

## SGAS New Member Spotlight: Daniel Hammer

### What is your current professional association?

Curator/Head of Reader Services, The Historic New Orleans Collection

### What academic discipline do you teach?

I am not a full-time teacher, but I am on the faculty of the Tulane School of Architecture as an adjunct lecturer in the Preservation Studies program. I teach a class called "History of North American Architecture" that concentrates on the origins and development of architectural forms relevant to the scene in New Orleans today.

### What are your specific fields of interest?

- Preservation of and access to archival materials
- Teaching archival research skills to high school and college students
- The history of the German community in New Orleans

### How did you first become involved in the field of German-American Studies?

I got involved in German-American studies through my work at THNOC. I was hired in 2005 as a part-time staff person. My duties included work on a couple of different projects and manning the reception desk on afternoons and weekends. Because I had a background in German, I was asked to spend a couple of hours per week making basic inventories of some unprocessed German language materials in our holdings. The more I looked into the German materials, the more I became interested in the history of Germans in New Orleans. I also enjoyed the challenge of deciphering 19th century German handwriting, and became somewhat obsessed with learning to do that well. Eventually, I created an online pathfinder to our German collections, and, while doing this came to understand how significant and understudied this material is.

### What projects are you currently involved in related to the field?

I just completed a great project with four AP German students from Ben Franklin High School in New Orleans and ten exchange students visiting from Germany. Over three classes, I introduced them to *Kurrentschrift* handwriting using copies of 19th century documents from our holdings (all previously untranscribed

and untranslated), gave a lecture on the history of German New Orleans, and worked with them to begin transcribing and translating the documents. Over the coming weeks, the students will complete the transcription and translation. I hope to make this program a model for connecting advanced foreign language students with archival materials, and introducing them to archaic forms of paleography in their target languages.

In the long-term, I am beginning to work towards putting together a major exhibit to commemorate 300 years of the German presence in Louisiana in 2020. Documents and artifacts in THNOC's collections tell a fascinating story that begins in 1720 when German-speaking engagés of John Law's Company of the Indies settled in Louisiana and continues through to today. I am certain that such an exhibit could receive great interest in Germany, and I am looking to soon connect with museums there to begin collaborating.

### What book, article, movie etc. would you recommend to people interested in the field?

*Der Spaziergang* by Robert Walser. Sorry, it does not have anything to do with German-American studies, but it is how I got interested in German.

### Which aspect of German-American studies do you find particularly significant?

German-Americans are not a uniform group with one single set of characteristics that defines them all. Rather, there are as many differences among German-Americans as there are among Germans and as there are among Americans. Therefore, the historical record of German-America has just as much potential to bear new fruits of understanding and knowledge as any place where historical inquiry may take place. However, access to this historical record is more threatened than others because of language and paleographical barriers, and because of a popular conception that if you are familiar with one German-American community, you know them all. German-American studies is significant because it keeps open an important path towards new insights in American history. ➡

## Preview on 2014 Symposium in Milwaukee

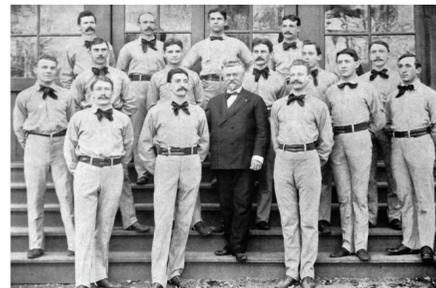
Walter Kamphoefner

For the first time in its history, the SGAS Annual Meeting is coming to Milwaukee. It's about time! Milwaukee is the most German city in the most German state in the union.

Two early streams of migration from Germany continued to stand out among Milwaukee and Wisconsin Germans. The first group of "Old Lutherans" from the East Elbian provinces arrived in 1839, some settling in the big city, others in the Watertown area. The first Rhineland Catholics arrived in Milwaukee in 1841, followed by thousands of others from the area between Cologne and Luxemburg. The German population of the city and state continued to draw disproportionately from these areas throughout the 19th century. It is evident in the many "saint" names that give the Catholic "Holyland" northwest of Milwaukee its nickname. And it is reflected in the concentrations of Pomeranians and Mecklenburgers among the Protestants. Right down to the present, Milwaukee's German sister city is, most appropriately, the Mecklenburg city of Schwerin.

