

Max Kade Institute

FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE MAX KADE INSTITUTE. VOL. 8 NO 3 . FALL 1999

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150 Years of German-American Culture in Wisconsin

by Charles James

This past summer, between July 13th and August 5th, every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., Cora Lee Nollendorfs moderated a series of lectures under the topic "German Immigrants to the United States: 1848 to Present". Cosponsored by the Division of Continuing Studies, the Office of Summer Sessions, the College of Letters & Science, and the Max Kade Institute, the eight sessions covered a variety of specific topics, including "From Dorfkapelle to Dutchman Bands: Wisconsin's German Music" (James Leary), "The German Language in Wisconsin" (Joseph Salmons), "Geography of German Immigration and Settlement in Wisconsin" (Robert Ostergren), "The German Catholic Settlement System of the Upper Midwest" (Kathleen Conzen), "German-American Festive Culture" (Heike Bungert), and "Becoming German-American: A Literary/Cultural Approach" (Brent Peterson). Following each lecture, Cora Lee Nollendorfs led a discussion with students who were attending the sessions as part of a summer school course for credit. This permitted the participants to discuss in depth the topics presented.

A number of things impressed me about the series, aside from the fact that it was well organized and smoothly conducted. First of all, each lecture attracted as many as 200 people from a variety of backgrounds: teachers and students, folks with German ethnic heritage and those without, young people and retirees. Frequently the lecture part ran late because of questions from the audience. By the time August 5th came around, those of who attended regularly had learned far more about the movement of German speakers from Central Europe to the American Midwest than the usual statistical and historical factoids. We will never listen to a polka, drive through a small town in Wisconsin, hoist a *Bierkrug* at a *Volksfest*, read a short story about immigrant families or even teach another German language class the same way again. This series was a major educational and, yes, entertainment experience. We learned a lot and enjoyed it at the same time.

Research News

The German Experience with the Land in Wisconsin

by Mary Devitt

Many of our strongest images and the most enduring stereotypes of Wisconsin come from Germans and their association with the land. German-Americans today frequently see themselves as good stewards and environmentally aware protectors of the land. These perceptions have been articulated across the Midwest in studies by Sonya Salamon, Kathleen Conzen and others, who have shown a strong persistence of cultural, social and economic patterns related to the land.

In her book *Prairie Patrimony*, Salamon characterizes the German-American attitude on the "cultural meaning of land" in this way: "Land is a sacred trust maintained by achieving continuity of family land ownership and an agrarian way of life." For "Yankees", she describes the attitude as being this: "Land is a commodity, and farming is a business in which accumulation of land is a means to increase family wealth and power."

An interdisciplinary and international team of scholars will explore the historical relationship between people and land, using the German-American experience in Wisconsin as its framework. They will focus on cultural differences and conflicts connected to land tenure, both within the broadly defined German-American community and between members of other social and ethnic groups in the state, looking at cultural contrasts in the attitudes and relationship with the land, and how immigrants derived meaning from the land. Wisconsin provides an ideal stage for this project owing to the high percentage of German-born immigrants that settled in the state: first and second generation German-speaking immigrants comprised 54% of the state's population in 1850 and still remained at 46% in 1900.

Leading the research in Wisconsin along with Joe Salmons, MKI Director, are Prof. Cora Lee Nollendorfs (German) and Prof. Robert Ostergren, who chairs the Geography Department; both are also part of the Interdisciplinary Executive Committee of the Institute. Graduate students with a range of social science and humanities backgrounds: Timothy Bawden (Geography), Steven Geiger (German), Beth Marquardt (Geography) and Scott Moranda (History), will utilize census data, land records and related sources, and will review travel reports, newspaper accounts and other qualitative sources to provide a richer and more comprehensive picture of German-American land tenure and social structure. Drs. Heike Bungert and Anke Ortlepp will lead the Univ. of Cologne team.

The German component of the project will include researchers looking at people's attitudes towards land in the German regions of origin prior to emigration and adaptations they made once they came to Wisconsin. They will examine several rural settlements in the Rhineland from where farmers and their families immigrated to communities in Wisconsin. Patterns of land ownership and inheritance in these German settlements, farming methods, etc. will serve as important reference points to the Wisconsin study. By looking at pre-immigration patterns, researchers hope to see continuity and discontinuity of attitudes towards land more visibly.

This project will contribute to earlier research by scholars who have looked at present issues of land ownership, by gaining an understanding of the origins of those attitudes, as imported by German-speaking immigrants.

