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In the Land of Beer, Brats, and Bootlegging: A Personal Account of Milwaukee History

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In all of the United States, one may be challenged to find a city that even today has remained quite as German as Milwaukee. Why is this? Within the boundaries of this paper, I have sought to answer this question by exploring one specific branch of my family tree, the Froehlichs. Their experiences in coming to Milwaukee from Germany and raising many generations there, directly mirror the stories of thousands of other German immigrants at the time. Together, these immigrants built a very tight-knit and unique American community that successfully blended some of the best elements of German culture and heritage with the idealism of America. Though the community makeup of Milwaukee has become much more diverse since the late 1800s, its German foundations still remain at the forefront of what makes it such a culturally interesting and valuable city today. To thoroughly explore such a topic, I have used a variety of different sources. First and foremost, I have used the memories of my grandma, Joy Feustel. Her interviews with me have been invaluable in adding to my research for this project. I have also used the Froehlich family tree and countless books on German history within Milwaukee.

Information about the Author:

Marissa Schmidt is a history/Spanish double major with a minor in American-Indian studies. She hopes to one day pursue her PhD in history, but for now, she is looking forward to a summer internship in the Anthropology Department of the Milwaukee Public Museum and to spending the next academic year studying abroad in Granada, Spain. The topic of this project is very personal, as Marissa is a full German and a life-long Wisconsinite.

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