



MAX KADE INSTITUTE

# FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

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## Mysteries of the Dead: A Sailors' Tombstone on the California Coast

Antje Petty



Gravestone for three sailors drowned on May 3, 1897. Cuffey's Cove Cemetery, Mendocino County, California

### INSIDE

- Temple Zion, Historic German Jewish Congregation in Appleton, Wisconsin
- Friends of the Max Kade Institute Annual Meeting 2025
- Memories of Max and Annette Kade
- Matching Grant Opportunity

On a remote stretch of the California coast, about 120 miles north of San Francisco, old gravestones stick out of the short sea grass. They are perched almost haphazardly on a bluff above rugged cliffs, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. This is Cuffey's Cove Community Cemetery. The oldest gravestones date back to the 1870s, many with Scandinavian names. Among them, one tall marker stands out, memorializing three men together.

Who were these men? What had brought them to California? And what happened on May 3, 1897?

SECOND OFFICER  
AUGUST VOLGERSON  
*Aged 33 Years*  
*Native of Germany*

— — —  
SAILOR  
JOHN JOHNSON  
*Aged 38 Years*  
*Native of Finland*

— — —  
SAILOR  
JOHN LINDERHOLM  
*Aged 28 Years*  
*Native of Finland*

— — —  
Drowned May 3, 1897

In the second half of the nineteenth century, lumber drove the economy of the little towns along this stretch of northern California's coast. The giant coastal redwoods that grew in the adjacent mountains became the main lumber source for the rapidly growing cities in California and beyond. Getting the wood to its destination was a major challenge, though. The timber tracts lay in steep terrain not easily accessible from the inland. Thus, all lumber was shipped down the coast by a fleet of small schooners.<sup>1</sup> Sawmills sprang up alongside creeks to cut the giant trunks into manageable pieces, which were then hauled down precipitous ravines using mules and rail cars on specially built, narrow gauge tracks.

The coastline in the area of Cuffey's Cove, however, is extremely rocky and rugged, and bordered by a sea that can be wild and unpredictable. There are virtually no natural harbors and very few places where a wharf or pier can be built far enough out for vessels to be loaded directly.<sup>2</sup>

In 1868, James Kenney, an enterprising Irish immigrant, and John Kimball, a successful owner of rail-

road tie mills, solved this problem by constructing an apron-chute system at Cuffey's Cove that allowed railroad ties, bales of shingles, sacks filled with bark, and other wood products

to be lowered down the cliff and onto a waiting schooner. The process was a feat of engineering that required constant adjustment. Most of all, it was very dangerous work for the men who loaded the ships.

After a fire destroyed Cuffey's Cove in 1886, lumber shipments moved to nearby Greenwood (now called Elk), where a wharf had been built that used a wire chute system to load schooners and winch up products and passengers, as recalled in these accounts by Greenwood residents:

*When a ship was in the harbor a workman rode a sling to an adjacent rock to fasten a line. Three*

*Continued on page 4*



Greenwood Wharf with steamer-schooner *Whitesboro*, ca. 1900. Photographer: A.O. Carpenter. [Historical Society of Mendocino County Photograph Collection]



Lumbermen slide individual pieces of lumber down a trough chute onto a waiting schooner at Salt Point Landing, Gerstle Cove, undated. [Fort Ross Conservancy]

## Greetings, Friends and Readers!

We are now headed into the home stretch of the 2024–25 academic year and are looking forward to the Friends of MKI Annual Meeting, which this year will take place in Appleton. Many thanks to Friends Board Member Sue Marshall and, as always, MKI Associate Director Antje Petty for the hard work both have put into what promises to be a very successful event.

We are pleased, in this newsletter, to share with you three articles that embody our mission to foster research in German American studies and make that research accessible to a diverse readership. Antje's lead article on a maritime tragedy off the coast of Northern California in 1897 had an interesting genesis. Last summer, Antje and her husband were driving along Highway 1 through rural Mendocino County, north of San Francisco. The sight of an old cemetery overlooking the Pacific inspired them to stop and take in the dramatic view and see what they might learn about the history of the area through the grave markers, which is when Antje noticed the memorial to three sailors, all migrants to California in the late 19th century. This led her to see what she could learn about these men and their families and the circumstances surrounding their passing. Stories like these, of ordinary people who lived generations ago, offer us a fascinating ground-level view of history.

In every spring issue of this newsletter, we feature an article that connects in some way with the location of our annual meeting. When we on the MKI staff discussed the story budget for this issue, I offered to write something on the German-speaking heritage of Appleton. I started, as I often do when I explore a new topic, with a deep dive into digitized newspapers, looking for interesting historical material that might be unfamiliar to modern readers. I soon came across several items related to Appleton's historic German Jewish congregation, Temple Zion, and was intrigued to discover the connections between it and Appleton's most famous former residents, Harry Houdini and Edna Ferber. I had never read anything of Ferber's work before researching this article and was delighted to discover what a gifted writer she was. The stories she told, among others that I found on Temple Zion in *The Appleton Crescent*, like Antje's article, bring history to life.

