

Max Kade Institute Friends Newsletter

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South American Low German: Mennonites in Bolivia

By Kimberly Miller, MKI Editorial Assistant

A tourist wandering through the Los Pozos market in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, might walk down the street 6 de agosto (6th of August) and be surprised to discover crowds of tall, blond-haired, blue-eyed white men in long-sleeved shirts and overalls, with a baseball cap or sombrero, and women in dark flowered, pleated dresses, nylons and fancy black sandals, embroidered headscarves, and straw hats. Over one business, a sign advertises, “Gute Bedienung für die Mennoniten,” and another is named “Mennoniten-Büro.”

These are the Old Colony Mennonites, at home in Bolivia. Over 45,000 of them live in Bolivia’s tropical plains, with at least 45 colonies already in existence and new ones forming. These Mennonites seek to separate themselves from the world around them. In order to maintain this separation, the Colony Mennonites limit their use of technology. Most colonies do not allow telephones or radios, and most require steel wheels on tractors. A rubber-tired tractor can travel much further and faster, making it easier to get to town. The idea of using a tractor as transportation might not occur to a car owner, but consider this: In a colony where rubber tires are allowed, some young men modify the gears on a tractor so that it can travel 70 kilometers an hour.

Separation from the world is not achieved only through limiting technology, however. There is a linguistic barrier: Among themselves the Colony Mennonites speak a variety of Low German, and in schools they learn High German as their language of literacy. Mennonite men



Horses wait outside the Valle Esperanza Campo 202 store.

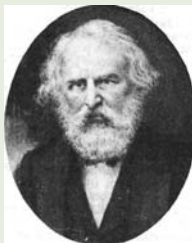


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Looking back, looking forward

By Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director

Greetings, Friends and Readers!

We are happy to report about a flurry of successful activity toward the end of the spring semester 2006. Jürgen Macha's March lecture ("Between the Language Varieties: Writing Behavior of German Emigrants to the U.S.") was well attended and received (see page 7), as was Don Yoder's in April ("Folklife in America: A Personal View"). The traveling lecture series on "Wisconsin Englishes," a multimedia event by Erica Benson, Joan Hall, Greg Iverson, Jennifer Delahanty, Tom Purnell, and Joe Salmons, was presented in Milwaukee, Eau Claire, and Madison in March and April. Antje Petty (MKI) and Daniela Pruß (Goethe Institute of Chicago) organized and led a late-April teachers workshop on incorporating past and present immigrant experiences in the German classroom. And finally, the annual meeting of the Friends of the MKI, held in May in West Bend, was a resounding success (see page 15).

Several MKI projects were completed last year or are moving toward completion. First is the "How German Is American?" project, including the

poster, brochure, and Web site. We can point to high demand for the materials as well as positive feedback as signs of its success. Next, the three-year American Languages project, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), has finished digitization of the German dialectal materials and will complete digitization of the American English recordings for the *Dictionary of American Regional English* by November. These materials will keep MKI's linguists busy for years to come, as well as attracting researchers from elsewhere. And finally, our monograph series is progressing, with the appearance this summer of *Wisconsin German Land and Life* (edited by Heike Bungert, Cora Lee Kluge, and Robert Ostergren), and the forthcoming annotated anthology entitled *Other Witnesses: An Anthology of Literature of the German Americans, 1850-1914* (edited by Cora Lee Kluge).

Some of our graduate assistants are finishing their degrees or moving on to other opportunities. This means we say farewell to some who have become familiar faces around the MKI and our partner institute, the Center for the Study of Upper Midwest Cultures (CSUMC): Zachary Schwartz (our Sound Lab's "wild digitizer"), Jocelyne Bodden (who worked with the CSUMC Newsletter and other projects), Mike Olson (who worked with technical aspects of the IMLS American Languages project), and Stacey Erdman (who contributed to the database and digitization side of the American Languages project). We wish all of them the best, and *they will be missed!*

Finally, we bid farewell to Mark Loudon, the MKI Director and then Co-director for the last four years, who is now "rotating out," as they say. As he is neither retiring nor leaving the University of Wisconsin, however, we will certainly continue to profit from his advice and even assistance for years to come. Our hearty thanks to him for his efforts in behalf of the MKI throughout his tenure. He has brought projects, energy, and success to the Keystone House; and we have profited greatly from his contributions. We wish for him demanding projects, hard work, and much happiness!

Cora Lee

Max Kade Institute

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Max Kade Institute
for German-American Studies
901 University Bay Drive
Madison, WI 53705

Phone: (608) 262-7546 Fax: (608) 265-4640
Any submissions via e-mail may be directed to
kkurdylo@wisc.edu

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Discussion with Professor Emeritus Gerhard Weiss of the University of Minnesota Department of German

Interviewed by Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director

C.L.K.: I would like to start by asking you, who have long been a Minnesotan, about your relationship with German studies and German-American studies in Madison. If I remember correctly, you were celebrating a special anniversary when you were on campus in April to give a lecture.

G.W.: You are absolutely right: Madison, the UW, the German Department, and the Max Kade Institute are close to my heart. I came to Madison in the fall of 1952 as a graduate student in German

and Comparative Literature. I was a teaching assistant under the guidance of John Workman,

I sat in the seminars of Heinrich Henel, Walter Naumann, Walter Gausewitz, Werner Vordtriede, Martin Joos, and Roe-Merrill Heffner. I was good friends with the departmental secretary Thekla Nimmow (a most formidable lady). Above all, I met my future wife, Library Science graduate student Janet Smith. I also frequently visited the “father” of the German Department, A. R. Hohlfeld (who was then ninety years old and blind), and assisted him with the completion of his last article on “die Mütter” in Goethe’s *Faust*. That was quite an experience! And,

lest I forget, there were the German plays under the leadership of Sieghardt Riegel!

