. A September 28–29 conference on "German Language and Immigration in International Perspective" was the capstone event of a videolinked collaborative seminar that took place in the spring of 2006. This innovative seminar, sponsored by the UW Center for German and European Studies, enrolled approximately fifty students and was taught by professors from the UW (Rob Howell, Mark Loudon, and Joe Salmons), the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the J.F.K. Institute at the Freie Universität Berlin, and the Europa-Universität Viadrina in



MKI Board Members Ed Langer and Fran Luebke host our exhibit at German Fest.

Frankfurt/Oder.

Meanwhile, our long-awaited *Wisconsin German Land and Life* (ed. Heike Bungert, Cora Lee Kluge, and Robert C. Ostergren), is at the printers and will be available through the UW Press this month (October). Next spring will bring *Other Witnesses: An Anthology of Literature of the German Americans, 1850–1914* (ed. Cora Lee Kluge). Our "How German Is American?" poster continues to be well received (and is still available), while its companion brochure can be downloaded from our Web site.

We are excited about a new addition to our archives—the German theater scripts collection, which has just come to us from Milwaukee's Pabst Theater; and we look forward to working with these materials.

This fall Alexandra Czernik from Bremen has been with us, helping with a number of events and activities, and particularly with evaluating some of the recent donations to our library and archives. Welcome to her!

Our high level of activity means that we never have a dull moment, but we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our upcoming events. Please check what is happening by looking at the MKI Web site: <[mki.wisc.edu](http://mki.wisc.edu)>.

Best wishes from the Keystone House!

—Cora Lee

### Max Kade Institute

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Visit the Max Kade Institute on the  
World Wide Web at:  
<<http://mki.wisc.edu>>.

## A Farewell to Rose Marie Barber, Former Member of MKI Board of Directors

By Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director

Rose Marie Barber, longtime member of the Friends of the Max Kade Institute and member of the Friends Board of Directors from 2002 to 2006, died on Sunday, September 3, 2006 at her home in Wauwatosa.

As a child Rose Marie (Winkler) Barber, the daughter of German immigrants, went to dances, parties, and gymnastic competitions at Milwaukee's Turner Hall. She and her husband, Larry Barber, raised five sons, all of whom participated in the Turner program, and two of whom became gymnastic coaches there. The specialist par excellence on the Milwaukee Turners, she knew the organization's history and loved its traditions. For seventeen years she served as its manager and executive director, and she was one of the motivating forces behind the \$4.5 million project to renovate the historic Turner Hall Ballroom, whose second phase—finishing the installation of basic utilities and safety amenities, replacing windows, improving the air conditioning, and restoring the pillars—is scheduled to be completed soon. She also worked with the Fourth Street Forum, an education program sponsored by the Turners, whose goal was to promote dialogue on important political and social issues.



Rose Marie Barber at the 2005 MKI Annual Meeting and Dinner.

The Turner Hall Ballroom was once the setting for social, cultural, and political events; and it was a showplace for the works of German-American panoramic painters and other artists. After it

was damaged by fire in 1933 and again in 1941, it fell into long years of disuse. Plans are to restore the ballroom and maintain and use it for civic and cultural purposes.

It was because of her interest in German-American studies that Rose Marie Barber became associated with the Max Kade Institute, and it was her goal to help establish a closer relationship between the Max Kade Institute and the Milwaukee Turners. She hoped that she would someday attend occasional events of the

Max Kade Institute in the Turner Hall Ballroom, and she often mentioned her dream to waltz there again.

We at the Max Kade Institute as well as members of the Friends remember Rose Marie Barber, her dedication to her work, her energy, and her pride in what was being accomplished. We extend our sympathy to her family; we, too, will miss her presence!

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

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had been hospitalized several times during his tenure with a variety of serious physical afflictions, and his work was taking a heavy emotional toll as well. After leaving office, however, he devoted himself to contributing as a writer, consultant, historian, and much more, displaying broad knowledge as well as a visionary ability to assess problematic developments and trends in municipal government and urban planning. He wrote about the role of aesthetics in urban renewal and about the alarming consequences trends such as residential skyscrapers, the disappearance of the small retailer, and the increased use of private vehicles would have for the future. On the national level, he was instrumental in re-forming the Socialist Party USA and served for many years as its national chair; he was the Socialist Party's presidential nominee in 1976.

Zeidler was an intellectual whose only college diplomas were six honorary degrees, including an honorary law degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Nevertheless, his publications would seem to come from the pens of specialists in a wide range of fields: city planning, labor relations, political science, history, and literature. He “translated” four of Shakespeare's plays into contemporary language, a project he first undertook to help one of his daughters read *Macbeth*, and he published a book of stories for children and a collection of verse. Zeidler's most recent publication is a book entitled *A Liberal in City Government: My Experiences As Mayor of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Milwaukee Publishers, 2005); although he wrote it in 1962, shortly after leaving office, it had never appeared. In the introduction, a second volume is promised for the year 2006, which is to contain the story of his struggle for better housing and redevelopment in the years of Milwaukee's growing racial tensions. We recommend the former as excellent reading material and look forward to the appearance of the latter.

Zeidler grew up in a Milwaukee German Lutheran family. He was well aware of his heritage and the contributions of immigrants to the development of the state; he possessed a wealth of knowledge about German Americans and the history of Wisconsin. In an interview in June 2004 he responded

to a question about the roots of Wisconsin's political liberalism by tracing it particularly to the German refugees of the Revolution of 1848. He was a member of the Milwaukee Turners, the Schwaben Männerchor, and the Milwaukee Lieberkranz, and he frequently attended the events of these groups. He and his wife Agnes Zeidler were long-time members of the Friends of the MKI, and they regularly attended annual dinner meetings of the Friends.

Zeidler received many awards and honors, including one from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Bonn, Germany, which recognized him for his public service and his contributions to German-American relations. It was presented to him in the spring of 1999 at an event in the Frank P. Zeidler Humanities Room in the Milwaukee Public Library.

