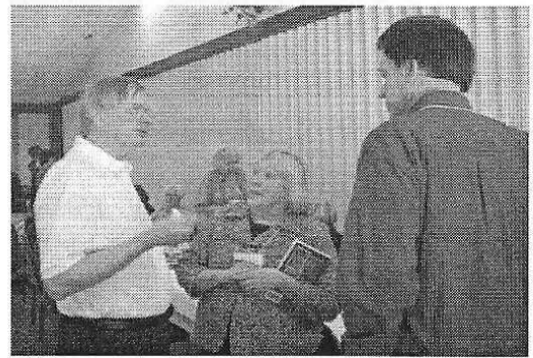
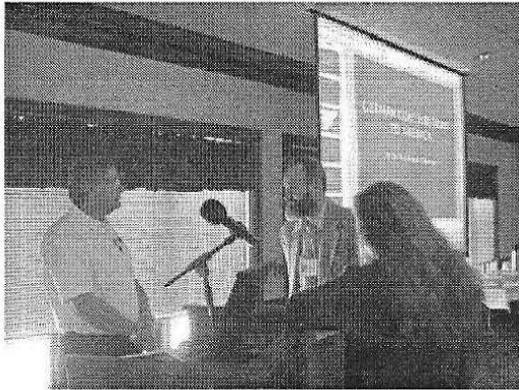


Fall Seminar Recap

Dr. Richard Hartle

The 2011 Fall Seminar at Plain City was a great success with Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann presenting a splendid overview of “German Immigration, Settlement and Contributions” in four lectures.



Dr. Tolzmann, Roberta, and Vern chatting.



German Immigration to America: Causes in the 19th Century:

This included a description of the events of the early devastation of the German States from the 30 Years War through the ravages by Napoleon. The populace following the defeat of Napoleon anticipated more freedom, but that did not happen, and civil unrest ensued culminating in the Revolution Of 1848. That failure pushed many to immigrate to America. The Prusso-Austrian War in 1866 was another push factor for emigration. Favorable publicity from America by German authors, such as Gottfried Duden, pulled people to America. Newspaper reports, the Bill of Rights, the Homestead Act, and the rise from rags to riches of Germans such as John Jacob Astor were additional pulling factors for immigration to America.

German Immigration to America: Settlement Patterns:

Germans settled around the seaports and followed transportation routes up the rivers and later followed the canals and railways. Concentrations developed at junctions of rivers, such as at Cincinnati on the Ohio between the Miami Rivers. Good farm land along river bottoms attracted Germans, who tended to stay where they settled, bringing in others in chain migrations of friends and family. German authors and artists provided glowing descriptions and illustrations of the west, stimulating even more Germans to immigrate to the frontier. Westward movement from Pennsylvania through the river valleys with a climate similar to Germany largely avoided the southern states due to their

opposition to slavery. This resulted in the German Belt of the Midwest with its concentration of German settlers, frequently having up to 50% of the population with German ancestry.

Ohio's Germans in the Civil War:

There was not much written information about the Germans in the Civil War until recently, as the World Wars made it politically incorrect to be proud of German ancestry. Dr. Tolzmann has translated a book about Cincinnati Germans in the Civil War and recommended another book by Wilhelm Kaufman, recently translated from the German. The Germans were opposed to slavery and secession and supported the Republican Party campaigning for Lincoln. He mentioned the names of many Germans who were prominent in the war including Hubert Dilger, who came from Baden to fight in the war and commanded a Battery of the 1st Ohio Artillery Battalion. Germans or Americans of German descent made up about a third of the Union Army including many who had experience in military procedures from the 1848 revolution.

German Contributions to America:

An outline of contributions to our culture by German immigrants noted that English is a Germanic language. There are many words in our language borrowed from the German, most of which are related to dietary items. Many Germans and Americans of German descent developed and enhanced our American way of life from Baron von Steuben to John Philip Sousa and Elvis Presley (later changed to Presley, when his great grandfather joined the Confederate army.).