

Investigating an International Treasure: The Diaries of Panorama Painter F. W. Heine

Kevin M. Kurdylo



*Milwaukee Panorama Artists, November 1887. Group portrait of German painters relaxing in the studio of the American Panorama Company, during a break from painting the *Jerusalem Cyclorama* depicting the crucifixion of Christ. F.W. Heine is sitting at the table wearing a hat.*

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On Saturday, November 1, 2008, some 80 people gathered at the Museum of Wisconsin Art (MWA) in West Bend for “Investigating an International Treasure,” a symposium on historical and present-day panorama paintings—also known as cycloramas—and a current project to transcribe and translate the diaries of nineteenth-century German-American painter Friedrich Wilhelm Heine (1845–1921). The diaries illuminate the life and work of a group of immigrant artists in Milwaukee.

The first speaker was **Gabriele Koller** from Bonn, Germany, who described the European origins behind Milwaukee’s development into a center for panorama painting. The art form began in 1787, when Irish-born Robert Barker patented a technique eventually known as panoramic painting; by 1792, his painted scenes of Edinburgh exhibited upon a cylindrical surface were attracting great interest in London. Later, buildings specially

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Greetings, Friends and Readers!

At this point we are in the middle of our announced twenty-fifth anniversary year at the Max Kade Institute. Our first celebratory event was a lecture by Professor Frank Trommler held in Tripp Commons on October 23. We are delighted that as many as four previous directors of the MKI were there—Professors Charlotte Brancaforte, Henry Geitz, Joseph Salmons, and Mark Loudén. In addition, we welcomed a number of members of the MKI's Executive Committees, present and past members of the Friends Board of Directors, and others who have been connected with and supported the work of the Institute throughout the years. In all, some 100 people were in attendance. For a report on Frank Trommler's lecture, please see Kevin Kurdylo's article on page 13. The festive reception that followed was hosted by the MKI and the Friends of the MKI, with co-sponsorship from the Department of German and the Center for German and European Studies. To everyone who assisted we extend our heartfelt appreciation.

Our "German-American Heritage Series," sponsored by the Division of Continuing Studies and the Wisconsin Alumni Association, proved to be a success. More than 100 people attended my overview presentation on October 15th, and nearly as many were present at Joe Salmons's lecture on German language in America on November 12. At the third lecture on November 19, Jim Leary of the UW Folklore Program addressed the role of music for another enthusiastic audience. This series will be turned into

a six-part on-line course in the spring, which will include, in addition to the three public lectures, presentations by Kevin Kurdylo, Mark Loudén, and Antje Petty. Check the calendar section for dates, and the MKI Web site for further details.

Another successful event was the Symposium "Investigating an International Treasure," featuring the F. W. Heine Diaries Project, co-sponsored by the Museum of Wisconsin Art (MWA), the Max Kade Institute, and the Milwaukee County Historical Society, which was held on November 1 at the MWA in West Bend. See Kevin Kurdylo's report that begins on page 1, as well as Antje Petty's article that begins on page 4. The Heine Diaries Project is attracting international attention, particularly because it will promote understanding of the work of the nineteenth-century panorama painters, whose American headquarters was Milwaukee.

Our work with panorama painting is timely from another point of view, namely because of the upcoming 150th anniversary of the Civil War. It would be difficult to overestimate the impact of this event on the development of the United States, and immigration scholars have been especially interested in its

importance for Americanizing the various nationalities settled in the country at the time. The panorama painters' favorite subjects were various battles of this war, and the American public displayed its fascination with history presented through this early form of visual media by thronging to see the massive works. The Assault and Siege of Vicksburg, for example, in which more than 9,000 Wisconsin soldiers took part, was the subject of a panorama produced by Louis Kindt and others at the Northwestern Panorama Company in Milwaukee, which was displayed in that city from 1885 to 1887, as well as another one created in Paris in the same period by the French artists Joseph Bertrand and Lucien Sergent and shipped to the United States for display.

You will already have noticed the exciting, professional-looking new format of our newsletter. Please let us know what you think about it—as well as about our newsletter's contents! Meanwhile, remember to stay in touch—renew your membership in the Friends, take care of yourselves, and have a good holiday season. We wish for you, as always, hard work, success, and happiness in the year to come.

—Cora Lee

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Kevin Kurdylo
Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies
901 University Bay Drive, Madison, WI 53705
Phone: (608) 262-7546
Fax: (608) 265-4640
kkurdylo@wisc.edu

mki.wisc.edu
maxkade.blogspot.com

Notes from the Board

As a member of the MKI Board of Directors and simultaneously director of the Museum of Wisconsin Art (MWA), I can hardly contain my excitement over a joint project being undertaken by these two organizations, together with the Milwaukee County Historical Society. On November 1st, we held a symposium at the MWA in West Bend concerning the phenomenon known as panorama painting, and we are planning an immense—and immensely important—undertaking to transcribe and later translate the diaries of Friedrich Wilhelm Heine, a member of Milwaukee's artistic community from the time he arrived in Milwaukee from Germany in 1885 until his death in 1921. So important is this research that it has captured the attention of others, both in the United States and in Germany. In fact, as a result of the collaborative efforts of our three organizations, a number of additional groups, as well as independent scholars, have become interested in getting involved. See the articles beginning on pages 1 and 4 of this newsletter issue. Look also for information on the Heine diary project at www.wisconsinart.org, or go to WUWM radio's Web page, then to their program archive, and then to the 15-minute segment from October 28, 2008.

It is often through such mutual endeavors that the best work can be done. Not only do we share interests and talents; we also interact with individuals whose training and points of view augment our own. We consider ourselves fortunate to have the support of others, and we are certain that

we are profiting from our opportunities to work together.