UW-Madison Graduate School and Max Kade Foundation funding is supporting the initial phase of this study. The team will pursue additional funding to expand the research into other regions of Germany with ties to Wisconsin communities.

MKI Bounds Into the 21st Century

by Steve Geiger

In the past few years, the MKI has begun to develop a strong program dealing with German dialects in America. Part of that development includes the acquisition of large collections of American German fieldwork recordings by Professors Wolfgang Moelleken (SUNY-Albany) and Lester "Smoky" Seifert. Unfortunately, many of the recordings are captured on aging reel-to-reel or audiocassette tapes, media that degrade over time. In an effort to preserve these extremely important collections, the MKI has applied for and received a small grant to convert these old recordings from analog to digital (analog refers to the way that things are preserved on tape). The digital recordings will then be

put on CDs, so that the collections will be useful for years to come. In order to do this conversion, the grant will provide a computer dedicated to sound processing, as well as other equipment such as a CD recorder. The grant will also provide a digital recorder, so that all dialect recordings made by the Institute in the future will not need to be converted from analog to digital, increasing the quality of the recordings beyond what is possible through analog technology, as well as making the recordings easier to analyze with the aid of computers.

This exciting new technology will open many doors in the field of dialect research. Since the grant proposal was written, the MKI has been in contact with others involved in similar projects in Germany and the U.S., and hopes to learn a great deal from them to aid in progress. Furthermore, in the future the MKI plans to become a part of a database of German dialects spoken all over the world, where samples of our digitized dialect recordings will be available via computer to scholars in Madison and all over the world. Our early involvement with these contacts will allow us to do our conversions in a format which is compatible with the recording format used by the other contributing members of the database, an important step toward getting the recordings out into the community of people interested in dialect studies. We hope to have this new system up and running by mid-September, although the hundreds of hours of conversion necessary will not be completed for some time.

In the Studio of the Master

Sophie Charlotte Gaebler, a Lisztianerin from Watertown in Weimar

(Continued from Vol. 8 No. 2 of the Friends Newsletter)

by Max Gaebler

This is the story of Sophie Gaebler, a noted music teacher in Milwaukee who during her visit to Germany as a young woman became a student of the celebrated musician Franz Liszt. In this part of the story, we hear of the legend of Liszt and the tale of Sophie Gaebler's trip to Weimar where she met and became a pupil of the great pianist.

And a celebrity he surely was, perhaps the first real celebrity as we understand that term today. Like Mozart, to whom he was often compared, he was a child prodigy. And like Leopold Mozart, so did Adam Liszt recognize his son's extraordinary gifts and take personally in hand his musical education. His first public concert took place in Vienna's Town Hall on Dec. 1st, 1822, when he was just eleven. Two years later Adam and his son were in Paris. Within three months young Franz had played in public thirty-eight times, and the Paris press had taken due notice of the prodigy in their midst. Three visits to England over the ensuing three years produced similar responses, and in a time when the public doted on (and sometimes destroyed) child prodigies this boy from Hungary was an established star.

The effect of this early fame on Liszt himself was predictable. After his father's premature and tragic death in 1827, Liszt was on his own. His mother was then still in Vienna, but though he remained affectionate and attentive to her she evidently played little part in his career. As a 16-year-old pianist, bereft of the man who had been doting father, constant companion and astute manager, he was left to face the world alone. His latest and most excellent biographer, Alan Walker, speaks of "the contempt in which he held his career as a wunderkind" and quotes Liszt's own words at the time: "... there came over me a bitter disgust against art, such as it appeared to me: vilified and degraded to the level of a more or less profitable handicap, branded as a source of amusement for distinguished society. I had sooner be anything in the world than a musician in the pay of the exalted, patronized and salaried by them like a conjuror, or the learned dog Munito. Peace to his memory!" The reference here is to a celebrated performing dog which allegedly understood "equally well French and Italian, works out the letters of the alphabet, distinguishes colors, plays dominos ... and is acquainted with the principles of geography and history."

There follows a period of relative obscurity in Paris, where his mother now joined him, a period of transition, maturation and personal formation. He took piano students, attracted by his earlier reputation and held by his genuine skill and intense attentiveness, and thus he supported himself and his mother. But he was also playing, reading and entering deeply into the cultural and political life of the French capital in the heady days following the revolution of

1830. These were the years when Berlioz and Chopin entered his circle of intimates, when he first fell in love and Countess Marie d'Agoult (later the mother of his three children) came into his life, and when he was overwhelmed by hearing Paganini.

