

PERSPEKTIVEN

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Fall 2004

“Ich erinnere mich an...” “I remember when...”

Goethe House's Wisconsin Oral History Project has successful start

By Dr. Samuel Scheibler

Since the 1950s, Goethe House has worked diligently as a non-profit cultural institute to encourage the best expressions of German culture and language in Wisconsin.

Early this year the Goethe House board of directors confronted the reality that we are on the cusp of losing an invaluable German-American cultural resource in our own backyard. As stewards of our heritage, the board resolved to create an enduring record of the rich and powerful personal memories of the state's German-American citizens by creating the Wisconsin Oral History Project.

With German Fest 2004, Goethe House began the task of preserving and cataloguing the contributions of German-Americans in their own words through advanced digital recording.

German-American living memories

The living memories of Wisconsin's German-Americans flow far beyond bratwurst and beer. Many seeds of the American labor movement, farm cooperative organizations, immigrant care, and cultural preservation were sown by German-Americans in the progressive soil of southeast Wisconsin. The state's well-earned reputation for social innovation and cultural advancement arose in a population largely of German descent.

The complexities and vicissitudes of the last six decades created a social and political climate that largely dampened the public expression of German-American culture in many areas. While patriotic fervor, both real and



Dr. Samuel Scheibler (left) and Wilma Giese share a song after she shared her family history with the Wisconsin Oral History Project in the Goethe House Pavilion at German Fest.

misplaced, may have suppressed the rich, varied, and vibrant stories of this important immigrant group, at Goethe House we recognize that we must act now to capture the memories and record contributions of earlier generations.

We believe that the experience of the German-American community in Wisconsin carries invaluable lessons not only for historians but for everyone

[Please turn to History, Page 4]

IN THIS ISSUE ...

- Goethe House movie schedule, page 3
- A Milwaukee souvenir of 1886, Page 5
- A journey to freedom, Page 7



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814 West Wisconsin
Avenue, Milwaukee,
Wisconsin
53233

Phone (414) 276-7435

e-mail:

goethe@execpc.com

Editors:

Robert W. Wiesian
Daniel P. Hanley Jr.

Managing Editor:

Helga Nikolic

Contributing Editors:

Gerhard Rohr
Frank P. Zeidler

Design:

Carl Ruppert

Partner Institute
Goethe Institut Chicago
Rüdiger van den Boom
150 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60601



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From the President

German Fest is now history and I am pleased to report that Goethe Haus reached a new high level of achievement!

First, we are delighted with Sprecher Brewery's support in assisting us to further promote our activities at German Fest and of it's interest in our future.

Second, as is indicated on Page 1 of this issue, our German Oral History Project has achieved an enormous success at its first outing. For this we thank our member volunteers and the students of Milwaukee School of Engineering, Lübeck Project.

Third, the Computer Testing Program conducted by the Rufus King High School German class had greater participation this year than last. We are indeed, grateful to the students under the guidance of Sabine Beirold.

Fourth, our Sprecher Raffle for wonderful steins provoked over 700 participants. This result should go a great way to enhance our marketing efforts.

Lastly, it is with extreme pleasure to announce the appointment of the Hon. James Benz and Father Samuel Scheibler as vice-presidents of Goethe Haus of Wisconsin. The addition of these two well qualified executives will greatly improve the effectiveness of Goethe Haus.

ALLES GUTE

ALLES GOETHE

Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr.

Marching along with Professor Umlaut's nephew

By Katharina Hren
Executive Director

At German Fest this year I unexpectedly found myself in the parade. I had actually intended for my son Gustav to participate in the parade as Professor Umlaut's nephew, wearing Lederhosen of course, and I had no thought of being in the parade myself. I tend to avoid being photographed, so being in a parade was not high on my to do list. However, to my surprise, I found myself glad for the experience, because I saw so many people from Goethe House as we traveled the parade route! It is truly the most rewarding aspect of serving as the director of Goethe House to see the veritable variety of ages and walks of life who make up the membership of Goethe House.



At our annual picnic just last week, I again marveled at the range of truly interesting people who have become part of Goethe House. The annual picnic is a wonderful opportunity for our members to meet our board members. This year we had the distinct privilege of meeting the new principal of the German Immersion School, Dr. Albert Brueger, and his wife, Barbara, as well as Monika Guenther, who is teaching a special intensive Beginner Business German class at MSOE this month. Ms. Guenther actually offered to come to America to teach for us by donating her time and paying her own way! She is truly generous individual, as well as a talented teacher! We hope she comes to visit us again soon!

This summer we had the help of patient and inexhaustible Kristin Lipke, from Marquette University, and this fall we welcome Genevieve Winter, also from Marquette University. Kathleen Dolan, now Kathleen Geraghty and a recent graduate of Alverno College, will be helping with our Spielgruppe again, as well as DSHA student Zoe Lindbergh. In October, Birthe Klappstein