Frank Zeidler was a talented politician whose honesty and integrity were never questioned; he lived by his own very high standards. He was a modest man, who neither drank nor smoked nor drove a car. He never collected a pension from the city of Milwaukee. He was generous, and he was hard-working. For his epitaph I choose two statements, one which he himself suggested—“he tried hard”—and one from one of his early poems, in which he is speaking: “Well, I have tried to do my share to make/ A life worthwhile for others as for me. . . .” We knew him this way. We remember him fondly and extend to his wife and their children our heartfelt sympathy.

#### **Friends of the Max Kade Institute**

The Friends of the Max Kade Institute organization supports the activities of the Institute, including the publication of this Newsletter. Individual members also assist the Institute through financial contributions, endowments, and planned giving, as well as by donating historical and other relevant materials to the MKI library and archives. To join the Friends, please see the last page of this Newsletter. To donate materials, please contact the librarian at [kkurdylo@wisc.edu](mailto:kkurdylo@wisc.edu) or call (608) 262-7546.

# German-American Architect Adolf Cluss Transformed Our Nation's Capital

Reviewed by Antje Petty, MKI Assistant Director

Lessor, Alan and Christoph Mauch, eds. *Adolf Cluss, Architect: From Germany to America*. Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, and New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. 180 pp., ill.

At first glance *Adolf Cluss, Architect* is a coffee table book. Opening it in the center, one finds historical images in two photo collections titled "Family Album" and "The Washington Cluss Found, the Washington Cluss Made." But the book is more than just beautiful sepia-colored pictures. In nine separate essays it tells the stories of mid-nineteenth century Germany in social and political turmoil, nineteenth-century America struggling to grow into one nation, a capital city transforming itself in a few decades from "federal village" to "global metropolis," and Washington, D.C.'s unique German-American community. Tying it all together is the personal story of Adolf Cluss.

Adolf Cluss was born on July 14, 1825 in Heilbronn, a rather prosperous former imperial city in southwest Germany with a developing middle class influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment and open to economic and social progress. Cluss's father was a builder and owner of building supply businesses and one of the city's most prominent and affluent citizens. His uncle and brother were architects, and other family members, too, were involved in various trades related to the construction business. Cluss himself set out on a career as an architect/civil engineer by first becoming an apprentice carpenter and a journeyman, the common educational path in

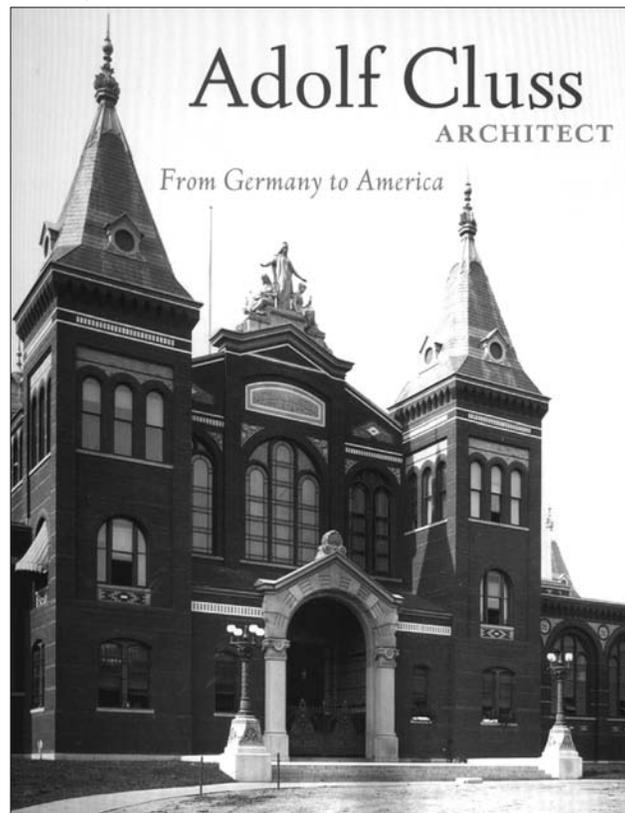
Germany at the time for a person with his interests.

His first job brought him to Mainz, where he worked on a railroad project as an assistant to the architect, spending most of his time among the working men. It was an experience that opened his eyes to the shortcomings of the society around him:

the centuries-old system of skilled trades was becoming obsolete because of technological progress; wealth was accumulated through capital, but inadequate compensation for labor could only lead to poverty; political power lay in the hands of a few aristocrats; and the church held control over social and moral issues. Fifty years and more after the French and American revolutions, the time had come for people in the German states to demand representation, personal freedoms, and social and economic improvement.

*Turnvereine* and *Singkränze* became meeting

places where sports and music were combined with political and social ideas for those with democratic or revolutionary views. Socialist and communist movements came out of their infancy, and workers' associations emerged. Cluss joined such groups enthusiastically. In 1847 he met Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and became a close personal friend and promoter of their ideas. Especially intrigued by Marx's belief in the emancipatory power of political education of the lower classes, Cluss co-founded the Workers' Educational Association in Mainz, where he tirelessly gave lectures and



# Karl Knortz Meets with Henry Longfellow, 1876: Part III

Translated by Mark Loudon, former MKI Co-Director

*The following is the final installment of an essay entitled “My First Visit with Longfellow” by Karl Knortz (1841–1918), a German-American teacher, author, and critic born in Garbenheim near Wetzlar, who studied in Heidelberg and came to the U.S. in 1863 to serve first as a teacher: in Detroit (1864–68), in Oshkosh, Wisconsin (1868–71), and then in Cincinnati (1871–74). His publications, including well over a hundred books, lectures, and translations on a wide range of topics, make him one of his generation’s important mediators of German culture in America and above all of American culture in Germany. He translated into German works of both Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Walt Whitman; he wrote on the myths of North American Native Americans, the anti-German sentiments of Americans in the World War I era, and German culture in America; and he has recently received attention as one of the early scholars of American folklore.*