For our third article in this newsletter, we are thankful to Mr. Charles Wray, who reached out to MKI Librarian and Archivist Kevin Kurdylo to share documents and memories of his and his wife's experiences with Max and Annette Kade, of whose philanthropic legacy we are grateful beneficiaries. Most of the books and archival materials in MKI's collections are donated by people like Mr. Wray who share our commitment to documenting historical events and sharing compelling stories that enhance our understanding of the past.

Your support in so many ways is crucial to our work and ensuring our continued growth. Thank you, our Friends, for all you do. I hope to see many of you in Appleton on May 3!

With gratitude,  
Mark

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*Continued from page 2*

*sailors took a rowboat to fasten a line to the mooring buoys. When the freight and passengers were unloaded, the lumber was let down the steep incline with an engine releasing it slowly. It was met at the bottom by a mule hitched to a car and pulled to the warehouse where the animal was unfastened. It quickly stepped aside to let the car glide to the end of the wharf.*

*To be a passenger on a lumber schooner meant having to board by standing in a wooden box and being carried over several feet of water on a sling.<sup>3</sup>*

*The sailors and mates never came up town as loading started the minute the ship was secure and left port as soon as loaded. The captains always came to the office and the store to transact business and occasionally to take in a Saturday night dance, if their schedule allowed.<sup>4</sup>*

The lumber and shipping business was now firmly in the hands of Lorenzo E. White, a lumber baron who lived in San Francisco and was John Kimball's brother-in-law. He owned vast tracts of land in Mendocino County, as well as sawmills, logging railroads, ranches, hotels, and other properties. And he had his own fleet of lumber schooners, one of which was the *Whitesboro*, launched in San Francisco in 1886, with Gus(t) Johnson as its captain.

Gus Johnson was a native of Norway. In fact, almost all schooner captains and crews were recent immigrants from Scandinavian coun-

tries and Northern Germany. Many had reached the West Coast as sailors on ocean-going vessels. In the Bay Area, they settled in neighborhoods close to the water among fellow expatriates. Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, and the streets near Mission Bay were filled with immigrants from Northern Europe who worked in jobs related to maritime commerce, shipyards, and the sea.

Sailors working coastal schooners enjoyed a level of stability and security that those on transoceanic vessels did not have. Not only were their voyages much shorter, and they could return home to their families every other week, the captains or masters of these schooners often had a different role and relationship with their crews than their counterparts on ocean-going vessels. The difference can be attributed to the fact that trips were much shorter, the food generally better, and the crew was on board by choice, not coercion. Schooner masters worked side by side with the crew and were generally liked by the men, with some following the masters from ship to ship. Despite the advantages of being seamen on these vessels, the job remained difficult and dangerous, with wrecks, groundings and vessel damage being relatively frequent.<sup>5</sup>

Such an unpredictable, terrible event happened on May 3, 1897. Five days later, it was reported on the front page of the *Mendocino Coast Beacon*:

*Victims of the Sea — Three Sailors  
Drowned in Greenwood Harbor  
Second Mate V. A. Volgwarsen  
of the steamer Whitesboro and  
two sailors of the crew were*



Sailor John Johnson with his wife Selma and daughter Selma Marie, August 1896. [findagrave.com/memorial/18518918/john-johnson]

*drowned on Monday afternoon at Greenwood. According to the meagre dispatches telling of the accident, the Whitesboro was lying at her moorings in the open roadstead [sheltered body of water] when a northwester arose, causing a heavy sea. The captain gave order to let go the mooring lines so he could run the steamer out to sea for safety and away from the rough and rocky shore.*

*The second mate and two men entered a boat to loose the line at the mooring buoy. When engaged at the work an immense wave swept over the boat, swamping the little craft and throwing the men into the water. A number of people stood on the shore, but they were powerless to render any assistance. For a moment the men were seen battling with the waves in an effort to swim to shore, but the undercurrents pulled them beneath the surface.*

*The body of one of the men was washed ashore on Tuesday, but he was not known to those on land, and his identity will not be ascertained until the sea subsides and the vessel returns to its moorings. The steamer had a narrow escape in getting away from the moorings. Seas swept over her as she steamed away after the lines that held her to the buoys were cut, and the people who witnessed the drowning of three of her crew say she had a hard fight with the waves to get clear of the rocks of the shore.*

Second officer August Volgerson / V. A. Volgwardsen was in fact **Volquard August Volquardsen**. He was born in April 1865 in the port city of Aabenraa (Southern Denmark) into a family of mariners. Only a year before August's birth, after the Second War of Schleswig, the region had been turned over from the Danish Kingdom to Prussia. In a city equally divided between Danish and

German speakers, the Volquardsens were German. At the time, Aabenraa's economy centered around its port, shipyards, and international trade. August's father was a ship captain, and August, as well as his two younger brothers Detlef and Anton, went to sea in their teens. All three brothers eventually settled in California.

