



Max Kade Institute Friends Newsletter

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Photos courtesy of Deborah Krauss Smith

Alder Buebe of Appenzell perform during Sangerfest.

Sangerfest in New Glarus celebrates all things Swiss

By Joe Salmons

It is a rare thing when a contemporary event gives you the sense of seeing history come alive, but that feeling was hard to escape at the 37th Sangerfest of the North American Swiss Singing Alliance, held in New Glarus, June 12-15.

The roots of this particular Sangerfest extend back over a century, to an 1897 event held in Cleveland, Ohio. This year's Sangerfest was the fourth time it has come to Wisconsin — the first was in Milwaukee in 1947 — and the



connection to that long history was palpable here.

In some of the best historical scholarship on German-speaking culture in North America from the 19th century, like the well known works of Kathleen Conzen and Phil

Bohlman or the newer works of people like Heike Bungert, we are reminded time and again how singing festivals were a central part of

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German-speaking culture and how such public celebrations helped bring vitality to the “Land without Nightingales.” Like those events way back when, this Fest brought together members of a far-flung immigrant community, with choirs traveling from as far away as Edmonton, Alberta; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and of course from Glarus, Switzerland. And like 100 years ago, there were clear signs of the negotiation of immigrant identity. At the Grand Concert, all the relevant national anthems were sung, and due was given throughout to the multiple national ties of the event and the participants. The richness of Swiss identity itself was naturally on display—from the greetings in German, Romansh, French, and Italian (as well as English) to the songs in all those languages.

In the end, though, Sangerfeste have always been about music, and the Grand Concert was the centerpiece, with performances ranging from the Alphorns of Green County to huge choirs. The Regelchorli from Graubunden provided the most innovative and energetic yodeling I have ever heard, and the other guest



Above: Alphorn players march in the parade on Sunday, June 15.
Below: Deborah Krauss Smith, the grand concert conductor, and Kurt Muller Klusman, a guest conductor, wave from their parade float.



Max Kade Institute

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performers were uniformly exciting. The Grand Choir (consisting of all singers present) was powerful. A highlight of the evening was the premier of Kurt Muller Klusman’s “Chilbizyt” by the Grand Choir, a work commissioned by the Sangerfest 2003 Music Committee and much appreciated by the crowd.

Just walking through downtown New Glarus during the festival was invigorating, watching and listening to throngs of people speaking various dialects and languages (and rest assured that most of the “German” was Swiss!), eating and drinking, listening to music. Dennis Streiff (the Festival chair), Deborah Krauss Smith (Grand Concert conductor), and the whole community are to be congratulated on a rich and satisfying *fest*, one that does well by the tradition of European immigrant musical culture.

Joe Salmons, professor of German at UW–Madison, is the former director of MKI.

Howling with the Wolves in Wisconsin

By Mark L. Loudon, MKI Director

One of my regular outreach presentations is “Languages of Wisconsin,” a Cook’s tour of the linguistic landscape of our state, both past and present. The talk covers three major areas: Native languages, immigrant languages, and the varieties of English spoken in Wisconsin. In searching recently for information on Wisconsin English, I turned to H. L. Mencken’s classic *American Language*. Though there isn’t an overwhelming amount of Wisconsin-specific data mentioned there, Mencken did make some intriguing references to excerpts from a couple of letters to the editor that appeared in the “From the People” section of the *Milwaukee Journal* in 1947. So I hightailed it to the Wisconsin State Historical Society Library and located the full texts on microfilm, digging up in the process a number of things not mentioned in Mencken. Reading these half-century-old letters about English in Wisconsin, and most importantly, people’s perceptions of it, is fascinating, so I thought I’d share their full texts here and discuss some of the more interesting points the unnamed writers raise.

The first letter that started the discussion about Wisconsin English was printed on April 25, 1947, and given the title “Wisconsin’s Own Language.” It was signed “Curious,” a reader living in Tomahawk, Wisconsin. Here’s the full text, just as it appeared in the *Journal*:

Wisconsin’s Own Language

To The Journal: I came to Wisconsin from New Jersey. And in all my travels in 23 states I have never heard people talk like they do here.

Can it be that Wisconsin has a language all its own? Some of the people I have in mind are high school graduates. Others have had further education. So apparently it isn’t the lack of training.