*In this essay, two sections of which appeared in the winter 2005 and summer 2006 Newsletters, Knortz, thirty-four years younger than Longfellow, describes his first visit with the famous poet. It was published in German in Knortz’s *Aus der transatlantischen Gesellschaft: Nordamerikanische Kulturbilder* (Leipzig, 1882), and it introduced Longfellow on a more intimate basis to Europeans who had read his works. Knortz portrays Longfellow as absent-minded and somewhat senile, proud, hypersensitive to criticism, and at the same time critical of others. Nevertheless, the essay ends by paying him real tribute, both as a person and as a man of letters. The volume containing this essay*

*can be found in the MKI Library.*

Longfellow was not well disposed to critics of his works since they seemed to take issue with so many things. For example, some objected to his use of the word “Excelsior” (the title and refrain of one of his most popular poems) on the grounds that it should more properly be rendered as “Excelsius.” Longfellow justified his use of the word by

reciting a Latin sentence that I had difficulty understanding, due to his American English accent. [. . .]

Longfellow was well acquainted with modern Italian literature; his desk was covered with the latest literary productions from Italy. He knew Italian almost as well as his native language, and could even compose poetry in it, as demonstrated by his translation of his sonnet “The Old Bridge of Florence.”

French literature, on the other hand, seemed to interest



Karl Knortz

Longfellow little.

“Now tell me,” he asked, “what was the name of that French abbé who wrote that embarrassing book about fourteen or fifteen years ago on artistic depictions of American Indians? What ever happened about that book? Wasn’t his name Domenech?”

“That was indeed his name, and about a year ago I spent one hilarious hour in the Kongressbibliothek [Library of Congress] with that infamous volume. Domenech is the French counterpart of [Henry Rowe] Schoolcraft. His book, which had the support of Napoleon and was published by the French Interior Ministry, contains, among other

# Brewers and Breweries of Eastern Dodge County

By Michael D. Benter

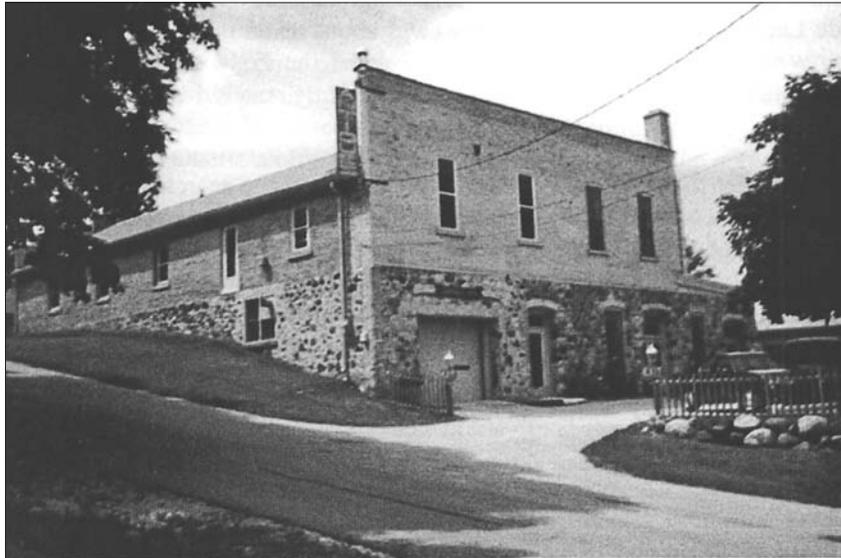
The brewers of eastern Dodge County, Wisconsin were a multi-talented and flexible lot; they were also risk takers, entrepreneurs, civically-engaged and religious. They were northern German, southern German, Catholic, and Lutheran. Nic Weidig and John Kohl were Civil War veterans. Martin Bachhuber was a veterinarian; Mattheus Ziegler was a trained musician. Kohl was shot in the back in his second occupation as deputy sheriff. In the sparsely-populated and wooded hinterlands, men like Georg Schmid and John Huels were almost conscripted to brew by their communities. Citizens were thirsting for the beer of the homeland, and if someone in the community had previous brewing experience, then that person *had to be* the local brewer.

Except for the local church, the brewery was the most important social institution in the small villages of Farmersville, LeRoy, and Huilsburg. Dances, harvest balls, masked balls in the German tradition of the *fastnacht*, weddings, G.A.R. veterans' camp meetings, and at least one court trial occurred at the small rural breweries. Even in relatively more populated places such as Horicon, Lomira, Mayville, and Theresa, the local brewery had a function that went well beyond its intrinsic utility.

People voted at the brewery hall in Mayville and picnicked in Mr. Ziegler's park. After church on Sunday morning, the brewery in Theresa was a community meeting place where information and gossip were exchanged and the week's beer was purchased. The village brewery was also a place newly-arriving immigrants could find entry-level employment in an occupation they may have had some familiarity with, thus alleviating some of the stress in making the tran-

sition to an unfamiliar land.

The men who ran the breweries made their communal marks by ably filling spots on church and community councils, the volunteer fire department, or the school board. They built community and personal parks, held picnics, and sponsored baseball and bowling teams and community bands. Theresa brewer Gebhard Weber was on the local



The brewhouse at the G. Weber brewery in Theresa, WI.  
(M. Benter photo.)

board of education and a founder of the Catholic church in the village. Mayville brewer William Darge held the position of street commissioner. Huilsburg's John Huels was a Union Army recruiter. Nic Weidig was the Town of LeRoy village clerk.