The MKI plays a significant part in a number of such collaborative projects. In addition, it has devoted itself to collecting, preserving, and documenting important historic publications, to supporting the study of language and the written word, and to researching the immigrant experience and the impact of immigration on America's cultural development. It shares its work with the Friends through its newsletter, publications, lectures, and other events, such as its entertaining annual gatherings, which are held at various Wisconsin locations, and it makes itself available to citizens of the entire state through its outreach programming. We can be proud of the MKI's solid reputation, which is based on many years of hard work.

However, we should realize that praise for the MKI's accomplishments can only go so far. Financial support is also necessary in times of tight budgets, and we know that the important work now before us requires solid backing. For this reason, and although

I feel that the "Notes from the Board" should not be devoted exclusively to requests for contributions, I would nevertheless like to add a plea for your assistance to our end-of-the-year greetings. Please help to wish the MKI a happy 25th anniversary by making an extra donation to its work.

Happy Holidays to you all!

—Tom Lidtke

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F. W. Heine: The Story of a German Immigrant

Antje Petty



F. W. Heine

While the symposium “Investigating an International Treasure” focused on panoramas as a unique art- and entertainment form and on F. W. Heine’s crucial, central role in the American panorama movement, there are many more stories waiting to be discovered in his diaries. One is his own story as a German immigrant.

Heine arrived in America in 1885, at the peak of the last large wave of German immigration in the nineteenth century. Most German immigrants in the 1880s hailed from the northeastern part of German speaking Europe. They tended to be poor farm laborers who had lost their livelihoods due to increased mechanization and land-consolidation in the region’s large agricultural estates. Because steamships had made an Atlantic passage affordable, many came to America to work

as laborers in this country’s growing industrial centers. Many were single (men and women), and many originally intended to stay in the United States only for a few years. Those who settled in the big cities in the Midwest found a vibrant German community, where they often worked in factories established by an earlier generation of German immigrants. By and large they lived a harsh working class life, and with time they became a significant force in labor movements in cities like Milwaukee and Chicago.

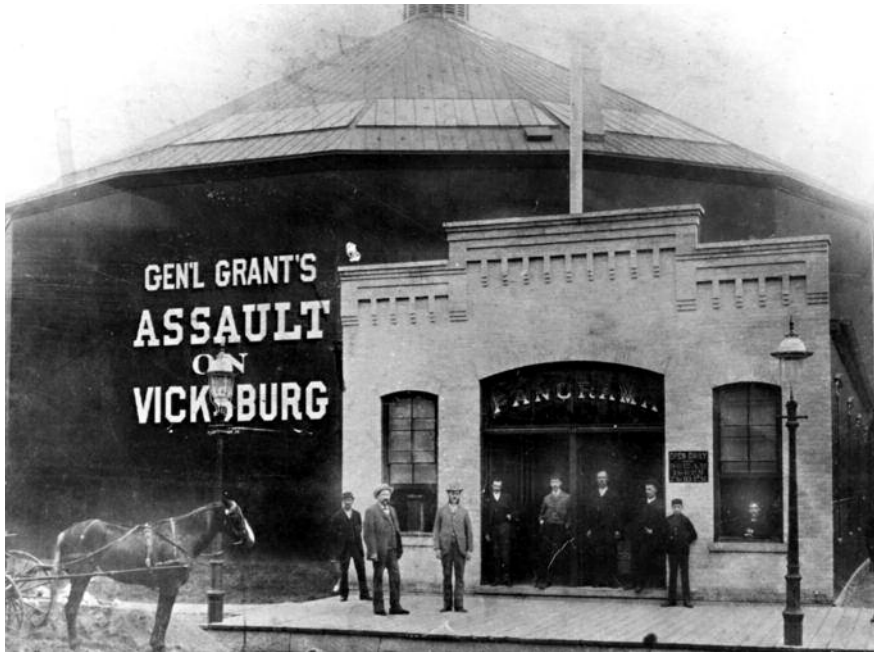
F. W. Heine’s immigration experience was quite different. So far few pages of his diaries have been transcribed, and we don’t have his full personal account. However, we have seen his description of his last four days in Germany, his transatlantic journey, and his first weeks in America. When F. W. Heine decided to leave for America, he was forty years old, married, and had three young children. He had become known as an artist, lived in Dresden/Saxony—a city pulsating with culture and life—and was relatively well-off financially. Thus he had not lived in the same dire economic circumstances that made so many other Germans consider leaving their homeland at the time, but he, too, saw an opportunity for a better life in America.

Heine’s opportunity came through William Wehner, a Chicago businessman, who wanted to get into the fast-growing panorama entertainment business and decided to establish a complete panorama company in the United States by recruiting qualified

artists directly from Europe. We do not yet know what motivated Heine to join the group, what type of contract he made with William Wehner, or whether he initially intended to leave Germany permanently or just for a few years. We do know that he planned his trip methodically and arranged for his family to join him a year later. During his last days in Dresden, he took care of many business details: he got his passport and emigration papers; purchased an accident insurance policy (10,000-Mark coverage for 300 Marks); set up a special bank account for his wife; arranged for her and his eight-year old son to get English-language instruction; had family photos taken; purchased special art tools, clothes, and other things for America; and visited with family and friends to bid farewell. Interestingly, even at this late date, he was still recruiting people for Wehner’s American panorama studio, especially the men who would work for him as models. At least one of them, Robert Klotzer, decided on short notice to join the group.