A few examples of what I mean are: “That’s for sure,” in lieu of “definitely,” “absolutely” or “positively.” Panes of glass are “window lights.” The word “ever” appears constantly. “Is it ever

cold” or “Was I ever glad,” even in the papers and on the radio. Bedroom or house slippers are “morning slippers.” What happens if one wears them at night? A gal’s slip suddenly becomes an “underskirt,” stockings or hosiery are “socks” regardless of the length. Pursued or chased is “took after.” In New Jersey “took after” means resemblance. A photographer’s studio, eastern version, is a “picture gallery.” “I’ll borrow you \$5,” instead of “loan” or “lend.” “Did you find back your pocket-book?” Why the “back”?

I haven’t heard anyone say “Hello” or “How do you do.” The accepted salutation is “Hi,” which is all right for some occasions. But, coming from business people and the aged, it sounds very silly to me.

At the movies, instead of requesting tickets for adults and children, they say “small” and “large.”

The worst one of all though is the practice of calling food whether it’s eaten at midnight or in the morning a “lunch.” To me, lunch or luncheon is the meal served at noon or 1 p.m. Snacks, a sandwich or anything light are “refreshments.”

I’m trying to retain my own style of speaking and writing but find it increasingly difficult.

I’m not writing this letter to complain. [Of course not, why would anyone think that?—MLL.] There are a lot of grand things in Wisconsin. But frankly I find much to be desired as far as speaking, writing and spelling are concerned. [Signed: CURIOUS, Tomahawk, Wis.]

Among the various linguistic pet peeves Curious mentions, it’s interesting to note just how many would scarcely raise the eyebrow of even the most peevish language critic today, including the expression *That’s for sure* and the use of *ever* as an intensifying adverb.

In the hosiery department, Curious puts his or her

From the People

Wisconsin’s Own Language

To The Journal: I came to Wisconsin from New Jersey. And in all of my travels in 23 states I have never heard people talk like they do here.

Continued from page 3

finger on an interesting shift in the meanings of *socks* and *stockings*. Before the advent of what we also call *nylons*, *socks* were short and *stockings* were long. Now the distinction between the two words is not according to length, but material. And as long as we're in the clothing department, *underskirt* is an old word that meant exactly what it looks like, not to mention the German *Unterrock*.

Curious's problem with *hi* in relatively formal contexts seems strange to our modern ears. *Hi*, *hey*, *hallo*, and *hello* are all very old English words used originally to get people's (or animals') attention; later, they became the greetings as we know them today. A quick look in a massive *Webster's* from 1956 includes *hey*, *hallo*, and *hello*, but no *hi*—this must have been viewed by lexicographers (inclined as Curious was in 1947) as being too colloquial.

Of the other words and usages Curious cites, many are still nonstandard, but also very widespread and almost certainly not limited to Wisconsin in the 1940s. The use of *borrow* as a synonym for *lend*, the *Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)* tells us, is attested in many parts of the U.S., especially in the Upper Midwest. *DARE* also points out the parallel with *borrow's* modern German cousin, *borgen*, which means both *borrow* and *lend*, a possible factor is reinforcing what was probably an old English pattern anyway. (The situation in Norwegian and Swedish is similar: both English *borrow* and *lend* corresponding to a single verb *låne/låna* [cf. English *loan*], though sometimes followed by a preposition-like particle.) I'm not sure what the provenance of *find back* and *take after* is, but German or Scandinavian influence might be at play here too. Did any of our readers ever look through *window lights* or buy *small* tickets at the movies?

Lunch is an interesting one. Although *Webster's* and other standard dictionaries define this as a *noonday meal*, *DARE* demonstrates its widespreadness as a word for *snack* taken at any time of the day (as in my personal favorite, *a little lunch*). The origins of this word are uncertain (one dictionary I consulted posited a Spanish source, *lonja*), but what is clear is that this word goes back to England, where it originally meant a *chunk* or *piece of food* ... eaten between meals.

So back to Wisconsin in 1947. On April 29, "A.S.G." from Milwaukee replied to Curious's letter as follows:

Calls It Brooklynes

To The Journal: "Wisconsin's Own Language" interpreted at Tomahawk! As a fellow of Weehawken

(N.J.) would say, "It's a molder!"