Milwaukee's ethnic patterns were richly portrayed in Kathleen Conzen's early and pathbreaking book *Immigrant Milwaukee*, published in 1976 in the series "New Urban History". As she documented, over half of the city was German-born in 1850, and on the eve of the Civil War, still one-third of the population and half of the household heads were natives of Germany. At the neighborhood level the concentration was even more intense. On the northwest side, three-fourths of the families were headed by Germans. In contrast to their residential clustering, the city's Germans were widely spread across the entire occupational spectrum, from unskilled laborers to businessmen and professionals. This meant that Germans seldom had to venture outside their ethnic community for any of their economic, social, or cultural needs.

German immigrants were known for their *Vereinswesen*, and Milwaukee was no exception to the old saying that wherever there were three Germans, they would band together to form a club. According to some accounts, a German fire company formed in 1844, just eight years after the city's founding, was the first German organization in the city, serving social as well as firefighting needs and attracting many of the city's aspiring young merchants. But it is predated by the first organized musical society, called "Milwaukee Beethoven Society" formed in 1843, three years before the city was incorporated. Its name also reveals its ethnic roots. The German love for music and theater gave the city the nickname "Deutsch-Athen" (the



Milwaukee Turners festival squad at the 28th Federal Turner Festival at Philadelphia, 1900.

German Athens). By the turn of the century it manifested itself in both popular culture and "higher" culture: in dozens of beer gardens, the largest reportedly seating 12,000, and in architectural monuments like the Pabst Theater and the Germania Building, and a very Germanic City Hall.

Another vivid reflection of German culture in Milwaukee was its foreign language press. The Arndt and Olson bibliography lists over 150 titles of German newspapers and periodicals published in Milwaukee, ranging across the entire ideological spectrum from the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenglocke* [church bell] all the way to the militantly rationalists *Lucifer*. There was a critical mass to support a number of specialized publications. The horticultural *Acker- und Gartenbau-Zeitung*, established in 1870, persisted down to World War I. *Der Ansiedler in Wisconsin*, promoting Northern settlement, lasted for more than a decade. The overlapping *Kinder-Post* (1883-1906) and *Kinderfreude* (1891-1933) gives evidence of language persistence beyond the immigrant generation, while *Onkel Karl* (1877-81) had earlier entertained the youth. Despite its late start in 1904, *Die Deutsche Hausfrau* persisted for over fifty years. Even the more radical German publications proved to be surprisingly long lived. The rationalist *Freidenker*, established in 1872, was only done in after 71 years by World War II. Not to forget ➡



Die Deutsche Hausfrau 1909



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### 2014 Symposium Theme (Milwaukee, WI, April 10-13) German-American Influences: City, State and Region

We invite you to submit one page abstracts of scholarly papers dealing with any aspect of German-American Studies. Paper topics typically include but are not limited to the history, language, literature, society and culture created from the interaction between the Americas and immigrants from German-speaking areas of Europe. Submit your abstract electronically to Dr. Walter Kamphoefner, Vice President of SGAS, Department of History, Texas A&M University, TX (wltkamp@tamu.edu), by December 15, 2013.



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# SOCIETY FOR German-American Studies

NEWSLETTER

SGAS.ORG

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What does the future hold for the Society for German-American Studies? I see many unexplored opportunities for research into many unexplored German-American topics. Thinking back to May, the New Orleans symposium shows the way to new analyses, interpretations and syntheses of traditional and new academic fields. Our strength has always been the use of an interdisciplinary approach, and lack of a typical *hierarchisch* structure which academically based organizations sometimes display. For me there is always an arc of memory which takes me back to Cincinnati, Ohio in April, 1986. It was the first SGAS Symposium which I participated in, and it proved to be a very worthwhile weekend of thoughtful conversations, discussion of new discoveries and shared research experiences with colleagues of similar interests.

How can our society continue to facilitate German-American research in the future? How can we expand our services and outreach to regions beyond the Midwest? One approach is for the Executive Board to become a team in creating effective goals and objectives, and most importantly, making changes which are needed. When the Executive Board meets in mid-November, almost one third of the ten members are assuming new positions. The newly elected Vice-President is Walter Kamphoefner, Professor of History at Texas A and M. The newly elected Treasurer is Albert Spengler, Lecturer in German Language and Literature at the University of Virginia. The newly appointed Chair of the Membership Committee is Karyl Rommelfanger, Teacher of German (retired) in the Manitowoc (Wisconsin) Public Schools. This is your team to provide leadership and coordination of SGAS activities. Your insights and thoughts are very important for your team. Please contact any of the members of the Board directly.