C.L.K.: The folks you named are the UW German Department giants of former years—and

hearing their names takes me way back. Can you believe that I myself knew six of the ten you mentioned?

G.W.: But there is more. I received my Ph.D. degree in 1956—this explains the anniversary you mentioned at the outset—and

became a member of the German Department at the University of Minnesota.

I continued to cherish my contacts with Madison—through workshops, symposia, guest lectures, and library resources. Janet and I have often been back. So you see, my ties to the UW have remained strong.

C.L.K.: . . . and your relationship with the Max Kade Institute?

G.W.: The Institute was established long after I had left. However, I had been in contact with Jürgen Eichhoff, who was involved with its found-



Janet and Gerhard Weiss.
Photo by Charles James.

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The Friends of the Max Kade Institute Board of Directors

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Mennonites continued from page 1

who frequently travel to town for business purposes, or who need to work closely with Bolivians, will learn some Spanish or even become fluent, but many, especially women, learn no Spanish at all.

How did these Low German-speaking Mennonites end up in Bolivia? When the 1952 agricultural reform opened the eastern Bolivian lowlands to settlement, Colony Mennonites began moving from Paraguay, Mexico, Belize, and Canada. This was the most recent step in a long history of migration. These Mennonites' ancestors lived in Holland and Frisia, moved to Prussia and there switched languages from Dutch to German, then moved to Russia, taking the German language with them. From Russia, their paths have diverged: some went to Paraguay, others to Canada and later from Canada to Mexico, yet others to Germany, and so on.

What draws them to Bolivia? Many of those who leave Paraguay and Mexico are seeking a more conservative lifestyle. For example, in Mexico, electricity has reached the colonies, and there are other liberalizing tendencies. But land needs are equally important: in Mexico and Paraguay land prices are higher, and land is becoming scarce. Families are large, with an average of eight children, and each generation needs more land. Conservative values limit the possible occupations: Most become farmers, but those who cannot afford land, or who do not do well as farmers, can become storekeepers, schoolteachers, blacksmiths, or mechanics. Working outside of the colony is prohibited.

The name of one colony, Valle Esperanza (valley of hope), indicates the great expectations and hopes that these Mennonites brought with them to Bolivia. The first settlement years were difficult, as bad roads made travel difficult and the land was still covered with trees, but then came the boom years of high crop yields and good prices. Now drought parches the soy fields, and those who succeed in raising a crop cannot get the price they once did. The other main cash

crops, milk, and sesame, are not affected as strongly by drought, but there have been price drops. As hard times have come, migration has largely ceased from all countries except the most conservative colonies in Paraguay.

Although the Mennonites choose to separate themselves from the culture around them, there are signs of influence and interaction. Their sojourns in different countries have left traces in their customs and language. For example, their clothing stems from the styles common among well-to-do Russians in the late 1800s. Hip-roofed barns and colonies named after Canadian provinces and towns (Alberta, Manitoba, Swift Current) testify to their time in North America. Now, Spanish words like *listo* (ready, done) and *baño* (bathroom, toilet) are entering the language.

While the Mennonites' lifestyle and language form barriers, they also create certain forms of interdependence. Because the Mennonites do not own vehicles, they hire Bolivians as drivers when they need to go to town or must haul something. The Mennonites only attend school through the sixth grade, and therefore they rely on the Spanish-speaking environment for medical and legal services. When the colony Valle Esperanza formed, a Bolivian village suddenly grew

up near it, as Bolivians moved there specifically to provide services to the Mennonites. Bolivians who regularly work with Mennonites may learn some Low German. And in Santa Cruz, the street that commemorates Bolivia's Independence Day, the 6th of August, is where Mennonites congregate to shop and where Bolivian shopowners cater specifically to Mennonite preferences.

Kimberly Miller, who completed her Ph.D. in German at the UW in 2004, recently spent a year in Bolivia serving with Mennonite Central Committee, where she edited the Menno Bote, a monthly German newspaper for the Colony Mennonites.



Eva Schmitt, 7 years old, on a long buggy ride to visit her grandparents. Her father owns the store pictured on page 1.

Profile continued from page 3

ing. Through him, I became aware of activities at the MKI, and was delighted to see the development of this resource, particularly since my own interests include German-American immigration history.

C.L.K.: You grew up in Germany and came to this country during the early years of the Nazi regime—is that right?

G.W.: Not exactly! Actually, I came to the U.S. after World War II, having survived the Nazi regime as a *Mischling* (my father was Jewish, my mother Protestant). It was no fun, as you can imagine. I had to wear the yellow star and was assigned to a labor group to remove bomb-damaged buildings. But, in comparison to what others had to endure, I came off reasonably well. We lived in an area of Berlin which after the war became the American Sector, and when in 1946 U.S. immigration policies allowed victims of the Nazi regime to enter the country, my parents and I were on the second boat. We were, so to speak, the last refugees, or the first immigrants after the war. We settled in St. Louis, and three months later I was drafted into the U.S. Army—the fastest course in total integration that one could experience!

C.L.K.: What were your experiences *during* the war?

G.W.: During the Second World War? They were shaped by my role as “outsider” in my own country, by my fervent hope for a quick Allied victory, by enduring each and every air raid on Berlin, by a constant fear of deportation, and by witnessing the apocalyptic end of the Nazi regime in the battle for Berlin.

C.L.K.: Where did you take your university degrees?

G.W.: Easily answered: my B.A. and M.A. degrees were from Washington University in St. Louis, and my Ph.D. from the UW in Madison.

C.L.K.: The Wisconsin German Department has traditionally been a center in the U.S.—perhaps *the* center—for German-American studies. Why is that?