We do not know when exactly August arrived in America, but he is first mentioned in the San Francisco 1883 city directory as a "master mariner" residing in a hotel near the harbor. An 1896 voter registration record for San Francisco describes him as 31 years old, 5' 5 3/4" with blue eyes, brown hair, and no visible mark; a "mariner" by occupation, and a "native of Germany" who was "naturalized on January 22, 1890."

**John Johnson's** original name was actually Johan Saarikoski. He was born in June 1860 in Liminka, Oulu, Finland.<sup>6</sup> According to family lore, he changed his name while working as a sailor on ocean-going vessels. He eventually jumped ship in San Fran-

cisco. At the time of his death, John lived in Berkeley, Alameda County, with his wife Selma Karjalainen and daughters Selma (2) and Emma (only a few days old).

Unfortunately, I was not able to find out more about the third drowning victim, **John Linderholm**, if that was indeed his name.

As a further testament to the hazards of this coastal livelihood, only two years before this tragedy, Captain Gus Johnson of the *Whitesboro* had his own brush with death as reported in the *Ukiah Daily Journal* from July 5, 1895:

*Captain Gus Johnson, who commands the steam coasting schooner Whitesboro had a very narrow escape from death just before leaving Greenwood for San Francisco the first of the week. He was superintending the removal of a portion of his cargo at that place when a heavy wire cable attached to the steamer's hoisting gear broke. The loose end of the cable whipped around and struck the captain on the back of his head, inflicting an ugly wound and knocking him overboard. Johnson was rendered unconscious by the blow and was unable to help himself while in the water. His crew went to the rescue and had considerable trouble reaching the captain. He was drowning when they finally pulled him out. They were fully an hour endeavoring to revive him.*

When we think of states in the US where German or Scandinavian Americans live, the San Francisco



Schooner *Whitesboro* taking on cargo of tan bark, undated. [Historical Society of Mendocino County Photograph Collection]

*Concluded on page 15*

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## Temple Zion, Historic German Jewish Congregation in Appleton

Mark L. Loudon

In downtown Appleton, at the corner of North Durkee and Harris streets, there is an impressive wood frame structure that occupies an interesting place in the history of Jewish Wisconsin. Dedicated in 1883, the building was the home of Temple Zion, a Reform congregation founded by German Jews who began migrating to Appleton from Europe in the 1850s. In what follows I will share some of the history of the Temple Zion congregation, which included Appleton's most famous residents, the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Edna Ferber and the illusionist known professionally as Harry Houdini.

The German Jews who founded Temple Zion in Appleton came to Wisconsin during a migration wave that brought other German-speaking Europeans to the Badger State starting around 1840. Wisconsin's earliest Jewish community was founded in Milwaukee in 1844; in 1856, Congregation B'ne Jeshurun was formed, which in 1927 merged with another historically German Jewish congregation, Emanu-El, and continues to thrive today. Madison was home to Wisconsin's second-oldest Jewish congregation, formed in the 1850s. Their first synagogue, Shaarei Shamayim (Gates of Heaven), was built in 1863 and still stands today near the shores of Lake Mendota in James Madison Park.

Until about 1880, most Jews in America, including in Wisconsin,



Temple Zion, 320 North Durkee St., Appleton, WI [Wikimedia Commons]

were of German background, and many were affiliated with the Reform movement. Reform Judaism, the most progressive major branch of the faith, traces its roots to 19<sup>th</sup>-century Germany, when its founders, notably Rabbi Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), sought to bring traditional Judaism into dialogue with contemporary society. Although Jewish migrants to the US before 1880 included Orthodox believers, most practicing Jews of German-speaking background in America were Reform. Today, according to the Pew Research Center, approximately thirty-seven percent of American Jews identify as Reform; nearly as many, thirty-two percent, are unaffiliated. Most of the rest of Jewish Americans are Conservative (17%) or Orthodox (9%).

The first rabbi to serve Appleton's Temple Zion was Meyer Samuel Weiss (originally spelled Weisz), who was appointed in 1878. Rabbi Weiss's

background was interesting. Born in 1829 in the Austro-Hungarian town known in German as Groß-Kanizsa (today Nagykanizsa, Hungary), Weiss grew up speaking Hungarian and German and was ordained a rabbi in 1851. He later enjoyed a thriving career as a lawyer in Budapest, but left Europe after reputedly killing a nobleman in a duel. Arriving in New York City in 1876, Weiss eventually made contact with a successful German-born Jewish businessman and politician from Appleton, David Hammel (1838–1928), who led the Temple Zion community. Hammel, who served as a Democratic representative in the Wisconsin State Assembly and later as Appleton's mayor from 1900 to 1904, recruited Weiss to serve as Temple Zion's spiritual leader in 1878. Weiss was joined later that year by his wife Cecilia and five children, including the four-year-old Erik (Ehrich), who later became world-famous as Harry



David Hammel (1838–1928) [Wikimedia Commons]

Houdini (1874–1926).

