



SOCIETY FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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OBITUARY

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Greetings, SGAS Members!

Just a few weeks ago, Punxsutawney Phil emerged from his burrow in Western Pennsylvania and saw his shadow, thereby predicting that winter will last another six weeks. Though lacking Phil's gift for prognostication, I am confident that by April 21, the start of our 46th Annual Symposium at the University of Iowa, spring weather will have arrived. Included in this newsletter is the program for the event, which will be our first in-person gathering since 2019. That in itself will be a cause for celebration.

I am pleased with the diversity of presentations on the program, which will be delivered by colleagues from across the US and from Canada and Germany. Those of you who participated in our symposium last year will recall that due to the virtual modality we opted for shorter "lightning talks" followed by longer discussion periods. This year, we are moving back to a more traditional format of twenty minutes per presentation, however rather than having questions after each talk, there will be one 30- or 40-minute discussion period after all session papers have been read, which we hope will encourage presenters and attendees to reflect on how the papers connect with one another.



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[SGAS.org](https://www.sgas.org)

A special highlight of our symposium will take place in the evening on Thursday, April 21, when we present longtime SGAS member and past Membership Coordinator Karyl Rommelfanger with this year's Outstanding Achievement Award. I can think of no better way to follow up the presentation of this award and Karyl's talk than with our traditional *Gemütliches Beisammensein* reception. These Thursday evening events will all take place in the lovely Old Capitol Museum located on the University of Iowa campus. Congratulations, Karyl!

Also included in this newsletter is an article recalling the life and career of our late colleague, Ernst Schürer. I came to know Ernst through our shared interest in Pennsylvania German history and culture; his courses on the topic at Penn State were very popular among undergraduate students. Ernst, like so many of us in German-American studies, came to the field almost by chance. To be sure, Ernst's personal experience as a German immigrant to the US who spent the bulk of his career in a state with a deep German heritage inspired him to develop an interest in German-American topics. Yet not many of his contemporaries with similar profiles, European-born scholars of German at American colleges and universities, chose, as Ernst did, to expand their research and teaching activity to include German-American studies. Now knowing what a true adventurer Ernst was – camping on glaciers and sailing the open seas ... in retirement, no less! – I'm not surprised he was so eager to expand his intellectual horizons as well.

On behalf of our Society, my sympathies go out to Sue and to their family as they mourn Ernst's passing and celebrate a full life that was well lived.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Mark



Learn more about Germans in Iowa at <https://germansiniowa.com/>

Ernst Schürer (September 13, 1933 - December 18, 2021) was an Old World gentleman, scholar, adventurer, and longtime SGAS member. He often said that he traveled from the Middle Ages to the twenty-first century in one lifetime. Born on September 13th, 1933, in northwest Germany, he lived for a time with his parents and four sisters in a dwelling that can be found today only in museums: a large structure that housed farm animals and family under one roof with an open fire on the floor for cooking. At the age of seven he was already the “man of the house,” helping his mother and sisters through the war.

Travel and an insatiable curiosity characterize each chapter of his life, beginning with hiking all over Germany as an Eagle Scout. At the age of 22 he emigrated from Germany to Canada and then to Austin, Texas, where he was employed as an apprentice to a builder of church organs. This allowed him to hone his skills in wood- and metalwork, which served him well for a lifetime. He built a wooden canoe in Austin and paddled down the Rio Grande the length of Texas by himself.

Ernst eagerly accepted the opportunity to study at the University of Texas at Austin, a dream of his, and went on to complete a Ph.D. in German Literature at Yale University. While at Yale he appeared on the television program *The College Bowl* and spent time working on archaeological excavations in Utah, which led to a lifetime of interest in the American West. He never outgrew his childhood love of cowboy films.

His career as a professor of German Language and Literature also kept him on the move, first at Yale, then The University of Florida in Gainesville, on various fellowships back to Germany, and finally as the Chair of the Department of German Languages and Literature at The Pennsylvania State University from 1978 until his retirement. His area of specialization was German Expressionism, but he was a true generalist. He co-published a biography and collections of essays on B. Traven (author of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*), developed a course on Pennsylvania German culture that attracted 200 students each year, and organized a conference and publication on the fall of the Berlin Wall. He has many publications to his name, and over his lifetime he collected many, many books – he could never walk past a used



book stall without picking up at least a novel or two.

Starting in the 1980s, Ernst went on many trips with his teenaged and then grown children from his first marriage. Together, they hiked the northern end of the Appalachian Trail in Maine, explored the Black Forest in Pennsylvania, and canoed the Florida Everglades. Further afield, Ernst followed the route of Jack London down the Yukon River, hiked many stages of the Central Alpine Trail, visited Machu Picchu via the Inca trail, and saw culture and wildlife in Zimbabwe and Botswana (including close encounters with lions and elephants). In retirement he camped on a glacier in Patagonia and sailed through the Beagle Canal in the Tierra del Fuego.