This is, of course, in answer to a letter from the skoit who signed her letter "Curious." And I assume she is a skoit, for only the female would use a signature such as that. That's for sure. Curiosity killed a cat once, you know!

While Wisconsin may not be a center of cosmopolitan or pedantic tastes, it does have a homespun, intimate, conversational pattern of speaking which it can call its very own.

It's true that Weehawken has a picturesque manner of expression but I have often wondered if the impediment may have been as a result of many years of carefully cultivated speech.

We in Wisconsin are very sorry that we have been unable to keep up with an advanced state, such as New Jersey. However, we assure "Curious," we definitely enjoy their Brooklynes accent, even if it has been borrowed. And only the minority in New Jersey speak it.

Personally, I doubt very much whether "Curious" has ever been further east than Chicago. In passing, may the writer advise "Curious" to first attain the style of speaking and writing peculiar to the people of New Jersey before she attempts to correct and belittle the interesting minority in Wisconsin?

Pardon me while I retire to the dining room for a "refreshment." [Signed: A.S.G., Milwaukee.]

Now isn't this ... er ... curious. A.S.G., reading more into the first letter than I certainly did, assumes that Curious is a woman, since *he* (A.S.G., I'm assuming) couldn't imagine a man identifying himself in this way. In any case, A.S.G.'s right-back-atcha response invokes what is one most of the broadly negative stereotypes of eastern U.S. speech, namely the much hyped "Toity-Toid and Toid" accent of Brooklyn. A.S.G. isn't too bothered by the fact that New Jersey English is rather different from that of its metropolitan neighbor one state over, but he does make this important point: judgments about regional speech are all relative.

This enlightened position about the linguistic diversity of the American landscape is picked up on by two more letters "From the People" that appeared on May 5, 1947:

Other State 'Languages'

To The Journal: To "Curious," who recently wrote on "Wisconsin's Own Language," may I say that living in six states and visiting and traveling in the other 42 has given me to believe that each state has its own language.

Wyoming has its "spuds," Oklahoma its "taters," a "pail" in the middle west is a "bucket" in the east, a

“poke” in the south is a “sack” in the east and a “bag” in Wisconsin. In Wyoming a spot of green grass in a “valley” is a “meadow”; a “farm” is a “ranch.”

While a New Jersey stranger in Wisconsin wonders at our language, we of Wisconsin would do the same in New Jersey.

Most of this is due to the type of foreigner who settled in this or that part of our United States. We are a melting pot and speak a mixed language with disregard for correct English. Moving from Brown county, where Germans and Belgians are many, to Door county’s Scandinavian population, it is very noticeable that our English is a mixup of this and that. [Signed: TRAVELER, 358 N. 3rd St., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.]

In Defense of ‘Wisconsin’

To The Journal: In reply to the letter written by the person who signed himself “Curious,” I wish to say that although I have not traveled in 23 states, I have been outside of Wisconsin enough to know that each state has a few customs and slang phrases of its own. There is a saying that “When you are with the wolves, you howl with them.” I am not implying the one should use incorrect language, but I do not think that a few misuses of the English language is a crime.

I wonder how perfect New Jersey is with its pronunciation of “r” as “ah”? If we want to get technical, we can find something wrong with the action or speech of each state, community or individual.

Some of the corrections made were right, of course, but “bedroom” or “house” slippers can be worn out of doors. “Gal” is one of the most vulgar pronunciations of the word “girl” I have ever heard, though it’s apparently used in New Jersey. “Hi” may be a shortened form of “hello” or “how do you do,” but then bowing and curtsying went out with the turn of the century, too.

As for the use of the word “lunch,” dinner was the name given to the noonday meal, and supper referred to the evening meal. Lunch meant a snack taken at most any time of day. The upper “400” decided that dinner and supper were too common for their society use, so they called their evening meal dinner and the noon meal became lunch or luncheon. Many working people have changed the two about to suit their own needs.

As one of Wisconsin’s potential teachers, I don’t think the language used in Wisconsin is any worse than that used in New Jersey or any other state. Maybe that’s because I hail from Wisconsin! [Signed: F.L.F., Theresa, Wis.]