Few details are known about Rabbi Weiss's tenure at Temple Zion, but he led the congregation for just four years, until August 1882, at which point he and his family relocated to Milwaukee. There has been much speculation as to why Weiss left Temple Zion. One reason often cited was his inability (or unwillingness) to preach in English, however there must have been more at play, since his successor, the German-born Ferdinand J. Salomon (1832–1892; also spelled Solomon), was described on his arrival in Appleton as "a cultured gentleman, [who] is becoming generally acquainted among the people, although he labors under the disadvantage of being unable to speak the American language, a difficulty he is determined to overcome as speedily as possible" (*The Appleton Crescent*, Sept. 16, 1882, p. 4). One possible reason for the apparent falling out between Rabbi Weiss and the leadership of Temple Zion cited by some was Weiss's Hungarian origins. Even

though Rabbi Weiss was a fluent German speaker, his cultural background, including his adherence to a uniquely Hungarian expression of Judaism known as Neolog, may have made his integration into a German Jewish congregation difficult.

Regardless of the circumstances under which Rabbi Weiss left Temple Zion and Appleton, it is notable that an extensive report published on Sept. 22, 1883, p. 3, in *The Appleton Crescent* about the dedication ceremony of the congregation's synagogue, which took place on Sept. 14 of that year, made no mention of Rabbi Weiss. The ceremony was a major community event.

*It was nearly 4 o'clock when the procession began to assume shape. It was first formed in the rear outer rooms of the temple; first came the two young sons of D[avid] Hammel and M[ark] Lyons, each bearing an American flag, followed by Miss Lyons, bearing on a beautifully embroidered satin pillow the key of the temple, and then eight other girls, all dressed in white, wearing natural flowers and bearing baskets of flowers, then Rabbi Dr. [Isaac S.] Moses of [Emanu-El] Temple, Milwaukee, side by side with Rabbi F. J. Solomon, of Zion Temple; then Messrs. M[ark] Lyons, of Appleton, and S[amuel] Marshall, of DePere, occupying the honorable position of bearers of the Scrolls of the Law, or the five books of Moses, which were to be deposited in the altar receptacle. Members of the congregation and citizens joined the procession, which proceeded to the southwest entrance, where, with appropri-*



Rabbi Meyer Samuel Weiss (1829–1892) [FamilySearch]

*ate remarks, little Miss Lyons representing the congregation, cordially thanked D. Hammel for his unwearied efforts in behalf of the temple, now crowned with such gratifying success, trusting that the benedictions of Deity might ever rest upon him. Mr. Hammel responded very modestly, accepted the key, handed it to Mayor [George N.] Richmond, who proceeded to throw open the doors of the temple.*

The German-born Rabbi Moses from Milwaukee delivered the dedicatory sermon at the service that followed, which was attended by many Appleton citizens. The organ was played by an Irish-born, non-Jewish professor of music from Lawrence University, Edward R. L. Cuthbert (1835–1893).

The celebration continued the following day and was a lavish affair. Approximately four hundred Appleton residents filled the local opera house for a sumptuous banquet, with

music provided by the local Germania Band.

*At the close of the banquet, Mr. Leo[pold] Hammel, as toast master, in a neat and timely speech, welcomed the company on behalf of Zion church, and then proceeded to read various toasts and called upon certain chosen ones to respond. To "The Mother Church—Judaism, the Foundation of all Religions," Rev. Isaac S. Moses was called upon to respond, which he did in a singularly felicitous manner, showing himself a broad, progressive man. Equally broad and progressive did the Rev. Mr. Banks show himself to be in his response to the toast, "The Christian Churches—a Good Tree cannot Bring Forth Evil Fruit." Both of these reverend gentlemen evidence the catholicity of true religion, and showed how the world has outlived the odium theologicum of the past practically and simply.*

Other non-Jewish dignitaries, among them Mayor Richmond, responded to more toasts, including one to "Religious Liberty in America." The festivities continued late into the evening with dancing. Underscoring how the celebration was a community affair that transcended religious and ethnic differences, the *Crescent* reporter noted that

*... we are authorized by the members of Zion church and congregation to return their hearty thanks to the citizens of Appleton for their generous and munificent patronage and co-operation. It will always be a*

*pleasing thought in connection with this most enjoyable affair that so much heartfelt sympathy was manifested by the citizens of our city generally.*

Over the years, events connected with Temple Zion were amply reported in local newspapers. The general impression from a review of these reports is that the congregation and its members were an important part of the Appleton community, and specifically its religious life. Although rabbis were occasionally identified as "pastors" and given the title "Reverend," and the synagogues were occasionally referred to as "churches," there are no hints in the historical record of anti-Jewish discrimination or ethno-religious tensions.