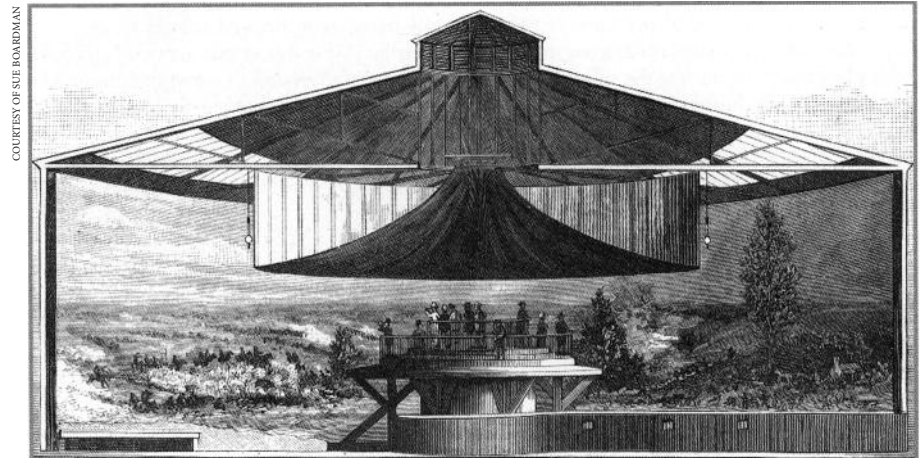
On April 25 Heine leaves Dresden by train for Bremen, where the core group of panorama artists was to assemble for the transatlantic journey. In addition to Heine, the group includes the chief organizer of the business venture in Europe, August Lohr (accompanied by his wife, two children and a maid); the painters Michalowski, Rohrbeck, and Schneider; and Robert Klotzer. Others would follow, such as artists Schröder and Richter, even though the latter lacked the 500 Marks necessary for the Atlantic trip for himself and his family.

On April 29th, the group boards the steamship *Fulda* for the nine-day ocean crossing. The *Fulda* is a new passenger ship, specifically designed for



*Battle of Vicksburg Panorama,
Kindt & Gardner Panorama
Company, Milwaukee, ca. 1885*

Diagram showing elements of a
cyclorama exhibition.



transporting emigrants. It can accommodate 250 first- and second-class cabin passengers, and more than 1,000 third-class steerage passengers. The panorama group travels first class; only model Klotzer has a bunk in steerage. Of all emigration accounts, the transatlantic journey is probably the one most often told and written about. For most emigrants, the journey was the most exciting and even traumatic event they ever experienced. Heine, too, describes his trip in great detail, but his style is that of a curious observer who has traveled before, and who enjoys the journey almost like a tourist:

"We have lunch in a gorgeous dining room, [decorated] with lots of wood, furnished with exquisitely carved furniture. Chamber music is playing [while] we eat a seven-course meal. Everybody is in a pleasant mood. [Afterwards] we sit in the smoking room and enjoy the evening." Heine is introduced to the ship's captain and meets with other first-class travelers, such as the director of the Leipzig Chamber Orchestra. Visiting with Klotzer, though, he experiences a different side of life on the *Fulda*: *"I walk along the steerage section with Klotzer, [just when] they distribute butter among the passengers. It*

is very crowded. People are lying around wherever they please, unabashedly. I wonder what this scene will be like in a couple of days. . . . We take a walk on deck. Lots of interesting groups of steerage passengers sit around, and eat meat and potatoes. They are all in an excellent mood, singing folk songs and playing harmonica or fiddle." A few days later, seasickness becomes the great equalizer between the different classes of passengers on the *Fulda*.

In New York the artists are met by William Wehner and his wife. Heine uses every minute of his short stay to take in the sights of New York and meet new people. Traveling on by train with a stop-over in Chicago, the group finally arrives in Milwaukee on

May 13, 1885. The following are Heine's diary notes for his first day in his new "Heimat." The passage is a good example of the short, detailed, record-like character of his writing.

" . . . [W]e arrive happy and well in our new Heimat [Milwaukee] at 2:30 pm; [the town] seems to be a welcoming and friendly place; we take a horse-drawn tram along Wisconsin Street and across the river to 3rd Street and the Republican House; the owner—a Mr. Kletsch—is from Bischofswerda. All the waiters speak German. We go to our rooms and clean up a bit. After that I immediately go house-hunting with Mr. Wehner and Lohr [for the Lohr family], but first we stop at the Panorama building. [The] construction [of the



F.W. Heine in his dining room in Milwaukee, undated

new panorama building] began 8 days ago; carpenters are busy, and the building should be completed in four weeks. Right next to it a somewhat smaller Panorama already exists [Kindt & Gardner Panorama]; it should open in a few months, also exhibiting an American battle.

Near the Panorama, on 9th Street, we see a house that I would like best; it borders an a hill [and has] a back yard, [thus would be a] perfect [setting] for doing studies and sketches; but we continue to look around and see two other pretty places; rent is 25-30 dollars per month for a year. At 6pm we pick up Mrs. Lohr and go to see three more houses. We show her the "first one" last, and she likes it so much that we take it. Schneider and Klotzer can for now stay there with them. The other three of us go back to the Boarding House [Republican House Hotel].

We have supper at the hotel; it's a good place; I sit with Wehner in the drawing room. He suggests I should rent [an apartment] from an English family and I agree. We read all the 'for rent' ads in the *Sentinal*. At 9pm I take a walk by myself, while the others go to Lohr's villa. I buy a city map and a few

small cigars at the 'Dorestan' drugstore. [Then] I go to the corner of Chestnut Street and the Bridge, where Henry Wehr's tavern is located. I have some good local beer: first a light beer then bock beer. All the bartenders are German [. . .] On the way back, I stop at "Millers and Holz" and play some billiard. At the hotel I have two more beers [and] go to bed at 11pm."

A few days later, Heine found an apartment for himself and the other panorama painters in an elegant new residence at 504 Grand Avenue. Klotzer later moved into the panorama building. Heine's diary entries in the following days vividly show how he threw himself into his new life. Most of his days are occupied with the panorama business, but he finds time for long walks around the city, visits many people, goes to German plays, operas, and concerts, and checks out Milwaukee's taverns and restaurants. His vantage point is that of a new immigrant, and he keenly compares his new world with the old in a rather non-judgmental way. Heine seems very appreciative of Milwaukee's large German community, but he also recognizes that he must learn English

for business purposes.

The diaries promise remarkable information for scholars studying language acquisition by adult immigrants. Heine records how he tries to learn English: he names the textbooks he buys, he describes the strategies he and the painters employ to force themselves to speak English amongst themselves one night a week, and he sprinkles his diary with English words. In these early days, his words are mainly spelled phonetically according to German spelling rules. For example, he writes *sliping car* [sleeping car], *sketsch* [sketch] or *all reiht* [alright]. What will his English look like thirty years later? How did he continue the learning process?