In a county with a population that remains predominantly German-American, the emigrating points of the brewers of eastern Dodge County provide a veritable map of nineteenth-century Germany. These men and their families came from the states of Baden, Bavaria, Brandenburg and Hesse, among others. For the dual rewards of a modest profit and good social standing, the brewers provided a product that was as culturally symbolic and tied to tradition as it was personally refreshing.

*Michael D. Benter works at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and is the author of Roll Out the Barrels: Brewers of Eastern Dodge County, Wisconsin, 1850–1961. His interests include Mississippi Delta blues history, Green Bay Packers history and trivia, and pre-Prohibition small breweries of southeastern Wisconsin.*

Class continued from page 5

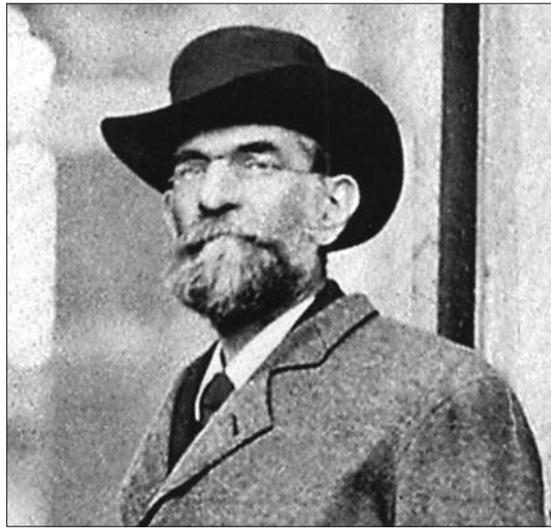
produced pamphlets on numerous issues. His faith in public education remained strong throughout his life and became visible in the many schools, museums, and other community buildings he later designed in Washington, D.C.

In 1848, revolutionary attempts to establish a pan-German democratic government failed. Disillusioned, Cluss left for America, hoping to “observe a free democracy,” and fully intending to return someday to a unified and democratic Germany. Jobs for new immigrants were scarce, but Cluss eventually found employment with the Navy Yard in Washington, where he was to draft gun designs, but also a few smaller buildings. Like other visitors at the time, he was appalled by the provincial character and lack of culture of the national capital. Designed like a European city of royal residence, it nevertheless looked—in the words of Carl Schurz—“like a big sprawling village, consisting of scattered groups of houses which were overtopped by a few public buildings, [. . .] in many streets, geese, chickens, pigs and cows had still a scarcely disputed right of way.”

Cluss immediately became involved in labor issues and tried to propagate Marxist ideas among the workers around him. Very soon, however, he realized that the situation in the United States was different, especially in Washington: above all, because it lacked any significant industry, the city didn’t have a “working class” in the European sense. Manual labor was done by poor African Americans and recent immigrants of many different nationalities who didn’t speak the same language and were not organized at all. In this continuously expanding country, “property” also was of different meaning. Within a few years, Cluss grew disillusioned with European Communist ideas, and around 1853 he broke with Marx. By the late 1850s, now an American citizen, husband, and father, Cluss was politically engaged entirely within the American context, joining the Republican Party in 1859.

When the Civil War embroiled the country, the

Federal Government expanded, and the population of the nation’s capital grew from 75,000 in 1860 to 131,000 in 1870. An unprecedented building boom began, and in 1862 Cluss took the opportunity to open his own architectural firm. He was the very first professionally educated architect in the city to focus on local work. But in Washington, most local work was also directly or indirectly federal work. Thus, after the Civil War Cluss profited immensely from the Republican Party’s commitment to turn the capital into a model city with first-rate construction and roads, water and sewer systems, police and fire protection, public schools and markets.



Adolf Cluss, 1880

Cluss’s first commission in 1862 was a public school, the Wallach School. An ardent believer in universal education, he set out to design “a school for all: good enough for the richest, cheap enough for the poorest.” He employed the most recent European design ideas and newest technology and materials, especially for ventilation, heating, lighting, and acoustics. In 1869, Cluss built the much bigger

Franklin School, which was considered nationwide “most attractive” and “unsurpassed,” even receiving a medal at the 1873 exposition in Vienna for “progress in school architecture.” An imposing brick exterior covered spacious classrooms with huge windows, marble floors and elegant woodwork. It was a learning environment that Cluss and the progressive educators around him hoped would encourage learning by exposing all students, not just the privileged few, to beauty in their daily environment.

In the following years, Cluss built twelve more schools, dozens of other public and government buildings, and churches and residential properties. The National Museum Building of the Smithsonian (now the Arts and Industry Building) is widely considered his masterpiece. Cluss incorporated the latest in European museum design theory. He

created an interior of open walls that made maximum use of natural light and afforded maximum exhibit space, and an exterior of brick glazed in buff, black, blue, and red which “offered fitness to its purpose and economy to its design.”

But Cluss designed not only buildings. He was also intimately involved in larger projects of city planning. For three years he was chief engineer of Washington’s federally established Board of Public Works. Looking to cities like Paris and Berlin, he tried to meet the challenge to create the growing capital’s infrastructure as quickly and on as grand a scale as possible. Adhering to L’Enfant’s basic street layout, he created broad avenues with “parkings” (green spaces between the roadway and houses), built an extensive sewer system, and paved miles and miles of roads with wood. As there had never been any attempt before to engage in city development on this scale, much of the work was done by trial and error and without time for careful reflection. Cluss’s street designs stood the test of time, but his sewer systems and pavements became examples of all that can go wrong in public works: throughout the city the wood pavement had to be replaced, and in places the sewers collapsed.

Like no other architect, Cluss was instrumental in creating the image of late-nineteenth century Washington. Over the course of his career, he designed sixty-six major buildings, of which only seven are still standing today. The first of his buildings were torn down already during his lifetime. Ironically, Cluss had designed his buildings to accommodate the needs of a fast-growing city, and the rapidly expanding capital addressed its changing needs by razing his buildings within a few decades. What was the latest in technology, design, and taste in the 1870s or 1880s was outdated by the early twentieth century. Cluss’s Washington of red brick buildings morphed into a city of white marble and sandstone, and later of concrete, glass, and steel.

