

# Max Kade Institute Friends Newsletter

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



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Photo courtesy of Beth Schlemper

A scene from the Holyland region in east-central Wisconsin.

## Building identity in the Holyland

**By Prof. Beth Schlemper**

German immigration has had a profound and lasting impact on the United States. Indeed, more people in this country claimed German ancestry in the 1990 census than any other. Of all the states of the Union, the German legacy is perhaps most evident in Wisconsin. This is in large part a result of the fact that the state

has always had the greatest proportion of Germans in its population, but also because of the ubiquity of their presence.

Among the most distinctive German settlements in Wisconsin is one that since at least 1898 has been known as the Holyland. The district, which is primarily in Fond

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## Remembering MKI Friend Sue Stoddard

**By Fran Luebke**

The Friends of the Max Kade Institute lost not only a member of the Board of Directors but a dear friend with the death of Susan Stoddard on January 13, 2003. Sue died of breast cancer at age 59. She



**Sue Stoddard  
1943–2003**

joined the Board in the spring of 2000 and served as secretary of the Board for the past two years.

Our association with Sue began through a serendipitous discovery in her parents' home. A number of

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## ANNUAL MEETING May 8, 2003

This year's Friends annual meeting and dinner will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2003 in the Pyle Center's Alumni Lounge, 702 Langdon Street, Madison.

**4 p.m.** Annual Meeting, Room 320

**5-8 p.m.:** Reception, Dinner, and Speaker

The after-dinner featured talk will be on "Wisconsin's German Population and the Civil War," by **Dr. Richard Zeitlin**.

Dr. Zeitlin is director of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and is an adjunct teacher of U.S. military history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the author of *Germans in Wisconsin* and a number of other books and articles, mostly on state and local history as well as military affairs.

**To register**, contact Antje Petty by email (apetty@wisc.edu) or by phone (608) 262-7546.

We look forward to seeing you ... and bring a friend!

## MKI set to release two more books

By Eric Platt

The Max Kade Institute's monograph series is pleased to announce the release of two books this spring: *German-Jewish Identities in America* edited by Christof Mauch and Joseph Salmons and *The Dictionary of Mennonite Low German* by Jack Thiessen.

*German-Jewish Identities in America* examines the changing political, social, and cultural contexts that led German Jews to take on many different identities in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. It covers topics ranging from the relationship between German and Eastern European Jews in America to the development of B'nai B'rith and German Jews' role in the building of modern American show business.

The contributors to this volume are as diverse as the topics they cover. Although most of the chapters are by historians, there are also ones from a linguist, theater and literature professors, and even an award-winning documentary filmmaker.

*German-Jewish Identities in America* is co-published with the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, and is available in hardcover for \$29.95.

Those Friends more interested in language than history might want to check out the monograph series' other new book, *The Dictionary of Mennonite Low German*. This dictionary, which will be the most detailed one available for Mennonite Low German available, contains entries for over 25,000 words ranging from *Äajdatjs* (lizard) to *Resse'rieta* (prankster) and *Zyreen* (siren). Many include colorful examples taken from popular sayings and poetry that illustrate how native speakers in areas as far-flung as Russia, Canada, and Latin America continue to use the language today.

*The Dictionary of Mennonite Low German* is available in hardcover for \$39.95. For more information about this and all our other publications, please visit the publications portion of our webpage: <http://csumc.wisc.edu/mki/Publications/1.PublicationsFrames.htm>

To order by phone call (773) 568-1550. On-line orders: <http://www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/order.html>

## Max Kade Institute

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Any submissions via e-mail may be directed to [nasaylor@students.wisc.edu](mailto:nasaylor@students.wisc.edu).

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

# 'Karl of Germany': *Plattner Kunst* in Wisconsin

By Antje Petty

To his friends and customers, he is known as “Karl of Germany,” which leaves no doubt about his country of origin. Karl Lechten, who grew up in Bremen/Gröpelingen and came to the United States in 1966, has done many things in life, but it is for his most recent endeavor, his *Plattner* work, that he is now recognized around the world. A *Plattner* (from the German word *Platte* ‘plate’) is someone who makes steel plate armor suits, a craft of great practical importance in medieval Europe but of notably less significance in today’s society. This begs the question: What is a master *Plattner* doing in twenty-first century Fitchburg, Wisconsin? The answer is intertwined with the fascinating story of Karl’s life.

