

PERSPEKTIVEN

PERSPEKTIVEN Volume 4, No. 1

Winter 2004-2005

The delightful, holy Advent and Christmas season descends from German heritage of symbols, beliefs

School Sisters of Notre Dame and "Crazy" King Ludwig of Bavaria

By Kathleen Geraghty

Turn into the quiet drive, and this time of year you'll glimpse rolling fields, bare trees, and Holy Mary, quietly keeping watch over a cluster of buildings in the village of Elm Grove. Originally the site of an orphanage, today it is home to over 100 women of the School Sisters of Notre Dame order. Sister Eileen McKeever, SSND, was kind enough to give us an interesting tour of the grounds.

It was at this bend in the road in 1855 that the horse belonging to Mother Caroline Friess stopped and refused to go any farther. Mother Caroline, wise as she was, took this as a sign from God that this spot on Watertown Plank Road was the site she had been looking for. She appealed to the Louis Mission Society of Bavaria and received the funding to purchase the land and begin construction on the needed expansion for the sisters.

She purchased the first 40 acres of land from George Betzold in 1856, and by the 1890s again requested funding for an additional project: a Bavarian-style structure, now known as Notre Dame Hall.

"We like to call this building the 'castle,'" says Sister McKeever. And where did this money come from?

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Illustration: Woodlake Kohler

By Dr. Samuel Scheibler

Cultures are not spun like ordinary grey wool on a single national wheel and spindle, but woven as multicolored tapestries composed of countless historical, social and religious threads. Self-appointed "purists" may attempt to shred the fabric to find an "authentic" strand only to find themselves left holding a tangle of tufts and lint unrecognizable as anything useful or beautiful.

The whorl and weave of any nation's traditions is found in its folk culture. Here the various filaments of ancient beliefs and practices mesh most smoothly with contemporary usage. This reality is not a revelation of modern scientific anthropology, but the practical observation of St. Gregory the Great (540-607 A.D.) given as papal advice to the first missionaries appointed to bring the Gospel to the ferocious pagans beyond the Rhine River.

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From the President

As the year comes to a close, we at Goethe Haus have much for which to be thankful! We begin by thanking our Executive Director Katharina Hren for her efforts and success with the Kinder Kamps, the Kinder Spiel Gruppe and the Kaffee Kultur. We are grateful to our Board of Directors whose pro-active attitude has encouraged us to explore new avenues of activity. This attitude in turn led to a greater presence at German Fest this past summer and increased volunteer participation. It has allowed our Academic Advisory Board to consider and create new approaches in responding to the demands of our multi-cultural society. It provided the impetus to launch, to date, the most successful German oral history project in our country. It allowed us to reintroduce to the international historical art community, the wonderful panoramic murals of Freidrich Wilhelm Heine and has enhanced the possibility of recreating an appreciation for Yiddish theater in Milwaukee. We have made further strides in developing the potential benefits of our web site by making it interactive. Our increased cooperative efforts with the Milwaukee School of Engineering have begun to pay significant bilateral benefits.

FROHES FEST, FROHE
WEINACHTEN
Alles Gute, Alles Goethe
Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr.

A Christmas tree prompts a cascade of nostalgia

By Katharina Hren
Executive Director

As the days grow shorter and colder, I am somehow filled with the warmth that nostalgia can bring. I am already looking forward to looking for the perfect tree with my son Gustav. When I was a child, I was always the one to lead the search for our Christmas tree. Once the tree is put in its perfect place in our house I am overwhelmed with a rush of memories. I am reminded of our "Spaziergaenge" (strolls) in the forest edging Wassertruedingen, the town where my Oma and Opa lived. For the month of December the forest is near.

Recently at our Spielgruppe (our own Kinderkollektive) we were singing some "Laternenlieder" (lantern songs), and these lines struck me in particular:

**Dort oben leuchten die Sterne,
Hier unten leuchten wir.**

**Up there the stars are shining,
Down here we are shining.**

I believe that the Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa season is an opportunity to be inspired by the "stars" in our lives, those people who give us the gift of their spirit, who like sparks of light inspire us with the very act of giving. Take the time to recognize some of the "stars" outside of your family - perhaps it's another child in your child's class, the person who serves you coffee, or the janitor at work.