Goethe House at the Movies

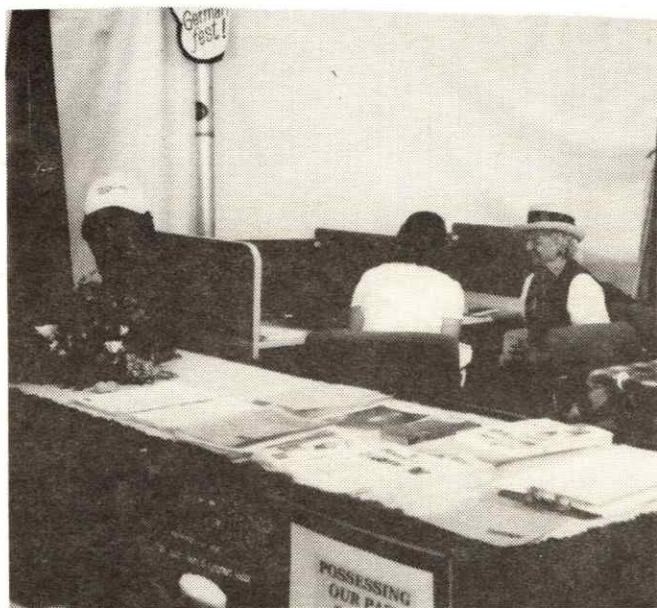
Don't forget to check out our Saturday movie showings. This fall we will showing movies every month on a Saturday (on the first Saturday if it is not a holiday) from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. here at Goethe House...free to the public! We will be showing such films as:

Good Bye Lenin - September 18; Sonnenallee... - October 2; Das fliegende Klassenzimmer (für Kinder) - November 6; Männerpension - December 4; Der Eisbär - January 8; Das Leben ist eine Baustelle - February 5; Advertising Rules - March 5; Enlightenment Guaranteed - April 2; Kleine Haie - May 7; Asterix Sieg über Cäsar - June 4.

from Bremen, Germany, will be our intern for four months. We have truly been blessed by the caliber of interns who have been willing to serve at Goethe House. A special thank you simply must be extended to our own board member Dr. Samuel P. Scheibler, for his tremendous organizational and social abilities, as well as his vast reserves of patience, energy, and tenacity, for he has brought together a talented and enthusiastic group of MSOE students to help us here at Goethe House...and who were simply invaluable at German Fest this year.

Some of these individuals were: Mary Barber (who also donned a dirndl and worked on the cataloguing of our books), Gary Cheung, Lindsey Heinrich (who wore a dirndl at German Fest), Shaun Karuck, Aisha Kitcher, Ryan Matiek, Jonathan Stallings (who played Professor Umlaut), Steven Turner (who worked wonders with our computer technology at Goethe House and did much driving on our behalf), Chris Von Sande. These students have taken classes through Goethe House and are part of an exchange program to Luebeck, Germany this fall. Dr. Scheibler was responsible for organizing the Member Hospitality area (thanks to all of you who joined us for a Sprecher and a chat!) and the Oral History area. Sabine Beirold, who teaches at Rufus King High School, brought her laptop computers and many of her high school students to once again offer the German language tests, as source of great fun and information for many. Alexis LaJoie offered some mini German lessons to passers by. The incredibly talented artist Carl Ruppert, the creator of Professor Umlaut, dropped by to add several artistic touches to our tent. And Jim Kupferschmidt from the Museum of Beer and Brewing gave us a new quiz, all about beers of course! Thanks to all of you.

Goethe House's Wisconsin Oral History Project has successful start



Wilma Giese (seated right) relates family history to a volunteer interviewer in the Goethe House Pavilion at German Fest during a session of the Wisconsin Oral History Project.

[History, from Page 1]

interested in the diversity that has made our nation great. Simple stories about times past provide unique and dynamic insights into our shared history. Even those who do not feel that their personal stories have intersected the great events of the past can provide an invaluable resource in preserving accounts of earlier ways of life. Holidays, anniversaries, household customs, family traditions, are all part of German-American heritage. Sometimes German-Americans don't realize that their memories embody a vital link between earlier generations and the present. Often what seems ordinary to us or "just the way we used to do things..." actually represents important information about German-American life in Wisconsin.


After training and preparing in the weeks before German Fest, Goethe House volunteers worked long hours each day during the Festival distributing information, encouraging participation and ultimately recording personal memories on digital computer discs in the Goethe House Pavilion.

The goal was to guide our guests through a series of open-ended questions in a quiet, comfortable environment. Participants received a personal copy of the

recording for themselves or their family. The master recordings were collected and compressed into an archive for editing and permanent cataloging. Final, edited copies of each interview will become part of the National Oral History Collection. Over forty-hours of interviews were conducted during the weekend.

Stories of heroism, romance, hard work and diligence merged with tales of folk humor, holidays, and even mischief to weave a remarkable tapestry of Wisconsin's rich cultural past. The visibility of the project was enhanced by a 15 minute discussion of the Goethe House program broadcasted each day during German Fest by Wisconsin Public Radio. At least seven participants stopped their weekend plans to come to German Fest and record their memories because "they heard us on the radio." By the standards of the American Oral History Association, this initial effort and the launching of the Wisconsin Oral History was an outstanding success.

Beyond the hours of recorded history many requests for future interviews have been taken. German-American groups in Kenosha, Racine, Wausau, and Waukesha have asked to be included in future recording plans.



Professor Umlaut

**On behalf of
Goethe House
of Wisconsin,
I cordially...**

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GERMAN LEGACY**

invite you to join in making a bequest to Goethe House in order to guarantee its success and service to future generations.

For more information on supporting Goethe House through your estate plan, contact:

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(414) 276-7435

Help
Make German culture live today and tomorrow.

The way we were: A Milwaukee souvenir of 1886

By Frank P. Zeidler

Much of the history of Milwaukee, especially in the 19th century, has been written in the German language. Germans both in Milwaukee and in Germany did a considerable amount of publishing about Milwaukee and no doubt other United States cities where there were German settlements.

An especially good historical record of Milwaukee has been preserved in a souvenir booklet, published in German by Casper & Zahn, Milwaukee publishers. The title of the work is "Die Stadt Milwaukee. Fuehrer durch Deutsch-Athen fuer Fremde and Einheimische." Roughly translated the title is "The City of Milwaukee, a leader because it is a German Athens for visitors and local people." The publication was issued as a souvenir for the 24th festival for the North American Singing Societies which occurred on July 21-25, 1886, in Milwaukee.