While still living in Germany, Karl had trained as a hairdresser with the intention of eventually taking over the family business. When he decided to migrate to the United States he initially planned on continuing to work in his trade. But only a few months after his arrival, Karl — still a German citizen — was drafted into the U.S. military. After three years of service, which included a tour of duty in Vietnam, Karl came to Madison, where his wife had found a teaching job. Here he opened a chain of four successful hair salons. However, after two decades in the hairstyling business, Karl was ready for something new. He had always been fascinated by medieval armor and decided to go into the armor import business, sensing consider-



Photos courtesy of Karl Lechten

Above: Karl works in his shop located in the basement of his Fitchburg home. Below: Peter and Lydia Moric, who were married in April 2002 in Strecno castle, Slovakia, hired Karl to design wedding-day armor.

able demand for suits of armor for display purposes in this country.

Upon researching the subject, Karl learned to his surprise that very little quality armor was still made anywhere in the world. Items were either rare and expensive originals from the Middle Ages, sold only by specialty auction houses, or cheap mass productions. Karl, recalling his father’s motto, “What you don’t know, you can always learn,” decided to acquire the knowledge to pursue the craft himself. He contacted one of the very few *Plattners* in Germany and was able to apprentice with him — an apprenticeship in the old guild tradition, where the apprentice has to stay with the master for two years and *pay* for the privilege of learning the trade.

In the years since his apprenticeship, Karl has perfected his skills and has become one of a very few specialists worldwide in Renaissance armor. In the fifteenth



century, steel-plate armor had replaced chain armor, which had become useless against the new weapons of the day: crossbows and long bows. In those days, the main centers of the craft were Nuremberg, Landshut, Augsburg,

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### Stoddard from page 1

more than one hundred letters written between 1848 and 1865 to Jacob Sternberger, her paternal great-grandfather. Sternberger left German-speaking Bohemia after the failed 1848 Revolution and settled in Wisconsin. The letters were written in the old German script, which can no longer be deciphered by most readers today. Sue was able to find a friend, Dr. Walter Lewinnik from Merrill, who could translate some of the letters. It soon became evident that they were of great historical significance and needed to be preserved and made accessible to scholars. A historian friend suggested that Sue consider donating them to the Max Kade Institute. Following her friend's advice, Sue wrote: "Hopefully these letters will help us understand the failed 1848 Revolution from yet another historical and political perspective, as well as provide linguistic and intellectual information from this time, and give us a picture of the struggles faced by those who came to find a new life." The letters are archived at the Max Kade Institute and are being translated and will be made available to the public on the web through the Institute's special digital library collection.

The letters were just the first of many donations Sue made to the Institute. Sue was tireless in promoting the Institute across the state. Convinced that many

other people would find historical "treasures" in their homes, she never missed the opportunity to make appeals for donations to the Max Kade Institute. Whether in public programs or private meetings, her probing curiosity, creative suggestions or ideas, and enthusiasm for the mission of the Institute sparked spirited discussions and imaginative solutions.

Her greatest gifts to us were personal. When she walked into a room, it came alive with her smile. She displayed personal warmth, seemingly boundless energy, and cheerfulness and fortitude in the face of illness. She lent strength to those who needed it, comforted those in distress, applied her great intellectual abilities to numerous organizations, and served as an example of a great human being to all who knew her. In appreciation of Sue's service, last spring the Friends announced the establishment of the Sternberger Fund to help underwrite the translation and transcription of her donated letters.

Anyone wishing to contribute to this fund may contact Antje Petty [apetty@wisc.edu](mailto:apetty@wisc.edu) or Mark Loudon [mllouden@wisc.edu](mailto:mllouden@wisc.edu) at the Max Kade Institute, (608) 262-7546. Sue will be deeply missed, and the staff and Friends of the Max Kade Institute send their deepest sympathy to her husband, Steve, and family.

*Fran Luebke is president of the MKI Friends.*

## News in Brief

### Decorative bindings on display

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Library System has produced an electronic exhibit that highlights the splendid artistry of German decorative bindings during the period from roughly 1870 to 1920. *The Art of Books—German Decorative Trade Bindings* contains color images of more than seventy-five beautifully designed covers and title pages representing various artistic styles, including the exuberantly curving lines and floral motifs of *Jugendstil* and the sleek geometric patterns of Art Deco. The virtual exhibit may be viewed at: <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/DLDecArts.GerDecBind>.