This season we have some very special events planned:

December began with our Seventh Annual Dinner, held for the second year at Karl Ratzsch's on December 2nd.

On December 4th St. Nikolaus will visit our Spielgruppe, as will the Alliance Francaise with some of their French families. We hope to do some singing in German and French.

On December 11th we'll be taking the train as a group to Chicago to visit the Christkindlmarkt.

On December 18th we'll have our Spielgruppe and Kultur Cafe Christmas parties.

And on the 19th we will have one more holiday event - a Christmas party hosted by the Alliance Francaise

at the Brown Deer Park Clubhouse (call us for more information!).

This year we decided to collaborate with the Alliance Francaise by offering Kinder Kamps and French summer camps at two of the same sites, for we have the mutual goal of making sure that our children continue to have access to a variety of foreign languages. Rather than compete with one another, we hope to work together by offering quality programming and thus increase our possibilities in terms of outreach.

Since we started offering our adult German Beginner III class, a bridge course between the Beginner and Intermediate levels, we have had more adult students than ever! We're also offering a fourth MSOE class, as well as a course through Marquette at Modine Manufacturing in Racine.

For 10 years a group of MSOE students has been taking part in an exchange program in Luebeck, Germany. Due to the Goethe House courses at MSOE initiated and made into a reality by our Dr. Samuel Scheibler this year, we have helped prepare the first group of MSOE students to arrive in Luebeck already knowing some German, and they were actually put into advanced classes!

I'd also like to mention the new arrivals to our Spielgruppe families this year:

Kaia Haines, Emma Richardson, Emily Streckel, Ella Frake.

And a very special thank you to our Spielgruppe volunteers: Birthe, Zoe, Kathleen, and Toby. These young women have made it possible for our active children to have even MORE fun ...and for our parents to actually have lucid conversations with one another!

Don't forget - your donations to Goethe House are tax-deductible!

We wish you all a blessed holiday season.

Alles Gute, Alles Liebe, Alles

Schoene, Alles Goethe...

Katharina

Goethe House director deserves Marquette honor



Photo: Michelle Powers/MARQUETTE

Dr. John S. Pustejovsky

Dr. John S. Pustejovsky, a member of the Board of Directors and Academic Advisory Board of Goethe House of Wisconsin, has been honored by Marquette University where he is associate professor of foreign languages and literatures.

Pustejovsky received the 2004 Rev. John P. Raynor, S.J., Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence. The award of a \$5,000 stipend is funded by the Lawrence G. Haggerty Endowment Fund. Pustejovsky is a 1976 graduate of Marquette University.

The Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence recognizes a faculty member who inspires his students to pursue the ideals of the university and helps students grow in knowledge and scholarship for the glory of God and the good of others. Nominations are made by alumni, faculty and students.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Ted,

Thank you for sending the two copies of your newsletter. It was a wonderful surprise when I opened the HERBST copy of Goethe House PERSPEKTIVEN, the first thing I saw was myself as a child looking back at me. Ein grosses Danke Schoen for including excerpts from my book "Barefoot in the Rubble" in your fall issue.

If you ever want me to come to Milwaukee and speak about my experiences as a child, I will be happy to do so. As you know, my story is one of the many millions that have been forgotten by most world historians. Hopefully more people will tell their stories and help bring the subject to light.

Sincerely, Elizabeth Walter



Goethe Words of Wisdom

In German

Man laesst den Winter sich noch gefallen.
Man glaubt, sich freier auszubreiten,
wenn die Baeume so geisterhaft,
so durchsichtig vor uns stehen.
Sie sind nicht, aber sie decken auch nichts zu.

In English

One still takes pleasure in the winter.
One believes that one can spread oneself out more freely.
When the trees stand before us so ghostly, so transparent.
They are not, but yet they do not hide anything either.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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.

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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

The delightful, holy Advent, Christmas Season



[Christmas, from Page 1]

Each year as Germans and German-Americans begin unpacking our decorations and preparing our kitchens for Advent and Christmas we owe St. Gregory and those who followed his sage advice a great debt of thanks. The richness, color and flavor our Advent and Christmas customs both rooted in Germany and transported across the Atlantic are a delightful synthesis of ancient Germanic, Celtic, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran symbols and beliefs.

