



MAX KADE INSTITUTE

# FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

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## Carl Schurz's Contribution to the Lincoln Legend

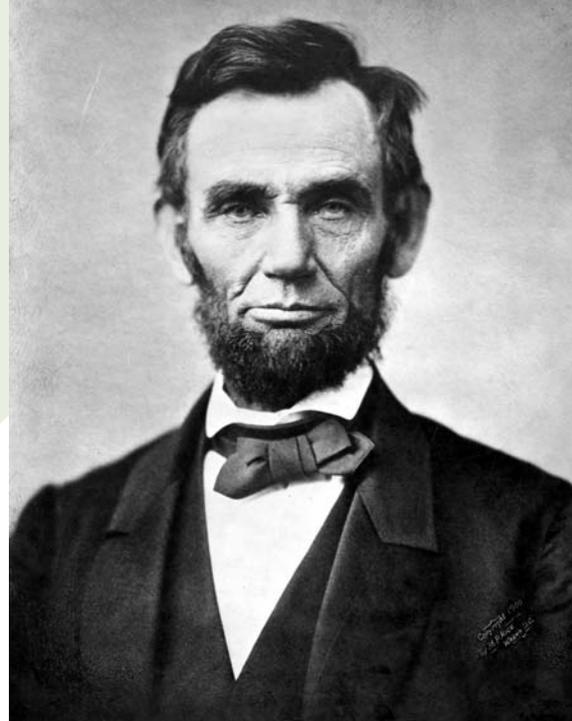
Cora Lee Kluge

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, LC-5129



Carl Schurz, undated

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, LC-9301



Abraham Lincoln, 1863

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Among all the works about Abraham Lincoln that are currently available in this Lincoln bicentennial year, including both new titles and new editions of older titles, one contribution that catches our attention is an essay by Carl Schurz that first appeared in 1891. Written originally as a response to the *Atlantic Monthly's* request for a review of the new ten-volume *Abraham Lincoln: A History* by John G. Nicolay and John Hay (1891), this essay

of approximately 22,000 words is too long to be a book review and at the same time surprisingly short for the well-respected assessment of Lincoln and his presidency that it has become. It was republished repeatedly between 1891 and 1920 and several times since, including at least three times in German translation (1908, 1949, 1955), and now has appeared in new editions (2005, 2007, and twice in 2008),

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## Greetings, Friends and Readers!

Spring is here—almost—and we are looking forward to a number of events that are right around the corner. First on the list is our conference entitled “Excursions in German-American Studies,” the capstone event in our year-long MKI 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, which will take place on April 1–3 at the Memorial Union on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. The program announcement is now on our MKI Web site, and printed announcements will have arrived in your mailbox even before you receive this Spring issue of the MKI Friends Newsletter. We have reserved a large venue at the Memorial Union for the banquet on the evening of April 1; and we hope to have a full house for the two featured presentations: an address by Ambassador Dr. Klaus Scharioth of the Federal Republic of Germany entitled “Why the German-American Relationship Matters,” and the conference keynote address by Professor Emeritus Jost Hermand of the UW-Madison Department of German entitled “Forced Out of Hitler’s Reich: Five Eminent Madisonians.” Please send in your reservations by March 20<sup>th</sup>! After the banquet come two days of morning and afternoon conference sessions, with presentations by a distinguished group of scholars representing various disciplines and approaches to the field of German-American studies. We have come so far, we appreciate your support, and we know you will find our program quite appealing.

Our online course “The German-American Experience,” a joint project of the Wisconsin Alumni Association, the Division of Continuing Studies, and the Max Kade Institute, is in full swing. We were led to believe that we might get about 20 students, but to everyone’s amazement 51 have enrolled! The course features lectures by Kevin Kurdylo, Joe Salmons, Jim Leary, Mark Louden, Antje Petty, and me, and while it has been a challenge, as well as a lot of work, it is thrilling to see all the enthusiasm for German-American topics. It has also been a chance for us to learn about teaching in the digital age, as the production of our course involves some of the most modern methods and technology.

Meanwhile, the MKI is pleased to announce that a couple of our joint projects have received funding and are moving ahead with work. First of all is the Heine Project (Milwaukee County Historical Society, Museum of Wisconsin Art, and MKI), which has received one year’s worth of financial support from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation in Milwaukee and will be able to proceed with the transcription of the

diaries of the Milwaukee panorama painter F. W. Heine. Second is the project entitled “Language Matters for Wisconsin” (Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, MKI, and a group of UW linguists), which has received a three-year Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin/Wisconsin Idea grant to explore language in four Wisconsin communities as it relates to historical and current immigration and questions of identity.

And finally, please don’t forget to mark your calendars for our annual Friends meeting and dinner, which is being held this year on May 2<sup>nd</sup> in Beaver Dam. Further information about this event will be ready soon: please watch our Web site and check your mail. We know that you will enjoy this Saturday in the company of your Friends.

Until we see you again: may you enjoy hard work, good success, and happiness with the assignments that come your way.

