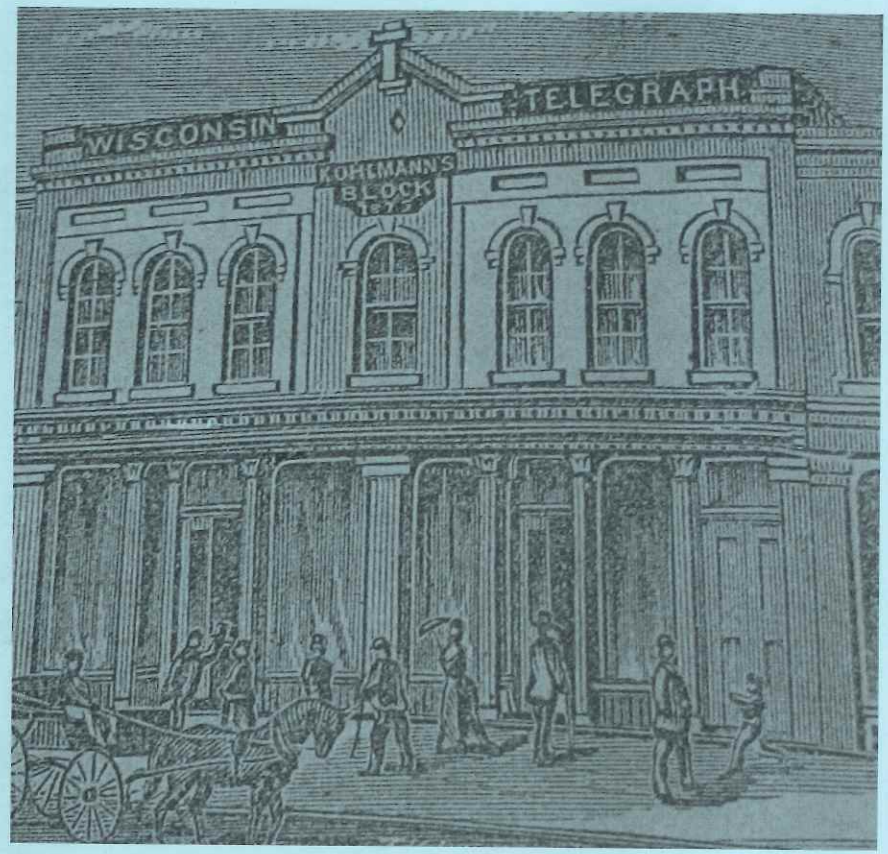
"America is No Magic Land"

Oshkosh's German-Language Newspaper in 1889



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Introduction

Although Oshkosh no longer has the exclusively German clubs, churches, banks, and newspapers of the nineteenth century, the city still retains a strong German presence. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, over 54 percent of people in Oshkosh claim German ancestry. The vast majority of families in Oshkosh are the descendants of European immigrants who arrived in Wisconsin from 1860 to 1900. At the turn of the twentieth century, nearly three-fourths of the city's residents were immigrants or born of immigrants, and a third of these were German.[1]

While German immigrants came to Oshkosh for their chance at capturing the American dream, some did not feel that the American government upheld the standards of human rights and liberty upon which the nation was founded. These frustrations were often captured in thousands of German-language newspapers established in the nineteenth century, including those printed in Oshkosh.

The title of this booklet comes from an article titled "American Conceit" in the *Wisconsin Telegraph*, Oshkosh's longest-running German-language newspaper. In "American Conceit," the *Telegraph* criticizes pretentious Americans and suggests that they could benefit from viewing the nation more realistically: "America is no magic land; the people in it are not expert wizards." While reading the newspaper excerpts contained in this booklet, it is important to remember that the newspaper is not promoting anti-American sentiments. Instead, the *Telegraph* strove to inform its readers about the political and economic

turmoil in nineteenth-century America in order to create a stronger, more unified nation.

The majority of the information in this booklet comes from a single, complete collection of weekly German-language newspapers stored at the Oshkosh Public Museum from 1889, including both the *Wisconsin Telegraph* and its Sunday counterpart, *Der Feierabend*. Examining these papers as complete collection provides a valuable opportunity to observe what kind of information the German-American community in Oshkosh received, and what this reveals about the community's values and interests.

This booklet provides a liberal sampling of excerpts from *Telegraph* articles and advertisements to give the reader a general sense of what the newspaper was like, as it drastically differs from newspapers of the twenty-first century. The booklet offers new English translations, while the original German texts are included in the endnotes.

What Drove Immigrants Out of Europe

America's massive growth would not have been possible without economic and political discontent in Europe throughout the nineteenth century. Germany did not become a unified country until 1871. Before this time, the regions that eventually became Germany, Austria, and Switzerland were divided into hundreds of smaller, aristocratically ruled units. The rapid rate of industrial growth made production in Europe easier than ever before, but created an even starker divide of wealth and power between the working class and the aristocracy.[2] Millions of farmers and artisans were suddenly displaced, causing widespread unrest and frustration.

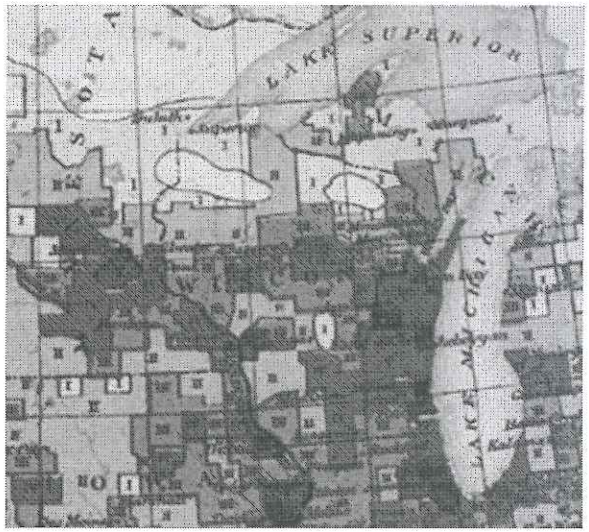
Groups of liberal-minded individuals from both the middle and working classes who valued liberty, democracy, and freedom of speech began to form. The pressure for political reform in the conservative German states mounted steadily and came to a head in 1848. The March Revolution, or the Revolutions of 1848, ended with victory for the conservative aristocracy. Because America was founded on ideas similar to the goals of the liberal thinkers behind the March Revolution, many immigrated to America and are now known as the Forty-Eighters. The exiled Forty-Eighters made major contributions to American politics, education, art, and technology. Many of America's German-language newspapers, including Oshkosh's *Wisconsin Telegraph*, were founded by Europeans who arrived in America shortly after the failed revolutions and enthusiastically upheld the progressive philosophies that could not yet flourish in Europe.

Of course, not all German immigrants came to Wisconsin as political activists. Europe struggled with many crises that led to increased poverty, including a 36 percent hike in birth rate, the development of factories that left thousands unemployed, and widespread crop failure. As a result, the promises of prosperity in America far outweighed the reality of life in Europe.

Painting depicting the March Revolution in Berlin, 1848. The varying orientation of the stripes on the German flags (horizontal versus vertical) indicate different political goals for the revolution. Source: Artist Unknown, Public Domain.