The life of the Temple Zion community was connected with local German American institutions, such

as the Germania Band that played at the dedication celebration described above. Highlights from the report on the 1892 wedding of David and Lena Hammel's eldest daughter Clara to Moses Billstein, whose parents had also migrated to Wisconsin from German-speaking Europe, show how culturally assimilated the families of Temple Zion were. The event was described as the "one of the most beautiful and brilliant weddings that Appleton has ever witnessed" (*The Appleton Crescent*, February 13, 1892):

*The wedding took place at Zion Temple at 5 o'clock and was pretty and exquisite in all of its appointments. Extending from the altar forward to the steps leading thereto a canopy had been erected, covered with American flags, the front arch*

**The Churches.**

**METHODIST CHURCH.**—Quarterly meeting services conducted by Presiding Elder Cole. Preaching morning and evening.

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.**—In the absence of the pastor the pulpit will be occupied next Sabbath by Prof. Chittenden.

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.**—The Rev. Chas. E. Walker, of Ohio, will preach morning and evening of next Sabbath, August 1st.

**BAPTIST CHURCH.**—Rev. H. C. Leland, pastor. Preaching in the morning at 10:30; Sunday school at 12 o'clock; Young people's meeting at 6 o'clock p. m. No evening service.

**GRACE CHURCH.**—Rev. James B. Williams, Rector. Services Sunday morning at 10:30; Sunday School at 3 o'clock afternoon; evening service 7:30. Seats free.

**GERMAN METHODIST.**—Fourth ward. Services at the usual hours, Sunday morning and evening, by Rev. Hoehle, pastor.

**TEMPLE ZION.**—Religious services every Friday evening at 7 o'clock, and Saturday morning at 10 o'clock. Religious instruction to children Sunday morning 10 to 12 o'clock. Rabbi Solomon pastor.

**GERMAN EVANGELICAL.**—Services Sunday morning at 10:30; evening 7:30. Sunday school 12 m.

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN.**—Services Sunday morning at 10 o'clock; Christian instruction afternoon at 2 o'clock.

*The Appleton Crescent*, July 31, 1886, p. 3



Rabbi Emanuel Gerechter (1842–1926) [Wikimedia Commons]

*consisting of ground pine heavily wreathed, florally decorated. Across the top of the arch appeared the name Billstein, in white and red colored electric lamps, which at the proper part of the ceremony was rendered a blaze of light by Rabbi Solomon turning on a switch. On either side were large hearts—white on the right side and red of the left, made of carnations.*

The use of white and red electric lighting at the ceremony undoubtedly made for a dramatic effect. In 1882, about a decade before the Billstein-Hammel nuptials, the Appleton mansion of local paper magnate Henry James Rogers, known today as the Hearthstone House, became the first residence in the US to be illuminated

by electric lights.

At the wedding, a music professor and organist from Lawrence, Alex Zenier, played the famous “Bridal Chorus” from Wagner’s *Lohengrin* for the processional. At the end of the ceremony, the bridal party exited the synagogue to the strains of the equally famous “Wedding March” from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by Felix Mendelssohn, then headed to Appleton’s Turner Hall for the reception, banquet, and dance, where the music was furnished by the German American Arion Band from Oshkosh.

Rabbi Salomon led Temple Zion until his death in 1892, whereupon he was succeeded by Rabbi Emanuel Gerechter (1842–1926), who was born in Silesia and had been a public school teacher and rabbi in Europe. Rabbi Gerechter migrated to the US in 1866 and served several congregations, including B’ne Jeshurun in Milwaukee for twelve years, until he came to Appleton. In addition to his position at Temple Zion, he was a professor of German and Hebrew at Lawrence and head of the German department there until his retirement in 1919. In 1920, Rabbi Louis Brav, from Kingston, NY, accepted the call to Temple Zion and joined the French and Spanish faculty at Lawrence. Rabbi Brav remained in Appleton just two years; in 1922 he relocated to Pine Bluff, AR, to serve a congregation there.

During the years that Rabbi Gerechter led Temple Zion, the family of Edna Ferber (1885–1968) moved to Appleton when she was twelve. The Ferbers had lived in several Midwestern towns, including Ottumwa, IA, where they were exposed

to antisemitism. Their experience in Appleton, on the other hand, was quite different. As Ferber recalled in her autobiography, *A Peculiar Treasure* (1939, p. 58):

*There was never such a town for sociability. At the least provocation Japanese lanterns burst into bloom on a hundred lawns, and lemonade-punch bowls were encircled by organdie-clad girls, and boys in white duck pants (peg-top) and blue serge coats (with slick revers). The dour days—the lean seven years through which we had just passed—were dispelled like fog before the sun of Appleton’s warm-generous friendliness. If Ottumwa had seemed like some foreign provincial town in its narrowness and bigotry, Appleton represented the American small town at its best. A sense of well-being pervaded it. It was curiously modern and free in the best sense of the words. Cliques, malice, gossip, snobbishness—all the insular meannesses—were strangely lacking in this thriving community. Trouble, illness and death were to come upon us there in the next few years, but sympathy and friendship leavened them and made them bearable.*

Ferber wrote at length about the Jewish community in Appleton. Of the approximately forty Jewish families in the town when her family settled there, Ferber estimated that around thirty were of German ancestry; the remaining were of Russian or Polish background (*A Peculiar Treasure*, p. 59). The Ferbers enjoyed

a comfortable home life.