—Cora Lee

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

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## Banquet

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

5pm

Memorial Union  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Registration required

### Special Address by

Ambassador Dr. Klaus Scharioth,  
Federal Republic of Germany  
"Why the German-American  
Relationship Matters"

### Keynote Address by

Professor Emeritus Jost Hermand  
Department of German,  
UW-Madison  
"Forced out of Hitler's Reich:  
Five Eminent Madisonians"

Limited Seating  
Please Register Early

Fill out the registration form  
you received in the mail or print  
out a form from the MKI Web site.  
Mark your meal choice and return  
with payment of \$29 per registration  
to

Friends of the Max Kade Institute  
Attn. Banquet  
901 University Bay Drive  
Madison, WI 53705

## Excursions in German-American Studies International Conference and Public Discussion

Thursday and Friday, April 2-3, 2009

Memorial Union  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
free and open to the public, no registration required

### Thursday, April 2

#### 9 AM morning session

##### *America and Her Immigrants: Ethnicity, Policy, Ideas*

- Cora Lee Kluge, opening remarks (Max Kade Institute)
- Walter Kamphoefner (Texas A&M University)
- Daniel J. Tichenor (University of Oregon)
- Hartmut Keil (University of Leipzig)

#### 3PM afternoon session

##### *German-American Language and Literature*

- Daniel Nützel (University of Regensburg)
- Lorie A. Vanchena (University of Kansas)

### Friday, April 3

#### 9AM morning session

##### *Creating the American Myth*

- Hugh Ridley (University College Dublin)
- Barbara Groseclose (Ohio State University)
- Kathleen Neils Conzen (University of Chicago)

#### 2PM afternoon session

##### *Learning From Each Other*

- Uwe Lübken (Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich)
- Louis A. Pitschmann (University of Alabama)
- PANEL DISCUSSION : University of Wisconsin Faculty

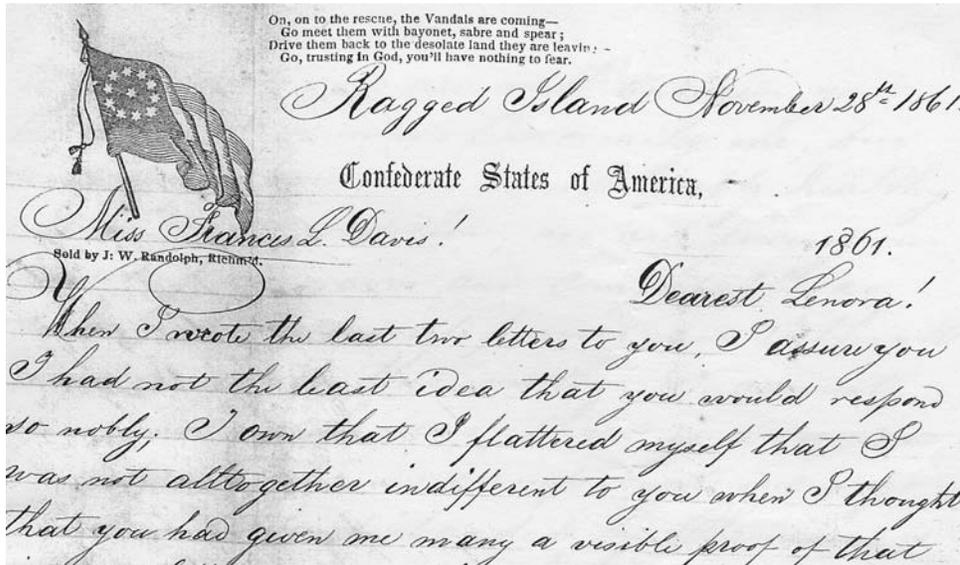
For a detailed program, including titles of presentations and speakers, please  
consult the Max Kade Institute Web site.

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# Dear Miss Lenora: The Letters of a German Soldier in the Confederate Army

Karyl Enstad Rommelfanger



It is well known that thousands of immigrants fought in the Civil War on the side of the North, many in regiments of their own ethnic groups, but modern readers are less familiar with the story of immigrants who fought for the South. Siegmund Carl (Charles) Liebermann was one of approximately 5,000 German-born Confederate soldiers, an estimate given by Dean B. Mahin in *The Blessed Place of Freedom: Europeans in Civil War America* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002).

Born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1835, Charles Liebermann was the son of a Jewish dyester, and he also became a dyester. He emigrated to the United States in the early 1850s and spent several years in the North, moving to South Carolina in 1857

and then on to Mecklenburg County in North Carolina in 1861, where he worked at the Rock Island Woolen Mill.

When the Civil War began, slaves represented 40 percent of Mecklenburg County's and 30 percent of the entire state's population; and North Carolina contained both pro-northern and pro-southern sympathizers. The state seceded from the Union only after Lincoln had called up 75,000 troops in response to the attack on Fort Sumter; it was the last state to do so.

Liebermann left the woolen mill immediately and enlisted in the Confederate army, joining Company B (the "Randalsburg Rifles") of what would become the Thirteenth North Carolina Volunteer Regiment. The regiment was mustered into service

on June 1, 1861 for a term of twelve months, and it immediately moved north into Virginia to help protect the entrance to the strategic James River.

In his book, Magin argues that German immigrants were looked upon with suspicion in the South and thus not eager to fight for the Confederacy. Those Germans most likely to fight for the South, Mahin asserts, were either economically dispossessed or members of the middle class who had achieved a modicum of success in the South. The former feared abolition would lead to competition for jobs, and the latter worried they could lose the support of slaveholders, upon whom they were dependent. Jews, however, were a group that willingly served the Confederacy, according Robert N. Rosen's ground-breaking monograph *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, S.C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2000). They had long lived in southern states, and were highly regarded for their educational background and business savvy. Thus the German Jew Liebermann writes: "I have dwelled for years in the north and never found rest till ... I took up my residence in the genial south."