Alan Walker describes that occasion thus: "As he listened to the Italian wizard he experienced an artistic awakening. Paganini and his violin seemed indivisible. Here was a violinist who not only played the violin better than his rivals, but played it as well as it could be played, a somewhat different proposition ... The 'Paganini of the piano' had still to appear. The galvanizing effect that this insight produced on Liszt is now history; that role he would carve out for himself."

And carve it he did. Whatever varying judgments there may be of Liszt in other respects, there seems to be unanimity in the perception of his central and decisive role in the development of pianistic art as we know it. This was in part due to his exploration of the technical possibilities of the keyboard, possibilities he was able to exploit in his playing as well as to test in his composing.

And it was in large part due also to the happy coincidence of his life in Paris with the development of piano building in that city at the same time. The two leading builders in those years were Pleyel and Erhard. And by great good fortune, from the earliest days of his arrival in Paris with his father, Liszt formed a close relationship with the Erhard family. This relationship lasted to the end of his life; during his later years he received in Weimar a new Erhard piano every year.

Alan Walker summarizes it thus: "Liszt was the first modern pianist. The technical 'breakthrough' he achieved during the 1830's and '40's was without precedent in the history of the piano.... It had to do with his ability to solve technical problems. Liszt is to piano playing what Euclid is to geometry.... It is impossible for a modern pianist to keep Liszt out of his playing out of his biceps, his forearms, his fingers even though he may not know that Liszt is there, since modern piano playing spells Liszt."

The resolve to become "the Paganini of the piano" unleashed in Liszt an astonishing burst of energy. Always a hard and serious worker, he now turned to his piano, his desk, his pupils and his public with unbounded zeal. A major turning point came in March, 1838, when the flooding of the Danube River drowned more than 150 Hungarians and left 50,000 homeless. News of this disaster reached Liszt in Venice, and he rushed off to Vienna to launch a series of benefit concerts for victims of the flood in his native land. Alan Walker observes that this not only marked Liszt's return to the concert stage, but also betokened the awakening of his patriotic sentiments as a native Hungarian. Hungary and its music were to provide a major theme in Liszt's career for the rest of his life.

But the immediate impact of his return to Vienna, where he had first attracted public notice as a child prodigy fifteen years before, was to launch him on the most extensive, best publicized and most dazzlingly successful concert career ever known surely up to that time and perhaps even to the present. From Lisbon to Moscow, from Copenhagen to Constantinople his unprecedented virtuosity established him as the premier attraction in the musical world. "*Lisztomania* swept Europe, and the reception accorded the pianist can only be described as hysterical," notes Alan Walker. It all began, as we have noted, with benefit concerts for the Hungarian victims of the Danube flood. Liszt was always generous in behalf of causes that captured his imagination and sympathy. He raised money for the Beethoven monument in Bonn and for the completion of the cathedral in Cologne. He gave concerts for the striking silk workers in Lyons. In later years he played in public only for such purposes "for some very special reason," as he himself put it, "to aid some charity or to further some artistic object."

During these years of high-profile public appearances Liszt virtually created the piano recital. As someone put it, he "took the piano out of the salon and placed it in the concert hall." And he utterly transformed the public stature of musicians indeed of all artists. You remember his spurning the role of performing dog, "a musician in the pay of the exalted, patronized and salaried by them." Indeed, as Alan Walker notes, he "went out of his way to make an enemy of powerful aristocrats if he thought that his dignity as an artist had suffered. Into this category falls his chilling reply to Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, who arrived late and then started talking during one of Liszt's recitals in St. Petersburg. He stopped playing and sat at the keyboard with bowed head. When Nicholas inquired the cause of his hushed silence,

Liszt replied, 'Music herself should be silent when Nicholas speaks.' ... Thanks to Liszt, artists soon became 'the new aristocracy'".

At the very height of his powers and his fame, still but thirty-five years old, Liszt retired from the concert stage abruptly, firmly, finally. He gave his last public recital for money in Elisabetgrad (today called Kirovograd) in September, 1847. He never again played in public for his own benefit.