Richly illustrated

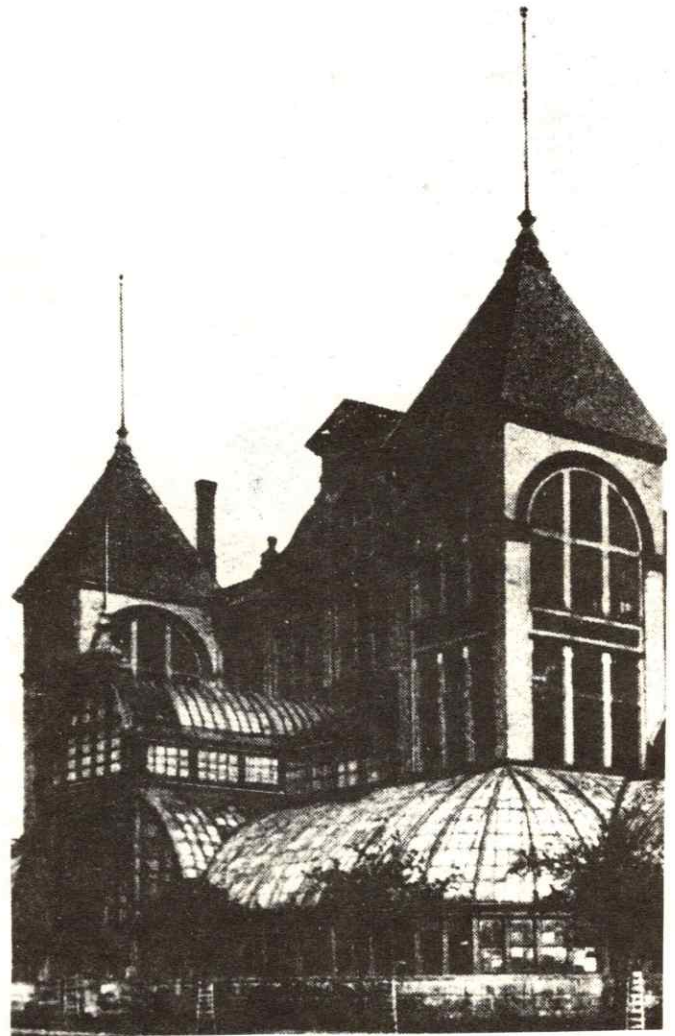
This publication is not simply a sheet of program notes. The publication has 120 pages, 6 3/8 by 9 inches, and, as the front sheet says, "Reich Illustriert" - richly illustrated. The illustrations include the portraits of leading participants, scenes from the city, wonderfully drawn bird's eye views of several sections of the city, and illustrations of the businesses and commercial operations in Milwaukee at the time.

The program was held in the relatively new Exposition Building on Fifth and Cedar Streets (now N. 6th Street and W. Kilbourn Avenue) with principal business headquarters at the West Side Turner Hall on 4th Street. About 98 singing societies came from Chicago and 15 from St. Louis. The program featured seven major events spread over four days. The detailed daily programs show a variety of presentations with soloists, quartets, mass singing and orchestra presentations.

Noted composers featured

Works of Mozart, Meyerbeer, Liszt, Wagner, Schubert and Rubenstein as well as the works of lesser known composers were on the programs. Many women singers were soloists or in group singing.

The head of the Saengerfest was Henry M. Mendel, president. Frank R. Falk was vice president and Mayor Emil Wallber treasurer. Large committees, with all the members named, are listed. Very fine pen and ink likenesses of the committee members are printed, the publication being printed before photoengraving became common. Naturally almost all men are heavily bearded.



Exposition Building 1886

Photo: Milwaukee Then And Now

The program section of this publication is supplemented by many fascinating articles, drawings and local scenes. Eugene Luening, a famous Milwaukeean, has an essay on the history of musical groups in the United States. This is followed by an historical sketch of Milwaukee as the German Athens on Lake Michigan. One page features head drawings of Solomon Juneau, George Walker, Byron Kilbourn, Increase Lapham, Mortiz Schoeffler and Mathis Stein, all leading early residents. This drawing work is superb.

History from French and Indian times

The early history of the area and city from the French and Indian times to 1886 is quite complete and

[Please turn to Stadt, Page 6]

The way we were: A Milwaukee souvenir of 1886

[Stadt, from Page 5]

accurate. One is mindful that the history was composed less than 40 years after Milwaukee became incorporated as a city. The history is followed by an extensive chronology of local events such as the building of the North Avenue dam, the founding of breweries, hotels, houses and building of railroads. Information on big fires and on secret societies and fraternal orders are listed. There is a tabulation of past mayors, of lake shipping disasters, of schools and hospitals. Public facilities of all types are listed, including welfare agencies.

The local information is augmented by excellent drawings of portions of the city, such as East Water Street, and sections along the Milwaukee River. One drawing shows a scene from about N. 5th and W. Walnut Streets overlooking the downtown with the shore of Bay View in the distance. These drawings deserve close study.

Incredibly accurate drawings

Some of the most significant features of this publication are line drawn, bird's eye views of sections of Milwaukee, such as the old East Side, the West Side, the Menomonee Valley and the lake front, to name some of the views. These extraordinary detailed drawings were made by the firm of William Brah, an engraver. The drawings are incredibly accurate and buildings currently existing such as Turner Hall on the west side are easily identified. Scenes of the Menomonee Valley and of the harbor mouth show entirely different aspects than are currently to be found.