Among those left behind at the Rock Island Woolen Mill was a vivacious young woman named Frances Lenora Davis. Because she was popular at the factory, Liebermann did not think he could win her; and he was surprised when she wrote only a month after his departure.

Liebermann writes back the next day, "My fondest hopes have been in a certain degree realized ... And since I received your letter, I begin to hope that they will make peace, that



Charles Liebermann, 1861



Frances Lenora Davis, 1861

we can return, and myself prove to you that I will be worthy of your confidence and Respect.” He describes camp life: several hours of drill each day, but then hours of lying around and idling away time. But the meals, he confesses, could be “sumptuous,”—cornbread, bacon, coffee, cakes and lots of oysters and fish. Liebermann’s mood a month later seems frivolous: “... if you would come here of a night and see us going on dancing and singing you would Come to the conclusion you was at a Picnic ...”

In August, Liebermann sent a bottle of perfume, and she responded with a small Confederate flag and another gift, whose meaning he did not understand. “I don’t know, my dear Miss, whether I understand the meaning of the precious little Cedar with the blue silk ribbon on

it. In my native home, when a young lady sends such a sign to a young man, it means constant love and friendship. I don’t mean to say that you meant such, but I flatter myself that it means at least friendship and, as such, I consider it ... I do believe, and I mean what I say, that whoever will be the lucky man to be your partner through life, he will be blessed with all a man can desire and pray for.”

During the winter of 1861–62, the soldiers of the Thirteenth were left to observe what little action there was on the other side of the James River and wait for the spring offensive. There was time for correspondence. Liebermann was overwhelmed by Frances Lenora’s tone: “When I first read your last letter and saw the language it

contained I could hardly believe that I, a comparative stranger to you, should have been lucky enough to captivate that dear price for which many [a] young man of your acquaintance have strove in vain ... All I can utter now out of a full heart is thousand thanks.”

Liebermann dispenses with the formal title of “Miss Lenora” and begins to address her now as “Dearest Lenora,” and each has a daguerreotype made for the other. On January 12, 1862, Liebermann attempts a proposal, which evidently gets lost in its flowery expose. In the next letter he comes more to the point. “... to make it perfectly plain to you, give me the blessed privilege, dear Lenora, to call you my own when my time is out, and by that you certainly would insure my happiness.”

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We do not have Lenora's reply, but it must have been an enthusiastic "Yes!" Their different religious backgrounds—Liebermann was Jewish and Lenora Christian—were apparently no stumbling block, or perhaps he had converted to Christianity. He trusts her with his paycheck, stating, "I have implicit confidence in you, which nothing can shake. I would as soon disbelieve the gospel." Liebermann mentions God many times, sometimes reaffirming his belief that God is on the side of the South. But this belief is not unwavering: "... 1862 will be ushered in with gloomy forebodings, and nothing short but the powerful arm of God can preserve us from ruin."

As spring came and the question of re-enlistment arose among the soldiers of the Thirteenth, Liebermann wrestled with his decision, but ultimately, his sense of duty and honor and the new obligation he feels won out. He writes: "For myself, I have now much more to fight for than I had when the war began. Then I was alone, and volunteered for myself and my country's honor. Now, my Lenora, I possess in you and your love a treasure ...."

Liebermann plans to return home in April, marry, and then reenlist. But on April 25, 1862, he writes that his hopes have been "dashed to the ground" with the passage of a Conscription Act by the Confederate Congress, which now forces the twelve-month enlistees to remain in the army for the duration of the war. His words reveal his disenchantment: "I only point out to you two very important points which caused

this present unhappy war: in the first place our state ... seceded because we would not allow Lincoln to use coercive means towards the southern states. Yet only one year has elapsed before the South uses Coercion as a means to keep together her army ... Lincoln denied the principle of state sovereignty, ... yet this same government, after a years existence, repudiates this very same principle of State Rights ...."

The spring offensive began. In March of 1862, the Thirteenth crossed the James River to join other forces near Yorktown, and in late April retreated toward Richmond to defend the Confederate capitol. The regiment was surprised by an attack at Williamsburg on May 4, and the 47 able men of Company B suffered heavy losses: eight killed, eleven injured, and one captured. Liebermann writes: "I have read often about battlefields but never saw one; oh, it was a terrible sight, here lay one shot through his mouth, another with the top of his head shot off, and others groaning, shame disagreeable for delicate ears ... After a days hard fighting, without anything to eat, we received orders to march, and we left our battlefield and marched that whole night till 9 o'clock next morning ... through knee deep mud. I have never been so broke down in life as then from exhaustion."

The men of Company B drafted resolutions for Mecklenburg County newspapers, thanking the local citizens for their "very liberal contributions" and continuing: "Resolved that the Randsburg Rifles will, while they have an arm to strike or a heart to throb, stand as a living

barrier between the invader of our soil and the loved ones at home. And while they deeply deplore the loss of so many of their brave comrades at the battle at Williamsburg ... they assure their friends at home that the cruel invader never shall reach them unless it is over their prostrate bodies." The resolutions were signed, "C. S. Liebermann, Secretary."