Many of the German-language books in the Max Kade Institute's Published in North America collection also have strikingly illustrated covers. If you would like to browse the collection, please call MKI Librarian Kevin Kurdylo at 262-7546.

## Events Calendar

**Antje Petty** is giving a talk, "Beyond Recipes: A Look at Immigrant Life through German American Cookbooks," at 7:15 p.m., Wednesday, **April 2**, at Madison Area Technical College (Truax campus), Rm. 120.

**German Consul General Dr. Alexander Petri** will speak about "Trans-Atlantic Relations between Germany and the U.S." at 2:30 p.m., Thursday, **April 3**, at 206 Ingraham Hall, UW–Madison.

**Goethe Institute Director Rüdiger van den Boom** will give an informational talk about the Goethe Institute in Chicago at a noon brown bag luncheon on Thursday, **April 10**, 336 Ingraham Hall.

# Stoddard's legacy lives on at Max Kade Institute

By Mark Loudon, MKI Director

We started this year off on a very sad note with the passing of our dear friend and Max Kade Institute Friends Board member, Sue Stoddard. (See the memorial article on page 1.) Sue was one of the MKI's most tireless advocates, and her energy, spirit, and personal warmth will be missed by all of us who knew her. Her presence at the Institute, however, endures.

As many of you know, three years ago Sue donated an amazing collection of letters and other personal documents from the family and friends of her great-grandfather, Jacob Sternberger, a "48er" who emigrated to Wisconsin in the mid-nineteenth century. The Sternberger Collection contains a wealth of first-hand information about life in Central Europe during that time, immigration to North America, and early Wisconsin history. These letters were written in the old German script, so transcribing and translating them involves a fair bit of work. After Sue's passing, the Stoddard family generously named the MKI a recipient of contributions in Sue's memory so that we might see the transcription and translation of the Sternberger Collection to completion. I am very happy to report that several of Sue's friends and relatives have now helped us to realize our goal. We have employed two gifted and hardworking graduate students from the UW-Madison German department, Kristen Reifsnnyder and Kimberly Miller, to work on the documents. We look forward soon to making these fascinating documents accessible to the public and scholars alike. This is a wonderful tribute to Sue and everything she has done for the MKI.

I have another transition to report. Our administra-

tive assistant, Lisa Blochwitz, recently accepted a new position in the Limnology department. Even though Lisa was with us just since August, she did quite a bit to keep our day-to-day operations here at the Keystone House running smoothly. We miss Lisa and wish her well in her new position.

If you've read the newspapers or seen the news lately, you will undoubtedly have heard about Governor Doyle's proposed budget, which includes substantial cuts to funding for the UW System. You might wonder what impact this might have on the MKI. Due to the fact that nearly all of our operating expenses are covered from sources other than state-allocated funds, we hope that any direct effects of the budget cuts will be minimal. However, the sluggish economy has taken its toll on our endowment income, so we are redoubling our efforts in the areas of grant writing and publications. This spring the MKI and CSUMC have submitted two major grant proposals, and our MKI monograph series has six new titles that are close to entering production.

And now more than ever we depend on the support of our Friends, in all senses of the word. Thanks in large part to the Friends, our financial situation is secure, and we look forward to building our programming in the future. At present we are developing some very exciting projects to take "on the road" across Wisconsin, which you'll be learning more about in coming newsletters.

As always, I am deeply grateful to all our Friends for their ongoing support for the MKI. I wish you all a very happy spring!

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

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William Thiel, Eau Claire

## Friends to sponsor heritage tour to Germany

Join us September 10-18, 2003, for our MKI Friends inaugural tour through several regions of Germany that sent many early immigrants to Wisconsin. After arriving in Frankfurt, this historical and cultural tour will begin by exploring villages of Rheinhessen with Dr. Helmut Schmahl, a German historian well-known to Wisconsinites. The tour will continue on to the Palatinate, the cities of Worms and Mainz, and include a Rhine River cruise. We will also travel along the Moselle River as we enjoy our tour at the height of the wine festivals. Further stops will include Koblenz and the Eifel region, the ancestral

home of many immigrants who settled in Wisconsin's "Holyland." We will also visit Liblar, the birthplace of Carl Schurz, and continue on to Bonn. After visiting Cologne, Osnabrück, and Bremen, we will follow the Weser to Bremerhaven to explore the port from which many of our ancestors departed for America. Dr. Wolfgang Grams, the tour coordinator, has extensive experience arranging tours. Tours will be led by English-speaking guides. An upcoming mailing will provide more details about the trip. For more information contact Friends President Fran Luebke via email at [franluebke@hotmail.com](mailto:franluebke@hotmail.com).