Good for you, F.L.F.; I wish I had had you for my teacher. And thanks, Traveler, for reminding us of one very important point about *how* American English has become so linguistically (and culturally and culinarily) enriched—through the “mixup” of people from various backgrounds, Native, Yankee, and immigrant.

Finally, on May 9, 1947, after these relatively enlightened critical responses to Curious, a last, curmudgeonly letter from “Reformer” in Milwaukee appeared:

Milwaukee’s Odd English

To The Journal: I’m not from New Jersey and I don’t pretend to be an authority on the English language. I was born and reared 130 miles from this city. I’ve done some traveling and lived in different cities, but I still insist that you haven’t heard anything until you hear the way Milwaukeeans use the English language.

I really dread raising my child in this city for that reason. She’s only 6 and still says “I’m going to grandmother’s house” instead of “I’m going by grandma’s house,” so I have hopes. She hasn’t acquired that expression “ana.”

“Youse” and “ain’t” are commonly used in Milwaukee. The illogical sequence of words in sentences and mispronunciations are among the more common errors. And the word “first”—they put it in some strange place in the sentence and give it a strange meaning!

I ride on the buses and streetcars often. It is seldom that one hears a perfect sentence.

Milwaukeeans don’t realize that they aren’t talking properly. Even teachers and radio announcers are not free from these local errors. I’ll wager that 90% of the people who visit here from out of the state do laugh at the way Milwaukeeans talk.

But what to do about it—that’s another question. [Signed: REFORMER, N. 37th St., Milwaukee.]

Oh boy, here we go again. All right, *a(in)na* (< *ain’t* it, a tag question used mainly by German-speaking immigrants; thanks again, *DARE!*) is still fairly regional; so is the German-Americanism *first* as a synonym for *just*, as in *I first came*. And even though *youse* and *ain’t* (of very old provenance in the history of English ... and logical: *you* (singular) + *-s* (plural) = *youse*) *ain’t* so regionally limited, the palettes of Mark Twain and many other superior writers would be much blander without them.

But let me counter Reformer by wagering that 90% of American English speakers would no longer wince if I were to *go by grandma’s house* (for a little lunch, perhaps?). What to do about it? (A perfect sentence.) Hmmm ... is that ever tricky, that’s for sure.

Klauser credited for work building ties with Hessen

By Nicole Saylor

Over the past twenty-five years, Wisconsin and the German state of Hessen have forged a close bond in the public and private sectors. Numerous business and political leaders regularly visit each other's states to share ideas about issues ranging from biotechnology to welfare reform. Hundreds of students participate in educational exchanges to learn about such diverse areas as metalwork, engineering, printing technology, and more.

These partnerships flourish today in no small part because of James Klauser. During his decade as secretary of administration under Governor Tommy Thompson, he was instrumental in getting leaders together to talk about problems and share solutions.

"For me, while I was secretary of administration, I really benefited from the discussion of mutual problems," Klauser said, "and seeing how they approached them. Overall, I think the student-teacher relationships are very important."

Klauser, 64, is beginning his second stint on the MKI Friends Board of Directors this year. Over most of the twenty-year history of the MKI, Klauser has supported the work of the institute both directly, as a past member of the Friends Board, as well as indirectly through his leadership of the Hessen-Wisconsin Society.

"I think it's a good organization, sometimes having to struggle within the university borders," he said. "We have to make sure Kade gets its piece of bread once in awhile."



Klauser

The origins of Klauser's interest in German, if not apparent by his last name, stems from his roots extending back to the former Prussian Empire. "My mother was a Burmeister, and her mother was a Sohns. My father's mother was named Busch," said Klauser, whose father was emigrated from Germany. His mother's family arrived in the United States in the 1840s and early 1850s from Silesia "as best we can tell."

Klauser's service to his ancestral home is well known. In 2001, he was awarded the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* (German Service Cross, 1st Class, or Knight's Cross) for his contributions supporting the reconstruction of Germany. The award is the Federal Republic of Germany's highest civilian honor and came to Klauser after he received the Hessen Medal of Service (*Verdienstorden des Landes Hessen*) in 1997. This medal recognizes outstanding

individuals who have provided valuable service, well over and above the call of duty, to the State of Hessen and its people.

Both honors stem from Klauser's work to build business, governmental, and educational partnerships.