Three weeks later the regiment was engaged in the Seven Days Battles, and Liebermann was wounded. Sent home to recover, he married Frances Lenora Davis on July 29, 1862. By September, he rejoined his regiment at Frederick, Maryland, where the Army of Northern Virginia under General Robert E. Lee was preparing an advance on Washington, D.C. He wrote home to thank Lenora for the wonderful influence she had been in his life, affirming "nearly all my brothers in arms have made the remark, that I am a different man now from what I used to be."

On September 14, the Thirteenth regiment took heavy casualties in a battle at Fox's Gap in Stone Mountain, losing their brigade and regimental commanders. Exhausted and demoralized, they marched toward Sharpsburg with the rest of Lee's army. At dawn on September 17, the Thirteenth took its position in a sunken country lane, moved on to reinforce General Hood's embattled troops, and was driven back, finally returning to the same sunken road, now known as Bloody Lane. Here, on the battlefield of Antietam, 40 soldiers of the Thirteenth, including Charles S. Liebermann, lost their lives.

Liebermann had always

understood the dangers of war. In the spring, he had written to Lenora: “You know, my beloved, that life is uncertain, death certain. And, if we have to go into a battle, it may fall to my lot that my life should be sacrificed on the altar of my adopted home. If it is God’s will that it should be so, his will be done ... Therefore, dear Lenora, if you should hear of me falling in a battle, weep not.” The Thirteenth went on to fight in every major battle in the eastern theater of the war. 232 of its members were engaged at Gettysburg, over 75 percent of whom were disabled.

North Carolina suffered more casualties than any other southern state: Over 19,000 North Carolinians fell in combat, while another 20,500 died of disease. Furthermore, of the 135 battle-ready soldiers who joined Company B in 1861, 41 percent died of wounds or disease, while another 23 percent were maimed or wounded. North Carolina also experienced the largest number of deserters—because of demoralization and also because of pleas from wives and families that they return home. One wife wrote: “I want you to try you very best to get A furlo and come home and if you cant get A long by yourself rite to me and I will tri to get some one to come after you ... I haven got no wheat soad yet.” Sadly, many Southern soldiers who attempted to flee home to assist their families were met by home guards and roaming bands of bushwhackers, eager to kill them for being disloyal.

Though Lenora’s anguish over her husband’s death was undoubtedly great, there was at least momentary joy at the birth in May, 1863, of a

son she named Charles Liebermann II. Unfortunately, the baby died one month later. His gravestone reads:

Our little Charlie is dead & gone  
To dwell with Christ above  
He left his earthly home  
For one of peace & love.

Frances Lenora remarried and had other children, but she never discarded Charles’s wartime love letters. Instead, she kept them safe, and they were handed down through the generations.

*Karyl Enstad Rommelfanger is a retired German teacher from Manitowoc, WI. She has done extensive research on the Civil War and has translated many letters and other documents by German soldiers fighting for the Union. Trying to find similar correspondence by Germans fighting for the Confederacy,*

*she happened upon the Charles Lieberman letters in the Virginia Historical Society. A little sleuthing led her to the descendants of Lenora Lieberman, who had donated the documents in the mid-1990s without knowing much about them. Working together, they were able to put the pieces together, and the family story can now be told again.*

USED WITH PERMISSION OF CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

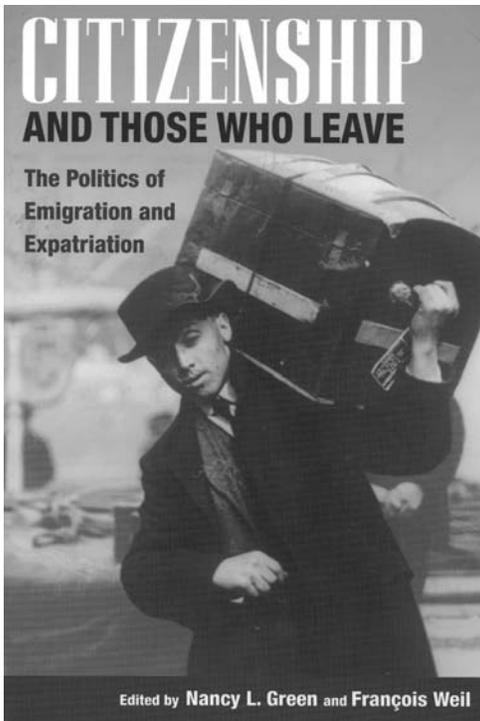


Karyl Rommelfanger (right) and the great-grand children of Francis Lenora Davis Lieberman Clark. From left: John Clark, Rosemary Davenport, and Joanne Quantz.

## Citizens and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation

edited by Nancy L. Green and François Weil, University of Illinois Press, 2007

Antje Petty



Every immigrant was first an emigrant. Many studies have been done and countless books have been written on every aspect of the immigration experience; far less, however, has been published on the first part of the migration process: the “leaving” and the circumstances and decisions that surround it. Usually, the causes for a person’s permanent departure from his homeland are examined in the context of immigration, and they are subsequently presented as the mirror image of the attractiveness of the des-

tinuation: the “push” corresponding to the “pull.” In the case of immigration to America, for example, it is assumed that those who came to the land of opportunities, left their home countries because they lacked exactly those—often economic—opportunities. Similarly, whenever the role of national governments in guiding migration is studied, regulations and requirements set by the receiving country are the focus of attention.