And what else will we learn about the German immigrant experience through the eyes of F. W. Heine? We know that his family joined him in 1886: a typical example of chain migration. How did the Heines establish themselves in their new community? Whom did they socialize with? What groups, organizations, or clubs did they join? What papers did they read? Did they attend a church, or not? Did they speak German and/or English? Did the Heine children go to a German-language, English, or bilingual school? With whom did they do business? Did they travel? Did the family take part over the next decades in the great social, political, and cultural changes that marked Milwaukee and its German community? So far, F. W. Heine's diaries have given us some tantalizing glimpses that promise a wealth of unique information still to come. As we work hard to obtain the financial support necessary to continue with the diary transcriptions, we anxiously await the next chapter in Heine's story. ■



Robert Teske, director of the Milwaukee County Historical Society, presenting at the symposium.

constructed to enhance the panoramic experience, as well as the paintings themselves, were standardized to facilitate the touring of panoramas from city to city. Koller showed a cross-section of a 50-foot high panoramic installation hung in a round building (see image on page 5). Visitors would enter through a dimly lit tunnel and arrive on a platform in the middle of the painting. A canopy hung above the platform obscured the upper edge of the canvas, and three-dimensional objects along the floor hid the base, creating the illusion of a borderless painting, while indirect and often natural lighting added to its immersive power.

Early panorama paintings were often views of towns or battle scenes from the Napoleonic Wars, but around 1880 interest had turned to depicting battles from the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871. Heine himself had been a war correspondent who provided magazines with illustrations of this

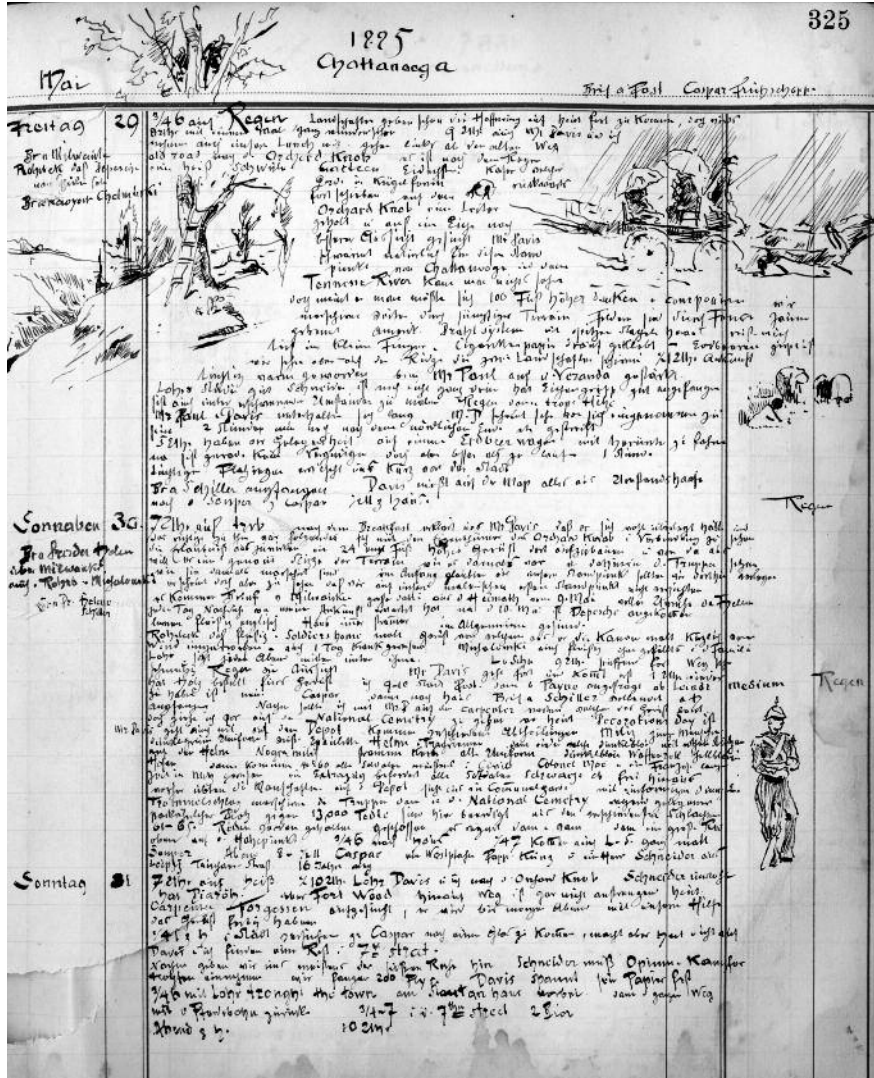
war. Another artist of the Franco-Prussian War was French-educated Louis Braun. Working in Munich with Franz Biberstein and August Lohr (both of whom would later immigrate to Milwaukee), Braun created a panorama of the Battle of Sedan, which was later exhibited in New Orleans, Cincinnati, and Toronto, and even went to Japan. In 1913 it was in Zürich, but its whereabouts are unknown today. A second panorama painting of this battle was commissioned, with the request that the role of Prussian troops rather than Bavarian ones be emphasized!

Meanwhile, German-born Chicago businessman William Wehner was convinced that the American public would welcome this art form. He enlisted Austrian-born August Lohr to build up a new Milwaukee-based company and commissioned a Civil War panorama. Lohr recruited Heine, who became his partner in the business, and other artists joined them. Heine's

unique and detailed diaries are valuable in helping us understand this period of American panorama painting.