The publication has an extensive section on the business and commerce of Milwaukee. There is a portrait of Alex Mitchell, at the time the wealthiest man in the community. This section contains numerous advertisements of breweries, wagon makers, wine dealers, grocers, stove makers, glass blowers, and tin ware people, and many smaller industries. Among the items manufactured were coaster wagons. Steamboat companies advertised and so did owners of private parks like the Schutzen Park, now the Clinton and Bernice Rose Park on N. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and W. Burleigh Street. The booklet has another listing of where places may be found in Milwaukee such as the City Hall, the police station and the railroad stations.

Milwaukee, a desirable place

A section of the book describes why Milwaukee is a desirable place in which to live and pictures in the book show fine houses and scenes in Milwaukee that might attract new comers. However, this is not all. There

A word about C. N. Casper. He had a book shop at 437 East Water St. at the corner of Mason. His book shop was a remarkable place filled with new and old volumes. As I remember, it was still functioning in the late 1920s. Milwaukee did not have a public sponsored university in Casper's time, but his book store served to educate many people who otherwise could not afford "higher education." In the souvenir booklet Casper listed subject titles on which his shop was prepared to supply books on topics from "Abenteuer" to "Zuckerfabrikation." Casper added, "and hundreds of other titles." - **Frank P. Zeidler**

is a discussion on railroad service to and from Milwaukee, and this opens the way to an article on the fine qualities of the lake country of Waukesha and of the North Country along the Wisconsin River and northern lakes.

Probably no other publication is as packed with the detail and information about Milwaukee up to 1886 as this publication. It is a city directory of sorts without the listing of all the individuals in the city at the time. However, its net effect leaves one in astonishment because of the intense concentration of quality information about Milwaukee and because of the line drawings and bird's eye views of William Brah's firm.

The book has also been published in an English version which I think is available in the Milwaukee Public Library. It is a publication worth reproducing for it has invaluable information for present residents in the Milwaukee area - city and county.

Frank P. Zeidler, an honorary director of Goethe House of Wisconsin, was mayor of Milwaukee from 1948 to 1960 and among the most successful Socialist elected officials in the United States.

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your friends to:**

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Information on Goethe House events, membership and other resources. Satisfy your need for German culture 24 hours a day.

Use our web site or e-mail address to send Letters to the Editor to comment and share ideas.

“Barefoot in the Rubble,” A journey to freedom

By Elizabeth B. Walter

The thing I well remember is a large meadow filled with poppies, a sea of red flowers as far as my eyes could see. The wind danced among them, making them come alive.

I wanted to be with the poppies. I wanted to pick them and be just as free as the wind. But barbed wire fence imprisoned me within the yard of the concentration camp. No flowers grew here. Too many people had trampled the ground. Beneath my bare feet, not even weeds had much of a chance to grow. I remember mostly playing in the back of the yard.

I stayed away from the “Partisaner” who guarded the entrance gate of the camp. Their dark eyes and mustaches frightened me. Their long bayonets stuck up from behind them, as if they grew out of their bodies. If they looked my way, I ran farther back into the camp yard. I was afraid they would come and get me as they did that night when they brought us to this terrible place. It had happened so quickly.

...

All my life I had been surrounded with the warmth and love of my family, and within the wink of an eye my life had been turned into a nightmare. We were tossed about, churning in a sea of turmoil and upheaval. Life as my people had known it was slashed from its roots and tossed into the fire. Near the end of the war all over Yugoslavia, Schwabos, as we were called by our non German neighbors, were rounded up by the Communist government of Marshall Tito. Let me tell you how it happened to my family.

...

The warm rays of the sun were streaming through the bedroom window onto the floor where I was sitting, playing contentedly with a tin gold chain, shaping hearts and circles. I remember being fascinated by how the small links could form all kinds of designs so easily, just by my fingertips pushing and pulling the chain in different directions.

Suddenly the quiet was broken. Yelling and screaming came from the street outside. I jumped up and looked out the window, where I saw a group of rolling wagons full of women. Mothers reaching over the sides and back of the wagon, crying children with outstretched hands grabbing onto their mothers' hands, soldiers yelling and hitting the children and mothers with the butts of their guns over and over again and again until they let go of

“Barefoot in the Rubble” is a recollection of my early childhood in Communist Yugoslav concentration camps after World War II. My mother, brother and I were interned for almost three years. In 1947 we escaped, crossing Hungary on foot to get to Austria. More than a month later we were finally reunited with my father, who had been shipped off to Russia as a slave laborer in 1944. We lived in bombed out Munich until 1950 when we immigrated to Chicago. The following are excerpts from the autobiographical account of my experiences. -

Elizabeth B. Walter



My passport picture, 1950.

Elizabeth B. Walter

each other. Why were the soldiers hitting them? I wondered. What if the Partisaner came to get me?

The wagons took them to the train where they were put into freight cars, just like my father and the others before them.

...

I was fast asleep in Mami's bed. Mami, Seppi and I slept in the bedroom, Mutter in the other room by herself. The shock of the bright light and men's voices startled me awake. Quickly I sat up clinging tightly to my Tuchet, my feather coverlet. There by the bedroom door stood three Partisaner, their large guns with long knives on the end pointing straight at us. Dark, foreboding eyes glistened from behind black bushy brows and mustached faces. Shouting in Serbian, they started toward Mami, who was standing at the foot of our bed. I watched in horror as they pulled at Mami's hand. What were they doing?

[Please turn to Rubble, Page 8]

"Barefoot in the Rubble," A journey to freedom

[Rubble, from Page 7]

They were hurting Mami. I started to cry. Their voices rose as they pulled some more on her hand. It seemed forever until they got what they wanted: Mami's wedding ring. Pointing to her ears they said something again and proceeded to take her earrings. Seppi stood on one side of me next to the bed, not saying a word. My grandmother came out of her room.