This makes *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation* a unique collection. The book grew out of a conference on emigration called “Citoyenneté et émigration” at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris in 2001. As the editors state in their preface, the goal of the publication is to take an interdisciplinary and comparative look at the role of nation states in shaping worldwide migration by influencing the “leaving” of their citizens. The various authors cover a wide spectrum of global migration from the colonial era to the present. While the emigration of Germans who left for America is not the main focus of the volume, this group is featured prominently and will be emphasized in my summary below.

The first part focuses on the history

of “the right to leave,” a freedom which today is considered one of the most basic rights of any citizen. In his essay “Leaving—A Contemporary View,” John Torpey analyzes how the right to depart is directly connected to the right to move within a country. In the eighteenth century, large segments of the European population were bound to landowners in hereditary servitude or were subject to powerful guilds that regulated employment and movement. Torpey credits the French Revolution—after which French citizens received the “freedom to remain or to depart”—with creating a ripple effect across Europe that eventually established a right to free movement to the citizens of other nations.

Among the German states, Prussia abolished hereditary servitude in 1807 and in 1817 instituted a passport law that allowed free movement for everyone within the country. However, those who wanted to leave the country needed a special permit from local authorities. Similar passport laws took effect in other German states, mostly requiring would-be immigrants to show that their country of destination would admit them. Later those restrictions loosened, too, and in Prussia a second passport law enacted in 1840 allowed all Prussians to emigrate,



This “Advice Book for Those Who Are Eager to Emigrate” was published in 1846 and gives detailed information on destinations ranging from the United States, Africa, Asia, Serbia, and Greece, to the “lesser cultivated parts of the Fatherland.” From the Max Kade Institute Collection.

except those who had not fulfilled their military obligations. As Torpey points out, though, even the stricter passport laws were relatively easy to circumvent, especially when one left for another European country. Torpey contrasts the nineteenth-century attitude in German states towards migration with that in countries like Russia, the United States, and China. In Russia, for example, where the serfs were not emancipated until 1861, the state took over control of the peasant population from the landowners and restricted internal movement as well as departure. Only undesirable minorities such as Jews and Poles were free to leave, as were Russian Germans. For this reason 70 percent of the emigrants from Russia between 1899 and 1913 were not ethnic Russians, but Jews, Poles,

and Germans, including a wave of Russian German that settled in the United States.

Aristide Zolberg in his essay “The Exit Revolution” ties the shift in attitude towards emigration in European states to demographic changes and a changing economy and labor market. In the eighteenth century, a ruler considered his subjects a valuable human resource. Thus the permanent departure of valuable citizens was discouraged, while at the same time some rulers tried to get rid of “undesirable elements” such as “paupers, criminals or religious deviants” by pushing them out of the country. A century later, however, the combination of a rapidly growing population with the beginning of mechanization and changing labor demands had—in Zolberg’s words—a “deflationary effect on the value of population from the perspective of elites concerned with economic production and military power.” Some states actively encouraged emigration of their surplus population through emigration societies and other means; but most merely loosened departure controls.

The second part of the volume focuses on the resulting European mass migration of the nineteenth and early twentieth century from the perspective of the countries of origin. In this section, three authors look at the concept and the legal implications of “citizenship” in European countries and the role emigration played in the formation of nation states. Donna R. Gabaccia, Dirk Hoerder, and Adam Walaszek in their essay “Emigration and Nation Building during Mass Migration,” compare Germany, Poland, and Italy as three

countries where emigration figured prominently in the nation building process. The authors see several commonalities. All three states 1) used the term “emigration” only for those citizens who intended to leave permanently, 2) saw emigration in a negative light, but at the same time embraced their citizens who wanted to leave, 3) saw emigration as vital to the strengthening of the nation, 4) dreamed of spreading their own culture and values around the globe, and 5) after World War I tried to keep their citizens who lived abroad tied to the homeland. However, laws concerning who is a citizen, who can become a citizen, and who can lose his citizenship varied between the countries, and also changed over time. In the case of the German-speaking countries, a German nation and the notion of “German” citizenship did not even exist. A large number of German-speaking Europeans were subjects of other nations, such as the Austrian Empire, Switzerland, France, or Russia. At the birth of the nation in 1871, a new law declared that all people born on German soil were German citizens and retained their citizenship even after emigration, as long as they did not renounce it or join a foreign army. This was a time of explosive economic growth, and the new law made it easier to attract the needed foreign workers. At the same time it preserved a connection to those citizens who had left and allowed them to return, if they so wished. By the end of the century, however, Germans became concerned about the steady influx of foreigners and their influence on German life and culture, and

finally changed the law in 1913 to define citizenship only on the basis of blood lines. Ever since that time, only the child of a German citizen is a German citizen, not matter where in the world he or she is born. The long-term result of the 1913 law was that there were now German citizens living around the world who had never set foot on German soil. Polish and Italian emigrants found themselves in a similar situation as the “Auslandsdeutsche,” and in all three nations the complexities and conflicts concerning citizenship came to the forefront at various times in the twentieth century, especially when citizens living abroad decided to “return” to the homeland.