What Brought Immigrants to Oshkosh

German immigrants arrived in Wisconsin in three separate waves. The first wave occurred from 1845 to 1855 and brought 939,000 new arrivals from mostly southwestern Germany. The second wave, lasting from 1865 to 1867, brought 1,066,333 immigrants from mostly northwestern Germany. The third and largest wave from 1880 to 1893 brought 1,849,056 Germans to Wisconsin. By 1890, over a third of Wisconsin's citizens were born in Germany.[3]



Map of foreign-born Germans in Wisconsin, 1890. The dark brown around Winnebago County indicates more than 20 foreign- born Germans per square mile. Source: "1890 German Population Map." *Statistical Atlas of the United States*. US Census Bureau, 1898.

For Germans eager to take their shot at the American Dream, few other states shared Wisconsin's potential. Oshkosh embodied many of Wisconsin's tantalizing opportunities, and its

rate of growth mirrors the state's pattern of swift expansion. Oshkosh's development began slowly, but grew rapidly as more immigrants learned about the area's wealth of resources and its convenient access to the Fox River. From 1846 to 1847, the Winnebago County's population expanded from 732 to 2,787, a growth rate that continued for the rest of the century. By 1900, the population reached 58,225.[4]

Pamphlets and articles praising Wisconsin were published in Germany in the latter half of the nineteenth century. These were written both by Germans who had already settled in America and industries, like railroad companies, that wanted to employ immigrant workers. For example, Wilhelm Dames published a pamphlet in Prussia entitled "*Wie sieht es in Wisconsin aus*?", or "What Does it Look Like in Wisconsin?" In the pamphlet, Dames lauds Wisconsin's healthfulness and clean drinking water, major selling points for traditionally health-conscious Germans. Alexander Ziegler published similar information in Germany about his experiences in America, particularly Wisconsin. He discusses the state's size, climate, soil, mineral deposits, and convenient trade locations, all of which were very attractive to immigrants.[5]

Many Germans were drawn to Oshkosh because of its booming lumber industry, which boasted over 50 lumber mills along the Fox River at its height, as well as dozens of other woodworking factories.[6] The city's reputation as a logging city was so great that it earned the nickname "Sawdust City." The appeal of factory work, which required minimal understanding of English and

provided reliable income due to high demand, made Oshkosh an ideal immigration hub.

The large number of Germans who arrived to cash in on Oshkosh's economic promise produced a thriving, stable German community for over four decades, complete with its own German-language schools, churches, clubs, and newspapers. Despite the transitory nature of these institutions, each played a major role in contributing not only to the German community, but also Oshkosh's development and culture.

Rathgeber
für
Auswanderungslustige.

Wie und wohin sollen wir auswandern:

nach den Vereinigten Staaten oder Britisch Nord-Amerika — nach dem Land jenseits der Felsengebirge oder dem Freistaat Texas — Santo-Thomas oder die Musquitoküste — Süd-Amerika oder Westindien — Afrika oder Asien — Süd-Australien oder Neu-Seeland? — Sollen wir nach Rußland oder Polen — nach Ungarn oder Siebenbürgen — Serbien oder Griechenland ziehen — oder ist es besser, unsere Kräfte den weniger kultivirten Theilen des deutschen Vaterlandes zu widmen?

Title page of a typical advice book published in Europe to help immigrants decide how and to where they should emigrate. Source: Bromme, Traugott. *Rathgeber für Auswanderungslustige*. Stuttgart: Hoffman, 1846. Accessed through the Max Kade Institute, Madison.

German-Language Newspapers in Oshkosh

From the mid- to late-1800s, Oshkosh had several different German-language newspapers.[7] Each of Oshkosh's four major German-language newspapers was established by the same printers, Charles and Valentine Kohlmann, Although the exact date of their arrival in Wisconsin cannot be pinpointed, the Kohlmann brothers immigrated from Prussia to Wisconsin sometime around 1852, as they appear first in the 1855 U.S. Census. They printed their first paper, *Anzeiger des Nordwestens*, only one year before Oshkosh's incorporation in 1853.

The Kohlmann brothers owned and printed all the city's German-language newspapers until 1885, when General Thomas Scott Allen (1825-1905) and Julius Weidner overtook ownership. The shift in ownership is noteworthy, as it is the first time that Oshkosh's German-language newspaper was not printed by someone of direct German descent. In fact, General Allen was born in the United States and fulfilled many important leadership roles not only in Oshkosh, but in all of Wisconsin. He ranked high in the 5th Wisconsin Infantry throughout the Civil War and served two terms as Wisconsin's Republican secretary of state from 1866 to 1870. After publishing the *Oshkosh Northwestern* from 1870 to 1884, General Allen took over the *Wisconsin Telegraph* from 1885 to 1902. An obituary published in the *Daily Northwestern* after General Allen's death in 1905 reports that his involvement with the *Telegraph* was minimal.[8] He learned to write and read German, but his role was only supervisory and involved no editorial tasks.

Although the city's earliest publications were short-lived, the German population was stable enough by the 1850s to support weekly printing of the *Wisconsin Telegraph* for almost four decades. However, by the twentieth century, enough Germans had adapted to America's language and customs to severely limit the German-language press. The beginning of World War One in 1914 introduced strong anti-German sentiment to the country, bringing a definitive end to the vast majority of German-language newspapers throughout the United States.

The Importance of the German-Language Press

Thanks to the development of radios, televisions, cell phones, and computers, many Americans now have instantaneous access to local and global news. Consequently, it can be difficult to imagine how heavily Americans depended on newspapers in the nineteenth century. With few other reliable, cheap methods to attain information, communities needed newspapers in order to learn about and stay connected with the rest of the world.

Newspapers were doubly important for immigrants because the newcomers relied on them to build community belonging in a foreign place. Many German immigrants arrived in Oshkosh unable to speak English, so Oshkosh's most prominent English-language newspaper in 1889, the *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern* (known today simply as the *Oshkosh Northwestern*), was largely useless for the earliest German communities. Instead, the immigrants relied on the *Wisconsin Telegraph* to comfortably

learn about their unfamiliar surroundings and how America worked.

The *Telegraph* was equally important for allowing German-Americans to stay in touch with their old homes. Immigrants had many reasons to maintain contact with their homelands. Because travelling to America costly and complex, many left behind families in Europe. The combination of leaving family members and feeling alien in a new country also caused homesickness for German-Americans, who were able to turn to local German publications like the *Telegraph* for a home away from home.

Because newspapers filled so many important roles for the immigrant community, they had the potential to powerfully sway public opinion. However, this power was balanced by the fact that German-language newspapers constantly faced competition from Americanization. As immigrants became increasingly comfortable with English, the necessity for a German-language press faded. As a result, newspapers would often go to great lengths to promote the German heritage, fighting especially for the preservation of the German language.

The Journalistic Style of the *Wisconsin Telegraph*

The *Telegraph* is written in a way that drastically differs from modern expectations of journalism. Articles are often written to be intelligible to readers at all levels of awareness. For example, a current newspaper is not likely to publish an article about John Kerry without clarifying that he is the United States

Secretary of State. Details are concisely explained in their entirety. We expect that the news delivered to us is unbiased and factual.

The same cannot always be said about the *Telegraph*, whose articles are often more reminiscent of editorials or essays than traditional news reports. The writers of the *Telegraph* adamantly believed that the United States government was not leading the nation properly, and did not hesitate to employ sarcasm and irony to express their frustration. They conveyed facts, but not without inserting commentary and consequently presenting the readership with a mixture of news and opinions.