G.W.: I think the answer lies in the fact that Wisconsin historically has had a strong German immigrant population with a distinct German-American culture. Many of them were highly educated,

and they were literate—thus the large number of German-language newspapers, books, and other documents produced during the nineteenth century in Wisconsin. They were also enthusiastic Americans who actively participated in the life of their new country while preserving many of their German traditions. So, it seems only proper that the German Department of the state’s university has remained involved in a serious study of this heritage. It is German history, and it is Wisconsin history.

C.L.K.: Were you already interested in German-American studies as a student? And what is your specific interest in the field?

G.W.: My serious interest in German-American studies developed gradually. Initially, I equated it with folk-dancing, oompah bands, and beer festivals, but eventually I came to recognize that it was an important and worthy area of academic inquiry. My feeling is that German immigration culture made an important contribution to and is part of American society as it exists today, and that the serious study of German immigration culture offers insights in how cultures merge. My own particular interest has been focused on the nineteenth-century immigrants, men like Charles Follen (the first German professor at Harvard), Francis Lieber (who, among his many other accomplishments, originated the *Encyclopedia Americana*), or Carl Dörflinger (Civil War hero, publisher, and author from Milwaukee).

C.L.K.: How do you assess the role of German studies in American education today?

G.W.: I am particularly concerned with the status of German in our secondary schools, but even on the college level, enrollments in German have declined. At the University of Minnesota, we have counteracted this trend somewhat by broadening the curriculum to include German culture studies, film studies, gender studies, etc. Language and literature alone simply do not interest American students today as much as perhaps they should.

C.L.K.: How do you assess the proper tasks for German-American studies?

G.W.: I have already indicated that German-American studies is a valid field of inquiry *per se*.

Karl Knortz meets with Henry Longfellow, 1876: Part II

Translated by Mark Loudon, former MKI Co-Director

*This is the second of three parts of an essay [see the Winter 2005 issue for Part I] by Karl Knortz (1841–1918), a famous German-American publisher, critic, and observer of American folklife, on his encounter with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882). We rejoin them in Longfellow’s home in Boston, discussing the difficulties of translation and sundry aspects of the world of letters. The essay is taken from Knortz’s *Aus der transatlantischen Gesellschaft: Nordamerikanische Kulturbilder* (Leipzig, 1882), which is available in the MKI Library.*

“My First Visit with Longfellow” (Part 2)

“There are numerous poems,” I remarked, “such that if one were to make every effort to slavishly reproduce the meter of the original in the foreign language, translating every word verbatim, the result would be the loss of the original’s poetic magic. Indeed, I would go so far as to claim that such a literal translation is simply impossible for many poems. You are surely familiar with the touching Spanish song, “*El pajaro perdido*” (The Lost Bird), by Carolina Coronado de Perry. (The fame of that woman, who was born in 1823 in Amendralejo, in Estremadura, was established with a collection of poems she published at the tender age of twenty. The German-Spanish poet and critic Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch wrote the preface. In 1872 Carolina married Horatio J. Perry, the U.S. envoy in Madrid at that time.) I have tried at least a dozen times to render this poem with the same meter in German, without success. Other translators have had similar experiences, like the proverbial boy who tried to

wipe the color off the butterflies he caught. But this Spanish poem, with its numerous monosyllabic words, has been translated successfully into English, as William Cullen Bryant has shown.”

“What? Bryant translated that poem?” Longfellow asked.

“Yes, and quite beautifully!”

“Did the translation appear in a newspaper?”

“You will find it in his collected poems.”

Longfellow seemed puzzled, went to his bookshelf and pulled down a rather large book, and after leafing through it for some time, stated: “You are correct.”

That book was not by Bryant; rather, it was Longfellow’s own anthology, *The Poets and Poetry of Europe*. His memory, as I myself thought, was not the best. During later visits he demonstrated more than a few “senior moments.” For example, he would ask me at



Karl Knortz

least a dozen times if I had heard that [Ferdinand] Freiligrath had died, and after I said I had, Longfellow would always ask: “How does he rank in German literature?”

Longfellow always spoke fondly of Freiligrath, remembering with pleasure the hours they had spent together in Düsseldorf.

“Freiligrath,” Longfellow recounted, “always spoke English with me, and quite fluently. One time, when we were sitting together over a glass of beer, he used the English word ‘undertaker’ in its original sense, prompting me to smile and leading him to remark that he must have made a rather dumb error. As I explained to him the modern

Max Kade Visiting Professor Jürgen Macha speaks about language of German immigrants

By Angela Bagwell and Mike Olson, MKI Friends

On March 30, Jürgen Macha addressed a crowd of professors, students, and members of the community on “Between the Language Varieties: Writing Behavior of German Emigrants to the U.S.” Professor für Deutsche Philologie (Sprachwissenschaft) in Münster, Germany, Macha spent the spring semester as the Max Kade Visiting Professor in the UW–Madison German Department. A specialist in dialectology and sociolinguistics, he has also worked extensively on historical linguistics, including the language of 17th-century witch trial protocols and the letters of 19th-century immigrants from German-speaking lands. Because of the recent publication of several sets of immigrant letters, linguists can more easily gain new insights into the lives of German immigrants in the U.S..

Macha began by focusing on the different strategies used by German settlers to represent American place names orthographically in their letters. At times they relied on their “acoustic experience” of the name to approximate the perceived pronunciation. For example, *Maundenzitti* and *Senklär* are phonographic representations of Mountain City and Sinclair. Or they used a mixture of German and English sounds, like *Penselvenien*. Another strategy is a graphographic, or visual, representation of place names, where the writer attempted to mimic English spelling, but unintentionally produced errors. For example, instead of Louisville, one writer wrote *Luisville*.