Articles by Caroline Douki and François Weil examine the French and Italian states at the time of mass emigration, and in the third part of the book the cost of emigration becomes the focus, with essays by David Feldman and M. Page Baldwin (the British state), Corrie von Eijl and Leo Lucassen (the Dutch state), and Andreas Fahrmeir, whose title is “From Economics to Ethnicity and Back: Reflections of Emigration Control in Germany, 1800–2000.” When economic factors became the deciding consideration, the German states feared they would lose their most qualified people and—if such citizens failed in their new country—would have to readmit and once again support previously self-supporting citizens. On the other hand, as the nineteenth century progressed, the earlier practice of shipping undesirable subjects abroad had been made increasingly difficult by the receiving countries, especially the United States. Fahrmeir points



Top-half of emigration passport for Magdalene Deuschle from Köngen, Württemberg, issued in 1858. Traveling with Magdalene Deuschle are her three children. In addition to the usual passport entries like personal descriptions, this special emigration document states: *All civil or military agencies are instructed to let the carrier of this passport [...] travel from Baden via Strasbourg and Havre to America, where she will join her husband to seek a better life.* The document also confirms that the travelers are in possession of transatlantic passenger tickets and 500 Francs . From the Max Kade Institute Collection.

out that it is difficult for a country that allows its citizens the “freedom to depart” to control departure. Thus in the nineteenth century emigration was mainly restricted indirectly by German states through inheritance-, tax-, property-, military conscription-, and passport laws, as well as regulations imposed on passenger shipping companies. In the first half of the twentieth century, emigration from Germany was influenced by the two World Wars; the results were a wave of emigrants between the wars, a wave of refugees from Hitler’s Europe, and later another wave of post-World War II emigrants. In the second half of the century, the two German states took very different approaches towards their citizens who wanted to leave. The Federal Republic of Germany did not restrict the movement of its citizens, but emigration nevertheless virtually ceased as the country itself offered economic opportunities. Until the fall of the

Berlin Wall in 1989, the German Democratic Republic, on the other hand, restricted the movement of its citizens even internally. No GDR citizen was allowed to leave except for another Soviet Block country, and this was enforced by severe penalties and by impenetrable physical borders.

Part Four deals with migration and emigration across the borders of neighboring states over the course of two centuries, focusing on the Netherlands, Canada, and Mexico as countries of departure. Part Five looks at the term “emigrant” and how a person who leaves his country is defined by the people who stay behind. Focusing on the examples of the “Overseas Chinese,” the “Genesis of Brain Drain in India,” and “Israeli Emigration Policy,” it becomes clear that the economic and political situation determines whether emigrants are admired or

*Continued on page 12*

in addition to a digitized edition of the original 1891 Houghton Mifflin edition available since 2007. Incidentally, we note that there is new interest in Carl Schurz and his life and contribution in the last years, too: a facsimile edition of his two-volume *Reminiscences* (first published in 1907) appeared in 2005 and 2006.

The lives and careers of Schurz and Lincoln were linked during the Civil War and the Lincoln presidency, and they knew each other well. In 1860 Schurz, a resident of Watertown, WI, and a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago, where Lincoln was chosen the party's presidential candidate. Schurz, then only 31 years old, campaigned for Lincoln, and his part in Lincoln's victory was rewarded in 1861 with an appointment as minister to Spain—despite both his desire at that point for a military command and fears from within the U.S. administration that his revolutionary background (as a Forty-eighter) would make him unacceptable in Europe. Schurz was to assess reaction abroad and to prevent other nations from recognizing and assisting the secessionist states. By the summer of 1862, Schurz was back in America to serve in the Civil War; he took part in the battles of Bull Run, Missionary Ridge, and Gettysburg, finally rising to the rank of major general. He supported Lincoln's plans for reconstruction and, though shaken by his assassination, remained in the service of the federal government, preparing an influential report on the condition of the South that was

seen as an indictment of President Johnson's policies.

Schurz's essay on Lincoln is characterized by an honesty and objectivity that make it different from many early portrayals that merely eulogize and idealize him. In fact, Schurz begins with the hypothesis that Lincoln's stature would lose rather than gain from idealization—since it was the “weird mixture qualities and forces,” the lofty and the common, the ideal and the uncouth, that made him the powerful and beloved leader he became. For this reason, Lincoln's unprivileged background (Schurz's words are “wretched,” “squalid,” and “void of elevating inspirations”) receives no glossing over: his father was “a typical ‘poor Southern white,’ shiftless and improvident, [...] constantly looking for a new piece of land on which he might make a living without much work.” The young Lincoln himself receives a colorful—but decidedly not handsome—depiction as “a very tall, rawboned youth, with large features, dark, shriveled skin, and rebellious hair; his arms and legs long, out of proportion; clad in deerskin trousers, which from frequent exposure to the rain had shrunk so as to sit tightly on his limbs, leaving several inches of bluish shin exposed between their lower end and the heavy tan-colored shoes....” And Schurz insists that many of the qualities for which Lincoln was most admired were the direct result of problems he was forced to overcome, that his terse and direct writing style, for example, came from the shortage of paper in the Lincoln household.