The book *Adolf Cluss: Architect* is the result of a collaborative project led by the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. It includes contributions by scholars from both sides of the Atlantic and speaks directly to the renewed interest in nineteenth-century life, culture, and architecture that can be found both in Europe and the United States today.

## Upcoming Events

### Lectures

Saturday, October 21, Memorial Union, Madison. As part of the Wisconsin Book Festival in Madison, MKI will present its new publication, *The Wisconsin Office of Emigration*.

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Wednesday, November 1, 7 p.m.–9 p.m., Pyle Center, Room 232. “Ausgewanderte deutsche Wörter nach Russland und Amerika Germanismen im Ost-West-Vergleich = Migrating German Words, From Russia to America: Comparing Germanisms East and West.” In this bilingual event, Dr. Luanne von Scheide-messer, Senior Editor of the *Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)*, and Dr. Lutz Kuntzsch from the Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache in Wiesbaden will discuss how German words have been incorporated into languages spoken in Europe and North America.

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### Lecture series

#### **In Search of a New World: Mennonites and Amish in the Americas**

Wednesday, November 15, 7 p.m.–9 p.m. Kimberly Miller: “Old Colony Mennonites in Bolivia,” Red Gym, On Wisconsin Room. The name Mennonite is shared by a diverse group of people worldwide, from conservative horse-and-buggy Mennonites to urban assimilated Mennonites. What religious tradition do these people share? After an overview of Mennonite origins, this presentation will focus on the history, beliefs, and lives of the Colony Mennonites in Bolivia.

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Wednesday, December 6, 7 p.m.–9 p.m. Prof. Mark Loudon: “Amish in North America,” Memorial Union, see TITU for room. One of the most visible religious minority groups in North America is the Old Order Amish. This presentation explores the basic foundations of Amish faith and life, from both historical and modern perspectives, and clarifies a number of common misunderstandings about the Amish.

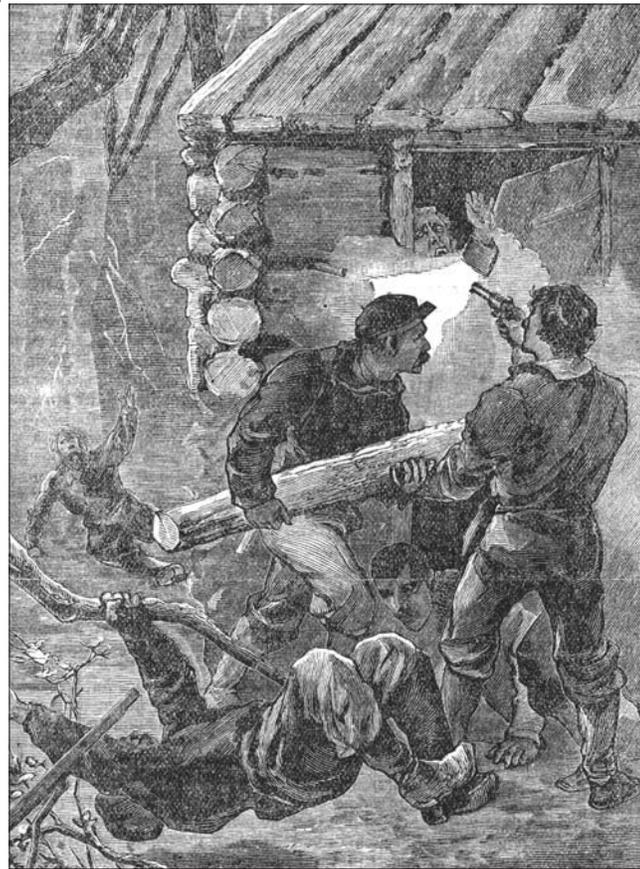
# The Life and Death of Jesse James: The Western Desperado

By Kevin Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

When the outlaw Jesse James was killed in 1882, the Philadelphia publishing house of Barclay & Co. issued the dramatically titled *Jesse James, the Life and Daring Adventures of This Bold Highwayman and Bank Robber and His No Less Celebrated Brother, Frank James: Together With the Thrilling Exploits of the Younger Boys. The Only Book Containing the Romantic Life of Jesse James and His Pretty Wife, Who Clung to Him to the Last*. And sometime shortly thereafter, perhaps the same year or as late as 1886, sensing an interest among German-speaking immigrants, the company issued the work in translation as *Jesse James. Das Leben und die verwegenen Abenteuer dieses kühnen Räuberhauptmanns und seines nicht weniger berühmten Bruders Frank James nebst den kecken Thaten der Gebrüder Younger. Das einzige Buch, welches enthält das romantische Leben des Jesse James und seiner hübschen Frau, welche ihm bis in den Tod treu blieb*.

Author and publisher Erasmus Elmer Barclay produced sensational works that purported to be the true accounts of murderers (with a fondness for those who were female), presidential assassinations, Indian captivity, Civil War events (particularly focusing on women who joined the army disguised as men), white slavery, the Underground Railroad, and great tragedies such as the Chicago fire, the Greely Arctic expedition, and the flood of Johnstown,

Pennsylvania. The works often had vivid titles, such as *Lizzie Nutt's Sad Experience: A Heart Broken, and a Family Plunged in Grief, Wreck and Ruin! The Shooting and Tragic Death of Noble-Hearted Captain Nutt, Lizzie's Brave Father, Who Flinched Not, Like a True Soldier, to Die in Defence of His Daughter's Honor. The Great Dukes Trial at Uniontown, Pa. Full Account, and All "Those Terrible Let-*



Hunted down! The James gang at bay—  
Desperate resistance! An exciting encounter.  
(Aufspürung der James'schen Bande.—  
Angriff. Verzweifelter Widerstand.  
Hitziges Gefecht.)