Christmas Tree Ornaments

Previously in PERSPEKTIVEN we have explored the origins of the Christmas Tree in the experiences of both the ancient Germans and the great reformer, Martin Luther, and the hopes enshrined by Bavarian villagers and Milwaukeeans in the decorations of the Christmas Bride's Tree (see PERSPEKTIVEN, Winter, 2003-2004). A quick glance over any one of a thousand Christmas trees in Wisconsin this season, however, will reveal the continual truth of St. Gregory's counsel (especially in homes where Oma's ornaments are still loving hung on the tree every year).

Marienkäfer (Ladybugs)

For generations Southern Germans and South Milwaukeeans have placed blown glass or carved wooden ladybugs on the boughs of their Weihnachtsbäume. These colorful insects have been appreciated for centuries for their assistance in controlling noxious aphids and other pests in summer gardens. The early Benedictine missionaries saw this tiny bug as a living illustration of the silent yet constant assistance of St. Mary, the Helper of all Christians. The synthesis between beetle and symbol became so strong that the proper German name for Coleoptera coccinellidae (the common ladybug) is Marienkäfer, the "Mary bug." While actual ladybugs lay dormant during the winter months, the living symbols of Mary's intercession cheerfully adorn Christmas trees in German Catholic homes.

Apples and Matters Matrimonial

From the 8th century A.D. until 1964 when it was bumped off of the calendar in a modernization move,

December 24th was celebrated in the Rhineland as the Feast of Adam and Eve. The feast day may be moribund, but the tradition of hanging apples on the Christmas tree has not yielded to contemporary decree. Young girls in the Rhineland and in Rhineland, Wisconsin, were instructed to hang a red apple on the Christmas tree before midnight on Christmas Eve to insure that the New Year would bring prosperity and a husband. As families traditionally gathered for Midnight Mass, a large family blessed with an abundance of single girls might have an entire tree festooned with brightly shined apples symbolically imploring Adam and Eve to look down from heaven and grant matrimonial bliss in the year to come. While huge families and marriage-as-career-goal for young women may have gone the way of the Feast of Adam and Eve in modern Germany and America, the ancient cultural symbol of unspoken wishes still graces our Christmas trees.

Lucky Mushrooms

For centuries before the first missionaries arrived in the Oldenwald (Hessen), hunters had searched this forest dedicated to Odin, the chief of the Germanic gods, for mushrooms. The species of mushroom found in the dense pine forest grows in a particularly expansive, concentric pattern creating a natural nitric fertilizer as it spreads. The result is a lush, green "fairy ring" appearing, seemingly miraculously, amongst the pine needles and scrub grasses of the forest floor. The "ring" was believed to be the dance floor for the Nisser, the wood spirits that served the best side of Odin's volatile personality. If a truly fortunate hunter found a mushroom cap poking its head out of the fairy ring, he was guaranteed a life of great wealth and excellent health. The "Mushroom Hunter" was a popular folk figure that can still be seen as a Christmas nutcracker in many German and German-American homes.

The first missionaries to Hessen took a dim view of Odin but found a useful teaching tool in his favorite fungus. Mushrooms grow in botanical decay. They flourish where other plant life cannot survive. Rather than exiling the "good luck mushroom" as remnant of paganism, the missionaries contextualized its meaning as a symbol of resurrection; of hope for a better existence beyond the decay of death. Whether the 8th century Hessians or 21st century Hessian-

[Please turn to Christmas, Page 7]

The delightful, holy Advent, Christmas Season



The first literary allusion to a decorated Christmas tree is found in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). The protagonist enters the house on 20 December and sees that Lotte, the heroine, has decorated the tree with "apples, candies, and lighted wax candles."

An eben dem Tage, es war der Sonntag vor Weihnachten, kam er Abends zu Lotte, und fand sie allein. Sie beschäftigte sich, einige Spielwerke in Ordnung zu bringen, die sie ihren kleinen Geschwistern zum Christgeschenke zurecht gemacht hatte. Er redete von dem Vergnügen, das die kleinen haben würden, und von den Zeiten, da einen die unerwartete Öffnung der Thüre, und die Erscheinung eines aufgezogenen Baums mit Wachslöchern, Zuckerwerk und Äpfeln, in paradiesische Entzückung setzte. Die Leiden des jungen Werthers 1774

Dr. Samuel Scheibler

The delightful, holy Advent, Christmas Season

[Christmas, from Page 5]

Wisconsinites understand the nuances of Germanic and Christian theology, we still decorate our Christmas trees with mushroom ornaments.