Schurz describes Lincoln's

development from small-time state politician and lawyer, to experienced speaker, political strategist, and opponent of Stephen Douglas, and finally to president, in all cases emphasizing that it was this same “weird mixture,” the marriage of his knowledge and logic with his sympathy for and intuitive understanding of the “plain people” of the nation—stemming from his background among them—that made him able to lead the country in a time of crisis. Thus Schurz insists that Lincoln did well not to make abolition the main issue of the Civil War from the beginning, although it was an issue that had always “stirred his soul in its profoundest depths,” but waited instead until the “plain people” were ready to fight to rid the country of slavery as an institution.

In Schurz's essay we find a first-rate summary of the political situation in America in the years that led up to Lincoln's election as president: the meaning of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott decision, and the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Lincoln was not well equipped to be Douglas's opponent because of his underprivileged background: “[His] narrow opportunities and the unsteady life he had led during his younger years had not permitted the accumulation of large stores in his mind.” Nevertheless, his strength, influence, and power as a speaker grew through the 1840s and 1850s, until finally the small-town lawyer from Illinois had become a nationally known leader and president-elect of the United States.

Schurz describes Lincoln's troubles as the new president with

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gaining the acceptance of members of his administration who felt that they were his superior. He cites a memorandum Lincoln received from Secretary of State Seward at the end of his first month in office—which Lincoln’s biographers Nicolay and Hay had first brought to light—and claims that this was nothing short of a “formal demand that the President should acknowledge his own incompetency to perform his duties, content himself with the amusement of distributing post offices, and resign his power as to all important affairs into the hands of his Secretary of State.” Schurz tells of how Lincoln handled such opponents, led the country into the Civil War, and exercised his intuitive good judgment on military matters. In addition, Schurz reveals details that he knew from first-hand experience, such as the attitudes of European leaders toward the secession of the Southern states, who would have liked nothing more than to see the permanent disruption of the American Union.

Schurz’s essay reveals details about Lincoln’s private life and person. Those who regret that we have no recordings of Lincoln’s voice can read here that it was “not melodious,” but “rather shrill and piercing, especially when it rose to its high treble in moments of great animation.” And in one short paragraph Schurz suggests Lincoln’s grief at the loss of his first love, his depression, and his troubled marriage—topics about which many volumes have been written.

Schurz’s final sentence, nearly 300 words in length, summarizes his essay and emphasizes once again the ambiguities in Lincoln’s life: he

was a man of humble origin who rose to a position of unprecedented power; he was a gentle man whom fate called upon to conduct the bloodiest American war; he held great governmental power but ruled the people by tender sympathy and compassion; conservative by nature, he led a wide-reaching social revolution; he kept his simple speech and rustic manner, but “thrilled the soul of mankind with utterances of wonderful beauty and grandeur”; and finally, though maligned by many while in power, he is praised as one of the noblest of men.

Schurz’s essay is an excellent survey of the life and times of Lincoln. It is well written and concise, and it displays qualities that have earned Schurz our respect—as a writer, as a writer of English, a language that he learned only as an adult, and as a historian. Because the essay appeared in a number of printings as part of Houghton Mifflin’s Riverside Literature Series, which was directed especially at educational institutions, we can assume it served for many years as one of the classic texts in American schools.

*Continued from page 10*

regarded as traitors, are supported or despised, and sometimes are treated first one way and then the other. It is interesting to compare the feelings towards emigrants in these countries with reactions that German emigrants encountered over the centuries.

When one looks at the volume as a whole, a number of common strands emerge. Most notably: over the centuries of global migration, the receiving countries have predominantly been the ones that influenced the migration flow. Only if a country completely seals its borders can it control its emigrants. And while migrants have played a crucial role in the creation and identity of many nations, they have also been viewed with an array of mixed feelings, ranging from envy, admiration, and encouragement, to suspicion, fear, and condemnation—not only as immigrants by their new countries, but also emigrants by the countries they left. Readers interested in learning more about German-American history will find food for thought when they compare the German-American emigration experience with that of citizens of other nations.

## Robert M. Bolz 1922–2009



Robert and Anne Bolz at the Friends Annual Meeting in 2005 in Madison

Our longtime Friend and member of the Board of Directors, Robert Mayer Bolz, passed away on January 19, 2009 at the age of 86. Bob was the son of Adolph C. and Eugenie Mayer Bolz. His family background was one of the reasons Bob was interested in German-American history, German-American relations, and the work of the Max Kade Institute. Bob's ancestors on both sides of the family hailed from German-speaking Europe, including his grandfather Oskar Ferdinand Mayer (founder of the Oscar Mayer Company) who was born in Bavaria in 1859 and came to Chicago as a fourteen-year-old boy. A poster-size, hand-drawn Stammtafel der Försterfamilie Mayer (family tree of the forester family Mayer), tracing Oscar Mayer's family back to the

late-fifteenth century, hangs in the Max Kade Institute.

Born in Chicago, Bob lived in Madison most of his life. He graduated from UW-Madison with a B.S. in Engineering, attended Harvard Business School, and worked for several years for Lockheed Aircraft Company in California. After a brief stint in the U.S. Army during World War II, Bob began his long career at Oscar Mayer and Co., serving in several positions, from plant manager of Double O Sausage Company in Chicago, to president of Oscar Mayer and Co. in Madison, and eventually retiring as Vice-Chairman of the Board.