The Partisaner said something else to my Mami and Mutter, pointing their guns. I could not understand what was said or what was going on. Why were these terrible men in our house?

...

It was cold and dark. The whole street was full of people. People in front and back of us, the whole street packed all the way across. I was on the outside left of the road, holding on to Mutter's hand, afraid and bewildered. My grandmother held on to me with one hand, in the other she carried a small bundle. Crying over and over:

"Was mache die mit uns. Mein Gott. Jesses, Maria, und Josef was mache die mit uns."

What are they going to do with us? My God. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; what are they going to do with us?

I began to cry. If grown ups didn't know what was going on, there was good reason for my fear and horror.

...

They came during the night. They took everything: our right to sleep in a bed, to eat our own food, to take care of our bodily functions in privacy. They drove us from our homes at gunpoint, young and old, male and female.

From the just born babe to the oldest in their 90's, we were driven out the gate like our animals by their herders. But instead of loving keepers with dog and whistle, men with rifles and bayonets herded us out of town and into the barbed wire enclosed airplane hangars. Now we were also considered beasts of burden. But unlike livestock, which was cared for and protected, we were to be abolished as a people. At the tender age of 4, I was considered an enemy of the people: A Nazi - a word that no 4-year-old could know the meaning of. ...

The saddest part of all was that the rest of the world was meanwhile rejoicing. Peace, peace was being shouted from all corners of the Western world. Never again would such inhumane treatment of people be

An historic overview

In the late 17th century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire recovered its Hungarian domains by defeating the Ottoman Turks. The Ottoman Empire had occupied the region for 150 years. Fearful that the Ottoman Turks would regain control of the area, the Austrian Imperial Council launched a great colonization scheme to settle the recovered lands with loyal subjects. Promising land in exchange for hard work, the Austrian Empire encouraged German-speaking people from southwestern Germany, northeastern France and Switzerland to cultivate the region. Since no roads linked Central Europe to Southeastern Europe, the new settlers traveled down the Danube by barge. More than 1,000 farming communities and numerous homesteads were settled in the Danubian Plain in what later became Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia. The two largest areas they settled became known as Banat and Batschka. The German-speaking settlers became known as Donauschwaben. ... The Austro-Hungarian Empire became disbanded at the end of World War I. Life ... [in the] newly formed country of Yugoslavia went on much as it had before the war. The end of World War II spelled disaster for Yugoslavia's 537,000 Danube Swabians. Tito's communist government declared ethnic Germans "enemies of the state". Danube-Swabians lost all their rights and property ... [and] were forced into concentration camps. Tens of thousands died in this, Yugoslavia's first ethnic cleansing.

tolerated as it had been during the war. Never. Never, except in Eastern Europe.

As the world powers cheered "Freedom," they condemned us to hell. It is very hard for me to relate to you, now that I'm an adult, what it was like to live for almost three years as the property of someone else. At the time, I was not aware of what was happening. Not until my teens did I understand a lot of things that had gone on

[Please turn to Rubble, Page 9]

“Barefoot in the Rubble,” A journey to freedom

[Rubble, from Page 8]

in my early childhood, and why.

For many years, when I talked about the above incident or any other incident that had occurred in the concentration camp, I would start to shake and cry. Not until I started to write about it was I able to tell my story with my emotions somewhat under control. We had been considered non human and dealt with as less than animal, animals to abuse and destroy at the whim of others - at the whim of Marshall Tito's Partisaner.

The guards had been told they could do with us what they wanted. The politicians of the Western world pretended to be deaf, blind, and dumb. Truman, Churchill and De Gaulle rejoiced with Stalin; rejoiced in victory. But not one of them interfered with their Communist Allies to stop what they were doing with us ethnic Germans in the Eastern Block. Nothing was told to the rest of the world. Fifteen million people were condemned for something over which they had no control. More than two million ethnic Germans who had been living in Eastern Europe perished in the next few years.

The only crime we had committed was to be born ethnic Germans. Neither our dead nor the camps used for slave labor and starvation were included in Yugoslavia's history of World War II. We have no pictures, newspapers, or newsreels to show the world what was done to us. No visual or written records of our internment were made public, and after more than 50 years, the facts have still not been acknowledged or made known.

One half million people have simply been written out of Yugoslavia's history, as well as 15 million out of the rest of Eastern Europe. It is hard when one loses everything he owns, but unbearable when one loses one's identity and history.

...

I was always hungry. The bluish Grauplsupp and rock hard Mallei corn bread were hard to swallow. Sometimes it just stuck in my throat. The soup tasted awful. It was slimy. The few kernels of barley that floated in the bluish liquid were not enough to fill a spoon. After eating everything I was still hungry. Why did we get so little to eat? I could have eaten a whole loaf of bread that Mami used to make back home, the big round loaves that were the size of a Baxsimpl - small basket.

The only time I got to eat real bread in camp is when Mami smuggled a small piece in for me. She managed to bring something for Seppi and me every day.

An apple, pear or whatever fruit she could find, or a potato was good. Anything that she brought helped ease the hunger.

...

I heard Mami's voice from far away. "Elsa, weck auf. Wake up, its time to go." In the darkness, I didn't know where I was; then I saw the black shadow of the Galje and knew. We quickly got our bundles together and joined the rest of our group.

...