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### Friends Profile

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## Michigan couple has longtime ties to MKI

By Regina Smith

Bill (Wilhelm) and Mary Seeger, both life members of the Max Kade Institute Friends, have been part of Grand Valley State University in western Michigan almost since the very beginning. They came to the fledgling institution from UW–Madison in 1965 to help develop the foreign language department at the behest of GVSU's first president, James Zumberge, who had been Bill's geology professor at the University of Michigan. They completed their Ph.D.'s in 1970, during the same week as the shootings at Kent State, and they both remember student protests on campus.

Bill, who grew up in Grand Rapids as the son of German restaurateurs, spoke German at home, and didn't learn English until he entered school, during World War II, at a time when German was not a very welcome language in America. He attended the University of Michigan for his B.A. and M.A., and then switched to the UW–Madison after a year at the University of Bonn. Bill helped develop the German curriculum at GVSU, and is one of the few full professors in the Modern Languages Department.

Mary, who is of Scandinavian descent, added German to her linguistic interests after a high-school exchange in Germany, and studied both Swedish and German at the University of Minnesota and the UW–

Madison. In addition to teaching, Mary has been a dean at GVSU for 30 years; currently she is the dean of Academic Resources and Special Programs, which means that she is in charge of all academic matters that affect undergraduates. Mary previously taught linguistics in the English Department for many years, and still teaches one or two German courses a year, as well as a junior seminar in the Honors College.

The Seegers are very active in the community, and they have held leadership roles in many different organizations reflecting their wide-ranging interests. They are life members of the Society for German–American Studies, for which they hosted the 25<sup>th</sup> Symposium in 2001. Bill is also a past president of the Grand Rapids Historical Society and the Michigan chapter of the American Association of

Teachers of German. Mary has served on the board of the Swedish-American Heritage Society, as well as serving for six years as the president of the Girl Scout Council; she is the current president of the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council. As for their membership in the MKI Friends, Mary notes: "we wish desperately that [the MKI] had existed when we were students."

*Regina Smith is an assistant professor of German at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich.*

"We wish desperately that [the MKI] had existed when we were students."

— Mary Seeger

## Exploring the role of European immigrants in the Civil War

Mahin, Dean B., *The Blessed Place of Freedom: Europeans in Civil War America*. Washington: Brassey's, Inc., 2002.

By Kerry Dobbins

Dean B. Mahin's most recent work, *The Blessed Place of Freedom*, takes on an ambitious project, to synthesize the massive amount of primary and secondary information on European involvement in the Civil War and condense it into a single volume that is just shy of three hundred pages. The task is monumental, considering the scope of the work, which includes not only Europeans who emigrated to the United States, but also those who came over for the duration of the conflict, as either combatants or observers. Considering the goals of the book, it might not be surprising then that the execution is somewhat flawed.

Mahin's work is not an academic text, and the author doesn't claim otherwise. Meant for genealogists or armchair historians, Mahin has organized the book into two types of chapters. The first type details the experiences of the various ethnic groups, consisting of a chapter each devoted to the Germans, Irish, British, and French, with another chapter devoted to the smaller populations of immigrant groups. Other chapters are what Mahin calls "topical" chapters, detailing the reactions of Europeans to events during the war. There are two other clear divisions within the book that are not used as organizational elements — first, between Europeans immigrants and those who were only in the country during the war, and second, between combatants and observers, both in America and abroad.

Trying to place all these diverse groups under the umbrella of "European" is problematic, since not only does it divide the book into many short chapters (some only five pages long), but it places the author in the position of having to paint his picture in very broad strokes, relying on general descriptions of so-called national characteristics. He quotes Ella Lonn's observation that "the mass of Germans were patient, philosophical, plodding men," a sweeping statement that was critiqued in 1952 and seems even more out of place fifty years later. This is always the danger with books that summarize large amounts of data, however Mahin's work seems somewhat unfocused in this regard. His sympathies clearly lie with the Germans,

who did enlist in the Union army in a higher proportion to their percentage in the Northern population. Despite this, support for the Union was not universal among the Germans, who were divided along religious and regional lines. Mahin's statement that "the Germans usually accepted conscription without protest" is out of place with his failure to mention any of the predominantly German Catholic draft riots that broke out in Wisconsin, while devoting two and a half pages to the Irish Catholic riots in New York.