ters" (1883); *Life, Trial and Execution of Edward H. Ruloff, The Perpetrator of Eight Murders, Numerous Burglaries and Other Crimes; Who Was Recently Hanged at Binghamton, N.Y. A Man Shrouded in Mystery! A Learned Ruffian! Was He Man or Fiend* (1872); and *Miss Coleson's Narrative of Her Captivity among the Sioux Indians! An Interesting and Remarkable Account of the Terrible Sufferings and Providential Escape of Miss Ann Coleson, a Victim of the Late Indian Outrages in Minnesota* (1864). Barclay published more than fifty works in German, including *Das Grosse Feuer in Chicago. Eine genaue Beschreibung der Entstehung, Ausbreitung und Verheerungen*

*dieses schrecklichen Feuers, des Grossten, das die civilisierte Welt gesehen [hat]* (1871); *Die schreckliche Tragödie in Washington. Ermordung des Präsidenten Lincoln* (1865); *Miss Coleson's Geschichte ihrer Gefangenschaft unter den Sioux Indianern!* (1864); *Der Rabe, a translation of Edgar Allen Poe's The Raven* (1869); and two books on the

assassination of James Garfield, *Das Attentat auf Präsident James A. Garfield* (1881) and *Der Grosse Guiteau-Prozess: Nebst der Lebensbeschreibung des feigen Mörders* (1882). At this time the MKI owns only one of these German-language volumes.

The author of the 96-page work about Jesse James does not identify himself; instead, the title page provides this line: “Verfasst von \*\*\*\*\* (Welcher sich für jetzt nicht nennen darf)” [written by one who for now dares not be named], while the first page announces that it is “Von \*\*\*\*\* (Des- sen Name verschwiegen bleiben muss)” [by one whose name must remain secret]. In the first paragraph the author writes: “Mein Gewissen quält mich und ich kann daher jene schrecklichen Geheimnisse nicht länger in meiner Brust verschlossen halten. Ich weiss, wovon ich spreche und zu passender Zeit werde ich meinen Namen und meine volle Geschichte dem Publikum bekannt machen. Jetzt streifen eine Menge desperater Menschen umher, die nichts um mein Leben geben und meinen Tod für nothwendig halten würden.” [My conscience torments me, and I can no longer keep these terrible secrets locked within my breast. I know of what I speak, and when the proper time arrives I will make my name and full history known to the public. Meanwhile there roams at large a number of desperate men who hold my life as nothing and would consider my death a necessity.] We learn more about the author when later he informs the

reader: “Ihr [leset] eine Geschichte . . . , deren Verfasser bei manchen kühnen Abenteuern zugegen und oftmals Zeuge finsterner und grausamer Thaten war, der jedoch nie seine Hände mit Menschenblut befleckte, wenn es nicht zur Selbstvertheidigung

geschah oder wenn er gehetzt wurde.” [You are reading a history written by one who participated in many daring exploits, and one who often was a witness to dark and cruel deeds, but who never stained his hands in human blood except in self-defense, or when pursued.] To my knowledge, the author has not yet been identified.

The book indeed recounts many “finstere und grausame Thaten”—too many to describe here—and so let us spend some time examining the “romantische Leben des Jesse James und seiner hübschen Frau.” While several illustrations are provided in this work, alas, there is none given of the woman Jesse loved. The author begins this part of his tale by wondering whether one can imagine “Jesse James, the bold raider and dashing

outlaw, in love?” Is it not “Albernheit!” [Preposterous!] “Und dennoch, warum sollte er es nicht sein? . . . . Waren alle zarteren Gefühle in seinem Herzen abgestorben?” [And yet why not? . . . . Had all tender feelings withered in his heart?] We learn that Jesse had a cousin, Miss Zee Mimms [incorrectly printed as Zoe Mimms in the German version], who “aus irgendwelchen Gründen konnte. . . nie glauben, dass ihr Vetter ganz so schlimm sei, wie man ihn schilderte, und wenn sie, was häufig geschah,



The Ford brothers assassinate Jesse James from behind. The Gebrüder Ford ermorden Jesse James hinterrücks.

# Wisconsin in the 1850s: Temperance and Lynchings—Part II

By Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director

In Part I of this essay (vol. 15, no. 2, summer 2006), I wrote about a deep division in Wisconsin during the 1850s between the Anglo-Americans and the German Americans, especially when it came to the question of temperance. A temperance law, known nationwide as the Maine Liquor Law, was on the state election ballot in November 1853; and it won the support of all counties except seven in the southeastern corner of the state—Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Jefferson, and Dodge. In these counties, which represented the heart of Wisconsin's German community, the law was defeated by a wide margin; 77.9 % of the Milwaukee County voters, for example, voted against it.

Beer (if not other alcoholic beverages) was indeed a real presence in Wisconsin's German areas, where a brewery and a saloon were part of every community. One can take as an example the small eastern Dodge County villages of Farmersville, Leroy, Huilsburg, Theresa, and Mayville, all of which were founded between 1845 and 1850. Within a few years each of them had its own brewery or breweries, and Theresa and Mayville even ranked for many years as centers of the brewing business.<sup>1</sup>

Wisconsin voters who supported temperance believed that drinking beer, as the Germans did, would either lead to criminal behavior or, perhaps, in itself constituted criminal behavior. The Germans, for their part, anxious about their reputation in their new homeland, were well aware that they were under scrutiny.

But I promised to tell you about Wisconsin's two lynchings of the summer of 1855. What was going on and why? In 1853, the state legislature had abolished capital punishment, becoming the third state—after Michigan and Rhode Island—to do so. The Wisconsin lynchings were undoubtedly a reaction to this legislation, a case of citizens responding to what they viewed as insufficient penalties for criminals convicted of (or at least charged with) egregious crimes.