In back of the building a ditch ran as far as one could see. Reeds grew on the side of the ditch, their thin, dark stalks taller than a person. We followed the path that led down toward the ditch. Hidden amongst the reeds were a few weather-beaten boards, a makeshift bridge. On the other side, the land sloped slightly and flattened into a wide area. Mami grabbed my hand and yanked me with her as she fled across the grass stubbled dirt. Everything and everyone was cloaked in dark shadows. We ran in the direction we were told, always listening for shots at our back. Finally a dark wall of rustling corn stalks swallowed us up as we ran into its rows for protection.

As we got to the other side of "No Man's Land" my mother knew that we were finally in Hungary, the rows of corn were planted differently here than in Yugoslavia. This was the landmark she had been told to look for.

"Gott sei Dank! Endlich sein mir aus dem Elend heraus!" Mami and Basl proclaimed, as they hugged and kissed us. Yes, thank God finally we were all out of that wretched place, and free of Tito's clutches.

Although I couldn't quite understand the meaning of what we had just achieved, a feeling of happiness washed over us. Not until I was much older did I understand what danger we had in escaping from bondage. At last we all settled in to sleep before daylight. The towering rows of corn were our fortress. We out of danger yet, we could be caught by the Hungarian government.

It took us almost a month to get to the Austrian border and true freedom.

Elizabeth B. Walter, born in Karlsdorf, in Banat, Yugoslavia, and her husband, Mike, reside in suburban Chicago. "Barefoot in the Rubble," published by Pannonia Press, may be ordered through the publisher at www.pannoniapress.com.

Theodor Wettstein - A name we all should know

By Jason and Samuel Scheibler

Six years before Carl Schurz arrived in Watertown, Wisconsin, a Milwaukee German-American had already risen to prominence in the infant Republican Party and had worked tirelessly for the advancement of the G.O.P. amongst recent German immigrants. Four years before the "oldest" German-American singing society was organized in Buffalo, New York, the same Rhinelander-turned-Badger was the host of weekly meetings of Milwaukee's own Sangerverein at his establishment on Market Square. Only three years after the Midwest's first Schuleverein was organized in Cincinnati this same intrepid gentleman had created one in Milwaukee. Twenty-one years before the next community in the region would have a German Relief Society he had founded a proto-type here. And 68 years before Walter Kohler Sr. laid the foundations of his internationally famous American Club with its emphasis upon assimilating German-speaking immigrants into American society, this remarkable Milwaukeean had opened the Gasthof zum Deutschen Haus with the same chartered goals. Yet, today the name Carl Schurz is revered by every student of German-American history and Kohler holds pride of place in America's bathrooms while this extraordinary champion of German-American culture is rarely mentioned at all.

The legacy of Theodor Wettstein

It is time to correct this oversight and remind students, scholars, and justly proud citizens of Milwaukee of the legacy of Theodor Wettstein.

Theodor Wettstein was born in Barmen, Rheinisch Prussia while Napoleon was still marching back from Moscow. As a young man he distinguished himself as a commercial and community leader in Elberfeld near the growing industrial center of Wuppertal. Sensing that his boundless energies and economic possibilities might be stymied in Prussia's western frontier provinces, he booked passage to America aboard the George Washington in April, 1848.

Convinced Elberfelders to emigrate

True to his organizational talent and a combination of charm and charisma that marked his entire life, Wettstein convinced 150 fellow Elberfelders to emigrate with him. If it can ever be said that a man "hit the ground running" it is true of Wettstein's arrival in Milwaukee. Immediately seizing upon the needs of "48'ers" arriving by the hundreds from revolution

wracked Europe, Wettstein opened a dry-goods store, a wine shop, and hardware emporium within his first 18 months in the New World.

Re-investing the profits from his stores along Spring Street, in 1850 he opened his hotel for German immigrants (popularly known among Milwaukee's English-speakers as "the German House"). Wettstein believed that "quality breeds quality" in all things. By 1852, a reporter noted that his property "set the standard for German hotels across the nation." That same year Wettstein played host to His Highness Wilhelm of Nassau and thus began a long tradition of royal and celebrity visits to Wettstein hotels in southeast Wisconsin.

Encouraged crossing the Atlantic

In his spare time between retail concerns and hostelries, in 1851 Wettstein wrote a book *Nordamerikanische Freistaat Wisconsin* (published by Baedeker) providing counsel, guidance and encouragement to Germans contemplating the move across the Atlantic.

His tireless efforts to promote Milwaukee as a German Mecca led him to found the Schuleverein in the same year. He had begun a Sangerverein (Milwaukee Musical Society) the year before and convinced the renowned "Latin farmer" and great conductor Hans Balatka to guide the group.

Desiring to "uplift" the level of social sophistication on the western shores of Lake Michigan, Wettstein introduced a series of "subscription balls" – elegant evenings of courtly dance and music of the Viennese tradition held in the stylish main salon of his hotel.

Burned in effigy

This was too much for the "Free Thinkers" who saw European imperial fashions and customs as this first stumble down the slippery slope to European despotism. A group of riled radicals burned Wettstein in effigy in front of his hotel after one of the balls.

In a famous scene that captured the essence of his good-humor, Wettstein responded to this outburst of free speech by laughing at the sight of his portly likeness disappearing in flames. Wettstein did not, however, overlook those who through circumstances beyond their control did not have the discretionary time to devote to music, literature and dance. In 1853 he became the first president of the Milwaukee German Relief Society with the stated goal of assisting recent immigrants who had not

[Please turn to Wettstein, Page 11]

Theodor Wettstein - A name we all should know

[Wettstein, from Page 10]

found the land of opportunity quite as opportune as they had been promised in Wettstein's promotional literature.