*During the first year or two of our coming to Appleton my mother rather grandly established Friday afternoons At Home. Our hired girl of that day was of German descent: Tillie Schultz, a treasure of purest ray serene. Tillie was a naturally gifted cook. On Friday mornings the house was fragrant with the scent of baking dough; of sugar and spice, and fruits bubbling on the bosom of plum, apricot and apple kuchen. The cheese kuchen, made from a recipe in which cottage cheese was smartened by lemon juice and grated lemon peel, was a specialty of the house. At about four o'clock the tantalizing fragrance of coffee would be added to the rest. These Friday afternoons became something of a stampede. [A Peculiar Life, p. 63]*

Edna Ferber's father, Jacob Charles, had been born in Hungary. Her mother, Julia (Neumann) Ferber, was from Milwaukee and of German Jewish background. The family joined Temple Zion, which Ferber called "Temple Emanu-El" in her autobiography.

*At fourteen I was singing in the choir at Temple Emanu-El. Years before, the wealthy Jewish families of Appleton had built for themselves a place of worship. The temple was a neat and dignified building in a good residence section of the town. It was a frame building, double-porched, with stained-glass windows, a charmingly proportioned pulpit completed by the ark and its twin-*

*branched candlesticks. The choir loft was at the back. In the pulpit presided Rabbi Emanuel Gerechter. In stature a miniature, this little Dr. Gerechter, his tiny figure lost in the embrace of the stately oak and crimson-velvet chair on which he sat enthroned as the choir held forth in the hymns. He was (I now belatedly realize) a definitely engaging little man, possessing charm and personality, smothered by the thick conventionality of his congregation. He walked with a slight scholarly stoop; his tiny high-arched feet were neatly shod in softest kid tipless shoes, square-toed. He wore trim little whiskers of the kind we called sideburns which were, I suppose, burnside, after the fashion of the army general of that name. A high-bridged nose, very keen brown eyes behind two pairs of glasses, one white, one blue-lensed, which served almost to obliterate the fine-featured face. He wore, always, a suit of black broadcloth with a Prince Albert coat. As the years went on, the little figure became more stooped, the walk more deliberate. His sermons, delivered in English on Friday nights and on Saturdays in German, were exemplars of dullness. I recall not a word of hundreds I must have heard.*

Throughout the 1920s, the number of families at Temple Zion declined. Although High Holy Day services continued to be celebrated there for many years, the rabbis who led them came from elsewhere. In 1932, the synagogue building was sold to a Pentecostal church, Appleton



Edna Ferber (1885–1968) [Wikimedia Commons]

Gospel Temple, with the agreement that Jewish services could still be held there occasionally. Temple Zion retained its identity as a congregation through the 1960s; after 1969 there are no reports of activities sponsored by groups affiliated with it. The last known member of Temple Zion was Dorothy (Frank) Freschl, a graduate of Oberlin College and a teacher in Appleton for 18 years who passed away in 2008 at the age of 80.

In 1972, Temple Zion became home to the Outagamie County Historical Society, which secured its status, together with that of the small school building adjacent to it, on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. In 1999, Temple Zion was purchased by Ronald Wahl, who with his son Christoph operate Wahl Organbuilders in the building. In that same year, Wahl refurbished the 16-foot-high, 640-pipe organ that was installed in Temple Zion in 1907 and reinstalled it in the back balcony

*Concluded on page 15*

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# Friends of the Max Kade Institute Annual Meeting 2025

## Appleton, Wisconsin

### Saturday, May 3, 2025



Join us for the 2025 annual meeting of the Friends of the Max Kade Institute in Appleton, Wisconsin. Our business meeting will be held at Mark's East Side Restaurant, followed by a luncheon featuring German dishes. George Schroeder, Executive Director of the Hearthstone Historic House Museum, will give a presentation on the local German community with a focus on the World War I era and military Company G, which was mostly comprised of German Americans from Appleton. Afterwards, we will take a special tour of the Hearthstone House, the first private residence in the world illuminated by electricity, where members of the household staff were mostly German-speaking immigrants.