This type of imbalance plagues the book, and Mahin spends another two and a half pages discussing a rather minor incident in which sixteen Germans were killed while attempting to evade the Confederate draft in Texas. Although a fascinating and little-known episode, the detailed account Mahin provides is out of line with his stated goal of providing a general survey of European experiences. In a similar vein, Mahin makes a half-hearted attempt to guess at the motivations of immigrants arriving during the war years, especially in the case of Germans who offered to join the Union army in return for free passage to America, which he takes to indicate support for the Union. The chapter reduces the issue of immigration from each country to a few short paragraphs and is the weakest in the book.

Even if Mahin had been more successful in the execution of his goals, the usefulness of these types of histories themselves might be questioned. The myriad reasons the immigrants gave for enlisting on either side of the conflict mirror those in James McPherson's *What They Fought For*, a slim, general volume about the motivations of combatants on both sides. Perhaps one of the most telling quotes comes from the French commander of the Fifty-fifth New York regiment when describing his French immigrant troops: "Under fire, when nobody saw them, they did neither better nor worse than the others." *The Blessed Place of Freedom* suffers most from its lack of focus, which is a shame because with its clear writing style and survey presentation, it has the potential to be widely read by the general public, which after all, is what more historians should strive for.

*Kerry Dobbins is a graduate student in the UW-Madison History Department.*

# Medical advice books for German-Americans

By Kevin Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

The Max Kade Institute Library contains many advice books for the preservation of health and the treatment of illness published for use by German-speaking citizens of the late nineteenth century. These books reveal a great deal about the prevailing ideas of the time on numerous topics, including health, disease, diet, exercise, sex, mental health, and moral living. Indeed, in several of the books the living of a moral life and the development of strong character are inextricably linked to good corporeal health. And often the basic advice for the preservation of health is sound, as in the chapter on Health in *Der goldne Wegweiser: Ein Führer zu Glück und Wohlstand* (The Golden Signpost: A Guide to Happiness and Prosperity): “Zu den Hauptbedingungen der Gesundheit gehören: Reine Luft, angemessene Nahrung, passende Wohnung und Kleidung, Reinhaltung und Abhärtung des Körpers, Bewegung und Schlaf.” “Among the main requirements for health are: pure air, proper nutrition, suitable housing and clothing, cleanliness and tempering of the body, exercise, and sleep.”) A great deal of the therapeutic advice presented in these books relies on herbal lore, no doubt incorporating advice passed down for centuries. The German edition of *Dr. Chase's Recept-Buch und Haus-Arzt, oder praktische Lehren für das Volk* (Dr. Chase's Recipe Book and Household Physician, or Practical Knowledge for the People) is a veritable treasure chest of information with formulas for everything from curing rheumatism, bandaging wounds, and treating bee stings to making soap, washing windows, and cleaning clothes. Below are listed a few of the health-related books in the MKI Published in North America collec-



The proper way to carry an unconscious person, from *Ein Freund in der Noth*, 1898.

tion; there are many more that could not be included here. To view these books, or any others in the MKI Library, please contact Kevin Kurdylo at (608) 262-7546 or [kkurdylo@wisc.edu](mailto:kkurdylo@wisc.edu) to make an appointment.

*Das Buch der Mütter, welches auch die Väter gerne lesen werden.* Cleveland: Lauer & Mattill, 1888. 492 pp., ill.

Intended as a “useful friend and a counselor for mothers in the education of their children and in the administration of their households,” this book includes advice on maintaining health and treating illness, as well as this interesting information about death:

“Manchmal findet ein Loslösen des Geistes vom Leibe schon vor dem Tode statt. Das Bewußtsein schwindet, der Geist schaut und

hört Dinge einer andern Welt, nach kurzer Zeit kehrt das Bewußtsein zurück, der Sterbende kann oft noch erzählen oder andeuten, was er gesehen und gehört hat, um bald endgültig aus dieser Welt abzuschneiden.” (“Sometimes a separation of spirit and body occurs before death. Consciousness fades, the spirit sees and hears things from another world, after a short time consciousness returns, and the dying individual can often still tell or hint at what was experienced before leaving this world for good.”)