The Christmas Goat

The association of gods or powers with animal representatives or totems is common in most world mythologies. The aforementioned Odin was associated with an eagle while his divine wife, Frya, with a pig (a compliment rather than an insult in ancient Germanic culture). Just below Odin in the ancient Germanic pantheon was Donner, god of war and storms (the English word "thunder" is a derivation of his name). Donner is always allied with a goat - a source of endless consternation to the early missionaries whose Mediterranean background taught them to associate goats with the Devil. Try as they might, however, the dedicated monks could not break the stubborn Germans' attachment to Donner especially in the coastal areas of the country where severe thunderstorms were often a matter of life and death.

Like so many customs and relationships the final compromise came down to Christmas. Centuries before Santa Claus' reindeer, the creative priests of Schleswig and Holstein introduced an animal courier for Christmas presents - the Yule goat. Using very lenient exegesis of the Nativity story the shepherds of Bethlehem were transformed into goatherds whose fear at the appearance of the angelic hosts in St. Luke Chapter 2 was on account of their tremendous fear of thunder. Thus the goat of Donner became the goat of Bethlehem.

Hanging alongside the apples, bells, angels, and occasional Green Bay Packer ornaments on Christmas trees in Polk, Waupaca, Burnett, and Waushara counties one can still find the Klapparbock, the Yule goat whose purpose is to protect the family from lightning and thunder. Usually made of blown glass and often an heirloom these small treasures remind the descendants of Schleswig-Holsteiner and Mecklenburger immigrants that their roots draw deeply from the rich soil of German tradition.

The "Christmas Pickle"

Every year American retailers offer blown glass pickles as "traditional German Christmas tree ornaments from the practice of hiding the Christmas pickle." Every year German-Americans ask one another if anyone has ever heard of the custom. There is some evidence that a "Christmas pickle" tradition started during the 19th century in the small Thuringian city of Lauscha. Not coincidentally, Lauscha's most famous product is blown glass, particularly Christmas tree ornaments. Whether an ancient Celtic-Germanic pickle ritual rests at the foundation of the Lauscha custom or not cannot be determined with any degree of certainty, but the best guess is that the "Christmas pickle" is the product of clever modern retailers rather than creative medieval missionaries.

Dr. Samuel Scheibler, a clergyman, is an ecclesiastical, educational and social leader, who specializes in German folk culture.

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Escape to Schlaraffia: It's all "auf Deutsch"



Schlaraffia

By Rick Schroeder

It's amazing where just a few words of conversation can lead. I was standing in a long line ("schlange") at the Greendale Post Office one day a couple of years ago when I struck up light banter with the guy standing behind me. He happened to mention that he might need a wagon to carry all his accumulated mail because he had been in Germany for several weeks. Having recently started studying Intermediate German at Goethe House again (after about 40 years since high school), I, of course, had to tell him all about it. After explaining to me that he was a former instructor of German language, he asked me to wait a few minutes for him. So as he emerged for the Post Office, Keith Taylor started talking to me auf Deutsch.

After I responded in my best (Intermediate) German, he said something like "good enough" and invited me to be his guest at the next meeting of a group called Schlaraffia, an international German-speaking men's club.

"Never heard of it", I said. But so it was that on the following Thursday I entered through the doors of the "Burg" of Schlaraffia Milwaukia, and into the land of the Schlaraffen, a Middle Ages idealistic imaginary place, and a lot of fun and friendship. And all of it auf Deutsch!

Schlaraffia has over 400 chapters and 11, 000 members world-wide. There are 33 chapters located in North America. Members are listed in a large international directory and are welcome at any Burg located anywhere in the world as a fellow Schlaraffen.

Here is a good general description of Schlaraffia as quoted from the Baltimore chapter web site:

Schlaraffia is a worldwide social club of like-minded men with the motto "Art, Friendship, Humor". The meetings are conducted in German; however, it is not necessary to be fluent in German to be a member. One just has to have some German language background and show a willingness to learn and improve over time. Members are encouraged to give artistic, literary, and/or humorous presentations (often original), according to their talents and capabilities, to entertain the group. While the subject matter of the presentations very often is Germany related, there are a few limits on the topic chosen and the members let their imaginations run free. To help insure harmonious meetings, however, no member is allowed to discuss religion, politics, or engage in derogatory personal attacks on fellow members.