Macha then shifted his attention to family names. First-generation German speakers in America often made adjustments, perhaps to eliminate strictly German orthographic characters, such as umlauts or an ess-tsett (ß), or to attempt to indicate the German pronunciation, or even to make their names sound more American. The census had an impact on the spelling of names, as monolingual census takers represented foreign-sounding names with their own writing conventions. Materials made available by German historian Joseph Scheben shed light on how names were changed. Immigrants frequently had to choose between retaining the *sound* and the

spelling of their name; keeping the spelling often led to strange English pronunciations, and keeping the sound led to spelling changes. They tried to find homophones between English and German (*Engelbert Esch* became *Ingelbird Ash*). Or they anglicized their names by changing umlauts and ess-tsetts to comparable Latin alphabet characters (*Büchel* to *Beachel*). Sometimes a name would even be translated, retaining the same meaning (*Fox* for *Fuchs* and *Smith* for *Schmitt*), but usually only if the English and German names had similar sound structures. Different members of the same family might choose different names: in the 1860 census, *Johann Thelen* had become *John Taylor*, whereas *Matthias Thelen* was listed as *Mathias Thelen*. Johann embraced his new identity by taking an American name, but Matthias, another family member, chose to maintain his heritage as a key element of his identity by keeping a distinctly German name. These name changes were sometimes affected by the German-speaker’s competency in reading and writing. Some could only sign their name with an X, and others became proficient and successful translators and interpreters, while most were between these extremes.

The Asbach family papers housed at the MKI <http://mki.wisc.edu/Resources/Archival_Images/Asbach/Asbach_index.htm> contain examples Macha used to illustrate the language of immigrants. He characterized the Asbachs’ son, because he was bilingual, as a typical second-generation German speaker. Some second-generation immigrants could write in both languages, often with English as their dominant language, since they were in an English-speaking environment outside of the home. Their reduced competency in German often caused problems for the older generation, especially the women, who tended to stay at home and had less contact with the community. They became increasingly isolated, even from their own children, and were sometimes forced to write in English in order to maintain contact.

Macha concluded that the first generation of German speakers was slower to adapt to the new lan-

A determined immigrant: The struggles of Helmut Dost

Reviewed by Pamela Tesch, MKI Friend

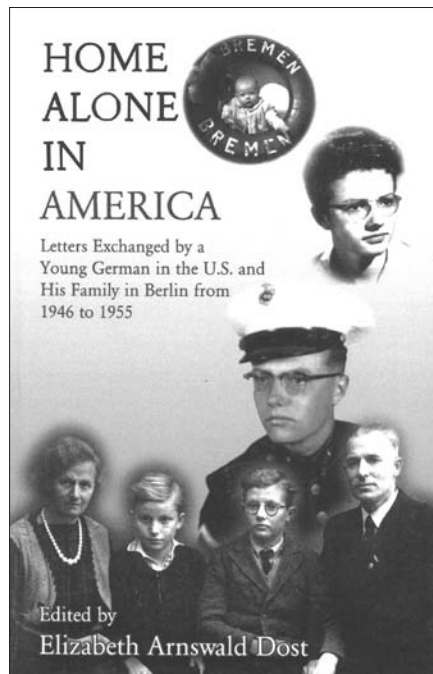
Dost, Elizabeth Arnswald, ed. *Home Alone in America: Letters Exchanged by a Young German in the U.S. and His Family in Berlin from 1946 to 1955*. Westminster, Maryland: Heritage Books, 2004. xv, 230 pp. Photos, letters, journal entries.

When sixteen-year-old Helmut Dost arrived in New York City in 1946 and began his journey to California, he did not dream that he would never see his father again, nor his mother and brother for nine more years. As one barrier after another was constructed around Berlin, it became increasingly difficult for his German family to leave; then his father died in an accident. Elizabeth Arnswald Dost, a journalist and the second wife of Helmut Dost, has created a wonderful tribute to her late husband by publishing *Home Alone in America*, a collection of letters exchanged between Helmut in the U.S. and his family in Germany from 1946 to 1955. Helmut's life unfolds like a historical novel through collected correspondence, photographs, and occasionally the journal entries of his father. The story is immediate, concrete, and filled with emotion: his impressions of America, financial struggles, and love for family and friends. In a classroom or book group, *Home Alone in America* could be used to inspire discussions on a variety of themes, including education in Germany and the U.S., language learning, or the impact of world events on personal history.

Helmut's path was determined by the fact that he was born in the U.S. in 1930 while his parents were living briefly in New York. Hoping that Helmut as an American citizen could pave the way for the family to escape postwar Berlin, his parents sent

him alone to his country of birth at the age of sixteen, planning to join him shortly. Helmut originally was to live in Vermont with family friends, but because a letter detailing his living arrangements was lost in the mail, the course of his life and education was changed forever. The lost letter, since rediscovered, is displayed in chapter one. Struggling to find a place to live, Helmut eventually moves in with a distant aunt in her

trailer in San Diego, California. His big dream is to continue schooling and become an engineer, his single-minded pursuit: to help his family with food and basic supply packages and to find a way for them to emigrate to the U.S. Unfortunately, "Tante Guschen" is not financially able to support Helmut or to sponsor his family in the immigration process. Helmut has no choice but to earn a living while taking evening high school classes. His letters tell of the jobs he holds: he learns shoemaking in San Diego, and works as a farmhand in Los



Altos, harvesting apricots and collecting eggs. He has hopes that Mr. and Mrs. Kern, the farmers who took him in, would eventually sponsor his family. However, as is revealed in chapter seven, these hopes are dashed when Mr. Kern is injured in an accident and cannot provide sponsorship. Helmut registers for the draft and is deployed to Korea. In chapter nine, the perspective changes: the letters are written by Maria, Helmut's mother, and by his brother, Martin. They describe daily life in Berlin and express their desire to join Helmut in California. In chapter ten, tension mounts as Helmut announces his decision to reenlist and stay in Korea. Thus, he tells his disap-

pointed mother and brother to remain in Berlin until he can provide for them. Finally, in chapter eleven, the letters are optimistic, as the entire family plans to reunite in New York in 1955. Unfortunately, there are no photos or journal entries documenting the reunion.