Although the tumultuous political atmosphere in the 1800's makes it difficult to pinpoint a single political affiliation for the *Telegraph*, the paper generally framed issues in a liberal, progressive light. The *Telegraph* not only supported immigrants' rights, but also spoke out against the rising national debt, uncontrolled lawmaking, economic issues associated with industrialization and expansion, and an American government which the newspaper did not view as fully protecting American liberties.

Throughout the *Telegraph*, the writers do not refer to themselves simply as Americans. The situation is very much "us" (the German-Americans) versus "them" (the English-Americans, or Yankees). Many articles are narrated in the first-person plural. Using an ambiguous "we" when reporting could have several possible associations, including "we" as the newspaper staff, or "we" as the German population in Oshkosh.

The *Telegraph* made generalizations about its readership, like assuming that anyone who read the *Telegraph* did so consistently. The first article about an event might contain complete details about who is involved and what is happening, but each subsequent article about the same event might only be briefly referenced before expanding on previous information. The writers expected the readership to already possess a working knowledge of American politics and current events.

Overview of the 1889 *Wisconsin Telegraph*

With offices located on both 22 and 24 Waugoo Avenue—across the street from today's downtown Opera House Square—the *Wisconsin Telegraph* headquarters were in the middle of Oshkosh's bustling downtown in 1889. Beyond publishing newspapers, these offices also performed general bookbinding and printing projects for the Oshkosh community.

In every publication, the *Telegraph* reserved space to outline its own intentions and offerings:

> The *Wisconsin Telegraph* now covers twelve six-columned pages which cover the newest reports from both sides of the ocean and especially from the state, county, and city like hardly any other weekly paper in Wisconsin. Unbiased, educated articles about politics, art, science, etc. Additionally, the Sunday paper *Der Feierabend* always contains a high-quality, exciting novel. Subscription price only $2.00 per year.[9]

Given the *Telegraph*'s partiality based on its journalistic style, this description is not entirely accurate. Nonetheless, the *Telegraph* prided itself on thorough and consistent journalism. The following sections give a general idea of what readers could expect from an average copy of the newspaper.

News

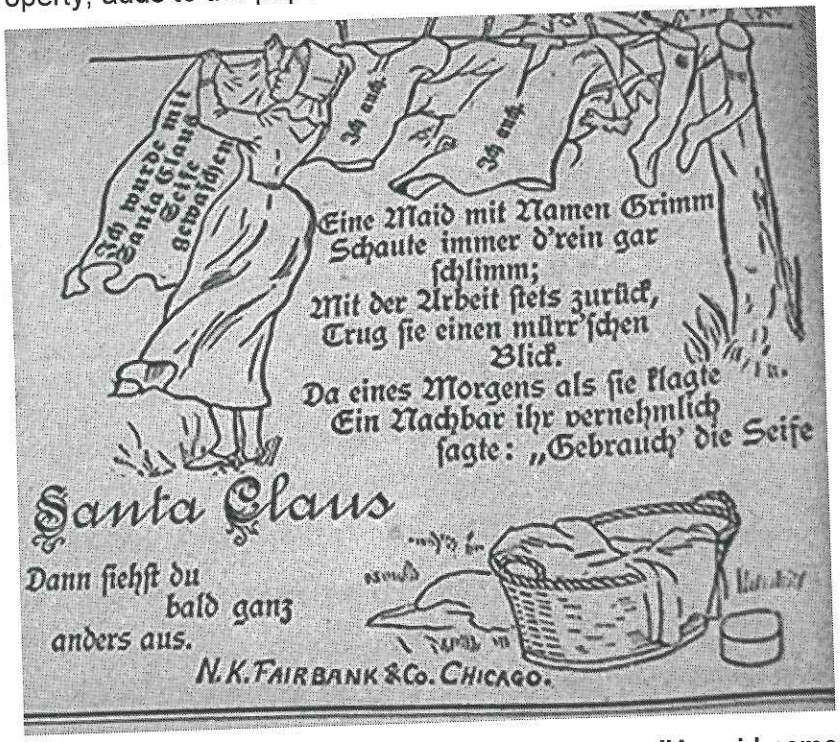
The contents of the Telegraph reflect just how many different communities the German-American population actually belonged to. The paper's front page is dedicated to major national news, offering commentary on economic and political developments. The next section is for news from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, divided into specific provinces (Sachsen, Schlesien, Bayern, etc) and major cities (Oldenburg, Hamburg, Hannover, etc). Often, the European news focused on major advances in the continent of which the immigrants could be proud.

Statewide news follows European news. These are categorized by city or town, including not only announcements from major cities like Milwaukee or Madison and neighboring towns like Neenah or Menasha, but also news from smaller towns further north like Phillips or Hayward. The local news section wraps up the *Telegraph* and contains a large variety of information, ranging from obituaries to snippets from everyday life: a neighborhood woman breaking her arm, or a family isolated because of a disease like scarlet fever, for instance. More formal announcements of local meetings, both for Oshkosh's active Turnverein, an athletic and political club for men more widely

known as Turners, and more governmental notices for public forms, can also be found in the local news section.

Advertisements

The *Telegraph* is filled with advertisements, with at least two out of six columns on each page containing advertisements in both English and German for familiar services and goods such as doctors, lawyers, groceries, clothing, local meetings, and taverns. A large classified section, especially for buying and selling property, adds to the paper's abundance of advertisements.



Weekly advertisement for Santa Claus Soap. Verse: "A maid named Grimm always had a bad attitude; she was always behind on her work and wore a stubborn look. Then one morning when she complained, a neighbor told her distinctly: 'Use the soap.'" Underneath: "Santa Claus, soon you will look very different."

English text in advertisements is always printed in a plain, Roman typeface, while German text is in *Fraktur*, the thick, Gothic typeface traditionally associated with German-language publications of the nineteenth century. For immigrants who arrived only familiar with German and *Fraktur*, the striking visual difference separates the languages even further.

Characteristic difference between the font used for English and the font used for German. This example comes from space reserved by the *Telegraph* itself; however, the discrepancy is consistent throughout all advertisements, notices, and articles.

A number of railroad advertisements were included in every issue, highlighting America's booming railroad industry and the constant pressure for westward expansion. Often, the same exact advertisements were included for months at a time and were

almost exclusively printed in English, as in the following advertisement for the Chicago and Northwestern Railway:

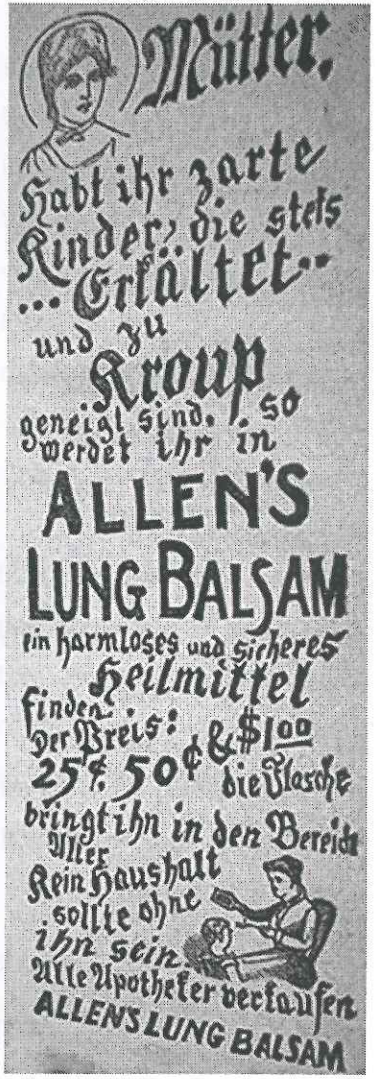
> Over 7,000 miles of steel track in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Dakota and Wyoming, penetrates the agricultural, mining, and commercial centres of the West and Northwest. The unrivaled equipment of the line embraces sumptuous dining cars, new Wagner and Pullman Sleepers, superb day coaches and fast vestibule trains running direct between Chicago, St. Paul and Minneapolis, Council Bluffs and Omaha, connecting for Portland, Denver, San Francisco and all Pacific Coast Points. Only line to the Black Hills. For tickets, rates, maps, time tables and full information, apply to any ticket agent or address the Gen's Passenger Agent, Chicago, Ill.