Henceforth he made Weimar his base, accepting an invitation to serve, for three months each year, as conductor and musical director to the court of the Grand Duke. Weimar was a small city, provincial in some respects. But it was the city of Goethe and Schiller, proud of its long record of hospitality to the arts. During the ensuing fourteen years Liszt directed his major efforts to what he called the creation of a new music. He was always more interested in the music of his own contemporaries than in the masters of earlier generations, turned more to the future than to the past. It was during these years that he devoted the greatest energy and attention to his own composing. And it was during these years, too, that he came to see Wagner as the true torch-bearer of the new music. He discouraged performance of his own work, even as he was producing it in unprecedented quantity. His greatest effort as musical director and conductor in Weimar was the promotion of Wagner.

Never one to let much grass grow under his feet, Liszt's Weimar connection, too, was interrupted by his retreat for several years to Rome. This was occasioned in part by the second major liaison of his life, that with Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, in part also by the life-long stirring of his intense religious faith. It was during these years in Rome that he took ecclesiastical orders, and for the rest of his life his clerical cassock was a hallmark of his appearance different from his earlier styles of dress, but no less dramatic. But it would be a great mistake to dismiss all this, as some have, as mere posturing on the part of Liszt. He kept a rigorous schedule of private devotions, and he made major contributions to church music during his years in Rome.

Eventually he returned to Weimar, though on more modest and less demanding terms. And during the last and surely the most peaceful phase of his life he divided his year between Rome, Budapest and Weimar. Since his retirement from the concert stage he had earned not a penny from his playing, and he never accepted money for his teaching. His resources in these years were very modest: he rode in second class train compartments, handled his enormous correspondence himself since he could not afford a secretary, drank the most ordinary wines. All this was by his own choice. He was still invited for two-week stays at the Dutch court and for lengthy visits on a great baronial estate in Silesia, his presence was a coup for any hostess, and his attendance at public concerts was a magnet for all the aspiring young musicians who flocked to Weimar in the hope of learning something even if only from basking in the ambience of the great master.

For his own part, as Sacheverell Sitwell observes, "In his old age the chief pleasure of Liszt was in his pupils Young men and women of talent, and of the most impressionable age, were gathered together here round this person of legend. He had given no concerts for thirty years, he would not play for money; but his counsel and advice, and the wonderful stimulus of his personality, were at the service of the young. No one came away from seeing him who was not the richer for that experience. He would criticize, he would comment, and there was always the hope that he would play. The magic of his technique was unimpaired, and it will readily be believed that those who heard him in such circumstances could never forget the impression of even a few bars played by his hands. His pupils, of whom there were sometimes twenty or thirty in the town, would bring him their pieces to play every afternoon, while on Sunday mornings, between eleven and one o'clock, there were regular concerts amounting sometimes to a whole piano recital by Liszt, according to his mood."

It was in these circumstances that Aunt Sophie came under his spell. And it is in her words that I want now to describe that environment, so fruitful for her and for so many other musicians of her generation.

She was twenty-one when she set sail from New York on the steamship Fulda on May 21st, 1884. A fortnight later she disembarked in Bremen, where she was met by an aunt and uncle. After a few days with them she went on to stay with a different set of relatives who lived in Thüringen, not far from Weimar. This second set of relatives, her mother's favorite brother and his wife, belonged to the petty nobility. Their large country house bore the pretentious name of Schloss Moderwitz. Aunt Sophie's uncle, Tilo Freiherr von Beust, was treated with some deference by the neighbors,

and Aunt Sophie herself, this young woman from small town Wisconsin, obviously enjoyed being addressed as "*gnädiges Fräulein*." She writes her mother that "Uncle Tilo keeps telling us amusing stories of your childhood: for example, how when you were five years old and there was such a storm that the hailstones flew into the room, you were frightened and asked your mother what you should do. She said, 'Pray.' So you folded your hands and began: 'Bless this food to our use, etc.' It was the only prayer you knew."

On June 12th she writes that she has just received her first letters from home. Evidently her father had passed along a warning from another uncle, offered partly but not entirely in jest, lest she become a bit too set on herself in the light of all her opportunities. So she responds: "Now, concerning Uncle Douai's remarks I'm not at all conceited. All the praise I get is meant for you, and for that reason I write it." And she tries similarly to reassure her mother: "Don't think that I'll come back as a spoiled baby. I am held to very strict limits. Auntie watches everything, and I have to obey on the dot." Yet she clearly was enjoying the social opportunities as well. She writes of a social club in a nearby town, of playing croquet and pleasant conversations. But "what strikes me most here," she writes, "is what beautiful bows they make." She always loved courtly manners.