The following excerpt illustrates the differences in education that Helmut noticed between Germany and the U.S. Because he was only sixteen years old when he first arrived, he was able to continue in U.S. high schools, but he encountered the following:

I heard recently that here people are only learning in college the trigonometry that they learn in Germany in the 5th class of high school, or are beginning to learn. What they're learning here I already know. For that reason I think I'll quit school. (30)

There are more passages in the text in which Helmut explains his experiences in school and the educational options in America. He advises his brother to emigrate *after* finishing the Gymnasium. It is interesting to note that Helmut later obtained a doctorate in physics on the GI Bill at the University of California.

Another selection illustrates Helmut's experience with the English language: British versus American English, and language learning in general. He writes:

Have I ever mentioned to you a few of the speech differences in English? Here they say *streetcar* instead of *tram* for *Strassenbahn*, or *elevator* instead of *lift* for *Fahrstuhl*, as on the elevated train. Instead of "I say," careless Americans say "I *sais*" and "you *sais*." Then they say as a greeting if they pass each other on the street, "Hallo." If they go into a shop or if they would like to begin an on-going conversation or business transaction, they say "Hadiddu" = "How do you do" or "Hai" = "How are you?" (25)

Helmut was a harsh critic of German immigrant language learners. Here he describes his Tante Guschen's English:

I've been amazed from the first moment

that she still can't speak proper English, since she has lived in the country 34 years already. She speaks almost worse than you, Mom and Dad. She doesn't want to learn anything about it either. It's come to that because the Americans are so flattering and no one tells her about her mistakes. (27)

Perhaps these excerpts could be used to discuss the process of language learning, pronunciation, or American versus British English. Students might discuss language fossilization and its causes or the processes involved in language correction.

Another important aspect of reading these immigrant letters is the way they reveal daily life in Germany. Here, Helmut's brother describes postwar Berlin:

The Russians are building encircling canals and roads to avoid going through Berlin. West Berliners are no longer allowed in the Zone (the East Zone of Germany, i.e. East Germany, which surrounded Berlin), soon also the reverse. So big bicycle trips have gone by the board. Also, we can no longer go to Grandma (in Wittenberg) or to Potsdam without a very important reason. (144)

German students and scholars are familiar with scenes of postwar Berlin in historical documentaries (*The Berlin Airlift*, The History Channel, 1988), fictional films (*Somewhere in Berlin*, 1946), and memoirs (Wolfgang Samuel's *German Boy*, 2000), but some may not have read published personal letters, such as those contained in *Home Alone in America*. Although many books have covered postwar German immigration to the U.S. (1945-1955), few have provided such an engaging glimpse into an immigrant's life through personal letters and photos.

This book is available for purchase at:
<www.homealoneinamerica.com>.

Pamela Tesch received her Ph.D. in German from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She is currently teaching German at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan.

Upcoming Events and News Briefs

German Fest Milwaukee

Visit us at a joint exhibit being hosted by the West Bend Art Museum and MKI at this summer's German Fest in Milwaukee! The dates and times for this year will be: Friday, July 28th noon to 12 midnight; Saturday, July 29th noon to 12 midnight; and Sunday, July 30th noon to 10:30 p.m.

Symposia

Thursday, Sept. 28–Sunday, Sept. 30: “The German Language and Immigration in International Perspective”; cosponsored with Center for German and European Studies; will take place in the Memorial Union in Madison.

Sunday, Oct. 1: “German-American Artists in Wisconsin.” To be held at the West Bend Art Museum (WBAM), this event is co-sponsored by MKI, the Friends, and the WBAM. Speakers will include Katharina Bott, an art historian from Germany/Italy; and Tom Lidtke, executive director of the WBAM.

Lectures

Thursday, Sept. 14, 7 p.m. at the UW–Madison Memorial Union: A presentation by Kristine Hornor and Kevin Wester on Luxembourg Americans in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin.

Wednesday, Oct. 18–Sunday, Oct. 22: On a day to be announced during the Wisconsin Book Festival, MKI will present its new publication, *The Wisconsin Office of Emigration*, in Madison.

Exhibit

Wednesday, Oct. 18–Sunday, Oct. 22: During the American Folklore Society's 2006 Annual Meeting, “Homelands and Diasporas,” in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, MKI will present an exhibit on “How German is American?”

Multi-Talented Board Members

Two members of the Friends of the MKI Board, Hans Bernet and Ed Langer, will be singing as part of the Milwaukee Liederkrantz's performance at the New Glarus Volksfest on Sunday, Aug. 6.

Progress Report: Luxembourg American Cultural Center in Ozaukee County, WI



Dismantling the Mamer/Hansen barn.

The Luxembourg American Cultural Center, to be located in the heart of northern Ozaukee County, the largest rural settlement of Luxembourgers in the U.S., will house a museum, a research center, and a community and conference center. The mission of the Cultural Center will be to honor the heritage and culture of Luxembourg immigrants in the U.S. and to foster continued relationships, commerce, education, and tourism between the U.S. and Luxembourg.