While the advertisement glorifies westward expansion, the luxurious improvements to traveling by train are particularly emphasized in an attempt to make the long journey West more appealing. Other railroad advertisements focused more on finding a job in the industry rather than using the train system.

Less familiar to the modern reader are the countless advertisements for alternative medicinal solutions: many types of balms and salves vaguely aimed toward kidney, lung, and especially circulatory health. Still popular in Germany today, these herbal solutions would likely catch the attention of German-American communities dealing with the effects of diseases like smallpox and scarlet fever. Dr. Mampe's Kräuter Magenbitters, or

Herbal Bitters, make promises and recommendations that are typical of such advertisements:

> A small wine glass full taken three times a day before mealtime will be a fast and safe cure for dyspepsia, kidney pains, liver complaints, and every kind of indigestion—an infallible medium against fever and all kinds of periodic pains—a medium for immediate relief of dysentery, colic, and cholera-attacks, a cure for constipation, a reviving medium for sickly persons of each gender, an excellent medium for strengthening the appetite and digestion organs; a purifying medium for the blood and other fluids.[10]



Typical weekly advertisement for Allen's Lung Balsam: "Mothers, if you have fragile children that always have colds and are croup-prone, then you'll find a harmless and safe healing medium in Allen's Lung Balsam. The price: 25 cents, 50 cents, or $1.00 per bottle will put it anyone's hands. No household should be without it. Sold at all apothecaries."

The medicine covers an extremely wide range of symptoms and diseases, promising not only to help but even cure some—something we never see in modern-day medical advertisements. While this does reflect a degree of German faith in herbal medicines, it is clear that the advertisers are also capitalizing on the diseases plaguing communities by including as many common complaints as possible.

Such advertisements were also sometimes placed directly in local news columns with attention-grabbing, sensationalist appeals to grab the reader's attention, a tactic Kemp's Balm for the Throat and Lungs employs:

> The ugliest man in Oshkosh, as well as the most beautiful, and others, are invited to call on an apothecary and pick up a free trial bottle of Kemp's Balm for the Throat and Lungs, a remedy that sells itself through its own worth and use and that is guaranteed to heal and relieve all chronic and acute coughing, bronchitis, asthma, and tuberculosis.[11]

While the marketing techniques are clever, they are also filled with false promises to cure diseases that we know today require antibiotics to cure. As medical technology increased throughout the nineteenth century and people grew more reliant on medicines for their health, the number of advertisements with such exorbitant promises decreased. However, herbal-based alternative medicines maintain popularity in Europe today.

The German-American Identity Crisis

As the 1800s advanced, so did the pressure for the Americanization of German immigrants, driven not only by Yankees from the East Coast, but also by children born of immigrants, who tended to favor adaptation over cultural preservation. Some English-speaking Americans and politicians, often of British descent, grew concerned with the volume of immigrants who conducted their churches and schools in native languages. Fearing that immigrants might overwhelm America, legislature was passed to prevent the use of native languages, like Wisconsin's Bennett Law. Approved in 1890, the Bennett Law required both public and private schools to teach in English. Experiencing the development of anti-immigrant sentiment in national and state politics, the *Telegraph* articles in 1889 concerning German culture are particularly passionate, as they reflect a community fighting for the right to preserve its heritage.

The *Telegraph*'s specific bias cannot be forgotten. As a business that thrived entirely on the German language to profit, it naturally swayed its readers towards preserving their native tongue. Ideas that may seem extreme to modern readers are not only the voice of a threatened community, but also the exaggerated emphasis of a vulnerable industry.

Language and Heritage

The *Telegraph* took every opportunity to decry attacks on the German language. In "No German in Heaven," the paper took issue with Pastor T. S. Hollins' assertion that "the Presbyterian

church should rid itself of the German language" by 1890 because "the foreign language would only cause confusion" in heaven. The *Telegraph* seizes the opportunity to counterattack:

> When such nonsense can be practiced by the Presbyterian pastor of President Harrison, one can truly be frightened of our president. There's also the fact that President Harrison has so sparingly named any Germans to federal offices. Perhaps he's too frightened that he could meet them in heaven later. He should calm himself about that, though, because we are convinced that no man who has held a federal office for four years will be let in [the gates of Heaven] by Saint Peter, and it's still very much the question whether President Harrison, despite his Presbyterian spiritual advisor Dr. Hollins, will go through the Pearly Gates.[12]

This passage is a strong example of both the sarcasm and the critical approach to politics employed by the writers of the *Telegraph*. Pastor Hollins was speaking at a national conference for the Presbyterian Church that President Harrison did not attend, but the *Telegraph* used to opportunity to relate the president to Pastor Hollins' extreme ideas, further influencing the paper's readership by pointing out the president's apparent disregard for German politicians while forming his cabinet.

The *Telegraph* also followed diplomatic relations between America and Europe closely and expressed dissatisfaction with the actions of American diplomats and politicians abroad, especially their lack of concern for European languages. In "The

'Victory of English,'" the *Telegraph* vehemently attacks the English-language press for claiming that English is the international language of diplomacy after its use at a conference in Berlin. Representatives from the United States, Great Britain and Germany attended to decide how to handle their joint occupation of Samoa. Instead of viewing the use of English at the conference as a victory for the language, the *Telegraph* attacks the American diplomats' limitations:

> It's true that the negotiations at the Samoa Conference were led in English, but why is it true? For the simple reason that the three American diplomats, Phelps, Kasson, and Bates, were too dumb to understandably explain themselves in any language except English. First, they tried to use the French language, the working language of diplomats for over two hundred years, but our three glorious Yankees stood there like oxen on a mountain.* And German? They could not even start with it . . . So Bismarck, who can speak four languages fluently, had to deal with three uneducated ruffians who could only speak English. What else was he to do? Send them home until they learn to properly navigate the worldly, educated European society? That would not work . . . Because Bismarck pitied the ignorance of the three Americans and used the English language, American newspapers, which are just as dumb as the American "statesmen," draw the

* German proverb indicating helplessness

conclusion that English is the diplomatic language of the future for the entire world.[13]

In this case, the *Telegraph* manages to criticize the politicians and the English-language press by portraying them as presumptuous, hasty, and unintelligent, while praising Bismarck for his worldliness and professionalism. The *Telegraph* frequently used tactics that both challenged American practices and fostered European pride.