On another occasion Aunt Sophie reports how much her aunt had been impressed with the gifts she had brought from America. "Well!," she wrote her mother. "Because of the coat and the watch chain she has let it be known what an elegant niece she has! Money means a great deal here, and because of my reputation I enjoy all the privileges of society." Her aunt had certainly misjudged on this score, for on another occasion Aunt Sophie writes her parents, "It really hurts me to spend money when you are going without." The family was not really in difficult straits, but they had indeed had to make a hard choice between two musically gifted children when it came to the opportunity for further education in Europe; they could afford to send only one of them, and for a variety of reasons the choice fell on Aunt Sophie.

To be continued in the next Newsletter.

Biennial Plattdüütsch Konferenz

The Holiday Inn & Suites near Wausau is the place to be this October 22nd-24th, 1999. It will be a rare opportunity for you to learn more about the language and life of your Platt-speaking forefathers in its various forms and to meet people with similar interests in a very pleasant setting.

This conference had its beginnings with the American/Schleswig-Holstein Heritage Society of Davenport, IA. and is being hosted this year by the Pommerscher Verein - Central Wisconsin. The conference traditionally draws attendees from throughout the midwest as well as a good-sized contingent from Germany and this year's conference is already shaping up to do the same.

Of special interest to everyone this year is the recent news that the European Council made a declaration on January 1st, 1999 that Plattdüütsch is a language in its own right, rather than a dialect, and is deserving of preservation along with 4 other minority languages. Our leadoff speaker, Dr. Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann, of Carlton College in Minnesota, will deal with this topic in his opening presentation.

Also of special note is a presentation by Prof. Renate Hermann-Winters of Greifswald University in Germany, Chair of the Plattdüütsch Department, who will relate her experiences working on her dictionary project, which was then interrupted by the Cold War, her life in the GDR times, and her resumption of the project in recent years.

The conference program features a lineup of high quality presentations by recognized authorities in their respective fields, all in some way or another, relating to Platt. In addition, there will be Platt demonstration sessions by conference attendees which will illustrate usage of the language today in its various forms.

The conference price includes all conference sessions, continental breakfast each day, luncheon program, break refreshments, and banquet dinner. A Friday evening dinner-dance will be offered optionally including free transportation to

the ballroom. The conference and lodging facilities are brand new and state-of-the-art.

For more information please e-mail DuWayne Zamzow at zamzow@gitllc.com or write to him at 13868 Berlin Lane, Merrill, WI 54452.

Our Speakers

Renate Herrmann-Winter Ph.D.

Prof Emeritus & Chair, Plaudüütsch Dept.
Greifswald University. Germany

Joachim (Yogi) Reppknann, Ph.D.

Prof of German. Carleton College
Northfield, MN

William (Kaiser Bill) Keel Ph.D.

Prof. & Chair, Dept. of Germanic Languages
and Linguistics
University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS

Joseph Salmons, Ph.D.

Prof. of German & Linguistics
Director, Max Kade Institute
University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

Michael Lind

Ph.D. Student
University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

Bob Stockman

Low German speaker, researcher and author
Altos, Michigan

Joachim (Jo) Peters

Retired educator & author
Pom. Society - Pomeranian Culture
in North America

Pastor Michael Zamzow

Pomeranian Researcher
Wausau, WI

For more information visit the [Biennial Plattdüütsch Konferenz](#) web page.

Fall Lectures in German-American Studies

All lectures are free and are open to the public.

October 11th, 3:30 p.m., Max Kade Institute

"Being 'German' in Western Canada: The German- Speaking Population of the Canadian Prairie Provinces, 1880s to 1980s"

Angelika Sauer, University of Winnipeg

November 9th, 7 p.m., Pyle Center

"The Amish in Wisconsin -- The Opportunities and Challenges of New Community Growth in the Kickapoo Valley."

Harvey Jacobs, UW-Madison

November 29th, 7 p.m., Max Kade Institute

"German Language Regional Theater in Wisconsin, Texas, and Nebraska"

William Grange, University of Nebraska

December 9th, 7 p.m., Max Kade Institute

"Festivals of German-Americans in the United States, 1859-1924"

Heike Bungert, Universität zu Köln

New Library Acquisitions

by Annie Reinhardt, MKI Librarian

The Max Kade Institute has recently received a significant addition to its library through the generosity of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). The following titles, published in Germany, are evidence of the broad interest in German-American studies within German universities and institutions. These titles will greatly enhance the library collection of the MKI, making works available to researchers with diverse scholarly interests.