His preferred mode of travel was backpacking: he had his trusty gear from the 1950s and an old framed backpack, and he would rather spend a night in a tent and wake up to a glorious morning sunrise than hide in a hostel or hotel. He was an expert at starting a campfire under the worst of circumstances and at brewing a coffee to start every day. One of his projects was to follow the trails of the Vikings, and on various trips he visited Norway to see the Northern Lights, took a ferry from Denmark to the Faroe Islands and then Iceland (sleeping on deck, of course), and braved the cold of Greenland. The only missing step was the Viking settlement in Labrador, which he sadly never got to see.

A sailing enthusiast for many years, Ernst purchased a thirty-foot Cape Dory on the southern coast of Puerto Rico in 2000 and sailed it back to the Chesapeake Bay. Ernst spent the better portion of a year sailing around the Caribbean and through the Intra-coastal Waterway. On these trips north and south he and his wife discovered Morehead City and Carteret County. It didn't take much prompting to settle there in retirement.

Ernst will be missed deeply by his wife Susan who resides at 4905 Atlantic Drive in Morehead City, by his four children Frank Schürer-Behrmann, Norbert Schürer, Anne Lohmann, and Abby Anderson, by their spouses, and by his nine grandchildren. His ashes will be returned to his beloved ocean in a private family ceremony. Donations may be made in his name to his lifelong charity SmileTrain.org.

46TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

“German Americans in Multicultural Societies”

April 21-23, 2022

University of Iowa, Iowa City

THURSDAY, APRIL 21

Old Capitol Museum

4:00 P.M. Registration opens

5:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M.

Words of Welcome

Presentation of the SGAS Outstanding Achievement Award to Karyl M. Rommelfanger

Awardee Talk: “Karl Pflaume’s 12-Year Sojourn in Amerika: Conflicts and Contributions”

Gemütliches Beisammensein Reception

FRIDAY, APRIL 22

Iowa Memorial Union

MORNING

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. PARALLEL SESSIONS I AND II

I. Manifestations of Early Contact: German-Speaking Immigrants and Native Americans

Moderator: Sandra Rebok

- DeWitt: Heinrich Loskiel: “Moravian Perceptions of Native Americans in the Ohio Region”
- Babcock: “Germans, Apaches, and Comanches on the Texas Frontier, 1842-1847”
- Hünlich: “German Comanches and Black Germans: Ethnic Proximity, Language Acquisition and Immigrant Assimilation in Texas”

II. Language Contact and Identity

Moderator: Marc Pierce

- Louden: “‘And the cow jumped over the ... fence?’ The Origins of a German-American Linguistic Meme and Denglish in America”
- Drake (with Brown): “Linguistic and Cultural Contact among Eau Claire’s (Wisconsin) Germans”
- Kaufmann: “Portuguese Loanwords in German Minority Varieties in Brazil: Reasons for and Consequences of Their Use”

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Coffee break

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. PARALLEL SESSIONS III AND IV

III. Texas: Language Maintenance and Loss

Moderator: David Hünlich

- Jones: “Gender Roles and Language Loss: An Analysis of Language Attitudes and the Potential for Gender-Influenced Language Maintenance and Loss Among Texas German”
- Pierce (with Boas and Gilbert): “On the Reliability of Fred Eikel’s New Braunfels German Data”
- Zersen: “The Wends of Texas: A German Minority Group Finds Independence Complicated”

IV. German Communities in American Cities

Moderator: Glenn Ehrstine

- Zieren: “Urban Mecklenburg Immigrants in Mid-19th-century America: Toledo, Ohio, as Case Study”
- Chroust: “Czechs and Germans in Cleveland Since 1850: Separate and Connected Lives and Communities in Migration”
- Huey: “Germans in Antebellum New Orleans: *Gemütlichkeit* and Culture Shock”

MIDDAY

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. SGAS membership meeting and luncheon

AFTERNOON

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. PARALLEL SESSIONS V AND VI

V. German Diasporas in the WWII Era

Moderator: Frank Trommler

- Conn and Reppmann: “German Americans and Tallinn’s Tragedy – Stalin: Keokuk Peace Letters, 1932–2022”
- Muhr: “The Acquisition of German World War II Era Cartographic Resources by the US Military and the Distribution of German Maps to US Research Libraries in the Late 1940s and Early 1950s”
- Wolf-Farré (with Rocker and Franz): “*Sosúa heute* – A Research Project on a German-Jewish Settlement in the Dominican Republic”