The next speaker on the program, **Yadegar Asisi** from Berlin, was unable to come to West Bend, but Gabriele Koller provided an overview of his work as a creator of modern panoramas in Dresden and Leipzig. As an architect, Asisi is interested in the experience of space, and as an artist, in how panoramas help viewers rediscover the act of seeing. In 1993 he designed an exhibition in Bonn on the history of panorama painting, and a 1995 exhibit entitled “Berlin 2005 Cityvision” that showed how that city would look upon the completion of a massive rebuilding project included four of Asisi's panoramas. His technique involves executing a small-scale painting in oil, editing and processing it on a computer, and then using computer-controlled paint sprayers to create the larger version. This method allows him to reproduce his paintings more easily than could the nineteenth-century panorama painters. After a temporary lightweight structure in which Asisi displayed his panoramic paintings collapsed, he renovated a round natural gas storage building in Leipzig known as a Gasometer, christened it a Panometer, and showed in it his “Everest 360°” and then a reconstruction of a nineteenth-century panorama depicting the entrance of Emperor Constantine into Rome in the year 312. At another Panometer in Dresden, Asisi installed “1756 Dresden,” and he is now working on another panorama that depicts a tropical rainforest.

The third speaker, **Thomas Lidtke** of the MWA, addressed the history of panorama painting in Milwaukee.



Sample page with sketches, F.W. Heine Diary, May 1885. Heine made these diary entries during a trip to Chattanooga, where he and other American Panorama Company artists did on-site studies in preparation for the *Battle of Missionary Ridge* cyclorama.

Panoramas had been known in Milwaukee for nearly forty years before the arrival of Heine and other artists associated with the American Panorama Company. The first successful panoramas depicted landscapes, such as the Garden of Eden, the Mississippi River, and views of the Hudson River, Ireland, and Niagara Falls, but a panorama showing the Civil War Battle of the Merrimac and Monitor was also popular. The first panorama known to be painted in

Milwaukee was one by Thomas Gardner and German-born Louis Kindt. Created in 1884, it depicted the Civil War Battle of Lookout Mountain and, according to newspaper reports, took only seventeen days to complete.

Kindt was one of the founders of the Northwestern Panorama Company based in Kenosha, which produced a panorama of the Battle of Vicksburg. Lidtke concluded by stressing that the Heine Diary Project is a cornerstone for understanding the era.

Sue Boardman of the Gettysburg Foundation in Adams County, Pennsylvania, provided a description of the history, neglect, and restoration of the Gettysburg Cyclorama. It was painted during 1883 and 1884 under the direction of French artist Paul Philippoteaux, and is one of only two historic panoramas currently being exhibited in the United States (the other is the Battle of Atlanta in Atlanta). Only two of Philippoteaux's four cycloramas are known to exist still today, and Gettysburg has the only one on display. Philippoteaux interviewed survivors of the battle, researched uniforms and military strategy, and had photographs taken of the landscape to ensure the historical accuracy of his work. For the first time in more than a century, the massive circular painting (377 feet long and 42 feet high) can be shown as was originally intended, with three-dimensional objects and a canopy to maximize its impact and give viewers a sense of witnessing the chaotic carnage. According to reports, grown men were brought to tears when it was first displayed. The original painting had been exposed to the elements and to vandals, cut into nineteen sections to be displayed in a department store, and—in an effort to preserve it—nailed to boards. The recent restoration, not including the construction of a building to display it in, cost an estimated \$15 million.

After a lunch break, the afternoon presentations focused on the American Panorama Company in Milwaukee and on Heine's diaries. **Thomas Lidtke** introduced Heine and his writings and shared his observations about his trip to America and on to Milwaukee.

kee. **Dr. Robert Teske** of the Milwaukee County Historical Society spoke about Milwaukee in the 1880s and the impact the panorama artists had on the city's economy and social life. He concluded with information about what became of the panorama painters. Some of the artists returned to Germany; a few moved to other American areas, including August Lohr, who died in Mexico in 1912. Heine remained in Wisconsin with his own studio and art school; and Bernhard Schneider, who retired to Cedarburg, took up photography. Then **Antje Petty** of the Max Kade Institute gave an account of Heine's immigration experience. Her presentation is elaborated upon in an article beginning on page four.

Michael Kutzer—who has done most of the transcriptions of the diaries so far—talked about the many challenges this particular transcription and translation project brings with it.

Confederate Civil War Soldiers with Canteens, 1886. This oil painting of Confederate Civil War soldiers was created as a preliminary study for the cyclorama of the *Battle of Atlanta*, painted by the American Panorama Company.

He began by sharing some of the many examples of content, he has already uncovered in the diary entries, starting with Heine's description of the Wells Street studio of Milwaukee's American Panorama Company and those who worked there. Heine provides interesting impressions and details of August Lohr, the company's financial manager; the "weak and whiny" Bernhard Schneider, who had recently fallen from the scaffolding; Albert Richter, Hermann von Michalowski, and Wilhelm Schröter, all landscape or figure painters; and Franz Rohrbach, the specialist in painting Confederate troops in battle scenes. We learned interesting things from the diary: investors to the American Panorama Company could have their faces painted into a panorama; generous contributors might even become officers on the field! According to another anecdote, a barrel of beer was brought in during a celebration at the studio; and the painters, having quaffed its contents, decided to send a telegram to Bismarck, only to drop the idea when they sobered up and reconsidered. Through the diaries we become acquainted with these artists as people of flesh and blood. Heine's descriptions are terse, without much drama, but the reader learns much about how the panoramas were created, the technical details, business matters, and artistic considerations. We are convinced that the artists were committed to their work and that Heine was determined to depict powerful battles. We also read Heine's comments on the qualities of other panoramas, their strengths and weaknesses.

Kutzer then described the challenges faced by those who work with the diaries. Heine wrote in a tiny script and in the old German handwriting style.

Furthermore, since he was writing only for himself and did not envision other readers, he used abbreviations liberally and often varies his abbreviations for the same term or person. Adding to these difficulties, he—appropriately enough—employed a nineteenth-century vocabulary sprinkled with Saxon dialect terms; and his spelling variations also reveal the influence (or an active interest in learning to use) English words.