Böttcher, Rolf. 1997. *Auf dem Weg nach Amerika: Auswanderung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Bremerhaven: NW; 93 p.

Freitag, Sabine, Hg. 1998. *Die Achtunvierziger: Lebensbilder aus der deutschen Revolution 1848/49*. München: Beck; 354 p.

Freitag, Sabine. 1998. *Friedrich Hecker: Biographie eines Republikaners*. Stuttgart: Steiner; 547 p.

Gellinek, Christian. 1997. *Northwest Germany in Northeast America: Immigration waves from Central Europe and their reverberations until today. Essays in preparation of the 400 year celebration in A.D. 2007*. Münster: LIT; x, 150 p.

Häderle, Irene. 1997. *Deutsche kirchliche Frauenvereine in Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1870-1930*. Stuttgart: Steiner; 262 p.

Hecker, Friedrich. 1848. *Die Erhebung des Volkes in Baden für die deutsche Republik im Frühjahr 1848*. (Reprint). Basel: Schabelitz, 1848; Köln: ISP, 1997; 128 p.

Hegi, Ursula. 1998. *Das Schweigen durchbrechen: Über das Deutschsein in Amerika*. München: Europa; 590 p.

Janssen, Susanne. 1997. *Vom Zarenreich in den amerikanischen Westen: Deutsche in Rußland und Rußlanddeutsche in den USA (1871-1928): Die politische, sozio-ökonomische und kulturelle Adaption einer ethnischen Gruppe im Kontext zweier Staaten*. Münster: LIT; 327 p.

Kammeier, Heinz-Ulrich. 1995. "Ach, wie schön ist es in diesem gelobten Amerika": Auswandererbriefe aus dem Kreis Lübbbecke und Umgebung 1890-1952. Espelkamp: Marie Leidorf; xiii, 242 p.

Lubinski, Axel. 1997. *Entlassen aus dem Untertanenverband: Die Amerika-Auswanderung aus Mecklenburg-Strelitz im 19. Jahrhundert*. Osnabrück: Rash; 328 p.

Reich, Uwe. 1997. *Aus Cottbus und Arnswalde in die Neue Welt: Amerika-Auswanderung aus Ostelbien im 19. Jahrhundert*. Osnabrück: Rasch; 272 p.

Rese, Beate. 1996. *Texas Ziel deutscher Auswanderung im 19. Jahrhundert*. Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus; 163 p.

Schäfer, Gudrund, Hg. 1996. *Nachbar Amerika: Verwandte Feinde Freunde in drei Jahrhunderten*. Landau: Knecht; 370 p.

Schimmer, Ralf. 1997. *Populismus und Sozialwissenschaften im Amerika der Jahrhundertwende*. Frankfurt: Campus; 420 p.

Frank Zeidler to be Honored by Friedrich Ebert Foundation

On October 1st, 1999 at 3:00 p.m., the Friedrich Ebert Foundation will hold a ceremony at the Milwaukee Public Central Library to honor former Milwaukee mayor and member of the Friends Board of Directors Frank P. Zeidler for his many years of public service and contributions to German American relations. Dr. Dieter Dettke, Executive Director of the Washington Office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, will present Mr. Zeidler with a bound volume of German constitutions. This collection will then be donated to the Frank P. Zeidler Humanities Room in the Milwaukee Public Central Library.

All interested individuals are welcome, and reservations are requested. Please contact the Washington Office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation by fax at (202) 331-1837 or by e-mail at fesdc@fesdc.org to RSVP.

Forthcoming Publication of the Max Kade Institute:

German-American Urban Culture: Writers & Theaters in Early Milwaukee



Peter C. Merrill

Max Kade Institute

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing well into the twentieth, Milwaukee was home to a remarkably vibrant and complex German-language intellectual scene. This collection of essays presents Milwaukee's most notable German-speaking writers and their works, including Wisconsin-written plays and operettas, prose, poetry, serial novels, and *Feuilleton* contributions. A number of essays treat the cultural context these writers worked in, especially the city's most important German-language theaters, up through the renovation of the Pabst Theater. This book concludes with a broad, synthetic essay on German-American urban culture in Milwaukee.

This book is currently in preparation and should be available in paperback in early 2000.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter C. Merrill is well known for his wide-ranging scholarly work on German-American artistic and literary culture. He grew up in the Chicago area but now lives in Florida. From 1968 to 1998 he was a professor in the Department of Languages and Linguistics at Florida Atlantic University. In addition to many essays, Merrill is the author of *German-American Artists in Early Milwaukee*, published by the Max Kade Institute, as well as *German Artists in America* and *German-American Painters in Wisconsin*, all three published in 1997.