- |               |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:00 – 12:00 | <b>Mark's Eastside, 1405 E Wisconsin Ave, Appleton, Wisconsin</b><br>— Registration<br>— Annual Business Meeting of the Friends (snack platters, beverages, cash bar) |
| 12:00 – 12:15 | Socializing; Board of Directors Meeting (election of officers)                                                                                                        |
| 12:15 – 1:30  | Luncheon (choose between Tenderloin Stroganoff, Wiener Schnitzel, and Vegetable Napoleon)<br>—Presentation by George Schroeder                                        |
| 2:00 – 4:00   | <b>Tour of Hearthstone Historic House Museum, 625 W. Prospect Ave, Appleton</b>                                                                                       |

**Cost per person:** Lunch — \$32; Tour — \$8

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# Memories of Max and Annette Kade

Charles Wray

*In the summer of 2024, we received a letter from Mr. Charles Wray. He and his wife Lynda had lived in the Connecticut summer home that once belonged to Max and Annette Kade. The Kades had established the Max Kade Foundation in 1944 to improve relations between Germany and America, and in 1983 the Foundation provided funding to found our Max Kade Institute at UW-Madison. Mr Wray had a few papers related to the Kades that he offered to our Institute for safekeeping. These included documents granting rights for the manufacture and distribution of the cough medicine Pertussin to Seeck and Kade, Inc., along with two early advertisements for the medicine. We asked Mr. Wray if he had memories of the Kades he would be willing to share, and he graciously agreed to write some down. We present his letter below, and thank Mr. Wray for providing these glimpses into the Kades' life, glimpses that reveal their human kindness.*

November 13, 2024

Some of the things I came to know during times of our conversations.

Mr. Kade was [born October 13, 1882, and] brought up in Stuttgart, Germany, but left and came to America. He and Mrs. Kade lived in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, when not in Connecticut. At that time, he said his office was in New York City at 100 Church Street. Mr. and Mrs. Kade did not have any children.



A photo from 1933 showing the Kade's red Packard parked at the main house. Charles believes Mrs. Kade is to the left, and notes that the shutters are closed on the main house for the winter

One of the neighbors was Carl Pevy, who was the principal of Stonington High School, and looked after their property when they were not in Connecticut. I believe Mr. Pevy had something to do with my working for Mr. Kade, as I was in my second year

of school there.

The first job I remember was picking Russet pears, with Mr. Kade present inspecting each one, and he would carefully wrap them in paper, put the pears in a box to be brought back to New Jersey along with apples.



A photo from 1940. From left to right: Unknown, Annette Kade, Max Kade

Mr. Kade had some number of fruit trees, and he referred to the property as the "farm."

As time went on, I worked more and more at the farm. Mr. Kade and I enjoyed each other's company. He showed me many things that needed doing on the property.

When Mr. and Mrs. Kade came to Connecticut, they would have his tree surgeon Mr. Baumgartner drive them from New Jersey in Mr. Kade's car, a red Packard. In that car would also be Mrs. Kade's maid, Tina, and a very large parrot named Polly.

Mr. Baumgartner and I would trim the fruit trees under Mr. Kade's supervision. It was just an enjoyable time.

There were many times when Mr. Kade and I would work together in

the morning and when lunchtime came, I would go home. Mr. Kade would tell me to bring my bathing suit back with me. He would say, "You can be my lifeguard this afternoon." We would then get into the "Vesta," and I would drive us to Napatree Point which is off Watch Hill, Rhode Island, and spend a beautiful summer afternoon swimming and sitting on the beach talking.

When Mr. and Mrs. Kade came to Connecticut in the fall, Mrs. Kade would have Mr. Baumgartner drive her and I to the J. C. Penney clothing store in Westerly, Rhode Island. She would pick out and purchase shirts and pants for me to wear to school that year. One year Mr. Kade purchased a brand-new bicycle for me. I could not believe it. Wonderful!

I graduated from high school in 1960 and Mr. Kade told my father he would like to pay for me to go to any college that I wanted to go to. I declined the offer because I knew I was not college material, and did not want to waste Mr. and Mrs. Kade's money. However, Mr. Kade wanted me to further my education in some way. The high school counselor suggested a two-year program at a state-run school in Danielson, Connecticut, Harvard H. Ellis Technical School. Mr. Kade agreed to fund the cost of the school with room and board. I enrolled in the electrical program and graduated in 1962.

I started full-time work, but still continued working for Mr. and Mrs. Kade in the summer. In 1964, I married Lynda, my wife for 61 years.

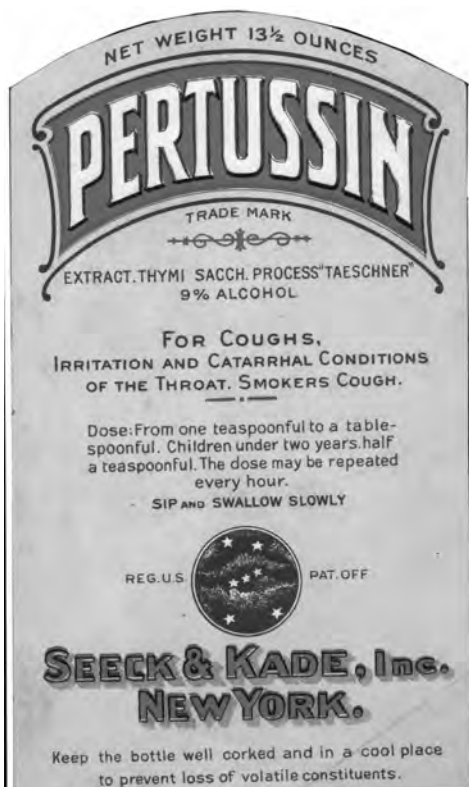
We rented a small apartment, and that summer Mrs. Kade asked if she could visit and see it. She came and looked it over, and a few days later