Kutzer concluded with a quote from a 1920 Milwaukee *Sunday Post* article, in which Heine is praised for his diligence and his calm and pleasant demeanor. The article continues: "He is not an artist who loafers. He works with military precision, and his inner life is in order. In large gatherings Heine is quiet, even shy, though talkative in small groups. He likes it here, he enjoys his work." We read here that Heine "has kept a diary since he was 14 years old," and we are told that some day these books will "contribute to the understanding of [his] soul." We began the transcriptions of the diaries with an entry in April 1885, and we are excited to learn more about nineteenth-century panorama painting and about Heine's soul. The historical, geographical, botanical, zoological, and anthropological accuracy Heine insisted on in his paintings is also evident in his diaries. The transcription and translation work is just beginning, Kutzer cautioned. After all, just 45 pages of entries took six months to decipher and transcribe into modern German script. We have 15 volumes of Heine's diaries with more than 12,000 daily entries still to go, and we have not even begun the translation of the diaries into English. ■



They Thought He Was a “Kraut”

Mark Loudon

This fall, while visiting Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, I spent a morning in the Shadek-Fackenthal Library’s archives poring through a collection of Pennsylvania Dutch-themed materials donated by the late Professor J. William Frey, a native speaker of Pennsylvania Dutch and a longtime faculty member at F&M. In a folder of random newspaper clippings from the *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, an item dated March 7, 1945, caught my eye. It told the story of Cpl. Gilbert J. Beamesderfer, a native Dutchman from Ephrata, Lancaster County, and a soldier in the U.S. Army during World War II. While serving in Germany in 1944, Beamesderfer was mistaken for a German soldier and held as a prisoner of war for thirty-one days by American forces. A bit more research yielded two additional articles about Beamesderfer, one from *Yank: The Army Weekly* (August 10, 1945, pp. 16–17) and the other from *True Comics* (November 1946, pp. 1–5). What follows is the Beamesderfer story based on the *Yank* article.

Cpl. Beamesderfer’s odyssey began in September 1944. While leading a squad on a mission in France, Beamesderfer was wounded in hand-to-hand combat by a German machine gunner. In an American evacuation hospital, Beamesderfer tried out his Pennsylvania Dutch on a captured German medic, and the two were able to converse fairly well. An American nurse overheard their conversation and, well, one thing led to another,

and the authorities became convinced Beamesderfer was a German. It did not help that a number of Germans had been captured in that area in recent days wearing U.S. Army uniforms. Despite Beamesderfer’s increasingly desperate protests, he could not convince the Americans he was in fact one of them. As the *Yank* staff writer put it, “It was no use; everyone thought Beamesderfer was a German, including the other Germans.”

For ten days, Beamesderfer was held with German prisoners at an air strip, awaiting transfer to England. His mood changed from anxious to frustrated, and he became a leader of sorts among the Germans because of his orneriness toward the Americans. The Americans, for their part, regarded Beamesderfer similarly and charged him with rounding up Germans for work details. Despite this, however, according to *Yank*, Beamesderfer thought little of the “krauts.”

Beamesderfer’s situation did not improve after he arrived in England. The *Yank* article describes the following conversation Beamesderfer had with an MP, who asked Beamesderfer if he had ever actually lived in Pennsylvania, since he kept referring to it.

“All me frigging life,” Beamesderfer said.

The MP became more interested and let Beamesderfer tell his story. At the end of it, he asked the MP’s advice on what to do.

“Well,” the MP said, after much thought, “you might insult the captain. Maybe that’d help.”



Cpl. Gilbert J. Beamesderfer, from *Yank: The Army Weekly*, August 10, 1945.

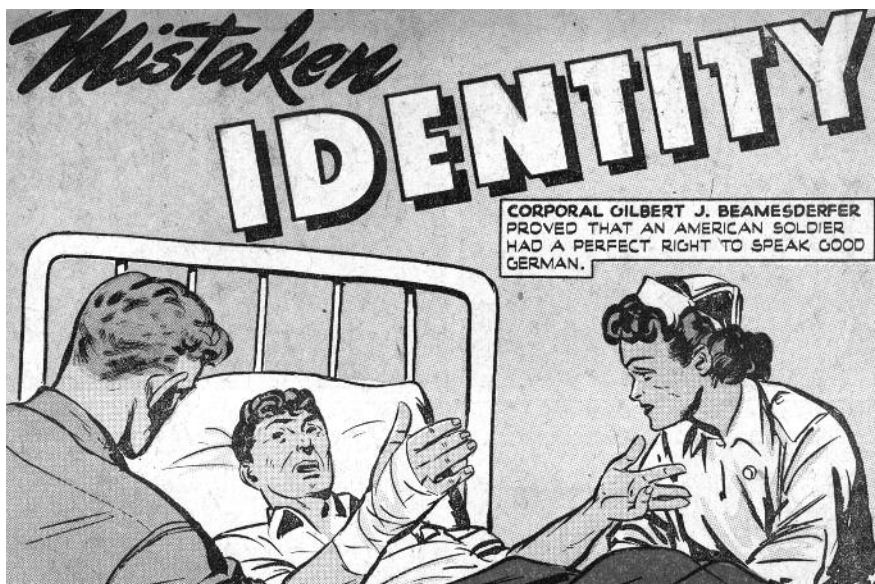
“Okay, I will,” Beamesderfer said. So the next time the captain came to treat his arm, Beamesderfer told him to go away.

“Captain,” he said loudly, “why don’t you take a flying leap to the moon?”

“What?” the captain said.

“Aaah,” Beamesderfer said. “Blow it out your barracks bag.”

Eventually, after days of interrogation, Beamesderfer had come forth with enough tidbits about Pennsylvania that the colonel in charge of the military hospital asked a nurse from Philadelphia to join in the discussion. Among other things, Beamesderfer impressed her by repeating the urban legend that an Amish man who has a marriageable daughter will paint his



True Comics, November 1946.