Since Schlaraffia's founders, back in 1859, were artists, businessmen and other professionals, they were not members of the aristocracy and, hence, were looked down upon. Thus, Schlaraffia today is an intentional spoof of the old aristocratic structure complete with pages, knights, majesties, thrones, castles and the like along with the rituals of those aristocratic times.



Uhu — Unser Maskottchen

It takes several meetings before a prospective member really appreciates and enjoys the humor, fun and intellectual stimulation present during the meetings. One thing is certain: Not only is there fun to be had, but one's German improves by leaps and bounds!

Schlaraffia Milwaukia, the Milwaukee chapter of Schlaraffia, recently celebrated the 120th anniversary of its founding. At one time in the past, the chapter had 150 members. Still alive and well after all these years, the current Burg has been located at 500 E. Marquette Ave.,

[Please turn to Schlaraffia, Page 9]

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Escape to Schlaraffenland: It's all "auf Deutsch"

[Schlaraffia, from Page 8]

South Milwaukee, for about 17 years and is a wonderful meeting facility. Membership is made up of a mix of former teachers of German, German-born businessmen and engineers, and several non-fluent students of German language and culture. Meetings are held each week on Thursday evenings.

Typically, after a period of socializing over beer and munchies, the formal meeting begins. After various administrative necessities comes the "entertainment" during which various members contribute by performing humorous speeches, reading poetry, or telling stories - all based on a given theme for the evening.

Everything revolves around the motto: Kunst, Freundschaft, und Humor ... Art, Friendship, and Humor. With the addition of a few Schlaraffenlieder, the program provides much fun and camaraderie. Meetings are usually followed by a light meal or Atzung. Periodically we have a Christmas Party or Spring Party, or a Special Celebration as we did in late September, a celebration of a member's 101st birthday. And, there are opportunities to travel to visit other chapters such as Chicago or Cincinnati.

Always a great time!

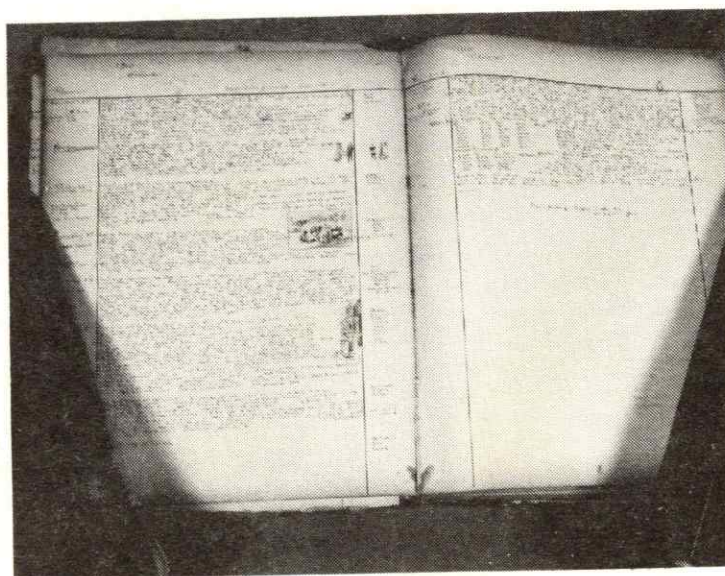
If you are interested in visiting a Schlaraffia Milwaukee meeting, please e-mail Horst Wentzek:

wentzek @ acronet.net

A special historical collection: The Heine Diaries



Dr. Samuel Scheibler presents
the Heine Diaries at the 12th
International Panorama
Conference in New York City



The Heine Diaries from the special collections of
the Milwaukee County Historical Society

Panorama paintings present dynamic experiences

By Dr. Samuel Scheibler

What is a Panorama Painting? Panorama paintings are not just "big pictures." The art form was first introduced in Southern Germany in 1814 as a medium for communicating dynamic visual experience in a society trying to understand the pageantry and brutality of the Napoleonic era.