Wettstein turned to politics. He became an early "Whig convert" to the new Republican Party and was appointed by Governor Randall as the Clerk of the Municipal Court in Milwaukee. Defeated for election, Wettstein began withdrawing from public life. After marrying for the third time in 1866, Wettstein moved to Chicago with its growing prominence as a transportation hub. Wettstein remained there until the end of his life in 1877. While his name may not be a household word and the site of his hotel now sits beneath Milwaukee City Hall, all German-Americans owe Theodor Wettstein a debt of gratitude. He taught and lived the lesson that good American citizenship and assimilation into the cultural mainstream does not mean abandoning the language and culture of your forefathers. In a very real way, the life and work of Theodor Wettstein exemplifies the same goals expressed today in Goethe House of Wisconsin.

Drink a toast to Sprecher

More than 700 people who visited the Goethe House Pavilion at German Fest entered the Sprecher Raffle for the wonderful steins provided by Sprecher Brewery. The winners are:

Carolyn Gibson, Racine; Al Meyer, Milwaukee; Karin Koller, Greenfield; Karl Newyear, Gurnee, Ill.; Ardell Bergin, Greenfield; Shirley Meyer, New Berlin; Sarah Asbeck, Milwaukee; Margaret Deugaw, Clarksville Tenn.

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Another benefit of Goethe House membership!

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Dr. Scheibler,

I really enjoyed German Fest as a whole...the music was excellent...the people were wonderful and the weather was fantastic! I was telling people here in Cedarburg of my experiences and how wonderful it was to interview people for the Wisconsin Oral History Project. They were in awe. Some of the things I heard this weekend and what people went through were absolutely incredible. I know now that I want to be a teacher...but instead of teaching the technical stuff...I would like to teach history (namely German history) and/or the German language...this weekend at German Fest, I feel like I finally got to explore history with its most valuable resources (the people who lived through it) and I LOVED it. I am German...but I have never felt as German as I did this weekend...and I was proud of my heritage. I want to explore my family history, I want to know what people did, how they did it and what they went through. Someday I may just write a book about it...who knows. Maybe I can help other people explore their genealogy as well...it needs to be told and passed down. This is something that is essential to our lives! Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely, Mary Barber

Editor's note: Mary Barber, a junior at MSOE, began her study of German this spring through the Goethe House/MSOE cooperative program and will spend the school year in Luebeck at the Fach Hochschule. Mary volunteered over 30 hours of service to the Goethe House Pavilion at German Fest serving in the Wisconsin Oral History Project section.

Dear Ted:

Thank you for the latest Goethe House newsletter; it was good to hear from you. "Die tat ist alles; nichts der ruhm." The deed is everything, the fame is nothing. - Goethe

All the best,

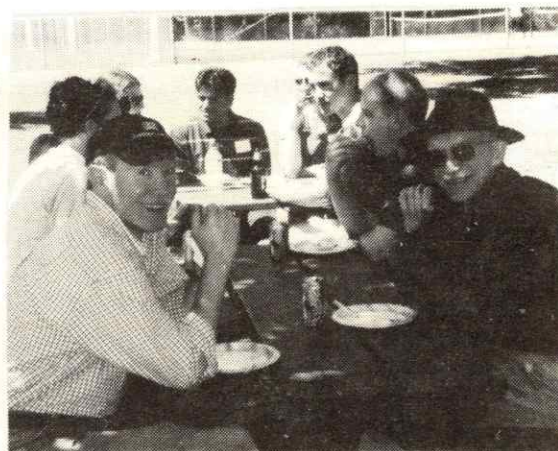
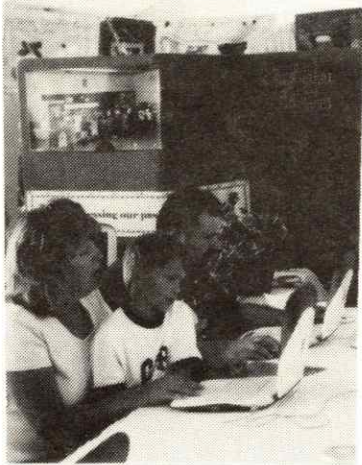
Guido Reinhardt Rahr Jr., Rahr Malting Co., Minneapolis

Editor's note: The Summer 2003 edition of PERSPEKTIVEN reported on the Rahr family's positive impact on Manitowoc, Wisconsin, beginning in 1847.



The Goethe House Scrapbook - Summer 2004

Our main events of Summer 2004 were, of course, German Fest at the Maier Festival Park on the downtown shore of Lake Michigan and the annual Goethe House of Wisconsin picnic in historic and scenic Lake Park on Milwaukee's East Side. Share the memories!



New perspective on Milwaukee Panorama painters



**Thomas D. Lidtke (left), Lea Heine
and Dr. Samuel Scheibler**

In early July, Lea Heine attended a lecture at the Wisconsin Historical Museum, "A New and Emerging Perspective on Milwaukee Panorama Painters." This topic particularly interested the 93-year-old Madison resident both because she is the great-granddaughter-in-law of renowned German-American panorama painter Friedrich Wilhelm Heine and because two decades ago she donated to the Milwaukee County Historical Society 15 handwritten journals recording the artist's life, work, and general observations.

To her surprise, Heine heard presenters Dr. Samuel Scheibler, cultural anthropologist and Goethe House board member, and Dr. Thomas D. Lidtke, executive director of the West Bend Art Museum, recount how a series of unlikely connections led them to the long overlooked diaries. She was amazed that the translation of her "Opa's" thoughts (written in minuscule, archaic script) had led Scheibler and Lidtke to significant discoveries about the fate of panorama paintings created in Milwaukee, most of which have proved untraceable since the art form fell victim to cinema a hundred years ago.