The writers of the *Telegraph* also take pains to point out instances when the German language excels. In "A Halt for the Deniers of the Germans and Their Language," the *Telegraph* mentions a German-language publication in Tokyo, Japan, that honors the "spirit of German productivity," sentiments which they applaud as a model for those who "contemptuously wrinkle their nose over German and also those Germans who are ashamed of their language."[14] The German-language program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is highly praised by the *Telegraph*, which includes an article about the program with 289 students enrolled and the program's four professors.[15]

However, the ideas the *Telegraph* portrays occasionally tended to extremity. In "Germany, the True Fatherland," the *Telegraph* denounces Yankee supremacy, or the tendency of British-Americans to feel an undue sense of entitlement simply because they had been in America longer. President James A. Garfield's 1880 eulogy for popular German Congressman Gustav Schleicher of Texas is quoted at length:

> "It was mentioned today," said Garfield, "that Schleicher was born in a foreign land. In one sense, this is correct, but in the correct sense, he was born in our fatherland . . . England is not the fatherland of our English-speaking population. Instead, our original homeland, the true fatherland of our race, are the ancient forests of Germany. . .Therefore we can say that the friend whose memorial we are celebrating today is one of the oldest brothers of our race. He came from the fatherland directly to America, not like our fathers, who first traveled through England."[16]

Such commentary reveals how intensely German-Americans insisted on their identities and conveys a broader sense of longing for a nation unified solely by German heritage, a dream from the Revolutions of 1848 that still carried over into the German-American press in 1889.

Immigration

Naturally, much of the German community supported immigration, an issue they saw as inherently related to American liberty. When the Ford Committee announced that stricter control was required at the Canadian border because at least 50,000 "paupers, lunatics, criminals, and other rabble" had entered America without impairment, the *Telegraph* cautioned the committee against acting too ruthlessly or strictly, which neither "fits the spirit of freedom's provisions, nor can be seen as intelligent or wise."[17]

In another article titled "A Hard Nut for Immigrant Haters," the *Telegraph* tries arguing their support for immigration with numbers:

> From 1876 to 1888, the population grew by 36 percent (from 44 to 60 million). In comparison, the value of personal property rose by 50 percent, the deposits at banks by 55 percent and the amount of printed money in circulation by 90 percent . . . [B]ecause the Know-Nothings have complained particularly about the recession of American agriculture, there's also a place for the following figures: the wheat harvest by bushels rose by 60 percent, the corn harvest by 57 percent, and the cotton harvest by 55 percent.[18]

The list of improvements that can be attributed to immigration continues, but is followed by a suspicious reassurance: "The correctness of these figures is not to be doubted. They will find be absolutely confirmed through the results of the next census."[19] A huge departure from modern expectations of journalism, such unfounded claims can undermine the *Telegraph*'s credibility. However, given that the targeted readership had limited means to access information beyond the newspaper, statistics like these were likely an effective method for influencing and empowering the German community.

Economics

A number of economically oriented articles reflect an intense interest in the nation's financial affairs, which the writers

felt were heading in a grim direction. In "The National Debt is Rising Instead of Falling," writers are outraged that the national debt reached 1.07 billion dollars.[20] With inflation rates, the national debt at the time was around 27.1 billion dollars. (Compare that with the current debt of 16.76 trillion dollars, according to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of May 2013—a staggering 61,781 percent increase since 1889.) The *Telegraph* does not include the source of the numbers, but historical records from the Department of Treasury in 1889 show the national debt at 1.6 billion dollars, even higher than the number supplied by the newspaper.

Several articles focus exclusively on America's shortcomings compared to European nations concerning international business. In "American Nonchalance," the *Telegraph* published excerpts from a speech about failing American industry in South America by Mr. John T. Abbot, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Columbia in 1889, in which he condemns American salesmen for their laziness:

> The American salesmen have never yet found it worth the effort to even study the South American market. As a rule, they confine themselves to advertising their products in a couple newspapers and request that their diplomats and ambassadors lend some support, as the German, British, and French salesmen, instead of sending their diplomats drafts of announcements and price lists in foreign languages, send living agents into these lands and board them there with great initial costs. These agents take up permanent residence, learn and speak the language of the

land, study the customs, habits, and needs of the population, and then open businesses, spread huge quantities of samples over big tables and make an effort in every way to be accountable for their trade.[21]

Although the writers point out that the reader of the *Telegraph* is already well-acquainted with these opinions, they stress that Mr. Abbot's points are noteworthy because they come from the English-American side.

America's booming railroad economy was also the subject of many *Telegraph* articles. The *Telegraph* was especially wary of monopolization, as can be seen in "America's Dictator," which discusses the recent unveiling of plans to consolidate American railroads:

> At a time when trusts and monopolies spring out of the earth like mushrooms after a warm summer rain, such an action was to be expected. Yes, one could easily wonder why the planned railway trust hasn't already been brought to life, because the contractor would receive enormous, totally unrestrained benefits, if he is a very energetic man without a conscience who doesn't back down from a challenge. Such a man would be the uncrowned Kaiser—even more so the all-powerful dictator of the United States, against whom the president as well as the governors, the judges, and every government official would have to step down in insignificant nothingness. Through the army of his officials this man would rule and guide the votes, making sure that nobody wins an office that doesn't completely

> submit to him. All the current laws would be turned upside down and new ones could be shoved through that only benefit himself and his company.[22]

Although the article contains much speculation, it emphasizes the risks of allowing businesses to play too large of a role in the government, which may lead to politicians unfairly favoring business instead of upholding America's standards of freedom and equality. The authors offer a solution for the monopolization, but not without ending on a bitter, pessimistic note:

> The only way to prevent this giant undertaking would be to socialize the entire railway system, according to the European model, to abandon the previous "winner takes all" policy, and, again according the European model, to delegate control to responsible, politically independent, pensionable officials that would only be replaced if they did something to bring guilt upon themselves. But in this land, such a suggestion will be seen as violating the constitution, tradition, and God knows what else and they will prefer to take on the dictatorship of one, who is in the position to spread attractive promises.[23]

This article has a radical tone due to its casual usage of the concepts of dictator and dictatorship. Once more, the *Telegraph* pushes European pride by suggesting that America model its industry after Europe's more merit-based system. Despite its extremity, the article provides valuable warnings against government corruption and the potential for American politicians to use the Constitution and religion as tools to manipulate the public.

"American Conceit"

The *Telegraph* frequently borrowed articles from other publications, both English- and German-language, for inclusion in its own newspaper, often with additional commentary from the local writing staff. The following excerpts are part commentary, part republication of Murat Halstead's "Our National Conceits," which the *Telegraph* retitles as "American Conceit." A major editor and journalist, Murat published his original English-language version in November 1889 in *The North American Review*,[24] a popular literary magazine still in print today.

Fueled by his observations of how arrogant and disrespectful Americans acted while in Europe, Halstead's "Our National Conceits" tersely criticizes the belief that simply being American allows a sense of entitlement. Much of his essay applies specifically to the American travelling abroad, although Halstead also discusses the lack of environmental concern in America and especially the idea that only America has made significant technological and cultural advances. He ends by urging Americans to realize that they have much to learn from the cultures and experiences of other countries.

Although only a small change, the difference between the essay's original title, "Our National Conceits," and the translation provided by the *Telegraph*, "American Conceit," provides a valuable insight into the kind of identity crisis that German immigrants faced. "Our National Conceits" would imply that the German-American community shares in the attitudes Halstead describes, something the *Telegraph* evaded by renaming the

essay. However, the *Telegraph* also distances its readership from feeling American and creates a more skeptical perception of what being American means.