Phase one of the construction plan will include the Roots & Leaves Museum, a main lobby, museum amenities, a gift shop, and the organization's offices. The museum structure is being created from the last Luxembourgian archetypal stone barn in Ozaukee County. The Mamer/Hansen stone barn was built in 1872 by Jacob Mamer, a Luxembourg immigrant. It was dismantled this past winter and will be relocated from its original site in rural Port Washington to its new home six miles north in New Luxembourg. It will be rebuilt in its original form, using stone that was numbered at the time of its dismantling.

The dedication and grand opening of the Luxembourg American Cultural Center is scheduled for August 11, 2007, in conjunction with the annual celebration of Luxembourg Fest in Belgium, Wisconsin. The grand opening of the Cultural Center will draw an international audience as a major event of the European Cultural Year 2007.

Pages from the Past continued from page 6

sense of ‘undertaker,’ the pompous head waiter, who had been listening in on our conversation, hopped over and complimented Freiligrath on his English, pointing out that only his accent betrayed the fact that he was not a native speaker.”

Longfellow was strikingly unfamiliar with recent German literature; by his own account he did not know the names Scheffel, Möser, Dramore, etc. Modern German poets, he remarked, were more difficult to understand than the older ones. He held [Ludwig] Uhland in special regard. According to him, the scene described in one poem as follows—“Über diesen Fluß vor Jahren, / Bin ich schon einmal gefahren!” (I traveled across this river many years ago)—had to be located in the area of Heidelberg. I later determined that Longfellow was incorrect, because the “youthful” traveling companion referred to in the poem was the poet’s childhood friend, Harpprecht from Stuttgart, who died in the Russian campaign; and the “fatherly” character in the poem was Pastor Hofer. The place of the river crossing is near Canstatt.

At one point our conversation turned to [Charles] Sealsfield, whose real name [Karl Postl] Longfellow didn’t know, and I remarked that it is difficult to determine how Sealsfield had made his fortune down south, where he must have used an assumed name. Longfellow, on hearing this, was firmly convinced that Sealsfield-Postl had traveled across America as a concert singer under the name of Hermann.

“Hermann,” he explained, “is a common name, and it is the practice of many singers and actors to perform under a stage name. I instantly recognized that that gentleman was a German, though several other people mistook him for a Southerner. His entire, mysterious being aroused my curiosity, such that I noted a number of things about him in my diary.”

How Longfellow could have concluded that that singer had been Sealsfield was beyond me, and I didn’t ask him anything more about it. The theory held by some that Sealsfield had been an American pirate is much more plausible.

By his own account, Longfellow’s knowledge of German philosophy was rather shaky. He claimed

to have read Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Mind*, but didn’t understand a word of it. I remarked that Germans had the same experience with Hegel. Longfellow wanted nothing to do with the notion of materialism; if humans, in his words, no longer believed in God and the eternity of the soul, then he would rather die, since all poetry and morals would be at an end.

“Modern life,” Longfellow continued, “does not seem to favor poetry. The idyll has been rendered nearly impossible because of the locomotive; the unadulterated life in the country is now practically unknown, with the arrival of urbanites who work in the city by day and retreat to their estates in the evening. Through their influence, the true character of rural folk has been obscured and their idyllic existence is gradually disappearing. In order to find inspiration in America for a true idyll, one must look back to the colonial era.”

Parodies and travesties were horrendous to Longfellow, who thought that only sick minds could produce such works. . . .

[*To be continued.*]

Macha continued from page 7

guage, often relying on others who knew both languages to function in their new environment. Many were farmers and laborers with no formal schooling in English, who acquired lexical items as needed. The second generation, on the other hand, typically used the new language beginning at an early age, learning to read and write it in school and using it extensively within the community. Thus younger generations often had greater competency in English and had limited ability to write German. By the third generation, German was often lost altogether.

Macha’s analysis helps us better understand the linguistic past, providing information on the history of the German language and its dialects, the linguistic changes of immigrant communities, and the development of American English in such communities.

Angela Bagwell and Mike Olson are Ph.D. students in German Linguistics in the Department of German at UW–Madison.

Wisconsin in the 1850s: Temperance and lynchings—Part I

By Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director

As we know, many of the approximately 976,000 natives of German lands who came to this country in the 1850s settled in the Upper Midwest. Probably the newcomers expected some culture shock when they arrived in Wisconsin, perhaps having heard about the area's harsh winters, about difficult farming conditions, and such problems. But guidebooks for potential German immigrants had somewhat misled them into believing that they would feel at home in Wisconsin—among fellow Germans. One such guidebook, published in Württemberg in 1849, had this to say:

This area [the fruitful state of Wisconsin] . . . above all the other states of the union . . . will become a German area, the heart of German life in North America. Two-fifths of the main city Milwaukee, as of the whole state, are already German. Numerous German settlements surround this city in a wide circle that widens with each passing year and will encompass the entire area within at most ten years.¹