*Dr. Ward's Wegweiser.* Winona, MN.: J. R. Watkins Medical Co., 1898. 48 pp., ill. Mainly an advertisement translated from English, this booklet includes testimonials from users of such products as Dr. Ward's *Vegetabilisches*

### Collection feature from page 8

*schmerzstillendes Liniment* (Vegetable Anodyne Liniment), Petro-Carbo Salve, Gen-De-Can-Dra für das Blut (a tonic bitters), Improved Condition Pulver (a powder apparently used to treat horses and other livestock), and *kleine Leberpillen* (Cathartic Liver Pills).

*Ein Freund in der Noth, ein Freund bis zum Tod: Gesundheits-Winke fürs Haus.*

New York.: Metropolitan Lebensversicherungs-Gesellschaft, 1898. vi, 89, ill. Issued by a life insurance company, this guide covers accidents and injuries, child care, specific poisons and their antidotes (including standing someone on his/her head for one or two minutes if they've breathed in too much chloroform), and general house hygiene.

*Homöopathischer Familien-Arzt für Familien, Farmer, Reisende, Missionäre, Pioniere, und Laien im Allgemeinen.*

Chicago: Deutsche Homöopathische Central-Apotheke, 1887. 79 pp.

The homeopathic method for dealing with the maintenance of health and the curing of illness, which includes the belief that a substance that would cause specific symptoms in a healthy person when taken in its raw form will also alleviate those symptoms in an ill person when correctly prepared and administered.

*Der Rettungs-Anker, zuverlässiger ärztlicher Rathgeber bei allen Krankheiten, Schwäche-Zuständen und functionellen Störungen der Zeugungs-Organe beider Geschlechter.* 110th ed. New York: Deutsches Heil-Institut, 1916. x, 233 pp., ill. This book has a great deal to say about the ill effects of onanism (masturbation) for both genders, segues into the horrors of venereal diseases, and even in-

cludes correspondence from patients of the German Medical Institution.

Bock, Karl Ernst. *Das Buch vom gesunden und kranken Menschen: Ein bewährter und vollständiger Führer zur Erhaltung und Pflege der Gesundheit sowie zur Heilung des kranken Körpers.* Milwaukee: Brumder, 1880. vi, 359 pp.

Eddy, Mary Baker. *Science and Health with Key*

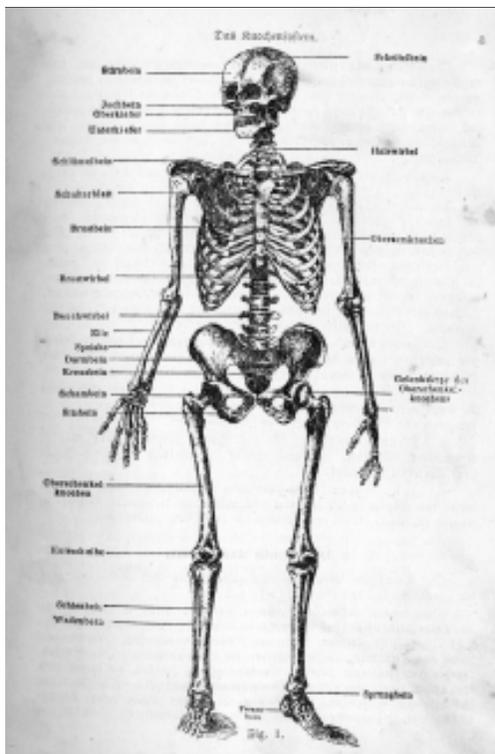
*to the Scriptures = Wissenschaft und Gesundheit mit Schlüssel zur Heiligen Schrift.* Boston: Trustees under the will of Mary Baker G. Eddy, 1875. xii, 697 pp.

An authorized translation of the teachings of Christian Science, this book alternates pages in English and German.

Faber, Dr. *Schutz, Hilfe und Beistand.* Milwaukee: Brumder, 1896. ix, 338 pp., ill.

Includes information on the health-preserving and curative benefits of "home gymnastics" and massage.