For the *Telegraph*, Halstead's essay acts as a springboard for bringing up other problems that the paper feel America faces, especially the country's unwillingness to accept and work out its imperfections. Although the *Telegraph* implements the essay in a way that makes it difficult to distinguish between Halstead's ideas and the *Telegraph*'s commentary, it faithfully portrays the opinions in "Our National Conceits." The majority of "American Conceit" follows:[25]

Mr. Murat Halstead published an essay with the title "American Conceit" in The North American Review, which is of interest both because of the author's personality and the essay's contents.

In America, there's always a certain pride in telling Americans the truth. Nowhere is the critic handled more gently, at least in specific things, as in the land of freedom of the press. The American people seldom see or hear critiques. Foreigners fall into caricatures and one is forced to ignore them with cold contempt [. . .] For the Americans, we are the biggest, most powerful, and most successful nation on Earth. Everything we accomplish is perfect. The American nation represents the total sum of all knowledge and ability. An underestimation of all other countries goes hand-in-hand with this overestimation of our own country. If one hears and reads many of these Americans, one would believe that the sun shines nowhere else except in America, that all

nations over which the Star - Spangled Banner doesn't wave live half in barbarism. Indeed, our conceit is paid back with interest: other countries judge us as unjustly as we judge them.

For this reason it is doubly gratifying to hear the judgment of a man who is enlightened enough to recognize the failures and benefits of all nations, one who appropriately doles out just praise and just blame. If we have something to add to the essay, it's that Mr. Halstead says too little rather than too much. Perhaps this is because of the boundaries to which he had to adhere. It was more his intention to portray the travelling Americans that observed in Europe than to shield the Americans in their own land. [...]

His critique especially challenges the contrast between the frugality of the Europeans and the depraved economy of the Americans. The protection of the forests and any care for the woodlands at all places itself in opposition to how Americans plunder resources and makes them aware that if they don't soon come to their senses, America will be transformed into a desert. The overexploitation that runs down the fruitful soils depopulates once heavily populated states. The lack of concern for the future in all economic relations prompts us to remember that Americans still have much to learn from the Europeans. [...]

We have already raised this point ourselves. America is no magic land; the people in it are not masterful wizards. What made America so big is not Americanism, but the modern spirit of technology that thrives in other lands as it does here.

Mr. Halstead could have said more without doing an injustice to the Americans. He could have pointed out that in

Europe, it doesn't take three months and 1200 citizens to build a jury of 12 men to judge an assassination,[*] or that private rights in Europe are better protected and more highly respected than here. He could have reported that in the so-called dictatorial countries personal freedoms are not as tread upon as they are here.

We are at least satisfied that there are Americans at all who acknowledge the fact that America can still learn something from other countries.

The final paragraphs of "American Conceit" may be offensive to Americans, but that is their intent. The writers combine a shock factor, personal bias, and passionate frustration by taking measures like comparing the American government to a dictatorship, and the reader is left to decide how exaggerated or ironic such assertions may be.

What "American Conceit" captures is the *Telegraph*'s fear of blind idealism. Just because America was founded on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness does not mean that the nation is inherently guaranteed those rights. Instead, the basic American promises must be constantly maintained and defended, or they may be lost to arrogance or corruption.

[*] Exactly what assassination trial the *Telegraph* mentions here is difficult to pinpoint. It may reference Charles J. Guiteau's extended trials after his assassination of President James A. Garfield in 1881.

Conclusion

Although the excerpts from the *Wisconsin Telegraph* included in this booklet are over 120 years old, they share frustrations immediately recognizable to modern readers. Today, we do not have reliable answers to issues like immigration, the use of English, or the role of business in politics. Americans often question the true limitations of their freedom. Witnessing the repetition of the same national conflicts for over a century may be disheartening, but should not be defeating. One of the nation's greatest assets is resilience, however forbidding the future may appear.

Thankfully, we can still reap the benefits of the *Telegraph*'s core message: America is not a magic land, and Americans are not wizards. The nation's problems should be accepted and embraced—doubt and conflict are natural, and they cannot be overcome without relinquishing idealistic expectations. America can never be a magic land, but with a foundation renewed by willingness to compromise and a more modest understanding of how much space remains for improvement, the nation can continue actualizing the original American Dream.

About the Author

Beth Molnar is a senior at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh majoring in German and English. This booklet was compiled as the final project for her Spring 2013 independent study, German 446: Archiving Local German Texts. The purpose of this independent study was to work with German-language materials at the Oshkosh Public Museum, to produce a booklet for the general public to increase awareness of the German-American experience in nineteenth-century Oshkosh, and to provide translations of local German-language materials for the Oshkosh community.

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Thank you also to Mr. Scott Cross, archivist at the Oshkosh Public Museum, for allowing access to the museum's archived German-language materials.

Further Reading

Many of Wisconsin's newspapers in a variety of languages are indexed. Consult the Oshkosh Public Museum, the Oshkosh Public Library, or the Wisconsin Historical Society for information about finding Wisconsin newspapers from the nineteenth century.

Everest, Kate Asaphine. "How Wisconsin Came By Its Large German Element." *Vol. XII Wisconsin Historical Collections*. Madison: State Historical Society of WI, 1892.

Final Report Intensive Historic Resource Survey for the City of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Oshkosh: Needles, Tammen & Bergendorf, 1981.

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Notes

Concerning the German-language excerpts from *Wisconsin Telegraph* articles: the orthography and linguistic idiosyncrasies, such as using "th" instead of "t" as is customary in modern German, have been reproduced as printed in their nineteenth century form.

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[1] *Final Report Intensive Historic Resource Survey for the City of Oshkosh, Wisconsin*. Oshkosh: Needles, Tammen & Bergendorf, 1981. 101. Print.

[2] Zeitlin, Richard H. *Germans in Wisconsin*. Madison: State Historical Society of WI, 2000. 5. Print.

[3] Zeitlin Richard H. *Germans in Wisconsin*. Madison: State Historical Society of WI, 2000. 7. Print.

[4] United States. Census Bureau. Population Division. "Population of Wisconsin Counties by Decennial: 1900 to 1990." Washington: US Census Bureau, 27 Mar. 1995. Web.

[5] Everest, Kate Asaphine. "How Wisconsin Came By Its Large German Element." *Vol. XII Wisconsin Historical Collections*. Madison: State Historical Society of WI, 1892. 21-25. Print.

[6] Jungwirth, Clarence. "Through the Years with Oshkosh." *Tales of Oshkosh*. Oshkosh: Oshkosh Public Library, 2002. 21-48. Print.

[7] Oehlerts, Donald E. *Guide to Wisconsin Newspapers, 1833-1957*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin,1958.

- 1852-1854: *Anzeiger des Nordwesterns* (Gazette of the Northwest)
- 1858-1860: *Wächter am Winnebago* (The Winnebago Watchman); weekly publication
- 1860-1865: *Deutsche Volksblätter* (German People's Paper); monthly publication
- 1866-1902: *Wisconsin Telegraph*; weekly publication with additional Sunday paper (*Der Feierabend*, or Quitting Time)

[8] Hicks, John. "Some Incidents in the Life of a Hero." *The Daily Northwestern* 24 Mar. 1906. Print.