In this wise, panorama painting should be viewed more as the precursor to motion picture art and science rather than an extension of architectural paintings of earlier centuries. The goal of the panoramist was to completely engage the audience in an experience that was at the same time both larger than life and personally intimate. These immense, 360° paintings came to life under the brushes of artistic teams. Working from master sketches and charcoal drawings, these dedicated artists strove to re-create great battles, exotic locations, and religious themes that were both sweeping in scope and accurate in detail.

The product of several months to a year of labor, the finished panorama traveled in its own "portable" gallery from city to city across the United States, Europe, and East Asia. Hundreds of thousand of ordinary citizens paid the small admission charge and were transported, however briefly, to distant places and extraordinary scenes.

In their book Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner (1902), Wilhelm Hense-Jensen and Ernest Bruncken refer to Milwaukee as the "Panorama City." By the 1870's an entire "colony" of panorama painters called Milwaukee home and the studios of Wilhelm Wehner and F. W. Heine produced most of America's best known monumental canvases.

For further reading on the Panorama Painters: Stephan Oettermann, *The panorama: history of a mass medium*. New York: Zone Books, 1997. Trans. by Deborah Lucas Schneider. F. W. Heine 1845-1921.

Rare treasure prompts international conference

Diaries of artist F. W. Heine are illuminated by Goethe House official

By Jason Scheibler

Imagine for a moment that the ceramic piece on that shelf above the sink in your kitchen that you have always assumed was a gift shop souvenir from Oma's 1927 holiday in Baden Baden turns out to actually be rare Meissen..."

With this statement Goethe House of Wisconsin opened our presentation on the discovery of the F. W. Heine diaries (see PERSPEKTIVEN Fall, 2004) at the 12th International Panorama Conference, "The Panorama in the Old World and the New" at Hunter College in New York on November 12. The presentation entitled "New Perspective on Milwaukee Panorama Painters - the Remarkable Treasures in the Friedrich Wilhelm Heine Diaries" was delivered on behalf of Goethe House by Dr. Samuel Scheibler to delegates from Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the People's Republic of China, and the United States.

Scholars representing major research universities joined art historians, museum curators, art restorers, collectors, artists and interested laymen in the three day symposium. The scope of the conference included the preservation of existing panoramas, the locating of "lost" works, and the expansion of the panorama legacy. While the "panorama universe" encompasses most of the globe, all the participants agreed that during the last half of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, this universe rotated on a Chicago-Milwaukee axis dominated by extraordinary German-American artists.

The shining star at the center of this artistic cosmos was F. W. Heine whose studio at 6th Street and Wells in Milwaukee produced some of the high points of the panorama school of art. The advent of cinema signaled the decline of panorama paintings as a popular form in art in the United States and as the artists from Milwaukee scattered so did the remnants of their vast canvasses.

Though panorama art is enjoying somewhat of a renaissance in America as exemplified in the restoration of F. W. Heine's Battle of Atlanta painting in Georgia and is undergoing a huge revival in China, the sudden decline of the art form in the 1920s and the dispersal of studios meant that most information about the artists and their work has disappeared.

Thus, the re-discovery of the Heine diaries in the Milwaukee County Historical Museum and the



Photo: Milwaukee County Historical Society

Friedrich Wilhelm Heine

1845 - 1921

Artist and Diarist

commitment by Goethe House of Wisconsin to insure their translation and publication has created a seismic reaction amongst panorama enthusiasts around the world. As noted in the last issue of PERSPEKTIVEN, Goethe House of Wisconsin has undertaken a joint project with the Milwaukee County Historical Society and the West Bend Art Museum to catalogue and digitalize Heine's diaries. As a diarist Heine not only recorded his inspirations and ideas for monumental paintings, but also his reflections on life in Germany and Milwaukee, his thoughts on politics and society, and a few revealing insights on his fellow artists.

Because Heine traveled the world to sketch "first hand" the sights and scenes of his historical panoramas, his journals includes travelogues of his journeys to the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Mexico that will expand the importance of the diaries well beyond artists, historians, and restorers. The international panoramists gathered in New York last month were of one mind: the 15 diaries found in a cardboard box in the Milwaukee County Historical Museum are truly "the Meissen on the window shelf" for those interested in this remarkable form art, the early history of German-American art in America, and the social and personal lives of 19th century Milwaukee-Germans.