PROFILES:

Board of Directors of the Friends of the Max Kade Institute

In the last issue of the newsletter we began presenting brief profiles of the members of the Board of Directors. The remaining profiles are presented below.

ROBERT M. BOLZ graduated from the University of Wisconsin before he entered the Oscar Mayer Company which had been founded by his maternal grandfather. After 32 years of dedication to his family business he finally retired as Vice Chairman in 1980. Married with two children and four grandchildren, he is currently volunteering with many nonprofit organizations, mainly for the University of Wisconsin where he is involved with the UW Foundation, the Vilas Foundation, the Medical School and the School of Business. In addition, he is a board member of the Madison Art Center and of the Max Kade Institute.

DENNIS BOYER holds a BA in political science and a JD from West Virginia University. Previously, he was employed as a freight carman on the Milwaukee Road and he is now the government relations counsel of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. As a writer and folklorist he has published ghost stories, legends, tall tales, and conservation topics. Currently he has works in progress on Wisconsin taverns, Pennsylvania German spirits, Midwest railroading, and folk medicine. In addition, Dennis is a member of many Pennsylvania German cultural groups.

EDWARD G. LANGER has worked as a tax lawyer/CPA for 19 years. He is an amateur historian who specializes in German and Czech emigration from Northeast Bohemia. He is the President of the German American Heritage Society of Wisconsin, Inc., which designed and financed an exhibit at the Milwaukee Public Museum dealing with three German-American educators. He has been a member of the Milwaukee Liederkrantz, a German male chorus, for 20 years and has served as its Treasurer, Secretary and Financial Secretary. In addition to being an American citizen, he is a Swiss citizen. He and his American-born wife traveled to his grandfather's hometown in Switzerland to marry.

KARYL ROMMELFANGER has been a German teacher for 33 years most of them in Manitowoc Public School District at Washington Jr. High. Married with two daughters, she has always been very interested in using German-American in the classroom and is the publisher of German reader *Einwanderer* for classroom use. In 1996, her German III students won the historic preservation award for their translation of the description of city of Manitowoc from 1850 from German into English. While she assisted with student archaeology projects in the last three summers, Karyl is currently developing a German-language Civil War diary for classroom use.

TRUDY PARADIS was born in Milwaukee into a German-speaking family and has maintained an interest in German language and culture all her life. She received a BA in Sociology and Economics from Milwaukee-Downer college and was a teacher for 27 years in Grafton, WI. Currently she lives in Cedarburg and is the Vice President of German Fest in charge of the Cultural Heritage Pavilion, and in that position she plans and organizes the genealogy and cultural exhibits each year. She has two children and two grandchildren.

HERMANN VIETS received his Ph.D. in astronautics from the Polytechnic University of New York in 1970, served as dean of the University of Rhode Island College of Engineering from 1983 until 1991 when he was selected president of the Milwaukee School of Engineering. Due to his outstanding accomplishments in this role he received a huge number

of awards such as the 1997 Engineer of the Year Award from the Engineers & Scientists of Milwaukee Inc. to name just one. In addition, he has authored and co-authored a great number of publications, has been awarded seven patents and has a first-language knowledge of German. Married with four children, Hermann is also associated with a large variety of organizations some of which are lucky to have him as a member on their Board of Directors such as Astro-Med, Inc., or the MKI to name only two.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER:

- **Heike Bungert's review of *Transplanted but not Uprooted: Immigrants from Hessen-Darmstadt in Wisconsin*, by Helmut Schmahl.**
 - **Paul Houseman's review of *The Phonology of Pennsylvania German English as Evidence of Language Maintenance and Shift*.**
 - **Report: Low German Conference.**
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1999 Biennial North American Plattdüütsch Konferenz

One language, Many Colors

Ost Frisian / Mecklenburg / Pommern Schleswig-Holstein

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, Wausau, Wisconsin

October 22-24, 1999

\$65.00 per person

Hosted by the Pommerscher Verein, Central Wisconsin

**With the cooperation of the Max kade Institute
and various other sponsoring organizations**

Preliminary Program Announcement

The Holiday Inn & Suites near Wausau will be the place for the conference to be held in October 22-24, 1999. It will be a rare opportunity to learn more about the language of your Platt-speaking forefathers in its various forms and to meet people with similar interests in a very pleasant setting.