[9] *Wisconsin Telegraph* self-description, included in each 1889 printing. Der „Wisconsin Telegraph" umfaßt jetzt 12 sechspaltige Seiten, welche außer den neuesten Nachrichten von beiden Seiten des Oceans, und ganz besonders aus der Stadt, dem Country, und dem Staate wie kaum eine andere Wochenzeitung in Wisconsin, leidenschaftslose, belehrende Artikel über Politik, Kunst, und Wissenschaft u. s. w. enthalten. Außerdem enthält das Sonntagsblatt „Der Feierabend" stets einen gediegenen, spannenden Roman. Preis nur $2.00 pro Jahr.

[10] „Dr. Mampe's Kräuter Magenbitters." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 25 Jan. 1889. Print.
Ein kleines Weinglas voll dreimal des Tages vor der Mahlzeit genommen, wird eine schnelle und sichere Kur von Dyspepsia, Nieren-Leiden, Leberbeschwerden und jeder Art Unverdaulichkeit sein—ein unfehlbares Mittel gegen Fieber und alle Arten periodischer Leiden—ein Mittel für augenblickliche Erleichterung bei Ruhr, Kolik u. Cholera-Anfällen, eine Kur gegen Hartleibigkeit, eine belebendes Mittel für kränkliche Personen jeden Geschlechts, ein ausgezeichnetes Mittel, den Appetit und die Verdauungsorgane zu stärken, ein Reinigungs-Mittel für das Blut und andere Flüßigkeiten.

[11] „Kemp's Balsam für Hals und Lunge." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 8 Feb. 1889. Print.
Der häßlichste Mann in Oshkosh, sowie der schönste, und Andere sind eingeladen, bei irgend einem Apotheker vorzusprechen und sich unentgeltlich eine Probeflasche von Kemp's Balsam für Hals und Lunge zu holen, ein Heilmittel, das sich durch eigenen Werth und Verdienst verkauft und das garantirt wird, daß alle chronische und akute Husten, Bronchitis, Asthma und Schwindsucht lindert und heilt.

[12] „Kein Deutsch im Himmel." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 31 May 1889. Print.
Wenn solcher Unsinn vom presbyterianischen Beichtvater des Präsidenten Harrison verübt werden kann, so kann Einem wahrlich um unsern Präsidenten bange werden. Da wäre dann auch am Ende der Umstand erklärt, daß der Präsident bis jetzt so spärlich mit den Ernennungen von Deutschen zu Bundesämtern zu Werke gegangen ist. Es ist ihm vielleicht bange, daß er sie später im Himmel treffen könnte. Darüber sollte er nun beruhigt sein, denn wir sind der Überzeugung, dass kein Mensch, welcher vier Jahre lang ein Bundesamt inne gehabt hat, vom heiligen Petrus reingelassen wird, und es ist noch sehr die

Frage, ob Herr Harrison, trotz seines presbyterianischen geistlichen Berathers Dr. Hollins, einst durch die Himmelspforte eingehen wird.

[13] „Der ‚Sieg des Englischen.'" *Wisconsin Telegraph* 5 July 1889. Print.
Wahr ist, daß die Verhandlungen der Samoa-Conferenz in englischer Sprache geführt wurden, aber warum ist es wahr? Aus dem einfachen Grunde, weil die drei Amerikaner Phelps, Kasson, und Bates zu dumm waren, um sich irgend einer anderen, als der englischen Sprache, verständlich auszudrücken. Es wurde zuerst der Versuch gemacht, die französische Sprache—da sie nun einmal seit zweihundert Jahren Handwerkssprache der Diplomaten ist—bei den Verhandlungen zu gebrauchen; aber da standen unsere herrlichen drei Yankee-Diplomaten wie die Ochsen am Berge. Und Deutsch? Das konnten sie erst recht nicht . . . Nun hatte es also Bismarck, der seinerseits vier Sprachen fließend spricht, mit den drei ungebildeten Rüpeln zu thun, die nur Englisch konnten. Was war da zu thun? Sie nach Hause zu schicken bis sie gelernt haben würden, sich in weltmännlich gebildeten europäischen Kreisen zu bewegen—das ging doch nicht . . . Weil die Vertreter Deutschlands aus Mitleid mit der Unwissenheit der drei Amerikaner sich der englischen Sprache bedienten, ziehen amerikansiche Zeitungsschreiber, die eben so dumm sind, wie jene drei „Staatsmänner", daraus den Schluss, daß die englische Sprache die diplomatische Zukunftsprache aller Welt sei.

[14] „Ein Stoppelwerk für die Widersacher der Deutschen und ihrer Sprache." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 20 Apr. 1889. Print.
A German-language publication in Japan that honors the "deutscher Geisteserzeugnisse," sentiments which they applaud as a model for "unsere anglo-amerikanische Mitbürger, die über die deutsche Sprache verächtlich die Nase rümpfen und auch Diejenigen unter die Deutschen, die sich ihrer Sprache schämen."

[15] „Die deutsche Sprache an der Wisconsiner Universität." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 15 Nov. 1889. Print.

[16] „Deutschland, das wahre Vaterland." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 29. Nov. 1889. Print.
„Es wurde heute bemerkt," sagte Garfield, „daß Schleicher auf ausländischem Boden geboren sei. In einem Sinne ist dies richtig, aber im richtigen Sinne war er in unserem Vaterland geboren . . . England sei nicht das Vaterland der Englisch-sprechenden Völker, sondern unsere ursprüngliche Heimath, das eigentliche Vaterland unserer Rasse, seien die alten Wälder von Deutschland . . . Wir können deshalb sagen, daß

der Freund, dessen Andenken wir heute feiern, einer der ältesten Brüder unserer Rasse ist. Er kam vom Vaterlande direkt nach Amerika, und nicht, wie unsere Väter, auf dem Wege über England."

[17] „Zur Beschränkung der Einwanderung." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 25 Jan. 1889. Print.
When the Ford Committee announced that stricter control was required at the Canadian border because at least 50,000 "Paupers, Wahnsinnige, Verbrecher, und anderes Gesindel" had entered America without impairment, the *Telegraph* cautioned the committee against acting too ruthlessly or strictly, " welche weder zu dem Geiste der freiheitlichen Einrichtungen dieses Landes past, noch weise und klug genannt werden kann."

[18] „Eine harte Nuß für die Fremdenhasser." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 15 Mar. 1889. Print.
Die Bevölkerung ist von 1876 bis 1888 um 36 Procent gestiegen (von 44 auf 60 Millionen). Dagegen hat sich der Werth des Grundeigenthums vermehrt um 50 Procent, der Hinterlegungen in den Sparbanken um 55 Procent und der des in Umlauf befindlichen Baargeldes um 90 Procent . . . Da die Knownothings ganz besonders den Rückgang der amerikanischen Landwirthschaft beklagt hatten, so mögen hier noch folgende Ziffern Platz finden: Der Weizenertrag in Bushels ist um 60 Procent gestiegen, der Maisertrag um 57, und der Baumwollertrag um 55 Procent.

[19] „Eine harte Nuß für die Fremdenhasser" cont'd.
An der Richtigkeit dieser Ziffern ist nicht zu zweifeln. Sie werden durch den nächsten Census ihre volle Bestätigung finden.

[20] „Die öffentliche Schuld nimmt zu, statt ab." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 9 Aug. 1889. Print.