"Culturally it's important," he said. "It helps us understand the roots of our culture. For the governmental units, they can learn from each other."

Klauser is currently senior vice president at Wisconsin Energy Corporation and lives on Pewaukee Lake with his wife Shirley. They have two sons, D. J., a Madison attorney, and Jamie, who is "freelancing and looking for a nice position" as a computer programmer.

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Staff changes, new books, German speakers mark a busy fall semester for MKI

By Mark L. Loudon, MKI Director

The fall semester is now underway and we at MKI and CSUMC are looking forward to another busy and satisfying year. I have a few personnel changes to report first. This fall, we bid farewell to Emily Engel, who has worked hard for the past several years as an editorial assistant for our monograph series. Emily has just received a promotion in her job with the YMCA; congratulations, Emily, and thank you for all you've done for us! Emily's last project was preparing for publication the *Mennonite Low German Dictionary* by Jack Thiessen, a substantial reference work that will appear in the next several weeks. We also wish Thor Templin, another longtime student worker, the very best now that he has graduated with master's degrees in German and Scandinavian studies.

Also speaking of staff, we are very pleased to welcome Dawn Hamre and Kirk Martinson to the MKI/CSUMC team. Dawn is our new program assistant, shared with the Folklore program. Kirk is a

project assistant whose position is funded through the generosity of the German department; he is working on digitization of sound recordings and a number of important projects related to our Web site. Welcome, Dawn and Kirk!

Our fall calendar of events is shaping up nicely. On October 3, we will welcome back our good friend (and Lifetime Friend!) Dr. Helmut Schmahl of the University of Mainz for a lecture on Wisconsin immigrants' biographies. And exactly one month later, Dr. Wolfgang Grams, an expert on German immigration to North America, will speak to us on traveling to Germany in search of "roots."

Finally, a hearty thank you to Fran Luebke and Antje Petty for their successful proposal to the German Consulate in Chicago for MKI program funding. I am very happy to say that the Friends have been awarded a \$10,000 grant to help build our outreach presentations. At the top of our wish list is a much needed new photocopier. Thanks, Fran and Antje!

And thanks to all of our Friends for their continuing support of the MKI. Our continued growth is mainly due to your generosity and hard work.

As we begin another academic year, the collaboration between the MKI and CSUMC and Folklore only grows stronger. Far from forsaking the traditional focus of the MKI's work on German-American studies, I am committed, as Joe Salmons was, to situating the experience of German-speaking immigrants into the bigger multicultural picture of the Upper Midwest and beyond. To that end, you'll notice that the content of my "Speaking of Language" feature elsewhere in this newsletter evokes this broader focus. In future articles, the amount of specifically German-American content will vary, but in every case I hope you enjoy reading about topics set against a linguistically and culturally diverse backdrop.

From all of us at MKI and CSUMC, a very happy and healthy fall to all of you!

Mark

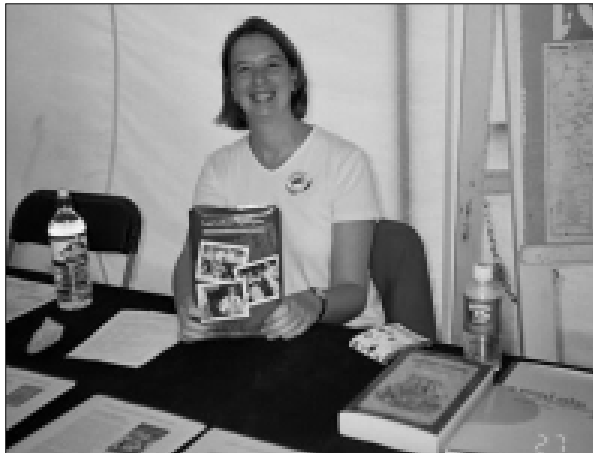


Photo by Charles James

GERMANFEST 2003 ... Kristen Reifsnnyder, a recent Ph.D. from the UW-Madison German Department, was one of many people who took turns staffing the Max Kade Institute's booth at the 2003 German Fest, July 25-27, 2003, at Milwaukee's Maier Festival Park. Staffers fielded questions about MKI and helped people research their German roots.