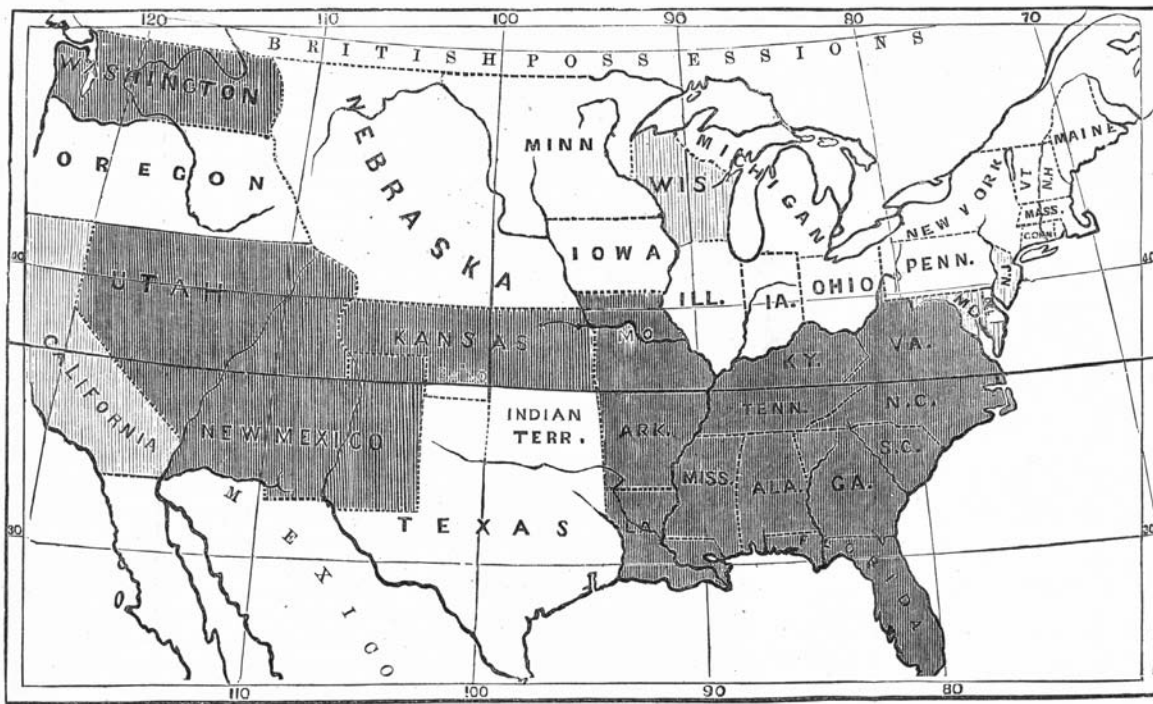
In fact, Wisconsin was not quite so hospitable. When we read—and these are the newest statistics I can find—that 83.96% of Madison's population today is *white*, we tend to forget that the ancestors of a large portion of this majority white population was then part of a foreign, immigrant, minority group.² The Germans of that era were different: they spoke a foreign language, many spoke no English, and their way of life was often frowned upon by the Anglo-Americans.

Illegal immigrants were scarcely the problem. In those times, immigrants were lured, invited, and welcomed—even by government officials such as Wisconsin's Commissioner of Emigration; their presence was *needed* to settle and develop Wisconsin. Employment—or unemployment—or benefits for the immigrants were also not an issue. There was work enough to do. The problem had more to do with the clash of cultures.

There were some particular cultural differences that divided the Germans—or German Ameri-

cans—from the Anglo-American part of the population; and these differences led to real societal rifts. One example of how the German group was not of the same mind as the rest of Wisconsin's inhabitants concerned the prohibition issue. A temperance law had taken effect in Wisconsin on May 1, 1849, and was made even stricter in February of 1850 by a measure championed by State Senator John B. Smith from Milwaukee. According to this statute, all laws were repealed that gave authority to towns and cities to grant licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages, and each tavern owner was to be held “pecuniarily responsible for all damages to the community, justly chargeable to such sale or traffic.”³ A group of German-American Milwaukeeans reacted in March of 1850 by breaking into the home of Senator Smith, holding a meeting at which resolutions deprecating the troublesome laws were adopted, and subsequently storming a meeting of supporters of the Smith Law, where, despite the interruptions, resolutions praising Smith and warning the “foreign element” that they should no longer engage in riotous conduct were passed.⁴

In 1853, the temperance issue was again on the ballot throughout Wisconsin for the fall election. Indeed, the question had achieved national importance, with most of the states having taken a stand for or against the so-called Maine Liquor Law by the mid-1850s. When elections were held on November 8, English-language as well as German-language Milwaukee newspapers featured daily reports of the tallies on the temperance issue, showing more interest in this than in the fate of candidates for public office. When all the votes had been counted—on November 26—the results showed that fully 77.9% of the voters in Milwaukee County was against the law, while in most counties the law was supported by a majority of the voters.⁵ The majority of the voters in the following counties voted against the temperance law—can you guess which ones? Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, Sheboygan, Manitowoc,



Prohibition in the U.S., 1855. White indicates prohibition law enacted, dark indicates no vote yet taken, and gray indicates popular vote favoring prohibition, but law not yet signed. From Henry S. Clubb, *The Maine Liquor Law* (1856).

Jefferson, and Dodge.

The Germans or German Americans and the Anglo-Americans were concentrated in different areas of the state, and they were taking opposing sides on at least some of the important issues. The German immigrants were feeling uneasy; they were looking over their shoulder to see what kind of trouble was lurking for them in the shadows. Those drunken Germans—those foreigners; those people who knew nothing about appropriate behavior, about the American way.

In Part II of this report, I will illustrate this by describing two lynchings that took place in Wisconsin in the summer of 1855 and sharing with you what I have learned from newspaper accounts about how the Germans viewed their place within the community.

[To be continued.]

Notes

¹*Wegweiser und Rathgeber für Auswanderer nach den vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* von dem königl. württembergischen Finanzkammer-Direktor, Werner in Reutlingen, 2nd ed. (Reutlingen: J. C. Mäcken Sohn, 1849). My translation.

Continued on page 14

Resultat über die Abstimmung des Temperenz-Gesetzes.

nach officiellen Berichten.