[21] „Amerikanische Lässigkeit." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 6 Sept. 1889. Print.
Die amerikanischen Kaufleute haben es aber noch nie der Mühe werth gehalten, den südamerikanischen Markt auch nur zu studieren. In der Regel beschränken sie sich darauf, in ein paar Zeitungen ihre Waare anzuzeigen und an die amerikanischen Gesandten und Consuln der betreffenden Länder das Gesuch zu stellen, ihnen ihre Unterstützung zu leihen, während die Deutschen, die Engländer, und Franzosen, statt in fremder Sprache abgefaßte Ankündigungen und Preislisten an ihre Consuln und Gesandten zu schicken, lebende Agenten in diese Länder

schicken und sie mit einem größen Kostaufwand dort unterhalten. Diese Agenten nehmen dort ihren bleibenden Wohnsitz, lernen und sprechen die Sprache des Landes, studieren die Sitten, Gewohnheiten und Bedürfnisse des Volkes, eröffnen dann Kaufläden, breiten auf ihren Tischen große Mengen von Proben ihrer Waaren aus und geben sich in jeder Weise Mühe, den Handel an sich zu ziehen.

[22] „Amerika's Diktator." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 2 Aug. 1889. Print.
Denn in einer Zeit, da die Trusts und Monopole wie Pilze nach warmen Sommerregen aus der Erde springen, war ein solches Vorgehen zu erwarten. Ja, man könnte sich billig darüber wundern, daß der geplante Eisenbahntrust nicht schon längst in's Leben getreten ist, da ein solcher für die Unternehmer enorme, ganz unbeschränkt reiche Ernten in Aussicht stellt, falls der Leiter desselben ein energischer, gewissenloser, vor keinem Hinderniß zurückschreckender Mann ist. Ein Solcher wäre der ungekrönter Kaiser, ja mehr noch, der allmächtige Diktator der Vereinigten Staaten, gegen den der Präsident, sowie die Gouverneure, Richter, und alle Beamten in das unbedeutende Nichts zurücktreten müssten. Denn durch das Heer seiner Beamten würde er die Wahlen beherrschen und lenken und dafür sorgen können, daß Niemand ein Amt erhielte, der sich ihm und der durch ihn vertretenen Gesellschaft nicht mit Haut und Haaren verschreibe. Alle bestehenden Gesetze würde er auf den Kopf stellen und neue, ihm genehme und nur seiner Gesellschft vortheilhafte dafür einschieben können.

[23] „Amerika's Diktator" cont'd.
Das einzige Mittel, dieses Riesenprojekt zunichte zu machen, wäre: die gesammten Bahnen nach europäischem Muster zu verstaatlichen; den bisherigen Grundsatz: dem Sieger die Beute!—beiseite zu schieben und—wieder nach europäischen Muster—verantwortliche, von der Partei unabhängige, pensionsberechtigte Beamte einzusetzen, die nur absetzbar wären, wenn sie sich etwas zu Schulden kommen ließen. Aber solchen Vorschlag wird man in diesem Land aus eigennützen Gründen als gegen Konstitution, Sitte, Gesetz, und Gott weiß was sonst noch verstoßend weit von sich weisen und lieber die Diktatur eines Einzelnen auf sich nehmen, der klingende Gunstbeweise zu ertheilen vermag.

[24] Halstead, Murat. "Our National Conceits." *The North American Review* 149.396 (1889): 550-59. Print.

[25] „Amerikanischer Dünkel." *Wisconsin Telegraph* 8 Nov. 1889. Print.

Unter dem Titel „American Conceit" veröffentlicht Herr Murat Halfstead einen Aufsatz in der *North American Review*, der ebenso durch die Persönlichkeit des Schreibers, wie durch den Stoff, welchen er behandelt, von Interesse ist.

In Amerika gehört immer ein gewisser Muth dazu, den Amerikanern die Wahrheit zu sagen. Im Lande der Pressfreiheit wird die Kritik nirgends schonungsvoller, wenigstens in gewissen Dingen, gehandhabt, als hierzulande. Das amerikansiche Volk bekommt selten Kritiken zu sehen oder zu hören. Auswärtige gefallen sich in Zerrbildern, an denen man gezwungen ist, mit kalter Verachtung vorüberzugehen [. . .] Für den Amerikaner sind wir die größte, die mächtigste, die fehlerfreiste Nation auf Erden. Alles was wir leisten, ist vollkommen. Die amerikanische Nation repräsentiert die Gesammtsumme alles Wissens und Könnens. Hand in Hand mit dieser Überschätzung des eigenen Landes geht eine Geringschätzung aller anderen Länder. Wenn man viele von diesen Stockamerikaner hört und liest, möchte man glauben, daß außerhalb Amerika nirgends die Sonne scheint, dass alle Nationen, über welchen das Sternenbanner nicht weht, in halber Barbarei leben. Freilich wird uns dieser Dünkel mit Zinsen heimgezahlt. Andere Länder urtheilen ebenso unrichtig über uns, wie wir über sie.

Aus diesem Grunde ist es doppelt erfreulich, das Urtheil eines Mannes zu hören, der aufgeklärt genug ist, die Fehler und Vorzüge aller Nationen zu sehen und denselben, je nach den Umständen, gerechtes Lob und gerechten Tadel angedeihen zu lassen. Wenn wir etwas an dem Aufsatz auszusetzen haben, so ist es, daß Herr Halfstead eher zu wenig, als zu viel sagt. Das mag vielleicht in den Grenzen liegen, die er sich gesteckt hat. Es war mehr seine Absicht, den Amerikaner auf Reisen, den er bei seinen häufigen Besuchen in Europa gründlich kennengelernt hat, als den Amerikaner in seinem eigenen Lande zu schildern. [. . .]

Seine Kritik fordert besonders der Gegensatz zwischen der Sparsamkeit der Europäer und der lüderlichen Wirthschaft der Amerikaner heraus. Die Schonung der Forsten und die Pflege der Wälder überhaupt stellt er in Gegensatz zu der Raubwirthschaft der Amerikaner und macht diese darauf aufmerksam, daß wenn sie hierin nicht bald zur Vernunft kommen, sie Amerika in eine Wüstenei verwandeln werden. Der Raubbau, der den fruchtbaren Boden so herunterwirthschaftet, daß einst vollreiche Staaten entvölkert werden, die mangelnde Sorge für die Zukunft in allen wirthschaftlichen Verhältnissen veranlassen ihn, in Erinnerung zu bringen, daß die Amerikaner noch viel von den Europäern zu lernen haben. [. . .]

Wir haben diesen Punkt schon früher selbst hervorgehoben. Amerika ist kein Zauberland, die Menschen darin sind keine Hexenmeister. Was Amerika so groß gemacht hat, ist nicht das

Amerikanerthum, sondern der moderne Geist der Technik, der sich in anderen Ländern ebenso geltend macht wie hier.

Herr Halfstead hätte noch viel mehr sagen können, ohne den Amerikanern Unrecht zu thun. Er hätte darauf hinweisen können, daß man in Europa keine drei Monate und keine 1200 Bürger braucht, um eine Jury von zwölf Mann, die über Meuchelmörder zu Gericht sitzen soll, zusammenzubringen; daß die Privatrechte in Europa besser geschützt sind und in höherer Achtung stehen, als hier. Er hätte berichten können, daß in den sogenannten despotischen Ländern die persönliche Freiheit nicht so mit Füßen getreten wird, wie hier.

Allein wir sind schon zufrieden, daß es Amerikaner giebt, die überhaupt zugestehen, daß Amerika vom Auslande noch etwas lernen kann.