Books available on German Jews, Mennonite Low Germans

The Max Kade Institute is pleased to announce the release of two new books: *German-Jewish Identities in America*, edited by Christof Mauch and our own Joseph Salmons, and the *Mennonite Low German Dictionary* 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. The *Mennonite Low German Dictionary* is the most detailed dictionary of the language available in English, containing more than 25,000 entries.

Be on the lookout for two more works from our monograph series in the upcoming months: *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich, and the two-volume *Regionalism in an Age of Globalism*. The first volume, *Concepts of Regionalism*, is edited by Lothar



Hönnighausen, Marc Frey, James Peacock, and Niklaus Steiner while the editors for the second volume, *Forms of Regionalism*, are James Peacock, Lothar Hönnighausen, Anke Ortlepp, and Niklaus Steiner.

— Eric Platt

German scholars to lecture at UW-Madison this fall



Schmahl

Two German scholars, Dr. Helmut Schmahl and Dr. Wolfgang Grams, will lecture at University of Wisconsin–Madison this fall.

On Friday, October 3, 2003, from 7–9 p.m. at the Memorial Union (check TITU for room number), Schmahl, from the University of Mainz, will speak on nineteenth-century immigrant biographies.



Grams

On Monday, November 3, 2003, Grams, owner of Routes to the Roots in Oldenburg, Germany, will lecture on “Departure—Sailing—Arrival: The German Migration Experience and the Pursuit of Happiness.” He speaks 7–9 p.m. in the VandeBerg Auditorium at the Pyle Center.

MKI News in Brief

Lectures to highlight cookbook

Be sure to attend the Taste of Wisconsin Traditions lecture and dinner program at the Wisconsin Historical Museum. Antje Petty, assistant director at the Max Kade Institute, will present “*Pickled Herring and Pumpkin Pie: Tracing the Immigrant Experience in German-American Cookbooks.*”

The event is 7–9 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 9, at the Wisconsin Historical Museum, 30 N. Carroll Street on Madison’s Capitol Square. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Cost is \$18 per person, \$15 for Historical Society members. Payment required by Sept. 29. Call (608) 264-6566 or email museum@whs.wisc.edu.

Petty will also introduce *Pickled Herring* at a Wisconsin Book Festival event, “The Book and the Cook,” 6–8:30 p.m. Sunday, October 26, 2003, at Willy Street Co-op, 1221 Williamson St., in Madison.

Highlights of recent library acquisitions

By Kevin Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

Once again we highlight a small number of the items recently added to the MKI Library, selected from the Published in North America, Subject, and Family History and Archives collections. A complete list of recent acquisitions is available on our Web site as a link from the News page or at the URL:

<http://csumc.wisc.edu/mki/Library/NewAcqs/NewAcqs.htm>.

Contact the MKI Librarian at (608) 262-7546 or e-mail him at kkurdylo@wisc.edu if you would like to view these titles, or if you would like to donate materials. We want to express our gratitude to Linda Albright, LaVerne Telle Boehmke, Ingeborg Carsten-Miller, Thomas Fairchild, Arlyn Fuerst, Wilma Giese, Hope Hague, Hugh H. Iltis, Mark Loudon, Helmut Schmahl, James Steakley, Johannes Strohschänk and William Thiel, the Swiss American Historical Society, and Erwin A. Uecker for their donations.

Published in North America

Der Deutsche in Nebraska illustrierte Volks-Kalender für das Jahr 1916. Mit Bildern in Dreifarben- und Tondruck und zahlreichen Illustrationen im Text. Omaha, NE: Omaha Tribune, [1915]. 102 pp., ill.

Includes a calendar with astronomical events, aphorisms, poems, essays, fiction, and war news. Article and stories include: "Gesprengte Fesseln," by E. Krickeberg; "Die Waldungen der Vereinigten Staaten," by Walter V. Woehlke; "Die verbesserte Schraube: Humoreske aus dem Soldatenleben," by Ferdinand Bonn; "Feuerschutz in den Wäldern des Felsen-gebirges"; "Unter falscher Flagge: Einem Erlebnis im U-Boot-Kriege," by Fritz Camphanser[?]; "Nach dem Sturm," by T. H. Randel; and "Der Pflingstritt," by G. Schätzler-Perasini. Donated by Arlyn Fuerst.