The first of the two 1855 summer lynchings took place on July 12 in the Anglo-American community of Janesville, and the second one, less than a month

later, in the German-American community of West Bend. It is unlikely that either of the two victims deserved much sympathy, as both were probably guilty of murder. The first victim was David Mayberry, who had been charged with attacking and killing a resident of Johnson Creek with a hatchet, apparently for his money. Mayberry's trial was held in Janesville in July and he was quickly found guilty. Janesville authorities feared trouble from a crowd that had gathered, and twice they postponed his sentencing. Despite their caution, however, when Mayberry was finally escorted from the jail to the Court House, he was seized by the mob, dragged away, and hanged.<sup>2</sup>

Although various English-language newspaper reports condemned the lynching, several insisted that the actions of the mob were understandable. One Madison newspaper expressed the hope that the case might influence the Legislature to restore capital punishment.<sup>3</sup> German-language newspaper reports of the same incident, on the other hand, specifically stated their relief that Germans were not involved, and one continued:

It would have been something different [...] if this event had taken place at a location where anti-temperance people reside. What now is called moral indignation would then have been attributed to the influence of alcohol, and the affair would be used as a new recommendation in favor of temperance.<sup>4</sup>

This is worth repeating: the Anglos said the lesson to be learned from the Janesville lynching was that the death penalty should be restored. German-language reports, in contrast, foresaw that if such an event occurred in a German location, the result would be another call for temperance.

The Germans were right, as they were soon to find out. The victim of the West Bend lynching was George DeBar, a physically weak and possibly mentally handicapped young man born in New York who worked as a farmhand for a German immigrant named John Muehr. He had gone to Muehr's home

to collect his wages, attacked Muehr and his wife, and killed a boy who worked for them. DeBar was arrested and indicted for murder before a West Bend court, but when he was being returned to jail, an angry group of Germans seized him, stoned, tied, and threw him into the Milwaukee River before hanging him. Members of mainly German militia groups who had been called in by the sheriff when violence seemed imminent apparently provided no resistance. Several instigators were subsequently indicted for their role in the lynching, but a German jury acquitted them, stating that DeBar had already been dead when he was hanged.<sup>5</sup> This presumably proved their innocence.

English-language reports of the West Bend lynching came late and with woefully incorrect information, even with regard to the basic facts of the case. Four days after DeBar's death, which had occurred on August 7, the *Wisconsin Patriot* of Madison issued conflicting reports about whether DeBar had indeed been killed, and it mis-identified DeBar's victim. Either the language barrier or something else apparently made it impossible for Wisconsin's Anglo community to keep in touch with goings-on in the German community.

To be sure, one finds statements in the English-language press to the effect that the two lynchings together would drag Wisconsin's reputation down to the level of "Texas and California" or "California and Kansas."<sup>6</sup> But nevertheless, there was some finger-pointing at the Germans. A German immigrant and members of his family had been attacked, and one of his employees had been murdered—thus a German household had been victimized. However, members of the German community were also perpetrators, involved in the lynching of the Anglo-American suspect. And there is specific mention of the Germans' anti-temperance stance: reports circulated that the German militiamen were fraternizing in the local beer halls.

Wisconsin's German-language newspapers, on the other hand, expressed painful awareness of how the image of the Germans might suffer. A prominent Milwaukee newspaper stated: "we confess openly that we would give a lot if [the lynching] had not occurred," adding on the very next day: "it would have been in the interests of the Germans [...] to prove that they understand the spirit of the local

institutions and laws and that they are capable of self-government as true Republicans and Democrats."<sup>7</sup> Germans wanted to be seen as law-abiding members of the community.

The reprehensible events of the summer of 1855, it would seem to us today, were black marks on the reputations of the Anglo-American and German-American communities alike, but at the time they were discussed in very different terms in the English-language and German-language press. The Anglos learned that what they had believed all along was true: the Germans—because of their drinking habits—were definitely a danger, and alcoholic beverages should be outlawed. The Germans also found confirmed what they had feared: they were being viewed with suspicion by their neighbors and seen as threatening outsiders within American society. Readers today understand from these reports that the German immigrants of the 1850s felt more than a little ill-at-ease among the other inhabitants of Wisconsin.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Michael D. Benter, *Roll Out the Barrels: Brewers of Eastern Dodge County, Wisconsin 1850–1961* (N.p., 2004).

<sup>2</sup> See Ira C. Jenks, *Trial of David F. Mayberry for the Murder of Andrew Alger Before the Rock Co. Circuit Court* (Janesville, Wis.: Baker, Burnett & Hall, 1855).

<sup>3</sup> See *Daily Journal*, Madison, Wis., 13 and 14 July 1855; and *Daily Argus and Democrat*, Madison, Wis., 13 July 1855.

<sup>4</sup> My translation. The German reads as follows: "Etwas Anderes wäre es [...], wenn [diese Handlung] sich an dem Wohnsitze von Anti-Temperenzlern ereignet hätte. Was jetzt sittliche Entrüstung genannt wird, würde dem Einflusse der Trunksucht zugeschrieben werden, und es würde die Angelegenheit als eine neue Empfehlung der Temperenz-Sache dienen müssen." ("Lynch-Gericht in Janesville," *Banner und Volksfreund*, Milwaukee, Wis., 14 July 1855.)

<sup>5</sup> The story is told in full in Richard N. Current, *The Civil War Era, 1848–1873* [vol. 2 of the series "The History of Wisconsin," ed. William Fletcher Thompson] (Madison, Wis.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), 193–194.

<sup>6</sup> "The West Bend Murder," *Daily Journal*, Madison, Wis., 8 August 1855; "The West Bend Tragedy," *Daily Journal*, Madison, Wis., 9 August 1855.