Transforming the Heine Diaries to digital images

The Challenge of Digital Imaging The Heine Diary Project

A small, handwritten sample of cursive script from a diary, showing the word 'Drift-baum'.

Actual size of Heine diary writing

A larger, clearer digital scan of the cursive script 'Drift-baum', showing more detail of the ink and the flow of the pen.

Enhanced digital image

A close-up detail of the cursive script, focusing on the letters 'L' and 'f', showing the fine lines and loops of the penmanship.

Detail of enhanced script

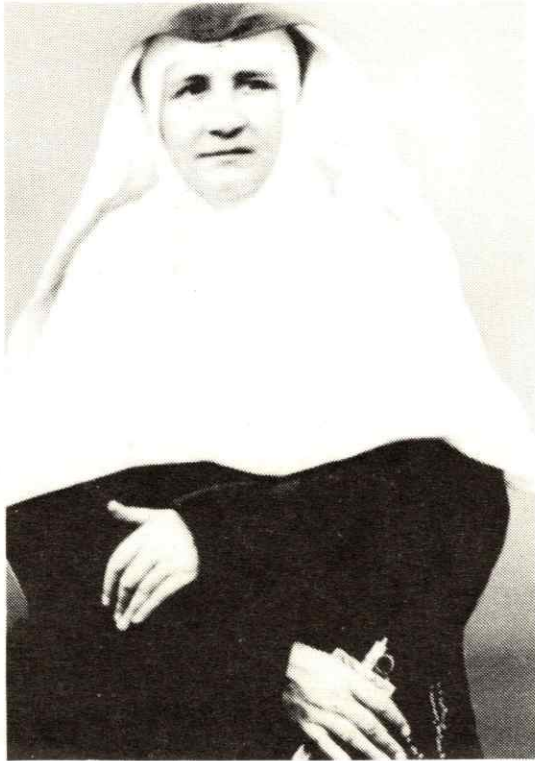
A printed version of the cursive letters 'Ch' in a blackletter or gothic style, showing the characteristic thick and thin strokes.

Printed transcribed letters

A printed version of the letters 'Ch' in a standard, modern serif typeface, showing a clean and legible design.

Standard "modern usage" print

School Sisters of Notre Dame and “Crazy” King Ludwig



Mother Caroline Friess

[Nuns, from Page 1]

None other than “Crazy” King Ludwig of Bavaria, a member of the Louis Mission Society (and quite fond of castles himself).

If you visit today, make sure to examine the spectacular five-story, handcrafted wooden staircase. This beautiful piece was originally constructed entirely without nails, and in some areas, you can see and touch the original wooden pegs from last century. And with good reason – the tower has a distinctly Bavarian flavor, thanks to its heavy Romanesque windows.

Mother Caroline arrived from Bavaria in 1847 in order to provide education to the children of German immigrants in the United States. By 1850, at the age of just 26 years, she was appointed vicar of North America, placing her in charge of all the SSND operations in the U.S. and Canada. Under her leadership, the number of School Sisters of Notre Dame grew to 2,000 in the U. S. and Canada, and she founded more than 300 schools and orphanages. More than 70,000 students attended the schools.

This woman of faith arrived in Wisconsin with all her worldly possessions in a small leather trunk, which is

now on display in the heritage. This room is one of, if not *the* highlight of the premises. It is housed in the former chapel of the “castle,” and contains everything from relics, to crucifixes, to Mother Caroline’s writing desk.

There are a myriad of stories about Mother Caroline and her good works. When she left Bavaria, she desperately wanted to bring the crucifix from the Mother House along with her. So, the dimensions of the crucifix were measured and a box was built, but the crucifix wouldn’t fit. They workmen measured again, constructed a new box, but again, the crucifix didn’t fit in the box. Mother Caroline, nothing if not reasonable, decided to leave it there. When she arrived in Milwaukee she commissioned a new one just like it.

Also housed in the heritage room is a desk known as the “*Wundertisch*” or, the “Miracle Desk”. When local laborers were helping to build the orphanage and other parts of the building, Mother Caroline always seemed to be short of money, but always managed to have enough to pay the workers. One day, however, there simply was not enough money to go around. “I can’t go home,” said the worker, “I have a wife and children to feed,” and he refused to leave. Mother Caroline prayed to the Three Kings for help. Suddenly, she remembered there was another drawer in the desk that was seldom used. She opened it up, and in the drawer there was exactly enough money to pay the worker for the week.