Boathouse, 1943; Max Kade at the back

we were asked if we would like to live in the boat house and care for their property over the spring to fall seasons. We were excited to do so. We would live there from May to September, then close it down as there was no heating system in the house. We did not know if the visit to the apartment was to check on my wife's housekeeping skills. If so, she passed.

Then came the time when things started to change. Mr. and Mrs. Kade came to Connecticut as usual, but after several days Mrs. Kade said Mr. Kade was not feeling well and was in bed. She said Mr. Kade wanted to talk to me. So I went upstairs to the master bedroom and sat in a chair next to him. We talked for a while, the last part of the conversation was about how he and Mrs. Kade were going to Stuttgart, Germany, to have a medical treatment for Mr. Kade, and when they returned he was go-



An early advertisement for Pertussin. Seck & Kade, Inc., was founded shortly after Max Kade arrived in New York from Canada in 1907

ing to make arrangements for us to purchase the property from the Max Kade Foundation.

We had no way of knowing this would be the last time we would ever see Mr. and Mrs. Kade.

We learned Mr. Kade had passed away while overseas. A letter from Mrs. Kade said Mr. Kade requested that he be buried in Stuttgart.\* He and Mrs. Kade are buried there. My wife said later, this is the only time she saw me cry.

We received a letter from the Foundation's attorney listing the property known as "the farm" at fair market value, and my wife and I purchased it.

*Postscript:* It's funny how sometimes we can form a bond with people, and do not realize how strong it is until they are no longer here. Mr. and Mrs. Kade were wonderful people, and tried to do good things for others. And they did.

Writing this letter brings back memories of my younger days and of some very nice people, Max and Annette Kade. 🖊️

#### NOTE

\*Max and Annette Kade are buried in Steinbach (Schwäbisch Hall), about 45 miles northeast of Stuttgart. Max Kade was born in Steinbach.



Charles and Lynda Wray

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For a list of some items under consideration for restoration and our current collection focus, see <https://mki.wisc.edu/restoration-and-aquisition/>

Continued from page 5

Bay Area usually does not come first to mind. But here, too, the push and pull factors of immigration were at play. In the 1870s and 1880s, the need for master mariners and sailors in the California lumber schooner business was answered by people who were skilled in the longshore trade and had experience at sea: men from the seafaring regions of Scandinavia and Germany. The gravestone at Cuffey's Cove Community Cemetery marks not only the tragic drowning of three sailors, it is also testimony to immigrants whose contributions were vital to the economic success and well-being of the coastal communities of Northern California in the late nineteenth century. 🌲

*Special thanks to the Historical Society of Mendocino County in Ukiah, California, for their support with the research for this paper.*

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> McNairn, Jackson, "Steam Schooner Sagas," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, July 1942.
- <sup>2</sup> "Shipping Lumber on the Coast," *Pacific Rural Press*, September 20, 1884.
- <sup>3</sup> Buchanan, Flora, 1969. *Reminiscences*. Greenwood (Elk), California.
- <sup>4</sup> Matson, Walter, *Reminiscences of a Town with Two Names: Greenwood, Known as Elk*, published by Greenwood Hobbyists, 1980.
- <sup>4</sup> Lindstrom, Harry, *Lumber Landings, Doghole Schooners and Shipwrecks*, presentation 2013, [https://www.tsra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Archives-Committee-Presentation-Lumber-Landings-ID\\_2133.pdf](https://www.tsra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Archives-Committee-Presentation-Lumber-Landings-ID_2133.pdf)
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18518918/john-johnson>

Continued from page 10

of the Lawrence University Memorial Chapel, where it can be heard today.

Thanks to its official status as a historic place and the care of Ronald Wahl, the exterior of Temple Zion looks today much as did when it was dedicated in 1883. Standing in front of it and gazing at it, one might imagine hearing the German, Hebrew, and English that were uttered and sung for decades within its walls. 🌲

## SOURCES

In addition to information gleaned about Temple Zion from *The Appleton Crescent*, which is available digitally on newspapers.com, biographical information on the individuals cited in this article can be found on Ancestry and FamilySearch. Information on Rabbi Meyer Samuel Weiss can be found in posts on the website [www.houdinifile.com](http://www.houdinifile.com). The 1939 first edition of *A Peculiar Place* by Edna Ferber is accessible at archive.org.

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