Herzliche Grüße,

*Bill Roba*

SGAS President

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## In Memoriam

Lisa M. Kahn, 1921-2013

Gert Niers



Lisa M. Kahn, Professor emerita (Texas Southern University, 1968-86) and one of the leading German-language authors in America, has passed away on July 3, 2013 in Houston at the age of 91 years. She was born in Berlin on July 15, 1921 as Lieselotte Margarete Kupfer and first came to the United States on a Fulbright Scholarship (University of Washington, Seattle, 1950-51). She received her Ph.D. in German from the University of Heidelberg in 1953 and adopted U.S. citizenship in 1958. In 1951 she married Robert L. Kahn with whom she had two children, Peter (1953) and Beatrice (1959). The family moved from Seattle to Houston in 1962.

Since her first German poetry volume *Klopfet an, so wird euch nicht aufgetan* (Darmstadt: Bläschke Verlag, 1975) her literary and scholarly activities continually expanded. From her long list of publications, the following book titles should be mentioned: *Feuersteine. Gedichte* (Zurich: Strom Verlag, 1978), *Reisegepäck Sprache. Deutschschreibende Schriftstellerinnen in den USA 1938-1978* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1979), *Denver im Frühling. Gedichte* (Berlin: Stoedtnr Verlag, 1980), *Utahs Geheimnisse. Gedichte* (Berlin: Stoedtnr Verlag, 1981), *KPHTH. Fruchtbar und anmutsvoll. Gedichte* (Berlin: Klauning, 1988), *Flussbettworte/Fluvial Discourse. Poems.* (Lewiston, New York: Mellen Poetry Press, 1998). She also contributed extensively to magazines and newspapers. Her work has been the subject of a Master's thesis (Folke Möller-Sahling, *Lisa Kahn: Eine deutschschreibende Schriftstellerin in den USA*. University of Vermont, 1995) and of a Ph. D. thesis (Sabine Schönherr, *Zwischen Deutschland und den USA: Die Lyrik von Lisa Kahn*. Universität Dortmund, 1997). In 1990 the German government honored Lisa Kahn, who was also a member of PEN, with the Bundesverdienstkreuz.

The last years of the author, who had converted to Judaism in 1973, had been extremely difficult, mainly for health reasons. She is survived by her daughter Beatrice Margarete Kahn (West Palm Beach, Florida), her daughter-in-law and son, Anna and Peter Kahn (Houston, Texas), and six grandchildren.

The title of Lisa Kahn's well-known anthology *Reisegepäck Sprache* has also become the title of one of her poems published in Gerhard Friesen's *Nachrichten aus den Staaten. Deutsche Literatur in den USA* (Hildesheim: Olms Presse, 1983). It is indicative of the author's concerns, especially as a bilingual immigrant. ■

### Reisegepäck Sprache

*Jahrelang*

*Andenken gesammelt*

*Fotos auch Sprachbrocken*

*Erinnerungen*

*Unentbehrliches*

*Überflüssiges*

*stets besorgt*

*Nötiges könne*

*abhanden kommen*

*immer Angst vor*

*der Gefahr dass*

*schützende Schichten*

*abbröckeln und*

*Furcht vor der*

*Verarmung einsprachig*

*zu werden*

Gert Niers had reviewed Lisa Kahn's first poetry collection, *Klopfet an, so wird euch nicht aufgetan*, in the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* (Oct 16/17, 1976). He finally met the author in person at the SGAS conference in Washington, D.C. in 1991. The year before, she had brought out together with Werner Kitzler (University of South Dakota) a German-American poetry anthology, *Deutschschreibende Autoren in Nordamerika. Band 2. Gedichte*.

## Milwaukee continued

the *Amerikanische Turnerzeitung*, established in 1885 and persisting for 54 years. Turners, especially in the early years, were often closely allied with the socialists, who published their first paper in 1875 and maintained the [*Wisconsin*] *Vorwärts* from 1887 to 1932.