Subject Collection

Pommern Life: As Heard on WRIG Radio. Wausau, WI: Pommerscher Verein—Central Wisconsin, [2002]. 7 compact discs .

The *Pommern Life* radio series began broadcasting in July 2001. The programs seek to "provide entertainment, information, and education about the life and times of Pomeranian immigrants to Wisconsin and their descendants in Central Wisconsin. The format includes a host and a guest each week discussing Pomeranian culture, heritage, customs, history, foods, the Plattdüütsch language, genealogy, and music."

Family Histories and Archives

Becher, Willie [*School Notebook: German Essay Writing, 1st Seminar and Elements of Algebra.*] [July 23, 1895]. [41] pp.

School essays in German (Deutsche Aufsätze) titled "Meine Heimat: Eine Beschreibung" (he says he was born in Chemnitz, Sachsen), "Ein Situationsbild (Nach dem Gedichte, 'Das Negerweib' v. Geibel)," "Die Lebensgeschichte Schillers," "Der Ring des Polykrates," "Steter Tropfen höhlt den Stein" (an essay on idiomatic sayings), "Charakterbeschreibung des Ritters in dem Gedichte 'Der Kampf mit dem Drachen,'" "Friedrich II und der Müller" (a play), "Die Rache," and "Die Rettung Baumgartens (Von ihm selbst erzählt)." Loose pages written in English include "Tiger Lily's Race" and "The Black Horse and His Rider" (by George Lippard[?]). Also an advertisement for a play titled "Die Ahnfrau."

Boehmke, LaVerne Telle, comp. *The Descendants of Johann Boehmke, ca. 1818-1983. Comprising the Boehmke, Latotski, Kluck, Klein, Radtke, Gruhlke, and Reibe Families.* St. Louis, MO: Robert E. Parkin Genealogical Research & Productions, [1983]. 196 pp.

"The Boehmkes arrived in the United States in the early 1880's. ... In Europe the Boehmkes lived in the area known then as West Prussia ... near the market town of Preussisch-Stargard." Donated by LaVerne Telle Boehmke.

Marriage, love advice for German-Americans

By Kevin Kurdylo, MKI Librarian

Winke für Werbung und Heirath: Ein feiges Herz hat nie eine schöne Dame gewonnen.

[Advice for courtship and marriage:
A faint heart never won a fair lady.]

How did German immigrants in North America develop their ideas about courtship, love, and marriage? Many doubtless took their cues from religious teachings or from the advice and examples of elders and peers; others perhaps developed an ache for romance by reading works of fiction and poetry. And a few, one imagines, availed themselves of such published works as discussed below. However they learned, we know they learned well, for some of us are living reminders of their success!

Familienglück, ein Büchlein für Jünglinge und Jungfrauen, die sich verheirathen wollen.

Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Waisenfreund, 1905. 106 pp.

Addressed to Catholic

youth of both genders this book advocates a traditional, strongly religious, prescription for marriage. It advises its readers to “betrachtet es als einen Rathgeber, der euch in einer sehr wichtigen Angelegenheit Winke und Warnungen gibt, die ihr beachten, und Belehrungen, die ihr befolgen müßt, wenn ihr euch keine unglückliche Zukunft bereiten wollt” [“regard it as a counselor that provides you with advice, admonitions, and instructions in a very important matter, which you must heed if you want to avoid a wretched future”]. The reader is told that one who enters into marriage is taking an important step, but he or she “übernimmt mehr Sorgen und Beschwerden, bekommt keinen Lohn, und, was das Schlimmste ist,

er kann, wenn er auch noch so unglücklich wird, nie kündigen” [“accepts more concerns and burdens, receives no wages, and, which is the worst, can never quit, even in the event of unhappiness”]. Readers are told that it is a special duty of spouses to remain kind to one another, and girls specifically are warned that

their beauty is not enough to win the heart of their husbands: “Wenn er dich alle Tage sieht, so wird er an deine Schönheit bald gewöhnt, und zuletzt macht sie gar keinen Eindruck mehr auf ihn” [If he sees you everyday, then he soon becomes accustomed to your beauty, and eventually it no longer makes an impression on him”].