VI. Art and Architecture

Moderator: Reinhard Andress

- Fuessl: “Bauhaus in America: Josef Albers at Black Mountain College (1933–1949)”
- Grill: “W.H.D. Koerner, German-American Painter of the American West”
- Rotter: “Gari Melchers’s View of African Americans Through the White Male Lens”

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Coffee break

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. PARALLEL SESSIONS VII AND VIII

VII. Group Impacts: German-American Organizers and Organizations

Moderator: Kathleen Condray

- Chariton: “The *Turnverein* of Madison, Wisconsin, Prepares for the Civil War”

- Gollner: “Russian to Anglo: The *Allgemeine Kirchenversammlung der Deutschen Kongregationalisten* and White Protestantism on the Frontier”
- Ehrstine: “German Iowans as Swing Voters: 1860, 1889, 1916, 2016”

VIII. Progressive Agendas

Moderator: Marcel Rotter

- Becker-Cantarino: “Otilie Assing as Supporter of Abolitionism in the US from the 1850s to the 1880s”
- Kluge: “Karl Knortz on the Women’s Issue in America (1882)”
- Petig: “Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann and Carl Schurz”

SATURDAY, APRIL 23

Iowa Memorial Union

MORNING

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. PARALLEL SESSIONS IX AND X

IX. One Group Among Many: Germans in Multicultural Societies

Moderator: Cora Lee Kluge

- Burke: “The Poetics of Multiculturalism in German-Canadian Literature”
- Boucher: “Germanic Influences on the Mennonite Institutions in the Americas”
- Kamphoefner: “German Americans: Ethnic Pluralists or Ethnic Chauvinists?”
- Trommler: “German Americans in Multicultural Societies: A Critical Look at 19th-Century Developments”

X. Getting the Word Out: Representation, Teaching, and Promotion

Moderator: Patrick Wolf-Farré

- Rebok: “Humboldt and Berghaus: Promoting Cartographic, Mineralogical and Ethnographic Knowledge of the American West”
- Löschner: “Uruguay’s German-Language Press, 1880-1980”
- Jany: “German-American Studies in Beginning/Intermediate German Language Courses”
- Condray: “Small Scale Public Humanities in Practice: European Immigration in Arkansas”

10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Coffee break

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

XI. Panel Discussion: “Curating and Accessing German-American Archival Resources”

AFTERNOON AND EVENING

Excursion to the Amana Colonies, Banquet at Old Yoke Inn



Society for German-American Studies
46th Annual Symposium, April 21-23, 2022, in Iowa City

REGISTRATION

Return with payment by March 28, 2022, or register online at <https://sgas.org/>

Name: _____ **Affiliation (if any):** _____

Email: _____ **Mobil phone:** _____

SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION

Conference fee, SGAS member _____ x **\$95**
 Conference fee, non-member _____ x **\$130**
 Student _____ x **\$20**
 University of Iowa student _____ free

FRIDAY LUNCHEON/ Business Meeting

Buffet _____ x **\$20**

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON
TOUR OF THE AMANA COLONIES**

(Free, but **pre-registration is required!**
 For registered Symposium participants + one guest only.)

_____ x **free**

SATURDAY EVENING

BANQUET at the Ox Yoke Inn in Amana
 (Family-style banquet in the Amana tradition)

\$40 per person _____ x **\$40**

**TRANSPORTATION to Amana Colonies
(please check)**

I will make my own arrangements _____
 I will need transportation _____
 I can give fellow participants a ride _____

SGAS Membership*

(if not yet a member for 2022) _____

***SGAS Membership (please check)**

Student _____ **\$15**
 Individual _____ **\$30**
 Joint _____ **\$40**
 Institutional _____ **\$40**
 Life Member _____ **\$500**

As a member of the SGAS
 you will receive the prestigious
Yearbook of German-American Studies
<https://sgas.org/publications/yearbook/table-of-contents/>

**Membership is required for all SGAS 2022
Symposium presenters.**

Please make your check payable to "SGAS"
and mail it to:

Antje Petty
(SGAS Symposium)
2911 Robin Court
Fitchburg, WI 53711

TOTAL enclosed _____

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University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES

CENTENNIAL HALL 4508

105 GARFIELD AVENUE

EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN 54702-4004

munsalvaesche@t-online.de

Katja Hartmann

MEMBERSHIP, Europe

apetty@wisc.edu

Antje Petty

MEMBERSHIP



**SOCIETY FOR
GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES**

mlouden@wisc.edu

Mark Louden

PRESIDENT

brownjo@uwec.edu

Josh Brown

NEWSLETTER EDITOR