Milwaukee was the largest American city with a successful socialist movement at the municipal level. It elected its first socialist mayor, 2nd generation German Emil Seidel, in 1910, along with a majority of the city aldermen, and sent Austrian Jewish immigrant Victor Berger to his first of six terms as the first socialist Congressman nationwide (though he was twice denied his seat because of his opposition to World War I). The city officially went nonpartisan in 1912, but the Irish-Canadian Daniel Hoan, who was elected mayor in 1916 and re-elected six times until 1940, emphasized his socialist allegiance. Although derided as "Sewer Socialists" by their more ideological critics, Hoan and his German allies stressed public services to its working class constituency. Tellingly, a study of public health in Milwaukee during this era is titled "The Healthiest City." Milwaukee was also the last big city with a Socialist mayor, Frank Zeidler, who served from 1948 to 1960, and proudly supported progressive causes till his death in 2006 at age 93. The Socialist heritage is commemorated by the Daniel Hoan Memorial Bridge on Interstate 794 on the downtown lakefront.



In contrast to Germans in some other cities, those in Milwaukee proved to be ethnic pluralists with regard to foreign languages in schools. German instruction had been introduced in the public schools already in 1867, but as immigration from other areas of Europe increased, the city also accommodated them. Polish was added in 1907 and Italian shortly thereafter, wherever it was requested by 75 percent of a neighborhood's parents. Although all these programs were wiped out by World War I, their tradition is reflected even today in the Milwaukee German Immersion School, which offers German not just as a subject but as the primary language of instruction from 4 Year Old Kindergarten through 5th Grade. Milwaukee German Immersion has won countless honors through the years, including recognition as a U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

Although Milwaukee has suffered from its share of Rust Belt maladies, there is much that still remains of the German imprint on its material and immaterial culture. ■

Milwaukee's German heritage is also reflected in its religious makeup. Germans make up the largest element in its 58 percent Catholic majority, and the runner-up Lutherans at

23 percent are overwhelmingly of German background, whereas the leading Anglo-American denomination, Methodists, weigh in at only 3 percent. This transplanted religious heritage has manifested itself in various institutions. Two of the first six German-American Catholic bishops served in Milwaukee: the Swiss-German John Martin Henni (1843-1881) and his successor, Bavarian immigrant Michael Heiss (1881-1890), the latter also the first German archbishop. Milwaukee was home to a German Lutheran college, one of the many Concordias, which was established in 1881 and for its first 83 years until 1964 operated as an all-male, six year high school and junior college on the model of a German Gymnasium. Since 1983 it has relocated to a new campus at Mequon on the north edge of the metropolitan area just beyond the county line, but to this day it offers instruction in German. The city is still home to Milwaukee Lutheran High School, established in 1903, the oldest Lutheran high school in America. Although it might seem odd, these institutions are both part of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. But the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which was founded in 1850 in Milwaukee, also maintains its national headquarters there.

Not surprisingly for the most heavily German city in the nation, Milwaukee has long been a leader in the brewing industry. Already in 1843, chronicler James Buck recorded 138 taverns in the city. By 1856, Milwaukee could claim more than two dozen breweries. The city was once the home to four of the world's largest beer breweries (Schlitz, Blatz, Pabst, and Miller), and was the leading beer producing city worldwide for decades. But nothing lasts forever. When the Pabst Brewery closed in 1997, Milwaukee was down to just one major brewery, Miller. Upon its merger with Coors in 2008, its headquarters departed for Chicago. But Miller still employs some 2,200 workers in Milwaukee, and is solidly ensconced in second place among American breweries. Its historic Milwaukee Brewery, located in "Miller Valley", at 4000 West State Street, is the oldest still-operating major brewery in the United States.

Although Milwaukee has suffered from its share of Rust Belt maladies, there is much that still remains of the German imprint on its material and immaterial culture. ■



The Pabst Mansion, once home to the Pabst family, has been open to the public since 1978, following extensive restoration. It also served as the home of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee for sixty years. Photo by purotorico.

## New Member Spotlight continued

### What do you think the Society of German American Studies can or should do for its members?

The great thing about the SGAS is that it brings together people who are passionate about their subject. I think it should continue to do that.

### Do you have a favorite professional anecdote you would like to share?

In 1901, J. Hanno Deiler, President of the German Society of New Orleans, Professor of German at Tulane University, and, generally, a leader of the German community in New Orleans, published a monograph called *Geschichte der New Orleanser Deutschen Presse; Nebst anderen Denkwürdigkeiten der New Orleanser Deutschen*. The anecdotes that Deiler relates in this work are taken mostly from various German newspapers of 19th Century New Orleans, most of which do not exist any longer in any form. Deiler's accounting of these stories has therefore become the only remaining version of them. THNOC has a copy of the monograph in its collection, but it has never been translated into English, and is not often accessed by researchers. A few years ago, I was reading it for the first time, and was struck by a story Deiler relates about the 1845 constitutional convention of the State of Louisiana. According to the *Deutsche Courier*, a mid-Century German newspaper of which only a couple of individual issues still survive, held by the University of North Carolina, the nativists of the state nearly added an amendment to the constitution

that would have severely limited the rights of naturalized citizens in Louisiana, but they were defeated in their efforts thanks to the fact that the Creole delegates of New Orleans ("natives," yes, but born during the Colonial, not the American era) sided with the foreign-born delegates on the issue. The *Courier* reported that the Germans of New Orleans had a gold medal made with the likeness of Bernard de Marigny, the leading Creole delegate, on one side, and symbols of friendship on the other, and presented it to de Marigny as a token of appreciation. As I read this – and to this day, I am not certain why – I thought to myself, "that medal sounds like something The Historic New Orleans Collection would have." I logged on to our catalogue, entered "Marigny" into the description field, and "medal" into the object field, and, lo and behold, indeed, there it was. I went back to the vault, pulled the object out, and found that it fit the description given by the *Courier* and relayed by Deiler to a T. I asked around with my colleagues, and, although the medal had been in our collection since 1972, no one was familiar with it. It had not been lost, but it had been forgotten. Last year, we remodeled our History Galleries – our permanent display of objects from our collection, telling the story of Louisiana from the colonial era to the present – and I am proud to say that the medal is now installed in the galleries, together with a description of its historical significance, to be seen by every visitor to the museum.

### Any final word?

Das also war des Pudels Kern! ■

## New Member Highlight

Daniel Hammer is Curator and Head of Reader Services at the Williams Research Center of The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC). He has a Bachelors degree in German literature from Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and a Masters degree in Historic Preservation from the Tulane University School of Architecture. He works closely with The Collection's significant holdings relating to the history of the German community in New Orleans. He created an online research pathfinder to these materials, available at [www.hnoc.org](http://www.hnoc.org), and has published and presented numerous papers about 19th and 20th Century German New Orleans, and the German community organizations whose records are preserved at The Collection. He is also interested in the history of historic preservation in New Orleans.



## SGAS Membership Drive Underway

By Karyl Rommelfanger

As of September 1, 2013, SGAS has undertaken a concerted two-pronged membership drive to bring back old members and to send notices of renewal to those whose memberships will expire December 31, 2013. Thanks to a fantastic database created by former membership chair Greg Redding, this effort has been much easier than expected, and the first stage of the drive is near completion. To date, SGAS has received twenty-seven annual memberships and two new life memberships from formerly inactive members.

Nonetheless, SGAS membership numbers are down considerably over five years ago. Thus, if SGAS is to survive, it is imperative upon those of you at institutions of high learning to promote membership. Please feel free to copy the information I will be sending you, or, if you prefer, you may send me names and snail / email addresses of young scholars and I will contact them. And of course SGAS membership is open to anyone with a serious interest in German-American topics, and the same procedure can be followed.

For future reference I have also requested in the letter that you let us know how you prefer to be notified of membership renewal, either via regular mail or via email. This will be an important tool for the Executive Board as we consider how best to proceed in the future. Also, as indicated on our [sgas.org](http://sgas.org) website, pay-pal will be yet another option in the future.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Karyl Rommelfanger

SGAS Membership Chair

### SGAS.ORG/MEMBERSHIP/

Questions can be addressed to the appropriate Membership Chair:

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### MEMBER BENEFITS

Members and subscribers receive the Society's Newsletter, the annual Yearbook of German-American

Studies, and any special supplemental issues during a given calendar year.

Members are eligible to apply to the Albert Bernard Faust Research Fund and the Karl J. R. Arndt Publication Fund for support of scholarly efforts in the field of German-American Studies.

An Annual Symposium is organized for the benefit of members and scholars in the field of German-American Studies.

Members are eligible to submit articles for publication in the Yearbook and papers for presentation at the Annual Symposium.

Memberships (except life memberships) run from January 1 to December 31 and are available in the following categories:

### MEMBERSHIP COST

#### Within North America

\$15	Student
\$30	Regular
\$40	Joint (one address)
\$500	Life (may be paid in 5 annual installments)
\$40	Institution (library, society, organization, business)

#### Outside North America

€20	Student
€40	Regular
€50	Joint (one address)
\$500	Life (may be paid in 5 annual installments)
€50	Institution (library, society, organization, business)