Bob was not only one of Madison's most respected businessmen, but also one of the city's most engaged and generous philanthropists. With his

wife Anne and through his leadership with different family foundations, especially the Eugenie Mayer Bolz Family Foundation, he supported numerous causes and organizations, including—just to name a few—Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison Children's Museum, Atwood Community Center, Madison Symphony Orchestra, and the Max Kade Institute. He served on a number of community boards and foundations, including the Dane County Natural Heritage Board, United Way of Dane County, Meriter Hospital Board and Foundation, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, and Wisconsin Historical Foundation. He was also very active with the University of Wisconsin, where he served on several boards, including those of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, the Business School, and the University of Wisconsin Foundation.

From 1999 to 2005, Bob was on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Max Kade Institute, and he served as its Vice President from 2003 to 2005. He was involved in the Institute's activities far beyond just "sitting on the Board." Bob cared personally about the work of the MKI. He visited the Keystone House to support our special projects, and he made it his mission to raise the visibility of the Institute and its programming. We will always remember Bob as a most kind, thoughtful, and helpful Friend.

## German Americans and their Relations with African Americans during the Mid-nineteenth Century

*Racial Divides*, Special Issue of the Journal of American Ethnic History, Vol 28.1, Fall 2008

James J. Lorence



The *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Fall 2008) contains a stimulating forum section entitled “German Americans and their Relations with African Americans during the Mid-Nineteenth Century.” Focusing on racial divides, this forum explores “race and ethnic relations between and within ethnic and racial groups in American society.” Organized and edited by Walter D. Kamphoefner of Texas A & M University, it demonstrates the linkages among Unionism, the antislavery movement, Republicanism, and racial egalitarianism in mid-nineteenth century America, with an emphasis on the political and

social behavior of German Americans in St. Louis, Charleston, S.C., and the American South in the pre-Civil War and Reconstruction periods. Readers will find substantial material of interest in this journal issue, and particularly in the forum section.

Setting the tone for the discussion, Helmut Keil of the University of Leipzig explores the variegated career of Francis Lieber in antebellum South Carolina. Presenting a nuanced portrait of Lieber’s unfolding ideas from the 1830s to the 1860s, Keil shows that while South Carolina’s German academic lived within a slave society and participated in its social practices, he also harbored contradictory ideas concerning slavery as an institution. Even as he accepted slave ownership himself, he was forced to come to terms with the price of inequality in a closed society. Concluding that race was the “fundamental reason for enslavement and discrimination,” Lieber could also argue that ultimately “African Americans should rightfully have the status of American citizens.” The picture of Lieber that emerges, then, is one of a pragmatist who in the abstract held slavery to be a philosophical “absurdity” and a “great malady,” but who spent much of his American career in the

South. Only belatedly did he leave South Carolina, unable to reconcile his conflicting perceptions.

Equally complicated were German-American political preferences in St. Louis during the contentious Reconstruction period. While at one time German voters were assumed to be firmly grounded in the Republican Party in support of the Union during the Civil War, these party alliances began to break down in the postwar era. Consequently, as Kristen L. Anderson of the University of Iowa demonstrates, the Republican lines were broken as a result of new political realities in Reconstruction Missouri. Her research confirms the loosening of the ethnic bonds forged during the war, and the emergence of more political diversity than was once perceived in the St. Louis community. Especially notable was the impact of cultural tensions in separating German-American voters from their original loyalties, as some elements in their community drifted towards the more receptive Democratic Party of the 1870s.

Finally, Jeffrey Strickland of Montclair State University documents the evolution of German Americans from a socially complex relationship with the African-American community in antebellum South Carolina towards an accommodation with the Democratic Party and the Redeemers who came to dominate

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the late Reconstruction South. While initially comfortable with easy interaction with the black communities of the antebellum era, German Americans followed their own road to social acceptance as the Reconstruction period came to an end. This essay, informed by the field of “whiteness studies,” argues that as German Americans moved towards their own integration into South Carolina society, they embraced the Democratic Party and the white supremacy it represented at the time of Redemption. As a result, second-generation German Americans began to identify themselves with native-born white Southerners and closed ranks in support of Jim Crow politics as the nineteenth century wore on.

In sum, this forum demonstrates that earlier scholarship that treated German Americans as a

unified group was mistaken in that assumption, which concealed a complex mix of ethnically-based political and social preferences. Kamphoefner has done scholars of German-American studies an important service in assembling this set of essays, which, taken together, reveal the richness and diversity of the German-American experience in the mid-nineteenth century United States. This forum makes it clear that over time, ethnic voters refined their preferences and moved away from their early openness on matters of race and towards a more conventional view of politics and society. This sophisticated interpretation of the German-American experience indicates that shifting political and social coalitions were part and parcel of admission into the mainstream of American

society.

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## Upcoming event

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### **Friends Annual Meeting and Dinner in Dodge County, Wisconsin Saturday, May 2, 2009**

Join us for an exiting day of exploration in Dodge County:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1:30 – 4 PM | Bus tour of German <i>Fachwerkhäuser</i> (half-timbered houses) of Watertown and Lebanon with historian Lyle Lindholm |
| 4PM–6PM     | ANNUAL MEETING at Williams Free Library and Museum, Beaverdam, WI   |
| 6PM–8pm     | Dinner at Feil's Supper Club in Randolph, WI  |

A registration form with all details will be mailed to members of the Friends. You can also find the form online at [mki.wisc.edu](http://mki.wisc.edu) or call 608-262-7546.

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