However, life was not especially easy for the sisters. Sister McKeever said they experienced some of the same prejudice that many new immigrants faced. “It wasn’t until the people saw that the sisters were in the schools, teaching, and providing the services, that opinions started to change.”

In addition to adjusting to life in America, the sisters also lived on a working farm. In fact, the basement of the “castle” had an underground tunnel leading to the barn. “In the winter, the sisters would use the tunnel to go out and collect eggs and feed the animals.”

When asked if there is anything that the School Sisters of Notre Dame have kept from their German heritage even as the order spreads to countries around the world, Sister McKeever said, “I think our work ethic. We’re good stewards. We receive gratefully. We share.”

For more information about visiting the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Elm Grove or about the history of this order, contact the Milwaukee Province Office at 262.782.9850 or visit www.ssnd.org.

Monika's message: Milwaukee is a lovely memory

**"Oh Augenblick verweile doch,
du bist so schön!"** Goethe's Faust
"Oh fleeting moment, stay for a while,
you are so lovely."

(Editor's note: Professor Monika Günther of Meersburg, Baden-Württemberg, a specialist in intensive language learning, spent some of the summer in Milwaukee as a guest of Goethe House of Wisconsin. In a note, she shares her memories, starting with Goethe's words.)

Looking back on three weeks in Milwaukee, the first thing I spotted when approaching the United States for the first time in my life was S P A C E. Theoretically I had known this, of course, but to see it with my own eyes was somewhat different.

Space obviously led to the generous planning of wide avenues and tree-lined streets in virtually every neighborhood. Well preserved public buildings of previous times have their friendly rendezvous with modern, audacious architecture. People love their city, I detected at a glance – with the openness of the landscape reflecting in its citizens' lifestyle and attitude to foreigners.

The first closer look I took, fit for "die Seele baumeln lassen," ("Let your soul swing gently") was my encounter with a Milwaukee Fish Fry at the South Shore Yacht Club with the most charming guide, Jill Haas-Baumann. I couldn't have conceived of a more magnificent illumination for my birthday than this glittering skyline by the lake.

After this introduction, events came forward like a rippling string of pearls – each one precious and distinct. Neither my kindly, kindly hostess Betty Konrath nor her family spared efforts to look after me with care and attention.

Notwithstanding the countless friendly hands I shook, which I will refer to instantly in the lines to come: From a house-warming at a pool to an Indian wedding reception, picnic in a magnificent park, historic walks and drives with altogether knowledgeable guides. I think I experienced all the highlights that human life has to offer in one go.

The flawless animals at State Fair seemed to have just walked out of Noah's Ark as perfect as they were while the variety of food was surely something that Noah missed during his journey. I was impressed by the serene elegance of the Milwaukee Athletic Club that Ted Wedemeyer introduced me to and wonder would have been small had Frank Sinatra popped in for a drink.



Monika Günther

Another gem was the exquisite selection of Steins and glassware at Ratzsch's.

I will cherish the moments of visiting the library and both the Public and the Art Museum as much as the bicycle ride in Chicago and breathtaking view from Hancock for the rest of my life. A different quality of "pearl" occurred whenever people allowed me to have insights into their work and private lives which sometimes took place simultaneously and sometimes just by walking into German Immersion School, MSOE, a Goethe Haus meeting or the Public Theatre and neighbors.

I conclude with a quotation from C.S. Lewis: Somebody who has traveled in a foreign country cannot remain unchanged, and I hope to come back, better sooner than later.

Gratefully yours, **Monika Günther**

Discover German

at an exhibition about the German language

Chicago - Simulated traffic and station noise, Cliff Richard singing in flawless German, a magnetic jigsaw map of Germany, and clips from German films and TV programs - these are some of the numerous exhibits from "Discover German," an exhibition which will entertain and instruct teachers of German and their students and other visitors to a German microcosm in the Gallery 37. The interactive traveling exhibition is the Goethe-Institut's magnificent contribution to the European Year of Languages.

The exhibition runs to December 14, 2004, at Gallery 37, 66 East Randolph Street, Chicago. Telephone 312-744-8925. Fax 312-744-9249. info@gallery37.org

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Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr.

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