Herzog, Maximilian. *Deutsch-Amerikanischer Hausarzt: Ein medizinischer Rathgeber für Haus und Familie bei Unfällen und Erkrankungen.* Chicago: Laird & Lee, 1895. 253 pp., ill.

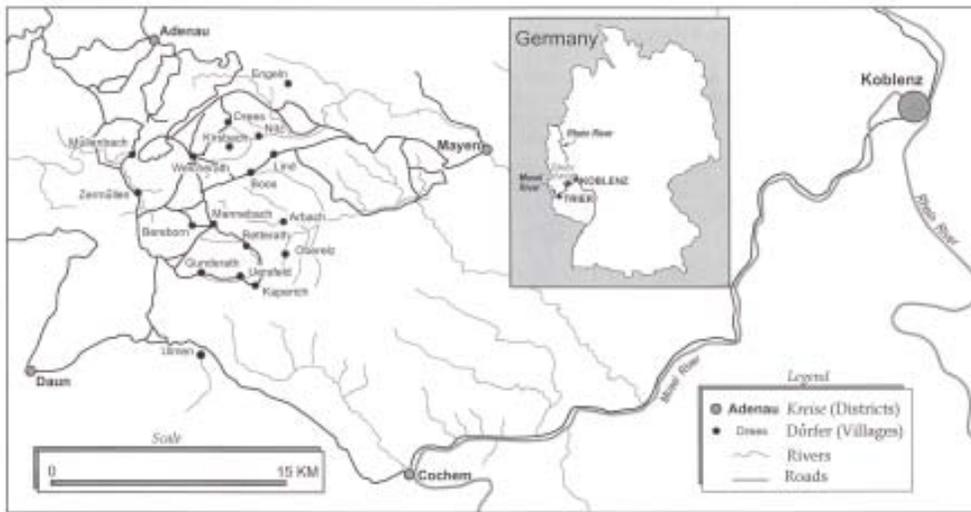


The skeletal system, from Dr. Faber's *Schutz, Hilfe und Beistand*, 1896.

Künzle, Joh., comp. *Gesunder Körper durch Heilkräuter: Winke und Ratschläge über Heilung von Krankheiten.* Hammond, IN: Hammond Book Co., n.d. 96 pp.

Alphabetical list of ailments with herbal and nutritional cures. Includes a list of botanicals in German with English translations.

Querner, Emil. *Der Selbstarzt, oder, Doctor und Apotheker im eigenen Hause.* 4. Auflage. Allentown, PA: Trexler & Härtzell, 1886. 192 pp.



A map of the villages in the Eifel from which many of the emigrants came.

### **Holyland from page 1**

du Lac County and partially in Calumet County, consists of several rural German Catholic communities connected by religion and place of origin. With placenames such as Johnsburg, Mount Calvary, Marytown, St. Peter, St. Cloud, St. Anna, St. Joe, and Jericho, there is little mystery on the surface as to why the district has its nickname. The real meanings of the sobriquet “Holyland” are far more varied and nuanced than one might expect at first glance.

Several factors seem to contribute to the idea of the Holyland of east-central Wisconsin and serve as clues to the meaning of this place: The emigrants from the Eifel, who began arriving during the 1830s, and their descendants; the Catholic Church, including both German and Irish Catholic members; the activities of the Capuchin Order of the Catholic Church; the networks of social organization that bond members of the community; and contemporary images of the region all seem to work together to reveal and to perpetuate its identity. The borders of the Holyland are best represented as an abstract layering of the images generated from each of these pieces of the puzzle.

In my research I have traced the immigration and settlement of Germans from the Eifel to Wisconsin’s Holyland during the nineteenth century. The majority of these early settlers came from small villages and hamlets in the Vulkan (or Hohe) Eifel region of Rhenish Prussia, more specifically from places such as Arbach, Bereborn, Boos, Drees, Engeln, Günderrath, Kirsbach, Lind, Mannebach, Nitz, Oberelz, Retterath, Uersfeld, Ulmen, Welcherath, and Zermüllen. The parish of Retterath was an especially significant source

region for emigrants to the Holyland.

Reasons for migrating from this part of Rhenish Prussia varied, but emigrants were most often motivated by economic factors. They left in search of improved economic conditions, particularly with the hope of procuring better land for agricultural purposes. During the nineteenth century, crop failures, land scarcity, and changes in industry contributed to a rising tide of emigration from the Vulkan Eifel. The *Kreise* (districts) Daun and Adenau were particularly hard-hit and contributed many immigrants to the Holyland.