The researchers recently also learned that the Wisconsin Historical Society has in its visual materials collection several paintings of Civil War soldiers thought to be studies for panoramas, large group photos of many

of the painters, and H. B. Bennett's stereocards of the panorama paintings on exhibit in the late 1800s.

Heine has agreed to participate in Goethe House's Wisconsin Oral History Project and to assist in deciphering "short-hand" portions of the diaries.

The Panorama Project, a joint venture of Goethe House, the Milwaukee County Historical Society, and the West Bend Art Museum, is laying groundwork for a major exhibition and publication based upon the "rediscovery" of this invaluable resource.

**Portions of this article were contributed by the
Wisconsin Historical Society**

Editor's note: The Fall 2003 edition of PERSPEKTIVEN reported on the European-born artists who came to Wisconsin to paint panoramas - the largest single influx of immigrant artists ever to reach our state at any one time. The works of some of these artists are included in the West Bend Art Museum's Archives.

**The West Bend Art Museum is located
downtown at 300 South 6th Avenue.**

**Public hours are Wednesday-Saturday
10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Sunday 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For information call (262) 334-9638

Free Admission

Goethe House of Wisconsin is a non-profit German-American cultural institute serving Wisconsin since 1958. Our mission is to serve as a statewide resource for information about the past and present culture of all German-speaking people - especially those in the Federal Republic of Germany. Goethe House of Wisconsin invites the financial support of individuals, companies and organizations who share our mission and recognize the value of this important cultural exchange. Goethe House of Wisconsin is a not-for-profit (501) (c) (3) organization. Donations are tax deductible as the law allows.

Goethe House of Wisconsin

We would like to thank our friends who have generously supported us.
Ein herliches Dankeschon

Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr.

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Thank you!

Kessler, Frederick; Ross, Dr. Ronald; Smaglick, Dorothy; Charleston, Ilse.

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Seniors

Ammon, Sandra; Ankel, Else; Barboriak, Gertrude; Bootz, Ursula; Dawley, Richard; Drufenbrock, S. Diane; Franzen, Ernst; Gommermann, Theresa; Gruning, William Jr.; Gruning, Wm F.; Hanley, Daniel P. Jr.; Janz, Penny; John, Marilyn; Jung, Gabriele; Kalupa, Bob/Eileen; Kanstein, Hans; Keller, Friedrich; Kent, Richard; Levis, Diane; Luetzow, Joan; Lukow, Kenneth; Maas, Bob; Maroti, A. Bela; Miller, Gudrun; Navarro, Ursula; Nielsen, Michelle; Phelps, Edward; Rauscher, Gerhard; Ritsche, Marita; Rupp, Johann; Schatzman, Erna; Schwark, Hans; Sherburne, S. Francele; Smith, Helga I.; Speckhard, Angelika; Stolberg, Vera; Taylor, Janet; Wiethaler, S. Victoria; Wilde, Susan; Brumder, E. J.

Students

Barber, Mary; Cheung, Gary; Courtney, Michael; Darling, Elisabeth; Darling, Wayne; Dillon, Candice; Heinrich, Lindsey; Jackson, Justin; Karuck, Shaun; Kitcher, Aisha; LaJoie, Nicholas; Ley, David; Matiek, Ryan; McMullen, Robert; Melbye, Kristal; Mravik, Kari; Riess, Susanne; Streckel, Antje; Szczerbiak, Devin; Vogel, Katrina; Von Sande, Chris; Winter, Genevieve; Ziegler, Sandra.

Lifetime

James Keyes; Harold Seemann; Rabbi Barry Silberg; Technischer Verein; Hon. Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr.; David Uihlein.

Goethe House-MSOE are a winning combination



Monika Günther (seated) with MSOE students Aisha Kitcher, Mary Barber, Samis Abdeljawwad and Lindsey Heinrich

An intensive German language class for business people and professionals offered by Goethe House in cooperation with the General Studies Department of the Milwaukee School of Engineering proved once again that the local academic community and Goethe House make a winning combination.

The genesis of the course was a request from several MSOE students enrolled in the Spring Goethe House beginning German class for a condensed, concentrated course prior to their departure for the exchange program between the university and the Fach Hochschule in Lübeck (see PERSPEKTIVEN, Summer 2004).

In response to their request, the Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr., president of Goethe House, arranged for Professor Monika Günther, a specialist in intensive language learning from Meersburg (HYPERLINK "<http://www.service-bw.de/>" Baden-Württemberg), to come to Milwaukee.

Goethe House and the General Studies Department designed a 10-session evening course focusing on professional conversational skills. Designed to fit into the busy schedule of working professionals as well as

students, the class was held from 5 :30–7:30 PM each evening in the Alumni Partnership Building on the MSOE campus. The course concluded on August 27, with a special, "hands-on" Prüfung conducted in the European Village of the Milwaukee Public Museum. Seventeen students enrolled in the class: three MSOE alumni, two Goethe House members from the community, and 12 current MSOE students. It is noteworthy that these students were willing to take two weeks out of their summer schedules for an intensive language course (and commute daily from as far way as Green Bay and Chicago).

Professor Günther stated that she found the Goethe House students to be motivated, intelligent, respectful, and hardworking. This is hardly faint praise coming from a German professor accustomed to working with European professionals. Anyone interested in future intensive courses in business German should contact Goethe House.



Goethe Words of Wisdom

In German

Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh.
In allen Wipfeln Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch.
Die Vögelein schweigen in Walde.
Warte nur, balde ruhest du auch.

In English

Over all the hilltops is calm.
In all the treetops you feel
Hardly a breath of air.
The little birds fall silent in the woods.
Just wait...soon you'll also be at rest.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe