



# SOCIETY FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Volume 38, Number 3

December 2017

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With this brief message, I look forward to our symposium in April 2018. We will be exploring Indianapolis and the topic of World War I.

Indianapolis is one of those rather few major cities in the United States that are also state capitals, and the result is a monumental series of large public buildings in the center of town, specifically the Capitol itself as well as the massive memorial for those who fell in "The Great War," which soon had to give way to the fallen of a second war. There is also the Indiana Historical Society, all of which give the downtown a European spirit of a real center of state and commercial energy. Walking from downtown Indianapolis to the Athenaeum, the old Deutsches Haus, is easy. On Sunday there will be a tour of the city and environs that will cover all the highpoints. I look forward to seeing you there!

Tschüß!

Steven Rowan, PhD  
Professor of History  
University of Missouri-St. Louis

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# 42ND ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

"World War I & Its Repercussions for German America: A Centennial Assessment"

Society for German-American Studies



April 19 - 21, 2018

Indianapolis, Indiana

Stay tuned for additional information: <https://sgas.org/symposium/>

Middle image: "Indianapolis Soldiers and Sailors Monument on the Circle" (CC BY-ND 2.0) by kennethkonica.

## GERMAN AMERICANS IN INDIANAPOLIS DURING THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1918

JANICE MILLER

When the first considerable number of German immigrants arrived in Indianapolis, Indiana during the 1830s and 1840s, they found a sparsely populated village strategically built along the banks of the White River. Although the Eastern seaboard boasted prosperous industrial centers, the search for both lucrative work and arable land drove Germans toward the Midwestern frontier. Enterprising German settlers selected the Hoosier capitol for its agricultural stability, favorable economic conditions, political liberties, and religious tolerance.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Germans contributed to the rapid development of the Indianapolis urban landscape. Numerous churches, theatres, schools, and public cultural centers bore the names of their German founders and builders. By 1850, Germans comprised one-eighth of the city's population.<sup>1</sup> In 1887, Berlin architect Bruno Schmitz and his colleague Rudolf Schwartz partnered with the city to design and construct a colossal war memorial to honor Hoosier soldiers who fought in several major wars, namely the American Civil War and the American Revolutionary War. The neoclassical memorial, now known as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, became the most recognizable landmark in the Indianapolis skyline and a beloved symbol of the city itself. The project strengthened the complex and unique symbiosis between Germans and the Indianapolis community.

However, the sudden outbreak of the Great War catalyzed American reassessment of national identity and allegiance. Although the European conflict initially elicited minimal response from Americans, the war's rapid and ferocious acceleration prompted nationwide apprehension. President Woodrow Wilson reasserted the necessity of neutrality, but popular opinion indicted Germany as the malefactor responsible for starting the war itself.



Mistrust and skepticism toward “hyphenated” Americans (i.e., German-Americans) spread like a contagion. In the earliest stages of the conflict, some German immigrants returned to the Fatherland to join the Kaiser's army, confirming American suspicions that those of German descent were disloyal to the United States. In 1915, the ill-fated British ocean liner RMS Lusitania sank after a torpedo attack by a German U-Boat. More than 1,000 civilians perished in the catastrophe, including over 120 Americans, further substantiating claims of German enmity. Two years later, Germany sent the infamous Zimmerman Telegram to Mexico, inviting the country to form a German-Mexican alliance against the United States. America joined the conflict in the spring of 1917, fueled by antagonism toward Germany and its people.

In Indianapolis, the ominous social atmosphere darkened Hoosier opinion of those claiming German descent. Native-born Americans perceived the hyphen as a treacherous symbol of divided allegiance. In his 1916 speech ‘America for Americans’ in St. Louis, Teddy Roosevelt admonished the use of the hyphen to claim dual citizenship:

*The American birthright is the birthright of all of us; and it is a shame and a disgrace for any man to barter it for so poor a mess of pottage as is implied in that kind of hyphenated citizenship which means that the individual tries to be a half-way citizen of two lands and forfeits the right to be a whole citizen of any land.*<sup>2</sup>

Roosevelt's caustic rhetoric deepened American misgivings about Germans residing in the United States. These “half-way citizens” became targets for accusations of espionage. Embroiled in a conflict over national identity, German immigrants made efforts to corrode public, visible links to their collective heritage. This primarily involved the removal of German names from buildings and organizations. For example, the Turner-founded social institution known as *Das Deutsche Haus* dropped its name in favor of the neutral, academic title ‘The Athenaeum’. The German Maennerchor became the ‘Academy of Music’. Fortunately, these ameliorating endeavors placated the Hoosier public. While Germans endured recusant attitudes, none confronted severe acts of oppression.

Even after the Armistice, America remained suspicious of Germans. When giving his final address in support of the League of Nations in 1919, Woodrow Wilson resurrected Roosevelt's potent language regarding the danger of hyphenated Americanism.

*Any man who carries a hyphen about with him carries a dagger that he is ready to plunge into the vitals of this Republic whenever he gets ready. If I catch any man with a hyphen in this great contest, I will know that I have got an enemy of the Republic.*<sup>3</sup>

Despite claims of disloyalty, it is evident that Germans living in Indianapolis maintained stalwart devotion to the municipal government. As a result, the perdurable legacy of those persistent and tenacious German immigrants may be found in the Indianapolis skyline, along its streets, inside its breweries and cafés, and in the classrooms of its academic institutions. Undoubtedly, German heritage is woven firmly into the fabric of Hoosier cultural identity.

<sup>1</sup>George Theodore Probst, "The Germans in Indianapolis 1840-1918" (master's thesis, Indiana University, 1951), 3.

<sup>2</sup>National Progressive Convention, *The Progressive Party: Its Records from January to July* (New York, NY: Press of the Mail, 1916), 71.

<sup>3</sup>Woodrow Wilson: *Essential Writings and Speeches of the Scholar-President*, ed. Mario R. DiNunzio (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2006), 412.

## IN MEMORIAM

JAMES M. BERGQUIST, PHD  
(1934-2017)

### MARC GALLICCHIO

James Berquist, Professor Emeritus of History at Villanova, passed away at the age of 83 on August 1, 2017. Jim was a renowned expert on immigrant life in America whose publications and professional service did much to uncover and preserve America's immigrant past.

Jim earned his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame in 1955 and his Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1966. Jim first taught at Coe College (Iowa) from 1961 to 1963; then came to Villanova in 1963 as an instructor, and taught there until retirement at the rank of professor in 2001.

The author of numerous articles on the German-American immigrant experience, Jim's book, *Daily Life in Immigrant America, 1820-1870*, was published in 2007. *Publishers Weekly* noted that "With calm authority and

unflinching clarity, Bergquist has written the best history ever of his subject: immigration into the United States after its colonial settlement and before the great surge through Ellis Island."

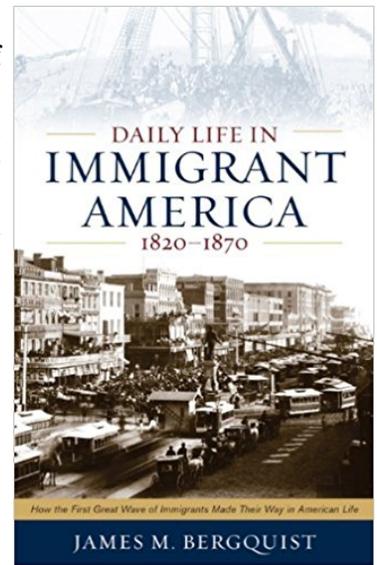
Jim was also the editor of the *Newsletter* of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society beginning in 1995, and he served on the Immigration History Society's board, also beginning in 1995.

Locally, Jim served as a trustee of the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies in Philadelphia, one of the country's premier institutions concerned with preserving the history of the immigrant and ethnic experience in America. After the Balch Institute merged with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, he served on the society's Library Committee.

Jim also was passionately committed to the cause of academic freedom. During his tenure at Villanova, he was a national leader of the AAUP, serving as president of the Villanova chapter and Pennsylvania division of the AAUP, and at the national level as member of the executive committee and national council among other positions.

Closer to home, Jim was universally admired and respected by his Villanova colleagues, especially the junior Americanists in the department for whom he always made time to discuss matters historical and professional. Jim possessed a dry sense of humor and was an entertaining storyteller at faculty gatherings. One of his gems recounted the story of an unfortunate undergraduate who, sometime in the 1970s, copied verbatim a book review from a British journal published in 1938. In addition to maintaining the British spelling of words like *labour*, the student's review ended with the memorable line "It now remains to be seen what Herr Hitler will do next."

Fortunately for us, Jim remained involved in the life of the department and professionally as well until his declining health prevented him from making his regular visits to Villanova. Jim is survived by his wife Joan Solon Bergquist, brother Tim Bergquist, Joan Stevens Bergquist, his sons John and Charles, and three grandchildren, Gregory, Paul, and Lucy.



## IN MEMORIAM

ELLEN C. MERRILL, PHD (1935-2017)

### BRIGITTA LÜDERS MALM

Dr. Ellen Merrill, a longtime, former member of SGAS died recently in New Orleans. She attended William and Mary College and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from H. Sophie Newcomb College in New Orleans in 1957. The next three years she spent in Europe at the University of Heidelberg, where she earned a diploma from the School of Translators and Interpreters in 1960. She returned to the States to obtain her Ph.D. in German language and literature from Tulane University in 1965.



She taught at Tulane University, Saint Mary's Dominican College, Loyola University, University of New Orleans and at Dillard University as associate professor and chair of the foreign language department. At the Historic New Orleans Collection, she was curator of education, founded and served as the director of the German archive.

Among her awards and honors is the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages-National Textbook Company Award for building community interest in foreign language education; in 1987, the German ambassador to the United States honored her with The Federal Republic of Germany Friendship Award, citing her efforts on behalf of German-American relations and her endeavors in fostering and sustaining friendship between the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States.

Grants from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and the National Park Service enabled Ellen to publish her book "Germans of Louisiana", a compre-

hensive study of the German history and heritage in Louisiana, together with her husband Raymond N. Calvert, who was responsible for the many drawings of Louisiana personages. (Review see Yearbook 2004 - Volume 39)

I met Dr. Merrill many years ago when I joined the Louisiana Chapter of the AATG and am personally much indebted to her. After "Germans of Louisiana" was published, Ellen became ill and asked me to take on speaking engagements about the book in her stead. It has been a pleasure for me to continue Ellen's endeavors and legacy to make known the German immigrant history and heritage in Louisiana.

## NEW FACE IN GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES SAM LITTY

Growing up in rural southern Wisconsin, Sam Litty never realized that things she was accustomed to were not the same in other areas of the country. She never would have guessed that words like *brat* (referring to a delicious sausage traditionally served on a bun, rather than an unruly child) or using *once* as a politeness marker in phrases like "Come here once!" were actually particular to the region or in other senses German-American. Initially her interests in German-American studies began with varieties of German and Pennsylvania Dutch through newspapers and publications from the 20th century. This grew when she had the opportunity to work as an assistant for the *Wisconsin German Project: Documenting Wisconsin German Varieties* where it was her job to identify and record speakers of Wisconsin German varieties spoken today.

Her interest in German varieties and their influences in Wisconsin led to the creation of her dissertation project, *We Talk German Now Yet: The Sociolinguistic Development of Voice Onset Time & Final Obstruent Devoicing in Wisconsin German & English Varieties, 1863-2013*. It focuses on integrating methods from historical sociolinguistics and modern sociophonetics in order to propose a new, unified approach. She addresses aspects of historical sociolinguistics that focus on written sources using original, handwritten data coupled with information from census, church, local records, etc. to make generalizations about languages and dialects and how they develop. Personal interviews and audio recordings were analyzed acoustically using modern sociophonetics.



For her dissertation, Litty used collections of documents from five areas in Wisconsin, Illinois, and the Upper Peninsula to track the written representations of a set of phonological features from the mid-19th century to 2013 in Wisconsin German and Wisconsin English varieties. She wanted to know, for example, if there was a correlation between writing *put* instead of *but*, or *ticked* instead of *ticket* and German influence. She then used these results to compare with results from the acoustic analysis of recordings made in the late 1940s and 2013.

A related goal is to use both written and audio sources in a geographical region to compare how (dis-)similar the language spoken there may be. This research compares both the German and English produced by groups and individuals in the same area, while outlining social networks and drawing on historical documents, census, marriage, birth and death records. For each collection, written and audio, she reconstructed potential social networks and mapped these for each author or speaker to show how their language may have been influenced by other regions, their occupations, personal contacts, etc.

This research shows how historical writings can directly inform our understanding of modern speech patterns and what modern speech patterns might be able to tell us about how language may have developed before audio recordings. Because it bridges the gap from historical to modern linguistics, it can allow better understanding of language change in the past and serve as a model to other language communities where multiple languages remain in contact over multiple generations. Her work helps us understand the implications of concentrated language contact over time;

how languages influence each other and how contact can reveal itself in the identity formation of individuals in bilingual communities.

Her future research plans include extending analysis of written documents from across Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest to enlarge the collection of data. This includes collecting, transcribing and making available more letters from individual collections. Eventually, work from regional authors who include literary representations of local speech in their works could be included and expanded on which might show attitudes toward different varieties as well as which varieties were understood or common at the time the texts were written.

Litty recently accepted a one-semester position at Luther College as Adjunct Professor of German in the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics for the Spring 2018 semester. She is excited to be gaining more classroom time teaching first and second semester German and looks forward to getting to know Luther College and campus community there.

Litty's work, including her collections of Wisconsin German and English, is available on her website: <http://samanthalitty.weebly.com/>

## NEW FACE IN GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES LISA MINARDI

Don't let the Italian surname fool you. Having developed a passion for Pennsylvania German art and culture at the age of eight, while attending a colonial crafts day camp at the Peter Wentz Farmstead in her native Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, Lisa Minardi has never looked back. Her childhood fascination with all things Pennsylvania German is by now a lifelong passion. Inspired by her volunteer work as a tour guide at the Wentz Farmstead while in high school, Lisa's graduation project was to build miniature replicas of Pennsylvania German furniture as a "museum in a box" that could be taken into local classrooms.

She enrolled at Ursinus College in order to pursue a BA in history, then added a self-initiated second major in museum studies after being hired by the college's Berman Museum of Art to catalog their Pennsylvania German collection. For her history major, Lisa wrote a distinguished honors thesis on the Muhlenberg family of German Lutheran fame, while also translating and researching the Berman Museum's *fraktur* collection for a distinguished

honors thesis in museum studies. This involved teaching herself to read old German script in order to decipher the text on the fraktur manuscripts.

After graduating from Ursinus in 2004, Lisa continued her studies in the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture, where she earned an MA in 2006. Her thesis was an architectural study of the Muhlenberg family's houses in Trappe, Pennsylvania. Lisa was then hired by Winterthur to assist with the exhibition and catalogue *Paint, Pattern & People: Furniture of Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1725-1850*, which debuted in 2011. For the 300th birthday of Henry Muhlenberg, also in 2011, she organized an exhibition at the Berman Museum and wrote the accompanying book *Pastors & Patriots: The Muhlenberg Family of Pennsylvania*.

In 2015, Lisa organized or assisted with a series of three exhibitions and associated publications: *Drawn with Spirit: Pennsylvania German Fraktur from the Joan and Victor Johnson Collection* (Philadelphia Museum of Art), *Quill & Brush: Pennsylvania German Fraktur and Material Culture* (Free Library of Philadelphia), and *A Colorful Folk: Pennsylvania Germans and the Art of Everyday Life* (Winterthur). Most recently, she has consulted for the German Historical Museum in Berlin on the 2017 exhibition *Der Luther Effekt—500 Years of Reformation in the World*. Also in 2017, she completely reinstalled the Henry Muhlenberg House in Trappe as the new special exhibition *Revolution at Home: The Muhlenberg Family of Pennsylvania*.

Since 2003, Lisa has been involved with The Speaker's House, a non-profit organization that rescued from demolition the Trappe home of Frederick Muhlenberg—first Speaker of the U.S. House and son of Lutheran patriarch Henry Muhlenberg. She currently serves as the museum's executive director and is overseeing a meticulous restoration of the house to its appearance during the Muhlenberg family's ownership, from 1781 to 1803.

Lisa also returned to graduate school in 2012 and is now a PhD candidate in the History of American Civi-

lization program at the University of Delaware. Her dissertation, *Germans in the Quaker City: Ethnicity, Religion, and Material Life in Early Philadelphia* (working title), explores the everyday lives of Germans in the cosmopolitan urban seaport of Philadelphia. A significant number of the 81,000 or so Germans who immigrated to America before 1783 entered via Philadelphia and remained in the city—comprising nearly half of Philadelphia's total population in 1760 and one-third in 1800. Despite this enormous



Lisa Minardi points out highlights of fraktur in the 2015 Winterthur exhibition *A Colorful Folk: Pennsylvania Germans and the Art of Everyday Life*.

German presence, a pervasive myth of English-speaking dominance looms large in the annals of Philadelphia history, which Minardi aims to rewrite. Her dissertation seeks to move beyond the predominant stereotypes of Philadelphia as an English-dominated, "Quaker City" and Pennsylvania Germans as country bumpkins who clung to their mother tongue and adorned their homes with nothing but quaint folk art. This recovery of Philadelphia's German-speaking residents

promises to offer an alternative history of immigration, settlement, and everyday life in early America. The sustained presence of literally thousands of Germans—who largely did not settle in ethnic enclaves but wherever space permitted—no doubt had a profound impact on Philadelphia's religious, economic, material, social, and political life. Conversely, living within an Atlantic seaport and capital city differentiated the Philadelphia Germans from their non-urban counterparts. Through a detailed investigation of their everyday lives, Minardi hopes to demonstrate the importance of German-speaking people in the formation of Philadelphia's—and ultimately America's—complex, multiethnic, polyglot identity.

Minardi has a long list of future projects on her to-do list, including the continued restoration of The Speaker's House and ongoing efforts to raise awareness about Trappe's historic sites and the Muhlenberg family. She is also in the early planning stages of establishing a Pennsylvania German study center that would host rotating special exhibitions, classes, and workshops on Pennsylvania German art and culture. Lisa welcomes feedback and queries from SGAS members and may be reached at [info@historictrappe.org](mailto:info@historictrappe.org).

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