The earliest group of emigrants from the Eifel, who left between 1830 and 1860, formed the strong nucleus of German settlement in the region. A second wave of emigration from the Eifel to the Holyland began in the 1860s and continued into the 1870s. This is evident in the expansion and growth of new parishes that took place during those decades. For the most part, settlers who arrived in the area in the latter part of the nineteenth century seemed to have a clearer sense of destination than the earlier pioneers. For example, Johann Steffes, who was listed in the 1860 and 1870 manuscript pages of the United States Census and who farmed land in Section 30 of the Town of Marshfield, already knew about several families from the Eifel living in this region of Wisconsin prior to emigration. Thus, Steffes, like so many others, settled in a region where friends and family awaited him.

Endorsements from friends and relatives who had already immigrated to the United States prompted many to leave their homes in the Eifel in search of

### **Plattner from page 3**

and Innsbruck. Here, *Plattners* invented a technique to harden the steel, thus allowing for a thinner armor, greatly reduced weight, and increased mobility. At the same time, Italian *Plattners* developed a variety of techniques to decorate the steel. By etching, gilding, embossing, enameling, or blackening the steel, they turned suits of armor into works of art.

In short, to create a beautiful and functional suit of armor you need a number of distinct skills, or as Karl puts it, “you have to be an artist, a plumber, and a seamstress at the same time.” The making of a suit of armor is a painstaking process. First, the customer is measured, and a paper pattern is made. Then, every steel plate is hand cut, embossed, decorated, nailed, and connected with layers of rivets and leather to allow for maximum mobility.

Despite the unavoidable practical and mechanical considerations, Karl sees himself first and foremost as an artist. While his work is inspired by history, every one of his pieces is a handmade original, using traditional techniques whenever possible. Guided by texts and pictures from the Middle Ages (for example woodprints depicting Emperor Maximilian I’s Court Armor Shop in Innsbruck), Karl has made his own copies of traditional tools. However, some of the old

metallurgical techniques, such as the use of mercury in the gilding process, are now known to pose health and environmental hazards, so Karl resorts to more modern methods.

For those customers who do not need a whole suit of armor, Karl can make just shields or helmets. Also, family crests in embossed copper, silver, or etched steel are popular.

Is anybody actually *wearing* Karl Lechten’s suits of armor? Yes and no. Most of Karl’s work is adorning museums, corporate offices, or the private homes of people who want a distinctive and unusual showpiece. However, a year ago Karl made a full-body suit of armor for the wedding of a young Slovakian businessman. The fairytale wedding was held in Strecno Castle, in one of Slovakia’s oldest and most famous castles, with the entire wedding party dressed in sixteenth-



Photo courtesy of Karl Lechten  
Etched morion, half armor.

century garb and the groom wearing his special suit throughout the event.

While suits of plate armor have lost their original practical significance, they still generate a lot of interest in the twenty-first century. Thanks to expert *Plattners* like Lechten, the centuries-old craft of armor-making has been preserved, transported half-way around the world, and elevated to a fascinating art form in its own right.

### **Holyland from page 10**

better opportunities. This process, known commonly as chain migration, resulted in the nearly transplanted communities that formed in the Holyland. Clearly, the human geography associated with these emigrants from the Eifel was carried over to the Holyland. For example, agriculture played a dominant role in the economy and culture of the Eifel, and this connection to the land was evident in the Holyland as well. Their commitment to this way of life is reflected in the maintenance of family farms in this region.

Along with the establishment of agricultural community life, immigrants from the Eifel in the Holyland remained tied to their cultural traditions. As their numbers increased in the region east of Lake Winnebago throughout the nineteenth century, so too did the presence of the Catholic Church. Specific

religious traditions were maintained also. For instance, just as popular in the Holyland as it was in the Eifel was the remembrance of the dead on All Souls Day, which culminated in a procession headed by a local priest to the cemetery, where he sprinkled and blessed individual graves.

Emigrants from the Eifel had a significant impact on the construction of identity of the Holyland of east-central Wisconsin. They shared experiences that contributed to both the settlement process and to a common regional sense of identity in Wisconsin. Their pre-migration experiences in the Eifel provided them with an economic and cultural foundation upon which to build their lives in Wisconsin.

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