Count.	Majorität.	Ja.	Nein.
Milwaukee	✓	—	3138
Racine	✓	531	—
Rock	✓	2052	—
Dauke	✓	—	770
Walworth	✓	1173	—
Washington	✓	—	1058
Dane	✓	422	—
Waushara	✓	141	—
Sheboygan	✓	—	461
Fond du Lac	✓	182	—
Kenosha	✓	442	—
Green	✓	299	—
Manitowoc	✓	—	299
Columbia	✓	663	—
Grant	✓	200	—
Jefferson	✓	—	69
Iowa	✓	366	—
Lafayette	✓	137	—
Winnebago Co	✓	847	—
Waukesha	✓	150	—
Dodge	✓	—	162
Couf	✓	154	—

Die noch fehlenden Counties werden die Majorität für das Gesetz noch um Bedeuten des vermehren.

From *Der Seebote* (Milwaukee), Nov. 22, 1853.
The col. on right shows counties against the law.

²The statistics are from the Madison Population and Demographics Web site, which cites the U.S. Census 2000. See <<http://madisonwi.areaconnect.com/statistics.htm>>.

³Quoted by Bayrd Still, *Milwaukee: The History of a City* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1948), 138, n. 20. Wilhelm Hense-Jensen states: “Nach diesem Gesetz mußte jeder Wirth eine Bürgschaft von \$1,000 stellen, um für allen Schaden aufzukommen, den ein in seiner Wirthschaft betrunken Gewordener am nämlichen oder den nächstfolgenden Tagen möglicherweise angestiftet.” William Hense-Jensen, *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner bis zum Schluß des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1 (Milwaukee: Verlag der Deutschen Gesellschaft, 1900), 166.

⁴This story is told in detail by John G. Gregory, “Politics and Political Issues Before the War,” *History of Milwaukee From Its First Settlement to the Year 1895*, ed. Howard Louis Conard, vol. 1 (Chicago: American Biographical Publishing, 1895?; rpt. Salem, Mass.: Higginson Book Co., 199-?), 80-83.

⁵See election results from *Der Seebote* on November 16 and November 26, 1853. Milwaukee County's returns stood at 1243 *for* and 4381 *against* the law. Unfortunately, only each county's majority vote—whether for or against—is indicated, together with the margin; thus, the total statewide percentage for the law cannot be calculated from the information provided.

Friends of the Max Kade Institute

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

In addition, in our schools it could help to remove the “foreign” aspect of learning German, in our colleges and universities it could contribute to a better understanding of the role of immigrant cultures in the makeup of American society, and in general, it could contribute to an awareness and preservation of a very rich and important heritage.

C.L.K.: Are there areas where you think the Max Kade Institute at the UW seems to be doing well? What directions should we take if we get the opportunity?

G.W.: Well, I am a bit of an outsider; distance does not permit me to be an active participant. But I think your *Newsletter* has become an excellent and informative outreach device, and your lectures and seminars sound interesting. Perhaps the MKI could offer some summer teacher workshops, attracting participants not only from the Madison area, but nationwide. And, if you can, why not aim for research funding for graduate students?

C.L.K.: Thank you for the compliment for the *Newsletter*. As for teacher workshops and research assistantships for Madison graduate students—these are things we have already included in our program, and are striving to continue.

G.W.: Excellent: keep it up. The main mission for the MKI, as I see it, should be to serve as an archive for German-Americana, it should be a research and teaching center, and it should have an outreach component to reach a broader audience. As far as I can see, you are doing a fine job in all these categories.

C.L.K.: Your words are very encouraging. And we are delighted that you, who have received so much recognition for your work, are a member of the Friends. Tell me: which of the many honors you have received are you most proud of?

G.W.: Ouch! Hard to say. I have been grateful for all of them, but the Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award was perhaps the one that moved me most. It was the result of nominations from students and colleagues, and it gave me the feeling that my work as a teacher was really being appreciated. And, for a teacher—that is wonderful to know!

C.L.K.: Thank you very much, Gerhard, for this interview. We are pleased to get to know you better, and we are grateful for your insights and observations.

MKI Annual Meeting and dinner at West Bend Art Museum

by Cora Lee Kluge, MKI Director



Left: Mark Loudon in front of Carl von Marr's "The Flagellants." Above: Cora Lee Kluge, Christian Kluge, and Charles James. *Photos courtesy of Charles James.*

The MKI Friends Annual Meeting was held in West Bend on May 13th. Following the business meeting, Board Member and Director of the West Bend Art Museum Tom Lidtke and his staff entertained those in attendance with a guided tour of the museum. The nucleus of the museum is a collection of works by German-American artist Carl von Marr (1858–1936), a painter renowned in both the United States and Germany, and director of the Academy in Munich from 1919 to 1923. Equally impressive, however, are other resources and projects of the museum, including exhibits and educational endeavors that have made it Wisconsin's leading center for regional art.

Following an excursion to the Riverside Brewery, the Board of Directors meeting took place, at which the most important order of business was to elect new members of the Board. These include three elected to a first term: Peter Monkmeyer (Madison), Greg Smith (Beaver Dam), and JoAnn Tiedemann (Madison); and two to a second term: Ed Langer (Hales Corners) and Don Zamzow (Wausau). Then came the elegant, catered banquet in the museum, served directly in front of the von Marr painting entitled "The Flagellants," which featured traditional German foods. The final event of the evening was an illustrated lecture by John Eastberg, Senior Historian at Milwaukee's Pabst Mansion, with the title "Gone But Not Forgotten: Milwaukee's Lost Homes of Grand Avenue."

We all had an excellent time and would like to express our sincere appreciation to our hosts in West Bend. We look forward to further joint efforts with the West Bend Art Museum, including—as a next step—an exhibit at Milwaukee's German Fest in July; and we are certain that our mutual interests will lead to many cooperative projects in the future. Three cheers!

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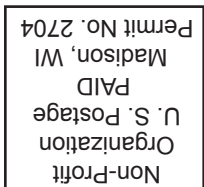
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