<sup>7</sup> My translation. The German is as follows: "Wir gestehen [...] offen, daß wir viel darum geben würden, wenn [diese Tragödie] nicht vorgekommen wäre"; and "es hätte gerade jenen Amerikanern gegenüber im Interesse der Deutschen gelegen, zu beweisen, daß sie den Geist der hiesigen Institutionen und Gesetze begreifen, und daß sie der Selbstregierung als wahre Republikaner und Demokraten fähig sind." ("Lynch-Gerichte," *Banner & Volksfreund*, Milwaukee, Wis., 10 August 1855.)

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zusammentrafen, so hatte sie immer ein zärtliches Wort für ihren Vetter Jesse, der sich auch stets gütig gegen sie benahm” [for some reason could never believe that her cousin was as bad as he was portrayed, and when they met, which frequently happened, she always had an affectionate word for her cousin Jesse, who also treated her with continual kindness]. They courted and were married in Missouri in 1874, and then, “von der Gesellschaft ausgestossen, durch das Gesetz geächtet. . .nahm Jesse James seine Braut und reiste ab. Es ging über Thal und Berg und Ströme bis zum sonnigen Süden. Dort suchte der Bandit und seine Braut einen Platz, wo sie ruhig leben und ihre Gesellschaft gegenseitig geniessen konnten.” [Ostracized by society, proscribed by the law. . .Jesse James took his bride and journeyed away, through valleys and over mountains and streams to the sun-drenched south. There the outlaw and his bride sought a place where they could live in peace and enjoy each other’s company.]

While some portion of domestic tranquility was granted to the couple, eventually the reader comes to “das Ende des Spiels. Der Vorhang fällt. Die Lichter werden ausgedreht und der König aller amerikanischen Banditen empfiehlt sich rasch.” [. . . the end of the play. The curtain falls. The lights are turned down, and the King of American bandits makes a hasty exit.] Earlier in the text the author relates how Jesse James insisted that “Zudem kann mich nur ein Missourier erwischen, denn ich traue keinem Anderen, und selbst dann müssten sie mich von Hinten erschiessen.’ Es hat sich herausgestellt, dass seine Worte prophetisch waren.” [“Besides, only a Missourian will ever get the drop on me, for I don’t trust anyone else, and even then they’ll have to shoot me from behind.” His words proved to be prophetic.]

On the morning of April 3, 1882, Jesse James died “in seinen Stiefeln” [with his boots on]. On that morning Charles and Robert Ford, newly recruited by Jesse for his gang, were in his home in St. Joseph, Missouri. While not born Missourians, the brothers were in Jesse’s confidence, and the fatal shot is reported to have come from behind. The author describes the scene: “Der

Gefahr unbewusst, schnallte James seinen Gürtel ab und warf ihn auf das Bett, ehe er sich wusch. Er war unbewaffnet. Jesse stellte sich auf einen Stuhl, um ein Bild zurechtzurücken. Die Brüder waren entschlossen, ihn der Belohnung halber zu tödten, und dies war ihre Chance. Sie wechselten einen Blick und schritten schweigend zwischen die Pistolen und ihr Opfer. Beide zogen ihre Pistolen. Jesse hörte, dass die Hähne gespannt wurden, und drehte sich um, um zu sehen, was es gebe. In diesem Augenblick schoss Robert, der jüngere Bruder, sein Pistol ab and die Kugel durchbohrte Jesse’s Gehirn. Ohne Schrei fiel der ermordete Bandit rücklings zu Boden und wälzte sich in Todeskampfe umher. . . . Weniger Minuten später, als er den Schuss empfangen hatte, hauchte der Ermordete in den Armen seiner Frau seine Seele aus.” [Unaware of the danger, James unbuckled his belt and threw it on the bed, preparing to wash himself. He was unarmed. Jesse climbed upon a chair to adjust a picture. The brothers had determined to kill him and get the reward, and this was their chance. They exchanged a glance and silently stepped between the pistols and their victim. Both drew their pistols. Jesse heard the click of the hammers and turned to see what it was. In this instant Robert, the younger brother, shot his pistol and sent a bullet through Jesse’s brain. Without a cry the murdered bandit fell backward and rolled upon the floor in the throes of death. . . . A few minutes after being shot, the murdered man breathed his last in the arms of his wife.]

#### Sources consulted

*Jesse James, the Life and Daring Adventures of This Bold Highwayman and Bank Robber and His No Less Celebrated Brother, Frank James: Together With the Thrilling Exploits of the Younger Boys. The Only Book Containing the Romantic Life of Jesse James and His Pretty Wife, Who Clung to Him to the Last!* Written by \*\*\*\*\* (one who dare not now disclose his identity). Publisher: Provo, Utah: Triton Press, c1989. Reprint. Originally published: Philadelphia, Pa.: Barclay & Co., c1883.

McDade, Thomas M. “Lurid Literature of the Last Century: The Publications of E. E. Barclay.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. Vol. 80, 1956. pp. 452-464.

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things, reproductions from the sketch book of a Texas-German schoolboy. The clumsy examples of German writing, which included words like ‘faßdag’ [Fat Tuesday], ‘honig’ [honey], ‘wurfð’ [sausage], etc., were mistaken by Domenech for Indian words, and since the learned reviewers of the manuscript were just as fluent in German as they were in Indian languages, the book was lauded as elevating the ‘gloire’ of French science.” [. . .]

Because in the course of our conversation a number of hours had already passed, I took leave of the amicable, talkative older gentleman, whereby I was forced to promise firmly to visit him as

often as possible.

I kept my word, spent many pleasant hours with him, and each time answered conscientiously his formulaic question of whether I had already heard that Freiligrath was dead. [. . .]

Nowhere is Longfellow lacking in admirers. In spite of the fact that only few original thoughts can be found in his works, nevertheless his name has become dear to all who discover the most noble spice of life in poetry. Just as his works have found a friendly home in every feeling heart, likewise because of his obliging and true nature he has won each person who had the fortune to associate with him as a friend forever.

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