True Comics, November 1946.

fence gate blue to attract suitors. The colonel finally agreed to send Beamesderfer's fingerprints to Washington for verification. A few days later, a lieutenant told Beamesderfer, "I am happy to inform you that you are an American," to which Beamesderfer replied, "You're happy to inform *me*!"; thereby, in the words of the *Yank* writer, "blowing his top."

"After that," according to *Yank*, "it was gravy." Beamesderfer was immediately given VIP treatment. The colonel praised him for having "proved [him]self an American by [his] perseverance." After returning to the U.S. for further treatment at Cushing General Hospital in Framingham, MA, Beamesderfer was described as having developed a phobia that he felt would bother him as long as remained in the Army: a fear of officers.

From what I have been able to glean from public records, Cpl. Beamesderfer returned to Ephrata, married, remained in the area, and passed away in 1991 at the age of 73. ■

The Devilish Power of Advertising

Kevin M. Kurdyllo

FAUST BRAND NUDELS

die Speise von „bleibender Kraft“.

Manche Speisen enthalten so wenig Nährkraft, daß man schlaff und „baff“ ist zwei Stunden nach dem Essen.

Faust Brand-Nudeln versorgen den Körper mit Energie. Geben einen Ueberschuß, davon gezogen wird, wenn besondere Anstrengung besondere Kraft erfordert. Es ist die Speise mit „bleibender Kraft“ — die Speise, die den Menschen für große Dinge ausrüstet. Ein Chemiker wird euch sagen, daß Faust Brand-Nudeln weit mehr Nährelemente besitzen als die meisten Dinge, die ihr esset. Nehmt die Speisen, die meist als notwendig angesehen werden — Schweinefleisch, Eier, Hühner, Fische u. s. w. **Faust Brand-Nudeln** enthalten mehr Nährkraft als jede von ihnen.

„Faust“-Nudeln klären das Gehirn und kühlen das Blut. Holt ein 5 oder 10 Cents-Paket beim Grocer, versucht untenstehendes Rezept und seht, wie viel kräftiger ihr seid durch den Genuß von Faust Brand-Nudeln.

Faust-Nudeln mit Tomaten.

Kocht und seht ½ Pfund Nudeln; fügt ½ Tasse Nudeln, ¼ Tasse Butter, Pfeffer und Salz dazu. Laßt es kurze Zeit kochen, aber die Nudeln nicht kochen werden. Tut sie in eine Schüssel, gießt 1 Pint gekochte Tomaten darüber, würzt und laßt sie heiß auf.

MAULL BROTHERS, St. Louis, Mo.



Schreib
Büchlein
Faust - N.
frei mit
Frage.

This advertisement for Faust Brand spaghetti noodles comes from the May 5, 1910 issue of *Frauenfleiß*. Published in St. Louis, Missouri, by Louis Lange, *Frauenfleiß* was the women's supplement to the *Abendschule* family magazine for German Americans. Ads for Faust Brand noodles appeared in a number of issues of this supplement throughout the early 1900s, with a different emphasis or variations on the present theme. Here the noodles are promoted as the food with “lasting energy”; we see the conclusion of a challenging race where the winner, wearing a large “F” (for Faust) emblem on his shirt, crosses the finish line before his competitors. One of the also-rans sports a Hermes-style winged boot on his

chest, but he seems to be flagging in energy, while the Faust runner has his head held high. He has benefited from his meal of Faust Brand spaghetti, which equips people for great things!

Some meals, we learn from the ad, contain so little nourishment that one feels droopy and sluggish two hours after consuming them. But Faust noodles provide the body with a surplus of energy which can be called upon when a specific endeavor requires an extra push. Any chemist will tell you, the ad continues, that Faust Brand noodles contain far more nourishing ingredients than most of the things you eat. Name any food considered necessary—pork, eggs, chicken, fish, etc.—Faust Brand noodles are more nutritious than any of these. Why,

these noodles can clarify the brain and cool the blood! Just try the recipe and discover for yourself how much stronger you'll be after consuming Faust Brand noodles. A free 20-page recipe book is free upon request.

The noodles are made by Maull Brothers of St. Louis. A bit of on-line searching turned up information on this pasta company, founded by Charles Maull, an immigrant from the Alsace-Lorraine region. “Starting his business from his home in the early 1870s, Maull developed unique, sought-after pastas ranging from spaghetti to vermicelli. Meeting with success early on, this North St. Louis entrepreneur consolidated his financial gains by changing the company's name to Faust Spaghetti and purchasing [a] building at Thirteenth Street and St. Louis Avenue in 1901. By the early teens, Faust Spaghetti was a pillar in the Old North St. Louis economic community and sold its product on a global scale.” <<http://www.umsi.edu/divisions/conted/cpp/onnp/biketour2.htm>>

We believe the Maull Brothers advertisements were originally written in English, and then translated for the German-American market. One indication of this is the failure to place the verb at the end of the clause in the first sentence. We don't know if Maull chose the name Faust to appeal to German-speaking customers, but if he did, was he referring to the strength indicated by a fist, or perhaps infusing his product with mephistophelian energy? If you have any information on Maull Brothers and their products, we'd like to hear from you! ■

Frank Trommler Speaks on a Turning Point in German-American Relations

Kevin M. Kurdylo



The German submarine ("Kultur") sinks the *Lusitania* ("Civilization") in a Bill Sykes cartoon in the *Philadelphia Evening Ledger*, republished in the *Literary Digest* (May 22, 1915).

On October 23, 2008, Frank Trommler, Professor Emeritus of German at the University of Pennsylvania, presented a lecture entitled "The *Lusitania* Effect: German Propaganda and German-American Identity in World War I" to a group of about 100 people at the 25th anniversary celebration of the Max Kade Institute.