Of interest are the lists of women and men, “die man nicht zur Ehe wählen soll” [“whom one should not choose to marry”]. Men should not marry a woman who is devoted to a “false religion”; who fancies herself to be scholarly (“you will be a fool in her eyes”); who is a

dancer (“sie ist keine Jungfrau”); who wears cosmetics (for she is ugly, otherwise she would have no need for whitewash); who likes the finer things in life (“she will spend more than you can earn”); or who is lewd or lascivious (“for you cannot trust her to be true to you”).

A woman should not choose to marry a man who is not of the Catholic faith, nor one who indulges in alcohol or gambling, is a glutton (he brings you nothing but a soft body and a degenerate soul), is incompetent at his work, quick to anger, lazy, misanthropic, or surly, for “wer kann es bei einem solchen aushalten? Wer bei ihm glücklich sein?” [“Who can bear to be with such a person? Who could be happy with him?”]



A bashful young couple. (All images from *Lichtstrahlen für die Gesundheit*, 1899.)

Both genders are warned against marrying those either much older or younger than themselves, and a discussion of whether to marry someone who is not of German nationality ends with this advice: “Wenn du das alles bedenkst, so wirst du einsehen, dass es am besten ist, wenn du nur eine solche Person zur Ehe wählst, die mit der deutschen Sprache so bekannt ist, wie du es bist” [“If you consider all this, then you will see that it is best if you only choose to marry a person who is as familiar with the German language as you are”].

Jefferis, B. G. and J. L. Nichols. *Lichtstrahlen für die Gesundheit, oder, dunkle Stellen beleuchtet. Ein vollkommener Rathgeber für geschlechtliche Fragen zur Erhaltung der Reinheit und Manneskraft. Rath für Jungfrau, Gattin und Mutter; wie auch Anleitung in Fragen der Liebe, Werbung und Heirath.* 7th ed. Naperville, Ill.: J. L. Nichols, 1899. 559 pp., ill.

A translation from English, this book offers advice on a wide range of health and sexual issues as seen through the lens of eugenics. The text combines traditional views of women’s roles with some pragmatic advice about love, marriage, choice of mate, and the bad habits of men. In the section “Was die Frauen an Männern lieben,” we are told that women love courage, strength, and firmness in men. “Die Frau wird einen Feigling naturgemäß verachten und sie hat nur wenig oder gar keine Achtung für einen Mann, der sich geniert” [“Woman naturally despises a coward, and she has little or no respect for a bashful man”]. A



Above: Communicating before marriage. Below: communicating in marriage.



women can also never love a man whose conversation is flat and insipid, but a homely man will catch her attention if he is strong and vigorous and possesses a good degree of intelligence. And, of course, “es ist eine allbekannte Thatsache, daß die Frauen Männer in Uniformen sehr gern haben” [“it is a well known fact that women love uniformed men”].

What do men love in women? A round, plump figure, with “breite Hüften, volle Brüste und kleine Füße” [“broad hips, full breasts, and small feet”], seems to do the trick, although “die Füße und Knöchle müssen jedoch mit dem Körper übereinstimmen, denn kleine Füße und kleine Knöchle an eine großen Frau würden nicht im Verhältniß und infolgedessen unschön sein” [“Feet and ankles however must be in harmony with the body, as small feet and small ankles on a large woman would be out of proportion and consequently not beautiful”]. Intelligence is on the list, too, but it comes only after the small feet.

Spurgeon, C. H. *Reden hinterm Pflug: oder Guter Rat für allerlei Leute.* New York:

Amerikanische Traktat-Gesellschaft, n.d. 198 pp.

A translation of *John Ploughman’s Talk, or, Plain Advice for Plain People*, this book offers the following two fitting sentiments upon which to close this article: “Zeigt mir einen liebenden Gatten, ein würdiges Weib und artige Kinder dazu, und ich bin gewiß, daß mich kein

Gespann, welches je die Straße hinuntergejagt ist, auch wenn es ein Jahr lang lief, irgend wohin bringen könnte, wo ich einen angenehmeren Anblick haben würde” [“Show me a loving husband, a worthy wife, and good children, and no pair of horses that ever flew along the road could take me in a year where I could see a more pleasing sight”]; and, “Erst wenn man verheiratet ist, fängt das Glück des lebens an” [“When you are married, your bliss begins”].

Next issue see Part II: How to write a love letter, and how to be a good husband or wife.

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