This conference had its beginnings with the American/Schleswig-Holstein Heritage Society of Davenport, IA. and is being hosted this year by the Pommerscher Verein - Central Wisconsin. The conference traditionally draws attendees from throughout the midwest as well as a good-sized contingent from Germany and this year's is already shaping up to do the same.

Of special interest to everyone this year is the recent news that the European Council has established a convention that Platdüüsch is a language in its own right and is deserving of preservation. Our leadoff speaker, Dr. Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann, will deal with this topic in his presentation.

The conference program features a lineup of high quality presentations by recognized authorities in their respective fields, all in some way or another, relating to Platt. In addition, there will be Platt demonstration sessions by conference attendees which will illustrate usage of the language today. The final brochure will include complete abstracts and bios of presenters.

The conference price includes all conference sessions, continental breakfast each day, luncheon program, break refreshments, and banquet dinner. A Friday evening dinner-dance will be offered optionally including free transportation to the ballroom. The conference and lodging facilities are brand new and state-of-the-art.

Mark your calendars now and plan on attending this stimulating, educational, and enjoyable conference.

Friday, October 22, 1999

10:00 a.m. Registration

1:15 p.m. Welcome and Introductions

**1:30 p.m. Dr. Joachim "Yogi" Reppmann Carleton College, Northfield, MN
*Plattdüütsch ... Dialect or Language?***

- 2:00 p.m.** **Dr. Joseph Salmons Univ. of Wis., Madison, WI**
A Brief Introduction to Old Saxon: The ancestor of Platt.
- 2:30 p.m.** **Dr. William Keel Univ., of Kansas, Lawrence, KS**
Low German Resurgence in Kansas and Missouri
- 3:00 p.m.** **Break - Kaffee Tiet**
- 3:30 p.m.** **Dr. Werner Buchholz, Germany Greifswald University**
Pomeranian Platt in Early Modern Times
- 4:00 p.m.** **Central Wi Verein Members**
Demonstration of Ost Pommersch Platt in Central Wisconsin
- 5:00 p.m.** **Drive to Rib River**
- 5:30 p.m.** **Reception, Ice Breaker Period**
- 6:00 p.m.** **Dinner and Program**
- 7:00 p.m.** **Verein 5th Anniversary Dance , Jerry Schneider and his Orch.**
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Saturday, October 23, 1999

- From 6:30 a.m.** **Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30 a.m.** **Bob Stockman, Dictionary Author Alto, MI**
Why are there different Low German dialects?
- 9:00 a.m.** **Reserved - To be Announced**
- 9:30 a.m.** **Dr. Werner Buchholz, Germany Greifswald University**
Emigration of Pomeranians to Wisconsin in the 19th Century
- 10:00 a.m.** **Break - Kaffee Tiet**
- 10:30 a.m.** **ASHHS Members**
Demonstration of Schleswig -Holstein Platt in Iowa
- 11:00 a.m.** **Michael Lind Univ. of Wis., Madison, WI**
Platt Language Research Project
- 11:30 a.m.** **Breakout Session**
- 12:00** **Noon Luncheon**

- 1:30 p.m.** **Dr. William Keel Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, KS**
Origins and Development of Low German.
- 2:00 p.m.** **Pastor Michael Zamzow Wausau, WI**
Dr. Pomeranus--Organizer of the Reformation through Platdüütsch
- 2:30p.m.** **Reserved - To be Announced**
- 3:00 p.m.** **Break**
- 3:30 p.m.** **Reserved - To be Announced**
- 4:00 p.m.** **Snackt Stunn - Story Hour**
- 6:00 p.m.** **Attitude Adjustment**
- 7:00 p.m.** **Banquet & Program**
Featuring Combined Platt Chorus
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Sunday, October 24 1999

- From 6:30 a.m.** **Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00 a.m.** **Plattdüütsch Gottesdienst**

This devotional service will use an old Liturgy developed by Johannes Bugenhagen (Dr. Pomeranus). The service will include group singing with brass accompaniment.

- 11:00 a.m.** **Conference Adjourns**

Area Tours

Immediately following the conference adjournment, 2 different optional tours of interest will be offered at nominal costs including a stop for lunch for those people who do not have to leave for home immediately. Specifics will be in the final brochure.

To register contact:

**1999 Plattdüütsch Konferenz
13868 Berlin Lane
Merrill, WI 54452**