Trommler's presentation concerned the *Lusitania*, a British luxury liner, which was torpedoed by a German submarine near the coast of Ireland on May 7, 1915, nearly two years before the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies. He described how the sinking of the *Lusitania*, which took the lives of nearly 1200 men, women, and children, including

128 American citizens, became a turning point in the stance of the United States toward the European conflict.

There is uncertainty still today whether the British intentionally put the *Lusitania* in harm's way to encourage an event that would precipitate the United States' entrance into the conflict, and whether the Germans' action was justified by the presence on the ship of offensive weapons enough to make it for all intents and purposes a warship. However, Trommler was focused on another aspect. He revealed to what extent the destruction of the *Lusitania* was conjured in print and by public speakers across America as an illustration of the threat of the German Reich, and he showed how it led to a deterioration of relations between the two countries. The incident also resulted in the end of German propaganda attempts to keep America neutral in the conflict and in the rise of the anti-German hysteria known as Germanophobia across the nation. Thus the sinking of the *Lusitania* played an essential part in the story of the United States' drive to pull itself together and forge a national unity out of its disparate elements.

The mobilization campaign in America required that the people be molded into one mass with "deathless determination"; it needed to smother ethnic identities in an avalanche of patriotism and to stamp out all Old

Continued on page 15

Bundesverdienstkreuz awarded to Cora Lee Kluge



General Consul Wolfgang Drautz awards the Bundesverdienstkreuz to Cora Lee Kluge, November 24, 2008, in Madison, Wisconsin.

We are delighted to announce that MKI Director Cora Lee Kluge has been awarded the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* (Federal Order of Merit) by the Federal Republic of Germany—the highest honor bestowed on a foreigner by the German government—for her work in furthering German-American understanding and friendship and her contributions in the fields of *Germanistik* and German-American studies.

Cora Lee has been a member of the Department of German at the University of Wisconsin in Madison since 1965, where she has taught German language, literature, and culture, as well as German-American studies. Her most recent course addition to the German Department's curriculum,

“The German Immigration Experience,” has become a popular class. As Director of the Max Kade Institute since 2006, Cora Lee has focused on public outreach and publications, particularly guided by her belief that the German-American experience must be approached above all as an important, though often ignored, part of American history.

This position is reflected in Cora Lee's most recent work, *Other Witnesses: An Anthology of Literature of the German Americans, 1850–1914* (MKI, 2007), a unique collection of German-language texts written by German-born Americans. In addition to this, she published an edition of *Christian Essellen's Babylon* (Peter Lang, 1996) and co-edited both *Wis-*

consin German Land and Life (MKI, 2006) and the essay collection *Teaching German in Twentieth-Century America* (published by the UW Press for Monatshefte, 2001). She has written and lectured on a wide range of other topics, and for many years she served as editor of the academic journal *Monatshefte für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur*.

But Cora Lee's engagement for German-American understanding goes beyond her academic activities. Every summer, she spends time in Wust in Sachsen-Anhalt (Germany), teaching at the “Sommerschule Wust,” a school for English language, literature, theater, and music. In addition to instruction in English, the school provides international encounters and introduces young German participants to other cultures and young foreigners to German culture. The school's teachers are all native speakers of English, mostly British or American undergraduate or graduate students, and over the years Cora Lee has initiated opportunities for many UW students to join the team in Wust.

We are proud of Cora Lee and are pleased that many of you were able to join us at the Memorial Union in Madison on November 24, when the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* was presented to her at a special ceremony and reception by German General Consul Wolfgang Drautz. ■

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* *Friends of the Max Kade Institute* is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that supports the research, outreach, educational, and publishing activities of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies.

* Membership covers the calendar year (January–December). Payments received after November 1 of the current year will be credited for the full succeeding year.

Trommler continued from page 13

World identification. German Americans, especially in the Midwest, continued to use the German language, making them highly visible and underscoring their connection with the German enemies. Many also stood out as proud of their European culture and education; as Charles Hexamer, the American-born president of the Deutschamerikanischer Nationalbund, said in a 1915 speech: “no one . . . will ever find us prepared to step down to a lesser *Kultur*; no, we have made it our aim to draw the other up to us.” They thus became targets of U.S. propaganda efforts, and the concept of *Kultur* was quickly associated with something driven by national egotism and a merciless bureaucratic

autocracy.

Rare voices spoke against the rising tide of anti-German sentiment. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, for example, questioned whether the “unpleasant hysteria” would apply to all things German, including the Christmas tree and the music of Beethoven. But by and large, German Americans became “grist for the mill” as America’s leaders sought to excite the passions of the nation. In many ways, Trommler asserts, German culture was defeated in this country more than it ever was “over there.” ■



Frank Trommler

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Upcoming Events

UW-Madison Course, German 278, "The German Immigration Experience"

*Spring Semester, 8:50 MWF, 114 Van
Hise Hall, Instructor: Cora Lee Kluge*

This course is open to all undergraduates. No German required. Individuals not enrolled at UW may audit this course for a reduced fee (see <http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/info/guests.htm>). Senior citizens who are Wisconsin residents may audit this course for free (see <http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/info/audit60.htm>).

Online Course "The German- American Experience"

February 16 – March 23, 2009

*A collaboration between MKI, the
Wisconsin Alumni Association, and the
UW Division of Continuing Studies*

Explore German-American history and culture with various UW experts in this six-week/six-lecture online course. Learn how German-speaking immigrants and their descendants have both shaped the North American environment and been shaped by it, from history and culture to language, music and food. Through video and audio recordings, interviews and slides, you'll gain insights from the research and archives of the Max Kade Institute. For details and registration information contact Antje Petty: apetty@wisc.edu

International Symposium & Banquet "Excursions in German-American Studies: Celebrating 25 Years at the Max Kade Institute"

April 1-3, 2009, in Madison

Join us on April 1 for the capstone celebration of our 25th anniversary year, a banquet at the University Club, at which German Ambassador Dr. Klaus Scharioth will address our guests and UW Professor Emeritus Jost Hermand will deliver a keynote speech. This will be followed on April 2 and 3 by presentations and discussions with renowned international scholars on a broad selection of German-American topics. More details will be posted soon on the MKI Web site: mki.wisc.edu